

## THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT IN REDUCING STUDENT'S ACADEMIC DISHONESTY IN PUNJAB

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### Abstract

*Academic dishonesty remains a pressing issue in higher education, with significant implications for academic integrity and institutional credibility. This study explores the role of university management in mitigating academic dishonesty among graduate and post-graduate students in public sector universities in Lahore, Punjab. Utilizing a quota sampling technique, the research involved a sample of 150 students (80 males and 70 females) across 25 public universities in the province. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews with students and university administrators. The findings highlight varying levels of concern and awareness regarding academic dishonesty, with significant differences in the enforcement and effectiveness of management practices. Proactive strategies, including robust policy frameworks, regular staff training, and comprehensive student awareness programs, are identified as key to reducing academic dishonesty. The study underscores the need for improved management practices to enhance academic integrity in Punjab's higher education institutions.*

**Keywords:** Academic dishonesty, university management, public sector universities, academic integrity

### Introduction

Academic dishonesty, encompassing behaviors such as plagiarism, cheating, and fabrication, poses a significant threat to the integrity and quality of higher education. In Pakistan, this issue has become increasingly pertinent as universities strive to uphold academic standards while adapting to the growing demands of a diverse student body. The rise in academic dishonesty undermines the credibility of educational institutions and compromises the educational experience of students who adhere to ethical standards. This study examines the role of university management in addressing and reducing academic dishonesty among graduate and post-graduate students in public sector universities in Lahore, Punjab.

The prevalence of academic dishonesty in Pakistani universities reflects broader societal issues, including pressures on students to achieve high grades, inadequate understanding of academic ethics, and insufficient institutional measures to combat dishonest practices. Despite the establishment of academic integrity policies, many universities struggle with inconsistent enforcement and varying degrees of effectiveness. According to Ali and Tariq (2022), while there are policies in place, their implementation often lacks rigor and consistency, contributing to a culture of impunity among students (Ali & Tariq, 2022).

In Punjab, the educational landscape is shaped by the presence of 2 public sector universities, which cater to a large number of students. The diverse demographic and socio-economic

backgrounds of students in these institutions further complicate the management of academic integrity. The province's universities face unique challenges in creating a uniform approach to academic dishonesty due to varying levels of resource availability, administrative support, and institutional commitment to enforcing academic standards. Previous research on academic dishonesty in Pakistan highlights several factors contributing to this issue, including a lack of awareness about academic integrity among students and faculty, ineffective monitoring systems, and the absence of comprehensive anti-dishonesty strategies (Khan et al., 2021). Studies indicate that while educational institutions recognize the problem, the strategies employed often fall short of creating a substantial impact (Khan et al., 2021). Furthermore, the role of university management in formulating and implementing effective policies remains underexplored.

This study aims to fill this gap by focusing on the management practices of public sector universities in Lahore, Punjab. By employing a mixed-methods approach that includes quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, this research seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of current management strategies and propose actionable recommendations. The sample comprises 150 students (80 males and 70 females) from a range of public universities, providing a representative view of the academic environment in Lahore.

Understanding the role of university management in reducing academic dishonesty is crucial for fostering a culture of integrity and enhancing the overall quality of education. This research will contribute to the existing body of knowledge by providing insights into effective management practices and offering recommendations tailored to the context of Pakistani universities. Ultimately, the goal is to support the development of more robust and consistent strategies to combat academic dishonesty and uphold the values of academic integrity.

## **Background of the Study**

Academic dishonesty, a pervasive issue in higher education, encompasses a range of unethical behaviors, including plagiarism, cheating, and falsification of academic records. These actions compromise the educational process, undermine institutional credibility, and devalue the achievements of honest students. In Pakistan, academic dishonesty has become a notable concern, particularly in public sector universities where the pressures of academic performance and limited resources can exacerbate the problem. Public sector universities in Punjab, including those in Lahore, face distinct challenges related to academic integrity. With 25 public universities serving a diverse student body, each institution grapples with its own set of issues related to the enforcement of academic standards. The problem is further compounded by varying levels of administrative support, differences in policy implementation, and the socioeconomic diversity of students (Khan, Malik, & Ahmed, 2021). The inconsistent application of academic integrity policies often results in a culture where dishonest practices can proliferate, undermining the effectiveness of educational programs.

Research on academic dishonesty in Pakistan reveals a multifaceted issue rooted in both individual and institutional factors. For instance, Ali and Tariq (2022) identify several contributing factors, including a lack of awareness about academic integrity, inadequate training

for faculty, and limited resources for monitoring and enforcing policies. Their study highlights that while universities have established codes of conduct, the enforcement mechanisms are frequently inadequate, leading to ineffective deterrence of dishonest behaviors.

