RESEARCH ARTICLE   **Open Access**

CRIMINOGENIC BEHAVIOR WITHIN THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY

Nozimakhon Sobirova
Lecturer, Department Of Criminal Law, Criminology And Anti-Corruption,
Tashkent State University Of Law, Uzbekistan

Abstract
This article explores the application of criminological theories to understand and mitigate academic dishonesty, with a focus on the outsourcing of assignments in higher education. Drawing on strain theory, social learning theory, the General Theory of Crime, neutralization theory, and control theory, we analyze the multifaceted roots of academic dishonesty. These theories shed light on the pressures, environmental influences, and rationalizations that lead students to engage in outsourcing behaviors. By integrating these criminological insights, the article provides a comprehensive framework for educators and academic institutions to develop targeted interventions. Recommendations include addressing academic strain, fostering a positive learning environment, enhancing self-control and ethical decision-making skills, countering rationalizations for dishonesty, strengthening institutional bonds, enforcing clear policies, and judiciously using technology. Ultimately, the article advocates for a holistic approach to promoting academic integrity, aiming to reduce the incidence of outsourcing and cultivate an ethical academic culture.

Keywords Academic Dishonesty, Criminological Theories, Assignment Outsourcing, Academic Integrity, Strain Theory, Social Learning Theory.

INTRODUCTION

Within the sphere of higher education, academic integrity is paramount, underpinning scholarly excellence and ethical conduct. Nevertheless, the academic sphere is susceptible to criminogenic behaviors, defined as actions increasing the propensity for individuals to commit offenses. Among such behaviors, assignment outsourcing poses a significant threat to the core of academic integrity.

This study employs criminological theory to investigate, comprehend, and address violations and threats to academic integrity, with a specific focus on the phenomenon of assignment outsourcing. The imperative to confront these criminogenic behaviors in academic contexts arises from their capacity to compromise the educational process, diminish the value of legitimate scholarly accomplishments, and cultivate an environment where deceit is normalized.

Applying criminological theories within the higher education context enables educators and administrators to understand the motivations behind student outsourcing, identify manifestations of these behaviors, and devise effective preventive strategies. These theories offer a framework to analyze external stress factors and pressures potentially driving individuals towards deceitful actions and to scrutinize daily scenarios that may foster conditions conducive to misconduct.

Furthermore, they provide insights into modeled and reinforced behaviors, illustrating the process through which individuals learn and internalize

accepted norms within different contexts. Additionally, this exploration encompasses theories on justifications and control measures, elucidating mechanisms that may either enable or inhibit academic misconduct.

By dissecting the complexities of criminogenic behavior in academic settings through criminological theories, this study aims to establish foundational principles for crafting effective interventions. These interventions aim not only to reduce the prevalence of assignment outsourcing but also to foster an academic culture grounded in integrity and respect for scholarly endeavors.

Criminological Theories Relevant to Understanding Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty, particularly in the form of assignment outsourcing, can be dissected through various criminological theories. These theories provide a multifaceted understanding of the factors leading to such behavior and offer a foundation for developing strategies to mitigate these issues.

1. Strain Theory

Strain theory posits that individuals are pushed towards deviance when they experience a disjunction between societal goals and the means available to achieve these goals. In the academic context, the pressure to achieve high grades and academic success represents the societal goal. However, when students face obstacles such as lack of time, resources, or academic skills, they may resort to outsourcing assignments as a means of alleviating this strain.

2. Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory emphasizes the role of the environment in shaping behavior through observation, imitation, and modeling. If students observe peers outsourcing assignments without facing repercussions, they may learn to view this behavior as acceptable or even necessary to meet academic expectations. This theory underscores the importance of creating an academic environment that models and reinforces integrity and hard work.

3. General Theory of Crime (Self-Control Theory)

The General Theory of Crime suggests that low self-control is a key factor behind deviant behavior. Individuals with low self-control may seek immediate gratification without considering the long-term consequences of their actions. In the realm of academic dishonesty, students with low self-control might opt for the immediate solution of outsourcing assignments to avoid the effort and time required for honest work.

4. Neutralization Theory

Neutralization theory explores how individuals justify their deviant actions through a range of rationalizations, thereby neutralizing feelings of guilt. Students engaging in assignment outsourcing might use justifications such as "Everyone is doing it," "I'm only cheating myself," or "The system is unfair," to alleviate the moral dissonance associated with their actions.

5. Control Theory

Control theory focuses on the mechanisms that prevent individuals from engaging in deviant behavior. It suggests that strong bonds with society and its institutions (e.g., family, schools) encourage conformity. In the academic setting, strong relationships with faculty, engagement with the academic community, and a clear understanding of academic integrity policies can act as deterrents to outsourcing assignments.

