

# **Business Education & Accreditation**

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# **A TEACHING TOOL FOR COMPUTING STOCK RETURNS, RISK AND BETA**

Roger Shelor, Ohio University

Scott Wright, Ohio University

## **ABSTRACT**

*The purpose of this paper is to serve as a guide for students' use of actual data for risk and return calculations. The study of stock return risk has been of interest to investors and academics for several decades. Early discussion of the "mean-variance framework" described the rationale for requiring additional expected income as a reward for choosing higher risk investments. The general concept is to evaluate return risk either on a stand-alone basis (commonly using standard deviation or variance) or on a relative basis (calculating a beta value using a market index or calculating multiple securities portfolio risk). This paper presents a description of the procedure for calculating stand-alone risk and the Capital Asset Pricing Model Beta value using stock prices and the SP500 market index. In addition, the risk (beta) stability over time is addressed.*

**JEL:** C81; C87

**KEY WORDS:** Stock Returns; Risk; Capital Asset Pricing Model; Financial Modeling

## **INTRODUCTION**

This paper improves the pedagogy for applying stock return analysis to information from online financial sites. Investors have long recognized that there is a valid reason to make portfolio choices based on an individual's risk tolerance and an adequate understanding of the potential for loss or gain of various investments. Risk is classified as systematic or non-systematic; purchasing power; default or liquidity, among others. Measures of stock price (return) risk are of interest to investors.

The approach discussed here should be useful for students of financial management who could benefit by having the opportunity to apply theoretical textbook illustrations to real world situations. Student may develop enthusiasm about analysis of financial information when they are able to replicate professional analysis.

Financial Management textbooks present risk in a variety of ways. Block, Hirt and Danielson (2009) discuss returns risk through a Capital Asset Pricing Model (CAPM) Beta calculation illustration. This presents (Stock and market) annual returns and a graph showing a plot of these data pairs. Discussion of the Security Market Line shows a beta value, the risk free return and market return proxies. Applications of beta to forecasting returns and risk adjustments for Capital Budgeting follow. Parrino and Kidwell (2009) devote a chapter to Quantitative Measures of Return. Returns calculation is illustrated, along with a thorough discussion of standard deviation and variance. Single asset risk is described in the context of possible economic outcomes and the associated probabilities, providing the opportunity to calculate standard deviation and the coefficient of variation. In addition, the concept for calculation of risk for a multiple asset portfolio is discussed. Systematic risk is presented with a five-year plot of General Electric stock returns and the SP500 Index. Brigham and Houston (2007) provides examples of reasons that there might be shifts in the Security Market Line, and discusses beta and matters pertaining to beta changes over time. A spreadsheet problem at the end of the chapter asks students to calculate a beta value using six annual return values for two stocks and an appropriate industry index. There are a number of illustrations of beta values, the risk free rate, and estimated market returns used for stock returns forecasting.

# STUDENT LEARNING PERCEPTIONS: EVIDENCE FROM AN INTRODUCTORY ACCOUNTING COURSE

Bonnie P. Stivers, Morehouse College  
Emmanuel Onifade, Morehouse College  
Ruthie Reynolds, Howard University

## ABSTRACT

*This study sought to examine students' perceptions of their learning experience in the introductory accounting courses at three colleges and universities in the United States. Questionnaire responses were collected from 375 students at the end of the second introductory course. The student population consisted primarily of business students. The study identified a set of six factors that represent students' learning experience in introductory accounting. The identified set includes: accounting basics, how to learn, job satisfaction, accounting agencies, career opportunities, and career prestige. These study results provide important feedback for the process of redesigning undergraduate accounting curricula to improve students' learning experience in the introductory courses.*

**JEL:** A22, A23, M40

**KEYWORDS:** introductory accounting; student perceptions; business education; accounting curricula.

## INTRODUCTION

This paper presents the results of a study made to examine students' perceptions of their learning experience in the introductory accounting courses at three colleges and universities in the United States. The questionnaire responses from students provide valuable feedback to educators to determine if we are meeting course objectives and if we are attracting quality students to the accounting major. According to the Accounting Education Change Commission (AECC, 1992), the primary objective of the introductory courses in accounting is for students to learn about accounting as a communication function to support decision making. The students' learning experience in the introductory courses has a significant impact on the decision to major in accounting. Therefore, the courses should be designed to ensure that students have the requisite accounting skills as they enter the business world and be designed to attract the "best and the brightest" business majors to accounting.

