

The Role of Group Chats: Diffusion of Responsibility in Instances of Academic Dishonesty



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BACKGROUND: Opportunities for group-based academic dishonesty have increased since the COVID-19 pandemic, as online student chat groups became more popular. The group-crime literature suggests that the presence of others can alter an individual's feelings of responsibility. This diffused sense of responsibility can reduce inhibitions and increase the likelihood of engaging in deviance, such as academic dishonesty. This study aims to explore the prevalence of academic dishonesty in online student chat groups and examine whether diffusion of responsibility serves as a mechanism to explain academic dishonesty.

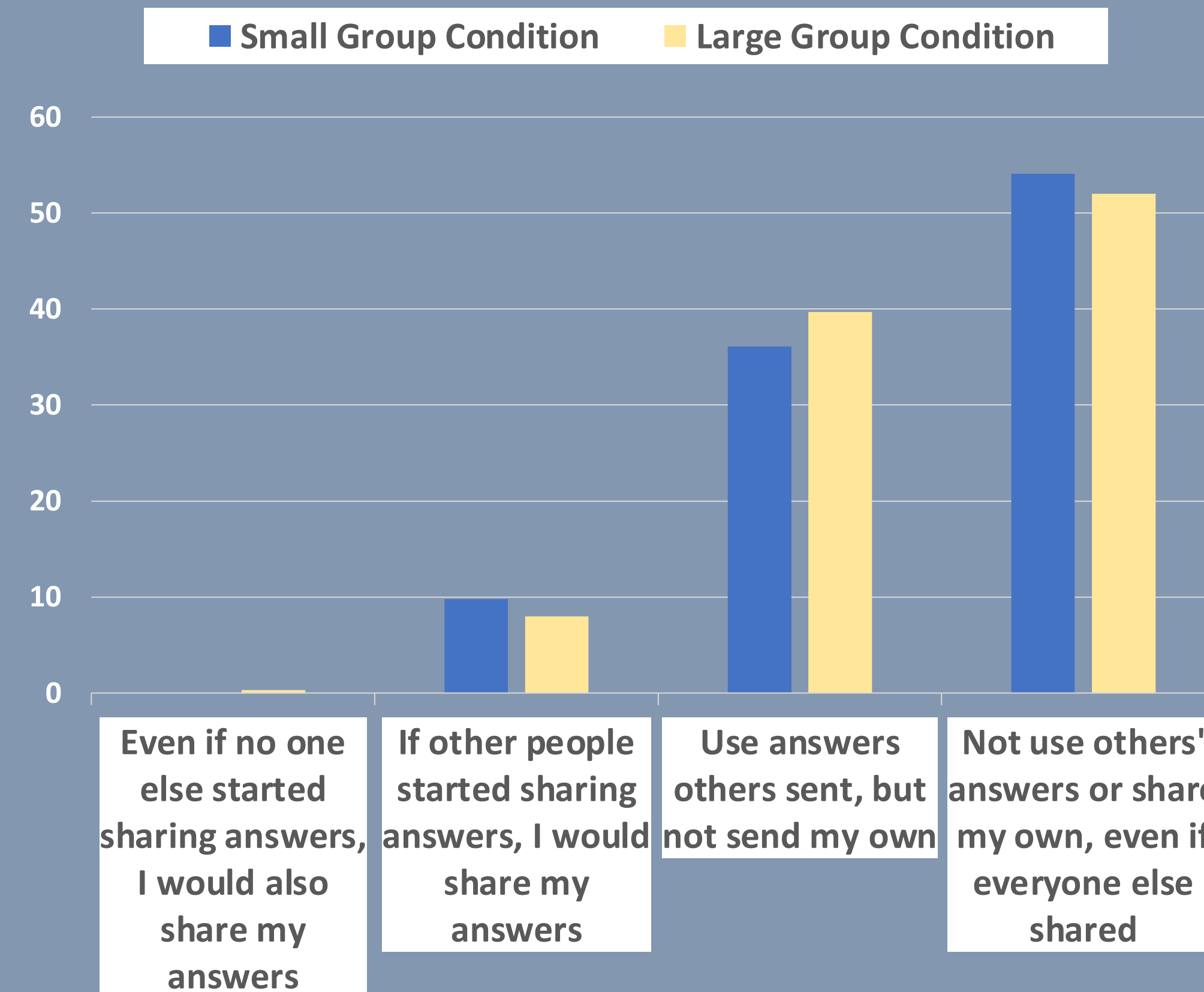
METHODS

1. Collected data from 713 university students using a web survey administered to 12 criminology classes.
2. Demographic data, feelings of responsibility regarding prevalence of academic dishonesty, group chat participation, and intentions to engage in academic dishonesty were collected.
3. Using SPSS, Chi-square tests and Mann-Whitney U tests, were used to assess relationships between variables of interest.

