

Contribution of Ethical Integrity in Escalating Academic Integrity among University Students

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Abstract

The present study was carried out to assess the contribution value of ethical integrity in escalation of academic integrity among university students. A total number of 302 students from public sector universities of Islamabad participated as sample of study. Mean, Standard deviation, Regression, Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis H tests were applied for statistical analysis. Students were found to have moderate levels of both ethical and academic integrity. Ethical integrity had significant positive contribution in escalating academic integrity. Ethical integrity contributed in decreasing the frequency and severity of various dishonest academic behaviors including plagiarism and cheating among students. There was no significant difference in ethical integrity of male and female students. There was a substantial difference in academic integrity of male and female students as frequency of plagiarism, cheating and fabrication was found higher in males; and female students had more awareness of academic unethical behaviors. Results also indicated that students who had GPA between 3.1-3.5 were more aware of the severity of various plagiaristic behaviors. It is recommended that students may be given more awareness about academic integrity through orientation, seminars and workshops. The educational institutions may communicate the message of zero tolerance for the academic dishonesty, and strictly implement policies for reducing academic misconducts among students.

Keywords: Ethical Integrity; Academic Integrity; Ethical Courage; Conation; Cognition

Introduction

Education is considered a higher lifetime earnings, greater social mobility and access to life opportunity (Chapman, 2002). A lot of personal and governmental expenditure are made on education every year. It is very alarming that students as well as employees come to rely on cutting corners instead of hard work and merit (Chapman & Lindner, 2016). When some of the students are indulged in academic dishonesty like cheating and plagiarism; they reduce available opportunities for

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brilliant and honest students. It is a corruption which is a matter of great concern for all stakeholders including teachers, students, parents and administrators. It breaks the connection of personal effort and reward based on it. The failure of academic integrity damages not only institutional brand but also the credibility of higher education (Altbach, 2004). The corruption practices have a negative influence in higher educational institutions. Cavico and Mujtaba (2009) have mentioned that ABC' poll has concluded that 7 out of 10 students say that their friends have cheated. Moreover, they also assert that business administration students are found in cheating most as per self-reported surveys. The most common justification from the students in favor of academic dishonesty is as our counterparts are doing it that is why we are also involved in it. Another justification is that as school system is just simply a preparation for the "cut throat" real world of business which cannot run without cheating and dishonesty that is why we also cheat in educational institutions. Other reasons for their misconduct are as religious leaders, politicians, bureaucrats, governors, prime-minsters and presidents are cheating therefore we do also have the right to cheat. Mujtaba and Preziosi (2006) have shared a research finding in which it is proclaimed that of the 12000 college students 75 % admitted that they have cheated on an exam.

The continuity and stability in practices of academic integrity are required for the smooth functioning of the academic system. Violation of academic integrity norms increases ethical problems and also causes annulment of educational objectives. Academic misconducts severely affect independent critical thinking of students (Harp & Taietz, 1966).

Academic misbehavior is not only the problem in students, but it is also the practice of some of the faculty members of higher educational institutions. These non-ethical practices are in the form of falsifying data, paying ghostwriter, publishing research papers in fake journals, bribing coauthor, stealing submitted papers given to them for publishing and review (Denisova-Schmidt & de Wit, 2017).

Academic integrity influences directly or indirectly the repute of educational institutions. McCabe, and Pavela (2004) affirms and recognizes academic integrity as a value of institution. Those institutions which define academic integrity standers have more chances of honest behavior of students in their academic endeavors. It also fosters lifelong commitment among students for learning and encourages students to take responsibility of academic pursuits. It promotes the creative and fair assessment practices and reduces the opportunities through which students can engage themselves in academic misconducts.

Denisova-Schmidt (2017) in his study used a word corruption in higher educational institutions. He addressed the problem of values and ethics in international education at higher level. He was of the view that challenge of academic integrity is the key issue in higher educational institutions. He identified that corruption in higher education is due to the low academic integrity and this corruption may found in both mass and elite, and public and private universities. Corruption is not a newer concept in educational institutions (Osipian, 2007).

