

## **A Comparison of the Prevalence of Dishonest Academic Behaviors Between USA and German Students**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Disreputable business behaviors appear to be a daily news item. USA businesses have a history of dishonest and deceitful practices but the USA has not cornered the market on improper behavior. The recent Volkswagen scandal illustrates that malfeasance occurred at the top of the company. To determine a baseline for unethical behavior a study was conducted to compare a variety of dishonest academic behaviors between students from the USA and Germany. An analysis was conducted to determine if there were differences by country, gender, and grade point average. A number of statistically significant differences emerged.

**Keywords: --**

## Introduction

American business is replete with examples of unethical or unscrupulous behaviors. Many people recognize major firms by their transgressions instead of their products. Even one of our most successful firms, Apple, produces an endless supply of desirable products produced by Foxconn whose employees toil in a grueling unsafe environment. In addition, Monsanto created Agent Orange and GMO seeds, Philip Morris, markets cigarettes to children, and Chevron created the “Amazon Chernobyl” (Hastley, 2013). While there are many more cases, perhaps the posterchild for unethical business practices is Enron who overnight shattered the lives of their employees, investors and pension fund recipients (Seabury, 2009).

However, major ethical breaches are not limited to the USA. Germany, for example, has been rocked by one of its bellwether companies; Volkswagen. Shortly after passing Toyota in 2015 to become the largest automaker on Earth Volkswagen executives admitted to cheating on emission tests which affected over eleven million vehicles and sullied the firm’s reputation (Hotten, 2015). Dishonesty at many levels led to this disastrous and costly public relations incident. Was this an isolated occurrence or are subtle shades of gray commonplace in the German culture?

What is the root cause of these actions? Could it be something as simple as greed? Defining greed ranges from Socrates’ sublime “He who is not contented with what he has, would not be contented with what he would like to have”, (goodreads.com) to the ridiculous, “Greed is Good” as proclaimed by the fictional Gordon Gekko in the film Wall Street (Wikipedia, 2016). Nonetheless, what are the causes of greed, where is it learned and how can it be addressed? Perhaps the answer can be found in universities which are the training grounds for tomorrow’s executives. These institutions of higher education are charged with educating students with the knowledge and skills prerequisite to begin their careers. Though exams, presentations, projects and a host of other activities, students develop the competencies and confidence to make the transition from student to employee. However, the temptation to cut corners and take the easy way is ever present just as it is in the world of business.

The purpose of this study is to determine the type of academic dishonest behaviors utilized by students in the USA and Germany. Upon learning the dishonest behaviors the following three research hypotheses will be tested on the various types of conduct.

H1- There is no difference in academic dishonest behaviors based on the country of the students.

H2- There is no difference in academic dishonest behaviors based on the country and gender of the students.

H3- There is no difference in academic dishonest behaviors based on the country and gpa of the students.

## Literature Review

### *Academic Dishonesty*

Academic dishonesty can have many interpretations but is generally defined as “students’ attempts to present others’ academic work as their own” (Jenson, Arnett, Feldman, & Cauffman, 2002). These behaviors can include cheating on exams, copying other students’ homework and assignments, and plagiarism. Graham, Monday, O’Brien, & Steffen, (1994) have found rates as high as 90% of reported cheating among college students. The more common types of cheating are cheating on homework and tests and plagiarizing (Baird, 1980; Graham et al., 1994). Jenson et al. (2002) found that acceptance of cheating was positively correlated with cheating behavior. There was also a positive correlation between tolerance of deviance and acceptance of cheating as well as self-reported cheating behavior.

It is a common assertion that academic dishonesty is growing in colleges and universities (Collision, 1990; Collision, 1990, p.A33; Hetherington & Feldman, 1964; Jayna, 1991; Jendrek, 1989; Michaels & Miethe, 1989; Wellborn, 1980). Some colleges and universities have introduced integrity classes and have tried to increase the efforts of professors to report student cheaters (Collision, 1990, p.A33). Derek Bok, in *Universities and the Future of America*, suggests that “Universities need to consider the larger campus environment beyond classroom. An obvious step in this direction is to have rules that prohibit lying, cheating, stealing, violent behavior, interference with free expression, or other acts that break fundamental norms. Such rules not only protect the right of everyone in the community; they also signal the importance of basic moral obligations and strengthen habits of ethical behavior (Bok, 1990 pp. 84-85).” It is also suggested that factors like competition for grades, the size and diversity of classes, any lack of honor code tradition, and the fact no one likes to accuse one another of cheating, work against Boc’s approach (Bok, 1990 P. 87).

