

# A Research on the Forming Process of College Students' Academic Misconduct

## — Based on the Self-analysis of the Completion of College Students' Personal Growth Report

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### Abstract

Based on the materials of 63 college students' self-analysis of their personal growth report —the assignment of the curriculum named college students' mental health education, research from the angle of psychology, pedagogy, sociology analysis of college students in the process of personal growth and the specificity in the process of completing course assignments, construct the model of academic misconduct behavior, further in-depth understanding of the current college students' learning and psychological characteristics, provide theoretical reference to improve and develop college students' psychological health education in the future teaching work.

**Keywords:** college students academic misconduct, personal growth report, self-analysis

### 1. The Research Background

The curriculum of college students' mental health education is a general course colleges and universities generally offer. The establishment of this course aims to popularize basic college students' mental health knowledge, enhance the students' psychological health level, the teacher usually choose paper as final examination in the course, the students in colleges and universities are asked to write a personal growth report as course assignments in course examination. The purpose of this assignment is through reviewing and analyzing the process of personal growth, push the college students explore the internal and external reasons of the formation of the their own personality, values, cognitive habit, then the college students can have a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding towards their own personal growth experience, It is also a good way for teachers of psychology to understand the students' thinking characteristics and growth process. This homework is meaningful and valuable to freshmen, and it is helpful for teachers to understand the growth process and thinking characteristics of students. Therefore, this college the author worked has taken personal growth report as the examination assignment of this curriculum for over 7 years. But in the recent course assignments, academic misconduct phenomenon, mainly distracting or plagiarism is on the rise, for a freshman, independent to write 2000 words of personal growth, the report will not be difficult. Just given a general criticism to the phenomenon will ignore the profound reasons behind, also may ignore the students' awareness of individual behavior process, namely through the analysis and research of the problems arising in homework, explore the internal psychological process from the external behavior activity, and cognitive characteristics of current college students, we can have a deeper understanding to college students' academic misconduct.

From a psychological point of view, any behavior behind has corresponding motivations ,internal and external reasons, as college student groups, when a certain behavior become tendency, indicate the reasons and motivation behind has been widely accepted ,and imitated each other by group members, if the behavior itself is negative, face and explore the phenomena not only necessity ,but urgency, as it has close relation to academic development of college students ,reflect and influence the higher education quality.

Academic misconduct or academic dishonesty is broadly defined as any attempt by a student to secure an unfair advantage in their work which is submitted for assessment.(Stephen Tee,2018) In A cross-sectional study of

academic dishonesty among Australian nursing students Plagiarism was the most frequently reported form of academic misconduct.( Melanie Birksa,2018) Academic misconducts were mainly considered more acceptable than professional misconducts, with no Significant difference in perception (Dora Nazaré Marques.2015)Academic misconduct can be predicted and explained by the type of course in which students are enrolled, their background characteristics, type of motivation, personality, traits, their instructor's attitude towards AD, and their cultural background (presented by country) (Peled, Y.2018)

## 2. Research Method and Object

Make the assignment of the curriculum College Students' Mental Health Education—"Personal Growth Report". Assignment Requirements: a. According to the important events and psychological feelings that have experienced, use the mental health knowledge we have learned to analyze the related psychological growth. The theme and regulations should be clear, and the narrative should be smooth. b. Independent operation, no fraud, no copying of others' achievements. c. The words required about 2000.

After the paper were handed in, selected 63 students who had not write as required, didn't write their own personal growth incidents honestly were asked one-to-one to write Homework Analysis the first time at once. They were asked to self-analyze their academic misconduct, including plagiarize or describe other unrelated content without review the process of their real growth. In order to understand the intrinsic motivation and external school and social environment influence factors behind the behavior of college students, this paper analyzes the psychological process of the behavior, and then puts forward corresponding feasible suggestions to solve the current academic problems of College students.

