



## Educators' Academic Integrity: The Case of Three Selected Universities in the Southern Region of Ethiopia

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### Abstract

*The main objective of this study is to investigate the status and features of academic integrity among educators of universities in southern Ethiopia. The study designed to achieve the objectives used quantitative approach where cross-sectional survey design was implemented. Three hundred fifty five respondents were selected for the study using multistage sampling method. The data were gathered using an academic integrity scale measuring honesty, trust, respect, fairness, and responsibility. The data gathered were organized and analyzed using SPSS – version – 24. Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were used to analyze the data. The finding of the study revealed that significant number of the respondents (35.5%) was moderate in their academic integrity; the academic integrity of 24.8 percent of the respondents was low; 22.1 percent of them were poor in their academic integrity; 16.1 percent of them demonstrated high academic integrity while the percent of the respondents who demonstrated very high academic integrity was 1.5 percent of the total participants. Moreover, multiple linear regression analysis revealed that all honesty, trust, respect, fairness and responsibility determine academic integrity equally. As educators' academic integrity contributes for educational quality in higher institutions, universities should design and implement a program to change educators' academic integrity mindset, and find out and address factors that can it.*

## 1 Introduction

Educating people about the vitality of education in human life seems redundant. Many people are tired of listening to the issue, as it is common to hear education scholars and laypersons talking about education, most commonly criticizing quality of education negatively everyday. Daily activities of blames and counter blames of key stakeholders in education system have resulted in burnout state of mind due to unresolved stress for long period of time (Sarafino & Smith, 2011). Parents blame schools, schools blame parents, scholars criticize education system, politicians aggrandize their educational policies, teachers blame students and so many other dynamics and interplays are common in

education discourse. But quality can be affected by a number of factors such as faculty administrators, staff and students (Tefera & Kinde, 2019)

These days, breaches in academic integrity have been reported on media, during public gatherings, and personal conversations and many scholars have been researching academic dishonest to forward ways to contain the practices (Almutairi, 2022; Solomon W. Feday, 2017 & Gillespie, 2003). Other things being constant, the honor and integrity of higher institutions in producing qualified, disciplined and productive citizen is being challenged by prevalence of academic misconducts both from teachers and students. However, many teachers are heard blaming students' misbehavior in schools,

exam rooms and in their relationship with their instructors for deterioration of academic honesty in schools and universities. For instance, teachers reported that cheating and plagiarism are common in students' work (Jones, 2001 & Etter, Cramer & Finn, 2006). Many researchers have been focusing on studying problems of integrity as students' dishonest (Tefera & Kinde, 2019; Solomon, 2017; Mabratu, 2014; Devis, Grover, Becker & McGregor, 1992 & Greene & Saxe 1992) and fewer of them addressed the breach of integrity by teachers.

The problem of academic integrity cannot be only a problem of students as there are many stakeholders in higher education and teachers are one of them. Teachers of academic institutions can also have contributions for the challenges. Efforts, courage, perseverance, motivation and commitment they made to equip their students with the required skills and knowledge should be examined to identify whether they are up to the standards or not. The preparation they make, the effort they exert to teach and assess achievements, materials they produce for students, time they invest for teaching, and the like look problematic because significant numbers of teachers seem relied more on gaining more income to survive in their personal life than the life of their students. But “a good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher. . .” (Palmer, 2007; *P.* 13).

Academic staffs can play significant role in deterioration of education quality because of problems with commitment, trust, honest, fairness, respect and responsibility because their positive impacts on students comes only if they have developed sense of ownership which encourage them to maintain the essential ethics of academic integrity that are vital for achieving education qualities at different levels (CIA, 1999). Some findings indicated that the status of rules and norms of the academia in higher institutions is failing to align with the expected social contracts (Jones, 2001) of ensuring academic integrity, which reflects the core values in a society such as mutual respect, trust, honesty, transparency, fairness and accomplishing own responsibilities. It is assumed that establishing and maintaining academic integrity is a fundamental element in the process of assuring quality of edu-

cation in Ethiopian higher institutions than other materialistic components.

Hence, the concept of quality education and its components, status, threats and challenges should be points of analysis on continuous bases even though its meaning is blurry and argumentative one (Sayed & Ahmed, 2011) from various perspectives. Scholars should continue researching issues in education to come up with better understanding and practices in the area as quality of education is determined by attributes of educators, students, education policy, curriculum, teaching-learning settings, educational leadership and parents of the learners. However, researching how all these components impact education quality and at all parts of the world at a time is difficult if not impossible. The point of focus in this paper is specific to explaining academic integrity of educators assuming that it can be one of the factors that can determine quality education (CIA, 1999).

Academic integrity is vital to theoretical studies and institutions where students, teachers and administrative staffs develop sense of trust, fairness, respect, honesty and responsibilities in their learning, teaching and administrative services in order to produce ethically sound, morally upright, trustworthy and well-mannered graduates that can serve as good professional and behavioral models in the larger society. However, scientific writings, scholarly speeches, public conversations and the general public complain serious problems in academic integrity very vividly. Challenges and problems of Ethiopian education quality mainly emerge from increasing prevalence academic dishonesty. The status of academic integrity in higher institution is best explained by CIA as follows, which may be true in Ethiopian context too.

