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An Analysis of the Internet-Triggered Academic Dishonesty and Reasons of Preservice Teachers*

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ABSTRACT

This study is to examine preservice teachers' internet-triggered academic dishonesty situations and their reasons for it. The research is a survey study which is one of the quantitative research methods. The population of the study consists of preservice teachers who study in the faculty of education at a state university in Turkey. The sample of the study involves preservice teachers chosen by the simple random sampling method according to the cluster sampling method. As a data collection tool, Internet-Triggered Academic Dishonesty Scale developed by Akbulut et al. (2008) was used in the study. As a result of the study, the internet-triggered academic dishonesty situations of the preservice teachers are on the level of "Very often", "Sometimes" and "Rarely" in the sub-dimensions of the scale and in the overall total. It was concluded that the preservice teachers expressed their opinions about the reasons for internet-triggered academic dishonesty as "Individual factors", "Institutional policies" and "sometimes" in sum total. Moreover, preservice teachers' internet-triggered academic dishonesty differs in terms of gender and male preservice teachers tend to commit more internet-triggered academic dishonesty. In addition to this, internet-triggered academic dishonesty also increases when the grade level of preservice teachers increases.

Keywords: Internet-triggered academic dishonesty, preservice teachers, plagiarism.

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Introduction

Academic dishonesty is a general term that includes plagiarism and cheating. Plagiarism is defined with different words by different authors and institutions and is mostly explained in association with the terms academic dishonesty and cheating. Although it is explained in different ways and by highlighting different issues in the literature, all definitions emphasize the feature of "using someone else's ideas and opinions without reference" (Özenç Uçak, and Ünal, 2015). Academic dishonesty involves inappropriate behaviors such as copying answers of others in the exams, getting improper help from others to complete tasks, and using information without accurately citing resources (Qualls, Figgars, and Gibbs, 2017). Academic dishonesty is the illegal or unethical behaviors such as deception on academic tasks, cheating on exams, making changes on homework, changing exam papers, unauthorized use of others' work, plagiarism, and changing research results (Aluede, Omoregie, and Osa-Edoh, 2006).

Plagiarism, another form of academic dishonesty, is described as the stealing or misuse of intellectual property and the uncited use of someone else's work (Juyal, Thawani, and Thaledi, 2015). There are many research findings stating that the widespread use of technology and the use of computers and the internet have facilitated academic studies and they have spread in recent years. As a result of this, it is stated that academic dishonesty has increased.

Academic dishonesty among university students is recognized as a serious problem. Studies show that 8 out of every 10 students studying at the university admit that they cheat in exams (Gabriel, 2010). In addition to these, Vartiainen and Siponen (2002) state that plagiarism from the internet and unauthorized duplication or copying of studies of known origin is included in this.

Gerdeman (2000) discusses the individual factors that underlie individuals' academic dishonesty as academic achievement, age, social activities, branch and gender. The behaviors and attitudes of the peers affect the wrong behaviors of the students and the decisions they make like academic misbehaviors. It has been determined that students are willing to tend to academic dishonesty, as they constantly observe each other doing that. Individuals committing academic dishonesty consider it as normal or acceptable. Misbehaviors of other peers can lead individuals to misbehave (Crown and Spiller, 1998). It is observed that students who feel that their teachers are worried about them tend to be less dishonest, and students tend to be less dishonest when the teachers are indifferent or the subject seems unimportant and uninteresting (Gerdeman, 2000). Another field of dishonesty other than exams is assignments. Failure to assign homework appropriate for the students' levels, assigning excessive homework, inauthentic homework, homework that prevents students from revealing their creativity, homework that students directly report the source, not checking the assigned homework, assigning the same homework every year, result-based rather than process-based assignments cause the students to commit academic dishonesty (Odabaşı et al., 2007).