In a ten year longitudinal study from 1984 to 1994, Diekhoff et al., (1996) found that the percentage of students cheating increased from 54% to 61.2%. Pulvers and Diekhoff (1990) examined 280 undergraduate students from 18 different classes from two different colleges found the classroom environments were related to cheating and the justification for why cheating occurred as their class was less personalized, less satisfying, and less task oriented.

Past studies have found anywhere from 13% to 95% of college students were a part of some form of academic dishonesty (Collision, 1990; Eve & Bromley, 1981; Haines et al, 1986; Harp & Taietz, 1966; Leming, 1980; Tittle & Rowe, 1973). There are two reasons that could account for academic dishonesty. One are individual differences, like gender (Ward & Beck, 1990), grade point average (Baird, 1980; Hetherington & Feldman, 1964), work ethic (Eisenberger & Shank, 1985), personalities, competitiveness (Perry, Kane, Bernesser, & Spicker, 1990), and self-esteem (Ward, Self-Esteem and Dishonest Behavior Revisted, 1986). The second reason could be due to the institution details like, honor codes (Brooks & al, 1981, Campbell, 1935, Canning, 1956), how faculty responds to cheating (Jendrek, 1989), sanction threats (Michaels & Miethe, 1989; Tittle & Rowe, 1973) and social learning (Michaels & Miethe, 1989).

Davis et al (1992) found the percentage of students allowing others to cheat off of them ranged from .3% to 8 %. However, Houston (1976) believes that if students believe that “everyone cheats” and if they think that is a part norm than that will encourage the students to cheat. Davis et al (1992), found 80% out of the students who admitted to cheating copied from other students sitting near them. In addition, 20% of the students listed specific ways they cheating including, having a copy of the test and looking up the answers ahead of time, opening the book and looking up answers during the test, and trading papers during the test and comparing answers.

The research tends to confirm the widespread nature of academic dishonesty in college. Hamlin, Barczyk, Powell, & Frost (2013) found 50-70% of all college students engaged in cheating, plagiarism and other forms of dishonesty. Similarly, McMahon (2015) found 60% to 90% of college students committed acts of academic dishonesty. This behavior is often tacitly permitted as many faculty are not actively punishing the behavior. In addition, Qualls, (2014) found 80% of the participants in the study participated in some form of cheating in college.

But cheating doesn't just start in college. It has just a continuing of the behaviors that have already ben instilled in the students. For example, a recent national poll on cheating in high schools was conducted by the Benenson Strategy Group. They found over thirty-five percent of teens admitted to cheating with cell phones, and over half used the internet to cheat In addition, there are services such as [WriteMyEssay.com](http://WriteMyEssay.com), [College-paper.org](http://College-paper.org), [Essayontime.com](http://Essayontime.com), and [Bestessays.com](http://Bestessays.com) which boast that "70% of Students use Essay Writing service at least once" (Common Sense Media, 2009).

### *Measuring Students' Behavior in an Academic Setting*

McCabe and Trevino's (1997) surveyed over 1,800 students at 9 universities in the 1993-1994 school year. They found contextual factors like peer behavior, peer disapproval of cheating, and severity of consequence, were more influential than the individual factors like age, gender, GPA, and participation in other activities.

A study conducted by Witherspoon, Maldonado, and Lacey (2010) looked at the how often undergraduate students engaged in academic dishonesty. They used 186 undergraduate students that were enrolled in 11 general education classes. The Survey of Academic Dishonesty (SAD) (McCabe, 1997) was used to collect data. Results showed that most students cheat occasionally, but the majority were not frequent cheaters.

Cheating traditionally consists of cheating in the classroom, outside of the classroom, and plagiarism. (Choi, 2010; Diekhoff et al., 1996; Greene & Saxe, 1992; Grijalva, Nowell, & Kerkvliet, 2006; Lipka, 2009; McCabe, 2009; McCabe, et al., 2006; Nate & Lovaglia, 2009; Power, 2009; Sutton, 1991). Research found cheating on tests was reported in higher proportions than in other situations and behaviors (Barnett & Dalton, 1981; Bowers, 1963; Choi, 2010; McCabe, et al., 2006; Nate & Lovaglia, 2006; Powers, 2009). Forty-three percent of students reported that they either copied answers from another student or gave answers to another student (Eve and Bromley, 1981).

