

# Chapter 9

## Cheating and Prevention Strategies in Online Assessment

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Increasing interest in online learning has increased the need for online assessment. However, academic dishonesty is a significant problem in online assessment. Cheating is one of the leading forms of academic dishonesty. Cheating is a serious problem with negative consequences that should be avoided by educators and students. Therefore, cheating emerges as a major problem in online assessment that requires an urgent solution. Understanding students' cheating behaviors will help determine steps to prevent this problem. This information will provide important clues for more reliable online assessments. In this context, this book chapter is presented to readers as a comprehensive resource on online assessments and cheating. In addition, important strategies were presented to all stakeholders such as designers, administrators, instructors, and students to prevent cheating on online assessments.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The role of technology in education is increasing with the development of information and communication technologies. Especially the easy access and flexibility provided by the internet have made online learning an important tool in education. The COVID-19 pandemic has strained the education system, accelerating the transition to online learning. Educators and learners began to benefit from the advantages of online learning more intensively. With increasing interest in online learning, online assessment has begun to be widely used as a measurement and evaluation method. This assessment method reduces instructors' workload, facilitates the evaluation process, and reduces costs compared to printed paper-and-pencil-based tests (Butler-Henderson, & Crawford, 2020). Online assessments offer more flexible opportunities than traditional paper-and-pencil-based tests, and question items can be arranged for different sessions (Zhang et al. 2019). It also shortens educators' grading time and ensures that scores are announced to students faster (Karay et al., 2015). Online assessments provide students with the convenience of quickly entering and editing answers (Pagram et al., 2018). It allows the use of rich question types that are interactive and multimedia-supported. It also saves resources by recording

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questions and student answers (Şenel, 2021). Finally, it provides easier access to statistical data that is difficult to obtain in paper-and-pencil-based tests (Clark et al., 2020).

Although online assessment provides many advantages over traditional assessment, it also brings with it the challenge of academic dishonesty (Costley, 2019). While academic dishonesty is already an important issue in the context of online assessment, the pandemic process has increased the dimensions of this problem (Ngqondi et al., 2021). It has been observed more clearly during the pandemic (Hodges et al., 2020) that academic dishonesty is one of the most important challenges in online assessment (Martin et al., 2020). Cheating is one of the leading forms of academic dishonesty, which expresses undesirable behaviors in academic environments such as plagiarism, cooperation, fabrication, and falsification (Surahman & Wang, 2022). Garg and Goel's (2022) study reveals that cheating is a common problem in online assessment.

Cheating is unethical behavior exhibited by students during learning activities such as exams and homework (Blau & Eshet-Alkalai, 2017). Although these behaviors have been observed in educational environments for many years (Stephens et al., 2021), such behaviors are more common in online assessment. Research shows that because online assessments make cheating easier, students are more likely to engage in dishonest behavior during this assessment (Dendir & Maxwell, 2020). The majority of students also admit to cheating on online assessments (Srikanth, 2014; Costley, 2019). This causes online assessment to be perceived as an opportunity for cheating among students (Peled et al., 2019). Therefore, cheating is a fundamental problem that needs to be addressed in the context of online assessment.

The effort to prevent cheating is an effort to provide a reliable assessment (Surahman & Wang, 2022). Reliable evaluation refers to the confidence level in the data and methods that demonstrate the accuracy of an application. Online assessment may lead to unfair assessment of learning outcomes due to cheating. Therefore, performing reliable assessments is an issue that should be emphasized by researchers and educators (Adzima, 2020). Educators are responsible for providing students with a reliable assessment environment (Clark et al., 2020). Cheating is a growing problem in online assessment that requires urgent attention (Garg & Goel, 2022). Therefore, this problem in online assessment must be resolved as soon as possible.

In this chapter, we tried to raise awareness and offer a new perspective on cheating, which is a frequently encountered problem in online assessment. In this regard, the online assessment literature was examined and strategies were proposed for all education stakeholders to prevent undesirable behaviors such as cheating. First of all, an answer was sought to the question of why students cheated. Then, the reasons why students preferred to cheat were investigated. Finally, we focused on current anti-cheat practices and their results. In light of this information, the proposed solutions will contribute to strengthening the current evaluation system and reducing cheating behavior in online assessment.

## **BACKGROUND**

In this section, the problem of cheating in online assessment is examined in the light of current scientific research. In this context, studies in the literature on online assessment, academic dishonesty, cheating, reasons for cheating, cheating techniques, and cheating prevention methods were examined in detail and synthesized.

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