

An Article Review: Russian and American College Students' Attitudes, Perceptions, and  
Tendencies Towards Cheating

Kelly Garrick

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Lupton, R. A., Chapman, K. J. (2002). Russian and American College Students' Attitudes, Perceptions, and Tendencies Towards Cheating. *Educational Research*, 44(1), 17-27.

The authors of this study are investigating the differences between Russian and American business college students concerning their attitudes, perceptions and tendencies towards academic dishonesty. As justification for this study, the authors have cited research comparing many different nations and the propensity their students' have towards cheating. The authors also state that though cross-national studies do exist, knowledge regarding attitudes, perceptions and tendencies towards cheating at the post-secondary level is lacking. The problem is clearly stated in the summary and throughout the introduction. The researchers imply, though they do not explicitly state, that the purpose of this study is to *fill* the gap in our knowledge about cross-national differences in attitudes, beliefs, and tendencies towards cheating. However, I do not feel that this is a problem that is worthy of investigation. The authors state that the findings of this study are important for business educators called to teach abroad or in classes that are multi-national in make-up. However, this study only focuses on a comparison between American and Russian students. The percentage of business professors that would find this information beneficial seems to me to be slim to none. I feel that stronger justification for this study should have been made. The statement that there have been few studies of this sort and none involving American and Russian business students at the post-secondary level is not justification enough for the study.

The variables are not clearly stated; rather they are inferred in this study. The independent variable is the nationality of the Business students (American or Russian). The dependent variable in this study is the students' attitudes, perceptions and tendencies toward cheating. The independent variable in the study is a categorical variable, while the dependent variable is quantitative in nature. Likewise, no hypothesis is clearly stated. However, a non-directional hypothesis is implied when the researchers state that they believe there will be a difference between the American and Russian Business college students' responses to the questionnaire. The variables were appropriate for this study and I feel that a non-directional hypothesis was appropriate as well. The authors followed through with both the variables and the hypothesis throughout the research.

The researchers state that confidentiality may be an issue related to ethics. They were careful, given the sensitive nature of the questions on the questionnaire, to tell the subjects repeatedly that their responses would be anonymous and confidential. After reviewing the study, confidentiality seems to be the only ethical issue present. I do feel that the researchers addressed this issue appropriately by repeatedly letting subjects know both orally and in written form, that their answers would be confidential. There does not appear to be any problems with risk or deception. The authors did not state whether they sent the proposal to the IRB for approval. However, because this study involves human subjects, the authors should have submitted an IRB proposal.

Key points that were made during the literature review were as follows:

- The Chinese civilization has been concerned with cheating dating back to 2,000 years ago. Though their punishment for cheating was extreme (death in most cases), we are not currently doing enough to deter cheating in the classroom.
- There are many studies and an exorbitant amount of published reports that report cheating incidences in excess of 70% in the US.
- Cheating devalues the educational experience by providing misrepresentations of student knowledge and inequitable grades. It also creates a slippery slope in which students that cheat and get away with it, become adults that take dishonesty more lightly.
- There have been many international reports that investigate academic dishonesty.
- The authors tell us that there are only a few studies that investigate cross-national differences related to academic dishonesty.
- Motivation to cheat varies greatly from nation to nation and students of different nationalities have different propensities for feeling guilt for having cheated.
- The literature review is concluded with the authors stating that the research that they have conducted "begins to fill the gap in our knowledge about cross-national differences in attitudes, beliefs, and tendencies towards cheating."

This literature review seems to be sufficient. The author provided an extensive amount of research on cross-national college level cheating. The authors have stated that there are only three directly related studies and they give sufficient summaries of each of these studies. All references are reliable and support the text and purpose of the study.

The subjects for this study were undergraduate business students from the USA and Russia. The American students were from Colorado State University. Nearly 50% of the American students were male, 90% were between the ages of 17 and 25 and the average GPA was 3.02. 52% were juniors and 45.8% were seniors. The Russian students were from Novgorod State University. 64% of the Russian students were male, 90% of them were between the ages of 17-25 and the average GPA was 3.27. 56.1% of the Russian survey students were freshmen while the remaining were sophomores and graduate students. This type of sample seems to be a convenience sample. Convenience sampling was appropriate for this type of survey research. The author does a sufficient job explaining the age, gender, GPA, and various other qualities that each of the groups possess. Because the sample is limited to college business students, this may not be representative of all college students. Sample size is sufficient for this study. However, I wonder if the variance in sample size between the American students (443) and Russian students (174) will cause some threat to internal validity.

The authors of this study chose to use a questionnaire to conduct their research. These questionnaires were identical for each country and consisted of a 29-question survey containing dichotomous questions, scalar questions, and scenario questions. The scalar questions provided the students with a seven-point scale anchored with strongly agree and strongly disagree. Validity and reliability were not discussed or addressed by the authors.

I feel that instrumentation was appropriate for this type of survey research. However, there was a lack of evidence to support validity and reliability of the instrument. I feel that the validity of the questionnaire was compromised by lack of definitions for terms like 'tendencies', 'cheating', and 'beliefs.' These meanings may differ from person to person, but even more-so

from culture to culture, which is the basis of this study. Therefore, this study seems to lack content-related evidence of validity. Reliability of this instrument could best be demonstrated by administering the same survey again, to two different groups of college students, outside the school of business.

For the most part, the author did adequately address most threats to internal validity by stating that none of the extraneous variables, such as gender, GPA, or age, interacted with data for the particular countries. However, I felt there was one that was not considered. One of the variables not considered when choosing a sample was financial status. It is possible that this could have a major effect on cheating behaviors in either country. The point could be argued that financial status affects one's propensity to cheat.

The results may not be generalizable due to the fact that only students in schools of business were tested. If the purpose of this study was to determine differences in Russian and American *Business* college students then this would not be an issue. However, that was not the stated purpose. The authors were hoping to determine this information about college students in general. Perhaps they could have chosen a sample of students from different courses of study when creating their sample.

Data results were collected and then placed in tables, demonstrating the differences between the two countries. Two tables were provided. Table one shows the percentage of students that answer "yes" to the dichotomous questions on the survey. Table two shows the results from the *beliefs* portion of the survey. The authors of the survey used both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics (*t*-test and Chi square). Results all appear to have content validity. However, the use of inferential statistics is inappropriate for these results.

When analyzing the data from this study, the authors seem at times to place more weight and importance on differences between the two countries that, in their data, are small. For example, when the authors state that Russian students were less likely than American students to feel that it is the instructor's responsibility to prevent cheating; the difference between the average American choice and the average Russian choice was only .7 on the scale of 1-7 with the American's choosing, on average 3.88 and the Russians choosing, on average 3.18. This is not a significant enough difference to warrant the statement made by the authors. This is only one example of this type of assumption.

I do feel that the results of this study support the authors' hypothesis that there are large differences with respect to Russian and American students' beliefs and tendencies towards cheating. However, I also feel that the sample lacked generalizability, the instrument lacked proof of validity, and the terms used were not clearly defined, causing the overall results of the study to go no farther than showing differences between these two groups.

I have taught elementary school for the last 4-5 years and I know the importance of teaching students the difference between right and wrong at a young age, especially when it comes to cheating. I agree whole-heartedly with the authors of this study when they state that "effective classroom management and teaching are influenced by the predominant norms within a country or region" (Lupton and Chapman, 2002). This translates to me and my students due to the fact that many of my students are coming to me from different countries. It is important to understand the values and beliefs of these students and not just to assume that they are the same as our own. I also agree with the authors when they state that

instructors should educate students on the virtues of not engaging in cheating. In doing so early on, we may be able to prevent any future issues for our students.