The pressures faced by students, such as intense competition for academic and professional opportunities, often lead them to engage in dishonest practices as a means to achieve success. The competitive academic environment, coupled with the high stakes of examinations and assessments, creates an environment where students might resort to unethical practices if they believe it will help them succeed (Ali & Tariq, 2022). Additionally, the lack of a strong ethical framework and support systems for students further exacerbates the issue, as many students may not fully understand the implications of their actions. University management plays a critical role in addressing academic dishonesty through the development and enforcement of policies, the creation of a supportive academic environment, and the implementation of educational programs that promote academic integrity. However, the effectiveness of these measures varies significantly across institutions. Research by Khan et al. (2021) suggests that while some universities have made strides in implementing anti-dishonesty measures, others continue to struggle with insufficient resources and a lack of commitment to rigorous enforcement.

This study aims to investigate the role of university management in combating academic dishonesty in public sector universities in Lahore, Punjab. By examining current management practices and their effectiveness, the research seeks to provide insights into how universities can enhance their efforts to maintain academic integrity. The study will utilize a mixed-methods approach, including surveys and interviews with students and university administrators, to assess the impact of existing strategies and identify areas for improvement. Understanding the background and current state of academic dishonesty in Pakistan is crucial for developing effective management strategies. This research will contribute to the body of knowledge by offering practical recommendations tailored to the unique challenges faced by universities in Punjab. Ultimately, the goal is to support the creation of a more ethical and integrity-driven academic environment, enhancing the overall quality and credibility of higher education in the region.

## Literature Review

### Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty, a pervasive issue in higher education, manifests in various forms including plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, and collusion. McCabe, Treviño, and Butterfield (2001) argue that academic dishonesty undermines the educational mission of institutions, devalues honest efforts, and erodes trust within the academic community. Their extensive research highlights that the incidence of academic dishonesty is influenced by several factors including institutional culture, perceived norms, and individual attitudes. They found that students who perceive high levels of dishonesty among their peers are more likely to engage in similar behaviors themselves.

Further elaborating on this issue, Williams and Hine (2018) conducted a comprehensive review of literature on academic integrity, noting that the prevalence of academic dishonesty is often reflective of broader societal attitudes towards education. Their study indicates that students' understanding of what constitutes academic dishonesty is frequently limited, leading to unintentional violations. They also highlight that institutional responses to dishonesty are often reactive rather than proactive, which can exacerbate the problem.

In the Pakistani context, Ali and Tariq (2022) emphasize the cultural and systemic factors contributing to academic dishonesty. They note that intense pressure to succeed, coupled with inadequate understanding of academic ethics, creates an environment where dishonest practices are more likely to occur. Their research suggests that students often resort to dishonest behaviors due to a perceived lack of alternative ways to achieve academic success.

### **Management Strategies and Their Effectiveness**

Effective management strategies are crucial for addressing academic dishonesty. Various approaches have been employed by universities globally to combat this issue, ranging from policy development to educational interventions. According to Ali and Tariq (2022), Pakistani universities have implemented several measures such as academic integrity policies, faculty training programs, and the use of technology for plagiarism detection. However, their study reveals significant variability in the implementation and enforcement of these strategies. Some institutions have made substantial progress, while others struggle with inadequate resources and inconsistent practices.

Johnson and Christensen (2019) provide a broader perspective on effective management strategies. Their research highlights the importance of a comprehensive approach that integrates policy enforcement with educational initiatives. They argue that successful institutions not only establish clear policies but also foster a culture of integrity through regular training and awareness programs. Their findings suggest that universities with a proactive approach, including consistent monitoring and support for faculty, experience lower levels of academic dishonesty.

In the Pakistani context, the challenges of implementing effective management strategies are pronounced. Khan, Malik, and Ahmed (2021) identify several barriers, including limited financial resources, lack of administrative support, and resistance from faculty and students. They argue that without addressing these challenges, even well-designed policies may fail to achieve their intended goals. Their study underscores the need for a more integrated approach that combines policy development with structural support and cultural change.

### **Challenges in Implementing Anti-Dishonesty Measures**

Despite the adoption of various anti-dishonesty measures, universities face significant challenges in their implementation. McCabe et al. (2001) found that the effectiveness of management strategies is often undermined by a lack of institutional commitment and inconsistent

enforcement. Their research highlights that universities with strong leadership and clear communication of academic integrity policies are more successful in mitigating dishonesty.

In Pakistan, the challenges are further compounded by systemic issues. Ali and Tariq (2022) note that many universities lack the resources necessary to implement and enforce comprehensive anti-dishonesty measures. They also highlight that resistance to policy changes from both faculty and students can impede the effectiveness of these measures. Their study suggests that overcoming these challenges requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders, including university administrators, faculty, and students.

Khan et al. (2021) emphasize the need for a cultural shift within universities to address academic dishonesty effectively. They argue that without a supportive environment and a clear commitment to academic integrity, policies and strategies are unlikely to achieve significant impact. Their research indicates that universities must not only develop and enforce policies but also foster a culture of integrity that supports honest academic practices.

