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Does Student Engagement Have a Darkside?

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Introduction

- Does campus engagement have a dark side? Can being under- or over-involved lead to cheating? Can being too engaged in college be a bad thing? The variables encompass students' academic experience on campus: engagement, busyness, time management, and campus resources.

- Students who are overly busy engage more in academic misconduct, but they are also engaged on campus. The study aims to determine how aspects of college students' lives affect the likelihood to engage in academic misconduct.

Background

- **Engagement** – The emotional bond or connection a student develops toward their institution; impacts sense of belonging and leads to better learning outcomes (Trowler & Trowler, 2010)
- **Busyness** – How much time a student spends in various areas of their life; including academic, non-academic (club, sport, social activities etc.) and employment
- **Time management** – Skills used to budget one's time
- **Campus Resources** – Services offered on campus to students that may include: speaking or writing center, peer tutors, counseling, career center, IT help, information centers, etc.

- **National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)** – studied college students and their engagement to their respective institutions

- **Britton and Tesser (1991)** – studied a set of time management practices

Hypotheses

- Engagement, time management, busyness and campus resources all interact in ways that **influence** academic misconduct

- Under-engagement and over-engagement **increase** a student's probability to engage in academic misconduct (Goldilocks concept)

- Use of campus resources and time management can **reduce** the effects of business and over-engagement

- Utilizing time management skills will lead to a **lower** amount of academic misconduct, and will serve as a moderating effect on the relationship between busyness and academic dishonesty

  - If a student is overly busy, but knows how to manage their time, they will be **less likely** to engage in academic misconduct

  - If a student does not use academic resources due to lack of engagement, or lack of academic skills, they will be **more likely** to engage in academic misconduct
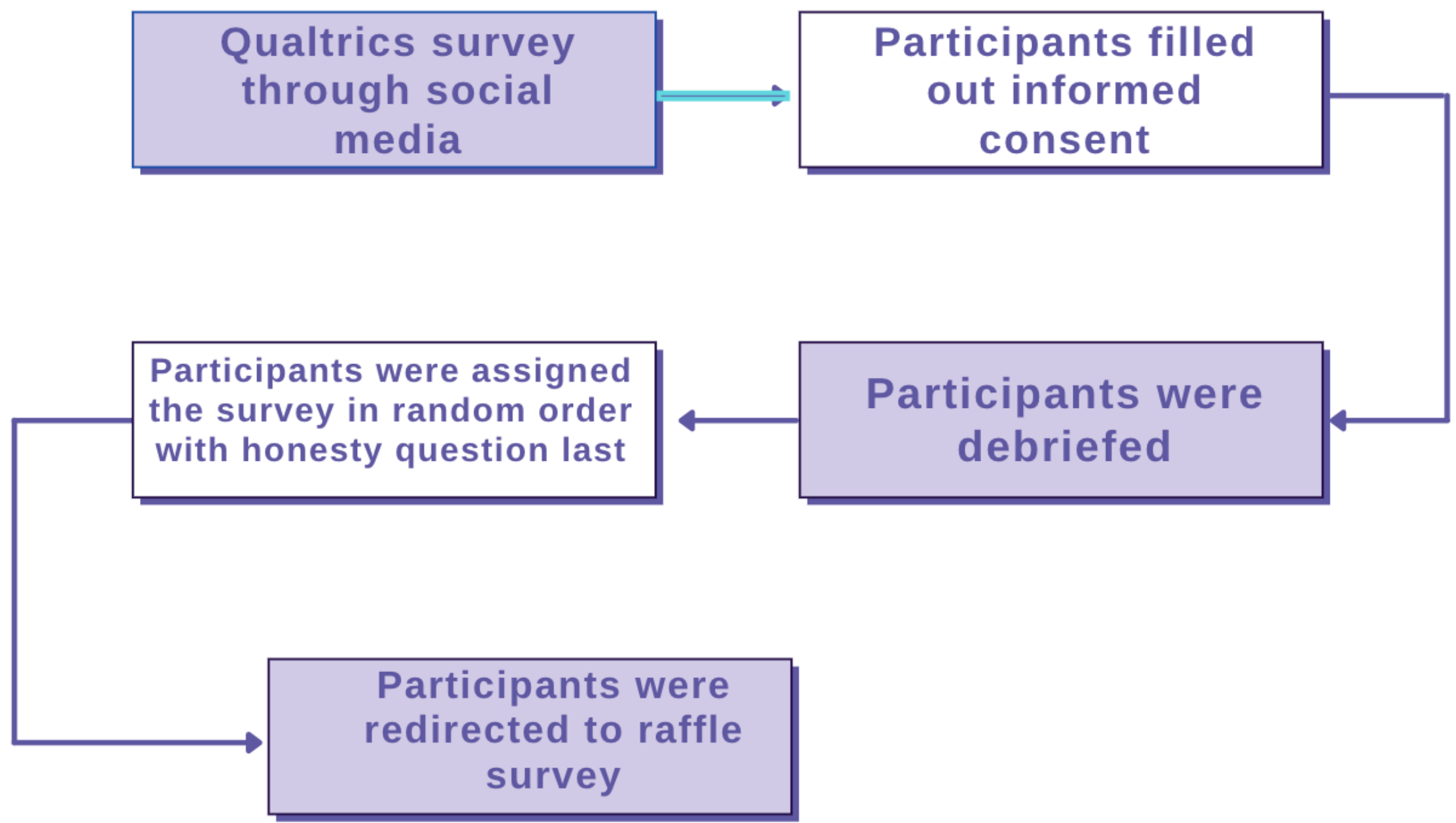
Method

