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Linking Goal Orientation and Resilience to Academic Integrity through Behavioral Learning

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Abstract

Academic integrity remains a persistent challenge in higher education, particularly within learning environments characterized by performance pressure and diverse socio-cultural contexts. This study examines how goal orientation and academic resilience shape academic integrity through the mediating role of behavioral learning among university students in Malaysia and the Philippines. Using a quantitative cross-sectional design, data were collected from 326 undergraduate students across three universities and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-PLS). The findings demonstrate that both goal orientation and academic resilience exert significant positive effects on behavioral learning and academic integrity. Behavioral learning was confirmed as a key mediating mechanism through which psychological dispositions are translated into ethical academic conduct. Cross-national analysis further reveals contextual variation: in Malaysia, structured learning systems and strong institutional regulation amplify the role of behavioral learning, whereas in the Philippines, academic resilience plays a more prominent role in sustaining academic integrity. These results contribute to a process-oriented understanding of academic integrity and underscore the importance of context-sensitive, learning-centered strategies in promoting ethical academic behavior in higher education.

A. Introduction

Academic dishonesty has become a global integrity crisis in higher education, with cheating, plagiarism, and contract cheating increasingly reported across diverse educational systems despite decades of institutional regulation and enforcement efforts (Lee & Fanguy, 2022; Musleh Harry et al., 2025). Studies across different regions consistently indicate that academic misconduct is no longer confined to a small group of students but has become a widespread phenomenon that threatens the credibility of academic qualifications and public trust in universities (Bretag, 2020; Bertram Gallant, 2017). As higher education institutions face growing pressure to produce competent and ethical graduates, the persistence of academic dishonesty raises fundamental questions regarding how integrity is learned, sustained, and practiced within contemporary academic environments (Rosli et al., 2025; Quintos, 2017).

This global concern is also evident in Southeast Asia, particularly in Malaysia and the Philippines, where academic dishonesty continues to be reported at alarming levels. In Malaysia, a single-centre cross-sectional study found that more than three-quarters of students reported engaging in at least one form of academic dishonesty, with similar prevalence observed in face-to-face and online learning modes (77.2% and 76.8%, respectively). Data further indicated that, particularly during online learning, commonly reported dishonest behaviours included using electronic or digital devices as unauthorized aids during examinations (21.1%), cheating on tests or examinations in other ways (18.0%), and turning in work completed by someone else (8.3%) (Rosli et al., 2025). A comparable pattern has been reported in the Philippines, where a multi-program undergraduate survey found that nearly nine out of ten students engaged in at least one form of academic dishonesty within a single academic year, with the most prevalent behaviors occurring in assignments or projects (93%) and those for examinations, quizzes, or exercises (92%) (Quintos, 2017).

Earlier grade-level studies further suggest that such practices have become normalized among Filipino students, indicating that academic dishonesty is sustained across educational trajectories rather than emerging as an isolated phenomenon in higher education (Balbuena & Lamela, 2015). Collectively, these findings point to an enduring academic integrity crisis with far-reaching consequences for both individual

development and institutional trust (Bretag, 2020). Despite extensive documentation of its prevalence, academic dishonesty persists, suggesting that the phenomenon cannot be adequately explained by institutional regulation or individual moral failure alone. A substantial body of research indicates that compliance-based approaches such as academic policies, sanctions, and honor codes are largely ineffective in cultivating sustainable academic integrity when they operate independently of supportive and coherent learning cultures (Sugirman et al., 2025; McCabe et al., 2012). This persistent failure reveals a deeper structural limitation within higher education systems: their inability to foster academic integrity as a habitual, internalized form of conduct rather than as a situational response to surveillance or punishment (Bertram Gallant, 2017).

This structural limitation becomes particularly evident in contemporary academic environments, where grades, efficiency, and competitive performance are increasingly prioritized over ethical engagement and meaningful learning processes (Malik et al., 2022). Within such contexts, academic dishonesty should be understood not merely as an individual ethical lapse but as a behavioral outcome shaped by students' psychological dispositions and the learning environments in which reinforcement patterns are continuously produced, sustained, and internalized (Skinner, 2023).

