THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL INFLUENCES ON THE PERCEIVED LIKELIHOOD OF

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AMONG UNDERGRADUATE BUSINESS STUDENTS

by

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A Senior Honors Project Presented to the

Honors College

East Carolina University

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for

Graduation with Honors

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May, 2018

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Abstract

This study explores the impacts of social influences on the perceived likelihood of undergraduate students participating in academic dishonesty. The influential factors used in this study come from Latané's (1981) social impact theory, or SIT. The theory uses a mathematical equation to explain that the social impact experienced by an individual is a function of the strength of the information sources, immediacy (proximity of the information sources to the target), and number of information sources. This study investigates these factors as they pertain to the instructor in a classroom setting. Specifically, I examine how instructor attributes impact students' propensity to cheat. In the study, the instructor's strength is measured as the reputation of the instructor in the classroom, immediacy is measured as the proximity of the instructor to students, and number is measured as the number of proctors monitoring the instructor's test setting. The objective of the study is to determine whether knowledge of these factors can assist universities in reducing the incidence of academic irregularities on campus.

Introduction

The completion of this study is part of the author's academic curriculum as a student of the Honors College at East Carolina University. All Honors College students must design and implement a Senior Honors Project (SHP) related to their field of study, under the supervision of a faculty mentor. This concentrated scholarly study offers students the opportunity to deliver an original contribution to the department they are affiliated with. The SHP is broken down into two highly structured semesters where the student must coordinate directly with their chosen mentor to fulfill the requirements outlined in the curriculum. The first semester consists of meticulous research and theoretical application in order construct the framework of the project. During this semester, students are tasked with identifying the topic of their project and using literary analysis to determine the significance of the potential results. This requires the students to construct a literary review, develop a hypothesis, pinpoint an appropriate target population, and create an investigative tool for gathering data. By the end of the first semester, the project design is solidified and reviewed to ensure all methods of data collected are ethical. The second semester includes the implementation of the project created during the first semester. The students collect data from the target population using the investigative tool called out in the project design. The information collected is then scrutinized and interpreted to determine the results of the study. Students are required to build a presentation that conveys the results of the study in a clear and concise fashion. Faculty members within the Honors College coordinate with each student's mentor to assess the overall performance of each SHP. The students receive a grade for their project which determines whether or not they qualify for graduation from the Honors College.

Problem Statement and Purpose

Research regarding the antecedents and likelihood of academic dishonesty is of high interest across all levels of education. Numerous studies have been conducted to research the moral character of students as it relates to cheating. Examination of these studies suggest that there may be a large gap between the perceived likelihood of cheating and the actions of students when moral judgement is involved. The vast majority of college students agree that cheating is morally wrong, however, their actions often contradict this belief (McCabe and Trevino, 1996). The majority of research related to cheating focuses on student characteristics and how they impact the likelihood that students will cheat (Sierra and Hyman, 2006). These studies consistently ignore the effect that external (i.e., social, environmental, situational) influences have on student decisions and very little research exists where the impacts of these factors are tested. The purpose of this study is to investigate the gap between perceived likelihood of cheating and actions of students by examining the impact of social influences. The originality of this experiment comes from the investigation of instructor attributes, as opposed to student attributes.

Literature Review

Social Impact Theory

Social impact theory, or SIT, was created by Latané (1981) to explain the impact of social influence on an individual's behavior. The theory explains the effects on individuals that come from the presence and actions of other people, whether those people are real or implied (Latané, 1981). These effects, called the "social impact" by Latané, are described as "changes in physiological states and subjective feelings, motives and emotions, cognitions and beliefs, [and] values and behavior" (Latané 1981, p. 343). The first principle of social impact theory, or SIT, states that the amount of social impact (î) experienced by an individual (the target or recipient) is a multiplicative function of the strength, S, the immediacy, I, and the number, N, of social sources present. It can be stated in mathematical notation as:

(1) $\hat{\imath} = f(\text{SIN})$

Strength refers to "the salience, power, importance, or intensity of a given source" to the receiving individual; immediacy implies "closeness in space or time and absence of intervening barriers or filters"; and, number means "how many other people [sources]" are influencing the receiver (Latané 1981, p. 344).

