

Academic Honesty Amongst the Students of Health Studies

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Abstract

Academic honesty is rarely investigated among Croatian students, despite the extremely high prevalence of unethical behavior at all levels of education, according to previous research. In this study, we examined the self-reported behavior, attitudes and values related to academic honesty of 1088 higher education students. The results indicate a moderate prevalence of dishonest behavior, especially in examinations. Students often show dishonest behavior due to poor supervision during exams while the main motivation for cheating is passing the exam or getting a higher score. Having examined the significant predictors of academic dishonesty, we can conclude that senior students behave more honestly. For students who are more honest in academic situations, cheating is less acceptable, and they provide more reasons for not cheating and less for cheating. However, students are not willing to take responsibility for their own honest behavior, and expect to be controlled by teachers and educational institutions. The paper introduces recommendations for the promotion and adoption of honest academic conduct in higher education institutions.

Key words: *attitude; cheating; perception; responsibility; students.*

Introduction

Although the phenomenon of academic honesty amongst students is the subject-matter of numerous research, particularly in the United States of America (e.g. Passow et al., 2006; Murdock et al., 2008; Nath & Lovaglia, 2008; Jones, 2011), and although further efforts are used to prevent academic dishonesty in academic assignments (e.g. Mirza & Staples, 2010; Owunwanne et al., 2010; Hall, 2011; Davis, 2011), in Croatia research and public debate on that topic is very rare. In Croatia, research concerning student cheating in academic assignments (e.g. Hrabak et al., 2004) or

concerning plagiarism (Pupovac et al., 2010) is published in the English language, which does not facilitate public academic debates regarding the problem. Other than the doctoral dissertation of Lidija Bilić-Zulle (2006) examining the prevalence and attitudes towards plagiarism amongst medical students, and a scientific paper of Šimić Šašić and Klarin (2008), who investigated the problem on a sample of secondary school students, there is no other research relating to the mentioned topic written in the Croatian language. Therefore, in our opinion, it is important to encourage and re-visit the debate concerning academic honesty, so that new contributions provide a better understanding of not only the methodological and didactic segment of the educational system, but also the segment of educational moral guidance, which is becoming unjustifiably neglected or non-existent at the level of higher education. What exactly is regarded as dishonest conduct in the educational context? Published works include a number of different descriptions of academic dishonesty amongst pupils and students. McCabe et al. (2001) identified five most common forms of such conduct. Students agree that the most serious form of cheating during an exam is the one that appears during the written part of the test and may include copying answers from another student, using cheat-sheets and helping another student cheat during the exam. Šimić Šašić and Klarin (2008) also observed a high prevalence of such conduct in their research. Other forms of cheating take place during the writing of written assignments (essays, papers, homework) and relate to (according to McCabe et al., 2001) plagiarism, fabricating or falsifying bibliography, turning in work done by someone else and copying a few sentences of a material without footnoting them in a paper. Still, Burrus et al. (2007) hold that students might not have an understanding of which behaviours are regarded as cheating (for example, a significantly smaller number of students classify behaviour, such as seeking assistance from a colleague in writing one's homework or studying for an exam from old tests, as dishonest). The experience of the mentioned authors tells us that the ratio of students who learn to recognise cheating during their studies increases after the types of conduct that belong to the category of academically dishonest conduct are clearly defined.

The subject-matter of academic honesty is particularly relevant in our society where the rate of cheating in school and academic assignments is extremely high. In the research conducted by Šimić Šašić and Klarin (2008), 92.71 % of high school students in Zadar stated that they had cheated in school once or more than once, while 94 % of students of the University of Zagreb – School of Medicine declared they had acted dishonestly in academic assignments at least once during their studies (Hrabak et al., 2004), which tells us that such conduct is more of a rule than an exception, and that it is present at all levels of schooling. The crossover of dishonest conduct from the high school to university, and even dishonest conduct at the workplace, was observed in other research (Harding et al., 2004; Carpenter et al., 2006), as well, reflecting a worrisome impression about the lack of sensibility and tolerance to dishonesty in the educational system, and society as a whole. The research carried out by Šimić Šašić and

Klarin (2008), in which pupils who believed that cheating was justifiable and socially acceptable (“everybody does it”) were more likely to cheat in school assignments, confirms the foregoing. The authors interpret the results by stating that cheating is viewed as a conventional problem (those who are successful in cheating, are actually resourceful), and not a morally questionable one. This conclusion is corroborated by high concordance results on the Perception of Social Injustice Scale, according to which students are most likely to notice *that not everyone is equal before law and there is non-acceptance of social values, and general inequality amongst members of society* (Šimić Šašić & Klarin, 2008, p. 1011).

Research of the phenomenon carried out outside Croatia shows us a wider percentile range of students who admit having engaged in dishonest conduct to receive a grade. In more recent research, students’ self-assessments of academically dishonest conduct range from 16 % (Rabi et al., 2006) to more than 70% (O’Rourke et al., 2010; DuPree & Sattler, 2010). The meta-analysis conducted by Whitley (1998) by comparing 107 research studies carried out over the last 35 years of the past century showed that 70 % of students admit plagiarism in their assignments, cheating at written exams or in home assignments.

Nath and Lovaglia (2008) point out that, despite the fact that most students agree that cheating is unethical, there is a high ratio of those who will still cheat during their studies. What are the reasons for such conduct? In the research carried out by Burrus et al. (2007), 97 % of students hold that copying during an exam is dishonest. Still, Jones (2011) states that only 41 % of participants stated that they would never cheat on ethical grounds, while 59 % stated that they would cheat deliberately and 67 % would commit plagiarism. According to the mentioned author, there are three basic reasons why students would cheat in academic assignments: they want or need to get better grades (in the case of 92 % students), as the result of procrastination (83 %), and too many obligations or no time (75 %). Other reasons are featured in a smaller percentage, and include the following (in the order of frequency): lack of understanding or unable to comprehend information, no interest in the subject or assignment, overwhelming workload or too many classes, everyone does it and gets away with it, diminishing the significance (no big deal; does not matter to the teacher), and peer pressure (Jones, 2011). One of the strongest correlates of academic cheating are moderate expectations for success, have cheated in the past, have poor study skills, hold favourable attitudes toward cheating, perceive that social norms allow cheating, anticipate greater reward for success, social comparisons with their peers (seeing others cheat or approve cheating), and the experienced severity of punishment for cheating (Whitley, 1998; McCabe et al., 2001). Characteristics such as the age and gender of students played a significantly lesser role. McCabe and Treviño (1993) add to the list circumstances under which it is possible to cheat. The climate of academic honesty in the educational institution itself is extremely important. The authors observe that for creating such a climate it is of great significance for schools to have clear rules of ethical conduct

(code of ethics), and peer pressure aimed at abiding by the said rules. Even only a warning about the control of students' works and the resulting punishment results in less cheating on the part of students who received such a warning (Bilić-Zulle, 2006).

The type of studies proved to be an important determinant of the frequency of cheating. It was observed that students of economics and students of technical studies engage in dishonest academic conduct more frequently (Harding et al., 2004), while cheating is observed to a lesser extent amongst the students of social and natural sciences, foreign languages and arts (Bowers, 1964, and Baird, 1980; according to Daniel et al., 1991). Still, it is particularly worrisome that there is a high percentage of academic dishonesty amongst medical students, because it is more likely they will have direct and dangerous impact on the life and health of the end users of their services (clients, patients) when they begin to work one day. That is also probably one of the reasons why particular attention is paid to detecting and preventing plagiarism and other dishonest acts in biomedicine (Bilić-Zulle, 2006). In a number of countries research on academic honesty amongst students of health studies has been conducted recently (e.g., McCrink, 2010; Keçeci et al., 2011; Mohr et al., 2011; Fontana, 2009), but there has been no such research in Croatia.

For that reason, we carried out research of the incidence of academic dishonesty amongst students of nine health studies, their perception of the acceptability of such conduct, reasons for honest and dishonest conduct in academic settings, and the delegation of responsibilities for such conduct. We wanted to know which forms of academic dishonesty amongst students appear more and which less, and which forms of such conduct are regarded as cheating. In view of the presumption that students will be more likely to give socially desirable answers in terms of academic honesty, in our research we applied the Lie Scale to verify the truthfulness of their responses. We suggest that the admitted appearance of cheating amongst students will be in line with the research conducted in Croatia to date, and that students will show a permissive attitude towards cheating. In addition, we expect a negative correlation between cheating and self-perceived cheating.

Methods

Participants

The research, conducted in Zagreb in the 2010/2011 academic year, included 1,088 students engaged in nine health studies. The average age of the students was 25.68 years (SD=8.06), and the age range from 19 to 56. In the sample of participants, 81 % were female students.

In terms of the manner of studying, 57.5% were full-time students, 27.7% were part-time students, and 14.7 % were the students of specialist studies. The costs of studying for 27.2 % of students are funded by the government, and the rest are paid from tuition fees. Many students are employed; 36.9% work full-time and 19.1 % part-time. Most students (67 %) consider themselves as moderately religious.

Instruments

The research was conducted in a group by using several questionnaires:

The **Cheating Scale** was created on the basis of the questionnaire on cheating by Šimić Šašić and Klarin (2009) and Carpenter et al. (2006). The original questionnaire of Šimić Šašić and Klarin consists of 17 items classified into two sub-scales, and in terms of content is adjusted to secondary school pupils, while the questionnaire used by Carpenter et al. includes 20 items which, in terms of content, mostly coincides with the scale used by Šimić Šašić and Klarin. The first sub-scale examines the appearance of various forms of cheating in academic settings, while the other sub-scale examines their acceptability. The scales were modified (with the permission of the authors), and for the purposes of this research the number of items was increased to 26 and adjusted to the manner of work at the higher education institution. The items include descriptions of conduct that represent various forms of academic cheating. For each conduct, students were to evaluate whether they cheated on their own or in the company of their peers (e.g. *copying from other students in a written exam*) on a three-degree scale (*never, 1-2 times, and multiple times*), and the extent to which they regard such conduct as acceptable (*unacceptable, partly acceptable and acceptable*). The cumulative results are expressed by adding answers on the sub-scales for conduct and acceptability, where a higher result indicates greater presence of cheating and a higher level of acceptance of such conduct.

For the sub-scale of the frequency of cheating, an exploratory factor analysis of the main components was carried out, resulting in the extraction of 6 factors. Of the 26 items, 21 had the greatest saturation with the first factor, where we removed 3 more items from further processing, because their saturation also appeared in other factors. The mentioned items describe conduct that the students in the sample do not even have an opportunity to commit (*to change an answer in the test after it is graded and then report to the teacher that he made a mistake when correcting the test*), because they do not receive the test for review unless they ask for it, and even then only in the teacher's presence. The other two items describe types of conduct that only the students of specialist studies had an opportunity to commit, because they mostly relate to the writing of the thesis. Therefore, we removed them from further processing.

The index of reliability (Cronbach alpha coefficient) for the 18-item questionnaire version is 0.87.

The **Reasons to Cheat Scale** includes 24 items with various reasons why students cheat (e.g. *I cheat, because I don't have time to study*). The scale was taken over from Šimić Šašić and Klarin (2009), where 5 items were changed, with the permission of the authors.

The **Reasons Not to Cheat Scale** was made for the purposes of this research, and includes 7 items (e.g. *I don't cheat, because other students don't approve of it*). Various reasons are stated that motivate students who do not cheat. On both scales for each item, students estimate the extent to which the mentioned reason relates to them on a

5-point Likert-type scale, where 1 means *Does not apply to me at all*, and 5 *Completely applies to me*.

The factor analysis was conducted for both scales together to check whether factorisation corresponds to the distribution of items based on face validity into reasons for cheating and reasons for not cheating. Therefore, the number of factors is limited to two, and the factor analysis confirmed the presumed distribution. The exploratory factor analysis for the Reasons to Cheat Scale resulted in two factors that together account for 45% of the variance, where the first factor explains 32%, and the other 13% of the variance. Most items are saturated only with the first factor or are to a greater extent saturated with it, except the first two items that have higher saturation with the second factor. However, the two items have solid saturation with the first factor, so in our opinion it is justified to treat the said scale as a single-factor scale. The factor analysis of the Reasons Not to Cheat Scale resulted in two factors that account for 64% of the variance, and can be interpreted as *moral reasons* (1st, 2nd, 5th and 6th item) or *fear as a reason* (3rd, 4th and 7th). Reliability for the Reasons to Cheat Scale, Cronbach's alpha, is 0.93, and on the Reasons Not to Cheat Scale for the *moral reasons* sub-scale 0.75, while for the *fear as reason* sub-scale, the alpha is 0.81.

