ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation:	AN EXAMINATION OF INFLUENTIAL FACTORS OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING AMONG COMMUNITY COLLEGE NURSING STUDENTS
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Academic dishonesty remains a pervasive, multi-discipline dilemma which has been reported as having the propensity of resulting in longstanding consequences beyond academic settings. Previous research has suggested that students who participate in dishonest behaviors while attending institutions of higher education have greater tendencies to engage in dishonest and unethical behaviors within professional settings. Notably, schools of nursing are not exempt from academic dishonesty and the ramifications that have been associated with such misconduct. Although academic dishonesty has been examined from various perspectives, and in numerous contexts, current studies that compare relationships between peer and faculty influences on academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns are lacking, particularly among community college nursing students. This study examines relationships between influential factors of academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns among nursing students attending community colleges. The results from this study revealed a statistically significant correlation between attitudes towards academic dishonesty and

ethical decision-making patterns among nursing students attending community colleges. The findings suggest that community college nursing students' ethical decision-making patterns increases as their attitudes towards academic dishonesty increases. Also, notable differences regarding ethical decision-making patterns of community college nursing students were indicated in this study. There were differences between male and female students' ethical decision-making patterns, differences between first semester and fourth semester students' ethical decision-making patterns as well as differences between nursing students employed in healthcare and those who are not. This study also revealed the need for additional research to further examine relationships between nursing students' familiarity with the American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics and faculty model behavior as influences towards academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns.

AN EXAMINATION OF INFLUENTIAL FACTORS OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

AND ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING AMONG COMMUNITY COLLEGE

NURSING STUDENTS

by

Roshelle Laticia Lemon-Howard, EdD

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has been approved

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE APPROVAL

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my amazing husband, William J. Howard. I would not have been able to complete this endeavor without your unyielding love, support, and sacrifice. When I whimpered, whined and became restless, you never complained. Instead, you comforted and encouraged me. You reminded me that "All things are possible through Jesus Christ." When I needed you to pray for me when I felt overwhelmed, you obliged. How blessed I am to have a God-fearing soldier as a husband. Throughout our time together, you have always believed and invested in my dreams. You have honored your promise to my father, the late Freddie Lemon, to take care of his daughter. For that, I am eternally grateful.

I also dedicate this work in memory of my beloved Christopher Earl Moses, Dreamer Shabricka Hemphill, and Dominique Ava Brice, absent in body, but forever in our thoughts.

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I would like to acknowledge my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who has equipped me with all that was needed to achieve this great accomplishment. To my mom, Ethelina Lemon, thank you for your continuous support, tremendous love, and your eternal prayers. To my sisters Barbara, Stephanie and Dreamer, thank you for always being available to support me by whatever means necessary. To my son, Terrance, thank you for your sense of humor, which provided me moments to be silly although deadlines were often soon approaching. To my brothers, Kevin and Monte', thank you for believing in me and providing words of encouragement along the way.

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To Dr. Gaulee, you have been a part of this endeavor since early on during the program coursework. I thank you for being kind and consistent with expecting nothing less than scholarly excellence. Your expertise in research and scholarship has also been beneficial as you taught me the rudiments of educational research.

To Dr. Jackson, you have been my guardrail for objectivity. Thank you for your time, patience, and expertise. More than I can express with words, your guidance has been extremely beneficial towards the production of a meaningful, succinct presentation.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter I: Introduction

We learned about honesty and integrity…that truth matters, *and success doesn't count unless it's earned fair and square."- Michelle Obama*

To the dismay of educational leaders at large, the value of higher education credentials may be at stake. Historically, the post-secondary educational experience has been regarded as an invaluable journey which fosters ethical development among generations of learners (Morris, 2018; Parnther, 2020). Scholars agree that a vital outcome of the higher education experience is the ability of students to appreciate and employ ethical decision-making in various contexts (Clark & Soutter, 2016; DeMaio et al., 2019; Morris, 2018). However, academic dishonesty which counters and undermines academic integrity remains a disturbing phenomenon which has plagued higher education for several decades (Arain et al., 2017; Devine & Chin, 2018). Research has revealed that over the last thirty years academic dishonesty in its broadest terms has not declined. Depending on the context in which academic dishonesty has been examined, on the upper end, the incidence of self-reports of academic misconduct has been documented between 50% and 95% (Sattler et al., 2017). Consequently, the credibility and worth of credentials conferred within institutions of higher education have become questionable despite ongoing efforts to foster and uphold principles of integrity (Bertram-Gallant, 2018; Morris, 2018). Academic dishonesty in any form denotes breaches of integrity and trust within the context of education and learning. Not surprisingly, occurrences of dishonest behavior are especially disturbing among all health professions, including nursing (McClung, 2017; Suber, 2018). According to Eberle (2018) and McClung (2017), nurses are expected to exemplify honesty and integrity without compromise. It is worth noting

that researchers have suggested that students who participate in academic misconduct in any discipline have the propensity of engaging in unethical behaviors within professional settings (Eberle, 2018; McNair & Haynie, 2017). Considering the importance of the standards of integrity, consequences associated with undeterred academic dishonesty at large, and the sparse research that has been conducted among nursing students within community colleges, additional research is warranted.

This chapter provides the background of the study, conveys a definitive issue of concern, and introduces the theoretical framing of the research. Additionally, the purpose of the study is presented. The four research questions, three null, three alternate hypotheses, limitations, delimitations as well as operational definitions of the study are discussed. By examining relationships between influential factors of academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns among community college nursing students, the findings from this study will add to the discourse of the multifaceted aspects of academic dishonesty among nursing students at large.

Background of the Study

For many decades, institutions of higher education have been challenged with managing violations against academic integrity. Often referred to as cheating or academic misconduct, academic dishonesty is reportedly one of the most longstanding integrity-related concerns for all sectors of higher education on a global scale (Denisova-Schmidt, 2017; Frenkel, 2016; Ismail & Omar, 2017). Understanding students' attitudes towards dishonest behavior and the impact of academic dishonesty beyond classroom settings have been the impetus for many investigations. Within the context of higher education, schools of business, engineering, and health professions are some of the disciplines in

which academic dishonesty has been explored (Arain et al., 2017; Liebler, 2015; McClung & Schneider, 2018; Smith et al., 2017). As society continues to place a strong emphasis on the association between academic achievements, degree attainment, and long-term success, scholars have postulated that students employ various defense mechanisms to justify academic wrongdoing to attain such success (Madara et al., 2016). Consequently, apathetic attitudes towards cheating and the lack of concern for upholding standards of integrity among its perpetrators have been associated with profound societal ramifications (Hendy & Montargot, 2019). Notably, findings from both early and recent research have reported positive correlations between students who self-reported cheating in academic settings, and participation in dishonest behaviors within professional settings. In a seminal work examining relationships between academic dishonesty and professional misconduct, Nonis and Swift (2001) argued that if students do not respect cultures of academic integrity, future professional experiences could be influenced by similar ways of thinking. To validate the former, Krueger (2013) found that behaviors that have been clearly delineated as harmful and unethical in healthcare settings were reported as ethical by some nursing students.

Unfortunately, academic dishonesty entails behaviors which undermine students' learning and questions the validity of higher education productivity. Stein (2018) reported that dishonest behaviors disrupt the learning processes and learning environments, directly affecting the acquisition of knowledge and the flow of information. Therefore, students' commitments to upholding integrity remain in question. It is worth noting, researchers have suggested that cheating is a behavior in which students make conscious decisions to engage (Anderman & Koenka, 2017). To further understand the motives

behind such conscious decisions, scholars have employed various theoretical frameworks to guide their investigations. According to Marda et al. (2016), deterrence theory, rational choice theory, neutralization theory, theory of planned behavior, and situational ethics theory have been frequently used to frame studies which describe, predict, and explain occurrences of academic dishonesty. Comparably, social learning theorists have posited that moral and ethical behaviors are strongly influenced by cognitive and environmental factors that may become internalized learned behavior (Eberle, 2018; Madara et al., 2016). Furthermore, researchers have suggested that beliefs and values that students identify with at the time of enrollment are influenced by various life experiences, which may or may not impact decision-making in a positive manner. In addition, peer relationships and the acceptable behaviors that are associated with such relationships may also influence decision-making (Johnson et al., 2020; Stein, 2018; Stiles et al., 2017). To date, numerous investigations that explored peer influences towards decision-making have been conducted; whereas studies that specifically examine the influences of faculty leaders on students' ethical decision-making are far less (Johnson et al., 2020; Pearson, 2019).

Literature reveals that academic dishonesty consists of various deceptive violations and has become acceptable behavior within higher education (Denisova-Schmidt, 2017; Salisbury, 2021). More specifically, cheating on examinations, plagiarism, falsifying records, stealing documents, purchasing essays, in addition to other offenses, all represent common deceptive practices among college students (Aaron & Roche, 2014; Cronan et al., 2017; Robinson & Glanzer, 2017).

Figure 1

Categories of Academic Dishonesty
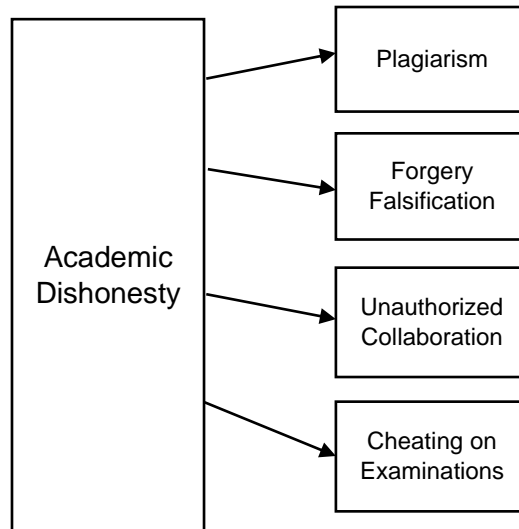
Not surprisingly, scholars have agreed that academic misconduct within the

nursing domain has the potential of impairing credibility within the academic community,

lowering professional practice standards, and ultimately impairing the quality of care

within healthcare systems at large (Bultas et al., 2017). Although academic dishonesty

has been noticeably understudied in the context of community colleges, the consequences

associated with its prevalence in four-year institutions are likewise applicable to two-year

institutions (Eberle, 2018; Hollis, 2018; McClung, 2017). Considering the reported

positive correlations between academic dishonesty and professional misconduct, and the

lack of research among nursing students in community colleges, additional research is

needed to add to the current body of literature. Thus, this study addressed two identified

gaps in current literature regarding academic dishonesty. First, the extent to which model

behavior of faculty leaders influences ethical decision-making patterns was examined. In

addition, students' knowledge of the American Nurses Association's [ANA, 2015] *Code*

of Ethics and Interpretive *Statements* (COE) towards ethical decision-making was explored.

Problem Statement

The central problem this study sought to explore was the ongoing occurrence of academic dishonesty within higher education, particularly among nursing students within community colleges. Academic dishonesty is an issue of concern that has been well documented across multiple disciplines including nursing (Atkinson et al., 2016; Hendy & Montargot, 2019). Although every case of academic dishonesty is disturbing, occurrences among nursing students are especially troubling. Both McClung (2017) and Rani et al. (2019) maintained that when nursing students engage in cheating behaviors, their content mastery is questionable and possibly insufficient. As a result, inadequate theoretical competence and clinical judgement ensues resulting in nursing students who are unprepared to perform care in a prudent and knowledgeable manner. Keener et al. (2019) corroborated this claim and asserted that the lack of true knowledge attainment associated with dishonest behaviors, particularly in the health professions, is a threat to the well-being and safety of others. Similarly, Bultas et al. (2017) posited that the lack of classroom integrity can compromise the acquisition of professional expertise and skills and result in detrimental outcomes. Even further, myriad studies have uncovered an equally disturbing aspect of academic dishonesty: acceptance and complicity (Denisova-Schmidt, 2017; Maley, 2019).

Recent findings have revealed that students perceive and report dishonest behaviors as normal and tolerable. Burgason et al. (2019) underscored this claim in their investigation which explored the meaning of academic dishonesty among undergraduate

criminal justice majors in the university setting. Furthermore, because academic dishonesty has been correlated with workplace dishonesty, and academic misconduct remains problematic at large, there is reason for concern and alarm. As such, researchers concur that academic dishonesty is a threat to the goals set forth by institutions of higher learning to develop responsible citizens, competent leaders, and morally conscious professionals (Cronan et al., 2017). Notably, research concerning academic dishonesty within four-year institutions is abundant unlike its two-year counterparts regarding this issue.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this cross-sectional survey study was to examine relationships between influential factors of academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns among students enrolled in community college nursing programs. An additional goal of this research was to determine the extent in which demographic variables predicted ethical decision-making patterns among students enrolled in community college nursing programs.

Research Questions (RQs)

Based on the theoretical framework, the independent and dependent variables, this study addressed four research questions with three null and three alternate hypotheses:

RQ1. What are the relationships between attitudes towards academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students at community colleges?

H01- There are no statistically significant relationships between attitudes towards academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students at community colleges.

HA1- There will be statistically significant relationships between attitudes towards academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students at community colleges.

RQ2. To what extent does the American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics influence attitudes and ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students at community colleges?

H02- The American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics will have no influence on attitudes and ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students at community colleges.

HA2- The American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics will influence attitudes and ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students at community colleges.

RQ3. To what extent do demographic variables predict ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students at community colleges?

H03- There will be no statistically significant relationships between demographic variables and ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students at community colleges.

HA3- There will be statistically significant relationships between demographic variables and ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students at community colleges.

RQ4. How do nursing students report whether their peers or faculty influence

ethical decision-making and dishonest behaviors at community colleges?

Theoretical Framework

To properly frame this study from a behavioral perspective, it is appropriate to acknowledge contributions from recognized experts of human conduct and actions. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), theoretical frameworks are used to provide logical perspectives that may guide explorations and provide explanations of human behavior. This research examined influential factors of academic dishonesty participation and ethical decision-making patterns among nursing students in community colleges using specific constructs from Social Learning Theory (SLT). Bandura (1986) posited that learning is a cognitive process that takes place in a social context. According to this theory, learning occurs as a result of interactions that occur between cognitive, and environmental factors which influence one's conduct and actions. For this study, students' attitudes towards dishonesty, perceptions of ethical behaviors, and principles of the ANA *Code of Ethics* represented cognitive factors. Additionally, peer and faculty model behaviors represented environmental factors.

Based on constructs of SLT, learned behavior involves observations, extraction from the observations, and imitation of behaviors observed (Bandura, 1971)**.** Bandura (1985) also theorized that within the interrelated dynamics of person, behavior, and environment, lasting experiences occur that affect value judgements. An important assumption of SLT is the significance of role models. Bandura posited that role models influence the development of personal values and principles that may be internalized. If internalization of a desired action occurs, behavior modeling ensues. According to

Bandura (1985), behavior modeling has been suggested to greatly impact decision-making. Specifically, within the cognitive process of learning, an individual thinks about a particular behavior, assigns value to the behavior, and sets a goal to perform the behavior. Bandura (1986) also posited that learned behaviors are neither motivated by inner influences, nor automatically shaped and controlled by the external environment alone. Instead, human thoughts and actions can be better explained in terms of bidirectional relationships in which behavior, cognitive, and other personal factors all interact and contribute to decision-making.