The social impact described in the theory is comparable to the physical presence of light and sound. Latané uses a light bulb analogy to illustrate the first principle of the social impact theory. "As the amount of light falling on a surface is a multiplicative function of the wattage or intensity of the light bulbs shining on the surface, their closeness to the surface, and the number of bulbs, so the impact experienced by an individual is a multiplicative function of the strength, immediacy, and number of people affecting him or her" (Latané 1981, p. 344). This simple and highly applicable theory has been used in several studies to explore the effect of social influence on individual behavior.

Daunt and Greer (2015) used SIT to investigate inappropriate behaviors among consumers. Most research regarding this topic focuses on consumer traits and dispositions to explain why consumers misbehave (Daunt and Harris, 2012a; Egan and Taylor, 2010; McColl-Kennedy et al., 2011). This research has proven to be valuable, however, it consistently ignores one of the most important explanations of inappropriate behavior: opportunity (Daunt and Greer, 2015). Daunt and Greer propose that "consumers do not typically misbehave because they are inherently 'bad'" (Daunt and Greer, 2015). Instead, consumers choose their behavior based on the opportunity presented to them, combined with environmental stimuli (Daunt and Greer, 2015). Daunt and Greer use SIT to further explore how opportunities can be affected by the strength, immediacy, and number of the real or implied presence of other individuals (Daunt and Greer, 2015).

The study used a random group of college students to test the likelihood of theft, given a specific opportunity. They were instructed to read a short scenario and answer a series of questions quickly and honestly. In the scenario, the students were presented with a hypothetical situation where they had the chance to steal an iPhone. The variables used in Daunt and Greer's study were social strength (i.e., whether or not the surrounding individuals were known to the potential offender) and the social density (i.e., the number of other individuals present) (Daunt and Greer, 2015). Daunt and Greer hypothesized that "the likelihood opportunistic theft is greater when unknown others are present and social density is high" (Daunt and Greer, 2015). In

other words, the potential offender is more likely to behave inappropriately if they are surrounded by strangers in a crowded environment. The results of this study showed that while moral judgement and self-control were related to inappropriate behavior, social strength and social density had a significant effect on the potential offender's decision to commit theft (Daunt and Greer, 2015).

A study conducted in 2005 used SIT to investigate the effects of non-interactive social strength (size of social presence) and social immediacy (how close the subject is to the social presence) on the self-presentation behaviors of consumers (Argo et al., 2005). The self-presentation behaviors witnessed in this study were behaviors that managed the social impression of the subject (Argo et al., 2005). The researchers hypothesized that as the level of social strength increased, the consumers would be more likely to manage self-presentation behavior (Argo et al., 2005). Furthermore, they hypothesized that as the social presence moved further away from the subject, the social strength would no longer matter (Argo et al., 2005). The results of the study supported both hypotheses and the researchers concluded that the mere presence of others had a profound impact on an individual's behavior (Argo et al., 2005).

Although these studies specifically examined consumer behavior, the principle of each study can potentially be applied to other areas of research. Daunt and Greer (2015) used SIT to determine the effect of social influences on the likelihood of participating in an unethical behavior. Argo et al. (2005) used SIT to explore the effects of social influences on self-presentation behaviors. Both of these studies support the claim that social influence can shrink the gap between perceived likelihood of cheating and the actions of students when considering moral development.

Academic Dishonesty

A plethora of literature exists on the propensity of students to cheat with studies yielding different results as to what types of students cheat (i.e., gender, GPA level, major, nationality, etc.), how students cheat (i.e., copying during exam, plagiarism, programming formulas in calculators, using cellphones, etc.), and why they cheat (i.e., internal pressure such as an intrinsic need to stay ahead of peers; external pressures such as need to maintain scholarships or appease others, especially parents; and taking advantage of an opportunity that enables cheating). Differences in results can be attributed to various methodologies used, including how variables

are measured and the different types of samples taken such as differences in majors, class levels, and type of institution, and when the studies were published.

The majority of cheating studies investigate student attributes that may increase the likelihood that they will cheat (Sierra and Hyman, 2006). Relatively few studies investigate situational factors that may impact the propensity to cheat. Situational factors include the likelihood of being a student being reported by a teacher and the severity of the penalty for being caught (Staats et al., 2009), and the student-proctor ratio, arrangement of seating during tests, classroom size, and the existence of institutional honor codes (Houston, 1986a, 1986b; Leming, 1980).

This study seeks to extend prior research on situational factors by examining attributes of instructors. Studying instructor traits, such as whether the presence or absence of an attribute impacts the likelihood of cheating, has practical implications for academia. This study fills a void in the literature by investigating three independent variables that capture instructor attributes, and their interactions, that may influence students' perceptions of academic misconduct.