The Attitude towards Cheating Scale was taken over from the research conducted by Carpenter et al. (2006), with the permission of the authors. The original scale includes 12 items based on "neutralisations". According to the authors, students use neutralisations to justify their inappropriate behaviour by influences outside their control. An example of such item would be *It is wrong to cheat regardless of the circumstances*. Another item was added to the scale *It is wrong to cheat, although cheating would help me receive a scholarship, exemption from the payment of tuition or a similar benefit*. The students had to circle an answer for each item on the 5-type Likert-type scale, where 1 means *Strongly disagree* and 5 means *Strongly agree*. A higher total result means a more negative attitude towards cheating. The exploratory factor analysis excluded two factors that together account for 66% of the variance, where all items have the greatest saturation with the first factor. It was not possible to find a common denominator of the statements that would make the factors easier to interpret even after the varimax rotation. Reliability of the scale is $\alpha=0.94$.

The **Responsibility for Cheating Scale** includes 6 items, and it was created on the basis of a sub-scale entitled Personal Responsibility for Cheating by Passow et al. (2006), where three items were added. The Responsibility for Cheating Scale establishes who, in the opinion of students, is to the greatest extent responsible for the prevention of cheating (e.g., *It is the institution's responsibility to prevent cheating*). Students could choose answers from 1 *Strongly disagree* to 5 *Strongly agree*. The factor analysis was used to exclude two factors that account for 59% of the variance. The first factor encompasses items relating to the responsibility of the student to prevent cheating - *personal responsibility*, and other items show the responsibility of others (the teacher and the institution) - *diffusion of responsibility to external sources*. The item

If I saw another student cheating, I would not do anything was removed from further processing, because it materially reduces reliability of the first sub-scale *personal reliability*: with the said item, Cronbach's alpha is 0.19, and without it 0.63. Reliability of the sub-scale *diffusion of responsibility to external sources* is 0.71.

All items that did not prove to be appropriate and were removed from further processing will be presented in the results only at the level of an individual description.

Along with the said scale, the participants filled out the **Eysenck's Personality Questionnaire** - EPQ (H. J. Eysenck and Sybil B. G. Eysenck, 1975) that assesses 3 personality traits (extroversion-introversion, neuroticism-emotional stability and psychoticism). However, the personality traits were not at the focus of this study, but the questionnaire was used, so that we could apply the Lie Scale. A higher result on the Lie Scale marks a higher level of lying.

In addition, we collected data on **sociodemographic characteristics** (gender, age, degree of religious belief, terms of payment for studies and employment).

Procedure

Data in this research was collected in full respect of the ethical guidelines for the implementation of research with human subjects. The anonymous questionnaires were completed in a group during class. The students were informed about the questionnaire being anonymous both verbally and in the written instructions that accompanied the questionnaires.

Results

The first aim of our study was to establish the way in which students perceive various forms of academic dishonesty amongst students and their statements concerning the acceptability of such conduct. In order to gain an insight into the frequency of individual forms of cheating and their acceptability, in Table 1 we showed frequencies of individual answers for each item on both scales. Although the answers we offered present an original measuring scale, we decided to express arithmetic means, because other central tendency measures reflect the existing differences in results to a much lesser extent.

The most frequent forms of academic dishonesty are expressed in statements (based on the degree of matching): 2, 12, 3 and 1. As opposed to Table 1 which states the percentages of students who repeatedly commit a particular type of conduct, the text below will include the percentages of students who stated they had acted in such manner (once or multiple times), and the percentages will be a sum of the two columns in the table. Almost all students (99.8%) allow other students to copy from them during a written examination, while 97.8% of students make an effort to find out about test questions from other students in advance. Moreover, 98.1% of students whisper answers to other students during a written or oral examination, and 98.4% copy from others during examinations. We can see that all of the mentioned types of conduct are widely present amongst students.

Table 1.
 Frequencies of conduct and the acceptability of such conduct on the Cheating Scale (1-3 range), (N=1088).

CHEATING SCALE	Frequency of conduct %			Acceptability of conduct %		
	Never	1-2 times	Multiple times	Unacceptable	Partially acceptable	Acceptable
1. Copying answers from a colleague during a written examination.	1.6	27.6	70.8	5.8	62.3	31.9
2. Allowing other students to copy from me during a written exam.	0.2	6.7	93.1	3.1	45.5	51.3
3. Whispering answers to other students during a written or oral examination.	1.9	18.9	79.2	4.9	53.7	41.4
4. Allowing other students to copy homework from me.	5.6	20.5	73.9	8.5	51.2	40.3
5. Using a crib sheet during an examination.	9.4	33.8	56.8	13.4	53.3	33.2
6. Passing on a crib sheet to other students during an examination.	22.7	32.5	44.8	17.2	49.4	33.4
7. Copying someone else's homework, paper, essay or the like.	37.5	37.3	25.2	39.2	47.2	13.6
8. Forging a grade.	98.2	1.5	0.3	97.5	1.3	1.2
9. Consulting with other students during written examinations.	4.0	30.5	65.5	6.7	57.4	35.9
10. Using a mobile phone to receive or send answers during an examination.	82.6	12.4	5.0	47.7	39.2	13.1
11. Using private connections to receive a grade (at an examination or final).	96.0	3.7	0.3	91.5	6.7	1.8
12. Finding out about test questions from other students in advance.	2.1	14.5	83.3	2.7	23.8	73.5
13. Convincing a teacher that we performed an assignment in class, where we did not.	65.6	25.3	9.1	62.8	31.9	5.4
14. Taking a test in place of another student.	99.1	0.8	0.1	91.7	6.4	1.9
15. Fabricating a bibliography in the thesis.	70.3	21.7	8.0	57.0	34.7	8.3
16. Copying a thesis or some other paper from previous years.	82.8	14.0	3.1	67.0	26.3	6.7
17. Copying homework from other students.	31.0	39.1	29.9	21.7	52.7	25.6
18. Copying a chapter or text paragraph from a book for homework/paper.	14.7	44.9	40.4	10.5	53.0	36.5
19. Copying an answer for homework from one's old homework.	21.0	44.8	34.2	11.1	52.1	36.8
20. Seeing another student cheating during an examination, and not reporting to the teacher.	20.4	17.3	62.3	20.6	34.6	44.8
21. Copying answers for a test into one's calculator, mobile phone or some other technical device.	44.2	29.2	26.6	28.6	48.7	22.7
22. Changing an answer in the test after it was graded and then reporting to the teacher that he did not correct the test properly.	91.2	7.8	0.9	89.0	8.6	2.4
23. Paying someone to take an examination or write an assignment for me.	99.6	0.3	0.1	94.3	3.9	1.8
24. Falsifying an excuse note.	75.5	16.9	7.6	71.5	23.0	5.5
25. Doing individual homework assignments together.	11.7	43.0	45.3	8.8	46.8	44.4
26. Photographing a test by mobile phone.	77.2	15.3	7.5	48.3	36.4	15.3

KEY: In the columns "multiple times" and "acceptable" the most frequent and the most acceptable behaviours are marked in **bold**, and the ones with the least frequency and acceptability are marked in *italic*.

Types of conduct that appear almost never or in a very low percentage are the following: paying someone to take part or full examination in place of the student (item 23), taking an examination in place of another student (14), falsifying a grade (8), and using personal connections to receive a grade (11). Such “serious” forms of cheating, although they are less present, occurred sporadically, so 19 participants in our sample admit having falsified a grade (1.8%), 10 admit having taken an examination in place of someone else (0.9%), and 95 students (8.7%) admit having changed an answer in the test after the examination.

Students are most likely to admit conduct that they find most acceptable. To the greatest extent, students find it acceptable to try and find out about test questions from other students in advance (24% partly acceptable, and 73.5% acceptable), and allow others to copy from them (45% consider it partly acceptable, and 51% acceptable), while serious transgressions, which are at the same time rarest, are least acceptable. It can be observed that passive forms of cheating are rather widespread and acceptable to students.

Along with the frequency and acceptability of cheating amongst students, we were interested in reasons why students decide to engage in academically dishonest conduct and reasons why they decide not to cheat. Table 2 presents results for the individual reasons to cheat in our sample.

Table 2.

Arithmetic means of the results and percentages of the answers Mostly or Completely relates to me on the Reasons to Cheat Scale (1-5 range, N=1088).

REASONS TO CHEAT SCALE	M	%
1. I cheat because I have too many obligations.	2.34	17.3
2. I cheat because I don't have time to study.	2.35	18.6
3. Cheating is acceptable because everybody does it.	2.58	21.7
4. Cheating is natural, inherent in human nature and should be expected.	2.65	23.0
5. I cheat because I want good grades.	2.51	25.6
6. I cheat in order not to disappoint my family should I fail (an examination or a year).	2.35	24.0
7. I cheat because I am too lazy to study.	2.37	24.8
8. I cheat because the seating arrangement allows me to.	2.90	38.6
9. I cheat whenever an examination is very important.	2.71	32.6
10. I cheat whenever an examination is very difficult.	2.92	39.0
11. I cheat whenever an examination is not fair.	3.03	40.9
12. I cheat during the examination of a teacher I dislike.	2.02	9.4
13. I cheat whenever I do not like the teacher.	1.90	7.5
14. I cheat when there is poor supervision during an examination.	3.46	55.4
15. I cheat when the organisation of an examination is poor.	3.22	46.8
16. I cheat when I do not have enough time to study.	2.84	35.9
17. I cheat because other students are better than me.	1.70	3.6
18. I cheat to avoid a poor grade or failing at an examination.	3.09	46.0
19. I cheat because there is no other way in which I could receive a good grade.	1.66	4.4
20. I cheat because I want to help a friend.	3.06	42.1
21. I cheat because there are no serious consequences for the cheater.	2.52	25.2
22. I cheat because cheating is an essential part of life.	1.82	6.5
23. I cheat because I cannot say no to a good friend who asked me to cheat for him.	2.28	20.2
24. I cheat because cheating in Croatia is socially acceptable.	2.33	18.6

KEY: The highest values are in **bold**, and the lowest are in *italics*.

The most frequently stated reasons for academic cheating by students are the following: poor supervision during an examination, poor organisation of an examination, and trying to avoid failing or receiving a poor grade at an examination. More than 55 % of students cheat, because supervision during an examination is poor and more than 46 %, because the organisation of an examination is poor, which is why we can conclude that the most frequent reasons for cheating are within the control of the teacher. In students' verbal comments after the filling out of the questionnaires, it was clearly stated that whenever the teacher leaves the room during an examination students feel as if copying is supported and encouraged. Students consider to the least extent that they *cannot receive a good grade in any other way* (other than by cheating), because *other students are better than they are*, or *because cheating is an essential part of life*.

Although most part of the research is aimed at reasons for dishonesty amongst students, it is particularly significant to investigate reasons why students do not cheat. Such data have great potential for theoretical and, in particular, practical application (Newstead, 1996).

Table 3.

Arithmetic means of the results and percentages of the answers Mostly or Completely relates to me on the Reasons Not to Cheat Scale (1-5 range, N=1088).

REASONS NOT TO CHEAT SCALE	M	%
1. I do not cheat because other students do not approve of it.	<i>2.07</i>	<i>9.7</i>
2. I do not cheat because most people whose opinion I hold in high esteem would not respect me any more.	<i>2.54</i>	<i>25.5</i>
3. I do not cheat because I am afraid of being caught.	3.31	50.8
4. I do not cheat because I am afraid of the consequences.	3.26	48.8
5. I do not cheat because I want to learn as much as I can.	<i>3.15</i>	<i>39.4</i>
6. I do not cheat because that is immoral and unethical.	<i>2.88</i>	<i>30.1</i>
7. I do not cheat because most of the time it is not possible to copy during an examination.	<i>3.17</i>	<i>42.9</i>

KEY: The highest values are in **bold**, and the lowest are in *italics*.

In our research, students most frequently state external reasons not to cheat (their fear of being caught and fear of consequences), which is in line with the high ratio of students who admit dishonest conduct. It was also demonstrated that participants in this research are least motivated to act morally by the opinion of others (students and people important to them).

In order to further explain why students cheat, we provided them with a 13-statement assessment concerning cheating in view of the possibility of rationalisation of immoral conduct in academic settings. Table 4 presents the arithmetic means by individual statement included in the Attitude towards Cheating Scale, and the percentage of students who agree with the statements offered.