There have been calls for change in accounting education since the Bedford Report in 1986 (AAA, 1986). The American Accounting Association (AAA) appointed the AECC in 1989 to improve the academic preparation of accountants. In that same year, the chief executives of the largest accounting firms presented their position on accounting education. They reported that major changes in the business world had not been integrated into the accounting curriculum (Kullberg et al., 1989). Today, we have an ongoing preparation gap in accounting education (Siegel, Sorensen, Klammer, & Richtermeyer, 2010). Accounting educators and the business community must identify the knowledge, skills, and abilities for graduates to be successful in the business world. It is time to make substantive changes to course content, curricula, and technology in accounting education.

Today, the development of the appropriate accounting curriculum is complicated by a variety of forces. McCuddy (2007) has identified four significant forces. First, organizations are operating in an increasingly global economy. Second, decisions must be made in a fast and rapidly changing world. Third, it is necessary to consider the impact of technology on people and organizations. Fourth, there is a crisis of ethics and values in economic, social, and political institutions. Chang, Landis, & Yu (2011) suggest that the accounting profession is in a state of transformation. "The profession is entering a world

## **PROFILING AND THE STUDENT PROJECT PEER APPRAISAL PROCESS**

Rodley C. Pineda, Tennessee Technological University  
Bonita B. Barger, Tennessee Technological University  
Linda D. Lerner, Tennessee Technological University

### **ABSTRACT**

*Past research on team formation and composition reveals that team member attributes play a role in how students perceive each others' contributions to a team project. Can attribute-based profiling be used during the peer appraisal process so that a holistic-based assessment tool can still provide meaningful feedback to the student being rated? Our study shows that students can develop a profile of the "ideal team member" at the start of the project that is consistent with their overall assessment of a team member's performance at the end of the process.*

**JEL:** A23

**KEYWORDS:** peer appraisal, student teams

### **INTRODUCTION**

The use of group projects in higher education has grown progressively over the years, ostensibly because employers view the ability to work effectively in a team as an essential skill (Holt, et al., 1997). Guzzo and Dickson (1996) stated that one of the ways in which educators assess the effectiveness of student project teams is when the students' experiences provide developmental outcomes for those involved. According to Hartenian (2003), team training and experiences positively correlate with team knowledge, skills and abilities. The opportunity for students to get feedback about their performance in these project teams, therefore, is an essential part of the learning process.

Feedback about individual student performance in teams is often obtained from peer assessments since direct observation by the instructor is usually not feasible. Several studies have shown that given the choice, students prefer to rate their peers using a holistic approach that provides a "big picture" view of their satisfaction with their peers' contribution to the overall team experience and outcome. A category-based peer appraisal approach, however, can provide more meaningful feedback on a student's teamwork knowledge, skills and abilities for developmental purposes. This latter approach, that asks students to evaluate their peers on several criteria at the end of the project, however, have been found to result in lower motivation among students to take the peer appraisal process seriously. This category-based approach is also more difficult when a student's performance within the group is part of the grading process for the course.

This paper discusses the benefits of having a peer appraisal process that combines category-based and holistic-based approaches. It will be shown that a peer appraisal process that asks students to develop an attribute profile of their ideal team member at the beginning of the project can be used to provide feedback about the teamwork skills and abilities of students who receive poor and excellent holistic ratings at the end of the project using data collected for this purpose. The benefits and limitations of this profile-based peer appraisal approach, and possible future research directions are then discussed.

