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Academic Dishonesty Among University Students: Gender, Semester Differences, and Influencing Factors

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Abstract

This study examines differences in academic dishonesty among university students based on gender and semester level and identifies factors influencing such behavior using an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. Quantitative data were collected from 405 undergraduate students across five semester levels (II, IV, VI, VIII, and X) using the Academic Dishonesty Scale (ADS) and analyzed with non-parametric statistical tests. The results show significant differences in examination-related cheating across semesters ($p = 0.012$) and significant gender differences across several indicators ($p < 0.05$), with male students and those in early semesters displaying higher levels of dishonest behavior. To further explain these findings, qualitative data were obtained through in-depth interviews with seven informants and analyzed thematically. The qualitative results indicate that academic dishonesty is influenced by pressure to achieve high grades, insufficient study preparation, permissive peer environments, and limited understanding of academic ethics. The novelty of this study lies in combining a validated measurement instrument with qualitative follow-up to provide contextual explanations of academic dishonesty in Indonesian higher education. The findings highlight the need for stricter supervision, strengthened academic ethics education, improved time management skills, and clearer institutional policies to foster an academic culture that promotes integrity.

Keywords:

Academic Dishonesty;
Academic Integrity;
Psychological Drivers;
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Situational Drivers.

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1- Introduction

Academic dishonesty is an increasingly challenging problem facing the higher education sector [1], and its impact is devastating; yet these reprehensible acts persist and recur [2-4]. Furthermore, with technological advances, access to the internet, AI applications, and social media, it is easier for students to copy assignments, cheat, or engage in other forms of academic misconduct. The COVID-19 pandemic, which has driven online learning, has also increased the risk of academic misconduct due to the lack of direct supervision. In addition to external factors, grade pressure, intense competition, peer influence, and a lack of academic integrity are also key triggers [5-7]. Academic dishonesty clearly contradicts the value of integrity; some students may perceive it as "beneficial" in the short term, such as completing assignments quickly, avoiding failure, maintaining a high Grade Point Average (GPA), and saving time. However, these benefits are temporary and misleading. In the long term, academic dishonesty harms students themselves by hindering the learning process and the development of analytical, critical, and creative thinking skills. When this practice becomes widespread, the quality of graduates declines, and the world of education loses its credibility. Therefore, while academic dishonesty may seem immediately rewarding, its impact is devastating. There needs to be a shared awareness that academic honesty is the foundation of integrity and long-term success.

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Academic dishonesty is a serious and growing problem among college students. Its forms include plagiarism, exam cheating, and fabricating or manipulating research data [8]. This problem arises from various factors, including the cheating triangle [9], such as pressure to achieve high grades, lack of time, unpreparedness for assignments, and a weak understanding of academic ethics [10]. Technological advances and easy access to information exacerbate this situation, making cheating easier and more challenging to detect. Winardi et al. [11] reported that 75.6% of college students engage in academic dishonesty. Approximately 40% of respondents had witnessed their peers engaging in academic dishonesty before, yet the majority (94%) never reported these acts [12]. This phenomenon clearly negatively impacts students' critical thinking skills [13] and fosters a culture of irresponsibility, where students are required to be strictly supervised in order to adhere to the rules [14]. In the long term, incompetent graduates will harm the workplace and society as a whole. For educational institutions, the prevalence of academic misconduct can damage their reputation and erode public trust in the quality of education. Furthermore, an academic culture tainted by dishonesty will hinder the creation of a deep, high-quality learning environment. Therefore, educational institutions must instill the value of academic integrity, strengthen oversight, and impose strict sanctions to reduce the number of academic misconduct cases and maintain the integrity of higher education.

Academic dishonesty is a common problem in universities worldwide and has a significant negative impact on students and the education system [5, 15]. Although no significant differences in academic dishonesty rates by gender are found at the secondary school level [16], this phenomenon changes when students enter higher education. Recent studies have shown significant differences between male and female students in academic dishonesty behavior, which vary by demographic and regional factors. In general, male students are more permissive towards dishonest behavior [17] and are more likely to engage in behaviors such as exam cheating and assignment copying than female students [18-20]. For example, a study in China involving 1624 students from four public universities showed that male were more frequently involved in dishonest acts [21]. Furthermore, academic dishonesty shows a distinct gender bias: exam cheating is more common among males, while plagiarism is more common among females [22]. Although female exhibit lower levels of dishonesty, they are more likely to deny their involvement in cheating, which may increase the likelihood of false accusations [23].

While most research indicates that male engage in more academic cheating, some studies have also found no significant differences based on gender [24]. In fact, female are more likely to report seeing classmates cheating, such as copying assignments, while male are less likely to consider a classmate who shares stolen exam questions to be a cheater. Not all research supports these findings; some studies even show that female are more likely to report cheating by others. Female students express more ethical attitudes toward cheating, but in practice, they cheat about as often as male [25]. It suggests that although the majority of students rate most cheating behaviors as “serious,” they still actively cheat despite their awareness of their seriousness [26]. These findings suggest that academic cheating behavior is influenced by multiple factors, including social norms, academic development, and gender differences in both the perception and response to such behavior. Consequently, academic cheating evolves in tandem with the progression of higher education and has the potential to undermine the integrity of the education system [27, 28]. Therefore, it is important to conduct further research, also exploring in depth the factors that influence this behavior, including internal factors such as religious commitment, self-efficacy, and self-control [29].

The influence of academic maturity, as indicated by semester level or year of study, has received limited attention in recent research, despite evidence suggesting that students at higher semester levels may exhibit more complex rationalizations and justifications for dishonest behavior [30, 31]. Studies have shown significant differences in academic cheating behavior driven by the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) between female students at different semester levels. Female students at higher semester levels tend to engage in academic cheating more frequently than newly enrolled female students [32]. Similar findings were reported in another study, which found that advanced students tend to be less honest in work-based presentations [33]. In this research, further studies are needed to investigate the interaction between gender and academic development, specifically, and how both relate to social learning mechanisms, such as peer modeling, perceived norms, and efficacy expectations, in shaping academic cheating behavior. An in-depth study of the influence of gender and semester differences can help understand differences in academic behavior, including the social factors that shape them. Furthermore, this study can also reveal how peers and the social environment contribute to the formation of attitudes and behaviors in academic contexts, including attitudes toward integrity and cheating.

To gain a deeper understanding of academic dishonesty, Bandura's Social Learning Theory (SLT) serves as a relevant theoretical framework [34]. According to this theory, individuals learn through social interactions and the observation of modeled behavior, particularly when such behaviors are observed in peers, especially when these actions appear successful or do not lead to significant negative consequences [35, 36]. This indirect reinforcement, in the form of anticipated positive outcomes, enhances students' self-efficacy, thereby increasing the likelihood of imitating similar behavior [37]. Furthermore, factors such as social norms, reinforcement, and cognitive processes—including rationalization—play a significant role in explaining the persistence of academic dishonesty. Therefore, it is crucial to assess how the social learning environment contributes to either reinforcing or mitigating cheating behavior. This study seeks to explore the differences based on semester and gender while also identifying the factors that contributed to the emergence of such behavior in academic settings.

2- Method

2-1- Research Design

This study employed a comparative design within a mixed-methods framework, utilizing an explanatory sequential approach (see Figure 1). The study commenced with the collection and analysis of quantitative data to identify differences in academic dishonesty between groups. These quantitative results then provided the foundation for qualitative data collection and analysis, aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of the factors that explain these differences. The integration of both analyses offered a comprehensive view of the patterns and causes of academic dishonesty, which can inform the development of effective prevention strategies by institutions and faculty. Specifically, the mixed-methods research procedure followed these steps: (1) quantitative data collection, (2) quantitative data analysis, (3) connecting quantitative and qualitative phases, (4) qualitative data collection, (5) qualitative data analysis, and (6) integration of the quantitative and qualitative results [38, 39].