In response to this concern, existing studies have increasingly turned to psychological factors to explain variations in academic integrity, most notably academic resilience and goal orientation. Academic resilience has been shown to enable students to manage academic stress, pressure, and failure without resorting to maladaptive strategies such as cheating (Rêgo et al., 2024). Similarly, goal orientation theory consistently demonstrates that mastery-oriented goals are associated with higher levels of academic integrity. In contrast, performance-oriented goals are linked to an increased risk of academic misconduct (Masyhuri et al., 2025). While these findings have substantially advanced the understanding of the psychological correlates of academic dishonesty, the dominant analytical approach in this literature remains largely predictor-based, emphasizing whether psychological factors influence academic integrity rather than explaining how such dispositions are translated into ethical academic behavior within specific learning environments. Most studies focus on identifying *what* psychological factors influence academic integrity, offering limited insight into *how* these dispositions are translated into ethical or unethical academic behavior within specific

learning environments (Jared et al., 2023). As a result, the behavioral processes through which resilience and motivational orientations are learned, reinforced, and stabilized over time remain theoretically underdeveloped.

Addressing this limitation requires a shift from static predictor models to a process-oriented framework that explains how psychological dispositions are enacted as routine academic behaviors. Behavioral learning theory offers a robust conceptual lens for understanding this process by emphasizing how behavior is shaped through repeated reinforcement embedded within environmental structures (Birtch & Chiang, 2014). Recent scholarship in academic integrity increasingly recognizes that integrity is not merely the outcome of individual moral reasoning but a learned behavioral pattern shaped by assessment practices, peer norms, instructional design, and institutional responses (Eaton, 2022; Muassomah et al., 2025). Empirical studies further demonstrate that policy awareness and compliance mechanisms alone are insufficient to reduce academic dishonesty when academic environments implicitly reward performance outcomes over ethical processes (Stoesz et al., 2023).

From a behavioral learning perspective, students internalize behavioral cues through ongoing reinforcement, which explains how motivational orientations and coping capacities are translated into habitual academic conduct rather than isolated ethical decisions (Koenka et al., 2020; Schabram et al., 2023). Despite this growing recognition of integrity as a learning outcome shaped by context, empirical research has paid limited attention to behavioral learning as a mediating mechanism linking psychological factors, such as academic resilience and goal orientation, to academic integrity in higher education settings. This theoretical limitation challenges the prevailing tendency to treat resilience and goal orientation merely as direct predictors of academic integrity and points instead to the need for a process-oriented explanation. Accordingly, the present study advances the argument that the influence of these psychological dispositions is enacted through behavioral learning processes embedded in academic environments, in which ethical or unethical academic behavior is learned, reinforced, and sustained over time.

Building on this perspective, the present study aims to empirically examine behavioral learning as a mediating mechanism through which academic resilience and goal orientation are translated into academic integrity among university students. By advancing a process-oriented explanation of academic integrity, this study seeks to move beyond descriptive and predictor-based models and contribute a theoretically grounded

framework for understanding how ethical academic behavior is learned, reinforced, and sustained within higher education environments.

B. Method

This study used a quantitative cross-sectional survey design to test a proposed conceptual model linking Goal Orientation and Academic Resilience to Academic Integrity through the mediating role of Behavioral Learning. The Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Model (SEM-PLS) is considered a precise, theoretically grounded method for this purpose. This study integrates behavioral learning theory, resilience theory, and goal-oriented theory, all of which involve complex, indirect, and interrelated relationships among multiple indicators. SEM-PLS was employed in SmartPLS to analyze the data and model these complex relationships.

This research was conducted in two countries: Malaysia and the Philippines. A total of 326 students participated, representing Malaysia (78.8%) and the Philippines (21.2%). The demographic composition, with 58.3% females and 41.7% males, aged 18–32 years, reflects the developmental period during which academic integrity, resilience, and learning behaviors are most prominent. The relational structure between variables was developed into a conceptual model to guide empirical analysis. Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on the inclusion criteria of actively registered students. Three institutions, namely Mindanao State University (Philippines), University of Malaya (Malaysia), and Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia, served as data collection partners and ensured compliance with ethical standards. The study achieved a high response rate of 89%, with no missing or invalid responses, reinforcing the dataset's credibility.

Four constructs were measured using tailored instruments: Academic Resilience, Goal Orientation, Behavioral Learning, and Academic Integrity. The Academic Resilience Scale (Cassidy, 2016) comprises 22 items, organized into four dimensions: perseverance, adaptive reflection, seeking help, and avoiding negative emotional responses. The Goal Orientation Scale (Pipa et al., 2017) includes 12 items that measure mastery-struggle and skill development. Behavioral Learning is adapted from McDermott et al. (1999) and consists of 12 items across the competencies of motivation, learning attitudes, attention/ perseverance, and flexibility. Academic Integrity uses a 17-item scale based on Keohane's (1999) conceptualization, adapted and validated by Ramdani (2018), with five dimensions: honesty, fairness, trust, respect, and responsibility.

