

Beat the cheat: tendencies of academic misconduct and teachers' interventions

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ABSTRACT

This research employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative techniques across two phases to explore the prevalence of academic misconduct (AM) and the interventions implemented by educators. Data were gathered from randomly selected students and purposively chosen teachers using structured and semi-structured questionnaires, based on specific criteria. The findings revealed significant occurrences of AM among students, including practices such as plagiarism, copying from websites, and sharing quiz answers via social media. Teachers also reported these behaviors, highlighting the multifaceted motivations behind students' engagement in AM. In response to these challenges, educators implemented a range of interventions. These included confirmatory communication through phone calls and text messages, the introduction of gamified learning activities, constructive feedback on plagiarized work, and supportive outreach via private messages. In some cases, home visits were conducted to reinforce accountability. The study identified four key outcomes of these interventions: student compliance with academic integrity measures, acceptance of the consequences of misconduct, receptivity to feedback, and the phenomenon known as "Ningas Kugon" mentality, which describes inconsistent or transient changes in student behavior. Hence, this inquiry provides valuable insights into the dynamics of AM and the effectiveness of various educator interventions.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Global studies highlight the widespread issue of academic fraud, particularly in modular and online learning environments, affecting students worldwide [1]. Academic misconduct (AM) encompasses any actions intended to secure or assist others in securing an unfair academic advantage. This includes practices such as plagiarism, collusion, contract cheating, data fabrication, and possessing unauthorized materials during exams [2]. Janke *et al.* [3] found that cheating occurred more frequently in online exams than on-site, while other measures of academic dishonesty showed negligible differences. This trend has prompted calls for a reevaluation of teaching and assessment strategies. Further, experts argue that the sudden shift to virtual platforms not only increased student stress but also created more opportunities for discreetly obtaining online assistance during examinations [4]. Despite extensive research, effective interventions to address academic dishonesty (AD) remain limited. Academic communities rely on a strong foundation of ethical values, such as accountability, courage, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect, which are vital for fostering a culture of

integrity and supporting meaningful learning experiences [5]. A study by Akhtar and Firdiyanti [6] identified motivation, hypercompetitive orientation, and learning mode as significant predictors of AD, underscoring how the transition from traditional classrooms to online learning during the pandemic may have weakened students' commitment to academic integrity. Further research by Zhang *et al.* [7] revealed that gender plays a critical role in shaping dishonest behaviors, with notable differences in mean scores and effect sizes across key predictors. The study highlighted that AD is not only influenced by individual traits but also by demographic factors such as grade level, year, and field of study, especially when these interact with gender. These findings suggest that efforts to address AM must account for gender-specific tendencies and contextual factors, tailoring interventions to better support diverse student populations.

In the Philippines, AD has become a prominent issue across various fields of study, reflecting a growing pressure among students to achieve top marks. This desire for higher grades often leads to engaging in unethical practices, undermining the integrity of the educational system [8]. Research reveals that those common dishonest behaviors—such as plagiarism and cheating—undermine student development and compromise program credibility [9]. Motivations for such behavior also stem from academic challenges, difficulties with self-regulation, and external pressures, with variations observed across year levels but not by gender or performance [10]. To address these issues, effective strategies include raising awareness, cultivating a culture of integrity, enforcing strict policies, and using supervised, solution-focused assessments to deter misconduct.

Indeed, guided by Quirino State University's institutional tagline, "molding minds, shaping future," the institution is committed to its students' comprehensive development, emphasizing academic excellence and ethical integrity. This commitment aligns with the primary goal of advancing knowledge and technologies to meet local and global needs. Recognizing that ethical conduct is foundational to these aspirations, the institution prioritizes cultivating academic honesty and integrity as essential components of its mission. To uphold these values, the university must investigate instances of AM. A misconduct-free environment is vital for establishing the connection between the pursuit of knowledge and ethical professional development. In this light, scrutinizing misconduct not only reaffirms the institution's dedication to creating an ethical educational environment but also reinforces its mission of shaping responsible professionals.

