

The status of academic integrity among nursing students

by

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of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Nursing Science at Stellenbosch University**

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DECLARATION

By submitting this research assignment electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the authorship owner thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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ABSTRACT

Academic integrity is of undisputed importance in the educational environment as honesty is regarded as a basic ethical value in all educational programmes. Yet, academic dishonesty is a wide-ranging practice which is also encountered in the nursing education environment. This phenomenon causes concern in the nursing fraternity because of the positive correlation between unethical academic practices and future unethical professional behaviour. This correlation, together with the lack of research data regarding academic dishonesty at nursing education institutions in South Africa, motivated the researcher to undertake the present study.

The purpose of the study was to examine the status of academic integrity among nursing students at a nursing education institution in the Western Cape. The objectives were to determine the incidence of academic dishonesty and to investigate the individual and contextual factors that influence academic dishonesty. The students' knowledge of institutional policies regarding academic dishonesty, their understanding of plagiarism and referencing, their attitudes towards cheating, and their recommendations to prevent cheating were also explored.

A quantitative research approach with a descriptive survey design was chosen for the study. The population (N=688) included all the pre-registration nursing students in the second- (N=319), third- (N=199) and fourth-year (N=170) groups. A non-random convenience sampling technique was used to select a sample of 80% (n=550) from each of the second-year (n=255), third-year (n=159) and fourth-year (n=136) student groups. A self-reported questionnaire, with a set of 61 Likert-type items, was designed to obtain information about academic dishonesty. Three open-ended questions were included in the questionnaire to generate more in-depth data. The questionnaire, which was based on a literature review and on the objectives for the study, was pilot tested to ensure reliability and validity. The inputs of experts in research methodology and nursing education also assured reliability and validity. Data collection, where only the researcher was involved, took place during scheduled classes. Descriptive statistics and, where appropriate, inferential statistical tests were used in analysing the data. Ethical approval was obtained.

Measures were taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality to all respondents. Consent was assumed on completion of the questionnaire.

It was found that academic dishonesty was a reality at the nursing education institution where this study was done. Cheating behaviours associated with plagiarism and assignments were identified as the main problem areas. An unacceptably high level of dishonesty with the completion of practical records was also an area of concern. The main recommendations were the development and implementation of a code of honour and the implementation of comprehensive academic integrity policies at the nursing education institution. Practical measures aimed at combating cheating in tests and examinations were also recommended.

OPSOMMING

Akademiese integriteit in die opvoedkundige omgewing is ongetwyfeld van groot belang omdat eerlikheid as 'n basiese etiese beginsel in alle opvoedkundige programme beskou word. Desnieteenstaande, is akademiese oneerlikheid 'n algemene praktyk wat ook in die verpleegonderwys omgewing voorkom. Weens die positiewe korrelasie tussen onetiese akademiese praktyke en toekomstige onetiese professionele gedrag veroorsaak hierdie verskynsel kommer in die verpleeggemeenskap. Hierdie korrelasie, tesame met die gebrek aan navorsingsdata ten opsigte van akademiese oneerlikheid by verpleegonderwys instellings in Suid-Afrika, het die navorser gemotiveer om die huidige studie te onderneem.

Die doel van die studie was om die status van akademiese integriteit onder verpleegstudente by 'n verpleegonderwys instelling in die Wes-Kaap te ondersoek. Die doelwitte was om die insidensie van akademiese oneerlikheid te bepaal, en om ondersoek in te stel na die individuele en kontekstuele faktore wat akademiese oneerlikheid beïnvloed. Die studente se kennis van die institusionele beleide met betrekking tot akademiese oneerlikheid, hul begrip van plagiaat en die verwysing van bronne, hul houding teenoor oneerlikheid, asook hul aanbevelings om oneerlikheid te voorkom, is ook ondersoek.

'n Kwantitatiewe navorsingsbenadering met 'n beskrywende opname-ontwerp is vir die studie gekies. Die populasie (N=688) het al die voorregistrasie-verpleegstudente in die tweede- (N=319), derde- (N=199) en vierdejaargroepe (N=170) ingesluit. 'n Nie-ewekansige gerieflikheidsteekproeftegniek is gebruik om 'n steekproef van 80% (n=550) uit elk van die tweede- (n=255), derde- (n=159) en vierdejaarstudente (n=136) te selekteer. 'n Self-rapporteringsvraelys met 'n stel van 61 Likert-styl-items is ontwerp om inligting ten opsigte van akademiese oneerlikheid in te samel. Drie oop vrae is ingesluit in die vraelys om meer in-diepte data te genereer. Die vraelys is op 'n literatuurstudie en die doelwitte van die studie gebaseer en 'n loodsstudie is gedoen om die betroubaarheid en geldigheid te verseker. Die insette van kundiges in navorsingsmetodologie en verpleegopvoedkunde het ook die betroubaarheid en geldigheid verseker. Data-insameling, waarby slegs die navorser betrokke was, het

tydens geskeduleerde klastyd plaasgevind. Beskrywende statistieke, en waar toepaslik, inferensiële statistiese toetse, is gebruik vir data-analise. Etiese goedkeuring is verkry. Algehele anonimiteit en vertroulikheid is vir al die respondente gewaarborg. Voltooiing van die vraelys het ook toestemming tot deelname aangedui.

Daar is gevind dat akademiese oneerlikheid 'n werklikheid is by die verpleegonderwys instelling waar die studie gedoen is. Oneerlike gedrag geassosieer met plagiaat en werkopdragte is as die hoof-probleemareas geïdentifiseer. Die onaanvaarbare hoë vlak van oneerlikheid met die voltooiing van praktika-rekords is ook 'n bron van kommer. Die hoofaanbevelings was die ontwikkeling en implementering van 'n erekode en die implementering van beleide ten opsigte van omvattende akademiese integriteit by die verpleegonderwys instelling. Praktiese maatreëls gerig op die bestryding van oneerlikheid in toetse en eksamens is ook aanbeveel.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABNF	Association of Black Nursing Faculty
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
NASPA	National Association of Student Personnel Administrators
SD	Standard Deviation

CHAPTER 1

SCIENTIFIC FOUNDATION FOR THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Academic integrity is an undisputed ethical imperative in the educational environment. Although honesty is regarded as a basic ethical value in all educational programmes, academic dishonesty, comprising different forms of cheating and plagiarism, is a common phenomenon at educational institutions – including nursing education institutions – throughout the world (Brown, 2002:7; Gaberson, 1997:14; Lim & See, 2001:269; McCabe & Treviño, 1997:379; Olasehinde-Williams, Abdullah & Owolabi, 2003:70).

Although there is an extensive body of research literature on academic dishonesty throughout the world, no information could be found regarding research done on this topic in nursing education in South Africa. According to Lim and See (2001:262), student behaviour is influenced by both cultural differences and institutional differences regarding policies and student population; therefore studies done in other countries cannot be directly applied to a South African scenario.

Researchers have found a positive correlation between unethical academic practices and future professional unethical behavior (Nonis & Swift, 2001:76). Therefore, the occurrence of academic dishonesty in nursing education, with consequential questioning of the nurse's honesty and professional integrity, is causing great concern in the nursing profession (Kenny, 2007:17). Nursing students become professional nurse practitioners bound to ethical codes of practice, and the health care consumers must be able to trust them to practise their profession with integrity at all times (Langone, 2007:45; Kenny, 2007:14). According to Langone (2007:45), the nursing profession is associated with a high level of trust and honesty. Trust plays a vital role in the relationship between the nurse and the health care consumer since it implies that the nurse's competency, professional morality and integrity are above suspicion and she can be expected to act ethically at all times (Searle, 2000:97,227).

Academic integrity is described as the prevalence of honesty in all academic matters (Turner & Beemsterboer, 2003:1122). Violation of academic integrity, in other words academic dishonesty, most commonly manifests as cheating in examinations and/or committing plagiarism and forgery, resulting in the student not acquiring the expected knowledge (Turner & Beemsterboer, 2003:1122). Therefore, in order to explore the status of academic integrity amongst nursing students, the extent of academic dishonesty needed to be established.

In an attempt to address the gap in existing research regarding the prevalence of academic dishonesty among nursing students, the researcher explored the incidence of the phenomenon of academic dishonesty amongst the nursing students at a specific nursing education institution in the Western Cape and sought to identify relevant individual and contextual factors associated with or contributing to academic dishonesty.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Guided by the literature study, a perception was formed that globally, academic dishonesty is a wide-ranging practice that is also prevalent in the nursing education environment. This perception was strengthened by the researcher's personal experience of academic dishonesty among nursing students. An example of this was an incident where two students submitted identical assignments, each one claiming it as their own work.

Research indicates that academic dishonesty is a reality at educational institutions in countries like the USA, England, Singapore, Japan, Nigeria and South Africa (Brown, 2002:7; Burns, Davis, Hoshino & Miller, 1998:596; Gaberson, 1997:14; Lim & See, 2001:269; McCabe & Treviño, 1997:379; Olasehinde-Williams *et al.*, 2003:70). These studies included students from the general student population, as well as in some cases nursing students.

1.3 RATIONALE

As mentioned in paragraph 1.1, the researcher found no research exploring academic dishonesty among nursing students in South Africa. However, on the basis of international studies, and the researcher's personal experience, a justifiable inference was made that the practice of academic dishonesty could prevail at nursing education institutions in South Africa. This conjecture, together with the previously mentioned correlation between academic dishonesty and unethical professional conduct, motivated the researcher to undertake this study.

The need for contextually relevant research into academic dishonesty, the existing gap in such research among nursing students and the alarming possibility of a positive correlation between unethical academic practices and future professional unethical behaviour, motivated the researcher, a nurse educator, to investigate the prevalence of academic dishonesty among nursing students. It was hoped that the study would result in greater insight into the problem and that it would suggest contextually relevant interventions to address academic dishonesty, thus enhancing academic integrity.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

The primary research question in this study was:

What is the status of academic integrity among nursing students at a nursing education institution in the Western Cape?

1.5 AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of this study was to explore the status of academic integrity among nursing students at a nursing education institution in the Western Cape.

1.6 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study were to:

- determine the incidence of academic dishonesty at a specific nursing education institution in the Western Cape;
- investigate the individual and contextual factors that have an influence on academic dishonesty at a specific nursing education institution in the Western Cape;
- determine the students' knowledge of institutional policies regarding academic dishonesty;
- determine the students' understanding of plagiarism and referencing;
- determine the students' attitudes towards cheating; and
- determine the students' recommendations regarding the prevention of cheating.

1.7 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

1.7.1 Academic integrity

According to Turner and Beemsterboer (2008:1122) the term academic integrity refers to the prevalence of honesty in all academic matters. Academic integrity is viewed as vitally important due to the influence it has on a student's academic performance and the acquiring of knowledge, skills and values (Turner & Beemsterboer, 2008:1122).

In the light of the above mentioned the term academic integrity in this study will refer to honesty by pre-registration student nurses in all activities related to the academic programme.

1.7.2 Academic dishonesty

The terms 'academic dishonesty', 'cheating' and 'plagiarism' are often used interchangeably in the literature. Lambert, Hogan and Barton (2003:2) define academic dishonesty as "any fraudulent actions or attempts by a student to use unauthorized or unacceptable means in any academic work". Solomon and DeNatale (2000:270) add to this definition by stating that academic dishonesty is a destructive and unethical academic behaviour that is typified by lying, cheating and plagiarism. Logue (2004:40) defines plagiarism as "the intentional or unintentional use of another's work or ideas, published or unpublished, without clearly acknowledging the source of that work or idea". Schmidt (2006:1) classifies plagiarism as a form of cheating.

Based on the above, the term 'academic dishonesty' in this research study will include all forms of cheating behaviour as well as plagiarism.

1.7.3 Pre-registration student

The term 'pre-registration student' in this study refers to students registered in a four-year course leading to registration as a nurse (general, psychiatric and community) and a midwife, under regulation 425 of 22 February 1985 in terms of section 45 (1) of the Nursing Act, 1978 (Act 50 of 1978) (South Africa, 1978).

1.8 METHODOLOGY

1.8.1 Research approach and design

Since academic dishonesty is a sensitive issue, most of the studies done in this regard are quantitative in nature, and self-reporting surveys are the most common method used (McCabe, 2009:616; McCabe & Treviño, 1997:385; Lim & See, 2001:265; Newstead, Franklin-Stokes & Armstead, 1996:231). According to Burns and Grove (2007:24), a descriptive, quantitative research design can be employed to explore and describe a phenomenon. Therefore, a quantitative approach with a descriptive survey design was utilised to investigate the extent of academic

dishonesty among nursing students at a nursing education institution in the Western Cape. As the primary purpose of this study was to collect information, no specific theory was used or tested.

1.8.2 Target population and sampling

The target population included all the pre-registration nursing students in the second- (N=319), third- (N=199) and fourth-year (N=170) groups at a specific nursing education institution in the Western Cape. This amounted to 688 (N=688) students. A large sample (n=550) was obtained using a *non-random convenience sampling* technique to draw a sample of 80% from each of the above-mentioned student groups in the target population, namely second-year (n=255); third-year (n=159) and fourth-year (n=136). The rationale for utilising a non-random sampling technique was to protect the anonymity of the respondents since all forms of random sampling involve the utilisation of a list or framework with names from which respondents are selected. In this study, due to the sensitive nature of the topic, guaranteed anonymity of the respondents was very important in order to elicit honest answers. The sample was enlarged to 80% in an effort to increase the representativeness of the sample.

1.8.3 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Respondents needed to have done at least one theory examination, one theory assignment and one theory test at this educational institution to be considered for inclusion in the study. The first-year student group was not considered for inclusion in the study because they did not meet the inclusion criteria.

1.8.4 Data-gathering instrument

A Likert-scale questionnaire, designed to measure the opinion or attitude of a respondent (Burns & Grove, 2007:388), was utilised to obtain self-reported information on academic dishonesty. Open-ended questions were included in the questionnaire to generate more in-depth data.

1.8.5 Reliability and validity

According to Delpont (cited in De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delpont, 2005:160), validity of an instrument signifies that it accurately measures the concept in question, while reliability reflects the consistency of the instrument in measuring the concept it is supposed to measure. Various measures were taken to ensure the reliability, as well as the content and face validity of the questionnaire. Such measures included the following:

- The selection of items for inclusion in the questionnaire was based on previous research done on this topic as well as the objectives set for this study.
- The questionnaire was analysed by a research statistician and the supervisor of the study, as well as by other experts in research methodology and nursing education.
- A pilot study was conducted to validate and refine the questionnaire.

1.8.6 Pilot study

A pilot study, explained in depth in Chapter 3, paragraph 3.6, was done to pre-test the questionnaire with a small, representative group of respondents. Shortcomings were identified and relevant alterations were made to the instrument.

1.8.7 Data collection

Data collection took place during scheduled classes from March 2010 to May 2010. The first 80% of the various year groups of students who entered the classroom received questionnaires. The researcher explained the purpose of the research and the research procedure. The respondents were informed that their participation was voluntary and they were assured that their anonymity would be protected. All the respondents' questions were addressed and the researcher requested respect for the privacy of respondents in completing their questionnaires. Time was granted to

complete the questionnaires and the completed questionnaires were posted into a sealed box.

1.8.8 Data management and statistical analysis

MS Excel was used to capture the data on computer. Given that a descriptive design was chosen for this study, descriptive statistics were used in analysing the data. Appropriate inferential statistical tests, e.g. analysis of variance (ANOVA), were applied with the aid of a statistician to analyse the data using STATISTICA version 9 software (Brink, 1987:23). The data was displayed in the form of histograms and/or frequency tables.

1.8.9 Reporting and dissemination of results

The research results written up in this research report will be available in the Stellenbosch University library. Copies of the research report will be made available to the head of the nursing education institution where the research was done. An article will be prepared for publication in an accredited research journal.

1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study was done in accordance with the fundamental ethical principles governing research as noted by Mouton (2001:239). Babbie (2007:63) points out that even though respondents participate voluntarily in a research project, they should not be harmed physically or emotionally. Emotional harm can occur when respondents have to reveal sensitive private information that can cause embarrassment and make them feel uncomfortable. Therefore, the researcher must predict possible dangers to protect the respondents against such a situation. However, it is not always possible to prevent injury to respondents; for example, answering questions on dishonest behaviour could cause distress for the respondent. In this instance the researcher had to have sound scientific grounds for including potentially distressing questions in the questionnaire (Babbie, 2007:63.) According to Strydom (cited in De Vos *et al.*,

2005:58), respondents can be protected against emotional harm by informing them in advance about the possible risks involved so that they can make an informed decision regarding their participation in a research project. The rights, interests and sensitivities of the respondents in this study were protected by ensuring their privacy, anonymity and confidentiality, and acquiring informed consent from them (Mouton, 2001:243).

Burns and Grove (2007:209) define privacy as “the freedom people have to determine the time, extent, and general circumstances under which their private information (inclusive of their attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, opinions, and records) will be shared with or withheld from others”. According to Mouton (2001:243), the right to privacy also includes the respondent’s right to refuse to participate in the research. In this study the respondents’ right to privacy was respected by explaining to them that participation was voluntary and completion of the questionnaire was optional. The protection and safekeeping of the acquired information were also explained to the respondents.

According to Babbie (2007:64), complete anonymity exists only when no one, including the researcher, is able to identify the respondent and link him or her to a given response. Confidentiality is also related to the management of the responses given by the respondents and the sharing of that information. Information may only be shared with the authorisation of the respondents and researchers must take care to protect access to the raw data of a study in order to ensure confidentiality (Burns & Grove, 2007:212). Measures were taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality to all respondents in this research study. This was ensured by the anonymous completion of questionnaires; and collection of all the questionnaires by posting them into a sealed box (Mouton, 2001:234).

The respondents’ confidentiality was further protected by non-disclosure of the name of the educational institution where the study was done. In addition, only the researcher, statistician and research supervisor had access to the collected data. To protect the respondents’ confidentiality the collected information is stored in sealed boxes in a locked storage room.

In order to give informed consent respondents must receive and be able to comprehend all the essential study information. In addition, respondents must be legally and psychologically competent to give consent and must understand the voluntary nature of the consent. Voluntary consent means that the respondents decide to take part in the research project out of their own free will without any coercion and that they understand that they can withdraw from the study at any time (Burns & Grove, 2007:217; De Vos *et al.*, 2005:59.) According to Williams *et al.* (1995, cited in De Vos *et al.*, 2005:59) the study information given to respondents should include the aim of the study, procedures that will be employed during the study, possible advantages and disadvantages, as well as the foreseeable negative effects the study might have on the respondents. In this study the aim of the study, the procedure for data collection, as well as information on the publication of the results were provided to the respondents. The respondents were informed that there were no immediate benefits for them and the expected advantages resulting from the study were explained. Furthermore, the respondents were informed that the researcher would be available and could be contacted in case they experienced any negative effects, for example, anxiety.

According to Burns and Grove (2007:219), written consent may be waived when the consent form, as the only link between the respondent and his or her response, can harm the respondent because of the potential break in confidentiality it represents. For this reason and since it was impossible to maintain complete anonymity with written consent, informed consent was assumed on completion of the questionnaire (Mouton, 2001:244).

In addition, the research protocol was presented to the Ethical Research Committee of the Faculty of Health Sciences, Stellenbosch University for ethical approval before data collection commenced. Consent was also obtained from the head of the institution where the research was conducted.

1.10 OUTLINE OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

The outline of this research report is as follows:

Chapter 1: Scientific foundation for the study

In this chapter a general overview of the research was given. It included an introduction to the research topic, operational definitions, as well as the problem statement, rationale, aim and objectives of the study. The methodology of the research study was explained briefly and the ethical considerations were discussed in depth.

Chapter 2: Literature review

The concepts 'academic integrity' and 'academic dishonesty' are clarified in this chapter. In addition, previous relevant research studies are reviewed and the research findings are discussed with regard to the prevalence of academic dishonesty, contributing factors and causes of academic dishonesty, control of academic dishonesty, and the significance of academic dishonesty for nursing.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

In this chapter the research approach and design as well as the selection of respondents for the sample, the data collection methods and process, and the data management are discussed in detail.

Chapter 4: Data analysis and interpretation

The results and findings of the research are discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations

This chapter contains the conclusions and recommendations of this study.

1.11 SUMMARY

Included in this chapter are the background to the research problem and a preliminary literature review on the research topic of academic dishonesty together

with the rationale for doing this study. The problem statement, research question, aims and objectives that guided the study were formulated. The study design was described briefly and the target population, sample size and sampling method were identified. The processes of data collection by means of a questionnaire, data management and statistical analysis were described. The relevant ethical issues and the management thereof were discussed. Finally, a description of the manner of reporting and dissemination of the results of the study as well as the study outline were included.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature review was undertaken to establish what information has been published to shed light on the following research question: “What is the status of academic integrity among nursing students at a nursing education institution in the Western Cape?”

Computerised searches of the CINAHL, PubMed, Medline, Nexus and Google scholar databases were conducted using mainly the following search terms: academic integrity; academic misconduct; academic dishonesty; cheating; unethical classroom behaviour; and plagiarism.

It is well-established in the literature that academic dishonesty is a growing problem in most disciplines at academic institutions all over the world and some researchers are of the opinion that this problem is reaching epidemic proportions (Bates, Davies, Murphy & Bone, 2005:73; Burns *et al.*, 1998:596; Lambert *et al.*, 2003:12; Lim & See, 2001:272; McCabe, 2009:614; McCabe, Butterfield & Treviño, 2006:299; McCabe & Treviño, 1993:524; Newstead *et al.*, 1996:231; Olasehinde-Williams *et al.*, 2003:77; Whitley, 1998:238). Research done specifically among nursing students found that the occurrence of academic dishonesty followed similar trends to those in other disciplines which is a cause for concern for the nursing profession (Brown, 2002:7; Hilbert, 1985:231; Hilbert, 1988:166; McCabe, 2009:617).

According to Searle (2000:95) nursing is deemed a highly ethical profession and it relies on the moral integrity of the individual practitioners to provide safe nursing care. Given this point of view, some researchers expected that academic dishonesty would be less common among nursing students (Fontana, 2009:181; Hilbert, 1987:43; McCabe, 2009:616). This expectation was initially confirmed by Hilbert (1985:232) who found that incidents of academic dishonesty occurred less frequently among nursing students compared to the general student body. However, later

studies established that academic dishonesty was also a common occurrence among nursing students (Bailey, 2001:127; Brown, 2002:7; McCabe, 2009:616). The importance of these findings for nursing lies in the potential for unethical classroom behaviour to be transmitted to the clinical practice areas, causing a threat to the safety and well-being of patients (Bailey, 2001:128; Gaberson, 1997:15; Hilbert, 1985:232; Hilbert, 1987:43). If future nursing practitioners were to be found guilty of unethical academic practice it would be cause for serious concern in the nursing fraternity as this behaviour threatens the ethical foundation of the profession (Gaberson, 1997:14).

2.2 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

2.2.1 Academic integrity

Duquesne University (1995, quoted in Gaberson, 1997:14) defines academic integrity as “the pursuit of knowledge, understanding, and truth in an honest manner”. Similarly, Turner and Beemsterboer (2003:1122) believe that “true academic integrity” indicates the prevalence of honesty in all academic activities. Honesty can thus be seen as fundamental to academic integrity and equates to ethical behaviour in the academic environment (Turner & Beemsterboer, 2003:1123). Gaberson (1997:14) points out that academic integrity must prevail in all academic activities undertaken by faculties and students to gain knowledge and understanding, and not only focus on activities related to assessment and student grades. Honesty and integrity are vitally important in the academic environment as they have a direct bearing on a student’s academic performance and the way in which knowledge, skills and values are acquired (Turner & Beemsterboer, 2003:1122). The primary focus of an academic institution should therefore be the creation of an academic environment that is conducive to the moral, cognitive, physical, social and aesthetic development of the student. This translates to the promotion of an environment that values academic integrity and honesty above all else (Lim & See, 2001:262).

The fundamental importance of academic integrity and the influence it has on the acquisition of knowledge and skills makes the consideration of violations of

academic integrity or, in other words, academic dishonesty, imperative. It is particularly crucial when one considers that academic dishonesty represents unethical behaviour and results in students not acquiring the expected knowledge (Turner & Beemsterboer, 2003:1123).

2.2.2 Academic dishonesty

There seems to be no single standard definition for academic dishonesty. Some authors use the terms 'academic dishonesty' and 'academic misconduct' interchangeably to refer to, for example, cheating and plagiarism (Bailey, 2001:124; Daniel, Adams & Smith, 1994:278; Fontana, 2009:181). Solomon and DeNatale (2000:270), on the other hand, differentiate between the two concepts. They define academic misconduct as intentional, unacceptable behaviour by students, which includes incidents like illegal political demonstrations. Academic dishonesty is defined as a form of academic misconduct including incidents of cheating, lying and plagiarism. Academic misconduct can therefore be seen as an umbrella term comprising different forms of misconduct, of which one may be academic dishonesty (Solomon & DeNatale, 2000:270). Lambert *et al.* (2003:2) state that academic dishonesty constitutes "any fraudulent actions or attempts by a student to use unauthorised or unacceptable means in any academic work". According to Duquesne University (1995, quoted in Gaberson, 1997:15) academic dishonesty occurs when students purposefully undertake deceiving practices in academic work, incorporating acts of "lying, cheating, plagiarism, alterations of records, forgery, false representation, and knowingly assisting another person with dishonest acts".

Prescot (1989, quoted in Smyth & Davis, 2004:64) defines cheating as "fraudulent behavior involving some form of deception in which one's own efforts or the efforts of others is misrepresented". Similarly, Kolanko, Clark, Heinrich, Olive, Serembus and Sifford (2006:35) consider academic cheating as "a form of stealing from another student or from the academic institution". According to Gaberson (1997:15) cheating is "an act of using unauthorised assistance in an academic activity". These definitions are fairly broad and can include several forms of dishonest academic behaviours such as the use of unauthorised notes, copying from another student in

tests or examinations, turning in someone else's work as one's own, helping other students to cheat, committing plagiarism and even lying about medical or other circumstances to circumvent the process of assessment (Bailey, 2001:124; Faucher & Caves, 2009:38). In an academic context, dishonest behaviour (academic dishonesty) also occurs in the clinical areas and comprises incidents such as fraudulent record keeping, not reporting errors and fabricating information; for example, recording the patient's observations without taking a reading (Johnson, 2009:49; Faucher & Caves, 2009:39).

Plagiarism is defined in the literature as the intentional or unintentional acquisition and use of another person's words and ideas as if it is one's own without any reference to or acknowledgement of the original source of the work (Logue, 2004:40; Park, 2004:291). Park (2004:291) further describes plagiarism as "the stealing of someone else's intellectual property". The uncited use of any information that cannot be considered general knowledge is seen as plagiarism (Park, 2003:472). Plagiarism comes in many forms, including collaboration on assignments meant to be one's own work; purchasing papers and representing them as one's own; duplicating papers for different subjects; and paraphrasing without citation (Park, 2004:293). Another form of plagiarism, which is called self-plagiarism, occurs where a person publishes the same article in several different journals, thereby violating the copyright on that work (Mason, 2002:7). Some authors are of the opinion that students are often unaware that they are plagiarising because they are not taught academic writing and therefore do not understand the necessity to reference academic material (Cronin, 2003:253; Gaberson, 1997:15; Park, 2003:476; Weeks, 2001:1). In this study the term 'academic dishonesty' will include all forms of cheating behaviour as well as plagiarism.

Sometimes, the imprecise definitions of the different terms related to academic dishonesty cause a discrepancy to arise between what behaviours individuals will classify as academic dishonesty and what can be regarded as innovative thinking (Schmelkin, Gilbert, Spencer, Pincus & Silva, 2008:588). In addition, there is a difference of opinion between educators and students as to what constitutes academic dishonesty and the seriousness of the acts of cheating (Bates *et al.*, 2005:69; Austin, Simpson & Reynen, 2005:148). This is evident in a study by Lim

and See (2001:267) who found that students did not perceive plagiarism and manipulation of data as serious academic cheating. Similarly, Schmelkin *et al.* (2008:602) found that in contrast with the students, educators regard “sabotaging someone else’s work” and “forging a university document” as most serious. Although both the educators and students regarded cheating in examinations as a serious violation of academic integrity, educators regarded it to be more serious than the students did (Schmelkin *et al.*, 2008:603; Austin *et al.*, 2005:152). In her article in the official journal of the Association of Black Nursing Faculty (ABNF), Arhin (2009:20) indicated that she had found evidence that most students were in agreement as to what constitutes academic dishonesty in examination situations. There was however, a substantial difference in what students perceived as dishonest behaviour when it comes to classroom assignments, use of Internet sources, and cutting and pasting of information. Some students found it quite acceptable to copy assignments from fellow students provided that it was done with their permission. The reason for this discrepancy in perceptions of academic dishonesty may be found in the researcher’s opinion that today’s Generation Y students tend to regard some forms of academic dishonesty as normal, because they think they are being innovative and resourceful in their actions. Generation Y students are people who were born after 1981. Most of them grew up with computers and are technologically literate in terms of the Internet, cell phones and their social lifelines. They are peer-dependent and see themselves as inventive, resourceful and able to solve their own problems. The normalisation of academic dishonesty may help to explain why this behaviour is prevalent at academic institutions all over the world (Arhin, 2009:20).

2.3 PREVALENCE OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Whitley (1998:238) did an extensive literature review including 107 studies done in the USA and Canada on factors associated with academic dishonesty. The results indicated that incidents associated with dishonesty had escalated over the period from 1969 to 1995 with the prevalence rate for academic dishonesty ranging from 9% to 95% with an overall mean rate of 70.4%. Whitley’s (1998:237) findings on three types of academic dishonesty were as follows:

- cheating on examinations: mean of 70.4%;
- cheating on homework and assignments: mean of 40.9%; and
- plagiarism: mean of 47.0%.

Similarly, a study at a Midwestern university reported that 83% of the respondents engaged in cheating behaviour more than once (Lambert *et al.*, 2003:12). In addition, in a study involving 54 higher academic institutions in the USA and Canada the researchers found that 56% of graduate business students and 47% of the non-business graduate students admitted to engaging in cheating behaviour in the past year (McCabe *et al.*, 2006:299). Harding, Carpenter, Finelli and Passow (2004:314) reported that 63.8% of the engineering students admitted to cheating at least a few times per term while 79.2% engaged in cheating behaviour at least once per term. These findings confirm the pervasiveness of academic dishonesty at educational institutions in the USA and Canada.

