



College of

Education

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

*An Integrative Exploration of Inequity-driven  
Cheating Behavior in Marginalized People*

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# *Background*

- Cheating in Tests has always been an issue in Academia.
- High-stakes tests are at risks of being undermined by the widespread of assessment dishonesty.
- Despite being inherently wrong, individuals might be forced to cheat due to ethical dilemmas imposed by controversial problems at a system level.

## *Status Quo*

- The No Child Left Behind act (2002) imposes performance-oriented academic culture, which places priority on the test score while neglecting the importance of students' lived context.
- The status quo widens the performance gap between high-achieving students and their lower counterpart, as well as pressuring students to cheat to escape from unjust consequences.

## *The problem worsens*

- Marginalized people were found to be especially vulnerable to this vicious cycle of unbalanced stake and educational inequity (Wong & Balestino, 2001).
- As a resistance to this systemic problem, I propose an exploratory mixed-method study to examine underlying conditions that influence marginalized students to cheat for the desired score in high-stakes accountability tests.

## *Literature Review: Cheating in Tests*

- Cheating behaviors are unauthorized actions that were taken to gain unethical advantages over other examinees for achievement misrepresentation.
- The act itself undermines score interpretation and use, as well as affecting public confidence in decisions made from the test.

# *Literature Review: Causal Factor of Cheating*

- **Internal Cause:** Goal Orientation, GPA, Achievement, and Motivation.
  - Students and Educators oftentimes cheat to avoid punishment.
- **External Cause:** Academic Integrity Regulation, performance-oriented testing culture, student norm of academic dishonesty.

*The more any quantitative social indicator is used for social decision-making, the more subject it will be to corruption pressures... and corrupt the social processes it is intended to monitor (Campbell, 1975, p.35)*

## *Literature Review: Academic Inequity in Marginalized Community*

- While education is supposed to act as a social equalizer, its associated cost steers the society into the opposite direction, especially for working-class and low-income family.
- Race and Gender were found to be most vulnerable to academic inequity, with less investment in education comparing to the white-dominant community.

## *Research Method*

- **Positionality:** A first-generation student from Thailand, a developing country.
- **Participant:** Representatives from student of color, Indigenous Student, Undocumented Student, First-Generation Student, and Student with low-income.



# *Research Method*

- Mixed-Method Procedure
  - Exploratory sequential mixed-method research design (QUAL > quant)
- Semi-Structured Interview -> “What would be the reason for you to cheat in State-mandate accountability test if you have the opportunity.”
- Quantitative Survey based on the interview categories/themes.
- RQ: “What are the motivating factors that drive marginalized students to cheat in a high-stake examination in the face of presenting educational inequity?”

## *Limitations*

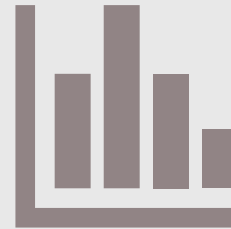
- Model Incompatibility between Quant and Qual.
- Limited Perspective
- Associated Monetary Cost and Time

# *Data Analysis*



## **Qualitative**

Themes Interpretation



## **Quantitative**

Descriptive Statistics / Normative  
Analysis

## *Conclusion and Implication*



Qualitative result could yield an in-depth understanding of why students cheat for their desired score.



Quantitative result could provide us with perspectives of students at a broader level to causal factor of assessment dishonesty.



Results from this study could inform test-related individuals at various levels, e.g., Test Developer, Test User, and Test Taker.

## *Closing Remark*

Issues in Test fairness is a shared responsibility by every individual that involves with the test and its entailing decisions.



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