All instruments underwent a cross-cultural adaptation process, including forward translation, expert review, and linguistic validation to ensure conceptual equivalence across the Malaysian and Philippine contexts. Reliability and validity were confirmed through pilot testing using Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and AVE, which showed that the adjusted scale maintained psychometric stability. All instruments use a five-point Likert response format. Data collection was conducted online through Google Forms to facilitate access for participants nationwide. Before completing the instrument, students are briefed on the research objectives and provided informed consent. The questionnaire took about 20 minutes to complete. Data were filtered to ensure completeness and accuracy, with no coercion or external intervention in the response process.

This study was approved in accordance with the research ethics procedures of the participating universities in Malaysia and the Philippines. All participants provided informed consent electronically before data collection, and participation was voluntary. Participants' identities were protected, no personally identifiable information was collected, and all data were treated with strict confidentiality in accordance with accepted ethical principles for social science research.

C. Results and Discussion

This section presents the empirical findings of the study based on data collected from 326 university students, representing Malaysia (78.8%) and the Philippines (20.9%). The analysis was conducted using the Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) approach to evaluate the measurement model and the structural relationships among the study variables. The results are presented in two parts: the first reports the outcomes of the measurement model evaluation, and the second reports the results of the structural model and hypothesis testing.

1. Results

The results of this study were obtained from the analysis of data collected from 326 university students using SmartPLS 3.0 software. The analysis was conducted in two main stages, namely the evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) and the testing of the structural model (inner model).

a. Outer model testing (measurement model): Validity and reliability testing

The measurement model evaluation assessed the validity and reliability of the constructs used in this study. Convergent validity was evaluated using outer loading values, with indicators considered acceptable when the loading value exceeded 0.70. The results of the convergent validity assessment indicate that all constructs met the recommended outer loading threshold. Most indicators across Academic Integrity, Academic Resilience, Behavioral Learning, and Goal Orientation showed outer loading values above 0.70. For the Academic Integrity construct, outer loading values ranged from 0.798 to 0.889. Indicators of Behavioral Learning and Goal Orientation also demonstrated values exceeding 0.70. In the Academic Resilience construct, while most indicators met the recommended threshold, two indicators (AR15 = 0.716 and AR20 = 0.767) showed relatively lower loadings; nevertheless, they remained above the minimum acceptable level and were therefore retained in the model.

The path analysis results indicate that Goal Orientation was positively associated with Behavioral Learning (β = 0.308) and Academic Integrity (β = 0.219). Academic resilience was positively associated with Behavioral Learning (β = 0.418) and Academic Integrity (β = 0.362). Behavioral Learning was also positively associated with Academic Integrity (β = 0.331). Figure 1 presents the structural model with standardized path coefficients obtained from the SEM-PLS analysis.

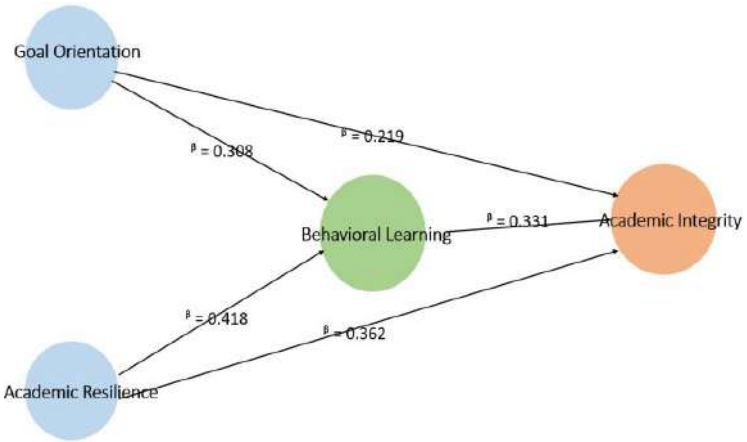

Figure 1. Structural model: Behavioral learning as a mediator

Figure 1 illustrates the hypothesized relationships among Goal Orientation, Academic Resilience, Behavioral Learning, and Academic Integrity. The model shows that Academic Resilience exhibits the strongest direct relationship with Behavioral

Learning, followed by Goal Orientation. Behavioral Learning, in turn, demonstrates a positive association with Academic Integrity, supporting its proposed role as an intervening mechanism through which psychological dispositions are translated into ethical academic behavior. The positive coefficients across all paths suggest that higher levels of goal orientation and academic resilience are associated with stronger behavioral learning and greater academic integrity among university students.