The problem of academic dishonesty is not limited to the USA and Canada. A study done at three academic institutions in Singapore indicated that different forms of cheating occurred quite frequently. These ranged from 94.4% of students allowing others to copy their coursework to 15.6% of students who admitted to taking unauthorised material into tests or examinations (Lim & See, 2001:268). In addition, 77.1% of the respondents reported they had witnessed other students engaging in some form of cheating behaviour (Lim & See, 2001:270). At the University of Nigeria a cheating rate of at least 66% was reported in all the courses (Olasehinde-Williams *et al.*, 2003:77). The first large-scale study in the UK was conducted at an English university involving students from nineteen disciplines, including health sciences. The findings of this study indicated that the most frequently occurring academic dishonesty (54%) was paraphrasing without acknowledging the author. The behaviour with the lowest frequency (1%) was taking an examination for someone else (Newstead *et al.*, 1996:231). Bates *et al.* (2005:73) found in their study among pharmacy students in the UK that 42.4% of the respondents admitted that they had engaged in academic dishonesty two or more times while 33.5% reported that they had never been involved in any incident of academic dishonesty.

The only study found involving South African students was a cross-cultural study comprising 210 South African and 132 Japanese students. The South African students were mostly psychology students. The aim of this particular study was to establish whether their patterns of academic dishonesty differed from those in the USA (Burns *et al.*, 1998:593). The findings were that the South African students reported less cheating than the Japanese and the American students. Fear of being caught and penalties such as suspension from the institution and shame were identified as the most important deterring factors regarding cheating for the South African students (Burns *et al.*, 1998:595). This is consistent with a study done in the USA where the respondents also identified shame, fear of being caught, and fear of sanctions as the main deterring factors (Harding *et al.*, 2004:315).

A focus on nursing education has revealed that the prevalence of academic dishonesty is as alarmingly high as in all the other fields of study. Hilbert (1985:230) conducted a ground-breaking study in the USA on unethical behaviours in the classroom and clinical settings with a sample of 101 baccalaureate nursing students. The findings for unethical classroom behaviour ranged from 2% of students who took an examination for another student to 27% of students who admitted to copying a few sentences from a referencing source without a footnote (Hilbert, 1985:231). Although this was a lower rate of unethical classroom behaviour than was the case with students at higher education institutions in general, Hilbert (1987:40) found in a repeat study that there was a considerable increase in unethical classroom behaviours such as the following:

- copying from another student in the examination (13.1%);
- allowing someone to copy in the examination (13.5%);
- getting examination questions from someone who did the examination before (14.8%);
- using someone else's words without referencing (14.9%); and
- dishonest adding of references to the bibliography (12%).

Furthermore, in this particular study there was no difference between the prevalence of unethical classroom behaviour between nursing and non-nursing students (Hilbert, 1987:42). Brown (2002:7) found a similarity between the associate degree nursing

students and the freshmen, sophomore, junior, and senior generic baccalaureate nursing students regarding the prevalence of cheating and the way in which they were cheating. The results show that 53% of senior baccalaureate nursing students and 40% of the associate degree group thought of cheating, and 27% of both groups indicated they would cheat if they thought they could get away with it. Between 61% and 94% of the respondents in the study reported that they had witnessed cheating by other nursing students but only 8% to 13% admitted to cheating, leading to the interesting question: "Who are the cheaters that everyone is watching?" (Brown, 2002:7). An important study on academic dishonesty in twelve nursing schools in the USA in 2007 compared data across different kinds of nursing programmes that all lead to a nursing degree. This particular study confirmed that academic dishonesty is an ongoing problem in nursing schools with 58% of the undergraduate and 47% of the graduate nursing students self-reporting that they had engaged in at least one of the sixteen listed classroom cheating behaviours. The researcher compared the findings of the study on nursing students with an ongoing study of academic dishonesty among college students in various other disciplines. A disturbing finding was that more cheating occurred among the undergraduate nursing students than in the broader student community (McCabe, 2009:617).

2.4 CONTRIBUTING FACTORS AND CAUSES OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

2.4.1 Role of student characteristics

Several studies identified individual factors such as age, marital status and gender as predictive of academic dishonesty. Whitley (1998:239) identified age and marital status as important indicators of whether a student will cheat or not, with younger, unmarried students more likely to display cheating behaviour. Similarly, other studies identified that the younger first- and second-year students tend to cheat more than the older, more mature students (McCabe & Treviño, 1997:388; Newstead *et al.*, 1996:233; Nonis & Swift, 2001:72). The argument is that it is easier for younger students to rationalise their cheating behaviour because they often have to attend classes with large groups of students in a compulsory subject that does not interest them (McCabe, Treviño & Butterfield, 2001:227). On the other hand, Hilbert

(1987:43) found that age was non-significant in unethical classroom behaviour amongst nursing students. Daniel *et al.* (1994:286) also found that the age and marital status of nursing students were not predictive of academic misconduct. Gender, as a possible predictive factor, receives much attention in the literature, with most of the studies reporting that men cheat more often than women (Bates *et al.*, 2005:73; Burns *et al.*, 1998:596; Lim & See, 2001:270; McCabe & Treviño, 1997:388; Newstead *et al.*, 1996:233; Nonis & Swift, 2001:72; Olasehinde-Williams *et al.*, 2003:77; Smyth & Davis, 2004:66). However, other studies found an insignificant difference between men and women when it comes to academic cheating (Blankenship & Whitley, 2000:6; Hilbert, 1987:42; McCabe, 2009:618). Newstead *et al.* (1996:239) claim that since most of the studies on academic cheating are self-reporting it may be that women are not as honest as men in reporting cheating behaviour, and that they tend to give a socially desirable response. Interestingly, the only study that significantly indicated that females were more involved in unethical classroom behaviour than males was that of Hilbert (1985:231) among nursing students. The researcher thought that this could possibly be explained by the fact that all the males were academically strong and did not need to cheat while the females might have felt pressurised into cheating in order to pass the course (Hilbert, 1985:233). These research findings seem to indicate that there is a difference between nursing students and the general student population with regard to the role of age and gender in academic misconduct (Hilbert, 1985:231; Hilbert, 1987:43; Daniel *et al.* 1994:286).

2.4.2 Influence of peer behaviour

McCabe and Treviño (1993:524) investigated academic dishonesty and the influence of honour codes and other contextual factors at 31 academic institutions of higher education in the USA, using a sample of 6 096 students. This was a particularly important study because of the large constituency of academic institutions targeted by the researchers. McCabe and Treviño (1993:533) found that peer behaviour had the most significant influence on academic dishonesty and described it as follows:

The strong influences of peers' behavior may suggest that academic dishonesty not only is learned from observing the behavior of peers, but that peers' behavior provides a kind of normative support for cheating. The fact that others are cheating may also suggest that, in such a climate, the non-cheater feels left at a disadvantage. Thus cheating may come to be viewed as an acceptable way of getting and staying ahead.

These findings were replicated in later studies in which the relationship between peer-related factors and academic dishonesty was reported as 'most powerful' (McCabe *et al.*, 2006:300; McCabe & Treviño, 1997:391). Whitley (1998:247) further confirmed the significance of peer behaviour in a literature review that clearly showed that students cheated more when they perceived the social norms as permitting cheating. It is widely recognised that the attitudes and behaviours of peers have a significant influence on students' cheating behaviour. Peer-disapproval has a minimising effect on academic dishonesty while perceived peer-condoning of cheating leads to higher levels of cheating (Jordan, 2001:243; McCabe & Treviño, 1997:391). Rettinger and Kramer (2009:310) argue that students who witness cheating by their peers not only get new ideas for cheating but also find justification for their cheating.

2.4.3 Attitudes towards cheating behaviour

Lambert *et al.* (2003:14) identified the rationalisation of cheating to get better grades and in order to graduate as two significant reasons students use to justify academic dishonesty. Tanner (2004:291) claims that she experienced various forms of academic dishonesty as academic nurse administrator with the common denominator that the students did not perceive their dishonest behaviour to be unethical, but simply a practical necessity, because they felt overwhelmed by the amount of work and the incongruence in the requirements of academia and the 'real world' (e.g. the course would require knowledge and the recall of a large amount of information while they could simply look it up in the 'real world'). Students often use neutralisation in the form of rationalisation, denial, blaming others, and denunciation of the accusers, as technique to excuse their dishonest behaviour (McCabe *et al.*,

2001:227). According to Haines *et al.* (quoted in Daniel *et al.*, 1994:286) neutralisation is employed by individuals to eradicate the feelings of guilt that normally accompany dishonest behaviour, therefore the individuals believe they can continue with this kind of behaviour without considering themselves to be deviants. Daniel *et al.* (1994:286) confirms this attitude when they describe the predicament of the dishonest nursing student as follows:

Realizing that nurses would frequently be considered role models whose personal and professional ethics would be expected to meet high standards, the tendency toward neutralizing among those who are deviant may be a way of maintaining a positive public image while compromising their own sense of integrity.

Students' indifference towards academic dishonesty is illustrated in a study by Lim and See (2001:271), who reported that 82% of the respondents chose to ignore cheating behaviour by other students, while only 1.7% was willing to report these students. According to McCabe *et al.* (2006:302) this attitude of indifference can be caused by the perception that lecturing staff are not willing to become involved in transgressions, therefore students feel that they do not have to report cheating by their peers. Paterson, Taylor and Usick (2003:149) point out that lecturing staff tend to dismiss incidents of plagiarism when they regard the reason behind it as acceptable; for example, the student does not know what plagiarism is. This was substantiated by their study that identified intention by the student as grounds for lecturing staff to take punitive action or not (Paterson *et al.*, 2003:153).

A laissez-faire attitude of the lecturing staff can be seen as one of the reasons why most students do not fear being caught when they are cheating and this can lead to a higher frequency of academic dishonesty (Lambert *et al.*, 2003:16). More specifically, when incidents of cheating and plagiarism are deliberately ignored by the lecturing staff this sends a message to the students that it is acceptable behaviour (Kiehl, 2006:201). Parameswaran (2007:266) is of the opinion that educators that are guilty of ignoring academic dishonesty can be held equally or even more morally responsible than the students who act dishonestly.

Fontana (2009:182) found that nurse educators viewed the management of academic dishonesty as an “enormous burden” because it caused damage to relationships, involved risk of damage to their personal and the institutional reputation, and left them traumatised. For these reasons some of the lecturers indicated that they would be reluctant to address academic dishonesty in future. However, most of them indicated they would address it again if necessary (Fontana, 2009:182). Gaberson (1997:21), on the other hand, is of the opinion that nurse lecturers naturally want to trust students and have good relationships with them and this makes it difficult for them to manage cases of academic dishonesty. Therefore, they will try to justify dishonest students’ behaviour and prefer to limit sanctions to an oral warning in the hope that it will not happen again. However, this behaviour by the lecturing staff is not acceptable because it is unfair towards other students, the institution and the public. Furthermore, lecturing staff are expected to apply the institutional academic integrity policies consistently to show that every incident of academic dishonesty is judged as a serious transgression of academic integrity (Gaberson, 1997:21). It is also the responsibility of the nurse lecturer to role-model the required behaviour of high academic integrity in order for the nursing student to be socialised into the acceptable nursing value system (Gaberson, 1997:19).

2.4.4 Perceptions of cheating behaviour

Students often rationalise their cheating by reasoning that everybody does it and therefore it is acceptable behaviour (Newstead *et al.*, 1996:233; Schmidt, 2006:1). In their article in the journal of the professional association for student affairs administrators in higher education, NASPA (National Association of Student Personnel Administrators), Hall and Kuh (1998:11) indicate that they found that when students perceive that academic dishonesty is a tolerated campus culture, they cheat more. Arhin (2009:17) argues that academic dishonesty has become so ubiquitous that most students do not perceive their cheating actions to be wrong. She is further of the opinion that students and lecturing staff do not always have the same understanding regarding what constitutes cheating behaviour. In a study of undergraduate nursing students she found that although 90% of the respondents

could identify dishonest examination behaviours such as looking at hidden notes to find answers, 7% did not think it was wrong. Only 45% of the students identified leniency in grading another student's class test as dishonest behaviour. An even greater indistinctness exists regarding dishonest behaviours related to classroom assignments where 61% of the students did not view it as cheating when they borrowed work from a friend to use in their own assignments. Furthermore, students indicated that it is acceptable to copy from a peer with his/her permission, but see it as unacceptable when the peer did not give permission (Arhin, 2009:19). According to Arhin (2009:20) this is an indication of the level of "peer dependence" and "immediate gratification" inherent in the student of today. A more contentious view is that academic dishonesty among university-aged students is indicative of a developmental stage in which normative standards are tested and students' own understanding of moral behaviour is reinforced (Austin *et al.*, 2005:154).

Regarding plagiarism, it was evident that a large number of students did not perceive using quotes without referencing them or cutting and pasting information from the Internet as dishonest behaviour (Arhin, 2009:19; Park, 2003:476). Lim and See (2001:267) also found that students do not perceive plagiarism to be a serious offence. According to Arhin (2009:20) cutting and pasting is such a widely used practice today that students believe this is the only directive to writing papers. This ambivalence about exactly what constitutes academic cheating and plagiarism came out in several other studies that were done on this topic. In the UK, a study among pharmacy students found almost the same trends as those Arhin found in her studies among nursing students. The pharmacy students could easily identify dishonesty in examination situations but as far as classroom assignments and plagiarism were concerned, it was unclear what constituted dishonest behaviour. These students, for example, also perceived copying from a peer with permission to be less dishonest than copying without permission (Bates *et al.*, 2005:72).

Hilbert (1985:232) found a high level of agreement between nursing students regarding what constitutes unethical classroom behaviour, ranging from 60% for working with another student on an assignment when it is not allowed to 99% for taking an examination or quiz for another student. However, believing that a particular behaviour was unethical did not necessarily prevent some individuals from

practising that behaviour. For example, 99% believed it is wrong to take an examination for another student but 2% admitted to doing it (Hilbert, 1985:232). However, McCabe (2009:619) is of the opinion that the more serious the students perceive a specific cheating behaviour to be, the less they will engage in this specific behaviour and vice versa. This was corroborated by his findings that students did not perceive collaboration on an assignment as serious cheating behaviour. This was also the behaviour with the highest level of engagement by both the undergraduate and the graduate nursing students (McCabe, 2009:619). In their study among pharmacy students in the UK, Bates *et al.* (2005:72) also found that students were more prepared to engage in academic dishonesty perceived as less serious such as “borrowing a friend’s work for ideas” than in serious cheating such as copying in an examination.

2.4.5 Other contributing factors of cheating behaviour

Hilbert (1987:42) reported that the pressure to achieve high marks was the most important cause of cheating behaviour among nursing students. Similarly, Newstead *et al.* (1996:233) found that 20% of the respondents cheated to increase their mark. Whitley (1998:243) also found in her literature review that students experiencing pressure to achieve high marks were reported to be more likely to cheat. Furthermore, Whitley (1998:261) concluded that students who are more likely to cheat are those who lack study skills, are less hard-working and more procrastinating. Other important factors playing a role in cheating behaviour were the need to be successful, and the pressure students experience from their parents and the educational institution (Hilbert, 1987:44). Pressure due to lack of time was also identified as a major role-playing factor in cheating behaviour by students (Harding *et al.*, 2004:315; Newstead *et al.*, 1996:233; Tanner, 2004:291).

Gaberson (1997:16) is of the opinion that high expectations are placed on nursing students to be perfect and not make mistakes. They therefore experience pressure to perform better than what they are capable of. Furthermore, this often unrealistic “standard of perfection”, together with the fear of punishment, can cause students to cheat or hide their mistakes (Gaberson, 1997:16).

2.5 CONTROL OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

2.5.1 Codes of honour

Researchers found that self-reported cheating was significantly higher at academic institutions where there were no codes of honour in comparison with those which had codes of honour implemented (McCabe & Treviño, 1993:531). It is widely recognised that the implementation of codes of honour at academic institutions, inclusive of a pledge of honour, reporting of dishonest behaviour, and judiciary action by peers plays an important role in the establishment of an academic environment where cheating and dishonesty are seen as socially unacceptable behaviour (McCabe & Treviño, 1997:393). It is also evident that clear definitions of appropriate and inappropriate academic behaviour in the honour code of an institution will prevent the rationalisation of unacceptable behaviour by students, resulting in fewer incidents of cheating and plagiarism (McCabe & Treviño, 1993:525). However, the existence of a code of honour does not guarantee a culture of strong academic integrity unless the code of honour is valued by the teaching staff, properly implemented, and embedded in the student culture (Hall & Kuh, 1998:10; McCabe *et al.*, 2001:224; Turner & Beemsterboer, 2003:1127). It is therefore important that academic institutions create and enforce high ethical standards on their campuses by clear explanation of rules and expected standards, the development of high moral standards in students and the enhancement of mutual respect between students and the teaching staff (McCabe *et al.*, 2001:228; McCabe *et al.*, 2006:303; Scanlan, 2006:180).

McCabe and Treviño (2002:1) identified two elements critical to the success of codes of honour. Firstly, academic institutions must implement strategies to make students aware of the high priority of academic integrity at the particular institution. Secondly, students must be involved in the judicial system that manages incidents that undermine academic integrity and breach the code of honour (McCabe & Treviño, 2002:1). Given the influence that peers have on academic dishonesty, it is essential that students give input in the formulation of the code of honour and that they play a central role in the establishment of an environment valuing academic integrity at an academic institution (McCabe & Treviño, 1997:394; Scanlan, 2006:182; Turner &

Beemsterboer, 2003:1127). Additionally, in an environment of strong academic integrity, relationships of trust are established among the academic community that will cause students first to consider the repercussions of their cheating behaviour before they engage in dishonest actions (McCabe *et al.*, 2001:231). According to McCabe, Butterfield and Treviño (2003:370) peer monitoring plays an important role in honour code communities. Students are expected to take responsibility for peer monitoring and report dishonest behaviour by peers in exchange for special privileges such as examinations without invigilation. Turner and Beemsterboer (2003:1124) are also of the opinion that codes of honour will strengthen personal responsibility and accountability for students. In addition, research indicated that the implementation of honour codes at higher education institutions can have an influence on dishonest behaviour later in the workplace because graduates coming from an honour code environment tend to display less dishonest behaviour in the workplace (McCabe *et al.*, 2001:225).

However, Arhin (2009:20) warns that a code of honour in itself is not enough to address all forms of academic dishonesty and that other strategies also need to be considered; for example, academic integrity policies. Furthermore, students must be taught what constitutes unacceptable academic behaviour with special attention to plagiarism.

2.5.2 Academic integrity policies

McCabe and Treviño (1993:531) point out that the understanding and acceptance of academic integrity policies have an impact on students' perceptions of their peers' behaviour. This in turn has a major impact on cheating behaviour. Jordan (2001:243) found that students who know and understand the institutional integrity policies were less likely to cheat than those students who did not have knowledge and insight in the policies. Policies of academic integrity, including an exact definition of what constitutes unacceptable academic behaviour, should be explained to the students and should be consistently enforced by the lecturing staff and the academic institution (Arhin, 2009:20). These policies should also include sanctions that are severe enough to deter students from engaging in dishonest behaviour (McCabe *et*

al., 2001:231). Sims (1993:210) argues that in order for students to learn that dishonesty is not acceptable behaviour lecturers must insist that students take responsibility for their dishonest actions and accept their moral obligations. They should not be protected by lecturers when they are guilty of academic dishonesty (Sims, 1993:210). Students further need to understand that the sanctions spelled out in the academic integrity policies will be consistently enforced and lecturers need to be supported by the institution in their efforts to combat academic dishonesty (McCabe *et al.*, 2001:231). This in turn will help with the establishment of a learning environment where academic integrity is valued (Whitley, 1998:261).

2.5.3 Strategies to manage academic dishonesty in the classroom

McCabe and Pavela (2004:12) developed ten principles of academic integrity for teaching staff. These principles are summarised in Table 2.1. With strong collaboration between lecturers and students these strategies can be employed to promote academic integrity, thereby minimising cheating and plagiarism rates at academic institutions.

Table 2.1
Ten principles of academic integrity for faculties

Number	Principle
1	Recognise and affirm academic integrity as a core institutional value.
2	Foster a lifelong commitment to learning.
3	Affirm the role of the teacher as guide and mentor.
4	Help students understand the potential of the Internet – and how that potential can be lost if online resources are used for fraud, theft, and deception.
5	Encourage students' responsibility for academic integrity.
6	Clarify expectations for students.
7	Develop fair and creative forms of assessment.
8	Reduce opportunities to engage in academic dishonesty.
9	Respond to academic dishonesty when it occurs.
10	Help define and support campus-wide academic integrity standards.

(McCabe & Pavela, 2004:12-15)

In addition, Hilbert (1987:43) identified the following strategies as successful in countering cheating during examinations: strict invigilation; control of seating arrangements; and the use of different forms of examinations. Brown (2002:7) also focuses on monitoring and prevention measures such as invigilators walking up and down the aisles when invigilating; making eye contact with all the students; not allowing students to keep any personal items at their desks; and not allowing students to leave the examination venue. Additionally, students should be informed of the policies regarding academic dishonesty and the consequences of cheating (Brown, 2002:7). Arhin (2009:20) also focuses on the administration of examinations and proposes that examination questions should be changed frequently, and that the code of honour must be included in the examination paper to remind the student of academic integrity while writing the examination. Furthermore, she suggests that all forms of electronic equipment should be forbidden in the examination room and if calculators are necessary for the examination the memories should be cleared before entering the room (Arhin, 2009: 20).

Park (2004:294) emphasises a positive approach in the control of plagiarism by clearly identifying it as unacceptable behaviour that contravenes academic integrity, with the emphasis on prevention, and education supported by a system of detection and punitive action. Arhin (2009:20) specifically indicates that students must be made aware of what constitutes plagiarism and emphasises that they need to be taught about proper referencing, paraphrasing and the use of Internet information. Whitley (1998:262) mentions several other strategies that can be employed to curb academic dishonesty. These include the provision of support services to students identified to be at risk for cheating, such as students with study problems; ensuring a manageable amount of course work for students; allowing students to redo assignments to improve their grades; as well as control of cheating during tests and examinations by close monitoring and innovative seating arrangements (Whitley, 1998:263).

Gaberson (1997:17) advocates the promotion of academic integrity through a socialisation process of moral fortification and character building where students learn to practise nursing with honesty and integrity. Although most nursing curricula include ethical principles and theory that model ethical decision-making behaviours,

they are mostly focused on the clinical setting. It is therefore necessary for lecturers to role-model this behaviour in the classroom and reinforce it by applying ethical standards and expecting ethical behaviour in the classroom (Lewenson, Truglio-Londrigan & Singleton, 2005:91). In the same way Nonis and Swift (2001:75) emphasise the important role of lecturers in the development of ethical practitioners by establishing a learning climate of academic integrity through the setting of high ethical standards, modelling ethical behaviour, and teaching ethical decision-making in the classroom. They believe that students who internalise ethical behaviour in the classroom will transfer that behaviour to the workplace (Nonis & Swift, 2001:75).

2.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY FOR NURSING

2.6.1 Academic dishonesty as unethical behaviour

Since academic integrity, based on honesty, forms the ethical foundation of all educational programmes, academic dishonesty can be classified as unethical behaviour (Turner & Beemsterboer, 2003:1123). According to McCabe *et al.* (2001:220) the decision to cheat or not to cheat is one of the most basic ethical decisions to be made by college students. However, from a study done at the Gordon College in Georgia, USA, one can deduce that this is not always an easy decision. Although 92% of the respondents in this study perceived cheating to be ethically wrong, 45% believed it to be socially acceptable (Smyth & Davis, 2004:66). One can therefore conclude that 45% of the students at this institution did not see cheating as ethically wrong. Similarly, concern exists about the values of nursing students in a study where 20% of the respondents did not perceive certain dishonest classroom behaviours, such as giving answers to another student during an examination, as unethical (Hilbert, 1987:45).

According to Turner and Beemsterboer (2003:1123) academic dishonesty can cause harm in different ways. Firstly, dishonest students are unfairly advantaged in comparison with others who do not cheat but work hard to earn their grades. Secondly, honest students can experience stress when they witness dishonesty and have to report it. Lastly, the lack of knowledge and skills caused by academic

dishonesty can cause harm to the public that trust the practitioner to provide safe care (Turner & Beemsterboer, 2003:1123). Equally important is the fact that seemingly harmless student dishonesty in the clinical settings, such as failing to report a mistake, can put the patient's safety at risk (Baxter & Boblin, 2007:20). Furthermore, Gaberson (1997:16) emphasises that since the student-lecturer relationship is built on trust and honesty, any incidents of cheating will cause damage to this relationship as well as to relationships between students because some honest students will resent those who are dishonest.

Given the high premium that is placed on ethical practice by the nursing profession, it can be safely assumed that honesty, integrity, competency and professional morality are expected from every nurse, including the nursing students, at all times (Langone, 2007:45; Searle, 2000:97, 227). Kunene, Nzimande and Ntuli (2001:35) emphatically state if the nurses fail to uphold the values of ethical practice, "nursing loses its meaning, professional integrity and good image". The evident prevalence of academic dishonesty among nursing students, as shown in numerous studies discussed earlier, is therefore a cause for great concern, since this threatens the ethical foundation of the nursing profession (Kenny, 2007:17).

2.6.2 Influence of academic dishonesty on clinical practice

Blankenship and Whitley (2000:2) conducted a study with 284 psychology students to examine the relationship between cheating and other deviant behaviours. The results indicated a significant relationship between cheating and two forms of deviance, namely risky driving and unreliability. This led to the conclusion that there is a consistent relationship between deviant behaviours and cheating, suggesting that academic dishonesty and other forms of deviance are significantly related. Furthermore, the researchers claim that the findings of this study imply that "honesty or dishonesty may be part of a stable dimension of behavior" (Blankenship & Whitley, 2000:8). One can therefore argue that people will behave consistently in an honest or dishonest manner irrespective of whether it is in an academic setting or any other domain, for example the workplace. In a similar study, Lucas and Friedrich (2005:20) also examined the relationship between academic dishonesty and workplace deviance, but added two standardised integrity measures to their study.

The findings revealed an inverted relationship between integrity and cheating where higher levels of integrity were associated with lower levels of cheating behaviour. On the other hand, higher levels of cheating behaviour were positively associated with higher levels of work-related deviance. This finding strongly supported Blankenship and Whitley's (2000:8) findings of a positive correlation between academic dishonesty and workplace deviance (Lucas & Friedrich, 2005:25).

Several other non-nursing studies also examined the relationship between academic dishonesty and workplace dishonesty. Sims (1993:209), for example, found that 91% of the business course students admitted engagement in some form of academic dishonesty, while 98% indicated that they engaged in dishonest workplace behaviour, suggesting that a significant relationship exists between the two behaviours. This leads to the conclusion that dishonest academic behaviour continues into the professional life of the individual. Nonis and Swift (2001:71) conducted a multi-campus study of 1 051 business students to examine the relationship between academic dishonesty and workplace dishonesty. In gauging the respondents' view of dishonest work behaviour, they found that 10% of the students judged 57.1% of dishonest acts as not-cheating behaviour. A disturbing result was that when respondents believed that dishonest behaviour was socially acceptable, they frequently engaged in it, irrespective of the situation. In other words, once this approach was internalised, individuals engaged in dishonest practices in the academic as well as the work environment. Furthermore, the study provided evidence of a high correlation between the frequency of academic cheating at college and dishonest workplace behaviour (Nonis & Swift, 2001:72). Similarly, Harding *et al.* (2004:317) identified a correlation between unethical classroom behaviour and unethical behaviour in the workplace, with 63.6% of the respondents that frequently engaged in unethical classroom behaviour also engaging in dishonest behaviour in the workplace.

Distressingly, in nursing too, studies of students' unethical behaviour revealed a significant correlation between unethical classroom behaviour and unethical behaviour in the clinical settings (Hilbert, 1985:232; 1987:42). Hilbert (1988:166) found that 15.9% of nursing students were guilty of serious unethical behaviour in the clinical areas such as dishonest recording of medication, treatment or

observations. Forty-four per cent admitted to taking hospital equipment to use at home. This is a cause for concern because such behaviour can harm patients and causes the moral integrity of the nursing profession to be questioned (Hilbert, 1988:166). Besides being unethical behaviour, cheating undermines learning and the evaluation process, and also produces graduates who do not possess the necessary knowledge and skills that are required for their future work environment (Bailey, 2001:130; Bates *et al.*, 2005:75; Lambert *et al.*, 2003:2; Lim & See, 2001:273; Turner & Beemsterboer, 2003:1123). Cheating in terms of clinical skills poses a particular threat to the well-being of patients. A student who cheats during the evaluation of a medicine round, for example, does not learn the skill of calculating a medication dose with the result that in future a patient may receive the wrong dose of medication (Gaberson, 1997:16). However, Hilbert (1988:166) points out that it is possible that students do not realise that cheating in an examination can cause a lack of knowledge that in turn can harm patients. One can therefore argue that it is vitally important for the lecturing staff to reinforce the possible clinical consequences of academic dishonesty and take responsibility to curb this type of behaviour.

Hilbert (1988:167) also suggests that in nursing education more attention should be given to the ethical content of the curricula, and that ethical behaviour in the clinical areas should be discussed with the students so that they understand what is expected of them. In addition, Bailey (2001:130) suggests that nursing students must have orientation programmes to bring to their attention the seriousness of dishonest recordkeeping and unethical practice behaviour. It is also essential that this kind of unethical behaviour be dealt with immediately (Bailey, 2001:130).

In summary: the above discussion provides evidence that academic dishonesty has serious consequences for the workplace since individuals who engage in such conduct continue with their dishonest behaviour in their professional careers. For the nursing profession these findings are even more significant since patients' well-being and even their lives can be at stake. Therefore, academic dishonesty must be deemed to be a very serious matter and may not be condoned or ignored by the lecturing staff and the academic institutions. Students must understand what the consequences are and lecturing staff need to make every effort to ensure that ethical practitioners are developed during the nursing education course.