According to Carter (1995), three steps discern, act and state are required for integrity. First step deals with discerning between rights and wrong which is based on reflection. Second step deals with acting on that discerned without fear of personal cost. Third step is taking a responsibility of discerned acts with one's own understanding of right and wrong? Carter's viewpoint of integrity is more practical one. He has also discussed the admirable of integrity which are courageous in convictions, compassion, undivided, steadfast, forthright and consistent in beliefs (Carter, 1995).

Ethical Integrity and its Dimensions

Ingerson (2014) in his study coined the term "ethical integrity" which gave entirety to the concept of integrity. Ethical integrity can be described in terms of ethical concerns which are high with positive ethical consistency in the feelings, thoughts, intentions and actions. Integrity is perceived as attitude like than state like or trait.

Ingerson (2014) in his study identified four dimensions of ethical integrity: affect, cognition, conation and ethical courage. These dimensions also provide the basis of research for the present study.

The affective dimension of morality or ethics consists of an individual's moral or ethical sentiments and feelings regarding moral or ethical behaviors and issues. The *cognitive* dimension of morality or ethics contains aspects of how person reason or think about the morality or ethics. This also describes that how much weightage person gives to the moral or ethical matters and emphasis or importance one gives to reasoning. The *conation* dimension of morality and ethics consists of an individual's intention or tendency to act morally or ethical. This also accounts the importance and effort an individual give to his/her actions in a moral or ethical manner. The *ethical courage relates with* an individual to act right regardless of its consequences. These consequences may be in the form of personal costs and standing alone.

Academic Integrity and its Dimensions

The basic philosophy and guiding principle of academic integrity is to conduct all the academic affairs with honesty. The institutions are supposed to clearly and vividly communicate what they expect from faculty, administrative staff and students regarding academic integrity, and ethics. If anyone is found guilty of academic dishonesty, then authorities must take this very seriously.

Academic integrity plays a significant role in educational institutions as it is a moral code of conduct. Academia operates within the parameters of ethics. All academic organizations especially universities ensure that all academic efforts like teaching learning process, research and publications, and assessment and evaluation are conducted within the prescribed standards of academic integrity and if certain misconducts occur then strict actions may be taken to safeguard the integrity of institutions.

The core values of academic integrity are respect, fairness, trust, responsibility and honesty. It is to remain within the ethical limits in all situations. Academic integrity is an individual's as well as organizational commitment to honesty even in adverse circumstances (Fishman, 1999). Ethical issues have been a great concern in education sector. There is a dire need to investigate issues of academic dishonesty including cheating and plagiarism, address them appropriately and combat with appropriate strategies and actions (Nazir, & Aslam, 2010). The most useful way to combat cheating is to support and encourage academic integrity, and at the same time if certain students cheat, they must be confronted immediately. These things cannot happen in vacuum. There is a great need to create and promote a culture of ethics and integrity where all the acts of academic dishonesty and misconduct are not only discouraged but are dealt severely.

One of the most promising approaches to inculcate the healthy practices of academic integrity is to treat the academic integrity as a constellation of skills which may be teach largely throughout the time of higher education. The professors must teach the students that what it means by academic integrity and why they value it. Moreover, the professors must tell the students rules of academic citation, and how they have to carry out their assignments and research projects (Blum, 2009)

In this study academic dishonesty is estimated in terms of two dimensions. One is *specific behavior intensity* and the second one is *specific behavior severity*. The specific behavior frequency indicates occurrence of dishonest behavior whereas specific behavior severity deals with the severity of dishonest behaviors.

Rationale of Study

The paradigm of integrity needs more attention from the researchers. Much of the focus of our educational institutions is on development of the technical competencies. We cannot ignore the importance of technical competencies in the life of any individual. Based on technical competencies, students can get good jobs and establish themselves in the practical world. Low academic integrity is a barrier in getting the expertise in technical competencies. Society requires people with high ethical standards to nurture it. Students spend most of the time in educational institutions. These institutions can play a major role in the ethical trainings of the students. Unfortunately, much of the attention has not been given to this area.