Quantitative data collection	Quantitative data analysis	Connecting quantitative and qualitative phases	Qualitative data collection	Qualitative data analysis	Integration of the quantitative and qualitative results
• The quantitative dataset contains students' academic dishonesty scores (ADS). • Respondent profiles include gender, semester, and institutional background. • Raw ADS data for statistical analysis.	• Results of descriptive and statistics inferential. • Findings on differences in academic dishonesty levels based on semester and gender. • Empirical basis for designing the qualitative phase.	• List of selected qualitative participants. • Semi-structured interview guide based on quantitative findings. • Conceptual bridge between quantitative and qualitative data.	• In-depth interview data (verbatim transcripts). • Narratives of students' experiences, perceptions, and perspectives regarding academic dishonesty.	• Qualitative themes and subthemes (e.g., academic pressure, peer influence, weak supervision). • Conceptual model of academic dishonesty among undergraduate students.	• Holistic understanding of students' academic dishonesty. • Validation and deepening of quantitative findings. • Policy recommendations and interventions to strengthen academic integrity.

Figure 1. Research procedure (explanatory sequential design)

The explanatory sequential design is well-suited to this study, as it facilitates the sequential integration of quantitative and qualitative data. The study begins with the collection of quantitative data, which provides an overview of the prevalence and variations in academic dishonesty, including differences by gender and semester. This is followed by the collection of qualitative data to explore the underlying reasons and social or psychological factors that drive students to cheat. While quantitative data reveal the patterns of academic dishonesty across different variables, qualitative data are necessary to understand the context behind these patterns, such as the influence of social norms, academic pressure, or personal factors that cannot be captured through statistical analysis alone. This approach provides a more comprehensive and contextual understanding of the phenomenon of academic dishonesty.

In this comparative study, the researchers examined variations in academic dishonesty among college students, focusing on differences between semesters (e.g., semesters II-X) and gender. By comparing these two factors, this study offers a clearer understanding of the factors influencing and shaping academic dishonesty levels among undergraduate students. The results of both the quantitative and qualitative analyses will provide a foundation for educational institutions and faculty to develop more effective strategies to address academic dishonesty.

2-2- Quantitative Data Collection

This study sample consisted of 405 students, including 127 males (M±SD = 21.6±3.4) and 278 females (M±SD = 24.0±2.1). Respondents were distributed across various semesters: Semester II (34.8%, n = 141), Semester IV (24.4%, n = 99), Semester VI (14.8%, n = 60), Semester VIII (19.5%, n = 79), and Semester X (6.4%, n = 26). Sample selection was conducted using a simple random sampling technique, ensuring each student had an equal chance of being selected, with the process being purely random [40, 41]. Although there was an imbalance in the distribution of respondents across semesters, the study design effectively addressed this issue. The use of fair sampling methods, combined with appropriate statistical analysis and the integration of both quantitative and qualitative data, ensures the validity, robustness, and representativeness of the findings. This mixed approach allows researchers to derive meaningful insights from uneven data and provides a comprehensive understanding of the causes and patterns of academic dishonesty among students.

The samples came from various faculties, including the Faculty of Economics, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Pharmacy, Faculty of Social and Computer Sciences, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of

Engineering, Faculty of Theology and so on which are spread across various universities in Indonesia, including Universitas Abulyatama (Nangroeh Aceh Darussalam Province), Universitas Pattimura, Akademi Maritim Maluku, STIKES Maluku Husada (Maluku Province), Universitas Bali Dwipa (Bali Province), Universitas Katolik Darma Cendika (East Java Province), Universitas Negeri Padang, Universitas Dharma Andalas (West Sumatra Province), Universitas Siliwangi, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sukabumi (West Java Province), Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana, Universitas Selamat Sri, Politeknik Negeri Semarang, Institut Teknologi dan Bisnis Semarang (Central Java Province), STIKES Yarsi Pontianak (West Kalimantan Province), Universitas Nusa Cendana, Universitas Kristen Artha Wacana, STIKES Maranatha Kupang (East Nusa Tenggara Province), Universitas Hasanuddin, Universitas Kristen Indonesia Toraja (South Sulawesi Province), Sekolah Tinggi Olahraga dan Kesehatan (STOK) Bina Guna, Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Kesehatan (STIKES) Santa Elisabeth Medan (North Sumatra Province).

Data on academic dishonesty were collected using the Academic Dishonesty Scale (ADS) developed by Bashir & Bala [42]. This scale was chosen due to its established content validity (Aiken) and construct validity, which was tested through Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analysis on a sample of 900 undergraduate students in India (51.1% male; 48.9% female). Additionally, the ADS has a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.831, which is considered excellent [43]. To ensure the instrument's relevance in Indonesia, a cross-cultural adaptation process was carried out. This process involved translating the scale into Indonesian, with a focus on the local context rather than a literal translation. Language experts, familiar with the nuances of Indonesian, and content experts, knowledgeable about the meaning of each item in the scale, collaborated to ensure that terminology and sentence structure aligned with the Indonesian cultural context. Adjustments to the social context were also made to ensure that the items remained relevant to local norms and values. Finally, a pilot test was conducted to ensure the instrument's clarity and its ability to accurately measure academic dishonesty behavior.

There are six indicators in the ADS. The first indicator, cheating in examinations, has five items (1-5), including "I use prohibited things like hidden notes, calculators, and other electronic devices during examination." The second indicator, plagiarism, has four items (6-9), including "I use online resources in my personal educational assignment/project without citing the author." The third indicator, outside help, has four items (10-13), including "I use unfair means to obtain information about the content of the test before it was given." The fourth indicator, prior cheating, has five items (14-16), including "I interchange my allotted seat near an efficient student to get a better grade in the examination." The fifth indicator, falsification, has three items (17-19), including "I submit the assignment in my name after getting it prepared by my friends." The sixth indicator, lying about academic assignments, has four items (20-23), including "Before the exam, I pay someone to write a paper/homework for me." The researcher distributed a Google form (ADS online) to respondents, who responded on a five-point Likert scale (always-never).

2-3- Quantitative Data Analysis

Academic dishonesty (AD) data were analyzed descriptively (frequency, mean, standard deviation) and non-parametric statistical tests (data groups were not normally distributed). For the first hypothesis test, the researcher used the Kruskal-Wallis test to examine differences in respondents' AD scores across semesters II, IV, VI, VIII, and X. For the second hypothesis test, the researcher used the Mann-Whitney test to examine differences in respondents' AD scores by gender. The decision to test the hypothesis was based on the asymptotic significance value; if <0.05, then there is a significant difference between the sample groups. The analysis process used Google forms, Microsoft Excel, and SPSS version 29.

2-4- Connecting Quantitative and Qualitative Phases

After completing the quantitative data analysis, this research entered the connecting phase, which links the quantitative and qualitative phases in an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. The purpose of this phase is to bridge the quantitative findings with the qualitative data collection process so that both phases complement each other and form a more complete and in-depth understanding of the problem of student academic dishonesty.

Based on a quantitative analysis using the Academic Dishonesty Scale (ADS), differences in academic dishonesty levels were found by gender and study program. These findings served as the basis for the qualitative phase design. The researchers then purposively selected interview participants, selecting students with high and low academic dishonesty scores from each category.

Furthermore, the quantitative results served as the basis for developing an interview guide. Questions were designed to delve deeper into factors that may influence students' academic dishonesty, including academic pressure, learning motivation, campus social norms, the role of lecturers in supervising and instilling values of academic integrity, and students' perceptions of academic honesty. Thus, the qualitative data obtained later can provide a more in-depth explanation of the quantitative findings, particularly the reasons behind differences in levels of academic dishonesty among undergraduate student groups.

2-5- Qualitative Data Collection

This phase aimed to delve deeper into the factors underlying the quantitative findings, particularly those related to differences in academic dishonesty levels among undergraduate students based on gender. The qualitative data collection technique used in this study was semi-structured interviews. The interview guide was developed based on the quantitative findings and focused on exploring students' experiences, perspectives, and perceptions of academic dishonesty behavior in the university environment.

