ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AMONG UNDERGRADUATES IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this research work titled **Assessment of Academic Dishonesty Among Undergraduates in The University of Benin** was conducted by **Etieyibo Avwerosuoghene Roy** with matriculation number **MED1706209** under supervision of **PROF. A.I OBI** in the Department of Public Health and Community Medicine, School of Medicine, College of Medical Sciences, University of Benin as part of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) degree.

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I hereby declare that this project work titled "**Assessment of Academic Dishonesty Among Undergraduates in The University of Benin"** was conducted under supervision and has not been submitted in part or in full for any purpose.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to Jehovah, the true God and Almighty, for granting me the fortitude and wisdom to do this work, and see it to it's finish.

Furthermore, I also wish to dedicate this work to my wonderful parents whose immense love and support have been of great help in the completion of this study, Eng. Daniel O. Etieyibo and Dr. (Mrs) Josephine O. Etieyibo.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

UNIBEN: University of Benin

GPA: Grade Point Average

ICT: Information and Communication Technology

MAIS: McCabe Academic Integrity Survey

ADS: Academic Dishonesty Scale

PKAS: Plagiarism Knowledge and Attitude Scale

SPAHCAD: Students' Poor Awareness of the Havoc and Consequences of Academic Dishonesty

AI: Artificial Intelligence

HEIs: Higher Education Institutes

UBTH: University of Benin Teaching Hospital

UNN: University of Nigeria, Nsukka

NUC: National Universities Commission

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Academic dishonesty: This refers to various unethical behaviors that violate academic integrity, including cheating on exams, plagiarism, falsification of data, and unauthorized collaboration.

Cheating: The act of using unauthorized materials, information, or aids in an academic exercise.

Plagiarism: Presenting another person's words, ideas, data or work as one's own without correct acknowledgement or citation

Falsification: Manipulating research data, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented.

Collusion: Working together with others without permission on assignments that are meant to be completed individually.

Academic integrity: The set of values (honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility) that underpin honest scholarship and assessment.

Contract cheating: Commissioning or paying a third party (including "essay mills" or ghostwriters) to produce academic work and submitting it as one's own.

Self-plagiarism: Re-using significant portions of one's own previously submitted work (text or data) in a new submission without disclosure or permission.

ABSTRACT

Background: Academic dishonesty encompasses a spectrum of unethical behaviours employed by students to gain unfair academic advantage, ranging from cheating during examinations to plagiarism, collusion, and falsification of work, and represents a critical threat to educational integrity. It manifests in diverse forms, including copying, impersonation, undeclared use of digital or artificial intelligence tools, and misrepresentation of effort, with consequences that are intellectual, ethical, and institutional. Research consistently demonstrates its rising prevalence in higher institutions, often occurring in familiar academic settings, influenced by peer pressure, inadequate enforcement of policies, and cultural perceptions that tolerate dishonest practices. Preventive measures include strengthening institutional policies, promoting awareness of academic integrity, redesigning assessment methods, and fostering a culture of honesty and accountability within universities.

Objective: To assess the level of knowledge, attitudes, prevalence, patterns and determinants of academic dishonesty among undergraduate students of the University of Benin with the purpose of enhancing our collective understanding and making recommendations for the prevention of academic dishonesty among undergraduates.

Subjects and methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among full-time undergraduates at the Ugbowo campus of the University of Benin. A multistage sampling strategy yielded a final sample size of 513 students. Data was collected with a self-administered, semi-structured questionnaire adapted from validated instruments. Data was analyzed using IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), and categorical data was presented in frequency tables. Chi-square test was used to examine the relationship between sociodemographic characteristics, respondents, knowledge, attitude and prevalence of sexual coercion. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$

Results: The mean age of respondents was 22.4 ± 3.1 years and 306 (59.6%) were males. Awareness of academic dishonesty was 389 (75.8%). Good knowledge of academic dishonesty was 171 (44.0%) while poor knowledge was 218 (56.0%). A positive attitude toward academic dishonesty was observed in 365 (71.2%) of respondents. The prevalence of academic dishonesty was 330 (64.3%); by level the responses were low 183 (35.7%), moderate 238 (46.4%) and high 92 (17.9%). Factors independently associated with the presence of academic dishonesty included poor knowledge (OR = 1.680, 95% CI = 1.077–2.620, p = 0.022), negative attitude (OR = 0.233, 95% CI = 0.139–0.390, p < 0.001), and perceiving peer influence as a motivating factor (OR = 0.434, 95% CI = 0.224–0.843, p = 0.014).

Conclusion: There is poor knowledge of academic dishonesty and positive attitude towards it among undergraduates. The prevalence of academic dishonesty is about two-thirds of the student population.

Knowledge and attitude were significant factors influencing academic dishonesty. There is a need for educating students on academic integrity, strengthening policies, redesigning assessments, and fostering a culture of honesty in the university.

Keywords: academic dishonesty, knowledge, attitude, prevalence, undergraduates; University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Academic dishonesty broadly refers to any deceitful action that breaches the integrity of scholarly work. It encompasses "a range of deceptive behaviours that violate the integrity of academic work," including plagiarism, cheating, collusion, fabrication, falsification and sabotage. In practice, students may plagiarise by copying text or ideas without attribution, misuse work previously submitted, or present false data. Cheating can take the form of copying answers during an exam, using unauthorised electronic aids, or "contract cheating". Collusion – improper collaboration or sharing answers when prohibited – is a related offence. Even more serious are fabrication and falsification, as well as acts like sabotage. These forms of misconduct all violate the core norms of academic integrity.[1,2]

Academic dishonesty is a universal concern in higher education. Integrity is considered "fundamental to effective education and learning," yet empirical studies show that many students continue to cheat in diverse ways. Reviews report that roughly 50–80% of tertiary students worldwide admit to at least one form of academic misconduct. This widespread prevalence undermines the fairness of assessment and the credibility of degrees. As one author notes, compromising academic integrity "jeopardises the standard and quality of education" and erodes public trust in academic credentials. In other words, when cheating is common, the value of qualifications falls: employers and society lose confidence that graduates truly possess the knowledge and skills their degrees imply. In sum, academic dishonesty threatens the legitimacy of higher education by diluting quality, fairness and trust.[3,4,17]

Undergraduates are especially prone to dishonest behaviour for several reasons. A primary driver is performance pressure. Several studies suggest that motivation, pressure to achieve, and attitudes toward learning influence students' propensity to cheat. Other common factors are heavy workloads, insufficient preparation time, and perceived difficulty of courses. Laziness or procrastination can also play a role, as can competition among students. Critically, poor understanding and attitudes compound the problem. Many undergraduates have only a limited grasp of what behaviours constitute misconduct. These students often see certain dishonest acts as morally mild or acceptable. In practice, those who do not fully appreciate the rules are far more likely to violate them.[6,7,17]

The consequences of academic dishonesty are grave. When students cheat, they not only subvert their own learning but also harm the entire educational enterprise. Cheating students acquire knowledge dishonestly, so their grades and credentials no longer accurately reflect competence. Studies find that individuals who cheat in school are more likely to cheat later as professionals, undermining their productivity. Moreover, widespread dishonesty tarnishes a university's reputation: if many graduates were dishonest in earning their degrees, employers will doubt the value of those qualifications. In this way, a culture of cheating erodes the quality of education. One analysis warns that escalating misconduct is "quickly becoming a mirage" over the ideals of education, directly jeopardising standards and outcomes. In effect, unchecked academic dishonesty ultimately becomes systemic and it jeopardises the role of universities in producing competent graduates equipped for the workforce.[3,4,8,17]

In Nigeria, academic dishonesty is pervasive and takes many forms. Research notes that Nigerian universities face "issues of academic dishonesty and misconduct" on an ongoing basis. Commonly reported malpractices include exam cheating, plagiarism in assignments or theses, "ghost" or gift authorship of work, and falsification of academic documents. Even

more extreme practices have been documented, from impersonation at exams to sex-for-marks schemes. These activities are often exacerbated by systemic factors. For example, overcrowded classrooms and lax enforcement of rules in Nigerian institutions create an environment ripe for cheating. A lack of effective oversight – such as weak plagiarism detection or poor invigilation – means dishonest acts often go unpunished. Cultural attitudes also contribute: many Nigerian students feel intense pressure to obtain certificates by any means, and may undervalue the importance of honest work. In short, academic dishonesty in Nigerian universities is endemic, driven by both individual motives and institutional weaknesses. This underscores the need for effective policies and education to address the problem.[2,5]

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There is no doubt that the issue of academic dishonesty among undergraduate students at the University of Benin is multifaceted, and that it is a matter which deserves to be examined in more detail. The university may lose credibility as a result of instances of cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and other forms of academic misconduct that undercut the credibility of the academic qualifications that are conferred by the university.

Research studies revealed that dishonest behaviors started in high schools can sustain in colleges, and likewise, students who are engaged in academic dishonest behaviors in college tend to engage in dishonest acts in the workplace.[9]

AD was found to be prevalent in a recent study among undergraduates in China in 2022. 1,624 participants in all, representing four public universities across four regions on the Chinese mainland, took part. According to the results, between 15.4 and 51.7% of respondents who were from China participated in AD. Over two thirds of the respondents admitted to cheating on tests or assignments at least once in the preceding academic year. In

addition, there were statistically significant variations in dishonest behaviors between male and female undergraduates in their second, third, and fourth years of study. In particular, compared to the female/sophomore students, the male/senior students engaged in more dishonest behaviors.[10]

A study explored the perceptions and actual indulgence in AD ("cheating") among pharmacy students in two schools of pharmacy in Nigeria. Its results show that the perceptions towards cheating was poor and prevalence of cheating was high, much higher than reported in other schools in the US. In examination scenarios, poor perceptions of what constitutes cheating in an examination was seen especially in two statements which were "a student continues to write in an exam after the allotted time was over" and "a student sees a leaked paper before an exam, solves it and uses the information during an exam". Interestingly the latter scenario can warrant a student's withdrawal from the pharmacy program in both Nigerian universities, but the students felt it was one's "luck" if such an event were presented to them. More encouragingly, only a few of them accepted to have indulged in such an act. The prevalence of indulgence in cheating was high in three examination scenarios with about half of the students reporting indulgence. Allowing a fellow student copy one's work, writing after allotted time was over and exchanging answers by signals during examinations accounted for the most prevalent acts of cheating among these students. Quite worryingly, majority of the students perceived these acts as cheating and still went ahead to indulge in them.[11]

As per the findings of this study among university students in Ethiopia, three types of AD were found to be widespread with the prevalence ranging from 82%-96%. Moreover, assignment-related dishonesty is significantly higher than exam-related and research-related dishonesties. Probably this is attributed to the fact that assignments are meant for mere submissions, students doubt instructors marking assignments, lack of communicating group

norms in doing group assignment, inability to supplement group work with other assessment techniques like oral questioning, lack of clear instruction in doing individual assignments, time pressure etc. Even if, it is difficult to make comparison between academic dishonesty studies due to methodological inconsistencies , the result of this study is indicative that AD in Ethiopian Universities is as high as some dishonesty studies reported earlier, which show a prevalence rate of 84%.[12]

1.2 JUSTIFICATION

Understanding how much students know about what constitutes academic dishonesty is critical because lack of awareness often fuels misconduct. Many undergraduates may engage in practices such as plagiarism, collusion, or examination malpractice without fully realizing that these acts violate academic integrity. By measuring the level of knowledge, the study highlights gaps that need to be filled through targeted orientation, curriculum integration, or workshops. In the long term, this information will guide the University of Benin in developing effective educational campaigns and policies that ensure students are better informed, thereby reducing unintentional dishonesty and fostering a culture of integrity.

Attitudes reflect students' personal beliefs, values, and justifications regarding dishonest behavior. A permissive or tolerant attitude toward cheating can normalize dishonesty and weaken the overall academic culture. By examining attitudes, the study identifies whether students perceive dishonesty as acceptable, necessary, or condemnable. This is important because negative attitudes can be reshaped through role modeling, stricter enforcement, or student-led integrity initiatives. In the future, these findings will allow the university to tailor interventions that challenge harmful mindsets, instill ethical responsibility, and strengthen moral reasoning among students.

Determining how widespread dishonest practices are provides a realistic picture of the problem. Prevalence data quantifies the scope—whether academic dishonesty is isolated, occasional, or systemic. Without such evidence, strategies to address the issue risk being vague or misdirected. By evaluating prevalence, the study equips policymakers and university authorities with concrete data to justify stricter regulations, allocate resources, and implement reforms. In the future, this allows progress to be tracked over time, enabling continuous monitoring of whether interventions are effective in reducing dishonesty rates.

Academic dishonesty rarely arises in a vacuum; it is shaped by multiple influences such as peer pressure, academic workload, lack of deterrents, teaching methods, or personal characteristics. Identifying these factors is essential because solutions must address root causes rather than symptoms. For example, if peer influence is a major driver, student-led awareness campaigns may help; if poor teaching methods contribute, then pedagogy reform is needed. In the future, this knowledge enables the University of Benin to implement targeted, evidence-based interventions that address the most significant drivers, ultimately reducing dishonesty and enhancing academic standards.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1 What is the level of knowledge of academic dishonesty among undergraduates of the University of Benin?

2 What are the attitudes of university undergraduates towards academic dishonesty?

3 What is the prevalence of academic dishonesty among undergraduates of the University of Benin?

4 What are the factors influencing academic dishonesty among undergraduates of the University of Benin?

1.4 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1.4.1 General Aim

To assess academic dishonesty among undergraduates in the University of Benin with the purpose of enhancing our collective understanding and making recommendations for the prevention of academic dishonesty among undergraduates.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

1. To ascertain the level of knowledge of academic dishonesty among undergraduates in the University of Benin.

2. To assess the attitudes of undergraduates in the University of Benin toward academic dishonesty.

3. To evaluate the prevalence of academic dishonesty among undergraduates in the University of Benin.

4. To identify the factors affecting academic dishonesty among undergraduates in the University of Benin.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Background

Academic dishonesty (AD) is an umbrella term for various forms of unethical academic behavior, most notably cheating, plagiarism, data fabrication, impersonation, collusion, and unauthorized collaboration. Academic dishonesty is not only a violation of ethics but also a threat to educational credibility and quality, with implications that stretch into the labor market and the professional world. Studies suggest that students who cheat in school are more likely to engage in unethical behavior in their professional lives, thereby emphasizing the importance of early intervention by means of periodic assessments of AD.

Assessing academic dishonesty at the University of Benin requires a contextual understanding of the unique pressures, norms, and institutional dynamics at play as students may know of rules but not fully understand their scope or severity and students may engage in ghostwriting services, purchase assignments, or cheat out of fear of failure and financial loss, thus assessment instruments must reflect this complexity—measuring not only prevalence but also attitude, peer behavior, awareness of policies, and perceived risks and rewards.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Several theoretical perspectives have been used to understand AD. One of which is Bandura's Social Learning Theory which posits that individuals learn behaviors by observing others, especially peers, authority figures, or role models as students tend to emulate peers who engage in AD, especially if those peers are seen as successful or escape punishment. Various research have observed that students justified cheating because others were doing the same and as such holds this theory to be true.

Another theory known as cognitive dissonance theory postulates that inconsistent cognitions arouse psychological tension that people become motivated to reduce and as such in this context of AD cognitive dissonance is considered a motivating factor. This theory was investigated and found to hold true as a study done by Mills in 1958 showed that undergraduate individuals who decided not to cheat when tempted became more severe in their attitudes toward cheating, while those who cheated became more lenient.

The McCabe Academic Integrity Survey (MAIS) developed by Donald L. McCabe, a pioneer in academic integrity research and founder of the International Center for Academic Integrity (ICAI), is one of the most widely used and validated instruments globally employed in the assessment of AD. It assesses self-reported cheating behaviors, peer behavior, attitudes, and perceptions of institutional policies making use of attitudinal Likert-scale items on values, peer influence, and policy awareness. It has been proven to have high reliability and validity (tested in thousands of institutions globally). Although there could be self-report bias as students may underreport dishonesty due to fear or guilt and also there are cultural limitations as some terms or behaviors may not translate well in non-Western contexts. It has be widely used in studies in the U.S., Canada, Australia, and adapted versions in Africa and Asia.

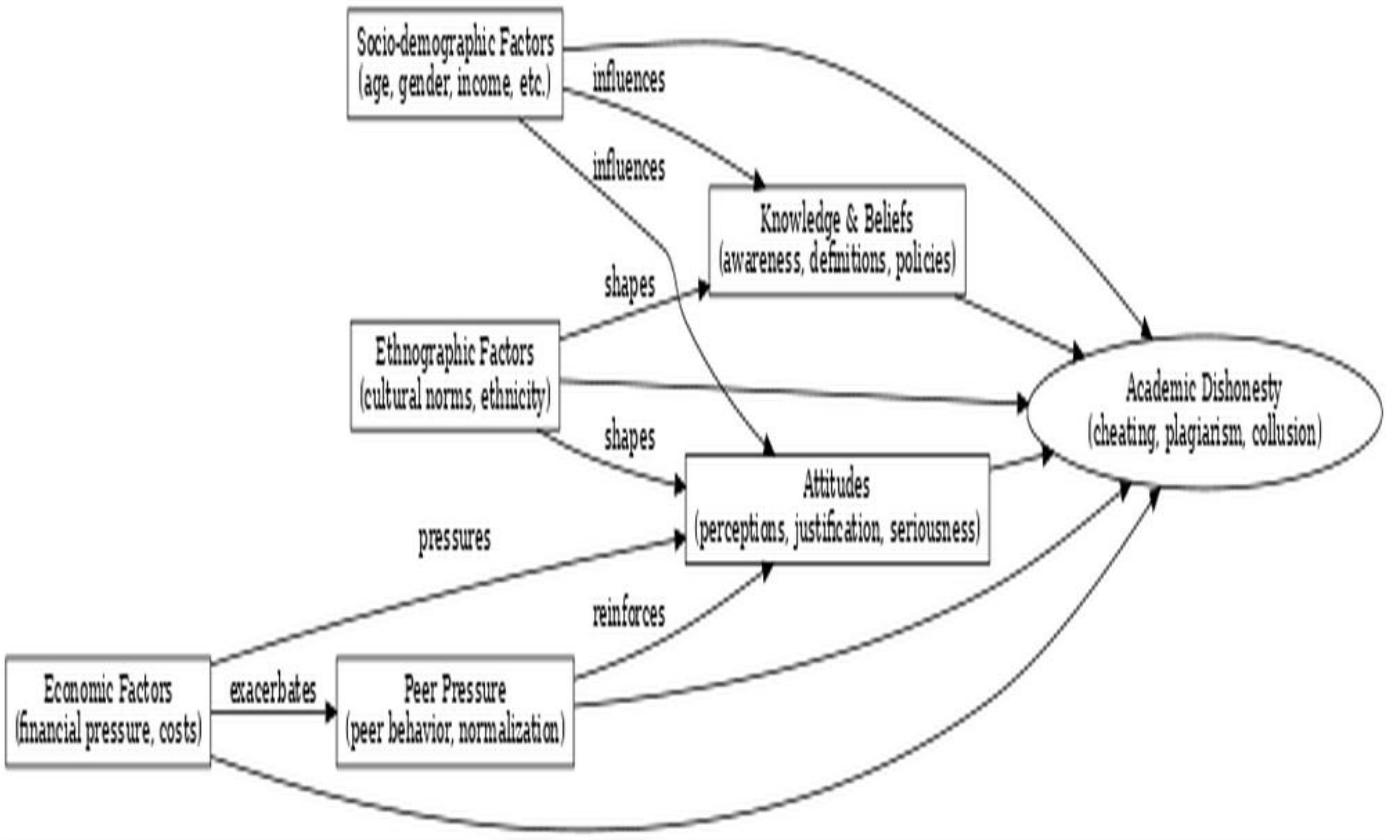
The Academic Dishonesty Scale (ADS) developed in the UK to assess types and frequencies of cheating behavior among undergraduates is also another important AD assessment tool. It captures a wide range of dishonest behaviors and was developed with an understanding of cultural and disciplinary nuances with proven usefulness for comparing intent and action. Although it focuses primarily on British higher education settings, with cultural adaptation before use it has been conveniently applied for various research in African and Asian contexts.