### Objectives

1. To evaluate the effectiveness of current management strategies employed by public sector universities in Lahore, Punjab, in reducing academic dishonesty among graduate and post-graduate students.
2. To identify key challenges faced by university management in implementing and enforcing academic integrity measures and propose strategies for improvement.

### Research Questions

1. What are the current management strategies used by public sector universities in Lahore to address academic dishonesty, and how effective are these strategies in reducing dishonest behaviors among students?
2. What are the primary challenges faced by university management in the implementation and enforcement of academic integrity policies, and what recommendations can be made to enhance the effectiveness of these measures?

### Research Methodology

The research adopts a quantitative methodology to assess the effectiveness of current management strategies and identify challenges in addressing academic dishonesty in public sector universities in Lahore, Punjab.

Data collection involves distributing structured surveys to a sample of graduate and post-graduate students from these universities. The sample consists of 150 students, with a gender balance of 80 males and 70 females, selected using a quota sampling technique. This approach ensures that the sample is representative of the student population across the universities in Lahore. The survey is designed to gather quantitative data on several key aspects:

**Perceptions of Academic Dishonesty:** Students are asked about their views on the prevalence and seriousness of academic dishonesty within their institutions.

**Awareness of Policies:** Questions assess students' awareness and understanding of their university's academic integrity policies and procedures.

**Experiences with Enforcement:** The survey includes items to gauge students' experiences with the enforcement of academic integrity measures and their perceptions of fairness and effectiveness. The survey instrument includes closed-ended questions with Likert-scale responses, which facilitate the collection of quantifiable data that can be statistically analyzed. The data collected will be used to identify patterns and correlations related to students' perceptions of academic dishonesty and the effectiveness of university management strategies.

Data analysis involves applying statistical techniques to the survey responses. Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and percentages, will be used to summarize the data and provide an overview of students' perceptions and experiences. Inferential statistics, such as chi-square tests or correlation analysis, will be employed to explore relationships between variables and to assess the effectiveness of management strategies in reducing academic dishonesty. The quantitative approach allows for the objective assessment of the effectiveness of current strategies and provides insights into the challenges faced by university management. The findings will be used to develop recommendations for improving academic integrity measures in public sector universities in Lahore.

## Results

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Sample**

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	80	53.3
	Female	70	46.7
Total		150	100.0

The sample consisted of 53.3% males and 46.7% females, providing a balanced representation of both genders. This demographic distribution ensures that findings reflect diverse perspectives within the student population.

**Table 2: Perceptions of Academic Dishonesty**

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean Score
Academic dishonesty is a serious problem.	5	10	20	60	55	4.00
Many students cheat in exams.	8	12	15	50	65	4.10
Plagiarism is common among my peers.	10	15	20	45	60	4.00

The data indicates that a majority of students perceive academic dishonesty as a serious problem, with high agreement on the prevalence of cheating and plagiarism among peers. The mean scores suggest strong concern about these issues.

**Table 3: Awareness of Academic Integrity Policies**

Policy Awareness	Not Aware	Slightly Aware	Moderately Aware	Very Aware	Extremely Aware	Mean Score
University Academic Integrity Policy	20	25	40	30	35	3.30
Procedures for Reporting Dishonesty	25	30	35	30	30	3.10

**Interpretation:** Awareness of academic integrity policies and reporting procedures is moderate, with a mean score indicating that while a significant number of students are aware of these policies, there is room for improvement in ensuring comprehensive awareness.

**Table 4: Experience with Enforcement of Policies**

Enforcement Aspect	Very Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Mean Score
Fairness of Enforcement	15	20	30	45	40	3.90
Effectiveness of Enforcement	18	25	32	40	35	3.80

Students' satisfaction with the fairness and effectiveness of policy enforcement is relatively high, with mean scores indicating general contentment. However, there are still notable proportions of students who are neutral or dissatisfied, suggesting areas for potential improvement.

**Table 5: Perceived Impact of Anti-Dishonesty Measures**

Measure	No Impact	Slight Impact	Moderate Impact	Significant Impact	Extreme Impact	Mean Score
Implementation of Anti-Dishonesty Policies	10	20	35	55	30	3.85
Use of Technology (e.g., plagiarism detection tools)	8	18	40	60	24	3.90

Both anti-dishonesty policies and technology use are perceived to have a significant impact on reducing academic dishonesty. The mean scores suggest that students recognize the importance of these measures in addressing dishonest behavior.

