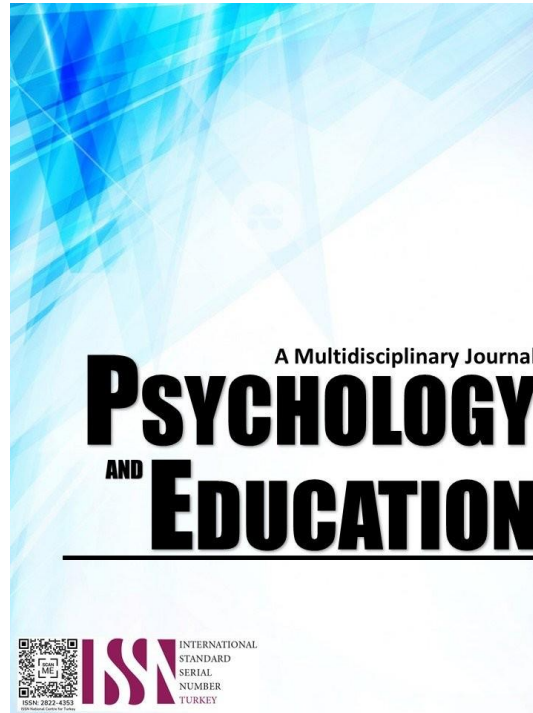


SELF-ESTEEM, SELF-EFFICACY, AND ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AMONG FRESHMEN COLLEGE STUDENTS: A MIXED METHOD STUDY



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Self-Esteem, Self-Efficacy, and Academic Dishonesty among Freshmen College Students: A Mixed Method Study

Galilee Jordan C. Ancheta, * Liezl R. Fulgencio, Kyle Edson B. Santor, Shan Micheal P. Capagalan,
Camilla Enriquez, Andrea Mae C. Santiago, Jayra A. Blanco, Jhoselle Tus

For affiliations and correspondence, see the last page.

Abstract

Amidst the competition in college and in life, students face challenges related to their self-esteem and self-efficacy. In academic context, these two psychological constructs were found to be related to freshmen college students' engagement on academic dishonesty. This mixed method study delves into the relationship of self-esteem and self-efficacy to academic dishonesty, aiming to visualize a bigger picture and understand why freshmen college students resort to academic dishonesty. Using a standardized questionnaire, the study reveals that freshmen college students report a mean score of 2.50 in self-esteem, interpreted as high, characterized by higher self-worth; and a mean score of 2.79 in self-efficacy, interpreted as high. Freshmen college students' self-esteem is found to be significantly correlated to academic dishonesty ($r = -.301$; p -value = .001), and freshmen college students' self-efficacy is found to be not significantly correlated to academic dishonesty ($r = -0.72$; p -value = .445). A one-on-one interview was conducted to a set of respondents that have lower self-esteem and self-efficacy, the study reveals that there are freshmen college students who confess to be engaging in academic dishonesty accompanied with signs of low self-esteem and self-efficacy. Self-critiques, approval seekers, and justifiers; these were the themes that described the students who participated in the interview phase. In essence, the quantitative shows that the higher the self-esteem and self-efficacy, the lower the tendency for the freshmen college students to engage in academic dishonesty. However, the qualitative study has strengthened the quantitative findings as the cards are flipped and revealed that students having lower self-esteem and self-efficacy have a higher tendency to engage in academic dishonesty.

Keywords: *self-esteem, self-efficacy, academic dishonesty, academic misconduct, cheating, freshmen college students*

Introduction

Worldwide, the education sector was embracing "online learning" as the new normal, a modern learning approach that became a new trend to sustain the academic learning of the students (Fritgerald, 2022). However, since the transition to online learning, many universities in Belgium, Canada, Australia, and the United States revealed significant academic dishonesty cases (Basken, 2020). Guiang (2023), a professor, stated that he ran portions of the student's essay through two different artificial intelligence (AI) detector websites, and "both garnered results that the samples were most likely written by AI," adding that using AI to complete academic requirements is more likely academic dishonesty. In addition, some University of the Philippines faculty members urged the state university to review its academic integrity policies to take into account the proper or improper use of AI when establishing course requirements.

Furthermore, studies revealed that students who engaged in dishonest acts in college classes were more likely to engage in dishonest acts in the workplace (Nonis & Swift, 2001; Guerrero-Dib et al., 2020). Von Jena (2020) added that the consequences of cheating may have detrimental effects on society, as it creates a mentality that devalues hard work and promotes a dishonest lifestyle.

Academic dishonesty is so widespread that multiple studies globally are exploring its domains and possible interventions to reduce its dangers to society. Mukasa et al. (2023) defined academic dishonesty as the negative side of the academic integrity spectrum which catalyzes unprofessional behaviors in the future. This study revealed that academic dishonesty includes plagiarism, direct copying, the use of cheat sheets, hiring contacts who secretly communicate answers to them, searching for answers on the internet, and anything else that deceives the school guidelines in terms of answering quizzes and exams.

The papers collectively suggest that there is a significant relationship between self-esteem and academic dishonesty (Williamson & Assadi, 2005; David, 2015). Błachnio et al. (2022) explored the relations between personal and cultural variables and academic dishonesty, and revealed that there is a significant correlation between students' self-esteem and academic dishonesty. Meanwhile, Brunell, Staats, Barden, and Hupp (2011; as cited in McManus, Pillow, & Coyle, 2022) revealed that there was no significant relationship between self-esteem and academic dishonesty among students. Furthermore, studies have revealed that self-efficacy is significantly related to academic dishonesty (Onu et al., 2021).

However, a study by Baran and Jonason (2020) found out that even though students may demonstrate high levels of sensation-seeking and have the ability to perform successfully in stressful situations, their self-efficacy does not necessarily correlate with academic dishonesty. In support, Ozmercan (2017) revealed that there is no significant relationship between self-efficacy and academic dishonesty.

Finally, this study investigates the relationship between self-esteem, self-efficacy and academic dishonesty among college freshmen

students that is aimed to be used as a basis for developing a psycho-educational intervention plan. This intervention plan shall be a guide for academic institutions on the development of the curriculum and programs. The results of this study could tell if psycho-educational intervention is necessary for freshmen college students as they start a real college life with academic integrity. This psycho-educational intervention will be directed at boosting students' self-esteem and self-efficacy and various prevention options for academically dishonest behaviors.

Research Questions

This study explores the self-esteem, self-efficacy, and academic dishonesty among freshmen college students. This study sought to address the following questions:

1. How may the following be described:
 - 1.1. self-esteem;
 - 1.2. self-efficacies; and
 - 1.3. academic dishonesty?
2. Is there a significant relationship between the freshmen college students' self-esteem and academic dishonesty?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the freshmen college students' self-efficacy and academic dishonesty?
4. What are the lived experiences of freshmen college students?
5. What are the challenges of freshmen college students?
6. What are the coping strategies of freshmen college students?
7. What program can be derived from the findings?