Another assessment tool is the Plagiarism Knowledge and Attitude Scale (PKAS) developed by Ibegbulam and Eze in 2015 in Nigeria to assess knowledge, perception, and attitude

toward plagiarism specifically. It focuses on assessing the awareness of what constitutes plagiarism, understanding of citation practices and beliefs about the ethics and consequences of plagiarism. Its underlying weakness is mainly the fact it does not cover other forms of academic dishonesty (e.g., cheating, collusion) and it has also been argued it may be overly focused on theory and not behavior but it has been shown to be useful as a module in broader AD assessment instruments, especially in first-year student populations.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Study



Knowledge of AD refers to the extent of awareness and understanding students have concerning the definitions, examples, consequences, and ethical implications of dishonest behaviors in academic settings. This knowledge plays a pivotal role in shaping student behavior, as ignorance or misinformation may inadvertently lead to rule. There are three main dimensions to students' knowledge of academic dishonesty which include knowing what constitutes academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, copying, data manipulation), understanding how to avoid engaging in AD (e.g., proper citation methods, seeking help rather than copying) and being aware of the institutional policies and societal expectations around academic behaviour. Several studies suggest that while students are generally familiar with obvious forms of cheating (such as copying during exams), they may lack a nuanced understanding of more subtle forms like self-plagiarism, unauthorized assistance, or falsifying. A scoping review highlighted showed that only a few undergraduates had good knowledge of academic dishonesty, while a vast majority of them had a positive perception of the importance of integrity. This reflects a critical gap between what students believe is right and what they know is wrong. Poor knowledge can also be attributed to institutional failures. For example, vague or under-communicated policies, lack of academic orientation, and ineffective sanctions all contribute to ignorance or ambiguity. As such, improving student knowledge through workshops, honor codes, and academic writing modules is considered an essential preventive strategy.

Attitude refers to an individual's evaluative disposition toward a particular behavior—in this case, academic dishonesty. It encompasses cognitive beliefs, affective responses, and behavioral intentions toward cheating, plagiarism, and related acts. According to the Theory of Planned Behavior**,** attitudes are among the strongest predictors of actual behavior. For example, a study found that although most students viewed cheating as unethical, a large

number still admitted to engaging in such acts within the previous year, citing peer behavior as justification which emphasizes that the discrepancy between belief and action is a major challenge in addressing AD. Interestingly, cultural context plays a significant role in shaping attitudes. In some collectivist societies, helping a friend cheat may not be seen as unethical but rather as fulfilling social obligations. Thus, attitude must be understood within socio-cultural and institutional frameworks.

The extent to which undergraduate students engage in dishonest academic behaviors such as cheating, plagiarism, and falsification across a given period or during specific academic tasks speaking to the prevalence of AD has been reported to be very high on a global scale with studies revealing increasing rates of self-reported cheating and previously uncommon forms of AD such as assignment-related dishonesty now becoming much more prevalent and even on par with commoner forms of AD such as exam-related dishonesty. In the Nigerian context, a systematic review has found that among undergraduates, over half allow peers copy their work, and nearly the same proportion also exchange answers during exams. Another study revealed a significant involvement in AD among Nigerian undergraduates demonstrating that the problem is both pervasive and normalized. Such high prevalence is alarming because it implies that dishonest academic behaviors are becoming institutionalized and culturally ingrained, often viewed as survival strategies rather than deviant actions.

Multi-layered factors ranging from individual-level traits to structural and institutional weaknesses have been identified as determinants of academic dishonesty and they include psychological and personality traits such as low conscientiousness, high neuroticism, and extraversion which have been linked to a higher propensity for cheating. Research has shown peer influence and social norms which was found to be among the most significant predictors of AD. Intense pressure to maintain scholarships, meet family expectations, or secure high

GPAs and many students lacking proper understanding of what constitutes dishonesty, such as self-plagiarism or inappropriate paraphrasing contributes to the likelihood of engaging in dishonest practices. Societal glorification of grades over knowledge has also been recognized to foster dishonest academic culture.

2.1 Knowledge of academic dishonesty

A cross sectional study was done in the Missouri State University among 639 students in both online and face-to-face classes to assess their knowledge and perception of online cheating. 57.2% believed that is easier to cheat in online classes while 15.7% believed otherwise.[13]

A descriptive cross-sectional study done in 2017, conducted in University of Tartu, Estonia among 26 undergraduate students. The results of the study indicate that undergraduate students mostly regard academic dishonesty as cheating on exams and giving answers to their fellow students. But also students who participated in the research considered academic dishonesty to also include plagiarism. At the same time students were aware of the consequences of academic dishonesty.[14]

A cross sectional study was done among 643 engineering and pre-engineering undergraduates at eleven institutions, in the United States to assess the understanding of what students and faculty perceive as cheating. The findings show that more students believe copying from another student on an exam is cheating than believe copying from another student on homework is cheating. This corresponds to a significantly higher frequency of students copying on homework than exams.[15]

In a descriptive cross-sectional study conducted in 2016 at Wa Polytechnic (WP) in Ghana among 131 students to assess their understanding of AD and support for, institutional AD regulations, their involvement in specific dishonest behaviours, as well as their motivation

factors, it was found that approximately 92 % of respondents said they were aware of institutional regulations on AD. However, only 31 % rated their understanding as high.[16]

A cross sectional study was done at the Addis Ababa and Jimma Universities in Ethiopia to assess the knowledge and self-reporting prevalence of AD among undergraduates. The findings show that 96.4% of respondents admitted to being aware and in fact engaging on assignment-related dishonesty while 82.1% and 82% on research-related and exam-related ones, respectively[12]

A cross-sectional study was conducted in 2022 at the Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria with the aim to assess the knowledge, perception, influencing factors as well as suggested strategies to reduce AD among healthcare students. 335 students were enrolled in this study of which 83.3% were female and the mean age of the respondents was 19.33 years. 29.8% and 94.9% of the students showed good knowledge and positive perception of AD respectively[17].

A descriptive cross-sectional study done among 282 first year students in 2015 among the Faculty of Business Administration, University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus was aimed at investigating the knowledge, perception and attitude of Nigerian students to plagiarism. It was found that the knowledge of plagiarism among the students prior to their being taught the subject was very low. However, after being exposed to the subject through teaching, their knowledge increased significantly.[18]

2.2 Attitude towards academic dishonesty

A cross sectional study was conducted in 2022 among 319 undergraduate health sciences students at the Faculty of Health Sciences, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia to investigate students' attitudes and behavior towards AD during online learning. The study found out that despite the fact that students perceive academic dishonesty as a serious

problem and unethical, they couldn't dissuade from doing it with a majority (86.2%) of the respondents reported that they have engaged in AD at least once for the past one year. It was also discovered that their fellow friends engaging in cheating behaviour more frequently than they do, was viewed as "a justification for their behaviour".[19]

A descriptive cross-sectional study carried out in Marmara University in Turkey among 26 students to assess their attitudes toward cheating during scholastic examinations. Findings showed that the tendency to cheat in a variety of ways was found to be high, particularly with regard to the preparation of cheating materials before the examination. While some students justified helping friends they are close to or who they observe as having difficulties, others considered it immoral and refused to be involved in the activity of cheating.[20]

A cross-sectional study was conducted in 2021 to examine perceived seriousness of academic cheating behaviors among 245 (146 males and 99 females) undergraduate students in an Ethiopian University. The results indicated that majority of the respondents rated most cheating behaviors as "serious" but despite that they continued to actively engage in cheating. Furthermore, significant differences were found in the perception of the seriousness of AD amongst students according to field of study and gender.[21]

A descriptive cross-sectional study was done in 2019 among 554 undergraduate business students at a private university in Kenya with the aim to investigate attitudes toward cheating. The results found that students perceived cheating in exam-related situations as quite serious, while cheating on written assignments was not considered a serious offence.[22]

A cross-sectional study conducted among students of Hawassa University College of medicine and health science in Ethiopia to determine the attitudes and prevalence of cheating found out that the majority of students (80.1% (95% CI = 77.9-82.3) disclosed that they would not report cheating to invigilators even if they had witnessed cheating.[23]

A cross-sectional study was conducted in 2019 among 1,310 students in the University of Nigeria Nsukka and Nasarawa State University both in Nigeria with the aim of understanding of students' attitude and perceptions about AD. The results showed that students who believe that they could lose respect if they are known to receive help, believe that there is a good chance that they would be caught, and students who indicated that they were well-prepared for exams, scored significantly higher on the mean situation statements ($p< 0.01$, $p< 0.01$, $p<0.05$ respectively). On the other hand, students who would not care whether they were caught or not as long as they passed the course, and students who indicated that passing was the most important thing to them had statistically significant negative signs on the mean situation scores ($p< 0.01$, $p< 0.01$ respectively).[24]

A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted in 2018 among 226 distance learning students in University of Ibadan, Nigeria. This study examines the awareness, perception and attitude towards plagiarism by these students and findings revealed that majority of the distance learners (89.6%) had a negative perception of plagiarism as they viewed it as a crime. Results also showed that a significant number of the distance learners had a negative attitude towards plagiarism as 90.1% indicated that they will ensure that they duly acknowledge their sources of information.[25]

2.3 Prevalence of academic dishonesty

A cross-sectional study was conducted on 453 Muslim students in 2014, 365 students in 2015 and 320 students in 2016 in four selected Malaysian public universities in order to provide some insight into the activities of AD among higher education students. The result shows that 47% of students had committed AD at least once in 2014; this was prevalent in 51% of students in 2015 and 49% in 2016.[26]

A descriptive cross-sectional study was done among a sample of 2,068 college students throughout Taiwan to assess the prevalence of AD across four domains, including: cheating on test, cheating on assignment, plagiarism, and falsifying documents. Findings showed that the prevalence rate for all types of academic dishonesty behaviors among college students in Taiwan was 61.72%, with the top five most practiced behaviors being provided paper or assignment for another student, helped others on assignments, copied others' assignments, and passed answers to others.[27]

A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted in 2012 among 639 students of the Missouri State University, USA. The aim of the study was to assess the prevalence of AD among within-subject comparisons of those students who had experience with both online and face-to-face courses, and between-subject comparisons of those students who had experience with only one mode of delivery. The within-subject comparison revealed that more students admitted to cheating in online classes. The between-subject comparisons revealed a smaller rate of cheating for students who only took online courses.[13]

A cross-sectional study was conducted in 2013 among students of Hawassa University College of medicine and health science, Ethiopia to determine the prevalence of cheating and identify factors that influence AD. The prevalence of self-reported cheating was found to be 19.8% (95% CI = 17.4-21.9) with about 12.1% (95% CI = 10.2-13.9) of students disclosing cheating on the entrance examination.[23]

A descriptive cross-sectional study was done among undergraduates in three East African universities each selected from three countries and for confidentiality purposes were labeled A, B and C. The purpose of this research was to examine the extent to which academic integrity is maintained in the academic programmes of students of each of these universities. The findings clearly indicated that AD is widely practised by East African university students.

Overall, 37% of the students in university C, followed by 32% of students in university A and 24% of students in university B engaged in AD.[28]

A cross-sectional study was conducted among final year and third year pharmacy students of University of Nigeria (UNN) and Olabisi Onabanjo University (OOU), all in Nigeria(UNN: n=216, 59.0%; OOU: n=150, 41%) to determine the prevalence of AD among Nigerian Pharmacy students. Findings showed that more students cheated in their coursework than in examination (54.2 vs. 45.8%, $p<0.05$), while significantly more final year students in OOU indulged in cheating (74.6 vs. 62.1%, $p<0.05$). Overall, significantly more students in UNN cheated than those in OOU (81.5 vs. 68%, $p=0.002$).[29]

A descriptive cross-sectional study was done in 2021 among 500 undergraduates of Oduduwa University, Ipetu-modu, Nigeria. The thrust of the study was to investigate the level of AD among the undergraduate students. The results showed that there was a low level of involvement in AD among the students 286(57.5%).[30]

2.4 Factors influencing academic dishonesty

A cross-sectional study was done in 2017 among 1127 university students from six public Romanian universities to assess the patterns and predictors of AD in Romanian university students. The results showed that how acceptable students believed the behaviors were and how often students witnessed other students engage in these behaviors were consistent predictors of the frequency of the behaviors, with small to medium effect sizes. Demographic predictors of these behaviors, including gender, academic specialty, year in school, institution, grade average, and scholarship status, predicted very little variance in the behaviors.[31]

A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 292 undergraduates at a large public university in the USA with the aim of assessing the frequency of AD and the characteristics (i.e. gender, course enrollment, and grades) of students who engage in distinct

forms of the behavior. The findings revealed men and students in a study strategies course had a significantly higher report rate for both plagiarism and making false excuses in comparison to women and students in a science course, respectively. Low grades corresponded with high rates of academic dishonesty, specifically in terms of having provided false excuses.[32]

A cross-sectional study was conducted in 2020 among 314 undergraduate students in the private Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) in Malaysia to evaluate the awareness towards academic plagiarism and predictors among undergraduates. The finding of this study reveals that lack of ideas, language proficiency limitations, health problems, pressure, the volume of work, and the lack of interest in the required task are among the reasons for committing academic plagiarism.[33]

A cross sectional study was conducted among 1,119 undergraduate students in the Hawassa University College of medicine and health science, Ethiopia to determine the prevalence of cheating and identify factors that influence cheating among the students of Hawassa University College. Findings showed that current cheating in the university is very strongly associated with cheating in high school, cheating on the entrance examination, field of study, year of study and passive cheating. Cheating was also found to be strongly associated with dining outside university cafeteria and substance abuse as well as with absenteeism from lecture class, attendance at private school and amount of pocket money.[23]

A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted in 2016 at Wa Polytechnic (WP) in Ghana among 131 students to assess their understanding of AD and factors influencing AD among students. The study results revealed that the pursuit of good grades, high academic load and pressure to please family and guardians were the leading causes of AD.[16]
A cross-sectional study was done in 2020 among the students of the Federal College of

Education Zaria Nigeria in order to determine the predictors of AD and assesses the awareness of the havoc and consequences of AD. The results indicated that Students' Poor Awareness of the Havoc and Consequences of AD (SPAHCAD) significantly ($p<0.05$) predict AD.[34]

A descriptive cross-sectional study was done in 2021 among 500 undergraduates of Oduduwa University, Ipetu-modu, Nigeria. The aim of the study was to examine the factors that could predispose students to academic dishonesty. The findings showed that there was a significant relationship between extraversion ($\beta = .051$, $p < 0.05$), agreeableness ($\beta = .131$, $p < 0.05$), neuroticism ($\beta = .327$, $p < 0.05$), openness ($\beta = .002$, $p < 0.05$) and AD, while a negative relationship existed between conscientiousness ($\beta = -.264$, $p > 0.05$) and AD as well as between task value and AD ($r = -.028$, $p > 0.05$).[30]

CHAPTER THREE

MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1 STUDY AREA

This study was conducted in the University of Benin, Ugbowo, Benin-City, Edo State, Nigeria.

Edo State is one of the 36 States located in South-South geo political zone in Nigeria. It was initially established as the Mid-Western Region in 1963 with Benin City as its capital. The region was later renamed Bendel State in 1976 but was divided on August 27,1991 creating the present-day Edo and Delta States. Edo state is bounded by Ondo State to the West, Kogi State to the North-East and Delta State to the South. It has an area of 17,802 square miles. Edo State has 18 local government areas and its slogan is the heartbeat of Nigeria. The main ethnic groups in Edo State are Edos, Afemais, Esans, Owans and Akoko Edos. The predominant occupations in Edo State are trading, artisanry and farming. Benin City is the capital of Edo State with a land mass of approximately 1,204km^2 (6°20′00″N 5°37′2 0″E) and a population of 1,086,882 as at the last population census in 2006 with a growth rate of 3.57% which gives a projected population of 1,973,000 in 2024. There are 3 major local government areas in Benin City, namely Egor, Oredo and Ikpoba-okha local government areas.[35 & 36]

The University of Benin (UNIBEN) is a government-owned tertiary institution established on November 23, 1970. Initially founded as the Midwest Institute of Technology, it attained full university status in 1971 and became a federal government-owned university in 1975. The university boasts an estimated student population of over 77,000 across its two campuses at Ugbowo and Ekehuan. The university is accredited by the National University Commission (NUC) of Nigeria and comprises 16 faculties and 2 colleges. The faculties include Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Veterinary Medicine, Arts, Physical Sciences, Life Sciences, Law,

Social Sciences, Basic Medical Sciences, Education, Environmental Sciences, Engineering, Vocational and Technical Education (VTE), Agricultural Sciences, and Management Sciences. Additionally, the College of Medical Sciences encompasses the Schools of Medicine, Dentistry, Basic Medical Sciences, and the Institute of Child Health. The College of Postgraduate Studies oversees advanced degree programs across various fields. The current vice chancellor of the university is Prof. Mrs. Lillian I. Salami.[37]

3.2 STUDY DESIGN

A descriptive cross sectional study design was used utilized for this study.

3.3 STUDY POPULATION

The study population was among undergraduate students of University of Benin, Ugbowo, Benin-city, Edo State.

3.4 SELECTION CRITERIA

3.4.1 Inclusion criteria

I. Full time undergraduate students of the University of Benin

II. Students who gave their informed consent to undertake the study

3.4.2 Exclusion criteria

I. Students who met the inclusion criteria but refused to participate in the study.

II. Students who were too ill to participate in the study

3.5 STUDY DURATION

The study was carried out between September 2024 and September 2025.

3.6 SAMPLE SIZE DETERMINATION

The minimum sample size for the study was determined using Cochran's formula for single proportions in descriptive studies.[38]

$$n = \frac{z^2pq}{d^2}$$

Where:

n = Sample size.

z = Standard normal deviation, 1.96 (at 95% confidence interval).

p = Prevalence rate of a particular characteristics of the target population

= 81.5% being the prevalence of academic dishonesty among students of University of Nigeria (UNN) in 2020[29].

= 0.815

q = 1 – p =1 – 0.815 = 0.185

d = Margin of Error (0.05)

Thus;

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 \times 0.815 \times 0.185}{0.05^2}$$

n = 231

A design effect of 2 was used.

