



Predictive Factors of Academic Integrity in Business Students: A Quantitative Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Academic integrity among university students is a high priority. This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of an intervention to address the inclination toward dishonest behaviour related to academic integrity in undergraduate students. The study focused on two specific objectives. First, it measured the intent to commit academically dishonest acts and, second, it raised awareness among the student community regarding acts that violate academic integrity as defined by the institution's regulations. To achieve the above, a pre-experimental approach was chosen with a pretest-posttest design involving a single group based on a non-probability convenience sample with a student body of 1304 undergraduate business students, where an instrument was applied before the intervention to establish a baseline. Participants' response to the interaction was measured with the same instrument at a later time. The findings report that, following the intervention, participants displayed a lower inclination to commit academically dishonest acts, suggesting an improvement in the perception of academic integrity.

KEYWORDS

Academic integrity; academic dishonesty; higher education; high-quality education; cheating behaviours; Theory of Planned Behaviour.

INTRODUCTION

Academic integrity is a prevalent topic in higher education, and scholars have been reflecting on it for over half a century (Pell & Amigud, 2023). As a multifaceted issue, it has been addressed from different perspectives and interpretations (Bretag, 2016). A consensus among scholars is that academic integrity refers to both the purpose of education and the personal traits and ethical principles that govern human conduct (Díaz et al., 2015; Okka, 2024). This encompasses both the practice of acting in accordance with ethical values and the principles consistent with teaching, learning, and research (NamGung & Lee, 2024; Tantakov et al., 2025).

Academic dishonesty in students has been widely addressed in different studies, including issues around plagiarism (Cronan et al., 2018; Rebollo-Quintela et al., 2017), cheating during exams (Díaz et al., 2015), and outsourcing assignments (Awdry & Groves, 2023). Further, additional papers report that these behaviours worsened during the pandemic (Eshet, 2025; Adama et al., 2023; Razi, 2023; Orellana et al., 2022). Interestingly, Peled et al. (2019) found that online students were less likely to engage in academic dishonesty than their face-to-face course counterparts.

Academic dishonesty has been identified as a problem associated with corruption and moral disengagement (Diez-Martínez, 2015). This outlook is shaped by a combination of individual, contextual, and socio-institutional factors. Prior research has asserted that these factors play a significant role in influencing whether students engage in academically dishonest acts. Consistent with this perspective, Awdry and Groves (2023) describe a complex learning environment in which students' decisions to participate in or refrain from cheating are influenced by intersecting social, cultural, and institutional conditions.

Vaamonde and Omar (2008) assert that some of the main contextual and socio-institutional drivers are: the perception of behaviours and attitudes of classmates, the presence or absence of honour codes, understanding and institutional acceptance of academic integrity policies, the effectiveness of these policies, the perception of the severity of the sanctions imposed, and belonging to student groups or fraternities. Although interdependent behaviours are learned, shared, observed, and reinforced through peer networks, Awdry and Groves (2023) emphasize, based on empirical work with students, that intervention is possible, yet equally complex.

Lack of academic integrity is a genuine concern among the leadership and faculty of higher education institutions (Pell & Amigud, 2023). Therefore, in the last decade, universities have increased their efforts to promote this value. According to Fishman (2016), some factors that correlate positively with the establishment of a culture of integrity include recognizing integrity as an institutional value, clarifying community members' expectations regarding honest behaviour, and practicing fairness in evaluation, among others. Academic integrity involves acting in accordance with values such as honesty, respect, and fairness. In an academic context, this includes producing original work, respecting the intellectual property of others, and engaging sincerely in the process of learning.

Prior research has indicated that university students' engagement in academically dishonest behaviour is often driven by multiple intersecting factors (Rebollo-Quintela et al., 2017; Simelane & Pillay, 2024). Some of these factors include time and workload pressures, perceptions of impunity and weak sanctioning protocol, ease of access to information through the internet, negative attitudes toward coursework, and economic, family, or academic pressures (Díaz et al., 2015).

Previous studies have identified successful initiatives aimed at promoting academic integrity, including alternative assessment models (Razi, 2023) and the use of online courses or tutorials. Evidence from these studies suggests that such instructional interventions can increase students' understanding of academic integrity and reduce dishonest tendencies (Stephens et al., 2021). Building on this body of work, the present study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of an awareness-raising intervention designed to examine students' inclination toward academically dishonest behaviour. With this in mind, a pre-experimental, single-group pretest–posttest design was employed (Campbell & Stanley, 2011).

Sureda-Negre et al. (2016) state that, to counteract academically dishonest behaviours, three types of actions tend to be implemented, including normative or regulatory actions, detection mechanisms, and formative and informative actions. The work presented here falls into the final category, seeking to answer the following questions:

- Is a student's intention to commit acts of academic dishonesty high (O_1)?
- Does the pre-exam awareness stage (X) significantly reduce the intention to commit an academic dishonest act (O_2) among the students in the sample?