Methodology

Research Design

This study used a sequential explanatory mixed method design to explore the relationship between self-efficacy, self-esteem, and academic dishonesty among freshmen college students. The online survey will be administered to 196 respondents, and 17 participants for a one-on one-interview. The instruments used for the quantitative data gathering were the General Self-Efficacy Scale (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995), the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), and the Academic Dishonesty Questionnaire (Bashir & Bala, 2018); and a semi-structured interview guide that a set of panels will validate. The interviews will be recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis. This design shall allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences and perceptions of freshmen college students regarding these variables.

Quantitative data from the survey will be analyzed using descriptive correlational design, and qualitative data from the interviews will be analyzed using Heideggerian phenomenology, with two independent researchers coding and analyzing the same transcripts to increase accuracy and minimize human errors. The identified themes will be organized into categories and a narrative will be developed to describe the findings. This mixed-methods design will comprehensively understand the relationship between self-efficacy, self-esteem, and academic dishonesty among freshmen college students.

Participants

This study focused on a particular subset of the population: first-year college students enrolled in a higher educational institution in Bulacan in the academic year 2023–2024. A total of 196 respondents made up the respondent pool. The researchers are challenged to reach a broader population with limited resources. Thus, the convenience sampling method was utilized, allowing researchers to collect data quickly and easily.

An online platform with a carefully designed Google Form survey was used to make data collection easier. All potential participants were kindly asked for their explicit consent, under ethical guidelines. In recognition of the importance of their time, participants were kindly asked to set aside a dedicated 10 to 25 minutes to complete the survey in its entirety. Stressing a dedication to the ethical handling of participant data, all information collected during the study was specifically guaranteed to be handled with the highest confidentiality, guaranteeing that it would only be used for research. This protocol emphasizes the researchers' commitment to methodological accuracy, moral behavior, and responsible participant data management within the guidelines of the study.

To be eligible for the quantitative study, a participant has to be (1) at least 18 years of age and (2) a freshman college student from a private higher educational school.

Furthermore, throughout the qualitative phase, 17 of the 196 first-year college students who took part in the initial phase will be selected for in-depth individual interviews. The participants in the qualitative study had to meet two requirements: they needed to (1) have the lowest weighted mean in the self-esteem and self-efficacy questionnaires and the (2) highest weighted mean in the academic dishonesty questionnaire.

Table 1. *Participant's Demographic Profile*

<i>Participant Code</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>General Average</i>
1	21	Female	92
2	20	Female	95
3	22	Female	90
4	19	Male	91
5	18	Female	88
6	18	Female	89
7	18	Female	90
8	19	Female	88
9	19	Male	85
10	18	Female	90
11	19	Male	87
12	18	Female	91
13	19	Male	87
14	18	Female	93
15	18	Female	91
16	19	Male	89
17	18	Male	95

Instruments

The research instruments section describes the different tools and methods used to collect data.

Quantitative Research Instrument

For phase 1, quantitative data gathering, the study will utilize Rosenberg's (1965) Self-Esteem Questionnaire, Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995) General Self-Efficacy Questionnaire, and Bashir and Bala (2018) Academic Dishonesty Questionnaire.

Self-Esteem Questionnaire

The Rosenberg (1965) Self-Esteem Questionnaire is a 10-item Likert-type scale used to measure self-esteem where respondents are asked to rate their level of agreement with each statement using a 4-point scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." The scores range from 10 to 40, with higher scores indicating higher self-esteem. The questionnaire is self-administered and can be completed within 5-10 minutes. The scores are calculated by adding the ratings for each item. A high score indicates high self-esteem, while a low score indicates low self-esteem. The reliability of the questionnaire is high, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.80 or above in most studies (Rosenberg, 1965). The questionnaire has been found to have good construct validity, with significant correlations with related constructs such as social support (Ji, Rana, Shi & Zhong, 2019), self-efficacy (Joy, Jayesh, & P.G, 2020), and life satisfaction (Szcześniak, Mazur, Rodzeń, & Szpunar, 2021).

General Self-Efficacy Questionnaire

The General Self-Efficacy (GSE) Questionnaire developed by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995) is a 10-item Likert-type scale used to measure an individual's general sense of perceived self-efficacy. Respondents are asked to rate their level of agreement with each statement using a 4-point scale ranging from "not at all true" to "exactly true." The scores range from 10 to 40, with higher scores indicating higher self-efficacy. The questionnaire is self-administered and can be completed in 5-10 minutes. The scores are calculated by adding the ratings for each item. A high score indicates high self-efficacy, while a low score indicates low self-efficacy. The GSE questionnaire has high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alphas ranging from 0.76 to 0.90 in various studies (Schwarzer and Jerusalem, 1995).

The GSE scale has been found to have good construct validity, with significant correlations with related constructs such as optimism (Liu et al., 2018), work satisfaction (Peng et al., 2021), and emotion (Yu et al., 2014 as cited in Leung et al., 2023). Negative correlations were found for constructs such as depression (Wang et al., 2018), stress (Lalwani & Vijayan 2021), burnout (Arif & Wijono 2022), health complaints (Kvarme LG, et al., 2009 as cited in Grasaas et L., 2020), and anxiety (Green, 2022).

Academic Dishonesty Questionnaire

The Academic Dishonesty Questionnaire (ADQ) developed by Bashir and Bala (2018) is a self-report questionnaire used to measure the extent of academic dishonesty among students. The scale consists of 23 items that cover different forms of academic dishonesty, such as cheating, plagiarism, and fabrication. The questionnaire is self-administered and can be completed in 10-15 minutes. The scores are calculated by adding the ratings for each item. A high score indicates a high level of academic dishonesty, while a low score indicates a low level of academic dishonesty.

The ADQ has high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alphas ranging from 0.85 to 0.92 in various studies (Ahmed & Firdous, 2020). The ADQ has been found to have good construct validity, with significant correlations with related constructs such as moral disengagement (Wahyuningsih, Eny Kusumawati, & Nugroho, 2022), academic performance (Rahman et al., 2023), and perceived

peer behavior (Amirrudin, Ibrahim, Salehuddin, & Abd Rashid, 2022).

Qualitative Research Instrument

For phase 2, qualitative data gathering, the study will utilize a semi-structured interview guide. This section outlines the instruments used in the study, including their description, administration, scoring, reliability, and validity.

Semi-structured interview guide

A semi-structured interview guide will be used to collect data in a research study. This guide is a flexible tool that provides a framework for the interviewer to ask open-ended questions and follow-up questions based on the participant's responses. It allows the interviewer to explore specific topics while also allowing for spontaneous and unanticipated questions. The administration of the guide will involve a trained interviewer who will use active listening skills and probe for deeper insights. The reliability of the data collected using this guide will be increased by using a consistent set of questions and allowing for comparability across participants. The validity of the data will be increased by ensuring that the questions are relevant to the research question and that the interviewer is unbiased in their approach. Additionally, this interview guide shall be verified by a set of panels for it to be used in the interview. Overall, the semi-structured interview guide will be an effective method for collecting rich and nuanced data that can be analyzed and used to answer the research question.