Seven interview participants were purposively selected from the quantitative analysis, with consideration given to variations in academic dishonesty scores (high and low) and gender representation. The number of six participants was determined based on the principle of data saturation, which occurs when information obtained becomes repetitive and no longer yields meaningful new findings. This ensured that the collected data were sufficient to describe the phenomenon under study without requiring excessive participant numbers.

Participants were three male and four female students from various undergraduate programs, including accounting, tax accounting, and management. They were R1 (female/21 years old), R2 (female/20 years old), R3 (male/19 years old), R4 (female/19 years old), R5 (male/20 years old), R6 (male/20 years old), and R7 (female/22 years old). This selection was made to ensure that the qualitative data obtained could provide a more comprehensive explanation of the variations observed in the quantitative data. Interviews were conducted in person with a flexible approach, but still referring to a pre-compiled list of questions.

Table 1. Research question blueprints

No.	Indicator	Questions	Goal
1	Cheating in examination	a. Tell me the reasons behind actions such as giving or receiving help during exams, using prohibited notes/tools, or collaborating with friends to get better grades?	Exploring internal motivation, social pressure, risk perception, and situational factors
		b. Why do you think these types of behaviors are more common in you than in the opposite sex?	Exploring gender, social values, competitive culture, and moral perspectives on academic honesty
2	Plagiarism	a. What reasons or considerations might lead you to copy or modify scientific writing, summaries, or information from other sources without citing the source in your academic assignments?	Exploring motivational factors, academic pressure, perceptions of plagiarism, and ethical writing awareness
		b. Why do you think this type of behavior might be more common in you than in the opposite sex? What factors most influence this difference, such as learning styles, self-confidence, or views on academic integrity?	Exploring gender, social values, and perceptions of academic responsibility
3	Outside help	a. Describe an experience or reason that led you to seek an illegitimate advantage, such as asking for help on an assignment that was supposed to be individual, or looking up questions before an exam, and the circumstances that facilitated such behavior.	Exploring academic/family pressure, access to resources/networks, perceived risk/punishment, perceived benefits, and group norms.
		b. Why do you think this illegitimate advantage behavior occurs more or less frequently in you than in the opposite sex? Which factors, such as gender socialization, risk propensity, friendship networks, or response to sanctions, play the most significant role?	Exploring concrete examples, differences in motivation/strategies, the role of facilities/positions, and effective solutions according to respondents.
4	Prior cheating	a. Can you explain the reasons or situations that led you to prepare notes at the exam center, switch seats, or even encourage another student to cheat before the exam?	Exploring personal motivation, value pressure, coping strategies, self-confidence, or a culture that normalizes cheating.
		b. Why do you think such behavior might be more common in you than in the opposite sex? What factors are most influential, such as risk-taking, peer solidarity, or how you deal with academic pressure?	Exploring differences in communication styles, group influence, and moral perceptions between male and female.
5	Falsification	a. Describe the reasons or circumstances that led you to hand over tasks created by others or to hand over the same task repeatedly. Who was involved, what were the perceived benefits, and what situations facilitated the action?	Exploring value/family pressure, access/competition for resources, social relationships, and anticipated consequences.
		b. Why do you think such behavior occurs more frequently in you than in the opposite sex? Which factors play the most important role, such as social norms, competitive strategies, sense of responsibility, or perceptions of risk and sanctions, and what examples of these might be given?	Exploring differences in motivation, the role of peer networks, and effective solutions according to respondents.
6	Lying about academic assignments	a. Can you describe a reason or situation that led you to give false excuses or seek dishonest means to gain extra time on a project or exam?	Explores academic pressure, time management, value motivation, fear of failure, competitive culture, or the perception that one's actions are "normal."
		b. Why do you think this type of behavior is more common in you than in the opposite sex? What factors are most influential, such as sense of responsibility, self-confidence, social pressure, or risk-taking tendencies?	Explores differences in coping strategies for academic stress, gender norms, and views on academic integrity.

2-6- Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis in this study was conducted using a thematic analysis approach, following six systematic stages adapted from Naeem et al. [44]. This approach was chosen because it provided a clear analytical structure and enabled researchers to develop a conceptual model based on the empirical data obtained from the interviews. The analysis was conducted using NVivo 15 to facilitate data organization and coding.

The first stage involved transcription, familiarization with the data, and selection of quotations. All interviews were transcribed verbatim. Researchers read the transcripts thoroughly to gain a deeper understanding of the interview content

and began identifying key quotations related to the research focus: behaviors and factors influencing academic dishonesty among students. The second stage involved keyword selection. Researchers identified key terms, phrases, or expressions that frequently appeared or were deemed relevant to the theme of academic honesty, such as "task pressure," "peers," "indecisive lecturers," or "not wanting to fail." These keywords served as the basis for the coding process.

The third stage involved coding meaningful data segments. Data pieces with similar meaning or context are assigned codes that reflect their content. For example, quotes related to reasons for academic dishonesty are coded as academic pressure, lack of supervision, or peer influence. The fourth stage is theme development, which involves grouping codes with similarities or specific relationships into initial themes. These themes are then analyzed in more depth to identify emerging connections, differences, and patterns among participants, such as instrumental motivation, academic social environment, or perceptions of academic integrity.

The fifth stage is conceptualization, which involves interpreting keywords, codes, and themes. This stage involves interpreting how the relationships between these themes and codes shape a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study, namely, the causal factors and dynamics of academic dishonesty among undergraduate students. The final stage is the development of a conceptual model, which involves formulating a conceptual overview of the thematic analysis results as relationships between themes. This conceptual model then serves as a framework for understanding academic dishonesty, including how individual, social, and institutional factors interact to shape it. Through this approach, qualitative data analysis not only yields descriptive themes but also builds a deeper theoretical understanding of the causes and dynamics of differences in academic dishonesty among undergraduate students.

2-7- Integration of the Quantitative and Qualitative Results

The integration phase is a crucial part of an explanatory sequential mixed methods design because it serves to comprehensively combine and interpret the results from both research phases, quantitative and qualitative. The primary objective of this phase is to identify how qualitative findings can explain, strengthen, or even expand the understanding of previously obtained quantitative results.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings yields a more holistic understanding of student academic dishonesty. This integration not only strengthens the validity of the findings but also provides practical implications for higher education institutions in designing more effective interventions, such as strengthening a culture of academic integrity, improving oversight of learning evaluations, and fostering student character development to foster greater ethical awareness in academic contexts.

In addition, the quantitative results served as a foundation for developing an interview guide. The questions were designed to explore factors that may influence students' academic dishonesty behavior, including academic pressure, learning motivation, campus social norms, the role of lecturers in supervising and instilling academic integrity values, and students' perceptions of academic honesty. Consequently, the qualitative data gathered in the subsequent phase will provide a deeper understanding of the quantitative findings, particularly in relation to underlying reasons for variations in academic dishonesty levels across different groups of undergraduate students.

3- Results and Discussion

3-1- Quantitative Result

3-1-1- Descriptive Data

A descriptive analysis of various forms of academic dishonesty behavior in Table 2 generally concludes that the majority *of* respondents demonstrate honest and ethical attitudes in their academic activities. It is reflected in the high frequency of "Never" responses to almost all statements, particularly for actions considered serious violations such as damaging library books (item 18), paying others to do assignments or exams (item 22), and obtaining exam information before the specified time (item 12). It indicates that extreme actions in the context of academic misconduct are still sporadic among respondents (see Figure 2).