Table 4.

Arithmetic means of the results and percentages of the answers Mostly or Strongly agree on the Attitude Towards Cheating Scale amongst the students of health studies (1-5 range, N=1088).

ATTITUDE TOWARDS CHEATING SCALE	M	%
1. It is wrong to cheat regardless of the circumstances.	3.56	56.1
2. It is wrong to cheat although the teacher did not adequately present the subject matter.	3.15	40.7
3. It is wrong to cheat although the teacher gave too much study material.	3.24	43.1
4. It is wrong to cheat although the teacher leaves the room during an examination.	2.82	33.5
5. It is wrong to cheat although the test questions are not from the assigned literature.	2.50	22.7
6. It is wrong to cheat although it seems that the teacher does not care whether I learned the subject matter or not.	2.82	29.4
7. It is wrong to cheat although the study material seems pointless.	2.95	30.1
8. It is wrong to cheat although the subject matter is too difficult.	3.06	35.3
9. It is wrong to cheat although that does not affect the grades of other students.	3.11	36.7
10. I believe it is wrong to cheat although the teacher is not fair.	2.69	27.4
11. It is wrong to cheat although I did not have enough time to prepare for the examination.	3.07	36.6
12. It is wrong to cheat although I might fail the year.	2.85	32.3
13. It is wrong to cheat although that would help me to get a scholarship, exemption from the payment of tuition or a similar benefit.	2.96	33.3

KEY: The highest values are in **bold**, and the lowest are in *italics*.

Students mostly agree with the statement that it is wrong to cheat regardless of the circumstances (Statement 1), and if the test subject-matter is too extensive (Statement 3). They agree least with Statements 5 and 10: 51.6% of students do not agree with the statement that *it is wrong to cheat, although the questions are not from the reading list assigned*, and 45% with the statement that *it is wrong to cheat, although the teacher is not fair*.

One of the problems that we encountered in our research was to establish whom or what students consider responsible for preventing cheating. Table 5 shows average answers by item on the Responsibility for Cheating Scale.

Table 5.

Arithmetic means of the results and percentages of the answers Mostly or Strongly agree on the Responsibility for Cheating Scale (1-5 range, N=1088).

RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHEATING	M	%
1. If I saw another student cheat, I would report him to the teacher.	1.30	1.1
2. If I saw another student cheat, I would tell that to the student.	1.80	9.9
3. If I saw another student cheat, I would not do anything.	4.03	77.1
4. It is my responsibility to prevent cheating.	1.71	4.6
5. It is the teacher's responsibility to prevent cheating.	4.25	81.5
6. It is the institution's responsibility to prevent cheating.	3.85	65.7

Students hold that the most responsible person for preventing cheating is the teacher. The educational institution takes second place, followed by the student

himself. The results are the same in all scales: students expect the teacher to set clear-cut rules of conduct in academic settings. If the teacher fails to do so, students feel as if he is implicitly giving them permission to copy and to engage in other forms of unethical conduct. The foregoing is confirmed by the following: whenever they see another student cheating, 77 % of students do nothing (most probably, because that is the teacher's duty and they do not want to expose themselves to social condemnation).

After an item-by-item analysis, we presented the overall results in the scales and sub-scales that we used, and in the Lie Scale. Table 6 shows average values for the Lie Scale from the EPQ Questionnaire, and for the scales and sub-scales connected with cheating.

Table 6.

Descriptive statistics for the Lie Scale (EPQ), and all scales related to cheating (N=1088).

	M	SD	Theoretical range
Lie Scale (EPQ)	8.17	4.038	0 - 21
Cheating Scale - conduct	38.42	6.663	18 - 54
Cheating Scale - acceptability of cheating	37.24	7.418	18 - 54
Reasons to cheat	60.57	17.862	24 - 120
Reasons not to cheat - moral	10.60	3.689	4 - 20
Reasons not to cheat - fear	9.72	3.301	3 - 15
Attitude Towards Cheating Scale	38.85	11.995	13 - 65
Personal responsibility	4.80	2.101	3 - 15
Responsibility of others	8.11	1.969	2 - 10

The results collected from students on the Lie Scale are somewhat different from the norms in the Croatian population (Miharija, 1994): they are lower than the norms (11.38). In view of the average total result, we might say that in this sample cheating is moderately frequent and partly acceptable. On the Reasons to Cheat Scales and the sub-scales of the Reasons Not to Cheat Scale, and attitudes towards cheating, the average group results are approximately at mid scale. The average result on the sub-scale *personal responsibility* is very low, while on the sub-scale *responsibility of others* the result is elevated.

In order to establish the relationship between the variables observed, we calculated Spearman's correlation coefficients (Table 7), because the variables significantly differ from a normal distribution.

Age has slight or low, but significant correlation with other observed variables; we can say that there is only a tendency to less cheating the older the students are. The degree of religious belief is not correlated with any aspect of academic dishonesty.

Very interesting results were obtained in the Lie Scale taken over from the EPQ Questionnaire. Dishonesty in answering is moderately, negatively and significantly correlated with conduct and reasons to cheat, while correlations with other variables are very low. That means that students who were less honest also have lower results on the Cheating Scale, and they provided less reasons to cheat. Although, at first glance, the mentioned results are contradictory, they are actually very logical, because students

Table 7.
Correlations between certain sociodemographic variables, lying and cheating.

	Religion	Lying	Conduct	Acceptability	Reasons to cheat	Moral reasons	Fear	Attitude towards cheating	Personal responsibility	Responsibility of others
Age	-0.049	0.177**	-0.351**	-0.228**	-0.284**	0.133**	-0.038	0.211**	0.114**	-0.058
Religion	1	0.114**	-0.06	-0.095**	-0.099**	0.03	0.03	0.066*	0.055	0.018
Lying		1	-0.364**	-0.256**	-0.354**	0.129**	0.014	0.214**	0.090**	-0.011
Conduct			1	0.681**	0.547**	-0.275**	-0.141**	-0.366**	-0.249**	-0.006
Acceptability				1	0.453**	-0.290**	-0.106**	-0.460**	-0.300**	-0.052
Reasons to cheat					1	-0.136**	0.051	-0.367**	-0.133**	0.025
Moral reasons						1	0.469**	0.387**	0.255**	0.065*
Fear							1	0.161**	0.103**	0.126**
Attitude towards cheating								1	0.287**	0.156**
Personal responsibility									1	0.043
Responsibility of others										1

** The correlation is significant at the level of 0.01

* The correlation is significant at the level of 0.05

who have a higher result on the Lie Scale also lied to a greater extent on the other scales, thus yielding “better” results.

Reasons to cheat are moderately positively correlated with dishonest conduct and its acceptability: the more they cheat, and the more they find cheating acceptable, the more reasons to cheat they provide. Naturally, the relationship of the variables can also be the opposite: the more reasons students have to cheat, the more they cheat. Moral reasons not to cheat are in a negative and low correlation with dishonest conduct and its acceptability and in positive, moderate correlation with the reasons not to cheat connected with fear, as well as with the attitude towards cheating. That means that on the basis of results on the subscale of moral reasons it is difficult to predict how much the students will cheat in academic situations and the extent to which they find cheating acceptable. The more students are motivated not to cheat by moral reasons, the less they cheat because of fear of being caught, and their attitude towards cheating is more negative. The attitude towards cheating, along with moral reasons, is also significantly correlated with dishonest conduct, acceptability of such conduct, and with reasons to cheat with which it is negatively correlated. The greater one’s personal responsibility to cheat, the less they accept cheating, and the more negative their attitude towards cheating. However, correlations were quite low, and do not represent a strong link between the observed variables.

For the purpose of establishing mutual relations and connectedness between independent variables in the prediction of results of the dependant variable, we carried out a simple regression analysis. Although the use of regression analysis for variables that were not normally distributed is inadequate, lacking the correct version of the nonparametric form, we present the results of the regression analysis fully aware of its limited range. In the regression analysis, we included as predictors only continuous quantitative variables that are mutually moderately correlated, and the criterion was self-perception of one’s conduct. Thus, we wanted to establish predictors that would be significant for foreseeing dishonest conduct amongst students in academic settings. Co-linearity was checked: the tolerances of predictors range from 0.6 and 0.8, while the average VIF is 1.32- all are regarded as acceptable values.

Table 8.

Regression analysis for the criterion variable of conduct for the students of health studies (N=1088).

Predictors	b	t
Age	-0.158	-6.81
Lying	-0.118	-5.13
Acceptability of conduct	0.471	17.92
Reasons to cheat	0.248	9.65
Moral reasons	-0.064	-2.65
Attitude towards cheating	0.044	1.70
Personal responsibility	-0.047	-2.06*
R= 0.760		
Adjusted R ² =0.578		
F (7.927) = 181.502**		

** Significant at the level of 0.01

* Significant at the lev

el of 0.05

Table 8 shows that six predictors, of the seven introduced proved to be significant: age, lying, acceptability of conduct, reasons to cheat and moral reasons, and personal responsibility. All seven predictors account for 57.8% of the variance of dishonest conduct amongst students. The tendency of students to admit academic cheating declines with age, and those who report less cheating have a higher score on the Lie Scale (they are more likely to conceal dishonest conduct), as explained in the review of the results of the correlation matrix. In addition, students who cheat less provide less moral reasons to cheat and the presented acceptability of such conduct is lower. The less personally responsible they feel for cheating, the more they cheat. As for the moral reasons for not cheating and personal responsibility as predictors of dishonest academic conduct, although they have significant beta coefficients, they are very low, so we cannot talk about meaningful prediction.

Discussion

In view of the small number of research studies conducted in Croatia concerning academic honesty amongst students, we wanted to investigate the extent of appearance of various forms of dishonest conduct on our sample of 1088 students of health studies, and the extent to which students consider such conduct acceptable. Of the 26 types of conduct offered, “milder” forms of cheating are the most frequent: *allowing others to copy from us, finding out questions after an examination, and copying and trying to find out answers by talking to other students during an examination*. Copying during an examination and whispering answers to others also proved to be the most frequent types of cheating in the research conducted by Šimić Šašić and Klarin (2009) on the sample of secondary school students in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, leading to the assumption that such conduct is present at all educational levels in Croatia. Allowing others to copy homework is also highly present in both research studies.

The results shown confirm that dishonest conduct is present throughout the educational system, and we are particularly worried by the fact that our research was conducted on students who should become health workers. The results of research conducted by McCrink (2010) show that unethical conduct amongst the students of nursing is more prevalent during written assignments and tests than in direct work with patients in clinical settings, but this connection has not been verified in practice in this research.

Observation of the total results from the sub-scales for cheating shows that cheating amongst the students of health studies in our sample is moderately frequent and partly acceptable. Certain types of unethical conduct are more frequent than others, while some are very rare. For example, serious forms of cheating (such as paying someone to take an examination for us, taking an examination in place of another student, falsifying a grade and using personal connections to receive a grade) are present in a very low percentage (up to 2%). The types of conduct that are most reported by students are the types of conduct that they find to be the most acceptable. For example, trying to find out answers before a test and allowing others to copy from them are the most acceptable

ones, where the least acceptable ones are the serious types of misconduct that are also reported more rarely. It is evident from the results that passive forms of cheating are very widespread and acceptable to students. Passive cheating is dishonest conduct that does not yield an immediate personal benefit to students, so obviously they do not regard such cheating as misconduct on their part and hold it to be pro-social behaviour (a friendly act of helping). We should like to know how much condemnation from other students would the act of refusing to help a colleague provoke.

In terms of further use of this scale at the level of higher education, we suggest adding questions relating to falsifying signatures in the matriculation book, which was not part of this study. Furthermore, item 23 (*Paying someone to take an examination...*) should be elaborated and the following variation should be offered: *Asking someone to take an examination...* In our research, there is a very low incidence of this type of conduct, and the reason might be that in our culture payment is not so common, but where it is present it may be for pro-social reasons or some other non-material gain.