Data Analysis

A non-probability sampling technique is used to establish the sample size for this phase of the study, which is 196 participants, in the quantitative phase of the research. In order to ensure that a representative sample of the larger population is included in the study, this method is used to systematically collect and analyze data in a targeted manner. To improve the robustness and dependability of the results, such methodological considerations are put into practice.

In order to analyze and interpret the collected data, the following statistical techniques will be used: SPSS (Statistical Packages for Social Sciences) will be used for data tabulation and processing. In addition, Descriptive statistics will be used to summarize the data collected from the three research instruments: Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Questionnaire and Scale, Schwarzer and Jerusalem's General Self-Efficacy Questionnaire and Scale, and Bashir and Bala's Academic Dishonesty Questionnaire and Scale. Means, standard deviations, and frequencies will be calculated to describe the demographic characteristics of the sample and the scores on each instrument. Pearson correlation coefficient will be used to examine the relationships between self-esteem, self-efficacy, and academic dishonesty among freshmen college students. The significance level will be set at $p < 0.05$. The Pearson correlation coefficient provides information about the strength and direction of the relationship between two continuous variables.

On the other hand, during the quantitative phase, interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was used by the researchers, a qualitative research method, to uncover and elucidate the overarching meaning of a phenomenon. IPA is chosen for its ability to suspend researchers' preconceptions about the phenomenon and focus on the nuances of everyday human experiences, making it especially well-suited for investigating complex, perplexing, or emotionally charged subjects.

Furthermore, communication data underwent interpretation using a method known as theme analysis, typically resulting in the development of a thematic framework. According to Neuendorf (2018), content analysts need to make a choice between manifest and latent content before progressing to more intricate stages of data analysis. Additionally, as highlighted by Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen, and Snelgrove (2016), thematic analysis researchers consider both manifest and latent content in their data analysis. The three primary steps in data analysis involve coding, organizing codes under potential sub themes or themes, and comparing the emergent coding clusters with each other and the entire dataset. These steps collectively contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the communication data in the context of the study.

Ethical Considerations

The data collection methodology and tools proposed will undergo a comprehensive review and approval process to ensure adherence to ethical standards. Formal approval will be obtained before commencing the study, and eligible participants will be invited to provide written informed consent. The established protocol aligns with the guidelines of the Data Privacy Act of 2012, prioritizing the protection of individuals' privacy rights and promoting transparent communication to encourage innovation. Selected freshmen students receive information about the voluntary nature of their participation, the study's objectives, and its scope. They are explicitly informed of their right to withdraw from the interview at any point and assured that collected information will strictly serve research purposes without compromising their anonymity. Additionally, explicit permission is sought for the recording of interview voices.

Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the findings from quantitative and qualitative data, and the integration of findings will be elaborated. This study used the convergent parallel model, a mixed method in triangulation design. First, both sets of data went to data analysis. After that, the joint display method was used to integrate quantitative and qualitative data to identify the key priorities elements in the preparation and development of a psychoeducational intervention

Quantitative Phase

Table 2. *The Level of Self-Esteem of Freshmen College Students*

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Verbal Interpretation</i>
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	2.70	High
At times I think that I am no good at all.	1.85	Normal
I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	2.75	High
I am able to do things as well as most people.	2.82	High
I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	2.54	High
I certainly feel useless at times.	1.89	Normal
I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	2.90	High
I wish I could have more respect for myself.	1.92	Normal
All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	2.75	High
I take a positive attitude toward myself.	2.86	High
Total	2.50	High

Legend: 0-1.49 – Low; 1.50-2.49 – Normal; 2.5-3 – High

The findings from Table 2 showed that the highest mean is from indicator 7, with a mean score of 2.90, interpreted as high. This implies that freshmen college students possess a high level of self-worth and often feel that they have qualities equal with other people. On the other hand, the lowest mean is from indicator 2, with a mean score of 1.85, interpreted as normal. This indicates that freshmen college students sometimes feel that they are not good enough as they don't have confidence in showcasing themselves. Further, the total mean score of freshmen college student's self-esteem is 2.50, interpreted as high. This may indicate a positive foundation for freshmen college students to adapt to the challenges of higher education, fostering resilience in the face of academic pressures, and promoting a healthy psychological well-being (Saiphoo et al., 2020).

Table 3. *The Level of Self-Efficacy of Freshmen College Students*

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Verbal Interpretation</i>
I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.	3.13	High
If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want.	2.28	Moderate
It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.	2.39	Moderate
I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events.	2.71	High
Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations.	2.87	High
I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort.	3.07	High
I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.	2.74	High
When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions.	2.79	High
If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution.	2.94	High
I can usually handle whatever comes my way.	2.88	High
Total	2.79	High

Legend: 1-2 – Low; 2.01-3 – Moderate; 3.01-4 – High

Displaying the level of self-efficacy of freshmen college students from Table 3 showed that the highest mean is from indicator 6 with a mean score of 3.07. This implies that freshmen college students possess a high level of self-efficacy and often feel that they can solve most problems if they invest necessary efforts. On the other hand, the lowest mean is from indicator 2 with a mean score of 2.28, interpreted as moderate. This indicates that freshmen college students sometimes feel that if someone opposes them, they can find the means and ways to get what they want. Furthermore, the total mean score of freshmen college student's self-efficacy is 2.79, interpreted as high. This indicates that freshmen college students, on average, exhibit a high level of self-efficacy.

The highest mean score is related to problem-solving self-efficacy, while the lowest mean score suggests a somewhat lower level of confidence in dealing with opposition, but this does not mean that the freshmen college student's self-efficacy is low because they still got a moderate score of 2.28. In support of these findings, a study by Matteucci and Soncini (2023) revealed that high self-efficacy contributes to the psychological well-being of an individual. In addition, believing in one's ability to succeed academically contributes to a positive mindset, motivation, and resilience in the face of challenges, ultimately supporting overall psychological well-being. Therefore, the total mean score of 2.79 supports the interpretation that freshmen college students possess a high level of self-efficacy and a healthy psychological well-being.

The findings from Table 4 showed that the highest mean is from indicator 7, with a mean score of 3.09, interpreted as moderate. This implies that freshmen college students possess a moderate level of academic dishonesty in terms of copying assignments from other sources.

On the other hand, the lowest mean is from indicator 21, with a mean score of 1.25, interpreted as very low. This indicates that freshmen college students are at a very low level of academic dishonesty when it comes to buying projects, assignments, and paper online to submit as their own individual effort. Furthermore, the total mean score of freshmen college student's self-efficacy is 1.67, interpreted as low. This indicates that freshmen college students, in general, exhibit a low level of academic dishonesty.

