We All Think It's Cheating, But We All Won't Report It: Insights into the Ethics of Marketing Students

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Purpose of the Study: Academic dishonesty is endemic in business education, and research suggests strongly that marketing students are frequent culprits. In this study, the authors investigate (a) what students think of various cheating behaviors, (b) whether students perceive cheating as a serious ethical problem, and (c) whether students exhibit ethical intentions (e.g., not cheat, report on peers) in response to problematic situations.

Method/Design and Sample: A sample of 235 marketing students completed a self-administered questionnaire that included items dealing with personal ethical ideologies, perceptions of cheating behaviors, and reactions to four academic dishonesty scenarios. Data were analyzed using frequencies, analysis of variance, and regression.

Results: Overall, students have mixed perceptions about cheating behaviors. They recognize that cheating is an ethical problem and exhibit ethical intentions not to cheat; however, they are reluctant to report, or snitch, on other students. Female students are less likely to view cheating behaviors as trivial and more willing to report them.

Value to Marketing Educators: The article's findings should encourage marketing educators to specify clearly for students the characteristics, problems, and outcomes of cheating. Educators should work with students to nurture their understanding of ethical decision making as it relates to cheating. With regard to students' potential responses to cheating, marketing educators should be aware that ethical intentions could involve distinct choices (not) to cheat and/or (not) to report cheating behavior.

Keywords: Academic Honesty, Gender, Cheating, Ethical Perceptions, Ethical Intentions

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Nearly twenty years ago, Thompson (1994) noted, "Given today's budget constraints and the continuing pressure to increase class sizes, the incidence of various forms of cheating will continue to plague instructors" (p. 12). About twenty years prior, a 1972 study found that 93% agreed with the statement, "in the world of today cheating is a normal part of life" (Smith et al., 1972, p. 654-55). These norms have exacerbated classroom challenges for educators, and they have shown no signs of subsiding. Every year, would-be cheaters and plagiarists will be enabled by newer technologies and methodologies. Instructors will face more difficulty attempting to monitor their class assignments, projects, and examinations given in-person or online. Thus, students essentially will have more opportunities to practice and profit from academic dishonesty.

Academic dishonesty remains an important issue for marketing educators (Chapman et al., 2004; Eastman et al., 2006; Payan et al., 2010; Singhapakdi, 2004; and others). Typically, academic dishonesty has been associated with cheating and plagiarism. Rich (1984) defines academic misconduct as "dishonest acts connected with course work, such as cheating on tests, examinations and assignments" (p. 69).

Researchers have attempted to discern relationships between academic major and cheating (Newstead et al., 1996). The general evidence on majors and cheating is mixed (Nathanson et al., 2006), but it has been found that business majors cheat more than non-business majors (Baird, 1980, McCabe & Trevino, 1995). Alas, marketing majors are among the worst and most frequent culprits (Chapman et al., 2004). The public generally views marketing as highly unethical (Laczniak, 1999; Vitell & Grove, 1987), leading people to wonder whether certain connections exist between unethical conduct at school and eventually at work (Klein et al., 2007). In fact, Goolsby and Hunt (1992) noted, "Many critics of marketing believe, quite simply, that marketing attracts individuals who have questionable ethics at best or are unscrupulous at worst" (p. 57).

Business schools and programs, such as those accredited by the American Association of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) or Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP), require their students to take a required course in business ethics. Despite this important step, however, people still have legitimate questions about marketing students and their perceptions of cheating, inclinations

to cheat, and willingness to report peers who cheat. Such questions are particularly valid since students often disagree about what constitutes cheating (Ashworth et al., 1997). Students do agree, however, that better grades can lead to better prospects for jobs or graduate schools (McCabe et al., 2001). These facts may not bode well for the discipline, considering that the cognitive moral development of business majors may be lesser than that of non-business majors (McNeel, 1994).