= 231 x 2 = 462

To account for non-response, a 10% non-response rate was added

$$nf = \frac{n}{1 - nr}$$

Where:

n = Minimum sample size (462).

nr = Non-response rate (10% = 0.10).

nf = Final minimum sample size.

$$nf = \frac{462}{1-0.10}$$

nf = 513

Thus, the final minimum sample size was 513.

3.7 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

Multistage sampling technique was used to carry out this survey. It was done in four (4) stages. A total of 513 undergraduate students participated, with questionnaires distributed across selected departments. Respondents who met the inclusion criteria were consecutively recruited until the desired sample size was achieved.

Stage 1: Selection of Campus:

Simple random sampling was used to select the campus to be used for the survey from the two University of Benin campuses – Ugbowo and Ekehuan campus, and the Ugbowo campus was chosen.

Stage 2: Selection of faculties

Simple random sampling by balloting was used to select six (6) faculties from the 16 faculties in the University of Benin located on the Ugbowo campus. The faculties chosen were Arts, Basic Medical Sciences, Environmental Sciences, Life Sciences, Medicine, and Physical Sciences.

Stage 3: Selection of departments

Within the selected faculties, there were a total of 39 departments. One department was selected from each faculty using simple random sampling by balloting. The departments selected were English and Literature, Nursing Science, Estate Management, Microbiology, Medicine, and Chemistry.

Stage 4: Selection of Respondents

Respondents were selected from undergraduates in each level of the selected departments by stratified sampling technique. The levels in the departments formed the basis for each stratum.

There were six departments involved in this study and the sampling fraction was calculated by dividing the sample size for this study by the total population size for this study(total population of all undergraduates for all 6 departments) and the sampling fraction was multiplied by the population of students in each department to get the department specific sample size.

Sampling fraction = sample size for this study/ total population size for all (6) departments

Department specific sample size = sampling fraction × population of students in each department

A computation for the number of respondents for each level in each department was done. The population of students in a level was divided by the population of students in the department and the resulting fraction was multiplied with the department specific sample size. This gave the required number of respondents for each level.

$$\frac{\text{Population of students in a level}}{\text{Total number of students in department}} \times \text{Departmental Sample size}$$

= Number of respondents for each level

Table 1: Proportionate allocation of respondents according to department and level

Department	Level	Population (N=3895)	Sample Allocation (n=513)
Medicine (N=918)	200L	183	31
	300L	139	24
	400L	134	23
	500L	128	22
	600L	122	21
Total			**121**
Nursing Science (N=797)	200L	163	26
	300L	176	28
	400L	308	51
Total			**105**
Chemistry (N=711)	200L	161	34
	300L	144	30
	400L	143	30
Total			**94**
Microbiology (N=652)	200L	144	28
	300L	153	30
	400L	146	28
Total			**86**
English (N=603)	200L	126	24
	300L	142	27
	400L	153	29
Total			**80**
Estate Management (N=214)	200L	46	11
	300L	29	7
	400L	14	3
	500L	26	6
Total			**27**

Out of 513 respondents, 121 were allocated to Medicine, 105 to Nursing Science, 94 to Chemistry, 86 to Microbiology, 80 to English, and 27 to Estate Management.

3.8 DATA MANAGEMENT

3.8.1 TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION

A quantitative tool (a self-administered semi structured questionnaire) was used for this study. The questionnaire was structured to contain both open ended and closed ended questions. The questionnaire was adapted from two well-established and psychometrically validated instruments, the McCabe Academic Integrity Survey (MAIS) and the Academic Dishonesty Scale (ADS). Each instrument offered unique strengths in measuring various aspects of academic dishonesty and was carefully reviewed and synthesized to suit the cultural and educational context of Nigerian universities. The resulting questionnaire incorporated constructs from both tools and was contextualized for clarity, relevance, and respondent engagement.

McCabe Academic Integrity Survey (MAIS)[38]: Developed by Dr. Donald L. McCabe, the MAIS is one of the most widely used instruments in academic integrity research globally. It assessed several components of academic dishonesty which includes cheating during examinations, plagiarism, facilitating dishonesty, unauthorized collaboration, and fabrication of information or citations. The MAIS utilizes both behavioral frequency items and attitudinal scales, measuring not only prevalence but also students' perceptions of institutional norms and peer behavior. It's Cronbach's Alpha ranges between 0.81 to 0.89 depending on the subscale and sample population and studies have reported test-retest reliability coefficients above 0.80, indicating strong stability over time.

Academic Dishonesty Scale (ADS)[39]: The ADS is a multidimensional instrument that evaluates the extent of self-reported involvement in a wide range of dishonest academic behaviors. Components of academic dishonesty assessed consist of plagiarism and paraphrasing without citation, cheating in written assignments and assessments, misrepresentation and falsification of data, improper use of technology, and group-based

dishonesty. The ADS is highly specific in item phrasing, offering respondents clear, behaviorally anchored examples of dishonesty. It's Cronbach's Alpha reported internal consistency ranges between 0.83 and 0.92, suggesting excellent reliability.

Section A: **Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents**

This section gathered information concerning respondents' age, gender, ethnicity, religion, department, level, residence, monthly allowance and marital status and other relevant sociodemographic details.

Section B: **Knowledge of academic dishonesty**

This section evaluated respondents' knowledge of AD using the following domains: Awareness of AD, source of information, different forms of AD, if it's legal or illegal, responsible body to AD, behaviors that would be considered AD, effect of AD on academic performance, if they've ever witnessed AD, strategies effective in preventing AD, consequences of AD.

Section C: **Attitude towards academic dishonesty**

Respondents were assessed on their view towards AD using a 5-point Likert scale.

Section D: **Prevalence and patterns of academic dishonesty**

The prevalence and patterns of AD was assessed using a 4-point Likert scale.

Section E: **Factors influencing academic dishonesty**

This section assessed some possible reasons why students choose to engage in AD or decide to desist from practicing AD also using a 5-point Likert scale.

3.8.2 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

The questionnaire was self-administered to the selected respondents. Informed consent was sought from the respondents and the respondents were assured of confidentiality. They were informed that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any point and withdrawal poses no loss or harm.

3.8.3 PRE-TESTING

The questionnaires were pre-tested among undergraduate students of Benson Idahosa University, a private university located in Benin-city, Edo State to determine the validity, comprehension and sensitivity of the data tool. Ten percent (10%) of the sample size of this study were used to pretest and observed errors were corrected before being used for this study.

3.8.4 DATA ANALYSIS

Data was collected, collated, screened for completeness, numbered serially and entered into IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Statistics for Windows, Version 257.0 software. Descriptive (univariate) statistics such as frequencies, proportions, means, and standard deviations was used to summarize the data. Chi-square ($\chi 2$) test was used to assess associations between categorical variables, while *t*-test was used for continuous variables. Logistic regression (multivariate) analysis was conducted to identify predictors of AD among the students.

SCORING SYSTEM

KNOWLEDGE SCORE

The knowledge of AD amongst undergraduates in the University of Benin was assessed using 13 questions in which each question will be scored based on correctness. This section evaluated knowledge across four domains: the definition of academic dishonesty, types of academic dishonesty, consequences of academic dishonesty, and awareness of the policies regarding academic dishonesty in the University of Benin. The values were coded as 1 for

correct response and 0 = incorrect response. The total score for each respondent were converted into a percentage. Respondents were categorized into two groups based on their scores:

- Good Knowledge: scores ≥70%
- Poor Knowledge: scores < 70%

ATTITUDE SCORE

A total number of 13 questions were used to access the attitude of undergraduate students of UNIBEN towards AD using a 5-point Likert scale which are strongly agree, agree, indifferent, strongly disagree and disagree. The appropriate responses were scored 1, while the inappropriate responses were scored 0. Then the scores were converted to percentages and grouped as follows:

- Positive attitude: scores ≥70%
- Negative attitude: scores < 70%

PREVALENCE SCORE

The prevalence of academic dishonesty was assessed using the Academic Dishonesty Scale (ADS). The adapted scale consists of 15 questions scored on a 4-point Likert scale[42]:

- Never = 0
- Rarely = 1

- Sometimes = 2
- Often = 3

A total score of 45 were summed, converted to percentages and categorized as follows:

- **0–25%**: Low level of academic dishonesty
- **26–50%**: Moderate level of academic dishonesty
- **50–100%**: High level of academic dishonesty

The scores were interpreted as follows

0-25% = Absent

>25% = Present

FACTORS SCORE

Univariate analysis was carried out to assess the distribution of variables. Bivariate analysis was also carried out and used to determine the association between the socio-demographic data and independent variables. Chi-squared statistical test of associations was used for the non-parametric data and Fischer's exact test was used to compare associations.

Logistic regression was used to fit data in order to identify factors associated with academic dishonesty. All explanatory variables that were associated with the outcome variable were in univariates.

A p-value < 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

3.9 DATA PRESENTATION

The results obtained from the study was presented using frequency distribution tables, contingency tables, charts, and prose. These methods helped in clearly showcasing the distribution of responses, the relationships between variables, and the overall trends observed in the data.

3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Ethical approval to carry out the study was obtained from the Health Research Ethics Committee of the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH) with the protocol number ADM/E 22/A/VOL. VII/148654912574. Permission was obtained from the school management. Informed verbal consent was obtained from all participants.

3.11 LIMITATION OF STUDY

The study relied on the information provided by respondents and may be limited by error due to recall bias, information bias or even false information. Non-response bias could also affect the study results.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

A total of 513 respondents participated in the study with 100% response rate. The results are presented in the following sections in line with the specific objectives.

SECTION A: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

SECTION B: Knowledge of academic dishonesty among undergraduates in the University of Benin

SECTION C: Attitudes of undergraduates in the University of Benin toward academic dishonesty

SECTION D: Prevalence of academic dishonesty among undergraduates in the University of Benin

SECTION E: Contextual factors affecting academic dishonesty among undergraduates in the University of Benin

SECTION A

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Table 1a: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Variables	Frequency (n=513)	Percent
Age group (years)		
15-19	85	16.6
20-24	312	60.8
25-29	108	21.1
30-34	8	1.6
Mean age (±SD)	22.4 ± 3.1	
Sex		
Male	306	59.6
Female	207	40.4
Department		
Medicine	121	23.6
Nursing Science	105	20.5
English and Literature	80	15.6
Chemistry	94	18.3
Microbiology	86	16.8
Estate Management	27	5.3
Level		
200	159	31.0
300	128	25.0
400	175	34.1
500	31	6.0
600	20	3.9
Ethnicity		
Benin	205	40.0
Igbo	83	16.2
Esan	77	15.0
Yoruba	52	10.1
Urhobo	34	6.6
Etsako	15	2.9
Isoko	10	1.9
Hausa	8	1.6
Ijaw	7	1.4
Owan	6	1.2
Efik	5	1.0
Ika	4	0.8
Jukun	3	0.6
Igala	2	0.4
Others*	2	0.4
Religion		
Christianity	501	97.7
Islam	8	1.6
African Traditional Religion	4	0.8
Marital Status		
Single	496	96.7
Married	11	2.1
Cohabiting	5	1.0
Widowed	1	0.2
Residence		
Hostel On-Campus	301	58.7
Hostel Off-Campus	150	29.2
Private Residence	49	9.6
Senior Staff Quarters	9	1.8
Junior Staff Quarters	4	0.8
Monthly Allowance (₦)		
<40,000	154	30.0
40,000-60,000	307	59.8
>60,000	52	10.2
Source of Income		
Parents	430	83.8
Self-supporting	38	7.4
Guardians	25	4.9
Other Relatives	14	2.7
Scholarships	6	1.2

*Others—Tiv, Igara

The age distribution of the respondents showed that the majority were within 20–24 years, 312 (60.8%), followed by those aged 25–29 years, 108 (21.1%). A total of 85 (16.6%) were within the age group 15–19 years, while only 8 (1.6%) were aged 30–34 years. The mean age of the respondents was 22.4 ± 3.1 years. In terms of sex, more than half of the respondents were male, 306 (59.6%), while 207 (40.4%) were female. With respect to department, Medicine had the highest representation, 121 (23.6%), followed by Nursing Science, 105 (20.5%), and Chemistry, 94 (18.3%). Microbiology accounted for 86 (16.8%), while English and Literature had 80 (15.6%). Estate Management was the least represented with 27 (5.3%).

Regarding academic level, 175 (34.1%) were in 400 level, 159 (31.0%) in 200 level, and 128 (25.0%) in 300 level. Only 31 (6.0%) and 20 (3.9%) were in 500 level and 600 level respectively. Ethnic distribution revealed that Benin respondents formed the largest group, 205 (40.0%). This was followed by Igbo, 83 (16.2%), Esan, 77 (15.0%), and Yoruba, 52 (10.1%). Other ethnicities included Urhobo 34 (6.6%), Etsako 15 (2.9%), Isoko 10 (1.9%), Hausa 8 (1.6%), Ijaw 7 (1.4%), Owan 6 (1.2%), Efik 5 (1.0%), Ika 4 (0.8%), Jukun 3 (0.6%), Igala 2 (0.4%), and Others including Tiv and Igara 2 (0.4%).

In terms of religion, the majority of the respondents were Christians, 501 (97.7%), while 8 (1.6%) practiced Islam and 4 (0.8%) adhered to African Traditional Religion.The majority of the respondents were single, 496 (96.7%), while 11 (2.1%) were married. Only 5 (1.0%) were cohabiting, and 1 (0.2%) was widowed. With respect to residence, most respondents lived in hostels on campus, 301 (58.7%), while 150 (29.2%) resided in hostels off campus. Private residences accounted for 49 (9.6%), senior staff quarters 9 (1.8%), and junior staff quarters 4 (0.8%).

In terms of monthly allowance, 307 (59.8%) received between ₦40,000–₦60,000, 154 (30.0%) received less than ₦40,000, while 52 (10.2%) received more than ₦60,000.

Concerning source of income, the majority of respondents were supported by their parents, 430 (83.8%). Others relied on self-support, 38 (7.4%), guardians, 25 (4.9%), and other relatives, 14 (2.7%). Only 6 (1.2%) benefitted from scholarships.

SECTION B

KNOWLEDGE OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AMONG UNDERGRADUATES IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

Table 2: Awareness and source of information on knowledge of academic dishonesty

Variables	Frequency (n=513)	Percent
Awareness of Academic Dishonesty	389	75.8
Source of Information on Academic Dishonesty*		
Colleagues	229	58.9
Social media	198	50.9
Journals	168	43.2
Television	143	36.8
Hospital	41	10.5

*Multiple response questions

A total of 389 (75.8%) respondents reported being aware of academic dishonesty.

Among the sources of information on academic dishonesty, colleagues were the most frequently mentioned, 229 (58.9%), followed by social media, 198 (50.9%). Journals were cited by 168 (43.2%) respondents, while 143 (36.8%) indicated television. Hospitals were the least reported source, 41 (10.5%).

Table 3: Knowledge of academic dishonesty among undergraduates in the University of Benin

Variables	Frequency (n=389)	Percent
Description of Academic Dishonesty		
Cheating during tests or exams	308	79.2
Missing classes without permission	51	13.1
Collaborating in group discussions	19	4.9
Failing to submit assignment before the deadline	11	2.8
Submitting the same assignment in two different courses without permission is academic dishonesty	248	63.8
Allowing someone else to copy your work is academic dishonesty	263	67.6
Examples of Plagiarism*		
Using someone's work without citing them	304	78.1
Paraphrasing someone's idea without referencing	185	47.6
Writing your own opinion without research	70	18.0
Printing references in bold font	50	12.9
Familiar with University of Benin Policy on Academic Integrity	360	92.5
Familiar with Proper Referencing/Citation	244	62.7
Collaborating on an Assignment without Permission is Academic Dishonesty	175	45.0
Using AI Tools without Disclosure is Academic Dishonesty	159	40.9
Actions that are NOT Academic Dishonesty		
Studying with classmates before an exam	336	86.4
Practicing past questions from textbooks	312	80.2
Paying someone to write your project	64	16.5
Submitting plagiarized assignments	25	6.4
Consequences of Academic Dishonesty (e.g., suspension, expulsion)	264	67.9
Formal Lectures/Seminars on Academic Dishonesty	223	57.3

*Multiple response questions

Among the 389 respondents who were aware of academic dishonesty, the majority described it as cheating during tests or examinations, 308 (79.2%). Other descriptions included missing classes without permission, 51 (13.1%), collaborating in group discussions, 19 (4.9%), and failing to submit assignments before the deadline, 11 (2.8%).

When asked about specific practices, 248 (63.8%) considered submitting the same assignment in two different courses without permission as academic dishonesty, while 263

(67.6%) believed that allowing someone else to copy their work also constituted academic dishonesty.

In terms of plagiarism, the most common example identified was using someone's work without citation, 304 (78.1%), followed by paraphrasing without referencing, 185 (47.6%). Writing personal opinions without research was noted by 70 (18.0%), while 50 (12.9%) mentioned printing references in bold font.

Most respondents, 360 (92.5%), were familiar with the University of Benin's policy on academic integrity, while 244 (62.7%) were familiar with proper referencing and citation. Additionally, 175 (45.0%) regarded collaborating on an assignment without permission as academic dishonesty, and 159 (40.9%) reported that using AI tools without disclosure constituted academic dishonesty.

Regarding actions not considered dishonest, 336 (86.4%) indicated that studying with classmates before an examination was acceptable, while 312 (80.2%) considered practicing past questions from textbooks as legitimate. However, a smaller proportion wrongly identified paying someone to write a project, 64 (16.5%), and submitting plagiarized assignments, 25 (6.4%), as actions that were not academic dishonesty.

For perceived consequences, 264 (67.9%) believed that academic dishonesty could result in sanctions such as suspension or expulsion. Furthermore, 223 (57.3%) reported that they had attended formal lectures or seminars on academic dishonesty.

Table 4: Correctness of responses to knowledge of academic dishonesty

Variables	Correct (%)	Incorrect (%)
Description of Academic Dishonesty		
Cheating during tests or exams	308 (79.2%)	81 (20.8%)
Missing classes without permission	338 (86.9%)	51 (13.1%)
Collaborating in group discussions	370 (95.1%)	19 (4.9%)
Failing to submit assignment before the deadline	378 (97.2%)	11 (2.8%)
Submitting the same assignment in two different courses without permission is academic dishonesty	248 (63.8%)	141 (36.2%)
Allowing someone else to copy your work is academic dishonesty	263 (67.6%)	126 (32.4%)
Examples of Plagiarism*		
Using someone's work without citing them	304 (78.1%)	85 (21.9%)
Paraphrasing someone's idea without referencing	185 (47.6%)	204 (52.4%)
Writing your own opinion without research	70 (18.0%)	319 (82.0%)
Printing references in bold font	339 (87.1%)	50 (12.9%)
Familiar with University of Benin Policy on Academic Integrity	360 (92.5%)	29 (7.5%)
Familiar with Proper Referencing/Citation	244 (62.7%)	145 (37.3%)
Collaborating on an Assignment without Permission is Academic Dishonesty	175 (45.0%)	214 (55.0%)
Using AI Tools without Disclosure is Academic Dishonesty	159 (40.9%)	230 (59.1%)
Actions that are NOT Academic Dishonesty		
Studying with classmates before an exam	336 (86.4%)	53 (13.6%)
Practicing past questions from textbooks	312 (80.2%)	77 (19.8%)
Paying someone to write your project	325 (83.5%)	64 (16.5%)
Submitting plagiarized assignments	364 (93.6%)	25 (6.4%)
Consequences of Academic Dishonesty (e.g., suspension, expulsion)	264 (67.9%)	125 (32.1%)

*Multiple response questions

In assessing respondents' knowledge of academic dishonesty, 308 (79.2%) correctly identified cheating during tests or examinations, while 81 (20.8%) were incorrect. A larger proportion, 338 (86.9%), correctly stated that missing classes without permission was not academic dishonesty, compared to 51 (13.1%) who believed otherwise. Similarly, 370 (95.1%) correctly identified that collaborating in group discussions was not academic dishonesty, while 19 (4.9%) were incorrect. Almost all respondents, 378 (97.2%), correctly noted that failing to submit assignments before deadlines was not academic dishonesty, with only 11 (2.8%) indicating otherwise.