Method

This experiment used Latané's (1981) social impact theory to determine the impact of social influences on the perceived likelihood of academic dishonesty among undergraduate business students. Specifically, these social influences were applied to the instructor in a hypothetical classroom setting to measure the instructor's impact on the likelihood of cheating. The study used a 3x2 within-subjects design whereby participating students were given each of the three variables explained in SIT (strength, immediacy, and number). Students were given one of two conditions for each variable (a high or low strength variable, a high or low immediacy variable, and a high or low number variable). The sample for the experiment included one hundred and eighty (180) students taking classes in the College of Business at East Carolina University. A Qualtrics survey was distributed to each student where they were asked to read a brief scenario and respond to a series of questions as honestly as possible. Students were not offered any incentive to complete this survey and did so completely on their own volition.

At the start of each survey, the students were prompted to read a statement that explained their rights as participants of the experiment. The purpose of this statement was to ensure that all

information gathered was free of coercion and received in an ethical and voluntary fashion. The statement read:

"Dear Participant,

I am asking you to take part in a research study that I am conducting. The survey you are asked to complete will take 5-10 minutes to complete.

If you agree to take part in this survey, you will be asked questions that relate to your demographic information and the perception of academic dishonesty.

This research is overseen by the ECU Institutional Review Board. Therefore, some of the IRB members or the IRB staff may need to review this research data. However, the information you provide will not be linked to you. Thus, your responses cannot be traced back to you by anyone, including myself.

You do not have to take part in this research, and you can stop at any time. If you decide you are willing to take part in this study, please continue on with the following survey.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in my research.

Sincerely,

Joseph Harrison
MBA Candidate | BSBA Finance"

If the students agreed to continue, they were asked to answer a series of questions regarding their demographic information. For each question, students were able to select their response from a series of preset answer choices. The responses received from these questions were used during the data analysis process to further explore the statistical significance of the results. The questions presented to the students are listed below.

1) *What is your age in years?*
    a. *Students were given a drop down menu that allowed them to choose their response. The answer choices started with "18 or younger", listed all ages from "19" to "59", and ended with "60 or older".*
2) *What is your gender?*
    a. *Students were able to respond using one of the following choices:*

        i. *Male*

       ii. *Female*

3) *Which answer choice best describes your undergraduate field of study?*

    a. *Students were able to choose one of the following options:*

         i. *Business -- Accounting*

        ii. *Business -- Finance*

       iii. *Business -- Hospitality Management*

       iv. *Business -- International Business*

        v. *Business -- Management*

       vi. *Business -- Management Information Systems*

      vii. *Business -- Marketing*

     viii. *Business -- Operation and Supply Chain Management*

       ix. *Business -- Risk Management*

        x. *Business -- Undecided*

       xi. *Nonbusiness -- Construction Management**

      xii. *Nonbusiness -- Fashion Merchandising**

     xiii. *Nonbusiness -- Health Services Management**

     xiv. *Nonbusiness -- Industrial Distribution**

      xv. *Nonbusiness -- Interior Design**

     xvi. *Nonbusiness -- Sports Studies**

    xvii. *Nonbusiness -- Other**

   xviii. *Nonbusiness --Undecided**

          *Denotes nonbusiness majors that are enrolled in business courses

          (i.e. students pursuing a business minor)

4) *What is your current student level classification?*

    a. *Students were able to choose from one of the following options:*

         i. *Freshman*

        ii. *Sophomore*

       iii. *Junior*

       iv. *Senior*

     v. *Graduate Student**

      *Denotes a graduate student that completed the survey while enrolled

      in an undergraduate level business course

  5) *What is your self-reported GPA?*

    a. *Students were able to report their GPA on an interactive bar graph that*

     ranged from "0.00" to "4.00". The answers on the graph were limited to two

     (2) decimal places.

   Control Variable. The scenario presented to the students was included in the parent survey before any survey flow logic was applied. The purpose of this was present the same control variable to each student and to ensure that all variables were tested independently. The scenario given to each student was the following:

   "You are a student taking a general education class. You are sitting in an auditorium style classroom with fold up desks at each seat. There are a total of 12 seats in each row and they are split in half by a walking aisle that spans the length of the classroom. There are 12 rows of seats which allows for a total of 144 students at any time. There is a desk at the front of the classroom with a computer and a chair for the professor teaching the class. Exits located at the front and back of the classroom.