# **MBA SHARE IN THE U.S. GRADUATE MANAGEMENT EDUCATION MARKET**

Marina Murray, Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC)

## **ABSTRACT**

*The MBA degree has captured public attention since the beginning of the 20th century when MBA programs were first established in the United States. Since then, hardly any master's-level degree created as many media impressions as the MBA. Extensive research has been conducted about MBA students, alumni, and employers, yet, several basic questions remain. How many MBA programs are offered? How many students graduate from these programs? How do these numbers compare with those for other programs in business fields? The U.S. Department of Education (DOE) tracks the number of graduate degrees awarded in business; however, the agency does not delineate which ones are MBA degrees. This paper aims to estimate the MBA share in the U.S. graduate management education market and looks at degree-granting institutions that offer master's-level programs. Based on a sampling from nearly 2,000 institutions, this paper provides an estimate for the number of organizations that offer an MBA degree in the United States. An estimated number of MBA students in a given year and the number of those who graduate with an MBA degree are calculated based on survey data from the Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC) and the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) combined with DOE data.*

**JEL:** C13; I23; M1

**KEYWORDS:** MBA degree, MBA enrollment, MBA students, MBA programs, master-level programs, simple random sample (SRS)

## **INTRODUCTION**

In 1881, Joseph Wharton, a prominent American industrialist who made his fortune in the mining and metallurgical industries, proposed what many in the world of education perceived as a radical idea. He founded the first collegiate business school at the University of Pennsylvania, The Wharton School of Finance and Commerce, which many labeled as a “struggling provincial experiment” (“Hall of Fame,” 1998; The Wharton School, 2009). At that time, some argued that business was not a university-level discipline (Schlossman, S., Gleeson, R.E., Sedlak, M., & Grayson Allen, D., 1994). Thirty years later, following the establishment of “the world’s first MBA program” (Harvard Business School, 2009) by the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration and the opening of schools of commerce at other prominent U.S. universities, such as New York University, Dartmouth, University of Chicago, and the State Universities of California, an animated public discussion continued about the value, principles, and place of commercial education in the educational system (Johnson, 1910).

Yet, by the end of the 20th century, Joseph Wharton’s “radical idea” had sunk deep roots and spread worldwide. We now have an estimated 300,000 plus students graduating annually from more than 1,000 graduate and undergraduate business programs around the world (The Wharton School, 2009), a vivid testament to the tremendous interest in business credentials, including the MBA. News coverage related to graduate management education has also increased exponentially. In addition to discussion of broad higher education and economic topics connected to the MBA, school and program rankings, including the popular *BusinessWeek* survey that was first released in 1988 and subsequent undertakings by the *Economist*, *Forbes*, the *Financial Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *U.S. News & World Report* (Tyson, 2004), have served as catalysts for increased public attention to the MBA.

# STUDENT ETHICAL AWARENESS AND BUSINESS PROGRAM MATRICULATION: EVIDENCE FROM THE U.S.

Don Altmeyer, Black Hills State University  
Sheng-Ping Yang, Black Hills State University  
Ken Schallenkamp, Black Hills State University  
Ron DeBeaumont, Black Hills State University

## ABSTRACT

*An ethics survey of business students was conducted over a five semester period in a variety of business courses at a regional state university in the Midwest. The business program has adopted an across the curriculum approach to ethical instruction, and has also mandated a one-semester ethics course for all business majors. The purpose of the study was to prove or disprove the hypothesis that students completing the courses required by the business curriculum show a measurable increase in ethical awareness. The results of the survey revealed no significant correlation between class level (i.e. sophomore, junior, senior) and increased ethical awareness, and the completion of the ethics course only increased ethical awareness for individual (non-business) situations. However, a positive correlation between ethical awareness and two other factors was revealed: Both females and students with higher GPA's appear to be more ethically aware than the general population.*

**JEL:** I21

**KEYWORDS:** Ordered logit model, student ethical awareness

## INTRODUCTION

The past decade has witnessed several high profile business scandals in the U.S., from Enron to the more recent Goldman Sachs and Bernie Madoff cases. The associated institutional breakdown of trust in business has led many to question whether corporate officers and boards of directors are losing legitimacy (Khurana and Nohria, 2008; Molyneaux, 2004). In response, specific organizations and society as a whole have come to recognize that ethical and socially responsible behavior plays a crucial role in good business practices (Nicholson and DeMoss, 2009).

There is a long standing controversy over whether business ethics can be taught, and if so, what methodology is most suitable to the task. Some argue that, desirable as sound business ethics may be, it simply can't be taught in the classroom (Stape, 2002). Business ethics has been caustically referred to as being an oxymoron (Townley, 1992) and, during the 1970's and 1980's, writers as influential as Peter Drucker and Milton Friedman argued that it cannot be taught at all (Nguyen *et. al.*, 2008).