The most frequently stated reasons for cheating by students are in the domain of teacher control, i.e., poor supervision during an examination and poor organisation of an examination. It is followed by trying to avoid failing or receiving a poor grade at an examination. The most rarely stated reasons to cheat are that they cannot receive a good grade in any other way, because other students are better than them, or because cheating is an essential part of life. The low incidence of the first two reasons follows from the need of students to find some external circumstances or reasons for their conduct. To the contrary, they would have to face their own lack of responsibility or effort used. The last reason stated leaves an impression that students are aware that they have a choice in their conduct; they do not consider cheating to be an essential part of life, cheating is not unavoidable, but it is their decision. The results coincide with the results of Šimić Šašić and Klarin (2006). Although the participants belong to different educational levels, two of the most and least represented reasons to cheat stated by the participants are identical in both pieces of research, which only confirms once again the transfer of conduct from the secondary school level to higher education. However, if we compare the average values of identical items in the reasons to cheat in both pieces of research, it is evident that they are regularly lower at student level than amongst the population of secondary school pupils. We presume that students are used to such type of conduct, and that they try to find fewer justifications for it.

We thought it would be useful to find out the reasons why students do not cheat. Research shows that the following factors contribute to less academic cheating on the part of students: reasons not to cheat are connected with internal factors; the importance students attribute to learning, personal integrity or the moral standpoint that cheating is wrong (Miller et al., 2011). In our research, it proved that the most common reasons that encourage students not to cheat are external, such as fear that they will be caught, and the fear of consequences. The foregoing indicates reduced internal moral regulation of the attitudes and conduct of students in our sample, which is most probably caused by numerous and various psychosocial reasons, about which we can only speculate: from

the value system adopted in their families, the atmosphere (strict or lenient) prevailing in a particular educational institution, to the social and political situation in our country over the past several years dominated by various forms of immoral conduct (such as lying to the public, concealing the truth, thefts and corruption).

Students in this research are least motivated to act morally by the opinion of people around them, other students and people who are important to them. We presume that other students and people close to them share similar views, so there is no social pressure that would make a particular student act morally.

It is somewhat surprising that more than half of the students in the research agree with the statement that it is wrong to cheat regardless of the circumstances. Namely, their conduct is in contradiction with the mentioned standpoint, because they cheat as soon as they have an opportunity, that is, when external supervision is poor. However, when we take into consideration their own acceptance of such types of conduct, the situation becomes less unusual: they simply do not believe that communicating with other students during an examination is cheating. Such results indicate that cheating might be reduced by making it clear to students what is regarded as cheating. Perhaps such great agreement with the said statement is partly caused by its position at the beginning of the scale; students idealistically agree with it, but when we remind them of various unfavourable conditions under which they study and have to take examinations (too difficult, lack of time, unfair teacher, danger of failing a year...), their agreement with the statements declines.

One of the interesting results was the result on the Responsibility for Cheating Scale: students hold that the most responsible person for preventing cheating is the teacher. It is followed by the responsibility of the educational institution, and the student is least responsible. Such results are in line with the dominant external reasons not to cheat during an examination (supervision by teacher), meaning that if students are “enabled” to act dishonestly in academic settings, they will do so. According to students, the end justifies the means, which shows poor use of proper moral values, but which is in line with the values dominating the society as a whole. Practical solutions arising from such knowledge are relatively easy to implement: whenever a teacher supervises pupils/ students during an examination, they will copy less (or not at all), that is, whenever punishment for various forms of cheating is explicitly announced or even issued against the pupil/student caught cheating, it will significantly reduce the likelihood of such conduct in the future. However, such (forced) approach does not change the attitude towards cheating as a wrong type of conduct, and more attention should be paid to the development or changing of intrinsic values.

If we observe the mutual relationship between the variables examined, there is a tendency that the older the students are the less they cheat and the less reasons to cheat they provide. Such results are confirmed in the studies conducted by McCabe et al. (2008), and Passow et al. (2006). They can partly be explained by greater embarrassment of older students if they are caught cheating. After the testing was conducted, when talking to older students of specialist studies, they stated that they could “not afford

to act that way any more”, because older persons are expected to be more mature and responsible. The degree of religious belief, in line with the results of other studies (Sutton & Hubb, 1995; Nowell & Laufer, 1997; all according to Carpenter, 2006), is not connected with any aspect of academic dishonesty although we expected that a greater degree of religious belief would be at least somewhat connected to less frequent dishonest conduct.

The result on the Lie Scale is negatively, moderately and significantly correlated with dishonest conduct and with the result on the Reasons to Cheat Scale. Literal interpretation would be that students who are less honest, cheat less and state less reasons to cheat, therefore, that they are academically more honest, which is definitely not probable. However, such results are easy to explain, considering that it is a self-perception scale. Although the questionnaire was anonymous, and the average result on the Lie Scale was lower than in the population, individual students have the need to present themselves in the best possible light, and hesitate to admit to others (and maybe also to themselves) any socially unacceptable conduct. Therefore, students who have a higher result on the Lie Scale are less honest about their dishonest conduct in academic settings, and about the number of their reasons to cheat. We established that reasons to cheat are moderately and positively correlated with dishonest conduct and its acceptability. Therefore, the more they cheat, and the more acceptable they find cheating, the more reasons to cheat they provide. Such results are expected, because students who cheat more also probably rationalise their unethical conduct and find numerous excuses for it. In other words, part of the explanation for the correlation can be derived from another direction: students who have less free time (because they are either employed or work part-time), or have less capacity, are more likely to engage in dishonest conduct, because they cannot meet their academic requirements in any other way.

The regression analysis showed that students will engage in less academic dishonesty the older they are. Such results are in line with Newstead (1996), and we presume that the reason is that with age students hold their social reputation and integrity in higher esteem, which we commented on earlier. Furthermore, students who report less cheating will have a higher result on the Lie Scale, which means that they are more likely to conceal dishonest conduct. In addition, students who cheat less also provide fewer reasons to cheat, and the presented acceptability of such conduct is lower. Considering that the acceptability of conduct has the highest beta coefficient, it follows that the attitudes expressed as the acceptability of specific conduct are the key predictor for the appearance of such conduct and that we can influence conduct by changing the attitudes of students about cheating. It is well-known that attitudes are quite resilient to change (according to Baron and Byrne, 1977), so we presume that any influencing of attitudes should begin at a younger age, and that there should be continued work with children and adolescents who should keep hearing the message that certain forms of conduct are unethical, and therefore not acceptable. The culture of honest conduct should be cherished and present not only in the educational system, but also in private and public life, politics and the media, and during the formative

years popular public figures should be used as role models of honest conduct.

What are the results telling us? Is academic dishonesty common, and should we work on suppressing it? In our opinion, the occurrence of cheating, although moderately present in our research, is even as such too high, and strategies for suppressing it or at least reducing it should be developed and used. We have already mentioned certain possibilities, and Davis (2011) sums up efficient strategies that appear in published works, but which are also used both by her and her colleagues in practice, which can suppress or at least reduce the occurrence of dishonesty amongst students. She states that clear communication about the rules of academic conduct by the teacher to students really is the key. As she points out, it is important to openly discuss this topic with students at the very first meeting (the same practice is proposed in Hall's 2011 study), and "to create a normative atmosphere where cheating is not acceptable" (Nath, 2009, p. 6), that is, to assume responsibility for the development of academic integrity (Miller et al., 2011).

The most recent papers intensively examine Internet plagiarism as the more and more present form of academic dishonesty. Taking over texts that are publicly available on the Internet or in electronic databases by a simple method of copying and pasting the selected text into papers, graduate theses, professional and other academic papers, without proper references, is growingly frequent. Comas-Forgas et al. (2010, p. 304) state that "the Internet has become the main source of academic literature and plagiarism in student essays". Considering that such texts are publicly available, it is incorrectly presumed that they may be used without proper references. As stated by Baždarić et al. (2009, p. 108), "the frequency of plagiarism is on the rise, and the development of the information-communication technology makes unauthorised use of texts easier, but at the same time, thanks to the same technology, computer programmes and network services are being developed to identify plagiarism". Although when copying texts from the Internet it is easier to spot plagiarism in the English language, computer programmes for checking whether texts are identical are now used in Spain (Comas-Forgas et al., 2010) and in Croatia (Bilić-Zulle, 2006). In this research, we did not include this important and very current problem, and it remains an open, separate topic for future research.

Conclusions

The purpose of this paper was to investigate self-perception of academic honesty amongst the students of nine different health studies. We, therefore, examined the self-perceived conduct, and the attitudes and values connected with academic honesty, which we registered on seven scales. The results show a very high incidence of individual and milder forms of dishonest conduct in academic assignments, particularly during tests. As many as 98.4 % of students admit having copied from others during a written examination, and 89.1 % admit having at least once used a crib sheet during an examination. Students find it most acceptable to try and find out answers before they take a particular test (they do not consider such conduct cheating), and to allow others to copy from them (they consider that to be proper behaviour amongst colleagues).

More serious forms of academic dishonesty (to use connections to receive a grade, to take an examination in place of another student, to pay someone to take an examination in place of us, to falsify a grade) appear in a very low percentage.

Students most frequently engage in dishonest conduct during tests, because they have an opportunity to engage in such conduct as the result of poor supervision during the test, and in order not to fail at the examination or receive a poor grade. Greater acceptance of the various forms of cheating proved to be connected with the stating of several reasons to cheat (justification), and the expressing of a more positive attitude towards cheating. Significant predictors for the criterion variable of conduct in academic settings are the following: age (older students cheat less), lying (those who have a higher result on the Lie Scale cheat less), acceptability of conduct (the more they cheat, the more they find cheating acceptable), reasons to cheat (students who cheat more state more reasons for cheating). The attitude towards cheating did not prove to be a significant predictor, whereas moral reasons and personal responsibility are significant, but with very low beta coefficients. All seven predictors account for 57.8% of the variance of dishonest conduct amongst students.

Students relay responsibility for cheating and for preventing cheating to teachers and the educational institution, and they assume responsibility for it least. We therefore conclude that in the suppression of cheating it is necessary to embrace a two-way approach: to teach teachers how to clearly inform students what is the kind of conduct that is expected of them, and what kind of conduct will not be tolerated, and to raise awareness and encourage the personal responsibility amongst students for their own ethical behaviour. In addition, it is essential to systematically work on the internalisation of ethical norms from the earliest school age.

We hope that this research will, at least somewhat, contribute to the raising of students' awareness about their own academic conduct and the attitude of students who took part in the research. It is our opinion that it is extremely important to encourage academic honesty amongst students not only during the studies, but also in terms of relaying positive academic standards into their future working environment, particularly because students who took part in this research will work in an especially sensitive field of work - the health care system. In conclusion, it would definitely be interesting to compare the results of this research with the results that we would obtain by examining the experience of academic honesty amongst students and other institutions of higher education that educate students for social, technical or natural science occupations where honesty in work is equally important.

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Akademski čestitost studenata zdravstvenih studija

Sažetak

Akademski poštenje studenata u nas se rijetko istražuje unatoč iznimno visokoj prevalenciji nečestitog ponašanja na svim razinama obrazovanja, kako pokazuju dosadašnja istraživanja. U ovom istraživanju ispitan je osobni doživljaj ponašanja, stavova i vrijednosti povezan s akademskom čestitošću 1088 studenata nekoliko veleučilišnih studija. Rezultati ukazuju na umjerenu pojavnost nečestitog ponašanja, osobito na ispitima znanja. Studenti se najčešće ponašaju nepošteno zbog slabog nadzora na ispitu, a osnovni motivator je prolaz na ispitu ili dobivanje više ocjene. Uvidom u značajne prediktore akademskog nepoštenja zaključujemo da se stariji studenti ponašaju čestitije. Ujedno, što im je nepoštenje u izvedbi akademskih zadataka manje prihvatljivo i što navode manje razloga za nepošteno ponašanje, a više za pošteno, to je njihovo ponašanje čestitije. Ipak, studenti nisu spremni preuzeti odgovornost za vlastito čestito ponašanje, te očekuju kontrolu nastavnika i obrazovne institucije. U radu su iznijete preporuke za poticanje i usvajanje čestitog akademskog ponašanja u visokoobrazovnim ustanovama.

Ključne riječi: odgovornost; percepcija; stav; student; varanje.