*Higher education and society benefit when colleges and universities have standards of integrity that provide the foundation for a vibrant academic life, promote scientific progress, and prepare students for responsible citizenship. Many institutions, however, have neither defined academic integrity nor expressly committed to it. Others explain academic integrity merely by listing behaviors that are prohibited rather than by identifying values and behaviors to be promoted (CIA, 1999, P. 4).*

Critical look into trends of public behaviors indicates that there have been deteriorations of personal, institutional and national integrities and that was why Montefiore and Vines (1999; PP. iii) asserted that “. . . a widespread collapse of confidence in the integrity of public life presents peculiar dangers for societies. . .” Societal morals and ethical behaviors have been transforming, changing, being substituted and discarded to the level of challenging human co-existence and what we have been witnessing in the public spheres in our country, Ethiopia, are a clear indication that personal, institutional and public integrities are under clear threat. Schools, work places and interpersonal communications are ridiculed by breaches of honesty and trustworthiness, lack of fairness, absence of respect and deterioration of responsibilities. Academic dishonesty in education institutions, rampant corruption in governmental and private organizations, rambling frauds in public services and disgusting interpersonal communication are all intriguing quest to know about and solve them. Researching integrity in its academic, political and social contexts sounds more than ever before because of the challenges we are encountering as a nation. Above all, it is convincing to research academic integrity because educational institutions are establishments where generations are scaffolded to be a good citizen. Academic integrity is essential in instructional process because it helps to focus on highest standard of excellence in learning and to develop ethical decision making perspective (Guerrero-Dib, Portales-Derbez & Heredia-Escorza (2020).

Based on the gaps of studies described above, the researcher paused the following research questions: (1) What is the level of academic integrity among university academic staff, and (2) How much educators are honest, trust, respectful, faire and responsible in their academic behavior; and (3) How much honest, trust, respectful, faire and/or responsible determine academic integrity. Assuming that studying educators’ academic integrity and describing its prevalence and features will have immense contributions for enhancing quality education as theoreticians, policy makers and practitioners learn more out it. Hence, the major objective of this study

is to describe prevalence and features of academic integrity among university educators.

### Conceptualizing Academic Integrity

As described by Bretag (2016), Macfarlane, Zhang and Pun (2014) and others, the concept of academic integrity is very multifaceted and defined by scholars from various disciplines and it is not easy to explain in concise and agreed up on way. In order to minimize the complex interpretations of the concept, these scholars have tried to define it operationally in line with the issue they have intended to research or write on.

In many of the literature reviewed for the purpose of this study, it is defined operationally and descriptions of the concept given below are indications of how varied the interpretations are. For instance, the following interpretations of academic integrity are extracted from various literature.

In ICAI define academic integrity as “a commitment to six fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage” (ICAI, 2021: P. 4).

“Academic integrity is an important part of the education process, which is a commitment and moral code in the academic world based on the fundamental values of honesty, trustworthiness, fairness, respect and responsibility” (Sunawan, Nugroho, Sutoyo & Susilawati, 2019: P. 219).”

“Academic integrity entails commitment to the fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage” (Fishman, 2014; cited in Holden, Norris & Kuhlmeier, 2021: P. 1).

Essentially, the definitions emphasized values, commitment, honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility demonstrated by stakeholders of education mainly teachers, students and administrative staffs of educational institutions. Based on these definitions, academic integrity can be conceptualized as educators’ commitment to these values in their scholarly engagements in higher institutions in the context of the current study.