There are a lot of studies in the literature on academic dishonesty. When the results obtained from the researches were examined, it was seen that, the preservice teachers believed academic dishonesty was not ethical and that precaution should be taken to prevent it (Özden, Özdemir Özden, and Biçer, 2015). It was found out that 61.72% of Taiwanese university students have acted within the scope of academic dishonesty at least once during their higher education life (Lin and Wen, 2007), Korean university students have acted dishonesty behavior

once or more times at rates ranging from 21% to 69%. (Ledesma, 2011), 80% of Lebanese students and 54% of American students exhibited a behavior related to academic dishonesty (McCabe, Feghali, and Abdallah, 2008). Furthermore, undergraduate students do not have complete and accurate information about plagiarism, which is within the scope of academic dishonesty, and that they engage in misbehavior due to these misconceptions (Çakmak, 2015). Cicutto (2008) stated that plagiarism is quite common, and this is due to misunderstanding of plagiarism. Chapman, Davis, Toy, and Wright (2000) concluded that college students knew cheating was not ethical, but they still continued to cheat. It was noticed that the academic dishonesty that preservice teachers committed frequently was cheating in exams (Özden, Özdemir Özden, and Biçer, 2015). According to the results of the research, it was thought that it is important to examine the pre-service teachers' academic fraud tendencies and to reveal the current situation. The purpose of this study is to examine the situation and the reasons of internet-triggered academic dishonesty of preservice teachers. In this context, the sub-problems of the research were determined as follows:

• What are the preservice teachers' levels of committing internet-triggered academic dishonesty?

• What are the reasons of preservice teachers for committing internet-triggered academic dishonesty?

• Do preservice teachers' internet-triggered academic dishonesty and their reasons for it differ according to the gender variable?

• Do preservice teachers' internet-triggered academic dishonesty status and their reasons for it differ according to the grade of preservice teachers?

Method

Research Model

This study, which aims to examine the internet-triggered academic dishonesty of preservice teachers and their reasons for it, is a survey research which is one of the quantitative research methods. A survey design provides a quantitative description of trends, attitudes, or opinions in a population through studies on a selected sample from that population. In this design the researcher makes generalizable inferences from the data obtained from the sample (Creswell, 2013).

Population and Sample

The population of the study consists of preservice teachers who study at the education faculty of a state university in Turkey. The sample of the study includes 239 preservice teachers determined according to the simple random sampling method. The distribution of the preservice teachers in the sample according to various variables is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of the sample group

Variable		**N**	**%**
Gender	Female	103	43.1
	Male	136	56.9
Grade	Freshman Year	45	18.8
	Sophomore Year	40	16.7
	Junior Year	53	22.2
	Senior Year	101	42.3
	Total	239	100.0

When Table 1 is examined, 103 (43.1%) of the 239 participants are female and 136 (56.9%) are male. In terms of grade variable, 45 (18.8%) participants from preservice teachers are in freshman year, 40 (16.7%) are in sophomore year, 53 (22.2%) are in junior year, 101 (42.3%) are in senior year.

Data collection tool

Internet-Triggered Academic Dishonesty Scale developed by Akbulut et al. (2008) was used as a data collection tool in the study. The scale consists of 2 sections. The first section consists of 26 items and 5 factors in which the opinions of preservice teachers on internet-triggered academic dishonesty are estimated. The second section, on the other hand, consists of 16 items and 3 factors in which preservice teachers' opinions on the reasons for internet-triggered academic dishonesty are determined. The scale is prepared as a 5-point Likert scale. The researchers, who developed the scale, reached the conclusion that the first section of it explained 59% of the total variance as a result of the exploratory factor analysis and with the second section 61% of the total variance was explained. A Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was calculated above .70. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients calculated for this research are also above .70 for both the first and the second sections.

Data Analysis

Firstly, descriptive statistics regarding the preservice teachers' internet-triggered academic dishonesty level and their reasons were given. In the analysis of the data, the assumptions of the parametric tests were checked, and it was determined that the data did not show a normal distribution. The Mann-Whitney U test was used to analyze whether there was a difference between the gender variable and the internet-triggered academic dishonesty status and reasons, and the Kruskal Wallis test was used to analyze whether there is a difference between the grade variable and the internet-triggered academic dishonesty status and reasons.