Figure 2 displays the outer loading values of the indicators included in the measurement model. All indicators shown in the figure exceeded the minimum loading threshold of 0.70.

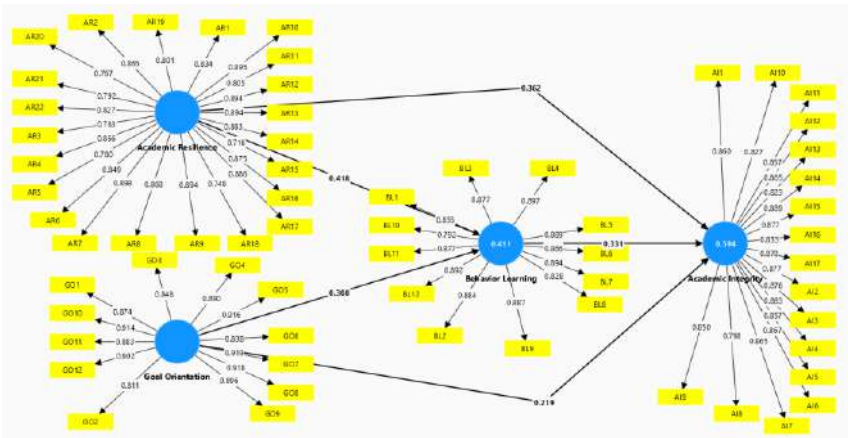

Figure 2. Outer loading values of indicators in the measurement model

Figure 2 demonstrates that all measurement indicators achieved satisfactory outer loading values, indicating strong convergent validity across the four constructs. Most indicators exhibited loading values substantially above the recommended threshold, reflecting a high degree of consistency between the indicators and their respective latent constructs. Although two indicators within the Academic Resilience construct showed comparatively lower loadings, both remained above the acceptable cutoff value and were therefore retained in the model. Overall, these results confirm that the measurement items adequately represent their underlying constructs and provide a reliable basis for subsequent structural model analysis.

Table 1 reports the values of Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Composite Reliability (CR), and Cronbach's alpha (CA) for each construct. The AVE values for all

constructs exceeded 0.50. Composite reliability values for all constructs were above 0.70, and Cronbach's alpha values were also above 0.70.

Table 1. Validity testing based on average variance extracted (AVE): reliability based on cronbach's alpha (CA) & composite reliability (CR)

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_c)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Academic Integrity	0.978	0.979	0.736
Academic Resilience	0.980	0.981	0.704
Behavioral Learning	0.971	0.974	0.757
Goal Orientation	0.975	0.977	0.783

The results presented in Table 1 confirm the satisfactory validity and reliability of all constructs included in the study. The AVE values ranged from 0.704 to 0.783, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.50 and indicating that each construct explains a substantial proportion of the variance in its indicators. Similarly, Composite Reliability values ranged from 0.974 to 0.981, while Cronbach's Alpha values ranged from 0.971 to 0.980, both surpassing the recommended minimum value of 0.70. These findings demonstrate a high level of internal consistency and support the reliability of the measurement model.

Table 2 presents the discriminant validity results based on the Fornell–Larcker criterion. The square root of the AVE for each construct is shown on the diagonal of the matrix, while the off-diagonal elements represent the correlations between constructs.

Table 2. Discriminant validity testing: Fornell & Larcker

	Academic Integrity	Academic Resilience	Behavioral Learning	Goal Orientation
Academic Integrity	(0.858)			
Academic Resilience	0.676	(0.839)		
Behavioral Learning	0.661	0.587	(0.870)	
Goal Orientation	0.595	0.549	0.538	(0.885)

Description: The value between "( )" is the square root of AVE

The Fornell–Larcker analysis further supports the discriminant validity of the measurement model. As shown in Table 2, the square root of the AVE for each construct is greater than its correlations with other constructs. This indicates that each construct shares more variance with its own indicators than with other latent variables in the model. Therefore, the results confirm that Academic Integrity, Academic Resilience, Behavioral Learning, and Goal Orientation represent empirically distinct constructs.

Table 3 presents the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) values for Academic Integrity, Academic Resilience, Behavioral Learning, and Goal Orientation, ranging from 0.553 to 0.687.

Table 3. Discriminant validity testing: HTMT

	Academic Integrity	Academic Resilience	Behavioral Learning
Academic Resilience	0.687		
Behavioral Learning	0.678	0.601	
Goal Orientation	0.608	0.565	0.553

The HTMT analysis presented in Table 3 provides additional evidence of discriminant validity among the study constructs. All HTMT values ranged from 0.553 to 0.687, remaining well below the commonly recommended threshold of 0.85. These results indicate that the constructs are empirically distinct and do not exhibit problematic overlap. The findings further confirm that Academic Integrity, Academic Resilience, Behavioral Learning, and Goal Orientation capture different conceptual dimensions and can therefore be treated as separate constructs within the structural model.

