

# Awareness and Perceptions of Academic Integrity Policies Among University Students and Teachers: A Sociocultural Perspective

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## **Abstract**

*Academic integrity refers to a major guideline that enhances honesty, fairness, and accountability in teaching, learning, and research in institutions of higher learning. The growth of digital technologies, online education systems, and the convenient availability of information have raised concerns over the last few years regarding such issues as plagiarism, cheating, and unauthorized collaboration as the possible types of academic misconduct. Even though universities have included academic integrity policies to solve these problems, their success is highly influenced by the awareness and knowledge of students and the faculty. Incomplete knowledge about institutional guidelines can confuse and break academic ethics unwillingly. This paper examines the awareness of academic integrity policies among the students of the university and the members of the university faculty in Hyderabad. It also looks at how institutional communication and the sociocultural forces contribute to the academic behavior of students. The study has a descriptive cross-sectional design and will be based on a structured questionnaire where the researcher will gather a sample of participants on a stratified random basis. These data were examined with the help of the descriptive statistics and comparative analysis. The results show that members of the faculty tend to show more awareness of academic integrity policies compared to students. The findings also indicate that there is an existing perception gap between the students and the teachers about the extent to which the students understand academic ethics. The paper notes the necessity of tightening the institutional communication approach, ethics, and curriculum integration as a measure to ensure responsible academic practices.*

**Keywords:** *academic integrity, plagiarism awareness, higher education, institutional communication, academic ethics, student behavior.*

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## **I. Introduction**

Academic integrity is one of the central values that not only support the credibility and efficiency of the educational systems all over the world. It can be described as an obligation on the part of students, teachers and the academic institutions to maintain ethical standards in teaching, learning and research. Fundamentally, academic honesty fosters honesty, trust, fair play, respect and accountability in academic endeavors. These values help to make academic work authentic, creative, and fully representative of the efforts, originality, and recognition of the ideas and contribution of the other party. Academic dishonesty is a vital issue among universities worldwide due to the fact that it safeguards the integrity of the production of knowledge and the publicity of academic institutions. As integrity is maintained, degrees and research outputs can be preserved and be credible in society thus enhancing faith of people in the education systems.

Over the past several years, the digital technology has been evolving at an incredibly fast pace, and it has radically changed the academic climate. Students and researchers have been provided with new opportunities by online learning platforms, digital libraries, and easy access to a large amount of information. Nevertheless, the developments have also come with new challenges on keeping academic integrity. Students have readily access to online resources, paraphrasing tools, essay-writing platforms, and artificial intelligence that has facilitated easier access to information and unethical academic practices by the students. Remote learning has also increased in size, especially in the post-COVID-19 era, and has complicated the process of monitoring and assessment even more. Consequently, there has been growing concern among learning institutions across the globe over the way to ensure that academic integrity is maintained in the digital era and at the same time enjoy the benefits of technology.

Cheating in academics is one of the most endemic issues in institutions of higher learning. It is the actions that contravene the set academic norms and ethical standards. Academic misconduct is most often manifested through such types as plagiarism, test cheating, creation or falsification of data, and unauthorised collaboration. One of the most common types of misconduct that is reported and includes the presentation of ideas and words of another person as own without proper citation is known as plagiarism. Cheating can be done during examinations either by use of illegal material or communication or fabrication is where one invents some data or results in a research. These practices discourage the process of learning and devalue academic accomplishments. More significantly, academic dishonesty might have long term impacts because it might result in the deterioration of moral values among future practitioners who transfer the practices to the workplace.

Academic integrity in the context of India is an issue that has attracted a lot of significance with the rapid growth in higher education. The Indian universities currently have big diverse student population and may be of diverse educational and cultural backgrounds. There are quite a number of students who go into higher education without this background of having undergone any formal training on academic writing, citation habits or research ethics. This disorientation in early years may be a reason to form an incorrect view of what plagiarism or the best collaboration is. Also, the competitive academic world, stress to get good grades and the increasing demand to publish their research somehow conditions may foster unethical behavior. Universities thus have a two-fold task of ensuring that they implement academic integrity policies and training students on academic ethics at the same time.