2.7 DEDUCTION

Dock (quoted in Lewenson *et al.*, 2005:93) challenged the nursing community in 1931 with the following statement: “The morale of our profession and its good name cannot be maintained unless the great body of nurses, students as well as graduates, learn and support its best traditions and ideals.” This is still a relevant and imperative challenge facing nursing today. The nurse educator has an important role to play by ensuring high standards of academic integrity in the education of the nursing students in order for them to become ethical and professional nursing practitioners (Lewenson *et al.*, 2005:91).

Lim and See (2001:262) contend that “the primary focus of an academic institution is to provide an environment for personal development of our youth in the moral, cognitive, physical, social, and aesthetic sphere”. This statement implies that in this environment high moral values, academic integrity and honesty should be the norm in the generation and evaluation of knowledge (Lim & See, 2001:262). However, it is clear from previous studies that large numbers of students at academic institutions all over the world commit some form of academic dishonesty and it is evident that it does have an effect on future ethical behaviour in the workplace (Brown, 2002:7; Gaberson, 1997:14; Kenny, 2007:17; Lim & See, 2001:269; McCabe & Treviño, 1993:524; McCabe & Treviño, 1997:379; McCabe *et al.*, 2006:299; McCabe, 2009:622; Nonis & Swift, 2001:76; Olasehinde-Williams *et al.*, 2003:70; Whitley, 1998:238).

Given the extensive attention that the prevalence of academic dishonesty and plagiarism at academic institutions receives all over the world, there is a surprising paucity of empirical research regarding this topic in general, and in nursing education specifically, at academic institutions in South Africa. McCabe (2009:623) expresses his concern regarding academic dishonesty in the nursing fraternity very clearly as follows: “The future health of the profession itself may depend on a strong response from the profession as a whole, with a special role to be played by nurse educators.” McCabe (2009:623) also indicates that there is a need for future research regarding the academic integrity of nursing students. It is therefore important to determine whether academic dishonesty is also a significant problem in nursing education in

South Africa to be able to develop strategies to prevent this kind of behaviour. This study attempted to help fill this gap by exploring the incidence of academic dishonesty amongst nursing students at a specific nursing education institution in the Western Cape and sought to identify related individual and contextual factors.

2.8 SUMMARY

In this chapter an overview is given of the concepts 'academic integrity' and 'academic dishonesty' and the prevalence thereof. Studies done on contributing factors and causes of academic dishonesty, as well as strategies to manage academic dishonesty, are discussed. This chapter concludes with a discussion on the significance of academic dishonesty for the nursing profession.

The methodology to study the above-mentioned concepts at a specific nursing education institution in the Western Cape is discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Maintaining academic integrity in nursing education is integral to the development of ethical practitioners in the nursing profession. This research explored the status of academic integrity among nursing students in a nursing education institution in the Western Cape. The research investigated the influence of age, gender, home language and year of study on academic dishonesty. The prevalence of academic dishonesty, the attitudes of nursing students towards cheating behaviour, the influence of peer behaviour and the control of academic dishonesty were also investigated.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH AND DESIGN

Fouché and De Vos (cited in De Vos *et al.*, 2005:101) state that the research topic determines the decision whether to utilise a quantitative, qualitative or combined qualitative-quantitative research approach. Burns and Grove (2009:22) define quantitative research as “a formal, objective, systematic process in which numerical data are used to obtain information about the world”. This approach is grounded in the philosophy of logical positivism and it therefore focuses on finding the truth through the objective measurement of reality (Burns & Grove, 2009:23).

According to Fortune and Reid (1993, quoted in De Vos *et al.*, 2005:73) quantitative studies focus on specific questions throughout the investigation and specific variables are measured. These variables are quantified by means of rating scales or frequency counts. Standardised procedures, for example the completion of the same questionnaire by all the participants, are utilised to collect data. In this way, the researcher takes on the role of “an objective observer” with limited involvement in the study phenomena (Fortune & Reid, 1993, quoted in De Vos *et al.*, 2005:73).

As a result of the sensitivity associated with studying academic dishonesty, most of the studies done in this regard are quantitative in nature, with self-reporting surveys the most common method used (Hilbert, 1988:163; Lim & See, 2001:265; McCabe, 2009:616; McCabe & Treviño, 1997:385; Newstead *et al.*, 1996:231). Accordingly, the researcher also decided on a quantitative research approach for this study. The quantitative research approach was further justified by the fact that in view of the sensitive nature of the topic, the researcher required answers to specific questions, quantification of variables, a large number of participants, objectivity in collection and analysis of data and a standardised method of data collection.

In referring to the research design as the “blue print” according to which a study is planned, Burns and Grove (2009:236) mention that its purpose is to provide control over the study to maximise the validity of the findings. Non-experimental research designs, for example descriptive and correlational designs, are often utilised in nursing research where phenomena are studied in their natural environment without any manipulation of the variables (Burns & Grove, 2009:237). According to Brink (2006:102) the purpose of non-experimental research is to describe phenomena, and to examine and describe relationships among the variables. Descriptive designs are utilised in studies where more information in a particular field is required to provide a picture of the phenomenon as it occurs naturally (Burns & Grove, 2009:237). In such designs the variables are described to answer the research question (Brink, 2006:102). The complexity of descriptive designs depends upon the number of variables involved. Since causality is not established in descriptive designs, no dependent and independent variables are identified (Burns & Grove, 2009:237).

According to Brink (2006:11) the research problem and the existing knowledge regarding the research topic dictate the choice of research design. In this study a descriptive survey design was utilised to investigate the extent of academic dishonesty among nursing students at a nursing education institution in the Western Cape. The researcher opted for this type of research design due to the sensitive nature of this issue and to optimise the collection of honest data by means of questionnaires. Furthermore, the phenomenon of academic dishonesty could be studied as it occurred naturally without any manipulation of variables.

3.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

The target population comprises all the individuals that meet the criteria for inclusion in the sample (Burns & Grove, 2009:343). The inclusion criteria, that is, those characteristics that a respondent must have to be included in the study (Burns & Grove, 2007:325), were that the respondents had to have done at least one theory examination, one theory assignment and one theory test at this educational institution. The target population therefore included all the pre-registration nursing students in the second- (N=319), third- (N=199) and fourth-year (N=170) groups at a specific nursing education institution in the Western Cape. The first-year student group was not considered for inclusion in the sample on the grounds that they had not yet been exposed to at least three assessment tasks at the nursing education institution. The estimated size of the target population was 688 students (N=688).

The purpose of the sampling process is to select a representative group of respondents from the target population for inclusion in the study (Brink, 2006:124). Representativeness means that the sample group should have more or less the same characteristics as the larger population in order for the findings of the study to be generalised to the larger population (Strydom, cited in De Vos *et al.*, 2005:196). The highest degree of representativeness is achieved through random sampling, where each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected for the sample (Strydom, cited in De Vos *et al.*, 2005:197). The researcher had originally planned to utilise a systematic random sampling technique for the selection of respondents. However, this method has the major drawback that a sampling frame containing the names of all the respondents is utilised. This may cause respondents to question whether their complete anonymity is indeed ensured. The researcher was alerted to this problem when the respondents who participated in the pilot study indicated that they felt uncomfortable with the fact that their names were known to the researcher, although complete anonymity had been guaranteed. The researcher therefore preferred to opt for a *non-random convenience sampling* technique where respondents were included in the study on the grounds that they were “in the right place at the right time” (Burns & Grove, 2009:353), meaning in a certain class at a certain time. In this manner the anonymity of the respondents was enhanced and the chances of securing honest data regarding a sensitive topic were increased. A

disadvantage of this sampling method is that all the respondents do not have an equal opportunity to be included in the sample, meaning that there is a chance that the sample will not be representative of the population (Burns & Grove, 2009:353).

There are no definitive prescriptions about the adequate size of a sample for a study, but larger samples are often used in quantitative studies (Brink, 2006:135). Stoker's table (1985, quoted in De Vos *et al.*, 2005:196) provided some guidelines for the sample size of a study (see Table 3.1). According to this table a study with a population of 500 respondents is adequately represented by a sample of 20% (100 respondents). However, in this study, as a result of the non-random sampling method, a sample of 80% was selected in an effort to increase representativeness. Basavanthappa (2007:300) also indicated that the danger of sample bias can be reduced with a large representative sample. In addition, the decision to enlarge the sample to 80% was based on previous studies on academic dishonesty which reported poor response rates, ranging from as low as 13% (McCabe *et al.*, 2006:297) to 35% (Jordan, 2001:237). The low response rate of 39% in the pilot study for this study was in line with these findings. According to Burns and Grove (2009:409) the representativeness of a study may be questioned if the response rate is lower than 50%. Increasing the sample to 80% would ensure that enough data was generated for analysis and interpretation. Accordingly, a sample of 80% (n=550) was obtained from each of the above-mentioned student groups in the target population, namely second-year (n=255), third-year (n=159) and fourth-year (n=136) students.

Table 3.1
Guidelines for sampling

Population	Percentage suggested	Number of respondents
20	100	20
30	80	24
50	64	32
100	45	45
200	32	64
500	20	100
1 000	14	140
10 000	4.5	450
100 000	2	2 000
200 000	1	2 000

Source: Stoker (1985) (De Vos *et al.*, 2005:196)

3.4 DATA COLLECTION

3.4.1 The survey as data collection technique

Data was collected by means of a self-reported survey. A survey is a data collection technique in which standardised questionnaires are administered to a sample of respondents to collect original data from an identified population that may be used for descriptive, explanatory or exploratory purposes (Babbie, 2007:244). According to Babbie (2007:275) it is more effective to use self-reported questionnaires to examine sensitive issues such as academic dishonesty, because respondents are often reluctant to report on dishonest behaviour in face-to-face interviews. In self-reported questionnaires the respondents complete the questionnaire themselves (Babbie, 2007:260).

3.4.2 The questionnaire as data-collection instrument

A questionnaire with a set of 61 Likert-type items was designed to obtain self-reported information about academic dishonesty. In order to generate data for analysis and interpretation, the research variables were operationalised by the questions incorporated in the questionnaire (Babbie, 2007:245). Items included in the questionnaire were based on the analysis of research studies on academic

dishonesty done by McCabe and Treviño (1997:380), Lim and See (2001:264) and Newstead *et al.* (1996:232). The questionnaire was designed in a way that allowed specific analysis of different forms of academic dishonesty, for example cheating behaviour and plagiarism. Some questions were included to determine potential individual influential factors such as age, gender, home language and year of training. Other questions were aimed at eliciting contextual information regarding academic dishonesty. The latter refers to items addressing incidents of cheating, the prevalence of observed academic dishonesty, the perceived seriousness of cheating, the influence of peer behaviour, the willingness to report academic dishonesty, the motivation for cheating, the perceived deterring effect of penalties, and knowledge of institutional policies regarding academic dishonesty.

According to Burns and Grove (2009:374) nominal scale measurement is used to measure data that can be categorised but not arranged in a particular order, for example gender. Some of the data elicited in this questionnaire was measured on the nominal scale, namely age, gender, home language and year of training. Ordinal scale measurement is used to measure data that can be ranked, but with unequal intervals. The variables for eliciting contextual information in this questionnaire were ranked into categories such as incidence of plagiarism, cheating behaviour, influence of peer pressure. They were measured on the ordinal scale level.

The Likert-type scale used in the questionnaire measured the opinions or attitudes of the respondents regarding 57 items (Burns & Grove, 2009:410). Each item had four possible response categories on the scale. The response categories indicating cheating behaviour ranged from '*never*' to '*many times*' and those indicating attitudes with regard to dishonesty ranged from '*strongly disagree*' to '*strongly agree*'.

In addition, three open-ended questions were included in the questionnaire to generate more in-depth data (Babbie, 2007:246). These questions investigated the respondents' understanding of the term 'plagiarism', their feelings regarding cheating, and their recommendations to prevent academic cheating among students.

The motivation for using a questionnaire in this study can be found in the advantages provided by this type of data-gathering instrument: it is a quick way of obtaining data

from a large group of people, it is less expensive in terms of time and money, and the format is standard for all the respondents (Brink, 2006:147).

Most importantly, particularly in this study, was the sense of security created by the guaranteed anonymity accompanying the questionnaire which, according to Brink (2006:147), is vital for eliciting honest answers from respondents.

3.4.3 Process of data collection

In previous studies done on academic dishonesty, researchers found that the response rate was much higher when questionnaires were distributed and filled in during regular class sessions. Bates *et al.* (2005:72) reported a response rate of 76% using scheduled class time while Daniel *et al.* (1994:282) found a response rate as high as 99%. According to Babbie (2007:262) 50% is considered to be an adequate response rate for analysis and interpretation.

In an effort to secure an adequate response rate for this study and to maintain consistency, data collection took place during scheduled classes and only the researcher was involved. Consistency in data collection plays an important role in maintaining the validity of the study. Consistency implies that data is collected from each respondent in an identical fashion or as close as possible to the original way of data collection (Basavanthappa, 2007:364). According to Burns and Grove (2009:409) consistency can be influenced by the number of data collectors involved and the circumstances under which the questionnaires are administered. Therefore, the questionnaires were distributed by the researcher who handed them out to the first 80% of students in each year group who entered the classroom. The aim of the study, as well as the information letter and the research procedure regarding the completion of the questionnaire, was explained to the respondents. All the respondents were assured of complete anonymity and it was stressed that participation was voluntary, as both of these requirements are very important when studying academic dishonesty. The importance of honesty in answering the questions was also brought to their attention. The respondents received sufficient time to complete the questionnaires and they then submitted the completed questionnaires by posting them into a sealed box. This approach to administering the

questionnaires maximised the return of completed questionnaires and it had the additional advantage that respondents could clarify any other misunderstandings about the instrument (Basavanthappa, 2007:429).

3.5 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

According to Delport (cited in De Vos *et al.*, 2005:160) reliability reflects the consistency of the instrument in measuring the concept it is supposed to measure. In other words, a reliable question will consistently be interpreted in the same way by the respondents in a study (Babbie, 2007:143). In order to ensure reliability the questions included in the questionnaire were based on previous research studies as indicated earlier in the report (see paragraph 3.4.2). The questions were also tested in a pilot study to make sure that the respondents understood the questions. In addition, as described in the previous paragraph, the consistency was further protected during data collection by involving only the researcher in the collection of data and utilising scheduled class time to ensure that the methods and procedures of data collection were the same for all the respondents (Basavanthappa, 2007:364).

The validity of a measuring instrument signifies the extent to which it accurately measures the concept in question (Strydom, cited in De Vos *et al.*, 2005:160). According to Monette, Sullivan and DeJong (2002, quoted in De Vos *et al.*, 2005:161) content validity indicates whether the measuring instrument would provide an adequate sample of indicators necessary for measuring the variable of interest. Strydom (cited in De Vos *et al.*, 2005:161) indicate that in order to determine content validity one should ask two questions: "Is the instrument really measuring the concept we assume it is?" and "Does the instrument provide an adequate sample of items that represent that concept?"

In addition, Rubin and Babbie (2001, quoted in De Vos *et al.*, 2005:161) are of the opinion that content validity is also established by the measuring instrument being judged by other researchers and experts. Face validity concerns the face value of the measuring instrument and whether it appears to measure the variable of interest (Strydom, cited in De Vos *et al.*, 2005:161). In order to ensure content and face

validity, the questionnaire was based on a literature review as well as on the objectives formulated for the study. A research statistician, the supervisor as well as other experts in research methodology and nursing education analysed the questionnaire. In addition, a pilot study was conducted to validate and refine the research instrument.

3.6 PILOT STUDY

Burns and Grove (2007:549) define a pilot study as “a smaller version of a proposed study conducted to develop and refine the methodology, such as the treatment, instruments, or data collection process to be used in the larger study”. The pilot group consisted of a 4% sample of each of the student groups in the target population, namely second-year (n=13), third-year (n=8) and fourth-year (n=7). These respondents and the collected data were excluded from the main investigation (see De Vos *et al.*, 2005:206).

During the pilot study, a small, representative group of respondents was randomly selected for pre-testing of the questionnaire to identify possible shortcomings. The overall response rate for the pilot study was 39%. This low response rate was one of the reasons why the researcher enlarged the sample for the main study to 80%. Based on the feedback from these respondents, relevant alterations were made to the instrument. Some questions were further clarified to ensure better understanding while two questions regarding honesty in the completion of practical workbooks were added. Normally the same sampling and execution methods are employed in the pilot study as are planned for the main investigation (Strydom, cited in De Vos *et al.*, 2005:206).

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

Each questionnaire was given an identification number after it had been returned by the respondent. The raw quantitative data was captured on computer with MS Excel for statistical analysis in the next phase of the research. The data was cleaned by

randomly cross-checking the data points with the original data for accuracy and correction of the identified errors (Burns & Grove, 2007:403). Descriptive statistics were used to describe the sample and draw up frequency distributions. The data on each of the variables was examined according to the measures of central tendency (mean) and dispersion (standard deviation) and the outliers were identified.

The mean is the measure of central tendency that is most commonly used and is also known as the average value. The mean is calculated by adding all the scores together and then dividing the sum by the total number of scores (Burns & Grove, 2007:417).

Maltby, Day and Williams (2007:58) describe the standard deviation (SD) as a descriptive statistic that measures variability and is always associated with the mean. According to Burns and Grove (2007:418) the SD provides the researcher with an indication of the average deviation of a score from the mean in that specific sample, and provides a measure of dispersion.

Inferential statistical tests were used to examine and describe differences between the different groups such as gender groups, home language groups and year of study groups. The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) is a parametric test that is used when the variables are normally distributed to determine whether there is a relationship between two continuous variables (Burns & Grove, 2007:423). The possible correlations range between -1 (a perfect negative correlation) and +1 (a perfect positive correlation) with a value of 0 in the middle, which indicates that no relationship exists between the two variables (Burns & Grove, 2007:423). It is important to note that the Pearson correlation only determines that a relationship (positive or negative) exists or that there is no relationship between two variables, but it does not determine causation of one variable by another (Maltby *et al.*, 2007:163). Analysis of variance (ANOVA) is a method for assessing the differences between means when data from two or more groups is being examined. The results are reported as an F -statistic (Burns & Grove, 2007:430).

Probability (p) is used in statistics to establish confidence in the findings of a study (Maltby *et al.*, 2007:114). In other words, the p -value gives an indication of the probability that an event will occur in a given situation or that an event can be

accurately predicted under certain circumstances (Burns & Grove, 2007:406). The p -value is expressed as a decimal value ranging from 0 to 1 and can be stated as less than a specific value, for example $p < 0.05$ (Burns & Grove, 2007:407). Significance testing is based on probability and is a criterion that is used to judge whether the researchers are confident that their findings are probable or not probable. The results of significance testing are expressed as a percentage indicating that the researcher is 95% or 99% confident of the findings. The level of significance is often expressed as a decimal of 0.05 or 0.01, meaning that there is a 5% or 1% probability that the researcher had made an error (Maltby *et al.*, 2007:115).

The raw data generated by the open-ended questions in the questionnaires was intended to supplement the quantitative data, and was not regarded as true qualitative research. As such, it was managed and categorised using the basic principles of Tesch's approach to qualitative data analysis (Poggenpoel, 1998:343). Tesch's approach, slightly modified because of the written narrative data as opposed to transcribed interviews, required the researcher to read all the narratives carefully to get a sense of the data as a whole. The researcher compiled a list of topics, abbreviated as codes, after thinking through the underlying meaning of the responses. The codes were written next to appropriate portions of the text. Finally, several categories of responses were identified and the frequency of such responses recorded.

3.8 SUMMARY

In this chapter the methodology implemented to explore the status of academic integrity among nursing students is described in detail. The target population, the sampling thereof, and the data collection technique are discussed.

The next chapter of this report describes and discusses the results gained from the gathered data after applying statistical analyses to investigate the prevalence of academic dishonesty among nursing students; the relationship between demographic variables such as gender, home language, level of training, age and research variables investigating academic dishonesty; and the influence of peer

behaviour on academic dishonesty. The results of the qualitative data analysis are also described.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to explore the status of academic integrity among nursing students at a nursing education institution in the Western Cape. The researcher sampled 550 individuals from the second- (n=255), third- (n=159) and fourth-year (n=136) pre-registration nursing student groups at a nursing education institution in the Western Cape. A self-report questionnaire was used as a data-collection instrument. Quantitative data was collected on the nominal and ordinal level. The inclusion of open-ended questions generated more in-depth information on the topic of academic integrity. The overall response rate for this survey was 72%. The third-year group had the lowest response rate of 56%, followed by the second-year group with 69% and the fourth-year group with the highest response rate of 95%. Possibly, the fourth-year group felt less threatened by the topic of academic integrity since they were in their final year of study.

4.2 DATA ANALYSIS

Burns and Grove (2007:41) describe data analysis as the process whereby the collected research data is reduced and organised with the purpose of drawing meaning from the data. Both quantitative and qualitative (by the inclusion of open-ended questions) data was generated and analysed to provide information on the status of academic integrity amongst nursing students at a nursing education institution.

The responses to all the questions in the questionnaire were summarised individually according to the layout of the questionnaire. However, the questions which generated qualitative data (questions 62, 63, 64) were analysed and are displayed under the data analysis of the qualitative data in paragraph 4.2.2.

4.2.1 Data analysis of the quantitative data

Microsoft Excel was used to capture the raw quantitative data on computer and STATISTICA version 9 software program was used to analyse the data. With the computing of the data the statistician rounded off percentages to the nearest whole number. Descriptive statistics are statistical methods used to organise and present the data by means of frequency distributions, measures of central tendency and dispersion in order to give meaning to the data (Burns & Grove, 2007:413). Descriptive statistics were used to describe the variables and, where appropriate, the distributions were illustrated by means of frequency tables or histograms.

Means were used as the measures of central tendency for ordinal and continuous responses and standard deviations (SD) as indicators of how the scores were spread around the mean. Relationships between two continuous variables were analysed with correlation analysis and the strength of the relationship was measured with the Pearson correlation statistic. The relationships between continuous response variables and nominal input variables were analysed using appropriate analysis of variance (ANOVA). In the current study a probability value of $p < 0.05$ represented statistical significance in hypothesis testing and 95% confidence intervals were used to describe the estimation of unknown parameters.

4.2.1.1 Section A: Demographic data

Demographic data was collected to investigate individual factors that could have an influence on the academic integrity of the participating pre-registration nursing students. This data included gender, home language, current level of training, as well as the age of the respondents. The respondents were requested to complete this part of the questionnaire by indicating their preferred answer with a tick in the box next to questions one, two, three, and to fill in their age in question four. The researcher wanted to determine if there was a correlation between the pre-registration nurses' gender, home language, level of training and age, and the occurrence of academic dishonesty.

Question 1: What is your gender? (n=395)

Two respondents (n=2) did not complete this question. The majority of the respondents who completed the questionnaire (n=332 or 84%) were female. The rest were male respondents (n=61 or 16%). This was consistent with the general female (86%) and male (14%) distribution of the second-, third- and fourth-year pre-registration nursing student groups at this nursing education institution.

Question 2: What is your home language? (n=395)

One respondent (n=1) did not complete this question. Most of the respondents were Xhosa-speaking (n=203 or 51%) and the second-largest group was Afrikaans-speaking (n=145 or 37%). The course is presented in English but only 9% (n=34) of the respondents were first language English-speakers. The remainder of the respondents (n=12 or 3%) who indicated 'other' were either Sotho- or Tswana-speaking.

Table 4.1
Respondents' language

Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
English	34	9
Afrikaans	145	37
Xhosa	203	51
Other	12	3
Total	n=394	100

Question 3: What is your current level of training? (n=395)

As indicated in Table 4.2 the majority of the respondents (n=177 or 45%) were second-year students. The third-year group of respondents was the lowest (n=89 or 22%) due to the low response rate in this specific group (see paragraph 4.1). Despite the fact that all the student groups were approached in the same manner it was evident that the third-year group did not respond to the same extent as the second-

and fourth- year groups of students. The reason for this phenomenon is unknown to the researcher.

Table 4.2
Respondents' current level of training

Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Basic course 2 nd year	177	45
Basic course 3 rd year	89	22
Basic course 4 th year	129	33
Total	n=395	100

Question 4: What is your age? (n=395)

Twenty-seven respondents (n=27) did not complete this question. As indicated in Table 4.3, the majority of the respondents who completed the questionnaire (n=169 or 46%) were in the age group 21 to 25 years. The rest of the respondents were divided into the following age groups: 15 to 20 (n=61 or 17%); 26 to 30 (n=72 or 19%); 31 to 35 (n=38 or 10%); 36 to 40 (n=19 or 5%); 41 to 45 (n=8 or 2%); 46 to 50 (n=1 or 1%). The mean age of the respondents was 25 years ($X=25$) where the mean is considered to be “the sum of the measurements divided by the number of measurements” and specifies the balance point of the distribution (De Vos *et al.*, 2005:233).

Table 4.3
Respondents' age

Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
15 – 20 years	61	17
21 – 25 years	169	46
26 – 30 years	72	19
31 – 35 years	38	10
36 – 40 years	19	5
41 – 45 years	8	2
46 – 50 years	1	1
Total	n=368	100

4.2.1.2 Section B: Data relating to academic integrity

In this section of the questionnaire the frequency of academic dishonesty amongst pre-registration nursing students was investigated, as well as various contextual factors influencing dishonest behaviour. Data collected from questions 5 to 24 investigated the frequency of various forms of academic dishonesty amongst pre-registration nursing students at a specific nursing education institution. The data generated by questions 5 to 18 revealed the personal involvement of the respondents in academic dishonesty, whereas questions 19 to 24 provided data related to the respondents' awareness of the involvement of other pre-registration nursing students in acts of academic dishonesty.

The respondents were requested to choose one of the possibilities next to the question as their answer and to indicate their choice with a tick in the open box. The following key was used to guide the respondents in questions 5 to 24: 4 = *Many times*; 3 = *More than once*; 2 = *Once*; and 1 = *Never*.

Question 5: How often have you copied *ideas* from any sources (e.g. books, journals) without acknowledging the original author? (n=395)

Two respondents (n=2) did not complete this section of the questionnaire. Figure 4.1 shows that 40% (n=156) of respondents *never* copied *ideas* from any sources including journals and books. However, the majority indicated that they had either copied *ideas once* (n=66 or 17%), *more than once* (n=111 or 28%) or *many times* (n=60 or 15%).

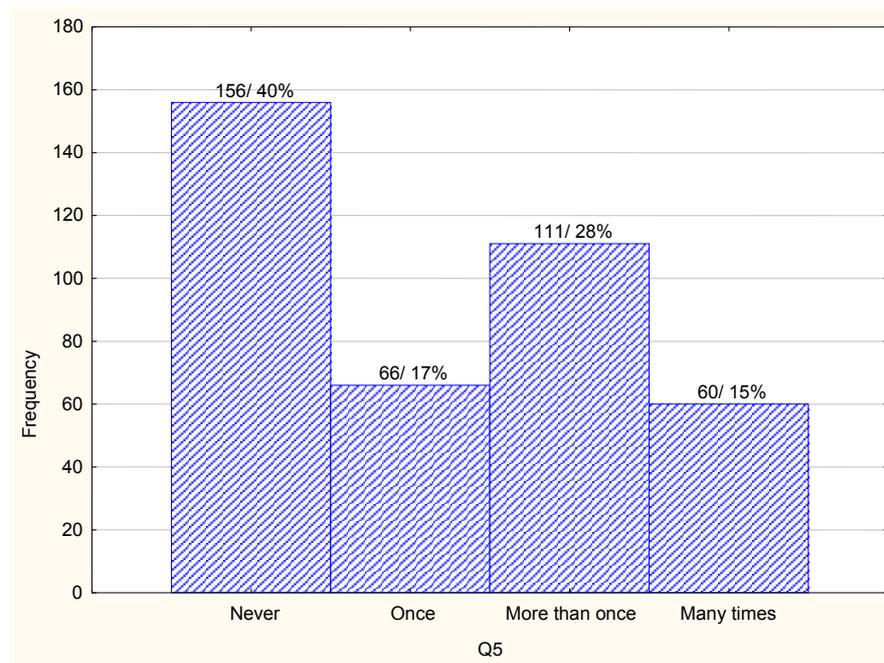


Figure 4.1

Copying *ideas* without acknowledging the original author

Question 6: How often have you copied *word for word* from any original sources (e.g. books, journals) and not used quotation marks? (n=395)

Two respondents (n=2) did not complete this section of the questionnaire. Figure 4.2 indicates that 169 of respondents (n=169 or 43%) *never* copied *word for word* from original sources such as journals and books without using quotation marks. However, the majority indicated that they had either copied *word for word* from an original source *once* (n=79 or 20%), *more than once* (n=114 or 29%) or *many times* (n=31 or 8%). It appears from the similar results of questions 5 and 6 that respondents associated the copying of ideas without acknowledging the original author (see Figure 4.1) with word-for-word copying without using quotation marks (see Figure 4.2).

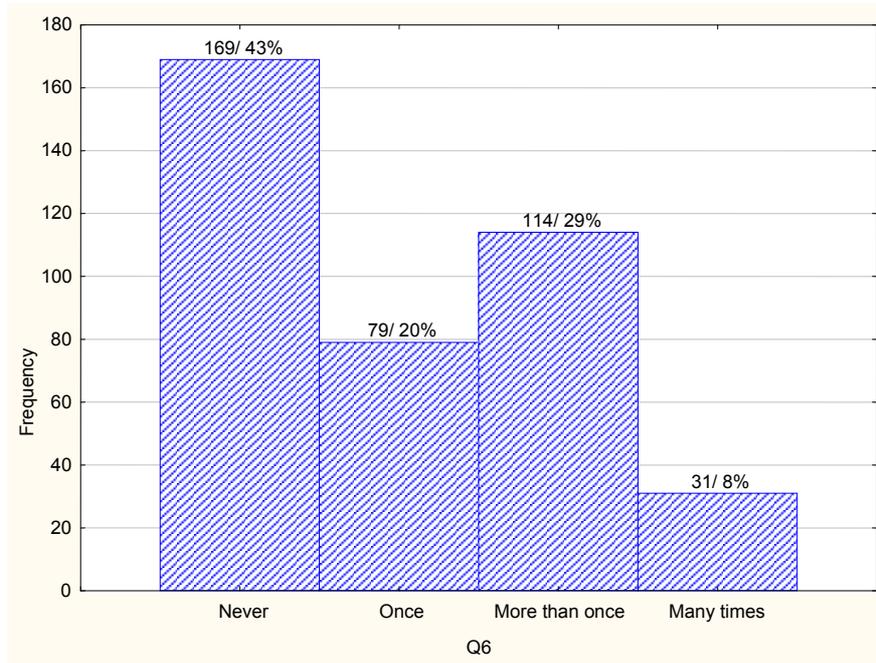


Figure 4.2

Word-for-word copying without using quotation marks

Question 7: How often have you worked together with one or more other students on a homework assignment that was supposed to be done individually? (n=395)

Despite the fact that more than half of the respondents (n=216 or 55%) indicated that they had *never* worked together on an assignment that was supposed to be done individually, Figure 4.3 shows that a large percentage of the respondents had worked together with other students either *once* (n=76 or 19%) or *more than once* (n=80 or 20%) or *many times* (n=23 or 6%).