Overall, the results of the measurement model evaluation demonstrate that all constructs satisfy the recommended criteria for convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability. The satisfactory outer loading values, AVE, Composite Reliability, Cronbach's Alpha, Fornell–Larcker criterion, and HTMT ratios collectively indicate that the measurement model is robust and suitable for subsequent structural model analysis and hypothesis testing.

b. Influence significance test (boostrapping) (hypothesis test) (inner model)

Following the satisfactory evaluation of the measurement model, the structural model was assessed to examine the hypothesized relationships among Goal Orientation, Academic Resilience, Behavioral Learning, and Academic Integrity. The structural model evaluation was conducted using the bootstrapping procedure in SEM-PLS to determine the significance and strength of both direct and indirect effects. The analysis focused on testing the proposed hypotheses and evaluating the explanatory power of the model across the combined sample as well as within the Malaysian and Philippine subsamples. Table 4 presents the path coefficients, significance levels, and explained variance (R^2) for the structural model.

Table 4 presents the results of the bootstrapping analysis for the structural model. For the combined sample of Malaysia and the Philippines, Goal Orientation was positively associated with Behavioral Learning ($\beta = 0.308$, $p = 0.001$) and Academic Integrity ($\beta = 0.219$, $p = 0.002$). Academic resilience was positively associated with Behavioral Learning ($\beta = 0.418$, $p < 0.001$) and Academic Integrity ($\beta = 0.362$, $p < 0.001$). Behavioral Learning was positively associated with Academic Integrity ($\beta = 0.331$, $p < 0.001$).

Table 4. Test path coefficient & significance influence

Country	Path	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values	R-Squares
Philippines & Malaysia	Goal Orientation ->Behavioral Learning	0.308	0.313	0.094	3.264	0.001	0.411
	Academic resilience ->Behavioral Learning	0.418	0.420	0.107	3.921	0.000	
	Behavioral Learning -> Academic Integrity	0.331	0.335	0.099	3.355	0.000	0.594
	Goal Orientation -> Academic Integrity	0.219	0.212	0.075	2.919	0.002	
	Academic resilience -> Academic Integrity	0.362	0.361	0.104	3.485	0.000	
	Goal Orientation ->Behavioral Learning -> Academic Integrity	0.102	0.109	0.052	1.966	0.025	
	Academic resilience ->Behavioral Learning -> Academic Integrity	0.138	0.141	0.057	2.424	0.008	
Malaysia	Goal Orientation ->Behavioral Learning	0.307	0.292	0.113	2.707	0.004	0.429
	Academic resilience ->Behavioral Learning	0.434	0.453	0.124	3.486	0.000	
	Behavioral Learning -> Academic Integrity	0.383	0.387	0.134	2.854	0.002	0.577
	Goal Orientation -> Academic Integrity	0.226	0.205	0.091	2.477	0.007	
	Academic resilience -> Academic Integrity	0.286	0.293	0.126	2.263	0.012	
	Goal Orientation ->Behavioral Learning -> Academic Integrity	0.117	0.121	0.072	1.636	0.051	

Country	Path	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values	R-Squares
Philippines	Academic resilience ->Behavioral Learning -> Academic Integrity	0.166	0.175	0.081	2.040	0.021	
	Goal Orientation ->Behavioral Learning	0.288	0.265	0.174	1.658	0.049	0.359
	Academic resilience ->Behavioral Learning	0.395	0.435	0.185	2.138	0.017	
	Behavioral Learning -> Academic Integrity	0.248	0.241	0.192	1.292	0.098	0.639
	Goal Orientation -> Academic Integrity	0.207	0.157	0.141	1.469	0.071	
	Academic resilience -> Academic Integrity	0.493	0.533	0.226	2.180	0.015	
	Goal Orientation ->Behavioral Learning -> Academic Integrity	0.071	0.082	0.085	0.839	0.201	
	Academic resilience ->Behavioral Learning -> Academic Integrity	0.098	0.100	0.105	0.934	0.175	

The structural model results indicate that all proposed direct relationships were significant in the combined sample of Malaysia and the Philippines. Goal Orientation demonstrated significant positive effects on Behavioral Learning ($\beta = 0.308$, $p = 0.001$) and Academic Integrity ($\beta = 0.219$, $p = 0.002$). Similarly, Academic Resilience was positively associated with Behavioral Learning ($\beta = 0.418$, $p < 0.001$) and Academic Integrity ($\beta = 0.362$, $p < 0.001$). Behavioral Learning also showed a significant positive effect on Academic Integrity ($\beta = 0.331$, $p < 0.001$). Among the direct effects, the strongest relationship was observed between Academic Resilience and Behavioral Learning, suggesting that resilient students tend to exhibit stronger learning behaviors that support academic engagement and integrity.