Results

Descriptive statistics on the average scores of preservice teachers for internet-triggered academic dishonesty are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Preservice teachers' opinions on Internet-triggered academic dishonesty

Sub D.	İtems	$\overline{X}$	sd
Fraudulence	"Sabotaging other people's academic works through Internet."	1.86	1.25
	"Selling an individual project on the Internet."	2.00	1.37
	"Publishing other people's studies on the Internet without the permission of the author."	**1.67**	**1.17**
	"Adding the names of non-contributing people as authors."	2.03	1.32
	"Claiming to have used materials and references that were not actually used."	3.35	1.57
	"Claiming to have conducted a research that was not conducted."	3.63	1.64
	"Translating Internet resources and claiming personal authorship"	2.57	1.51
	"Fabricating information"	2.04	1.40
	"Deliberately providing wrong references"	1.85	1.42
	"Providing references at the wrong place of the assignment"	2.25	1.54
	"Slicing an Internet resource in a way that opposes the original document and favors personal point of view"	**3.68**	**1.64**
Plagiarism	**"Using other people's complete works on Internet for personal assignments without acknowledging the author"**	**4.11**	**1.23**
	"Using the important parts of other people's works on Internet without acknowledging the author"	3.93	1.29
	"Combining several resources found on the Internet and using in an assignment without acknowledging the authors"	3.36	1.41
	"Using Internet to copy others' work without permission"	**3.09**	**1.25**
	"Using Internet quotations in personal assignments without a quotation mark as one's own"	3.51	1.28
Falsification	"Changing the contents of Internet resources while citing, and attributing the ideas to the author"	4.10	1.28
	"Manipulating the scientific information on the Internet through personal comments"	**2.44**	**1.27**
	"Paraphrasing an Internet resource in a way that deteriorates the integrity of the original idea"	**4.13**	**1.21**
Delinquency	**"Using the same assignment in different courses"**	**4.23**	**1.12**
	"Citing from an Internet resource to an unacceptable extent"	4.00	1.36
	"Making spelling mistakes"	4.03	1.25
	"Doing friends' assignments using Internet"	**2.37**	**1.23**
Unauthorized help	**"Renting or buying a previously completed assignment through Internet"**	**1.30**	**.80**
	"Doing an individual assignment with a group using several Internet resources such as forums, chat rooms, blog, etc."	**3.62**	**1.20**
	"Having others to do individual assignments"	2.99	1.25

When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that the item that preservice teachers participated mostly in the "Fraudulence" sub-dimension of internet-triggered academic dishonesty is "Slicing an Internet resource in a way that opposes the original document and favors personal point of view ($\overline{X}$ = 3.68)" while the item with the lowest participation score is "Publishing other people's studies on the Internet without the permission of the author. ($\overline{X}$ = 1.67)." In the "Plagiarism" sub-dimension, the most participated item is "Using other people's complete works on Internet for personal assignments without acknowledging the author ($\overline{X}$ = 4.11)" while the least participated item is "Using Internet to copy others' work without permission ($\overline{X}$ = 3.09)." In the "Falsification" sub-dimension, the item with the most participation score is "Paraphrasing an Internet resource in a way that deteriorates the integrity of the original idea ($\overline{X}$ = 4.13)" while the least participated item is "Manipulating the scientific information on the Internet through personal comments ($\overline{X}$ = 2.44)." In the "Delinquency" sub-dimension, the most participated item is "Using the same assignment in different courses ($\overline{X}$ = 4.23)" while the least participated item is "Doing friends' assignments using Internet ($\overline{X}$ = 2.37)." In the "Unauthorized help" sub-dimension, the item with the most participation score is "Doing an individual assignment with a group using several Internet resources such as forums, chat rooms, blog, etc. ($\overline{X}$ = 3.62)" while the item with least participation score is "Renting or buying a previously completed assignment through Internet ($\overline{X}$ = 1.30)."

