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The Impact of Technological Advancement on Academic Integrity

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ABSTRACT

Academic integrity is giving credits and acknowledging the findings and contributions of researchers and scientists when applying their idea or using their stated information. This modern-day technology like smartphones, modern laptops, portable devices, affordable internet, rapid adaptation of social media, and easy accessibility of online data and information poses a serious threat to the integrity of academia in terms of plagiarization. The widespread information on the internet and its ease of access to everyone are one of the vital reasons for academic dishonesty.

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Introduction

Academic integrity is about adhering to the principles of truthfulness, trust, respect, fairness and responsibility. It is necessary to adhere to these principles even when no one is watching or controlling. Each institution sets its own academic rules and standards of integrity to help students and educators make informed moral and ethical decisions in their activities. In addition to plagiarism, cheating, deception and falsification, academic dishonesty also includes doing written work instead of another or for remuneration, forgery, fraud, and so-called “unauthorized collaboration”. Forms of academic dishonesty also include cheating, cheat sheets, and tips. New technologies are constantly emerging and have a significant impact on higher education, both positive and negative. One of the negative aspects of the use of technology in education and especially for assessment is its ability to support academic dishonesty, namely to promote student cheating and plagiarism. On the other hand, it enables academic staff to monitor academic dishonesty.

Academic dishonesty is any kind of deception associated with the performance of tests, essays, exams, the performance of abstracts, term papers, thesis, research papers, etc. And it has been a long-standing concern

within higher education and has increased a lot over the past years [1]. The reasons for the rise in academic dishonesty include the fact that more students are participating in online learning and new technologies are constantly emerging that can help students or contribute to academic dishonesty [2]. The Internet has changed the way students choose to cheat and, in a way, those students who choose academic dishonesty. Students often use search engines to quickly access information, which has led to the idea that students view the scholarship as borrowing ideas and assembling them together to demonstrate what they have learned, when in fact it is plagiarism [3]. The ubiquity of mobile ownership provides students with unlimited opportunities to easily take and store photos or documents of course materials that can be viewed in the examination room [4]. While there is no conclusive evidence that technology is responsible for the rise in academic dishonesty, it cannot be denied that the rapid adoption of new technologies such as smartphones and wearable smart devices, coupled with the proliferation of social media and online information, has reshaped the landscape of academic dishonesty, adding new ways of deception [5].

Experiment part:

How technology can affect academic dishonesty is context specific. For example, Syed and Lento (2015) identify three types of academic dishonesty most affected by technology: a) use of information without proper links; b) use of unauthorized materials during the test; as well as; c) instructing another person to complete the assignment or to use assignments of other students from the previous semester. They compared cheating attempts clearly associated with examinations to cheating attempts associated with assignments to determine any possible differences due to technological impact. Syed and Lento also found that most educators believe that the spread of technology has increased academic dishonesty, and that technology has a greater impact on assignments than on exams. Their research found that academic staff seem to believe that technology has influenced academic dishonesty about assignments / jobs far more than exams. This article aims to explain the impact of different technologies on academic integrity.

Discussions

Cheating and plagiarism through technological advances are mainly observed in three different conditions of evaluation processes: 1) face-to-face examinations under the supervision of a teacher / proctor; 2) submission of PAPER assignments, prepared in the absence of a teacher / proctor; 3) ONLINE submissions of assignments (in a VLE or via e-mail) prepared in the absence of a teacher / proctor.

1) Based on the observations of teachers and students, scientists can conclude that face-to-face exam technologies influence fraud and plagiarism, modifying them in two main directions: 1 - copying from mobile devices, where technology replaces traditional paper materials; and 2 - receiving prompts from someone outs0ide the examination room using a digital device. Unlike the first type of deception, the second would not have been possible without technology, although its "non-technological" version is a justified temporary exit from the examination room, and then gaining access to outside help.

2) When students submit PAPER assignments prepared in the absence of a teacher / supervisor, some students use plagiarism and ghost writing, meaning the assignment is being performed by someone else (eg, a friend, family member, teacher, or purchased from a web site). In their additional comments, teachers say that students often submit assignments from previous years (written by other students) or submit written papers downloaded directly from the Internet.

3) In the context of ONLINE submission of assignments (VLE or email) prepared in the absence of a teacher / supervisor, teachers find significantly lower rates of plagiarism and ghost writing. This may mean that students rarely try to cheat when submitting work online, as it is easier to find the source from which the work is plagiarized.

The data above clearly shows that cheaters are seen twice as often as non-cheaters in three contexts (including with or without technology) various forms of deception and plagiarism. The most significant differences between the observed forms of cheating are between “cheaters” and “non-cheaters” in different countries of the world. The contexts are as follows:

1) face-to-face exams - copying from materials (including from mobile devices);

2) submission of a written assignment - plagiarism;

3) online delivery of the assignment - impersonating another person. From the data obtained on the impact of technology on attempts to deceive in the assessment, it is impossible to draw unambiguous conclusions, but once again emphasizes one aspect in which technology changes deception.

From all of the above, the role of fraud and plagiarism prevention technologies in valuation is clearly distinguished. The integration of software systems for student authentication and authorship is likely to change the mindset of more skeptical e-assessment participants. Outside of the context of e-assessment, face-to-face exams can use technology to turn off the signal from mobile devices and prevent them from being used for unauthorized purposes.

Conclusion

According to the observations of Peytcheva-Forsyth et al (2018) similar is the trend for students - the different forms of cheating when submitting electronic/online materials are less frequently observed than in cases of paper-based submissions. Plagiarism and "ghost writing" in online/electronic submissions are 10% less observed by students than the same two forms of cheating in paper submissions.

In face-to-face exams, technology is changing cheating/plagiarism primarily by copying from mobile devices instead of traditional paper materials and by using a digital device to get prompts from someone else. The role of technology in submitting assignments on paper is mainly related to downloading materials from websites. In online applications, the described forms of cheating using technology refer to real-time assessment activities - mobile communication with other people to help during the assessment; and copying texts from an electronic device during the exam.

In addition, no single process or technology can eliminate the multiple forms of plagiarism and the corresponding motives for committing a crime. According to Beasley J.D. (2004), the addition of research automation software and research development environment can prevent or reduce plagiarism or fill gaps in existing approaches by providing timely leadership, research project management, productivity enhancements, and information tracking functions. Overall, James Douglas Beasley believes that the combination of curriculum and code of honor, RDE Research Process Automation software and plagiarism detection technology is the best anti-plagiarism strategy in the Internet age.

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