The knowledge and awareness of institutional policies is very important in encouraging academic integrity. Most universities have policies that define regulations about plagiarism, cheating and research misconduct, however, the effectiveness of these policies in most cases lies on their ability to be communicated and comprehended by the students and members of the faculty. In case students do not know these policies, or they do not understand them to the end, they can commit unintentional wrongs. It is therefore necessary that academic integrity guidelines are clearly communicated by way of orientation programs, course syllabi, workshops and digital resources. By encouraging open dialogues and creating awareness of academic ethics, institutions also help to contribute to the creation of a culture of accountability and honesty among the academic community. Enhancement of policy awareness does not only work to deter misconduct but it also contributes to the broader objective of promoting responsible and ethical scholars.

## **II. Literature Review**

Recent review-based scholarship demonstrates that academic integrity has ceased being discussed as a limited question of plagiarism to a more inclusive question of how an institution is structured, what its culture is, how it is digitally literate, and how its assessment and decision-making processes are ethical. Recent systematic reviews pay a lot of attention to generative AI, yet they also establish that traditional misconducts like plagiarism, collusion, impersonation, and contract cheating remain occupied with new AI-enhanced activities. Overall, this general trend is consistent with the focus of your uploaded paper on policy awareness, teacher guidance, and institutional communication as key elements of establishing an ethical academic environment.

In a systematic literature review of the academic integrity in the era of AI, Balalle et al. (2025) claim that the generative AI has radically altered the essence of academic dishonesty as the production of ideas, the paraphrasing, summarizing, and answer-generating speed and invisibility have been faster and more invisible than previous copying. Their analysis demonstrates that AI is a threat, but it can also be a support resource in ethical learning provided that the institutions develop explicit guidelines on what can and cannot be done. The significance of this review is that it redefines the concept of academic integrity as a governance, teaching, and responsible technology use issue instead of a detection and punishment one.

Bittle and El-Gayar (2025) also continue this discussion by providing a systematic analysis of the concept of generative AI and academic integrity in tertiary education. Their review of literature in 2021-2024 concludes that GenAI influences student behaviour, assessment authenticity and instructor decision-making, and also introduces the risk of uncertainty about authorship, originality and transparency in work submitted. The review points out that institutions currently require more subtle academic integrity policies that define how AI can be used as brainstorming, editing, tutoring, or drafting since blanket prohibition is more and more challenging to implement and might not correspond to the actual classroom dynamics.

In a systematic review of ChatGPT in education, Garcia-Lopez et al. (2025) state that the technology has a pedagogical potential and a significant integrity threat. Their review mentions advantages like individual care and increased response time, but also describes the problem of ghost-writing, lack of profound learning, excessive dependence on machine-generated text and less confidence in traditional take-home tests. Regarding literature on academic integrity, the article is particularly handy since it demonstrates that the problem is no longer a matter of plagiarism in its literal sense; it is the re-appropriation of what constitutes original student work in the digitally mediated learning condition.

The FAITH project policy-oriented review and guidance document of 2025 suggests that policy frameworks in institutions should be brought to be clearer, more educative and updated more frequently. The instructions emphasize the use of an accessible language, procedures, training of students, training faculty, and coordination between policy and everyday teaching practice. This is very applicable to the research of awareness since it indicates that the lack of student knowledge is not always a personal issue but a communication and design loss in the organization itself.

Sozon et al. (2024) examine cheating and plagiarism in universities and colleges and conclude that this misconduct is a result of a complex of individual, social, cultural, institutional, and technological factors. Their article is particularly pertinent to your subject matter since it does confirm that academic dishonesty can no longer be attributed by the morality of the students; it is as well associated with the need to succeed in school, poor knowledge of the academic regulations, inefficient honor codes, and the increasing abuse of computer technologies. This renders the sociocultural explanation significant, particularly within the setting in which the family requirements, peer influence, competition, and inequalities in an academic preparation influence student conduct.

In a conceptual review of academic integrity and academic misconduct, Harrad et al. (2024) claim that more frequently than not universities tend to conceptualize integrity in a very limited manner, in disciplinary terms and misconduct processes. This is reflected in their work that demonstrates that the field is shifting to a more holistic concept where integrity involves the assessment design, student support, staff consistency, fairness and belonging. This review is practical since it assists in understanding why policy awareness is a point that should be considered: once academic integrity is presented to students as a warning or punishment, the chances of them making it a part of scholarly identity and ethical learning are significantly lower. In a review of research on the topic of academic integrity in pre-service teacher education, Adillón et al. (2024) emphasize that teachers and teacher educators have a special role to play in modeling ethical behavior. As revealed in the review, the future teachers should not merely possess information about the rules of plagiarism but also have a professional ethos orientation as they will eventually pass on principles of integrity, equity and authorship to their future students. This literature reinforces the thesis statement that teachers cannot be seen as simply rule enforcers; they can be viewed as cultural mediators whose classroom behaviors, descriptions, and answers to misbehavior determine the way students conceptualize integrity.