## 3. Research Findings

Data collection and analysis of 63 self-analysis are as follows:

### 3.1 There Is a Fluke and Think "The Plagiarism in My Paper Will Not Be Found by the Teacher

Seven college students admitted they think they may get away with plagiarism in the course assignments, accounting for 10.6% of the total number. They believed that teachers would not seriously review the assignments and according to the practices of the people around them, they searched Baidu for plagiarism boldly. Previous academic misconduct was not punished in time, and even some in courses "students in their papers ended up with good grades from teachers." Students get away with it after the academic misconduct, made students learn about plagiarism: in college campuses, plagiarism is common without serious consequences, and I can do the same. Weber-Wulff bluntly points to certain weaknesses in academic education that can lead to plagiarism, such as professors failing to read their students' theses sufficiently thoroughly, or even not at all, due to the immense number of submitted dissertations and term papers, and evaluation of the academic standing of professors according to the number of doctoral students under their supervision. (Malgorzata, 2017)

### 3.2 The Method of Completing Assignments According to the Nature of the Course

15 college students, accounting for 23.8% of the total number in the self-analysis mentioned curriculum character, as the curriculum of College Students' mental Health Education is a general fundamental course , during the final exam period of a semester, when there are many papers and examinations to cope with, they usually choose to put more energy and time on the specialized courses, general courses are "water course", and treat with the general fundamental curriculum randomly according to the difference in the teaching attitude, examination evaluation system, relations to the degree awarded requires between specialized courses and general fundamental one. One year after entering university, college students can learn rules from teachers and peer groups, including the importance of courses of different natures, and make allocation of energy and investment based on the judgment of the nature of courses, and adopt corresponding learning attitudes and study methods.

### 3.3 Negative Learning Attitude: Lazy and Unwilling to Think Independently

The 15 students attributed the failure to complete their homework independently to laziness in their self-analyze, which accounted for 23.8%. "Looking back on my growth process is actually a very meaningful homework, but because of laziness, I don't want to use my brain to think about these things. "I'm afraid of thinking, writing, just in order to save trouble, save energy, and spare more time for self-entertainment." It shows that students can realize that the behavior of not finishing homework carefully is the reflection of their own laziness. High strength learning through secondary school and relaxed management environment in college, make students enter "happy time", relax swiftly after the longtime tension, in addition to the current college attitude of strict admission and leniency, four years of college life now in China, the retention rate is very low not because college students do well academically,

but the examination is too loose, which contributed to the formation of students' perfunctory learning attitude.

### *3.4 Learning Habit of Procrastination*

Thirteen students, 20.6% of all blamed poor study habits, especially procrastination for their academic misconduct in their self-analyze. "Homework is assigned before the Dragon Boat Festival holiday, because the first day of the Dragon Boat Festival holiday was to test College English level 4, so I planned to complete the assignment after the holiday, but received other courses of the paper assignments..." "After a long delay, when it was time to hand in the paper, I just remembered that there was still such a thing to be finished, I was so anxious, and when it was time to hand in the paper, I took out my mobile phone and quickly selected one paper that met the requirements and copied it intact.. "I can't manage my time well. I have a lot of specialized courses paper and examinations to prepare, so I just want to get by some."

### *3.5 Bipolar Personal Growth Experience*

The growth experience mentioned in the college students' self-analyze was classified into two bipolar categories, extremely flat or too much pain. One was the monotony of the growth process. Fourteen of the 18 people believed that there were no special events worth mentioning or was particularly influential to their growth. On the other hand, there were significant setbacks and blows in the process of growing up. Four people said that memories the past would make them experience pain again, they chose to avoid the growing process and avoid feeling the painful experience again at that time. "Because there were so many events I couldn't forget but didn't want to mention, it was hard for me to write on paper and summarize and reflect on the pain I had experienced." "I'm an introvert and I don't want people to know me too much." "The fear of going back to the past, the fear of being able to analyze the past ... Lack of confidence in myself."

### *3.6 The Word Number the Paper Required Is Too High to Cope With*

"When I heard the number of words to be written, my whole body was not good." One freshman recalled. Another seven cited their writing skills as the reason for not writing the personal growth report independently. "Due to poor composition performance in high school, I have no confidence in writing. so I borrowed and referred online articles." They gave low self-evaluation on their writing ability or independently write small papers, lacked academic confidence. The sum total of above totals is 28, which accounts for 44.4% of the total number of respondents. As all of them were expressions of writing ability, the above items were classified into one category.