Descriptive statistics regarding the sub-dimensions and sum total averages of preservice teachers' views on internet-triggered academic dishonesty are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics regarding the sub-dimensions and sum total averages of preservice teachers' views on internet-triggered academic dishonesty

Subdimensions	$\overline{X}$	**Sd**	**Comment**
Fraudulence	2.44	.60	Rarely
Plagiarism	3.59	.79	Very often
Falsification	3.55	.67	Very often
Delinquency	3.65	.63	Very often
Unauthorized help	2.63	.66	Sometimes
Total	2.93	.43	Sometimes

When the mean scores of the preservice teachers regarding internet-triggered academic dishonesty on the basis of sub-dimensions and their arithmetic mean in sum total are examined, it is understood that they are "Very often" in "Plagiarism", "Falsification" and "Delinquency" sub-dimension, "Sometimes" in "Unauthorized help" and "Total" sub-dimension, and "Rarely" in the sub-dimension of "Fraudulence".

Descriptive statistics regarding the mean scores of the preservice teachers regarding the reasons for internet-triggered academic dishonesty are given in Table 4.

Table 4. Preservice teachers' opinions on the reasons for internet-triggered academic dishonesty

Sub D.	İtems	$\overline{X}$	sd
Individual factors	"Boring assignments"	3.84	1.34
	"Teachers' inclination to give a lot of assignments"	3.64	1.33
	"Doing assignments in a hurry"	2.31	1.30
	"Thinking that assignments will not help me personally and professionally"	**4.18**	**1.06**
	"Being very busy and having no time"	3.91	1.13
	"Uninteresting assignments"	2.18	1.29
	"Getting higher grades"	4.01	1.26
	"Having a very loaded social life"	2.45	1.37
	"Feeling incompetent on the subject matter"	2.17	1.27
	"Not appreciating the quality of personal works"	**1.89**	**1.24**
Institutional policies	"Non-existence of sanctions regarding academic misconduct"	3.96	1.32
	"Internet's encouraging and facilitating misconduct"	3.91	1.17
	"Teachers' turning a blind eye towards academic misconduct"	**3.90**	**1.21**
	"Insufficient penalties"	4.14	1.08
peer pressure	"Trying to show off towards the opposite sex"	1.72	1.09
	"Trying to impress friends"	1.52	.62

When Table 4 is investigated, the item that preservice teacher participated mostly in the "Individual factors" sub-dimension of the reasons for internet-triggered academic dishonesty is "Thinking that assignments will not help me personally and professionally ($\overline{X}$ = 4.18)" while the item with the lowest participation score is "Not appreciating the quality of personal works ($\overline{X}$ = 1.89)." In the "Institutional policies" sub-dimension, the most participated item is "Insufficient penalties ($\overline{X}$ = 4.14)" while the item with the least participation score is "Teachers' turning a blind eye towards academic misconduct ($\overline{X}$ = 3.90)." In the "Peer pressure" sub-dimension, it is seen that preservice teachers show low participation in the items "Trying to show off towards the opposite sex ($\overline{X}$ = 1.72)" and "Trying to impress friends ($\overline{X}$ = 1.52)."

Descriptive statistics related to sub-dimensions and sum total averages of preservice teachers' reasons for internet-triggered academic dishonesty are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics related to sub-dimensions and sum total averages of preservice teachers' reasons for internet-triggered academic dishonesty

Subdimensions	$\overline{X}$	**Sd**	**Comment**
Individual factors	3.05	.53	Sometimes
Institutional policies	2.98	.55	Sometimes
Peer pressure	1.61	.78	Never
Total	2.85	.41	Sometimes

When the arithmetic means in the sum total and average scores of the preservice teachers regarding the reasons for internet-triggered academic dishonesty are examined on the basis of sub-dimensions, it is understood that they are “Sometimes” in “Individual factors” and in “Institutional policies” sub-dimensions and “Total” and “Never” in the “Peer pressure” sub-dimension.

The results of the Mann Whitney U test analysis done for the differentiation of the preservice teachers' internet-triggered academic dishonesty and their reasons according to the gender variable are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Differentiation of the preservice teachers for internet-triggered academic dishonesty according to gender variable

Dependent Variable	**Variables**	**N**	**Mean Rank**	**Sum of Ranks**	**U**	**Z**	**p**
Internet-triggered academic dishonesty status	Male	136	146.44	19916.50	3407.50	-6.799	**.000**
	Female	103	85.08	8763.50			
Internet-triggered academic dishonesty reasons	Male	136	120.75	16422.50	6901.50	-.194	.846
	Female	103	119.00	12257.50			

When Table 6 is examined, it is seen that the mean scores of the preservice teachers regarding their internet-triggered academic dishonesty differ significantly according to the gender variable [U = 3407.50, z = -6.799, p <.05], the mean scores for their reasons for internet-triggered academic dishonesty do not differ significantly according to the gender variable. [U = 6901.50, z = -. 194, p> .05]. When the median values of preservice teachers regarding the difference in internet-triggered academic dishonesty is examined, it is found out that there is a significant difference in favor of girls (Median $_{Male}$ = 80, Median $_{Female}$ = 71).