In the following sections, this paper identifies important research questions pertinent to the academic honesty literature. Then, it provides in-depth survey analysis that addresses the research questions. Finally, it concludes with a discussion of limitations, contributions, and implications for marketing education.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This paper aims to understand marketing students' ethical perceptions and intentions regarding cheating behavior. Informed by previous research on academic honesty, this paper contemplates the following research questions:

1. Do students share ethical perceptions (about the seriousness) of cheating behaviors?
2. Are some students intent on cheating in collusion or collaboration with their peers?
3. Are some students willing to report, or not report, the cheating behavior of their peers?
4. Does gender explain differences in ethical perceptions and intentions related to cheating?
5. Does ethical ideology explain ethical intention to not cheat and/or report cheating peers?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Over twenty-five years ago, Haines et al. (1986) indicated that cheating was showing serious signs of increase, stating, "In fact, there seems to be general agreement that cheating is endemic to education in the secondary schools as well as at the college level" (p. 342). Unfortunately, faculty and students seem to lack consensus about cheating (Ashworth & Bannister, 1997; Eastman et al., 2006). And while business schools and programs have given greater emphasis to ethics education, Yu and Zhang (2006) contend that business school curricula may "desensitize students to ethical issues and contribute to a moral void in the future corporate leaders'' (p. 185).

Explanations for academic dishonesty are legion. Scholars have cited gender, age, situation, academic major, anxiety, prior academic performance, social bonds, and other factors to describe what leads students towards cheating or plagiarism (see Haines et al., 1986; Michaels & Miethe, 1989; Roig & Neaman, 1994; and others). Choong and Brown (2007) found that academic dishonesty could be motivated by self-interest, campus culture, and hardship. Additionally, Buckley et al. (1998) found that students weigh attempts at cheating against the probability of being caught and penalized. Ashworth and Bannister (1997) suggested that students consider whether specific acts of cheating are harmful to their peers.

The disturbing prevalence of academic cheating can be linked to an overall decline in public morality (Fass, 1990). Scholars also have tied college students' cheating behaviors to situational characteristics in the class environment and dispositional factors at the individual level (Singhapakdi, 2004; Yoo & Donthu, 2002). For example, students would be less likely to cheat if they feel strong disapproval of cheating among their peers (McCabe & Trevino, 1997) or frequently interact with instructors in classroom (Pulvers & Diekhoff, 1999). Students who are less inclined to cheat also tend to be more successful academically (Newstead et al., 1996) and do not espouse offensive behavior (Nathanson et al., 2006).

In short, myriad factors have been purported to help identify and differentiate students along an academically honest continuum (e.g., less inclined, more inclined to cheat). This paper shares the view that the purported dichotomy of situational versus dispositional factors is actually false (Zimny et al., 2008). Situational factors that could influence academic dishonesty implicitly involve individual interpretations of the situation (Lucas & Friedrich, 2005). Indeed, one can argue that a sound approach to researching student ethics is to include "measures that capture both dispositional differences and sensitivity to situational characteristics" (Zimny et al., 2008, p. 302).

In light of the above issues, this paper focuses on investigating demographic, dispositional, and situational factors that can explain students' ethical perceptions and ethical intentions with regard to cheating. The paper explores general opinions about cheating behaviors. It also employs behavioral scenarios to examine students' decisions (not) to cheat and (not) to report cheating done by peers.

Gender and Academic Honesty

Conventionally, gender has been a primary go-to factor in determining students' attitudes towards academic dishonesty or their likelihood of committing acts, such as cheating, plagiarism, and so forth. Sustained trends and future forecasts indicate that female students will represent a substantially large proportion of higher education enrollments for years to come (Buchmann & DiPrete, 2006; Goldin et al., 2006). Citing a March 2013 study by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Business Week* (Coy, 2013) reported that women outpaced men, 30% to 25% by age 25, in earning a bachelor's degree. Based on the longstanding argument that men and women differ in their moral reasoning (Gilligan, 1982), it can be reasoned that gender probably has some impact on the ethical perceptions and intentions of students.

Overall, the evidence on gender effects and academic dishonesty has been rather mixed (Crown & Spiller, 1998; Ward & Beck, 1990; Whitley, 2001). For instance, McCabe (2005), McCabe and Trevino (1997), Buckley et al. (1998), and others have