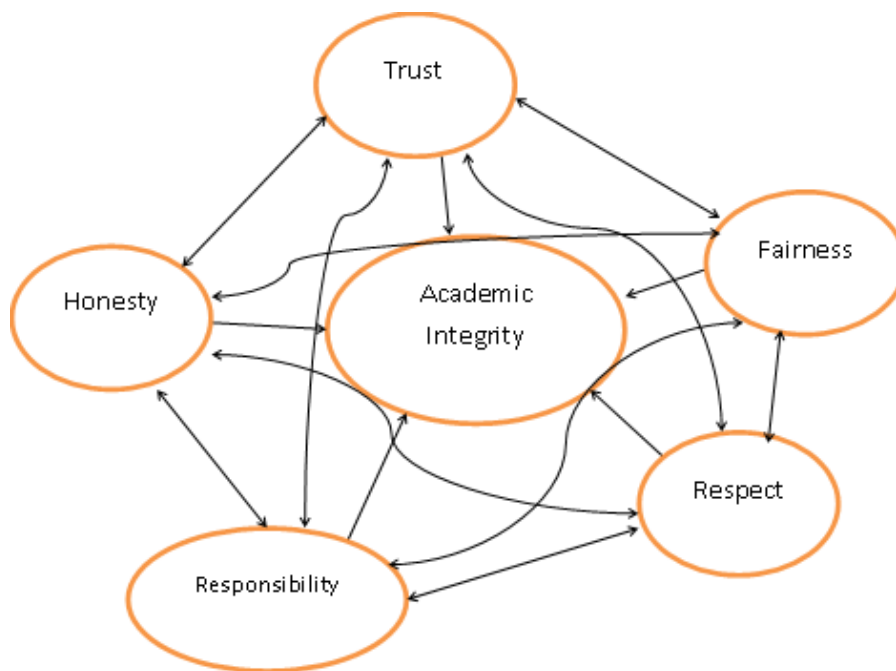


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

**Perspectives on Integrity**

Various literature described integrity from different points of view (Cox, Caze & Levine, 2021; Huberts, 2018; Schöttl, 2015 & Macfarlane, Zhang & Pun, 2014) but Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy is inclusive in presenting the perspectives. In Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy revised by Cox, Caze and Levine (2021) discussed integrity as the integration of self, maintenance of identity, standing for something, moral purpose and a virtue. However, Brenkert (2004) and Montefiore (1999) concluded that interpretation of the concept of integrity is still argumentative and needs further clarification and range of various viewpoints, from those describing integrity as wholeness to those scholars who defined integrity as model moral behavior, or integrity as individuals value of behaving in line with certain national and international codes and laws (Six & Huberts, 2008).

**Integration as Maintenance of Identity:** The underlying assumption of these perspectives is focused on commitments, “identity conferring commitment” as coined by Cox, Caze and Levine (2021), in interpreting integrity and they describe integrity in terms of how persons recognize themselves with most deeply held life convictions. In this sense, the term commitment is nearly defined as set of

promises, convictions, intentions and relationships of one’s trust and expectancy that can be displayed intentionally, unintentionally, in private or with the knowledge of others and with commitment to institutions, people, traditions, principles, causes, projects, ideals, and others (Cox, Caze & Levine, 2021). Integrity as integration of identity perspective is mainly implied in the works of (Williams, 1973).

According to Williams (1973) identity conferring commitment is equivalent to life identity, very existence, of a person or his/her character and people lacks meaning of living unless they are driven forward by the conatus of needs, life scheme and curiosity. In this approach, integrity is not explained in terms of conformity or compliance to the intentions of others but it is primarily viewed as an individual’s persistently held truth. Not all commitment to persons, object, values and concepts are permanent and they are subjected to unavoidable conflicts and dynamics of changes. Realizing this nature of commitment of integrity, philosophers have explained various aspects of integrity to differentiate pillars commitment in an individual’s integrity (Cox, Caze & Levine, 2021) as a person’s commitment to honesty, trust, respect, being fair and taking responsibility (Waters, 2022).

**Self-Constitution View of Integrity:** In the self-constitution view of integrity, the central point in interpreting integrity are views of one's present self and future self. Integrity constitutes both the intention to behave on principle in accordance with rationales confirmed by oneself as one behaves and his/her future self, and having a comprehensible lifelong intention and the courage to realize it. One must perform on set of one's rational and approved future self that reflect the issue satisfactorily. There is hypothetical appropriate correlation between one's current plan and future actions that defines one's integrity (Cox, Caze & Levine, 2021).

A prominent advocator of this view of integrity is Christine Korsgaard. In her work entitled *Self-Constitution: Agency, Identity, and Integrity*, Korsgaard (2009) explained integrity in constructivist Kantian perspective. According to the author, integrity is not described in terms of aspired and imagined excellence of one's very existence in life in which failure to reach the ideals in life result equated with absence of integrity, loss of life or lost self. In her explanation of the moral law is the law of self-constitution, it is implied that integrity, which makes a person a good person, is the result of mechanism by which one make intra-active, interactive, consistent, unified and wholistic self and someone's continuance of himself/herself into well and good at being a person.

**Integrity as Standing for Something:** This perspective of integrity can be called Calhoun's perspectives because she was Cheshire Calhoun who explained integrity as a social virtue where an individual value behaving in accordance with the role s/he has in his community. Contrary to explaining integrity in terms of one's self-integration and identity which is mainly a private personal issue and quality of one's care of the self, integrity is largely a social virtue and interpreted in line with an individual's relationship with others in a given society (Calhoun, 1995). According to Calhoun (1995), integrity is both consistent confirmation of one's personal values and striving to find out best and acceptable decisions acceptable by members of the community. Integrity is an issue of owning appropriate respect, a process of confirmation of what a community regards as worth doing and

valuable and respect for the judgment of others.

**Integrity as Moral Purpose:** This can be called moral integrity as one can conclude from the works of Ashford (2000) or Halfon (1989), Utilitarianism, Integrity and Partiality and Integrity: A Philosophical Inquiry respectively, analyzed by Cox, Caze and Levine (2021). Even though there are variations among scholars in this category in ways of defining integrity in terms of moral integrity, their explanation of integrity centers morality.

For instance, as described by Halfon (1989) in a process through which a person is dedicated to search a moral life using his/her intellectual obligation that urges them to understand the needs of such a life in living. According to him, a man of integrity is the one who has conceptual clarity, logical consistency, impart relevant empirical evidence, enforce limitations on their behaviors, seeks a commitment to do what is best in a community, and keen to recognize and evaluate pertinent moral deliberations (Halfon, 1989). Ashford (2000) also described integrity as objective perception of the real moral obligation and a person integrity is the one who cannot be morally mistaken.