On specific practices, 248 (63.8%) correctly recognized that submitting the same assignment in two different courses without permission was academic dishonesty, whereas 141 (36.2%) did not. Likewise, 263 (67.6%) acknowledged that allowing someone else to copy their work constituted dishonesty, while 126 (32.4%) did not.

Regarding plagiarism, 304 (78.1%) correctly reported that using someone's work without citation was plagiarism, though 85 (21.9%) answered incorrectly. Paraphrasing without referencing was correctly identified by 185 (47.6%), while more than half, 204 (52.4%), failed to recognize it. Writing one's own opinion without research was incorrectly classified as plagiarism by 319 (82.0%), while only 70 (18.0%) answered correctly. Additionally, 339 (87.1%) correctly identified that printing references in bold font was not plagiarism, while 50 (12.9%) did not. Knowledge of institutional policies showed that 360 (92.5%) were familiar with the University of Benin's policy on academic integrity, while 29 (7.5%) were not. Similarly, 244 (62.7%) were familiar with proper referencing and citation, whereas 145 (37.3%) were not. Concerning collaborative practices, 175 (45.0%) recognized that working on an assignment without permission was academic dishonesty, while 214 (55.0%) did not. With respect to emerging practices, 159 (40.9%) agreed that using AI tools without disclosure was academic dishonesty, compared to 230 (59.1%) who did not.

For activities not regarded as dishonest, 336 (86.4%) correctly noted that studying with classmates before an exam was legitimate, while 53 (13.6%) thought otherwise. Practicing past questions from textbooks was correctly identified by 312 (80.2%), while 77 (19.8%) were incorrect. Conversely, 325 (83.5%) correctly stated that paying someone to write a project was academic dishonesty, while 64 (16.5%) misclassified it. Submitting plagiarized assignments was correctly identified as academic dishonesty by 364 (93.6%), while 25 (6.4%)

were mistaken. In terms of consequences, 264 (67.9%) knew that academic dishonesty could result in sanctions such as suspension or expulsion, while 125 (32.1%) did not.

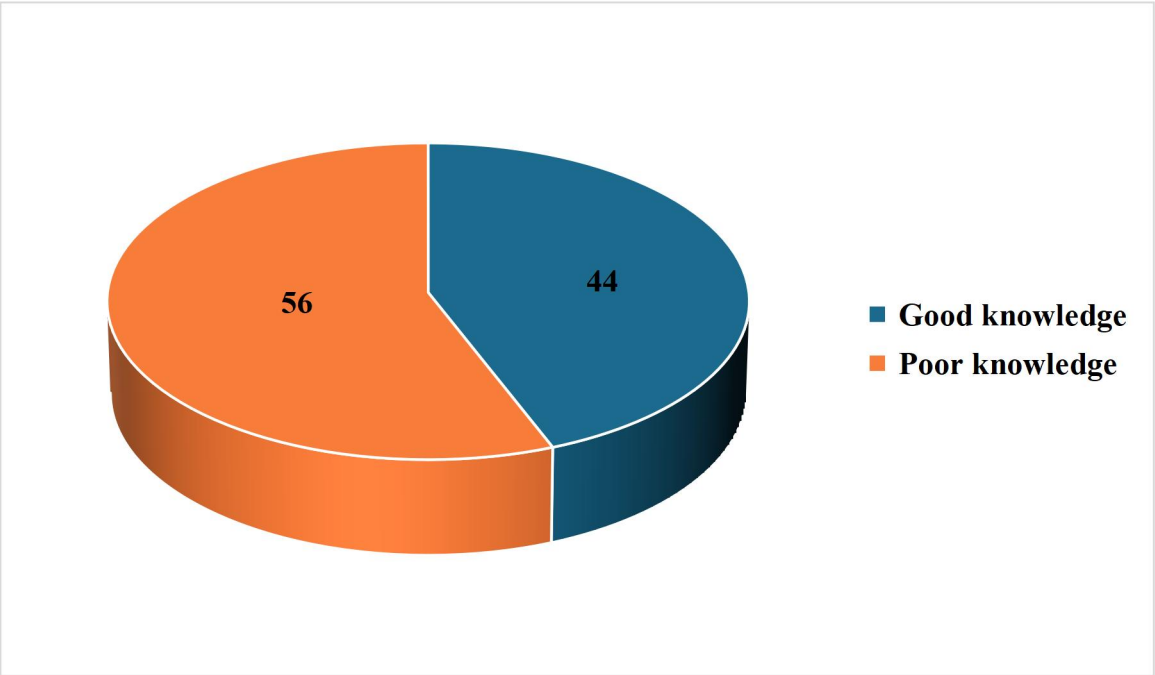


Figure 1: Knowledge of academic dishonesty among undergraduates in the University of Benin

Majority of the respondents, 218 (56.0%) have poor knowledge of academic dishonesty, while only 171 (44.0%) have good knowledge.

Table 5: Factors affecting knowledge of academic dishonesty among undergraduates in the University of Benin

Variables	Knowledge of academic dishonesty		Test statistic (χ^2)	p-value
	Good (n=171) (%)	Poor (n=218) (%)		
Age group (years)				
15-19	19 (24.1%)	60 (75.9%)	17.403*	**<0.001**
20-24	111 (47.6%)	122 (52.4%)		
25-29	39 (53.4%)	34 (46.6%)		
30-34	2 (50.0%)	2 (50.0%)		
Sex				
Male	115 (50.7%)	112 (49.3%)	9.938	**0.002**
Female	56 (34.6%)	106 (65.4%)		
Department				
Health related	115 (49.1%)	119 (50.9%)	6.412	**0.012**
Non-health related	56 (36.1%)	99 (63.9%)		
Level				
200	50 (33.8%)	98 (66.2%)	19.347	**0.001**
300	42 (41.6%)	59 (58.4%)		
400	53 (52.5%)	48 (47.5%)		
500	14 (58.3%)	10 (41.7%)		
600	12 (80.0%)	3 (20.0%)		
Ethnicity				
Edo indigenes	94 (42.2%)	129 (57.8%)	0.692	0.411
Non-Edo indigenes	77 (46.4%)	89 (53.6%)		
Religion				
Christians	170 (44.6%)	211 (55.4%)	3.281*	0.084
Others	1 (12.5%)	7 (87.5%)		
Marital status				
Never married	169 (44.6%)	210 (55.4%)	2.392*	0.196
Ever married	2 (20.0%)	8 (80.0%)		
Residence				
On-campus	109 (42.4%)	148 (57.6%)	0.735	0.450
Off-campus	62 (47.0%)	70 (53.0%)		
Monthly Allowance (₦)				
<40,000	51 (40.5%)	75 (59.5%)	0.932	0.637
40,000-60,000	103 (45.8%)	122 (54.2%)		
>60,000	17 (44.7%)	21 (55.3%)		
Source of Income				
Parents	143 (43.3%)	187 (56.7%)	2.473	0.661
Guardians	7 (38.9%)	11 (61.1%)		
Other Relatives	6 (50.0%)	6 (50.0%)		
Self-supporting	14 (56.0%)	11 (44.0%)		
Scholarships	1 (25.0%)	3 (75.0%)		

*Fisher's Exact Test

Respondents aged 25–29 years had the highest proportion with good knowledge of academic dishonesty, 39 (53.4%), followed by those aged 20–24 years, 111 (47.6%), while the lowest

was among respondents aged 15–19 years, 19 (24.1%). The association between age group and knowledge of academic dishonesty was statistically significant (FET = 17.403, $p < 0.001$). A higher proportion of males, 115 (50.7%), had good knowledge of academic dishonesty compared to females, 56 (34.6%). This association was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 9.938$, $p = 0.002$). Students from health-related departments had a higher proportion with good knowledge of academic dishonesty, 115 (49.1%), compared to students from non-health-related departments, 56 (36.1%). The association between department and knowledge of academic dishonesty was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 6.412$, $p = 0.012$).

For level of study, 600-level students had the highest proportion with good knowledge, 12 (80.0%), followed by 500-level students, 14 (58.3%), while the lowest was among 200-level students, 50 (33.8%). The association between level of study and knowledge of academic dishonesty was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 19.347$, $p = 0.001$). Non-Edo indigenes had a higher proportion with good knowledge of academic dishonesty, 77 (46.4%), compared to Edo indigenes, 94 (42.2%). However, this association was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 0.692$, $p = 0.411$).

Christians had a higher proportion with good knowledge of academic dishonesty, 170 (44.6%), compared to respondents of other religions, 1 (12.5%). This association was not statistically significant (FET = 3.281, $p = 0.084$). Among respondents who were never married, 169 (44.6%) had good knowledge of academic dishonesty compared to 2 (20.0%) among those who were ever married. This association was not statistically significant (FET = 2.392, $p = 0.196$). Respondents who lived off-campus had a higher proportion with good knowledge, 62 (47.0%), compared to those who lived on-campus, 109 (42.4%). The association between place of residence and knowledge of academic dishonesty was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 0.735$, $p = 0.450$).

Students who received between ₦40,000 and ₦60,000 as monthly allowance had the highest proportion with good knowledge, 103 (45.8%), followed by those who received above ₦60,000, 17 (44.7%), while the lowest was among those who received less than ₦40,000, 51 (40.5%). The association between monthly allowance and knowledge of academic dishonesty was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 0.932$, $p = 0.637$). Considering source of income, 143 (43.3%) of respondents who depended on their parents had good knowledge compared to 7 (38.9%) among those supported by guardians, 6 (50.0%) supported by other relatives, 14 (56.0%) who were self-supporting, and 1 (25.0%) on scholarships. This association was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 2.473$, $p = 0.661$).

Table 6: Predictors for good knowledge of academic dishonesty

Predictors	β	Odds ratio	95% CI for OR		p-value
			Lower	Upper	
Age (years)	0.052	1.054	0.903	1.230	0.507
Sex					
Male	0.655	1.925	0.892	4.155	0.095
Female*		1			
Department					
Health related	0.357	1.429	0.907	2.252	0.123
Non-health related*		1			
Level					
200	-1.905	0.149	0.026	0.843	**0.031**
300	-1.571	0.208	0.041	1.060	0.059
400	-1.173	0.310	0.066	1.451	0.137
500	-1.475	0.229	0.039	1.342	0.102
600*		1			
Ethnicity					
Edo indigenes	0.063	1.065	0.513	2.208	0.866
Non-Edo indigenes*		1			
Religion					
Christians	18.519	110371305.633	<0.001	>0.999	0.999
Others*		1			
Marital status					
Never married	18.925	165656235.858	<0.001	>0.999	0.999
Ever married*		1			
Residence					
On-campus	-0.043	0.958	0.445	2.061	0.913
Off-campus*		1			
Monthly Allowance (₦)					
<40,000	-1.359	0.257	0.086	0.766	**0.015**
40,000-60,000	-1.192	0.304	0.119	0.777	**0.013**
>60,000*		1			
Source of Income					
Parents	-0.619	0.539	0.225	1.288	0.164
Others*		1			

CI = Confidence interval; **OR** = Odd ratio; *reference category

For every one-year increase in age, respondents were 1.1 times more likely to have good knowledge of academic dishonesty (95% CI = 0.903 – 1.230, p = 0.507), and this was not statistically significant. Males were 1.9 times more likely to have good knowledge of academic dishonesty than females (95% CI = 0.892 – 4.155, p = 0.095), but this association was not statistically significant.

Respondents from health-related departments were 1.4 times more likely to have good knowledge of academic dishonesty compared to those from non-health-related departments (95% CI = 0.907 – 2.252, p = 0.123), though the relationship was not statistically significant.

At the 200 level, respondents were 6.7 times less likely to have good knowledge of academic dishonesty compared to those at the 600 level (95% CI = 0.026 – 0.843, p = 0.031), and this association was statistically significant.

Similarly, respondents at the 300 level were 4.8 times less likely to have good knowledge than those at the 600 level (95% CI = 0.041 – 1.060, p = 0.059), though this was not statistically significant. Those at the 400 level were 3.2 times less likely to have good knowledge (95% CI = 0.066 – 1.451, p = 0.137), while 500-level students were 4.4 times less likely to have good knowledge compared to 600-level students (95% CI = 0.039 – 1.342, p = 0.102). Both associations were not statistically significant.

Respondents who were Edo indigenes were 1.1 times more likely to have good knowledge of academic dishonesty compared to non-Edo indigenes (95% CI = 0.513 – 2.208, p = 0.866), and this was not statistically significant. Christians were vastly more likely to have good knowledge than respondents of other religions (OR = 110,371,305.633, 95% CI < 0.001 – >0.999, p = 0.999), though this finding was not statistically significant. Respondents who had never married were also substantially more likely to have good knowledge than those who were ever married (OR = 165,656,235.858, 95% CI < 0.001 – >0.999, p = 0.999), but this association was not statistically significant.

Students residing on campus were 1.0 times less likely to have good knowledge of academic dishonesty compared to those living off campus (95% CI = 0.445 – 2.061, p = 0.913), and this was not statistically significant. Respondents with a monthly allowance of less than ₦40,000 were 3.9 times less likely to have good knowledge of academic dishonesty

compared to those earning more than ₦60,000 (95% CI = 0.086 – 0.766, p = 0.015), and this association was statistically significant.

Similarly, those with an allowance of ₦40,000 – ₦60,000 were 3.3 times less likely to have good knowledge compared to those with over ₦60,000 (95% CI = 0.119 – 0.777, p = 0.013), which was also statistically significant. Respondents whose source of income was their parents were 1.9 times less likely to have good knowledge of academic dishonesty than those supported through other means (95% CI = 0.225 – 1.288, p = 0.164). However, this association was not statistically significant.

SECTION C

ATTITUDES OF UNDERGRADUATES IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN TOWARD ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Table 7: Attitudinal responses of undergraduates in the University of Benin toward academic dishonesty

Variables	Strongly agree (n=513) Freq (%)	Agree (n=513) Freq (%)	Neutral (n=513) Freq (%)	Disagree (n=513) Freq (%)	Strongly Disagree (n=513) Freq (%)
Cheating during exams is justifiable when the exam is too difficult	41 (8.0)	58 (11.3)	64 (12.5)	152 (29.6)	198 (38.6)
Submitting someone else's work as your own is a serious academic offense	196 (38.2)	166 (32.4)	73 (14.2)	47 (9.2)	31 (6.0)
Helping a friend cheat is not as wrong as cheating for yourself	9 (1.8)	66 (12.9)	106 (20.7)	194 (37.8)	138 (26.9)
There is no harm in cheating as long as you don't get caught	10 (1.9)	54 (10.5)	97 (18.9)	169 (32.9)	183 (35.7)
It is normal for students to cheat, especially when everyone else is doing it	12 (2.3)	55 (10.7)	88 (17.2)	197 (38.4)	161 (31.4)
If there were stricter punishments, fewer students would engage in academic dishonesty	112 (21.8)	190 (37.0)	91 (17.7)	90 (17.5)	30 (5.8)
Using AI without acknowledgment is dishonest if it completes your entire assignment	61 (11.9)	124 (24.2)	195 (38.0)	92 (17.9)	41 (8.0)
I would report a classmate if I caught them cheating during an exam	19 (3.7)	31 (6.0)	229 (44.6)	143 (27.9)	91 (17.7)
Plagiarism is not a serious offense as long as no one is hurt by it	6 (1.2)	48 (9.4)	117 (22.8)	215 (41.9)	127 (24.8)
Fear of failing is a valid reason to cheat	54 (10.5)	71 (13.8)	108 (21.1)	149 (29.0)	131 (25.5)
Most students would stop cheating if they truly understood what academic dishonesty means	61 (11.9)	104 (20.3)	152 (29.6)	147 (28.7)	49 (9.6)
Group assignment cheating is acceptable when lecturers do not monitor contributions	28 (5.5)	89 (17.3)	171 (33.3)	164 (32.0)	61 (11.9)
Academic dishonesty damages the credibility of a university's degree	181 (35.3)	184 (35.9)	78 (15.2)	56 (10.9)	14 (2.7)

A large proportion of students, 198 (38.6%), strongly disagreed and 152 (29.6%) disagreed that cheating during examinations is justifiable when the exam is too difficult, while only 41 (8.0%) strongly agreed.

Most respondents, 196 (38.2%) strongly agreed and 166 (32.4%) agreed that submitting someone else's work as one's own is a serious academic offense. Similarly, the majority, 194 (37.8%) disagreed and 138 (26.9%) strongly disagreed that helping a friend cheat is not as wrong as cheating for oneself. A considerable proportion, 183 (35.7%) strongly disagreed and 169 (32.9%) disagreed with the statement that there is no harm in cheating as long as you do not get caught. Likewise, 197 (38.4%) disagreed and 161 (31.4%) strongly disagreed that it is normal for students to cheat, especially when everyone else is doing it.

More than half of respondents, 190 (37.0%) agreed and 112 (21.8%) strongly agreed that stricter punishments would reduce academic dishonesty. However, attitudes were more divided regarding the use of artificial intelligence (AI) for assignments, as 195 (38.0%) remained neutral while 124 (24.2%) agreed that using AI without acknowledgment is dishonest if it completes an entire assignment. On reporting peers, 229 (44.6%) remained neutral on whether they would report a classmate caught cheating, while 143 (27.9%) disagreed and only 19 (3.7%) strongly agreed. Regarding plagiarism, the majority, 215 (41.9%) disagreed and 127 (24.8%) strongly disagreed that plagiarism is not a serious offense as long as no one is hurt.

Fear of failing was not widely accepted as justification for cheating, as 149 (29.0%) disagreed and 131 (25.5%) strongly disagreed with this statement. In terms of preventive understanding, 152 (29.6%) were neutral and 104 (20.3%) agreed that most students would stop cheating if they truly understood what academic dishonesty means. When asked about group assignments, 171 (33.3%) remained neutral, though 164 (32.0%) disagreed that group assignment cheating is acceptable when lecturers do not monitor contributions. Finally, a majority of respondents, 184 (35.9%) agreed and 181 (35.3%) strongly agreed that academic dishonesty damages the credibility of a university's degree.