Thus, this study explores the trends of AM in online and modular learning environments and evaluates the teachers' interventions and their outcomes. The primary research question guiding this investigation is: what are the prevalent forms of AM in these settings, what interventions are employed by educators, and their outcomes? Additionally, the study's recommendations will inform teacher training programs, enhancing instructors' competencies in establishing academic integrity. A proactive, data-driven approach helps institutions effectively combat AM and promote integrity.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study explored the tendencies of AM and the interventions implemented by teachers during the post-pandemic academic year 2021–2022, a period marked by the adoption of blended learning. To achieve this, we employed an explanatory sequential mixed-method research design, following the framework established by Fetters *et al.* [11], unfolded in two distinct phases: quantitative phase and qualitative phase. We collected data from 457 first-year students across various academic programs. Participants were selected through simple random sampling and responded to a structured questionnaire. In qualitative phase, we gathered in-depth narratives from 25 faculty members. These individuals were purposively selected based on specific criteria, including teaching experience and active involvement in blended learning. A semi-structured questionnaire with open-ended questions facilitated the exploration of their interventions and outcomes [12], [13]. A 'building' integration approach was applied, whereby the findings from the quantitative phase directly informed the qualitative data collection process, confirming both relevance and analytical depth. This methodological strategy enabled the synthesis of statistical trends and experiential insights, thereby strengthening the validity and richness of the conclusions.

Data collection was conducted using web-based questionnaires via Google Forms. The quantitative phase focused on assessing student tendencies and reasons for AM, while the qualitative phase delved into teacher interventions. Our instruments underwent rigorous validation through expert review and reliability testing, including Cronbach's alpha, which confirmed high internal consistency.

In terms of analysis, the quantitative data involved frequency counts and distribution for student demographics, alongside mean analysis of misconduct tendencies using a 5-point Likert scale. Meanwhile, the qualitative data were subjected to thematic analysis, as articulated by Mwita and Mwilongo [14], examining observed AD, interventions, and outcomes. Virtual interviews conducted via Google Meet created a comfortable atmosphere for participants to share their experiences openly.

Throughout this process, we adhered to ethical protocols. Permissions were obtained from the campus administrators, deans, and program chairpersons. Participants were informed about the study's objectives, and their consent highlighted the voluntary nature of their involvement, ensuring both confidentiality and anonymity.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Students' tendencies of academic misconduct

The study's most unexpected finding was the prevalence of AM, but it also shed light on the strategies that facilitate dishonest behavior. Table 1 reveals that among the 457 participants, a significant majority (72.43%, $n=331$) reported non-engagement in AM, while a smaller segment (27.57%, $n=126$) acknowledged their involvement. This distribution underscores the prevalence of non-participation within the sampled population, alongside a notable minority engaging in such behavior. Exploring these proportions is essential for uncovering the factors behind AM. Further investigation can provide insights into determinants and motivators, leading to more effective prevention strategies. These findings align with previous research highlighting the global prevalence of AD among college and university undergraduates [15]. Notably, attitudes toward AD and perceptions of peer involvement are significant influencers of student cheating [16].

Table 1. Number of students who tend to engage in AM

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1. Not engaged in AM	331	72.43
2. Engaged in AM	126	27.57
Total	457	100

The results in Table 2 highlight the key factors in student AM. Students feel overwhelmed by assignments (mean: 3.65) and perceive leniency in online evaluations (mean: 3.58), suggesting cheating as a coping mechanism. The difficulty of course content (mean: 3.83) and the belief that cheating is common online (mean: 3.53) also contribute to this norm. In contrast, peer influence (mean: 2.35) and concerns about scholarships (mean: 2.56) are less significant. A notable concern is the perceived lack of supervision during online assessments (mean: 3.82), reducing the perceived risk of being caught. These findings emphasize the need for better instructional support and assessment supervision to uphold academic integrity. Addressing these issues is vital for effective strategies against AD. Consequently, these results align with prior research indicating that AM often involves deliberate actions during evaluations, such as unauthorized information exchange, driven by exam difficulty and time constraints [15]. The proliferation of mobile devices has further facilitated such behavior, making information easily accessible and shareable. Moreover, students may prioritize academic success over ethical standards, influenced by motivations such as peer dynamics, the desire to outsmart instructors, or even deriving amusement from the act [17]. Addressing these underlying causes is essential for designing effective institutional strategies to curb AD.

