

# The Concepts of Academic Dishonesty of Undergraduate Students in China in the Situation of Online Education

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*As an ethical requirement, honesty is the fundamental of all ethics and one of the critical contents of the core socialist values in China. An important manifestation of honesty in undergraduate students is academic honesty. As a vital link of the honest education system for college and university students, academic honesty is related to cultivating undergraduate students' honesty and ethical quality and is an important guarantee to promote the healthy development of higher education and academic innovation. Academic honesty is also suffered unprecedented attention from all walks of life. At the beginning of 2020, affected by the sudden Covid-19, colleges and universities all over China responded to the call of the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, actively responded to, and comprehensively applied various information means. Colleges and universities started online education, carefully and wholly formulated online teaching plans, and adopted various methods and ways to carry out various forms of online education.*

*Keywords: undergraduate students, teaching, academic honesty, scientific research, knowledge*

## INTRODUCTION

At the end of 2019, a sudden outbreak of Covid-19 (COronaVIRus Disease 2019) spread rapidly from Wuhan to the whole country, breaking the past's calm; China quickly launched a public health emergency response. The epidemic situation of Covid-19 is raging, which seriously affects all fields of social life, threatens the life safety of the people, affects social stability, and the education industry is also greatly affected without exception (Oliynyk et al., 2021). The Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China issued the "Circular of the Ministry of Education on the extension of school term in spring 2020" (2020). The Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China proposed that schools at all levels should delay the opening of the spring semester in 2020, and students should not return to school in advance without school approval. Because of the teaching in the spring of 2020, the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China issued issue the "Guiding opinions on doing a good job in the organization and management of online education in colleges and universities during the period Covid-19 prevention and control" (2020). It proposed that colleges and universities actively carry out online education activities such as online teaching and online learning. They relied on all kinds of online curriculum platforms and online learning spaces on all levels to ensure the progress and quality of education during Covid-19 prevention and control.

The iterative development of information technologies such as big data, the Internet, and artificial intelligence has challenged offline classroom teaching and education (Kisiołek et al., 2021; Fedorchenko

et al., 2020). The reform of multi-form online education has attracted the attention of the academic community significantly since the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak has been further accelerated practical change in online teaching (Danyang et al., 2021; Tokatligil et al., 2021). So far, Covid-19 is still spreading all over the world. After a long time, online education will become regular teaching work. Universities and colleges are the primary development garden for scientific and cultural inheritance and innovation, the cradle of cultivating high-quality and innovative talents, and the source of creating productive social forces (Xing, 2015). Zh. Jiushi (2000), a famous high educator in China, pointed out in his article “The true meaning of university life” that “the university’s fundamental characteristics can be summarized as academic”. Academic development is closely related to rejuvenating the country through science and education, sustainable development, and strengthening the nation with talents. Academic has also become the primary index to measure colleges and universities’ academic reputation and social status. Academic is also a yardstick to measure undergraduate students’ educational and scientific research level.

This study will form a conceptual article to adopt the theory adaptation method. It bases on the related concepts of undergraduate students’ academic dishonesty under offline teaching. It also combined the new characteristics of undergraduate students’ academic dishonesty under Chinese college and university’s online education during the Covid-19, redefining the related concepts of undergraduate students’ academic dishonesty.

## **THE CONCEPTS OF ACADEMIC HONESTY FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS**

The undergraduate stage is the starting point for students to engage in scientific research activities. Their academic ethics and scientific research level are related to the future of academic circles. Honesty has been a traditional virtue of the Chinese nation for thousands of years. Academic honesty is the requirement of scientific researchers to abide by the ethics of honesty in carrying out academic research (Ling, 2019). To cultivate the excellent quality of undergraduate students, first of all, to understand their honesty, targeted implementation of honesty education (Xuewen and Yangyang, 2019). Therefore, defining the concepts of “honesty”, “academic honest”, and “academic honesty of undergraduate students” is convenient to deeply understand and study undergraduate students’ academic honesty and academic dishonesty.

Honesty. First of all, define the concept of honesty. Academic honesty is one of the contents of honesty. The correct understanding and definition of the concept of honesty are conducive to a more accurate description of academic honesty. According to “Xinhua Dictionary” (2020), “honesty” means sincerity, “credit” means honesty and not deception. According to the “New Dictionary of Modern Chinese” (2019), “honesty” means faithfulness and credit. Core socialist values are the main point of social ethics and ethical construction in the new era. “Honesty” is one of the essential contents of citizens’ basic ethical standards, and it is the conciseness of core socialist values of personal behavior level (Fedorchenko and Fedorchenko, 2020). The socialist concept of honor and disgrace, one of the important components of the core socialist values system, also advocates for “pride in honesty and trust worthiness”. Honesty has become a vital value required by the socialist ethical system, and it has also become the main content of moral education (Aifang, 2010; Begalinova and Ashilova, 2018). It emphasizes honest labor, keeping promises, and treating people sincerely.