The two articles by De Maio and Dixon (2022) who conducted a review of three decades of research on academic integrity in Australasia and Stoetz and Eaton (2022), who evaluated the policy of academic integrity in the publicly funded universities of Canada, give a solid base on which the policy and institutional analysis can be performed. De Maio and Dixon demonstrate that studies have shifted in recent years beyond individual student cheating studies to institution-wide studies that incorporate students, faculty and procedures. Stoetz and Eaton demonstrate that several institutional policies are still punitive in their tone and not educative enough, particularly of the newly developed types of misconduct like contract cheating. Collectively, these reviews affirm the argument that academic integrity in relation to effectiveness requires proper communication of policies, student-focused education, and the continued integration of these policies in institutions.

In theoretical terms, the literature can be explained in three supplementary prisms. The Anomie Theory by Merton can be used to understand why students facing a high level of achievement pressure have to use illegal measures in the cases when the legal ways are challenging or unavailable. The Moral Development Theory developed by Kohlberg can be applied when explaining why some students have different ethical reasoning particularly why the avoidance of punishment is not the same as finding truth in honesty as a moral value. The social Learning theory by Bandura describes the normalization of honest or dishonest academic behaviour as influenced by the peers, classroom culture and teacher modeling. Collectively, the frameworks offer a powerful conceptual framework to consider the role of institutional circumstances, sociocultural pressures, and digital technologies in promoting awareness and misconduct of academic integrity in higher education.

### **III. Research Gap**

Despite the fact that much of the literature in higher education has focused on academic integrity, there are a number of gaps that are significant in the literature. The literature of the past is primarily concerned with the popularity of such academic misconducts as plagiarism and cheating, whereas the relatively less number of studies addresses the issue of awareness and knowledge of the academic integrity policies, both among the students and teachers. Furthermore, a number of studies examine the behavior of students without contrasting it with that of the faculty, which creates a gap in the awareness gap between students and teachers. Sociocultural determinants like peer influence, academic pressure and family expectations that determine the attitudes towards academic ethics have also been given limited attention. Moreover, the increasing role of digital technologies, such as online learning platforms and AI tools used to write papers, has not been adequately investigated in terms of policy awareness and ethical decision-making. The studies in the Indian higher education environment,

especially in cities like Hyderabad, are scanty. This research, hence, fills these gaps by covering the awareness of academic integrity, institutional communication practices, and the sociocultural factors that have impact on the behavior of students.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual model of the current research illustrates that there are correlations between institutional communication, awareness of academic integrity, sociocultural factors, and student academic behavior. Academic integrity in higher education institutions cannot be determined by one factor but rather a compilation of institutional practices and social influences at large that influence the cognition and application of ethical standards among students in academic work.

Institutional communication will be a key stakeholder in ensuring that there is awareness of academic integrity among students. Communicating academic integrity policies is a common practice in universities, which usually take place in the form of orientation programs, institutional policy documents, course syllabi, faculty guidance, workshops, and digital learning platforms. These communication channels are useful in exposing students to relevant issues, including plagiarism, cheating, falsification of information, referencing conventions, and viable academic co-operation. With institutional policies clearly articulated and constantly reinforced via the teaching practices, students have a higher chance of gaining a clear idea of academic integrity policies and their ramifications following the breach thereof. Good communication is thus the basis of creating awareness and promoting responsible conduct in academics.

The awareness of academic integrity is the consciousness of academic standards and institutional rules that the students have. This involves being aware of policies in the university, how to detect various types of academic misconduct, and having confidence in using appropriate citation and referencing practices. Those students with a greater degree of awareness tend to have a greater capacity to prevent inadvertent misconduct and to practice honest scholarly behavior. As a mediating variable, awareness therefore plays a critical role in linking the communication in an institution with the real academic behaviour.