### *3.7 The Convenience of Network Retrieval*

Eight respondents, 12.7% of the total, attributed the convenience of the Internet and smart phones to the fact that there were so many online materials, Admitting frankly can't resist the temptation to get something for nothing." Hanker after convenience." "After entering the university many classmates choose Baidu to finish papers." "After entering the university, when asked to write papers, mostly looking for answers or articles related on the smart phone." Considering plagiarism is found in most of the papers surveyed, The popularity of smart phones and the convenience of wireless networks should be one main Auxiliary power, especially at present, the campus full coverage and communication of the 4 g network traffic package cost is reduced, greatly convenient for the college students to the network use, Come across the things in life and study, students first choice network resources, Baiduing, causes the students relying too much on the mobile phone network, the efforts of "no mobile phone classes" a few years ago in colleges and universities also gradually tend to be in vain.

## **4. A Structural Model for the Generation of College Students' Academic Misconduct**

Based on the research findings above, a structural model for the generation of college students' academic misconduct of copying or writing irrelevant content for papers is constructed, as follows:

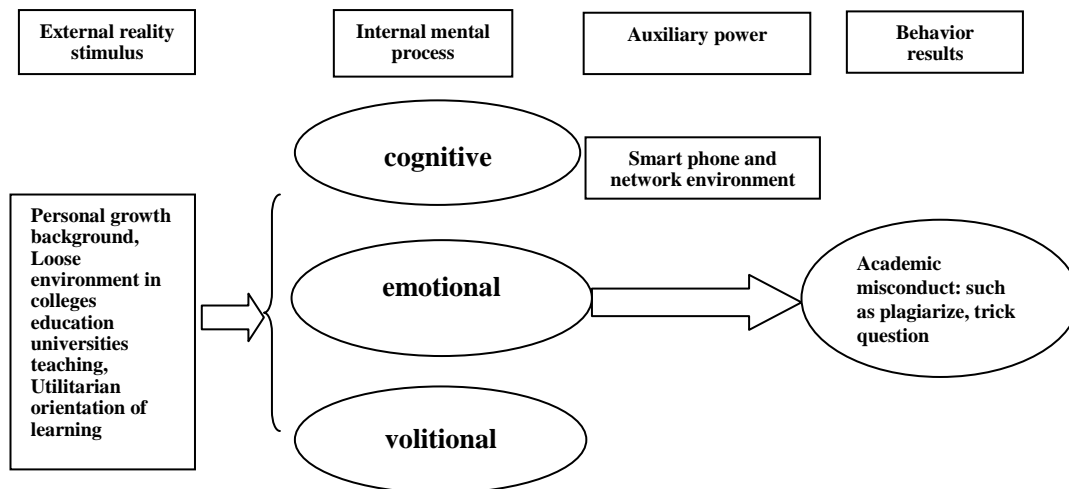


Figure 1

Cognitive: Public classes can be handled at will. Plagiarism is a common and normal phenomenon

Emotional: The agony of thinking independently of completing assignments, the dread of writing, the painful or pointless memory.

Volitional: weak willpower in overcoming difficulties ,independent thinking and resisting the temptation of outside word.

Experience of personal growth, liberal education environment in colleges and universities, social utilitarian orientation for the work of education constitutes the real stimulation, so that producing the corresponding knowledge, emotion, psychological process in the progress of completing academic tasks , under the help of external network using environment, resulting once facing the reality of academic papers, the college students even freshman choose to plagiarism ,not finish the homework as required for specific academic misconduct.