Educational organizations have their policies for dealing with academic misconducts but despite rigorous steps taken by educational institutions this issue is increasing day by day. As McCabe, and Pavela (2004) reveals that incidents of cheating are at constant rise in schools as well as in colleges. This indicates that academic dishonesty is a widely spread practice which is not confined to one institution, one level of education and to one country. There are several studies which proclaim that students are indulged in academic dishonesty.

Quraishi and Aziz (2017) have identified higher level of academic dishonesty in higher educational institutions of Punjab. Moreover, students intentionally plagiarize written material in different universities of Pakistan (Ramzan et al., 2012). Higher education institutions are more concerned with matter of academic dishonesty from last few decades. Education sector is facing a severe issue of students' dishonest behavior. Those who practice dishonest behavior in education are more likely to practice the same in their jobs. It is the responsibility of academicians to develop ethics and morality in students. (Nazir & Aslam, 2010).

Despite the efforts of educational institutions, the incidents of academic dishonesty are at constant rise. One of the reasons is the recent trend of greatest reliance on higher grades as a key to acquire prestigious jobs and hence a good status in society. The parents constantly pressurize their children to get good grades. Those students who are weak in studies and cannot attain better grades they indulge themselves in cheating, fabrication and plagiarism. The education has become a commodity and most of the students feel themselves in an educational competition to get it at any cost. This type of attitudes is increasing academic dishonesty among students.

Most students do not consider cheating as a serious offence. In a study conducted by Nazir and Aslam (2010) found that severity of students acts regarding academic dishonesty were copying during examination from exam sheets and from cheating material, copying the projects, internship reports and assignments of other students, helping students to copy from their answer sheet during examination, submitting the assignment of others as their own work, stealing examination material and copying the material from the internet without mentioning the source.

Rakovski and Levy (2007) in their study discussed that cheating in higher education is rampant. It is caused by many factors including student perceptions about faculty and their dishonest behaviors, the use of technology, and evolving cultural norms. Underwood and Szabo (2003) described “academic dishonesty in the form of plagiarism and cheating as major problem found at all educational levels. It is not confined to higher educational institutions.

In Pakistan, the area of academic integrity is needed to be more explored by the researchers as well as institutions on continuous basis. Serious attention should be given to the areas of ethical integrity as well as academic integrity.

The present study has focused on ethical integrity and academic integrity. Ethical integrity which is an attitudinal phenomenon has cognition, affects, conation and ethical courage as its sub-dimensions. The level of academic integrity is tapped through the frequency and severity of academic dishonesty behaviors. It is assumed that those students who possess ethical integrity are less indulged in incidents of academic dishonesty. In other words, those who are high in ethical integrity are also high in academic integrity. Keeping in mind this assumption, the present research was conducted. In order to determine the level of academic integrity, the dishonest *specific behavior frequency* and dishonest *specific behavior severity* were assessed. So, the high level of dishonest specific behavior frequency and the specific behavior severity means less academic integrity. The research was conducted to examine the contribution of ethical integrity in escalating the academic integrity among university students.

Significance of the study

Ethics and integrity issues are receiving growing attention in academia in recent years. Integrity is a personal choice, predictably consistent and uncompromising commitment to ethical, artistic, spiritual and moral principles and values. Integrity is the need of the soul as oxygen is the need of the physical body. Integrity adds unity and wholeness (Craig, 2002). It enhances moral soundness and

personal costs. Integrity is to tell people honestly and fairly about what they are doing. It is to take careful decisions (Bruce et al., 2005). The contradiction in the saying and doing is not integrity (Killinger, 2007). Academic dishonesty is a serious problem not only for the students, but it is also threatening for the society. Society will face serious consequences due to the moral decline of students. Cheating, plagiarism and other academic misconducts will result in poorly trained and less capable product of universities. Poor quality of students as an output of higher educational institutions will contribute in deterioration of the society.