Cheating outside of the classroom involves writing a paper for another student, copying an assignment, working on an assignment in a group with other students, purchasing a paper from

someone or a program online, or failing to report cheating committed by another student (Greene & Saxe, 1992; Grijalva et al., 2006; Lipka, 2009; McCabe, 2009; Sutton, 1991; Wilkerson, 2009).

Plagiarism is another component of academic dishonesty but may be occurring since students were confused whether they plagiarized or not (Brandt, 2002; Brown & Howell, 2001; Buranen, 2009; Franklyn-Stokes & Newstead, 1995; Park, 2003; Rosamond, 2002; Thompson, 2005). Plagiarism can come in many forms including but not limited to: a) stealing from another source and saying that it was their own; b) submitting a paper written by a peer; c) copying a section off of one or more papers and not referencing it; and d) paraphrasing from one or more papers and not referencing it (Brandt, 2002). Hansen (2003) found that 38% of students admitted to plagiarizing by using conventional sources and 40% of students plagiarized from the Internet. Research conducted by Pino, Smith, and William (2003) surveyed students at a university concerning their behaviors and attitudes about academic dishonesty. Approximately 53% students reported they had never committed any acts of academic dishonesty, 37% reported they committed a few acts or less throughout their whole entire time at college, and only 8% reported they cheated once or twice during a semester (Pino & Smith, 2003).

Wowra (2007) investigated if academic dishonesty was related to moral identities and social evaluation. Approximately 70 college students were surveyed on various topics dealing with academic dishonesty and standards and results showed significant differences. Social anxiety was positively correlated with cheating and students who didn't find much importance with their moral identities was also positively correlated with cheating.

Brown and Choong (2005) explored the theory that students who place ethics and values at a higher level were less likely to cheat. Further, their study had students from both a private and public university complete questionnaires that dealt with academic dishonesty. Although values and the principles of ethics were weighted more in the private university, results showed that both groups of students from private and public universities placed very similar levels on academic dishonesty.

An interesting finding from McCabe and Trevino (1996) reported that the University of Maryland at College Park modified an honor code. This code provides that student involvement is encouraged in the resolve of supposed cases of academic dishonesty. This encourages students to become involved in endorsing academic honor through various techniques including, having students sign an Honor Pledge, creating an Honor Council, or recommending strategies that teachers can use to minimize cheating occurring in the classroom.

Colleges and Universities offering more online classes have to face the challenge of academic dishonesty in a different setting. This new generation, the "millennials" or "digital natives" know new types of technology that lead to new types of academic dishonesty (Dryer, 2010). Old and new tactics are used in online education like, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion, and technology manipulation, misinterpretation, and paid impersonation.

According to Gallant and Drinan (2006), cheating in online classes is the most practiced in academic dishonesty. There are two types of cheating that occurs online. One is called "planned

cheating”, meaning that students use crib sheets for tests, copy assignments, and plagiarize written assignments. The second type is called “panic cheating” which is when a student’s looks off another student’s test during the test time (Bunn, Caudill & Gropper, 1992; Dietz-Uhler & Hurn, 2011). Devices like the World Wide Web, cell phones, laptops, and wireless earpieces are used to help the students cheat (Vilchez & Thirunarayanan, 2011; Dryer, 2010; Howell, Sorensen & Tippets, 2009; Becker, Connolly, Lentz & Morrison, 2006).

Most people wouldn’t think that this next method of cheating is a source of academic dishonesty. Collusion is when students work together using their notes, the textbook, and online sources while doing an assignment or test that is meant to be done alone (Vilchez & Thirunarayanan, 2011. “Digital deception” is closely related to collusion. It is the use of phones, email, instant messaging, chat-rooms, and other messaging sources to give out and to receive information about the course. Another way that a student can use “digital deception” is by lying to the professor about something school related, like why one hasn’t turned in an assignment on time (Jumani et al., 2011).

With online courses, students can now manipulate the technology to benefit in their favor. In McGee’s (2013) research study, he found that students may be taking the easy way out of doing difficult course assignments. Students also realize that they can use problems with the technology as an excuse for not completing an assignment or test. Also, depending on the program being used students may be so technology savvy that they learn a way to retake an assignment or test without the professor knowing (Rowe, 2014).