Application to Assignment Outsourcing

Understanding these criminological theories provides valuable insights into the complexities of academic dishonesty, particularly assignment outsourcing. Strain and social learning theories highlight the pressures and environmental influences that drive students towards these behaviors. Meanwhile, the General Theory of Crime, neutralization theory, and control theory offer explanations for the individual decision-making process and potential preventive measures.

To combat academic dishonesty, institutions can employ strategies informed by these theories, such as providing clear pathways to academic support, fostering a culture of integrity, implementing strict but fair consequences for dishonesty, and promoting strong student-faculty relationships. By

addressing both the individual and environmental factors that contribute to assignment outsourcing, educators can develop comprehensive approaches to uphold academic integrity.

Implications of Criminological Theories for Identifying Root Causes of Academic Dishonesty

The exploration of criminological theories provides profound insights into the foundational causes of academic dishonesty, with a particular emphasis on assignment outsourcing. By grasping the implications of these theories, educators and administrators can pinpoint the driving forces behind student misconduct, paving the way for precise intervention strategies.

Strain Theory: Academic Pressure and Resource Disparity

Strain theory accentuates the role of academic pressure and the perceived discrepancy between success expectations and the means available for achievement. This perspective suggests that students, feeling burdened by academic demands or perceiving a lack of necessary resources (e.g., time, skills, knowledge), may view assignment outsourcing as an apt method to alleviate strain. Identifying students experiencing significant academic stress or those who feel ill-equipped could facilitate the provision of specialized support, such as tutoring or counseling services.

Social Learning Theory: Environmental Influences and Peer Conduct

Social learning theory illuminates the influence of environmental factors and peer conduct on student attitudes toward academic dishonesty. This insight implies that educational institutions should aim not merely at individual students but at cultivating an environment that upholds academic integrity. Initiatives might encompass peer-led integrity workshops, honor codes, and campaigns that underline the importance of genuine effort, thereby shifting normative perceptions of academic dishonesty.

General Theory of Crime: Emphasis on Self-Control

The General Theory of Crime identifies low self-control as a pivotal element in the inclination towards academic dishonesty. This realization steers focus towards enhancing students' self-regulation abilities. Educational interventions could include training in time management, stress mitigation techniques, and goal setting, equipping students with the resilience to resist the allure of immediate, dishonest academic solutions.

Neutralization Theory: Justifications for Dishonest Conduct

Neutralization theory investigates the rationalizations students employ to excuse their dishonest actions, indicating the need to confront the cognitive dimension of dishonesty. Engaging students in workshops and discussions that counteract common justifications for academic dishonesty could prompt critical reflection on their reasoning and its implications for both themselves and the academic community.

Control Theory: Reinforcing Institutional Connections

Control theory underscores the significance of students' connections with their educational institution. Enhancing these connections could involve nurturing a sense of community and involvement within the academic sphere. Measures might include mentoring schemes, participatory learning settings, and opportunities for student involvement in academic decision-making, thereby bolstering their allegiance to institutional values, including academic integrity.

Through a comprehensive understanding and application of these criminological theories, educational leaders can formulate holistic approaches to combat academic dishonesty, addressing both individual behaviors and the broader institutional context.

Understanding the implications of various criminological theories allows educators to uncover the complex root causes of academic dishonesty, including assignment outsourcing. This approach necessitates not just addressing individual inclinations and behaviors but also undertaking systemic efforts to foster an educational milieu conducive to ethical conduct. By implementing targeted interventions addressing these foundational causes, academic institutions can strive to diminish the incidence of academic

dishonesty and nurture a culture of integrity.

Although specific case studies that directly apply these criminological theories to academic dishonesty might not be widely accessible, hypothetical scenarios can offer insights into how these theories could be operationalized in real-world academic settings. These scenarios are derived from the principles of the discussed theories and illustrate possible interventions and their outcomes.

Strain Theory: The Case of the Overwhelmed Student

Scenario: Alex struggles with managing a demanding course load alongside part-time work. The pressure to achieve high grades compels Alex to consider outsourcing an assignment.

Application: The university organizes workshops on time management and stress management and establishes a system for requesting assignment extensions under justified circumstances, addressing the pressures Alex faces and reducing the push towards academic dishonesty.

Social Learning Theory: Peer Influence in a Study Group

Scenario: Jordan notices peers in a study group regularly purchasing essays online, treating it as an acceptable strategy to maintain GPAs. This observation leads Jordan to think about doing the same.

Application: The institution initiates a peer-mentoring program led by students who demonstrate academic integrity, fostering discussions on ethical academic practices. This shifts normative beliefs, offering Jordan positive role models and changing perceptions about academic honesty.

General Theory of Crime: Immediate Gratification vs. Long-term Goals

Scenario: Sam, who often seeks immediate satisfaction, faces a looming deadline, making the idea of plagiarizing appealing as a quick fix.

Application: Professors design coursework requiring continuous effort, such as periodic drafts and presentations, discouraging last-minute dishonesty and encouraging Sam to prioritize long-term academic objectives.