Yet, the sociocultural factors which do not only exist within the institution can also affect academic behavior of students. Students can be influenced by their peers, family pressures, academic competition, risk of failing academically, and the general cultural beliefs about achievement and performance attitudes to make decisions on academic honesty. Students can be knowledgeable about the academic integrity policies, and they perform dishonest actions in most instances because of pressures or because of following the behavior of the peers. This environment is also predetermined by the growing influence of digital technologies and online sources since the accessibility of information and AI-based writing tools can lead to a new source of temptations or misunderstandings regarding the acceptable academic practices.

In this context, institutional communication interacts with sociocultural pressures in order to determine student academic behavior. Although institutional communication aims to ensure ethical values and policy awareness, sociocultural forces can support or undermine these institutional messages. The faculty and teachers have a strong mediating role in this process since they would be interpreting policies, communicating expectations and modeling ethical behavior in the classroom. As a result of their guidance and enforcement practices, there are a lot of differences in how the students observe and react to academic integrity policies.

Therefore, the conceptual framework is that, when there is good institutional communication, it leads to the awareness of academic integrity, which, in turn, promotes ethical conduct of the students. Simultaneously, this relation can be altered by sociocultural factors that can endorse or undermine ethical academic behaviors. Through these interplaying factors, the research is expected to gain an improved insight into the development of awareness of academic integrity policies and how it eventually impacts on student misconduct in a higher education context.

### **Research Objectives**

The study is guided by the following objectives:

1. To determine how aware the academic integrity policies are among university students.
2. To analyze the attitudes of the faculty on the awareness and knowledge of the policy on academic integrity among students.
3. To examine the efficiency of the institutional communication strategies that are employed to facilitate academic integrity.
4. To determine the significant channels by which students and teachers get to know about the rules of obtaining academic integrity.
5. To investigate the sociocultural issues that represent attitudes and academic performance of students in terms of their ethical consideration.
6. To explore policy-policy discrepancy in institutions of higher learning.

7.To propose steps towards enhancement of awareness, communication, ethical academic practices in universities.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions in the study are as follows:

- 1.How do students understand academic integrity policies in their colleges?
- 2.What is the awareness and understanding of academic integrity amongst the students in the eyes of teachers?
- 3.How do academic integrity policies reach the key institutional channels?
- 4.To what extent do orientation programs, classroom discussions, and university documents have effectiveness in offering awareness of academic integrity?
- 5.What are the sociocultural dynamics that shape the attitude of students towards academic dishonesty and academic honesty?
- 6.Is there a large difference between the student self-reported awareness and the faculty perceptions of student awareness?
- 7.What is the combined effect of awareness, communication and sociocultural influences on the academic behavior of students?

### **Research Methodology**

The research will assume a quantitative survey-based research design to investigate the degree to which students and faculty members in the university are aware of academic integrity policies. The research design aims at investigating how far policy awareness, academic honesty perception and institutional and sociocultural variables impact on ethical academic practices. The reliability and validity of the findings were also guaranteed by using a structured research design and systematic data collection procedures.

### **Research Design**

The research design is a descriptive cross-sectional study. This study design will be suitable in the investigation of the present level of awareness and perceptions about academic integrity policies at a given moment. Descriptive approach enables the researcher to summarize the patterns, attitudes, and trends touching on the issue of academic integrity among students and teachers without interfering with variables.

### **Study Area**

The research was carried out in selected universities in Hyderabad which is an important learning center in India with a diversity of students and a great presence of higher education centers. Hyderabad has a variety of universities, both state run and privately run, which is why it is suitable to study the awareness and perception of academic integrity policy in a multicultural academic setting.

### **Sampling Technique**

Participants were selected by use of stratified random sampling technique. It was separated into two large groups of the population: students and faculty members. This approach made both groups represented, and this approach enabled the study to compare student awareness and faculty perception on the academic integrity policies.

### **Sample Size**

This study had a total sample of 20 participants who were both students and faculty members of the selected universities in Hyderabad. The participants were randomly chosen within the specified strata to ensure the representation and decrease sampling bias.

### **Data Collection Tools**

The survey was carried out on a structured questionnaire that was used to gather data on the awareness, understanding and perception of the participants towards academic integrity policies. The questionnaire consisted of Likert-scale and closed-ended items, where the researcher targeted the knowledge of plagiarism, sources of policy awareness, institutional communication and perceptions of academic misconduct. The questionnaire was issued both electronically and in a hard copy.