Participants

- 304 participants were recruited through social media and incentivized with a raffle drawing
- The average age of participants was 23.4 with a standard deviation of 5.07
- Demographics
  - male (39.1%), female (59.2%), nonbinary/transgender/gender queer (2.6%)
  - Asian (34), Black (44), Hispanic/Latinx (19), Native American (11), Native Hawaiian (1), White (208), Self-Identify (5), and 7 participants preferred not to say
  - first years (6.2%), sophomores (25.8%), juniors (23.2%), seniors (29.7%), 5th or beyond (14.4%)

Materials

- **Student Engagement** (Kuh, 2008; NSSE High Impact, Institutional Supportive Environment Scale, Sense of Belonging)
  - High impact experiences: e.g. study abroad, internships, capstones
  - Supportive env.: e.g. encouraged social involvement
  - Sense of belonging: e.g. I feel valued by my institution
  - 4-point scales

- **Time Management** (Britton & Tesser, 1991) – Short range planning, time attitudes, long-range planning subscales
  - The short-range planning subscale includes the question "Do you plan the day before you start it?"
  - Responses on a 5-point scale from Never to Always

- **Campus Resources**
  - e.g. "How frequently have you used the following resources at your school?"
  - 10 items measured on a 5-point scale (Never to Very Frequently)

- **Academic Misconduct** – How often a student engaged in cheating behaviors and to the extent of their cheating (Rettinger et al., 2021)
  - e.g. getting questions or answers from someone who had already taken a test or exam
  - 6-point scale (never, once, 2-4 times, 5-10 times, 11 or more times, and not applicable to my program)

- **Time Usage** (Kuh, 2008) NSSE Time Use Subscale
  - How many hours in a 7-day week spent doing certain activities such as preparing for class, working for pay, or relaxing and socializing. 0, 1-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, 21-25, 26-30, and more than 30 (Hours per week)

- **Demographics and Honesty Check**

Procedure

```
Qualtrics survey           Participants filled
through social      -->     out informed
media                       consent
                                |
                                v
Participants were assigned   Participants were
the survey in random order <- debriefed
with honesty question last
     |
     v
Participants were
redirected to raffle
survey
```

Results

Summary Statistics

| Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Alpha (α)	Correlation with Academic Misconduct	p-value
Academic Misconduct	1.75	.85	.972	-	-
Time Use (hrs./wk.)	27.51	8.37	.665	.434*	< .001
Short-Term Planning (Time Mgt.)	3.58	.83	.882	- .229*	< .001
Campus Resources Usage	2.49	.85	.893	.287*	< .001
Belongingness	1.93	.63	.754	.094	.101
High Impact Experiences	1.66	.28	.647	- .041	.481
Perceived Institutional Support	2.21	.56	.813	.093	.106

Time Use (busyness)
- Over-engagement is associated with increased cheating relative to average or low engagement. (graph 1 and 2; $F(2,299) = 25.79$, $p<.001$)
  - Time spent studying does not predict cheating ($r(301) = -.01$, ns)
  - Time spent out of school does predict cheating ($r(303) = .49$, $p<.001$)

Campus Resources & Time Management
- More short term planning is associated with less cheating ($r(303) = -.23$, $p<.001$)
- More campus resources = more cheating ($r(303) = 0.29$, $p<.001$)
- Interaction of time use (busyness) and time management is significant ($t(299) = -5.3$, $p<.0001$)
  - Low time management ($\beta = .07$, $p<.0001$) large busyness effect on cheating
  - Avg. time management ($\beta = .04$, $p<.0001$) effect of busy on cheating goes down
  - High time management ($\beta = .01$, ns) no effect of busyness on cheating
- Interaction of time use (busyness) and campus resource use is significant ($t(299) = 2.61$, $p = .01$)
  - Low resource use ($\beta = .02$, ns) no busyness effect on cheating
  - Avg. resource use ($\beta = .04$, $p<.0001$) small effect of busyness on cheating
  - High resource use ($\beta = .05$, $p<.0001$) larger effect of busyness on cheating