**Integrity as a virtue:** Virtue is the center of description and explanation of integrity. The concept of virtue is defined by various philosophers and writers contextually. For instance, MacIntyre (1981) defined virtue as learned value that a person possesses and realize in practice that helps the person to attain goods of life. According to this perspective, integrity is a dynamic process of change where a person's convictions, values, beliefs, commitments, knowledge, desire and other personal virtues undergo changes in life through a strongly successful self-examination (Cox, Caze, & Levine, 2021). In this perspective, integrity is also explained as a virtue of self-monitoring, moral emotions or emotions of self-assessment such as regret, remorse, guilt and shame (Pugmire, 2005; cited in Cox, Caze, & Levine, 2021).

Taking the explanations of these the perspectives are vital in understanding the essence of integrity in the context of educators in higher institutions. One's commitment, being principled, moral upright and social values, directly or indirectly, constitutes the

values (honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility and courage) identified by CIA (1999) as pillars of academic integrity. For instance, the intention this study was to measure educators' commitment to being honest, trustworthy, respectful, fairness and taking responsibility.

## 2 Methodology

Conceptually, integrity and its components: trust, fairness, respect, sense of responsibility, and honesty are constructs common to human personality despite their variations in magnitude. It is believed to be a cross-cutting issue that demands objective investigation and utilization of the knowledge being generated. Hence, the study was framed and executed as per the principles, assumption and methodologies of positivism. Quantitative was the appropriate approach because it enabled us the researcher to conceptualize the study procedures and have standard instrument to measure the level of educators' academic integrity.

It was assumed that the best research design preferred for this study was cross-sectional descriptive where major values of academic integrity was investigated by collecting data from educators teaching in Dilla, Wolayita and Bonga universities in southern Ethiopia as it helps to take samples from different sects of a population at a time and generalize knowledge generated based on the sample descriptions taken from the population.

### 2.1 Procedure

All educators working in eight universities (Hawassa, Dilla, WolayitaSodo, Arba-Minch, Bonga, Jinka, MizanTeppi and Wolkitie Universities) in SNNPR of Ethiopia were population of the study but Dilla, Wolayita and Bonga were randomly selected as study site and academicians teaching in these universities were the target population. Then, the three universities were randomly selected after all the eight universities were purposively categorized into four categories as first, second, third and fourth generation universities. At the time of data collection, academic staff of Dilla, Wolayita and Bonga universities were 1154 (Sources, Dilla University Academic Programs), 1143 (University Official website, 2022) and 295 (Biniam Genet

& Amanuel Shibiru, 2020). The total population size was 2592. Then, sample size was determined using the formula (Kothari, 2004) mentioned below where all the figures were added. Finally, educators are selected using systematic sampling technique.

$$n = \frac{N * Z^2 * P * Q}{e^2(N-1) + Z^2 P * Q}$$

Where,  $n$  = the sample size;  $N$  = Number of educators in the selected universities;  $Z$  = the standard normal value at the required confidence level (1.96) at confidence level 95%;  $P$  = an estimate of the population proportion, which is 0.5;  $Q = 1 - P$  and  $e$  = the maximum acceptable error margin or the confidence interval which is expressed in decimal (0.05).

$$n = \frac{2592 * 1.96^2 * 0.5(1-0.5)}{0.05^2(2592-1) + 1.96^2 * 0.5(1-0.5)}$$

Hence, the sample size is calculated is 335 (334.685).

Then, the number of participants from each university was calculated proportionally as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} n_{(Dilla\ University)} &= \frac{1154}{2592} * 335 = 149; \\ n_{(Wolaita\ University)} &= \frac{1143}{2592} * 335 = 148 \\ n_{(Bonga\ University)} &= \frac{295}{2592} * 335 = 38 \end{aligned}$$

Then, systematic sampling technique formula ( $K = N/n$ , where  $K$ ,  $N$  and  $n$  represent systematic sampling interval, population size and sample size respectively) was used to identify specific participants from each university and every 8th instructors, assistant professors, associate professors and technical assistants in the lists where selected and made to participate in the study.

Finally, letter of permission for data collection was granted from Dilla University Research and Technology Transfer Vice President Office and Research and Dissemination Office of the three Universities for communicated for the purpose. Then, the selected participants were communicated through their departments in person and made to fill the data collection instrument after the necessary explanations of the purpose the study and consent were made. Then, they took a week to complete the questionnaire. First, from 15-22 June 2022 GC., data were collected from the selected educators from Dilla University. Then, from 10-16 July 2022

GC. data collection was made at Wolaita University. Finally, from 14-23 August 2022 GC., data collection was conducted at Bonga University.

## 2.2 Instruments

A questionnaire having three sections was used in the study. The first section contains introduction and consent while section two includes demographic data. The third section was a scale items adapted to measure educators' academic integrity. Academic integrity scale (AIS) having 17 items and seven rating levels: very appropriate (5), appropriate (4), neutral (3), inappropriate (2), and

very inappropriate (1), which was constructed by Ramdani (2018) was adapted and used to measure educators' levels of academic integrity in this study. The scale has five subscales: honest (5 items), fairness (4 items), respect (3 items), trust (3 items) and responsibility (2 items). Ramdani (2018) claimed that the scale has a total reliability coefficient of the scale 0.866 with interrelated and single dimensional of the five aspects. Using pilot test of the instrument on 32 instructors from Hawassa University, it was found that the scale items have Cronbach alpha reliability of 0.923. Moreover, summary of item and scale statistics of the final study are given in table 2 below.

