

How Exam Cheat Sheets Shape Student Success

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Background

We are interested in how students interact with exam cheat sheets and their perceptions as they relate to exam success.

What we Understand About Behaviors

(Burns, 2013; Danielien & Buswell, 2019; Özer, 2021)

Dependency Hypothesis

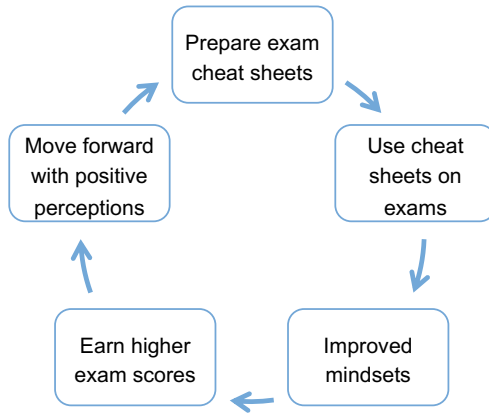
Students become dependent on cheat sheets and study less.
As cheat sheet use increases, exam score will decrease.

Coding Hypothesis

Cheat sheets help students mentally organize material.
As cheat sheet use increases, exam score will increase.

What we Understand About Perceptions

(Malecha & Budhrani-Shani, 2018)



Research Questions

1. How do students' **direct interactions** with their cheat sheets prior to and during an exam relate to exam performance?
2. How do students' corresponding **perceptions** of cheat sheets relate to exam performance?

Methods

This study was granted exempt status from the UNC at Chapel Hill Institutional Review Board

Created their Cheat Sheets

- 8.5" x 11"
- Both sides
- Any info and method

Cheat Sheets Used on Exam

- Unlimited access to their own cheat sheet brought to the exam
- Turned in afterwards with exam

Survey via Qualtrics

- Class immediately after exam
- Asked about behaviors & perceptions

Data Analysis via SPSS

- Paired exam scores and surveys
- Bivariate Pearson correlations

Conclusions

(Burns, 2013; Özer, 2021)

While students benefited from increased confidence, the more they interacted with their cheat sheets before and during the exam, the lower their resulting exam scores were.

This supports the dependency hypothesis, as students appear to be relying excessively on their cheat sheets instead of using other evidence-based study strategies.

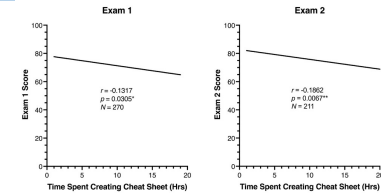
When developing course policies, instructors should consider whether students and their exam scores would benefit overall from the use of cheat sheets on exams.

Acknowledgements & References

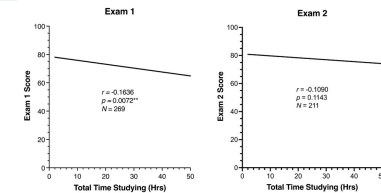


Results

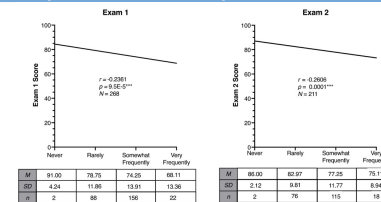
How many hours did you spend creating your cheat sheet?



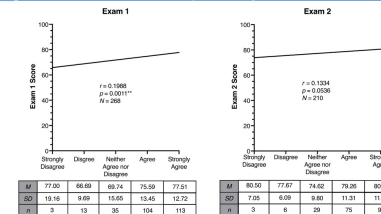
How many hours total did you spend studying for this exam?



How frequently on the exam did you refer to the cheat sheet?



Generating a cheat sheet helped my confidence on the exam.



I relied on my cheat sheet excessively.