Higher educational institutions are more concerned with the academically dishonest practices of students from last few decades. The severity of dishonest behavior is high at graduate and undergraduate level students (Nazir & Aslam, 2010). McCabe and Pavela (2004) favored that colleges and universities must foster quality of academic integrity. Educational organizations also have to discourage deception and cheating habits among students. According to Nitterhouse (2003), maintaining the environment of academic integrity in the educational institutions is challenging for the individual faculty member as well as for the higher educational institutions (Ferguson, 2010).

The study will be significant for students, teachers, parents and university authorities. They need to know what the level of ethical integrity and academic integrity among university students is. It will sensitize the university stakeholders about academic integrity and ethical integrity. Moreover, it will provide an insight to the university authorities to think about different ways to enhance ethical integrity and control academic dishonesty behaviors and take certain measures to control academic misconducts among university students.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the current study were to:

1. Assess the level of ethical integrity of students.
2. Determine the level of different dimensions of ethical integrity (cognition, affects, conation and ethical courage).
3. Estimate the level of academic dishonesty (specific behavior frequency and specific behavior severity) of students.
4. Identify the contribution of ethical integrity in escalating academic integrity (reducing dishonest specific behavior frequency and dishonest specific behavior severity) among university students.

5. Investigate the differences regarding ethical integrity and academic dishonesty (specific behavior frequency and specific behavior severity) on the basis of gender among students.
6. Determine the differences in ethical integrity and academic dishonesty (specific behavior frequency and specific behavior severity) of students with different Grade Point Averages.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of ethical integrity among university students?
2. What is the level of different dimensions of ethical integrity (cognition, affects, conation and ethical courage) among university students?
3. What is specific behavior frequency and specific behavior severity in relation to academic dishonesty of students?
4. How much ethical integrity contributes in escalating academic integrity (reducing academic dishonesty) among university students?
5. How male and female students differ in terms of ethical integrity and academic dishonesty (specific behavior frequency and specific behavior severity) at university level?
6. Whether the students with different Grade Point Average also differ in ethical integrity and academic dishonesty (specific behavior frequency, and specific behavior severity) at university level?

Null Hypotheses

Following were null hypotheses of the current study:

- H0i. Ethical integrity has no significant contribution in escalating academic dishonest specific behavior frequency among university students.
- H0ii. Ethical integrity has no significant contribution in escalating academic dishonest specific behavior severity among university students.
- H0iii. There is no significant difference in ethical integrity of male and female students at university level.
- H0iv. There is no significant difference in dishonest specific behavior frequency of male and female students at university level.
- H0v. There is no significant difference in dishonest specific behavior severity of male and female students at university level.
- H0vi. There is no significant difference in ethical integrity of students with different grade-point average at university level.
- H0vii. There is no significant difference in specific behavior frequency of students with different grade-point average at university level.
- H0viii. There is no significant difference in specific behavior severity of students with different grade-point average at university level.

Methodology

The present study was quantitative in nature and survey method was employed to collect data. It dealt with two variables. One variable was ethical integrity and the second variable was the academic integrity. The exploratory research design and prediction research designs were employed. Exploratory research study was selected in order to identify the degree to which two or more variables co-vary. Prediction design was used to identify variable which will predict outcome variable (Creswell, 2012).

Population, Sample and Sampling Technique

Students of public sector universities of Islamabad the Capital Territory were selected as the population of study. The convenience sampling technique was used, and sample was drawn from two universities. A total number of 302 students were selected from departments of Social Sciences, Management Sciences, Languages, and Engineering.

Instruments of the Study

The nature of study demanded two instruments. Twelve items ethical integrity scale developed by Ingerson (2014) was used to determine ethical integrity level of the students at university level. It consisted of cognition; affects, conation and ethical dimensions with five-point scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”.