Figure 2

Schematic of Bandura's Social Learning Theory, (Bandura, 1986, p.18)
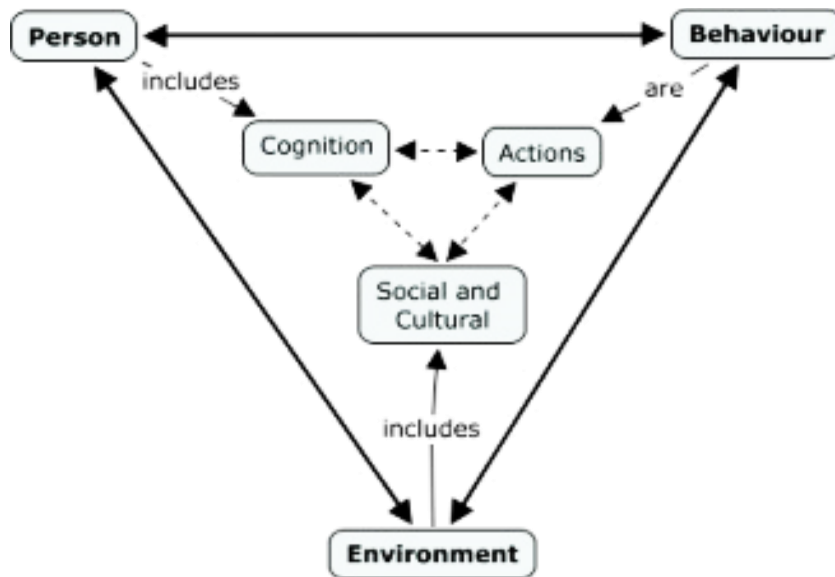
Because SLT seeks to explain why individuals behave in a particular manner, the theory aligns with this study as it will appropriately guide the process of examining interactional influences of academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns. More specifically, this study examined relationships between cognitive

(attitudes/perceptions) and environmental (peer and faculty) influences and ethical decision-making patterns as illustrated in figure three.

Figure 3

The Conceptual Framework for this Study

Academic Dishonesty and Ethical Decision-Making

Attitiudes and Perceptions   Peer and Faculty Role Models
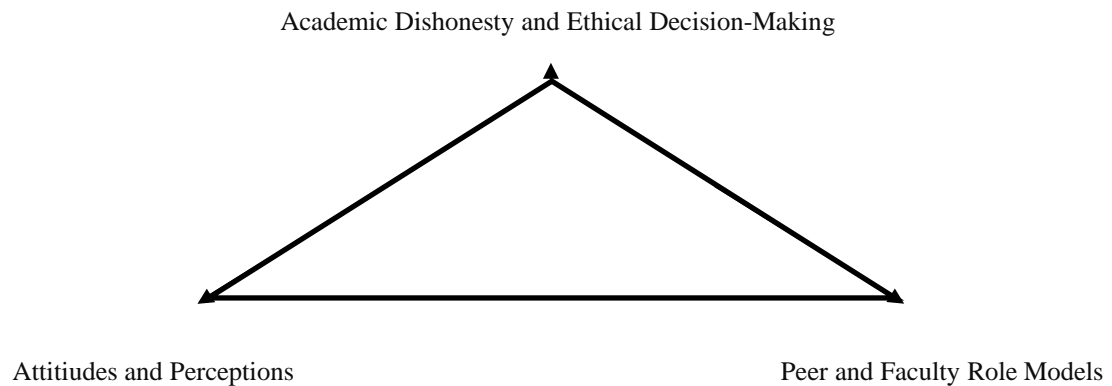
Variables

Using constructs from Bandura's (1986) SLT, this study explored relationships between a set of independent and a dependent variable as detailed further.

Independent Variables

This study explored four independent variables which included: (a) attitudes towards academic dishonesty, (b) perceptions of the ANA code of ethics, (c) peer and faculty role models, and (d) demographic data

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable for this study was ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students in community colleges.

Figure 4

Relationship Between the Independent and Dependent Variables
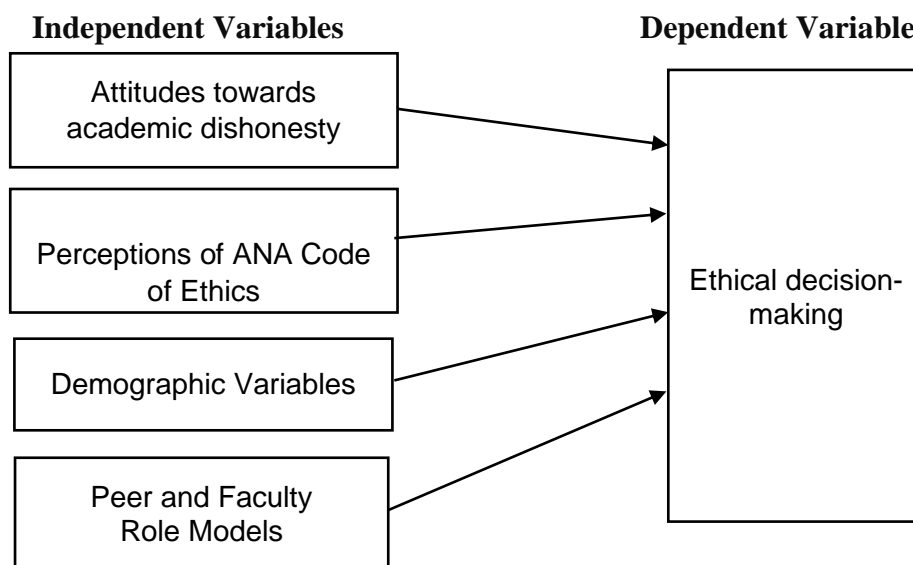
Significance of the Study

      Academic dishonesty remains prevalent within higher education. Previous

research in academic dishonesty includes investigations that explored types and

frequencies of dishonesty, explanatory and predictive models of its occurrence, as well as

preventive and deterrence strategies of the same. However, a limited number of recent

investigations have re-examined this phenomenon as a learned behavior. Therefore, this

research sought to add to the discourse of academic dishonesty participation among

nursing students in community colleges through the lens of Social Learning Theory. In a

recent study, Liebler (2015) revealed that few scholarly investigations have explored how

students develop and learn attitudes that lend to the acceptance of and participation in

cheating behaviors in academic settings. Furthermore, most studies examining academic

dishonesty have only examined peer influences (Frenkel, 2016; Maring et al., 2018).

While scholars agree that peer dynamics play a major role in decision-making, the

influences of faculty role modeling should be investigated in greater detail. By further examining differences between faculty and peers as influential factors of ethical decision-making patterns, findings from this research may be useful in developing strategies that mitigate and deter academic dishonesty. Furthermore, because ethical comportment is the bedrock of nursing, this study also gauged the relevance of the American Nurses Associations' *Code of Ethics* towards decision-making among nursing students within community colleges. Finally, this research quantified themes that emerged from Eberle's (2018) qualitative examination of academic integrity among baccalaureate nursing students.

Delimitations and Limitations

All research contains both limitations and delimitations which are essential components of thorough research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The following section summarizes the delimitations and limitations of this study.

Delimitations

This study examined relationships between influential factors of academic dishonesty participation and ethical decision-making patterns among nursing students attending community colleges to attain an associate's degree and become eligible to take the registered nurse licensure examination. Practical nursing students attending certificate granting two-year institutions were not included in this study.

Limitations

This study examined relationships using a quantitative approach. As with most research, this study was not without limitations. Because of the characteristics of quantitative research, this study did not capture in depth, personal accounts of self-

reported occurrences of academic dishonesty participation. Furthermore, although anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed, participant responses may have lacked exact truthfulness as academic dishonesty is a sensitive topic. Finally, the results of cross-sectional research may have limited validity because findings do not reflect causal relationships. Although Bandura (1986) posited that rewards and consequences influence behavior, this study only examined relationships between cognitive, environmental and behavioral interactions as influences of academic dishonesty, and ethical decision-making patterns.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this research, the following terms have been identified and defined. Therefore, it is the investigator's intention to provide the reader with relevant definitions as a guide to understand the context for the study.

Academic Dishonesty: the intentional participation in behavior or a set of behaviors that lead to the misrepresentation of scholarly work in which grades and academic privileges are awarded (Stein, 2018).

Academic Integrity: A commitment to honesty, truthfulness, fairness, respect, and responsibility with regards to all aspects of scholastic achievement (ICAI, 2015).

Attitudes: Feelings or ways of thinking; a point of view which defines how we see situations and how we behave toward the situation (Maring et al., 2018).

Ethical Decision-Making: A way of thinking about issues being right and wrong (Smith, et al., 2017).

Perceptions: Understanding and comprehension; interpretation of meaning based on prior knowledge and experiences (Eberle, 2018).

Professional Healthcare Setting: A hospital or clinic where learning occurs and is demonstrated among patients (Krueger, 2013).

Model behavior: Actions that can be observed, learned, and imitated by observers (Bandura, 1971).

Unethical behavior: Conduct that threatens the integrity of an individual or profession (Van Stekelenburg et al., 2020).

Values: Longstanding beliefs about what is important to a person (Taylor et al., 2019).

Summary

Community colleges are the primary means of entry into the higher education arena for more than 40% of undergraduate students nationwide (American Association of Community Colleges [AACC], 2021). For some, the college setting may be the primary means in which ethically sound behavior is demonstrated. For others, the college setting should be where ethically sound behavior is reinforced. Even so, breaches in academic integrity which may carry over into professional settings, continue to plague institutions of higher learning on a global scale. Chapter One outlined the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, theoretical framework, and introduced the research questions and hypotheses to be tested. Also, key terms were identified and defined.

Chapter Two provides a review of pertinent literature surrounding cognitive, and environmental factors as posited in SLT as influential factors of academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns. Specific cognitive factors such as attitudes and perceptions, values and beliefs, and ethical comportment will be discussed. An overview of academic environmental factors and the role of model behavior of both peers and

faculty will also be provided. Finally, through the examination of literature, which is germane to this study, the prevalence, consequences and need for sustainable strategies to deter academic dishonesty will be further validated.

Chapter II: Review of Literature

There is an abundance of research that expound upon the various aspects of academic dishonesty within higher education. This chapter provides a comprehensive review of literature which is germane to this study as framed by Social Learning Theory (SLT). For this review, it is appropriate to provide an overview of the role of higher education institutions in promoting academic integrity, the defining characteristics of academic dishonesty, and the evolution and prevalence of academic dishonesty within higher education. In addition, cognitive, and environmental influences of academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making that have emerged through quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods research and other supporting literature will be discussed. With regards to cognitive influences, literature has revealed that an individual's attitudes, values, and beliefs impact one's perception and decision to engage in a particular behavior (Eberle, 2018; Krueger, 2013; Yu et al., 2017). Within the context of academic dishonesty, components of cognitive influences will be detailed herein, including ethical decision-making. Regarding environmental influences, institutional, transcultural, peer and faculty dynamics have emerged and will be discussed. Because this study sought to explore relationships between observed behaviors of peers and faculty and academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns, the concept of learning by observing is detailed. Research conducted in both two and four-year institutions, with the majority from the latter are also included in this review. The information presented in this review helps to demonstrate how this research contributes to the current body of literature regarding academic dishonesty within community colleges.

Academic Integrity and Higher Education

Within the context of higher education, scholars agree that principles that undergird integrity are the standards by which students should be held accountable. In fact, fostering academic integrity has been considered an essential responsibility of faculty leaders from all sectors of higher education (Bertram-Gallant, 2018; Cronan et al., 2017). To validate this assumption, Morris (2018) posited that institutions of higher education are responsible for embedding values and practices associated with integrity within learning experiences. Similarly, Bertram-Gallant (2020) asserted that an integral aspect of the higher learning experience is for educators to promote the development of ethically sound citizens who will become conscientious, accountable professionals. In the same tone, Wong et al., (2016) maintained that beyond intellectual advancement, integrity cultivation is an invaluable element of the higher education experience. Just as recent literature has substantiated the responsibility of institutions of higher education to cultivate integrity among learners, it is worth noting that the role of higher education in championing integrity among students became evident through early legislation. In fact, the amended Higher Education Act [HEA, 1998] clearly emphasized that character building is a crucial responsibility of higher education. In line with the charge given by the amended HEA (1998), Smith et al. (2017) validated the significance of integrity within academia. The researchers asserted that a direct result of adherence to the values of integrity is the development of lifelong reliability among students which extends beyond college classrooms and campuses.

According to the International Center for Academic Integrity [ICAI,2020], integrity within higher education consists of five fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. The aforementioned principles have been associated with personal and social accountability among learners and are essential in informing and improving ethical decision-making. An additional point to note is the affect academic dishonesty has on the reputable standing of academic institutions. Parnther (2020) noted that contrary to the tenets of integrity, academic dishonesty in any form can be damaging to institutional reputations and the legitimacy of conferred academic credentials. In separate studies, Simola (2017) and Wong et al., (2016) reiterated the vulnerability of institutional reputation as noted by Parnther (2020). Based on their analyses of persistent academic dishonesty in university settings, Simola (2017) and Wong et al.,(2016) conveyed that additional reputational risks associated with academic dishonesty could negatively impact strategic goal achievements, recruitment and retention, as well as fundraising. As such, scholars agree that creating and maintaining a culture of integrity within higher education is vital to minimize the undermining effects of academic dishonesty (Blau et al., 2021; Pearson, 2019; Tatum & Schwartz, 2017). Furthermore, researchers agree that undeterred academic dishonesty adversely affects scholarship, pollutes communities of learning, and negatively impacts society overall (Beasley, 2016; Parnther, 2020).

Defining Academic Dishonesty

Literature reveals that among the myriad of research regarding academic dishonesty, a single, universal definition has not been established (Barnhardt, 2016; McClung, 2017; Suber, 2018). Furthermore, the meaning of academic dishonesty relies

on the interpretation of the researcher and the context in which the investigation is conducted. Even so, scholars agree that academic dishonesty violates the principles of integrity set forth by institutions of higher education at large (Atkinson et al., 2016; Bertram-Gallant, 2018; Clark and Soutter, 2016; Stephens, 2019). In gleaning relevant literature, for this study academic dishonesty is defined as the intentional participation in a single behavior or set of behaviors that lead to the misrepresentation of scholarly work in which grades and academic privileges are awarded (Stein, 2018). Although the aforementioned description of academic dishonesty is used for this study, it is worth noting additional perspectives of scholars regarding descriptive characteristics of dishonest academic behaviors.

Categorizing Dishonest Behaviors

In a quantitative study exploring academic dishonesty among students enrolled in baccalaureate degree nursing programs, McClung (2017) expounded upon descriptive nomenclature of dishonest behaviors revealing various categories of misconduct. Some behavioral descriptions included cheating, perjury, recycling assignments, shortcutting, and unauthorized collaboration. Based on her research, McClung (2017) posited that clear, decisive language regarding academically dishonest behaviors is essential and provides a strong framework in which discussions and management of integrity violations can occur. Consistent with this assertion, Cronan et al. (2017) as well as Robinson and Glanzer (2017) emphasized the importance of clearly stating expectations of integrity and unambiguously defining behaviors that constitute integrity infractions. To further substantiate the importance of clear terminology, DeMaio et al. (2019) revealed that within the university setting, the lack of cohesive defining characteristics of

academic dishonesty allows for varied interpretations. They further maintained that if definitions of academic dishonesty were consistent within institutions of higher education, misconceptions regarding integrity infractions would likely be minimized. In addition, some researchers have indicated that from a student's perspective, the context in which assignments are given may lend to inadvertent incidents of integrity violations (Aaron & Roche, 2014; Beasley, 2016; Hendy & Montargot, 2019).

Testing the previous assumption in a pivotal earlier study, Elmore et al. (2011) examined the notion of perceived active and passive academic dishonest behaviors among business students. Actions such as providing false excuses to delay taking an examination, purchasing online course test banks, and visiting professors to influence course grades were categorized as passive dishonest behaviors. Conversely, actions such as prohibited cell phone use during an examination, using unpermitted notes during an examination, and taking credit for an assignment completed by someone else were categorized as active dishonest behaviors. It is important to note that although all of the behaviors described in their study were dishonest, students selected the degree of deceit based on their personal belief systems and values.