Table 2. Reasons for engaging in AM

Indicators	Mean	SD	Descriptive interpretation
1. My instructor assigns too much paperwork	3.65	0.84	Very often
2. My instructor is very lenient during the online evaluation	3.58	0.88	Very often
3. My friend asked me to copy answers from the internet	2.35	1.02	Sometimes
4. My instructor does not seem to care if I learn and understand the material	2.52	0.96	Sometimes
5. My course information seems useless	1.45	0.70	Never
6. My course material is too hard	3.83	0.79	Very often
7. I feel like everyone else seems to be cheating because it is an online modality	3.53	0.91	Very often
8. I am in danger of losing a scholarship because of poor grades	2.56	0.93	Sometimes
9. I do not have time to study because I am working to pay off my school	2.26	1.05	Sometimes
10. I feel like AM can be freely done because no one supervises me physically	3.82	0.81	Very often
Grand mean	2.97	0.89	Sometimes

The data in Table 3 indicate that AM among students is primarily driven by academic and institutional pressures, with a grand mean of 3.16 suggesting a moderate tendency. The most significant factor is lack of preparation (mean: 4.52), highlighting unpreparedness as a key driver of dishonest behavior. This is reinforced by exam difficulty (mean: 3.90) and teachers' leniency (mean: 4.21), both indicating that challenging assessments and inadequate supervision create conditions conducive to cheating. Grade orientation (mean: 3.62) and parental pressure (mean: 3.53) also reflect significant influences, suggesting that

both external and internal expectations contribute to misconduct. Moderate influences include the urge to cheat (mean: 3.34), invigilation/environment (mean: 2.48), and extrinsic motives (mean: 2.58), while peer pressure (mean: 2.14) and involvement in extracurricular activities (mean: 1.23) show minimal impact on dishonest behaviors. These findings highlight the need for institutions to enhance academic support, implement fair but rigorous assessments, and enforce consistent monitoring to effectively address the root causes of misconduct. The fraud triangle theory identifies “incentive/pressure, opportunity, and rationalization/attitude” as key elements leading to cheating [18], [19]. Under pressure for good grades, students may exploit opportunities to improve their scores dishonestly, rationalizing their actions. Previous research suggests that “more cheating occurs in online courses” [20], likely due to students’ resource proficiency and the perceived distance from instructors, which encourages dishonest behavior.

Table 3. Tendencies of AM

Indicators	Mean	SD	Descriptive interpretation
1. Lack of preparation	4.52	0.58	Very high tendency
2. Teachers’ leniency	4.21	0.67	High tendency
3. Exam level of difficulty	3.90	0.73	High tendency
4. Grade-oriented	3.62	0.79	High tendency
5. Parental pressure	3.53	0.85	High tendency
6. Urge to cheat	3.34	0.91	Moderate tendency
7. Extrinsic motive	2.58	0.96	Moderate tendency
8. Invigilation/environment	2.48	0.99	Moderate tendency
9. Peer pressure/challenge	2.14	1.02	Low tendency
10. Involvement in extracurricular activities	1.23	0.66	Very low tendency
Grand mean	3.16	0.82	Moderate tendency

3.2. Teachers observed academic misconduct among students, their interventions, and the observed outcomes of the interventions

3.2.1. Academic misconduct of students as observed by the teachers

Despite the steadfast efforts of the teaching staff to uphold academic integrity, instances of misconduct were observed during the implementation of blended learning. The observed incidents are detailed:

a. Twinning or duplicated answers

A duplicate submission occurs when a student submits identical academic work for assessment in two distinct courses. The majority of participating teachers indicated that instances of duplicated answers were prevalent in their classes. This recurring phenomenon was emphasized by teacher #3:

“Many times, I noticed twin answers, especially activities from their modules. I asked even who the origin is, but no one answered; instead, they just left from an online class. Yeah, disgusting, but these are some of the situations during online classes.”