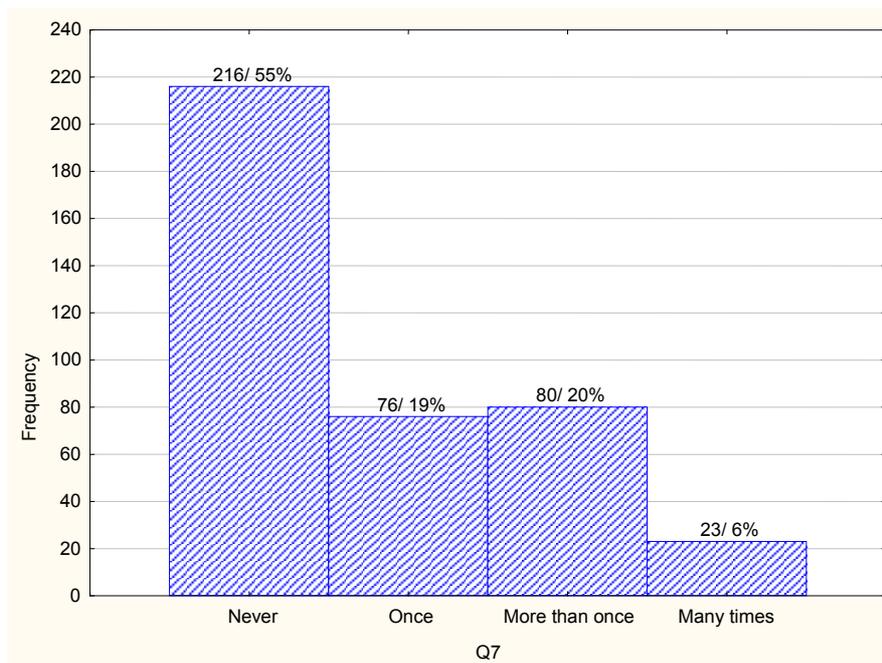


Figure 4.3

Working together on an assignment instead of individually

Question 8: How often have you used material from another student's paper without acknowledging the original author? (n=395)

Six respondents (n=6) did not complete this question. As indicated in Figure 4.4 the majority of respondents (n=286 or 73%) indicated that they had *never* used data from another student's paper without acknowledging the author. However, some respondents (n=47 or 12%) indicated that they had *once* used data from another student's paper without acknowledging the author. Another 42 respondents (11%) had used data from another student's paper without acknowledging the author *more than once*, while 14 respondents (4%) replied that they had used data from another student's paper without acknowledging the author *many times*.

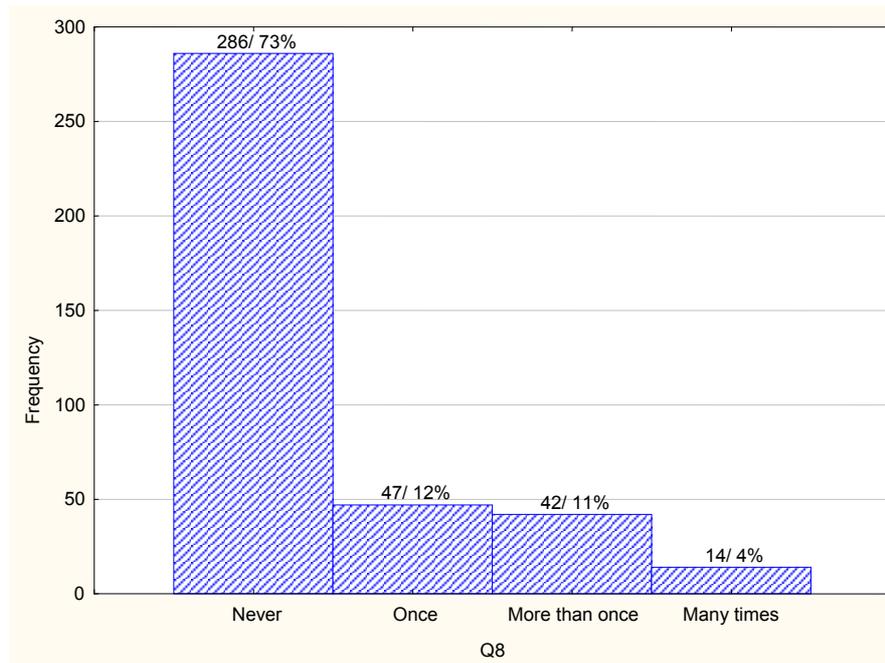


Figure 4.4

Using material from another student's paper without acknowledging the author

Question 9: How often have you submitted a paper written by someone else (e.g. a friend or relative) as your own? (n=395)

Almost all the respondents (n=372 or 92%) indicated that they had *never* submitted a paper written by somebody else as their own. However, some respondents (n=19 or 5%) indicated that they had submitted a paper written by somebody else *once*, and three respondents (2%) had submitted a paper written by somebody else *more than once*, while one pre-registration nursing student (1%) replied that he or she had submitted papers written by somebody else *many times*.

Question 10: How often have you submitted another student's work as your own? (n=395)

Almost all the respondents (n=385 or 96%) indicated that they had *never* submitted another student's work as their own. However, some respondents (n=9 or 3%)

indicated that they had submitted another student's work *once*, and one respondent (1%) had submitted another student's work *more than once*.

Question 11: How often have you written an assignment for someone else? (n=395)

Two respondents (n=2) did not complete this question. The majority of the students (n=319 or 80%) responded that they had *never* written an assignment for someone else. However, 13% of the respondents (n=50) mentioned that they had written an assignment for someone else only *once*. The rest of the pre-registration nursing students mentioned that they had either written an assignment for someone else *more than once* (n=18 or 5%) or *many times* (n=6 or 2%).

Question 12: How often have you copied from another student during a test or examination? (n=395)

Almost all the respondents (n=377 or 94%) indicated that they had *never* copied from another student during a test or examination. However, some respondents (n=11 or 3%) indicated that they had copied *once* from another student during a test or examination. Six respondents (n=6 or 2%) replied that they had copied from another student *more than once* during a test or examination and one (n=1 or 1%) replied that he or she had copied from another student *many times*.

Question 13: How often have you allowed another student to copy from your work during a test or examination? (n=395)

One respondent (n=1) did not complete this question. The majority of the students (n=341 or 86%) responded that they had *never* allowed another student to copy from their work during a test or examination. However, 8% of the respondents (n=32) mentioned that they had allowed another student to copy from their work during a test or examination only *once*. The rest of the respondents mentioned that they had either allowed another student to copy from their work during a test or examination *more than once* (n=19 or 5%) or *many times* (n=2 or 1%).

Question 14: How often have you brought unauthorised crib notes into a test or examination venue? (n=395)

Almost all the respondents (n=386 or 96%) indicated that they had *never brought* unauthorised crib notes into a test or examination venue. However, some respondents (n=7 or 2%) indicated that they had *brought* unauthorised crib notes into a test or examination venue only *once*. One respondent (n=1 or 1%) replied that he or she had *brought* unauthorised crib notes into a test or examination venue *more than once* and one (n=1 or 1%) replied that he or she had *brought* unauthorised crib notes into a test or examination venue *many times*.

Question 15: How often have you used unauthorised crib notes during a test or examination? (n=395)

Three respondents (n=3) did not complete this question. Almost all the respondents (n=380 or 97%) indicated that they had *never used* unauthorised crib notes during a test or examination. However, some respondents (n=9 or 2%) indicated that they had *used* unauthorised crib notes during a test or examination *once*. Three respondents (n=3 or 1%) replied that they had *used* unauthorised crib notes during a test or examination *more than once*.

Question 16: How often have you given another student answers in a test or examination with the help of signals? (n=395)

One of the respondents (n=1) did not complete this question. The majority of the respondents (n=337 or 86%) indicated that they had *never* given another student answers in a test or examination with the help of signals. However, 9% of the respondents (n=37) mentioned that they had given another student answers in a test or examination with the help of signals only *once*. The rest of the respondents mentioned that they had given another student answers in a test or examination with the help of signals *more than once* (n=17 or 4%) or *many times* (n=3 or 1%).

Question 17: How often have you lied about medical or other circumstances to defer a test or examination in order to have more time to study for it? (n=395)

One respondent (n=1) did not complete this question. The majority of the respondents (n=365 or 93%) indicated that they had *never* lied about medical or other circumstances to defer a test or examination in order to have more time to study for it. However, 6% of the respondents (n=24) mentioned that they had lied about medical or other circumstances to defer a test or examination *once*. The rest of the respondents mentioned that they had done this *more than once* (n=5 or 1%).

Question 18: How often have you been dishonest in any way when completing your practical workbook? (n=395)

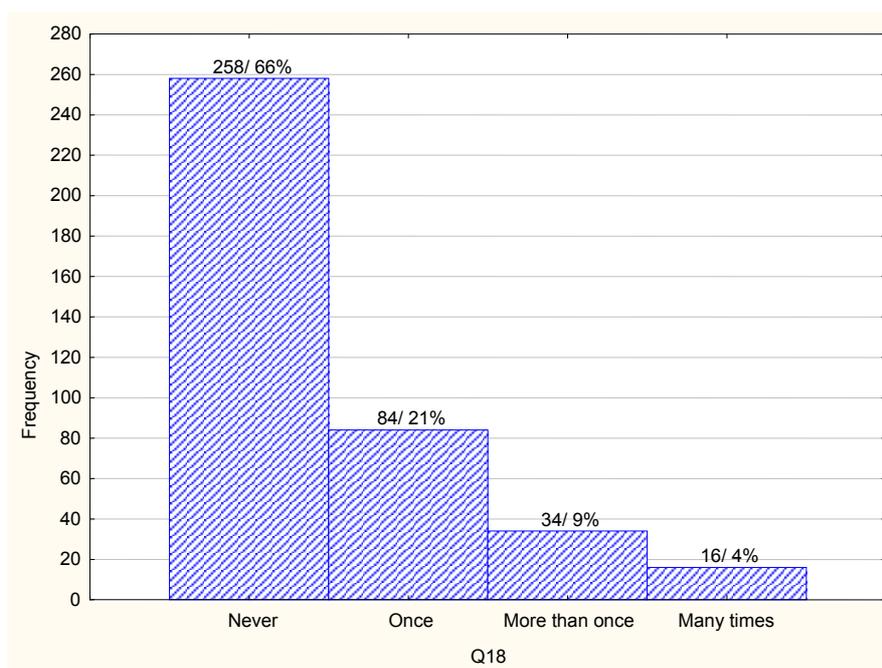


Figure 4.5

Self-reported dishonesty in completing the practical workbook

Three respondents (n=3) did not complete this question. As indicated in Figure 4.5, the majority of respondents (n=258 or 66%) indicated that they had *never* been dishonest in any way when completing their practical workbook. However, some respondents (n=84 or 21%) indicated that they had been dishonest when completing

their practical workbook *once*, 34 respondents (n=34 or 9%) had done this *more than once*, and 16 respondents (n=16 or 4%) had done it *many times*.

Question 19: How often have you been aware of another student copying from someone else during a test or an examination? (n=395)

According to Figure 4.6 the majority of respondents (n=275 or 70%) indicated they had *never* been aware of another student copying from someone else during a test or an examination. However, a significant number of the respondents reported that they had been aware of another student copying from someone else during a test or an examination at least *once* (n=54 or 14%) or *more than once* (n=49 or 12%) or *many times* (n=17 or 4%).

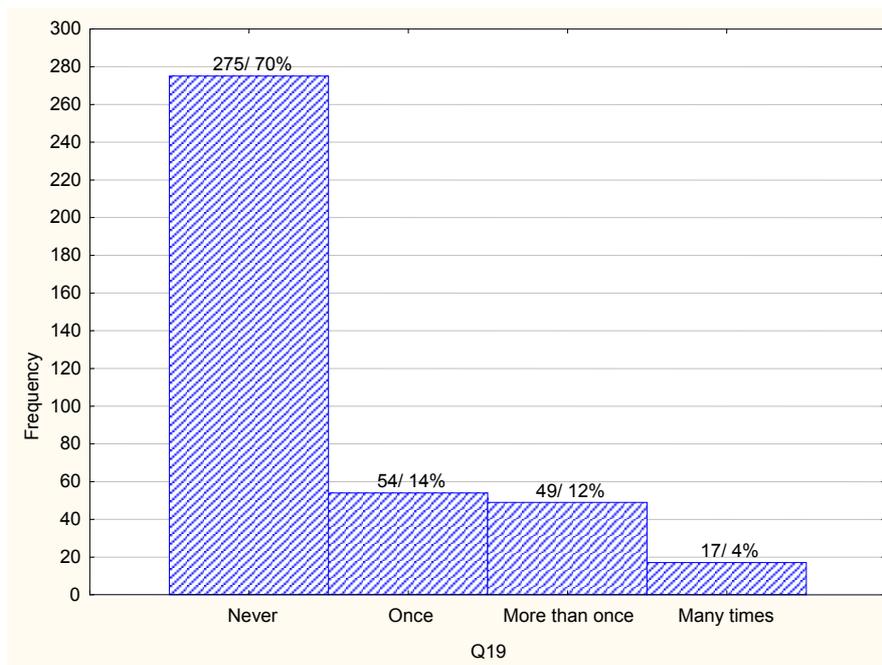


Figure 4.6

Awareness of another student copying from someone else during a test or an examination

Question 20: How often have you been aware of another student bringing unauthorised crib notes into a test or examination venue? (n=395)

Almost all the respondents (n=332 or 84%) indicated that they had *never* been aware of another student *bringing* unauthorised crib notes into a test or examination venue. However, some respondents indicated that they had been aware of another student *bringing* unauthorised crib notes into a test or examination venue *once* (n=29 or 8%), *more than once* (n=26 or 6%) or *many times* (n=8 or 2%).

Question 21: How often have you been aware of another student using unauthorised crib notes during a test or examination? (n=395)

Almost all the respondents (n=333 or 85%) indicated that they had *never* been aware of another student *using* unauthorised crib notes during a test or examination. However, a small percentage of respondents indicated that they had been aware of another student *using* unauthorised crib notes during a test or examination *once* (n=28 or 7%), or *more than once* (n=25 or 6%) or *many times* (n=9 or 2%).

Question 22: How often have you been aware of another student helping someone else to cheat in a test? (n=395)

The majority of the respondents (n=328 or 83%) responded that they had *never* been aware of another student helping someone else to cheat in a test. However, the rest of the respondents mentioned that they had been aware of another student helping someone else to cheat in a test *once* (n=30 or 8%), *more than once* (n=29 or 7%), or *many times* (n=8 or 2%). It appears that the pre-registration nursing students had similar responses regarding awareness of other students *bringing* unauthorised crib notes into a test or examination venue (see question 20), *using* unauthorised crib notes during a test or examination (see question 21), and helping someone else to cheat in a test (see question 22).

Question 23: How often have you been aware of another student allowing someone else to copy parts of their assignment, or their whole assignment? (n=395)

One respondent (n=1) did not complete this question. The data in Figure 4.7 reveals that although most of the respondents (n=239 or 61%) indicated that they had *never* been aware of another student allowing someone else to copy parts of their assignment, or their whole assignment, a large percentage of the respondents had been aware of another student allowing someone else to copy parts of their assignment, or their entire assignment, *once* (n=70 or 18%), *more than once* (n=63 or 16%) or *many times* (n=22 or 5%).

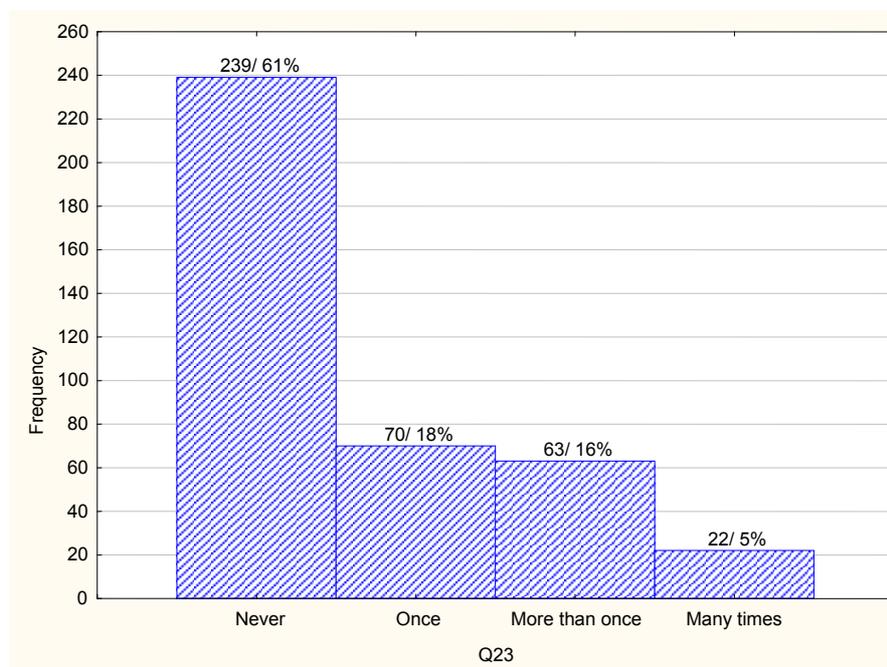


Figure 4.7

Awareness of another student allowing someone else to copy assignments

Question 24: How often have you been aware of another student being dishonest when completing his/her practical workbook? (n=395)

Figure 4.8 indicates that 44% (n=172) of respondents had *never* been aware of another student being dishonest when completing his or her practical workbook. However, the majority indicated that they had either been aware of another student

being dishonest when completing his or her practical workbook *once* (n=72 or 18%), *more than once* (n=81 or 20%) or *many times* (n=70 or 18%).

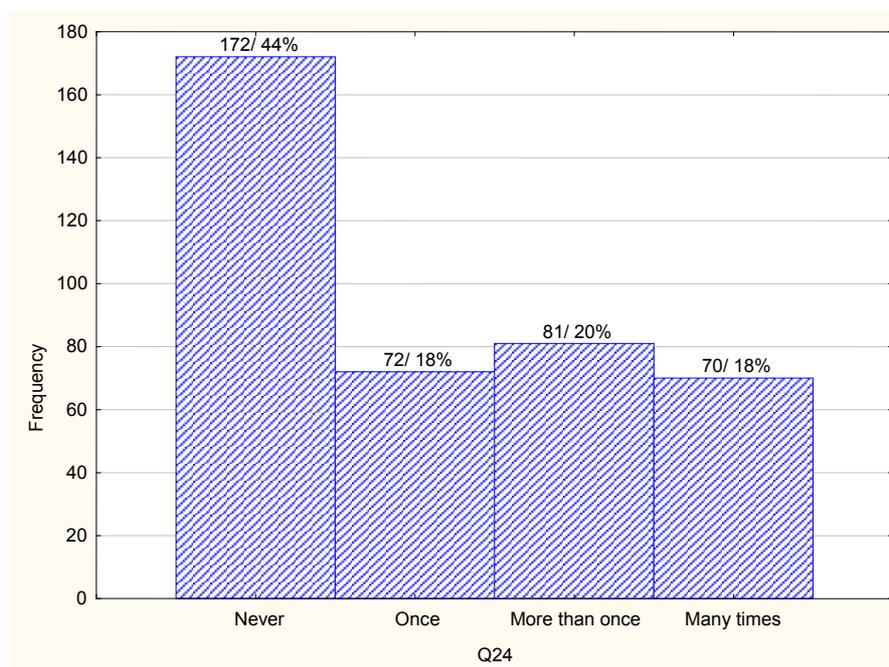


Figure 4.8

Awareness of another student's dishonesty with practical books

Information generated by questions 25 to 54 investigated the contextual factors that might influence the academic integrity of the pre-registration nursing students at a specific nursing education institution. These contextual factors are presented as follows:

- Questions 25 to 31: attitudes of respondents regarding cheating
- Questions 32 to 35: peer pressure as a cause of cheating
- Questions 36 to 40: attitudes and behaviour of respondents regarding other students' cheating
- Questions 41 to 48: further causes of dishonest behaviour
- Questions 49 to 54: respondents' perceptions regarding prevention of cheating

The respondents were instructed to select one of the possibilities next to the question and to indicate their answer with a tick in the appropriate box. The following key was used to guide the respondents in questions 25 to 54: 4 = *Strongly agree*; 3 = *Agree*; 2 = *Disagree*; and 1 = *Strongly disagree*.

Question 25: In my opinion cheating is sometimes justified when a close friend asks for help (n=395)

Three respondents (n=3) did not complete this question. The majority of the respondents indicated that they either *strongly disagreed* (n=178 or 45%) or *disagreed* (n=117 or 30%) that cheating was sometimes justified when a close friend asked for help. However, some of the respondents either *agreed* (n=83 or 21%) or *strongly agreed* (n=14 or 4%) that cheating was sometimes justified when a close friend asked for help (see Figure 4.9).

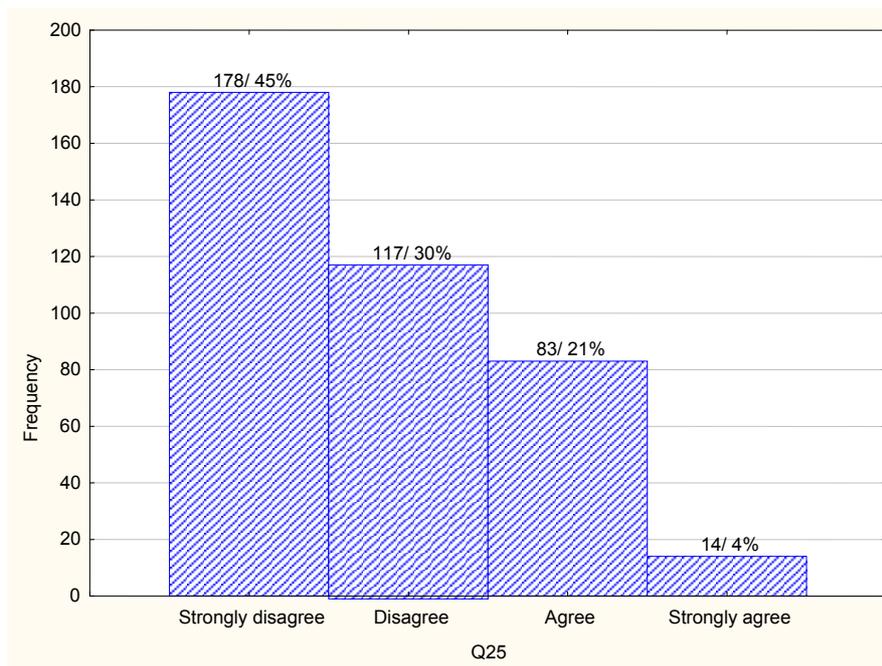


Figure 4.9
Justification of cheating when a close friend asks for help

Question 26: In my opinion cheating is sometimes justified to succeed academically
(n=395)

Figure 4.10 shows that most of the respondents *strongly disagreed* (n=192 or 48%) and 30% of the respondents (n=118) *disagreed* that cheating was sometimes justified to succeed academically. However, some of the respondents indicated that they *agreed* (n=70 or 18%) or *strongly agreed* (n=15 or 4%) that cheating was sometimes justified to succeed academically.

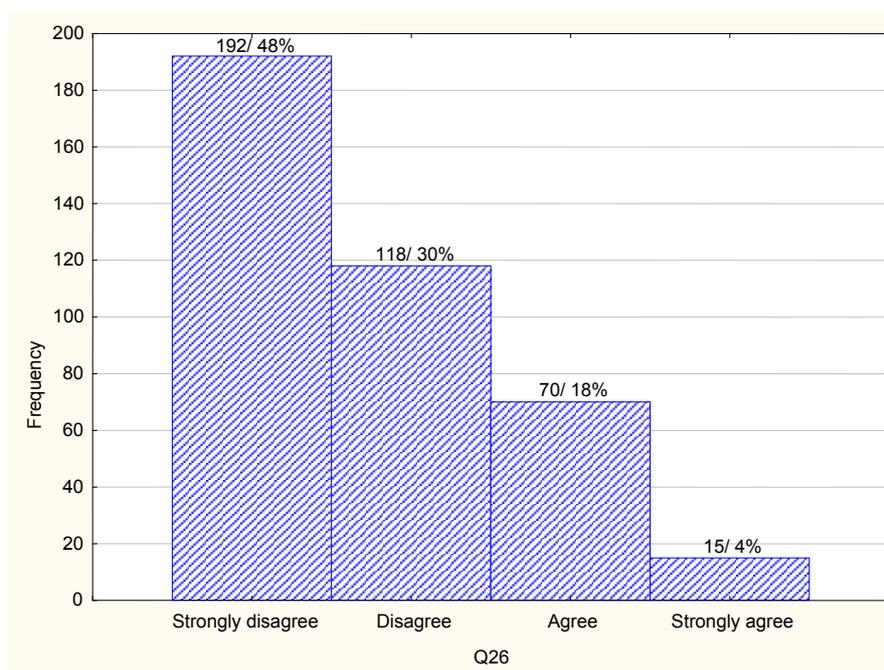


Figure 4.10

Justification of cheating to succeed academically

Question 27: In my opinion cheating is sometimes justified for other reasons than the above (n=395)

Nine respondents (n=9) did not complete this question. Figure 4.11 indicates that the majority of the respondents either *strongly disagreed* (n=147 or 38%), or *disagreed* (n=118 or 31%) that cheating was sometimes justified for reasons other than helping a close friend or succeeding academically. On the other hand, almost a third of the respondents either *agreed* (n=100 or 26%), or *strongly agreed* (n=21 or 5%) that cheating was sometimes justified for other than the previously mentioned reasons.

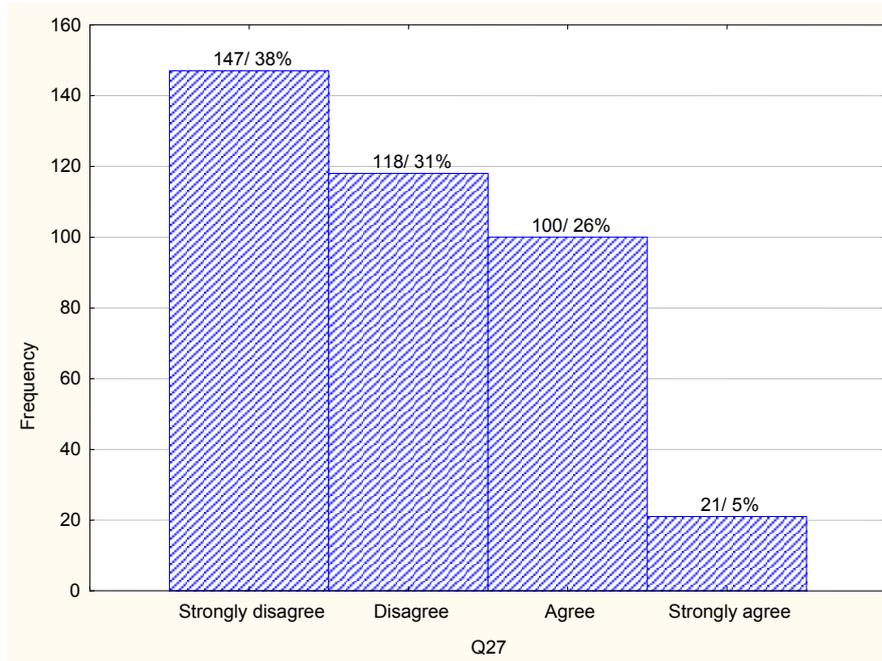


Figure 4.11

Justification of cheating for other reasons than helping a friend or to succeed academically

Question 28: In my opinion other students will *not* disapprove if they find out I had cheated (n=395)

Seven respondents (n=7) did not complete this question. According to Figure 4.12 the majority of the respondents *strongly disagreed* (n=146 or 38%) and a further 32% (n=126) *disagreed* that other students would *not* disapprove if they found out that a student had cheated. However, 24% (n=92) *agreed* and a further 6% (n=24) *strongly agreed* that other students would *not* disapprove if they found out that a student had cheated.

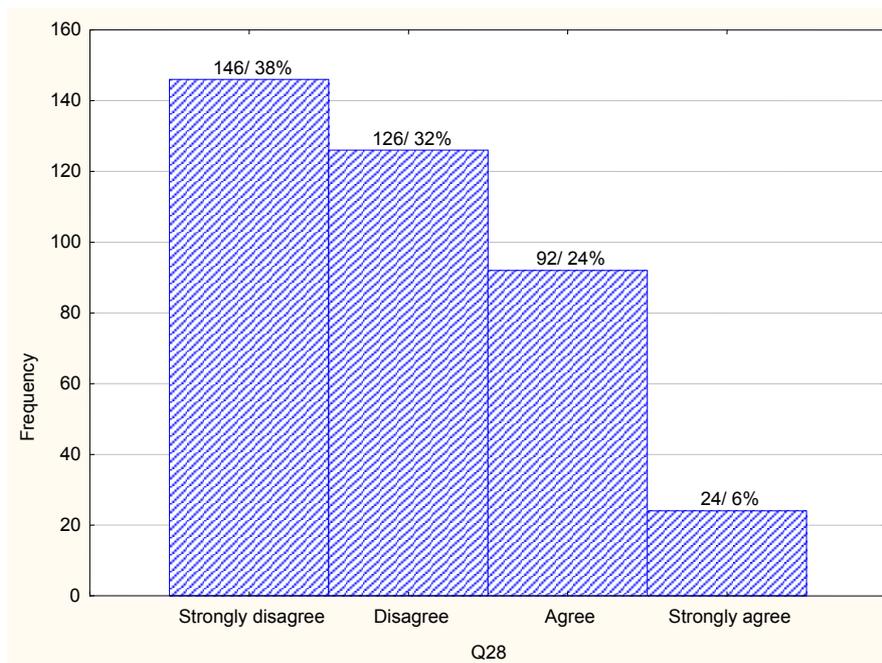


Figure 4.12

Fellow students' non-disapproval of cheating

Question 29: In my opinion other students would not report a student if he or she cheated (n=395)

Three respondents (n=3) did not complete this question. According to Figure 4.13 the majority of the respondents (n=167 or 43%) *agreed* and 11% (n=45) *strongly agreed* that other students would *not* report a student if he or she had cheated. On the other hand, the rest of the respondents either *strongly disagreed* (n=92 or 24%) or *disagreed* (n=88 or 22%) that other students would *not* report a student if he or she had cheated. This response implies that although most of the respondents were of the opinion that other students would disapprove of a student who cheated (see Figure 4.12), they also believed that students would *not* report another student who had cheated (see Figure 4.13).