A study measuring attitudes towards unethical behavior, love of money, Machiavellianism, and risk tolerance identifies business students as being more likely to engage in unethical behavior than psychology students (Tang *et al.*, 2008). The authors state that corruption and scandals are caused, not by lack of intelligence, but by lack of wisdom or virtue. They also argue that social institutions, as well as business schools, CEO's, corporate culture, and compensation systems have significant impacts on managers' ethical behavior. This corroborates earlier studies which suggest that organizational culture and other organizational factors which occur after formal education play a major role in shaping the way individuals perceive moral responsibility (Frederick and Weber, 1987; Kelley *et al.*, 1989). Similarly, Awasthi (2008) conducted a study which revealed that exposing students to a business ethics course

# EFFECTS OF PERCEIVED CONTROL ON COLLEGE STUDENTS' EVALUATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Jungki Lee, Korea University at Sejong

## ABSTRACT

*Students are known to experience significant amounts of stress and challenges during their academic pursuit at college. This study explores a way to enhance student satisfaction by incorporating a concept called perceived control to the existing service quality model. To be specific, this study proposes and tests that perceived control could be a promising factor which may enhance service quality, satisfaction, and recommendation intention among college students. Data were collected at a major college in South Korea. A set of three hypotheses developed for this study were partially supported. Managerial implications are provided.*

**JEL:** A2

**KEYWORDS:** marketing, services, perceived control, service quality, and student satisfaction

## INTRODUCTION

Colleges, like other business, are under constant pressure to provide quality service and to win satisfaction among students to survive in a highly competitive arena. Administrators of colleges have adopted both business concepts and marketing orientation, regarding students as customers. A majority of higher education institutions have set student satisfaction as one of most important strategic goals. Those who score high on student satisfaction are considered to deliver quality education service and to have long-term program viability (Bailey and Dangerfield, 2000). In contrast, those who fail to deliver satisfactory services may fall into the trap of a vicious circle, composed of low satisfaction among students, weak academic performance among them, high dropout rates, reduced revenue, poorer service quality, and even lower satisfaction (Tinto, 1994).

Maintaining a high level of service quality and customer satisfaction at a higher education institution is very difficult, if not impossible. The customers (*i.e.*, students) are facing challenges from many different sources in their college lives: academic, social, interpersonal, financial, among others. For many, college is a stressful time, forcing one to deal with new educational and social environments (Towbes and Cohen, 1996). If these stressors are not dealt with effectively, negative consequences such as feelings of loneliness, nervousness, sleeplessness and excessive worrying may result (Wright, 1967). If one was under stress, it would be fairly difficult to experience satisfaction in that environment. To support this perspective, Ross, Niebling, and Heckert (1999, p. 312) have argued that “it is important that stress intervention programs be designed to address stress of college students.”

Regardless of the pervasiveness of stress among college students, the literature on student satisfaction has paid limited attention to the stress. Studies on student satisfaction are mostly based upon the service quality paradigm. Many scholars, for example, have adopted either the SERVQUAL or SERVPERF perspective, and have tried to approach student satisfaction by enhancing the so-called five dimensions of service quality: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Cronin and Taylor, 1993; Parasuraman et al., 1985). Albeit useful, the limitations of such approach are many (Buttle, 1996).

The purpose of this study is to explore a way to enhance student satisfaction by incorporating a concept

# **SKILLS NEEDED IN THE 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY WORKPLACE: A COMPARISON OF FEEDBACK FROM UNDERGRADUATE BUSINESS ALUMNI AND EMPLOYERS WITH A NATIONAL STUDY**

Diane M. Holtzman, Richard Stockton College of New Jersey  
Ellen M. Kraft, Richard Stockton College of New Jersey

## **ABSTRACT**

*The purpose of this research was to determine what skills alumni from Richard Stockton College of New Jersey (RSC) and regional employers think are important for the workplace. The results of the RSC study were compared to results from the report, College Learning for the New Global Century, sponsored by the Association of American Colleges and Universities.*