The bootstrapping results further indicate significant indirect effects through Behavioral Learning. The indirect path from Goal Orientation to Academic Integrity through Behavioral Learning was significant ($\beta = 0.102$, $p = 0.025$), indicating that Behavioral Learning partially mediates the relationship between Goal Orientation and Academic Integrity. Similarly, the indirect effect of Academic Resilience on Academic Integrity through Behavioral Learning was also significant ($\beta = 0.138$, $p = 0.008$), supporting the mediating role of Behavioral

Learning in translating resilience into ethical academic conduct. These findings provide empirical support for the proposed mediation model and highlight the importance of behavioral learning as a mechanism linking psychological dispositions to academic integrity.

The model demonstrated satisfactory explanatory power. For the combined sample, Goal Orientation and Academic Resilience explained 41.1% of the variance in Behavioral Learning ($R^2 = 0.411$), while Goal Orientation, Academic Resilience, and Behavioral Learning jointly explained 59.4% of the variance in Academic Integrity ($R^2 = 0.594$). These values indicate that the proposed model accounts for a substantial proportion of variation in both Behavioral Learning and Academic Integrity among university students.

2. Discussion

This study demonstrates that goal orientation and academic resilience are systematically associated with learning behavior and academic integrity among university students in Malaysia and the Philippines. The findings indicate that these psychological dispositions do not operate solely as isolated predictors of ethical academic conduct but are enacted through behavioral learning processes embedded within higher education contexts. By examining these relationships across two national settings, the study highlights learning behavior as a central mechanism through which motivation, resilience, and ethical academic conduct are translated into routine academic practice.

The relationship between goal orientation and behavioral learning can be interpreted through Goal Orientation Theory, which emphasizes the role of goal clarity in shaping sustained engagement, learning regulation, and adaptive academic behavior (Chadwick & Raver, 2015). Students who demonstrate strong goal orientation tend to approach academic tasks with a mastery-focused mindset, prioritizing skill development and self-improvement rather than short-term performance outcomes (Abd Mubi, 2025). This orientation fosters learning behaviors characterized by persistence, strategic engagement, and reflective practice, which are essential for sustained academic development and ethical conduct. Consistent with prior research, goal-oriented learners are more likely to adopt disciplined and effective learning strategies that support long-term achievement and reduce reliance on maladaptive shortcuts (Safian, 2025; Koopman et al., 2014).

This association can be further understood through the multidimensional structure of goal orientation. Competence motivation reflects students' intrinsic drive to master academic content and continuously improve their capabilities beyond task completion,

encouraging deeper cognitive engagement and sustained effort (Yi Li & Shieh, 2016). Attitudes toward learning also play a critical role, as students with strong goal orientation tend to value the learning process itself rather than focusing exclusively on grades, which promotes curiosity, openness to challenges, and adaptive responses to academic difficulty (Tian et al., 2017). Moreover, strategic flexibility enables goal-oriented students to adjust learning approaches according to task demands, such as shifting between independent study and collaborative learning when confronted with complex material (Ma & Oxford, 2014). These behavioral patterns align with self-regulated learning perspectives that emphasize planning, monitoring, and strategic adjustment as core components of effective academic engagement (Labuhn et al., 2010).

Taken together, these findings suggest that goal orientation functions not merely as a motivational attribute but as a cognitive–behavioral framework that structures how students engage with academic demands over time. By translating goal clarity into disciplined and adaptive learning practices, goal orientation fosters behavioral patterns that support sustained academic engagement and ethical conduct across diverse educational contexts.

The relationship between academic resilience and behavioral learning can be understood as a process through which adaptive coping capacities are transformed into sustained learning practices (M. Suud & Na'imah, 2023; Suud et al., 2024). Academic resilience reflects students' capacity to persist, adapt, and remain engaged when confronted with academic stressors, setbacks, or failure (Ramadhan et al., 2025). Rather than functioning solely as an emotional buffer, resilience serves as a behavioral catalyst, enabling students to maintain constructive learning routines under pressure.