The second instrument was academic integrity scale developed by Ferguson (2010). It measured *specific behavior frequency and specific behavior severity of academically dishonest behaviors among university students*. *Specific behavior frequency* referred to occurrence or number of times students were indulged in various behaviors of plagiarism, cheating and fabrication. It was measured on “never”, “once” and “more than once” scale. *Specific behavior severity* was measured on “not cheating”, “trivial cheating”, “moderate cheating” and “serious cheating” scale.

Data Analysis

Mean score, standard deviation, regression, Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis H tests were applied for analyzing the data keeping in view the objectives and hypotheses of the study.

Table 1: Ethical integrity level of university students

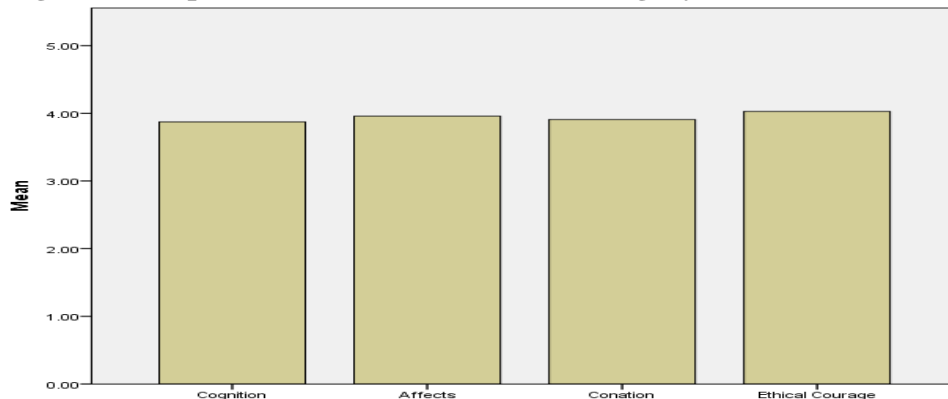
Overall Ethical Integrity	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Variance
	1.00	5.00	3.9409	0.71147	0.506

Results of mean value showed that ethical integrity (3.9409) of university students was moderately high.

Table 2: Level of different dimensions of ethical integrity

Ethical Integrity & its Dimensions	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Variance
Cognition	1.00	5.00	3.8731	.93004	0.865
Affects	1.00	5.00	3.9570	1.03892	1.079
Conation	1.67	5.00	3.9073	.84856	0.720
Ethical courage	1.67	5.00	4.0265	.84583	0.715

The value of ethical courage (4.0265) was found as the highest as compared to other dimensions of ethical integrity including affect (3.9570), cognition (3.8731) and conation (3.9073) among university students. In other words, they were more inclined to do the right acts irrespective of the consequences like personal cost and standing alone.

Figure 1: Graphical Presentation of Ethical Integrity Dimensions.**Table 3: Level of Academic Dishonesty (specific behavior frequency, and specific behavior Severity) of University Students**

Academic Dishonesty	Mini	Maxi	Mean	SD	Variance
Specific behavior frequency	1	2.90	1.66	0.5887	0.347
Specific behavior severity	1	4	2.999	0.8231	0.678

Academic dishonesty had two sub-scales: specific behavior frequency and specific behavior severity. Results indicated that both *specific behavior frequency* (1.66) and the *specific behavior severity* (2.99) were found at moderate level.