In support, Oran et al., (2016) revealed that in general, students are not likely to engage in academic dishonesty. In Contrast to this



study, Jensen, Arnett, Feldman, and Cauffman (2002; as cited in Mensah et al., 2016) stated that in general, students are not likely to engage in academic dishonesty.

Table 4. *The Degree of Academic Dishonesty Frequency of Freshmen College Students*

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
During examinations I use signals to fetch answers from my friends.	1.75	Low
I use prohibited things like hidden notes, calculators and other electronic devices during examinations.	1.41	Very Low
I interchange my allotted book with other students to get better grades in examinations.	1.54	Low
During an examination, I solve answers on question paper and hand them out to my classmates.	1.61	Low
During a test I try to copy from another student.	1.72	Low
I copy a summary of a story/poem/chapter from a textbook & claim it as completed by me.	1.47	Very Low
For submitting assignments, I copy and change a few sentences/lines/words and phrases from other sources.	3.09	Moderate
I use online resources in my personal educational assignment/project without citing the author.	1.73	Low
For personal comments I manipulate scientific information on the internet and claim it as written by me.	1.35	Very Low
I attempt to make special considerations to attain or getting favors i.e. (bribery)	1.42	Very Low
In an individual work/assignment I take help from others to complete it.	3.06	Moderate
I use unfair means to obtain information about the content of the test before it was given.	1.3	Very Low
Before the examination I try to know questions asked in the paper.	1.9	Low
I write expected answers on the table/wall/hand/paper etc. in prior time.	1.61	Low
I interchange my allotted seat near an efficient student to get a better grade in the examination.	1.45	Very Low
Before the examination I encouraged other classmates to cheat.	1.32	Very Low
I submit the assignment in my name after getting it prepared by my friends.	1.45	Very Low
I damage library books so that classmates do not get required content.	1.31	Very Low
In a course I submit the same educational assignment more than one time.	1.53	Low
I give false explanations when I miss the deadline of my educational project.	1.42	Very Low
I buy a project/assignment/paper online & submit it as my individual effort.	1.25	Very Low
Before the exam I pay someone to write a paper/homework for me.	2.3	Low
I provide false excuses to teachers, to gain extra time on projects/assignments.	1.4	Very Low
Total	1.67	Low

Legend: 0-1.49 – Very Low; 1.50-2.49 – Low; 2.50-3.49 – Moderate; 3.50-4.49 – High; 4.50-5 – Very High

The Relationship of Self-esteem, Self-efficacy and Academic Dishonesty

Table 5. *Correlation between Self-esteem and Academic Dishonesty*

Variables	r	p-value	Decision	Conclusion
Self-Esteem and Academic Dishonesty	-.301	.001	Reject H0	Statistically Significant

Table 5 shows a statistically significant relationship between self-esteem and academic dishonesty ($r = -.301$; $p = .001$). Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. The findings are in line with the studies by Lee, Kuncel, and Gau (2020) and Zheng (2023), stating that there is a significant correlation between self-esteem and academic dishonesty.

As shown in Table 6, there is a negligible significant correlation between self-efficacy and academic dishonesty ($r = -.072$; $p = .445$). Thus, the null hypothesis was accepted. The findings are in line with the studies by Mutmainah (2023), stating that there is no significant correlation between self-efficacy and academic dishonesty. In support, Susanty and Hawadi (2020) stated that there is no significant correlation between Self-efficacy and Academic Dishonesty.

Table 6. *Correlation between self-efficacy and academic dishonesty*

Variables	r	p-value	Decision	Conclusion
Self-Efficacy and Academic Dishonesty	-.072	.445	Accept H0	Not Statistically Significant

The study by Onu, Onyedibe, Ugwu, and Nche (2019) stated that Self-efficacy and Academic Dishonesty have a negatively significant correlation. This could imply that there are instances where individuals' Academic dishonesty is negatively moderated by Self-efficacy. Furthermore, Mufarrihah (2022) revealed that self-efficacy and academic dishonesty have a negative significant correlation, the study also expresses that there is a need for teachers to boost their students' self-efficacy in order to decrease academic dishonesty, implying that there could still be a significant correlation between the self-efficacy and academic dishonesty.

Qualitative Phase

The Analysis

Table 7. *Thematic analysis of qualitative data*

Horizon	Subthemes	Themes
“Kapag nararamdaman ko yung feeling na ang dali-dali lang naman po nung pinagagawa sa akin pero nagkakamali pa rin po ako, hindi ko pa rin po nagagawa yung best ko. Tingin ko po halos ang tanga ko sa part na ganun.”	Humiliating Oneself (58.82%)	Self-Critiques

“Nakaka-affect po sa akin dahil po nagiging people pleaser ako sa mga nangyayari and ambaba na po ng self-confidence ko kasi po doon ko po tinitignan yung self-worth ko kung paano nila ako tratuhin.”	Perceived Truth (29.41%)	
“[Sa bahay,] kapag talaga po hindi ko nami-meet yung expectations, pinapatahimik talagaako nun. Parang better if di ko na lang ulitin kasi pinapahiya ko yung sarili ko.”	I Can't Afford to Disappoint (70.59%)	
“Yung nag-attempt ako magbigay ng kaya ko tapos hindi man lang na-appreciate ng prof. Ramdam ko naman po yun para po akong wala lang. Parang isa lang po ako sa mga humihinga sa classroom.”	My best efforts remain unnoticed (52.94%)	Approval Seekers
“Parang wala akong natutunan. Mahirap mag self-study. Mas okay pa rin na may nagtuturo talaga na prof. Mahirap pagsabayan kasi ang isip ko pati na sa work tapos sa school pa.”	Self-studying in school (47.06%)	
“So ngayon self-disrespect na pala yung tawag doon? Kasi ang tawag doon samin, nagtutulungan.”	It's Called Teamwork (23.53%)	Justifier
“[Kapag nag-sasagot ng school activities,] maghahanap ako ng magandang example. Tas doon ako nag-base. Minsan nagiging unique po siya.”	Just Getting Ideas (41.18%)	

The Self-Critiques

Presenting the “Self-Critiques” there are approximately 10 respondents (58.82%) that fall under the first subtheme (Humiliating Oneself), and 5 (29.41%) on the second subtheme (Perceived Truth). According to Coffey and Warren (2016), individuals who are self-critical often grapple with feelings of guilt, unworthiness, and inadequacy. Additionally, they commonly experience a sense of failure. These individuals harbor a fear of rejection and criticism, and they engage in continuous and harsh self-analysis and self-evaluation.

In alignment with this, a significant majority of the participants in the study revealed that they attributed their academic underperformance to themselves, leading them to adopt a habit of negative self-talk. This could imply that students tend to express self-blame for their perceived shortcomings in school. In both scenarios, the presence of low self-worth and a diminished sense of personal value can exert a detrimental influence on various aspects of life and overall well-being (Cherry, 2023).