Similar to the notion of active versus passive dishonesty, Sutherland-Smith (2013) expanded the concept of degrees of misconduct and revealed perceptions of legitimate versus illegitimate collaboration. In a qualitative study among postgraduate students enrolled as either arts, science, or Education majors, Sutherland-Smith (2013) revealed that participants acknowledged unauthorized collaboration as a minor offense, whereas faculty viewed the same behavior as a more serious offense of collusion. Even further, Sideridis et al.(2016) highlighted the fraudulent and deceptive nature of academic

dishonesty within higher education. In a study among prospective undergraduate students, Sideridis et al. (2016) revealed the frequency of dishonest practices during entrance examinations. Specifically, the researchers revealed that out of 545 applicants, 253 attempted to increase their chances for university admissions by deliberately taking the examination at multiple testing sites which was prohibited. In addition, Denisova-Schmidt (2017) noted that in some instances academic dishonesty has been described as unsanctioned, corruptive acts which include bribery, fraud, and complicity and all violate rules of integrity. Conversely, Barnhardt (2016) proposed that unintentional behaviors do not necessarily reflect breaking the rules. To this end, in reviewing both early and recent research, it is evident that a hallmark defining characteristic of academic dishonesty is intentional deception.

The Evolution of Academic Dishonesty

Researchers have confirmed that academic dishonesty within higher education both domestic and abroad is not a new phenomenon. In fact, based on international accounts, cheating on examinations was identified before the establishment of institutions of higher education in America. According to Denisova-Schmidt (2017) and Ko (2017), academic dishonesty dates back to the 17th century during the final Ch'ing Dynasty in which success on the civil service examination was the high stakes motivation for dishonest behaviors. Ko (2017) noted that becoming an imperial civil servant in China was considered an honor and the passport towards success. Additionally, Stiles et al. (2017) noted that dishonest behaviors were often used to improve the chances of successful credential attainment among applicants of the civil servant examination.

Within the context of American institutions of higher education, accounts of academic dishonesty began being published during the first two decades of the twentieth century.

Early Research

Early accounts of academic dishonesty revealed that in response to reports of students cheating on college examinations, Parr (1936) began collecting and analyzing data in the university setting to determine why students engaged in dishonest behaviors. Although his study was self- admittedly unsophisticated, Parr (1936) revealed relevant findings regarding the prevalence, frequency, and factors associated with academic dishonesty; all of which continue to be explored in current investigations. The seminal work of Bowers (1964) as cited in the early work of McCabe and Trevino (1997) is regarded as the hallmark study of academic dishonesty among American universities. Using a longitudinal, multicampus approach comprised of a sample from 99 colleges and universities Bowers revealed astounding results. According to Yu et al. (2017), Bowers found that 75% of his participants admitted to engaging in at least one form of cheating, while 50% reported taking part in cheating behaviors at least twice while attending college. During the era of Bowers' research, reported dishonest behaviors consisted of copying from another student's examination, using notes during an examination when prohibited to do so, and incidents of plagiarism.

In following the multicampus, longitudinal approach thirty years later, McCabe and Trevino (1997) replicated the work of Bowers and added to the body of literature by exploring additional individual and contextual influences of academic dishonesty. For the replicated study, some individual influences that were explored included age, gender, grade point average (GPA), and intercollegiate athletics participation. In addition,

fraternity/sorority membership, peer behaviors, and severity of punishment represented contextual influences of academic dishonesty. Using a multivariate approach, the researchers examined relationships and differences between and among the individual and contextual influences. Based on their findings, McCabe and Trevino (1997) suggested that peer influences on academic conduct was significantly impactful and had advanced beyond previous decades, particularly among fraternity and sorority members. At the ten-year milestone of their longitudinal research, McCabe et al. (2001) reported significant increases in dishonest behaviors during examinations such as copying answers from another student's test. Specifically, between 1963 and 1993, self-reported dishonest behaviors during examinations increased from 39% to 64% (McCabe et al., 2001). Additionally, McCabe et al. (2001) revealed that students' reported understanding of what behaviors constituted dishonesty, or the lack thereof was associated with an increase in plagiarism.

Technological Advances and Academic Dishonesty

Over the course of the last five decades, academic dishonesty has evolved from obscure attempts of deceit to blatant unethical behaviors (Pearson, 2019). In recent years, a category of misconduct known as digital dishonesty, the use of electronic devices and internet-based resources, has evolved tremendously. In a recent study that explored digital dishonesty, Moore et al. (2017) revealed the use of smart phones, smart watches, smart pens, Bluetooth devices and the like as current technologies utilized to facilitate academic dishonesty. Similarly, in a study that contrasted modes of content delivery, Friedman et al. (2016) reported that advanced technologies and easy internet access have expanded students' abilities to engage in digital plagiarism, contract cheating, and

unauthorized peer-to-peer sharing more frequently. Furthermore, Krienert et al. (2021) posited that as a result of advanced technology and multi-methods of academic dishonesty, an entire internet economy has evolved, particularly regarding the sale of written assignments.

The Prevalence of Academic Dishonesty

Researchers have revealed alarming statistics regarding the prevalence of academic dishonesty across all sectors of higher education and within various academic disciplines (Beasley, 2016; Corrigan-Gibbs et al. 2015; Johnson et al., 2020; Maley, 2019; Willey, 2021). In examining the frequency of academic dishonesty among mathematics majors in a four-year university, Balbuena and Lamela (2015) reported 80% of their participants acknowledged being dishonest more than once, 67% acknowledged cheating during an examination, and 57% acknowledged unauthorized collaboration. In another investigation that explored the prevalence of academic dishonesty among undergraduate and graduate students, Burgason et al. (2019) revealed that the extent of self-reported academic dishonesty encompasses a wide statistical range. More precisely, the researchers disclosed that studies conducted between 1992 and 2018 have revealed self-reports of dishonest behaviors as low as 9% and as high as 90%. Bultas et al. (2017) in addition to other researchers corroborated the research of Burgason et al. (2019). Additionally, in separate studies, Clark and Soutter (2016) and Smith et al. (2017) revealed that more than 50% of college students within various academic settings reported participating in some form of dishonest behavior during their higher education experiences. The seminal multi-campus longitudinal study conducted by McCabe et al.

(2012) revealed that 70 % of a 50,000 undergraduate sample reported engaging in at least one academic dishonest act while attending college.

International Perspectives

The ICAI (2020) recently corroborated the continued widespread incidences of dishonest behaviors within higher education. Using the updated *Academic Integrity Student Survey*, which was distributed across multiple college campuses, the ICAI revealed that more than 60% of university students engaged in at least one act of dishonesty. Specifically, cheating on examinations (29.3%), taking credit for work produced by someone else (2%), using unauthorized resources to complete assignments (23%), engaging in unauthorized collaborations (26%), and omitting appropriate citations (13.8%). Mirroring the reports of Bultas et al. (2017), Saana et al. (2016) reported that between 40%-80% of students surveyed globally, acknowledged intentionally engaging in some form of academic dishonesty at least one time during their collegiate experiences. In a similar tone, Simola (2017) noted that among 83 campuses between the United States and Canada, 20% of students surveyed reported participating in cheating during examinations; of which 33% acknowledged obtaining information from peers prior to taking an examination. Considering the abundance of research exploring academic dishonesty within higher education, there is a general consensus among scholars concerning its prevalence. Notwithstanding slight variations regarding how often students engage in dishonest behaviors, scholars agree that over the last five decades academic dishonesty in its broadest context has not declined (Sattler et al., 2017; Stiles et al., 2017).

Academic Dishonesty and the Community College

Since its inception as an entity of postsecondary education in 1901, the American community college has expanded beyond a niche between high schools and four-year institutions to become a comprehensive sector of higher education (Boggs & McPhail, 2016; Cohen et al., 2014). By providing open access to nontraditional students, community colleges have been undeniably instrumental in facilitating socioeconomic mobility among generations of learners (American Association of Community Colleges [AACC], 2021). Recent headcounts reveal that community colleges account for 41% of all undergraduate enrollment (AACC,2021). Even with its unique student populations, challenges that affect four-year public institutions are likely to affect two-year institutions as well. Not surprisingly, academic dishonesty is one such challenge. While academic dishonesty has been studied extensively among various disciplines within four-year colleges and universities, there remains a dearth of research in the context of two-year institutions. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2018), 51% of nurses who enter the workforce are graduates from two-year programs within community colleges. However, both Krueger (2013) and Parnther (2020) revealed that less than 50 studies exploring multidimensional aspects of academic dishonesty within the community college sector have been conducted. Garza et al. (2018) revealed that students are more likely to engage in some form of academic dishonesty during the first two years of enrollment. Because degree seeking community college students spend approximately two years in an academic major and enter the workforce before their four-year counterparts, the claim of Garza et al. (2018) is particularly concerning. Parnther (2016)

also revealed that most studies conducted among two-year institutions have explored limited topics such as attitudes towards and frequencies of academic dishonesty.

In an early study exploring the attitudes of community college students towards misconduct in academic and business settings, Smyth and Davis (2004) revealed that despite the fact that nearly all respondents (92%) perceived dishonest behaviors as ethically wrong, 45% of the same respondents acknowledged dishonest behaviors as acceptable. However, in a cross-sectional survey design among students enrolled in English composition courses within four Midwestern community colleges, Ferguson (2010) disclosed opposite findings. Ferguson (2010) revealed between 84% and 90% of the study participants reported not engaging in academic dishonesty. Nevertheless, the need for additional research within community colleges continues to be underscored. Hensley (2013) posited that although the dynamics of community colleges differ from four-year institutions, students enrolled in the former are still subject to the demands of higher education achievement and may rely on dishonest means to attain success.

In a qualitative exploration of how student-faculty interactions influence academic misconduct, Bluestein (2015) explicated the importance of faculty-student mentoring. In addition to uncovering the importance of meaningful teacher-student interactions among the study's participants, Bluestein (2015) also corroborated the impact of circumstances that are unique to community college students, such as parenthood and full-time employment status. Because of such competing responsibilities, study and class preparation time are often inadequate and may result in deficient academic performance, which Bluestein (2015) suggested influences students' decision-making to participate in dishonest academic behaviors. In line with Bluestein's observations of inadequate

academic performance and dishonesty among community college students, Hollis (2018) elaborated on a specific type of misconduct in which inadequately prepared students may engage, ghostwriting. Within the context of academia, the term ghostwriting refers to students obtaining the assistance from unnamed authors to complete written assignments and has been referred to as contract cheating or paper-mills (Harper et al., 2019). Although ghostwriting has occurred at various academic levels, this form of academic dishonesty may be an appealing option for academically unprepared community college students to obtain a high grade (Hollis, 2018).

Academic Dishonesty Among Nursing Students

Nursing is a profession that should be guided by ethical standards (Eberle, 2018; Fein, 2019; Maley,2019; McClung, 2017). Society perceives nursing to be comprised of honest and trustworthy individuals (Khalaila, 2015; McNair, 2016; Suber, 2018). However, some researchers contend that academic dishonesty which has been positively correlated with professional misconduct, exists among nursing students (Beck, 2018; Devine & Chin, 2018; McClung & Schneider, 2018; Suber, 2018). Hilbert (1985,1988) validated this claim in her seminal research conducted among senior level nursing students enrolled in traditional four-year baccalaureate degree programs. Using both a single campus sample (n=110) and a multi-campus sample (n=210), Hilbert (1985) administered a 22-item instrument developed to measure 11 classroom-specific behaviors along with 11 healthcare setting-specific behaviors. Hilbert (1985) revealed 51.9 % of the participants acknowledged engaging in one form of classroom misconduct, while 35 % of the participants collectively acknowledged engaging in one of three acts of misconduct in

actual healthcare settings. The two distinct behavioral categories are particularly significant when investigating nursing students.

All nursing curricula are comprised of didactic and experiential learning, which takes place in both classroom and professional healthcare settings, also referred to as clinical. An understanding of instruction that occurs within classroom settings is expected to be demonstrated during clinical experiences among live patients. However, the mere completion of a skill or task is not an indicator of proficiency. As such, nursing students are required to demonstrate content mastery through summative assessments. And so, it is appropriate to gauge students' attitudes toward, and participation in dishonest behaviors in both settings. In reviewing literature among nursing students that have explored misconduct in both academic and professional healthcare settings none were found preceding Hilbert (1985). Therefore, Hilbert set the precedent for further research in this regard. With Hilbert (1985) establishing the standard for research exploring academic dishonesty among nursing students, studies that have followed continue to validate her findings by examining the specific behaviors from the original research. In fact, Bultas et al. (2017), validated Hilbert's (1988) findings as they compared the attitudes and behaviors toward academic dishonesty between students in general and nursing students specifically at a large Midwestern Jesuit university. Their findings supported previous literature which support the association between academic dishonesty and professional misconduct.

Academic Dishonesty and Professional Misconduct

Furutan (2018) noted that over the past 20 years, literature exploring relationships between dishonesty and ethical decision-making which occurs in both academic and professional settings has emerged. Not surprisingly, faculty leaders across academic disciplines have expressed concern regarding reported correlations between academic dishonest behaviors and misconduct within professional settings (Guerrero-Dib et al., 2020; Keener et al., 2019; McClung & Schneider, 2018; McNair & Haynie, 2017). This association was recognized early on by Nonis and Swift (2001) during their seminal multi-campus study among undergraduate and graduate business students. Using 44 separate items adapted from five previous studies, the researchers revealed that the frequencies of academic dishonesty and misconduct within professional settings were positively correlated. Alleyene et al. (2019) supported that claim and suggested that such behaviors are contributing factors to the failed ethical conduct within businesses and corporations. Suber (2018) revealed that in addition to 85% of undergraduate participants acknowledging dishonest academic behaviors, a positive correlation was found with misconduct in professional settings among the same participants. Beyond business students, Schindler (2016) revealed that the position of academic dishonesty being associated with misconduct within professional settings has been corroborated among various disciplines, which include but are not limited to engineering, accounting, journalism, and psychology.

With regards to nursing students, Ip et al. (2018) noted that classroom integrity infractions such as making false excuses, using unauthorized resources during examinations, and fabricating laboratory findings mirror misconduct in professional

healthcare settings such as misuse of sick time, falsifying documentation, and performing unauthorized procedures. Additionally, Bultas et al. (2017) revealed that the demands associated with both classroom and clinical performances create stress levels that students have difficulty managing. As a result, students may become desensitized to wrongdoing and commit integrity infractions in both settings. The following tables represent a brief overview of behaviors that have been explored specifically among nursing students.

Table 1

Classroom Specific Behaviors (Adopted from McNair & Haynie, 2017)

Copying a few sentences without citing
Using cheat/crib notes during an exam
Helping a peer cheat on an exam
Falsifying bibliographies
Fabricating laboratory results

Table 2

Clinical Setting Specific Behaviors (Adopted from McNair & Haynie, 2017)

Documenting false vital signs
Documenting treatments as completed which were not performed
Breaking patient's property without reporting the incident
Discussing patients' information in public places
Using hospital supplies for personal use

Cognitive Influences of Academic Dishonesty

An early, yet longstanding assumption of SLT as theorized by Bandura (1986), suggests that behavior is influenced by cognitive factors which include an individual's personal beliefs, values, moral development, attitudes and ethical reasoning. Bandura (1986) further asserted that self-expectations, self-perceptions, and individual goals play

a direct role in attitudes towards behaviors and decision-making as well. Additionally, Bandura (1986) argued that cognitive influences become learned inclinations which develop as a result of direct personal experiences with others. Because cognitive influences motivate an individual to consider engaging in a particular behavior, it is likely that an intention is formed which is followed by performance of the behavior. Friedman et al. (2016) advanced Bandura's assertions and suggested that cognitive motivations for engaging in dishonest behaviors can be analyzed from either an ethical, pedagogical, economical, or psychological point of view. For example, students who use unauthorized collaboration to complete assignments or examinations in an attempt to speed up the academic process due to financial pressures and distress reflect an economical point of view. Similarly, students who knowingly use prohibited devices during examinations, but offer unreasonable excuses to justify the behavior demonstrates a psychologically based impetus. Even further, students who purchase essays to submit as their own due to time constraints could be analyzed from an ethical perspective. Researchers agree that regardless the motivation toward academic dishonesty, prolonged participation in dishonest behaviors could lead to desensitization and attitudes of acceptance (Barnhardt, 2016; Clark & Soutter, 2016; Furutan, 2018).