**Table 1:** Summary Academic Integrity Item Statistics

	Mean	Min	Max	Range	Max/Min	Variance	Scale	N of Items
Item Means	2.938	2.149	3.937	1.788	1.832	.239	Mean=49.95;	17
Item Variances	.961	.553	1.717	1.163	3.104	.112	SD=12.699	17
Inter-Item Covariances	.533	.304	1.300	.996	4.278	.027		17
Inter-Item Correlations	.571	.355	.917	.562	2.581	.012		17

The data generated using survey questionnaires were organized, coded and analyzed, using SPSS version 20. Descriptive statistical techniques like frequencies, measures of central tendencies and measures of dispersion were used. To interpret the sampled educators' scores of academic integrity, the raw data was transformed to standard scores and ranges of determining levels of academic integrity were developed in line with the area under normal curve. Theoretically, academic integrity scores of the respondents were dichotomized as very high (>2 St. Deviation), high (1 through 2 Std. Deviation), moderate (0 through 1 St. Deviation), low (-1 through 0), poor (-1 through -2 St. Deviation) and poor (< -2 St. Deviation).

In the analysis, interpretation and presentation of the results, questions: (1) What is the level of academic integrity among university academic staff; (2) How much educators are honest, trust, respectful, faire and responsible in their academic behavior; and (3) how much honest, trust, respectful, faire and/or responsible determine academic integrity were presented in their order in here one after the other.

## 3 Results

All the respondents were contacted in person and 100% response rate was secured, i.e. all the 335 respondents returned the questionnaire they were given to fill. Accordingly, 293 (87.5%) males and 42 (12.5%) females with age rages of 18 – 24 years (8, 2.7%), 25 – 45 years (299, 89.3 %) and more than 45 years (27, 8.1%) have participated in the study. The instructors were selected from 8 colleges/institutes/schools/faculties and 40 departments have participated in the study.

Among the respondents, 278 (83%), 34(10.1%), 13 (3.9%), 9(2.7%) and 1 (0.3%) were MA/MSc graduates, assistant professors, PhD holders and associate professors respectively. Most of them, 114 (34%), have served for 11 to 15 years while 98 (29.3%) had work experience of 6 to 10 years; 66 (19.7%) have been working for more than five years; 33 (7.3%) of the respondents have been engaged in work for more than 16 to 20 years; and 24 (7.2%) of the respondents had work experience of more than 20 years. Out of the total respondents, 283 (84.5%) respondents have attended HDP (higher

**Table 2:** Frequency distribution of respondents’ college/institute/school/faculty

No.	Faculty/School/College/Institute	Frequency	Percent (%)
1	Education and behavioral sciences	28	8.4
2	Engineering and Technology	128	38.2
3	Social Science and Humanities	36	10.7
4	Law	6	1.8
5	Medicine and health sciences	56	16.7
6	Agriculture and natural resources	35	10.4
7	Natural and computational sciences	26	7.8
8	Business and economics	20	6.0
	Total	335	100.0

Diploma Program), on-job one year pedagogical training program intended to equip instructors with some teaching skills and behaviors but 52 (15.5%) of them did not attend the program at the time of data collection. Moreover, 50 (14.9%) of the respondents were position (any) holders and most of them, 285 (85.1%) respondents were fully engaged in teaching and other related roles.

The study revealed that significant percent of the respondents, 35.5 percent, was neutral in their responses to the statements provides to measure their levels of academic integrity. For instance, in the case of the first item of integrity scale, about 43 percent of the respondents do not agree that honesty starts with a person; 33.1 percent reacted as neutral

while 23.8 percent of them responded being trustful to oneself is appropriate and very appropriate. Significant number of the respondents, about 33.8 percent of them took a statement “honesty trains us to believe in our abilities” as very inappropriate or inappropriate; 22.7 percent were neutral in their response while 43 percent of the respondents reacted as appropriate and very appropriate.

In general, cumulatively, the number of those respondents who reacted to the ideas presented in the scale as very inappropriate and inappropriate was more than those who reacted as appropriate and very appropriate. For more details, refer to table 3 below.