Humiliating Oneself

These participants beat themselves with self-deprecatative words when they make small mistakes. According to Speer (2019), self-humiliation or self-deprecation can be understood as a specific type of self-talk that serves as an expression of one's cognitive state, particularly characterized by low self-esteem or negative self-regard. In other words, when individuals engage in self-deprecating thoughts or language, they are essentially manifesting a mental and emotional state where they perceive themselves in a less favorable light. This could involve downplaying one's abilities, highlighting perceived flaws, or expressing a diminished sense of self-worth.

The connection between self-deprecation and the underlying cognitive and emotional factors that contribute to a less positive self-perception with respondent 5, the interviewer asked him about his views on her self-worth in the academic context and she uttered, “*Kapag nararamdaman ko yung feeling na ang dali-dali lang naman po nung pinagagawa sa akin pero nagkakamali pa rin po ako, hindi ko pa rin po nagagawa yung best ko. Tingin ko po halos ang tanga ko sa part na ganun.*” (“When I feel like I don't perform well on activities that I know are very basic. Even if I put my best efforts, I feel so dumb on that part.”)

Respondent 4 shared the same feelings of disappointment to themselves when they make mistakes that are highly personal to them. “*Kapag nanduon na ako sa point na I'm not academically prepared. Disappointed ako sa sarili. Kasi bakit hindi ko nagawa to, bakit hindi ko napag-handaan, bakit ibang tao nagagawa to, bakit ako hindi. Ang tanga tanga ko.*” (“When I'm at the point that I'm not academically prepared, I feel disappointed with myself because I did not prepare myself. I ask myself why can't I do what other people can? Why can't I do it? I'm so dumb.”).

Meanwhile, Respondent 8 expresses that she feels worthless when she isn't giving honors back to the family unlike her sisters. “*Minsan po, parang wala akong kwenta kapag di ako nakapagbigay man lang ng karangalan sa pamilya. Kasi sa lahat, yung mga ate ko magagalang, sila matatalino. Tapos kapag ako parang failure.*” (“Sometimes I feel like I'm useless when I don't give back the honors to my parents. My sisters are smart and excelling while I'm being a failure.”) Based on the study of Kim and Kim (2023), comparing can result in negative emotions such as loneliness, low self-esteem, low self-confidence, and envy. In addition, according to Ackerman (2018) the concept of self-worth suggests that an individual's primary focus in life is to attain self-acceptance, and this self-acceptance is frequently derived from accomplishments, which means that accomplishment is frequently attained through competition with others.

On the topic of students' challenges for their self-esteem, respondent 10 depressively said, “*Napanghihinaan ako ng luob kapag po nagiging pagbigat na lang ako, yung wala po akong mai-ambag sa groupings or sa family po kahit sa mga friends. Kapag parang sila na gumagawa ng paraan for me kasi ang hina-hina ng luob ko.*” (“I feel bad about myself when I'm being a burden to my group mates,

like when I contribute nothing, even with my family and friends because I am weak and incompetent.)

A study by Cherry (2021) revealed that students could feel learned helplessness when faced with repeated obstacles as they lack control over their circumstances. Consequently, they stop attempting to enact changes and resign themselves to their situation. Struggling academically, despite considerable effort, can trigger feelings of learned helplessness. Individuals might conclude that regardless of their actions or hard work, it won't yield any difference in their outcomes.

Perceived Truth

American Psychological Association (2022) stated that lack of self-confidence leads to poor academic performance. In addition, Odogwu (2022) revealed that poor academic performance contributes to increasing students' tendency to engage in academic dishonesty. As revealed in the interview, some self-critiques seem to lack confidence. This could imply that this subgroup of participants may have poor academic performance, and possibly, this may also be the reason why they engage in academic dishonesty behaviors.

In an interview, Respondent 6 shows that she is conditioned to others opinion as she shares that she bases her self-worth on how others treat her, and that this causes her to have a low self-confidence. Respondent 6 said "*Nakaka-affect po sa akin dahil po nagiging people pleaser ako sa mga nangyayari and ambaba na po ng self-confidence ko kasi po doon ko po tinitignan yung self-worth ko kung paano nila ako tratuhin.*" ("I see myself as a people pleaser when something happens. Also, I rarely feel confident because that's where I base my self-worth, on how people treat me"). It was later followed by a confession from Respondent 6 revealing that she commits academic dishonesty by getting answers for his school activities through Google search, adding that she's not proud of it but still does it anyways. "*Kay Google rin po ang takbo minsan kapag po gusto ko lalo mapadali at mas gusto ko po may maipasa kaagad. Hindi naman po ako proud sa sinasabi ko pero dahil nga po para sa akin mahirap po yung ginagawa ko dahil hindi ko naman po siya gusto.*" ("I go to Google sometimes when I really want to submit [assignments] as early as possible. I'm not really proud of what I'm saying, it's just that I find college hard because I don't really like college.")

A study by Valizadeh (2021) supports the assertion that cheating is more widespread and convenient in online courses. In these virtual learning environments, students find it easier to engage in dishonest practices, taking advantage of the digital landscape. Further, one common method involves the utilization of online sources, with Google being a prominent example, to directly copy and paste answers. From a bird's eye view, a major factor that may have dragged these students down to academic dishonesty is their reliance on external validation and fear of coming up as a failure to their family and friends (Orok et al., 2023).

Moreover, Perry (2022) stated that the pressure to meet external standards, be it from family or friends, can create a sense of desperation to succeed at any cost. This fear of failure, when combined with the need for validation, might lead students to resort to dishonest practices in academics. The fear of disappointing those close to them could potentially drive them to compromise their integrity, as the pressure to meet expectations becomes overwhelming. This is where the approval seekers come up.

The Approval Seekers

There are approximately 12 (70.59%) participants that fall under the first subtheme (I Can't Afford to Disappoint), 9 (52.94%) on the second (Do I Even Exist?), and 8 (47.06%) on the third (Self-studying in school). A study by Affuso et al. (2023) revealed that teacher and parental support affects students' academic performance involving their self-efficacy impacting academic performance positively. Thus, if the approval seekers lack teacher and parental support, there is a possibility that students' academic performance is negatively affected. According to a recent study by Thakre (2020), Filipinos are well-known for having an authoritative parenting style which commonly leads to children seeking parental approval (Karmakar, 2015; Carmo et al., 2021). Though, these parents are also just humans and can be ignorant at their lowest (Shum et al., 2023). In this study, approval seekers show a glimpse of the downside of having an authoritative parent.

I Can't Afford to Disappoint

Parental pressures can significantly shape a student's personality and academic achievements; positive, supportive, and balanced approaches tend to foster a healthy development (Moore, 2022), while excessive pressure, unrealistic expectations, and poor communication can have detrimental effects on both personality and academic success (Santiago, 2019). According to Amirrudin, Ibrahim, Salehuddin, and Abd Rashid (2022), imposing unrealistic expectations on students may result in elevated stress and anxiety levels, causing detrimental effects such as sleep deprivation, the development of eating disorders, excessive worrying, and resorting to cheating as a coping mechanism. Furthermore, the study conducted by Amuda et al. (2020), showed a strong correlation between peer group influence, parental pressure and academic performance. With these findings it's crucial for parents to strike a balance, understanding their child's individual needs and providing the necessary support without creating undue stress.