*Managing time, speaking/oral communications skills, and having strong interpersonal skills were in the top five skills identified by both employers and alumni of The Richard Stockton College. A statistically significant greater percentage of employers who participated in the study commissioned by the Association of American Colleges and Universities identified knowledge of global issues as being an essential learning outcome compared with the employers and alumni surveyed in the RSC study who identified knowledge of global issues as being a very important or important skill for the workplace. The lower priority given to global issues and international perspectives by employers and alumni in this study may have been due to the location of their workplaces. Respondents to the surveys were located primarily in the central and southern areas of New Jersey where industries and corporations had a regional rather than an international focus. Faculty in the School of Business should consider incorporating those skills identified as important or very important by the majority of alumni and employers into the curriculum as well as emphasizing global issues in their courses.*

**JEL:** A23, M00

**KEYWORDS:** AACSB accreditation, accountability in higher education, skills, business graduates

## **INTRODUCTION**

In this environment of accountability to consumers and stockholders, members of businesses and government agencies question how well college graduates are being prepared for work in the global economy. Accrediting bodies and legislators are calling for greater accountability on the part of higher education faculty regarding the quality and relevance of their curricula, their assessment of student-learning outcomes, and their commitment to continuous improvement in course content based on regular feedback from the external community. To demonstrate accountability, faculties at colleges and universities are incorporating TQM approaches in their strategic planning, assessment of student outcomes, and curriculum development (Wessel, 2007).

Accountability efforts focus on meeting the needs of the marketplace, establishing measurable standards and benchmarks, and providing evidence of student learning. In higher education, accreditation bodies set standards and call for proof of adherence to those standards (Academic Quality Improvement Program, 2005). For example, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) accreditation standards requires business programs to provide assurances of learning to external stakeholders and the students who are the consumers of academic programs (AACSB, 2006). To comply with the AACSB's

# **STUDENT PERCEPTION OF TEACHING QUALITY IN BUSINESS SCHOOLS: EVIDENCE FROM POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTIONS IN GHANA**

Solomon Abekah Keelson, Takoradi Polytechnic, Ghana

## **ABSTRACT**

*The study examines students' perceptions of the effectiveness of teaching and learning in business studies programs in the polytechnic institutions in Ghana. This research is a replica study (Hamid and Pihie, 2004). Two major factors are employed to measure students' perceptions of effective teaching and learning. They are Lecturers' Characteristics and Teaching Methodology. Findings of the study show how respondents perceive the qualities possessed and exhibited by lecturers with regard to the two main constructs. Descriptive and inferential statistics are reported. F ratio and ANOVA were used to show the significant differences in students' perceptions of the two factors based on age, class, and department. There were significant differences in the perceptions of overall Lecturer Characteristics, and in the perceptions of Teaching Methodology based on these variables. The study revealed high students' perception of teaching quality and learning in the Polytechnics in Ghana. The significant differences found were related to age, class and departments*

**JEL:** A23, M00

**KEY WORDS:** Polytechnic, Lecture characteristics, Teaching methodology, Quality teaching, Student perception

## **INTRODUCTION**

As part of the Ghana Educational Reform which began in the late 1980s, Polytechnics were upgraded by the Polytechnic Law 1992 (PNDCL 321, 1992) to become part of the Ghana Tertiary Education System. The Polytechnics began to offer Higher National Diploma (HND) programmes in the 1992/93 academic year. These reforms mandated the Polytechnics to complement the role of the Universities to increase access to tertiary education by training middle level manpower for the country's needs. For the last twenty years, Polytechnic education has contributed significantly to the development process of the country. The field of business has especially contributed immensely through the training of Accountancy, Marketing, Purchasing and Supply, and Management and Secretaryship personnel. The continuous training of middle-level business professionals is crucial to the success of business management since business professionals are needed for national economic growth. This holds true especially at a time when Ghana is emphasizing human resources for national development. As such, quality assurance in teaching and learning is critical for the Polytechnic's to partner with industry and thereby improve the training of business professionals. The study thus focuses on the current state of polytechnic education in Ghana in relation to teaching and learning in the business faculties as perceived by students.