Uvod

Iako se fenomen akademskog poštenja studenata dosta istražuje, osobito u Sjedinjenim Američkim Državama (npr. Passow i sur., 2006; Murdock i sur., 2008; Nath i Lovaglia, 2008; Jones, 2011), te se ulaže dodatan trud u sprečavanje studentskog nepoštenja u izvedbi akademskih zadataka (npr. Mirza i Staples, 2010; Owunwanne i sur., 2010; Hall, 2011; Davis, 2011), u nas su takva istraživanja, ali i rasprave u javnom prostoru, vrlo rijetki. Istraživački radovi koji se tiču pojavnosti varanja studenata u akademskim zadacima (npr. Hrabak i sur., 2004) ili stavova prema plagiranju (Pupovac i sur., 2010) i u nas se objavljuju na engleskom jeziku, što ne doprinosi otvaranju javne, akademske rasprave o tom problemu na našem području. Osim doktorske disertacije Lidije Bilić-Zulle (2006) koja je ispitala pojavnost i stav o prisvajanju autorskog vlasništva u studenata medicine, te znanstvenog rada Šimić Šašić i Klarin (2008) koje su taj problem istraživale na uzorku srednjoškolaca, na hrvatskom jeziku ne nailazimo na druga istraživanja te teme. Stoga smatramo da je važno poticati i

obnavljati raspravu o akademskoj čestitosti kako bi se dao novi doprinos boljem razumijevanju ne samo metodičkog i didaktičkog segmenta obrazovnog sustava, već i odgojnog, koji na razini visokog obrazovanja postaje neopravdano zanemaren ili nevidljiv. Što se zapravo smatra nepoštenim ponašanjem u obrazovnom kontekstu? U literaturi se nailazi na različite opise ponašanja učenika i studenata koji se smatraju akademski nepoštenim. McCabe i suradnici (2001) identificirali su pet najčešćih oblika takvog ponašanja. Studenti se slažu s tim da je najozbiljniji oblik varanja na ispitu ono koje se pojavljuje tijekom pismenog testa znanja, a može uključivati prepisivanje odgovora od drugog studenta, upotrebu *šalabahtera* i pomaganje drugom studentu da vara na ispitu. To su ujedno ponašanja čiju su visoku prevalenciju primijetile Šimić Šašić i Klarin (2008) u svom istraživanju. Ostali oblici varanja događaju se prilikom pisanja pismenih radova (eseja, seminara, zadaća), a odnose se (prema McCabe i sur., 2001) na neovlašteno prisvajanje tuđeg autorskog vlasništva i prikazivanje kao vlastitog (plagiranje), falsificiranje ili izmišljanje bibliografije, predaju rada koji je napisao netko drugi i preuzimanje tuđih rečenica (citata) bez posebnog označavanja i referenciranja. Ipak, Burrus i suradnici (2007) smatraju da studenti možda nisu osvijestili ili da ne prepoznaju cijeli spektar ponašanja koji bi se mogao nazivati varanjem (primjerice značajno manji broj studenata svrstava ponašanja kao što su traženje pomoći kolege u pisanju domaće zadaće ili učenje za ispit iz starih testova u nepoštena). Iskustvo navedenih autora govori o tome da se proporcija studenata koji priznaju varanje tijekom studija povećava nakon što im se jasno definiraju ponašanja koja pripadaju kategoriji akademski nepoštenih.

Tema akademskog poštenja osobito je relevantna za naše društvo u kojem je pojavnost varanja u školskim i akademskim zadacima iznimno visoka. U istraživanju Šimić Šašić i Klarin (2008) ukupno je 92,71 % srednjoškolaca u Zadru izjavilo da je u školi varalo jednom ili više puta, dok se čak 94 % studenata Medicinskog fakulteta u Zagrebu barem jedanput tijekom studija ponašalo nepošteno u akademskim zadacima (Hrabak i sur., 2004), što nam govori o tome da je takvo ponašanje više pravilo nego iznimka, te da se prenosi u svim razinama školovanja. Taj prijenos nepoštenog ponašanja iz srednje škole u studentski kontekst, pa i u nepošteno ponašanje na radnom mjestu, primijećen je i u drugim istraživanjima (Harding i sur., 2004; Carpenter i sur., 2006), što stvara zabrinjavajući dojam nesenzibiliziranosti i tolerancije na nepoštenje ne samo u obrazovnom sustavu već i u društvu općenito. Na to ukazuje i istraživanje Šimić Šašić i Klarin (2008) u kojem su učenici koji smatraju da je varanje opravdano i društveno prihvatljivo („svi to rade“) bili skloniji varanju u školskim zadacima. Autorice takav nalaz tumače gledanjem na varanje kao na konvencionalni problem (oni koji su uspješni u varanju, zapravo su *snalažljivi*), a ne moralno upitan. Taj zaključak potkrepljuju visokim rezultatima slaganja dobivenim na Skali percepcije socijalne nepravde, prema kojima učenici osobito primjećuju *nejednakost članova pred zakonom i neprihvatanje društvenih vrijednosti i opću neravnopravnost članova društva* (Šimić Šašić i Klarin, 2008, str. 1011).

Istraživanja ovog fenomena provedena izvan Hrvatske govore o širem postotnom rasponu studenata koji priznaju uključenost u stjecanje ocjene na nepošten način. U novijim istraživanjima samoprocjene vlastitog akademski nepoštenog ponašanja studenata kreću se od 16 % (Rabi i sur., 2006) do više od 70 % (O'Rourke i sur., 2010; DuPree i Sattler, 2010). Metaanaliza koju je proveo Whitley (1998) uspoređujući 107 istraživanja provedenih tijekom posljednjih 35 godina prošlog stoljeća pokazala je da 70 % studenata priznaje plagiranje svojih studentskih radova, varanje na pismenim ispitima ili u domaćim zadaćama.

Nath i Lovaglia (2008) ističu da će, unatoč slaganju većine studenata u tome da je varanje neetično, velik broj njih ipak varati tijekom studija. Koji su razlozi takvog ponašanja? U istraživanju koje su proveli Burrus i suradnici (2007) čak 97 % studenata smatra prepisivanje na testu nepoštenim. Ipak, Jones (2011) navodi da tek 41% sudionika izjavljuje kako nikada ne bi varali iz etičkih razloga, dok njih 59 % izjavljuje da bi namjerno varali, odnosno 67 % da bi namjerno plagirali rad. Prema toj autorici, tri su osnovna razloga zbog kojih bi studenti varali u akademskim zadacima: želja za boljom ocjenom (92 % studenata), odgađanje učenja ili odugovlačenje s učenjem ili izvršavanjem zadataka (83 %), prezauzetost, odnosno nedostatak vremena (75 %). Ostali razlozi zastupljeni su u manjem postotku, a uključuju sljedeće (slijedom učestalosti): nerazumijevanje gradiva, manjak interesa za gradivo, preopterećenost nastavom, i drugi to rade nekažnjeno, omalovažavanje značenja (nije važno ni njima, ni profesorima) i vršnjački pritisak (Jones, 2011). Među najsnažnijim korelatima akademskog varanja su umjereno očekivanje uspjeha, prethodno iskustvo varanja, studiranje u teškim uvjetima, pozitivan stav prema varanju, doživljaj da socijalne norme podržavaju varanje, očekivanje velike nagrade za uspjeh, socijalna usporedba s vršnjacima (primjećivanje koliko drugi varaju, odnosno odobravaju varanje) i doživljena ozbiljnost primijenjene kazne za varanje (Whitley, 1998; McCabe i sur., 2001). Osobine kao što su dob i spol studenata imale su značajno manju ulogu. McCabe i Treviño (1993) dodaju navedenom popisu okolnosti u kojima je moguće varati. Pritom je klima akademske čestitosti u samoj obrazovnoj instituciji iznimno važna. Ti autori primjećuju da je u školama u kojima su jasna pravila etičnog ponašanja (etički kodeks), pri čemu je osobito važan vršnjački pritisak usmjeren na pridržavanje tih pravila, od velikog značaja. Čak i samo upozorenje na kontrolu studentskih radova i kaznu ima kao posljedicu manje varanje upozorenih studenata (Bilić-Zulle, 2006).

Vrsta studija pokazala se kao važna odrednica učestalosti varanja. Uočena je veća pojavnost nepoštenog akademskog ponašanja studenata ekonomije i tehničkih struka (Harding i sur., 2004), a manja studenata društvenih i prirodnih znanosti, stranih jezika i umjetnosti (Bowers, 1964, i Baird, 1980; prema Daniel i sur., 1991). Ipak, visok postotak akademskog nepoštenja studenata na medicinskim studijima osobito je zabrinjavajuć, jer je vjerojatnije da će imati izravan i opasan utjecaj na zdravlje i život krajnjih korisnika njihovih usluga (klijenata, pacijenata) kada se jednog dana zaposle. Vjerojatno je to i jedan od razloga zbog kojih se osobita pažnja usmjerava

na otkrivanje i sprečavanje plagiranja i drugih nečestitih pojava u biomedicini (Bilić-Zulle, 2006). U novije vrijeme nailazimo na istraživanja akademskog poštenja među studentima zdravstvenih studija u svjetskim okvirima (npr. McCrink, 2010; Keçeci i sur., 2011; Mohr i sur., 2011.; Fontana, 2009), koja u nas nisu nimalo zastupljena.

Zbog toga je provedeno istraživanje pojavnosti nepoštenog akademskog ponašanja studenata devet zdravstvenih studija, njihove percepcije prihvatljivosti pojedinog ponašanja, razloga za pošteno i nepošteno ponašanje u akademskim situacijama, te odgovornosti za takvo ponašanje. Zanimalo nas je koji se oblici akademske nečestitosti studenata javljaju u većoj, a koji u manjoj mjeri, kao i koje oblike tih ponašanja smatraju varanjem. S obzirom na pretpostavku da će među studentima biti izraženije davanje socijalno poželjnih odgovora u smjeru akademski čestitog ponašanja, u istraživanju smo primijenile skalu laganja kako bismo provjerile istinitost njihovih odgovora. Pretpostavljamo da će samoiskazana pojavnost varanja studenata biti usklađena s dosadašnjim istraživanjima provedenim u nas, i da će studenti iskazati permisivan stav prema varanju. Također, očekujemo negativnu povezanost između laganja i samoprocjene varanja.

Metode

Sudionici

U istraživanju provedenom tijekom akademske godine 2010./2011. u Zagrebu sudjelovalo je 1088 studenata devet zdravstvenih studija. Prosječna dob studenata iznosi 25,68 godina (SD=8,06), a raspon dobi između 19 i 56 godina. U uzorku sudionika 81 % čine studentice.

Prema načinu studiranja, 57,5% obuhvaća redovne studente, 27,7 % su studenti izvanrednih, a 14,7 % studenti specijalističkih studija. 27,2 % studenata studira na teret ministarstva, dok ostali studenti plaćaju školarinu. Mnogi su studenti u radnom odnosu; njih 36,9 % je u punom radnom odnosu, a njih 19,1 % radi povremeno. Većina studenata (67 %) smatra se umjereno religioznima.

Instrumenti

Ispitivanje je provedeno grupno primjenom nekoliko upitnika:

Skala varanja nastala je na temelju upitnika o varanju autorica Šimić Šašić i Klarin (2009), odnosno Carpentera i suradnika (2006). U originalu se upitnik autorica Šimić Šašić i Klarin sastoji od 17 čestica raspoređenih u dvije subskale i po sadržaju je prilagođen učenicima srednje škole, dok upitnik Carpentera i suradnika sadrži 20 čestica koje se sadržajno uglavnom poklapaju s već navedenom skalom Šimić Šašić i Klarin. Prva subskala ispituje pojavnost različitih oblika varanja u akademskim uvjetima, a druga subskala ispituje njihovu prihvatljivost. Skale su modificirane (s dopuštanjem navedenih autora), pa je za potrebe ovog istraživanja broj čestica povećan na 26 i prilagođen načinu rada na visokom učilištu. Čestice sadrže opise ponašanja koji predstavljaju različite oblike akademskog varanja. Za svako ponašanje studenti

trebaju procijeniti jesu li navedeno učinili sami ili u društvu vršnjaka (npr. *Prepisivati od drugih studenata na pismenom ispitu*) na skali od tri stupnja (*nikad, 1-2 puta i više puta*), i u kojoj im je mjeri takvo ponašanje prihvatljivo (*neprihvatljivo, djelomično prihvatljivo i prihvatljivo*). Ukupni rezultati izražavaju se zbrajanjem odgovora na subskalama ponašanja i prihvatljivosti ponašanja pri čemu veći rezultat označava veću zastupljenost varanja i veću razinu prihvaćanja navedenog ponašanja.

