Academic Integrity among Israeli Students During COVID-19: Lessons for the AI Crisis (Poster)

Yovav Eshet
Zefat Academic College
yovave@zefat.ac.il

יושרה אקדמית בישראל בתקופת הקורונה: לקחים עבור משבר הבינה המלאכותית (פוסטר)

יובב עשת
המכללה האקדמית צפת
yovave@zefat.ac.il

Abstract

This study integrates complementary subjective and objective empirical perspectives to examine academic integrity in Israeli higher education across different phases of the COVID-19 pandemic and to derive implications for the responsible use of generative artificial intelligence (AI). The research is grounded in the assumption that integrity-related behavior under technological disruption cannot be fully understood through a single methodological lens. Subjective self-reported data capture students' motivations, perceptions, and ethical self-assessments, while objective machine-based analysis of academic assignments provides an external, behavior-focused measure of misconduct. Together, these approaches offer a more comprehensive account of academic integrity dynamics.

The subjective component draws on survey data collected from 1,090 undergraduate students across five-time spans, from the pre-pandemic period through long post-pandemic stabilization. Guided by Self-Determination Theory and the Big Five personality framework, the surveys assessed intrinsic and extrinsic learning motivation, personality traits, and self-reported engagement in academic misconduct, including plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration. This perspective enables insight into how students interpret, rationalize, and regulate their academic behavior, particularly under conditions of uncertainty and stress. Complementing this self-reported perspective, the objective component analyzed plagiarism rates in 25,864 academic assignments collected from multiple Israeli higher education institutions across three periods: pre-pandemic, during the pandemic, and post-pandemic. Automated plagiarism detection software was employed to identify longitudinal changes in misconduct patterns using consistent, machine-based criteria that are independent of students' self-perceptions or reporting biases.

Findings from both data sources converge in demonstrating a substantial increase in academic misconduct during crisis periods, with peak levels observed during the early stages of the pandemic. Subjective data indicate that extrinsic motivation is a strong predictor of self-reported misconduct,

whereas intrinsic motivation and personality traits, particularly agreeableness and emotional stability, serve as protective factors, although their influence weakens under acute crisis conditions. The objective plagiarism analysis corroborates these trends by revealing parallel increases in detected misconduct and partial normalization following the crisis. The convergence of subjective and objective evidence strengthens the explanatory validity of the findings and illustrates how motivational and dispositional factors translate into observable academic behavior.

From the perspective of responsible use of AI, the COVID-19 experience highlights the limitations of relying solely on technological detection or enforcement mechanisms. Generative AI tools, like automated plagiarism systems, can provide objective oversight but cannot address the motivational and ethical foundations of misconduct. Responsible AI adoption in higher education therefore requires an integrated framework that combines transparent governance of AI use, assessment redesign aligned with learning goals, and support for intrinsic motivation, while accounting for individual differences among learners.

Keywords: academic integrity; motivation; personality traits; plagiarism; artificial intelligence.

מילות מפתח: יושרה אקדמית, מוטיבציה ללמידה, תכונות אישיות, פלגיאט, בינה מלאכותית.

References

Eshet, Y. (2025). Examining the dynamics of plagiarism: A comparative analysis before, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic. *International Journal for Educational Integrity, 21*(1). https://doi.org/10.1007/s40979-024-00178-z

Eshet, Y. (2024). Academic integrity crisis: Exploring undergraduates' learning motivation and personality traits over five years. *Education Sciences, 14*(9), 986. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci14090986