Belongingness and institutional support not associated with cheating

Graph 1: Time use and academic misconduct
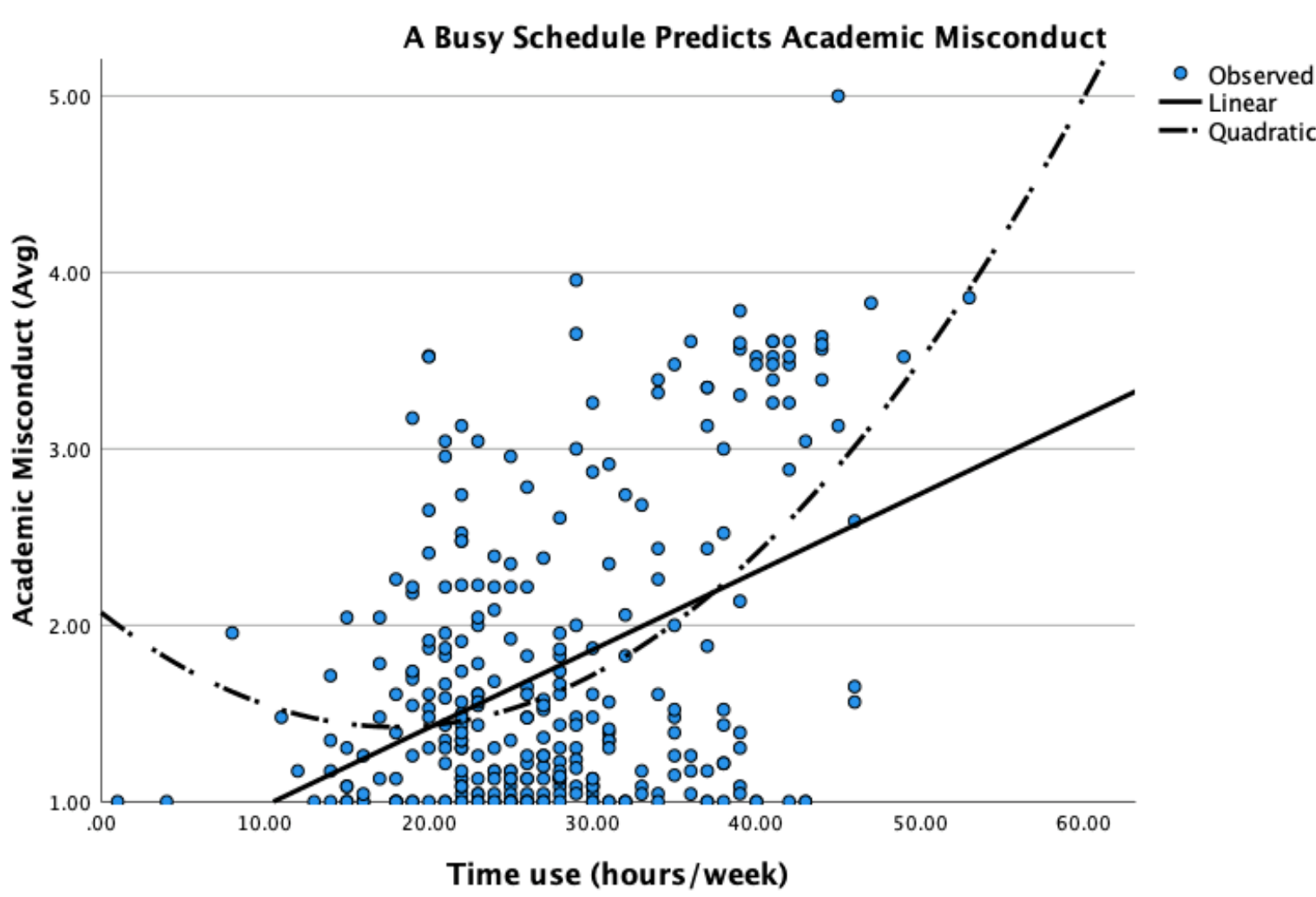
Graph 2 : Mean academic misconduct and time usage
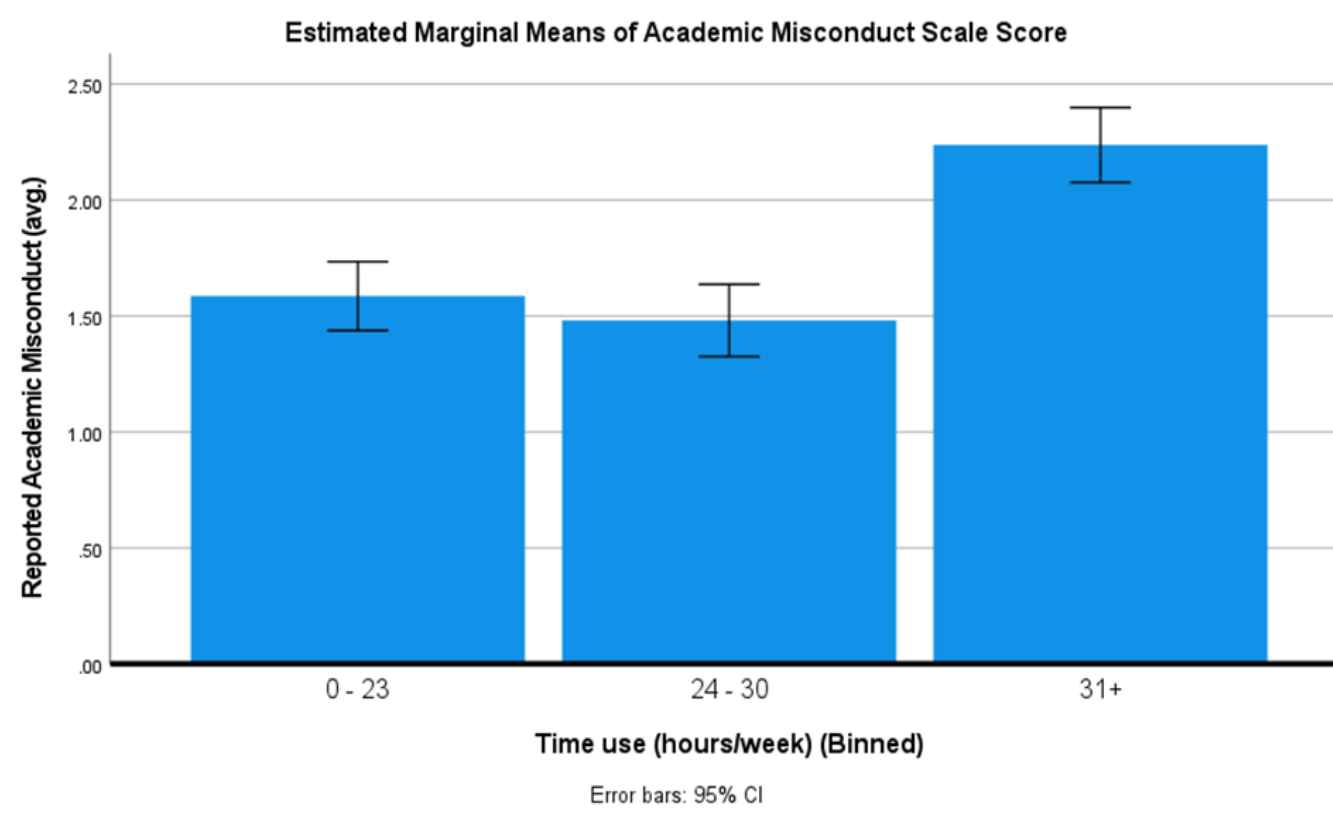
Time Use Types Predict Cheating (Stepwise Regression)
Final Model ($F(5, 284) = 23.12$, $p<.001$, $r^2 = 0.29$)
- Working for pay (on campus), commuting, relaxing/socializing, & volunteering are positive predictors
- Sleeping & self-care are negative predicators of cheating
- NOT INCLUDED: studying, co-curriculars, working (off campus), & childcare don't predict cheating

Discussion

Time Usage

- Busy students at higher risk of cheating
- Under-engagement may be risky as well

- Students who work at heightened risk of cheating
- Commuting time takes away from school and work
- Too much socializing/relaxing is a risk factor

- Self-care/sleeping is associated with less cheating

Time Management and Campus Resources

- Short-term planning skills help students reduce cheating
  - Direct effect on reducing cheating
  - Mitigates effect of busyness

- Campus resources have a paradoxical effect
  - Increased use of resources associated with more cheating
  - Perhaps confounded with students at risk

So What?

- Dark side to student engagement
  - Institutions encourage engagement, but student's can get overwhelmed
  - Teach time management

- When colleges don't meet students' basic needs, cheating is a risk

- Students at risk use both appropriate and inappropriate resources

References

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