These days’ students are often involved in cheating and mass copying. The worst part of their problem is that they are not even told by their parents and teachers that cheating in examinations is a wrong behaviour and they should not indulge in cheating. Therefore, students often develop positive attitude towards cheating instead of having negative attitude towards cheating. Their elders often encourage cheating behaviour. The elder students also present wrong models in front of young and junior students. Sometimes parents even reinforce and encourage cheating behaviour of their children. So the concept of cheating is often formed in wrong manner, and so their attitude towards cheating is not negative. They do not develop hatred towards cheating behaviour nor do they feel ashamed of it and often develop positive attitude towards cheating. Some children on the other hand, are taught strong moral values. Their parents emphasize knowledge acquisition through hard work as their aim of education. Such students have high value for knowledge acquisition and hard work. They learn to earn good marks through hard work and therefore, try to manage their limited time in such a manner that they can learn their subject matter thoroughly and obtain good marks in exams.

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Negative attitude towards cheating shows a feeling of guilt for cheating or copying in classroom or examination room, a behaviour that is not permitted by the examination authorities. Positive attitude towards cheating means absence of any feeling of guilt and or shame in the student’s mind. In extreme case, they have a feeling of pride in thinking themselves to be smart, being able to cheat. Such students would easily indulge in cheating behaviour whenever they get opportunity.

A simple typology of reasons why students plagiarise, informed particularly by the work of Stevens and Stevens (1987), Davis et al. (1992), Love and Simmons (1998) and Straw (2002), captures the multiple and contingent motives of plagiarism by students.

1. Genuine lack of understanding: Some students plagiarise unintentionally, when they are not familiar with proper ways of quoting, paraphrasing, citing and referencing and/or when they are unclear about the meaning of ‘common knowledge’ and the expression ‘in their own words’.

2. Efficiency gain. Students plagiarise to get a better grade and to save time.

3. Time management. There are many calls on student’s time, including peer pressure for an active social life, commitment to college sports and performance activities, family responsibilities and pressure to complete multiple work assignments in short amounts of time.

4. Personal values/attitudes. Some students see no reason why they should not plagiarise or do it because of social pressure, because it makes them feel good or because they regard short cuts as clever and acceptable.

5. Defiance. To some students plagiarism is a tangible way of showing dissent and expressing a lack of respect for authority.

6. Students’ attitudes towards teachers and class. Some students cheat because they have negative attitudes towards assignments and tasks that teachers think have meaning but they do not (Howard, 2000). Burnett (2002) emphasizes
Attitude of Students Towards Cheating

the importance of a relationship of trust between student and teacher, because ‘the classes in which [students] are more likely to cheat are those where students believe their professor does not bother to read their papers or closely review their work’.

7. Denial or neutralization. Some students deny to themselves that they are cheating or find ways of legitimising it by passing the blame on to others.

8. Temptation and opportunity. It is both easier and more tempting for students to plagiarise as information becomes more accessible on the Internet and web search tools make it easier and quicker to find and copy.

9. Lack of deterrence. To some students the benefits of plagiarising outweigh the risks, particularly if they think there is little or no chance of getting caught and there is little or no punishment if they are caught (Davis & Ludvigson, 1995).

An important factor may be the utility of their examination result in getting jobs.

There is no doubt that some students cheat more than others. Ferrell & Daniel (1995) said that students who engage in cheating behaviour share common characteristics, the evidence suggests that some factors might be particularly helpful in predicting or explaining cheating behaviour by students.

1. Gender. Cheating tends to be more common among male than among female students (Calabrese & Cochran, 1990; Buckley et al., 1998; Straw, 2002).

2. Age and maturity. Young (Straw, 2002) and immature (Haines et al., 1986) students tend to cheat more often than older and more mature students.

3. Academic ability. Some studies (for example Straw, 2002) have shown that cheating is more common among students with lower grades than among those with higher grades.

4. Student social life. Cheating is more common amongst students who party a lot and have very active social lives.
(Straw, 2002), students involved in several outside activities (Straw, 2002) and students who are members of campus fraternities and sororities (McCabe & Bowers, 1996).

5. Peer disapproval. Peer disapproval is often only a minor influence on cheating by students (Diekhoff et al., 1996).

6. Student personality factors. Students tend to cheat more often if they lack confidence, feel under pressure from and seek the approval of parents and peers (Raffetto, 1985), if they have an aggressive (Type A) behaviour type (Buckley et al., 1998), if they lack commitment to their studies (Haines et al., 1986), if they have a neutralising (rationalising) attitude (Daniel et al., 1994).

7. Student attitude towards their classes. Cheating tends to be more common in classes where the subject matter seems to students unimportant or uninteresting or where the teacher seemed disinterested or permissive (Gerdeman, 2000).

8. Risk of being caught. A number of studies have underlined the importance, in students’ decision making about cheating, of their perception of the probability and consequences of being caught (Leming, 1980; McCabe & Trevino, 1993, 1997; Buckley et al., 1998) and of the importance of deterrents such as embarrassment and fear of punishment (Diekhoff et al., 1996).