Attitudes Towards Academic Dishonesty

Upon starting higher education endeavors, students are faced with new experiences and competing priorities; all of which influence decision-making patterns. Ismail and Omar (2017) supported this claim and posited that the way in which students understand and make meaning of experiences, circumstances, and situations are often attributed to their background knowledge as well as new encounters. To this end,

researchers maintain that attitudes towards academic integrity versus the decision to participate in dishonest behaviors are based upon previous interactions and perceptions about what acceptable and honest behaviors entail (Maring et al., 2018; Rani et al., 2019). Even so, the manner in which students process their perceptions vary. For example, Chudzicka-Czupala et al. (2016) contended that students' initial attitudes towards academic dishonesty represent their basic understanding of the ethical nature of integrity violations as well as their intentions to uphold the principles of integrity. While examining cultures of academic integrity within two midwestern universities, Cronan et al. (2017) revealed a concerning finding. Students may embrace an attitude of whatever it takes to get ahead as an acceptable way of thinking, as opposed to approaching academic credential attainment honestly. Additionally, the researchers revealed that such mindsets have been reported even with integrity promoting interventions such as honor codes. In a similar vein, Stiles et al. (2017) revealed that students who preferred high grades over content mastery are more likely to engage in academic dishonesty. Aaron and Roche (2014) further substantiated this claim when they disclosed that students across the national landscape of higher education have reported that everyone deserves good grades even without producing quality work. Moreover, researchers have contended that in some instances, participation in academic dishonesty has become the normal mindset students have embraced in order to attain perceived academic and personal success (Hendy & Montargot, 2019; Smith et al., 2017). Notably, such attitudes may counter individual morals and ethical values. Denisova-Schmidt (2017) asserted that beyond acceptance, academic dishonesty is expected among certain peer groups. Maring et al. (2018) validated this assertion based on findings from research conducted among health

professions students in the final semester of respective programs. The researchers reported that socially accepted academic dishonesty represents the attitude of comradery among peers rather than competition.

Personal Beliefs and Values

Ismail and Omar (2017) argued that personal beliefs and values are cognitive influences of moral development and ethical decision-making that progress over time, and are shaped by cultural, familial, and social experiences. Additionally, Ismail and Omar (2017) asserted that the extent to which students' adhere to their beliefs and values is reflected in academic behaviors that either accept or reject principles of integrity. With regard to the acceptance of dishonest behaviors based on beliefs and values, Liebler (2015) contended that academic dishonesty could be perceived as either socially acceptable, morally acceptable, or an acceptable risk. Khalaila (2015) suggested that students' perceptions of the dynamics of academic dishonesty which are influenced by beliefs and values are critically significant regarding ethical decision-making patterns and should be further explored. Because scholars have suggested that personal beliefs and values impact judgements and ethical decision-making patterns, and current research is minimal, there is indeed a gap which merits additional investigations (O'Keefe et al., 2017).

Ethical Knowing and Decision-Making Patterns

Scholars agree that external stakeholders of higher education rely on academic institutions to facilitate the development of standards of integrity, and ethical decision-making among students (Keck et al., 2020; O'Keefe et al., 2017). Smith et al. (2017) described ethics as a set of socially accepted principles that constitute which behaviors

are understood to be good or bad. As such, ethical reasoning, the manner in which an

individual conceptualizes ethical standards, results in ethical decision-making patterns.

Chambers and Ransom (2016) as well as Arain et al. (2017) contended that the

prevalence of ethical issues within business organizations, healthcare professions,

academia, and society at large has made a compelling case for advancing ethical

knowledge within academic disciplines. Smith et al. (2017) asserted that occurrences of

poor ethical decision-making within academia challenges the assumption that individuals

seeking higher education at various levels automatically possess an inclination to adhere

to standards of integrity. To this end, scholars agree about the importance of advancing

ethical knowledge and fostering principles of trustworthiness across academic

disciplines; thereby fostering ethically sound students (Arain et al., 2017; O'Keefe et al.,

2017; Smith et al., 2017).

In a seminal work that explored patterns of knowing among the academic and

clinical domains of nursing, Carper (1978) introduced the concept of ethical knowing.

Carper (1978) argued that ethical knowing is grounded in regulatory principles and

emphasizes the acknowledgement and acceptance of what is good, just, and right. To

gauge the appreciation of ethical knowing among community college nursing students,

McCrink (2008) created an instrument that explored relationships between academic

dishonesty and the ethics of caring as well as students' views of professional ethical

standards. McCrink (2008) concluded that students' attitudes towards ethical standards

demonstrated a commitment to the ethic of caring. In order to substantiate the findings of

McCrink (2008), the extent to which the American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics

influence ethical decision-making was examined in this study. In so doing, changes in perceptions of professional standards over the course of nearly 15 years were revealed.

   Professional Codes of Ethics. Ikonen et al. (2017) noted that guidelines such as professional codes of ethics are known to impact ethical decision-making patterns. Smith et al. (2017) suggested that the manner in which ethical development occurs within higher education has a wide range of future implications. Specifically, regarding students' abilities to effectively address countless situations that may arise in all sectors of academic and professional settings. For example, in exploring business students' knowledge of codes of ethics, Mihelic and Culiberg (2014) revealed that moral responsiveness as evidenced by the reporting of dishonest behaviors among fellow peers significantly influenced ethical decision-making. The researchers asserted that students who were committed to upholding the standards of integrity were willing to risk possible sanctions from fellow peers as opposed to allowing cheating to go unreported.

   Van Stekelenburg et al. (2020) sought to examine to what extent students regard themselves as having an ethical compass, which the researchers defined as motivations to behave according to the moral standards of any given profession. Additionally, the researchers examined how the ethical compass was formed. Based on the results of semi-structured interviews among 36 baccalaureate degree seeking students across four campuses, Van Stekelenburg et al. (2020) revealed that although students strived to embrace the concept of becoming ethical decision-makers, they faced challenges. The participants revealed that because of the lack of an effective working knowledge of relevant distinctions specific to ethical knowing, distinguishing between personal and professional ethical responsibilities were difficult. However, the participants emphasized

that role models had a strong positive influence on the development of ethical decision-making.

Code of Ethics for Nurses

As noted earlier, nursing students are not exempt from performing dishonest academic behaviors. Keener et al. (2019) noted that the collective Health Sciences Academic Certification Boards, which include medicine, pharmacy, dentistry, and nursing, mandate that respective programs uphold professional standards and ethical behavior without compromise. The researchers added that although academic standards and policies provide general guidance towards maintaining integrity, faculty are often challenged with inconsistencies in interpreting integrity violations collectively across disciplines. However, within all domains of nursing, *The Code of Ethics for Nurses* (COE) serves as the standard by which ethical behavior is defined. Originated by members of the American Nurses Association (ANA) in 1950, the COE makes explicit the ethical underpinning and shared values of the profession (ANA, 2021). The most current version of the COE, which was updated in 2015, details nine provisions encompassing ethical values, obligations, and professional ideals of nurses individually and collectively. Indisputably, all nine provisions are relevant. However, for this study, the following provisions (in part) are of significance:

- Provision 4- The nurse is responsible and accountable for making decisions which promote health.

- Provision 5- The nurse preserves wholeness of character and integrity.

- Provision 6-The nurse maintains and improves the ethical work environment.

- Provision 9-The collective profession of nursing must convey nursing values and maintain integrity of the profession.

Based on the aforementioned provisions of the COE, faculty leaders who are nurse educators, have the responsibility of preparing students to become trustworthy contributors to the healthcare profession and society at large. Not only are nurse educators obligated to impart theoretical knowledge into nursing students, but they are also expected to socialize them into the professional role of the nurse, which encompasses honesty and integrity (National League for Nursing [NLN], 2020). Eberle (2018) noted that faculty leaders within nursing academics have been deemed ethical guardians and gatekeepers to the profession. Because nursing is associated with and expected to exemplify high moral and ethical standards, nurse educators are expected to purposefully challenge nursing students to form ethically sound decisions without jeopardizing patient safety or the principles of integrity (Bezek, 2014; Maley, 2019). As such, efforts to foster such decision-making should intentionally reflect tenets of integrity as communicated within the ANA's COE (McNair & Haynie, 2017; Stein, 2018). Additionally, Bertram-Gallant (2018) noted that academic environments are instrumental in fostering tenets of integrity thereby minimizing occurrences of academic dishonesty.

Environmental Influences of Ethical Decision-Making

According to SLT, behaviors are learned as a result of ongoing interactions between cognitive and environmental influences (Bandura, 1986). In line with SLT, scholars have suggested that a variety of environmental factors play a role in students' academic conduct choices. Cronan et al. (2017) suggested that cultures of integrity, the presence or absence of institutional honor codes, integrity policies and procedures, and

transcultural experiences all influence students' attitudes and decisions towards academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making. Supporting the assumptions of SLT, Hensley (2013) asserted that activities and interactions create social environments in which students share experiences that ultimately underline and strengthen decision-making. Robinson and Glanzer (2017) substantiated this claim and posited that of all contributing factors, academic environments created by administrators, faculty, and students are most influential. Furthermore the lack of an emphasis on the value of upholding academic integrity, and minimal reinforcement of policies for integrity infractions bolsters misconduct. Additionally, Clark and Soutter (2016) asserted that comprehensive academic cultures of integrity that extend beyond single honor codes are more effective in deterring academic dishonesty. Furthermore, researchers have suggested that if the importance and value of academic integrity are not thoroughly explained, ambiguity may ensue, thereby adding to the complicity and complacency that enable academic dishonesty (Maley, 2019; Smith et al., 2017; Stephens, 2019).

Academic Cultures of Integrity

According to Wong et al. (2016), The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) emphasize the importance of creating campus wide cultures of integrity. In fact, the AACU outlined five key dimensions of personal and social responsibility that institutions of higher learning are expected to incorporate to influence positive ethical decision-making. In brief, the five key dimensions address:

- The development of a strong work ethic among students
- Cultivation of personal and academic integrity
- Motivations towards contributing to society at large

- Enforcing the seriousness of responsible citizenship

- The development of competence in ethical and moral reasoning

Jian et al. (2018) posited that a defining characteristic of cultures of academic integrity is the collaborative approach in instilling and upholding institutional values. Wong et al. (2016) contend that campuses of higher education that embrace the notion of cultures of integrity are best suited to influence honesty and trustworthiness. In a study that highlights strategies towards academic integrity, Bertram-Gallant (2018) revealed the need for academic leaders to identify deficits in current approaches advancing campus-wide integrity promotion strategies. Notably, Mitchell and Parnther (2018) underscored the importance of college faculty, staff and administrators in identifying the significance of transcultural experiences that could influence academic dishonesty.

Transcultural Influences of Academic Dishonesty

The significance of transcultural factors that may impact academic dishonesty was established early on. In an investigation among undergraduate and graduate students representative of 19 countries, Bista (2011) examined perceptions of possible causes of academic dishonesty. Bista (2011) revealed six categories that attributed to the pressure of engaging in academic dishonesty as noted in Table 3. To date, similar challenges continue to be reported as transcultural challenges among students attending both four-year and two-year institutions (Jian et al., 2018). Because community colleges have embraced and respected the perspectives, values, and contributions of its international students, it is imperative that a mutual understanding of the tenets of integrity within American institutions is conveyed early on (Jian et al., 2018).

Table 3

Challenges of International Students

Challenges for International Students Seeking Degrees in the United States
Previous Learning Style
Incompetence
Academic Culture Unfamiliarity
Student-teacher Relationships
Educational Resources
Psychological Pressures

Source: Bista, 2011

Arguably, cultural differences may account for students' misunderstandings and attitudes toward behaviors that constitute academic dishonesty. Stiles et al. (2018) posited that international students may even be vulnerable as a result of unfamiliarity with integrity standards and the consequences that are associated with breaches. Researchers agree that cultural differences regarding perceptions of academic dishonesty as well as an understanding of factors which shape students' ethical attitudes should be thoroughly addressed when attempting to create academic environments conducive to integrity (Allen et al., 2017; Maring et al., 2018).

Societal Influences

Researchers have revealed that in some instances higher education is perceived as a consumer driven marketplace where attaining higher education credentials are a commodity rather than an experience to genuinely gain knowledge (Afuro et al., 2021; Harper et al., 2019). Gerlach et al. (2019) contended that ongoing occurrences of

deceitful economic, journalistic, industrial, and political practices further substantiates the role of institutions of higher education in cultivating honest contributors of society. Supporting this notion, Burgason et al. (2019) noted that successful completion of the higher education experience has been viewed as an investment into future prosperity. Additionally, Clark and Soutter (2016) contended that a highly competitive, performance-driven society may encourage the willingness of students to engage in dishonest behaviors. Consequently, students are witnessing others taking shortcuts in their learning rather than exerting honest efforts toward gaining knowledge.

In a mixed methods approach to understanding students' dishonest behaviors, Alsuwaileh et al. (2016) suggested that societal success and productivity were motivating factors of the means to an end mindset. The researchers also revealed that the fear of being caught engaging in dishonest behaviors did not deter the study participants from breaching standards of integrity. Cronan et al. (2017) further substantiated the impact of societal pressures towards success. The researchers reported that the attitude of getting ahead by any means necessary as opposed to complying with rules and regulations to achieve remains prevalent among students attending four-year institutions. Adding to the means to an end mindset, Salisbury (2021) asserted that if students perceive that credential attainment may be jeopardized because of academic challenges, dishonest behaviors may appear as a reasonable option to achieve success. Nelson et al. (2017) agreed with Salisbury (2021) and suggested that if students witness their peers participating in academic dishonesty without punitive consequences, similar behaviors will be attempted.

Learning by Observing

Social Learning Theory (SLT) posits that human behavior is learned through the influence of examples (Smith et al., 2017). The theory draws heavily on the assumption of modeling, also known as learning by observing and imitating. More specifically, individuals watch the behaviors of others, in addition to the outcomes that are associated with the behaviors being observed. Thereafter, the decision to imitate the witnessed behavior is made (Eberle, 2018). Imitation is a function of successful modeling by which followers are able to reproduce behaviors that are being exhibited. It is important to note that for this study both peer and faculty models were considered leaders whose behaviors students imitate. Additionally, researchers suggest that if peers engage in dishonest behaviors without being caught, the tendency for observers to attempt similar actions are likely increased (Burgason et al., 2019; Pearson, 2019; Salisbury, 2021). On the other hand, the ICAI (2015) suggested that when students observe integrity promoting behaviors such as adherence to honor codes and codes of ethics, they are less likely to participate in dishonest behaviors.

Model Behavior

It has been suggested that role models are influential in the development of beliefs, values, and attitudes among observers, particularly regarding ethical decision-making (Chambers & Ransom, 2016; Smith et al., 2017). To be clear, SLT asserts that individuals being observed are referred to as models, while the process of learning and reproducing like behaviors being observed is considered modeling (Bandura, 1986; Keck et al., 2020). Eberle (2018) suggested that modeling can occur both formally and informally. Additionally, modeling can have both positive and negative outcomes. For

example, student exposure to models who uphold integrity can beneficially influence

behaviors among individuals and communal groups (Bertram-Gallant, 2018; Bluestein,

2015). On the other hand, Denisova-Schmidt (2017) and Stein (2018) revealed that

student exposure to behaviors such as using prohibited resources during examinations,

falsifying documents, and hiring others to complete assignments can adversely influence

student behaviors. Keck et al. (2017) suggested that role models display attributes in their

social roles which individuals perceive to be similar to self, and desire to imitate.

Therefore, it is plausible to assert that peers and faculty are influential in fostering

academic integrity, as well as deterring academic dishonesty.