Inclination to engage in academically dishonest behaviours throughout intentions

This research relies on the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), which "...is based on the assumption that human beings usually behave sensibly; that they take account of available information and implicitly or explicitly consider the implications of their actions" (Ajzen, 2005, p. 117). Consistent with this idea, intentions are generally good predictors of many different kinds of behaviour, and a person's intention to perform (or not to perform) a behaviour is the most important immediate determinant of that action. Imran et al. (2025) examined the effectiveness of an extended Theory of Planned Behaviour in predicting academic dishonesty among higher education students and found that such behaviour, cheating in particular, was common practice among the sample group. The study identified several key psychological factors associated with this outcome, including positive attitudes toward dishonest behaviour, weak perceptions of sanctions, and students' confidence in their ability to cheat successfully. An additional contributing factor was the belief that intellectual property constitutes a form of "public property."

The Theory of Planned Behaviour asserts that intentions and behaviours are not only linked, but also shaped by three core determinants: individual attitudes, perceived social norms, and perceived behavioural control. These three factors combined influence an individual's intention to engage in a given behaviour. Stronger intentions are associated with a higher

likelihood of behavioural enactment. Additionally, the theory identifies that the perception of behavioural control may exert a direct influence on behaviour by affecting (preventing) an individual's capacity to achieve specific behavioural goals.

Contributing and deepening TPB, Faridli et al. (2025) add character education theory and investigate the effectiveness of Project-Based Civic Learning (PBCL) to foster anti-corruption attitudes and behaviours among university students. The findings reveal four key internalization mechanisms: strengthening personal integrity, collective reinforcement through social norms, overcoming challenges in project implementation, and developing reflective capacity that leads to behaviour change.

Adding to Ajzen's (2005) framework, perceived behavioural control plays a particularly important role, as it not only shapes intentions but may also directly influence behaviour by affecting individuals' sense of ability. This suggests that the relationship between perceived behavioural control and intention is not necessarily mediated by attitudes or subjective norms. Faridli et al. (2025) further extends this framework by incorporating an educational intervention component, emphasizing reflective capacity as a mechanism for fostering ethical behaviour and behavioural change.

Additional studies such as those by Gonsalves (2025) and Giray et al. (2026) emphasize Ajzen's (2005) proposal and revealed that students exhibit remarkably high confidence in their ability to use generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) without disclosing it, because they are not concerned about detection. The collective normalization of GenAI used for cheating on assessments and in writing creates subjective norms that significantly influence individual behaviour. The findings reveal that fear of academic repercussions, ambiguous guidelines, inconsistent application, and peer influence are key barriers to disclosing GenAI use.

In general, people intend to perform a behaviour when they evaluate it positively, experience social pressure to perform it, and believe they have the means and opportunities to do so. The TPB assumes that the relative importance of attitude toward the behaviour, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control are related in this case to the inclination for dishonest action as the investigated intention and that intentions primarily reflect an individual's willingness to attempt a specific behaviour. Cronan et al. (2018) found that attitude, perceived behavioural control, subjective norm, past behaviour, and moral obligation significantly influence an individual's intention to violate academic integrity, specifically studying plagiarism and sharing assignments when asked not to, which explained 33% and 35% of the variance in the intention to commit an academic integrity violation through assignment sharing and plagiarism, respectively.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour is a logical framework to use when analysing behaviours that involve individual intention but are shaped by social and contextual constraints. Accordingly, this study applies the TPB to examine university students' inclination to engage in academically dishonest behaviours within business and economics programs.

According to TPB its conceptual definition, this research proposes the inclination for a dishonest academic act is understood as any intention, inclination, predisposition, tendency, or disposition towards an action going against ethical principles that govern academic integrity.

Using the aforementioned design, this study was based on the following hypotheses:

H0: The intention to engage in academically dishonest acts does not depend on any intervention.

H1: Educational interventions reduce the intention to engage in academically dishonest acts.

H2: The intention for academically dishonest acts is reduced when there is knowledge of university regulations.

H3: The intention for academically dishonest acts is different across demographic variables.

H4: The intention to commit academically dishonest acts is influenced by the academic environment.