**Table 3:** Frequency distribution of respondents’ responses for each item in the academic integrity scale

No	Items	Frequency/Percent				
		1	2	3	4	5
H1	For me to be honest it starts from myself.	83/24.8	61/18.2	<b>111/33.1</b>	36/10.7	44/13.1
H2	Honesty trains us to believe in our abilities.	30/9	83/24.8	76/22.7	<b>93/27.8</b>	53/15.8
H3	I really appreciate friends who do the tasks with their own ability.	11/3.3	59/17.6	78/23.3	<b>102/30.4</b>	85/25.4
H4	I am sure that any work done honestly results will be satisfactory.	91/27.2	85/25.4	<b>108/32.2</b>	46/13.7	5/1.5
H5	Originality of ideas is an important thing to have when writing.	10/3	112/33.4	<b>123/36.7</b>	81/24.2	9/2.7
F1	I am happy to pass the course material to my friend.	4/1.2	76/22.7	<b>115/34.3</b>	106/31.6	34/10.1
F2	I am glad when a friend asks my idea in doing the lecture work.	2/6	54/16.1	<b>124/37</b>	113/33.7	42/12.5
F3	I am active to participate in academic activities inside and outside of the campus.	8/2.4	93/27.8	<b>158/47.2</b>	63/18.8	13/3.9
F4	I love studying other people’s research results.	30/9	96/28.7	<b>157/46</b>	47/14	5/1.5
R1	All students have equal opportunities to get involved in campus activities.	2/6	45/13.4	<b>142/42.4</b>	109/32.5	37/11
R2	Regular academic evaluation is very important in the learning process.	—	34/10.1	68/20.3	<b>118/35.2</b>	115/34.3
R3	Trusting each other’s friends is a solid foundation for collaboration on campus.	2/6	50/14.9	140/41.8	<b>140/41.8</b>	3/9
T1	I like to discuss how to cite the reference sources that lecturers present in the classroom.	30/9	124/37	<b>158/47.2</b>	19/5.9	4/1.2
T2	For me preparing the material before the lecture is a natural thing.	29/8.7	119/35.5	<b>163/48.7</b>	16/4.8	8/2.4
T3	I enjoy discussing college assignments with friends.	61/18.2	113/33.7	<b>114/34</b>	40/11.9	7/2.1
R1	Getting a scholarship is like having a responsibility to serve the nation.	29/8.7	119/35.5	<b>154/46</b>	24/7.2	9/2.7
R2	I feel a good image of campus is a shared responsibility.	127/37.9	102/30.4	47/14	47/14	12/3.6

Note: very appropriate (5), appropriate (4), neutral (3), inappropriate (2), and very inappropriate (1).

The mean value of the respondents’ responses to the items in the scale is between 2 (inappropriate) and 4 (appropriate). As reported in table 4 below, the mean scores of academic integrity scale and

its sub-scales: honest, fairness, respect, trust and responsibility are 49.95, 14.70, 12.33, 10.61, 7.56 and 4.75 respectively.

**Table 4:** Summary of descriptive statistics of academic integrity and its subscales (N = 335)

Measures	Academic integrity	Honesty	Fairness	Respect	Trust	Responsibility
Mean	49.95	14.70	12.33	10.6	7.56	4.75
Median	52	15	12	10	8	5
Mode	59	18	13	10	9	3
SD	12.70	4.84	3.01	2.43	2.30	1.92
Range	53.00	18.00	13.00	10.00	12.00	8.00
Minimum	26.00	6.00	6.00	4.00	3.00	2.00
Maximum	79.00	24.00	19.00	14.00	15.00	10.00

The ideal lowest and highest scores for the scale are 17 and 85. Out of the respondents, 10 (2.99%) of them has scored 50 (about the mean value), 157 (46.9%) scored below the mean value and 174 (51.94%) scored above the mean value. The descriptive statistics for honest subscale revealed that 140 (41.8%) of the respondents have scored 14 and below while 37 (11%) of them scored approximate to the mean value, 14.70, while 158 (47.16%) of the respondents scored above the approximate mean value. In terms of fairness, 134 (40%) have scored less than the approximate mean value; 34 (10.1%) scored the mean value; and 167 (49.85%) of them scored above the mean value. In terms of respect, the descriptive statistics revealed that 190 (56.7%) have scored score of ten and below; 6 (1.8%) scored 10 and 11 that is close to the mean value 10.61; and 139 (41.49%) scored above 11. In the case of trust, 155 (46.3%) scored below 7. 56, 54 (16.1%) scored 8 which is approximate to the mean value, 7.56; and 126 (37.61%) scored above the mean value. Moreover, statistics of the responsibility measure shows that 142 (42.4%) of the respondents scored 4 and below; 93 (27.8%) scored 5, which

is approximate to the mean value 4.75; and 100 (29.85%) of them scored above 5.

However, interpreting a raw score without norms of reference may not sound in terms of statistical assumptions there was a need to find out a standard domain to compare the academic scores of the respondents. Hence, other things being constant, to formulate standardized intervals to equate the academic integrity scores of the respondents, the raw data were converted to standardize scores and the following classes of the standard score were developed based on the assumptions of the area under the normal distribution because the researcher unable to find reference norm to interpret the scores obtained the academic integrity scale used in this study. As depicted in table 5 below, the majority of the respondents (35.5%) had moderate academic integrity; the academic integrity of 24.8 percent of the respondents was low; 22.1 percent of them were poor in their academic integrity; 16.1 of them demonstrated high academic integrity while the percent of the respondents who demonstrated very high academic integrity was 1.5 percent of the total participants.