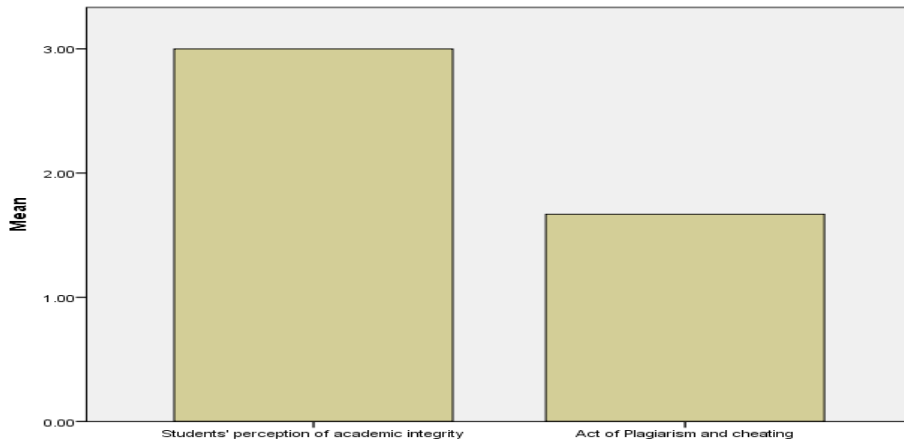


Figure 2. Graphical Presentation of Academic Integrity Dimensions.

Table 4: Contribution of Ethical Integrity in Escalating Academic Dishonest Specific Behavior Frequency among University Students

Predictor	R	R Square	Beta	F	T	Sig.
Ethical Integrity	0.289	0.083	-0.398	27.254	-5.221	0.000

*p <.05

Predictor= Ethical Integrity

Dependent Variable= Specific Behavior Frequency

Results revealed that correlation between ethical integrity and specific behavior frequency dimension of academic dishonesty was 0.289. The value of $p=0.000$ also indicated that ethical integrity showed high level of significant but negative contribution in specific behavior frequency. Specific behavior frequency described that how often students were engaged in plagiaristic behavior. Results revealed that increase in ethical integrity decreased the frequency of specific dishonest behavior. The value of coefficient was -0.398 which indicated that one unit increase in the ethical integrity will decrease the 0.398 units in the specific

behavior frequency. Ethical integrity will also bring 8.3 % variation in the severity of acts regarding the plagiarism, cheating and fabrication. Thus, rejecting the null hypothesis that ethical integrity has no significant contribution in escalating academic dishonest specific behavior frequency among university students is rejected.

Table 5: Contribution of Ethical Integrity in Escalating Academic Dishonest Specific Behavior Severity among University Students.

Predictor	R	R Square	Beta	F	T	Sig.
Ethical integrity	0.203	0.041	0.392	12.950	3.599	0.000

* $p < .05$

Predictor= Ethical Integrity

Dependent Variable= Specific behavior severity

Results revealed that the correlation between ethical integrity and specific behavior severity was .203. The predictor ethical integrity had significant and positive contribution in the dependent variable specific behavior severity ($F=12.950$, $p=.000$). The value of R square was .041 which showed that ethical integrity will bring 4.1 % variation in specific behavior severity. So the null hypothesis that ethical integrity has no significant contribution in escalating academic dishonest specific behavior severity among university students was rejected.

Table 6: Difference in Ethical Integrity of Male and Female University Students

Variable	Gender (Total= 302)		Mann-Whitney U	Z	p value
	Male (N=86) Mean Rank	Female (N=216) Mean Rank			
Ethical integrity	148.99	152.50	9072.00	-0.316	0.752

* $p < .05$

Results showed that there was no significant difference in ethical integrity of male and female students ($U=9072.00$, $z= -0.316$, $p= 0.752$). therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in ethical integrity of male and female students at university level is failed to be rejected.

Table 7: Difference in Academic Dishonesty (Specific Behavior Frequency) of Male and Female University Students

Variable	Gender (Total= 302)		Mann-Whitney U	Z	p value
	Male (N=86) Mean Rank	Female (N=216) Mean Rank			
Specific behavior frequency	185.20	138.08	6390.00	-2.24	0.000

As far as frequency of specific behavior was concerned results indicated that significant difference existed among male and female students. The mean value of specific behavior frequency of male students was 185 and of females was 138.08 indicating a significant difference in specific behavior frequency of male and female students ($U=6390.00$, $z=-2.24$, $p=0.000$). Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in dishonest specific behavior frequency of male and female students at university level is rejected.

Table 8: Difference in Academic Dishonesty (Specific Behavior Severity) of Male and Female University Students.