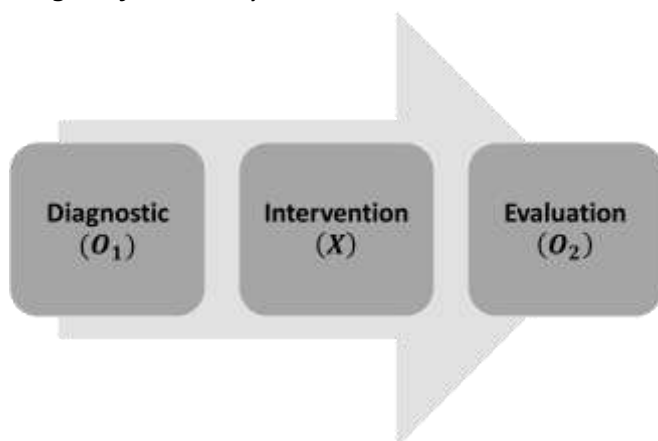
H5: The intention to commit an academically dishonest act depends on the weight that the individual assigns to social values.

METHODS AND DESIGN

This research is a pre-experimental study based on a retest-posttest design involving a single group (Campbell & Stanley, 2011), revealing the difference between an initial state (O_1) and its modification (O_2) after a defined intervention (X). This methodology was chosen because pre-experiments are useful in the applied field and provide a solution to the problems of experimentation in education. The study consisted of three phases, as illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1.

Stages of the study



Sample

The empirical analysis presented here was carried out at a private university in Mexico City with a student body of 1304 undergraduate business students. A total of 1042 responses to the instrument were obtained, 1039 of which were valid (519 were from men and 520 were from women). From the above data, the degree of reliability of the sample is inferred at 99.7%, and its representativeness level is 80%. The applied instrument was created for this research, with

5 demographic questions and 19 academic integrity-related questions. For this research, informing the participants about the characteristics of the study and obtaining their agreement to participate in it through informed consent were part of the process, assuming that this is a standard ethical component of research with human subjects (Perrault & Keating, 2018). Thus, in order to meet ethical standards in the data collection phase, students received an informed consent form at the beginning of the questionnaire. Participants thus gave their express authorization to use the data collected. To achieve voluntary participation, as mentioned, convenience sampling was applied, as the instrument was sent to the entire undergraduate student body at the School of Economics and Business Sciences, who responded freely after having signed an informed consent form. Once the data was collected, the database was protected.

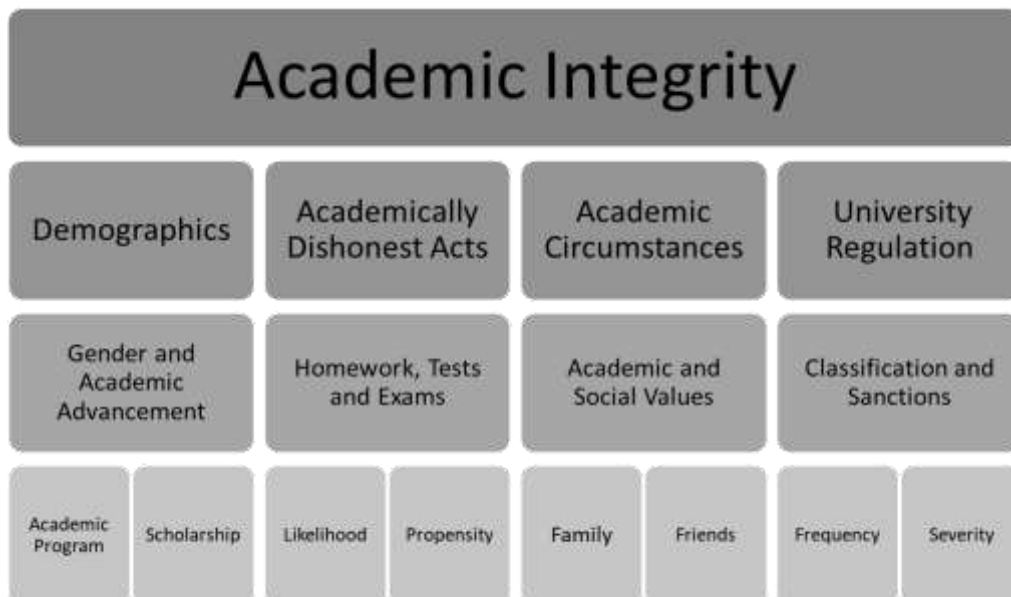
Instrument and Data Collection

Diagnostic stage (Pre-test)

To answer the research question regarding the likelihood that a university student will engage in academically dishonest behaviours, an instrument was designed to measure the inclination to commit a dishonest academic act based on the aspects shown in Figure 2. Three types of variables were used to create the instrument: dichotomous, when the attribute has only two states; categorical, when the attribute has more than two states; and quantitative.

Figure 2.

Aspects considered in the instrument



Some examples of academic integrity questions defined in the instrument were:

- 1) Based on the following circumstances, how much would you justify a lack of academic integrity? Helping a friend, so as not to lose my scholarship, avoiding failing an exam, maintaining GPA, bad class/teacher, insufficient study, not understanding the exercise,

embarrassment when asking questions, high weighting on final grade, and low weighting on final grade.