suggested that males are more likely than females to commit acts of academic dishonesty. Leming (1980) found that females are more likely than males to cheat under low-risk conditions. Perhaps looking at and beyond gender, Buckley et al. (1998) suggested that individuals driven by aggression and hostility are likely to cheat. Lambert et al. (2003) found that females are more likely than males to perceive scenarios involving academic dishonesty as severe cheating. Ward and Beck (1990) found that female students are less likely to cheat but more likely to engage in excuse making before cheating. Similarly, Whitley (2001) found that female students have negative attitudes towards cheating, but they are just as likely as male students to engage in academic dishonesty. In a review of the 18 empirical studies on gender and academic cheating, Crown and Spiller (1998) noted the following: ten studies found no significant gender difference; six studies found that males cheat significantly more than females (6); and two studies found that females cheat significantly more than males. More recently, Premeaux (2005) reported no significant differences in cheating behaviors based on gender among students attending either Tier 1 or Tier 2 AACSB-accredited institutions. In an ethics survey of marketing practitioners, Singhapakdi and Vitell (1990) even found that males and females do not differ significantly in terms of their perceptions of ethical problems or alternatives to resolving those problems. Taking these mixed findings into account, marketing educators should continue to inquire whether and how gender affects perception of and responses to academic dishonesty.

Ethical Perceptions and Responses to Academic Dishonesty

Cheating seems likely to remain endemic to higher education (Chapman et al., 2004; Haines et al., 1986). Ashworth and Bannister (1997) and Eastman et al. (2006) argue that students and faculty still have differing opinions on what constitutes academic dishonesty. For instance, students appraise each questionable behavior according to its impact on their fellow peers. If the behavior does not seem to harm other students, then it may be tolerable; however, if it does harm other students, then it would be intolerable. Such views run counter to those held by faculty. Students also tend to overestimate the degree to which their peers actually cheat (Chapman et al., 2004), which may lead them to adopt beliefs that cheating is not a truly deviant behavior and snitching is a less appropriate response.

Michaels and Miethe (1989) identify four social theories of deviance that are relevant to the discussion of academic dishonesty. These theories include deterrence, rational choice, social bonds, and social learning. Deterrence and rational choice can explain the choice to cheat stemming from a cost-versus-benefit evaluation of the behavior's outcomes. For example, if students anticipate significant rewards from cheating (e.g., better grades) and expect little chance of being caught or punished, then they would be more likely to cheat. Social bonds and social learning can incline students to conform gradually to group norms or protect ties with a peer community.

Faculty helps set the tone and example for preventing and reporting acts of academic dishonesty (Allen et al., 1998; Burnett, 2002). According to Tittle and Rowe (1973), "fear of a sanction is a more important influence than moral appeal in generating conformity to the norm of classroom honesty" (p. 492). Alas, however, they often refuse or fail to enforce policies. Indeed, Jendrek (1989) found that only 20% of faculty who had observed cheating in the classroom actually reported it. Levin (1995) contends that some instructors may not report cheating since they do not want to suffer in student evaluations. Interestingly, many instructors "give a pass" to students who, if penalized, could be disadvantaged competitively. This practice would seem to reflect some naïveté in light of the strong correlation between school-related cheating behaviors and work-related cheating behaviors (Sims, 1993).

Informed by the general theory of marketing ethics Hunt and Vitell (1986) and issue-contingent model (Jones, 1991), Singhapakdi (2004) hypothesized and found that students who perceive an ethical problem (issue) in a situation would be likely to exhibit ethical intentions in response to that problem (issue). However, that research did not consider the role of factors that might marginalize perceptions of an ethical problem. In their research of situational ethics, LaBeff et al. (1990) suggest that the practice of neutralization can enable individuals to perceive behaviors as deviant but endorse them nonetheless. This process can occur before, during, and/or after questionable behavior (Sykes & Matza, 1957). Individuals neutralize the significance of deviant behaviors by separating themselves from responsibility, denying the existence of an actual victim, slighting the severity of an alleged harm, or gravitating toward other loyalties. Bruggeman and Hart (1996) assert that moral reasoning differs from the moral behavior. Consequently, students who perceive an ethical problem with cheating may also stop short of actually reporting, or snitching on, their peers. Here, this paper asserts that students can perceive ethical problems, yet still trivialize them, and not demonstrate ethical intentions. However, this paper disagrees with Singhapakdi and Vitell's (1990) claim "that male and female marketers do not differ significantly in their […] feasible alternatives to resolve the ethical problems" (p. 264).