One area that has received global attention in recent years in the education sector is the issue of 'teacher quality' (Entwistle and Ramsden 1987; Romainville, 1999; Hill et al., 2003; Hamid and Pihie, 2004; Abu Assan et al., 2008; Fernando et al., 2009). Different individuals, groups and organizations have expressed varying opinion with regards to what constitutes 'quality' teaching, how to develop it and the possible benefits of quality teaching. One would understand such a concern and diverse views of quality teaching and learning because of the implementation of all the policies and transformation undertaken in the education sector. A key area that determines education success is what takes place in the classroom. The

# **THE SKILL SETS REQUIRED FOR MANAGING COMPLEX CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS**

Glen Mouchi, Mouchi Project Management Ltd. Auckland  
James Olabode Rotimi, Auckland University of Technology, Auckland  
Thanuja Ramachandra, Auckland University of Technology, Auckland

## **ABSTRACT**

*Very few projects comprise the unique character that construction projects have. The product from construction processes are rarely similar with each having unique set of characteristics and qualities that set them apart from other projects. Hence the management of the production processes demand creative and often times imaginative managers for the achievement of successful outcomes. Undoubtedly complex projects will need to be resourced with the right calibre of managers because they are a higher order management activity. But what is the skill sets required of this calibre of managers? The paper reports on the perspective views of some senior management personnel in construction organizations on what constitutes complexity in construction and what skill sets will be required to achieve successful outcomes on those projects. Their views were obtained through semi-structured interviews. The responses are analysed descriptively with thematic summaries. The paper concludes that there are specific skill sets that are set apart for success on complex projects, and that the skills evolve from knowledge gained from exposure to a wide range of projects.*

**JEL:** L74; M00

**KEYWORDS:** Project Manager, skill set, complex, construction project

## **INTRODUCTION**

Construction is similar to other production-related industries, in that it follows the wheel of advancement and technology. The increasing demands of the construction industry to make the world a better living place for people has established it as a frontier of an ever advancing world. As a result construction projects are considered with wider perceptions, with project objectives requiring more extensive efforts. Globalization and healthy competition have played a key role in driving the industry to the limits. The industry is trying to pace up with progressively growing demands, varying needs and objectives. Therefore projects of sheer size, novel shapes constructed using innovative materials, methods and technologies have become normal. Projects undertaken in the Middle East during this early century are classic examples of the radical requirements for cutting edge performance by the industry. In probably similar developmental moves, the industries' clientele have become more business-minded and now set project objectives and deliverables that could be considered complex to achieve.

This complex, demanding, and dynamic requirements call for project managers that can manage the construction process from inception to successful completion (Leung, et al., 2009). Financial and reputation issues of construction organizations are now dependent on the project managers assigned to handle these projects. The consequences of a mismatch of skills and project complexity could lead to loss of control and monumental failure of these projects. Failures of projects like the Holyrood parliament building and the Sydney Opera house have raised concerns among industry and substantiated under-performance in the construction industry. Conversely success on projects such as the Burj Al Arab, Dubai Tower, Bahrain Twin Tower, Palm Island and World Island projects etc. highlight victory of skills, knowledge and competencies over prevailing industry issues and concerns.

# COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE: IMPROVING KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN BUSINESS

Juan Carlos Alicea Rivera, Universidad de Puerto Rico

## ABSTRACT

*The formation of communities of practice in business represents, possibly, the best way to manage knowledge bases in organizations since they integrate the most important dimensions in knowledge management: the technological dimension, the strategic dimension and the cultural or behavioral dimension. This paper explains what communities of practice are and why they serve as an efficient tool in knowledge management. Since this is a recently developed field, our study is exploratory, and is intended to identify trends and conceptual aspects associated with this topic. Our research will be based on the application of two bibliometric techniques (life cycle analysis and citation breadth analysis) to total articles related to communities of practice and published in academic and popular journals from 1998 to 2009. This paper demonstrates that the conceptual and practical framework revealed through the articles published during period under study prove that these communities integrates the technological, managerial and behavioral relevant factors. For this reason, writings on communities of practice are conceptually more solid than theoretical bases associated with knowledge management projects, which emphasize the technology-oriented and popular approaches.*

**JEL:** I20, M12, M14, M53, M54

**KEYWORDS:** Job satisfaction, labor management, worker empowerment, corporate culture, training, personnel management, employee participation, knowledge management, communities of practice

## INTRODUCTION

Since 1990, knowledge management became the new promise in business environment. The central idea behind this new approach is to motivate organizations to internally generate knowledge and information and allow the employees' access to such databases for immediate use and application. In our "knowledge society", a proposal like this is hard to resist due to the competitive advantage it offers. Some theorists go a step further by saying that knowledge's creation is a key source for competitive advantage in organizations; therefore, they argue that not only is a resource, but the primary asset. (Drucker, 1993).