Za subskalu učestalosti ponašanja varanja provedena je eksploratorna faktorska analiza glavnih komponenti koja je rezultirala ekstrakcijom 6 faktora. Od 26 čestica 21 čestica imala je najveće zasićenje prvim faktorom, od čega smo iz daljnje obrade izbacili još 3 čestice čija su zasićenja bila raspršena i u drugim faktorima. Te čestice opisuju ponašanja za koja studenti u ovom uzorku nemaju priliku (*Promijeniti odgovor u testu nakon što je ocijenjen i onda prijaviti nastavniku da je krivo ispravio test*) jer ne dobivaju testove na uvid osim na zahtjev, a i tada u prisutnosti nastavnika. Druge dvije čestice opisuju ponašanja za koja su priliku imali samo studenti specijalističkih studija jer se uglavnom odnose na pisanje diplomskog rada, stoga smo i njih izuzeli iz daljnje obrade. U konačnici je izbačeno osam čestica: 2, 8, 11, 14, 15, 16, 22, 23.

Indeks pouzdanosti (Cronbachov alfa koeficijent) za verziju upitnika s preostalih 18 čestica iznosi 0,87.

Skala razloga varanja sadrži 24 čestice s različitim razlozima zbog kojih studenti varaju (npr. *Varam jer nemam vremena za učenje*). Preuzeta je od autorica Šimić Šašić i Klarin (2009.) uz izmjenu 5 čestica, također s dopuštenjem autorica.

Skala razloga nevaranja konstruirana je za potrebe ovog istraživanja, a sadrži 7 čestica, (npr. *Ne varam jer drugi studenti to ne odobravaju*). Navedeni su različiti razlozi koji motiviraju studente da ne varaju. Na obje skale za svaku česticu studenti procjenjuju u kojoj se mjeri navedeni razlog odnosi na njih na skali Likertova tipa od 5 stupnjeva, pri čemu 1 znači *Uopće se ne odnosi na mene*, a 5 *Potpuno se odnosi na mene*.

Faktorska analiza provedena je za obje skale zajedno kako bismo provjerili odgovara li faktorizacija podjeli čestica po facijalnoj valjanosti u razloge varanja i razloge nevaranja. Stoga je broj faktora ograničen na dva, a faktorska analiza potvrdila je pretpostavljenu podjelu. Eksploratorna faktorska analiza za Skalu razloga varanja izlučila je dva faktora koji zajedno objašnjavaju 45 % varijance, od čega prvi faktor objašnjava 32 %, a drugi 13 % varijance. Većina čestica zasićena je samo prvim faktorom, ili su u većoj mjeri njime zasićene, osim prve dvije čestice koje imaju veće zasićenje drugim faktorom. No, i te dvije čestice imaju solidno zasićenje prvim faktorom, pa smatramo opravdanim tretirati navedenu skalu kao jednofaktorsku. Faktorska analiza Skale razloga nevaranja polučila je dva faktora koji objašnjavaju 64 % varijance, a mogu se interpretirati kao *moralni razlozi* (1., 2., 5. i 6. čestica), odnosno *strah* (3., 4. i 7.). Pouzdanost za Skalu razloga varanja, Cronbachov alfa, iznosi 0,93, a na Skali razloga nevaranja za subskalu *moralni razlozi* 0,75, dok za subskalu *strah kao razlog* alfa iznosi 0,81.

Skala stavova o varanju preuzeta je iz istraživanja Carpentera i sur. (2006), s dopuštenjem autora. U originalnoj verziji skala sadrži 12 čestica koje se temelje na

„neutralizacijama“. Kako autori navode, neutralizacije studenti upotrebljavaju kako bi svoje neprikladno ponašanje opravdali utjecajima koji su izvan njihove kontrole. Primjer čestice je *Pogrešno je varati bez obzira na okolnosti*. Skali je dodana čestica *Pogrešno je varati iako bi mi to pomoglo da dobijem stipendiju, oslobađanje plaćanja školarine ili sličnu korist*. Za svaku česticu studenti zaokružuju jedan odgovor na skali Likertova tipa od 5 stupnjeva, pri čemu 1 znači *Uopće se ne slažem*, a 5 *Potpuno se slažem*. Veći ukupan rezultat znači negativniji stav prema varanju. Eksploratorna faktorska analiza izlučila je dva faktora koji zajedno objašnjavaju 66 % varijance, pri čemu sve čestice imaju najveće zasićenje prvim faktorom. Ni nakon provedene varimax rotacije nije bilo moguće naći zajednički nazivnik tvrdnji koji bi nam olakšao interpretaciju faktora. Pouzdanost te skale iznosi $\alpha=0,94$.

Skala odgovornosti za varanje sadrži 6 čestica, a nastala je na temelju subskele *Osobna odgovornost za varanje* autora Passow i sur. (2006) kojima su pridodate još tri čestice. Njome se ispituje tko je, po mišljenju studenata, u najvećoj mjeri odgovoran za sprečavanje varanja (npr. *Sprečavanje varanja je odgovornost učilišta*). Studentima su ponuđeni odgovori od 1 *Uopće se ne slažem*, do 5 *Potpuno se slažem*. Faktorskom analizom izdvojena su dva faktora koji objašnjavaju 59 % varijance. Prvi faktor obuhvaća čestice koje se odnose na odgovornost studenta da spriječi varanje - *osobna odgovornost*, a drugi čestice koje iskazuju odgovornost drugih (nastavnik i učilište) - *odgovornost drugih*. Čestica *Kada bih vidio/la drugog kako vara, ne bih učinio/la ništa* izbačena je iz daljnje obrade jer bitno smanjuje pouzdanost prve subskele *osobna odgovornost*: s tom česticom Cronbachov alfa iznosi 0,19, a bez nje 0,63. Pouzdanost subskele *odgovornost drugih* iznosi 0,71.

Sve čestice koje se nisu pokazale prikladnima, pa su izbačene iz daljnje obrade, bit će prikazane u rezultatima samo na razini pojedinačne deskripcije.

Uz navedene skale sudionici su ispunili **Eysenckov upitnik ličnosti** - EPQ (H. J. Eysenck i Sybil B. G. Eysenck, 1975) koji ispituje 3 dimenzije ličnosti (ekstraverzija - introverzija, neuroticizam - emocionalna stabilnost i psihoticizam). No, one nam za ovaj rad nisu bile u središtu interesa, već je upitnik u cijelosti upotrijebljen kako bismo mogli primijeniti skalu laži. Viši rezultat na skali laganja označava veći stupanj laganja.

Dodatno su prikupljeni podaci o **sociodemografskim obilježjima** (spol, dob, stupanj religioznosti, način plaćanja studija i radni odnos).

Postupak

Prikupljanje podataka u ovom istraživanju provedeno je uz pridržavanje etičkih smjernica za provedbu istraživanja u kojima su ispitanici ljudi. Ispitivanje je provedeno grupno u vrijeme nastave. Ispitivanje je bilo anonimno, o čemu su student obaviješteni usmeno i pismeno (u uputi).

Rezultati

Naš je prvi cilj u ovom istraživanju bio utvrditi samopercepciju pojavnosti različitih oblika nepoštenog ponašanja studenata u akademskom okruženju i njihove izjave o

njihovoj prihvatljivosti. Kako bismo dobili uvid u učestalost pojedinih vrsta varanja i njihovu prihvatljivost, u tablici 1. prikazale smo frekvencije pojedinih odgovora za svaku česticu na obje skale.

Tablica 1.

Najučestaliji oblici nepoštenog ponašanja izraženi su u tvrdnjama (prema stupnju slaganja): 2, 12, 3 i 1. Za razliku od tablice 1., u sljedećem tekstu bit će prikazani postoci studenata koji su naveli da su se ikada tako ponašali (jednom ili više puta), pa će ti postoci biti zbroj dvaju stupaca u tablici. Čak 99,8 % studenata dopušta drugim studentima da prepisuju od njih na pismenom ispitu, dok se 97,8 % studenata raspituje o pitanjima za ispit na koji još nisu izašli. 98,1 % studenata šapće drugim studentima na pismenom ili usmenom ispitu, a 98,4 % njih prepisuje od drugih za vrijeme ispita. Vidimo da su sva navedena ponašanja široko rasprostranjena među studentima.

Ponašanja koja se ne pojavljuju uglavnom nikad ili u vrlo malom postotku jesu plaćanje drugima da odrade dio ili cijeli ispit umjesto studenta (čestica 23.), izlaženje na ispit umjesto drugog studenta (14.), krivotvorenje ocjene (8.) i dobivanje ocjene preko veze (11.). Takvi „teški“ oblici varanja, iako slabije prisutni, javljali su se sporadično, pa tako 19 ispitanika u našem uzorku priznaje da je krivotvorilo ocjenu (1,8 %), 10 ih je izašlo umjesto nekog drugog na ispit (0,9 %), a čak 95 studenata (8,7 %) promijenilo je odgovor u testu nakon ispita.

Ponašanja koja studenti najviše iskazuju ujedno sui m i najprihvatljivija. U najvećoj mjeri studentima je prihvatljivo raspitivati se o ispitu na koji još nisu izašli (24 % djelomično prihvatljivo, a 73,5 % prihvatljivo), dopustiti drugima da prepisuju od njih (45 % smatra da je to djelomično prihvatljivo, a 51 % da je prihvatljivo), dok su im najmanje prihvatljivi teži prijestupi koji se ujedno i najrjeđe javljaju. Može se uočiti da su pasivni oblici varanja vrlo rašireni i prihvatljivi studentima.

Osim učestalosti i prihvatljivosti varanja među studentima, zanimaju nas i razlozi zbog kojih studenti posežu za nepoštenim načinima akademskog ponašanja, odnosno, kad ne varaju, koji su razlozi koji ih na to motiviraju. U Tablici 2. prikazani su rezultati za pojedine razloge varanja u našem uzorku.

Tablica 2.

Razlozi akademskog varanja koje studenti najčešće navode su: slab nadzor na ispitu, loša organizacija ispita, izbjegavanje pada ili loše ocjene na ispitu. Više od 55 % studenata vara zato što je nadzor na ispitu slab, odnosno više od 46 % jer je organizacija ispita loša, na temelju čega možemo zaključiti da se najviše vara zbog razloga koji su pod kontrolom nastavnika. U usmenim komentarima studenata dobivenim nakon provedenog ispitivanja jasno je izrečeno da studenti doživljavaju izlazak nastavnika iz prostorije tijekom ispita kao podršku i poticaj za svoje prepisivanje. Studenti u najmanjoj mjeri smatraju da *drugačije* (osim varanjem) *ne mogu dobiti dobru ocjenu*, jer su *drugi studenti bolji od njih*, ili *zato što je varanje nužan dio života*.

Iako se većina istraživanja usmjerava na razloge nepoštenog ponašanja studenata, od osobitog je značaja istraživati i razloge zbog kojih studenti ne varaju. Ti podaci imaju velik potencijal za teorijsku, a osobito praktičnu primjenu (Newstead, 1996).

Tablica 3.

U našem istraživanju najčešće navedeni razlozi za nevaranje studenata su izvanjski (strah da će biti uhvaćeni i strah od posljedica), što je u skladu s visokom proporcijom studenata koji priznaju nečestito ponašanje. Dodatno se pokazalo da sudionike ovog istraživanja na moralno ponašanje najmanje potiče mišljenje drugih osoba (studenata i važnih ljudi).

Kako bismo dodatno objasnili zašto studenti varaju, dali smo im na procjenu 13 tvrdnji o varanju s obzirom na mogućnost racionalizacije nemoralnog ponašanja u akademskim uvjetima. U Tablici 4. prikazane su aritmetičke sredine po pojedinim tvrdnjama na Skali stavova o varanju i postotci studenata koji se slažu s ponuđenim izjavama.

Tablica 4.

Studenti se najviše slažu s tvrdnjom da je pogrešno varati bez obzira na okolnosti (tvrdnja 1.), te ako je materijal za ispit preopširan (tvrdnja 3). Najmanje se slažu s petom i desetom tvrdnjom: čak 51,6% studenata ne slaže se s tvrdnjom da je *pogrešno varati iako pitanja nisu iz zadane literature*, a 45% s tvrdnjom da je *pogrešno varati iako nastavnik ne ocjenjuje pravedno*.

Jedan od istraživačkih problema bio je utvrditi koga ili što studenti smatraju odgovornim za sprečavanje varanja. U Tablici 5. prikazani su prosječni odgovori po česticama Skale odgovornosti za varanje.

Tablica 5.