Peer Influences and Modeling

The influence of peer models within academic settings has been well established

in the literature (Beasley, 2016; Cronan et al., 2017; Robinson & Glanzer, 2017). Social

Learning Theory identifies peer modeling as a key component in influencing ethical

decision-making patterns. From a peer-to-peer perspective, research suggests that student

behaviors are learned and considered appropriate based on how fellow peers view what is

acceptable (McCabe et al., 2012; Smith et al., 2017). Therefore, the more frequent

students witness their peers engaging in certain behaviors, the more inclined they are to

engage in the same behaviors (Beasley, 2014; Krueger, 2013). In their seminal study

framed by SLT, McCabe and Trevino (1997) proposed that the observation and

acceptance of misconduct among peers provides a sense of normalcy and support for

those who elect to participate in such behaviors. However, one could argue that the same

holds true for students who elect to adhere to the standards of integrity. In a recent study

conducted among third- and fourth-year nursing students, Eberle (2018) corroborated

McCabe et al. (2012) and concluded that peers were a significant influential factor of students engaging in either honest or dishonest academic behaviors. Nelson et al. (2017) supported the relevance of peer-to-peer influences even further in their investigation of academic dishonesty among millennials. The researchers concluded that peer dynamics of 18–27-year-old undergraduate business majors strongly influenced participation in dishonest academic behaviors.

Faculty Influences and Modeling

While relationships between peer influences and academic dishonesty have been well documented, research exploring the degree to which faculty leaders influence ethical decision-making patterns remains sparse. Of the few investigations that explored the impact of faculty modeling and ethical decision-making patterns, some findings challenged research that maintains the unequivocal impact of peer influences. For example, O'Keefe et al. (2017) underscored that faculty leaders are the single most important influencers in shaping environments and behavior. Keener et al. (2019) corroborated the claim and further asserted that within academia, faculty leaders are the first responders to breaches of academic integrity and are positioned to uphold academic and professional standards. Arain et al. (2017) echoed Keener et al. (2019) and argued that faculty leaders demonstrate and influence ethically sound behaviors which consequently contribute to the cultivation of ethically sound students. More specifically, Arain et al. (2017) revealed a direct and positive relationship between ethical leadership and ethical decision-making based on their findings among undergraduate business majors. Nelson et al. (2018) posited that the influence of faculty could possibly have longstanding effects on students that may translate into professional settings and within

society at large. In a mixed-methods approach examining academic dishonesty, Frenkel (2016) determined that faculty leaders play a major role in cultivating integrity and deterring dishonesty. From these perspectives faculty role models who demonstrate integrity and uphold ethical codes of conduct are essential in influencing ethical decision-making patterns.

Summary

This chapter provided a synthesis of literature that is germane to this study. The context of the study was established through literature which validated the significance of academic integrity within higher education. The history, defining characteristics, and pervasiveness of academic misconduct were substantiated through numerous studies. Additionally, the abundance of research within this review revealed the multifaceted aspects of academic misconduct within higher education. Research that explored cognitive factors such as attitudes towards academic dishonesty, values and beliefs that influence decision-making as well as ethical comportment were also discussed. Environmental factors including academic cultures of integrity, transcultural influences, societal influences, and peer and faculty model behavior were also detailed. Notably, studies which examined relationships between faculty models and ethical decision-making as well as relationships between perceptions of the *Code of Ethics for Nurses* and ethical decision-making are lacking. Thus, positioning this study within the body of literature related to academic dishonesty. Chapter Three presents the research methodology and design for examining influential factors of academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns among nursing students attending community colleges.

Chapter III: Research Methodology

Academic dishonesty within higher education continues to be problematic among all sectors of higher education. Of particular concern is the occurrence of academic dishonesty among students who aspire to become registered nurses, specifically considering reported correlations between academic and professional misconduct. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine relationships between influential factors of academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns among nursing students attending community colleges. Using specific constructs from SLT to frame this investigation, the following research questions were explored: (a) What are the relationships between attitudes towards academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students at community colleges? (b) To what extent does the American Nurses Association's *Code of Ethics for Nurses* influence attitudes and decision-making patterns of nursing students at community colleges? (c) To what extent does demographic variables predict decision-making patterns of nursing students at community colleges? (d) How do nursing students report whether their peers or faculty influence ethical decision-making patterns and dishonest behaviors at community colleges?

This chapter describes the research design, population and sampling, instrumentation, research procedures, data collection and analyses that were used in this study. In addition, the role of the researcher is briefly discussed.

Research Design

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), the selection of a research approach that best gauges the research problem and research questions is of great significance in

planning and conducting an investigation. This quantitative study was conducted using a cross-sectional survey design approach. The quantitative approach to research entails the investigation of a particular problem, or issue of concern that has been narrowed down into research questions along with research hypotheses (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). When using the quantitative approach, researchers may choose from correlational, causal-comparative, cross-sectional, and longitudinal research designs (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). With a cross-sectional survey approach, the design is non-experimental and data collection occurs at one single point in time; unlike longitudinal survey design studies which involve data collection over an extended time frame. This cross-sectional survey design has provided numeric descriptions of trends, attitudes, and opinions rather than cause and effect relationships as with experimental research. The collection of data was accomplished by using an adapted version of two valid and reliable instruments which will be detailed further. The adapted instrument was administered as an online survey to measure relationships between the variables of this study. Appropriate statistical analyses were conducted in order to obtain unbiased data interpretations. In addition, demographic variables were tested to determine if behavioral predictions could be made among the participants for generalization to the target population. Because relationships and associations among variables were explored, correlation techniques were also applied to measure the extent to which variables were related.

Rationale

Cross-sectional survey research has many advantages in comparison to longitudinal research. The relative ease and expediency of administering an online survey, the cost effectiveness of surveying at one point in time, and the likelihood of

adequate participation is greater with cross-sectional studies than with a longitudinal approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Additionally, the possibility of achieving a quick return from a large sample in the cross-sectional approach is also beneficial. In contrast, longitudinal studies which occur over a period of time, are subject to participant attrition (Creswell, 2015). In previous research, the cross-sectional survey approach has been beneficial in exploring attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors in various contexts. Furthermore, cross-sectional survey research has been reported as useful in examining relationships and predicting outcomes (Bultas et al., 2017; Krou, 2015; Sideridis et al., 2016). More specifically, Bezek (2014) employed a cross-sectional approach to explore relationships between perceptions of academic dishonesty and subsequent misconduct in professional healthcare settings. Other researchers have used the same approach to explore attitudes towards academic dishonesty and self-reported engagement in dishonest behaviors in academic settings (Madara et al., 2016). Because the cross-sectional survey approach has proven beneficial in explaining human behavior and predicting likely outcomes, it was the most appropriate approach to achieve the goals of this study.

Research Questions (RQs)

Based on the theoretical framework, the independent and dependent variables, this study addressed four research questions with three null and three alternate hypotheses:

RQ1. What are the relationships between attitudes towards academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students at community colleges?

H01- There are no statistically significant relationships between attitudes towards academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students at community colleges.

HA1- There will be statistically significant relationships between attitudes towards academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students at community colleges.

RQ2. To what extent does the American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics influence attitudes towards academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students at community colleges?

H02- The American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics will have no influence on attitudes towards academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students at community colleges.

HA2- The American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics will influence attitudes towards academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students at community colleges.

RQ3. To what extent do demographic variables predict ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students at community colleges?

H03- There will be no statistically significant relationships between demographic variables and ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students at community colleges.

HA3- There will be statistically significant relationships between demographic variables and ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students at community colleges.

RQ4.   How do nursing students report whether their peers or faculty influence

ethical decision-making and dishonest behaviors at community colleges?

Target Population and Sampling Procedures

The targeted participants for this study were students currently enrolled in

associate degree nursing programs offered by community colleges within the Mid-

Atlantic region. Three community college nursing programs agreed to participate in this

study. For this study, obtaining an adequate sample of at least 10% from the participating

community colleges provided adequate representation of students enrolled in community

college nursing programs in the region. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), the

intent of simple random sampling is to choose individuals who will be representative of

the target population. Researchers agree that large populations may increase the

likelihood of obtaining an adequate sample size; thereby increasing the study's validity,

potential for generalizability and replication (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Furthermore,

adequate sample sizes have the potential of minimizing the occurrence of outcome biases

unlike inadequate sample sizes which may not produce the fullness or depth of

information desired (Creswell &Creswell, 2018; Salkind, 2017). Notably, schools of

nursing within community colleges provide unique opportunities towards licensure

attainment. More specifically, students who attend community colleges can elect to

acquire a certificate in practical nursing, an associate nursing/science degree, or be dually

enrolled in baccalaureate degree programs when applicable. The invitation to engage in

this study was extended to all students enrolled in all four semesters of the traditional

two-year tract. Communications with the schools of nursing's administrators was

conducted to solicit student participation. Students were contacted using two formats:

directly through student email and indirectly through college administrators and nursing faculty. An informational flyer was shared electronically with the administrators prior to launching the survey link. Access to email addresses of students currently enrolled was obtained by the same.

Ethical Considerations and Procedures

The protection of the rights of human subjects is an essential component of educational research and was considered throughout this Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved #21/05-0090 investigation. Additional approvals as required by participating community colleges were obtained. The invitation to participate in this study was extended to nursing students currently enrolled in either semester of an associate degree tract within the participating community colleges. Using the cross-sectional approach to data collection, an adapted online survey questionnaire was administered using Momentive ®. A direct link to the survey was embedded within email messages of the study participants. Survey access was available until the minimum of 150 responses was exceeded. After the initial email was sent, reminder email messages encouraging survey completion was sent on two additional occasions until the minimum number of responses (n=150) were obtained.

Voluntary informed consent was explained within each student communication and acquired from each participant both directly and indirectly. Participants were made aware of their rights before, during, and after the investigation. Although the survey was a one-time three-minute response, per IRB protocol, participants were made aware that early withdrawal from the study was permissible and would not result in any penalties or unfair treatment. Participants were also assured that confidentiality and anonymity would

be maintained throughout the study, as well as in the event results from this investigation are published. Data handling and management was restricted to the primary investigator. Data will be stored in a locked file cabinet, as well as a passport protected online data storage site for a minimum of three years. Thereafter, the data will be destroyed.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

To measure the constructs of this study, items from the *Attitudes Towards Academic Misconduct Survey* developed by McCrink (2008) and adapted by Krueger (2013) as the *Academic Dishonesty Survey* was used. Additionally, two items in the form of a vignette based on Krou's (2015) examination of academic dishonesty were also used. The use of vignettes in survey research has been reported as beneficial in the data collection of sensitive topic areas such as academic dishonesty (Evans et al., 2015). Vignettes are short scenarios about a person or social situation which contain precise details of what is thought to be important for the decision-making process. There is a common factor among survey instruments used in quantitative research to examine academic dishonesty; the majority of instruments in use are adaptations of the *Academic Integrity Student Survey* developed by McCabe and Trevino (1997). This is true among several academic disciplines and in various contexts (Krueger, 2013; Suber, 2018). For this study, McCrink's (2008) questionnaire specifically gauged the attitudes toward academic dishonesty and ethical standards specific to baccalaureate degree seeking nursing students. Similarly, in a replication study, Krueger adapted items from McCrink (2008) to examine academic dishonesty among nursing students enrolled in two Midwestern community colleges. All items selected from the prototype instruments align

with the research questions of this study. Permission to use select items was granted by the respective authors.

Survey Items

Using a five-point Likert scale to measure constructs for the proposed study as framed by SLT, item one of the survey, which was comprised of ten behaviors, explored students' attitudes towards academic dishonesty. For this question which assesses attitudes toward the degree of dishonesty of a peer observed behavior, participants had the option of selecting one of the following responses:

1 = not dishonest

2 = slightly dishonest

3 = uncertain

4 = very dishonest

5 = extremely dishonest

Similarly, item two of the survey comprised seven behaviors that measured students' perceptions of unethical behaviors, six of which occur in the clinical setting. Participants had the option of selecting one of the following responses:

1 = not unethical

2 = slightly unethical

3 = uncertain

4 = very unethical

5 = extremely unethical

For items three and four of the survey, the likelihood of peer and faculty behaviors influencing the behavior of students was measured using vignettes and a five-point Likert scale. Participants had the option of selecting one of the following responses:

1 = very unlikely

2 = somewhat unlikely

3 = uncertain

4 = very likely

5 = somewhat likely

Items five and six were closed ended questions that measure students' understanding of the COE as well as the code's influence on ethical decision-making patterns. Demographic variables from items seven through twelve were used to predict ethical decision-making patterns. Lastly, item thirteen was an open-ended question which measured how students perceived peer and faculty role models as influencers of ethical decision-making patterns. Table 4 displays a sample of survey items that measured the named independent variables.

Table 4

Alignment of Independent Variables and Examples of Survey Items

Independent Variables	Sample Survey Items
Attitudes towards academic dishonesty	*Getting test questions from another student.*
Perceptions of the ANA COE	*Does the ANA COE influence your decision-making in academic and professional healthcare settings?*
Demographic Variables	*In which semester are you currently enrolled?*
Peer and Faculty Role Models	*How likely would a typical college student be influenced by faculty members' behaviors as opposed to the behaviors of fellow students?*

Source: Adapted from Krou, 2015; Krueger, 2013; McCrink, 2008.

In this study, items three and four are presented in the form of a vignette.

Researchers have suggested that although self-reporting surveys are commonly used for

data collection, vulnerable topics such as dishonest and unethical behaviors may affect

the truthfulness and authenticity of participants' responses. As a result, social desirability

may occur (Devine & Chin, 2018; Evans et al., 2018). Social desirability occurs when

participants provide responses that are assumed to be acceptable in order to please the

investigators who are conducting research. Consequently, data findings may be subjected

to questionable validity (Krou, 2015; Krueger, 2013). To minimize social desirability,

researchers have suggested that vignettes can be employed as an alternative to self-

reported responses (Liew et al., 2020; McClung & Schneider, 2018). Additionally, for the

purpose of data collection, vignettes create distance between the character of the scenario

and the participants, but also reflect how participants would act in reality. Consequently,

the biasing effect is minimized as participants are answering questions based on

hypothetical situations rather than from a personal experience (Auspurg & Jackle, 2017;

Suber, 2018). Additionally, Evans et al. (2015) noted that vignettes have been useful in examining judgement and decision-making in various contexts, particularly regarding decision-making in clinical settings**.**

Instrument Reliability and Validity

In quantitative research, reliability refers to the consistency or repeatability of an instrument. Furthermore, the extent to which the results of a study can be reproduced under similar methodology is a characteristic of reliability. Of equal importance regarding data collection is the degree to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure; this is known as validity (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Instruments for data collection must meet rigorous criteria to be considered both reliable and valid. The most important form of reliability for multi-item instruments is the instrument's internal consistency which is the degree to which sets on an item behave the same way (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). These criteria are essential in assessing underlying variables and are quantified by a Cronbach's alpha. With Cronbach's alpha, the scoring of items of an instrument range between 0-1. Optimal Cronbach alpha scores range between 0.7 and 0.9 (Salkind, 2017).

The prototype instruments for this study have been tested for adequate reliability, and predictive validity using the coefficient or Cronbach α reliability score in numerous studies (Bultas et al., Cronan et al., 2017; Krou, 2015; McClung, 2017; Suber, 2018). Considering the constructs of this study, the reported reliability scores were acceptable. The section that was adapted from Krueger and measured attitudes towards academic dishonesty and unethical behaviors and includes questions one and two which are comprised of specific behaviors reported a Cronbach α at .72. The survey items which

were adapted from McCrink (2008) and will measure ethical components reported a

Cronbach α of .95. (Krou, 2015; Krueger, 2013; McClung, 2017).