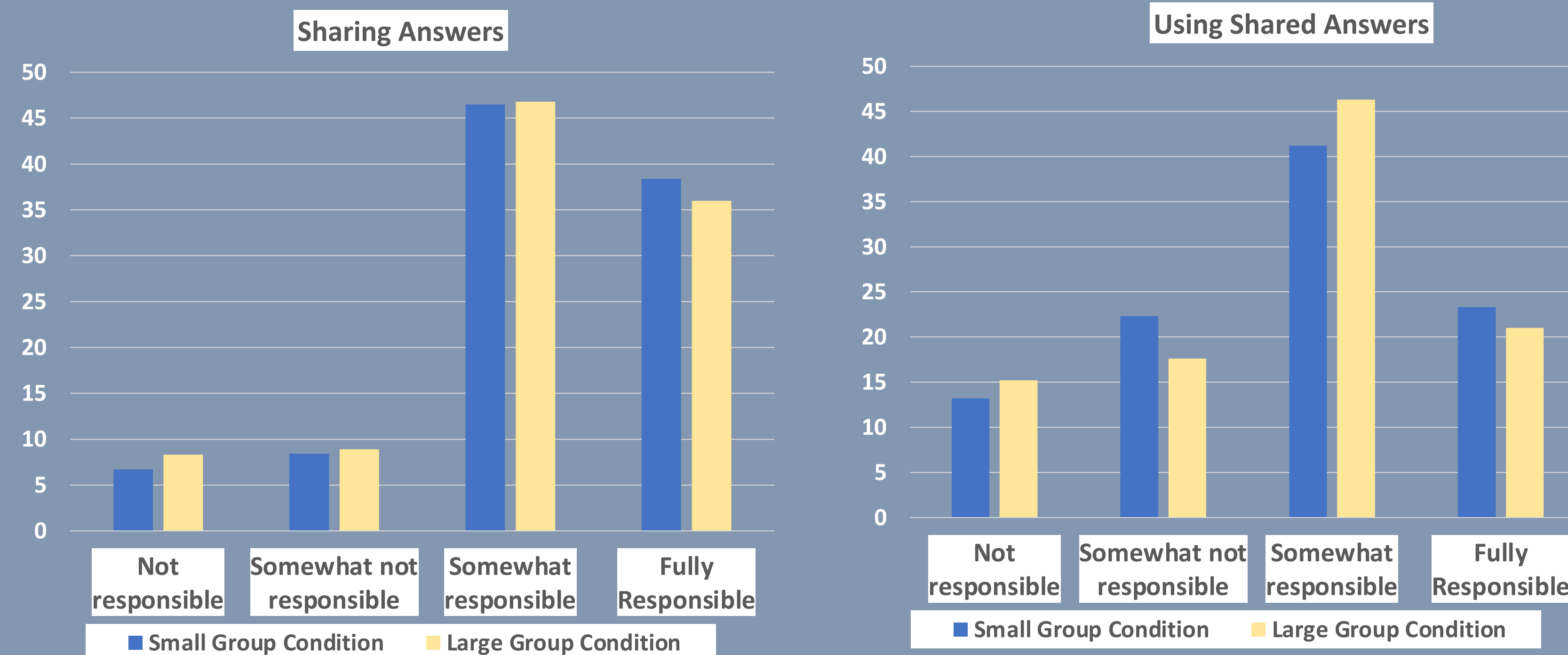
RESULTS

- 11.8% of students reported engaging in online academic dishonesty
- 15.3% of students reported engaging in in-person academic dishonesty

Group size does NOT influence intentions to offend



OR perceptions of responsibility!



ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

- Students who engaged in online academic dishonesty perceived themselves as less responsible for their actions than those who engaged in in-person academic dishonesty
- Regardless of group size condition, there are significantly lower perceptions of responsibility for just using answers and not sharing

DISCUSSION

- Analysis revealed substantial differences in perceptions of responsibility for in-person vs. online academic dishonesty
- Although group size is unrelated to the main hypothesis, the presence of others generally serves as an inducement to participate in online academic dishonesty
- The prevalence and use of online group chats may have normalized specific forms of academic dishonesty, given that the group format facilitates the diffusion of responsibility

REFERENCES

- A list of references used both for this poster and within my thesis can be found here:



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