Table 8: Correctness of attitudinal responses of undergraduates in the University of Benin towards academic dishonesty

Variables	Appropriate (%)	Inappropriate (%)
Cheating during exams is justifiable when the exam is too difficult	350 (68.2%)	163 (31.8%)
Submitting someone else's work as your own is a serious academic offense	362 (70.6%)	151 (29.4%)
Helping a friend cheat is not as wrong as cheating for yourself	332 (64.7%)	181 (35.3%)
There is no harm in cheating as long as you don't get caught	352 (68.6%)	161 (31.4%)
It is normal for students to cheat, especially when everyone else is doing it	358 (69.8%)	155 (30.2%)
If there were stricter punishments, fewer students would engage in academic dishonesty	302 (58.9%)	211 (41.1%)
Using AI without acknowledgment is dishonest if it completes your entire assignment	185 (36.1%)	328 (63.9%)
I would report a classmate if I caught them cheating during an exam	50 (9.7%)	463 (90.3%)
Plagiarism is not a serious offense as long as no one is hurt by it	342 (66.7%)	171 (33.3%)
Fear of failing is a valid reason to cheat	280 (54.6%)	233 (45.4%)
Most students would stop cheating if they truly understood what academic dishonesty means	165 (32.2%)	348 (67.8%)
Group assignment cheating is acceptable when lecturers do not monitor contributions	225 (43.9%)	288 (56.1%)
Academic dishonesty damages the credibility of a university's degree	365 (71.2%)	148 (28.8%)

The majority, 350 (68.2%), considered it inappropriate to justify cheating during examinations because the exam was too difficult. Similarly, 362 (70.6%) regarded submitting someone else's work as one's own as inappropriate, while 332 (64.7%) considered helping a friend cheat inappropriate.

A large proportion, 352 (68.6%), viewed the idea that there is no harm in cheating as long as one does not get caught as inappropriate, and 358 (69.8%) felt it was inappropriate to normalize cheating simply because others engage in it. Regarding preventive measures, 302 (58.9%) believed that stricter punishments would reduce academic dishonesty, while 211 (41.1%) felt otherwise.

Interestingly, opinions on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) were less strict: 328 (63.9%) considered it appropriate to use AI without acknowledgment if it completed an entire assignment. Likewise, only 50 (9.7%) considered it appropriate to report a classmate caught cheating, while an overwhelming 463 (90.3%) felt reporting was inappropriate.

Most respondents, 342 (66.7%), regarded as inappropriate the claim that plagiarism is not a serious offense as long as no one is hurt. Similarly, 280 (54.6%) disagreed that fear of failing is a valid reason to cheat. However, only 165 (32.2%) felt that most students would stop cheating if they truly understood academic dishonesty, compared to 348 (67.8%) who considered this inappropriate.

With regard to group assignments, 288 (56.1%) disagreed that group assignment cheating is acceptable when lecturers do not monitor contributions. Finally, a strong majority, 365 (71.2%), affirmed that academic dishonesty damages the credibility of a university's degree.

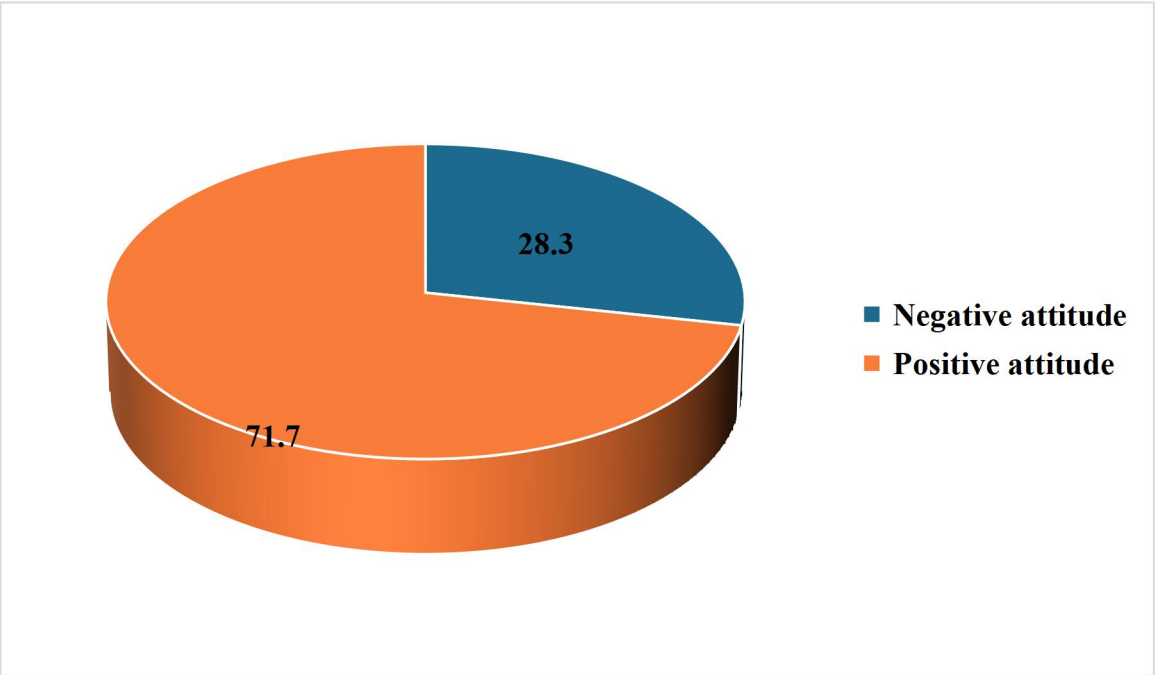


Figure 2: Attitudes of undergraduates in the University of Benin toward academic dishonesty

Majority of the respondents, 365 (71..7%) have a positive towards academic dishonesty, while only 148 (28.3%) have a negative attitude.

Table 9: Factors affecting the attitudinal responses of undergraduates in the University of Benin toward academic dishonesty

Variables	Attitude towards academic dishonesty		Test statistic (χ^2)	p-value
	Negative (n=148) (%)	Positive (n=365) (%)		
Age group (years)				
15-19	19 (22.4%)	66 (77.6%)	4.360	0.228
20-24	88 (28.2%)	224 (71.8%)		
25-29	37 (34.3%)	71 (65.7%)		
30-34	1 (12.5%)	7 (87.5%)		
Sex				
Male	87 (28.4%)	219 (71.6%)	0.010	0.921
Female	58 (28.0%)	149 (72.0%)		
Department				
Health related	103 (33.0%)	209 (67.0%)	8.852	**0.004**
Non-health related	42 (20.9%)	159 (79.1%)		
Level				
200	31 (19.5%)	128 (80.5%)	14.647	**0.005**
300	41 (32.0%)	87 (68.0%)		
400	54 (30.9%)	121 (69.1%)		
500	8 (25.8%)	23 (74.2%)		
600	11 (55.0%)	9 (45.0%)		
Ethnicity				
Edo indigenes	87 (28.7%)	216 (71.3%)	0.073	0.842
Non-Edo indigenes	58 (27.6%)	152 (72.4%)		
Religion				
Christians	143 (28.5%)	358 (71.5%)	0.815*	0.523
Others	2 (16.7%)	10 (83.3%)		
Marital status				
Never married	145 (28.9%)	356 (71.1%)	4.842*	**0.023**
Ever married	0 (0.0%)	12 (100.0%)		
Residence				
On-campus	84 (26.8%)	230 (73.2%)	0.915	0.366
Off-campus	61 (30.7%)	138 (69.3%)		
Monthly Allowance (₦)				
<40,000	43 (27.9%)	111 (72.1%)	0.362	0.826
40,000-60,000	89 (29.0%)	218 (71.0%)		
>60,000	13 (25.0%)	39 (75.0%)		
Source of Income				
Parents	123 (28.6%)	307 (71.4%)	3.005*	0.610
Guardians	6 (24.0%)	19 (76.0%)		
Other Relatives	5 (35.7%)	9 (64.3%)		
Self-supporting	11 (28.9%)	27 (71.1%)		
Scholarships	0 (0.0%)	6 (100.0%)		
Knowledge of academic dishonesty				
Poor	40 (18.3%)	178 (81.7%)	36.322	**<0.001**
Good	80 (46.8%)	91 (53.2%)		

*Fisher's Exact Test

Respondents aged 30–34 years had the highest proportion with a positive attitude towards academic dishonesty, 7 (87.5%), compared to 224 (71.8%) among those aged 20–24 years, 71 (65.7%) among those aged 25–29 years, and 66 (77.6%) among those aged 15–19 years. The association between age group and attitude towards academic dishonesty was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 4.360$, $p = 0.228$). Males had a positive attitude in 219 (71.6%) cases compared to 149 (72.0%) among females. The association between sex and attitude towards academic dishonesty was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 0.010$, $p = 0.921$).

Students from health-related departments had a higher proportion with negative attitudes, 103 (33.0%), compared to those from non-health-related departments, 42 (20.9%), and this association was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 8.852$, $p = 0.004$). By level of study, 200-level students had the highest proportion with a positive attitude, 128 (80.5%), compared to 121 (69.1%) at 400 level, 87 (68.0%) at 300 level, 23 (74.2%) at 500 level, and 9 (45.0%) at 600 level. The association between level and attitude towards academic dishonesty was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 14.647$, $p = 0.005$).

Among ethnic groups, 216 (71.3%) of Edo indigenes had a positive attitude compared to 152 (72.4%) of non-Edo indigenes. The association between ethnicity and attitude towards academic dishonesty was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 0.073$, $p = 0.842$). Christians had a positive attitude in 358 (71.5%) cases compared to 10 (83.3%) among those of other religions. The association between religion and attitude towards academic dishonesty was not statistically significant (FET = 0.815, $p = 0.523$). In terms of marital status, all ever-married respondents, 12 (100.0%), had a positive attitude compared to 356 (71.1%) among those never married. The association between marital status and attitude towards academic dishonesty was statistically significant (FET = 4.842, $p = 0.023$).

For residence, those living on-campus had a positive attitude in 230 (73.2%) cases compared to 138 (69.3%) of off-campus residents. The association between residence and attitude towards academic dishonesty was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 0.915$, $p = 0.366$). Regarding monthly allowance, respondents receiving ₦40,000–60,000 had the highest positive attitude, 218 (71.0%), compared to 111 (72.1%) among those receiving less than ₦40,000 and 39 (75.0%) among those receiving more than ₦60,000. The association between monthly allowance and attitude towards academic dishonesty was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 0.362$, $p = 0.826$).

By source of income, all respondents on scholarships, 6 (100.0%), had a positive attitude, compared to 307 (71.4%) among those supported by parents, 19 (76.0%) among those supported by guardians, 9 (64.3%) among those supported by other relatives, and 27 (71.1%) among self-supporting respondents. The association between source of income and attitude towards academic dishonesty was not statistically significant (FET = 3.005, $p = 0.610$). Finally, respondents with poor knowledge of academic dishonesty had a lower proportion with negative attitudes, 40 (18.3%), compared to those with good knowledge, 80 (46.8%). The association between knowledge of academic dishonesty and attitude was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 36.322$, $p < 0.001$).

Table 10: Predictors for positive attitude towards academic dishonesty

Predictors	β	Odds ratio	95% CI for OR		p-value
			Lower	Upper	
Age (years)	0.012	1.012	0.910	1.127	0.820
Sex					
Male	-0.020	0.981	0.591	1.626	0.940
Female*		1			
Department					
Health related	-0.450	0.637	0.380	1.071	0.089
Non-health related		1			
Level					
200	1.155	3.175	0.739	13.632	0.120
300	0.478	1.613	0.389	6.695	0.510
400	0.176	1.193	0.297	4.784	0.804
500	1.609	4.997	1.074	23.253	0.040
600*		1			
Ethnicity					
Edo indigenes	-0.197	0.821	0.502	1.344	0.434
Non-Edo indigenes*		1			
Religion					
Christians	-0.378	0.685	0.117	4.017	0.675
Others*		1			
Marital status					
Never married	-20.715	<0.001	<0.001	>0.999	0.999
Ever married*		1			
Residence					
On-campus	0.493	1.637	0.981	2.731	0.059
Off-campus*		1			
Monthly Allowance (₦)					
<40,000	0.024	1.024	0.420	2.497	0.959
40,000-60,000	-0.012	0.988	0.437	2.233	0.977
>60,000*		1			
Source of Income					
Parents	-0.616	0.540	0.262	1.114	0.095
Others*		1			
Knowledge of academic dishonesty					
Poor	1.243	3.467	2.125	5.657	**<0.001**
Good*		1			

CI = Confidence interval; **OR** = Odd ratio; *reference category

For every one-year increase in age, respondents were 1.012 times more likely to have a positive attitude towards academic dishonesty (95% CI = 0.910 – 1.127, p = 0.820), and this was not statistically significant.

Respondents who were male were 1.019 times less likely to have a positive attitude towards academic dishonesty compared to females (95% CI = 0.591 – 1.626, p = 0.940), and this was not statistically significant.

Respondents from health-related departments were 1.6 times less likely to have a positive attitude towards academic dishonesty compared to those from non-health-related departments (95% CI = 0.380 – 1.071, p = 0.089), though this finding was not statistically significant. By level of study, 200-level students were 3.175 times more likely to have a positive attitude compared to 600-level students (95% CI = 0.739 – 13.632, p = 0.120). Similarly, 300-level students were 1.613 times more likely (95% CI = 0.389 – 6.695, p = 0.510), and 400-level students were 1.193 times more likely (95% CI = 0.297 – 4.784, p = 0.804). Respondents in 500 level were 4.997 times more likely to have a positive attitude compared to those in 600 level (95% CI = 1.074 – 23.253, p = 0.040), and this was statistically significant.

Edo indigenes were 1.2 times less likely to have a positive attitude towards academic dishonesty compared to non-Edo indigenes (95% CI = 0.502 – 1.344, p = 0.434), and this was not statistically significant. Christians were 1.5 times less likely to have a positive attitude compared to those of other religions (95% CI = 0.117 – 4.017, p = 0.675), and this was not statistically significant. Respondents who were never married were less than 0.001 times as likely to have a positive attitude compared to those who were ever married (95% CI = <0.001 – >0.999, p = 0.999), and this was not statistically significant.

Those residing on-campus were 1.637 times more likely to have a positive attitude compared to those living off-campus (95% CI = 0.981 – 2.731, p = 0.059), and this was not statistically

significant. Respondents receiving less than ₦40,000 monthly allowance were 1.024 times more likely to have a positive attitude compared to those receiving more than ₦60,000 (95% CI = 0.420 – 2.497, p = 0.959). Those receiving ₦40,000–60,000 were 1.012 times less likely (95% CI = 0.437 – 2.233, p = 0.977). Both were not statistically significant.

With respect to source of income, respondents supported by parents were 1.85 times less likely to have a positive attitude than those supported by others (95% CI = 0.262 – 1.114, p = 0.095), and this was not statistically significant. Finally, respondents with poor knowledge of academic dishonesty were 3.5 times more likely to have a positive attitude towards it compared to those with good knowledge (95% CI = 2.125 – 5.657, p < 0.001), and this association was statistically significant.

SECTION D

PREVALENCE OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AMONG UNDERGRADUATES IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

Table 11: Prevalence of academic dishonesty among undergraduates in the University of Benin

Variables	Never (n=513) Freq (%)	Sometimes (n=513) Freq (%)	Often (n=513) Freq (%)	Almost always (n=513) Freq (%)
Copied from another student during an exam	180 (35.1)	202 (39.4)	110 (21.4)	21 (4.1)
Used unauthorized materials during an exam	377 (73.5)	89 (17.3)	37 (7.2)	10 (1.9)
Allowed someone to copy your work during an exam	114 (22.2)	100 (19.5)	233 (45.4)	66 (12.9)
Submitted an assignment copied from another student	124 (24.2)	146 (28.5)	172 (33.5)	71 (13.8)
Paraphrased someone's work without proper citation	185 (36.1)	134 (26.1)	156 (30.4)	38 (7.4)
Collaborated on an assignment intended to be individual	88 (17.2)	140 (27.3)	218 (42.5)	67 (13.1)
Used AI tools without acknowledgment	71 (13.8)	115 (22.4)	172 (33.5)	155 (30.2)
Provided fabricated or falsified data in a lab report or project	239 (46.6)	141 (27.5)	95 (18.5)	38 (7.4)
Falsified attendance (e.g., signing for absent friends)	195 (38.0)	109 (21.2)	151 (29.4)	58 (11.3)
Shared exam questions with students yet to take the test	302 (58.9)	129 (25.1)	64 (12.5)	18 (3.5)
Used old or leaked question papers without permission	230 (44.8)	104 (20.3)	131 (25.5)	48 (9.4)
Exchanged answers during an exam using gestures or whispers	194 (37.8)	109 (21.2)	166 (32.4)	44 (8.6)
Paid someone to complete coursework on your behalf	378 (73.7)	79 (15.4)	41 (8.0)	15 (2.9)
Used translation or paraphrasing software to avoid plagiarism detection	274 (53.4)	119 (23.2)	97 (18.9)	23 (4.5)
Cheated in an online exam or quiz	298 (58.1)	124 (24.2)	71 (13.8)	20 (3.9)

Several forms of academic dishonesty were reported among the respondents, with varying levels of frequency. Copying from another student during an exam was fairly common, as only 180 (35.1%) indicated that they never engaged in this behaviour, while 202 (39.4%) admitted to doing so sometimes, 110 (21.4%) often, and 21 (4.1%) almost always. In contrast,

the use of unauthorized materials during an exam appeared less frequent, with a majority of 377 (73.5%) reporting “never,” while 89 (17.3%) admitted to doing so sometimes, 37 (7.2%) often, and 10 (1.9%) almost always.

Allowing someone else to copy during an exam was relatively widespread, with less than a quarter, 114 (22.2%), stating they never engaged in it. Conversely, 100 (19.5%) admitted to sometimes allowing others to copy, while 233 (45.4%) and 66 (12.9%) reported doing so often and almost always, respectively. Similarly, submitting assignments copied from another student was also notable, as only 124 (24.2%) had never done so, whereas 146 (28.5%) reported sometimes engaging in it, 172 (33.5%) often, and 71 (13.8%) almost always.

Paraphrasing someone’s work without proper citation showed a similar trend, with 185 (36.1%) reporting they never did this, 134 (26.1%) sometimes, 156 (30.4%) often, and 38 (7.4%) almost always. Collaboration on assignments intended to be individual was even more prevalent, as just 88 (17.2%) reported never engaging in this behaviour, while 140 (27.3%) admitted to sometimes doing so, 218 (42.5%) often, and 67 (13.1%) almost always.

A striking pattern was observed with the use of AI tools without acknowledgment: only 71 (13.8%) denied engaging in this practice, while 115 (22.4%) did so sometimes, 172 (33.5%) often, and as many as 155 (30.2%) almost always. Providing fabricated or falsified data in reports or projects was less common, with nearly half, 239 (46.6%), indicating they never engaged in it, though 141 (27.5%) admitted to doing so sometimes, 95 (18.5%) often, and 38 (7.4%) almost always.

Falsifying attendance, such as signing for absent friends, was reported as never by 195 (38.0%) respondents, while 109 (21.2%) admitted to doing so sometimes, 151 (29.4%) often, and 58 (11.3%) almost always. Sharing exam questions with students yet to take the test was

reported as never by 302 (58.9%), sometimes by 129 (25.1%), often by 64 (12.5%), and almost always by 18 (3.5%).