In addition, there are ways to obtain work that is not your own. These misinterpretation strategies occur in two different ways. One is to purchase papers or projects off of various websites including Wetakeyouclass.com, Boostmygrades.com, or Unemployedprofessors.com (Sileo & Sileo, 2008). The second form is by having a student pay another student to take the course for them (Bailie & Jortberg, 209; Schaefer, Barta & Pavone, 2009).

### *American Ethics*

Many trends in academia, management, and business ethics originated from America and were adopted by countries in Europe and Germany (Vogel, 1992). American “business ethics programs” were very popular to teach new and upcoming employees on certain norms and values. *Codes of Ethics* were written to define different company’s ethical value system and to provide a set of guidelines for employees. The next step was to apply an *Ethics Committees of the Board of Directors*; this helps to incorporate ethics at the company’s top-level. Support is given to this committee by the *Ethics Office*, which handles all aspects of ethics management plan a day-to-day basis. The *Ethics Office* also handles and organizes the company’s *Ethics Training* for their employees. It also helps with answering any questions that employees might have about the Ethics Code, in addition companies also run an *Ethics Audit*, which monitors the efficiency and the success of the Ethics Code (Palazzo, 2002). This evaluation is handled through a variety of instruments such as surveys to determine whether the employees know the code, what parts of the code employees find helpful, and what areas might need improved (Lohnert, 1996; Wieland, 1993). American companies have several reasons for following this grueling

process from just the general need, to the will of keeping up with a good reputation, and because of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines (Dalton et al., 1994).

### *German Ethics*

To convey their Ethic Code to employees, alternative methods are relied on by German companies. An instrument called mission statements are used to get their message across (Ulrich et al, 1996; KPMG, 1999). However, in these statements you will hardly ever see the word “ethics” (Palazzo, 2002). German companies also often deal with questions of business ethics in a more indirect manor.

A research experiment conducted by Ulrich et al (1996) included employees of the 500 largest German companies who were surveyed about their current status with business ethics. The surveys showed that most of the respondents answered with a mixture of unawareness, and doubt about the policies as over 50% of the employees admitted they had never heard of ethics audit, ethics hotline, or ethics officers. A shocking 21% of the German respondents reported that the word “ethics” was being avoided in their company! Some employees were insulted that there was no formal business ethics program in their company, and only 16 out of the 67 responding German companies had a Codes of Ethics. On the positive side to this, 42% of the respondents said that they were planning on having some sort of business ethics measures installed, which gives sight that there is a steady trend towards the implementation of business ethics programs in more German companies. Perhaps, a lack of a strong legal motivation like the Federal Sentencing Guidelines in America, is a reason that German companies might not enforce business ethics programs (Pallazzo, 2002).

### *German Reactions to American Ethics*

Something so private, complex, and philosophical as ethics being so public in America has made Germans react in awe (Ulrich et al., 1996). Germans are skeptical of America’s “just-do-it” attitude. Adding ethics to economics without exploring the theoretical implications to the problem is seen as improper and somewhat disrespectful in the eyes of the Germans. Also, jealousy might arise between Germans towards Americans because this creation of ethics might be more advanced (Palazzo, 2002).

Suggested by Otte (1996), the best way to handle public relations and employee motivation is by American business ethics. Having more positive effects than negative effects on employees as strong ethical guidelines make employees feel secure and improve their drive and constructiveness which in turn, makes a good ethics program in a company (Palazzo, 2002). According to Wieland (1994) and Frank (1988), “only genuine ethics result in economic advantages”. However, since America’s business ethics are based on America’s cultural background, Germany cannot relate.

When it comes to what is made private and what is made public, America and Germany differ. A greater separation between public and private domains is given from Germans. Germany considers morals to be a private matter and their professional life as public. Similarly, Germans

tend to keep their ethical opinions private. On the other hand, Americans have a much smaller private domain. Therefore, it is much easier for Americans to accept ethics codes from their employer (Palazzo, 2002).

In 1992, a survey was conducted that showed American employees identified more with their company than the Germans did with theirs (Beerman and Stengel, 1992). Americans also tend to “job-hop” which means they don’t stay with one job for too long. Germans are the opposite in this aspect for they usually tend to stay with their employment long-term. Because of this fact, one would think that it would be more common for Germans to relate to the company they work for.

### *Implementing Ethics in Germany*

If Germany would try to implement a code of ethics into their companies, they would have to so carefully since they are more private when dealing with morals, specifically ethics. Most companies would be afraid it would raise expectations and that employees would criticize for adding an ethics code. In place of an ethics code, German companies prefer to use the term “Corporate Culture” which signifies the responsibilities within the company (Palazzo, 2002).