Data Analysis

Creswell and Creswell (2018) contend that there are interrelated steps required for

analyzing quantitative data. In general, after the organizing of data is completed, input of

data occurs using an appropriate statistical program. For this study, data analyses and

interpretations were conducted using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version

28 (SPSS 28) software. To start, descriptive analysis which revealed measures of central

tendency (mean, median, and mode) as well as variability as revealed by standard

deviations were conducted. For this study, demographic data including: age, gender, and

GPA was analyzed. The aforementioned demographics are in line with previous research

examining academic dishonesty (Beasley, 2016; Ip et al., 2018; Sideridis et al., 2016;

Stiles et al., 2017). Additionally, semester enrolled, healthcare employment status, and

history of repeating any nursing courses were also included in data analysis. Thereafter,

inferential statistics were conducted for hypotheses testing and to reveal relationships

between the independent and dependent variables of this study, as well as significant

differences between groups. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were used

to assess relationships between the independent and dependent variables. Additionally,

simple linear regression determined the potential predictive relationships between

attitudes towards dishonesty and perceptions of unethical behaviors. Two-way analysis of

Variance (ANOVA) determined how perceptions of ANA's Code of Ethics for Nurses

and ethical decision-making differed by groups. Multiple linear regression determined the

potential predictive relationships between selected demographic characteristics and

perceptions of unethical behaviors. Finally, descriptive statistics were used to answer

research question four employing multiple response frequencies and frequencies.

Table 5 displays an alignment of the research questions of this study, independent

and dependent variables, survey items and statistical analyses.

Table 5

Data Schema

Research Questions	Variables	Survey Items	Statistical Analysis
RQ 1. What are the relationships between attitudes towards academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students at community colleges?	**IV**- attitudes towards academically dishonest behaviors **DV**- ethical decision-making patterns	IV item(s): 1,3,4 DV- item 2	Pearson's correlation Simple Linear Regression
RQ 2. To what extent does the American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics influence attitudes towards academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students at community colleges?	**IV**- perceptions of ANA's Code of Ethics for Nurses **DV** – ethical decision-making patterns attitudes towards academic dishonesty	Item(s): 5,6	Two-Way ANOVA
RQ 3. To what extent do demographic variables predict ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students at community colleges?	**IV**- age, semester in program, gender, GPA, healthcare experience, repeat status. **DV** – ethical decision-making patterns	Item(s):7,8,9,10,11,12	Multiple linear Regression
RQ 4. How do nursing students report whether their peers or faculty influence ethical decision-making patterns and dishonest behaviors at community colleges?	**IV-** peer and faculty model behavior **DV** – ethical decision-making patterns	Item(s): 13	Multiple Response Frequency Frequencies

Role of Researcher

The role of researcher for a quantitative investigation is unlike the role of researcher in a qualitative inquiry. Instead of checking for indifferences, biases, and subjectivity, the primary responsibility in a quantitative inquiry is the protection of participants throughout the entire process. Considering ethical mandates of institutional review boards within academic settings and healthcare institutions, participant anonymity, freedom to withdraw, and freedom from intimidation must be respected. As both an active clinician and nurse educator over a forty-year time span, such principles have been internalized. Furthermore, it was imperative that the researcher upheld and modelled the standards of integrity within all domains of nursing. This is a non-negotiable stance. Nurse educators are regarded as gatekeepers of the profession. The charge of protecting the profession without compromise has been communicated by regulating bodies, accrediting organizations of schools of nursing and by society at large. Therefore, as nurse educator and nurse clinician, it was the responsibility of the researcher to advance previous research concerning motivations and influences of academic dishonesty among future professional nurses. Furthermore, maintaining honesty and integrity while upholding the standards of research were essential to the role as researcher.

Summary

This study explored relationships between students' attitudes toward academic dishonesty, students' perceptions of professional ethics, and peer and faculty role modelled behaviors as influential factors of academic dishonesty participation and ethical decision-making patterns of community college nursing students. This chapter provided

details for the research methodology which included discussions of the research design, population and sampling methods, instrumentation, data collection, data analysis, and role of the researcher. Chapter Four will offer a presentation and analysis of data collected from this study.

Chapter IV: Results

The purpose of this cross-sectional survey study was to examine relationships between influential factors of academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns among students enrolled in community college nursing programs. An additional goal of this research was to determine the extent to which demographic variables predicted ethical decision-making patterns among students enrolled in community college nursing programs. Data were collected using an online adapted survey which measured the constructs of this study. Students currently enrolled in accredited schools of nursing from three community colleges in the Mid-Atlantic region participated in this study. Participation was open to all enrolled in either semester of the traditional two-year face-to-face associate degree nursing programs within all three community colleges. College A provided access to 388 nursing students, of whom 135 participated, yielding a response rate of 34.7 %. College B provided access to 150 nursing students, of whom 76 participated, yielding a response rate of 50.6%. College C provided access to 175 students of whom 23 participated, yielding a 13.1 % response rate. The total number of responses obtained for the study was N= 234 students.

This chapter summarizes findings of relationships between influential factors of academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns among students enrolled in community college nursing programs. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the demographic characteristics of the nursing students. Inferential statistics were then used to answer the four research questions and three null and alternate hypotheses. Research question four sought to gather students' open-ended descriptions and did not require a null hypothesis.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The four RQs explored in this study and their associated null and alternate hypotheses are:

RQ1. What are the relationships between attitudes towards academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students at community colleges?

H01- There are no statistically significant relationships between attitudes towards academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students at community colleges.

HA1- There will be statistically significant relationships between attitudes towards academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students at community colleges.

RQ2. To what extent does the American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics influence attitudes towards academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students at community colleges?

H02- The American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics will have no influence on attitudes towards academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students at community colleges.

HA2- The American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics will influence attitudes towards academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students at community colleges.

RQ3. To what extent do demographic variables predict ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students at community colleges?

H03- There will be no statistically significant relationships between demographic variables and ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students at community colleges.

HA3- There will be statistically significant relationships between demographic variables and ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students at community colleges.

RQ4.   How do nursing students report whether their peers or faculty influence ethical decision-making and dishonest behaviors at community colleges?

Descriptive Statistics

Student Characteristics

The sample for this study was primarily community college nursing students, ($N =$ 234). The preponderance of these respondents was female (90%), ages 25 to 34 (41%), and were enrolled in their fourth semester (27%). Eighty-one percent of the respondents reported never repeating any nursing courses and earned a GPA of 3.1 to 3.5 (44%). Table 1 presents the participants' demographic characteristics.

Table 6

Participants' Student Characteristics

Description	N	%
Gender		
Female	211	**90.2**
Male	19	8.1
Other (Not in Analysis)	4	1.7
Total	234	100.0
Age		
18 to 24	61	26.1
25 to 34	95	**40.6**
35 to 44	51	21.8
45 years or older	27	11.5
Total	234	100.0
Semester Currently Enrolled		
First semester	55	23.5
Second semester	62	26.5
Third semester	53	22.6
Fourth semester	64	**27.4**
Total	234	100.0
Repeated Nursing Courses		
No	189	**80.8**
Yes	45	19.2
Total	234	100.0
GPA		
2.0 to 3.0	71	30.3
3.1 to 3.5	104	**44.4**
3.6 to 4.0	59	25.2
Total	234	100.0

Employment and American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics Characteristics

In terms of employment and American Nurses Association's (ANA) Code of Ethics characteristics, a good percentage of the respondents reported being employed in healthcare (71%). Finally, 86% of these respondents said they were familiar with the ANA code of ethics, while 71% said the ANA code of ethics has influenced their

decision-making in academic and professional healthcare settings. Table 7 presents the

descriptive findings.

Table 7

Participants' Employment and American Nurse Association's Code of Ethics

Characteristics

Description	*N*	%
Employed in Healthcare		
No	68	29.1
Yes	166	**70.9**
Total	234	100.0
Familiar with ANA Code of Ethics		
No	32	13.7
Yes	202	**86.3**
Total	234	100.0
ANA Code of Ethics Influence on Decision-Making		
No	68	29.1
Yes	166	**70.9**
Total	234	100.0

Attitudes Towards Academic Dishonesty and Ethical Decision-Making Patterns

RQ1: What are the relationships between attitudes towards academic dishonesty

and ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students at community

colleges?

For this research question, the researcher aimed to determine whether there was

a relationship between attitudes towards academic dishonesty and ethical decision-

making patterns. A Pearson product moment correlation was conducted to assess this

relationship. A follow up test utilizing simple linear regression was conducted to

determine if attitudes towards academic dishonesty is a predictor of ethical decision-making patterns.

Correlation

A two-tailed test of significance indicated that attitudes towards academic dishonesty ($r(232) = .665, p < .01$) was related to ethical decision-making patterns. The correlation coefficient's relationship between attitudes towards academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns (.665) was moderate. The results suggested that as attitudes towards academic dishonesty increase, ethical decision-making patterns also increase. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. The correlation results are shown in Table 8.

Table 8

Correlation Between Attitudes Towards Academic Dishonesty and Ethical Decision-Making Pattern

	Ethical Decision-Making Patterns	Attitudes Towards Academic Dishonesty
Ethical Decision-Making Patterns	-	
Attitudes Toward Academic Dishonesty	.665**	-

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Simple Linear Regression

Simple linear regression model was statistically significant, $F(1, 230) = 182.072$, $p \leq .001$, $R^2 = .442$). The model accounted for only 4% of the variability in ethical decision-making patterns and is explained by the independent variable. The regression results indicated that attitudes toward academic dishonesty predicted ethical decision-making patterns ($b = .673, p < .001$). The results suggest that community college nursing

students' ethical decision-making patterns increases as their attitudes towards academic

dishonesty increases by .673 units. Simple linear regression results are shown in Table 9.

Table 9

Simple Linear Regression Analysis Results of Attitudes Towards Academic

Dishonesty and Ethical Decision-Making Patterns

	b	S.E.	Beta	t	p	95 CI for b	
Attitude Towards Academic Dishonesty	.673	.050	.665	13.493	.000	.575	.772

Note: Dependent Variable: ethical decision-making patterns (R^2 = .445). Significant results at ***$p < 0.01$ level.

American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics, Attitude Towards Academic

Dishonesty, and Ethical Decision-Making Patterns

> RQ2: To what extent does the American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics
>
> influence attitudes and ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students
>
> at community colleges?

Research question two sought to determine whether attitudes towards ethical

behaviors and ethical decision-making patterns are influenced by the American Nurses

Association's Code of Ethics. A series of two-way ANOVA analysis were performed. In

this analysis, familiarity with the American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics included

two levels (no, yes) and American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics influence on

decision-making in academic and professional settings consisted of two levels (no, yes).

The effect sizes for those research questions were calculated using partial eta squared

(ηp^2). Creswell (2015) suggested effect sizes are small (.01), medium (.06), or large (.14).

Ethical Decision-Making Patterns

Levene's F tests of error variance revealed that the assumption of the

homogeneity of equal variance was justifiable for ethical decision-making patterns (p =

.800). There was a significant main effect of the American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics influence on decision-making in academic and professional healthcare settings, ($F(1, 229) = 4.581$, $p < .05$, $\eta p^2 = .02$). The effect size was small (.02). The results showed that the mean scores of community college nursing students who said yes to American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics having influence on decision-making in academic and professional settings ($M = 3.61$, $SD = .595$) differed from those who said no ($M = 3.36$, $SD = .563$) in terms of their ethical decision-making patterns.

In total, the results suggested that community college nursing students who said yes to the American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics having influence on ethical decision-making patterns in academic and professional healthcare settings exhibited higher ethical decision-making patterns from those who said no; the null hypothesis was rejected. Conversely, there were no significant main effect found of familiarity with American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics, ($F(1, 229) = 2.825$, $p \geq .05$) nor a two-way interaction of the two independent variables on ethical decision-making patterns, ($F(1, 229) = 3.093$, $p = .080$); the null hypothesis was retained. The results are shown in Table 10.

Table 10

Two Way ANOVA of American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics and Ethical

Decision-Making Patterns

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	MS	F	p.	ηp^2
Dependent Variable: *Ethical Decision-Making Patterns R² = .027*						
Familiarity with ANA Code of Ethics	.984	1	.984	2.825	.094	.012
ANA Code of Ethics Influence on Decision-Making in Academic and Professional Healthcare Settings	1.596	1	1.596	4.581	**.033**	.020
Familiarity with ANA Code of Ethics x ANA Code of Ethics Influence on Decision-Making in Academic and Professional Healthcare Settings	1.078	1	1.078	3.093	.080	.013

Attitudes Towards Academic Dishonesty

Levene's *F* tests of error variance revealed that the assumption of the

homogeneity of equal variance was justifiable for attitudes towards academic dishonesty

(*p* = .830). There was no significant main effect of the American Nurses Association's

Code of Ethics influence on ethical decision-making patterns in academic and

professional healthcare settings, (*F*(1, 229) = .923, *p* = .338, ηp^2=.00), main effect found

of familiarity with the American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics, (*F*(1, 229) =

2.139, *p* = .145) or a two-way interaction of the two independent variables on attitudes

towards academic dishonesty, (*F*(1, 229) = 1.464, *p* = .228).

In total, the results suggested that familiarity with the American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics and its influence on ethical decision-making among community college nursing students were not statistically significant; the null hypothesis was retained. The nonsignificant results are shown in Table 11.

Table 11

Two Way ANOVA of American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics and Attitudes Towards Academic Dishonesty

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	*df*	MS	F	*p.*	*ηp²*
Dependent Variable: *Attitudes Towards Academic Dishonesty R² = .014*						
Familiarity with ANA Code of Ethics	.313	1	.313	.923	.338	.004
ANA Code of Ethics Influence on Ethical Decision-Making Patterns in Academic and Professional Settings	.724	1	.724	2.139	.145	.009
Familiarity with ANA Code of Ethics x ANA Code of Ethics Influence on Decision-Making in Academic and Professional Settings	.496	1	.496	1.464	.228	.006

Predictors of Ethical Decision-Making Patterns

RQ3: To what extent do demographic variables predict ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students at community colleges?

Research question three used multiple linear regression analysis to ascertain whether demographic characteristics were predictors of ethical decision-making patterns. In this analysis, baseline reference categories (coded as 0) were male, ages 25 to 34,

fourth semester, 2.0 to 3.0 GPA, not employed in healthcare, and did not repeat nursing

courses. Multicollinearity was not a concern (female, $VIF = 1.073$, age 18 to 24,

$VIF = 1.286$, age 35 to 44, $VIF = 1.283$, 45 years or older, $VIF = 1.174$, 45 first semester,

$VIF = 1.851$, second semester, $VIF = 1.727$, third semester, $VIF = 1.773$, 3.1 to 3.5 GPA,

$VIF = 1.529$, 3.6 to 4.0 GPA, $VIF = 1.519$, employed in healthcare, $VIF = 1.071$, repeated

nursing courses, $VIF = 1.188$).

The multiple linear regression model was statistically significant,

$F(11, 217) = 2.127$, $p = .020$, $R^2 = .097$). The model accounted for only 10% of the

variability in ethical decision-making patterns explained by the independent variables.

Results indicated that female ($b = .291$, $p = .016$, $sr^2 = .03$), first-semester ($b = .311$, p

$= .002$, $sr^2 = .04$), and employment in healthcare ($b = .150$, $p = .041$, $sr^2 = .02$)

significantly predicted ethical decision-making patterns. Holding constant other variables,

the results suggested that for female community college nursing students', relative to

male community college nursing students', ethical decision-making patterns increased by

.291 units. Additionally, for first semester community college nursing students, relative

to fourth-semester community college nursing students, ethical decision-making patterns

increased by .311 units, given that all variables are held constant. For community college

nursing students employed in healthcare, relative to those who are not employed, ethical

decision-making patterns increased by .150 units, given that all variables are held

constant. The unique variance explained by each of the independent variables indexed by

the squared semi-partial correlations was small. Results demonstrated that first-semester

(4%), followed by female (3%), and employed in healthcare (2%) uniquely predicted a

statistically significant proportion of variation of ethical decision-making patterns.