Ethical Ideologies and Cheating

Ethics refers to how people apply moral standards to perceptions, intentions, and actions. Forsyth (1980) suggests that individuals are intuitive moral philosophers who develop their own ethics over time through observations, experiences, and reflections. By some regards, normative ethical orientations can be classified as deontological (duty-based) or teleological (consequence-based). The teleological orientation leads individuals to determine good or bad as a function of an action's consequences (Hunt & Vitell,

1986). By contrast, the deontological orientation inclines individuals to deem an action as inherently right or wrong, regardless of its consequences (Fraedrich & Ferrell, 1992). According to ethics position theory (EPT; Forsyth, 1980), these orientations inform the moral judgment of individuals via a two-dimensional construct of idealism versus relativism. Generally, deontological standards are associated with high idealism (low relativism), while teleological standards are associated with low idealism (high relativism).

Ethical idealism reflects the view that "desirable consequences can, with the 'right' action, be obtained" (Forsyth, 1980, p. 177). Individuals who espouse high idealism are inclined to endorse moral absolutes and believe that appropriate consequences can always be achieved. These persons typically adhere to principles rather than outcomes when making decisions. They are likely to value honesty and fairness such that they would find academic dishonesty morally wrong and, thus, unacceptable. Indeed, Kleiser et al. (2003) found that high idealism could lead individuals to rate harshly virtually any and all ethical questionable acts. In contrast to ethical idealism, ethical relativism reflects the view that people should not expect, accept, or rely upon universal moral standards when making decisions. Individuals who exhibit high relativism are typically lenient when making ethical judgments about questionable behaviors. This habit can be attributed to weighing circumstances and consequences more heavily than mere rightness or wrongness (Kleiser et al, 2003). Research findings have been mixed about the influences of idealism and relativism with regard to academic cheating. Indeed, (Forsyth & Berger, 1982) discovered that "ideology may not be predictive of actual moral behavior" (p. 56), suggesting that idealistic and relativistic individuals can be just as likely to cheat or not report cheating by their peers.

Table 1: Students' Expectations and Evaluations of Cheating

	***Peers do these behaviors.* (Percentages)**			***This behavior is cheating.* (Means; 1 - 5 agreement scale)**			
	Never	**Sometimes**	**A lot**	**All**	**Female**	**Male**	**F (Sig.)**
A student uses copies of exams that were "stolen" from an earlier course when s/he knows the same exam will be used in her/his class.	13	69	18	4.00	4.10	3.88	2.77 (.10)
After taking an exam, a student "swipes" a copy of the exam that is not supposed to be "out."	46	50	4	4.17	4.31	3.99	4.67 (.03)
Students work together on an electronic exam (Web administered) when they are explicitly told to do the exam on their own.	8	52	40	3.82	3.88	3.74	1.03 (.31)
A student uses crib sheets, notes, or similar materials during a closed book/notes exam.	20	66	14	4.32	4.40	4.22	1.84 (.18)
A student alters answers on a test returned for review and then gets credit for the "mistake."	43	51	6	4.20	4.29	4.09	2.11 (.15)
A student allows another to copy her/his work during an exam.	13	69	18	4.06	4.23	3.83	8.58 (.00)
A student obtains information from someone who has taken the same exam in an earlier course even though the instructor requires all exam takers to take a "vow of silence."	10	42	48	3.51	3.65	3.35	3.75 (.05)

METHODOLOGY

Sample

235 undergraduate marketing students completed a self-administered questionnaire dealing with perceptions of several cheating behaviors and reactions to four scenarios. They attended a leading business school at a private university located in the Northeastern region of the United States of America. The students reported an average age of 21 years., and included 131 females (55.7%) and 104 males (44.3%). In terms of ethnicity, they identified as African American/Black (.4%), Asian (4.3%), Hispanic/Latino (2.6%), White/Caucasian (91.1%), and Other (1.7%).

Measurement

Types of Cheating Behaviors

Informed by the work of Choong and Brown (2007), the authors attempted to address different categories and types of cheating behaviors, such as *flagrant cheating*, *insidious cheating*, *collusion*, and *collaboration*. Flagrant cheating refers to relatively overt acts related to copying examination answers, submitting another student's work as one's own, or bringing prohibited information into a test-taking environment. Insidious cheating refers to more subtle acts, such as fabricating excuses for delayed assignments, receiving undue credit for work not completed in group projects, or not citing sources. Collusion deals with soliciting or providing examination details or answers with other students who have not yet taken the examination. Collaboration involves working with others in ways not sanctioned or permitted by an instructor. This range of cheating behaviors is represented within the survey instrument described below.