   The classroom is at maximum occupancy. The professor handed out exams and walked back to the front of the classroom. There is only one version of the exam. The only items allowed on each student's desk are the test, scantron, and a pen/pencil. Due to the style of seating in the classroom, the desks are very close in proximity. This creates an unobstructed view of the contents on the desks located immediately to each student's left and/or right. Assume students in the class are not close acquaintances with others students sitting in the class."

   After the students familiarized themselves with the scenario, they were directed to assume the role of the student in the classroom setting provided, but to consider all new information independently as they progressed through the survey.

   Dependent Variable. This study measured the perceived likelihood that a student would cheat on an exam, given a hypothetical situation. The dependent variable was the "perceived

likelihood rating" that was provided in each participant's response. The scale was in numerical form and ranged from one (1) to ten (10). Each numerical value coincided with a "level" of perceived likeliness.

Upon completion of the demographically-focused questions, students continued on to the eight (8) independent sets of questions. The survey flow logic was constructed so that each student would randomly receive one (1) of the eight (8) sets of questions. The logic was also configured in such a way that each set of questions was distributed evenly. Each set contained three questions that addressed the three variables in SIT; one (1) question associated with strength, one (1) associated with immediacy, and one (1) associated with number. Within the eight (8) sets of questions, there were a total of four (4) high-level strength questions (S_H), four (4) low-level strength questions (S_L), four (4) high-level immediacy questions (I_H), four (4) low-level immediacy questions (I_L), four (4) high-level number questions (N_H), and four (4) low-level number questions (N_L). The combinations used in the eight (8) sets of questions are listed below. Note that the order of the three variables was dynamic to reduce the potential of order effects.

1. $(S_H)+(I_H)+(N_H)$
2. $(S_H)+(I_L)+(N_H)$
3. $(S_H)+(I_H)+(N_L)$
4. $(S_H)+(I_L)+(N_L)$
5. $(S_L)+(I_H)+(N_H)$
6. $(S_L)+(I_L)+(N_H)$
7. $(S_L)+(I_H)+(N_L)$
8. $(S_L)+(I_L)+(N_L)$

As each variable was presented, the student was prompted to answer a question regarding the perceived likelihood of academic dishonesty. For the purpose of ethical practices, the students were not asked to provide the likelihood that they would have personally participated in academic dishonesty. Instead, they were asked whether or not they perceived that a student, in the hypothetical scenario presented, would have partaken in unethical practices (i.e., cheating on the exam). The question presented to the students was as follows:

"Given this information, what is your perception on the likelihood that a classmate in the scenario provided would participate in some form of academic dishonesty?"

The students were asked to rate their perception on a scale from one (1) to ten (10). A rating of one (1) implied that the participant perceived that it was extremely unlikely that a student in the hypothetical situation would have cheated on the exam. A rating of ten (10) would have implied that the participant perceived that it was extremely likely that a student in the hypothetical situation would have cheated on the exam. An example of the scale used in the survey is shown below.

Etremely Unlikely				*Somewhat Likely*					*Extremely Likely*
1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*	*10*
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

As each student provided their rating and continued to the subsequent screen, they were not permitted to change the answer they provided on the previous question. When the students reached each new question (i.e. each independent variable), the following statement appeared at the top of the screen:

"Please disregard the information provided on the previous page and continue with the information below (assuming just the original classroom setting)."

Directly underneath that statement was the information related to the next independent variable being investigated. The students were once again asked to rate their perception on a scale from one (1) to (10). The following sections discuss the details, variables, and hypotheses for each independent variable in the study.

Strength

Independent Variable. This study used the influence of social strength, as it pertained to the professor, as an independent variable. The level of social strength was, in this case, determined by the perceived reputation of the instructor in the classroom. Social strength was

measured by providing the participants with supplemental information that contained either a high strength independent variable (S_H) or a low strength independent variable (S_L). The students were then asked to consider the supplemental information, in conjunction with the original situation (i.e., the control variable), and rate their perception on the likelihood that a student in the hypothetical situation would have cheated on the exam. Each student that participated in this study received one (1) question related to social strength (i.e., students that received a high strength variable question did not receive a low strength variable question, and vice versa). The high and low strength independent variables used in the survey were as follows:

(S_H): *"It has come to your attention that the instructor of your class has a reputation of sending students to the Academic Integrity Committee (AIC) for participating in academic dishonesty. A friend of yours was in your instructor's class last year and she witnessed the instructor send four students to the AIC during that semester alone. You have never personally witnessed a student cheating while taking exams in this class."*