According to the 1996 survey completed by Ulrich et al., German business culture is currently in the middle of a value shift. Because most individuals felt that more companies needed business ethics but they also rejected the idea of carrying out formal programs into their companies, this is considered a double bind situation. Since there is a rise of “corruption, white collar crime, and corporate crime” in German companies, this suggests that business culture is changing and that the effectiveness of informal business ethics is slowly diminishing (Palazzo, 2002).

The norms and values the company chooses to follow should be more relational, if German companies do introduce new business ethics programs (Jackson, 2000). This is essential because too obvious and inflexible rules of behavior might cause conflict between trust of employees and employers and cause employees to feel like there is an invasion of privacy. To help avoid conflicts listed above, having a high level of participation by the employees when deciding on a program is key (Palazzo, 2002).

### **Methods**

Voluntary anonymous surveys were distributed to students at a small Mid-Atlantic Masters I Comprehensive Institution and an institution in Germany. The survey consisted of questions related to academic dishonesty. Respondents made their response on a Likert like rating scale ranging from one to five for the twelve questions. A comparison of means and Pearson’s correlation were conducted to see if the variables of country, gender, or gpa, affected the responses.

### **Results**

A total of 320 usable responses were obtained, the majority came from students in the USA. However, breakdown by gender was essentially equal. The USA respondents were evenly split by gpa but the German students with grade point averages less than 3.0 only amounted to 15%



(see Table 1). After the analysis is completed the significance of the results must be tempered by such a low number of responses.

	USA	Germany	Total
Respondents	232 72%	88 28%	320
Gender			
Female	112 70%	48 30%	160
Male	120 75%	40 25%	160
GPA			
< 3.0 GPA	111 90%	12 10%	123
>3.0 GPA	121 64%	69 36%	190

The twelve survey questions are listed in Appendix A.

The first question sought if students ever allowed anyone to copy their answers when taking an exam. A strong statistically significant difference was found as over 85% of the German students allowed someone to copy from them as opposed to 33% of the USA students. This behavior was consistent when examining by gender and gpa. German males were the most likely to allow someone to claim credit for their work (see Table 2).

		Means	r	sig	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
Allowing others to copy from you									
	USA	1.490			66.7%	18.8%	13.3%	1.2%	
	Germany	3.074	0.602	0.000	14.8%	14.8%	30.9%	27.2%	12.3%
Gender									
					GPA	Means			
						r		sig	
USA	Female	1.429			< 3.0	1.495			
Germany	Female	2.792	0.586	0.000	< 3.0	3.333	0.533	0.000	

USA	Male	1.558			> 3.0	1.486		
Germany	Male	3.485	0.649	0.000	> 3.0	3.029	0.620	0.000

Seeking the converse, students were asked if when taking an exam the student copied answers from someone else. Interestingly, German students were more prone to copy answers from others. This behavior was also statistically significant by gender and gpa as Germans with a lower gpa were the most apt to copy from others (see Table 3).

Table 3		Means	r	sig	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	V. Often
You copied from others									
	USA	1.478			65.5%	23.1%	9.8%	1.2%	.4%
	Germany	2.321	0.393	0.000	27.2%	32.1%	24.7%	13.6%	2.5%
Gender					GPA	Means			
						r		sig	
USA	Female	1.393			< 3.0	1.505			
Germany	Female	2.208	0.430	0.000	< 3.0	2.917	0.447	0.000	
USA	Male	1.567			> 3.0	1.458			
Germany	Male	2.485	0.379	0.000	> 3.0	2.217	0.393	0.000	

In keeping with the theme of cheating on tests the next question sought to find out if students utilized “cheat sheets” or their smart phones when taking an exam. Nearly 60% of German students and a third of USA students utilized cheat sheets or cell phones during tests. The findings were also significant across gender and gpa as those with gpa’s under 3.0 were most apt to employ this dishonest behavior (see Table 4).