The use of old or leaked question papers without permission was reported as never by 230 (44.8%), while 104 (20.3%) admitted to doing so sometimes, 131 (25.5%) often, and 48 (9.4%) almost always. Exchanging answers during an exam using gestures or whispers was reported as never by 194 (37.8%), sometimes by 109 (21.2%), often by 166 (32.4%), and almost always by 44 (8.6%).

Some behaviours were much less common. For instance, paying someone to complete coursework was denied by 378 (73.7%), while 79 (15.4%) admitted to sometimes engaging in it, 41 (8.0%) often, and 15 (2.9%) almost always. Similarly, using translation or paraphrasing software to avoid plagiarism detection was reported as never by 274 (53.4%), sometimes by 119 (23.2%), often by 97 (18.9%), and almost always by 23 (4.5%). Cheating in online exams or quizzes followed a similar pattern, with 298 (58.1%) denying such behaviour, 124 (24.2%) admitting to it sometimes, 71 (13.8%) often, and 20 (3.9%) almost always.

Table 12: Components of academic dishonesty

Variables	Frequency (n=513)	Percent
Cheating in examination		
Low	206	40.2
Moderate	225	43.9
High	82	16.0
Plagiarism/misuse of resources		
Low	163	31.8
Moderate	207	40.4
High	143	27.9
Outside help/contract cheating		
Low	276	53.8
Moderate	180	35.1
High	57	11.1
Falsification/fabrication		
Low	212	41.3
Moderate	197	38.4
High	104	20.3

The results show that different forms of academic dishonesty varied in prevalence among respondents. For cheating in examinations, 206 (40.2%) students were categorized as low, 225 (43.9%) as moderate, and 82 (16.0%) as high. With respect to plagiarism and misuse of resources, 163 (31.8%) fell into the low category, 207 (40.4%) into moderate, and 143 (27.9%) into high.

For outside help or contract cheating, more than half of the respondents, 276 (53.8%), reported low involvement, while 180 (35.1%) fell into moderate and 57 (11.1%) into high. Similarly, falsification or fabrication of academic work was reported as low by 212 (41.3%), moderate by 197 (38.4%), and high by 104 (20.3%).

Table 13: Levels of academic dishonesty

Variables	Frequency (n=513)	Percent
Academic dishonesty		
Low	183	35.7
Moderate	238	46.4
High	92	17.9

Levels of academic dishonesty among respondents varied in distribution. Out of 513 students, 183 (35.7%) were categorized as having low levels of academic dishonesty, 238 (46.4%) fell within the moderate category, while 92 (17.9%) were classified as high.

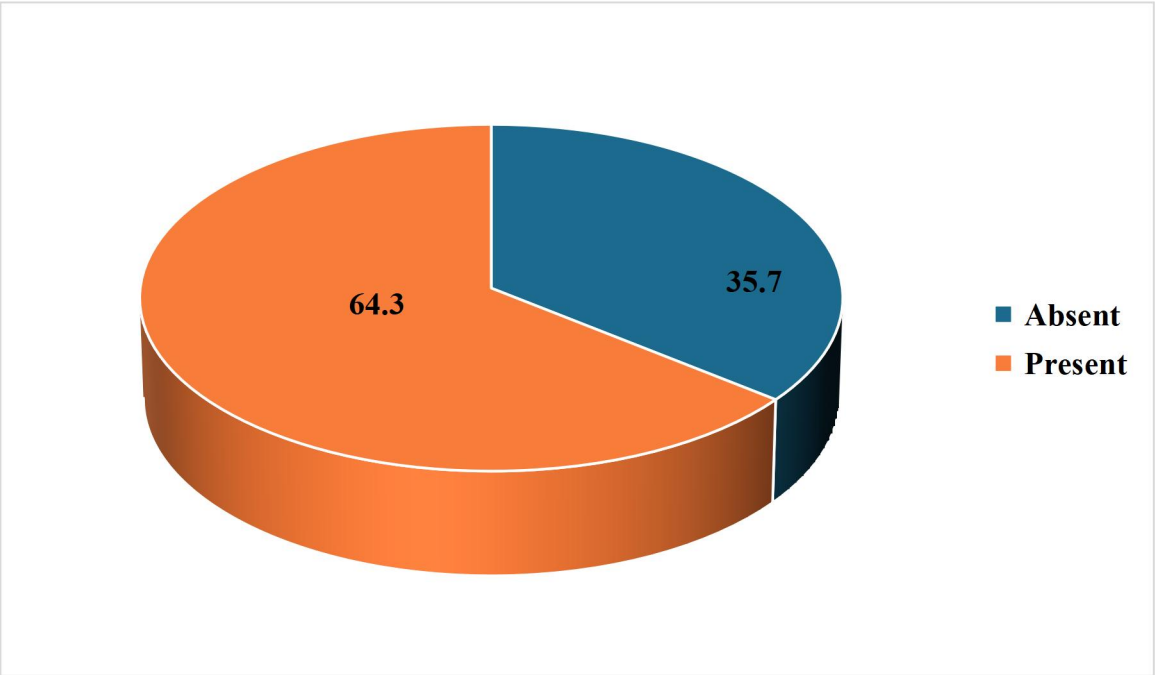


Figure 3: Prevalence of academic dishonesty among undergraduates in the University of Benin

Academic dishonesty is present in majority of the respondents, 330 (64.3%), while it is absent in 183 (35.7%) .

Table 14: Factors affecting the prevalence of academic dishonesty among undergraduates in the University of Benin

Variables	Prevalence of academic dishonesty		Test statistic (χ^2)	p-value
	Present (n=330) (%)	Absent (n=183) (%)		
Age group (years)				
15-19	55 (64.7)	30 (35.3)	2.950	0.399
20-24	193 (61.9)	119 (38.1)		
25-29	76 (70.4)	32 (29.6)		
30-34	6 (75.0)	2 (25.0)		
Sex				
Male	196 (64.1)	110 (35.9)	0.025	0.874
Female	134 (64.7)	73 (35.3)		
Department				
Health related	194 (62.2)	118 (37.8)	1.601	0.220
Non-health related	136 (67.7)	65 (32.3)		
Level				
200	102 (64.2)	57 (35.8)	8.356	0.079
300	73 (57.0)	55 (43.0)		
400	119 (68.0)	56 (32.0)		
500	25 (80.6)	6 (19.4)		
600	11 (55.0)	9 (45.0)		
Ethnicity				
Edo indigenes	199 (65.7)	104 (34.3)	0.587	0.444
Non-Edo indigenes	131 (62.4)	79 (37.6)		
Religion				
Christians	322 (64.3)	179 (35.7)	0.537*	1.000
Others	8 (66.7)	4 (33.3)		
Marital status				
Never married	323 (64.5)	178 (35.5)	0.192*	0.762
Ever married	7 (58.3)	5 (41.7)		
Residence				
On-campus	206 (65.6)	108 (34.4)	0.576	0.448
Off-campus	124 (62.3)	75 (37.7)		
Monthly Allowance (₦)				
<40,000	91 (59.1%)	63 (40.9%)	3.913	0.147
40,000-60,000	208 (67.8%)	99 (32.2%)		
>60,000	31 (59.6%)	21 (40.4%)		
Source of Income				
Parents	271 (63.0)	159 (37.0)	5.805*	0.208
Guardians	21 (84.0)	4 (16.0)		
Other Relatives	8 (57.1)	6 (42.9)		
Self-supporting	25 (65.8)	13 (34.2)		
Scholarships	5 (83.3)	1 (16.7)		
Knowledge of academic dishonesty				
Poor	144 (66.1)	74 (33.9)	4.958	**0.028**
Good	94 (55.0)	77 (45.0)		
Attitude towards academic dishonesty				
Negative	63 (43.4%)	82 (56.6%)	38.400	**<0.001**
Positive	267 (72.6%)	101 (27.4%)		

*Fisher's Exact Test

Respondents aged 30–34 years had the highest proportion with academic dishonesty present, 6 (75.0%), compared to 76 (70.4%) among those aged 25–29 years, 193 (61.9%) among those aged 20–24 years, and 55 (64.7%) among those aged 15–19 years. The association between age group and prevalence of academic dishonesty was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 2.950$, $p = 0.399$).

Males had academic dishonesty present in 196 (64.1%) cases compared to 134 (64.7%) among females. The association between sex and prevalence of academic dishonesty was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 0.025$, $p = 0.874$).

Among students from non-health-related departments, 136 (67.7%) reported academic dishonesty compared to 194 (62.2%) among those from health-related departments. The association between department and academic dishonesty was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 1.601$, $p = 0.220$). By level of study, 500-level students had the highest prevalence, 25 (80.6%), compared to 11 (55.0%) among 600-level, 73 (57.0%) among 300-level, 102 (64.2%) among 200-level, and 119 (68.0%) among 400-level students. The association between level and prevalence of academic dishonesty was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 8.356$, $p = 0.079$).

Edo indigenes had academic dishonesty present in 199 (65.7%) cases compared to 131 (62.4%) among non-Edo indigenes. The association between ethnicity and prevalence of academic dishonesty was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 0.587$, $p = 0.444$).

Christians had academic dishonesty present in 322 (64.3%) cases compared to 8 (66.7%) among respondents of other religions. The association between religion and prevalence of academic dishonesty was not statistically significant (FET = 0.537, $p = 1.000$).

Never-married respondents had academic dishonesty present in 323 (64.5%) cases compared to 7 (58.3%) among ever-married respondents. The association between marital status and prevalence of academic dishonesty was not statistically significant (FET = 0.192, p = 0.762).

Respondents residing on-campus had academic dishonesty present in 206 (65.6%) cases compared to 124 (62.3%) among off-campus residents. The association between residence and prevalence of academic dishonesty was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 0.576$, p = 0.448). Regarding monthly allowance, respondents receiving less than ₦40,000 had academic dishonesty present in 91 (59.1%) cases, those receiving ₦40,000–60,000 in 208 (67.8%), and those receiving more than ₦60,000 in 31 (59.6%). The association between monthly allowance and prevalence of academic dishonesty was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 3.913$, p = 0.147). With respect to source of income, academic dishonesty was present in 271 (63.0%) of respondents supported by parents, 21 (84.0%) by guardians, 8 (57.1%) by other relatives, 25 (65.8%) self-supporting, and 5 (83.3%) on scholarships. The association between source of income and prevalence of academic dishonesty was not statistically significant (FET = 5.805, p = 0.208).

Knowledge of academic dishonesty was significantly associated with its prevalence. Among those with poor knowledge, 144 (66.1%) reported engaging in academic dishonesty compared to 94 (55.0%) among those with good knowledge ($\chi^2 = 4.958$, p = 0.028). Finally, respondents with a negative attitude towards academic dishonesty had a lower prevalence of academic dishonesty present, 63 (43.4%), compared to 267 (72.6%) among those with a positive attitude. The association between attitude and prevalence of academic dishonesty was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 38.400$, $p < 0.001$).

Table 15: Predictors for the prevalence of academic dishonesty

Predictors	β	Odds ratio	95% CI for OR		p-value
			Lower	Upper	
Age (years)	0.023	1.023	0.930	1.127	0.637
Sex					
Male	-0.077	0.926	0.577	1.485	0.749
Female*		1			
Department					
Health related	-0.295	0.744	0.472	1.173	0.203
Non-health related		1			
Level					
200	0.570	1.769	0.449	6.964	0.415
300	0.496	1.643	0.424	6.362	0.473
400	0.814	2.257	0.608	8.385	0.224
500	1.452	4.273	0.871	20.972	0.074
600*		1			
Ethnicity					
Edo indigenes	0.315	1.370	0.858	2.186	0.187
Non-Edo indigenes*		1			
Religion					
Christians	-0.282	0.755	0.139	4.096	0.744
Others*		1			
Marital status					
Never married	0.966	2.627	0.654	10.548	0.173
Ever married*		1			
Residence					
On-campus	0.088	1.093	0.667	1.788	0.725
Off-campus*		1			
Monthly Allowance (₦)					
<40,000	0.388	1.474	0.643	3.378	0.359
40,000-60,000	0.523	1.686	0.778	3.655	0.185
>60,000*		1			
Source of Income					
Parents	-0.670	0.512	0.258	1.014	0.055
Others*		1			
Knowledge of academic dishonesty					
Poor	0.519	1.680	1.077	2.620	**0.022**
Good*		1			
Attitude towards academic dishonesty					
Negative	-1.457	0.233	0.139	0.390	**<0.001**
Positive*		1			

CI = Confidence interval; **OR** = Odd ratio; *reference category

For every one-year increase in age, respondents were 1.023 times more likely to exhibit academic dishonesty (95% CI = 0.930 – 1.127, p = 0.637), and this was not statistically significant.

Male respondents were 1.081 times less likely to engage in academic dishonesty compared to females (95% CI = 0.577 – 1.485, p = 0.749), and this was not statistically significant.

Respondents from health-related departments were 1.3 times less likely to engage in academic dishonesty compared to those from non-health-related departments (95% CI = 0.472 – 1.173, p = 0.203), and this was not statistically significant. By level of study, 200-level students were 1.769 times more likely to engage in academic dishonesty compared to 600-level students (95% CI = 0.449 – 6.964, p = 0.415), 300-level students were 1.643 times more likely (95% CI = 0.424 – 6.362, p = 0.473), 400-level students were 2.257 times more likely (95% CI = 0.608 – 8.385, p = 0.224), and 500-level students were 4.273 times more likely (95% CI = 0.871 – 20.972, p = 0.074). None of these associations were statistically significant.

Edo indigenes were 1.370 times more likely to engage in academic dishonesty compared to non-Edo indigenes (95% CI = 0.858 – 2.186, p = 0.187), and this was not statistically significant. Christians were 1.325 times less likely to engage in academic dishonesty compared to those of other religions (95% CI = 0.139 – 4.096, p = 0.744), and this was not statistically significant.

Never-married respondents were 2.627 times more likely to engage in academic dishonesty compared to ever-married respondents (95% CI = 0.654 – 10.548, p = 0.173), and this was not statistically significant. Respondents residing on-campus were 1.093 times more likely to engage in academic dishonesty compared to off-campus residents (95% CI = 0.667 – 1.788, p = 0.725), and this was not statistically significant.

For monthly allowance, respondents receiving less than ₦40,000 were 1.474 times more likely to engage in academic dishonesty (95% CI = 0.643 – 3.378, p = 0.359), and those receiving ₦40,000–60,000 were 1.686 times more likely (95% CI = 0.778 – 3.655, p = 0.185), compared to those receiving more than ₦60,000. Both were not statistically significant. With respect to source of income, respondents supported by parents were 1.953 times less likely to engage in academic dishonesty compared to those supported by other sources (95% CI = 0.258 – 1.014, p = 0.055), and this was not statistically significant.

Respondents with poor knowledge of academic dishonesty were 1.68 times more likely to engage in it compared to those with good knowledge (95% CI = 1.077 – 2.620, p = 0.022), and this association was statistically significant. Finally, respondents with a negative attitude towards academic dishonesty were 4.29 times less likely to engage in academic dishonesty compared to those with a positive attitude (95% CI = 0.139 – 0.390, p < 0.001), and this was statistically significant.

SECTION E

FACTORS AFFECTING ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AMONG UNDERGRADUATES IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

Table 16: Factors affecting academic dishonesty among undergraduates in the University of Benin

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Academic pressure to maintain good grades contributes to students cheating	481	93.8
Fear of failure is a major reason for academic dishonesty	482	94.0
Lack of strict punishment encourages students to cheat	384	74.9
Large class sizes and inadequate supervision make cheating easier	459	89.5
Peer influence is a motivating factor for academic dishonesty	447	87.1
Students cheat because they believe everyone else is doing it	394	76.8
Access to smartphones, internet, and AI tools increases cheating	441	86.0
Awareness campaigns and academic support can reduce cheating	358	69.8
Most lecturers at the University of Benin enforce integrity policies seriously	295	57.5

A majority of respondents, 481 (93.8%), indicated that academic pressure to maintain good grades contributes to students cheating, while 482 (94.0%) identified fear of failure as a major reason for academic dishonesty. Lack of strict punishment was also considered a contributing factor, with 384 (74.9%) agreeing that it encourages students to cheat.

Large class sizes and inadequate supervision were perceived as facilitating cheating by 459 (89.5%) respondents, and peer influence was noted by 447 (87.1%) as a motivating factor. Similarly, 394 (76.8%) of respondents believed that students cheat because they think everyone else is doing it. Access to smartphones, internet, and AI tools was reported by 441 (86.0%) of respondents as increasing the likelihood of cheating.

On the positive side, 358 (69.8%) of respondents agreed that awareness campaigns and academic support can reduce cheating. However, only 295 (57.5%) felt that most lecturers at the University of Benin enforce integrity policies seriously.

Table 17: Factors affecting academic dishonesty among undergraduates in the University of Benin

Variables	Prevalence of academic dishonesty		Test statistic (χ^2)	p-value
	Present (n=330) (%)	Absent (n=183) (%)		
Academic pressure to maintain good grades contributes to students cheating				
No	19 (59.4)	13 (40.6)	0.365	0.546
Yes	311 (64.7)	170 (35.3)		
Fear of failure is a major reason for academic dishonesty				
No	21 (67.7)	10 (32.3)	0.168	0.682
Yes	309 (64.1)	173 (35.9)		
Lack of strict punishment encourages students to cheat				
No	87 (67.4)	42 (32.6)	0.728	0.393
Yes	243 (63.3)	141 (36.7)		
Large class sizes and inadequate supervision make cheating easier				
No	30 (55.6)	24 (44.4)	2.024	0.155
Yes	300 (65.4)	159 (34.6)		
Peer influence is a motivating factor for academic dishonesty				
No	50 (75.8)	16 (24.2)	4.312	0.038
Yes	280 (62.6)	167 (37.4)		
Students cheat because they believe everyone else is doing it				
No	78 (65.5)	41 (34.5)	0.100	0.751
Yes	252 (64.0)	142 (36.0)		
Access to smartphones, internet, and AI tools increases cheating				
No	43 (59.7)	29 (40.3)	0.774	0.379
Yes	287 (65.1)	154 (34.9)		
Awareness campaigns and academic support can reduce cheating				
No	105 (67.7)	50 (32.3)	1.128	0.288
Yes	225 (62.8)	133 (37.2)		
Most lecturers at the University of Benin enforce integrity policies seriously				
No	139 (63.8)	79 (36.2)	0.053	0.818
Yes	191 (64.7)	104 (35.3)		

*Fisher's Exact Test

Respondents who indicated that academic pressure to maintain good grades contributes to students cheating had academic dishonesty present in 311 (64.7%) cases, compared to 19 (59.4%) among those who did not perceive this as a factor. The association between academic pressure and prevalence of academic dishonesty was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 0.365$, $p = 0.546$). Among respondents who believed fear of failure is a major reason for academic dishonesty, 309 (64.1%) had academic dishonesty present, compared to 21 (67.7%) among those who disagreed. This association was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 0.168$, $p = 0.682$).

Respondents who reported that lack of strict punishment encourages cheating had academic dishonesty present in 243 (63.3%) cases, compared to 87 (67.4%) among those who did not perceive lack of punishment as a factor. The association was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 0.728$, $p = 0.393$). Large class sizes and inadequate supervision were perceived to facilitate cheating, with 300 (65.4%) of respondents reporting academic dishonesty present compared to 30 (55.6%) among those who disagreed. The association was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 2.024$, $p = 0.155$).

