

BERA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2019

10TH - 12TH SEPTEMBER | THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER



Details of Submitter

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Title | Prof |
| First Name | Ali |
| Family Name | Mahmoud |
| Institution/Place of work | N/A |
| Country | UK |
| Mobile Phone Number | 07393420107 |
| Email | elguitarista@live.com |

Submission Type

*

Individual paper

Enter the FULL TITLE of your paper

Wartime Crisis Perception Predicts Attitudes towards Cheating Behaviour of Higher Education Students

Abstract Paper (750 word maximum)

Wartime Crisis Perception Predicts Attitudes towards Cheating Behaviour of Higher Education Students

We aimed to empirically test the effects of wartime crisis perceptions on students' attitudes towards cheating behaviours. Student integrity has been an area of interest since the beginning of formal education (Jereb, et al., 2018). Furthermore, there has been increasing work done on academic integrity and student dishonesty as the topic is deemed to be one of critical importance. Studies have been carried out which examine student perceptions of plagiarism, collusion and cheating in exams however, these studies were conducted in stable democracies (e.g., Rawwas, Swaidan, & Al-Khatib, 2006). Students working in a conflict zone may experience differing perceptions on cheating to those in more stable environments. Researchers in the field point out that few studies on cheating have been conducted in the Middle East, and even fewer in conflict zones (e.g., Mahmoud & Blinkhorn, 2018). The review of extant literature demonstrates the lack of research on student academic misconduct in challenging contexts. Thus, there is a gap in the academic literature, and an empirical study was thus undertaken to answer the research question. We ran a correlational field study that took place in Syria during the civil war and yielded 517 valid responses from higher education students during 2015 and 2016. Wartime perceptions were measured using single-item scale designed for this study. We elicited seven items, from Rawwas et al (2006). Those items were utilized to measure attitudes towards cheating behaviour as a multi-item unidimensional construct, which scored a good level of internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = .71). We used hierarchical regression to analyse the influence of wartime perceptions on cheating. Gender, year of study, age, and university type (Mahmoud & Grigoriou, 2017) were entered into the analysis as control variables. Our results showed that although the participants held negative feelings about cheating ($t = -44.8$, $df = 516$), however, older ($\beta = .20$, $p \leq .05$) male ($\beta = -.14$, $p < .01$) with less negative wartime personal experience students ($\beta = -.10$, $p < .05$) tended to hold less unfavourable attitudes towards cheating behaviours. Our results regarding the role of gender are in line with previous research. Overall, Females have long been characterized to be more ethical than males in general (e.g., Serwinek, 1992) and regarding cheating behaviour in particular (e.g., Rawwas et al., 2006). However, unlike gender, our results regarding age were inconsistent with literature as we found a positive relationship between age and tendency to engage in cheating behaviour. Previous research has reported that age-related evolution of ethical judgment was inclined with the frequency of cheating behaviour (Rawwas et al., 2006). Rawwas and Singhapakdi (1998) found that the majority of people had a tendency to be more ethical as they became older. Serwinek (1992) stated that age was the most major ethics precursor with older individuals holding strict elucidations of ethical standards. We contend that a possible reason for that contradiction might lie within the tendency of older students to be more experienced with university assessments and less anxious about it. With such relatively lower anxiousness older students would tend to be more daring to consider cheating if needed. Eventually, this study provides new insights regarding male students' attitudes to cheating in conflict zones and how they relate to wartime perceptions. Further research could investigate the reasons for the differences found.

References

- Jereb, E., Perc, M., Lämmlein, B., Jerebic, J., Urh, M., Podbregar, I., & Šprajc, P. (2018). Factors influencing plagiarism in higher education: A comparison of German and Slovene students. *PloS one*, 13(8), 1-16.
- Mahmoud, A. B., & Blinkhorn, V. (2018). Exploring the effects of wartime perceptions on attitudes towards plagiarism in higher education students. BERA 2018 Conference. Newcastle: The British Educational Research Association.
- Mahmoud, A., & Grigoriou, N. (2017). When empathy hurts: Modelling university students' word of mouth behaviour in public vs. private universities in Syria. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 71(4), 369–383.
- Rawwas, M. Y., & Singhapakdi, A. (1998). Do consumers' ethical beliefs vary with age? A substantiation of Kohlberg's typology in marketing. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 6(2), 26-38.
- Rawwas, M. Y., Swaidan, Z., & Al-Khatib, J. (2006). Does religion matter? A comparison study of the ethical beliefs of marketing students of religious and secular universities in Japan. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 65(1), 69-86.
- Serwinek, P. J. (1992). Demographic & related differences in ethical views among small businesses. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 11(7), 555-566.

Category

Higher Education

Individual Papers sub-group * Researcher

This abstract has been approved by all authors* Yes

Would you be willing to review abstracts in February 2018? No

Details of Authors

Mahmoud, Ali¹; Hack-pola, Dieu²

¹University of Liverpool UK ;

²University of Lincoln UK ;

Powered by [Shocklogic](#)