In revealing one of the downsides of students having authoritative parents, Respondent 5 shared that her parents shut her up when she gets low grades, and that she feels ashamed about her academic performance. "*[Sa bahay,] kapag talaga po hindi ko nami-meet yung expectations, pinapatahimik talaga ako nun. Parang better if di ko na lang ulitin kasi pinapahiya ko yung sarili ko.*" ("[In our home,] when I don't meet my parents' expectations, they shut me up. I feel like it's better to just not do it again because it's only bringing shame to myself.") Respondent 4 added that one factor of her low self-efficacy is her fear of disappointing her family. "*Maraming*

factors na nag-contribute sa ganung feeling na pagka-indecisive ko, mga social pressure, parang mga pressure sa paligid, family, baka ma-disappoint ko sila.” (“There’s a lot of factors that contribute to that feeling of indecisiveness, social pressure, one would be from my family, I [am afraid] might disappoint them.”) Respondent 9 expresses remorse as she shares that she doesn’t receive appreciation from her parents after getting low grades even if she did her best. “Yung nag-attempt ako magbigay ng kaya ko tapos hindi man lang na-appreciate [ng magulang ko].” (“Maybe it’s when I try to give my best and still, I don’t get appreciation. [from my parents]”)

Approval seeker’s reliance on external validation and fear of coming up at their parents and friends as a failure exacerbates when accompanied by the academic unpreparedness as it pushes them to commit academic dishonesty.

Do I Even Exist?

Most respondents are evidently struggling with their relationships at home; and most have considered that lack of recognition from the professor is one of the factors that they take the course seriously in a way that they have to give up their moral principles. Respondent 9 expressed that it’s frustrating that professors fail to acknowledge when students give their best in their academic activities. On the topic of the students’ challenges with self-esteem in an academic setting, Respondent 9 said “Yung nag-attempt ako magbigay ng kaya ko tapos hindi man lang na-appreciate ng prof.” (“Maybe it’s when my professor couldn’t even appreciate the best of my efforts.”)

Respondent 10 shared the same sentiments as he feels like he doesn’t exist when it comes to not being the instructor’s favorite. Respondent 10 said “As a student po, naranasan ko na po na hindi ako paborito ng instructor. Ramdam ko naman po yun para po akong wala lang. Parang isa lang po sa mga humihinga sa classroom.” (“As a student, I experienced not being the instructor’s favorite. I feel like I’m just nothing. Like I’m just one of those that go in the classroom only to breathe.”)

A mindset of inadequacy among those who are not favored can be fostered by favoritism in the classroom, which harms students’ self-esteem. Relationships are affected by this bias, but it also affects opportunities and grades. College acceptance prospects for deserving students can be negatively impacted by unequal treatment, such as preferential redos or better chances, which can impede their academic and social progress. Preventing these unfavorable outcomes requires educators to uphold their objectivity (Harshman, 2021).

In addition, a study by Zaki, Rafiq, and Afzal (2023), revealed that at the college level, favoritism has a major impact on student learning outcomes. Students experience feelings of insecurity, discontent, conflict, and retaliation as a result, which has a negative impact on their ability to learn. Students who experience favoritism also have lower self-confidence. Favoritism affects the learning environment in the classroom, which is linked to poor learning outcomes.

Self-studying in school

Aside from lack of recognition received from professors, some respondents experience professors that do asynchronous classes more frequently. Respondent 1 shared that she learns nothing when self-studying, and suggests that it’s much better to have a professor that teaches.

“Parang wala akong natutunan. Mahirap mag self-study. Mas okay pa rin na may nagtuturo talaga na prof. Mahirap pagsabayan kasi ang isip ko pati na sa work tapos sa school pa.” (“It’s like I learn nothing. It’s difficult to study by myself. It’s way better to have a professor that actually teaches. It’s hard to balance work and school at the same time.”)

In support of the previous statement, Respondent 2 expresses that she and her classmates exchange answers and ideas because their professor doesn’t teach at all. “Nagpapalitan lang kami ng sagot. Parang ideas. Yung mga profs kasi na ano yun. Sobrang ano talaga. Lalo na sa oral. Hindi naman nag-tuturo.” (“We exchange answers and ideas because this professor doesn’t actually teach lessons.”)

The approval seekers clearly show signs of having low self-efficacy, and self-esteem. Their authoritative parenting style at home was a strong influence in their actions of academic dishonesty. In support, studies reveal that authoritative parenting influences the students’ self-esteem (Hussain et al., 2023) and self-efficacy (Pathirathna et al., 2023).

With this matter at hand, participants could be engaging in academic dishonesty as studies have revealed that low self-efficacy (Alhadabi et al., 2019; Fatima et al., 2020; du Rocher, 2020; Putarek & Pavlin-Bernardic, 2020) and low self-esteem (Lee et al., 2020; Zheng, 2023) could lead to students engaging in academic dishonesty.

Justifier

There are approximately 4 participants (23.53%) who share the same experience in the first subtheme (It’s Called Teamwork), and 7 participants (41.18%) in the second subtheme (Just Getting Ideas). From Table 7, the justifiers in this study are the ones with high scores on academic dishonesty in terms of collaborating with other individuals to gather answers and ideas that help them accomplish school activities. Among the 17 participants, 10 confessed that they take answers from other people, and ask classmates about their answers to get ideas. In this section, the perspectives of respondents will be elaborated along with their coping mechanisms. Further, Mukasa, Stokes, and Mukona (2023) revealed that there are students, who are likely to engage in academic dishonesty, one way or another, the most common method is the act of copying assignments from other students.

It’s Called Teamwork

Some respondents prioritize their academic grades and graduating with their peers over their moral principles. According to Alnajjar, Aly, and Hashish (2021), study participants view academic dishonesty as a useful strategy for overcoming the difficulties of their coursework rather than as something that is intrinsically good or bad. This implies that rather than rigorously abiding by ethical principles, students may see dishonest practices as a way of coping with the requirements associated with their educational obligations. In addition, Valizadeh (2021) revealed that it is easier for the respondents to engage in academic dishonesty on a physical and psychological level because the mode of learning is mostly online.

In the context of self-respect, Respondent 1 sarcastically questioned the interviewer's biased definition of academic dishonesty and said this. "*So ngayon self-disrespect na pala yung tawag doon? Kasi ang tawag doon samin, nagtutulungan.*" ("You call that self-disrespect? We call that teamwork.") followed by an explanation how they are just doing teamwork and she just wants to graduate with her peers. "*Yun na yung pagtutulungan. Oo, na disrespect ko yung sarili ko. Pati yung school. Na-violate ko yung ano namin, rules. Kasi kailangan namin makagraduate sabay-sabay eh. Ayaw namin na iiwan. Kaya ayun.*" ("I might have disrespected myself and the school. I violated the rules, and that's only because we need to graduate together. We don't like it when someone's left out.")