- 2) From zero to 100%, what is the probability that someone who violated academic integrity in an EXAM will be discovered?
- 3) From zero to 100%, what is the probability that someone who infringed on academic integrity in academic activities will be discovered?
- 4) Assuming that someone has been discovered, what is the probability that they will receive a sanction from the institution, from zero to 100%?
- 5) Do you think there is a social sanction for infringing on academic integrity?
- 6) Do you consider that the benefit from a lack of academic integrity is greater than the social sanction?
- 7) Does a lack of academic integrity affect your reputation with your friends/peers?
- 8) Does a lack of academic integrity affect your reputation with your family?

The operational definition regarding the likelihood of committing a dishonest academic act was constructed from three elements. Namely, information regarding the circumstances under which a student is willing to commit the act, the possibility of being discovered, and the probability of being sanctioned for it. In consequence, individuals' responses intrinsically involve the risk level that particular behaviour implies, according to their perception, named $P(x)$.

To measure a student's intention, the reported probability was subtracted from the unit $1 - P(x)$, thus reporting the individual's perceived probability of not being caught and/or sanctioned, accordingly to all three previously described elements. This can be interpreted as the inclination for a dishonest act. In addition, knowledge about university regulations identified whether this has an effect on dishonest academic behaviour. This inclination was measured by consulting individuals in three different areas of their daily academic life, including academic activities like academic activities, exams, and the scenario of being sanctioned in the context of either of those two. To measure internal consistency and reliability, Cronbach's alpha was applied to the dataset. The indicator is $\alpha = 0.93$, indicating the items within the survey are highly correlated with each other, suggesting they are measuring the same concept consistently.

Data Analysis

A cleaned dataset was obtained from the collected information and was analysed in probabilistic terms, so the response of the studied variable produced by the independent variables' movements was estimated. Including demographics, knowledge of university regulations, and the circumstances under which a dishonest act may occur. This reaction was measured according to the following equations:

$$AD_i = \beta_1 + \beta_2 DM_i + u_i, \quad (1)$$

$$AD_i = \beta_1 + \beta_3 UR_i + u_i, \quad (2)$$

$$AD_i = \beta_1 + \beta_4 SV_i + u_i. \quad (3)$$

AD_i measures the probability for a dishonest academic act; DM_i represents the demographic variables matrix; UR_i is the degree of knowledge students had about the university regulations; SV_i stands for social values; u_i is the error term; and sub index i represents the cross-sectional unit, i.e., students. Parameters β_1 , β_2 , β_3 , and β_4 capture the response in terms of probability statistically speaking, also interpreted as propensity, and in this research, is what we call inclination; all in terms of AD_i and after a change in the independent variable dynamics. Estimations were performed through probabilistic models under the Least Squares methodology. It is important to highlight that AD was analysed by assuming individual impact from DM, UR, and SV. Therefore, all three elements were activated on an individual basis and never simultaneously, due to the nature of all variables.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The impulse from independent variables starts moving from an initial state in a given academic context to a subsequent state, considering the circumstances under which an individual decides to commit a dishonest act. Beta parameters in Equation 1 were estimated by applying probabilistic regression analysis using the Extreme Value model (Andersson et al., 2023), which provides the maximum possible likelihood. Table 1 results show that inclination for academically dishonest acts is greater in men than in women, when considering both academic activities and exams: the former report a 36% probability in academic activities and 49% in exams, while women report 19% in academic activities and 1% in exams.

Table 1.

Dishonest academic act probability in academic activities.

Academic activities	Coefficient	Std. Error	z	P z
Female	0.1925	0.0423	2.12	0.0417
Male	0.3678	0.0349	2.07	0.0620
Semester 1-3	0.2156	0.0207	1.98	0.0780
Semester 4-6	0.4386	0.0523	2.13	0.0331
Semester 7-9	0.3875	0.0975	3.81	0.0002
Scholarship	0.2834	0.0211	2.11	0.0567
GPA	0.0201	0.1875	1.85	0.0975
Regulations	0.2256	0.0266	3.54	0.0006

Number of observations = 1032

Regarding sanctions, men report a 12% probability and women a 17% probability. Likewise, an opposite relationship can be observed between the probabilities of being sanctioned versus committing dishonest acts in academic assignments. This suggests that the lower the perception of sanction, the higher the probability of committing dishonest acts in men, and vice versa for women.