Academic honesty. To understand the concept of academic honesty, first need to understand the concepts of “academic” and “honesty” and then integrate them to understand academic honesty systematically. In English, the term “academic” is derived from the higher education school created by Plato. It has many interpretations, such as “school, scholar, learned, pure theory or reasoning” (Bozhong, 2006). According to the “New Dictionary of Modern Chinese” (2019), “academic” refers to systematic and specialized learning. According to the concept of academic, total “honesty” can be understood as being able, honest, and abiding by credit in the process of systematic and specialized learning. Concrete performance is an excellent ethical quality that people show in academic research activities. The above has discussed the concept of academic, academic honesty. Undergraduate students’ academic honesty mainly aims at undergraduate students, primarily refers to undergraduate students in the study and academic

research. They can be honest and abide by credit; they can guarantee their learning, academic research compound academic ethics, and respect others' academic research results. "Measures for the prevention and punishment of academic misconducts in institutions of higher education" (2016) divides academic dishonesty into the following categories:

1. Plagiarism and embezzlement of academic achievements of others.
2. Tampering with other people's research results.
3. Falsify scientific research data, materials, documents, or notes, fabricate facts, or fabricate false research results.
4. Not participate in the research or creation and signed on the research results, academic papers without the permission of others, improper use of other people's signature, fictitious collaborators signed together, or many people to complete the research without indicating the work and contribution of others in the results.
5. Provide false academic information in applying for topics, achievements, awards and job evaluation, application for degrees.
6. Sale papers, writing by or for others.
7. According to the rules formulated by higher learning institutions, relevant academic organizations, or relevant scientific research administrative institutions, other academic misconduct.

According to the undergraduate students' study, this study will take these as the dimension, the academic characteristic, carries on the division research to the standard undergraduate students' academic dishonesty behavior.

Cheating in the examination. The examination is an essential way to investigate undergraduate students' attitudes to knowledge, learning, and the degree of mastery of knowledge. Cheating in the examination violates the principle of fair and just examination. To a great extent, it seriously affects the improvement of teaching quality and the construction of a good study style in colleges and universities. Examination honesty is the most crucial part of undergraduate students' academic honesty, and it is also an essential manifestation of undergraduate students' academic honesty. Cheating in the examination refers to the examinee's behavior intentionally violating the examination regulations, deception, fraud, and other methods to defraud the examination results or assist others in defrauding the examination results. Through improper ways to participate in the examination, the subject's behavior does not allow seeking or trying to seek answers, and fair and just examination principles contrary to a behavior (Bei, 2013). Following the provisions of article 6 of chapter 5, "Punishment measures for violations of regulations in state education examinations" (2012), candidates who violate the principles of fairness and impartiality in the examination shall be deemed to be cheating in the examination if they commit any of the following acts in the course of the examination:

1. To take part in the examination with materials related to examining electronic devices that store information related to the examination content.
2. Plagiarize or assist others in plagiarizing the answers to the test questions or information related to the examination contents.
3. Robbing, stealing examination papers, answering papers, or coercing others to provide convenience for plagiarism.
4. Carrying equipments with the function of sending or receiving information.
5. Someone else impersonates the person taking the examination.
6. Intentionally destroying examination papers, answer papers, or examination materials.
7. To fill in the answer sheet with the identity of the name, examination number, and other information.
8. Transmitting or receiving articles or exchanging examination papers, answer papers, or draft papers.
9. Other improper means to obtain or attempt to answer questions, test results.

Copy and plagiarism of academic achievements. In Chinese current academic ethical anomie behavior, such as copy and plagiarism other's words and opinions without indicating the source, is more common (Yanhua, 2014). According to article 47 of chapter 5, the "Copyright Law of the People's Republic of

China” (2020), if there are the following tort acts, they shall, according to the circumstances, bear civil liability such as stopping the infringement, eliminating the influence, apologizing and compensating for the loss. The fifth item refers to the act of plagiarism, which requires legal liability. Chapter 4 of “A guide to research integrity of science and technology” (2017) defines academic dishonesty. It compares and analyzes copy and plagiarism and gives the definition of them. Copy refers to the publication of all or part of another person’s work as one’s work in a way that changes more or less the form or content. Plagiarism refers to the addition, without the consent or authorization of others, of other people’s language, text, chart, formula, or research point of view, edited, pieced together, modified into their papers, works, project applications, project conclusion reports, patent documents, data files, computer program codes, and other materials. And as their results and not quoted public publication. Undergraduate students copy and plagiarize other people’s academic achievements can be roughly divided into two forms: copy and plagiarism in the examination will not repeat here, as explained in the first point; copy and plagiarism of thesis, the thesis here contains course thesis and graduation thesis or graduation design. In order to pass the exam, get a high score in their final grades, or graduate smoothly, undergraduate students download articles online, patchwork, and piece together low-level papers with no technical content and scattered contents.