A study by Cliniciu et al. (2021) and Zhao et al. (2022) shows that it is nothing new that student's team up with a classmate to get better grades in college. Zhao et al. (2022) added that academic dishonesty is primarily attributed to peer pressure and identified academic dishonesty to have a correlation to students' perception of cheating behaviors among their peers.

Just Getting Ideas

Respondent 5 admits that she sometimes commits academic dishonesty by looking out for answers online and blatantly sugar-coats it that she's only getting ideas to make her answers more unique. "*[Kapag nag-sasagot ng school activities,] maghahanap ako ng magandang example. Tas doon ako nag-base. Minsan nagiging unique po siya.*" ("[When answering school activities,] I look for good examples. And then, I base my answer on that to make it more unique.")

Additionally, Respondent 8 shares an experience when she's unsure of her answers, she verifies by asking other classmates to give their answers for them to compare if it's right or wrong. "*Ano po, kapag parang di ako sure sa mga sagot ko, nag-ask ako kung same din ba yung answer nila sa answer para lang comparison lang po.*" ("When I'm uncertain with my answers, I ask my classmates to compare our answers.") followed by the same explanation by Respondent 5. "*Kapag hindi ako handa, talagang nagtanong nalang ako sa ka-klase ng mga sagot, or kaya ako kumukuha ko sa iba ng idea.*" ("When I'm not ready, I really just ask a classmate for ideas or even answers.")

The justifiers have shown that they have low self-esteem and low self-efficacy on the interview. This could imply that because of low self-esteem (Lee et al., 2020; Zheng, 2023) and self-efficacy (Alhadabi et al., 2019; Fatima et al., 2020; du Rocher, 2020; Putarek & Pavlin-Bernardic, 2020), respondents tend to commit academic dishonesty. Overall, respondents have had tough experiences in their freshmen years revealing the truth behind academic dishonesty behaviors.

Integration of Findings

The presented quantitative and qualitative findings underwent analysis, combining the results to ascertain the primary priorities for developing a psychoeducational intervention for freshmen college students. Tables 8 to 10 illustrate the integration of themes derived from both qualitative data and the quantitative survey on self-esteem, self-efficacy, and academic dishonesty.

The researchers collected this information into a table, serving as a unified display for both qualitative and quantitative data. This table facilitated the integration of insights from interviews and surveys, enhancing the researchers' comprehension of the data. By employing this visual method, the researchers identified new insights that extended beyond the revelations from the interviews and surveys. Before delving into Tables 8-10, it is essential to acknowledge that the findings from quantitative and qualitative methods are anticipated to diverge. This discrepancy arises because participants for the qualitative component were selectively chosen from among the respondents in the quantitative method based on specific criteria—specifically, those with the lowest scores in self-esteem and self-efficacy, and the highest scores in academic dishonesty.

Table 8. *Integration of QUAN-QUAL data for Self-esteem*

QUANTITATIVE (Self-Esteem)	QUALITATIVE (The Self-Critiques Theme)	INTEGRATED THEME Key Priority Areas
The quantitative analysis, using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, reveals that users tend to express positive self-esteem with a mean score of 2.50 (Average).	The self-critiques express dissatisfaction as they receive low scores on school activities, even though they exert their utmost effort. This situation leads to frustration. Moreover, they grapple with diminished self-esteem, reaching a point where they label themselves as stupid and ineffective.	A key priority is the students' lack of focus on positive self-talk. Other discrepancies in understanding the underlying factors influencing self-esteem is also a matter that needs to be prioritized, because there is a need to foster a more holistic approach to support self-esteem and psychological well-being.

As shown in Table 8, the integration of quantitative findings points to average self-esteem (mean score of 2.50) among freshmen college students, with qualitative insights revealing a contrasting narrative of low self-esteem presents a nuanced understanding of the

multifaceted nature of self-esteem. This indicates that among the respondents, most have high self-esteem. However, students with low self-esteem can't be assumed to not exist on the side. Thus, a psychoeducational intervention is a must. Despite the seemingly conflicting results, a closer examination of the qualitative data reveals important contextual nuances. The qualitative analysis unveiled themes related to specific situations and triggers that contribute to a perception of low self-esteem among some participants. These situations might not be fully captured by quantitative measures alone. By acknowledging both high and low self-esteem dimensions, it can be recognized that the complexity of self-esteem as a dynamic construct is influenced by various factors. The integrated theme suggests that qualitative insights reveal a contrasting narrative implying that students show signs of low self-esteem despite having high scores in quantitative. A key priority is to address the discrepancies and understand the underlying factors influencing self-esteem, aiming to foster a more holistic approach to better support self-esteem and psychological well-being. A study by Levy (2019) states that there is a need to address the discrepancies and understand the underlying factors influencing self-esteem as there are biases in self-report measures.

Table 9. *Integration of QUAN-QUAL data for Self-efficacy*

QUANTITATIVE (Self-Efficacy)	QUALITATIVE (The Approval Seekers Theme)	INTEGRATED THEME Key Priority Areas
The quantitative analysis using the General Self-Efficacy scale developed by Jerusalem and Schwarzer shows that the average mean score of the respondents was 2.79 interpreted as high. This only shows that the freshmen students have high self-efficacy.	The approval seekers often experience low self-efficacy because they don't receive the validation they need from parents and professors, making them doubt their capabilities. They commonly feel the need to compensate for perceived shortcomings at home by excelling in school, driven by their overall low self-efficacy.	A key priority is the students' focus on academic preparedness. There is a need to address the underlying factors contributing to low self-efficacy among this subgroup, aiming to foster a supportive environment that encourages validation from both home and academic settings.

The integrated theme suggests a detailed view of self-efficacy among freshmen college students, implying that while the quantitative analysis indicates an overall high self-efficacy, the qualitative findings reveal a subgroup characterized by low self-efficacy—the approval seekers. These approval seekers need to focus on positive self-talk (Sabzipour et al., 2023).

Another key priority is to address the underlying factors contributing to low self-efficacy among this subgroup, aiming to foster a supportive environment that encourages validation from both home and academic settings. This approach is crucial in empowering students to overcome doubts about their capabilities and promoting a more complete development of self-efficacy. In support, Morelli et al. (2023) revealed that there is a need to investigate the underlying factors that contribute to low self-efficacy in academic settings because self-efficacy plays a role in minimizing dropout rates in college students which is a crucial aspect.