However, some forms of misconduct are more common, particularly minor plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration. For example, statements about copying assignments with minor changes from other sources (item 7) and about using online sources without attribution (item 8) indicate that more than half of respondents admitted to having done so, though mostly at low frequency. Furthermore, there are behaviors considered ethically “grey”, such as asking others for help with individual assignments (item 11), which were engaged in by nearly 40% of respondents. Interestingly, there are also indications that some students attempt to obtain exam information before the exam (item 13), with approximately 20% admitting to having done so, including a small number who do so regularly. While these violations are not as common as other minor violations, they remain concerning because they indicate a tendency to seek an unfair advantage in the academic evaluation process.

Overall, while explicit dishonest behavior is low, more covert unethical practices remain quite common. Therefore, educational and preventive approaches are needed, such as increasing understanding of academic ethics, using plagiarism-detection technology, and reinforcing regulations on individual work and the use of information sources. With these steps, a culture of honesty and responsibility in academics can be continuously instilled and maintained.

Table 2. Frequency of academic dishonesty of respondents

No.	Statement	Responses (frequency)				
		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	During examination I use signals to fetch answers from my friends.	205	123	68	5	4
2	I use prohibited things like hidden notes, calculators and other electronic devices during examination.	273	79	39	6	8
3	I interchange my allotted book with other student to get better grade in examination.	371	20	9	5	0
4	During an examination, I solve answers on question paper and handover to my classmates.	290	63	41	6	5
5	During a test I try to copy from another student.	275	77	45	7	1
6	I copy summary of a story/poem/chapter from a textbook and claim it as completed by me.	256	70	51	23	5
7	For submitting assignment, I copy and change few sentences/lines/words and phrases from other sources.	146	99	101	45	14
8	I use online resources in my personal educational assignment/project without citing the author.	145	101	96	52	11
9	For personal comments I manipulate scientific information on internet and claim it as written by me.	288	56	50	8	3
10	I attempt to make special considerations to attain or getting favours i.e. (bribery).	348	26	16	9	6
11	In an individual work/assignment I take help from others to complete it.	226	101	60	13	5
12	I use unfair means to obtain information about the content of the test before it was given.	356	31	15	3	0
13	Before examination I try to know questions asked in paper.	264	50	38	29	24
14	I write expected answers on table/wall/hand/paper etc. in prior time.	324	47	22	7	5
15	I interchange my allotted seat near efficient student to get better grade in examination.	352	24	21	7	1
16	Before examination I encourage other classmates to do cheating.	356	33	12	3	1
17	I submit the assignment in my name after getting it prepared by my friends.	360	28	8	3	6
18	I damage library books so that classmates do not get required content.	402	1	2	0	0
19	In a course I submit the same educational assignment more than one time.	341	44	9	4	7
20	I give false explanations when I miss deadline of my educational project.	352	39	13	0	1
21	I buy a project/assignment/paper online and submit it as my individual effort.	361	29	8	4	3
22	Before exam I pay someone to write a paper/homework for me.	394	7	3	0	1
23	I provide false excuses to teacher, to gain extra time on project/assignment.	364	26	10	5	0

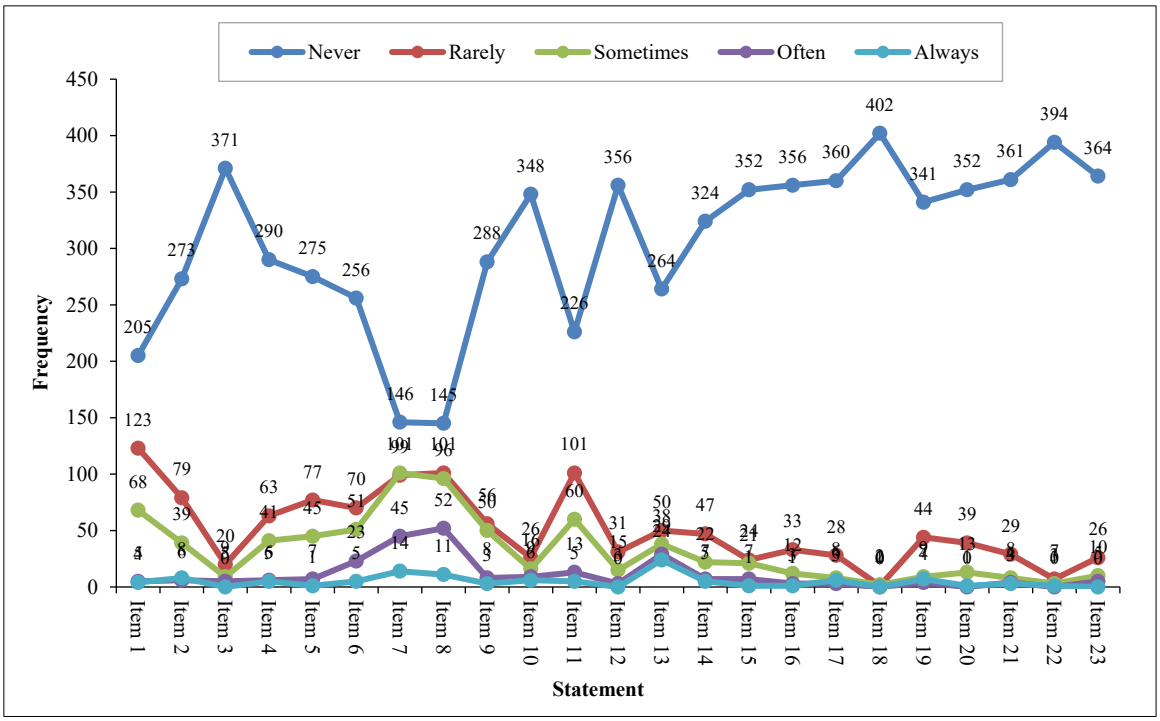

Figure 2. Frequency graph of respondents' responses to academic dishonesty

3-1-2-Academic Dishonesty: Semester Difference Test

In the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test, it was found that the significance value in all data groups was <0.05 (0.001-0.030) (see Table 3). This means that the distribution of data in the five data groups for the academic dishonesty variable is not normally distributed.

Table 3. Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test

	Group	Statistic	df	Significance
Academic dishonesty	Semester II	0.133	141	0.001
	Semester IV	0.118	99	0.002
	Semester VI	0.121	60	0.030
	Semester VIII	0.155	79	0.001
	Semester X	0.304	26	0.001

Given the non-normal distribution of data across the five sample groups (see Table 2), the researcher used the Kruskal-Wallis nonparametric test. The general conclusion confirmed that there was no significant difference in academic dishonesty among the five sample groups, as indicated by the asymptotic significance was >0.05 (0.084). It means that the academic dishonesty scores for students in the first, middle, and final semesters were all in the low category (<2.50) (see Table 4).

However, of the six indicators of academic dishonesty, the first indicator, "Cheating in Examination," showed a significant difference (0.012 <0.05), so that lecturers can pay attention to this finding when monitoring and controlling learning. Looking at the average scores, students in the fourth, sixth, and eighth semesters were more likely to engage in academic dishonesty. Some potential behaviors include using signals to get answers from friends, using hidden notes, calculators, and other electronic devices during exams, and exchanging textbooks with other students to get better grades. Solve the problems on the problem paper, hand them in to classmates, and try to copy from other colleagues.

Table 4. Kruskal-Wallis test

No.	Academic dishonesty indicator	Semester (M±SD)					Kruskal-Wallis	
		II	IV	VI	VIII	X	H	Asymp. sig.
1	Cheating in examination	1.37±0.75	1.44±0.78	1.58±0.79	1.57±0.91	1.35±0.79	12.794	0.012
2	Plagiarism	1.80±0.99	1.91±0.13	2.00±1.10	1.96±1.15	1.82±1.21	4.001	0.406
3	Outside help	1.42±0.92	1.45±0.88	1.59±1.00	1.55±0.99	1.34±0.76	4.726	0.317
4	Prior cheating	1.18±0.58	1.25±0.65	1.29±0.68	1.34±0.79	1.13±0.44	9.405	0.052
5	Falsification	1.13±0.51	1.14±0.57	1.16±0.53	1.23±0.75	1.06±0.25	1.781	0.776
6	Lying about academic assignments	1.08±0.36	1.12±0.42	1.13±0.46	1.25±0.69	1.13±0.42	6.591	0.154
	Total	**1.33±0.25**	**1.39±0.25**	**1.46±0.26**	**1.48±0.17**	**1.30±0.35**	**8.201**	**0.084**

3-1-3-Academic Dishonesty: Gender Difference Test

In the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test, it was found that the significance. The value in the male data group was 0.001, and in the female data group was 0.001, both of which had values <0.05 (see Table 5). Thus, the distributions of the academic dishonesty variable in both groups were not normal.