Peer influence emerged as a significant factor. Respondents who believed peer influence motivates academic dishonesty had prevalence present in 280 (62.6%) cases, compared to 50 (75.8%) among those who did not. The association was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 4.312$, $p = 0.038$). Among respondents who believed that students cheat because everyone else is doing it, 252 (64.0%) had academic dishonesty present, compared to 78 (65.5%) among those who disagreed. The association was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 0.100$, $p = 0.751$).

Respondents who agreed that access to smartphones, internet, and AI tools increases cheating had academic dishonesty present in 287 (65.1%) cases, compared to 43 (59.7%) among those who disagreed. This association was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 0.774$, $p = 0.379$).

Among respondents who believed awareness campaigns and academic support can reduce cheating, 225 (62.8%) had academic dishonesty present, compared to 105 (67.7%) among those who did not. The association was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 1.128$, $p = 0.288$). Finally, respondents who reported that most lecturers enforce integrity policies seriously had academic dishonesty present in 191 (64.7%) cases, compared to 139 (63.8%) among those who disagreed. The association was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 0.053$, $p = 0.818$).

Table 18: Predictors for prevalence of academic dishonesty

Predictors	β	Odds ratio	95% CI for OR Lower	Upper	p-value
Academic pressure to maintain good grades contributes to students cheating					
Yes	0.266	1.305	0.582	2.925	0.518
No*		1			
Fear of failure is a major reason for academic dishonesty					
Yes	-0.412	0.662	0.264	1.662	0.380
No*		1			
Lack of strict punishment encourages students to cheat					
Yes	-0.143	0.867	0.542	1.388	0.552
No*		1			
Large class sizes and inadequate supervision make cheating easier					
Yes	0.601	1.824	0.935	3.559	0.078
No*		1			
Peer influence is a motivating factor for academic dishonesty					
Yes	-0.834	0.434	0.224	0.843	0.014
No*		1			
Students cheat because they believe everyone else is doing it					
Yes	0.126	1.134	0.692	1.860	0.617
No*		1			
Access to smartphones, internet, and AI tools increases cheating					
Yes	0.244	1.276	0.725	2.246	0.398
No*		1			
Awareness campaigns and academic support can reduce cheating					
Yes	-0.185	0.832	0.542	1.276	0.398
No*		1			
Most lecturers at the University of Benin enforce integrity policies seriously					
Yes	0.062	1.064	0.730	1.552	0.745
No*		1			

CI = Confidence interval; **OR** = Odd ratio; *reference category

Respondents who indicated that academic pressure to maintain good grades contributes to cheating were 1.305 times more likely to engage in academic dishonesty compared to those who did not perceive this factor (95% CI = 0.582 – 2.925, p = 0.518), and this was not statistically significant.

Those who believed fear of failure is a major reason for academic dishonesty were 1.510 times less likely to engage in academic dishonesty compared to respondents who did not perceive fear of failure as a factor (95% CI = 0.264 – 1.662, p = 0.380), and this was not statistically significant. Respondents who reported that lack of strict punishment encourages cheating were 1.153 times less likely to engage in academic dishonesty compared to those who did not perceive this factor (95% CI = 0.542 – 1.388, p = 0.552), and this was not statistically significant.

Those who agreed that large class sizes and inadequate supervision make cheating easier were 1.824 times more likely to engage in academic dishonesty compared to respondents who disagreed (95% CI = 0.935 – 3.559, p = 0.078), and this was not statistically significant. Respondents who perceived peer influence as a motivating factor were 2.30 times less likely to engage in academic dishonesty compared to those who did not perceive peer influence as a factor (95% CI = 0.224 – 0.843, p = 0.014), and this was statistically significant.

Respondents who believed that students cheat because everyone else is doing it were 1.134 times more likely to engage in academic dishonesty compared to those who did not perceive this factor (95% CI = 0.692 – 1.860, p = 0.617), and this was not statistically significant. Those who reported that access to smartphones, internet, and AI tools increases cheating were 1.276 times more likely to engage in academic dishonesty compared to those who did not perceive this factor (95% CI = 0.725 – 2.246, p = 0.398), and this was not statistically significant.

Respondents who believed awareness campaigns and academic support can reduce cheating were 1.202 times less likely to engage in academic dishonesty compared to those who did not perceive this factor (95% CI = 0.542 – 1.276, p = 0.398), and this was not statistically significant. Finally, respondents who reported that most lecturers at the University of Benin

enforce integrity policies seriously were 1.064 times more likely to engage in academic dishonesty compared to those who disagreed (95% CI = 0.730 – 1.552, p = 0.745), and this was not statistically significant.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

This study assessed the knowledge, attitudes, prevalence, and patterns of academic dishonesty among undergraduate students of the University of Benin, Nigeria, and further examined factors associated with these behaviors.

A total of 513 respondents participated, which is sufficiently large to give a fair representation of the undergraduate population across various faculties in the institution.

The mean age of respondents was 22.4 ± 3.1 years. This falls within the expected age range of undergraduates in Nigeria, where most students enter university soon after secondary education.

Sex distribution revealed that about three-fifths of the respondents were male, while approximately two-fifths were female. This male predominance reflects the enrollment pattern of some faculties at the University of Benin that traditionally attract more male students.

In relation to marital status, more than nine-tenths of respondents were single, while less than one-tenth were married. This aligns with the typical age structure of undergraduate students in Nigeria, who generally pursue tertiary education before marriage.

When compared with an Ethiopian multi-site study conducted among undergraduates at Addis Ababa and Jimma Universities, similarities were observed. In the Ethiopian study, the mean age of respondents was 21.2 years, which is slightly younger but still within the early twenties, consistent with the present study's mean of 22.4 years. Both studies also reported a predominance of male students, accounting for more than half of respondents, and nearly all were single.[12]

Religion-wise, about nine-tenths of respondents identified as Christians, with less than one-tenth practicing other religions. This reflects the religious profile of Benin City, where Christianity is the predominant faith.

About two-fifths of respondents were of Bini extraction, roughly one-sixth were Igbo, about one-seventh were Esan, and about one-tenth were Yoruba, and smaller groups each made up only single-digit percentages. This distribution indicates the University of Benin naturally attracts a high proportion of Edo (Bini/Esan) students while also drawing students from neighbouring states and further afield, producing the observed mix.

About three-fifths of respondents lived in on-campus hostels and roughly three-tenths in off-campus hostels. This shows that most students use university hostel accommodation, with a substantial minority living off-campus. A plausible reason is limited private housing or the convenience/cost advantages of campus hostels; conversely, some students prefer or must use off-campus housing because of hostel capacity limits or personal choice.

Approximately three-fifths of respondents reported a monthly allowance in the ₦40,000-₦60,000 band, about one-third received less than ₦40,000, and roughly one-tenth received more than ₦60,000. This pattern suggests most students subsist on a moderate family allowance, while a sizeable minority live on much smaller sums. About five-sixths of respondents relied on parental support which indicates overwhelming family dependency for tuition and living costs.

About three-quarters of respondents reported being aware of the term “academic dishonesty,” and this awareness appears to be driven mainly by informal peer networks and mass media/social platforms, with formal channels cited less often. This pattern is important for public health and institutional integrity because information that is transmitted informally or through unregulated online channels is prone to distortion, minimization of harms, and the

normalization of unacceptable practices. To counter this, the university should create and actively maintain authoritative, student-friendly online resources and amplify them via the same social-media channels students use. They should also institute a peer-educator programme that trains selected students to deliver short, evidence-based integrity sessions in faculties so peer influence works for correct practice, not misinformation.

In contrast to the high awareness, less than half of respondents had good knowledge of academic dishonesty, while more than half demonstrated poor knowledge of what constitutes dishonest behaviour. Several plausible, mutually reinforcing factors likely explain this gap. One of which is that exposure has been largely superficial involving just policy awareness without hands-on training and formal instruction on referencing/paraphrasing including acceptable use of tools including AI is limited or irregular across departments. Also faculty emphasis on teaching good academic practice is inconsistent, and assessment designs may reward shortcutting.

The disparity between high awareness but limited knowledge in this study aligns with findings from a survey conducted among undergraduate students at Afe Babalola University, Nigeria in 2022, which reported that although a large majority of students had heard about academic misconduct, less than half could accurately identify behaviours classified as dishonesty, and misconceptions were common.[17]

Poor, superficial knowledge of academic integrity among undergraduates even where awareness is high has important downstream implications for public safety and professional accountability. In health and clinical disciplines, evidence shows that unprofessional behaviour during training is associated with a higher risk of disciplinary action later in professional practice as students who develop or normalise dishonest shortcuts in training are more likely to carry unprofessional practices into the workplace, with potential harms to

patient safety and public trust.[40] Therefore it is not only an academic problem but a public-health concern that justifies early, discipline-specific remediation and monitoring.

To bridge this gap it is crucial to shift orientation from "rules only" to skills and scenarios by making freshman orientation to include small-group, discipline-specific workshops. It is also imperative to train and support faculty to teach and model academic integrity so instructors can give consistent, practical guidance and mark for originality, not just penalize after the fact. A simple, discipline-specific institutional statement on acceptable AI use, with examples and required declaration formats should also be developed so students understand what disclosure looks like in practice.

Analysis of knowledge of academic dishonesty and sociodemographics revealed that older students (25–29 years) were more likely to have good knowledge of academic dishonesty compared to younger respondents, especially those aged 15–19 years. This aligns with findings from a Ghanaian study conducted among undergraduates in 2016 which observed that older undergraduates reported higher understanding and lower tolerance for dishonest behaviours than younger ones, who were still adapting to academic life.[16] The agreement suggests that age often reflects maturity and accumulated exposure to institutional norms, with younger students less grounded in academic ethics due to limited experience.

Male students in this study were more likely to have good knowledge of academic dishonesty compared to their female counterparts, a difference that was statistically significant. One possible explanation is that males tend to engage more in peer networks where cheating practices and rules are openly discussed, giving them greater familiarity with what constitutes dishonesty. Social norms may also influence this outcome, as female students might be less exposed to these informal conversations or may underreport familiarity due to gendered

expectations about academic behaviour. This is in contrast with a study done among undergraduate students at University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus in 2015 which did not report a statistically significant difference between male and female students.[18]

Findings also showed that level of study was significantly associated with knowledge of academic dishonesty, with students in higher levels showing better knowledge than their junior counterparts. This finding is not surprising, as senior students are more exposed to university regulations, departmental training, and repeated encounters with academic tasks that require referencing and originality. In addition, senior students may have personally witnessed disciplinary actions or discussions about malpractice, making them more conscious of academic integrity.

Faculty also showed a significant relationship with knowledge, with students in health-related faculties and departments tending to demonstrate better knowledge compared to non-health counterparts. This is likely because professional courses such as Medicine, Nursing, and Laboratory Science place greater emphasis on ethics, research methods, and originality as part of their curricula. These students are also frequently reminded of the professional consequences of dishonesty, both in training and eventual practice. Conversely, students in some non-professional faculties may not encounter structured academic-integrity training to the same extent, which could explain their relatively poorer knowledge.

Economic resources also influenced knowledge as students with higher monthly allowances were more likely to have good knowledge of academic dishonesty compared to those with lower allowances. This relationship may be explained by the fact that students with greater financial support can afford better access to internet facilities, textbooks, and academic writing resources, all of which facilitate learning about proper referencing and plagiarism avoidance.

These findings are in similar to a 2010 Ethiopian study to determine the knowledge and self-reporting prevalence of AD among undergraduates at Addis Ababa and Jimma Universities which reported that knowledge of academic dishonesty was significantly associated with faculty of study and year level, with health sciences and senior students demonstrating better awareness than non-health and junior counterparts.[12]

The finding that higher levels of study and professional faculties were linked with better knowledge suggests that younger and non-professional students may be particularly vulnerable to engaging in academic dishonesty without fully appreciating its consequences. If dishonesty becomes normalized at these formative stages, it can translate into unethical practices in the workplace. Furthermore, the role of financial resources implies that students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may be disproportionately disadvantaged, both in access to integrity-related training and in their ability to develop the academic skills required to avoid misconduct. This raises equity concerns, as systemic factors may predispose certain groups to higher risks of misconduct.

Addressing these gaps requires a multifaceted strategy. Universities should integrate compulsory, credit-bearing modules on academic integrity early in undergraduate programs, ensuring that all students, including those in non-professional faculties, are equipped with practical knowledge on referencing, paraphrasing, and the ethical use of technology. Financial disparities should be addressed by providing free access to plagiarism-detection tools, writing support centers, and workshops, so that students from less affluent backgrounds are not left behind. Targeted interventions for junior students, such as mandatory first and second-year integrity workshops, would help establish strong ethical foundations before academic dishonesty becomes ingrained.

About three-quarters of the study sample showed a positive attitude to academic dishonesty when the overall attitude score was applied and only about one-tenth said they would report a classmate if they witnessed cheating, a pattern that indicates broad tolerance or acceptance of peers' dishonest behaviour. A plausible explanation is social norming and peer protection where students may personally judge cheating as problematic in principle yet still tacitly accept or tolerate it in practice because of peer pressure, concerns about reporting (fear of social sanction or reprisals), high stakes assessment pressure, and perceived weak enforcement of rules on campus all of which lower the perceived personal cost of condoning or participating in dishonest acts.

This is in agreement with a study among undergraduates at Oduduwa University, Nigeria done in 2021 which revealed that more than two-thirds of students rationalised or condoned dishonest academic behaviours, hence having a positive attitude toward academic dishonesty. This further underscores that tolerance for academic malpractice is widespread among university institutions in Nigeria.[30]

The predominance of positive attitudes toward academic dishonesty among undergraduates has serious implications for both academic culture and future professional practice. When students normalise or justify dishonest behaviours, the risk is that such attitudes may extend beyond the classroom and into professional settings, eroding trust in critical sectors such as health care, law, and education.

To address this, universities must implement multi-pronged interventions. They must strive to strengthen institutional enforcement by applying sanctions consistently and create safe and anonymous channels for reporting malpractice. Equally important is tackling the root causes of positive attitudes, including high academic pressure and inadequate learning support, through counselling services, peer-mentorship schemes, and provision of academic resources.

These approaches are more likely to shift attitudes away from tacit approval toward genuine rejection of dishonesty, thereby protecting both institutional credibility and long-term public trust.

Analysis of attitude towards academic dishonesty and sociodemographic revealed that level of study appears to play a significant role. Students in the 200 level had the highest proportion with positive attitudes, while those in the final year were the least tolerant of academic dishonesty. A likely explanation for the general pattern is exposure, as students progress academically, they encounter more rigorous training, stricter enforcement of rules, and the realisation of professional consequences, all of which reduce tolerance for dishonest behaviour. Junior students, on the other hand, are less exposed and more susceptible to peer influence.

Faculty of study was also a significant predictor of attitude. Students from professional faculties, particularly health-related disciplines, displayed less positive attitudes toward academic dishonesty compared to those in non-professional faculties. This result is unsurprising given that health and related programmes incorporate repeated instruction on professional ethics, responsibility, and integrity. Dishonesty in such fields is not merely an academic concern but a matter of patient safety and public trust. By contrast, in non-professional faculties where such explicit links to practice may be weaker, dishonest practices may be more easily rationalised.

The results of this study show considerable agreement with a study conducted at Hawassa University, Ethiopia in 2014 among undergraduate students which reported that level of study and faculty significantly influenced attitudes and behaviours toward academic dishonesty. Senior students and those in health-related faculties were less tolerant of dishonest practices, mirroring the present findings.[23]

Marital status also emerged as significant in this study. All students who were ever married demonstrated positive attitudes toward academic dishonesty compared to about three-quarters of their never-married peers. While this finding should be interpreted cautiously due to the small number of married respondents, it suggests that the added pressures of family and financial responsibility may lead married students to adopt more pragmatic or permissive views of academic integrity.

Findings also showed that students with good knowledge of academic dishonesty were more likely to hold negative attitudes toward it, while those with poor knowledge were more likely to display tolerant or positive attitudes. This significant association suggests that awareness and understanding of what constitutes academic dishonesty, alongside its consequences, shape how students perceive and judge such behaviours. A probable reason is that students who are well informed about academic integrity policies and the broader academic or professional risks of dishonesty may internalise these values, leading to a stronger disapproval of malpractice. On the other hand, those with poor knowledge may not fully grasp the seriousness of dishonest acts, resulting in more permissive attitudes.

This is in harmony with a study conducted in a university in Ethiopia among undergraduates in 2014 were the study also noted that students with poor knowledge were more permissive, further corroborating the role of knowledge as a determinant of attitude.[23] A similar pattern was reported in a study conducted among Nigerian university students in 2015 which examined knowledge, perception, and attitudes toward plagiarism. They found that students who had clearer knowledge of plagiarism were significantly more likely to view it as unacceptable, while limited or poor knowledge often translated into ambivalence or tacit acceptance of the practice.[18] But it contrasts with a study assessing academic integrity

conducted among East African university students in 2012 which found that many students who knew about dishonest behaviours still showed relatively tolerant or positive attitudes.[28] This difference might be due to cultural or institutional variations in contexts where rule enforcement is weaker, or where peer norms override formal ethics, knowledge may not as strongly convert to negative attitude.

This study revealed that the overall prevalence of academic dishonesty was present in 64.3% of the students sampled. Exam-related behaviours were common with about two-fifths of students reporting sometimes copying from another student and roughly one-fifth reporting doing so often, with a small minority (about one in twenty) indicating they almost always copied. Allowing others to copy was reported frequently with only about one-fifth never allowing it while nearly two-fifths did so often. Notably, unacknowledged use of AI tools was prominent as roughly two-thirds of students used AI tools with at least moderate frequency (often or almost always), while paying someone to do coursework was comparatively uncommon with about three-quarters denied ever doing that. Taken together, these patterns indicate that dishonest behaviours are routine for a substantial minority and that much of the activity is peer-driven or technology-facilitated rather than primarily commercial contract-cheating. Plausible reasons include intense grade/competition pressures, social norms that tolerate “permitted” copying, weaknesses in assessment design and invigilation, and rapid availability of digital tools including AI that lower the barrier to cheating.

These findings are in harmony with a 2021 study carried out in Oduduwa University, Ipetumodu, Nigeria, where it was reported that 61% of undergraduates admitted to engaging in dishonest practices, highlighting that academic misconduct is widespread in Nigerian private universities as well.[30]

These findings carry serious public health and institutional implications. A prevalence of this magnitude means that dishonest behaviour has become normalised for many students, risking the production of graduates whose competencies may not match their certified qualifications. In professional fields such as medicine, nursing, and engineering, this could translate into unsafe practice, loss of public trust, and reputational damage for the institution.

To counter these risks, universities must adopt a comprehensive integrity framework that combines policy, pedagogy, and enforcement. Faculty must be empowered through training to detect and sanction dishonesty consistently, while providing support services such as writing centres and counseling to address underlying pressures. Introducing clear institutional guidelines on emerging issues such as AI use is equally critical to prevent a widening gap between student practices and institutional expectations. Through these measures, prevalence rates such as those seen in this study can be progressively reduced, safeguarding both educational standards and the integrity of future professionals.