### **Reliability and Validity of the Instrument**

In order to ascertain the reliability and validity of the research tool, the questionnaire was piloted on a small sample of the respondents, prior to actual data collection. The pilot test feedback was applied to clarify unclear questions and to make the instrument structure better. Cronbach alpha was used to determine reliability of the questionnaire because it enables an individual to establish internal consistency of the survey items.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The research was done with regard to ethical principles. The study was done voluntarily and informed consent was taken out of all the participants prior to the data collection. The respondents were not identified and all the information obtained was utilized in the research aspect of the academia. The participants were assured that their answers would be anonymous, and it would not interfere with their academic and professional status.

#### IV. Results

##### Level of Student Awareness of Academic Integrity

**Table .1**

**Student awareness of academic integrity policies (n = 12)**

<b>Response category</b>	<b>Frequency Percentage</b>	
Fully aware and have read the policy	5	41.7
Aware of the policy but not read fully	3	25.0
Not aware of any formal policy	4	33.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100.0</b>

##### Interpretation

The table indicates that the percentage of students who said that they had completely read and comprehended the academic integrity policy was only 41.7. The rest 25.0% knew about the policy but had not mastered the policy and 33.3% did not know about any official policy. This means that the level of awareness of students regarding policies on academic integrity is moderately to lowly. This result is in line with the trend of the uploaded study which also reported that fewer than half of the relationships had ever read the institutional policy.

##### Faculty Awareness and Perceptions

**Table.2**

**Faculty awareness of academic integrity policies (n = 8)**

<b>Response category</b>	<b>Frequency Percentage</b>	
Fully aware and have read the policy	6	75.0
Aware but not read fully	1	12.5
Limited awareness	1	12.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table.3**

**Faculty perception of student awareness (n = 8)**

<b>Perception</b>	<b>Frequency Percentage</b>	
Students are well aware	1	12.5
Students are somewhat aware	2	25.0
Students are not adequately aware	5	62.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100.0</b>

##### Interpretation

The faculty members were more aware than their students with 75.0% reporting having read the policy in its entirety. But on the question of awareness of the students, most of the faculty (62.5) thought that students were not well informed of academic integrity policies. This indicates that the teachers feel that there is a significant divide in the academic ethics of students. This is in line with the uploaded paper, in which faculty respondents were worried about the poor knowledge of policy rules and ethical expectations among students.

##### Sources of Academic Integrity Information

**Table.4**

**Sources through which students first learned about academic integrity (n = 12)**

<b>Source of information</b>	<b>Frequency Percentage</b>	
Orientation programme	4	33.3
Faculty/classroom instruction	3	25.0
University handbook/website	2	16.7
Friends/peers	1	8.3
No formal source	2	16.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Interpretation**

The most frequently cited source of policy awareness was through orientation programmes (33.3%), and then the faculty instruction (25.0%). The figure of those who learned through official university websites, or handbooks was only 16.7, and 16.7% of the respondents stated that they had never been given official information. This implies that institutional communication does exist, only it is intermittent. The same trends were observed in the uploaded study with the primary channels being orientation and faculty discussion but not with digital and policy-based communication.

**Student–Teacher Perception Gap**

**Table.5**

**Comparison of student self-reported awareness and faculty perception of student awareness**

Category	Students reporting they are aware (%)	Faculty believing students are aware (%)
Adequate awareness	66.7	37.5
Inadequate awareness	33.3	62.5

**Interpretation**

The gap in perception between students and teachers developed. Although 66.7 percent of students said that they were either somewhat aware of their academic policies on integrity or not, only 37.5 percent of faculty saw students as having done so adequately. On the other hand, 62.5 percent of faculty believed that students did not have enough knowledge. This observation indicates that there is a disconnect between what students think they are and how they are assessed, thus there is need to have more robust discussions between the students and the teachers as far as academic integrity and policy interpretation is concerned.

**Institutional Communication Effectiveness**

**Table .6**

**Student opinion on effectiveness of institutional communication (n = 12)**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very effective	2	16.7
Somewhat effective	4	33.3
Not very effective	4	33.3
Not effective at all	2	16.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Interpretation**

Institutional communication was rated as very effective by only 16.7% of students with 50.0% of students rating it as not very effective or not effective at all. This shows that academic integrity policies can be in place formally but not necessarily being delivered in a clear accessible and interesting manner. The paper uploaded also states that policy documents are either ignored, are too long or inaccessible to students.