Cassidy (2016) conceptualized academic resilience as encompassing interrelated dimensions of perseverance, reflective functioning, adaptive help-seeking, and regulation of negative emotional responses, all of which contribute directly to learning behavior. Perseverance supports sustained task engagement despite difficulty, encouraging behaviors such as repeated practice, timely task completion, and strategic use of learning resources (Li & Tsai, 2017). Reflective functioning and adaptive help-seeking further promote proactive learning by enabling students to evaluate their learning strategies, recognize limitations, and seek appropriate academic support from peers, instructors, or digital platforms (Choi & Hur, 2023).

The regulation of negative emotional responses constitutes a critical mechanism linking resilience to behavioral learning. By managing academic stress, anxiety, and frustration, resilient students are better positioned to maintain attentional focus and avoid maladaptive responses such as disengagement or procrastination (Salleh et al., 2021; Salma & Alsa, 2023). From this perspective, academic resilience contributes to behavioral learning not merely by sustaining motivation but by stabilizing the emotional conditions necessary for effective self-regulation. These findings underscore academic resilience as a dynamic psychological resource that supports consistent, adaptive, and goal-directed learning behaviors across challenging academic contexts.

Behavioral learning emerges as a critical mechanism through which academic integrity is enacted in everyday academic practice. Learning behaviors characterized by planning, self-monitoring, strategic engagement, and reflective evaluation shape how students navigate academic demands and ethical choices. From a self-regulated learning perspective, students who effectively regulate their learning processes are more likely to adhere to academic norms, as ethical conduct becomes embedded in routine learning activities rather than treated as a separate moral decision (Nota et al., 2004; Stone, 2023).

When learning behavior is structured around disciplined study habits, responsible use of academic resources, and autonomous task completion, academic integrity is reinforced as a behavioral norm. Prior research indicates that students who engage in systematic learning routines are less inclined toward dishonest practices, as academic success is grounded in legitimate effort rather than outcome-driven shortcuts (Khilmiyah et al., 2020). In this sense, integrity is sustained not only through moral awareness but through repeated engagement in ethical learning behaviors.

This interpretation aligns with broader models of ethical learning that emphasize behavior-based regulation over compliance-driven enforcement. By framing academic integrity as an outcome of learning behavior, the findings suggest that integrity is cultivated through consistent practice within supportive learning environments. Behavioral learning thus functions as a bridge between internal self-regulation and external academic norms, translating learning strategies into ethical academic conduct (Bashori & Moerdijat, 2023; Kibtiyah & Suud, 2024).

A central contribution of this study lies in positioning behavioral learning as a mediating mechanism that translates psychological dispositions, specifically goal orientation and academic resilience, into academic integrity. While prior research has predominantly

examined these constructs as direct predictors of ethical or unethical academic behavior, the present findings extend the literature by demonstrating that integrity is shaped through daily learning practices rather than through motivation or resilience in isolation. This perspective shifts the analytical focus from static traits to dynamic behavioral processes as the locus of ethical academic conduct.

From a behavioral learning standpoint, motivation and resilience influence academic integrity by shaping patterns of reinforcement, habit formation, and self-regulated learning routines. Goal orientation provides direction and purpose, while academic resilience sustains engagement under adversity; however, behavioral learning operationalizes these capacities into concrete actions such as time management, responsible resource use, and independent task completion (Liu, Du, & Lu, 2023; Khilmiyah, Wiyono, & Suud, 2020). By foregrounding this mediating process, the study advances behavioral learning theory beyond descriptive accounts of learning habits toward an explanatory framework for ethical academic behavior.

This mediation-based explanation represents a theoretical advancement by integrating motivational, resilience, and behavioral perspectives into a unified model of academic integrity. Rather than conceptualizing integrity as a moral outcome enforced primarily through rules or sanctions, the findings suggest that integrity emerges from sustained engagement in goal-directed and adaptive learning behaviors. In doing so, the study contributes a process-oriented understanding of how academic integrity is cultivated within higher education contexts, particularly in Southeast Asian settings where learning norms and institutional expectations are embedded in daily educational practices.

The cross-national patterns observed in this study further indicate that academic integrity is shaped by contextual factors rather than governed by a universal mechanism. In the Malaysian context, behavioral learning appears to play a more prominent role, reflecting a highly structured educational system characterized by formalized assessment practices and strong institutional regulation of academic conduct (Kek & Huijser, 2011; Jelas et al., 2016). Such conditions reinforce procedural discipline and routinized learning behaviors, allowing behavioral learning to serve as a primary pathway for enacting academic integrity.