Cheating Behaviors among Business Students

Students read descriptions of seven different cheating behaviors adopted from Allen et al. (1998) and Chapman et al. (2004) (see Table 1). Presenting a range of behaviors is important since students might have different views on particular forms of cheating (Nuss, 1984). Using a five-point Likert-type scale (e.g., strong disagree, strongly agree), students indicated their agreement with the following statement: "I think that this behavior is cheating." Using a three-point scale (i.e., never, sometimes, a lot), they also responded to the question, "How often do you think fellow business students engage in the following behavior?"

Behavioral Scenarios: What Do You Think? What Would You Do?

Students reviewed four scenarios dealing with cheating behaviors that involve one or more peers (Table 2) (Allen et al., 1998; Chapman et al., 2004). As indirect measures of academic honesty, behavioral scenarios can exhibit less downward bias than direct self-reported measures (Allen et al., 1998). Additionally, these scenarios provide coverage of the flagrant cheating, collusion, and collaboration categories discussed earlier (Choong & Brown, 2007).

Ethical Perception and Ethical Intention

The authors developed a set of response items, where two statements deal with ethical perceptions (i.e., ethical problem, trivial problem) and three statements focus on ethical intentions (i.e., cheat/not cheat, report on peers). This approach is rather novel, since prior studies using scenarios have typically measured ethical perception with one item and ethical intention with one item. As recorded here, the first item about ethical perception follows convention (Singhapakdi, 2004), and the second item provides direct measure of an individual's perceived importance of ethics. The second item addresses a gap in Singhapakdi's (2004) multi-item measure of perceived importance of ethics which "is not a measure of the importance of ethics to the individual; rather it measures the individual's perception of how important ethics is to business" (p. 265). In addition, ethical intention has been studied as a single item, such as "I would act in the same manner as [the person] did in the above scenario" (see Singhapakdi, 2004). However, the present study asserts that ethical intentions regarding cheating should encompass more than simply not cheating with peers, but also reporting the cheating behavior or intention of peers. The four behavioral scenarios and their associated response items appear in Table 2.

Table 2: Students' Cheating Evaluations and Intentions

Scenario 1: Flagrant Cheating (Single Student Involved)

During a midterm exam, the instructor leaves the room to get a cup of coffee. As soon as this happens, a student next to you asks for the answers to three questions by slipping you a piece of paper to write the answers on. Response Items: (1) strongly disagree – (5) strongly agree.

	All	Female	Male	F (Sig.)
This situation involves an ethical problem.	4.06	4.06	4.05	.017 (.89)
This situation is trivial (not a big deal).	2.35	2.16	2.64	8.69 (.00)
I would probably provide the answers.	2.13	2.06	2.22	1.47 (.23)
I would probably not provide the answers.	3.81	3.94	3.64	5.16 (.02)
I would probably report the student at a later time for cheating.	1.97	2.08	1.97	3.87 (.05)

Scenario 2: Collusion (Single Student Involved)

A student from your class confides that s/he has a copy of the exam that will be given in your business course tomorrow and will share it —no cost, no questions asked. The exam is worth 25% of your grade.

	All	Female	Male	F (Sig.)
This situation involves an ethical problem.	3.83	3.88	3.77	1.03 (.31)
This situation is trivial (not a big deal).	2.35	2.23	2.53	3.42 (.07)
I would probably accept the exam.	2.83	2.86	2.79	.27 (.60)
I would probably not accept the exam.	3.17	3.19	3.15	.07 (.79)
I would probably report the student at a later time for cheating.	2.06	2.18	1.92	4.96 (.03)

Scenario 3: Collusion/Collaboration (Many Students Involved)

You are taking a course in which the quizzes and tests are taken electronically (over the Web) at a time and place of your choice. The instructor has given strict warnings about taking the tests on your own and has suggested that cheating could result in failure in the course. Several of the students in the class ask you if you want to participate in group test taking, in which you would share information and take the tests together. The exam is worth 25% of your final grade.