Table 5. Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test

	Gender	Statistic	df	Significance
Academic dishonesty	Male	0.126	127	0.001
	Female	0.128	278	0.001

In general, the nonparametric Mann-Whitney test showed significant differences between the gender groups (male and female), with an asymptotic significance <0.05 (0.014) (see Table 6). Detailed differences in academic dishonesty between sample groups only occurred in the first indicator, "Cheating in exams" (asymptotic significance 0.026), the third indicator, "Outside help" (asymptotic significance 0.014), the fifth indicator, "Falsification" (asymptotic significance 0.021), and the sixth indicator, "Lying about academic assignments" (asymptotic significance 0.048). The data also show that male still have higher academic dishonesty problems than female. This justification is confirmed by the mean academic dishonesty score for male = 1.46, 0.11 greater than that for female (1.36).

Table 6. Mann-Whitney test

No.	Academic dishonesty indicator	Gender (M±SD)		Mann-Whitney	
		Male	Female	Z	Asymp. sig.
1	Cheating in examination	1.53±0.81	1.42±0.79	-2.219	0.026
2	Plagiarism	2.02±1.17	1.83±1.05	-1.826	0.068
3	Outside help	1.58±1.01	1.43±0.89	-2.452	0.014
4	Prior cheating	1.27±0.69	1.23±0.63	-5.528	0.597
5	Falsification	1.19±0.57	1.13±0.57	-2.314	0.021
6	Lying about academic assignments	1.20±0.61	1.10±0.40	-1.979	0.048
	Total	**1.46±0.24**	**1.36±0.23**	**-2.470**	**0.014**

This conclusion does not apply to two indicators of academic dishonesty, namely the second indicator, "Plagiarism" (0.068), and the indicator "Prior cheating" (0.597). More specifically, the "Plagiarism" indicator had the highest average value among the other academic dishonesty indicators. Therefore, plagiarism is the most common form of academic dishonesty among students, both male and female. Plagiarism cases often involve students quoting from online sources without citing the source, copying summaries from textbooks and claiming them as their own assignments, and copying and changing several sentences/lines/words, or phrases from other sources. In addition, students also manipulate scientific information on the internet and claim it unilaterally. Thus, with the increase in student project assignments, lecturers must implement a strict evaluation, monitoring, and verification system as an external intervention to overcome students' culture of plagiarism.

To assess the magnitude of the effect and the practical significance of the difference, a Cohen's d test was conducted. The results indicated a Cohen's d of 0.426 (see Figure 3), which falls within the moderate range [45]. This suggests a moderate difference in academic dishonesty behavior between male and female, highlighting that gender plays a significant role in influencing one's propensity to engage in academic dishonesty.

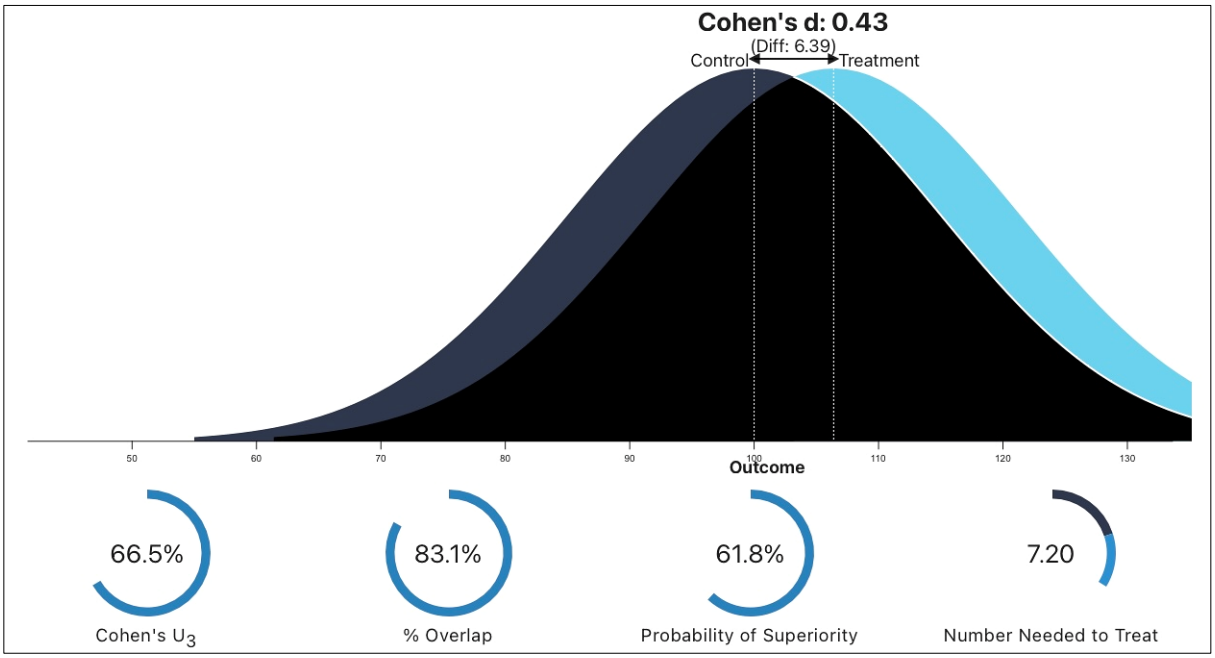

Figure 3. Cohens'd test curve

3-2- Qualitative Study

This research identified seven key themes that drive academic dishonesty among college students. Most students feel burdened by the pressure to achieve high grades and fear failure, leading them to seek quick fixes to achieve their desired results. Inadequate study preparation and poor time management exacerbate this situation, prompting students to take shortcuts, especially during exams or when assignments pile up. Furthermore, the influence of the social environment is significant, where permissive friendships often make cheating acceptable. Group solidarity is often used as an excuse to help each other in unethical ways (see Figure 4).