In general, the results suggested that female community college nursing students were more likely to exhibit higher ethical decision-making patterns than their male counterparts. The results also suggested that first-semester community college nursing students were more likely to exhibit higher ethical decision-making patterns than fourth-semester community college nursing students. Finally, community college students employed in healthcare were more likely to exhibit higher ethical decision-making patterns than those who were not; the null hypothesis was rejected. Conversely, the other demographic characteristics did not significantly predict ethical decision-making patterns; the null hypothesis was retained. Multiple regression results are shown in Table 12.

Table 12

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Results of the Demographic Characteristics and Ethical Decision-Making Patterns

	b	S.E.	*Beta*	t	p	sr^2	95 CI for b	
Female	.291	.120	.162	2.429	**.016**	.03	.055	.526
(*base = Male*)								
18 to 24	-.008	.083	-.007	-.100	.921	.00	-.171	.155
35 to 44	-.049	.087	-.041	-.560	.576	.00	-.219	.122
45 years or older	.146	.111	.092	1.316	.190	.01	-.072	.364
(*base = 25 to 34*)								
First Semester	.311	.097	.280	3.192	**.002**	.04	.097	.280
Second Semester	-.175	.094	-.157	-1.857	.065	.01	.094	-.157
Third Semester	-.185	.101	-.158	-1.840	.067	.01	.101	-.158
(*base = Fourth Semester*)								
3.1 to 3.5	.084	.079	.084	1.058	.291	.01	-.072	.240
3.6 to 4.0	-.088	.090	-.078	-.979	.329	.01	-.266	.090
(*base = 2.0 to 3.0*)								
Employed in Healthcare	.150	.073	.137	2.058	**.041**	.02	.006	.295
(*base = Not Employed in Healthcare*)								
Repeated Nursing Courses	.094	.087	.076	1.080	.281	.01	-.078	.266
(*base = Did Not Repeat Nursing Courses*)								

Note: Dependent Variable: Ethical decision-making patterns ($R^2 = .097$). Significant results at **$p < .01$ and *$p < .05$ level.

How Peers and Faculty Influence Ethical Decision-Making and Dishonest Behaviors

RQ4: How do nursing students report whether their peers or faculty influence

ethical decision-making and dishonest behaviors at community colleges?

The final research question sought to determine whether nursing students believe

their peers or faculty influence ethical decision-making and dishonest behaviors.

Descriptive statistics, using multiple response frequencies, was conducted to answer this

research question. The themes were generated using the multiple response frequencies in terms of the aggregate responses regarding both peer and faculty influences on ethical decision-making patterns. The four themes that emanated from the multiple response frequencies for nursing students were:

1. Guidance
2. Encouragement, Support, and Collaboration
3. Provide Safety, Critical Thinking Skills, and Honesty
4. Ethical Standards and Professionalism

Peer and Faculty Aggregate Responses

For the aggregate responses there was a total of 81 responses to this open-ended question. Out of the four themes, the vast majority of the respondents believed ethical standards and professionalism were very important (77 percent or 62/81) in terms of peer and faculty influences on ethical decision-making patterns. They also believed guidance (37 percent or 30/81), encouragement, support, and collaboration (36 percent or 29/81), and providing safety, critical thinking, and honesty (13 percent or 11/81) were also beneficial. Table 13 presents the multiple response frequencies findings for nursing students.

Table 13 *Multiple Response Frequencies on Peers and Faculty's Influences on Ethical Decision-Making Behaviors*

	Responses (*n* = 81)		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Guidance	30	22.7%	37.0%
Encouragement, Support, and Collaboration	29	22.0%	35.8%
Provide Safety, Critical Thinking Skills, and Honesty	11	8.3%	13.6%
Ethical and Professionalism	62	47.0%	**76.5%**
Total	132	100.0%	163.0%

The aggregated responses were further broken down by looking at the four themes separately for peers and faculty using frequencies.

Peers

For peers, 43% of the respondents thought that ethical behaviors, professionalism, encouragement, support, and collaboration were the most important in terms of peers influences on ethical decision-making patterns. Conversely, seven percent of the respondents acknowledged that guidance and providing safety, critical thinking, and honesty were also beneficial but the least important in terms of peer influence on ethical decision-making behaviors.

Student responses included:

"My peers are valuable assistance to my study."

"My peers provide community where I can collaborate and use teamwork."

Table 14 presents the frequencies findings.

Table 14

Frequencies Results on Peers' Influences on Ethical Decision-Making

Behaviors

	N	Percent
Guidance	4	7.4%
Encouragement, Support, and Collaboration	23	42.6%
Provide Safety, Critical Thinking Skills, and Honesty	4	7.4%
Ethical Behaviors and Professionalism	23	42.6%
Total	54	100.0%

Faculty

For faculty, 47% of the respondents thought that ethical behaviors and professionalism was the most important in terms of faculty influence on ethical decision-making patterns. Guidance (23%) and encouragement, support, and collaboration (22%) were also considered to be important in terms of faculty influence on ethical decision-making patterns. Providing safety, critical thinking, and honesty (8%) were also seen as beneficial but the least important.

Student responses included:

"Faculty members play a huge role in influencing decision-making as I consider them role models and people with vast experience in the field."

"I believe the role of faculty is more important than the role of peers in influencing decision-making."

Table 15 presents the multiple response frequencies findings for community college nursing students.

Table 15

Frequencies Results on Faculty's Influences on Ethical Decision-Making

Behaviors

	N	Percent
Guidance	30	22.7%
Encouragement, Support, and Collaboration	29	22.0%
Provide Safety, Critical Thinking Skills, and Honesty	11	8.3%
Ethical Behaviors and Professionalism	62	47.0%
Total	132	100.0%

Summary

The findings of the analyses (Pearson product moment correlation, simple linear regression, two-way ANOVA, multiple linear regression, and multiple response frequencies, presented in this chapter answered the four research questions delineated in this study. Descriptive statistics summarized and classified community college nursing students' characteristics. Pearson product moment correlation examined the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Simple and multiple linear regression assessed whether the independent variables predict the independent variable. Two-way ANOVA determined how perceptions of ANA's Code of Ethics for Nurses and ethical decision-making patterns differed by groups. Finally, multiple response frequencies answered the qualitative research question.

For research question one, Pearson product moment correlation results indicated that attitudes towards academic dishonesty were related to ethical decision-making patterns. The results suggested that as attitudes towards academic dishonesty increase,

ethical decision-making patterns also increase. Simple linear regression follow-up test found that attitudes towards academic dishonesty predicted ethical decision-making patterns. The results suggest that community college nursing students' ethical decision-making patterns increase as their attitudes towards academic dishonesty increase.

For research question two, two-way ANOVA results found a significant main effect on ethical decision-making patterns by American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics influence on decision-making patterns in academic and professional healthcare settings. In total, the results suggested that community college nursing students who said yes to the American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics having influence on decision-making patterns in academic and professional healthcare settings exhibited higher ethical decision-making patterns from those who said no. Conversely, there were no significant main effect found of familiarity with American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics nor a two-way interaction of the two independent variables on ethical decision-making patterns.

Two-way ANOVA results did not find a significant main effect on attitudes towards academic dishonesty by American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics influence on decision-making in academic and professional healthcare settings. No main effect was found of familiarity with American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics, or a two-way interaction of the two independent variables on attitudes towards academic dishonesty. In total, the nonsignificant results suggested that familiarity with the American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics and its influence on ethical decision-making among community college nursing students were not statistically significant.

For research question three, multiple linear regression results showed that female, first-semester, and employment in healthcare, significantly predicted ethical decision-making patterns. In general, the results suggested that female community college nursing students were more likely to exhibit higher ethical decision-making patterns than their male counterparts. The results also suggested that first-semester community college nursing students were more likely to exhibit higher ethical decision-making patterns than fourth-semester community college nursing students. Community college students employed in healthcare were more likely to exhibit higher ethical decision-making patterns than those who were not; the null hypothesis was rejected. Conversely, the other demographic characteristics did not significantly predict ethical decision-making patterns.

Finally for research question four, four themes emanated from the multiple response frequencies. The results revealed 77% of the respondents believed ethical standards and professionalism were very important in terms of peer and faculty influence on ethical decision-making behaviors. The respondents also acknowledged that guidance (37%), encouragement, support, and collaboration (36%), and providing safety, critical thinking, and honesty (13%) were beneficial.

When looking at the four themes separately for peers and faculty, frequencies result indicated that 43% of respondents thought that ethical standards, professionalism, encouragement, support, and collaboration were the most important in terms of peer influence on ethical decision-making behaviors. Conversely, 7% of the respondents revealed that guidance, providing safety, critical thinking, and honesty were also beneficial, but the least important in terms of peer influence on ethical decision-making

patterns. As for faculty, 47% of respondents acknowledged that ethical standards and professionalism were most important in terms of faculty influence on ethical decision-making patterns. Guidance (23%) and encouragement, support, and collaboration (22%) were also considered to be important in terms of faculty influence on ethical decision-making behaviors. Providing safety, critical thinking, and honesty (8%) were also seen as beneficial but the least important.

Chapter 5 presents the discussions, conclusions, and recommendations.

Chapter V: Discussions, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Although academic integrity is an essential component of the higher education experience, academic dishonesty persists (Burgason et al., 2019; Ives, 2020; Lancaster, 2021). Academic integrity is extremely important among schools of nursing where future licensed professionals emerge. Healthcare delivery in the twenty-first century has become more complex and challenging than in earlier years (Pittman, 2019). Consequently, there is an increasing demand for competent nursing professionals who can safely take care of patients in various healthcare settings (ANA, 2021). Because academic dishonesty has been associated with diminished content and skill mastery, and has been positively correlated with professional misconduct, the need to better understand influential factors of academic dishonesty remains critical (Fein, 2019; Keener et al., 2019; Parnther, 2020). Using constructs from SLT, this research study sought to examine relationships between cognitive and environmental factors to better understand such influences.

This chapter provides an overview of the study, which further explains the data analyses and results that were illustrated in Chapter 4. There are three main sections in this chapter: Summary of the Study, Conclusion that emphasizes what all of it means, and Implications of the study that will also move into a discussion around the study's recommendations and limitations. This chapter also offers an understanding of how the findings of the study relate to the theoretical framework in Chapter 1 and connect the study to what others have done as described in the literature review in Chapter 2.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this cross-sectional survey study was to examine relationships between influential factors of academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns

among students enrolled in community college nursing programs. An additional goal of this research was to determine the extent to which demographic variables predicted ethical decision-making patterns among students enrolled in community college nursing programs. Constructs from Bandura's Social Learning Theory [SLT] (1971, 1986) were used to frame this research and were appropriate for this study. According to SLT, learned behaviors are a result of interactions between cognitive and environmental factors that take place in a social context. For this study, students' attitudes towards academic dishonesty, and perceptions of the ANA's *Code of Ethics* represented cognitive factors of the conceptual framework. Environmental factors of the conceptual framework were represented by peer and faculty model behaviors. The results of this study confirm findings in the literature, and also identify new relationships that may have an impact on deterring academic dishonesty among community college nursing students. Additionally, the results of this study can be used to guide the development of integrity policies across academic disciplines such as business, journalism, and health sciences in which codes of ethics undergird respective professional settings.

A cross-sectional survey design approach was used for data collection to answer the four research questions of this study. The three research questions (RQ) that explored relationships were:

RQ1: What are the relationships between attitudes towards academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students at community colleges?

RQ2: To what extent does the American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics influence attitudes towards academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students at community colleges?

RQ3: To what extent do demographic variables predict ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students at community colleges?

Research question four, an open-ended survey item, was presented to the participants to gather data that detailed personal accounts of how faculty and peers influence ethical decision-making patterns:

RQ4: How do nursing students report whether their peers or faculty influence ethical decision-making patterns and dishonest behaviors at community colleges?

Discussion of the Findings

Attitudes Towards Academic Dishonesty and Ethical Decision-Making Patterns

RQ1: What are the relationships between attitudes towards academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students at community colleges?

The findings for research question one found that attitudes towards academic dishonesty were related to ethical decision-making patterns. The results suggested that as the attitudes of community college nursing students towards academic dishonesty increased, ethical decision-making patterns also increased. Additionally, a simple linear regression follow-up test found that attitudes towards academic dishonesty predicted ethical decision-making patterns. For this study, nursing students' attitudes regarding academic dishonesty were evaluated by their ratings of how dishonest ten specific

behaviors were. These findings align with studies that have examined dishonesty among academic disciplines in both two and four-year institutions. Bezek (2014), Khalaila (2015) and Krueger (2013) suggested that positive attitudes towards academic dishonesty are proportionate to the increased participation in ethical decision-making patterns in professional healthcare settings. In addition, Balbuena and Lamela (2015) also found that among non-nursing students attitudes toward academically dishonest behaviors correlated with students' ethical decision-making patterns.

American Nurses Associations Code of Ethics and Ethical Decision-Making Patterns

RQ2: To what extent does the American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics influence attitudes towards academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns of nursing students at community colleges?

The findings for research question two revealed a significant main effect on ethical decision-making patterns by the American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics influence on ethical decision-making patterns in academic and professional healthcare settings. In total, the results suggested that community college nursing students who said yes to the American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics having influence on decision-making in academic and professional settings exhibited higher ethical decision-making patterns as compared to those who said no. These results relate to the early findings of McCrink (2008) who conducted a similar study among nursing students attending community colleges. McCrink (2008) found a strong significant relationship between nursing students' attitudes towards academic dishonest behaviors and the participation in behaviors that reflect ethical decision-making patterns. In addition, findings from this study coincide with Ismail and Omar (2017) who posited that students who

acknowledged a clear understanding of ethical values and principles also reported having negative attitudes toward academic dishonesty. Additionally, Ismail and Omar (2017) maintained that students who reported negative attitudes towards dishonest behaviors were more likely to employ decision-making that did not violate tenets of integrity.

Conversely, there were no significant main effects found in terms of familiarity with the American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics nor a two-way interaction of the two independent variables on ethical decision-making patterns. Additionally, no significant main effect was found on attitudes towards academic dishonesty by the American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics' influence on ethical decision-making in academic and professional healthcare settings. In total, the nonsignificant results suggested a non-influential effect of familiarity of the American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics. Specifically, the results suggest regardless of familiarity with the American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics or acknowledging that the code influenced decision-making in academic and professional healthcare settings, the attitudes towards academic dishonesty were the same. Although this study found no significant main effect between familiarity and influence of the American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics on ethical decision-making patterns, the results revealed the need for clear delineations of ethical standards among community college nursing students. Findings from McNair and Oye (2018) and Keener et al. (2019) support this assumption. The researchers maintained that the lack of an understanding of clear explanations of guidelines as communicated within ethical standards and principles could be problematic in professional settings.

Predictors of Ethical Decision-Making Patterns

RQ3: To what extent do demographic variables predict ethical decision-making

patterns of nursing students at community colleges?

The findings for research question three revealed that female, first-semester, and employment in healthcare significantly predicted ethical decision-making patterns. In general, the results suggested that female community college nursing students were more likely to exhibit higher ethical decision-making patterns than their male counterparts. The results also suggested that first-semester community college nursing students were more likely to exhibit higher ethical decision-making patterns than fourth-semester community college nursing students. Community college students employed in healthcare were more likely to exhibit higher ethical decision-making patterns than those who were not; the null hypothesis was rejected. These findings coincide with the research of Kruger (2013). In a similar study among nursing students enrolled in community college nursing programs, Krueger (2013) found that GPA, gender, and employment status yielded significant differences in attitudes toward academic dishonesty and could be further examined for predictive ability. However, findings from this research are in contrast to Pearson (2019) and Beck (2018) who found no significant differences in gender and age regarding ethical decision-making patterns among students enrolled in four-year nursing programs. The demographic variable of course repeater status which was unique for this study did not significantly predict ethical decision-making patterns. With regards to semester enrolled in the program, findings from this study contrast the research of Bultas et al. (2017) who suggested that fourth-semester students are less tolerant of academic dishonesty and exhibit ethical behaviors more frequently than first-semester enrolled students. In

general, it is worth noting studies exploring academic dishonesty have revealed mixed

results when considering different demographic variables as findings from this research

has corroborated (Krueger, 2013; Maring et al., 2018; Pearson, 2019).