	All	Female	Male	F (Sig.)
This situation involves an ethical problem.	3.73	3.73	3.72	.02 (.90)
This situation is trivial (not a big deal).	2.53	2.39	2.74	4.66 (.03)
I would probably work with the students to get a better grade.	2.66	2.57	2.78	2.26 (.13)
I would probably not work with the students.	3.36	3.44	3.27	1.63 (.20)
I would probably report the other students at a later time for cheating.	2.03	2.10	1.95	1.57 (.21)

Scenario 4: Collusion/Collaboration (Many Students Involved)

You are enrolled in a course where the quizzes and tests are taken electronically (over the Web) at a time and place of your choice. Several students ask you if you want to participate in group test taking in which you would share information and take the test together. The instructor has suggested cheating could result in failure in the course. The instructor also indicates that s/he has a means for catching cheaters using electronic surveillance. Word of mouth from other students in an earlier class also indicates that some students were caught cheating.

	All	Female	Male	F (Sig.)
This situation involves an ethical problem.	3.79	3.81	3.77	.16 (.70)
This situation is trivial (not a big deal).	2.51	2.38	2.70	3.37 (.07)
I would probably work with the students to get a better grade.	2.10	1.98	2.25	4.75 (.03)
I would probably not work with the students.	3.83	3.97	3.64	7.30 (.01)
I would probably report the other students at a later time for cheating.	2.09	2.18	1.96	3.70 (.05)

Ethical Ideologies

Students provided data about their individual ethical ideologies by responding to the *Ethics Positions Questionnaire* (EPQ; Forsyth, 1980). The EPQ is comprised of two contrasted ten-item scales, which measure *ethical idealism* and *ethical relativism*. Items for ethical idealism include, for example, "One should not perform an action which might in any way threaten the dignity and welfare of another individual" and "If an action could harm an innocent other, then it should not be done." By contrast, items for ethical relativism include, for example, "What is ethical varies from one situation and society to another" and "Moral standards should be seen as being individualistic; what one person considers to be moral may be judged to be immoral by another person." Students responded to each item using a 5-point Likert-type scale. Ultimately, scores for each scale were computed by totaling its ten respective items. The EPQ demonstrated favorable psychometrics properties (idealism α=.873; relativism α=.810).

RESULTS

The data were analyzed using frequencies, analysis of variance (ANOVA), and regression. ANOVA was used to evaluate gender differences in ethical perception and ethical intention regarding a set of cheating behaviors (Table 1) and four behavioral scenarios (Table 2). Regression was used to analyze the influence of ethical ideology and ethical perception on ethical intentions within each behavioral scenario (Table 3).

Regarding expectations and evaluations of cheating (Table 1), marketing students think that their peers cheat no less than 54% of the time (i.e., swiping a copy of the exam) and as much as 92% (i.e., working together on an electronic exam). On average, all students believe that each of the seven listed behaviors constitute examples of cheating. There are no significant gender differences for opinions on four of the seven cheating behaviors. Female students report stronger opinions on cheating for three behaviors, specifically: swing a copy of the exam (F=4.67, p=.03); allowing another student to copy her/his work during an exam (F=8.58, p=.00); and obtaining information from someone who has taken the same exam earlier (F=3.74, p=.05).

As shown in Table 2, reactions to the four behavioral scenarios indicate that female students and male students perceive acts of flagrant cheating, collusion, and collaboration as ethical problems. Female students perceive ethical problems as less trivial than their male counterparts do. However, only in the first and third scenarios do female students differ significantly from male students in their perceptions of the ethical problem as trivial/not a big deal (Scenario 1: Females=2.16, Males=2.64, F=8.70, p=.00; Scenario 3: Females=2.39, Males=2.74, F=4.66, p=.03). Based on all four scenarios, female students generally exhibit a stronger ethical intention not to cheat (i.e., not provide answers, not accept exam, not

work with other students), but they differ significantly from males only in Scenario 1 (F=5.16, p=.02) and Scenario 4 (F=7.30, p=.01). Female students also indicate a significantly stronger ethical intention to report cheating behaviors of peers in Scenario 1 (F=3.87, p=.05), Scenario 2 (F=4.96, p=.03), and Scenario 4 (F=3.70, p=.05).