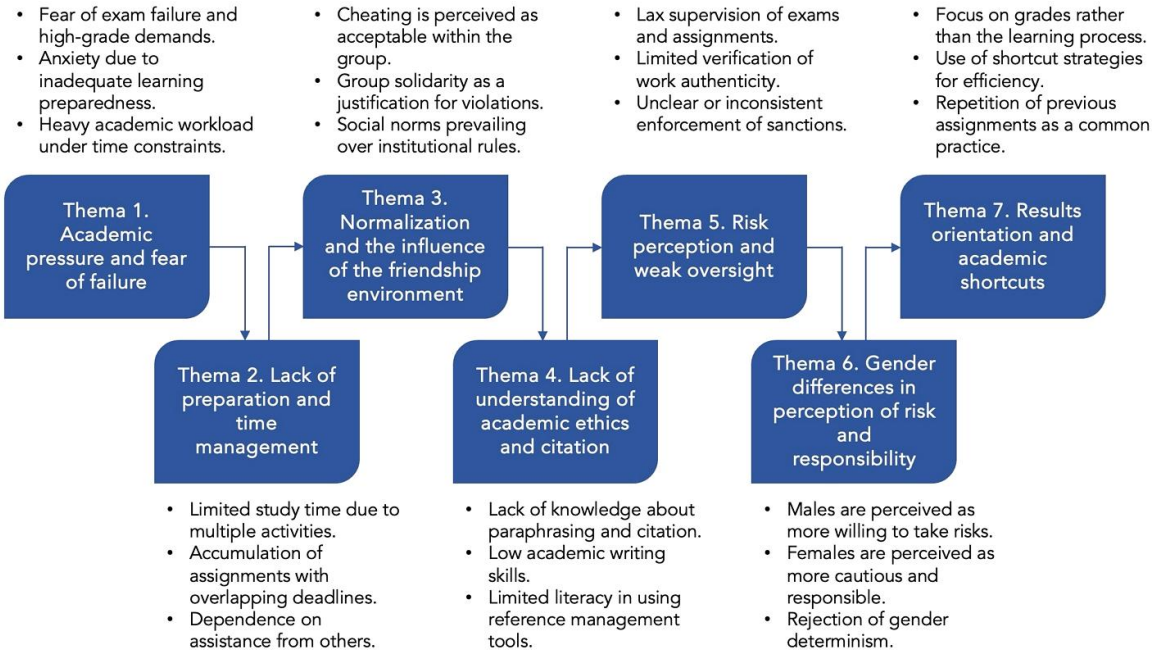

Figure 4. Thematic determinant factors of student academic cheating

This phenomenon is further exacerbated by a lack of understanding of academic ethics and proper citation practices, leading to plagiarism that occurs unconsciously or without malicious intent. Lack of supervision and low perception of risk also facilitate cheating. Although gender appears to influence courage and responsibility, situational pressures dominate in influencing this behavior. Finally, students' focus on results and shortcuts often leads to the neglect of the actual learning process. These themes provide a more in-depth understanding of the factors that trigger academic dishonesty.

3-2-1-Academic Pressure and Fear of Failure

Academic pressure and fear of failure are among the main factors driving students to commit academic dishonesty, especially during exams. Many students feel pressured by the demands of high grades and the risk of failure, leading them to seek shortcuts to reduce that risk. One student revealed, "The fear of failure and the pressure to get high grades tempt me to ask or give help to friends" (R1/female/21 years old). It demonstrates that the psychological pressure of academic goals can influence students' decision-making, even leading them to break rules to maintain their grades.

Furthermore, exam unpreparedness is also a significant trigger. Students who do not have time to study or who face difficult questions tend to copy or follow their friends to keep up. One student explained, "I'm afraid of getting a bad grade, haven't had time to study, or feel the questions are too difficult, so I end up following my friends" (R6/male/20 years old). This situation demonstrates that anxiety and academic pressure can reduce students' ability to approach exams independently and honestly. Another factor exacerbating the situation is the sheer amount of material they have to study in a limited time. Furthermore, R3 (male, 19 years old) stated, "There's a lot of exam material, not enough time to prepare, so some people take shortcuts," confirming that ineffective time management increases the likelihood of dishonest behavior.

Overall, academic pressure and fear of failure indicate that the psychological context and educational demands significantly influence student behavior. Rather than training them to improve their preparation, pressure pushes students to resort to quick strategies to maintain their grades, even if those strategies violate academic integrity principles. Therefore, educational institutions must provide academic and psychological support, including realistic study load management, effective study strategies, and an understanding that an honest learning process is more important than the final result. This approach is expected to reduce academic dishonesty and foster a culture of responsible learning.

3-2-2-Lack of Preparation and Time Management

Lack of preparation and time management are significant factors driving academic dishonesty among students. When students do not have enough time to prepare for exams or complete assignments, they tend to look for quick fixes to achieve their desired results. One student explained, "Lack of preparation before exams due to busy schedules means some people don't have time to study" (R4/female/19 years old). It demonstrates that limited time and the burden of academic and non-academic activities can trigger stress and lead to decisions to break rules to improve grades. However, if they were more proactive, the academic and non-academic workload could train them to be more predictive and analytical about their various tasks and responsibilities as students, leading to more productive time management and performance.

Furthermore, the accumulation of assignments is a significant trigger for dishonest behavior. Students feel overwhelmed when they have to complete multiple assignments simultaneously, leading them to resort to shortcuts to save time. One student revealed, "There are many assignments to submit simultaneously, so they choose quick fixes to ensure their grades are safe" (R6/male/20 years old). This situation confirms that poor time management not only impacts the quality of learning but also academic integrity. In fact, in emergencies, some students resort to asking for help or paying others to complete assignments, as R7 (female, 22 years old) stated: "When deadlines are pressing, and assignments are piling up, people ask for help or pay others." This situation continually worsens the higher education ecosystem and normalizes a problematic work culture going forward.

Overall, a lack of study preparation and poor time management are factors that encourage academic dishonesty. This issue emphasizes the importance of effective time management, study planning, and prioritizing academic activities. With thorough preparation and sound time management strategies, students will be better able to face assignments and exams without resorting to shortcuts that harm academic integrity. This approach demonstrates that preventing dishonest behavior is not only a matter of supervision but also of education, through the development of practical study skills and good time management.

3-2-3-Normalization and the Influence of the Friendship Environment

The normalization of cheating and the influence of peer groups are important factors influencing students' academic behavior. When students are in a permissive environment, where cheating is considered normal, and there are no serious consequences for such destructive behavior, they tend to follow suit. One student stated, "If many of my friends around me do the same thing without consequences, it feels 'okay' to follow suit" (R2/female/20 years old). It suggests that perceptions of group norms influence students' attitudes toward academic misconduct. They develop the perception that there are different orientations to the destructive behavior of lecturers and students. However, if both parties agree on the various violations and their consequences, the problem will not persist.

Furthermore, solidarity within peer groups is often used as a justification for cheating. Students feel compelled to help each other so that all group members get good grades, as expressed by R1 (female/21 years old): "There's a drive to help each other so that everyone gets good grades." In practice, this solidarity can take the form of sharing assignment leaks, working together illicitly, or facilitating exams, which some students believe are part of the group culture. One student added, "The culture of solidarity in friendship groups encourages sharing leaks or working together" (R5/male/20 years old), confirming that the social environment can shape behavioral norms that deviate from academic integrity.

The normalization of cheating and the influence of peer groups indicate that social factors play a significant role in shaping students' academic behavior. Students prioritize their friendships over the values inherent in their peer group. When unethical behavior is considered normal within a group, students are more likely to follow suit, even if it violates the rules. Therefore, strengthening an academic culture that emphasizes integrity, awareness of consequences, and honesty requires consistent implementation. By creating an environment that upholds ethical norms, students will be encouraged to re-evaluate their actions, reduce cheating practices, and develop responsible academic behavior both individually and collectively.

3-2-4-Lack of Understanding of Academic Ethics and Citation

Amid advances in technology and information, a lack of understanding of academic ethics and citation practices is a key factor in student plagiarism. Many students plagiarize not out of malicious intent, but rather due to a lack of understanding of proper academic writing, including paraphrasing, citation, and referencing techniques (manually), and the use of reference applications such as Mendeley, Zotero, and others. For example, one student explained, "I don't understand academic writing techniques, so I copy and paste because I think the content is more important" (R3/male/19 years old). This statement indicates that students often focus on the content while neglecting the ethical aspects of writing due to a lack of understanding.

A similar phenomenon is also seen when students feel confused about writing citations or feel their writing skills are inadequate. One student revealed, "Sometimes I copy because I'm confused about how to write citations or feel my own

writing isn't good enough" (R4/female/19 years old). It indicates that low academic skills and writing confidence encourage students to take shortcuts, namely copying from other sources. Furthermore, some students believe that copying often appears to be plagiarism because they lack the understanding of how to process information from sources. As explained by R2 (female, 20 years old): "It looks like copying from another source because I don't know how to process it." This phenomenon underscores the importance of assessing students' basic writing skills before assigning academic writing assignments.