Studenti smatraju da je najodgovornija osoba za sprečavanje varanja nastavnik. Tek potom smatraju da je odgovornost na obrazovnoj instituciji, a najmanje na samom studentu. Taj se nalaz provlači kroz sve skale: studenti očekuju od nastavnika da postavi jasna pravila ponašanja u akademskom okruženju. Ako nastavnik to propusti učiniti, studenti to doživljavaju kao prešutnu podršku u njihovu prepisivanju i drugim oblicima neetičnog ponašanja. To potvrđuje sljedeći nalaz: kad vide drugog studenta kako vara, 77% studenata ne čini ništa (vjerojatno jer je to nastavnikov posao, pa se ne žele izlagati socijalnoj osudi).

Nakon analize po česticama, izrazile smo ukupne rezultate na korištenim skalama i subskalama, kao i na skali laganja. U Tablici 6. prikazane su prosječne vrijednosti za skalu laganja iz upitnika EPQ, i za skale i subskale vezane uz varanje.

Tablica 6.

Rezultati dobiveni od studenata na skali laganja donekle se razlikuju od normi na hrvatskoj populaciji (Miharija, 1994): niži su u odnosu na norme (11,38). S obzirom

na prosječni ukupni rezultat, možemo reći da je u ovom uzorku varanje umjereno učestalo i djelomično prihvatljivo. Na skalama razloga varanja i subskalama skale nevaranja, kao i stavova o varanju, prosječni rezultati grupe nalaze se približno na sredini skale. Prosječan rezultat na subskali *osobna odgovornost* vrlo je nizak, dok je na subskali *odgovornost drugih* rezultat povišen.

Kako bismo utvrdile odnos između promatranih varijabli, izračunale smo Spearmanove koeficijente korelacije, jer varijable značajno odstupaju od normalne distribucije (Tablica 7.).

Tablica 7.

Dob ima neznatne ili niske značajne korelacije s ostalim promatranim varijablama; postoji tek tendencija da što su stariji, studenti manje varaju. Stupanj religioznosti nije povezan ni s jednim aspektom akademske nečestitosti.

Vrlo zanimljiv rezultat dobiven je skalom laganja preuzetom iz EPQ upitnika. Neiskrenost u odgovaranju je umjereno, negativno i značajno povezana s ponašanjem i s razlozima varanja, dok su korelacije s ostalim varijablama vrlo niske. To znači da su studenti koji su bili manje iskreni, imali niži rezultat na skali varanja, i da su navodili manje razloga za varanje. Iako na prvi pogled kontradiktoran, taj je nalaz vrlo logičan jer studenti koji imaju veći rezultat na skali laganja, u većoj su mjeri lagali i na preostalim skalama, pa su dali „uljepšane“ rezultate.

Razlozi varanja su u umjerenj pozitivnoj korelaciji s nečestim ponašanjem i njegovom prihvatljivošću. Što više varaju, i što im je varanje prihvatljivije, to navode više razloga za varanje. Naravno, odnos varijabli može biti i obrnut: što studenti imaju više razloga za varanje, to više varaju.

Moralni razlozi za nevaranje su u negativnoj i niskoj korelaciji s nečestim ponašanjem i njegovom prihvatljivošću, a u pozitivnoj umjerenj korelaciji s razlozima nevaranja vezanim uz strah, kao i sa stavom o varanju. To znači da na temelju rezultata na subskali moralnih razloga gotovo da ne možemo predvidjeti koliko će studenti varati u akademskim uvjetima i u kojoj im je mjeri varanje prihvatljivo. Što studente za nevaranje više motiviraju moralni razlozi, manje će varati i zbog toga da ne budu uhvaćeni, a stav prema varanju bit će negativniji. Stav o varanju, osim s moralom, značajno korelira i s nečestim ponašanjem, prihvatljivošću takvog ponašanja, kao i s razlozima varanja s kojima je u negativnoj korelaciji. Što je osobna odgovornost za varanje veća, manje prihvaća varanje, a stav o varanju je negativniji, no utvrđene korelacije su prilično niske, pa ne predstavljaju čvrstu vezu između promatranih varijabli.

S ciljem utvrđivanja međusobnih odnosa i povezanosti među nezavisnim varijablama u predikciji rezultata u zavisnoj varijabli provedena je jednostavna regresijska analiza. Iako je primjena regresijske analize za varijable koje nisu normalno distribuirane neadekvatna, u nedostatku odgovarajuće inačice u neparametrijskom obliku prikazujemo rezultate regresijske analize svjesni njezina ograničenog dometa.

Kao prediktore u regresijsku su analizu uključene samo kontinuirane kvantitativne varijable koje međusobno umjereno koreliraju, a kriterij je percepcija vlastitog ponašanja. Na taj smo način htjele utvrditi prediktore koji bi bili značajni u predviđanju nečestitog ponašanja studenata u akademskim uvjetima. Provjerena je kolinearnost: tolerancije prediktora kreću se između 0,6 i 0,8, dok je prosječan VIF 1,32, što se smatra prihvatljivim vrijednostima.

Tablica 8.

Iz Tablice 8. vidljivo je da se šest prediktora, od sedam uvedenih, pokazalo značajnima: dob, laganje, prihvatljivost ponašanja, razlozi varanja i moralni razlozi, osobna odgovornost. Svih sedam prediktora objašnjava 57,8 % varijance nečestitog ponašanja studenata. Studenti će iskazivati manje akademskog varanja što su stariji, a oni koji prijavljuju manje varanja imat će viši rezultat na skali laži (skloniji su prikrivanju nepoštenog ponašanja), što je već pojašnjeno u osvrtu na rezultate korelacijske matrice. Dodatno, studenti koji manje varaju navodit će manje razloga za varanje, a iskazana prihvatljivost takvih ponašanja biti će manja. Što se tiče moralnih razloga za nevaranje i osobne odgovornosti kao prediktora nečestitog akademskog ponašanja, iako imaju značajne beta koeficijente, oni su vrlo niski, pa ne možemo govoriti o smislenoj predikciji.

Rasprava

S obzirom na malen broj istraživanja u Hrvatskoj o temi akademskog poštenja studenata, zanimalo nas je ispitati na našem prigodnom uzorku od 1088 studenata zdravstvenih studija u kojoj mjeri su različita nepoštena ponašanja prisutna, kao i koliko ih studenti smatraju prihvatljivima. Od 26 ponuđenih ponašanja najveću učestalost imaju "blaži" oblici varanja: *dopuštanje drugima da prepisu od nas, raspitivanje o pitanjima nakon ispita, prepisivanje i došaptavanje na ispitu*. Prepisivanje na ispitu i šaptnje drugima pokazali su se najučestaliji i u istraživanju Šimić Šašić i Klarin (2009) provedenom na srednjoškolskoj populaciji u Hrvatskoj i u Bosni i Hercegovini, što vodi pretpostavci da su takva ponašanja sveprisutna na svim obrazovnim razinama našeg područja. Dopuštanje drugima da prepisu domaći rad također visoko kotira u oba istraživanja.

Prikazani rezultati potvrđuju sveprisutnost nepoštenog ponašanja u obrazovnom sustavu, a osobito nas zabrinjava to što se u našem istraživanju radi o studentima koji trebaju postati zdravstveni radnici. Rezultati istraživanja McCrink (2010) pokazuju da je neetično ponašanje studenata sestrinstva ipak više prisutno u situacijama pismenih radova i ispita znanja nego u izravnom radu s pacijentima na kliničkoj praksi, no ta povezanost u nas još nije provjerena.

Kad promotrimo ukupne rezultate na subskalama varanja, pokazuje se da je varanje studenata zdravstvenih studija u našem uzorku umjereno učestalo i djelomično prihvatljivo. Neka neetična ponašanja učestalija su od drugih, dok su pojedina vrlo

rijetka. Primjerice, teži oblici varanja (plaćanje drugima da izađu na ispit umjesto nas, izlaženje na ispit umjesto drugih, krivotvorenje ocjene i dobivanje ocjene preko veze) prisutni su u vrlo malom postotku (do 2%). Ponašanja koja studenti najviše iskazuju ujedno su im i najprihvatljivija, pa je tako studentima najprihvatljivije raspitivati se o ispitu na koji još nisu izašli, te dopustiti drugima da prepisu od njih, dok su im najmanje prihvatljivi teži prijestupi koji se ujedno i najrjeđe javljaju. Iz rezultata je vidljivo da su pasivni oblici varanja vrlo rašireni i prihvatljivi studentima. Pasivno varanje je nepošteno ponašanje od kojeg studenti osobno nemaju trenutnu korist, pa to očito ne smatraju svojim prekršajem, odnosno smatraju to prosocijalnim ponašanjem (prijateljski čin pomaganja). Pritom nas zanima koliku bi osudu drugih studenata izazvao čin odbijanja pomoći kolegi/ci?

Sugestija koju predlažemo za daljnju upotrebu navedene skale na visokoškolskoj razini je dodavanje pitanja koja se odnosi na krivotvorenje potpisa u indeksu čiju pojavnost nismo ispitale. Nadalje, česticu 23. *Platiti nekome da ode na ispit ..* treba doraditi i ponuditi varijantu *Tražiti od nekoga da ode na ispit...* U našem istraživanju vrlo je niska pojavnost tog ponašanja, a razlog tome može biti da u našoj kulturi plaćanje možda nije toliko uvriježeno, nego, ako je takvo ponašanje prisutno, do njega dolazi zbog prosocijalnih razloga ili neke druge nematerijalne koristi.

Najčešći razlozi varanja koje studenti navode su pod kontrolom nastavnika, a to su slab nadzor na ispitu i loša organizacija ispita. Potom slijedi izbjegavanje pada ili loše ocjene na ispitu. Najrjeđe navedeni razlozi su da varaju zato što drukčije ne mogu dobiti dobru ocjenu, jer su drugi bolji od njih, i zato jer je varanje nužan dio života. Moguća niža zastupljenost prva dva razloga proizlazi iz potrebe studenata da za svoje ponašanje nađu vanjske okolnosti ili razloge. U protivnom, morali bi se suočiti s vlastitim manjkom odgovornosti ili uloženog truda. Posljednji navedeni razlog ostavlja dojam da su studenti svjesni da svoje ponašanje mogu izabrati; ne smatraju da je varanje nužan dio života, varanje nije neizbježno, već je to njihova odluka. Dobiveni rezultati poklapaju se s rezultatima Šimić Šašić i Klarin (2006). Iako su ispitani sudionici različite obrazovne razine, dva najviše i najmanje zastupljena razloga varanja koja sudionici navode identična su u oba istraživanja, što ponovno potvrđuje prijenos ponašanja iz srednjoškolskog u visokoškolsko obrazovanje. No, kad usporedimo prosječne vrijednosti identičnih čestica razloga varanja u oba istraživanja, vidimo da su one redovito niže na studentskoj nego na srednjoškolskoj populaciji. Pretpostavljamo da su se studenti priviknuli na takav način ponašanja, i da za njega manje traže opravdanja.

Smatrali smo korisnim saznati koji su razlozi zbog kojih studenti ne varaju. Istraživanja ukazuju na manje akademskog varanja onih studenata čiji su razlozi za nevaranje povezani s unutarnjim čimbenicima; važnošću koju studenti polažu na učenje, osobni integritet ili moralni stav kako je varanje pogrešno (Miller i sur., 2011). U našem istraživanju pokazalo se da su najčešće navedeni razlozi koji studente potiču na pošteno ponašanje ipak izvanjski, a to su strah da će biti uhvaćeni i strah od posljedica.

To ukazuje na smanjenu unutrašnju moralnu regulaciju stavova i ponašanja studenata u našem uzorku, koja je vjerojatno uzrokovana brojnim i različitim psihosocijalnim razlozima, o kojima možemo samo nagađati: od vrijednosnog sustava koji studenti donesu iz svojih obitelji, specifične atmosfere (stroge ili blage) u pojedinoj obrazovnoj instituciji, do društveno-političke situacije u zemlji posljednjih godina kada su različiti oblici nemoralnog ponašanja (obmanjivanje javnosti, prešućivanje, krađe i korupcija) dominirali domaćom političkom scenom.

Studente u ovom istraživanju na moralno ponašanje najmanje potiče mišljenje osoba oko njih, drugih studenata i važnih ljudi. Pretpostavljamo da drugi studenti i njima važne osobe imaju slične stavove, pa ne postoji socijalni pritisak koji bi pojedinog studenta nagnao na moralno ponašanje.