Table 3: Correlation Analysis for Behavioral Scenarios (n=235)

			Scenario 1: Flagrant Cheating (Single Student Involved)		
	IDEAL	RELAT	CHEAT	REPORT	PROBLEM
IDEAL	-				
RELAT	-.143*	-			
CHEAT	-.199^	.149*	-		
REPORT	.117	.123	-.261^	-	
PROBLEM	.163^	.010	-.150*	.149*	-
			Scenario 2: Collusion (Single Student Involved)		
	IDEAL	RELAT	CHEAT	REPORT	PROBLEM
IDEAL	-				
RELAT	-.141*	-			
CHEAT	-.249^	.119	-		
REPORT	.150*	.105	-.397^	-	
PROBLEM	.117	.021	-.195^	.097	-
			Scenario 3: Collusion/Collaboration (Many Students Involved)		
	IDEAL	RELAT	CHEAT	REPORT	PROBLEM
IDEAL	-				
RELAT	-.141*	-			
CHEAT	-.145*	.121	-		
REPORT	.197^	.125	-.193^	-	
PROBLEM	.169^	.047	-.381^	.143*	-
			Scenario 4: Collusion/Collaboration (Many Students Involved)		
	IDEAL	RELAT	CHEAT	REPORT	PROBLEM
IDEAL	-				
RELAT	-.141*	-			
CHEAT	-.197^	.139*	-		
REPORT	.199^	.106	-.178^	-	
PROBLEM	.208^	.007	-.363^	.095	-

* p≤.05 ^ p≤.01

As shown in Table 3, partial correlations, controlling for gender, indicate that ethical idealism (IDEAL) is significantly inversely related to ethical relativism (RELAT); directly related to ethical perception (PROBLEM) in three of four scenarios; inversely related to cheating intention (CHEAT) in all four scenarios; and directly related to reporting intention (REPORT) in three of four scenarios. Ethical relativism is not significantly related to ethical perception or reporting intention in any scenario. However, it is directly related to cheating intention in two scenarios. Ethical perception exhibits a significant inverse relationship to cheating intention in all scenarios. It shows a significant inverse relationship to reporting intention in two scenarios. Finally, cheating intention demonstrates an inverse relationship to reporting intention across all four scenarios.

Table 4: Regression Analysis for Behavioral Scenarios (n=235)

Scenario 1						
		CHEAT			REPORT	
	β	t	p	β	t	p
IDEAL	-.164	-2.519	.012	.124	1.882	.061
RELAT	.131	2.039	.043	.128	1.966	.051
PROBLEM	-.125	-1.943	.053	.127	1.958	.053
		R^2=.073			R^2=.049	
		F=6.000 (.001)			F=3.919 (.009)	
Scenario 2						
		CHEAT			REPORT	
	β	t	p	β	t	p
IDEAL	-.210	-3.293	.001	.166	2.533	.012
RELAT	.085	1.344	.180	.113	1.732	.085
PROBLEM	-.168	-2.667	.008	.084	1.292	.198
		R^2=.093			R^2=.046	
		F=7.920 (.000)			F=3.659 (.013)	
Scenario 3						
		CHEAT			REPORT	
	β	t	p	β	t	p
IDEAL	-.068	-1.096	.274	.206	3.161	.002
RELAT	.136	2.232	.027	.141	2.188	.030
PROBLEM	-.375	-6.138	.000	.102	1.574	.117
		R^2=.170			R^2=.073	
		F=15.739 (.000)			F=5.999 (.001)	
Scenario 4						
		CHEAT			REPORT	
	β	t	p	β	t	p
IDEAL	-.115	-1.854	.065	.214	3.239	.001
RELAT	.135	2.221	.027	.124	1.921	.056
PROBLEM	-.339	-5.512	.000	.052	.790	.430
		R^2=.167			R^2=.061	
		F=15.404 (.000)			F=4.961 (.002)	

As shown in Table 4, regression analysis indicates that IDEAL and RELAT exhibit negative and positive influence on CHEAT in all four scenarios; however, IDEAL is significant only in Scenario 1 (β=-.164, t=-2.519, p=.012) and Scenario 2 (β=-.210, t=-3.293, p=.001), and RELAT is significant in Scenario 1 (β=.131, t=2.039, p=.043), Scenario 3 (β=.136, t=2.232, p=.027), and Scenario 4 (β=.135, t=2.221, p=.027). PROBLEM demonstrates a significantly negative influence on CHEAT in Scenario 2 (β=-.168, t=-2.667, p=.008), Scenario 3 (β=-.375, t=-6.138, p=.000), and Scenario 4 (β=-.339, t=-5.512, p=.000). IDEAL, RELAT, and PROBLEM each exhibit a positive influence on REPORT. Of these three variables, IDEAL demonstrates the most significant influence, as shown for Scenario 2 (β=.166, t=2.533, p=.012), Scenario 3 (β=.206, t=3.161, p=.002), and Scenario 4 (β=.214, t=3.239, p=.001).