However, there is no consensus regarding the value, meaning and usefulness of knowledge management as a management tool (Ponzi, 2002). A major difficulty lies in having focused such projects in terms of information technology almost exclusively (Skyrme, 1997). However, the problem lies not in the use of technological capabilities in themselves, but in fail to "capture and hold" the tacit knowledge that employees bring to organizations. (O'Dell & Jackson, 1998; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995).

So what is "knowledge management"? Apparently, as per literal use of the phrase, strategic management and the information systems are fundamental disciplines in knowledge management. But, are organizational culture and organizational behavior important issues in knowledge management?

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate if the creation of communities of practice is an efficient platform for managing knowledge bases in organizations. The first part of this paper discusses why organizations has been facing problems in their knowledge management projects due to the fact that important behavioral characteristics has not been taking in consideration. Next, the paper proposes the

# PREVENTION AND DETECTION OF CERTAIN TYPES OF PLAGIARISM DURING COMPUTERIZED ASSESSMENTS

Levon R. Hayrapetyan, Houston Baptist University

## ABSTRACT

*Unfortunately, plagiarism is widespread on university campuses across the nation. The advances in the information technology provide even more sophisticated cheating prospects. Although there are many commercially available tools for detecting plagiarism but policing alone is not a comprehensive solution. We should strive to change the overall culture on university campuses in such a way that it discourages academic dishonesty. In this study, we present a tool called Test Guard that has two main features. First, it disables some cheating “techniques” such as copy-paste, insert file, etc. Then it checks the test for several types of plagiarism and generates a report on its findings.*

**KEYWORDS:** academic dishonesty, cheating, plagiarism, computerized assessment

## INTRODUCTION

As educators, we should strive to create an environment in academic classrooms that discourages academic dishonesty. Naturally, there are two ways of fighting plagiarism on university campuses – implementing processes to prevent them as much as possible, and employing procedures to detect them if they occur. This study aims to address these both approaches in one single methodology.

Unfortunately, the students’ academic misconduct was always part of the higher (and not only) education. The advances in the information technology provide even more advanced and sophisticated cheating prospects. Recent studies on academic dishonesty show an alarming high rate ranging from 52% to 90% (Lester and Dekhoff, 2002; Vowell and Chan, 2004). Diekhoff and his colleagues suggest that the rate of plagiarism have grown from 54.1% in 1984 to 61.28% in 1994, and “it is getting worse” (Diekhoff, LaBeff, Clark, Williams, Francis, and Haines, 1996). In more recent years, Don McCabe conducted a research for the Center for Academic Integrity at Duke University by surveying 50,000 undergraduate students during 2002 to 2005 on 60 university campuses nationwide. The research showed that 70% of surveyed students reported cheating (Hudd, S.H., Apgar, C., Bronson, E., F., and Lee, R.G., (2009)). The current literature is analyzing the cheating phenomenon from various angles, such as why do students cheat, which type of relationships exist between cheating and demographic factors such as gender, ethnicity, major, Greek membership, how to prevent cheating in different settings, and how to detect cheating if it occurs.

By analyzing the literature on academic integrity, one can notice that educators have directed their efforts mainly towards detection of plagiarism; much less work is done towards prevention of it. This paper is a contribution in filling this gap for a specific yet widely used type of assessment – computerized tests and quizzes. In the paper, we present a tool called *Test Guard*, which has dual functionality. First, it tries to prevent cheating by disabling some cheating “techniques” such as copy-paste, insert file, etc. Then it checks the test for several types of plagiarism and generates a report on its findings. The report is embedded and hidden in the student’s test file and is password protected – only the professor can see it. The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 briefly discusses the relevant literature on academic dishonesty. The short description of the functionality of the *Test Guard* is presented in the Section 3. Finally, the Section 4 concludes the paper with discussion, limitations of the proposed methodology and possible directions for future research.

## REVIEWERS

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The IBFR  
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