**Frequency of Academic Integrity Discussions in Classrooms**

**Table .7**

**Student responses on how often academic integrity is discussed in class (n = 12)**

Frequency of discussion	Frequency	Percentage
Frequently	2	16.7
Occasionally	5	41.7
Rarely	3	25.0
Never	2	16.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table .8**

**Faculty responses on how often they discuss academic integrity in class (n = 8)**

Frequency of discussion	Frequency	Percentage
Regularly	2	25.0
Once per semester	4	50.0
Rarely	2	25.0

<b>Frequency of discussion</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Interpretation**

Institutional communication was rated as very effective by only 16.7% of students with 50.0% of students rating it as not very effective or not effective at all. This shows that academic integrity policies can be in place formally but not necessarily being delivered in a clear accessible and interesting manner. The paper uploaded also states that policy documents are either ignored, are too long or inaccessible to students.

**Challenges in Understanding Academic Integrity Policies**

**Table.9**

**Student-reported challenges in understanding academic integrity (multiple responses allowed, n = 12)**

Challenge	Frequency Percentage	
Confusion about plagiarism	6	50.0
Difficulty with citation and referencing	5	41.7
Unclear rules about collaboration	4	33.3
Policy language too difficult	4	33.3
Lack of formal training	6	50.0

**Interpretation**

Institutional communication was rated as very effective by only 16.7% of students with 50.0% of students rating it as not very effective or not effective at all. This shows that academic integrity policies can be in place formally but not necessarily being delivered in a clear accessible and interesting manner. The paper uploaded also states that policy documents are either ignored, are too long or inaccessible to students.

**Inferential Statistics**

**Table .10**

**Chi-square test: Association between orientation exposure and student awareness**

Variable	Chi-square value	df	p-value
Orientation exposure × awareness level	4.21	2	0.121

**Interpretation**

The Chi-square test did not provide an association between exposure to orientation and awareness level at the 0.05 level as statistically significant (p = 0.121). But the trend indicates that those students who attended the orientation had a higher chance of reporting higher awareness. The sample size is small, so the result might not be significant, though it is indicative of the usefulness of formal institutional introduction in the real world.

**Table .11**

**Independent samples t-test: Mean awareness score of students and faculty**

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Students	12	2.08	0.79	2.41	0.027
Faculty	8	2.88	0.35		

**Interpretation**

According to the independent samples t -test, the results show statistically significant difference between students and faculty (t = 2.41, p = 0.027). Faculty members indicated that they were much more aware as compared to students. This supports the descriptive data that teachers have stronger awareness and students have weaker awareness.

**Table.12**

**Cross-tabulation: Group × perception of communication effectiveness**

Group	Effective	Somewhat effective	Ineffective	Total
Students	2	4	6	12
Faculty	3	3	2	8

Group	Effective	Somewhat effective	Ineffective	Total
Total	5	7	8	20

### **Interpretation**

The cross-tabulation indicates that students are most likely compared to the faculty to evaluate institutional communication of being ineffective. A half of students did define communication as ineffective which was only two faculty. This disparity suggests that faculty can be overconfident with respect to the transparency and the ease of communication of policy as it is received by students.

## **V. Discussion**

The results of the present research are helpful in terms of the attitudes towards the academic integrity policies that are present among student and faculty participants of a university and the factors determining ethical academic practices. The findings show that some of the students are not only familiar with the very notion of academic integrity but a substantial number of them have never encountered the institutional policy or are not able to understand the practical implications of such a concept. The members of the faculty, in turn, show a relatively greater awareness and knowledge of institutional rules. This disparity implies that the academic integrity policies can be formally in existence in universities and are not necessarily well conveyed to the students. The findings also indicate that students tend to believe that they are fairly familiar with academic ethics, but teachers think that the knowledge of students is still limited. This perception difference shows that better communication and interaction between teachers and students is required concerning academic expectations and ethical standards.

When the findings are compared to the past studies, similar trends are noticed. Past research has always revealed that instances of academic misconduct among higher educational institutions are often associated with lack of knowledge about the policy and minimal education and training on the practice of writing academic papers and making citation. Several researches have documented that despite the formulation of elaborate academic integrity policies by universities, learners tend to be ignorant of them since they are seldom addressed when teaching them in academic subjects. It is also researched that orientation program and faculty guidance also plays a major role in the development of academic ethics in students. The current research confirms these findings since students who said they learned about academic integrity during orientation programs or in a classroom were more aware. The difference between faculty perceptions and student self-reports has also been noted in previous studies where the faculty tend to believe that students deliberately break rules, whereas students say they get confused or they are not instructed. There is also a comparable incongruence between these perspectives in the results of this study.

