

# Assessment of Understanding of Academic Integrity among Nursing Students

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## ABSTRACT

A clear sense of academic honesty and responsibility is fundamental to good scholarship, and the integrity of university academic work and the degrees conferred by the university is dependent upon the honesty and soundness of the teacher-student learning relationship and of the evaluation process. The aim of this study was to assess the understanding of academic integrity among nursing students.<sup>1</sup>

**Methods:** A Descriptive research approach was used for the present study. The study comprised of 50 Nursing Students of selected Nursing Colleges. Twelve true or false questions prepared by the Texas Tech University Ethics Center were used for data collection. Purposive sampling technique was used for data collection. Formal permission was obtained from concerned authority for data collection. The analysis of the data was done by using descriptive statistics.

**Results:** The results showed that, 86% of nursing students in the age group of 19 - 25 years and 52% of nursing students were male. 60% of nursing students were having good comprehension of academic integrity and 40% of nursing students were having excellent comprehension of academic integrity. Mean knowledge score of nursing students was 9.14. There was not significant association found with selected demographic variable.

**Conclusion:** The study shows that most of the nursing students were having good comprehension of academic integrity. 60% of nursing students had good comprehension of academic integrity.

**Keywords:** Academic integrity, dishonesty, nursing, students.

## INTRODUCTION

Academic dishonesty is defined as a student's intentional attempt to falsify, fabricate or tamper with data, information, records, or any other material that is relevant to any course, laboratory, or other academic exercise or function.<sup>2</sup>

Academic integrity is the commitment and demonstration of honest and moral behavior in an academic setting. This is most relevant at the university level as it relates to providing credit to other people when using their ideas. In simplest terms, it requires acknowledging the contributions of other people.<sup>3</sup>

A cross sectional study conducted on to compare the attitudes toward academic integrity and the frequency of behaviors

related to academic dishonesty in nursing and non-nursing students. Results of the study suggest upper division and second degree nursing students are less tolerant and more condemnatory of cheating than younger students.<sup>4</sup>

Academic dishonesty is growing among nursing students. Reasons for this growth can be categorized into student, faculty, and system factors. Researchers identified three themes: characteristics of students with academic integrity, patient safety, and professional outcomes. Exploring student perceptions of academic integrity can help faculty design measures to prevent dishonesty in these three areas. It was recommended that, fostering culture change through strategies that target

students, faculty, and systems. These strategies include peer mentoring, role modeling integrity, enhancing awareness of what constitutes cheating, and developing policies that promote honesty.<sup>5</sup>

A study conducted by Gaberson on academic dishonesty among nursing students. Results showed that, student cheating on college campuses is believed to be a common occurrence, but academic dishonesty among nursing students is a source of legitimate concern to nursing faculty members because of its potential effect on present and future professional practice. Strategies are outlined that can promote academic honesty in the nursing program through moral and character development of nursing students, teaching moral decision-making skills, role-modeling of honest academic behavior, and developing and enforcing an appropriate academic integrity policy.<sup>6</sup>

Academic integrity refers to the expectation from a student to submit original work and give credit to other people's ideas. Academic integrity is the commitment and demonstration of honest and moral behavior in an academic setting. This is most relevant at the university level as it relates to providing credit to other people when using their ideas. In simplest terms, it requires acknowledging the contributions of other people.<sup>7</sup>

A study conducted on to investigate the phenomenon of academic dishonesty in the classroom from a longitudinal perspective within a cohort of Italian nursing students. A non-experimental longitudinal design was used. The results show that students get accustomed to taking academically deceitful actions. They come to consider their behaviours acceptable and normal, thereby stabilizing them, which increases the probability of stabilizing subsequent deceitful behaviours.<sup>8</sup>

Academic dishonesty amongst nursing students has become a common occurrence and has drawn a great amount of public scrutiny in recent times. This is often viewed as the starting point of legal

agitation to nursing educators because of the possible impact this will have on existing and subsequent professional practice and patient care.<sup>9</sup>

Ethical practice and academic integrity derived from honesty should form the bedrock of any nursing education environment. This foundation is crucial to quality patient care and outcomes. Honesty is regarded as a basic ethical value and academic integrity is vital in the educational environment. In the nursing profession, it is especially important as the well-being of the patients in our care depend on it.<sup>2</sup>

A descriptive and cross-sectional study conducted on to evaluate academic dishonesty among university nursing students in Turkey. The study's sample included 196 students. Two instruments were used for gathering data. The first instrument, a questionnaire, which included some socio-demographic variables, formed the first part. The second part included the Academic Dishonesty Tendency Scale developed by Eminoğlu and Nartgün. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Kruskal Wallis, One-way Anova, t- test and Mann-Whitney U test. It was found that academic dishonesty was at medium-level (2.60-3.39) in nursing students.<sup>10</sup>

McCabe et. al. have conducted a series of studies around understanding of academic integrity policies. Result shows that poor understanding and lack of acceptance of academic integrity policies were associated with significantly higher rates of self-reported departures from academic integrity across 21 post secondary organizations ( $p < 0.001$ ); however, sample size was not reported for this study.<sup>11</sup>

In a Gallup poll conducted in 2006, nursing was perceived to be the most honest of 23 professions and the one with highest ethical standards. With such a high ethical expectation of the profession, one would assume that academic dishonesty would be nonexistent in nursing programs. Yet it has been documented that nursing students

engage in academically dishonest behaviors that they do not perceive as such.<sup>12</sup>

A study conducted by Smedley to evaluate the change in nursing student's knowledge and understanding of plagiarism before and after an educational intervention in their first semester of the Bachelor of nursing degree at a private college of higher education in Sydney, Australia. Study concluded that an educational intervention can increase knowledge and awareness of plagiarism among nursing students.<sup>13</sup>

#### Statement

“Assessment of understanding of Academic Integrity among Nursing Students.”