**Table 5:** Frequency distribution of standard scores of the respondents’ academic integrity

Z-scores interval	Corresponding score interval	Frequency	Percentage	Level of Academic integrity
> 2	> 74.95	5	1.5	Very high
1 through 2	62.65 – 74.95	54	16.1	High
0 through 1	49.95 – 62.65	119	35.5	Moderate
-1 through 0	37.25 – 49.95	83	24.8	Low
-1 through -2	< 37.25	74	22.1	Poor
< -2	None	None	None	Very poor

Similarity, scores of the sub-scales of the academic integrity: honesty, fairness, respect, trust and responsibility were converted to standard scores as given in tables 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 below. About 32 percent of the respondent had moderate level of

honesty in their academic behavior and 19.1 percent of them measured as having high level of honest. However, 26.3 and 22.4 percent demonstrated low and poor levels of honesty respectively.

**Table 6:** Distribution of standardized honesty scores of the respondents and their levels

Z-scores interval	Corresponding score interval	Frequency	Percentage	Level of honesty
> 2	> 24.38	—	—	Very high
1 through 2	19.54 – 24.38	64	19.1	High
0 through 1	14.84 – 19.54	108	32.2	Moderate
-1 through 0	9.86 – 14.84	88	26.3	Low
-1 through -2	5.02 – 9.86	75	22.4	Poor
< -2	None	None	None	Very poor

As indicated in table 7 below, 34.9 percent of the respondents were moderate in their level of fairness while 29 percent demonstrated low level of fairness.

Moreover, 20.3 percent of the respondents demonstrated poor level of fairness and 13.6 scored high fairness.

**Table 7:** Distribution of standardized fairness scores of the respondents and their levels

Z-scores interval	Corresponding score interval	Frequency	Percentage	Level of fairness
> 2	> 18.35	6	1.8	Very high
1 through 2	15.34 – 18.35	44	13.1	High
0 through 1	12.33 – 15.34	117	34.9	Moderate
-1 through 0	12.33 – 9.32	97	29.0	Low
-1 through -2	9.32 – 6.31	68	20.3	Poor
< -2	< 6.31	3	0.9	Very poor

As reported in table 8 below, 36.7 percent of the respondents demonstrated low level of respect but 32.5 percent scored moderate level of respect.

About 19 percent were poor in their level of respect while 10.7 percent score high level of respect.

**Table 8:** Distribution of standardized respect scores of the respondents and their levels

Z-scores interval	Corresponding score interval	Frequency	Percentage	Level of respect
> 2	> 18.35	—	—	Very high
1 through 2	15.34 – 18.35	36	10.7	High
0 through 1	12.33 – 15.34	109	32.5	Moderate
-1 through 0	12.33 – 9.32	123	36.7	Low
-1 through -2	9.32 – 6.31	65	19.4	Poor
< -2	< 6.31	2	0.6	Very poor

As depicted in table 9 below, the majority of the respondents (38.2%) of the demonstrated moderate level of trust in their academic behavior, 13.1 scored high and 1.5 very high but 24.5 and 21.8 percent of them displayed low and poor level of trust.

**Table 9:** Distribution of standardized trust scores of the respondents and their levels

Z-scores interval	Corresponding score interval	Frequency	Percentage	Level of trust
> 2	> 12.16	5	1.5	Very high
1 through 2	9.86 – 12.16	44	13.1	High
0 through 1	7.56 – 9.16	128	38.2	Moderate
-1 through 0	5.26 – 7.56	82	24.5	Low
-1 through -2	2.96 – 5.26	73	21.8	Poor
< -2	< 2.96	3	0.9	Very poor

In the table 10 below, the majority of the respondents (39.1%) demonstrated moderate responsibility, 15.5 percent had high level of responsibility and only 3 percent of them revealed very high level of responsibility but significant percent of the respondents, 33.7 percent, depicted low level of responsibility and only 8.7 percent scored poor level of responsibility.

**Table 10:** Distribution of standardized responsibility scores of the respondents and their levels

Z-scores interval	Corresponding score interval	Frequency	Percentage	Level of responsibility
> 2	> 8.59	10	3	Very high
1 through 2	6.67 – 8.59	52	15.5	High
0 through 1	4.75 – 6.67	131	39.1	Moderate
-1 through 0	2.83 – 4.75	113	33.7	Low
-1 through -2	0.91 – 2.83	29	8.7	Poor
< -2	< 0.91	—	—	Very poor

As indicated in table 11 below, Honesty, fairness, respect, trust and responsibility have significant positive correlation with each other and academic integrity. The leaner multiple regression analysis result revealed that honesty, fairness, respect, trust and responsibility determine academic integrity ( $R^2 = 1$ ) when they are combined together.

**Table 11:** Correlation and Linear multiple regression result coefficients academic integrity and it’s sub-scales

	<b>AITOTAL</b>	<b>Honesty</b>	<b>Fairness</b>	<b>Respect</b>	<b>Trust</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
AITOTAL	1.000	.919	.889	.830	.838	.848
Honesty	.919	1.000	.804	.679	.633	.678
Fairness	.889	.804	1.000	.686	.633	.660
Respect	.830	.679	.686	1.000	.678	.626
Trust	.838	.633	.633	.678	1.000	.896
Responsibility	.848	.678	.660	.626	.896	1.000