AM in online learning presents a complex psychological and social challenge for learners. These instances highlight the serious nature of AM, violating academic norms and fairness. The prevalence of twinning or duplicated answers is notable and requires scrutiny. Numerous studies explore the factors associated with AM. As Ercegovic and Richardson [21] note, social factors, achievement motivation, and both internal and external pressures significantly contribute to these behaviors. External pressures, such as the desire to meet expectations from peers, faculty, and family, often drive students to engage in dishonest practices like duplicating answers. Faculty attitudes towards AD also play a crucial role; inadequate responses to such behavior can inadvertently foster it, while institutional policies may clarify the issue of AD [22]. Individual motivations, including the pursuit of social recognition, pressure for high grades, career advancement, time constraints, and a lack of awareness about plagiarism [23], further exacerbate the problem. Ultimately, the replication and duplication of responses undermine students’ learning and highlight the need to instill integrity and honesty in academic environments.

b. Online/web source replication

As colleges transitioned to online formats during the COVID-19 crisis, numerous universities reported notable increases in AM, particularly in the form of extensive plagiarism [24]. This observation was highlighted by teacher #5:

“During the modular mode of learning, plagiarism is evident in their answers. They also do not put effort into answering essay questions because they tend to copy what’s available information from the web. The good thing is that at least 10 out of 40 submit their module answer sheets on time.”

Indeed, this situation reflects a clear technological disadvantage, particularly in shaping students’ attitudes toward learning. Their growing dependency on websites for instant answers undermines the true educational purpose of their activities. As Wang and Zhang [25] observed, both personality traits and attitudes toward academic rules significantly predict misconduct, highlighting a critical challenge for educators and researchers alike. To address this, fair and proactive strategies must be developed, with potential points of failure anticipated and minimized as a precaution [26]. Teacher participants emphasized that the widespread “culture of Googling” erodes students’ self-confidence; instead of engaging in independent thinking, many students now begin their assignments by relying on the ideas of others, stifling their own intellectual development. One of the teacher participants, teacher #8, shared:

“I do not know what it is that brainly.com. It was a blessing and a disguise when my co-teacher went to my room and told me about the website. At that time, I was checking the assignments of my students. Upon opening the website and clicking the specific keywords, unfortunately, the answer submitted by the student flashed on the screen. So, I was able to confirm that his answers are copy-pasted from the website.”

Undeniably, the abundance of online information stimulates students’ curiosity, nurturing a propensity to copy-paste relevant details for assigned tasks. While strategies promoting academic integrity have long been applied in postsecondary education, there is a growing concern about increasing moral failings [27]. The integration of technology into classrooms and the prevalence of online courses have created new opportunities for “e-cheating” [28], [29]. Before 2020, around 30% of degree-granting students in U.S. colleges took at least one online course, emphasizing the need to address “e-cheating” [30]. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated changes in education. Therefore, teachers should instill self-confidence in students as independent thinkers. Familiarity with plagiarism detection tools is crucial for educators to ensure the reliability and honesty of students’ work.

c. Sending examination/quiz responses via social media platforms (e.g., Facebook Messenger)

Utilizing the internet or social media for inappropriate information sharing constitutes AM. The act of sharing resources online, even with unknown or uncontacted individuals, falls under regulations addressing plagiarism and collusion [31]. Teachers observed instances of sending examination or quiz answers through Facebook Messenger, as highlighted by teacher-participant #12:

“One student accidentally sent me the quiz answer via Facebook Messenger. I asked about the intended recipient, and he admitted it was for classmates. I addressed the misconduct calmly, advising against repetition. Nowadays, students are drawn to inappropriate online behavior.”

Certainly, technological advancements have facilitated a surge in cheating practices [32]. Social media improves connectivity and information access but also poses challenges like misinformation, privacy issues, and mental health risks. It can facilitate academic misconduct through plagiarism, real-time answer sharing, and contract cheating [33]. Consequently, educators must maintain vigilance over students’ responses, employing plagiarism checkers to assess the extent of plagiarized content in submitted assignments.