Variable	Gender (Total= 302)		Mann-Whitney U	Z	p value
	Male (N=86) Mean Rank	Female (N=216) Mean Rank			
Specific behavior severity	130.57	159.83	7488.00	-2.63	0.009

The mean value of specific behavior severity of male students was 130.57 and of females was 159.83 regarding the academic dishonesty ($U=7488.00$, $z=-2.63$, $p=.009$). Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in dishonest specific behavior severity of male and female students at university level is rejected.

Table 9: Differences in Level of Ethical Integrity of University Students with Different GPA.

Variables	CGPA	N	Mean Rank	$\chi^2(df)$	P value
Ethical Integrity	Less than 2.5	6	21.50	7.810(3)	.05
	2.5-3.0	58	139.46		
	3.1-3.5	32	177.45		
	3.6-4.0	206	154.65		

* $p < .05$ GPA (grade point average)

Kruskal-Wallis H test was applied for assessing the differences among students regarding ethical integrity based on their GPAs. Results reveal that a significant difference exists in ethical integrity (χ^2 (3) 7.810, $p=0.050$) of students with different GPAs. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in ethical integrity of students with different grade-point average at university level is rejected.

Table 10: Differences in level of Academic Dishonesty (Specific Behavior Frequency) of University Students with Different GPA.

Variables	CGPA	N	Mean Rank	χ^2 (df)	P value
specific behavior frequency	Less than 2.5	6	194.50	7.770(3)	.05
	2.5-3.0	58	167.47		
	3.1-3.5	32	152.94		
	3.6-4.0	206	45.53		

A significant difference also exists in frequency of various plagiaristic behavior of students with different GPAs (χ^2 (3) 55.558, $p=0.000$). Students who have GPAs between 3.1-3.5 are more aware of the severity of plagiaristic behaviors. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in specific behavior frequency of students with different grade-point average at university level is rejected.

Table 11: Differences in Level of Academic Dishonesty (Specific Behavior Severity) of University Students with Different GPA.

Variables	CGPA	N	Mean Rank	χ^2 (df)	P value
Specific behavior severity	Less than 2.5	6	74.50	55.558(3)	.01
	2.5-3.0	58	108.72		
	3.1-3.5	32	188.88		
	3.6-4.0	206	159.98		

Results also describe that a significant difference also exists in severity of specific behaviors of plagiarism, cheating and fabrication based on GPAs. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in specific behavior severity of students with different grade-point average at university level is rejected.

Discussion

Integrity can be described as an internal state that act as a guiding principle towards making ethical and wise choices. According to the Killinger, compassion is

important for the integrity. Only doing right things are not enough. Integrity includes doing right thing for right reason is also important (Killinger, 2007). The present study is also aimed at identifying the contributing value of ethical integrity in escalating the academic integrity among students. Ethical integrity scale and academic integrity scale were used. A sample of 302 students were participated in the present study from public universities of Islamabad.

Results about ethical integrity among university students indicate that ethical integrity is at moderately high level. Ethical courage component of ethical integrity is found high in students. As Carter (1995) in his book mentioned that integrity do not look for the desire of the person to do something instead integrity demands to exhibit ethical behavior. Ethical courage also demands from individual to act right regardless of its consequences (Ingerson, 2014).

Academic integrity refers to the students' trustworthy and honest behavior towards academic work. It also describes the commitment of the individual even in adverse circumstances and follows values fairness, responsibility, trust, honesty and respect (Fishman, 1999).

Results about specific behavior severity and specific behavior frequency dimensions of academic dishonesty also portray that students have moderate level of awareness regarding the severity of various plagiaristic behaviors of plagiarism, cheating and fabrication. Frequency of various plagiaristic behaviors including plagiarism, cheating and fabrication are also found at moderate level in the university students.

Significant contribution of ethical integrity is found in reducing severity of various plagiaristic behaviors of cheating, plagiarism and fabrication among students. Results also reveal that significant contribution of ethical integrity is found in decreasing the frequency of various plagiaristic behaviors of plagiarism, cheating and fabrication.