DISCUSSION

This study indicates that students are not monolithic in their opinions about cheating behaviors. Indeed, regardless of their gender, they tend to recognize cheating when it is described or observed. Still, the findings show interestingly that female students have uniformly stronger ethical intentions (i.e., not cheating, reporting offenders) than male students. The data for this research reflect characteristics of a convenience sample and represent a single moment in time. The sample is not ethnically diverse, which may (not) reflect the realities of undergraduate marketing programs at some institutions. Additionally, this study

does not explicitly examine institutional or peer norms related to cheating. Such norms could affect how students perceive and respond to the academic dishonesty of their peers. This study also could be improved by including grade point average, educational level, geographic diversity, and other factors. In light of these potential limitations, readers may desire to interpret the findings with some caution.

Beyond these points, this study makes a few important contributions to the marketing education literature. First, it captures students' perspectives on a range of unilateral, collusive, and collaborative cheating behaviors. Next, the study takes a close look at whether students take ethical problems seriously. It explores these topics more deeply and finds that gender effects exist but are not uniform in all cheating cases. The study provides some mixed results about the significance of ethical ideology in determining cheating intentions. It generally confirms that students are less likely to cheat if they perceive cheating as an ethical problem. Yet, it also indicates that are not likely to report cheating even if, or merely because, it represents an ethical problem.

With regard to ethical intentions, this study includes a few deliberate steps to enhance current survey methods. First, it improves upon the scenario response items used by Allen et al. (1998) and Chapman et al. (2004). Research by those authors actually combined and confounded two distinct actions — (not) cheating *and* reporting on cheating peers — into a single item. In the present study, the authors asked students to indicate *separately* (a) if they would cheat and (b) if they would report their peers' cheating behavior. By isolating these two independent decisions, this paper asserts that ethical intention is a two-fold idea when it comes to cheating. That is, students may perceive an ethical problem with cheating and decide ultimately (a) (not) to cheat and (b) (not) to report known offenders. In fact, these results provide some basis for re-examining the stability of the perception-to-intention hypothesis that accounts for normative ethics research using vignettes/scenarios.

The idea of treating each cheating intention and reporting intention can be rather important for studying and preventing academic dishonesty. Cheating and failures to report it can deleteriously affect academic climate, learning environment, and competitive fairness for students. Furthermore, these behaviors can preserve unfair competitive advantages enjoyed by cheaters and even encourage other students to be slightly dishonest. Academic honesty represents an ongoing concern for marketing faculty who realize the challenges to uphold it. Indeed, as the results of this study suggest, the most significant threats to academic honesty center around people and their attitudes, not the technologies, situations, and opportunities that could enable them. This study showed mixed results concerning the significance of ethical ideology; however, further study could help scholars discern whether and when idealism or relativism matter most in students' ethical decision making.

Going forward, marketing educators should lead a better, broader narrative on why ethics matters in the academic environment and the business situations that follow. It may be helpful to initiate open dialogue with female students and male students to understand *what* and *how* they think about academic honesty. In order to learn the underlying issues, marketing educators need to learn from students how they form their ethical perceptions and apply them to cheating situations. Educators should commit more earnestly to nurturing students' realization that ethics are important to sustained academic and professional success. The realization should be linked unambiguously to a business school's mission statement. Additionally, marketing faculty should create class projects that challenge student groups to research, evaluate, discuss, and resolve scenarios like the ones presented in this study. Students could also perform role-playing exercises to understand the motivations of potential cheaters, accomplices, or observers. Such exercises could help faculty and students appreciate their (lack of) common ground regarding what factors make an ethical issue trivial or serious. Based on the gender effects found in the study, the groups should be mixed by gender to allow for a balance of converging and dissenting views on the motivations and consequences of academic dishonesty. Ultimately, marketing educators have a responsibility to ensure that marketing students are graduated from their programs with sound and competent ethical judgment.

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