## 5. Conclusion and Implications for Research and Practice

### 5.1 Utilitarian Education Orientation Lead to College Students' Lack of Interest in Learning and Autonomous Learning Motivation

In the self-analysis , 21 college students admitted they were "lazy, unwilling to think" and "fluke mentality, feeling that their academic misconduct would not be found, be punished by teachers", that was the reason for the failure of to write personal growth reports as required, accounts for 30 percent of the respondents. That is, the students lack of interest in learning, lack of motivation for active thinking. Entering the university is the goal of middle school, then ,get the college diploma and find a job is the next goal, while the meaning of learning, the value of knowledge, the influence of the thinking process to the personal growth are all ignored, this is also the result of social from all walks of life, which put too much emphasis on graduation rates, employment rate ,as quantifiable index of school performance, because these usually can bring great benefits ,such as more enrolment, more financial support from the government. Utilitarian in education system, ignored the value and significance of the learning process itself, learning is a tool just for the sake of get a higher level of diploma or get a job, cause students lose interest in learning and thinking, learning behavior confined to a passive learning task, there is no high quality pursuit for the homework assigned by the teachers, through observation and trial, resort to academic misconduct boldly. External reality stimulus of the college students are not knowledge-oriented, interest- orientated, getting a satisfying job is the goal, getting knowledge with thinking is not, so they don't care the academic training and paper work. Which is the core reason of their academic misconduct.

### 5.2 College Students' Dependence on Mobile Phones Deeply Affects Their Study Habits

According to Living Here -- Research Report on social networking and empowerment, jointly released by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and Tencent Company in 2017, in the question " Can young people separated from mobile phones and social networks?" 94% of young people feel that go out without a mobile phone is very difficult to accustomed to, 86.8% of all respondents "usually browse WeChat or QQ every 15 minutes ", reflects the

youngsters' excessive dependence on mobile phone and Internet. (CASS, 2017) As college students is the main force in the young group, they have not yet married, this dependence have more community atmosphere, cost also is one important factor—portable smartphone, the campus wireless network for the whole process of communication operators of preferential flow cost greatly, make university students for the use of mobile phones more and more beyond the actual needs. Turn to phone when need, play when nothing to do. The mobile phone is inseparable and an unconscious dependence gradually forms. Ten years ago, teenagers needed to go to the Internet bar or the desktop computer in the dormitory to realize their online needs, today's college students can satisfy such needs anytime and anywhere. Too much mobile phone use occupy most of the university student's time, energy, which become a universal phenomenon to be concern, a smart phone is convenient to students' daily life, is also a test for the college students' ability of self-control and self-discipline consciousness at the same time, students with weak willpower are more and more addicted to the virtual world of the phone, from learning to daily life, be dependent on the mobile phone, become subservient to the mobile phone. The problem of college students' mobile phone addiction has attracted wide attention of scholars, just two years from 2017 to 2018 in China, the research articles with the theme of college students' mobile phone addiction reached as many as 287, comparing to only 4 papers in 2008, according to Zhinet-Chinese Academic Journal Full Text Database.

### *5.3 Develop the Ability of Self-control and Will Quality Is Urgent to College Students*

In internal mental process, weak willpower in overcoming difficulties, independent thinking and resisting the temptation of outside word make college students hard to finish their academic work independently. After entering into college, students have to face a wide variety of courses with different requirements for papers and exams, what they need most is to master and arrange their spare time effectively. In the final stage of intensive course assignments and exams, if not reasonable arranged, college students are easy to fall into a state of academic chaos. Without teachers urged anytime and anywhere, students tend to failing to form effective self, such as self-control, self-planning ability, are easy to form a learning habit of procrastination and student work completion also show the effects of individual will power. (ETTIC, CAMH. 2005:99) Bad study habits as a kind of behavior patterns, due to the lazy, unwilling to learning attitude of independent thinking, focusing on the students' learning motivation for excitation at the same time, in the freshmen entrance education work in colleges and universities can be appropriately increased with time management skills, personal willpower training content, help college students to the university to study during the course arrangement, all kinds of inspection form and complete way, the investment of time energy to have a general understanding, focus on learning and mastering boycott lazy, strengthen the basic skills of self-control, develop good character.