(S_L): *"It has come to your attention that the instructor of your class has never reported a student to the Academic Integrity Committee (AIC). A friend of yours was in your instructor's class last year and she witnessed students cheating on every test. You have also personally seen students cheating while taking exams in this class."*

SIT proposes that as the strength of a social influence increases, it will have an increasing effect on an individual's behavior. In this case, it was expected that an increase in the perceived strength of the instructor would result in a decrease of the likelihood that a student would participate in academic dishonesty. Similarly, a decrease in the perceived strength of the instructor would result in an increase of the likelihood that a student would cheat on the exam. This information was used to develop the first hypothesis (H1) for this study:

H1: The greater the instructor's strength (i.e., the reputation of strict academic integrity enforcement), the lower the perceived likelihood that students will participate in academic dishonesty.

Immediacy

Independent Variable. This study used the influence of social immediacy, as it pertained to the professor, as an independent variable. The level of social immediacy was, in this case, determined by the perceived physical distance between the students and the professor in the classroom. Social immediacy was measured by providing the participants with supplemental information that contained either a high immediacy independent variable (I_H) or a low immediacy independent variable (I_L). The students were then asked to consider the supplemental information, in conjunction with the original situation (i.e., the control variable), and rate their perception on the likelihood that a student in the hypothetical situation would have cheated on the exam. Each student that participated in this study received one (1) question related to social immediacy (i.e., students that received a high immediacy variable question did not receive a low immediacy variable question, and vice versa). The high and low immediacy independent variables used in the survey were as follows:

(I_H): *"You notice that the instructor started walking down the aisle in the middle of the classroom once the exams have been distributed. The instructor appears to carefully monitor all of the students, on both sides of the aisle, as they complete their exams. Upon reaching either end of the aisle, the instructor turns around and walks down the aisle again."*

(I_L): *"You notice that the instructor stays seated at the front of the classroom once the exams have been distributed. The instructor does not appear to carefully monitor the students because the professor rarely looks up from the computer screen at the desk."*

SIT proposes that as the immediacy of a social influence increases, it will have an increasing effect on an individual's behavior. In this case, it was expected that an increase in the perceived immediacy of the instructor would result in a decrease of the likelihood that a student would participate in academic dishonesty. Comparably, a decrease in the perceived immediacy of the instructor would result in an increase of the likelihood that a student would cheat on the exam. The second hypothesis (H2) for this study was created based on this information:

H2: The greater the instructor's immediacy (i.e., the closer the instructor is in proximity to the students), the lower the perceived likelihood that students will participate in academic dishonesty.

Number

Independent Variable. This study used the influence of social number, as it pertained to the professor, as an independent variable. The level of social number was, in this case, determined by the perceived number of proctors in the classroom. Social number was measured by providing the participants with supplemental information that contained either a high number independent variable (N_H) or a low number independent variable (N_L). The students were then asked to consider the supplemental information, in conjunction with the original situation (i.e., the control variable), and rate their perception on the likelihood that a student in the hypothetical situation would have cheated on the exam. Each student that participated in this study received one (1) question related to social number (i.e., students that received a high number variable question did not receive a low number variable question, and vice versa). The high and low number independent variables used in the survey were as follows:

(N_H): *"As the instructor was handing out the exam, you noticed that three graduate assistants entered the room. After passing out the last exam, the instructor announced that the graduate assistants were there to serve as additional proctors for the duration of the exam. There are now four people proctoring the exam."*

(N_L): *"As the instructor was handing out the exam, you noticed that three graduate assistants entered the room. After passing out the last exam, the instructor approached the graduate assistants. The instructor and the graduate assistants spoke for a brief moment and all three graduate assistants proceeded to leave the room. The instructor is the only proctor for the exam."*

SIT proposes that as the size of a social influence increases, it will have an increasing effect on an individual's behavior. In this case, it was expected that an increase in the perceived

number of exam proctors in the room would result in a decrease of the likelihood that a student would participate in academic dishonesty. Likewise, a decrease in the perceived number of proctors in the room would result in an increase of the likelihood that a student would cheat on the exam. This information was used to construct the third hypothesis (H3) for this study:

H3: The greater the size of the social influence (i.e., the greater the number of proctors in the room), the lower the perceived likelihood that students will participate in academic dishonesty.