<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>						
<b>Model</b>		<b>Unstandardized</b>		<b>Standardized</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
		<b>Coefficients</b>		<b>Coefficients</b>		
		<b>B</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>		
1	(Constant)	3.233E <sup>-014</sup>	.000		.000	1.000
	Honesty	1.000	.000	.381	147982637.747	.000
	Fairness	1.000	.000	.237	93257291.048	.000
	Respect	1.000	.000	.191	86321630.906	.000
	Trust	1.000	.000	.181	53468654.877	.000
	Responsibility	1.000	.000	.151	44498490.776	.000

a. Dependent Variable: AITOTAL

#### 4 Discussion

In this study, it is found that university educators’ level of academic integrity and its subscales described as very high, high, moderate, low, poor and very poor. The majority of the respondents (35.5%) had moderate academic integrity; the academic integrity of 24.8 percent of the respondents was low; 22.1 percent of them were poor in their academic integrity; 16.1 of them demonstrated high academic integrity while the percent of the respondents who demonstrated very high academic integrity was 1.5 percent of the total participants. Even though not academic integrity is not conceptualized as it did in this study, Behera (2022), in his work on “academic integrity and university teaching: A triangulation study on University teachers,” argued that like their students, teachers are engaged in academic dishonest in the form of not neglecting their responsibilities, unfair judgment, motivate cheating, disclosure of exam questions before exam schedule, plagiarizing research works, discriminating students and receiving money from students to award marks but his objective was not to describe the level of academic integrity as it is conceptualized in this study. Moreover, Federal

Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (2013) and Plummer (2012), cited in Solomon (2017), reported collaboration of lecturers of higher institutions with cheaters which in turn affects public perception towards teaching profession.

In terms of specific components of academic integrity studied, the study revealed that about 51.1 percent of the respondent had moderate and high levels of honesty in their academic behavior but 48.7 percent demonstrated low and poor levels of honesty. The existing literature show that honesty is the most researched aspects of academic integrity and many scholars have explained it from different perspectives in the context of educational system but many of them focuses on students’ academic dishonest and the role of teachers in containing the practices and it has been researched with negative interpretation and mindset: perception, prevalence, causes and techniques of academic dishonest, for instance, Solomon W. Feday (2017). They also focus on advising teachers to be honest in their teaching. Hence, it is difficult to discuss the current finding in line with the previous ones.

The current study found that 48.5 percent of the re-

spondents were moderate and high in their level of fairness while and 49.3 percent of the respondents demonstrated low and poor level of fairness. The study depicted that 55.7 percent of the respondents demonstrated low and poor levels of respect but 43.2 percent scored moderate and high level of respect. According to the results of the current study, the majority of the respondents (51.3%) of the demonstrated moderate and high levels of trust in their academic behavior but 46.3 24.5 percent of them displayed low and poor levels of trust. Moreover, the majority of the respondents (54.6 percent) demonstrated moderate and high levels of responsibility but significant percent of the respondents, 42.4 percent, depicted low and poor levels of responsibility.

### Limitations

The first challenge of this study was inability to find standardized levels of academic integrity along which the raw scores obtained in the study can be rated and the researcher was obliged to transform the raw scores to standard scores and levels were set to judge the raw scores. Secondly, comparing and contrasting the findings of the current study with other previous research result was challenged due to absence prior research results describing the nature of academic integrity among university teachers both at local and national levels. The recent study by Almutairi (2022) on “effect of academic integrity of faculty members on students’ ethical behavior” did reveal description of the nature and level of academic integrity among the faculty members.

## 5 Conclusion

The finding of the current study revealed that academic integrity of university educators can be explained at various levels where 1.5 percent, 16.1 percent, 35.5 percent, 24.8 percent and 22.1 percent scored very high, high, moderate, low and poor academic integrity. The findings of the current study has immense implications on intervention, promotion and development of academic integrity in higher institutions because academic integrity in general and the educators’ in particular is vital in teaching learning process because it determines development of scholarly communities and creation of strong civic engagement (ICAI, 2021). It influences

moral and ethical behaviors of students (Almutairi, 2022) and learners’ self-identity (Robert & Hai-Jew, 2009; cited in Almutairi, 2022). Moreover, it helps learners and teachers freedom to build new ideas, knowledge and creative works, and to respect and acknowledge the work of others in their academic behavior ([www.uow.edu.au](http://www.uow.edu.au)).

Hence, Teachers should be honest, fair and trustworthy in their academic exercises and behaviors (Behera, 2022). Stimulating culture of academic institutions - from the higher leaders to supportive administrative staffs and students, and family to the larger society should make integrity their daily discourse. They have to organize seminars, workshops and trainings on regularly bases. It is possible to enhance academic integrity by developing academic environment, enlightening teaching, enhancing institutional support for instructional process, and working to reduce institutional challenges in academic arena (Gallant, 2008, p. 89).

Moreover, universities need to have continuous, specific and applicable academic integrity development policies and strategies. Finally, factors that affect academic integrities should be studied so that universities work on it to reduce their impacts.

### Data Availability

The data collected and analyzed to discuss academic integrity in this study are available on request from the author. The data cannot publicly available due to ethical issues.

### Conflict of Interest

This research was funded by Dilla University and the author declares no competing of interest.

### Ethical Approval

Consent was sought from the research participants. Confidentiality was maintained in reporting information.

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