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ABSTRACT

Ethical decision-making impacts individual lives on a daily basis. In the higher education context, the import of such decision-making has always been extant. However, a neoteric emphasis on personal ethics has arisen with the advent of a multitude of blended and exclusively on-line degree offerings from institutions throughout the world. According to proponents of online learning, these opportunities have many positive ramifications. Various effects include convenience and flexibility of work time, minimal travel expense, less stressful atmosphere, and the ability to work interactively on a global basis. Reservations about the efficacy of online learning include technology limitations, the lack of personal and timely communication, and the possibility of plagiarism and work completed by someone other than the enrolled student.

This study investigates the ethical decision-making utilized by online students at faith-based and non faith-based institutions of higher education in the disciplines of Business and Education. A comparative study of several variables, both between institution types and within each institution type, is noted in the context of online delivery classes: Faith-based and non-faith based students; business and education students; graduate and undergraduate students; and gender based responses. Ethical decision making is gauged via a purposive survey which addresses class work ethics, deception in the form of plagiarism and work completed by other than the student enrollee, and attitudes regarding levels of ethical behavior.