Table 10. *Integration of QUAN-QUAL data for Academic Dishonesty*

QUANTITATIVE (Academic Dishonesty)	QUALITATIVE (The Justifier Theme)	INTEGRATED THEME Key Priority Areas
A quantitative analysis was conducted using the Academic Dishonesty Questionnaire (ADQ) to determine the frequency of academic dishonesty among students which was developed by Bashir and Bala. The average mean of 1.67 in the results indicated rare occurrences. This implies that participants don't often engage in academic dishonesty.	The pressures of academic rigor, coupled with the social and personal adjustments required in college, can create a sense of overwhelm. In an effort to meet academic expectations or to cope with the stress, some participants may choose dishonest practices, such as cheating or plagiarism, as a survival strategy. This behavior might stem from a perceived need to succeed at any cost in order to cope with the demands of the unfamiliar college environment.	Key priorities include the lack of aid for students in navigating academic challenges. Students seem to have confusion with the value of honesty.

The study's quantitative approach acknowledges the rarity of dishonesty instances as a whole as shown in Table 10, delving into the stress-driven roots of such behavior. However, qualitative approaches emphasize that some students are active in academic dishonesty in terms of copying school activities from other sources, and illicit collaboration.

This could possibly root from students having low self-esteem and low self-efficacy. In support, studies show that low self-esteem (Lee et al., 2020; Zheng, 2023) and low self-efficacy (Alhadabi et al., 2019; Fatima et al., 2020; du Rocher, 2020; Putarek and Pavlin-Bernardic, 2020) could lead to academic dishonesty. Thus, there is a need to prevent academic dishonesty by boosting students' self-esteem and self-efficacy. Priorities include establishing robust support systems to aid students in navigating academic challenges, implementing educational programs that emphasize the value of honesty, reinforcing clear academic integrity policies, cultivating a growth mindset that views challenges as learning opportunities, and maintaining vigilant monitoring systems to assess and adjust the effectiveness of initiatives.

Conclusion

Based on the study's results, the following conclusions were formulated:

Self-Esteem. Low self-esteem characterized by low self-worth makes it a big deal for students to always come up as an achiever in

front of their parents, teachers, and peers.

Self-Efficacy. Low self-efficacy characterized by low confidence and low self-belief makes it difficult for students to compete with their peers in a school setting.

Academic Dishonesty. Because of low self-esteem and self-efficacy, some student resort to academic dishonesty in form of plagiarism and illicit collaborating. Thus, a psycho-educational intervention helping the students' self-esteem and self-efficacy may mend their seemingly broken moral standards.

Understanding self-esteem appears to play a crucial part in addressing issues regarding academic dishonesty. With the rejection of the null hypothesis in this study, the proposed psycho-educational intervention shall come as an essential tool.

Considering the quantitative findings, the researchers were enlightened that self-esteem should be given with much focus in the proposed psycho-educational intervention.

There is a troubling trend where the approval seekers, feel frustrated by low grades on school activities despite their best efforts. This frustration stems from a perceived lack of approval from parents and professors, contributing to a diminished sense of self-efficacy.

There are prevalent challenges among participants, particularly those in the self-critiques group who grapple with low self-esteem, often going so far as to label themselves as dumb and useless. These individuals also express a sense of helplessness stemming from external opinions.

The participants employ coping mechanisms such as eating and diverting their focus to manage frustration and disappointment, both with themselves and their circumstances.

Building upon these conclusions, the following recommendations are hereby submitted:

Self-Esteem. This study has shown that students with low self-esteem may lead to engaging in academic dishonesty. Which is why the psycho-educational intervention is recommended for students troubling with low self-esteem. This psycho-educational intervention contains a webinar series tackling positive self-talk and empowering mindset, topics that enhances one's intrapersonal communication skills. To ensure that students acquire the lessons, they will be interviewed by the final day of the webinar series. To top it off, students will be given with another self-esteem test to quantify their self-esteem and their scores will be compared to the scores they got on the first self-esteem test they took before the webinar series.

Self-Efficacy. As the study shows that the students' low self-efficacy stems from the belief that they can't perform well at school. This belief should be altered when students learn how to actually perform well at school. One part of the psycho-educational intervention focuses on informing the students about the simplified studying techniques. This should help the students to see academic activities as a lighter load than how it seems to be. To ensure that students learned, the program coordinators will conduct a pre-test and post-test, and compare the scores assuming that students get higher scores on post-tests.

Academic Dishonesty. To address the rising trend of academic dishonesty among freshman college students, it is recommended that educational institutions implement the proposed psycho-educational intervention. This intervention focuses on activities that enhance students' self-esteem and self-efficacy. While there is no immediate way to guarantee the complete elimination of academic dishonesty, the findings of this study suggest that as students' self-esteem and self-efficacy increase, their engagement in academic dishonesty is likely to decrease.

It is recommended that educational institutions implement comprehensive and proactive interventions to address the identified challenges in emotional well-being, academic preparedness, and ethical conduct. This may involve the development of targeted programs to enhance students' self-esteem, self-efficacy, and coping mechanisms for academic stress. Additionally, initiatives should be undertaken to create a supportive academic environment that emphasizes the importance of ethical behavior and academic integrity. Collaborative efforts among educators, counselors, and administrators can contribute to the creation of a holistic support system, fostering the growth of individuals who not only excel academically but also cultivate a robust sense of self-worth and ethical values.

It is recommended that educational institutions prioritize the development of interventions aimed at enhancing students' self-esteem. Implementing programs that promote self-awareness, positive self-perception, and resilience can contribute to a more supportive environment, potentially reducing the likelihood of engaging in academic dishonesty as a coping mechanism.

It is recommended that future research endeavors delve deeper into this relationship. This could involve expanding sample sizes, incorporating diverse populations, or refining measurement instruments to enhance the study's statistical power.

It is recommended that colleges implement psychoeducational interventions that focuses on enhancing emotional well-being and self-efficacy among students, strategies may include counseling services, mentorship programs, and workshops aimed at building resilience.

It is recommended that educational institutions implement psychoeducational interventions to address the psychological well-being of students. These initiatives may include counseling services, workshops on self-esteem building, and mentorship programs. Furthermore, the findings underscore the importance of academic integrity campaigns that not only highlight the consequences of

dishonest practices but also offer resources for ethical decision-making.

It is recommended that educational institutions prioritize the development of holistic support systems. Initiatives should be implemented to enhance students' emotional resilience, stress management, and coping skills. Counseling services, workshops, and awareness campaigns can contribute to creating a more supportive environment for students facing academic pressures..

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Affiliations and Corresponding Information

Galilee Jordan C. Ancheta

Jesus Is Lord Colleges Foundation, Inc. – Philippines

Liezl R. Fulgencio

Jesus Is Lord Colleges Foundation, Inc. – Philippines

Kyle Edson B. Santor

Jesus Is Lord Colleges Foundation, Inc. – Philippines

Shan Micheal P. Capagalan

Jesus Is Lord Colleges Foundation, Inc. – Philippines

Camilla Enriquez

Jesus Is Lord Colleges Foundation, Inc. – Philippines

Andrea Mae C. Santiago

Jesus Is Lord Colleges Foundation, Inc. – Philippines

Jayra A. Blanco

Jesus Is Lord Colleges Foundation, Inc. – Philippines

Dr. Jhoselle Tus

Jesus Is Lord Colleges Foundation, Inc. – Philippines