#### Objective:

To assess the understanding of Academic Integrity among Nursing Students.

### RESEARCH METHODS

A Descriptive research study approach was used for present study. The study comprises of 50 nursing students of selected nursing colleges. Purposive sampling technique was used to select sample. Twelve true or false questions prepared by the Texas Tech University Ethics Center were used for data collection. The reliability of research tool is 0.83 which was reliable. The investigators introduce them and obtain consent from nursing students for participation in study. Purpose and important of research study explain before collection of data. Formal permission was obtained from concerned authority from selected Nursing Colleges for data collection. The analysis of the data was done by using descriptive statistics.

### RESULTS

Analysis and interpretation is based on the objectives of the study. The analysis was done with the help of descriptive statistics. Frequency and percentage wise distribution of demographic variables of nursing students such as age, gender and so on

**Table 1: Percentage wise distribution of nursing students according to their demographic characteristics n=50**

SN	Demographic Variables	No. of students	Percentage
1.	Age(Years)		
	Less than 18	07	14.00
	19 - 25	43	86.00
	More than 25	00	00
2.	Gender		
	Male	26	52.00
	Female	24	48.00
3	HSC Board		
	State Board	37	74.00
	CBSC	13	26.00
	Other	00	00

The above table 1 shows that 86% of nursing students belongs to 19 - 25 years of age and 14% belongs to less than 18 years of age. 52% nursing students were male and 48% were female. Most 74% of nursing students completed their 12th Std. from state Board.

**Table 2: Distribution of nursing students with regards to level of understanding regarding academic integrity. n=50**

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Poor	00	00
Average	00	00
Good	30	60.00
Excellent	20	40.00

The above table 2 depicts that the 60% of nursing students were having good comprehension of academic integrity and 40% of nursing students were having excellent comprehension of academic integrity. This indicates that most of the nursing students were having good comprehension of academic integrity.

**Table 3: Mean knowledge score of academic integrity among nursing students. n=50**

Category	Mean	SD	Mean Percentage
Academic Integrity	9.14	1.15	76.17

The above table 3 depicts that mean knowledge score of nursing students was 9.14. This indicates that nursing students having good comprehension about academic integrity.

The below Table 4 depict that, most of the students was having good comprehension of academic integrity. Some of the students was having lack of understanding about It is ok to collaborate with other students on academic assignments without having permission from your teachers.

**Table 4: Item wise knowledge score of academic integrity among nursing students. n=50**

SN	Questions	Correct	Incorrect
1	Academic Integrity means that you are accountable for your own work.	41	09
2	Making a personal decision to adhere to the standards of ethical behavior is part of academic integrity.	45	05
3	Ethical behavior and independent thought are important for achieving academic success	44	06
4	Trust and respect among students, faculty, and staff are essential components of education	41	09
5	Academic Integrity is the foundation of professional and educational careers.	42	08
6	Don't worry about plagiarism if you use the web; things from the web do not need to be cited	43	07
7	Copying from another student or source during a test is cheating.	34	16
8	It is cheating to obtain questions or solutions for a test before taking it without having permission from your teachers.	36	14
9	Using materials from other sources and presenting it as your own work is plagiarism.	40	10
10	Not citing materials or ideas from other sources in your work is plagiarism	30	20
11	It is ok to collaborate with other students on academic assignments without having permission from your teachers	28	22
12	Submitting false information in order to get an extension on an assignment or to take a quiz/test later is considered "misrepresenting facts" (E.g. a false doctor's note).	33	17

## DISCUSSION

In present study, aim of the study was to assess the understanding of academic integrity among nursing students. The mean knowledge score of academic integrity was 9.14. its indicate that most of the students was having good comprehension about academic integrity. There is no significant association was found with selected demographic variable.

A survey conducted by Texas Tech University on assessment of students' understanding of academic integrity. The results show that students have a very good comprehension of academic integrity, with an average score of 91.9%.<sup>14</sup> Smedley, Crawford and Cloete suggested numerous ways to reduce academic dishonesty. These include ensuring and preserving a trustworthy environment, conveying clear values and beliefs, an environment of trust, communicating clear expectations, speaking up when academic misconduct occurs and reinforcing the University principles on academic integrity and professional behaviour.<sup>13</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The aim of the study was to assess the understanding of academic integrity among nursing students. The present study comprises 50 nursing students. Non probability Purposive sampling technique was used for data collection. Mean score of academic integrity of nursing students was 9.14. There was no significant association found with selected demographic variable.

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How to cite this article: Pandit RB, Gite ST. Assessment of understanding of academic integrity among nursing students. *Int J Health Sci Res*. 2020; 10(4):1-5.

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