Whether preservice teachers' internet-triggered academic dishonesty status and their reasons differ according to the grade variable was analyzed by Kruskal Wallis test since the data did not show a normal distribution, and the results are indicated in Table 7.

Table 7. Differentiation of the preservice teachers for internet-triggered academic dishonesty according to grade variable

Dependent Variable	Grade	N	Mean Rank	df	x^2	p	Meaningful difference
Internet-triggered academic dishonesty status	Freshman Year	45	23.00	3	214.437	.000	4>3.2.1 3>2.1 2>1
	Sophomore Year	40	65.80				
	Junior Year	53	111.97				
	Senior Year	101	188.90				
Internet-triggered academic dishonesty reasons	Freshman Year	45	111.89	3	.848	.838	
	Sophomore Year	40	124.30				
	Junior Year	53	120.14				
	Senior Year	101	121.84				

When Table 7 is examined, it can be seen that preservice teachers' internet-triggered academic dishonesty status differs significantly according to the grade variable [Internet-triggered academic dishonesty status $_{(3)}$ = 214.437, p <.05]. It is understood that this difference is in favor of preservice teachers who study in the senior year among the preservice teachers in the senior year and the preservice teachers in the junior, sophomore and freshmen years, it is in favor of preservice teachers who study in the junior year grade among the preservice teachers in the junior year and the preservice teachers in the sophomore and freshmen years, and it is in favor of preservice teachers who study in the sophomore year among the preservice teachers in the sophomore year and the preservice teachers in the freshmen year. On the other hand, it is seen that the reasons of preservice teachers for internet-triggered academic dishonesty do not differ significantly according to the grade variable [Internet-triggered academic dishonesty reason $_{(3)}$ = .848, p> .05].

Discussion and Conclusions

When the mean scores of the preservice teachers regarding internet-triggered academic dishonesty were examined in the sub-dimensions and the sum total arithmetic averages, it was found that they were “Very often” in the “Plagiarism”, “Falsification” and “Delinquency” sub-dimensions, “Sometimes” in “Unauthorized help” sub-dimension and “Total”, and “Rarely” in “Fraudulence” sub-dimension. When the arithmetic means in the sum total and average scores of the preservice teachers regarding the reasons for internet-triggered academic dishonesty were examined on the basis of sub-dimensions, it was understood that they were "Very often" in the "Plagiarism", "Falsification" and "Delinquency" sub-dimensions, "Sometimes" in “Unauthorized help" sub-dimension and "Total", and "Rarely" in the "Fraudulence" sub-dimension. It was concluded that preservice teachers commit internet-triggered academic dishonesty very often and sometimes. Özden, Özdemir Özden and Biçer (2015) reached a similar result to this result in

their research. According to the related research findings, 60% of the preservice teachers who are direct observers of these behaviors believe that academic dishonesty is very common.

It was revealed that preservice teachers' internet-triggered academic dishonesty status showed a significant difference in favor of females according to the gender variable. According to this result, males commit more internet-triggered academic dishonesty compared to females. There are also similar research results. The studies conducted by Taşgın, Kıncal, Küçükoğlu and Ozan (2019) and Kadı, Baytekin and Arslan (2016), showed that male students commit more academic dishonesty. In the study of Ömür, Aydın, and Argon (2014), it was explained that male students show a higher tendency than women in the dimension of fraud tendency in research and reporting. Also Kıral and Saracaloğlu (2018) reached similar conclusions. In the related study, it was found out that the fraud tendencies of males in studies such as homework, projects and showing references were higher than males. Roig and Caso (2005) and Yangın (2009) also found in their researches that males have higher academic fraud tendencies than females. It was carried out that the reasons for preservice teachers for internet-triggered academic dishonesty did not differ significantly according to the gender variable. Özden and Özdemir Özden (2015) also confirmed in their research that female students were more agree with that some of the items in the data collection tool were related to academic dishonesty compared to male students. These results indicate that men tend to be more prone to internet-triggered academic dishonesty. This may have resulted from the fact that females are more disciplined and do their work meticulously.