3.2.2. Teachers’ interventions in the observed academic misconduct

a. Confirmatory questions/queries via phone calls or text messages

Doubtful responses or answers of the students on their activities were usually intervened by the teachers through confirmatory questions or queries via phone calls or texts. The teacher-participants emphasized that maintaining calmness and adopting the most effective approach are essential to avoid undermining students’ egos. Hence, most of the participants verbalized those confirmatory questions may establish good rapport and precautionary measures for not engaging in such AD. As such, teacher #15 said:

“I initiated follow-up calls, texts, and even sent letters to the parents. I used to do phone calls to calmly interrogate the students about their doubtful answers. Nevertheless, I also encourage students to submit their outputs even after the deadline, as long as their answers were not copied from anywhere else, and ensure that all students are given a chance to comply and pass the grading. And ahhh...with that strategy, I feel relief at least.”

Indeed, it has been emphasized that “a phone call makes all the difference.” The statement underscores that establishing connections with parents through phone calls can be instrumental in fostering positive relationships, paving the way for success, and yielding long-term time savings [34]. Accordingly, participants regarded this intervention as an effective means of evaluating students’ work and fostering independence in both module and online assessments. Teachers measured the effectiveness of confirmatory questions by assessing whether students demonstrated a deeper understanding of the material and applied critical thinking to their responses. Observable changes included an improvement in the quality of students’ submissions, with more thoughtful, original responses, as well as a noticeable reduction in instances of AM. Supporting evidence from student feedback highlighted those confirmatory questions encouraged them to reflect more critically on their work.

b. Gamified learning activities

Gamification in education, an evolving strategy to boost learner motivation, integrates game design elements into educational settings. Despite its increasing popularity and varied success, this review emphasizes empirical evidence over potentialities, beliefs, or preferences. Teacher participants #6 and #9 highlighted the advantages of employing gamified lessons:

“I explored and researched some strategies, including gamified learning activities and applications I utilized before, during, and after the class, and yes, it increased the participation and attendance of students in the online classes. Gamified learning activities divert students from academic misconduct as they are answering the activities on the spot and eventually develop autonomous learning.”

Gamification techniques harness individuals’ intrinsic motivations such as socializing, learning, mastery, competition, achievement, status, self-expression, altruism, or closure. Employing rewards like points, badges, progress bars, and virtual currency, gamification enhances engagement and competition among players [35]. Visible rewards and leaderboards further stimulate competition. Strategically implementing gamified activities positively influences students’ learning outcomes, mitigating the likelihood of AM linked to task difficulty pressures, as evidenced in prior study findings. Consequently, gamified learning promotes independent learning with an enjoyable aspect, akin to leisure activities.

c. Remarks on the copied outputs

The teacher-participants articulated the interventions they have made to check on the AM of the students. According to them, they put remarks on the copied outputs of their students, particularly context that seems not properly referenced or items that are copied from the internet. One of the participants shared:

“I address instances of obvious plagiarism by capturing screenshots of students’ papers and comparing them with the source. This practice aims to make students aware that their submissions undergo thorough scrutiny. Some students may harbor the misconception that their work goes unchecked, assuming a lack of concern on our part. Additionally, there is a prevailing belief that no one will fail due to government directives against issuing failing marks during the pandemic. By taking such measures, students are encouraged to exercise caution and refrain from engaging in further misconduct.”

Certainly, the intervention, as expressed by the teacher participants, is a good note to remind the students of the misconduct they committed. The remarks may lead them to check the misrepresentation of the context of their answers and other issues about their copied outputs [36]. Hence, many types of research indicate AD is managed through proper attention given to the supporting factors, pointing to the classroom teacher providing students with the needed strategies to successfully employ technologies in an honest way.

d. Fatherly/motherly approach via private or personal messages and home visitation

The participants highlighted the cultivation of teacher-student relationships, akin to a second parental role. The teacher-participants emphasize that a caring approach, manifested through subtle checks on student misbehavior, fosters intimacy and openness. Utilizing private and personal messages proves effective in enhancing the teacher-student relationship. Additionally, home visitation emerges as a highly effective strategy for gaining insights into students’ real-life situations at home. Teacher-participant #1 underscored the efficacy of this approach.

“I am delighted when I see my student’s showing acceptance and obvious respect when I check their misconduct via private or personal messages. I can feel the sense of intimacy. Indeed, I have found that by gaining a student’s trust and respect, that student will more often than not perform better academically in my classroom.”