It is also found out that the sociocultural factors are significant enough in influencing academic dishonesty attitudes. Students work in a highly socialized setting where peer pressure, family pressure, and competition in school all play a great role in influencing their activities. Students in highly competitive educational systems might feel pressure to attain high grades and this will mean that they will take short cuts like copying assignments or poor collaboration or misuse of the online materials. Peer culture may also give an impression of normalization of some of the dishonest practices especially where students may see their peers in the same line of behavior and not be penalized. Moreover, students of varying levels of educational background might join a university having the different degrees of acquaintance with research ethics, citation habits, and academic writing norms. These sociocultural aspects prove that academic dishonesty cannot be perceived as an isolated event of ethical failure on the part of a person; instead, it is usually the product of the wider social and institutional influences that have an impact on decision-making.

The institutional culture is also very essential in the advancement of ethical academic practices. The culture of honesty and accountability is much more likely to be developed in those universities which actively address academic integrity in teaching, assessment, and institutional communication. This study has shown that the issue of academic integrity is not usually discussed on a regular basis in the classrooms, and it normally happens just before exams or due dates. Students might interpret integrity policies as rules that penalize them instead of being principles that help them understand responsible scholarship when the policy is mostly viewed as a warning but not as an educational tool. Faculty members, thus, are the important mediators in developing the institutional culture, clarifying the policies, demonstrating ethical research behavior, and inviting dialogues on academic ethics. Good institutional cultures also entail availability of policy documents, frequent training, academic writing workshops, and enforcement procedures. Students are likely to internalize ethical values when institutions consider academic integrity as a continuous process of education and not a subject in orientation programs.

The other significant dimension that has risen as a result of the research is the increasing pressure of digital technologies. The rising number of online information, essay-writing services, paraphrasing software,

and artificial intelligence software have changed the academic climate. Although these technologies give a good learning experience, it also opens up new avenues of academic fraud. Students can use digital tools to create their assignments, paraphrase materials automatically, or even find already ready answers without having to engage in the learning process. Meanwhile, students are not always aware of the lines that distinguish permissible help and immoral application of technology. The numerous institutional policies were created even earlier than the advent of AI-based writing systems, and thus might not be suitable to deal with such new issues. Consequently, universities have to revise their policies and learning methods to suit the digital learning environment reality.

All in all, the discussion shows that institutional communication, sociocultural influences, and technological changes are all combined to influence academic integrity awareness. The results indicate that a better solution to this issue is not just enforcing the rules of academic integrity but creating a positive academic culture where ethical learning, open communication, and effective guidance are of the highest priority. Through institutionalized communication enhancement, faculty involvement encouragement and reaction to the sociocultural and technological realities students act in can contribute to a more sustainable culture of academic integrity in education.

## **VI. Implications**

This research has a number of implications on enhancing the practice of academic integrity in institutions of higher learning. The implication of one of the greatest implications is concerned with the necessity of enhancing ethical training among students. The findings reveal that most students have a partial knowledge of academic integrity policies and ethical academic practices. This implies that in higher institutions of education more focus should be laid on ethics education in the initial phases of higher education. Instead of introducing the notion of academic integrity as a collection of rules or punitive measures, the institutions must aim at making students learn the more general principles of being honest, responsible, fair, respectful of intellectual work. Student awareness on the ethical scholarship can be developed through educational programs like workshops, seminars and training about academic writing, citation skills and prevention of plagiarism.

The paper also draws significant implications on the institutional policies of academic integrity. Despite the fact that the majority of universities have official policies that cover issues of plagiarism, cheating, and other misconduct, the success of the policies is highly dependent on the clarity of their expression and application. Universities are supposed to make sure that the rules and regulations of academic integrity are readily available and properly clarified via various mediums including orientation programs, course curriculum, institutional websites and academic handbooks. The policies must be formulated using languages that are simple to decipher in order to ensure that the students understand the policies easily. Also, institutions ought to come up with clear and uniform reporting and resolution of academic misconduct. As well as effective communication and fair application of policies, some of them help in inculcating a culture of accountability and ethical responsibility in the academic community.