Method of Analysis

The perceived likelihood that a student would cheat, the dependent variable, was captured using a 10-point Likert scale with endpoints of Extremely Unlikely and Extremely Likely. The three independent variables (social strength, social immediacy, and social size) were dichotomous variables (i.e., operationalized by having a greater or weaker presence). T-tests that compared the distribution of data under each scenario were used to analyze the initial results. Because the dependent variable was on a ratio scale and the independent variables were nominal, the data was also analyzed using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Main effects and interactive effects (although not hypothesized) were examined to determine if the presence of multiple factors had an even greater effect on the perceived likelihood that a student would cheat.

Experimental Results

Hypothesis Testing

As hypothesized, the high level conditions for all three independent variables significantly reduced the perceived likelihood of cheating relative to the low level conditions.

H1. The first hypothesis tested pertained to the impact of social strength on the perceived likelihood that students would have participated in academic dishonesty. The results of this study supported my hypothesis that as the level of social strength increased, the perceived likelihood that students would have cheated decreased. The mean of the high strength condition was 4.29 and the mean of the low strength condition was 6.66. This created a significant difference of 2.37 ($p < .001$).

H2. The second hypothesis tested pertained to the impact of social immediacy on the perceived likelihood that a student would have cheated on the exam. The results supported my hypothesis that as the level of social immediacy increased, the perceived likelihood that students would have cheated decreased. The mean for the high immediacy condition was 3.76 and the mean for the low immediacy condition was 6.78. These means created a highly significant difference of 3.02 (p<.001).

H3. The third and final hypothesis tested pertained to the impact of social number on the perceived likelihood that a student would have cheated on the exam. The results supported my hypothesis that as the level of social number increased, the perceived likelihood that students would have cheated decreased. The mean for the high number condition was 3.74 and the mean for the low number condition was 5.19. The difference of these means was also significant at 1.45 (p<.001).

In addition, the overall mean of all the high level conditions was 4.25 and the overall mean of all low level conditions was 6.14, which is highly significant (p<.001). Of the three independent variables, number had the lowest mean under both conditions (3.74 and 5.19 for the high and low conditions, respectively) as noted in **Table 1** below.

The variable with the largest mean difference between conditions was immediacy, operationalized at the proximity of the proctor. When the proctor was nearby (i.e., walking through the aisle during the exam), the students reported one of the lowest perceptions of cheating, but when the proctor was stationary in the front the class (i.e., more distant proximity to students), the condition had the highest level of potential academic dishonesty. This suggests that the immediacy measure had the largest overall impact on student behavior.

Table 1

T-tests Comparison of Independent Variables

Independent Variables	High Condition	MEANS Low Condition	Difference
Strength	4.29	6.66	2.37 ***
Immediacy	3.76	6.78	3.02 ***
Number	3.74	5.19	1.45 ***
Condition Mean	4.25	6.14	1.89 ***