In the conclusion, preservice teachers' internet-triggered academic dishonesty status differs significantly according to the grade variable. As maintained by this result, the higher grade level causes the more internet-triggered academic dishonesty cases. Similarly, Çetin (2007) states that as the grade level increases, the tendency of students to cheat increases. Tayfun and Yazıcıoğlu (2008) found in their research that as the grade level increases, the rate of those who believe that the faculty members overlook cheating and discriminate among students increase. Keçeci, Bulduk, Oruç, and Çelik (2011) declared that the juniors cheat more. The findings of Szabo and Underwood (2004), on the other hand, contradict the results of this study that the freshmen and sophomores plagiarize more than the juniors. Jordan (2001) revealed that freshmen do more academic dishonesty compared to upper grades. Ng, Davies, Bates, and Avellone (2003) pointed out that freshmen do not have enough knowledge about the definition of cheating and plagiarism, moreover, seniors are more aware of the opportunities they have to engage in academic dishonesty. De Lambert, Ellen, and Taylor (2006) explain that seniors commit more academic dishonesty by their relatively less acceptance of academic dishonesty behaviors of upper grade students. It is seen that the reasons for the internet-triggered academic dishonesty of the preservice teachers do not differ significantly according to the grade variable.

When similar studies are examined in the literature, it is an important finding that, similar to the results of this study, preservice teachers stated that they are not warned or punished by teaching staff, and that even if they know that they would be punished, they would continue to do behaviors that include academic dishonesty (Özden, Özdemir Özden, and Biçer, 2015). It is a similar result with the study of Köse and Arıkan (2011) which finds, students consider that they should not commit plagiarism, but if they do, they will most likely not be caught. Davis and Ludvigson (1995) stated that the pre-announcement of the punishment of students who commit academic dishonesty by the instructors has an effect on both female and male students. Ersoy

and Özden (2011) determined the role of the instructor on plagiarism behaviors and reached supportive findings. Accordingly, they drew attention to the fact that the instructor's explanations that she/he will check the resources of the submitted homework, give information about the sanctions she/he will copy homework on the Internet, and make explanations about internet ethics prevent the participants' tendency to plagiarize online. Bisping, Patron, and Roskelley (2008) pointed out the importance of students' awareness of which behaviors are considered within the scope of academic dishonesty and their consequences. Özenç Uçak and Ünal (2015) confirmed that academic unethical behaviors such as plagiarism should be prevented at the beginning of early student life, not to be waited until the university education to teach the students the science ethics, research methods and techniques; otherwise it will be late to gain ethical behavior. It has been found that preservice teachers' tendency to plagiarize online in their homework is related to variables originating from the instructor (Ersoy and Özden, 2011). Therefore, knowing the experiences of students in cheating and plagiarism in the preservice education process can give important clues about the future. Plagiarism of university students in general and preservice teachers in particular in their academic studies can be seen as a very important problem (Ersoy, 2014).

As a result, it was found that the preservice teachers have internet-triggered academic dishonesty behaviors and the reasons for this are caused by various cases. In terms of gender variable, it was determined that males exhibit more internet-triggered academic dishonesty behaviors. In terms of class variable, it was concluded that preservice teachers who study at upper grades commit more internet-triggered academic dishonesty. Based on these results, it can be said that preservice teachers should be informed about academic dishonesty from the first years of their beginning to university. It is important to apply dissuasive sanctions and it may be beneficial to present research ethics issues to students in a more comprehensive way by expert faculty members. Additionally it may be suggested to researchers to conduct qualitative research on internet-triggered academic dishonesty cases and on the reasons why male pre-service teachers are more likely to commit academic dishonesty.

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