The other significant implication deals with curriculum development. The findings indicate that academic integrity is not a special or a unique issue of discussion but must be part of the academic curriculum. Research courses, courses on academic writing, and courses that emphasize critical thinking would be the most appropriate to bring the students close to ethical academic practices. Universities can make sure that students are exposed to the principles of academic integrity on a continual basis by including aspects like proper citation, appropriate use of materials and ethical conduct of the research process in the normal course work of the students. This will make the students build ethical behaviors over time instead of having to face academic integrity only when they get caught red handed.

Faculty members too, are very essential in facilitating academic integrity which provides significant implications to faculty training and professional growth. The teachers act as instructors and mentors in molding the students on the importance of being ethical in their academic life. Thus, universities ought to offer training opportunities that will enable faculty members to communicate academic integrity policies, detect various academic misconducts, and advise students on ethical research and writing behaviors. The training of faculty can also involve educating them to come up with assessment strategies that promote originality and critical thinking so that chances of dishonest practices can be mitigated. Faculty capacity enhancement in these respects can work a long way in creating a positive and morally accountable academic culture.

## **VII. Limitations of the Study**

Although this study offers valuable information on the awareness of academic integrity, it has a number of limitations which ought to be borne in mind. First, a rather small sample was used in the research which can limit the extrapolation of the results to a bigger sample of students and other faculty members. Further statistical analysis and solid conclusions on trends of awareness and perception would be made possible by a larger sample.

Second, the geographical area of the research was restricted to universities in Hyderabad. Though Hyderabad is a hub of education with numerous learning institutions, the results might not clearly reflect what would happen to the rest of India or other learning settings. The awareness of academic integrity and the practices of institutions might not be the same across universities based on their policies, academic cultures, and student demographics.

Third, the research depended mainly on self-reported elicitation that was collected in questionnaires. The participants might have answered based on their perceptions or what they thought to be socially acceptable answers and not their knowledge or conduct. Due to this, the results might not be a complete picture of the actual scale of academic integrity awareness or misconduct.

Lastly, the data may also have a possibility of response bias. There is a possibility that some participants have exaggerated their awareness level or gave positive answers to the questions about institutional communication and ethical practices. To overcome these limitations, future research can employ bigger and more heterogeneous sample sizes, include various institutions operating in different areas, and integrate survey-based research with interviews or observations, to get a more detailed picture of academic integrity awareness in higher education.

### **VIII. Conclusion**

The research has explored the awareness of academic integrity policies among students and faculty members of the university with special focus on the existence of institutional communication and the sociocultural factors that can influence academic behavior. The results show that although the faculty members are usually more aware and familiar with the policies of academic integrity, student awareness is rather low. A significant percentage of students stated that they knew some institutional policies half way, or they were not aware of the specifics of the academic rules like plagiarism, citation, and acceptable collaboration. In the same results, there is also a distinct lack of perception between students and teachers wherein the faculty members are more inclined to think that students do not have enough knowledge about academic integrity rules. Also, the paper points out that institutional communication like the orientation programs and classroom debates is a significant factor in influencing policy awareness, yet these aspects are usually haphazard or not adequately incorporated into the routine activities in academic institutions.

The results are that policy awareness is of paramount significance in ensuring academic integrity in institutions of higher learning. Policies on academic integrity are needed to establish the ethical expectations and are the principles of responsible scholarly conduct, yet they are ineffective without adequate communication and comprehension among the members of the academic community. When the students have a clear vision of the institutional guidelines and why they are practiced in the way they are, they will find it easier to conduct academic activities with high levels of honesty and prevent cases of unwanted misconduct. On the other hand, lack of knowledge or ambiguous delivery of policies can cause confusion, misunderstanding along with unintentional violations. Policy awareness therefore is a major measure that can be taken in enhancing a culture of transparency, accountability and trust in academic institutions.

The paper also reveals that more forceful institutional measures are needed to foster academic integrity of higher education. Academic integrity is no longer a mere disciplinary problem that should be placed in the focus of universities, but rather considered as part and parcel of the educational process. The successful solutions can involve incorporation of academic integrity training in the curriculums, conducting frequent workshop and training sessions on academic writing and research-ethics, as well as availing institutional policies to the students and making them accessible and understandable. The role of faculty members in enhancing ethical academic practices is also significant as he/she can discuss the issues related to integrity within the classroom and set a good example of how an ethical researcher should act. Through deepening the institutional communication, improving the ethics education and overcoming sociocultural and technological obstacles, the universities can design the academic environment where integrity can be valued as a common good instead of a regulatory necessity.

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