*** p<.001

Figure 1
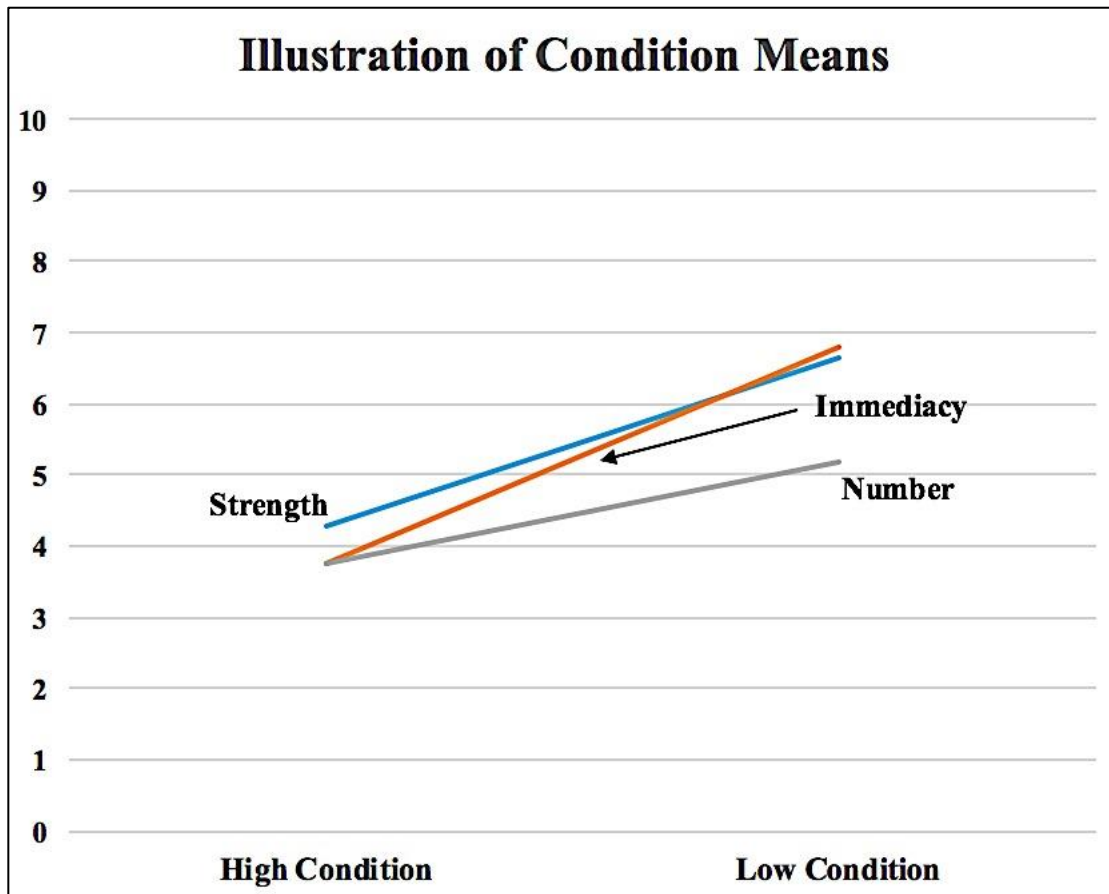
Independent Variable Comparison

      The variable condition means were further analyzed by studying the comparison between independent variables. In this test, each high and low condition mean was compared to the high and low condition means of the other two independent variables. The purpose of this test was to determine whether or not there was a significant difference in the effectiveness of one variable compared to the others.

      There were no statistically significant differences in the perceived likelihood of cheating between the Strength and Immediacy variables in both the high and low conditions. In the low condition, there were significant differences ($p<.001$) between Number and both Strength and Immediacy. This suggests that the presence of a proctor, even if not overly observant, was a

greater deterrent to cheating than the increased levels of social strength and the increased levels of social immediacy. A summary of this information is found in **Table 2** below.

Table 2

T-tests Comparison Between Independent Variables

BETWEEN CONDITION MEANS

Strength (High)	Immediacy (High)	Difference
4.29	3.76	0.53^
Strength (High)	**Number (High)**	
4.29	3.74	0.55^
Immediacy (High)	**Number (High)**	
3.76	3.74	0.02^
Strength (Low)	**Immediacy (Low)**	
6.66	6.78	0.12^
Strength (Low)	**Number (Low)**	
6.66	5.19	1.47***
Immediacy (Low)	**Number (Low)**	
6.78	5.19	1.59***

^ not significant; ** $p<.01$; *** $p<.001$

Conclusion

The experimental results imply that increased levels of all three instructor-influenced variables (strength, immediacy, and number) had the potential to deter students from partaking in academically dishonest practices. Additionally, the difference between the high condition mean and low condition mean was highly significant for all three independent variables. The results of this study also indicate that instructor-related influences can impact the likelihood of cheating a classroom setting. The purpose of this study was to investigate the gap between the perceived likelihood of cheating and the realized actions of students. It is conceivable that a portion of that gap can be attributed to instructor-influenced variables. These findings are important because the vast majority of research on cheating focuses on student attributes, as opposed to instructor attributes.

Additional Research

In the future, different measures of each independent variable (strength, immediacy, and number) will be developed and tested. This will help discover which instructor attributes are most effective at deterring academic dishonesty. In addition, different combinations of the variables will be tested to determine the best practice for instructors to implement and reduce the likelihood of cheating. Demographic information can also be incorporated in the data analysis process to establish any possible correlations between factors such as age, gender, socioeconomics, race, and ethnic affiliation.

The variable of social number yielded the lowest mean in both the high condition and the low condition. This seems to suggest a "perception of detection," whereby an increased number of proctors present (i.e., the greater the likelihood of being detected) reduces the likelihood of cheating. To further test this, I will repeat the experiment with a varying number of proctors to see if the inverse relationship between the number of proctors and the likelihood of cheating holds.

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