Problem

To compare the attitude of the students of professional courses and non professional courses towards cheating.

Hypothesis

Students of professional courses would have more positive attitude towards cheating in comparison to students of non professional courses.

Description of Key Words

Cheating

Every sort of behaviour of a student which try to deceive the teacher is behaviour of cheating. Students try to deceive their teacher
in different ways in their studies, by showing immoral behaviour such as telling a lie, cheating to change marks in the result card, to change the remarks and to copy from other copies, or from books. In the class work, tests and examinations, these are different type of cheating behaviour.

—Webster’s International Dictionary.

Positive Attitude Towards Cheating

Positive attitude towards cheating means absence of any feeling of guilt or shame in the student’s mind. In extreme case, they have a feeling of pride in thinking themselves to be smart, being able to cheat. Such students would easily indulge in cheating behaviour whenever they get opportunity in life.

Negative Attitude Towards Cheating

Negative attitude towards cheating shows a feeling of guilt for cheating or copying in classroom or examination room, a behaviour that is not permitted by the examination authorities.

Professional Courses

Professional Courses are those through which a person becomes worthy to receive direct or indirect remuneration to work in specific area. The students in these courses get special training and they develop their skills and abilities in a particular field. Professional courses are often linked with job offer.

Non Professional Courses

In non professional courses students does not becomes worthy to receive direct remuneration to work. No special training or skills is imparted to students in non professional courses.

METHOD

Sample

The sample was selected from post graduate professional courses and non professional courses studying in DEI and university of Agra. The sample consisted of 20 students of professional courses and 20 students of non professional courses.
Tool

*Attitude Towards Cheating Scale (ATC)*

ATC scale constructed by Das and Mishra (2007) was used. This scale is based on Likert’s five point rating scale. In this scale 40 items are included, which are either positive or negative. Responses are to be obtained on five point scale.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Table 1: Mean scores on Attitude towards Cheating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>SE.d</th>
<th>t</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Courses</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>9.23</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>16.59*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students of</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Professional Courses</td>
<td>54.1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8.64</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .01

The result as given in Table shows the difference between the attitude towards cheating scores of professional and non professional courses’ students. The value of t (16.59*) was found to be statistically significant at .01 level. It indicates that Professional Courses students have more favorable attitude towards cheating in comparison to Non Professional Courses students.

The result of current study showed that professional and non professional courses students differed on their attitude towards cheating scores. Professional courses’ students showed positive attitude towards cheating than non professional courses’ students. A study done by Grimes (2004). His study presents the findings from an international survey of college students which examined perceptions and attitudes towards dishonesty in academic and business contexts. Data were collected from undergraduate students.
Attitude of Students Towards Cheating

studying business and economics in eight transitional economies of Eastern Europe and Central Asia and from students in the United States. The results indicate that academic cheating is a common activity in all of the countries surveyed. Even though most students reported fearing the punishment of being caught, substantial numbers of students indicated that academic cheating is socially acceptable and not ethically wrong. When asked to rate their perceived degree of dishonesty with respect to behaviour in an academic setting relative to analogous behaviour in a business setting, students in both the United States and the transitional economies viewed dishonesty in a business context more severely than dishonesty in an academic context. The evidence also suggests that when compared to students in the transitional economies, American students apply a relatively higher standard of honesty towards behaviour in both the academic and business settings. Coleman and Mahaffey (2004) did a study on business student ethics: selected predictors of attitudes towards cheating. Their research addresses the frequently reported finding that business education reduces the ethical sensitivity of students. This research proposed a dependent measure based on students’ attitudes towards academic dishonesty and the use of two independent variables, locus of control and personality type. In an empirical study, both locus of control and personality type were found to significantly influence students’ attitudes to academic dishonesty. Students who studied business however, were no more tolerant of academic dishonesty than students in other programs. Nor did they have a different locus of control or personality-type. Locus of control and personality type were significantly correlated.

Some previous studies showed that professional courses’ students have higher level of aspiration than non professional courses’ students. Therefore, professional courses’ students do not accept that cheating is ethically wrong for the fulfillment of their desires and aspirations. The results of a study showed that only 23% of students from non professional background gained two or more A grade level in comparison to 53% students from professional background. Mathur and Rao (2004) conducted a study on 107 students of Udaipur town post graduate students from the college
of basic science and humanities. Number of students from non professional courses was 48 and the number of students from professional courses was 59. Self Anchoring scale was used to measure the level of aspiration. The results showed that 48% students from professional background and 29% students from non professional courses aspired to go abroad. 89% students from professional background and 70% students from non professional background were job oriented.

The implication of the study is that in professional courses values and ethics should be emphasized. The students of professional courses should be taught that short cuts like cheating are not the right way to gain success. They should be fair and honest in their work to achieve long term success.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of results the researcher concluded that the students of professional courses’ have more positive attitude towards cheating whereas non professional courses’ students have negative attitude towards cheating.

REFERENCES