Tamper research. One of the essential characteristics of the research results is to be innovative. It requires researchers not to cheat and requires researchers to have the scientific spirit of seeking truth from facts, and requires researchers to have creative thinking without formal constraints. Chapter 4 of “A guide to research integrity of science and technology” (2017) defines tampering. Tampering is the act of manipulating test materials, equipment, or steps, changing or omitting data or partial results in a scientific research activity so that the research record cannot truly reflect the actual situation. Experiments, interviews, and other investigations and research are practical for undergraduate students to write academic papers and complete academic research. The authenticity and validity of these research data directly determine the value of the research results. Some undergraduate students are impatient, eager for quick success and a quick profit, unwilling to devote their energy to research. In order to get the results they want, they tamper with the experimental and investigation data to echo their research conclusions or tamper with others’ research results as their research results.

Forgery of scientific research, data, references and notes. Scientific research data should be scientific, accurate and objective data obtained in scientific experiments. It is the premise of scientific research to get precise conclusions. Chapter 4 of “A guide to research integrity of science and technology” (2017) defines forgery. Forgery is the act of recording or reporting data or results that are not generated in scientific research activities. Forgery is not based on the accurate data obtained in actual observation and experiment but on the expected value derived from some scientific hypothesis and theory and falsifies false statements and test results. Undergraduate students forge scientific research data as their failure to carry out experiments, questionnaires, and other actual research. However, to fabricate academic papers and academic research data, muddle through. The experiment, questionnaire survey, and further research did not complete the investigation and study, and finally fabricated a series of scientific research data to end the study. References and notes are books, papers, and other references cited in writing. References and notes can indicate the source of the mentioned materials and highlight academic research level and level. Forgery of references and notes refers to undergraduate students writing papers to find similar books, papers, or directly forge some books and documents that do not exist as references and notes.

Sale papers. To pursue academic papers’ quality or limited academic ability, the undergraduate students who are unwilling to concentrate on their research seek unconventional ways to complete the papers. Hence, the industry of sale papers emerges as required. Sale papers include course papers, published papers, graduation papers. The number of words, disciplines, difficulties, journal grades, etc., decides the sale price. It refers to undergraduate students who have minimal research ability or do not have research ability to look for “paper writing” to buy papers or undergraduate students with better research ability to act as “paper writing” through themselves. Undergraduate students give up academic honesty by buying papers from others or selling papers to others.

## NEW CHARACTERISTICS OF ONLINE EDUCATION IN UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL DURING COVID-19

The development of online education in China has transformed from technology popularization and application to teaching mode exploration and paradigm reform. Online education in China began at the end of the 20th century when online education was mainly aimed at adult education and vocational training. After 2000, China established a large number of quality courses. And in 2010, educational informatization was incorporated into the overall strategy of national informatization development. China ushered in the first year of “MOOC” (massive open online course) in 2012. Since 2015, the “Internet + teaching” model has been popularized, and the concept of educational informatization has been strengthened. During Covid-19, colleges and universities across China applied online education globally, spanning the entire spring semester of 2020. As of June 15, 2020, 1454 China has carried out online education, participating in 2.3 billion college and university students, and the number of courses has reached 12.26 million (Xiaolin and Qinglei, 2020). This large-scale online education in China brings online education opportunities and challenges for colleges and universities in China. Besides, it is also a test of the application of online education in colleges and universities in China and shows new characteristics.

Changes in the identity of teachers and students. Under offline education, the teacher’s identity is mainly the imparting of knowledge, and the student’s identity is primarily the receiver of knowledge. The status of teachers and students in online education during Covid-19 has changed to meet the era of network and information education requirements. The information is all-encompassing in the network information age, and knowledge is updated rapidly. Teachers and students can obtain information and knowledge from the network conveniently and efficiently. Teachers change from knowledge imparting to learning methods. Teachers can use the network’s convenience to improve teaching methods and enrich the teaching content for teachers themselves. Teachers need to guide students on using the web to enhance their studies, teach students how to distinguish network information, and guide students to use the network correctly. Students change from the receiver of knowledge to the active acquisition of knowledge. Students’ development depends on the breadth of obtaining information and the depth of using the information to cultivate self-learning and improve self-education. The network can enable students to learn a lot of knowledge. Under the guidance of teachers, students should change from passively receiving knowledge to acquiring knowledge and learning to use the network to purchase learning conducive to their growth, thus expanding their knowledge and promoting their continuous development and improvement (Begalinov et al., 2018).