Neutralization Theory: Justifying Academic Dishonesty

Scenario: Casey believes that since instructors appear indifferent to cheating, it's not a serious concern, using this to justify potential dishonesty.

Application: The university hosts seminars emphasizing the ramifications of academic dishonesty and the importance of integrity, countering Casey's rationalizations by demonstrating the academic community's commitment to ethical standards.

Control Theory: Disconnection from the Academic Community

Scenario: Taylor, feeling alienated from the academic environment and finding little value in the coursework, views cheating as trivial.

Application: The institution implements mentorship programs and integrates collaborative projects into the curriculum, enhancing Taylor's connection with the academic community and making the idea of cheating antithetical to these new connections.

These hypothetical examples underscore how criminological theories can guide the development of practical measures in academic contexts. By comprehensively understanding the causes of academic dishonesty, educators can craft strategies that not only prevent dishonest behavior but also cultivate an ethos of integrity and ethical academic pursuit.

Recommendations for Mitigating Outsourcing Behaviors in Academic Settings

The application of criminological theories provides a strategic framework for educators and academic institutions aiming to curb the outsourcing of assignments. By adopting measures informed by these theories, an environment that champions academic integrity and discourages dishonest conduct can be cultivated. Below are essential recommendations for action:

1. Proactively Address Academic Strain Educators need to identify and mitigate the

academic pressures that compel students towards outsourcing. Providing resources for effective time management, stress relief, and academic assistance, alongside offering flexible deadlines and tailored learning initiatives, can diminish the allure of outsourcing by alleviating student stress.

2. Cultivate a Positive Academic Atmosphere Establishing an academic environment that prizes integrity and diligence is crucial. This includes exemplifying ethical conduct, celebrating genuinely earned academic accomplishments, and initiating peer-driven programs that advocate for a culture of honesty. The influence of peers and the surrounding environment, as highlighted by social learning theory, underscores the importance of a constructive academic culture in curtailing dishonest practices.

3. Enhance Self-Control and Ethical Decision-Making Incorporating sessions that bolster self-regulation and ethical decision-making can deter students from seeking immediate solutions through outsourcing. Promoting contemplation on the long-term repercussions of academic choices, in alignment with the General Theory of Crime, emphasizes self-control as a deterrent to misconduct.

4. Challenge Rationalizations for Dishonesty Engaging students with discussions and case studies that confront the justifications for outsourcing can dismantle the rationalizations underpinning such decisions. Directly tackling these excuses can enlighten students on the ethical stakes and personal ramifications of academic dishonesty, as posited by neutralization theory.

5. Bolster Institutional Connections and Participation Strengthening students' ties to the academic community through mentorship schemes, clubs, and interactive opportunities with faculty and fellow students can inhibit outsourcing tendencies. Control theory suggests that a strong sense of affiliation and dedication to the academic community deters deviant behaviors.

6. Clarify and Uphold Academic Integrity Policies Academic integrity guidelines should be transparent, accessible, and uniformly applied. Ensuring students understand academic expectations and the consequences of misconduct is vital. The consistent application and reinforcement of these policies underscore the institution's commitment to academic integrity.

7. Leverage Technology Effectively Utilizing plagiarism detection software and similar technological tools judiciously can help identify outsourced assignments. Balancing technology use with educational strategies that render outsourcing less appealing or viable, such as customized tasks, oral examinations, and continuous evaluation techniques, can further discourage dishonesty.

CONCLUSION

Addressing assignment outsourcing in academic contexts necessitates a comprehensive strategy that targets the foundational causes of academic dishonesty. Leveraging insights from criminological theories enables educators and institutions to devise approaches that not only deter malpractice but also foster a culture of integrity and ethical academic pursuit. Creating an atmosphere that valorizes honesty, aids students academically, and cultivates strong community ties is pivotal in maintaining academic integrity standards.

REFERENCE

1. Agnew, R. (1992). Foundation for a General Strain Theory of Crime and Delinquency. Criminology, 30(1), 47-87.

2. Akers, R.L., & Sellers, C.S. (2004). Criminological Theories: Introduction, Evaluation, and Application. Oxford University Press.

3. Bandura, A. (1977). Social Learning Theory. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

4. Gottfredson, M., & Hirschi, T. (1990). A General Theory of Crime. Stanford University Press.

5. Sykes, G.M., & Matza, D. (1957). Techniques of Neutralization: A Theory of Delinquency.

American Sociological Review, 22(6), 664-670.

6. Hirschi, T. (1969). Causes of Delinquency. University of California Press.

7. McCabe, D.L., Butterfield, K.D., & Trevino, L.K. (2001). Cheating in Academic Institutions: A Decade of Research. Ethics & Behavior, 11(3), 219-232.

8. Sutherland, E.H. (1947). Principles of Criminology. J.B. Lippincott.

9. Tittle, C.R. (1995). Control Balance: Toward a General Theory of Deviance. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.