Table 2.*Dishonest academic act probability in evaluations*

Evaluations	Coefficient	Std. Error	z	P z
Female	0.0112	0.0054	2.15	0.0620
Male	0.4983	0.0736	2.17	0.0698
Semester 1-3	0.3178	0.1165	2.05	0.0305
Semester 4-6	0.0693	0.0347	1.83	0.0989
Semester 7-9	0.5006	0.0544	3.33	0.0034
Scholarship	0.1581	0.0111	3.21	0.0045
GPA	0.0123	0.0010	2.89	0.0079
Regulations	0.4377	0.0668	2.75	0.0147

Number of observations = 1032

The connection between academically dishonest acts and academic achievement, the study revealed that during the first three semesters, there is a high likelihood when it comes to exams, which decreases substantially in the middle and rises again in the final stage of undergraduate studies. On the other hand, the grade point average of each student is not a variable that determines the behaviour towards academically dishonest acts. Tables 1 and 3 show that, for academic activities, the probability is 2%, exams 1%, and sanctions 1%.

Table 3.*Dishonest academic act probability when sanctions are possible*

Sanctions	Coefficient	Std. Error	z	P z
Female	0.1734	0.0015	2.57	0.0099
Male	0.1256	0.0017	2.85	0.0036
Semester 1-3	0.0483	0.0010	3.79	0.0000
Semester 4-6	0.1697	0.0245	2.04	0.0603
Semester 7-9	0.2225	0.0386	2.01	0.0576
Scholarship	0.0865	0.0485	2.79	0.0041
GPA	0.0143	0.0091	3.46	0.0002
Regulations	0.1974	0.2573	2.16	0.6789

Number of observations = 1032

Source: Own Elaboration

Concerning the knowledge of university regulations, the probability of committing an academically dishonest act is 22% for academic activities, 43% for exams, and 19% for sanctions. Table 4 reveals the results based on contextual and sociocultural factors that influence academic integrity. The inclination to commit dishonest acts when students perceive that the benefit is greater than the sanction they would receive if their behaviour were identified is 39% in the

case of academic activities, only 6% in exams, and 20% when there will be a sanction. When analysing scenarios in which a student knows that there will be a social sanction, the probability is 23% in academic activities, 25% in exams, and only 4% in the scenario of institutional sanctions, since the individual also contemplates social sanctions.

Table 4.*Contextual and sociocultural factors in academic activities*

Academic activities	Coefficient	Std. Error	 z 	P z
The benefit is greater than the sanctions	0.3992	0.0911	4.02	0.0000
Social sanctions	0.2356	0.0234	1.77	0.0997
Reputation	0.2004	0.0567	1.85	0.0915
Reputation within the family	0.2684	0.0362	1.92	0.0843
Ethical values	0.0821	0.0040	2.07	0.0542

Number of observations = 1032

If their reputation with their peers will be affected, the probability is 20% regarding academic activities, 29% regarding exams, and 5% when they know there will be a sanction. When considering their reputation within the family, students report a inclination of 26%, 25%, and 7%, respectively, in each scenario described. Finally, if individuals consider their ethical values, the inclination is 8%, 3%, and 1%.

Table 5.*Contextual and sociocultural factors in evaluations*

Evaluations	Coefficient	Std. Error	 z 	P z
The benefit is greater than the sanctions	0.0686	0.0021	2.01	0.0505
Social sanctions	0.2554	0.0593	1.95	0.0801
Reputation	0.2941	0.0472	2.17	0.0627
Reputation within the family	0.2506	0.0125	4.71	0.000
Ethical values	0.0348	0.0016	2.05	0.0611

Number of observations = 1032

Below, the circumstances under which students tend to engage in dishonest behaviour in the academic environment are analysed. For these scenarios, a categorical variable was used with three states expressing the extent to which a student would be willing to commit an academically dishonest act. The responses included were: not at all, somewhat likely, or very likely. The average for all elements is: to help a friend, 1.68; to avoid losing my scholarship, 1.97; to avoid failing the exam, 1.59; to maintain GPA, 1.6; bad class/teacher, 1.71; insufficient

studding, 1.36; not understanding exercises, 1.51; embarrassment when asking questions, 1.3; high weighting, 1.71; low weighting, 1.34.

Table 6.

Contextual and sociocultural factors when sanctions are possible

Sanctions	Coefficient	Std. Error	z	P z
The benefit is greater than the sanctions	0.2053	0.0027	3.85	0.0000
Social sanctions	0.0497	0.0184	4.31	0.0000
Reputation	0.0553	0.0173	3.96	0.0000
Reputation within the family	0.0758	0.0384	2.83	0.0007
Ethical values	0.0179	0.0396	4.78	0.0000
Number of observations = 1032				

Table 7.