Transformation of the teaching platform. The offline education platform is mainly based on campus and classrooms, and all the teaching activities are completed. The classroom stands on the podium; students sit down and listen. The teaching platform of online education has changed a lot. More than 130 online education companies provide all kinds of online education resources, tools, platforms, services, and so on to Wuhan or the whole country (Jianli et al., 2020). For example, there are mainly Chinese colleges and universities MOOC, superstar, cloud class, wisdom tree, learning power, vocational education cloud, rain class, U campus, and so on in online teaching platforms. Another example is Tencent classrooms, Tencent conferences, QQ group live, nail, enterprise WeChat, ZOOM conference, and other teaching live broadcast tools (Baembitov et al., 2021). Changes in teaching content. The offline education form mainly depends on the designated paper teaching materials. However, the paper teaching material’s content is limited, and some teaching materials are also affected by timeliness, hindering them from acquiring updated and richer knowledge. Online education provides better help for teachers to screen teaching materials, conceive teaching routes, and provide students opportunities to contact and learn updated, more prosperous, and more diverse learning materials. Online education has significantly improved the utilization rate of teaching resources outside the designated paper teaching materials. It has included all kinds of learning materials that are helpful for students to learn. The contents are more prosperous and more diverse, and they can keep up with the pace with the times, which is conducive to students’ more comprehensive understanding and digestion of knowledge (Oliinyk et al., 2021).

Transformation of teacher-student interaction. Under offline education, the interaction between teachers and students is mainly reflected in the classroom. Teachers can adjust the teaching content and

speed by observing students' classroom performance, such as expression in students' eyes, body movements, language. Teachers can also encourage and guide students through speech, body movements, and other ways. However, due to many students and limited teaching time, teachers cannot interact with each student. But teacher-student interaction is limited to the classroom, and the interaction outside the classroom is greatly restricted. The interaction between teachers and students mainly reflects in the classroom and outside the classroom under online education. However, the interactive form in the classroom is slightly different from offline teaching. The intuitive reflection of students in online teaching is not easy to be mastered by teachers. Teachers cannot observe students' classroom performance, and it is difficult to grasp the universal problems existing in students in time. In online education, teachers can see the issues raised by a student at any time, form "one-to-one" targeted guidance and help, which is conducive to teachers in deepening their understanding of the individual students and meeting individual learning needs students. Outside the classroom, the platform is used to set up students' and teachers' answers, extending the classroom teaching content and strengthening the interaction between teachers and students after class.

Change in teacher control of students. In offline education, teachers directly face students to carry out teaching work, and teachers can always pay attention to students' every move. In online education, teachers and students can only meet through the computer screen, and teachers' cannot control students face-to-face. First, offline education has classroom discipline and teacher control for classroom teaching. Students can seriously study the rules to a large extent to ensure the efficiency of students. And online education teachers can't observe student status at all times and can't restrict students. Second, offline education has school examination discipline and teacher invigilation for classroom tests. Students can complete the quiz to comply with the test norms. Although online education also has a school examination discipline, teachers cannot invigilate a real-time monitoring program. Third, offline education teachers will explain in class or with students one-on-one, face-to-face correction for after-class homework and course papers. Most of the students around the pressure of students and teachers conscientiously completed. Although teachers will also explain or one-on-one corrections across the screen in online education, students lack force across the screen. Fourth, offline education teachers will regularly meet with students for graduation thesis, report to teachers on the thesis's progress and content, listen to the report, and give guidance. Most students under the control of teachers can work thoughtfully. Online education, students' reporting, and defense lack formal sense; across the screen, students lack pressure.