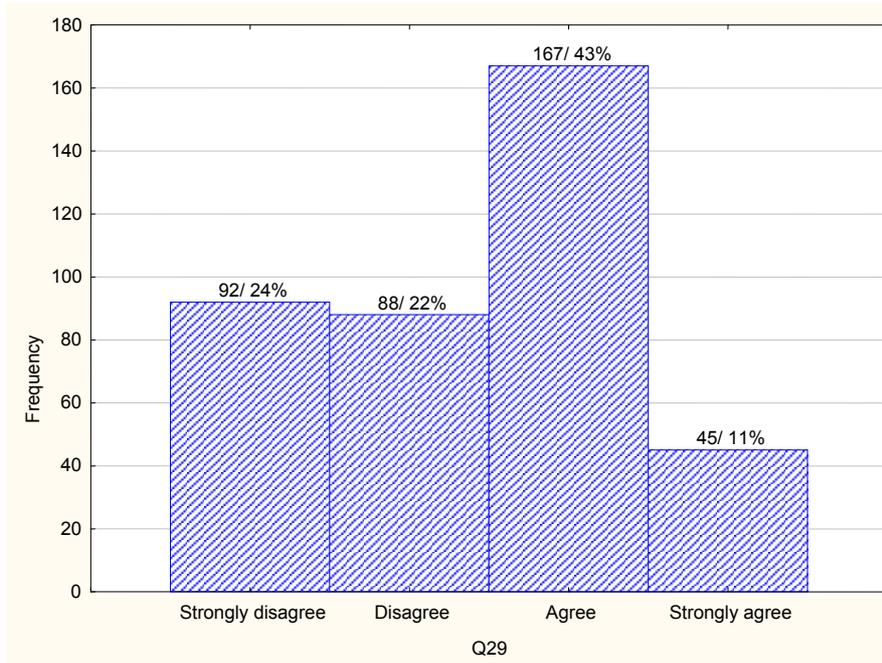


Figure 4.13
Students' reporting of fellow students who cheated

Question 30: In my opinion I would *not* feel guilty if I cheated (n=395)

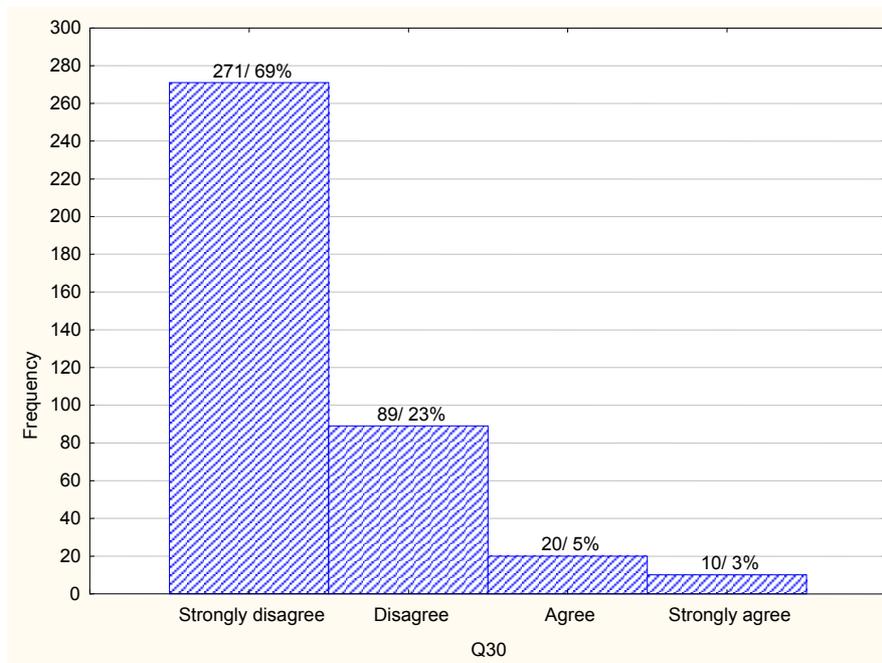


Figure 4.14
Absence of feelings of guilt when cheating

Five respondents (n=5) did not complete this question. Figure 4.14 indicates that the majority of the respondents (n=271 or 69%) *strongly disagreed* and 23% (n=89) *disagreed* that they would *not* feel guilty if they had cheated. However, a small number of respondents *agreed* (n=20 or 5%) or *strongly agreed* (n=10 or 3%) that they would *not* feel guilty if they had cheated.

Question 31: In my opinion, using material from another author's work without referencing it is not a serious offence (n=395)

Two respondents (n=2) did not complete this question. According to Figure 4.15 the majority of the respondents *strongly disagreed* (n=210 or 53%) and a further 26% (n=103) *disagreed* that it was *not* a serious offence to use material from another author's work without referencing it. However, 16% (n=62) *agreed* and a further 5% (n=18) *strongly agreed* that it was *not* a serious offence to use material from another author's work without referencing it.

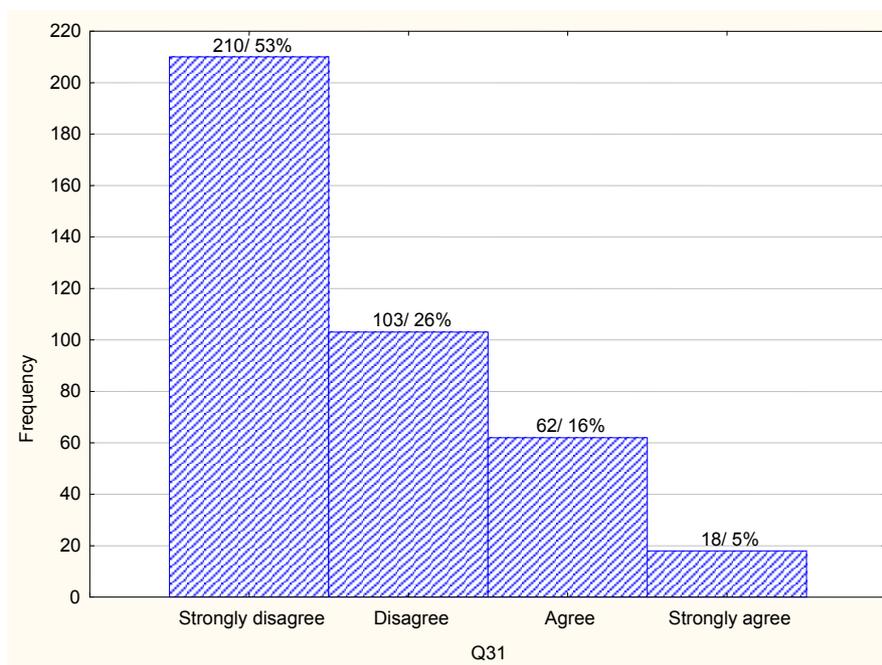


Figure 4.15

Using material from another author's work without referencing it seen as *not* a serious offence

Question 32: Peer pressure will cause me to allow another student to copy answers from my test or examination paper (n=395)

Two respondents (n=2) did not complete this question. Figure 4.16 indicates that the majority of the respondents (n=252 or 64%) *strongly disagreed* and 21% (n=85) of the respondents *disagreed* that peer pressure would cause them to allow another student to copy answers from their test or examination papers. However, a small percentage of the respondents *agreed* (n=46 or 12%) or *strongly agreed* (n=10 or 3%) that peer pressure would cause them to allow another student to copy answers from their test or examination papers.

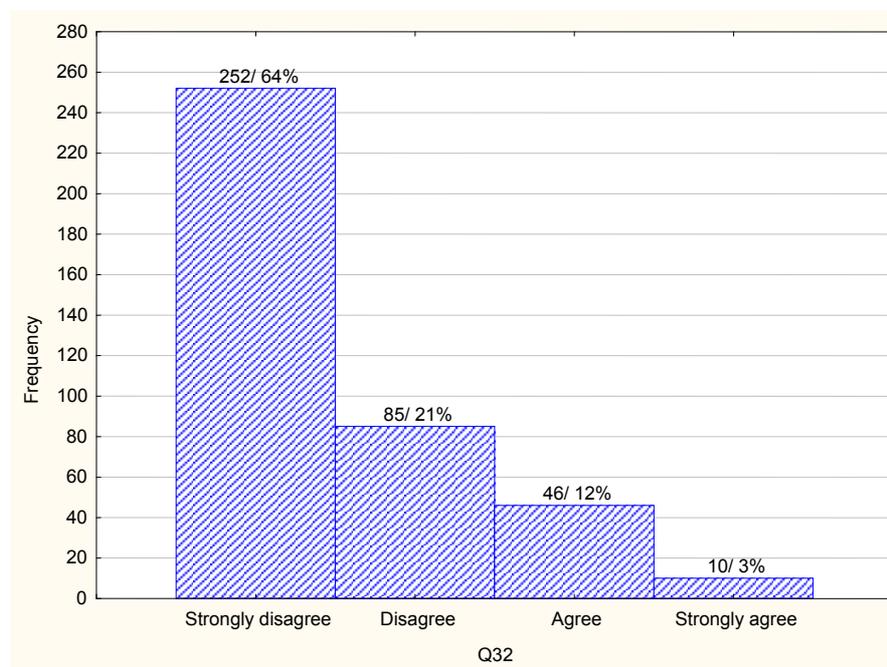


Figure 4.16

Effect of peer pressure regarding participants allowing other students to copy their answers in tests and examinations

Question 33: Peer pressure will cause me to help a friend who asks for my assistance on an assignment that I know is supposed to be his or her own work (n=395)

Three respondents (n=3) did not complete this question. Although more than half of the respondents indicated that they either *strongly disagreed* (n=113 or 29%) or *disagreed* (n=87 or 22%) that peer pressure would cause them to help a friend who asked for their assistance on an assignment that they knew was supposed to be their own work, a large percentage of the respondents *agreed* (n=170 or 43%) or *strongly agreed* (n=22 or 6%) with this statement (see Figure 4.17).

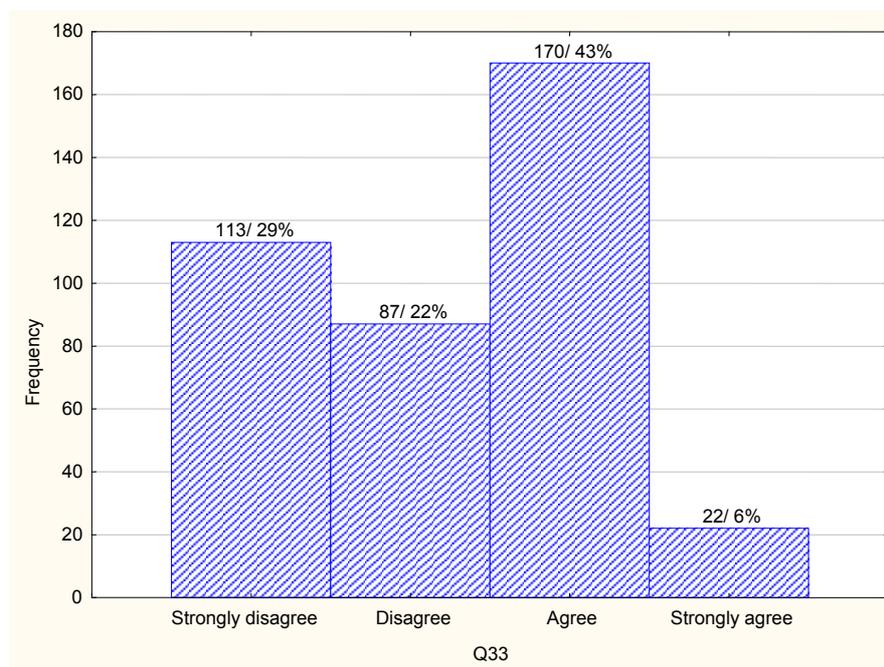


Figure 4.17

Effect of peer pressure regarding participants illegally assisting other students with assignments

Question 34: Peer pressure will cause me to allow another student to copy my assignment (n=395)

Three respondents (n=3) did not complete this question. According to Figure 4.18 the majority of the respondents *strongly disagreed* (n=196 or 50%) and 31% (n=124) *disagreed* that peer pressure would cause them to allow another student to copy

their assignment. However, 16% (n=62) of the respondents *agreed* and 3% (n=10) *strongly agreed* that peer pressure would cause them to allow another student to copy their assignment.

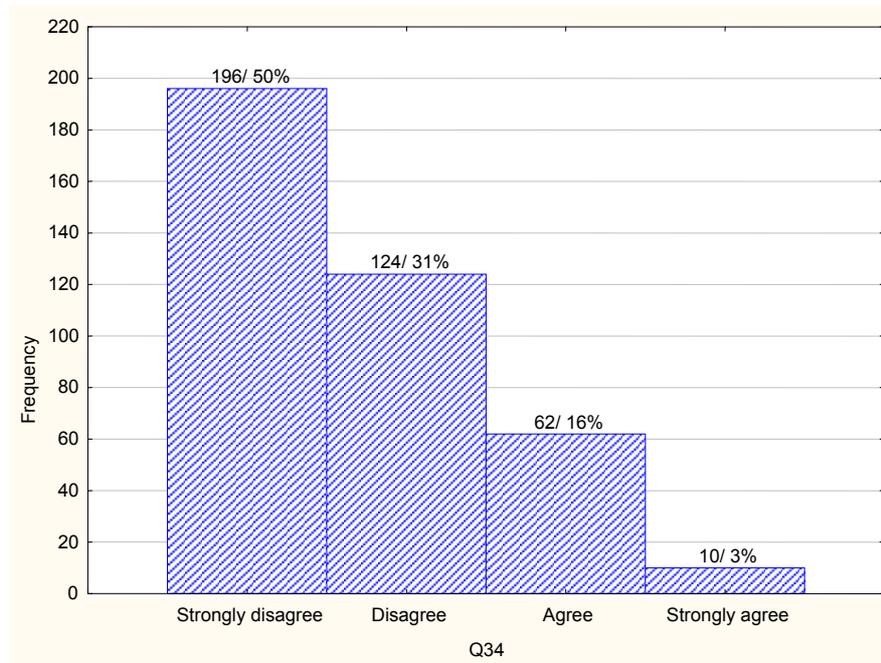


Figure 4.18

Effect of peer pressure regarding participants allowing other students to copy their assignments

Question 35: Peer pressure will cause me to try cheating when I know other students got away with it (n=395)

Four respondents (n=4) did not complete this question. According to Figure 4.19 the majority of the respondents *strongly disagreed* (n=228 or 58%) and a further 27% (n=106) *disagreed* that peer pressure would cause them to cheat because they knew other students got away with it. However, a small number of respondents *agreed* (n=50 or 13%) and *strongly agreed* (n=7 or 2%) that they would try to cheat if they knew other students got away with it.

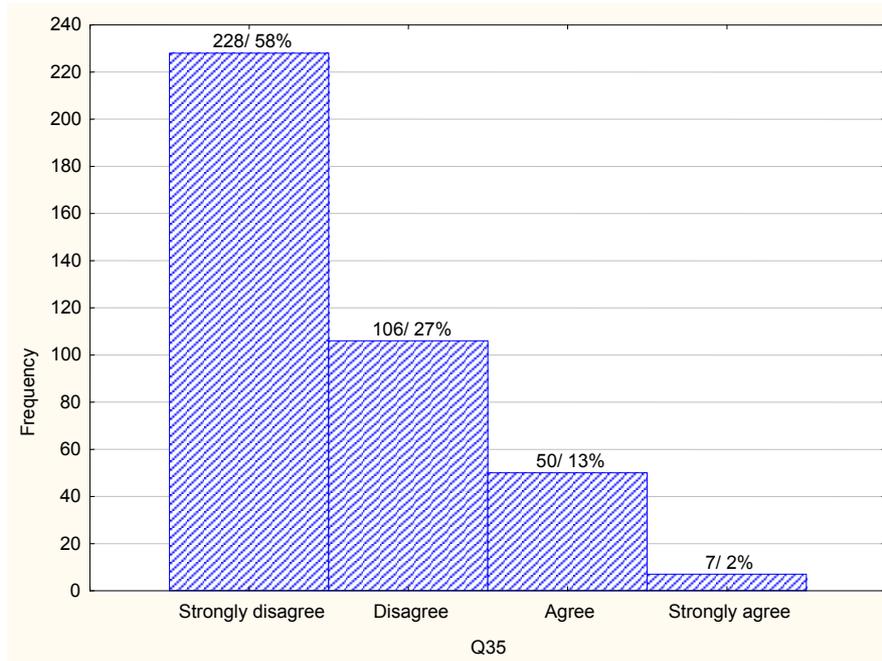


Figure 4.19

Influence of peer pressure on participants' willingness to cheat

Question 36: When I become aware of another student cheating I will report him or her to the lecturer when I see him or her cheating in a test or examination (n=395)

Figure 4.20 indicates that the majority of the respondents either *disagreed* (n=175 or 44%) or *strongly disagreed* (n=86 or 22%) that they would report another student to a lecturer when they saw him or her cheating in a test or examination. However, more than a third of the respondents *agreed* (n=92 or 23%) or *strongly agreed* (n=42 or 11%) that they would report another student to a lecturer when they saw him or her cheating in a test or examination.

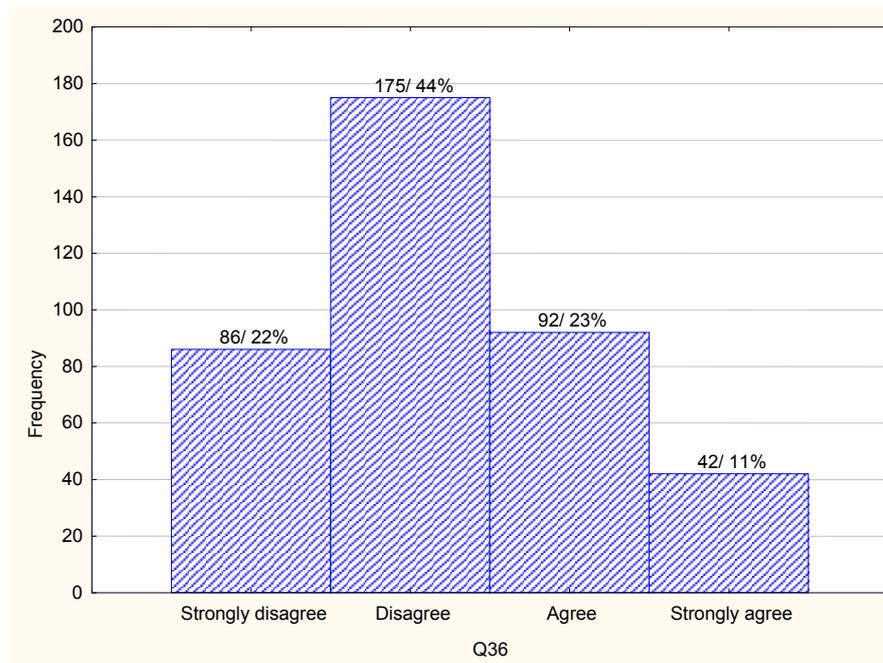


Figure 4.20

Willingness to report other students when aware of cheating in tests or examinations

Question 37: When I become aware of another student cheating I will report him or her to the lecturer when I know he or she cheated in his or her assignments (n=395)

One respondent (n=1) did not complete this question. According to Figure 4.21 the majority of the respondents *disagreed* (n=193 or 49%) and a further 23% (n=89) *strongly disagreed* that they would report another student to a lecturer when they know that the student had cheated in his or her assignments. However, the rest of the respondents *agreed* (n=83 or 21%) or *strongly agreed* (n=29 or 7%) that they would report another student to a lecturer when they knew that the student cheated in his or her assignments.

It appears that the respondents had the same degree of willingness to report a student to a lecturer, irrespective of whether the cheating occurred in a test or examination (see Figure 4.20) or in an assignment (see Figure 4.21).

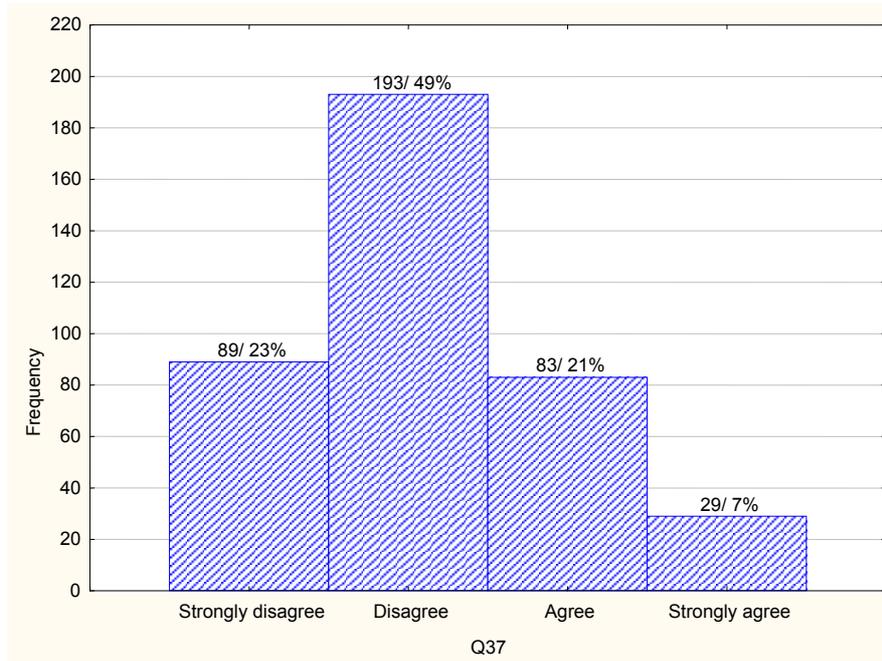


Figure 4.21

Willingness to report other students when aware of cheating in assignments

Question 38: When I become aware of another student cheating I will threaten him or her with being reported to the lecturer if the cheating does not stop (n=395)

One respondent (n=1) did not complete this question. Figure 4.22 indicates that despite the fact that more than half of the respondents indicated that they *strongly disagreed* (n=104 or 26%) or *disagreed* (n=127 or 32%) with the statement, a large percentage of the respondents *agreed* (n=113 or 29%) or *strongly agreed* (n=50 or 13%) that they would threaten to report another student to a lecturer if the cheating did not stop.

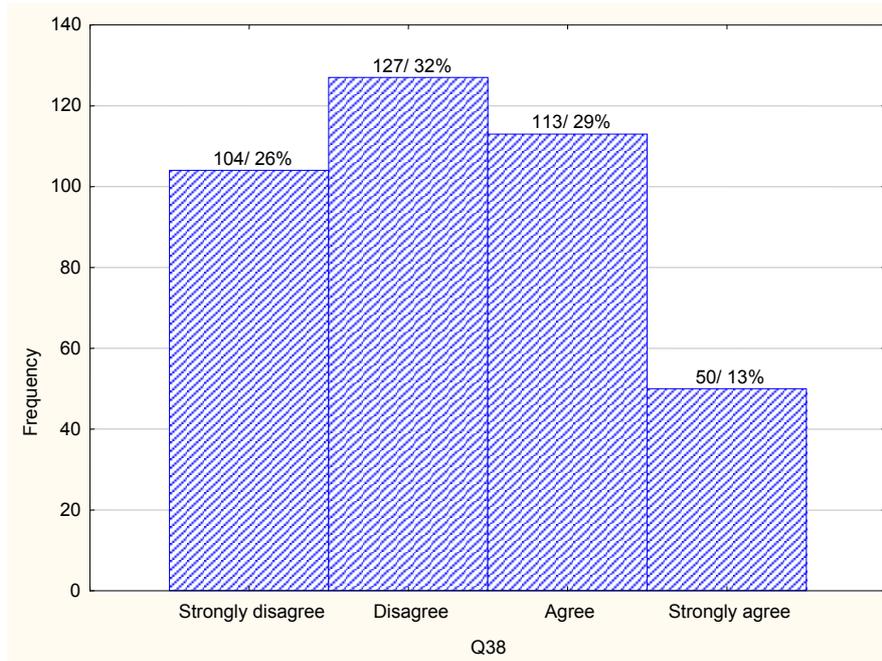


Figure 4.22

Willingness to threaten another student with being reported to a lecturer if their cheating does not stop

Question 39: When I become aware of another student cheating I will tell other students that cheating behaviour is occurring (n=395)

Five respondents (n=5) did not complete this question. According to Figure 4.23 the majority of the respondents *agreed* (n=193 or 49%) and a further 18% (n=69) *strongly agreed* that they would tell other students if they became aware that cheating behaviour was occurring. However, 19% (n=75) *disagreed* and a further 14% (n=53) *strongly disagreed* that they would tell other students if they became aware that cheating behaviour was occurring.

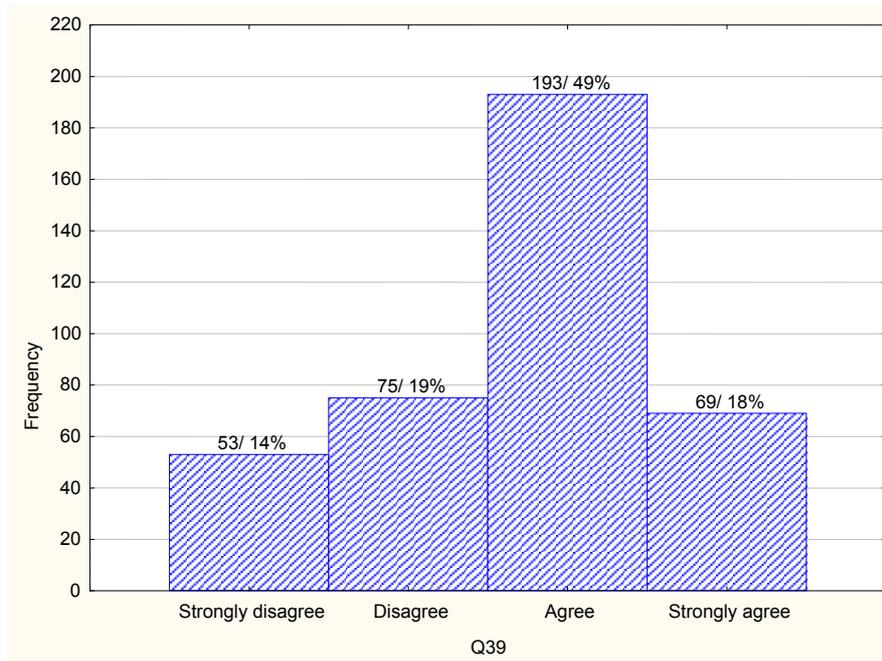


Figure 4.23

Willingness to tell other students of cheating behaviour that is occurring

Question 40: When I become aware of another student cheating I will *not* ignore the cheating behaviour (n=395)

Five respondents (n=5) did not complete this question. Figure 4.24 indicates that although more than half of the respondents responded that they *agreed* (n=142 or 36%) or *strongly agreed* (n=59 or 15%) that they would *not* ignore cheating behaviour, a large percentage of the respondents *disagreed* (n=124 or 32%) or *strongly disagreed* (n=65 or 17%) that that they would *not* ignore cheating behaviour.

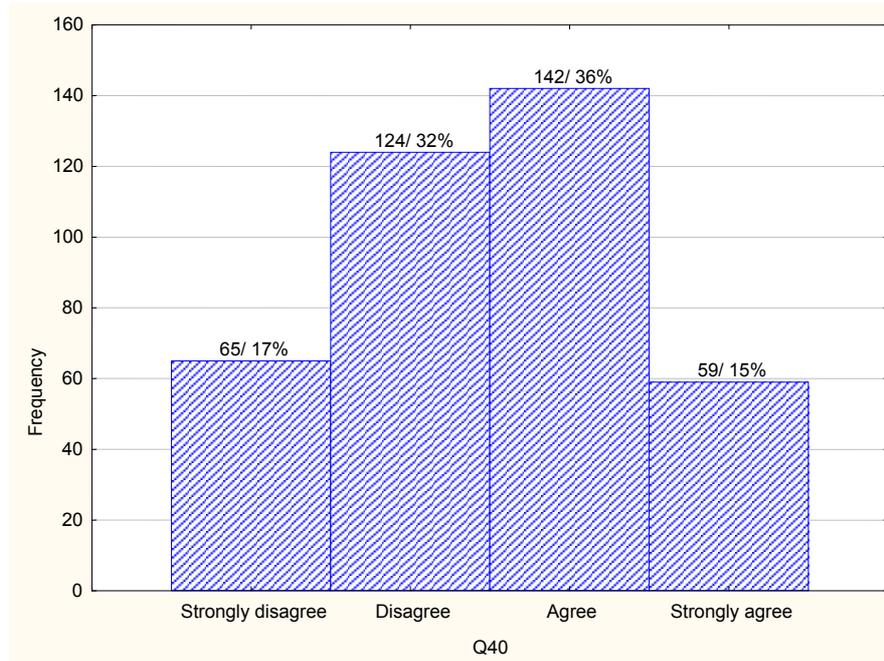


Figure 4.24
Willingness *not* to ignore cheating behaviour

Question 41: In my opinion students engage in cheating behaviour because of the pressure to succeed academically (n=395)

Two respondents (n=2) did not complete this question. Figure 4.25 indicates that the majority of the respondents *agreed* (n=179 or 45%) or *strongly agreed* (n=152 or 39%) that students engaged in cheating behaviour because of the pressure to succeed academically. On the other hand, the rest of the respondents *disagreed* (n=34 or 9%) or *strongly disagreed* (n=28 or 7%) that the pressure to succeed academically would cause students to engage in cheating behaviour.