In the Philippine context, academic resilience has been highlighted as a key factor that supports students' ability to uphold academic integrity, particularly in environments that demand adaptive coping and self-regulated learning, as suggested by research on academic resilience and integrity in higher education (Cassidy, 2016; Stone, 2023). Within this setting, resilience serves as a stabilizing resource, enabling students to navigate academic

pressures while maintaining ethical conduct, particularly in contexts where institutional enforcement is less uniform. This pattern aligns with prior research that emphasizes the roles of socio-economic variability, community orientation, and informal support networks in shaping ethical learning practices (Honra & Monterola, 2024).

These contrasting pathways underscore the importance of situating academic integrity within broader cultural, institutional, and policy contexts. Whereas Malaysian students may internalize integrity through structured learning routines reinforced by institutional regulation, Filipino students may draw more strongly on resilience-based self-regulation to sustain ethical conduct under academic strain. This comparison highlights the need for context-sensitive models of academic integrity that account for variation in educational structures and cultural expectations.

Despite its contributions, this study is not without limitations. The cross-sectional design restricts causal inference and limits the ability to capture changes in learning behavior and integrity over time. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data may introduce social desirability bias, particularly in the measurement of ethical conduct. While the cross-national sample enhances contextual insight, the findings should be interpreted cautiously for generalization beyond the specific institutional and cultural settings examined.

Nevertheless, this study makes a significant theoretical contribution by repositioning academic integrity as a behavioral and developmental process rather than solely a moral disposition or regulatory outcome. By empirically validating behavioral learning as a mediating mechanism, the study responds to calls for more process-oriented and contextually grounded theories of academic integrity (Bertram Gallant, 2017; Eaton, 2022). Moreover, by foregrounding perspectives from the Global South, the findings extend integrity research beyond Western-centric frameworks and offer a transferable conceptual model for other emerging higher education systems.

Despite its theoretical and empirical contributions, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the use of a cross-sectional design restricts the ability to draw causal conclusions regarding the relationships among goal orientation, academic resilience, behavioral learning, and academic integrity. Longitudinal or experimental designs would allow future research to capture developmental changes in learning behavior and ethical conduct over time. Second, the reliance on self-reported data may introduce social desirability bias, particularly in measuring academic integrity, as respondents may underreport unethical behavior. Third, although the cross-national comparison enhances contextual insight, the findings are limited to

specific institutional settings in Malaysia and the Philippines and should be interpreted cautiously when generalized to other higher education contexts. Future studies are encouraged to extend this model across diverse educational systems, incorporate behavioral or observational measures, and examine additional contextual factors that may shape the learning–integrity relationship.

D. Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive account of how academic integrity is shaped through the interaction between psychological dispositions and learning processes within higher education contexts. By examining goal orientation and academic resilience alongside behavioral learning, the findings demonstrate that academic integrity is not merely a moral disposition or an outcome of institutional regulation, but a behavioral phenomenon cultivated through sustained learning practices. The results confirm that goal orientation and academic resilience influence academic integrity both directly and indirectly, with behavioral learning serving as a critical mediating mechanism that translates motivation and adaptive coping into ethical academic conduct.

The study contributes to the academic integrity literature by advancing a process-oriented perspective that emphasizes how ethical behavior is learned, reinforced, and stabilized through everyday academic engagement. Rather than framing integrity as a compliance-driven response to rules or sanctions, the findings highlight the central role of disciplined learning routines, self-regulation, and adaptive engagement in sustaining ethical conduct. The cross-national comparison further underscores that the pathways through which integrity is enacted are context-dependent, shaped by institutional structures, cultural expectations, and educational environments in Malaysia and the Philippines.

Building on the acknowledged limitations, several directions for future research emerge. Given the cross-sectional nature of the present study, longitudinal and experimental designs are needed to examine how behavioral learning and academic integrity evolve and to establish stronger causal inferences regarding the relationships between psychological dispositions and ethical behavior. Future studies are also encouraged to complement self-reported measures with behavioral or observational data to reduce social desirability bias and provide a more nuanced understanding of academic integrity in practice. In addition, extending this model to diverse institutional and cultural contexts beyond current settings would enhance its generalizability and enable a deeper exploration of the contextual factors that shape learning behavior and ethical conduct across higher education systems.

This study demonstrates that strengthening academic integrity requires moving beyond policy enforcement toward learning-centered approaches that cultivate disciplined, reflective, and adaptive learning behaviors. In this sense, academic integrity is not simply taught or enforced but progressively formed through sustained engagement in ethical learning practices within supportive educational environments.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial or non-financial interests that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

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