Teacher-participant #4 also shared her observations regarding students' responses to her messages to them. She said:

"There were times that I felt very emotional for my students as well. This means it is a big thing to talk to them personally to see the real reasons why they engaged in such acts."

Student-teacher relationships play a crucial role in creating a thriving classroom environment and contributing to students' self-worth and mental health [37]. These positive relationships are associated with a decrease in behavioral problems and the promotion of academic success, mitigating the likelihood of AM. Thus, a positive student-teacher relationship is vital in the long term, instilling confidence in students and reinforcing the value of their ideas. This enduring confidence positively influences students throughout their subsequent academic pursuits.

3.2.3. Intervention outcomes

a. Passive response to interventions

Passive response refers to students' minimal or disengaged reactions to AM prevention strategies, where learners show little initiative or effort in adhering to the interventions, often resulting in ineffective implementation of the intended measures. As such, the teacher-participants commonly mentioned students' complacency with the interventions initiated and even showed negative gestures to any corrective actions given by the teachers, as exemplified by teacher-participant #6:

"There were those who were not responding to the interventions or corrective initiations. It is difficult to talk to these kinds of students. So, the only way to communicate with them is that do a series of home visits, especially for those who were complacent about the interventions we initiated. It is difficult really to converse with this kind of student, but it is a part of our work, we can't do anything but help them rather than allow such acts and bring that misconduct into their future work, of course, it is our role really to check on that."

Indeed, home visiting is a prevention strategy used to support lenient students in their studies. Home visitations were found to be an effective strategy in addressing student complacency, as they provided a more personalized approach to understanding the students' challenges and reinforcing the importance of academic integrity. Teachers reported that after these visits, students demonstrated increased engagement and a greater sense of responsibility toward their academic work. Observable behavioral changes included improved participation in class discussions and a reduction in tardiness or missed assignments. Anecdotal evidence from teacher participants revealed that students who initially displayed resistance to interventions began to show more proactive behaviors, such as seeking clarification on assignments or requesting additional academic support. Ultimately, the benefit of home visits is a means of strengthening home-school partnerships. Teachers perceive that home visits result in more positive relationships with children and their families [38]. Further, the teachers believe that the visits lead to improved communication with the parents, a better understanding of the child, and a better understanding of the impact of the child's home environment as it relates to school performance.

b. Apologetic and obedience to the interventions

It is encouraging to note that students exhibited a sense of accountability and compliance with the corrective actions implemented by the teacher-participants in response to the observed AM. Teacher-respondent #4 expressed her delight about the scenario:

"Some diligently follow corrective actions about their academic misconduct. They answer the activities based on their capabilities, observations, and discernment."

Moreover, another teacher participant agreed that there are students who are very apologetic and obedient as far as the intervention is concerned. Teacher-respondent #8 said:

"All my students are currently adhering to my instructions to avoid consequences. Nowadays, students are highly concerned about the points they earn in class, which motivates them to behave well. Sometimes, they seek clarification on tasks to ensure they earn points, demonstrating a positive response and a tendency to avoid academic misconduct."

Certainly, the observed scenario reflects a positive response to teacher-initiated interventions. The support provided by teachers proves beneficial, fostering students' inclination to work independently and honestly, thereby reducing the likelihood of AM. This perspective aligns with Kaur and Rani [39],

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emphasizing that understanding these dynamics is crucial for designing effective interventions. Recognizing apologetic behavior, where individuals express regret or defensiveness, allows learners to create a supportive environment. This approach ensures interventions are embraced rather than merely followed, reducing risks linked to destructive obedience.

c. Receptive to the consequences of academic misconduct

The integrity of academic and journalistic work is fundamental to societal trust, highlighting the importance of accurately crediting knowledge creators. As such, students reflected on their behaviors and the outcomes of AM through surveys and interviews, allowing them to express their understanding of the consequences openly. Teachers also noted changes in students' attitudes and behaviors over time, observing instances where students took responsibility for their actions or engaged in discussions about the significance of academic integrity. This multi-method approach provided a clearer understanding of how students perceived and acknowledged their misbehavior. Teacher participants reported that many students accepted corrective actions and responded positively. One teacher noted:

“After a series of conversations with the students, they shared their reasons for choosing to cheat instead of acting honestly. They recognized the consequences of their actions, and I gave them another chance, which resulted in amazing outcomes.”