A lack of understanding of academic ethics and citation techniques significantly contributes to plagiarism in higher education. This issue highlights the need for stronger academic literacy training, including writing, paraphrasing, and proper citation. Based on this basic knowledge and understanding, students need to be trained to use application-based referencing systems to prevent various practices that violate academic integrity. By improving academic understanding and skills, students can compose original writing, respect intellectual property rights, and maintain academic integrity. This approach emphasizes that academic misconduct is often preventable and educational rather than purely intentional, thereby fostering a culture of responsible learning. Indeed, these two distinct sources of academic dishonesty require different approaches.

3-2-5-Risk Perception and Weak Oversight

Low risk perception and weak oversight are important factors driving students to commit academic misconduct. Students are more likely to violate rules when they feel the likelihood of being caught is low and the sanctions imposed are not strict. One student stated, "Less supervision makes it feel safe" (R1/female/21 years old), indicating that weaknesses in the oversight system can embolden students to commit violations. A similar situation arises in the context of assignment submission, where students feel they can exploit lecturers' weaknesses in checking sources or verifying the authenticity of assignments. For example, one student stated, "Lecturers rarely verify sources, so many people resubmit old assignments" (R6/male/20 years old). This situation indicates that weak academic control mechanisms encourage students to take shortcuts for efficiency and secure grades.

Furthermore, low risk perception makes students more willing to violate rules because they feel they can avoid consequences. One student stated, "If they feel they can avoid consequences, people are more willing to violate" (R5/male/20 years old). The decision to commit violations is often influenced by considerations of the likelihood of being caught and the level of punishment, rather than solely by motivation to learn or personal integrity. As a result, behaviors such as copying old assignments, cheating on exams, or manipulating grades become more likely when supervision is ineffective, and the perceived risk is low.

Overall, low perceived risk and weak supervision significantly contribute to the rise in academic misconduct among students. To reduce this behavior, strengthening oversight mechanisms and implementing consistent sanctions are necessary. With strict supervision and the risk of real consequences, students will be encouraged to comply more closely with academic regulations, thereby maintaining the integrity and quality of their education. This approach not only emphasizes preventing misconduct but also fosters students' awareness that the learning process is important, not just the final result or securing a grade.

3-2-6-Gender Differences in Perception of Risk and Responsibility

Most students observed gender-based differences in academic dishonesty, including risk-taking, levels of responsibility, and responses to sanctions. Some students argued that male students tended to be more willing to take risks when cheating, while female students were more cautious due to fear of consequences. One student expressed, "Male students tend to be more willing to take risks, while female students are more afraid of sanctions" (R1/female/21 years old). A similar view emerged regarding responsibility, with female students perceived as more cautious in maintaining academic integrity, as expressed by R7 (female/22 years old): "Female are usually more responsible and careful in maintaining academic integrity." This view demonstrates the perception that gender factors can influence academic behavior, particularly cheating, which is thought to be related to the psychological and social characteristics of each gender.

On the other hand, some students rejected this view and believed that gender is not a primary factor in cheating behavior. These students argued that certain conditions, such as academic pressure or pressing situations, can motivate anyone, regardless of gender, to cheat. One student stated, "I do not think there's a gender difference; anyone can do it if they are under pressure" (R2/female/20 years old). This statement emphasizes that context and individual motivation are more important determinants of cheating behavior than gender differences per se. Male and female have an equal opportunity to cheat when faced with pressure or urgency. It suggests that contextual factors, such as situational pressure, achievement demands, and individual motivation, play a more dominant role than gender identity itself.

Student perceptions regarding the relationship between gender and academic cheating varied. Some saw gender biases in risk-taking and academic responsibility, while others emphasized that cheating is more influenced by the situation and pressure, not gender. It suggests that efforts to prevent academic cheating need to consider individual

motivation, pressure, and awareness, rather than just gender stereotypes. A more comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon can help build a more equitable academic culture and strengthen integrity in educational environments. These findings reinforce the view that cheating behavior should be analyzed through a structural and psychological lens, rather than a biological one. Therefore, analysis should focus on the conditions that trigger cheating, such as academic or social pressure, and how individuals rationalize these actions.

3-2-7-Results Orientation and Academic Shortcuts

The phenomenon of results-oriented, academic shortcuts is increasingly evident among students, with the primary focus on grades and final results rather than the learning process itself. Many students choose instant strategies to complete assignments and exams for the sake of time efficiency, although this does not always reflect an immersive understanding of the material. One student stated, "The goal is to secure a grade without having to put in a lot of effort" (R6/male/20 years old), indicating their motivation is more about achieving grades (academic grades) than academic competence, making it difficult for them to transfer academic knowledge or learning experiences. Another student expressed a similar sentiment, stating, "The important thing is to submit assignments and get grades" (R7/female/22 years old). This statement emphasizes that academic success is measured by formal (ceremonial) achievements rather than by content or critical and reflective learning processes.

Furthermore, repeating old assignments is a common strategy to conserve energy, as students perceive the content as still relevant. One student explained, "I repeat old assignments because I feel the content is still relevant and I want to save energy" (R5/male/20 years old). This strategy demonstrates that even though students are aware of previously learned material, their motivation remains driven by time efficiency and guaranteed grades. This situation reflects a tendency toward outcome-oriented learning that ignores diverse learning experiences as a process for developing competency. The essence of learning experiences is change or improvement in competency, not the number of assignments submitted. Consequently, students may underdevelop critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills because the primary focus is on grades, rather than higher-order thinking and responsible integrity.

This outcome-oriented approach and academic shortcuts reflect a pragmatic and instrumental learning paradigm. Students tend to choose instant strategies to secure grades, ignoring the intrinsic value of the learning process itself, thus fostering a habit of autonomy in learning, responsibility in completing assignments, and integrity in evaluating their progress. It underscores the need to develop awareness of the importance of the learning process as a foundation for academic competency, so that students are not merely focused on grades but can also master knowledge in depth and take responsibility for their academic journey. Results achieved without the correct process are not ideal learning outcomes, because the results are a process of deepening competencies, and this must be born of a process with integrity.

3-3- Discussion

3-3-1-Sensitivity of Fraud Indicators to Situational Factors

The results of the study indicate that not all forms of academic dishonesty are equally influenced by situational factors. Quantitative data from the Kruskal-Wallis test revealed a significant difference between semesters in relation to cheating on examinations ($H = 12.794$; $p = 0.012$), while no significant differences were found for other forms of dishonesty, such as plagiarism, outside help, and falsification. These quantitative findings, which show significant semester differences, align with the fraud triangle theory, particularly its pressure and opportunity components [9]. Academic pressure, workload, and the low perceived risk of being caught are identified as the primary triggers for students to cheat on exams. Qualitative data further support these findings, highlighting that academic pressure to maintain their grades, particularly when unprepared for exams or faced with a large volume of material to study in a limited time, is a significant factor. This suggests a strong relationship between challenging academic conditions and students' decisions to cheat. In other words, cheating on exams is the type of academic dishonesty most influenced by situational factors compared to other forms of cheating.

These findings are consistent with previous research suggesting that lack of competence, time pressure, academic unpreparedness, high competition, and high-grade demands are key factors driving exam cheating [10, 46-48]. This aligns with Social Learning Theory (SLT), which posits that individuals learn by observing the behavior of others, especially when such behavior is rewarded. In academic contexts, students tend to imitate the cheating behavior of their peers, which enhances their outcome expectations and self-confidence [34, 37, 49-51]. Furthermore, these results corroborate the findings of Conaway & Wiesen [8], who demonstrated that exam cheating is more prevalent in stressful and competitive academic environments. Consequently, exam cheating can be viewed as a short-term adaptive response to situational pressures, rather than a reflection of individual character. In contrast, plagiarism in this study showed no significant differences based on semester or gender. This finding aligns with research by Minarcik & Bridges [10] and Riad [27], which highlighted that plagiarism is more influenced by low academic literacy and a lack of ethical understanding than by deliberate intentions to cheat. Thus, plagiarism is more structural and educational in nature, necessitating interventions that focus not only on monitoring but also strengthening learning around academic writing and scientific integrity.