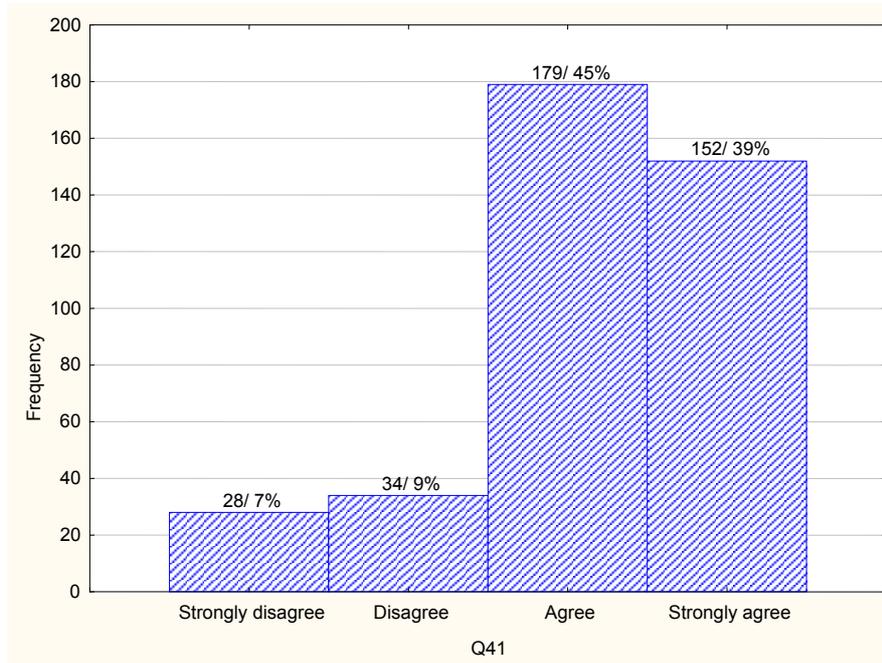


Figure 4.25

Pressure to succeed academically as cause of cheating behaviour

Question 42: In my opinion students engage in cheating behaviour because of the fear of losing status amongst peers (n=395)

As shown in Figure 4.26, the majority of the respondents *agreed* (n=172 or 44%) and a further 27% (n=107) *strongly agreed* that the fear of losing status amongst peers would cause students to engage in cheating behaviour. However, 18% (n=71) *disagreed* and a further 11% (n=45) *strongly disagreed* that the fear of losing status amongst peers would cause students to engage in cheating behaviour.

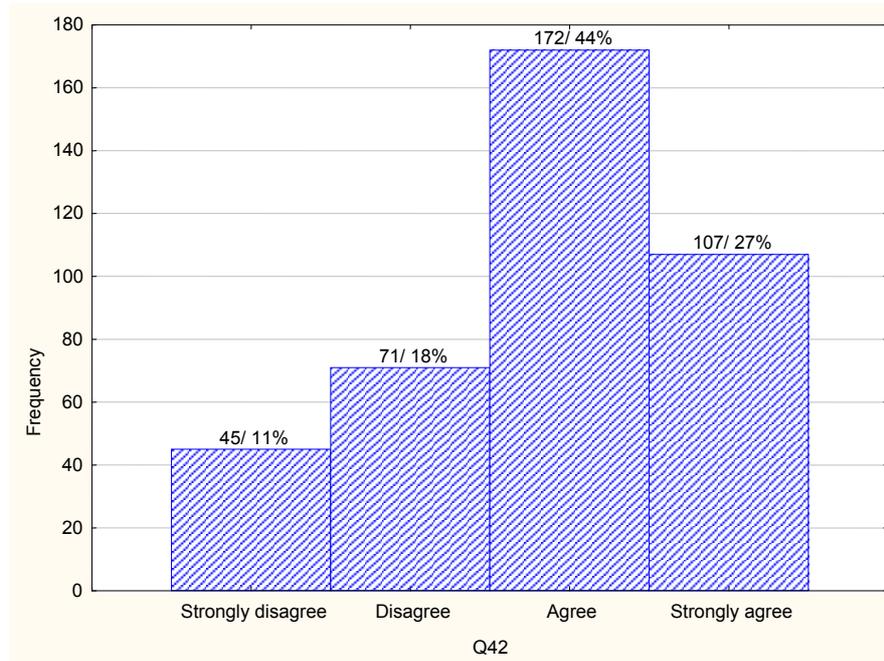


Figure 4.26

Fear of losing status amongst peers as cause of cheating behaviour

Question 43: In my opinion students engage in cheating behaviour because of the limited time they have to study (n=395)

Three respondents (n=3) did not complete this question. As shown in Figure 4.27, the majority of the respondents *agreed* (n=167 or 43%) or *strongly agreed* (n=123 or 31%) that students engaged in cheating behaviour due to the limited time they had to study. On the other hand, the rest of the respondents *disagreed* (n=62 or 16%) or *strongly disagreed* (n=40 or 10%) that students engaged in cheating behaviour due to the limited time they had to study.

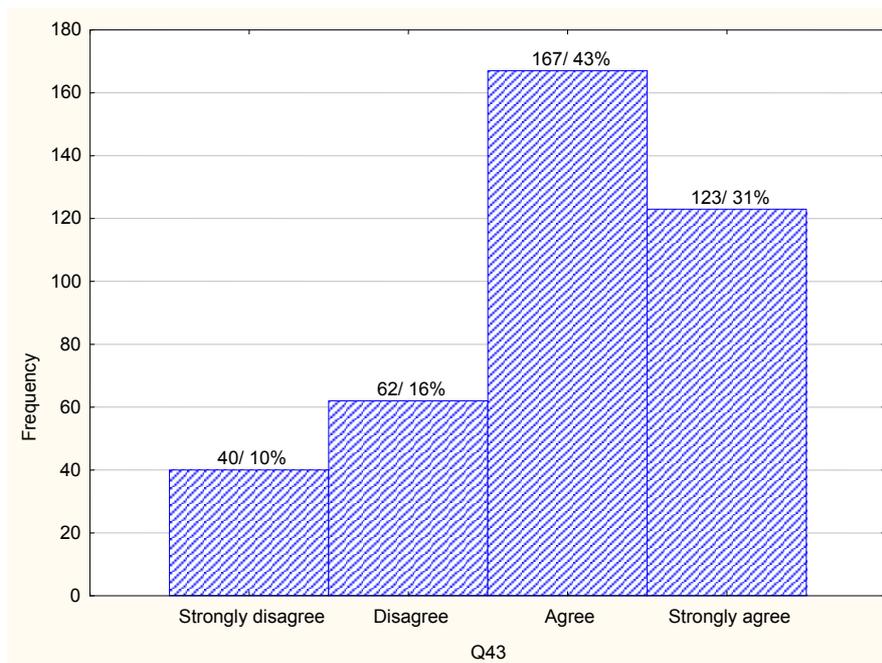


Figure 4.27

Limited time to study as cause of cheating behaviour

Question 44: In my opinion students engage in cheating behaviour because of the large amount of study material they have to master (n=395)

Three respondents (n=3) did not complete this question. According to Figure 4.28 the majority of the pre-registration nursing students *agreed* (n=182 or 46%) and a further 37% (n=145) *strongly agreed* that the large amount of study material they had to master caused students to engage in cheating behaviour. However, 10% (n=37) of the respondents *disagreed* and a further 7% (n=28) *strongly disagreed* that this would cause students to engage in cheating behaviour.

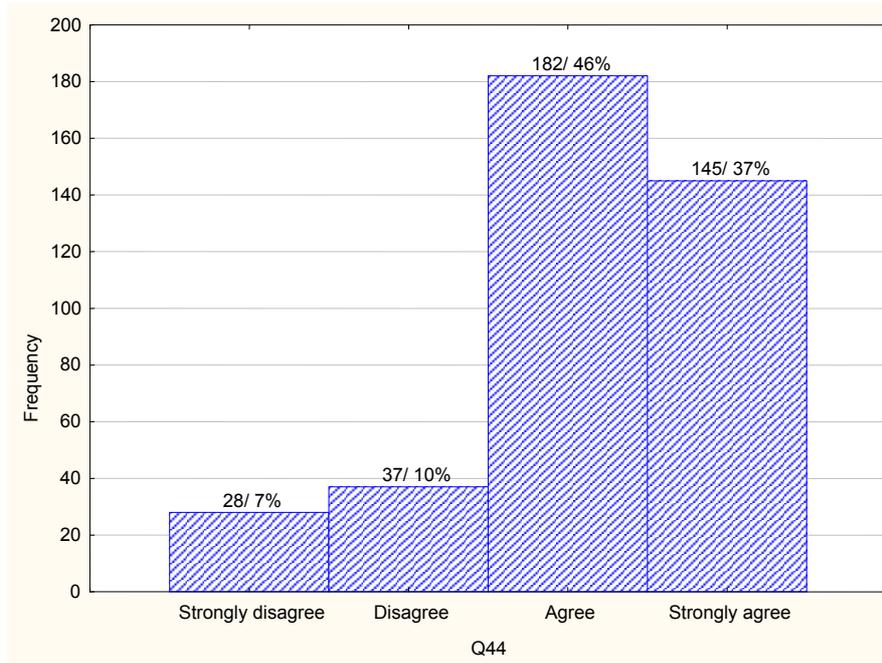


Figure 4.28

Large amount of study material as cause of cheating behaviour

Question 45: In my opinion, students engage in cheating behaviour because of the difficult learning material they have to study (n=395)

Five respondents (n=5) did not complete this question. As indicated in Figure 4.29, the majority of the respondents *agreed* (n=182 or 46%), or *strongly agreed* (n=112 or 29%) that students engaged in cheating behaviour because of the difficult learning material they had to study. On the other hand, the rest of the respondents *disagreed* (n=70 or 18%) or *strongly disagreed* (n=26 or 7%) that the difficult learning material would cause students to cheat.

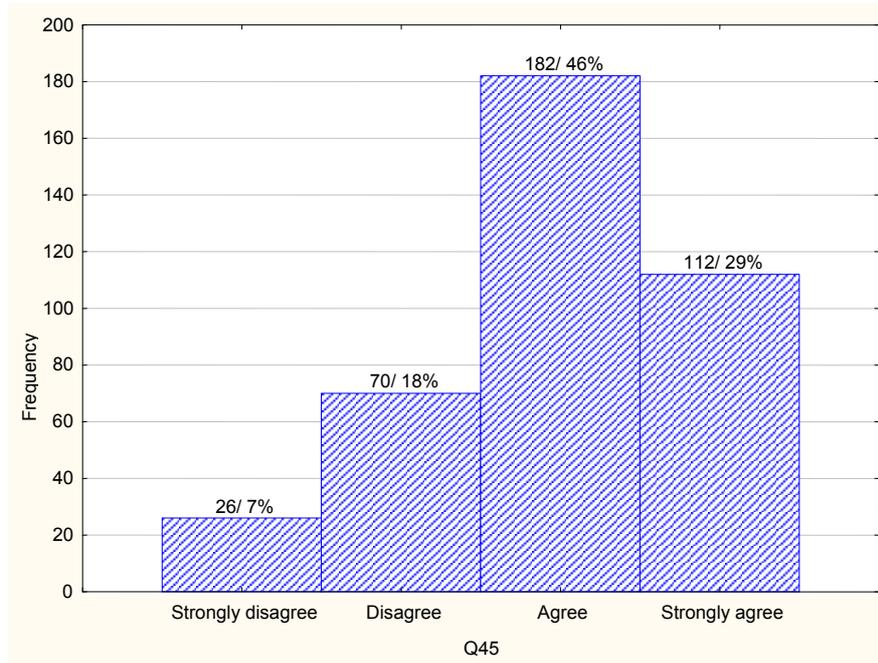


Figure 4.29

Difficult learning material as cause of cheating behaviour

Question 46: In my opinion students engage in cheating behaviour because of their negative attitude towards assignments and tests (n=395)

Two respondents (n=2) did not complete this question. According to Figure 4.30 the majority of the respondents *agreed* (n=178 or 45%) and a further 24% of the respondents (n=93) *strongly agreed* that students' negative attitudes towards assignments and tests would cause them to engage in cheating behaviour. However, 18% (n=72) of respondents *disagreed* and a further 13% of the respondents (n=50) *strongly disagreed* that negative attitudes towards assignments and tests would cause students to engage in cheating behaviour.

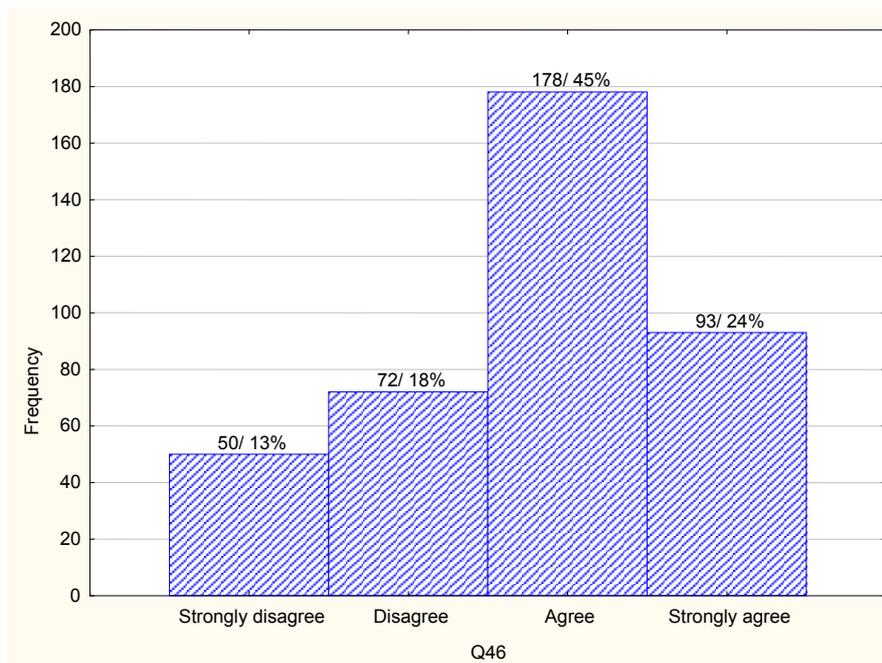


Figure 4.30

Negative attitude of students towards assignments and tests as cause of cheating behaviour

Question 47: In my opinion students engage in cheating behaviour because of having to pay back their bursary when they fail (n=395)

Two respondents (n=2) did not complete this question. According to Figure 4.31 the majority of the respondents (n=126 or 32%) *agreed* and about 32% (n=125) *strongly agreed* that students engaged in cheating behaviour because they would have to pay back their bursary if they fail. On the other hand, more than a third of the respondents *disagreed* (n=78 or 20%) or *strongly disagreed* (n=64 or 16%) that the paying back of bursaries, in the event of failure, caused students to engage in cheating behaviour.

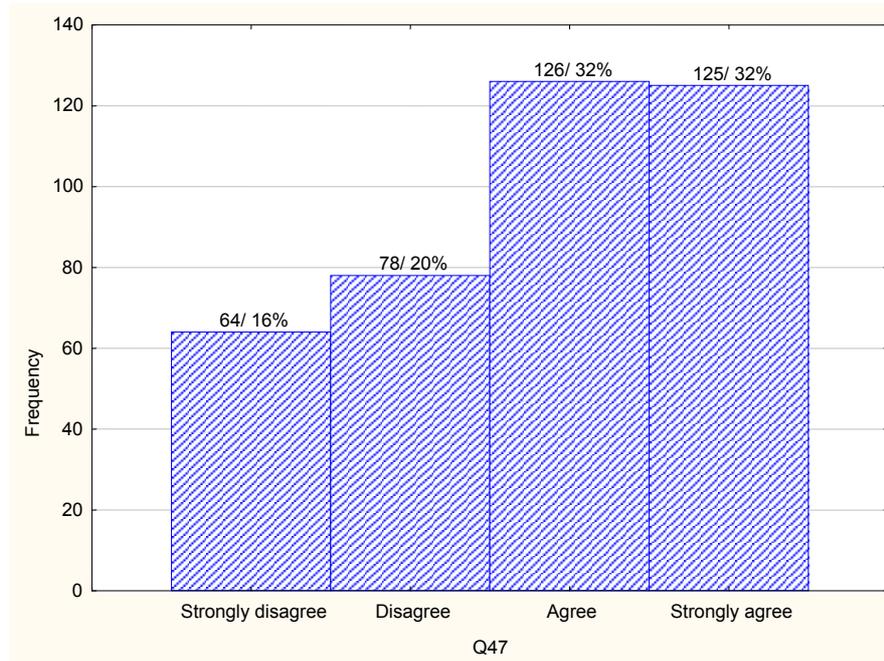


Figure 4.31

Having to pay back bursaries in the event of students failing as cause of cheating behaviour

Question 48: In my opinion students engage in cheating behaviour because other students get away with it (n=395)

Three respondents (n=3) did not complete this question. As indicated in Figure 4.32 the majority of the respondents *agreed* (n=198 or 51%), or *strongly agreed* (n=80 or 20%) that students would engage in cheating behaviour because other students got away with it. However, 18% (n=69) of the respondents *disagreed* and a further 11% of the respondents (n=45) *strongly disagreed* that this would cause students to engage in cheating behaviour.

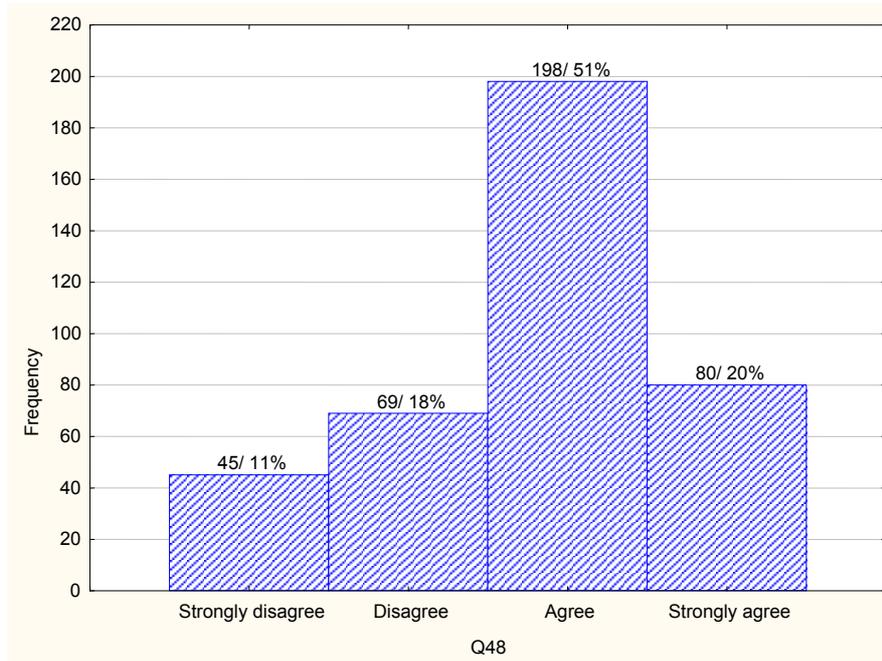


Figure 4.32

Some students got away with cheating as cause of cheating behaviour

Question 49: In my opinion students caught cheating are severely penalised in this academic institution (n=395)

Four respondents (n=4) did not complete this question. Figure 4.33 indicates that most of the respondents (n=166 or 43%) *agreed* and 30% of the respondents (n=118) *strongly agreed* with the statement that students who were caught cheating were severely penalised at this academic institution. However, the rest of the respondents *disagreed* (n=55 or 14%) or *strongly disagreed* (n=52 or 13%) with this statement.

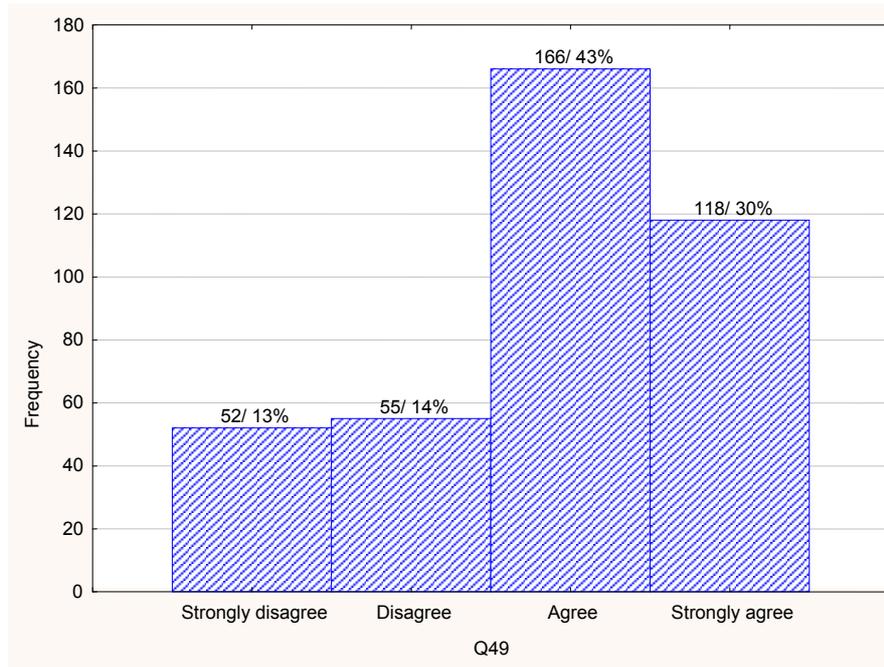


Figure 4.33

Opinion on the fact that students who were caught cheating were severely penalised

Question 50: In my opinion students will get caught if they cheat (n=395)

As shown in Figure 4.34 the majority of the respondents *agreed* (n=213 or 54%) or *strongly agreed* (n=82 or 21%) that students would get caught if they cheat. However, 17% (n=68) of the respondents *disagreed* and a further 8% (n=32) *strongly disagreed* that students would get caught if they cheat.

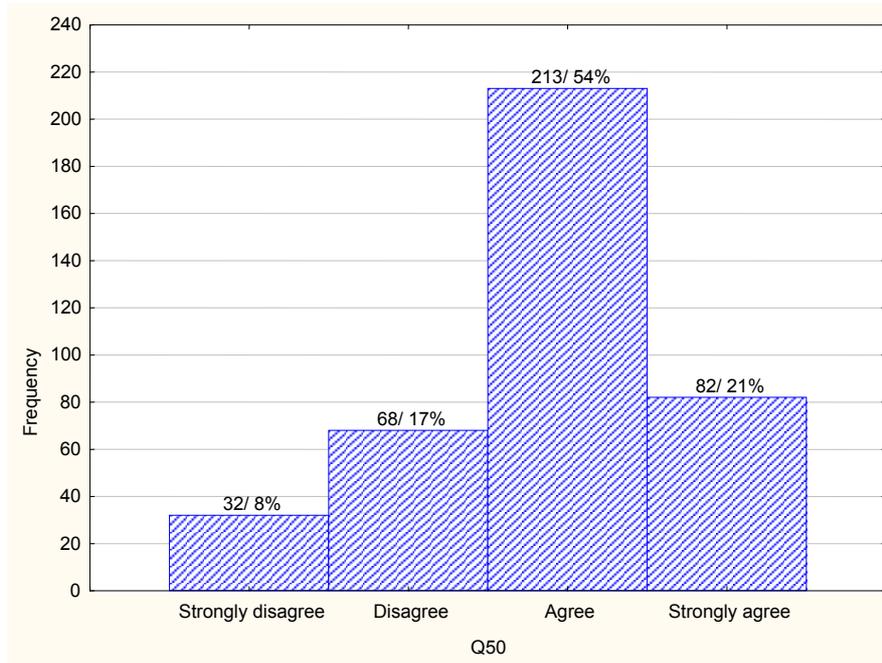


Figure 4.34

Opinion that students would get caught if they cheat

Question 51: In my opinion students are afraid to be caught cheating (n=395)

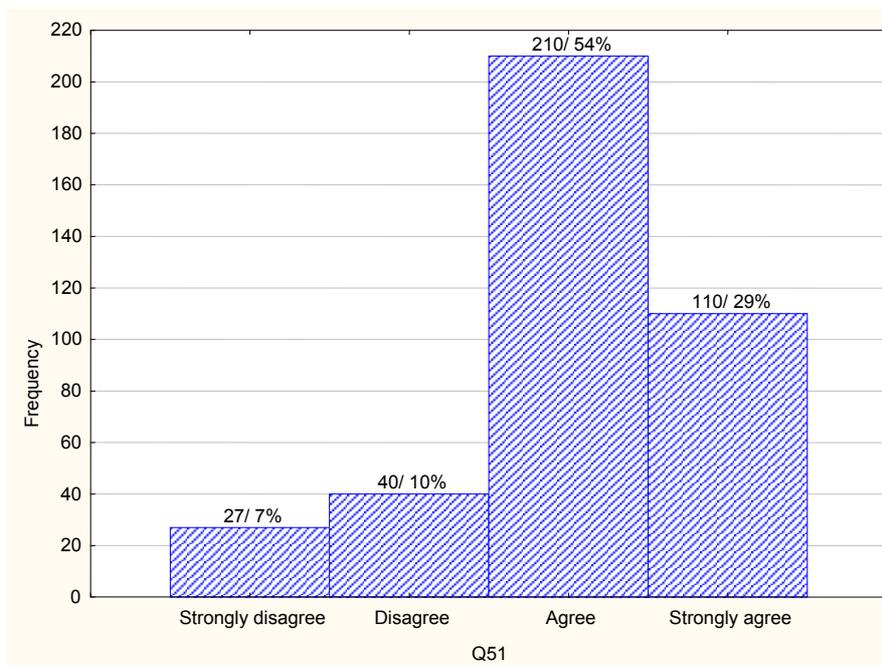


Figure 4.35

Opinion on students' fear of being caught cheating

Eight respondents (n=8) did not complete this question. Figure 4.35 shows that the majority of the respondents *agreed* (n=210 or 54%), or *strongly agreed* (n=110 or 29%) that students were afraid to be caught cheating. On the other hand, a small percentage of respondents *disagreed* (n=40 or 10%) or *strongly disagreed* (n=27 or 7%) that students were afraid of being caught cheating.

Question 52: In my opinion severe penalties will prevent students from cheating
(n=395)

Four respondents (n=4) did not complete this question. Although most of the pre-registration nursing students *strongly agreed* (n=157 or 40%) and a further 39% (n=153) *agreed* that severe penalties would prevent students from engaging in cheating behaviour, a small percentage of respondents *disagreed* (n=47 or 12%) or *strongly disagreed* (n=34 or 9%) that severe penalties would prevent cheating behaviour (see Figure 4.36).

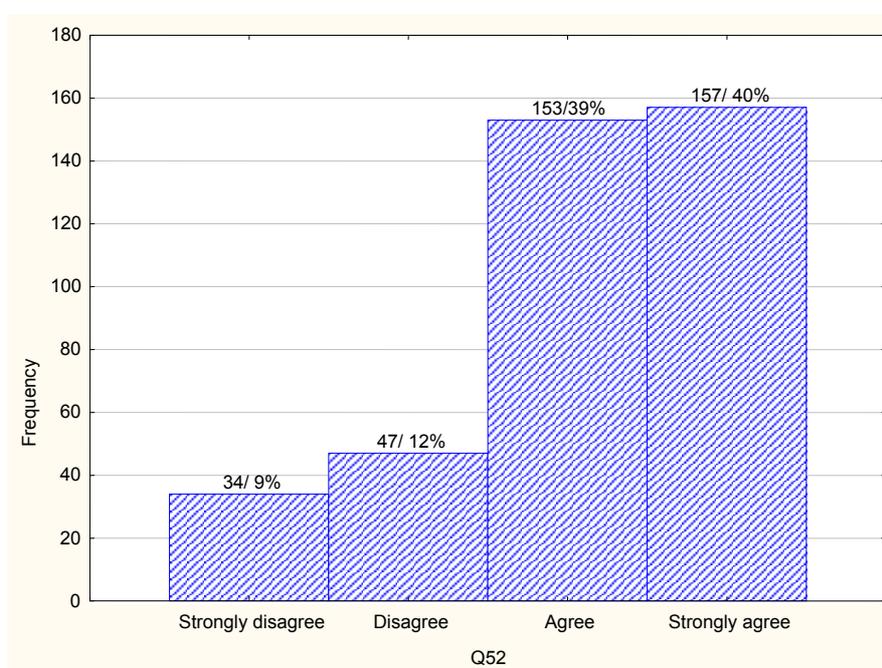


Figure 4.36
Preventing cheating by instating severe penalties

Question 53: In my opinion encouraging students to monitor peer behaviour will prevent students from cheating (n=395)

Two respondents (n=2) did not complete this question. As shown in Figure 4.37 the majority of the respondents *agreed* (n=184 or 47%) and a further 19% (n=73) *strongly agreed* with the statement that encouraging students to monitor peer behaviour would prevent students from cheating. However, more than a third of the respondents *disagreed* (n=95 or 24%) or *strongly disagreed* (n=41 or 10%) with this statement.