Similarly, participant #8 remarked on the receptiveness of certain students, stating:

“They accepted their fault, and some were able to comply and regain their self-esteem. Although it took time, the response was very positive, showing clear changes.”

Consequently, these observations highlight the positive impact of teacher interventions on student engagement. Research shows that downplaying AM leads to increased dishonesty [40], underscoring the need for institutions to promote integrity and awareness of consequences to enhance academic performance and ethical decision-making.

d. “*Ningas Kugon*” mentality

The “*Ningas Kugon*” mentality in education offers a brief surge of motivation, boosting initial student engagement and short-term gains like improved performance and awareness of academic integrity. However, its drawbacks are more significant: the lack of sustained effort leads to superficial learning and a quick return to old habits. This inconsistency not only limits lasting behavioral change but also undermines the effectiveness and evaluation of intervention programs, hindering meaningful long-term improvements. “*Ningas Kugon*,” as described by teacher-participants, is an outcome of the interventions initiated. It reflects an inclination to start a task with enthusiasm but lose interest, leaving it incomplete—a tendency observed among college students. Teacher-participant #7 concurred:

“There are very receptive students, but in the end, they repeat the wrongdoings caught by the teachers. They seem to stop when they are not supervised. It is a challenge on the part of the teacher.”

Accordingly, Holden *et al.* [41] discuss how fixed and malleable cultural mindsets influence persistence and responsiveness to feedback in cross-cultural contexts. Flexible mindset players demonstrated greater cultural learning and persistence, suggesting that mindset may play a role in overcoming tendencies similar to “*Ningas Kugon*” by nurturing a more sustained engagement in learning and adaptation.

4. CONCLUSION

This study explored factors influencing AM in modular and online classes, alongside teachers' interventions and their outcomes. Key findings reveal that excessive workloads, teacher leniency, course difficulty, parental pressure, and inadequate preparation contribute to dishonest behaviors. Effective teacher strategies, including confirmatory questioning and gamified learning, were shown to promote academic integrity. The study identified varied student responses to interventions, ranging from passive compliance and apologetic obedience to genuine acceptance of misconduct consequences and superficial engagement (“*Ningas Kugon*” mentality). It underscores that AD extends beyond the classroom, representing a systemic issue exacerbated by the rapid transition to virtual learning.

Indeed, to address these challenges, institutions should adopt evidence-based policies, redesign curricula, and enhance teacher training. Balancing academic rigor with student well-being requires recalibrated demands, stronger integrity frameworks, and supportive environments. Actionable measures

include integrating innovative teaching methods, involving parents in ethical education, and developing policies that consider both academic and mental health needs. Thus, collaboration among teachers, administrators, and policymakers is essential to foster a culture of intellectual honesty and global competitiveness. Future research should further investigate the mental health impact of parental pressure and the interplay between teacher practices and student misconduct. Sustaining academic integrity demands ongoing innovation, institutional commitment, and a unified vision for ethical education.

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C : **C**onceptualization

M : **M**ethodology

So : **S**oftware

Va : **V**alidation

Fo : **F**ormal analysis

I : **I**nvestigation

R : **R**esources

D : **D**ata Curation

O : Writing - **O**riginal Draft

E : Writing - Review & **E**diting

Vi : **V**isualization

Su : **S**upervision

P : **P**roject administration

Fu : **F**unding acquisition

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest associated with this study. This affirms that the authors have disclosed any potential financial, personal, or professional relationships that could influence or appear to influence the research outcomes.

INFORMED CONSENT

We have obtained informed consent from all individuals included in this study, ensuring that each participant fully understood the purpose, procedures, and potential risks involved before agreeing to take part.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

The research related to human use has complied with all the relevant national regulations and institutional policies following the tenets of the Helsinki Declaration and has been approved by the author's institutional review board regulations and institutional policies for the care and use of animals.

DATA AVAILABILITY

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author [LSA]. The data, which contain information that could compromise the privacy of research participants, are not publicly available due to certain restrictions.

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