Results show that gender of students does not bring any significant difference in their ethical integrity. As far as ethical integrity is concerned it is found that female students are more aware about various plagiaristic behaviors including cheating, plagiarism and fabrication. Frequency of specific behavior like plagiarism, cheating and fabrication is greater in male students as compared to female students. The findings of this study correlate with the findings of a study reported by conducted by Quraishi and Aziz in 2017 where it is also revealed that academically dishonest behaviors are more prevalent among male students. The one possible reason for such prevalence may be attributed to parents' pressure on male students

to acquire higher grades which are essential to get good jobs in future. As the male students have the responsibility to provide financial support to their families that is when they feel that they cannot get good grades they indulge in unfair means to get success in examinations and academic requirements including assignments and projects.

McCabe and Trevino (1997) also provided the evidences of different researches that cheating intensity was found higher in male students than females. But in another study females reported cheating more than males (Ferguson, 2010). Guthrie (2009) also indicated that females reported high level of academically dishonest behavior. A study conducted by Soroya et al. (2016) revealed that academic integrity level is higher in females than the males.

Results of current study reveal that no difference exists based on GPAs regarding ethical integrity. Whereas significant differences exist regarding frequency of various plagiaristic behavior on the basis of GPAs. Students who have GPAs between 3.1-3.5 are more aware of various plagiaristic behavior severity. Results also describe that no difference exists about severity of specific behavior of plagiarism, cheating and fabrication based on GPAs. McCabe and Trevino (1997) provided the evidences of different researches that those students who have lower achievement were involved more in cheating than students with high achievement.

One of the reasons identified by (Ramzan et al., 2012) in their research study that society and family pressure of getting good grades in examination are the major reasons of student's involvement in the unfair means like plagiarism. Good marks are considered as a symbol of getting status and employment in the society.

Conclusions

It is concluded that university students are found at moderately high level in ethical integrity. Ethical courage is at the highest level as compared to other dimensions of ethical integrity among students. As far as academic dishonesty is concerned, it is concluded that students are found at moderately high level in both specific behavior frequency and specific behavior severity. Significant negative contribution of ethical integrity was found in escalating severity and frequency of various plagiaristic behaviors including cheating, plagiarism and fabrication. In other words, it is concluded that ethical integrity reduces both the specific behavior frequency and specific behavior severity among university students and hence increase the academic integrity.

Male and female students were found same in level of ethical integrity, whereas male students are more indulged in academic dishonesty including specific behavior frequency and specific behavior severity. It is also concluded that the students with different GPAs possess the same level of ethical integrity. But the students with different GPAs have also difference in specific behavior frequency and specific behavior severity including plagiarism and cheating.

Recommendations

Ethical integrity may be raised among students by paying attention on the cognitive, affective and behavioral components of human side. Different counseling sessions may be arranged for addressing the issues ethical and academic integrity.

As severity of acts of plagiarism and cheating were found moderately higher in the students of universities. So, universities may pay more attention and take some preventive measures for reducing the misconducts among students. Organizations may clearly convey a message to the students about zero tolerance about academic misconducts. The very first step which institutions and teachers may take is to provide awareness to students regarding academic misconducts. Time to time different orientation sessions may be arranged by the organizations to provide awareness. Counseling and psychological services may be provided to students with low academic integrity. Different preventive measures are available in the form of code of ethics and different organizational policies like plagiarism policy or examination rules, but institutions may ensure the proper implementation of these policies. Educational institutions may give more attention to the issue of low academic integrity. Relationships of trust among students and teachers may reduce the frequency of academic dishonesty. Pope (2017) has suggested five steps for creating a climate of academic integrity and control cheating behavior. They are striving for Buy-In of Honest Academic Practices, Emphasizing Mastery and Learning Over rather than Performance and Grades, establishing a Climate of Care, and Revising Assessment and Grading Policies.

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