How Peers and Faculty Influence Ethical Decision-Making and Dishonest Behaviors

RQ4: How do nursing students report whether their peers or faculty influence

ethical decision-making and dishonest behaviors at community colleges?

For the qualitative findings for research question four, four themes emanated from

the multiple response frequencies. Results revealed that 77% of the respondents believed

ethical standards and professionalism were very important in terms of peers and faculty's

influences on ethical decision-making patterns. The respondents also believed that

guidance (37%), encouragement, support, and collaboration (36%), and providing safety,

critical thinking, and honesty (13%) were beneficial.

When looking at the four themes separately for peers and faculty, frequencies

result indicated that 43% of the respondents thought that ethical standards and

professionalism and encouragement, support, and collaboration were most important in

terms of peers' influences on ethical decision-making patterns. Conversely, 7% of the

respondents revealed that guidance and providing safety, critical thinking, and honesty

were also beneficial but the least important in terms of peer influence on ethical decision-

making patterns. As for faculty, 47% of the respondents thought that ethical standards

and professionalism were most important in terms of faculty influence on ethical

decision-making patterns. Guidance (23%) and encouragement, support, and

collaboration (22%) were also considered to be important in terms of faculty influence on

ethical decision-making patterns. Providing safety, critical thinking, and honesty (8%)

were also seen as beneficial but the least important. These findings relate to the research of Eberle (2018) which sought to gain students' recommendations for nursing faculty to consider in deterring academic dishonesty. Eberle (2018) maintained that modeled professional conduct and behaviors in both academic and professional healthcare settings provide positive examples for nursing students to emulate. Similarly, Devine and Chin (2018) emphasized the importance of faculty as positive role models in building honesty, ethical behavior, and professionalism which also emphasize the importance of these findings. To add, Bluestein (2018) and Beasley (2014) concluded that guidance from, and respect of faculty leaders are favorable influences towards academic integrity. Finally, Garza-Mitchell and Parnther (2018) suggested that the responsibility of fostering and maintaining academic integrity should be a shared obligation among faculty and students.

Conclusions

This study sought to examine relationships between cognitive and environmental influences of academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns among community college nursing students. Most research regarding academic dishonesty has explored students' characteristics and the frequency of dishonest behavior occurrences. However, investigations that explore the influence of professional codes of ethics and faculty-modeled behavior as deterrents are minimal. It is worth noting, all schools of nursing within both two-year and four-year institutions have a communal obligation. That is, nurse educators are responsible for ascertaining a certain degree of familiarity among nursing students with the American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics. Understanding what factors influence attitudes towards academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns can assist academic policy makers in developing better informed

guidance to promote academic cultures of integrity. This study has contributed to the limited research focusing on both familiarity of and significance of a code of ethics in addition to the influence of modeled faculty behavior.

From the findings in this study, several inferences are made:

Quantitative Results

- Attitudes towards academic dishonesty were related to ethical decision-making patterns.

- Community college nursing students' ethical decision-making patterns increase as their attitudes toward academic dishonesty increase.

- Community college nursing students who said yes to American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics having influence on decision-making in academic and professional healthcare exhibited higher ethical decision-making patterns from those who said no.

- Community college nursing students' familiarity with the American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics did not significantly influence ethical decision-making patterns or attitudes towards academic dishonesty.

- Female community college nursing students were more likely to exhibit higher ethical decision-making patterns than their male counterpart.

- First-semester community college nursing students were more likely to exhibit higher ethical decision-making patterns than fourth-semester community college nursing students.

- Community college students employed in healthcare were more likely to exhibit higher ethical decision-making patterns than those who were not.

Open-ended Item Results

- 77% of the respondents acknowledged that ethical standards, and
  professionalism were very important in terms of peer and faculty
  influences on ethical decision-making patterns.

- 43% of the respondents acknowledged that ethical standards,
  professionalism, encouragement, support, and collaboration were most
  important in terms of peers influence on ethical decision-making patterns.

- 47% of the respondents acknowledged that ethical standards and
  professionalism were most important in terms of faculty influence on
  ethical decision-making behaviors.

Implications

When considering the consequences that have been associated with academic

dishonesty and the positive correlations between academic dishonesty and professional

misconduct it was important for this researcher to further investigate this issue of

concern. Furthermore, academic dishonesty was important to study because nurse

educators in academic settings are expected to produce competent, safe and honest nurses

who uphold the standards of integrity as delineated within the American Nurses

Association's (ANA) Code of Ethics. According to the findings from this study, attitudes

toward academic dishonesty were the same even if community college nursing students

were familiar with the ANA Code of Ethics or not. The same held true for students

believing that the code influenced ethical decision-making patterns in academic and

professional healthcare settings. Considering the expectation that nurse educators and

nurse clinicians will articulate values that foster integrity as delineated within the Code of

Ethics among nursing students, this research revealed results that point to important implications for schools of nursing at large.

This study uncovered relationships between employment status in healthcare and familiarity and influence of the ANA Code of Ethics'on ethical decision-making patterns. Specifically, the findings revealed the large majority (71%) of the participants that have healthcare experiences acknowledged the ANA Code of Ethics being influential in ethical decision-making patterns. As such, nurse educators should give thought to pairing nursing students who have healthcare experiences with nursing students who do not. Bluestein (2018) noted that students look outside themselves to peers and other significant persons for guidance. Additionally, researchers have concluded that it is often assumed students understand the meaning of what constitutes ethical behavior, which may not be the case for all students (O'Keefe et al., 2017; Smith et al., 2017). Consequently, meaningful learning experiences that clearly define and exemplify characteristics that constitute honesty and ethical judgments in academic and professional healthcare settings should be considered for nursing students. Because it has been suggested that the social learning process begins when individuals focus attention on modeled behaviors, faculty are in key positions to foster integrity and cultivate the mindsets of students towards integrity. Furthermore, fostering honesty and ethical behaviors should become active learning opportunities and not be managed with punitive responses alone (Bertram-Gallant & Stephens, 2020; Morris, 2018; Stein, 2018). Also, providing clear, unambiguous definitions of dishonesty as well as clear guidelines for ethical behavior is a start towards the prevention and deterrence of dishonesty in academic and professional settings.

Another implication from this study is with regards to peer-to-peer collaboration. This research corroborated findings from other investigations that revealed the importance of peer-to-peer collaborations in academic settings (Beasley, 2016; Cronan et al., 2017; Robinson & Glanzer, 2017). Although collaborative learning is a high impact teaching-learning strategy, faculty must be explicit in communicating when collaboration is accepted and when it is not. Clear definitions are important because the growing body of evidence concerning academic dishonesty suggests that students do not view unauthorized collaboration as dishonest behavior (McClung, 2017; Stein, 2018). While faculty may view unauthorized collaborations as dishonest behaviors, students reportedly rely on collaboration and view it as solidarity among peers (Maley, 2019).

Prior studies have suggested that academic dishonesty is likely to occur when students view it as a socially accepted behavior (Maring et al., 2018). Research also suggests that efforts to foster climates of academic integrity require a holistic student development approach in order to promote lifelong integrity (Bertram-Gallant, 2017; Johnson et al., 2020). Consequently, cultures of integrity or the lack thereof, play a profound role in students' decision-making to engage or avert dishonest behaviors. It is important to recognize that academic cultures of integrity do not occur by happenstance. Instead, academic cultures of integrity are the result of purposeful collaboration and requires a multi-systems approach with the goal of students becoming integrity conscious and ethically sensitive (Smith et al., 2017). Johnson et al. (2020) suggested that the overall academic climate is a critical component of successful academic integrity strategies. Bertram-Gallant (2018) posited that a comprehensive approach even within the community college setting is appropriate and affords opportunities towards congruent

approaches to minimizing occurrences of academic dishonesty. Researchers agree that the more faculty, staff and administrators understand the multifaceted dynamics of academic dishonesty, the more effective they can be in creating environments of integrity (Bertram-Gallant, 2018; Garza-Mitchell & Parnther, 2018; Hensley, 2018; Morris, 2018). As a result, the promotion and protection of cultures of academic integrity that are associated with ethical decision-making patterns will ensue.

A final implication of this study is the reported positive correlations between academic dishonesty and professional misconduct (Beck, 2018; Devine & Chin, 2018; Keener et al., 2019; McNair & Haynie, 2017). This remains concerning for nurse educators at large. Considering the complex nature of healthcare systems, newly licensed nurses may become challenged and possibly overwhelmed with all that is required in any given shift. Even so, newly licensed nurses are expected to connect codes of ethics with real patient outcomes to ensure safe care delivery without compromise (Pittman, 2019). Therefore, it is imperative that ethical concepts and principles are introduced throughout nursing curricula beginning with the first semester of study. Overall, because the American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics frames the expectations of honesty and integrity among registered nurses on a national scale, these implications are not limited to community colleges, but apply to four-year institutions as well.

The findings from this research need to be considered within this study's limitations. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are presented.

Recommendations

Academic and Professional Practices

- The creation of campus-wide cultures of academic integrity, which include concerted efforts from administrators, faculty and staff. The responsibility of fostering campus-wide integrity should not rest on faculty alone.

- Integration of ethical comportment within nursing curricula for each course. This may not be common practice because schools of nursing are focused on first-time NCLEX-RN success. Therefore, faculty focus on covering the NCLEX test blueprint, which does not emphasize the ANA Code of Ethics.

- Assign role playing and/or simulated activities that specifically address academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns. Role-playing and simulation are often used as instructional delivery methods in both two-year and four-year schools of nursing as a means of imitating real-life scenarios without causing harm.

Future Research

There are various investigations that may emerge from the findings of this study.

- A quantitative inquiry among nurse educators exploring the extent to which the American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics is actually discussed or included in schools of nursing curricula.

- A comparative study of familiarity and influence of the American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics between baccalaureate and associate degree seeking nursing students to determine if there are any significant differences between the two groups.

- A convergent mixed methods investigation exploring influential factors of academic dishonesty.

- Additional investigations of relationships between nursing students' familiarity with the American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics and attitudes towards academic dishonesty, which has been understudied.

- A quantitative inquiry exploring faculty as influential factors of nursing students adhering to standards of integrity in academic and professional healthcare settings.

- A comparative study exploring academic dishonesty and ethical decision-making patterns among male students enrolled in nursing programs and other health professions.

Limitations

- The preponderance of participants for this study was comprised of females (90%) with only 10% of the sample being male.

- Academic dishonesty is a sensitive topic that may lend to responses that are socially desirable. Although self-reports of academic dishonesty were not examined in this study, and vignettes were used to create distance between the participants and dishonest behaviors, there is still a possibility that exact truthfulness was not fully conveyed. Consequently, validity of this study could be questionable.

Summary

For this study academic dishonesty was defined as the intentional participation in a single behavior or a set of behaviors that lead to the misrepresentation of scholarly

work in which grades and academic privileges are awarded (Stein, 2018). Academic dishonesty has been an issue of concern among institutions of higher education for several decades and has been examined in myriad contexts. As such, the prevalence of its occurrence does not appear to be in question. However, investigations that focus on identifying strategies to minimize its occurrence are being conducted more often than in previous years. Although small scale, this study has contributed to the body of research on academic dishonesty among nursing students attending community colleges as well as four-year institutions. Additionally, the findings are important for nurse educators within both academic and professional healthcare settings. While students may have a familiarity with the American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics, the level of familiarity may not be adequate enough to influence ethical decision-making patterns.

In concluding this study, the researcher anticipates additional investigations will be conducted on this topic.

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Appendix A: Survey Instrument

Academic Dishonesty

Academic Dishonesty and Ethical Decision-Making Survey

*1. Using the scale provided, indicate to **what degree** the following observed **peer behaviors are dishonest.**

	Not dishonest	Slightly dishonest	Very dishonest	Extremely dishonest	Uncertain
Getting test questions from another student who has taken the exam at an earlier time	○	○	○	○	○
Copying from another student's test without their knowledge	○	○	○	○	○
Receiving answers from another student during a test	○	○	○	○	○
Using notes, books, cell phones, and other prohibited items during a closed book exam	○	○	○	○	○
Paraphrasing or copying material from a source without referencing the source	○	○	○	○	○
Working with another student on an individual assignment when the instructor **expressly prohibited** peer collaboration	○	○	○	○	○
A student turning in an assignment written by a friend as their own original work	○	○	○	○	○
A student taking a **bathroom break during an exam** to look at hidden notes	○	○	○	○	○
A student **cuts and paste information** from the internet without changing the content, but references the website	○	○	○	○	○
A student makes up and **submits fake results** for a science lab assignment	○	○	○	○	○

2. Using the following scale, indicate **to what degree** the following behaviors are **unethical**?

	Not unethical	Slightly unethical	Very unethical	Extremely unethical	Uncertain
Developing a personal relationship with a professor to gain favor in receiving test answers	○	○	○	○	○
Coming to the clinical area and **providing patient care under the influence** of prescribed narcotic analgesics	○	○	○	○	○
Reporting and/or **recording patient treatments and responses that were not performed** or observed	○	○	○	○	○
Attempting to **perform a procedure** on a patient **without adequate knowledge** and/or failing to obtain guidance from the instructor.	○	○	○	○	○
Breaking sterile technique and neither reporting it nor replacing contaminated item(s)	○	○	○	○	○
Providing restricted computer access to a peer in order to assist with timely documentation	○	○	○	○	○
Not reporting peers taking medical supplies **for personal use**	○	○	○	○	○

* 3. Please read the following scenario and select your response.

	Very unlikely	Somewhat unlikely	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Uncertain
A student feels that a required **statistics course** is irrelevant and will not be useful in future career endeavors. The student decides to hang out with friends rather than study for the upcoming statistics exam. **A friend agrees** to **take pictures of the statistics exam** and **share**. The student receives the pictures from the friend and uses this information to study for the exam and **scores an A** on the exam. How likely would a typical college student be influenced to perform the same actions?	○	○	○	○	○

* 4. Please read the following scenario and select your response

	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Very unlikely	Somewhat unlikely	Uncertain
Faculty members consistently demonstrate behaviors that reflect **ethical decision-making in the professional healthcare** setting and emphasize the **importance of upholding** such behavior. How likely would a typical college student be influenced by **faculty members' behaviors** as opposed to the behavior of fellow students?	○	○	○	○	○

5. Are you **familiar with** the American Nurses Association's *Code of Ethics?*

○ Yes   ○ No

6. **Does the American Nurses Association's** *Code of Ethics* **influence your decision-making** in academic and professional healthcare settings?

○ Yes   ○ No

7. What is your **approximate age** range?

○ 18-24   ○ 35-44   ○ 55-64

○ 25-34   ○ 45-54   ○ 65+

8. **In which semester** are you currently enrolled?

First semester	Second semester	Third semester	Fourth semester
○	○	○	○

9. What is your gender?

Male	Female	Other
○	○	○

10. What is your **approximate grade point average (GPA)?**

2.0 - 2.5	2.6 - 3.0	3.1 - 3.5	3.6 – 4.0
○	○	○	○

11. Are you currently or have been previously **employed in healthcare?**

Yes	No
○	○

12. Have you repeated any nursing courses in your current program?

Yes	No
○	○

13. As a nursing student, **how do you describe** the role of your peers and **the role of faculty** members in influencing decision-making in academic and **professional healthcare** settings?

Appendix B: Recruitment Flyer

ATTENTION FUTURE NURSES

YOUR VOICE MATTERS!!!

PLEASE CONSIDER PARTICIPATING IN AN IMPORTANT

THREE MINUTE SURVEY

RESULTS FROM THE SURVEY WILL ADD TO NURSING EDUCATION AND NURSING PRACTICE AT LARGE

To inquire further, contact the researcher at:

████████████████

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