3-3-2-The Role of Gender in Academic Cheating Behavior

The Mann-Whitney test results showed significant differences by gender across several indicators, including cheating in examinations ($p = 0.026$), outside help ($p = 0.014$), falsification ($p = 0.021$), and lying about academic assignments ($p = 0.048$). Male students tend to score higher on these indicators than their female counterparts, suggesting that they are more likely to engage in risks-taking behaviors related to academic dishonesty. This finding is consistent with the majority of previous studies reporting that males engage in academic cheating more frequently than females [18-21, 52]. However, in the indicators of plagiarism and prior cheating, gender differences were not significant, indicating that these behaviors are more influenced by educational factors or individual experiences than by gender characteristics. Qualitative data suggests that male are more willing to take risks and show greater permissiveness towards cheating behavior, a finding that aligns with the work of Witmer & Johansson [23], who reported that male students exhibit a higher tolerance for violations of academic ethics. In this context, gender not only functions as a demographic variable but is also related to differences in risk perception and social norms. However, the lack of significant differences in plagiarism and prior cheating indicators corroborates the findings of Şahin [53], who stated that not all forms of cheating are influenced by gender. These results are consistent with the findings of a study by Nketsiah et al. [54], which indicated that students' academic level did not significantly influence their reasons for plagiarizing. This phenomenon suggests that the influence of gender is context-dependent and pertains to specific types of cheating, rather than being a generalizable factor. Consequently, the findings of this study underscore the importance of exercising caution when making gender-based generalizations.

3-3-3-Psychological and Social Factors as Strong Predictors of Cheating

Qualitative findings confirm that academic pressure, anxiety about failure, and peer influence are strong predictors of academic dishonesty. These results are consistent with previous studies, which indicate that although cheating is frequently observed, many students choose to remain silent due to the normalization of such behavior within their social groups [12, 55]. Peer influence has the most significant impact on students' academic cheating behavior, where students are more likely to cheat when they see or believe that their peers are also cheating [56]. Group norms and solidarity within friendships influence student behavior, contributing to the acceptance of cheating in certain social context [14, 57]. A qualitative study by Zanetti & Butera [58] even revealed a chronology of collective cheating because students perceive that cheating together means working together, showing solidarity, helping each other, and supporting each other. This phenomenon explains several quantitative results, for example, the indicator of outside help, where male students are more likely to seek help from others. Academic pressure and exam anxiety encourage students to seek shortcuts, while peer influence can provide social justification for dishonest behavior. This supports the argument of Baran & Jonason [15] that a permissive social environment can diminish students' moral sensitivity to academic violations. Thus, cheating is influenced not only by individual factors but also by social dynamics (the normalization of cheating) that shape collective justifications. Therefore, the implementation of stringent academic integrity standards is crucial to ensure that knowledge is acquired honestly and ethically, prompting fairness among students, and enhancing public confidence in the quality of university education [59].

3-3-4-Results Orientation and Academic Shortcuts

Qualitative findings highlight the phenomenon of outcome orientation, where students focus more on grades and final results than on understanding the material. Immediate strategies, such as reusing previous assignments, copying peers' work, or seeking external assistance, are employed as means to secure favorable grades. It is consistent with several quantitative indicators, such as lying about academic assignments and outside help. When compared to the previous study by Winardi et al. [11], this finding is particularly relevant, as the high prevalence of academic dishonesty is correlated with an academic culture prioritize quantitative achievement. Outcome orientation decreases the quality of learning because students tend to ignore the learning process and competency development. However, not all outcome- or goal-oriented phenomena are correlated with academic cheating or negatively impact student competency. A meta-analysis study by Fritz et al. [60] found no correlation between achievement goals and academic dishonesty. Likewise, across various goal-setting theories and studies, outcome goal orientation can help students formulate performance goals and select process goals, thereby improving their competency and academic performance [61, 62]. These findings underscore the need for a paradigm shift in education, from a focus on value orientation to one centered on process orientation, where learning is viewed as a process of developing critical, creative, and problem-solving competencies. Behaviors such as copying assignments, repeating old assignments, and asking third parties for help reflect short-term survival strategies to maintain a GPA. The impact is a decline in the quality of learning and a weakening of the development of critical thinking competencies [28, 63]. Therefore, the findings of this study highlight the importance of shifting the educational paradigm toward a process-oriented approach to enhance the quality and depth of learning.

3-3-5-Risk Perception and Weak Oversight

Low risk perception and weak oversight mechanisms are important factors that encourage cheating behavior [64, 65]. Moreover, with the rapid development and use of artificial intelligence, which should be leveraged to enrich and

assess students' critical understanding, many students instead misuse it to engage in cheating and plagiarism [66, 67]. This is particularly in online exams, where students exploit weak supervision [68]. Their reasoning is simple: students feel safe cheating when supervision is not strict, or sanctions are unclear [14, 63]. This phenomenon accounts for the differences in behavior on indicators that are more situationally influenced, such as cheating in examinations and outside help. The finding that low risk perception and weak oversight encourage cheating aligns with the concept of opportunity in the cheating triangle [9]. When sanctions are unclear and oversight is lax, students feel safe committing violations, especially in situational forms of cheating, such as cheating on examinations and using outside help. These findings underscore the importance of strategies that integrate both educational and preventive approaches, specifically strengthening supervision, enforcing consistent sanctions, and fostering student awareness that the learning process is more valuable than mere grades. With increased consequences, the motivation to cheat will decrease. Although numerous studies suggest that students may hold ethical attitudes and be aware of the risks associated with cheating, they continue to engage in dishonesty behavior when the opportunity arises [25, 26]. Therefore, preventing academic dishonesty necessitates a comprehensive approach that includes not only strengthening oversight and sanctions, but also promoting education on academic integrity and fostering a healthy academic culture [8, 28].

4- Conclusion

This study revealed significant variations in students' academic cheating behavior, both by semester and gender. The analysis indicated that students in semesters II and VIII engaged in cheating less frequently than those in semesters IV and VI, which may reflect the greater susceptibility of students who are either at or nearing the end of their studies to academic pressure. However, no significant differences were observed in other forms of cheating, such as plagiarism and outside help, no significant differences, suggesting that these behaviors remain relatively consistent throughout the academic trajectory. In terms of gender, male students were more likely to cheat than female students, particularly on exams and assignments. Key factors contributing to academic dishonesty include pressure to achieve high grades, the influence of permissive peers, and a lack of understanding of academic ethics. To mitigate academic cheating, a more comprehensive approach is required, beginning with stricter supervision of exams and assignments, along with more intensive training on academic integrity. Counseling services and time management workshops are also crucial to help students manage academic stress. Moreover, clear and robust cheating control policies should be implemented, with particular attention to gender disparities to ensure fairness. Peer-assessment programs can serve as an effective preventative measure, as they promote students' appreciation for their peers' work and cultivate a sense of responsibility. Further research could explore the psychological and situational factors influencing cheating, as well as the impact of digital technology and cheating control policies, to develop more effective and sustainable strategies for preventing academic dishonesty.

5- Declarations

5-1- Author Contributions

Conceptualization, R.R., A.C., and D.C.U.; methodology, R.R., A.C., and D.C.U.; software, R.R.; validation, A.C. and D.C.U.; formal analysis, R.R.; investigation, R.R., A.C., and D.C.U.; resources, R.R.; data curation, R.R., A.C., and D.C.U.; writing—original draft preparation, R.R.; writing—review and editing, A.C. and D.C.U.; visualization, R.R.; supervision, R.R., A.C., and D.C.U.; project administration, R.R.; funding acquisition, R.R. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

5-2- Data Availability Statement

The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

5-3- Funding and Acknowledgments

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5-4- Institutional Review Board Statement

Not applicable.

5-5- Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

5-6- Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this manuscript. In addition, the ethical issues, including plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication and/or falsification, double publication and/or submission, and redundancies have been completely observed by the authors.

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