The concepts of academic dishonesty of undergraduate students during online education. The Covid-19 has promoted the large-scale implementation of online education in Chinese colleges and universities. The emergence of large-scale online education ensures the colleges and universities' teaching progress, the teaching plan's performance, the adjustment and change of the colleges and universities' educational model, and the new characteristics of the education and teaching. These adjustments and changes will inevitably affect undergraduate students' academic behavior and make undergraduate students' academic dishonesty show unique characteristics. The concept of academic dishonesty behavior of undergraduate students under the original offline education is not enough to cover online education's new features. Combined with the unique characteristics of online education, this study is necessary to sum up it again. Cheating in the examination. According to the original concept of cheating in examinations and combined with the new characteristics of online education, this study adjusts the meaning of cheating in examinations appropriately:

1. Bring information related to the examination content to participate in the examination.
2. Searching, plagiarizing, or assisting others in searching, plagiarizing the answers to test questions or information related to examination content.
3. Robbing, stealing examination papers and answering papers, logging into the examination system, or coercing others to provide convenience for plagiarism.
4. Carrying equipments with the function of sending or receiving information into the entity examination room.
5. Answer the phone, send or receive information during the examination.
6. Someone else impersonated to take the exam.

7. Intentionally destroying examination papers, answer papers, or examination materials.
8. Mark the name, examination number, and other information that does not match my identity on the examination paper.
9. Transmit or receive papers, answer sheets, draft papers, and articles.
10. Organizing or participating in discussions relating to the examination content through a virtual method during the examination.
11. Examination answers in papers are more than 20 percent similar.
12. Other acts of obtaining or attempting to answer test questions or test results improperly.

Copy and plagiarism of academic achievements. During online education, the academic resources at home and abroad are more open, and students can easily access various countries' academic resources through the Internet (Kisiołek et al., 2020). This study adjusts the idea of copy and plagiarism appropriately according to the original concept of copy and plagiarism, combined with the new characteristics of online education. Copy refers to using all or part of other people's work as their own in a way that changes more or less the form or content or the direct translation of foreign language materials into Chinese as all or part of their work. Plagiarism refers to the public publication without the consent or authorization of others to edit, piece together, modify, add to their papers, assignments, project applications, project conclusion reports, patent documents, data files, computer program codes, and other materials without reference; or to translate foreign language materials directly into Chinese, to edit, piece together, and modify them as their results without reference.

Tamper research. Online education has made the traditional experimental practice teaching has been impacted to a certain extent. During Covid-19, colleges and universities are also exploring innovative, practical teaching methods and exploring new online experiments. Online education also carries out distance experiment teaching and guidance, actively excavating virtual simulation experiment teaching resources inside and outside colleges and universities, and effectively carries out online experiment teaching activities. Electronic research is easier to tamper with for other research, such as access, because it needs to be carried out online. According to the new characteristics of online education, this study adjusts the concept of tampering with research results appropriately: tampering is an act of manipulating virtual test platforms, experimental materials, equipment or steps in scientific research activities, changing or omitting data or some results so that the research records cannot truly reflect the actual situation; or privately changing or omitting questionnaires and other investigation research so that the conclusions of the study cannot truly reflect the actual situation.

Forgery of scientific research, data, references and notes. According to the original concept of forgery scientific research data, references and notes, combined with the new characteristics of online education, this study maintains the new meaning of undergraduate students' concept of forgery scientific research data. Undergraduate students forgery scientific research data means they do not carry out experiments, questionnaires, and other actual investigations and research. They then fabricate academic papers and research data in academic research and muddle through. Although they carried out experiments, questionnaires, and other research, but did not complete and finally fabricated a series of scientific research data to end the study. Or they manipulate the virtual experimental platform to do false experiments, through the Internet to do inaccurate questionnaires and other research and then fabricate academic papers and academic research data (Bondarenko et al., 2021). There is no apparent difference between online and offline education of forged references and annotations, and its original concept is not adjusted here. Sale papers. According to the original concept of sale papers, combined with the new characteristics of online education, this study holds the new idea of sale papers for undergraduate students appropriately. Sale papers refer to undergraduate students who have minimal research ability or do not have research ability to look for "writing papers" to buy papers. Or they sign up online to pay fees for other people's papers. Or the more excellent research ability of college students through their own as "paper writing". They give up their academic ethics as researchers, sell papers to others, or upload papers online for improper profit-making.

## CONCLUSIONS

During the outbreak of Covid-19, online education solved the normalization of students' studies and made the teaching model show new characteristics. Online education is a new teaching method that accords with the teaching idea of learning at the center, representing teaching development in the future and bringing more diverse and convenient information interaction for teachers and students. The colleges and universities have this large-scale application of online teaching experience. In the future, online education will pay more attention to research, and offline education co-exists for a long time, complementary to each other.

Undergraduate students are the future and hope of science, and academic honesty is the basis of academic prosperity and development. Under the online education of undergraduate students' academic honesty presents new characteristics. Therefore, redefining the concept of academic dishonesty of undergraduate students helps understand the connotation of undergraduate students' academic dishonesty more deeply to grasp further the present situation and the main problems of undergraduate students' academic honesty.

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