Inclination based on the academic environment in academic activities

Academic activities	Coefficient	Std. Error	z	P z
Helping a friend	0.1774	0.0345	3.33	0.0034
So as not to lose my scholarship	0.1492	0.0267	3.68	0.0000
Avoiding failing an exam	0.1712	0.0328	3.99	0.0000
Maintaining GPA	0.1546	0.0491	3.11	0.0067
Bad class/teacher	0.1638	0.0256	4.37	0.0000
Insufficient studying	0.1993	0.0361	6.11	0.0000
Lack of understanding of the exercise	0.1727	0.0634	3.44	0.0000
Embarrassment when asking questions	0.1826	0.0598	3.89	0.0000
High weighting	0.1515	0.0257	4.02	0.0000
Low weighting	0.1995	0.0111	3.01	0.0078
Number of observations 1032				

When presented with the opportunity to help a friend, students report an inclination for dishonest behaviour of 17% regarding academic activities, 13% regarding exams, and 2% when they know there will be a penalty. When analysing academic assignments, the circumstances with the highest inclination reported were: low weighting of the assignment in the total or partial grade, because they did not study enough, or because they are embarrassed to ask questions, and to avoid failing the exam.

Similarly, the circumstances with the highest inclination regarding exams were: insufficient studying before the exam, a high weighting of the exam in the final grade, helping a friend, and avoiding failing the exam. Regarding the scenario of sanctions, inclination was very low. On average, students express a very high inclination for dishonest acts when they are trying

not to lose a scholarship, because the teacher is bad, or the weighting of the academic assignment is high, or when helping a friend.

Table 8.

Inclination based on circumstances

Evaluations	Coefficient	Std. Error	z	P z
Helping a friend	0.1346	0.0143	2.34	0.0620
So as not to lose my scholarship	0.1157	0.1942	1.92	0.0952
Avoiding failing an exam	0.1294	0.0253	2.22	0.4448
Maintaining GPA	0.0974	0.0285	1.99	0.0902
Bad class/teacher	0.0972	0.0249	1.96	0.0974
Insufficient studying	0.1721	0.0749	2.32	0.0601
Lack of understanding of the exercise	0.1208	0.0612	2.02	0.0555
Embarrassment when asking questions	0.0704	0.0311	1.87	0.0871
High weighting	0.1555	0.0444	2.12	0.0542
Low weighting	0.2321	0.0397	2.01	0.0502
Number of observations 1032				

Table 9.

Inclination based on the academic environment when sanctions are possible

Sanctions	Coefficient	Std. Error	z	P z
Helping a friend	0.0243	0.0623	2.12	0.0417
So as not to lose my scholarship	0.0194	0.0075	3.54	0.0006
Avoiding failing an exam	0.0303	0.0069	3.89	0.0000
Maintaining GPA	0.0294	0.0062	5.77	0.0000
Bad class/teacher	0.0215	0.0061	4.32	0.0000
Insufficient studying	0.0178	0.0082	3.89	0.0000
Lack of understanding of the exercise	0.0939	0.0745	3.56	0.0000
Embarrassment when asking questions	0.0121	0.0085	5.12	0.0000
High weighting	0.0666	0.0294	2.07	0.0542
Low weighting	0.0110	0.0086	3.58	0.0000
Number of observations 1032				

Intervention stage: raising awareness

The concept of awareness raising in the context of education refers to the process through which students cultivate a heightened consciousness and a deeper understanding of a given

phenomenon. This process encompasses dimensions such as empathy, readiness, and the capacity for action. Awareness-raising transcends mere perception; it entails a dynamic process in which reason, emotion, and social relationships converge, functioning as a catalyst for a more effective and humanizing educational experience. From this standpoint, and in relation to the theme of academic integrity, awareness-raising within the educational framework may be understood as a formative process that enables students to develop critical, ethical, and affective awareness regarding the dynamics of academic integrity. In this sense, awareness-raising constitutes a catalyst that reshapes students' perspectives during their academic formation and propels them toward practices oriented to the common good.

Awareness-raising program as a set of planned and systematic activities designed to increase awareness and understanding of a specific topic, which, in the present study, is applied specifically to the domain of academic integrity. A range of strategies has been identified and successfully implemented in educational contexts to strengthen students' awareness, ethical reflection, and commitment (Khan et al., 2020).

Building upon the aforementioned results, concerns among the university leadership intensified as the inclination of business students to engage in dishonest practices was identified. In response, and consistent with prior studies (Solano et al., 2023; Khan et al., 2020), an intervention was proposed. Specifically, an awareness-raising campaign was designed and implemented through short video messages, each lasting no more than 30 seconds, featuring university authorities, recognized employers, and professors with extensive industry experience. The objective of this initiative was to enhance students' understanding of academically dishonest behaviours and to foster greater awareness of university regulations. Below are some of the messages presented in the videos.

This section presents the text of the videos shown to students with messages promoting academic integrity, developed by academic authorities.