Table 4		Means	r	sig	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	V. Often
Utilize Cheat Sheets									
	USA	1.463			65.9%	24.3%	7.5%	2.4%	
	Germany	1.852	0.205	0.000	43.2%	37.0%	13.6%	3.7%	2.5%
Gender					GPA	Means			
						r		sig	
USA	Female	1.464			< 3.0	1.523			
Germany	Female	1.729	0.164	0.038	< 3.0	2.083	0.192	0.033	
USA	Male	1.475			> 3.0	1.417			

Germany	Male	2.030	0.255	0.001	> 3.0	1.812	0.238	0.000
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The next question focused on working without help, but over 93% of German students and of 73% of USA students accessed information from others or online when they were instructed that this was not permissible. What is fascinating is that 30% performed this action “often” or “very often”. German males and those with lower gpa’s were the most prone to engage in this type of behavior (see Table 5) Statistically significant differences were found by country, gender, and gpa.

Table 5		Means	r	sig	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	V.Often
Help from others/online		1.491			26.7%	26.3%	34.1%	11.8%	.8%
USA									
Germany		2.585	0.297	0.000	6.3%	22.5%	31.3%	28.8%	11.3%
Gender					GPA	Means			
							r	sig	
USA	Female	2.375			< 3.0	2.477			
Germany	Female	2.938	0.223	0.005	< 3.0	3.545	0.280	0.002	
USA	Male	2.333			> 3.0	2.271			
Germany	Male	3.500	0.416	0.000	> 3.0	3.101	0.329	0.000	

Relating to group projects and working a part of a team, the students were asked if they did less work but received the same grade as their teammates. German students were much more likely to let their colleagues carry them as 87% of the respondents admitted to slacking during group work. Statistically significant differences were found by gender and gpa with the German students with gpa’s below 3.0 the most likely to commit social loafing (see Table 6))

Table 6		Means	r	sig	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	V.Often
Social loafing in a team									
USA		1.698			45.5%	39.2%	15.3%		
Germany		2.304	0.329	0.000	12.7%	51.9%	29.1%	5.1%	1.3%
Gender					GPA	Means			
							r	sig	
USA	Female	1.598			< 3.0	1.802			
Germany	Female	2.167	0.367	0.000	< 3.0	2.583	0.282	0.002	
USA	Male	1.808			> 3.0	1.618			

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Germany	Male	2.516	0.337	0.000	> 3.0	2.254	0.391	0.000
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Often professors specify a minimum number of pages for an assignment. The students were asked if they deliberately made the margins larger or increased the font size to increase their page count. The German students were more apt to use larger margins or font to increase the number of pages by the by a very slight margin. Delving deeper it was found that German males participated in this practice more than USA males or German female. However, German females with lower gpa's were the most likely to increase margins (see Table 7).

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		Means	r	sig	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	V. Often
Table 7									
Manipulate	USA	1.678			52.2%	31.4%	13.3%	2.7%	.4%
Margins	Germany	2.000	0.152	0.005	41.8%	29.1%	16.5%	12.7%	
Gender			0.152	0.007	GPA	Means			
						r	sig		
USA	Female	1.688			< 3.0	1.640			
Germany	Female	1.957			< 3.0	2.833	0.370	0.000	
USA	Male	1.675			> 3.0	1.708			
Germany	Male	2.063	0.178	0.028	> 3.0	1.851			

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Since several of the questions resulted in very low means signifying a low level of usage, the questions and their results have been combined into one table (see Table 8). The statistically significant differences found were more of a mathematical calculation than a finding of importance. Some items of interest were German students with a gpa less than 3.0 were more likely to purchase papers online and added references which were not used in their paper. German males were more prone to take credit for another's idea. Interestingly, German students with a gpa over 3.0 admitted to using papers produced by their colleagues from another class as their own, and downgraded peers in group assignments to better their score.

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Table 8  
Combined  
questions

	Purchased paper Online	Added references not used	Used same paper for multiple classes	Took credit for another's idea	Used a paper that a colleague used in another class	Evaluated group members lower to benefit yourself
USA	1.047	1.467	1.303	1.114	1.196	1.165

Germany	1.238	1.825	1.438	1.388	1.590	1.525
r/sig	.189 ***	.184 ***		.260 ***	.264 ***	.272 ***
USA Female	1.036	1.375	1.205	1.063	1.089	1.098
Germany Female	1.271	1.667	1.396	1.250	1.521	1.583
r/sig	.218 **			.251 ***	.371 ***	.408 ***
USA Male	1.050	1.542	1.403	1.134	1.283	1.233
Germany Male	1.188	2.063	1.500	1.594	1.700	1.438
r/sig				.370 ***	.233 **	
USA gpa <3	1.027	1.423	1.355	1.117	1.279	1.270
Germany gpa <3	1.583	2.417	1.833	1.333	1.750	1.583
r/sig	.418 ***	.355 ***	.201 *		.205 *	
USA gpa >3	1.063	1.500	1.264	1.112	1.132	1.083
Germany gpa >3	1.176	1.721	1.368	1.397	1.561	1.515
r/sig				.297 ***	.333 ***	.377 ***