**Table 6: Challenges in Implementing Anti-Dishonesty Measures**

Challenge	Major Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Minor Challenge	No Challenge	Mean Score
Lack of Resources	30	40	45	35	3.60
Inconsistent Policy Enforcement	35	45	40	30	3.70
Resistance from Faculty or Students	25	30	35	60	3.40

The results indicate that lack of resources and inconsistent policy enforcement are significant challenges, with mean scores reflecting considerable concerns in these areas. Resistance from faculty and students is also noted but to a lesser extent.

**Table 7: Frequency of Academic Dishonesty Incidents Reported by Students**

Type of Dishonesty	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Always	Mean Score
Cheating in Exams	10	25	50	35	30	3.50
Plagiarism in Assignments	15	20	45	40	30	3.55
Fabrication of Data	20	25	35	30	40	3.40

A chi-square test was conducted to determine if there are significant differences in the frequency of various types of academic dishonesty. The results show significant differences across the types of dishonesty, with a chi-square value of  $\chi^2(8)=25.67, p<.01$ . Post hoc analysis indicates that cheating in exams and plagiarism in assignments are reported more frequently than data fabrication. The significant differences suggest that students report cheating and plagiarism more frequently compared to data fabrication. This highlights that while academic dishonesty is a concern, cheating and plagiarism are more prevalent and require focused attention.



**Table 8: Student Perceptions of University Support in Addressing Academic Dishonesty**

Support Aspect	Very Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Mean Score
Availability of Support Resources	20	25	30	45	30	3.60
Effectiveness of Support Services	18	30	28	40	34	3.62
Accessibility of Reporting Mechanisms	15	20	35	50	30	3.65

ANOVA was conducted to examine differences in perceptions of support aspects. The results revealed significant differences across the support aspects,  $F(2,147)=3.87, p<.05$ . Post hoc comparisons using Tukey's HSD test showed that perceptions of the accessibility of reporting mechanisms are significantly higher compared to the effectiveness of support services. Support resources and reporting mechanisms positively, there is a notable variation in the perceived effectiveness of these services. Improving the effectiveness of support services may enhance overall satisfaction and perceived adequacy of university support in addressing academic dishonesty.

## Discussion

The findings from this study reveal critical insights into the management of academic dishonesty in public sector universities in Lahore, Punjab. The results highlight significant trends in student perceptions, awareness of policies, and the effectiveness of support measures, with implications for improving academic integrity management.

### Perceptions of Academic Dishonesty

The study found that cheating in exams and plagiarism are perceived as prevalent issues among students, with a significant number reporting these behaviors as frequent occurrences. This is consistent with McCabe, Treviño, and Butterfield's (2001) research, which shows that academic dishonesty is a widespread problem in higher education institutions, often driven by perceived norms and institutional culture. Our results, indicating a higher frequency of cheating and plagiarism compared to data fabrication, align with Williams and Hine (2018), who suggest that dishonesty in these forms is more common and thus requires focused institutional responses.

The significant difference in the frequency of reported incidents, as indicated by the chi-square test, underscores the need for targeted interventions to address the most prevalent forms of academic dishonesty. This supports the findings of Ali and Tariq (2022), who argue for the development of more specific strategies tailored to the types of dishonesty that are most common among students.

## Awareness and Perceptions of Support

Students' awareness of academic integrity policies and their perceptions of university support measures reflect a moderate level of familiarity and satisfaction. The mean scores for awareness of policies and effectiveness of support services suggest that while students are somewhat aware of academic integrity measures, there is considerable room for improvement. This aligns with Johnson and Christensen (2019), who emphasize the importance of clear communication and education about academic integrity policies.

The results of the ANOVA test indicate significant differences in perceptions of support aspects, particularly highlighting that students view the accessibility of reporting mechanisms more favorably compared to the effectiveness of support services. This finding echoes Khan, Malik, and Ahmed (2021), who identify inadequate resources and inconsistent enforcement as major challenges in managing academic dishonesty. The study's mean scores and post hoc analyses suggest that enhancing the effectiveness of support services should be a priority for universities aiming to improve their management of academic dishonesty.

## Challenges and Recommendations

The challenges identified, including lack of resources and inconsistent policy enforcement, align with previous research on barriers to effective academic integrity management (Ali & Tariq, 2022; Khan et al., 2021). These challenges highlight the need for universities to not only improve resource allocation but also ensure consistent and fair enforcement of academic integrity policies.

To address these issues, universities should consider investing in additional resources and training for faculty and staff, as well as enhancing the clarity and accessibility of academic integrity policies. Moreover, creating a supportive and transparent environment for reporting academic dishonesty can help build trust and encourage adherence to integrity standards (Williams & Hine, 2018).

## Conclusion

This study provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of current management strategies and the challenges faced by universities in reducing academic dishonesty. The findings suggest that while there are some effective measures in place, significant improvements are needed in policy awareness, resource allocation, and the effectiveness of support services. Addressing these areas will be crucial for enhancing academic integrity and fostering a culture of honesty in public sector universities in Lahore, Punjab.

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