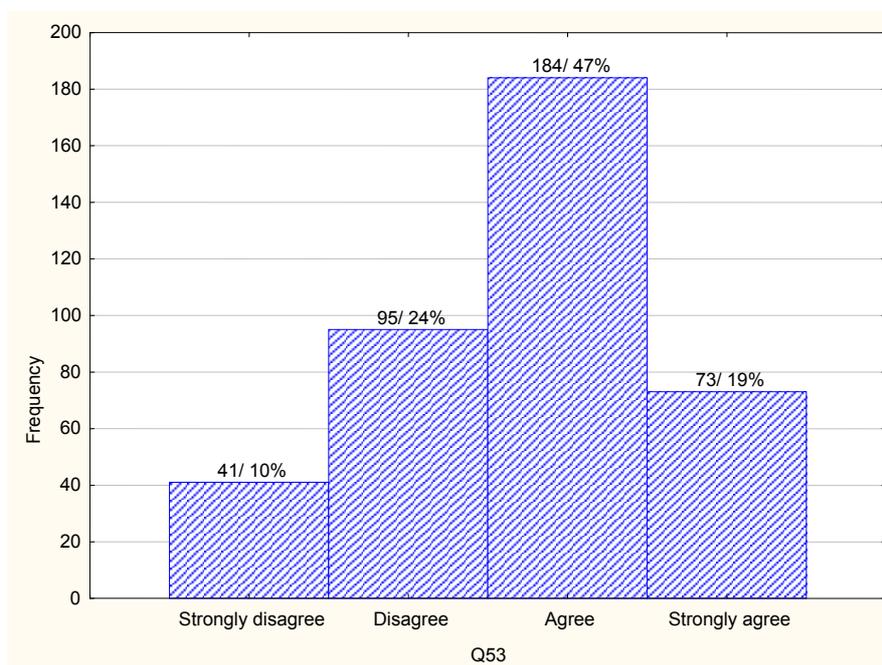


Figure 4.37

Prevention of cheating by encouraging students to monitor peer behaviour

Question 54: In my opinion the introduction of a code of honour will prevent students from cheating (n=395)

Two respondents (n=2) did not complete this question. Figure 4.38 indicates that although the majority of the respondents *agreed* (n=155 or 40%) or *strongly agreed* (n=98 or 25%) that the introduction of a code of honour would prevent students from cheating, more than a third *disagreed* (n=107 or 27%) or *strongly disagreed* (n=33 or 8%) with this statement.

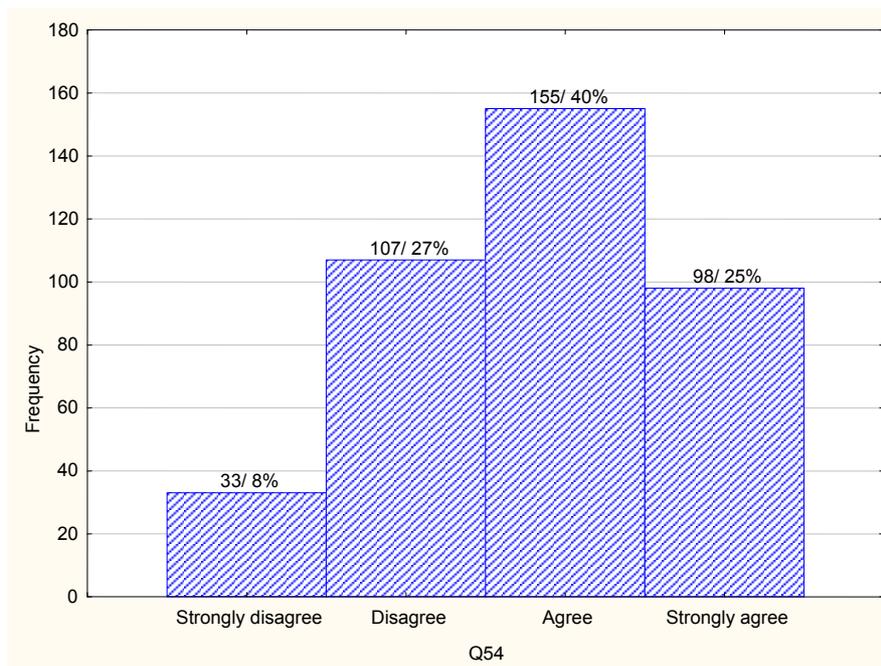


Figure 4.38

Prevention of cheating by introducing a code of honour

The pre-registration nursing students' knowledge of institutional policies was tested by questions 55 to 57. The respondents were instructed to indicate their answer (yes or no) with a tick in the appropriate box.

Question 55: Are you aware of any policies at your academic institution that spell out rules regarding referencing of sources? (n=395)

Five respondents (n=5) did not complete this question. According to Table 4.4 the majority of the students (n=278 or 71%) responded that they were aware of the policies that spelled out the rules regarding referencing of sources. However, 29% of the respondents (n=112) mentioned that they did not know of the policies regarding referencing of sources.

Table 4.4
Awareness of policies regarding referencing of sources

Response category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Yes	278	71
No	112	29
Total	n=390	100

Question 56: Are you aware of any policies at your academic institution that spell out rules regarding student conduct in examination and assessment venues? (n=395)

Four respondents (n=4) did not complete this question. As shown in Table 4.5 almost all the respondents (n=361 or 92%) indicated that they were aware of the policies involving the rules regarding student conduct in examination and assessment venues. However, 8% of the respondents (n=30) indicated that they did not have any knowledge of these policies.

Table 4.5
Awareness of policies regarding student conduct in examination and assessment venues

Response category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Yes	361	92
No	30	8
Total	n=391	100

Question 57: Are you aware of any policies at your academic institution that spell out penalties for academic dishonesty? (n=395)

Six respondents (n=6) did not complete this question. Table 4.6 indicates that the majority of the students (n=277 or 71%) responded that they were aware of the policies that spelled out penalties for academic dishonesty. However, 29% of the respondents (n=112) indicated that they were unaware of these policies.

Table 4.6
Awareness of policies that spell out penalties for academic dishonesty

Response category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Yes	277	71
No	112	29
Total	n=389	100

Questions 58 to 61 generated information regarding the participating pre-registration nursing students' understanding of plagiarism and referencing. The respondents were instructed to indicate their answer (yes or no) with a tick in the appropriate box.

Question 58: Do you know how to reference the ideas of other authors in your assignment? (n=395)

Five respondents (n=5) did not complete this question. Although most of the respondents (n=282 or 72%) indicated that they knew how to reference the ideas of other authors in an assignment, almost a third of the respondents (n=108 or 28%) indicated that they did not know how to reference (see Table 4.7).

Table 4.7
Knowledge regarding the referencing of ideas of other authors

Response category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Yes	282	72
No	108	28
Total	n=390	100

Question 59: Do you know how to reference word-for-word quotations of other authors' work in your assignment? (n=395)

Four respondents (n=4) did not complete this question. As shown in Table 4.8 a large percentage of the students (n=252 or 64%) responded that they knew how to

reference word-for-word quotations of other authors. However, 36% of the respondents (n=139) mentioned that they did not know how to reference the quotations.

Table 4.8
Knowledge regarding the referencing of word-for-word quotations of other authors' work

Response category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Yes	252	64
No	139	36
Total	n=391	100

Question 60: Do you know where to find guidelines on correct referencing techniques? (n=395)

Four respondents (n=4) did not complete this question. Table 4.9 indicates that the majority of the students (n=252 or 64%) responded that they knew where to find guidelines on the correct referencing techniques. However, 36% of the respondents (n=139) mentioned that they did not know where to find these guidelines.

Table 4.9
Knowledge regarding where to find guidelines on the correct referencing techniques

Response category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Yes	252	64
No	139	36
Total	n=391	100

Question 61: Do you know what plagiarism is? (n=395)

Six respondents (n=6) did not complete this question. Table 4.10 shows that most of the respondents (n=324 or 83%) indicated that they knew what plagiarism is. However, a small percentage of respondents (n=65 or 17%) indicated that they were not familiar with the term.

Table 4.10
Knowledge regarding plagiarism

Response category	Frequency (<i>f</i>)	Percentage (%)
Yes	324	83
No	65	17
Total	n=389	100

4.2.2 Data analysis of qualitative responses to open-ended questions

The data that was generated by the inclusion of open-ended questions supplemented the quantitative data to provide more in-depth information on the pre-registration nursing students' understanding of plagiarism and their feelings about the fact that some students got away with cheating. In addition, the last question requested the respondents' recommendations regarding interventions to prevent academic cheating among students. The responses were analysed by means of analytical data reduction based on Tesch's approach as discussed in paragraph 3.7.

Question 62: Explain in your own words what do you understand under the term 'plagiarism'.

Most of the respondents ($n= 209$) who answered this question demonstrated a fairly good understanding that plagiarism relates to using or presenting other people's work as your own without acknowledging the author. Although they did not give an exhaustive definition of plagiarism, they did capture the essence of the concept. However, it was evident that several respondents did not have a complete understanding of the concept. Lack of understanding was demonstrated in that these respondents cited certain conditions as having to be present before a particular behaviour could be regarded as plagiarism. For example, some respondents said that copying someone else's work is plagiarism only when one copies work word for word ($n=29$); copies work from someone else without permission ($n=14$); hands in someone else's assignment as one's own ($n=38$). A small group of respondents ($n=35$) indicated that they did not know what plagiarism means.

The responses to the above question were grouped and summarised as follows:

- “Copying someone else’s work without acknowledging the author” (n=209);
- “Handing in someone else’s assignment as one’s own” (n=38);
- “Do not know what it means” (n=35);
- “Copying someone else’s work word for word” (n=29);
- “Copying someone else’s work without permission” (n=14).

Question 63: Explain in your own words how you feel about the fact that some students get away with cheating.

The respondents’ responses were grouped and quantified, resulting in the identification of seven core responses. These responses varied on a continuum from what may be regarded as insightful to what may be regarded as poor insight. The response categories that may be grouped on the insightful end of the continuum, and also represent a certain degree of maturity, are those that reflect that students will not have the necessary knowledge when they qualify (n=29) and that cheating will not be confined to theory but also extend into future practice (n=8). An example of a comment from the former category was: “If you cheat, you do not know the prescribed work and are passing without having the relevant knowledge. This will impact on the health care service provided to the patient.”

Response categories that tended towards the poor insight end of the continuum were those that reflect that cheating is unfair towards other students (n=156) or that cheating does not matter (n=35). One respondent commented: “It is not right towards other students who work hard although they still fail.” Another subject mentioned: “It does not bother me if they get away with it. It’s their luck.”

A disquieting response by 12 of the respondents was that cheating was justified. One mentioned: “Not all of us can pass exams without cheating, maybe that’s the thing (cheating) that can help them to succeed.” Equally disturbing is the response of 35 respondents that it does not matter if students get away with cheating. Other responses were that cheating is wrong (n=22) and that cheating is wrong but perpetrators deserve a second chance (n=1).

The pre-registration nursing students' feelings regarding some students getting away with cheating were summarised as follows:

- “Cheating is unfair towards other students who work hard to pass” (n=156);
- “Cheating does not matter” (n=35);
- “These students will not have the necessary knowledge when they qualify” (n=29);
- “Cheating is wrong” (n=22);
- “Cheating is justified” (n=12);
- “Cheating will extend into future practice” (n=8);
- “Cheating is wrong but perpetrators deserve a second chance” (n=1).

Question 64: What interventions do you recommend to avoid/prevent academic cheating among students?

The responses to the above question, namely “What interventions do you recommend to avoid/prevent academic cheating among students?” could broadly be placed in four major categories. The first major category of responses refers to those that have punitive intent. The majority of subjects (n=80) who answered this question provided responses that fitted into this category and proposed the strict application of punitive measures such as disciplining of offenders, temporary suspension of offenders and even termination of training.

The second category contains those responses that call for greater vigilance in order to detect and prevent academic dishonesty. A significant number of subjects (n=72) suggested more invigilators, as well as increased vigilance from invigilators. One respondent commented: “More examiners in the examination hall who are actually paying attention to the students.” This second category was also characterised by responses suggesting that students be searched or observed by cameras (n=28) in test and examination venues. A small group of respondents (n=19) suggested that larger venues with increased space between desks would curb cheating in tests and examinations.

The third major category comprises responses that propose, from the respondents' point of view, some form of remedial action targeting the lecturers. In this category, 32 of the respondents proposed that the workload should be reduced and 28 respondents suggested that more time to study for tests and examinations should be scheduled into the programme. A few respondents (n=3) felt that referencing techniques should be properly explained. Fourteen respondents proposed extra classes and nine respondents commented that lecturers should make sure that students understand the work.

The fourth category includes responses indicating that nothing could or should be done to prevent cheating. Here 10 of the respondents indicated that nothing could be done to prevent cheating. More alarming was that eight respondents indicated that nothing should be done to prevent cheating. An example of a comment in this regard is: "Just let them cheat, it is fine. If they see it as a right thing or you must ask easy things in exams."

A final suggestion by 14 of the respondents was that students should sign a declaration of honesty. The pre-registration nursing students' recommendations to prevent academic cheating are summarised as follows:

- "Punitive measures should be taken, e.g. disciplining of offenders, temporary suspension, termination of training" (n=80);
- "More invigilators in test and examination venues with increased awareness by the invigilators, e.g. walking up and down, strict supervision of students" (n=72);
- "Workload must be reduced by narrow demarcation of learning material for tests and examinations" (n=32);
- "Students must be searched upon entering and use of surveillance cameras in test and examination venues" (n=28);
- "Programme schedule should provide more time to study for tests and examinations" (n=28);
- "Test and examination venues must be large enough to allow adequate spacing between students" (n=19);
- "Declaration of honesty should be signed by all students" (n=14);

- “Extra classes must be provided” (n=14);
- “Nothing can be done about cheating” (n=10);
- “Lecturers should make sure that students understand the work” (n=9);
- “Do nothing to prevent cheating” (n=8);
- “Referencing techniques should be properly explained” (n=3).

4.2.3 Frequency distributions of summed data relating to the prevalence of academic dishonesty and respondents’ awareness of academic cheating

In this section all responses indicating *once*, *more than once* or *many times* related firstly, to the self-reported prevalence of academic dishonesty (questions 5 to 18) and secondly, to the respondents’ awareness of academic cheating by other students (questions 19 to 24) have been summed and are presented as composite frequency distributions in tabular form.

4.2.3.1 Prevalence of academic dishonesty

Data related to the prevalence of academic dishonesty was collected by questions 5 to 18 of the questionnaire. The reliability of this part of the instrument was considered to be acceptable, with a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.72.

The summing of all the scores indicating any level of academic cheating (*once*, *more than once*, or *many times*), reveals that the majority of respondents (n=346 or 88%) indicated that they had committed one of the cheating activities that were surveyed at least once. Only 12% (n=49) of the respondents reported that they had never been involved in any form of cheating. Descriptive statistics depicted in Table 4.11 illustrates, from most frequently occurring to least frequently occurring, the forms of cheating behaviour exhibited by the respondents. The most common cheating behaviour (n=237 or 60% of respondents) was copying ideas without referencing. The least common cheating behaviour (n=12 or 3% of respondents) was using unauthorised crib notes in a test or examination. A disturbingly large number of respondents (n=134 or 34%) reported dishonesty with the completion of their practical workbooks.

Table 4.11
Prevalence of cheating behaviours

	Items	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Q5	Copying ideas from any sources (e.g. books, journals) without acknowledging the original author	237	60
Q6	Copying word for word from any original sources (e.g. books, journals) and not using quotation marks	224	57
Q7	Working together with one or more other students on a homework assignment that was supposed to be done individually	159	45
Q18	Dishonesty in any way with completing one's practical workbook	134	34
Q8	Using material from another student's paper without acknowledging the original author	103	27
Q11	Writing an assignment for someone else	74	20
Q13	Allowing another student to copy from one's work during a test or examination	53	14
Q16	Giving another student answers in a test or examination with the help of signals	57	14
Q9	Submitting a paper written by someone else (e.g. a friend or relative) as one's own	23	8
Q17	Lying about medical or other circumstances to defer a test or examination in order to have more time to study for it	29	7
Q12	Copying from another student during a test or examination	18	6
Q10	Submitting another student's work as one's own	10	4
Q14	Bringing unauthorised crib notes into a test or examination venue	9	4
Q15	Using unauthorised crib notes during a test or examination	12	3

4.2.3.2 Awareness of academic dishonesty by other students

Data related to the participants' awareness of other students' involvement in incidents of academic dishonesty was collected by questions 19 to 24 of the questionnaire. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this part of the questionnaire was 0.81, meaning that the reliability of the instrument was satisfactory.

Table 4.12 illustrates the form of cheating behaviour witnessed by respondents, from the most frequently observed to the least frequently observed. The results show that dishonesty in completing the practical books was the type of cheating behaviour most frequently witnessed by the respondents (n=223 or 56%). The use of

unauthorised crib notes during a test or examination (n=62 or 15%) was the least witnessed cheating behaviour.

Table 4.12
Awareness of cheating behaviours by others

	Items	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Q24	Awareness of another student being dishonest when completing his/her practical workbook	223	56
Q23	Awareness of another student allowing someone else to copy parts of, or their whole assignment	155	30
Q19	Awareness of another student copying from someone else during a test or an examination	120	30
Q22	Awareness of another student helping someone else to cheat in a test	67	17
Q20	Awareness of another student bringing unauthorised crib notes into a test or examination venue	63	16
Q21	Awareness of another student using unauthorised crib notes during a test or examination	62	15

4.3 CORRELATION OF QUANTITATIVE DATA

Inferential tests were applied to examine the relationship between academic dishonesty and gender, home language, level of training and age respectively. The relationship between academic dishonesty and peer pressure was also examined. The various aspects and the related tests are described in the following sub-sections (4.3.1 – 4.3.5).

4.3.1 Gender and academic dishonesty

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to ascertain if there was a relationship between the gender of the respondents and the incidence of academic dishonesty. A probability value $p = 0.02$ (smaller than the significance level of 0.05) indicated that the hypothesis that there is no difference in the means of males and females regarding academic dishonesty was rejected. The means recorded by males was 1.42 and by females was 1.32 (on a scale of 1 = *never* to 4 = *many times*). This result suggests that males had a statistically significant higher cheating tendency than females.

4.3.2 Home language and academic dishonesty

An appropriate ANOVA method was used to ascertain if there was a relationship between the home language of the respondents and the incidence of academic dishonesty. The results ($F[3,372]=0.55370$; $p=0.65$) indicated there was no significant relationship between home language and academic dishonesty. The probability value of $p=0.65$ was larger than 0.05, indicating that the relationship between academic dishonesty and home language was statistically insignificant.

4.3.3 Current level of training and academic dishonesty

An appropriate ANOVA method was used to ascertain if there was a relationship between the current level of training of the respondents and the incidence of academic dishonesty. No significant difference was found in the cheating behaviour of the respondents in the different year groups ($F[2,373]=1.3508$; $p=0.26$). The probability value $p=0.26$ was larger than 0.05, indicating that there was not a significant relationship between the level of training and academic dishonesty (see Figure 4.43).

4.3.4 Age and academic dishonesty

A Pearson product moment correlation was used to examine the relationship between age and academic dishonesty. The probability value $p=0.22$ was larger than 0.05, suggesting that there was no statistically significant relationship between age and academic dishonesty (Pearson $r = -0.07$; $p=0.22$).

4.3.5 Peer pressure and academic dishonesty

Data related to the influence of peer pressure on cheating behaviour was collected by questions 32 to 35 of the questionnaire. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this part of the questionnaire was 0.75, meaning that the reliability of the instrument was satisfactory.

A Pearson product moment correlation was used to examine the relationship between peer pressure and academic dishonesty. The correlation coefficient $r = 0.36$ fell between 0.30 and 0.50, indicating a moderately positive relationship between peer pressure and academic dishonesty. The probability value $p < 0.01$ was smaller than 0.05, which indicated a statistically significant relationship between peer pressure and academic dishonesty. A statistically significant positive correlation was identified between peer pressure and academic dishonesty (Pearson $r = 0.36$; $p < 0.01$), suggesting that peer pressure and academic dishonesty were associated with one another.

4.4 SUMMARY

In this chapter an extensive analysis of the data collected by means of a questionnaire was described. The quantitative data generated by questions 1 to 61 was analysed and described and, in most cases, the distribution of variables was presented with histograms or frequency tables. The overall prevalence of academic dishonesty was determined and the findings indicated that most of the respondents admitted that they had committed at least one of the surveyed cheating activities at least once. Three open-ended questions (62 – 64) included in the questionnaire generated qualitative responses which were categorised and the frequency of the responses was recorded.

In Chapter 5 the empirical findings are discussed and compared with the findings of previous studies on the topic. Conclusions are drawn. Recommendations emanating from the current study are discussed, and recommendations for further studies are made. In addition, the limitations of the current study are discussed.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

It was established from the literature study (Chapter 2) that academic integrity is important in the training of future ethical and competent nurse practitioners. However, the literature study revealed that academic dishonesty is a worldwide problem in all educational institutions, including nursing education institutions. Therefore, the aim of this study was to explore the status of academic integrity among nursing students at a nursing education institution in the Western Cape. Violation of academic integrity is expressed in the form of academic dishonesty (see paragraph 2.2.1), therefore this study focused on the prevalence of different forms of cheating behaviour and the factors that might have an influence on academic dishonesty.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

The research objectives that were formulated for this study in paragraph 1.6 guided the discussions and synthesis of the findings. A discussion of the findings related to each research objective is presented, ending with an overall conclusion regarding the particular objective.

5.2.1 Incidence of academic dishonesty

Objective number 1: Determine the incidence of academic dishonesty at a specific nursing education institution in the Western Cape.

The findings of this study indicated that the majority of pre-registration nursing students (88%) reported that they had committed at least one form of cheating activity at least once (see paragraph 4.2.3.1). This finding concerning the overall incidence of academic dishonesty is congruent with those of past studies done with

students in courses other than nursing (see paragraph 2.3). For example, Lim and See (2001:267) reported that almost all of the students in their study had committed one form of cheating at least once. Lambert *et al.* (2003:12) found an overall involvement in cheating behaviour of 83% in their study amongst students in different courses at the Midwestern University in the USA. Harding *et al.* (2004:314) also found a high overall cheating rate of 70.2% amongst the engineering students in their study, while Olasehinde-Williams *et al.* (2003:77) reported a 66% overall cheating rate at the University of Nigeria.

However, the above-mentioned overall self-reported involvement in cheating practices by pre-registration nursing students in the current study is found to be considerably higher when it is compared to previous research among exclusively nursing students (see paragraph 2.3). McCabe (2009:617) found that 58% of the undergraduate nursing students were engaged in at least one of the surveyed cheating behaviours, whereas Brown (2002:7) reported that only 8% to 13% of nursing students in her study admitted to being involved in cheating behaviour. Such inconsistencies may possibly be attributable to the fact that socially desirable response bias is often indicated as a limitation in studies concerning academic dishonesty.

It is noteworthy that cheating behaviours tantamount to plagiarism (60% and 57%) and dishonesty related to assignments (45%) were the two most common forms of cheating committed by the pre-registration nursing students in this study (see Table 4.11). These findings are generally consistent with previous research on the cheating behaviour of students. Most researchers also identified the paraphrasing of material without acknowledging the source as one of the most common cheating behaviours in their studies (Hilbert, 1985:231; Hilbert, 1987:41; Lim & See, 2001:268; McCabe, 2009:617; Newstead *et al.*, 1996:231). Dishonest behaviour related to assignments also features high on the frequency rate in previous studies (Hilbert, 1985:231; Lim & See, 2001:268; McCabe, 2009:617; Newstead *et al.*, 1996:232) (see paragraph 2.3).

Researchers have acknowledged that the high incidence of plagiarism might be due to the fact that students possibly do not understand plagiarism (Paterson *et al.*, 2003:157), or do not understand the seriousness of plagiarism (Park, 2003:483).

Previous research has also indicated that students often regard plagiarism and cheating in assignments as less serious acts of academic dishonesty (Lim & See, 2001:269; McCabe, 2009:620; Schmelkin *et al.*, 2008:602). Researchers found that students did not always regard plagiarism and dishonest behaviour related to assignments as academic cheating because there is no clear definition of academic cheating (Arhin, 2009:19; Bates *et al.*, 2005:73) (see paragraphs 2.2.2 and 2.4.4). However, by regarding the use of material from another author's work without referencing it as a serious offence, the majority of respondents (79%) indicated awareness of the importance of plagiarism (see Figure 4.15).

Similar to previous research findings (see paragraph 2.3), it was found in the current study that cheating behaviour during tests and examinations was significantly less common than the previously mentioned forms of cheating (see Table 4.11). However, a comparison of the respondents' awareness of cheating by other students with their self-reported personal engagement in cheating (see Tables 4.11 and 4.12) indicated that it is possible that personal dishonesty in tests and examinations was under-reported. For example, considerably more students (30%) reported that they had seen a student copying from someone else during a test or examination than students who owned up to copying from someone else themselves (6%). The same trend was found among respondents who indicated awareness of other students bringing unauthorised crib notes into a test or examination (16%), compared to only 4% who admitted to engaging in this behaviour themselves. Similarly, more respondents were aware of other students using unauthorised crib notes (15%) than the 3% of respondents who admitted that they had been involved in this behaviour (see Tables 4.11 and 4.12). Brown (2002:7) also found that a large number of students reported they had seen other students cheat while a much smaller number admitted to cheating themselves.

A disquieting finding of the current study was that a significant number of pre-registration nursing students (34%) admitted to dishonesty in completing their practical workbooks (see Figure 4.5). This finding has implications for their competency as future independent nursing practitioners. In addition, the majority of the respondents (56%) reported they had witnessed other students being dishonest when completing their practical workbook (see Figure 4.8). Once again, this finding

revealed a possible degree of under-reporting and the number could be higher. A possible explanation for the dishonesty in recording the practical sessions could be that pre-registration nursing students fail to see the importance of the practical component of their nursing studies. This suggestion is supported by the following response of a student to an open-ended question regarding their feelings about students getting away with cheating: “For the practical book I don’t feel bad because some things they expect us to do are impossible e.g. third year (practical) book we all have cheated.”

It can be concluded that academic dishonesty, particularly related to plagiarism and the completion of assignments, is widespread amongst the pre-registration nursing students. An alarming finding is that academic dishonesty is not restricted to the classroom only, but also affects the practical component of nursing education. Furthermore, the discrepancy between observed and self-reported episodes of cheating behaviour indicates that the incidence of cheating behaviours is probably higher than that revealed by the self-reported frequency. These conclusions are a cause for concern in view of the expectation that nursing students should always behave in an ethical manner. An additional cause for concern is that cheating could cause the nursing students to be underprepared as future professional nurses, and that they would therefore lack the necessary knowledge and skills to provide high quality patient care. For that reason it is vital that cheating should not be ignored and that innovative preventative measures should be introduced.

5.2.2 Factors influencing academic integrity

Objective number 2: Investigate the individual and contextual factors that have an influence on academic dishonesty at a specific nursing education institution in the Western Cape.

5.2.2.1 Individual factors

The relationships between academic dishonesty and respectively gender (see paragraph 4.3.1), home language (see paragraph 4.3.2), current level of training (see paragraph 4.3.3), and age (see paragraph 4.3.4) were explored. The results

pertaining to gender indicated that males were significantly more likely to cheat than females. This finding is supported by previous studies that also found that males cheated more than females (Bates *et al.*, 2005:73; Burns *et al.*, 1998:596; McCabe & Trevino, 1997:388; Newstead *et al.*, 1996:233; Nonis & Swift, 2001:72; Lim & See, 2001:270; Olasehinde-Williams *et al.*, 2003:76; Smyth & Davis, 2004:66; Whitley, 1998:242). On the other hand, several studies found no significant difference between the cheating behaviour of males and females (Blankenship & Whitley, 2000:6; Hilbert, 1987:42; McCabe, 2009:618). Only one study was identified that found that females cheated more than males (Hilbert, 1985:231). It seems from the divergent results of previous studies that the significance of gender as a predictor of cheating behaviour is still a contentious subject (see paragraph 2.4.1).

No significant relationship was found between academic dishonesty and home language, current year of study, or age. Although the non-significant findings related to age were supported by two previous studies, both conducted exclusively among nursing students (Daniel *et al.*, 1994:286; Hilbert, 1987:43), most previous studies suggest that younger first- and second-year students display more cheating behaviour than mature students (McCabe & Trevino, 1997:388; Newstead *et al.*, 1996:233; Nonis & Swift, 2001:72; Whitley, 1998:239) (see paragraph 2.4.1).

It can therefore be concluded that there is a statistically significant association between gender and cheating behaviours amongst the pre-registration nursing students; and that no statistically significant relationships exist between academic dishonesty and home language, current level of study, or age.

5.2.2.2 Contextual factors

Table 5.1 summarises, from highest to lowest, the level of agreement by the respondents regarding the role of contextual influences (as surveyed) underpinning cheating behaviour of pre-registration nursing students.

Table 5.1
Opinion of respondents regarding contextual influences on cheating behaviours

Items	Percentage %
Students engage in cheating behaviour because of the pressure to succeed academically.	84
Students engage in cheating behaviour because of the large amount of study material they have to master.	83
Students engage in cheating behaviour because of the difficult learning material they have to study.	75
Students engage in cheating behaviour because of the limited time they have to study.	74
Students engage in cheating behaviour because other students get away with it.	71
Students engage in cheating behaviour because of fear of losing status amongst peers.	71
Students engage in cheating behaviour because of their negative attitude towards assignments and tests.	69
Students engage in cheating behaviour because of having to pay back their bursary when they fail.	64

The pressure to succeed academically (84% of respondents) was indicated as a major factor influencing the decision to engage in cheating behaviour (see Table 5.1). This corresponds with the findings in previous research (see paragraph 2.4.5) where the pressure to achieve high marks was identified as one of the most important reasons for cheating (Hilbert, 1987:42; Newstead *et al.*, 1996:233; Whitley, 1998:243).

Consistent with research done by Harding *et al.* (2004:315), Newstead *et al.* (1996:233); and Tanner (2004:291), the current research also identified the limited time to study (74% of respondents) as a major influence in students' cheating behaviour (see paragraph 2.4.5).

The majority of respondents (71%) indicated that the fear of losing status among peers would cause them to engage in cheating behaviour (see Figure 4.26). These findings are consistent with those in previous research (see paragraph 2.4.1) on the influence of peer behaviour on academic dishonesty (McCabe *et al.*, 2006:300; McCabe & Trevino, 1993:533; McCabe & Trevino, 1997:391).

An interesting finding in this study was that, as a result of peer pressure, respondents were more willing to assist friends with their assignments illegally (49%) (see Figure 4.17) than to allow them to copy their assignments (19%) (see Figure 4.18), or to let friends copy their answers in tests or examinations (15%) (see Figure 4.16). This may be related to the notion that students regard certain academic dishonesty as being more serious than others, as previously discussed in paragraph 5.2.1.