\* sig at .05 level

\*\* sig at .01 level

\*\*\* sig at .001 level

## Conclusions and Implications

It should be noted that a rating of “NEVER” had a value of 1, and a rating of “RARELY” had a value of 2. Since most of the questions had response means at 2.0 or below a low level of academically dishonest behaviors were utilized. In evaluating the data in light of the research hypotheses it can be determined that:

H1- There is no difference in academic dishonest behaviors based on the country of the students.

Not supported- as in all cases the German students exhibited a greater frequency of academic dishonest behaviors.

H2- There is no difference in academic dishonest behaviors based on the country and gender of the students.

Not Supported. There were instances where German females utilized more unethical behavior and German males and vice versa. However, in no case did USA males or females exhibit a higher level of dishonest behaviors.

H3- There is no difference in academic dishonest behaviors based on the country and gpa of the students.

Not Supported-Results- There were instances where students with gpa's above and below 3.0 participated in a number of academic dishonest behaviors. German females utilized more unethical behavior and German males and vice versa. Again, in no case did students from the USA exhibit a higher level of dishonest behaviors regardless of their gpa.

The German students exhibited higher levels of academic dishonest behaviors than their USA counterparts in all cases. However, the overall responses from these students were generally consistent but contrary to the research about academic dishonesty. While appearing widespread, the instances of academic dishonesty were surprising low, maybe too low based on the abundant literature which documents a greater frequency of dishonest academic behaviors.

Further, these findings affirm these populations were remarkably homogenous and one must ask if these students were really that honest. Even though the survey was voluntary and anonymous, most of the surveys were collected in a classroom setting with the instructor in attendance. Were the students apprehensive about putting into writing, even anonymously, incriminating dishonest behaviors about themselves? It is common knowledge that cheating is a widespread problem and perhaps due to vigilance, culture, or ethical training, it appears to be minimal at these institutions. Or, perhaps the students were lying about their behaviors. Would the results be different at other institutions?

The literature states the two reasons for academic dishonest are individual differences and institutional factors such as honor codes and tolerance of dishonest behaviors. The institution where the USA students were surveyed prides itself on incorporating ethical choices across the curriculum. Perhaps the biggest take away from the study is the incorporation of Leadership, Ethics classes, Codes of Conduct, and strict penalties for academic dishonesty.

As previously stated, this group of students, while engaging in academic dishonest behaviors, did so at a rate lower than expected and the reason for this action is unknown. However, it carries hope for the future since ethical behavior is not sufficiently discussed or promoted in German culture. Perhaps the Volkswagen incident was more representative of culture and these students may prove to be the exception.

### **Future Research**

Additional respondents are needed from Germany to obtain a clearer picture of their practices especially students with gpa's below 3.0.

The survey questions should also include cheating in an online environment as online classes are gaining in popularity and there is limited oversight to preserve academic integrity. There could also be included other variables such as ethnicity, family income, religiosity, major, and graduate level status.

Finally, the results of this study could compare students from other institutions and other countries to ascertain if differences exist. These students could be compared with students in the India, China and other European countries such as Spain, Sweden, and France.

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## Appendix A- Survey Questions

### *Measuring Students' Behavior in an Academic Setting*

1. Have you ever made your page count longer for an assignment/paper by increasing the margins and/or the type font?
2. Have you ever purchased a paper online for a class assignment?
3. Have you ever added sources to your paper that were not used and/or cited in your references?
4. Have you ever submitted the same paper/assignment in multiple classes?
5. In a group project, have you ever done less work but received the same grade as others?
6. Have you ever taken a group member's idea and represented it to the Professor as your idea?
7. Have you ever used a paper/assignment that your group member/peer used for another class?
8. In a group project, have you ever evaluated other members less favorably to benefit yourself?
9. When you were supposed to complete an assignment on your own, have you ever accessed information from others and/or online?
10. Have you ever allowed anyone to copy your answers while taking an exam?
11. While taking an exam, have you ever copied answers from anyone test?
12. While taking an exam have you ever used information from additional sources (cheat sheets, phones etc.)?