Recognized Employers

"Hello everyone, I would like to address a message to you and remind you about the importance of ethical behaviour in all aspects of your life. Honesty is a value that has not only been sought after but also demanded by many of the companies you may want to work for in the future. Acts that may seem harmless, such as cheating, plagiarizing, or letting a person copy off your answers on a test, are actually dishonest. Watch your image and continue building your good reputation. It takes a lot to build it and very little to destroy it." (Employer 1)

"Reputation is built throughout our lives. It is one of the things we value as human beings, but it can be destroyed in just a moment. What takes us so long to build can crumble in the blink of an eye. Don't cheat. Always be true to your principles." (Employer 2)

Professors with Extensive Industry Experience

"How come do we condemn corruption, but we ourselves are capable of being unethical? Join a dishonesty-free university. Keep your mind clean, and free your heart! Why ruin the reputation that has taken you so long to build? Make decisions based on your integrity, do not tear it

down." (Professor 1)

"Why ruin a reputation that's taken years to build? Make decisions that build your integrity rather than destroy it. In business, honesty and trust mean everything. Would you put your money in dishonest hands? In my company, I am looking to hire honest, irreproachable people whom I can trust. Could I hire you? In the workplace, honesty is more valuable than a perfect grade."(Professor 2)

University Authority

"Life is a road of obstacles, and we have to jump over the ones that come our way. Sometimes cheating seems like the way out, but it won't get you a gold medal in the long run, which requires being authentic, pure, and honourable. Think before cheating."

Throughout the semester, the videos were published on different digital and social media platforms and projected by professors before the beginning of the midterm and final exams. At the end of the semester, once the campaign concluded, all students were surveyed again to measure a change in the inclination for dishonest behaviours.

Evaluation Stage (Post-test)

Based on the results obtained in stage 1 (diagnosis), some particularly interesting aspects were identified, which guided stage three, where only questions regarding academic integrity in the academic environment were considered. Consequently, once the awareness campaign was finished, the same students were surveyed again to measure whether their perception of academic dishonesty had changed or not. The same empirical analysis was applied once more, and the results obtained are presented below, which show, in the reaction column (Table 10), the percentage of change in the inclination for dishonest behaviour across all three elements.

Table 10.

Average inclination reaction after the campaign

Academic Circumstances	Reaction
Helping a friend	-0.19
So as not to lose my scholarship	-0.13
Avoiding failing an exam	-0.21
Maintaining GPA	-0.21
Bad class/teacher	-0.24
Insufficient studying	-0.21
Lack of understanding of the exercise	-0.17
Embarrassment when asking questions	-0.18
High weighting	-0.22
Low weighting	-0.16
Ethical values	-0.07

Under all academic circumstances used to measure students' academically dishonest behaviours, inclination measured in basis points decreased. The greatest decreases were

reported in the following cases: bad teacher (24%), high weighting of the academic assignment (22%), avoiding failing an exam (21%), maintaining their grade point average (21%), and studying too little before the academic assignment (21%). On the other hand, the categories that showed the lowest decrease were those regarding ethical values (7%) and not losing a scholarship (13%).

The average reaction of all the academic aspects listed in Table 10 showed a decrease by 18% in the inclination for an academically dishonest act. This decrease in inclination for academically dishonest acts demonstrates modifications in the students' perception after the awareness campaign.

DISCUSSION

In recent years, especially during the pandemic, academic dishonesty has increased in higher education. Therefore, understanding the academic circumstances and determinants that lead students to engage in this type of behaviour is of utmost importance. To measure this inclination and understand the main circumstances under which these types of acts are committed, a measurement instrument was designed and applied to a sample of undergraduate students in the School of Business at a private university in Mexico City. Based on this, the study's hypotheses were defined, the behaviour of which is described below.

The null hypothesis, "The inclination to engage in academically dishonest acts does not depend on any intervention," was rejected, as the results of the third stage show changes in the inclination to engage in dishonest acts after the intervention. This leads to the acceptance of the following alternative hypotheses.

Regarding H1, "Educational interventions reduce the inclination to engage in academically dishonest acts," an intervention aimed at raising awareness regarding university regulations and academic integrity proved helpful, as it had a positive influence on students' perception of academic dishonesty. An awareness campaign based on informational videos featuring university leadership, recognized employers, and professors had an impact on reducing the inclination for academic dishonesty under all academic circumstances measured. The inclination regarding the level of knowledge of the sanctions established in the university's regulations was measured to test H2, "The inclination for academically dishonest acts is reduced when there is knowledge of university regulations." The findings support this hypothesis, as one of the main determinants found corresponds to students' perception of what they know about university regulations and academic dishonesty. Such perceptions influence the inclination of students to engage in academically dishonest acts.

When considering H3, "The inclination for academically dishonest acts is different across demographic variables", the study found that the inclination to commit an academically dishonest act is greater in men than in women, both on assignments and exams. Simultaneously, a perceived lack of sanctions generates a higher likelihood of committing an academically dishonest act in men, and a lower likelihood in women.