### *5.4 The Impact of Actual Personal Growth Experiences*

Experiences in personal growth obviously is a factor influence the perception of personal emotion and expression, on the one hand, simple or too monotonous life before college, no special events, affect their emotions or growing process, make the youngsters have nothing worthy to recall. China's basic education puts too much emphasis on academic performance which deprives students of the opportunity to experience various aspects of life during childhood. In terms of quantity, this situation is in the majority, which indicates that the family, school and society attach great importance to study in childhood and adolescence, and meanwhile reduce their experience opportunities of activities outside school, and they have nothing to say when recalling. It's a reminder that should be in the school education at the same time strengthening teenagers' life education, enrich their after-school life, enhance their feelings to the world beyond studying, for their emotion experience, only a variety of life experiences can stimulate students' perceptive ability. On the other hand, some students actively choose to avoid the negative painful experience happened in their childhood, so as to avoid experiencing the pain again. Through homework analysis, the individual psychological self-protection tendency in the process of writing personal in growth report was recognized. Although it is minority, It suggests that individuals tends to shut themselves down after experiencing strong negative events, once the frustration in the growth process have not solved properly, Youngsters should be guided to face up the past self through individual communication and affirm the positive significance of setbacks.

### *5.5 Unified and Strict Methods of Teaching Assessment Can Restrain Students' Academic Misconduct to Some Extent*

Courses in University are divided into two categories: public and professional. Universities treat them differently in teaching requirements, credit setting and assessment, resulting in different study attitude of students, especially when they lack initiative in learning. Public courses have been marginalized. Large class teaching is widely adopted in public courses. The class of college students' psychological health education course this research involved is 221 students. Four rows, nearly 70 students in the back of the classroom generally reflect they couldn't see the content of the PPT clearly, accounted for 31.7%, significantly affect the effect of classroom learning. Due to the lack of

motivation for teachers to explore diversified teaching methods, most of them adopt traditional teaching method teaching from beginning to end, the content is only rational knowledge, class is monotonous. Under the influence of several factors above, students' interest in learning cannot be stimulated in the class. In the case that small-class teaching cannot be realized in the short term, the department in charge of teaching in colleges and universities should encourage teachers to research and try diversified teaching methods in scientific research and teaching, so as to improve the effect of large-class teaching. The teaching requirements and appraisals of courses of different nature in higher education shall be treated in a non-discriminatory way.

### *5.6 The Strict Cultivation Process of College Students Should Be the General Consensus of the Higher Education Circle*

Getting students to find a job is not the ultimate goal of higher education. We cannot simply use the employment rate to measure the achievements of higher education, but ignore the fundamental value and significance of higher education in improving students' thinking ability, building broader knowledge system and cultivating their independent thinking and exploration ability. Improve the writing ability of college students. Although the respondents in this study are science major, the choice of major usually the results of considering their writing interest and ability, caused nearly half of all students in the survey considered poor writing ability as the reason of didn't write papers as required. Writing is the essential ability for every college student, and in four years of college life, academic paper is a common way of examination, In order to make up for the negative influence of students' writing ability on students' learning, colleges and universities can give guidance on writing after the freshmen enter the university. More importantly, we should strengthen the standardized and rigorous examination of academic research, deal with plagiarism and cheating seriously in a timely manner, and avoid the spread of this phenomenon on university campuses, thus causing mutual imitation, increase the intensity, regularity and timeliness of punishment, increase the cost of academic misconduct from the regulations and enforcement, thus the students dare not to engage in academic misconduct.

College students' paper plagiarism shows their eagerness to achieve quick success and lack of the consciousness of independent thinking. Explore the psychological process of the behavior from the perspective of psychology is a method of academic research, but how to solve is a thorny practical problem facing universities. In order to do well in talent training in colleges and universities, help the college students develop good study habits, managers and teachers in colleges need to change the conventional teaching mode, take practical measures focusing on the students' learning attitude in freshmen entrance education, mental health education, stricter the courses examination mechanism, stimulate students' learning enthusiasm and initiative, make the students get rid of the lazy rely on the network, willing to think, daring to think, then enjoy the study in thinking, finally do the papers depend on themselves.

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