On exploration of the relationship between socio-demographic characteristics and the prevalence of academic dishonesty the study showed that respondents with poor knowledge of academic dishonesty were more likely to engage in dishonest practices compared to those with good knowledge and that this difference was statistically significant, with poor knowledge increasing the odds of engagement. This indicates that without sufficient understanding of what constitutes dishonest behaviour students may inadvertently or deliberately commit acts they do not fully recognize as cheating or may underestimate the risks involved. Knowledge gaps thus appear to lower psychological or moral barriers that help prevent misconduct.

This finding is in harmony with a study conducted among undergraduates in Afe Babalola University, Nigeria in 2023. This study showed that students with lower scores on knowledge

assessments were significantly more likely to engage in academically dishonest conduct compared to those with higher knowledge.[17] Thus it supports the conclusion that knowledge is indeed a critical protective factor.

There was a significant relationship between students' attitudes and their involvement in academic dishonesty with attitude strongly predicting academic dishonesty as shown in the regressional multivariate analysis. Those with positive or permissive attitudes toward dishonest practices were more likely to engage in them, while those with negative attitudes were less likely to report involvement. A probable reason is that students who view dishonesty as acceptable or harmless are less deterred by institutional rules, while those with negative attitudes internalise ethical values that reduce engagement in misconduct.

This is in accordance with a study conducted in 2013 among undergraduates in a university in Ethiopia were findings revealed that permissive attitudes and weak deterrents were key predictors of misconduct.[23] Also another relevant and similar study which assessed the prevalence and predictors of academic dishonesty among undergraduate students in public universities in Ghana in 2018 reported that attitude toward cheating was one of the strongest predictors of whether they admitted to dishonest behavior. Students with more permissive attitudes had significantly higher self-reported prevalence of cheating and those who saw cheating as more serious had lower reported misconduct.[41] This supports the idea that shifting attitudes not just knowledge is essential for reducing prevalence.

When students believe that cheating is acceptable, it does not only affect exam results but also means some skills are not properly learned. In addressing this it is vital to implement rapid, low-cost behavioural and structural fixes that change incentives and social norms also making sure integrity metrics are imbibed into programme quality reviews so that culture change is measured, reported, and sustained.

CONCLUSION

In relation to knowledge of academic dishonesty, about two-fifths of the respondents demonstrated good knowledge, while about three-fifths had poor knowledge. Level of study and monthly allowance were significant predictors of poor knowledge.

For the attitude towards academic dishonesty, almost three-quarters of the respondents expressed a positive attitude toward academic dishonesty, while only about one-quarter held a negative attitude. Knowledge of academic dishonesty and level of study were found to strongly predict a positive attitude towards academic dishonesty.

In relation to the prevalence of academic dishonesty, about two-thirds of respondents reported involvement in dishonest practices, while about one-third reported no involvement. Knowledge of academic dishonesty and attitude were significant predictors of prevalence.

With regards to the forms of academic dishonesty, plagiarism and misuse of academic resources emerged as the most prevalent, with about two-thirds of respondents reporting moderate to high involvement. This was followed by cheating during examinations and falsification or fabrication of academic work, each affecting approximately three-fifths of respondents at moderate to high levels. The least reported form was outside help or contract cheating, where about two-fifths of the respondents admitted moderate to high engagement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made based on the findings from this study with the hope that if implemented, they will reduce academic dishonesty among undergraduate students.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT

1. The government should integrate academic integrity education into national higher education policy and accreditation requirements.
2. The government should fund digital infrastructure, including plagiarism detection and exam monitoring systems, for public universities.
3. The government should enforce strict penalties for contract cheating services and ban their commercial operations.
4. The government should support nationwide student awareness campaigns on the professional consequences of academic dishonesty.
5. The government should provide grants for research on integrity and assessment reforms in Nigerian universities.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE UNIVERSITY

1. The university should introduce compulsory academic integrity modules for all new students and reinforce them at each level of study.

2. The university should create clear policies on the use of AI tools and ensure students are trained on ethical application.
3. The university should redesign assessments to emphasise application and critical thinking over rote memorisation.
4. The university should establish confidential and fair reporting mechanisms for academic dishonesty cases.
5. The university should regularly review departmental prevalence data to target interventions where misconduct is highest.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE STUDENTS

1. Students should commit to honesty pledges before major assessments and uphold them in practice.
2. Students should seek legitimate academic support through tutorials, writing centres, and peer study groups instead of resorting to dishonesty.
3. Students should familiarise themselves with university policies on academic integrity and follow them consistently.
4. Students should resist peer pressure to participate in group dishonesty and encourage others to act responsibly.
5. Students should use AI tools responsibly by acknowledging their use and avoiding misrepresentation of generated work.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear respondent, I am a 600 level student at the School of Medicine, University of Benin, Benin City. This questionnaire will aid as a tool for the assessment of academic dishonesty among undergraduates in the University of Benin. Your sincere response will be helpful and the information given here will be appreciated and treated with utmost confidentiality.

SECTION A: SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

1. Age(as at last birthday): _____

2. Sex: Male ( ) Female ( )

3. Department: English and Literature ( ) Nursing Science ( ) Environmental Management and Toxicology ( ) Microbiology ( ) Medicine ( ) Chemistry ( )

4. Level (please specify): 100( ) 200 ( ) 300 ( ) 400 ( ) 500 ( ) 600 ( )

5. Ethnic group: Benin ( ) Esan ( ) Igbo ( ) Yoruba ( ) Hausa ( ) Others (specify)_____

6. Religion: Christianity ( ) Islam ( ) African Traditional religion ( ) Others _____

7. Marital status: Single ( ) Married ( ) Cohabiting ( ) Separated/Divorced ( ) Widowed ( )

8. Residence: Hostel On-Campus ( ) Hostel Off-Campus ( ) Private residence ( ) Junior Staff Quarters ( ) Senior Staff Quarters ( ) Others (specify)_____

9. Monthly allowance: (₦) 20,000 ( ) 30,000 ( ) 40,000 ( ) 50,000 ( ) 60,000 ( ) Others (specify): _____

10. What is your main source of income? Parents ( ) Guardians ( ) Other relatives ( ) Self-supporting ( ) Scholarships ( ) Others (specify):

11. What are your other sources of income? Parents ( ) Guardians ( ) Other relatives ( ) Self-supporting ( ) Scholarships ( ) Others (specify):----------

SECTION B: KNOWLEDGE OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

12. Have you heard the term "academic dishonesty" before? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If No, skip to **Section C**

13. **If Yes**, what is your source of information? (**You may select more than one**)☐ Television ☐ Social media ☐ Colleagues ☐ Journals ☐ Hospital ☐ Others (Specify) _____ **(MRQ)**

14. Which of the following best describes academic dishonesty? (**Select one**)

☐ Failing to submit your assignment before the deadline ☐ Collaborating in group discussions ☐ Cheating during tests or exams ☐ Missing classes without permission

15. Submitting the same assignment in two different courses without permission is a form of academic dishonesty. ☐ True ☐ False

16. Allowing someone else to copy your work is considered academic dishonesty.

☐ True ☐ False

17. Which of the following is an example of plagiarism? (**You may select more than one**)

☐ Using someone's work without citing them ☐ Writing your own opinion without research ☐ Paraphrasing someone's idea without referencing ☐ Printing your references in bold font **(MRQ)**

18. Do the University of Benin have any formal policy on academic integrity or dishonesty? ☐ Yes ☐ No

19. Do you know how to properly reference or cite sources in your assignments? ☐ Yes ☐ No

20. Collaborating with a classmate on an assignment without the lecturer's permission is a form of academic dishonesty. ☐ Yes ☐ No

21. Using AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT) to complete your assignments without proper disclosure may be considered academic dishonesty. ☐ True ☐ False

22. Which of these actions is **NOT** academic dishonesty? (**You may select more than one**)

☐ Practicing past questions from textbooks ☐ Studying with classmates before an exam ☐ Paying someone to write your project ☐ Submitting plagiarized assignments **(MRQ)**

23. Do you know the potential consequences of academic dishonesty at the University of Benin (e.g., suspension, expulsion)? ☐ Yes ☐ No

24. Have you received any formal lectures, seminars, or orientation specifically addressing academic dishonesty? ☐ Yes ☐ No

SECTION C: ATTITUDE TOWARD ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Please carefully consider each statement, and indicate the extent to which you **AGREE** or **DISAGREE** with them.

S/N	STATEMENT	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indiferrent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
25.	Cheating during exams is justifiable when the exam is too difficult					
26.	Submitting someone else's work as your own is a serious academic offense.					
27.	Helping a friend cheat is not as wrong as cheating for yourself					
28.	There is no harm in cheating as long as you don't get caught					
29.	It is normal for students to cheat, especially when everyone else is doing it.					
30.	If there were stricter punishments, fewer students would engage in academic dishonesty					
31.	Using AI (e.g., ChatGPT) without acknowledgment is dishonest if it completes your entire assignment					
32.	I would report a classmate if I					

	caught them cheating during an exam					
33.	Plagiarism is not a serious offense as long as no one is hurt by it.					
34.	Fear of failing is a valid reason to cheat.					
35.	Most students would stop cheating if they truly understood what academic dishonesty means.					
36.	Group assignment cheating is acceptable when lecturers do not monitor who contributes what					
37.	Academic dishonesty damages the credibility of a university's degree.					

SECTION D: PREVALENCE OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

For each behavior listed below, please indicate how often you have personally engaged in the behavior *since entering university*.

S/N	STATEMENT	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
38.	Copied from another student during an exam				
39.	Used unauthorized materials (e.g., phone, notes) during an exam				

40.	Allowed someone to copy your work during an exam				
41.	Submitted an assignment copied from another student				
42.	Paraphrased someone's work without proper citation				
43.	Collaborated on an assignment intended to be individual				
44.	Used AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT) without acknowledging or citing them				
45.	Provided fabricated or falsified data in a lab report or project				
46.	Falsified attendance (e.g., signing for absent friends)				
47.	Shared exam questions with students yet to take the test				
48.	Used old or leaked question papers without permission				
49.	Exchanged answers during an exam using gestures or whispers				
50.	Paid someone to complete coursework on your behalf				
51.	Used translation or paraphrasing				

	software to avoid detection for plagiarism				
52.	Cheated in an online exam or quiz (e.g., using another device or getting help)				

SECTION E: FACTORS INFLUENCING ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Please carefully consider each statement, and indicate if you agree or disagree with them by selecting either **YES** or **NO** for each statement

S/N	STATEMENT	Yes	No
53.	Academic pressure to maintain good grades contributes to students cheating		
54.	Fear of failure is a major reason why students engage in academic dishonesty		
55.	The lack of strict punishment or consequences encourages students to cheat		
56.	Large class sizes and inadequate supervision during exams make cheating easier		
57.	Peer influence is a strong motivating factor for academic dishonesty		
58.	Students engage in academic dishonesty because they believe “everyone else is doing it.”		

59.	Access to smartphones, the internet, and AI tools increases the chances of academic dishonesty		
60.	Awareness campaigns and academic support programs can reduce students' tendency to cheat		
61.	Most lecturers at the University of Benin enforce academic integrity policies seriously.		

APPENDIX II

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF STUDY

Assessment of the prevalence of academic dishonesty among undergraduates at the University of Benin**,** Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria.

INSTITUTION

Department of Public Health and Community Medicine, College of Medical Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City.

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Etieyibo Avwerosuoghene Roy

SUPERVISOR

Prof. Andrew I. Obi

FINANCIAL SPONSORSHIP

This research work is financially sponsored by the principal investigator.

PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

The purpose of this research work is to assess the knowledge, attitude, prevalence, and factors influencing academic dishonesty among undergraduates in the University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria.

PROCEDURES

Participants will be asked questions regarding the the knowledge, attitude, prevalence, and factors influencing academic dishonesty amongst them.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information collected would be kept confidential and stored securely. Data collected would be anonymized and only accessible to the researcher and supervisor.

COMPENSATION

Participants will not receive any compensation for their participation.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences.

RISKS

There are no risks associated with participation in this study.

BENEFITS

Participants would contribute to important research that will help improve the knowledge and prevalence of the various forms of academic dishonesty among undergraduates and hence enable strategic measures and necessary interventions to be put in place to curb its prevalence and enhance the academic integrity among students in the University of Benin.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this research work please contact.

Etieyibo Avwerosuoghene Roy

Email: etieyiboroy@gmail.com

Phone Number: 08107438075

OR

Department of Public Health and Community Medicine, UBTH, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria.

Ethics and Research Committee,

Email: ubthresearchethics@gmail.com

Phone number: 07063331337

IF THERE IS ANY PORTION OF THIS CONSENT AGREEMENT THAT YOU DO

NOT UNDERSTAND, ASK THE FIELD WORKER OR INVESTIGATOR BEFORE SIGNING.

Please, sign below if you have agreed to participate in the study.

CERTIFICATION OF CONSENT

I,_____ having full capacity to consent for myself do thereby consent to my participation in the research study.

The methods and means by which the study will be conducted have been explained to me by the Ethical Committee and researcher. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions concerning this investigational study, and any such questions have been answered to my full and complete satisfaction.

I understand that I may at any time during the course of this study revoke this consent and withdraw myself from the study without prejudice.

Participant's Signature:_____

Date:_____

HEALTH RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HREC)

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN TEACHING HOSPITAL

P.M.B. 1111 BENIN CITY NIGERIA Telephone: 052-600418 Website: ubth.org

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Committee email: ubthresearchethics@gmail.com

Registration Number:
NHREC-UBTH-HREC/24/12/2022B

PROTOCOL NUMBER: ADM/E 22/A/VOL. VII/148654912574

PROPOSAL TITLE: "AN ASSESSMENT OF THE PREVALENCE OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AMONG UNDERGRADUATES IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN"

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR(S): ETIEYIBO AVWEROSUOGHENE ROY

DEPARTMENT/INSTITUTION: DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND COMMUNITY MEDICINE, SCHOOL OF MEDICINE, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, EDO STATE, NIGERIA

DATE CONSIDERED: JUNE 10TH, 2025

DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE: APPROVED

THIS APPROVAL DATES 10/6/2025 TO 9/6/2026. IF THERE IS DELAY IN STARTING THE RESEARCH, PLEASE INFORM THE HREC SO THAT THE DATES OF APPROVAL CAN BE ADJUSTED ACCORDINGLY

REMARK:

CHAIRMAN: PROF. (MRS) A.N. OFILI **SIGNATURE & DATE**..... 10/6/2025

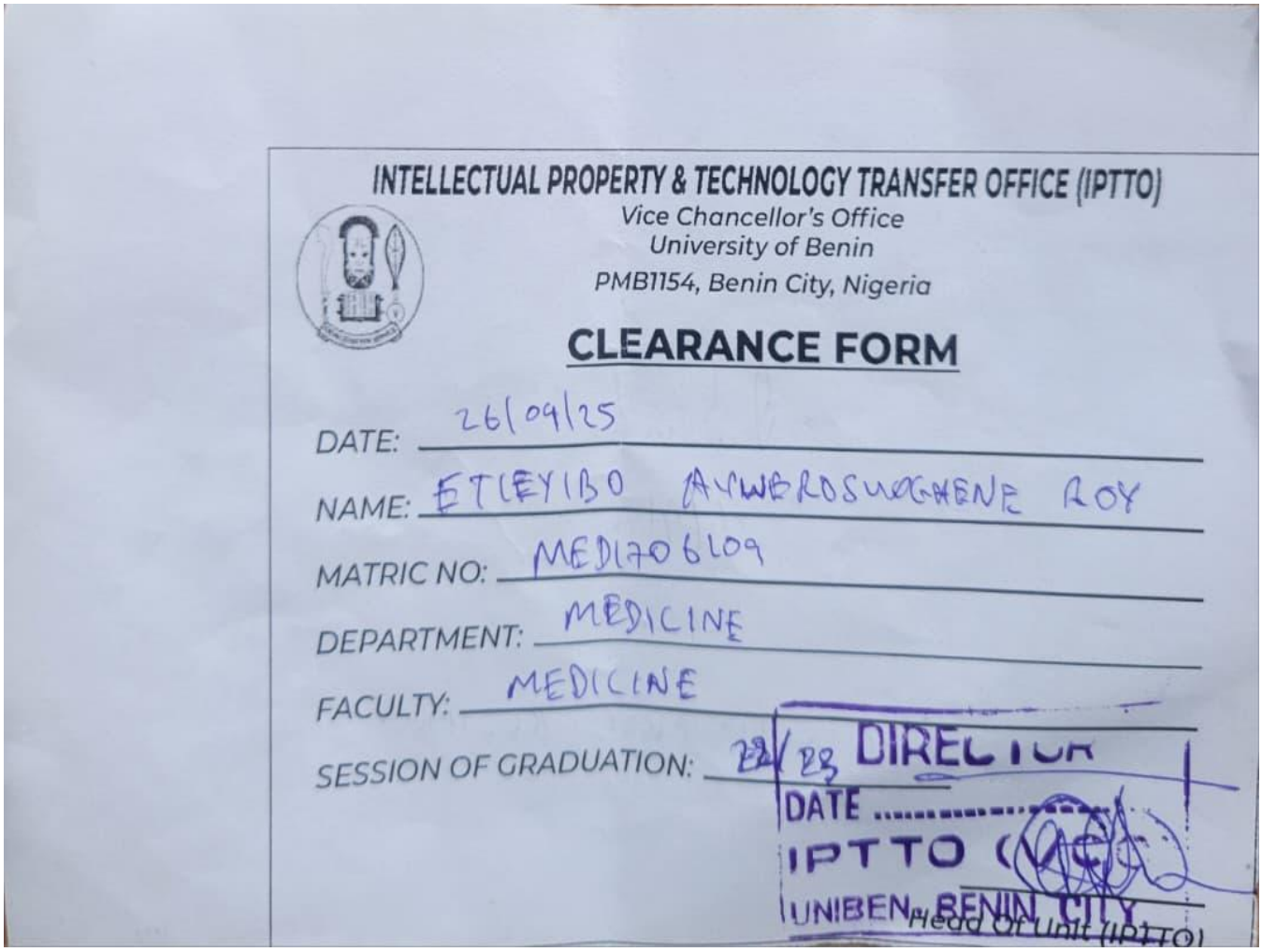
SUPERVISOR (S): DR. A.I. OBI

DECLARATION BY INVESTIGATOR(S):

PROTOCOL NUMBER (please quote in all enquiries)

Note that no participant accrual or activity related to this research may be conducted outside of these dates. All informed consent forms used in this study must carry the HREC assigned number and duration of HREC approval of the study. In multiyear research, endeavor to submit your annual re-port to the HREC early in order to obtain renewal of your approval and avoid disruption of your research. No changes are permitted in the research without prior approval by the HREC except in circumstances outlined in the Code. The HREC reserves the right to conduct compliance visit your research site without previous notification

Signature & Date..... 10/06/25



INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY & TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER OFFICE (IPTTO)

Vice Chancellor's Office
University of Benin
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CLEARANCE FORM

DATE: 26/09/25

NAME: ETIEYIBO AYWEROSUOGHENE ROY

MATRIC NO: MED170609

DEPARTMENT: MEDICINE

FACULTY: MEDICINE

SESSION OF GRADUATION: 22/23

DIRECTOR
DATE .....
IPTTO
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Head Of Unit (IPTTO)