Likewise, H4, "The inclination to commit academically dishonest acts is influenced by the academic environment," is confirmed, as the results show that there is a high inclination to commit academically dishonest acts in the context of academic evaluations. In particular, students' behaviour regarding academic tasks such as academic activities and exams was analysed.

Factors regarding subject matter, the professor, subject and/or exercise difficulty, the high weighting of academic assignments, and embarrassment to ask questions are the main academic determinants that influence a student's decision to commit academically dishonest acts. Other relevant factors for engaging in this behaviour are helping a friend, not failing the exam, and not losing a scholarship. GPA showed the opposite behaviour.

In contrast to the previous hypotheses, H5, "The inclination to commit an academically dishonest act depends on the weighting that the individual assigns to social values," had little impact on the likelihood of committing an academically dishonest act, regardless of the individual's weighting.

Consequently, intervention contributes to reducing the inclination to commit dishonest acts. However, it cannot be sporadic. Broad and consistent intervention is necessary to develop a culture of integrity that involves students, teachers, researchers, and administrators across the institution's different practices. Academic integrity is not restricted to students and also involves pedagogical practices, evaluation processes, institutional norms, and the conduct displayed by teaching and administrative staff, who also contribute to a university's culture of integrity. One way to decrease dishonest behaviour involves improving learning processes and focusing on results, that is, improving the academic circumstances and environment in which this study was analysed.

The results presented show that academically dishonest behaviour is multifaceted, consistent with Bretag (2016). The most relevant aspects that affect the inclination for academically dishonest acts are related to complex learning environments. Particularly, when the student thinks the teacher is bad, considers the class to be tedious or bad, does not have a good understanding of the exercises, is embarrassed to ask questions, or the weighting of academic assignments is high. Consequently, students present high propensities toward academically dishonest acts, which confirms the results of Awdry and Groves (2023).

Moreover, if the student also perceives a false sense of impunity or the absence of exemplary sanctions regarding academically dishonest acts, the inclination to engage in them is usually high. According to Rebollo-Quintela et al. (2017), perceived impunity is a determining factor for this type of behaviour. This was the case in the vast majority of the results presented in this study. Economic pressures also turn out to be an important factor. However, for the sample selected in this study, economic pressures measured by the possibility of losing a scholarship do not report such a high inclination for engaging in academically dishonest acts, as is the case in other circumstances.

This type of behaviour always appears in areas related to academic evaluations, coinciding with the results found by Díaz et al. (2015). In academic evaluations, one factor that impacts academically dishonest behaviour corresponds to the possibility of helping a friend. The results show that the individuals under analysis report a high inclination under this circumstance, which implies that peer or friend networks in which a student is involved may be another determinant of academically dishonest behaviour, an idea that is also highlighted by Awdry and Groves (2023).

On the other hand, the factors that have the least impact on this type of behaviour are ethical values and grade point average throughout a student's academic career. In particular, the results presented reveal an extraordinarily low inclination for the ethical values reported by individuals, which differs from what Díaz et al. (2015) and Díez-Martínez (2015) identified.

In this scenario, the need for an intervention to measure the change in perceptions was very clear, especially regarding a perceived absence of sanctions and knowledge of what is considered an academically dishonest act. The intervention, conducted via the mass dissemination of informational videos in academic spaces and on social media, had positive results on decreased inclination for academically dishonest acts, as significant reductions were recorded in this regard in all academic circumstances analysed in the study. The above shows that there are intervention policies that can be effective in inhibiting this type of behaviour, which is in line with McCabe et al. (2001), Sureda-Negre, Reynes-Vives, and Comas-Forgas (2016), and Vaamonde and Omar (2008).

However, the effectiveness of an intervention like the awareness campaign implemented in this study on the perception of students may be temporary if not permanently maintained. This happens because, over the years, new students' admissions dilute the knowledge regarding dishonest acts and their consequences in terms of sanctions. Likewise, students may again have a heightened perception of ease and/or impunity to engage in academically dishonest acts if they are not constantly informed on the subject.

Implications for Practice and Future Research

Intervention with students in order to mitigate dishonest academic behaviour becomes necessary to modify students' perceptions regarding academic integrity. For this research in particular, a single intervention during one semester yielded positive results regarding students' knowledge in terms of academic integrity. However, the scope of the intervention depends strongly on the type of messages and their duration. Without a doubt, continuous intervention would be ideal to reduce acts of academic dishonesty to a minimum. The fact that university authorities, recognized employers, and iconic professors are the main characters in intervention messages is very helpful to have a more significant impact on the students' perception of dishonest academic behaviour. The agenda of this research for the future should follow the course of a longer intervention to include other characters when addressing messages, such as outstanding students within the university community, but most importantly, designing short but direct messages to inhibit dishonest academic acts.

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