Donekle iznenađuje da se više od polovine studenata u ovom istraživanju slaže s tvrdnjom da je pogrešno varati bez obzira na okolnosti. Naime, njihovo ponašanje je kontradiktorno tom stavu, jer varaju čim im se za to ukaže prilika, tj. kad je vanjska kontrola slaba. No, kad uzmemo u obzir njihovu vlastitu prihvatljivost tih ponašanja, onda situacija postaje manje neobična: oni jednostavno ne smatraju varanjem, npr. došaptavati se za vrijeme ispita. Takav nalaz ukazuje na to da bi se varanje moglo smanjiti obavještavanjem studenata o onome što se smatra varanjem. Možda je veliko slaganje s navedenom tvrdnjom djelomično uzrokovano i njezinim mjestom na početku skale; studenti se idealistički slože s njom, no kada ih podsjetimo na različite nepovoljne uvjete studiranja i polaganja ispita (pretežak ispit, nedostatak vremena, nepravedan nastavnik, opasnost od pada godine...), slaganje s tvrdnjama se smanjuje.

Jedan od zanimljivijih nalaza jest rezultat na Skali odgovornosti za varanje: studenti smatraju da je najodgovornija osoba za sprečavanje varanja nastavnik. Nakon toga odgovornost je na obrazovnoj instituciji, a najmanja je na studentu. Takav nalaz poklapa se s dominantnim vanjskim razlozima nevaranja na ispitu (kontrola nastavnika), što znači da ako se studentima „omogućiti“ nepošteno ponašanje u akademskim uvjetima, oni će to svakako iskoristiti. Po njima, cilj opravdava sredstva, što ukazuje na slabu primjenu ispravnih moralnih vrijednosti studenata, a što je u skladu s vrijednostima koje dominiraju u javnom prostoru. Praktična rješenja koje proizlaze iz te spoznaje relativno su jednostavno provediva: kada nastavnik pazi na učenike/studente na ispitu, oni će manje (ili neće uopće) prepisivati, odnosno ako je kazna za različite oblike varanja eksplicitno najavljena ili čak izrečena prijestupniku, to će umnogome umanjiti vjerojatnost pojavljivanja takvih ponašanja u budućnosti. No, takav (prisilni) pristup ne mijenja stav prema varanju kao pogrešnom obliku ponašanja, što znači da bi trebalo više pažnje polagati na razvijanje ili mijenjanje unutarnjih vrijednosti.

Kada promatramo međusobni odnos ispitivanih varijabli, pokazuje se da postoji tendencija da što su studenti stariji, manje varaju i navode manje razloga za varanje. Takav rezultat u svojim radovima potvrđuju i McCabe sa suradnicima (2008), Passow i suradnici (2006). Vjerojatno se takav nalaz djelomično može objasniti većom neugodom starijih studenata ako su uhvaćeni u varanju. Nakon provedenog ispitivanja,

u razgovoru sa studentima specijalističkih studija koji su stariji, oni izjavljuju da si takvo ponašanje „više ne mogu dopustiti“, jer se od starijih osoba očekuje veća zrelost i odgovornost. Stupanj religioznosti, u skladu s rezultatima drugih istraživanja (Sutton i Hubba, 1995; Nowell i Laufer, 1997; sve prema Carpenter, 2006) nije povezan ni s jednim aspektom akademske nečestitosti, iako smo očekivale da će viši stupanj religioznosti biti barem donekle povezan s manjom učestalošću nepoštenog ponašanja.

Rezultat na skali laganja negativno umjereno i značajno korelira s nečestitim ponašanjem i s rezultatom na skali razloga varanja. Doslovna interpretacija bila bi da su studenti koji su manje iskreni, manje varaju i navode manje razloga za varanje akademski pošteniji, što svakako nije vjerojatno. No, takav je nalaz lako objašnjiv, s obzirom na to da se radi o skali samopercepcije. Iako je upitnik bio anonimn, a prosječan rezultat na skali laganja niži nego u populaciji, pojedini studenti imaju potrebu prezentirati se u što boljem svjetlu, pa se ustručavaju priznati drugima (a možda i sebi) društveno neprihvatljiva ponašanja. Dakle, studenti koji imaju viši rezultat na skali laganja, manje su iskreni i o svom nepoštenom ponašanju u akademskim uvjetima, kao i o broju razloga varanja. Utvrdili smo da su razlozi varanja u umjerenj pozitivnoj korelaciji s nečestitim ponašanjem i njegovom prihvatljivošću. Prema tome, što više varaju, i što im je varanje prihvatljivije, to navode više razloga za varanje. Takav je nalaz očekivan, jer studenti koji više varaju vjerojatno racionaliziraju svoje neetično ponašanje, nalazeći za takvo ponašanje brojne. Odnosno, dio objašnjenja te povezanosti može ići i iz drugog smjera: studenti s manje slobodnog vremena (jer su u radnom odnosu ili rade honorarno), ili slabijih kapaciteta, skloniji su nečestitom ponašanju jer drukčije ne mogu zadovoljiti akademske zahtjeve.

Regresijska analiza pokazala je da će studenti iskazivati manje akademskog varanja što su stariji. Takav nalaz poklapa se s onim Newsteada (1996), a pretpostavljamo da je razlog tome taj što su s dobi studentima sve važniji socijalni ugled i integritet, što smo već komentirali. Nadalje, studenti koji prijavljuju manje varanja imat će viši rezultat na skali laži, što znači da su skloniji prikrivanju nepoštenog ponašanja. Dodatno, studenti koji manje varaju ujedno će navoditi manje razloga za varanje, a i iskazana prihvatljivost takvih ponašanja biti će manja. Kako prihvatljivost ponašanja ima najveći beta koeficijent, proizlazi da su stavovi izraženi kao prihvatljivost pojedinog ponašanja ključni prediktori za pojavu tog ponašanja, i da na ponašanje možemo djelovati mijenjajući stavove studenata o varanju. Poznato je da su stavovi prilično otporni na promjenu (prema Baron i Byrne, 1977), pa pretpostavljamo da bi djelovanjem na stavove trebalo započeti u mlađoj dobi, a zatim kontinuirano raditi s djecom i adolescentima šaljući im poruke kako određeni oblici ponašanja nisu etični, pa time ni prihvatljivi. Pritom bi njegovanje kulture čestitog ponašanja trebalo biti prisutno ne samo u obrazovnom sustavu već i u privatnom i javnom prostoru, politici i medijima, a u formativnim godinama osobito u modeliranju čestitog ponašanja popularnih osoba iz javnog života.

Što nam rezultati govore? Je li akademska nečestitost uobičajena pojava i treba li raditi na njezinu suzbijanju? Mišljenja smo da je pojavnost varanja, iako u našem

istraživanju umjerena, i kao takva previsoka, pa da svakako treba osmisliti i koristiti se strategijama njezina suzbijanja ili barem smanjivanja. Na neke smo mogućnosti već ukazale, a Davis (2011) povezuje učinkovite strategije koje se pojavljuju u literaturi, ali i koje ona i njezini kolege upotrebljavaju u vlastitoj praksi, a kojima se može suzbiti ili barem smanjiti pojava studentskog nepoštenja. Kao najvažniju navodi jasno komuniciranje pravila očekivanog akademskog ponašanja od nastavnika studentima. Ističe da je o toj temi važno otvoreno razgovarati sa studentima već na prvom zajedničkom susretu (isto se predlaže u radu Hall iz 2011) i stvarati *normativnu atmosferu u kojoj je akademsko nepoštenje neprihvatljivo* (Nath, 2009, str. 6), odnosno preuzimati odgovornost za razvoj akademskog integriteta (Miller i sur., 2011).

U najnovijim se radovima pojačano istražuje mrežno plagijatstvo kao sve prisutniji oblik akademskog nepoštenja. Sve češće se pojavljuje preuzimanje tekstova koji su javno dostupni putem interneta, odnosno elektroničkih baza podataka, jednostavnim metodom kopiranja i lijepljenja odabranog teksta u vlastite seminarske, diplomske, stručne i ostale akademske radove, bez označavanja originalnog autorstva. Comas-Forgas i suradnici (2010, str. 304) navode da je *internet postao glavni izvor akademske literature i plagiranja u studentskim esejima*. S obzirom na to da su ti tekstovi javno dostupni, pogrešno se smatra da se mogu i koristiti bez primjerenog referenciranja. Kako navode Baždarić i suradnici (2009, str. 108) *učestalost plagiranja je u porastu, a razvoj informacijsko-komunikacijske tehnologije olakšava neovlašteno preuzimanje teksta, no istodobno, zahvaljujući istoj tehnologiji, razvijaju se računalni programi i mrežne usluge za otkrivanje plagiranja*. Iako je prilikom kopiranja teksta s interneta lakše otkriti plagiranje na engleskom jeziku, računalni programi za otkrivanje identičnosti tekstova počeli su se primjenjivati i u Španjolskoj (Comas-Forgas i sur., 2010) i u nas (Bilić-Zulle, 2006). U ovom radu nismo obuhvatile taj važni i vrlo aktualni problem, no on ostaje goruća, zasebna tema za buduća istraživanja.

Zaključci

Svrha ovog rada bila je istražiti doživljaj vlastite akademske čestitosti studenata devet različitih zdravstvenih studija. Stoga su ispitanici samoiskazano ponašanje, stavovi i vrijednosti vezani uz akademsku čestitost zabilježeni uz pomoć sedam ljestvica. Rezultati upućuju na vrlo visoku pojava pojedinih, blažih oblika nečestitog ponašanja u akademskim zadacima, osobito ispitima znanja. Čak 98,4 % studenata priznaje da prepisuje od drugih za vrijeme pismenog ispita, a 89,1 % ih se barem jednom na ispitu koristilo *šalabahterom*. Studentima je najprihvatljivije raspitivati se o ispitu na koji još nisu izašli (ne smatraju to ponašanje varanjem), i dopustiti drugima da prepisu od njih (smatraju to kolegijalnim ponašanjem). Teži oblici nečestitog akademskog ponašanja (dobiti ocjenu preko veze, izaći umjesto drugog studenta na ispit, platiti da netko izađe umjesto nas, krivotvoriti ocjenu) javljaju se u vrlo malom postotku.

Studenti se najčešće nepošteno ponašaju na ispitima znanja i to najčešće zato što imaju priliku za takvo ponašanje zbog slabog nadzora na ispitu, kako ne bi pali ispit ili

dobili lošu ocjenu. Veće prihvaćanje različitih oblika varanja pokazalo se povezanim s navođenjem više razloga za varanje (opravdavanje), te izražavanjem pozitivnijeg stava prema varanju. Značajni prediktori za kriterijsku varijablu ponašanja u akademskim situacijama su: dob (stariji studenti varaju manje), laganje (manje varanja prijavljuju oni koji imaju viši rezultat na skali laganja), prihvatljivost ponašanja (što više varaju, to im je varanje prihvatljivije), i razlozi varanja (studenti koji više varaju navode više razloga za varanje). Stav o varanju nije se pokazao značajnim prediktorom, dok su moralni razlozi i osobna odgovornost značajni, ali uz vrlo niske beta koeficijente. Svih sedam prediktora objašnjava 57,8 % varijance nečestitog ponašanja studenata.

Odgovornost za varanje i sprečavanje varanja studenti prenose na nastavnike i obrazovnu instituciju, a najmanje preuzimaju vlastitu odgovornost. Na temelju toga zaključujemo da je u suzbijanju varanja potrebno djelovati u dva pravca: podučavanje nastavnika kako da jasno naglase studentima kakva se ponašanja očekuju, a kakva se neće tolerirati, te osvješćivanje i poticanje osobne odgovornosti studenata za etičnost vlastitog ponašanja. Dodatno, nužno je sustavno raditi na internaliziranju etičkih normi od najranije školske dobi.

Nadamo se da je ovo istraživanje barem donekle doprinijelo osvješćivanju vlastitog akademskog ponašanja i stavova studenata koji su u istraživanju sudjelovali. Poticanje akademske čestitosti studenata ne samo tijekom studija već i u smislu prenošenja pozitivnih akademskih normi i u svoje buduće radno okruženje smatramo iznimno važnim, osobito stoga što studenti sudionici ovog istraživanja svoje djelovanje nastavljaju u osobito osjetljivo području rada – u sustavu zdravstva. U konačnici, svakako bi bilo zanimljivo usporediti rezultate ovog istraživanja s rezultatima koje bismo dobili ispitujući doživljaj akademske čestitosti studenata i drugih visokoškolskih ustanova koje obrazuju studente za društvena, tehnička ili prirodoslovna zanimanja u kojima je čestitost u radu jednako važna.