As a contextual influence, peer pressure to 'help' other students was positively and significantly associated with academic dishonesty (see paragraph 4.3.5), despite the fact that 70% of the respondents felt that peers would disapprove of their cheating (see Figure 4.12). One could argue that such perceived peer disapproval would deter students from engaging in cheating behaviour, particularly in the light of the fact that researchers found that *higher* levels of cheating were associated with perceived *peer condonement* (Jordan, 2001:243; McCabe & Trevino, 1997:391). Loyalty to fellow students, albeit misguided, might account for this apparent contradiction, particularly when one considers that the majority of respondents (see Figure 4.13) also felt that peers would not report them if they cheated.

Most of the respondents (71%) were of the opinion that realising that students got away with cheating would cause other students to engage in cheating behaviour (see Figure 4.32). On the other hand, the majority of respondents (85%) indicated that if other students got away with cheating it would not cause them to cheat (see Figure 4.19). Although Jordan (2001:244) found a strong positive relation between cheating and witnessing other students cheat, it was difficult to relate this finding to the current study because of the above-mentioned contradictory views of the respondents (see paragraph 2.4.1).

In summary, it can be concluded that all the contextual factors listed in the questionnaire and portrayed in Table 5.1 played a major role in the cheating behaviour of the nursing students. These are:

- the pressure to succeed academically;
- a large amount of study material;
- difficult learning material;

- limited time to study;
- other students getting away with it;
- losing status amongst peers;
- a negative attitude towards assignments and tests; and
- having to pay back bursaries in the event of failure.

5.2.3 Knowledge of institutional policies regarding academic dishonesty

Objective number 3: Determine the students' knowledge of institutional policies regarding academic dishonesty.

The majority of respondents (see Tables 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6) indicated that they were aware of the institutional policies regarding referencing of sources (71%), student conduct in examination and assessment venues (92%), and the penalties for academic dishonesty (71%).

It can be concluded that most of the respondents had a relatively good knowledge of the institutional policies regarding academic dishonesty. In addition, it is clear that the respondents were generally better acquainted with the policies guiding conduct in examination and assessment venues than those related to referencing of sources or penalties for academic dishonesty. Jordan (2001:243) found that students who had more knowledge of institutional policy cheated less and vice versa (see paragraph 2.5.2). Therefore, the above findings might explain why transgressions related to plagiarism were found to be more common than those related to examinations and tests (see paragraph 5.2.1)

5.2.4 Students' understanding of plagiarism and referencing

Objective number 4: Determine the students' understanding of plagiarism and referencing.

The respondents were asked if they knew what plagiarism was and 83% answered 'yes', while only 17% answered 'no' (see Table 4.10). Respondents were also asked

to explain in their own words their understanding of the term 'plagiarism'. Most of the respondents indicated that it was the act of copying someone else's work without acknowledging the author, thereby displaying a fairly good understanding of the meaning of plagiarism (see paragraph 4.2.2, question 62).

The replies to the questions related to referencing displayed a greater uncertainty from the respondents, with 72% of the respondents indicating that they knew how to reference ideas from other authors (see Table 4.7) and 64% of the respondents indicating that they knew how to reference direct quotations (see Table 4.8).

From the responses to these questions it can be concluded that students are not ignorant about the meaning of plagiarism or referencing. However, the researcher's experience at the setting where this study was conducted was that the majority of the students did not reference their sources at all, or did so very poorly. The reason for this may be tolerance on the part of faculty, combined with laziness, and in some cases a lack of knowledge on the part of the student, rather than intentional cheating.

5.2.5 Students' attitudes towards cheating

Objective number 5: Determine the students' attitudes towards cheating.

The fact that most of the respondents felt there is no justification for cheating suggests a general attitude of intolerance towards cheating (see Figures 4.9, 4.10, 4.11). This finding corresponds with previous research on justification for academic dishonesty (Jordan, 2001:242). However, the finding that an average of 25% of respondents felt that cheating might be justified in certain circumstances is significant in the light of other research findings. Lambert *et al.* (2003:14) found that there is a significant relationship between justification and the level of cheating. Whitley (1998:245) also found that students with so-called 'neutralising attitudes' (beliefs that cheating can be rationalised and justified) were more likely to cheat than students who felt that there is no justification for cheating (see paragraph 2.4.3).

Respondents were also asked to explain in their own words how they felt about the fact that some students got away with cheating. The responses varied on a continuum from what the researcher classified as insightful to responses indicating poor insight (see paragraph 4.2.2, question 63). A few responses portrayed insight by indicating that cheating could cause future practitioners to have inadequate knowledge or that cheating behaviour could extend into future practice. The validity of these insights was confirmed by previous research (see paragraph 2.6.2) which found that as a result of academic cheating, newly qualified graduates did not possess the necessary knowledge and skills (Bailey, 2001:130; Bates *et al.*, 2005:75; Lambert *et al.*, 2003:2; Lim & See, 2001:273; Turner *et al.*, 2003:1123). Previous studies also confirmed that there was a significant correlation between academic cheating and workplace dishonesty (Blankenship & Whitley, 2000:8; Harding *et al.*, 2004:317; Hilbert, 1985:232; Hilbert, 1988:166; Lucas & Friedrich, 2005:20; Nonis & Swift, 2001:71; Sims, 1993:209). However, the majority of the respondents showed poor insight, with responses indicating that cheating does not matter or that cheating was unfair towards other hardworking students (see paragraph 4.2.2, question 63). The following are some examples, quoted verbatim and unedited, of the less insightful comments to the open-ended question (see question 63):

“I could honestly say it's their luck. I don't find any reason to be emotional about it because in the end it's their choice.”

“My opinion is that every one wants to pass so if they cheated is the only way that they can be what they want to be for future.”

“I have no problem with their cheating they are doing it for themselves for their benefit.”

“It's unfair towards the students who is struggling hard to become something in life.”

“I think it is very unfair. We all work hard to pass but the ones who cheat are passing with distinctions.”

These responses led the researcher to question the motivation behind the respondents' apparent attitude of intolerance towards cheating. Were they intolerant of cheating because of the 'unfairness' of cheating towards others or were they intolerant because cheating is unethical behaviour?

The findings regarding reporting other students when they are seen to be cheating communicated the students' indifference towards academic dishonesty. The majority of respondents (see Figures 4.20 and 4.21) indicated that they would not report another student to the lecturer if they witnessed them cheating in tests and examinations (66%) or with their assignments (72%). Almost half of the respondents (49%) indicated that they would ignore the cheating behaviour (see Figure 4.24), while some of the respondents (42%) would threaten the cheaters with reporting if they did not stop (see Figure 4.22). Most of the respondents (67%) indicated that they would tell the other students about the cheating (see Figure 4.23). These findings are generally consistent with those obtained in previous research on students' willingness to report their peers. For example, Lim and See (2001:271) found that only 1.7% of respondents in their study would report someone found cheating. McCabe *et al.* (2006:301) also reported that the vast majority of respondents in their study would be unwilling to report cheating amongst their peers (see paragraph 2.6.2).

It is worth mentioning that although the respondents were of the opinion that cheating is 'unfair' towards other students, they were not willing to report them. A possible explanation for the respondents' reluctance to report cheating could be the influence of peer pressure as discussed in paragraph 5.2.2.2.

A substantially high percentage of respondents (92%) indicated that they would feel guilty if they had cheated (see Figure 4.14). This finding is significant in view of the high cheating rate and the apparent indifference towards academic dishonesty displayed in the discussion above.

It can be concluded that there is ambivalence in the respondents' attitudes toward cheating. On the one hand most of the respondents indicated that there was no justification for cheating, suggesting intolerance of cheating. On the other hand, an indifference towards cheating is evident from their responses regarding students getting away with cheating as well as their unwillingness to report witnessed cheating by other students. Once again this may be more indicative of misplaced loyalty than indifference.

5.2.6 Prevention of cheating

Objective number 6: Determine the students' recommendations regarding the prevention of cheating.

Most respondents (83%) indicated that students were afraid of being caught cheating (see Figure 4.35). A majority (75%) also believed that cheaters would get caught (see Figure 4.34). Furthermore, most of the respondents (73%) were of the opinion that students are severely penalised when caught cheating (see Figure 4.33). These are interesting findings in the light of the high cheating rate reported by the respondents. It seems that despite their fear of being caught and their belief that they would be severely penalised, students still persist with the cheating behaviour.

The majority of respondents (79%) indicated that severe penalties would prevent students from cheating (see Figure 4.6). The same trend was reflected in the open-ended questions where the majority of the respondents suggested the strict application of punitive measures to prevent cheating (see paragraph 4.2.2, question 64). Other researchers also (see paragraph 2.3 and 2.5.2) identified fear of being caught and the imposition of severe penalties as major deterring factors with regard to engagement in cheating behaviour (Burns *et al.*, 1998:595; Harding *et al.*, 2004:315; McCabe *et al.*, 2001:222; Smyth & Davis, 2004:66). In addition, respondents called for other preventative measures such as searching of students for unauthorised crib notes, the maintenance of large spaces between desks and strict invigilation during tests and examinations (see paragraph 4.2.2, question 64). Researchers in previous studies identified similar interventions to prevent cheating

during tests and examinations (Brown, 2002:7; Hilbert, 1987:43) (see paragraph 2.5.3).

A large number of respondents were in agreement that the monitoring of peer behaviour (66%) and the introduction of a code of honour (65%) would prevent students from cheating (see Figures 4.37 and 4.38). This is strongly supported by previous research which indicated that the prevalence of cheating behaviours was significantly reduced by the proper implementation of codes of honour as well as monitoring by peers (Hall & Kuh, 1998:10; McCabe & Trevino, 1993:531; McCabe & Trevino, 1997:393; McCabe *et al.*, 2001:224; McCabe *et al.*, 2003:370; Turner *et al.*, 2003:1127) (see paragraph 2.5.1).

A small number (8 respondents) were of the opinion that nothing should be done to prevent cheating (see paragraph 4.2.2, question 64). However, this is still an alarming finding in the light of the high premium that is placed on honesty and integrity in the nursing profession. Previous research strongly supported the promotion of academic integrity among students by lecturers setting and applying ethical standards and modelling ethical behaviour in the classroom. This would help with the process of character building and moral fortification of the nursing student. (Gaberson, 1997:17; Lewenson *et al.*, 2005:91; Nonis & Swift, 2001:75) (see paragraph 2.5.3).

Some of the other strategies the respondents identified (see paragraph 4.2.2, question 64) in the open-ended question as means to minimise cheating and plagiarism were that:

- the workload of the students should be reduced;
- students should get more time to study for tests and examinations;
- proper referencing techniques should be taught to the students;
- extra classes should be offered; and
- lecturers should ensure that students understand the work.

It can be concluded from the open-ended question that students generally recommended disciplinary, punitive and strict control measures during tests and examinations as the major deterring strategies for cheating. However as indicated previously (see paragraph 4.2.1.2, questions 53 and 54), the majority were also in

agreement that the institution of academic integrity policies and a code of honour would play an important role in curbing academic dishonesty.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is evident that academic dishonesty is an existent problem at the setting where this study was conducted. Although gender and peer pressure were significantly related to academic dishonesty, no specific recommendations were made regarding gender, since this could be interpreted as unfair discrimination. In addition, the students' knowledge (or lack of knowledge) of institutional policies regarding academic dishonesty, as well as their attitudes towards cheating, informed the recommendations arising from this study.

The following recommendations are based on the findings of the study. They correspond to most of the principles of academic integrity (see Table 2.1) identified by McCabe and Pavela (2004:12).

5.3.1 Implementation of a code of honour

Several researchers identified the implementation of a code of honour at educational institutions as an important aid in the establishment of a learning environment characterised by strong academic integrity (Hall & Kuh, 1998:10; McCabe & Trevino, 1993:531; McCabe & Trevino, 1997:393; McCabe *et al.*, 2001:224; Turner *et al.*, 2003:1127). In institutions that have a code of honour, students share the responsibility to create an environment where academic dishonesty is deemed to be unacceptable. This implies that students must be involved in the formulation of the code of honour and in peer monitoring of students who engage in dishonest behaviour (McCabe & Trevino, 1997:394; McCabe & Trevino, 2002:1; McCabe *et al.*, 2003:370; Scanlan, 2006:182; Turner *et al.*, 2003:1127) (see paragraph 2.5.1).

Most of the respondents agreed that the introduction of a code of honour and the monitoring of peer behaviour were strategies that should be applied to prevent students from cheating (see paragraph 5.2.6). However, the significant relationship

between peer pressure and academic cheating and the reluctance showed by respondents in this study to report their peers creates a challenge for the implementation of peer-driven monitoring and reporting systems.

The researcher therefore recommends that faculty, together with students, employ the following innovative measures to promote academic integrity:

- Develop a code of honour.
- Establish a judicial system that manages incidents of academic dishonesty.
- Develop and implement a system of peer monitoring and peer reporting of academic dishonesty.

The researcher anticipates that the implementation of a code of honour will play an important role in changing the attitudes of students regarding academic dishonesty and that it will promote integrity in the academic environment of this institution. In addition, it is believed that the introduction of a code of honour will enhance ethical behaviour among future nurse practitioners.

5.3.2 Academic integrity policies

The fact that students cheat less when they have knowledge of and insight into institutional academic integrity policies (Jordan, 2001:243) accentuates the important impact of policies on academic integrity in the curbing of academic dishonesty. Arhin (2009:20) and McCabe *et al.* (2001:231) recommend that academic integrity policies should spell out what is regarded as unacceptable academic behaviour, inclusive of the sanctions that will accompany such behaviour. Other researchers (e.g. Brown, 2002:7; Sims, 1993:210) also stress that students should be informed of the policies regarding academic dishonesty and that they should be compelled to take responsibility for their unacceptable behaviour. The respondents in this study also recommended disciplinary action as a strategy to deter students from engaging in unacceptable academic behaviour (see paragraph 5.2.6).

Therefore, the researcher recommends that academic integrity policies be formulated with exact definitions that spell out unacceptable academic behaviour.

These policies should reflect a zero tolerance approach to academic dishonesty, thereby affirming academic integrity as a core institutional value (McCabe & Pavela, 2004:12). However, zero tolerance policies should be tempered by a progressive disciplinary process, for example, one commencing with a final written warning for the first offence, followed by dismissal for a following offence, thereby affording the transgressor an opportunity for rehabilitation. A necessary prerequisite is that such academic integrity policies must be brought under the students' attention at regular intervals so that they can internalise the content and understand that academic dishonesty is regarded to be a serious offence. McCabe *et al.* (2001:231) endorse the importance of the consistent application of such policies when they state that lecturers should be supported in their efforts to address academic dishonesty (see paragraph 2.5.2).

5.3.3 Strategies to prevent plagiarism and promote correct referencing

Despite the finding that students are generally able to describe the nature of plagiarism in broad terms (see paragraph 5.2.4), they are generally non-compliant with requirements regarding the referencing of sources (see paragraph 5.2.1). The researcher therefore recommends that special attention should be given to educating students at this institution about plagiarism and referencing, specifically by implementing the following strategies:

- Introduce an academic development programme that gives pertinent, rigorous attention, from the first year onwards, to the issues of plagiarism and, in particular, the referencing of sources (see paragraph 5.2.6).
- Make attendance of the above-mentioned programme obligatory, even if the students are able to broadly describe the nature of plagiarism (see paragraph 5.2.6).
- Include a definition of plagiarism, emphasising its unacceptability, in the academic integrity policies (see paragraphs 5.2.1 and 5.2.6).
- Require students to complete a declaration of authenticity when submitting assignments.
- Change assignment topics on a regular basis.

- Combat plagiarism with appropriate disciplinary action, when persistent, deliberate transgression occurs (see paragraphs 5.2.1 and 5.2.6).

An educational rather than punitive approach to combating plagiarism is also supported by Park (2004:294) and Arhin (2009:20) (see paragraph 2.5.3).

5.3.4 Preventative measures for cheating in examinations and tests and in the completion of practical records

It is important that the students understand that it is unacceptable to cheat in examinations and tests and in completing practical records. Therefore, this principle should be accentuated in the academic integrity policies. Furthermore, students should be taught that integrity regarding the completion of the practical requirements of the programme is a prerequisite for the development of the necessary skills to be a safe nurse practitioner. In addition, lecturing staff should demonstrate the seriousness with which they regard the honest completion of practical records by exercising strict and uncompromising control. Finally, practical strategies related to the prevention of cheating in examinations and tests, as summarised in Table 5.2, should be implemented to make it impossible for students to cheat (see paragraph 5.2.6). The researcher's recommendations regarding cheating in examinations and tests and in the completion of practical records are supported by other researchers such as Bailey (2001:130); Brown (2002:7); Hilbert (1987:43) and Whitley (1998:263) (see paragraph 2.5.3).

Table 5.2

Practical strategies to prevent cheating in examinations and tests

Number	Strategy
1	Ensure close invigilation during tests and examinations.
2	Invigilator/student ratio should not be more than 1:30.
3	Provide suitable seating arrangements, e.g. enough space between desks.
4	Allow only items specified by the examiner, e.g. pens, calculators etc. in the examination/test venue.
5	Exercise strict control of electronic equipment, e.g. no cell phones allowed in examination/test venue.
6	Enforce strict entry and exit control measures.
7	Ensure positive identification of students sitting for examinations and tests.
8	Reduce the workload of the students.
9	Provide more time to study for tests and examinations.
10	Offer extra classes to students.
11	Ensure that the students understand the work.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

5.4.1 Expansion of research

It would be informative if a similar study targeting a variety of nursing education institutions in the country were done. This would allow generalisation of findings to nursing education in South Africa. Post-registration students could possibly be included so as to examine any differences in the behaviour of pre- and post-registration nursing students with regard to academic integrity.

5.4.2 Socialisation of nursing students into the ethics of the nursing profession

Nurses are expected to behave ethically at all times. In the light of the findings, and given the relationship between academic dishonesty and future unethical behaviour, it is recommended that the ethical socialisation of nursing students be further

investigated. This should include the process whereby students internalise the ethical values of honesty, integrity and professional morality of the nursing profession.

5.4.3 Relationship between academic dishonesty and gender

The significance of gender as a predictor of cheating behaviour is still a contentious subject, with various studies yielding contradictory results. Therefore, the researcher recommends that the role of gender as a predictor of cheating be further investigated.

5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This research was subjected to limitations related mainly to the methodology of survey research. Because of the sensitive nature of the topic, a major limitation was the vulnerability to socially desirable response bias. This may have resulted in under-reporting of cheating occurring during tests and examinations. The researcher attempted to avoid this problem by guaranteeing complete anonymity and by emphasising the importance of honest answers to the questions.

A limitation arising from the use of a self-reported questionnaire was that some respondents provided incomplete demographical data and did not complete all the closed-ended questions. In addition, several students did not answer the open-ended questions. Another limitation was that although the researcher requested silence and respect for privacy during the completion of the questionnaires, it is possible that some degree of influence could have occurred.

The fact that the study involved students from a single setting limits the generalisation of the findings to a larger population.

5.6 SUMMARY

A quantitative, descriptive research study was conducted to investigate academic integrity at a nursing education institute in the Western Cape. The population included all the second-, third- and fourth-year pre-registration nursing students.

The rationale, problem statement, aim and specific research objectives for the study were described in paragraph 1.6, and were underpinned by an extensive literature review presented in Chapter 2. The ethical considerations guiding the study were also discussed in paragraph 1.10. The selection and use of an appropriate research methodology were discussed in detail in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4 the data analysis and interpretation were presented. In the current chapter, the clarification and synthesis of the findings of this and other studies were provided, and conclusions were drawn regarding each research objective. These were followed by recommendations ensuing from the current study, recommendations for further studies and a description of the limitations of the study.

The overall conclusion was that academic dishonesty is a reality at the particular nursing education institution involved in this study. Moral ambivalence is evident among students, as demonstrated by persistence in cheating despite feelings of guilt. It is also evident that there is an unwillingness to report peers, despite an intolerant attitude towards cheating. The main cheating behaviours were those associated with plagiarism and assignments. An unacceptably high level of dishonesty regarding the completion of practical records is a cause for concern, particularly because of the implications it has for future competence. Generally, the findings correlate with those of studies done on this topic globally. One can therefore expect the findings to be similar in other nursing education institutions – a hypothesis that needs to be tested during future research.

The overall recommendation is that a code of honour and comprehensive, clear, academic integrity policies be jointly developed and adhered to by staff and students. The implementation of practical measures to combat cheating in tests and examinations, for example, by providing innovative seating arrangements and careful invigilation would reflect the institution's approach of zero tolerance towards academic dishonesty.

Finally, this study has demonstrated that nursing education institutions need to be aware of the prevalence of academic dishonesty and need to accept the challenge of establishing a learning environment where academic integrity is highly valued and zealously protected so that ultimately, ethical nursing practitioners are developed for the future.

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ADDENDUM A: RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE



TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The status of academic integrity among nursing students

AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of this study is to explore the status of academic integrity among nursing students at a nursing education institution in the Western Cape.

INFORMATION TO THE PARTICIPANT

You are being invited to take part in a research project on the status of academic integrity among nursing students. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this project. Please ask the researcher any questions about any part of this project that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this study entails and how you could be involved. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary** and you are free to decline to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part.

Anonymity will be ensured by the anonymous completion of the questionnaires and the collection of all the questionnaires by posting it in a sealed box. Therefore, it will not be possible to match your identity with the completed questionnaire.

All the information obtained from this research study will remain confidential. Only the researcher, statistician and research supervisor will have access to the collected data. To protect your confidentiality the collected information will be stored in sealed boxes in a locked storage room with controlled access by other persons.

There will be no identifying information on the questionnaires and the educational institution where the study will be done will not be identified in any publication, report, or presentation resulting from this research.

Although there are no immediate benefits to you in this research study the result of the study may benefit nursing education and nursing practice by providing insight into the phenomenon of academic dishonesty and the protection of academic integrity of the future nursing student. There will be no financial or other benefits for you.

There are no risks associated with this research study, but you may experience some anxiety in the completion of the questionnaire. Should you experience any distress the researcher is available and can be contacted.

INFORMED CONSENT

Participation in the completion of the questionnaire is voluntary and to ensure complete anonymity, informed consent will be assumed on completion of the questionnaire. The success of this study depends on your truthful completion of the questionnaire.

Thank you for agreeing to fill in the research questionnaire.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Indicate your answer by placing a tick (✓) in the open box next to the appropriate answer

Question 1. What is your gender?

Male	M
Female	F

Question 2. What is your home language?

English	E
Afrikaans	A
Xhosa	X
Other	O

Question 3. What is your current level of training? (Choose one)

Basic course 2 nd year	
Basic course 3 rd year	
Basic course 4 th year	

Question 4. What is your age?

Years old

SECTION B:**DATA RELATING TO ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Please answer every question as honestly as possible

Read each question carefully, and choose one of the possibilities next to the question as your answer.

Indicate your answer by placing a tick (✓) in the appropriate box next to the question.

		Never	Once	More than once	Many times
		1	2	3	4
	How often have you:				
Q5	copied ideas from any sources (e.g. books, journals) without acknowledging the original author.				
Q6	copied word for word from any original sources (e.g. books, journals) and not used quotation marks.				
Q7	worked together with one or more other students on a homework assignment that was supposed to be done individually.				
Q8	used material from another student's paper without acknowledging the original author.				
Q9	submitted a paper written by someone else (e.g. a friend or relative) as your own.				
Q10	submitted another student's work as your own.				
Q11	written an assignment for someone else				
Q12	copied from another student during a test or examination.				
Q13	allowed another student to copy from your work during a test or examination.				
Q14	brought unauthorised crib notes into a test or examination venue.				
Q15	used unauthorised crib notes during a test or examination.				
Q16	given another student answers in a test or examination with the help of signals.				
Q17	lied about medical or other circumstances to defer a test or examination in order to have more time to study for it.				
Q18	been dishonest in any way when completing your practical workbook				

		Never	Once	More than once	Many times
		1	2	3	4
	How often have you been aware of <u>another student</u>:				
Q19	copying from someone else during a test or an examination.				
Q20	bringing unauthorised crib notes into a test or examination venue.				
Q21	using unauthorised crib notes during a test or examination.				
Q22	helping someone else to cheat in a test.				
Q23	allowing someone else to copy parts of, or their whole assignment.				
Q24	being dishonest when completing his/her practical workbook				

Read each question carefully, and choose one of the possibilities next to the question as your answer.

Indicate your answer by placing a tick (✓) in the appropriate box next to the question.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
		1	2	3	4
	In my opinion:				
Q25	cheating is sometimes justified when a close friend asks for help				
Q26	cheating is sometimes justified to succeed academically.				
Q27	cheating is sometimes justified for other reasons than the above				
Q28	other students will not disapprove if they find out I had cheated.				
Q29	other students will not report a student if he or she cheated.				
Q30	I will not feel guilty if I cheated.				
Q31	using material from another author's work without referencing it is not a serious offence.				

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
		1	2	3	4
	Peer pressure will cause me to:				
Q32	allow another student to copy answers from my test or examination paper.				
Q33	help a friend who asks for my assistance on an assignment that I know is supposed to be his/her own work.				
Q34	allow another student to copy my assignment.				
Q35	try cheating when I know other students got away with it.				
	When I become aware of another student cheating:				
Q36	I will report him/her to the lecturer when I see him/her cheating in a test or examination.				
Q37	I will report him/her to the lecturer when I know he/she cheated in his/her assignments.				
Q38	I will threaten him/her with being reported to the lecturer if the cheating does not stop.				
Q39	I will tell other students that cheating behaviour is occurring.				
Q40	I will not ignore the cheating behaviour.				
	In my opinion students engage in cheating behaviour because of:				
Q41	the pressure to succeed academically.				
Q42	the fear of losing status amongst peers.				
Q43	the limited time they have to study.				
Q44	the large amount of study material they have to master.				
Q45	the difficult learning material they have to study.				
Q46	their negative attitude towards assignments and tests.				
Q47	having to pay back their bursary when they fail.				
Q48	other students getting away with it.				

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
		1	2	3	4
	In my opinion:				
Q49	students caught cheating are severely penalised in this academic institution.				
Q50	students will get caught if they cheat.				
Q51	students are afraid to be caught cheating.				
Q52	severe penalties will prevent students from cheating.				
Q53	encouraging students to monitor peer behaviour will prevent students from cheating				
Q54	the introduction of a code of honour will prevent students from cheating				

Read each question carefully, and choose one of the possibilities next to the question as your answer.

Indicate your answer by placing a tick (✓) in the appropriate box next to the question.

		No	Yes
	Are you aware of any policies at your academic institution that spells out:		
Q55	rules regarding referencing of sources.		
Q56	rules regarding student conduct in examination and assessment venues.		
Q57	penalties for academic dishonesty.		
	Do you know:		
Q58	how to reference the ideas of other authors in your assignment.		
Q59	how to reference word for word quotations of other authors' work in your assignment.		
Q60	where to find guidelines on correct referencing techniques.		
Q61	what plagiarism is.		

Q62	Explain in your own words what you understand under the term Plagiarism.
Q63	Explain in your own words how you feel about the fact that some students get away with cheating.
Q64	What interventions do you recommend to avoid/prevent academic cheating among students?

Thank you for completing the questionnaire.

ADDENDUM B: ETHICAL APPROVAL

UNIVERSITEIT STELLENBOSCH-UNIVERSITY
 FOR THE ENLIGHTENED USE OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL

15 December 2009

MAILED

Ms C Theart
 Department of Nursing
 2nd Floor, Teaching building
 Stellenbosch University
 Tygerberg campus
 7505

Dear Ms Theart

"The status of academic integrity among nursing students."

ETHICS REFERENCE NO: N09/11/340

RE : PROVISIONAL APPROVAL

It is my pleasure to inform you that the abovementioned project has been provisionally approved on 15 December 2009 for a period of one year from this date. You may start with the project, but this approval will however be submitted at the next meeting of the Health Research Ethics Committee for ratification.

Notwithstanding this approval, the Committee can request that work on this project be halted temporarily in anticipation of more information that they might deem necessary to make their final decision.

Please quote the abovementioned project number in all future correspondence.

Please note that a progress report (obtainable on the website of our Division) should be submitted to the Committee before the year has expired. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary). Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly and subjected to an external audit.

Federal Wide Assurance Number: 00001372

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Number: IRB0005239

The Health Research Ethics Committee complies with the SA National Health Act No.61 2003 as it pertains to Health Research and the United States Code of Federal Regulations Title 45 Part 46. This committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research, established by the Declaration of Helsinki, the South African Medical Research Council Guidelines as well as the Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes 2004 (Department of Health).

15 December 2009 13:03

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Fakulteit Gesondheidswetenskappe • Faculty of Health Sciences



Verbind tot Optimale Gesondheid • Committed to Optimal Health

Afdeling Navorsingsontwikkeling en -steun • Division of Research Development and Support

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UNIVERSITEIT STELLENBOSCH - UNIVERSITY
UNIBESITHO SIYENKHELO - YUNIBESITHO SIYENKHELO

Yours faithfully

MRS EL ROHLAND

RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

Tel: 021 938 9677 / E-mail: elr@sun.ac.za

Fax: 021 931 3352

15 December 2009 13:03

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Faculteit Geneeskunde en Natuurwetenskappe - Faculty of Health Sciences



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ADDENDUM C: LETTER OF PERMISSION GRANTED

ENQUIRIES MR D. GOVIN
NAVRAE COLLEGE PRINCIPAL
IMIBUZO

TELEPHONE
TELEFOON (021) 684 -1202/3
IFOWUNI

REFERENCE Request to do a research
VERWYSING project at the Western Cape
ISALATHISO College of Nursing

DATE 31 March 2010
DATUM
UMHLA



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
DEPARTEMENT VAN GESONDHEID
ISEBE LEZE MPIOLO

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT: WESTERN CAPE
PROVINSIALE GOEWERMENT: WES-KAAP
ULAWULO LWEPHONDO: INTSHONA KOLONI

WESTERN CAPE COLLEGE OF NURSING

WES-KAAP KOLLEGE VAN VERPLEGING

IKHOLEJII YECANDELO LABONGIKAZI BASENTHONA-KOLONI

Dear Ms Theart

Request to do a research project at the Western Cape College of Nursing

Your letter dated 18 November has reference and our verbal communication on several occasions.

Your request was considered and herewith permission is granted to you to continue with the project.

You are reminded of the confidentiality aspect of the project under investigation.

After completion of the study could you please forward a report to this institution of your findings.

We wish you well with your studies.

Sincerely,

.....
Mrs B Rafferty
Vice Principal
WCCN

