

Ideal and actual roles of university professors in academic integrity management: A comparative study

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Abstract

Unethical behaviour has become an increasingly controversial issue in Higher Education institutes. There have been debates about the reasons for the increase in unethical behaviour. But many of those debates contain problems. A key problem has been the lack of empirical results about faculty members' perceptions of their role in the phenomenon, how cultural contexts influence the perception of university teachers about their role in the academic integrity field and whether conflicts exist between what they believe their role should be and the types of roles they actually play.

The aim of the study is to explore this aspect using a qualitative research design to facilitate comprehensive access to faculty members' beliefs and practices. The findings suggest that professors believe the teaching role extends beyond encouraging the learning of the subject matter being studied and includes offering education and information to students about the importance of avoiding academic misconduct such as cheating and plagiarism. Implications for university across different countries are also discussed

Keywords: Ideal role, actual role, academic integrity, plagiarism, HE, cultural context

Introduction

Unethical behaviour has grown exponentially in higher education, posing serious problems to both the quality of education and the preservation of academic integrity (Imran and Nordin, 2013) thus generating a society that is more prone to cheat. This is particularly troublesome for Higher Education institutes (HEIs) who are responsible for providing society with highly skilled employees (Sugrue et al., 2018) and training future leaders whose behaviour can impact both their personal and work environments. Therefore, HEIs are required to foster ethical values and to help students develop competencies for their future since joint actions by the all-academic community to preserve integrity in the university can have beneficial consequences (Löfström, et al., 2015). Namely, when students see that there is a commitment to ethical standards from all sides and its knowledge is disseminated, academic integrity is less likely to be violated (McCabe and Trevino, 1993).

While it can be argued that the commitment to addressing integrity issues has improved, the implementation of it in teaching has made unsatisfactory progress. As noted by Christie *et al.* (2013), there is a disparity between the “rhetoric of policy documents” and the actual practice of integrating academic integrity in the classroom. This incongruity may be due in part to a lack of common values, and confusion around the concept of ethics and integrity itself, the absence of training among teachers (Paik *et al.*, 2019; Gullifer and Tyson, 2014), or even sociocultural factors. To ensure consistency between teachers' actions and policies, the inclusion of teachers in their formulation and implementation is necessary since they are in a transmission channel with the students (Sutherland-Smith, 2005).

According to the literature, the teacher is a critical element for the effective integration of academic integrity in the classroom and their understanding and beliefs about it play a crucial role in how it is implemented (McCabe and Pavela, 2004). From them, students learn ethical guidelines and acceptance of academic integrity standards (McCabe, 1993). Universities try to ensure that their members act in accordance with ethical standards, but the general effort towards academic integrity generates great expectations about the role of faculty members and dilemmas about what they understand is their role in this subject. Therefore, the discrepancy between what they think and what they really do to find possible infringements of academic integrity, may also have an impact on the way they see their role with it in the classroom.

Thus, the relationship between faculty members' beliefs (what should be done, ideally) and their actual practices should help to clarify how they incorporate integrity into their teaching (Lumpkin, 2008) and whether their practices reflect their beliefs. Despite the existence of studies about possible discrepancies between teacher beliefs and practices (Ertmer *et al.*, 2012; McCarty *et al.*, 2001), these have not analysed teachers' attitudes toward and understanding of their actual and ideal roles. The research still lacks conceptual clarity of the "professor role" construct, and it also remains confusing which specific professor behaviour most successfully helps students to preserve academic integrity (Bruton and Childers, 2016).

Contrary to fields such as business ethics (Paik *et al.* 2019) and child development (Şahin-Sak *et al.*, 2016), little empirical research has directly addressed what teachers as class leaders do in the field of academic integrity and how they perceive their ideal roles in different cultural contexts. While culture has been shown to be an important element in explaining human behaviour in a given context (Hofstede *et al.* 2005), and shaping perceptions related to academic dishonesty (Smyth and Davis, 2004; Marshall and Garry, 2006; Kutieleh and Adiningrum, 2011) to date, much of the cross-cultural research on academic integrity has explored national culture influence on both students' violation of academic integrity (Marshall and Garry, 2006; McCabe, Feghali, and Abdallah, 2008 ;Kutieleh and Adiningrum, 2011) and students' perceptions of academic integrity policies and practices and in higher education(Jian, Marion, and Wang, 2019; Mahmud, Bretag and Foltýnek, 2019).

However, so far, no studies have explored the possible influence of culture over the perception of professors about their actual and ideal role. The actions and inactions of the faculty members are the result of an interaction between their individual, their cultural environment, the rules established in the institution and the students in the classroom, favourable to academic integrity to a greater or lesser extent (Macfarlane, Zhang, and Pun, 2014). To address the limited research on the current and ideal role of professors in academic integrity management processes, we proceeded to compare different countries: Spain, Italy, Sweden, Ireland, South Africa, and India using the knowledge of intercultural management. Among the best-known researchers in the field we find Hofstede who represented national cultures in different dimensions (Hofstede, 2001). The dimensions of Hofstede, initially applied only in the business field, have been successively considered

relevant in educational settings (Frambach, Driessen, Beh, & Van der Vleuten, 2014). In line with studies in the field of education, the university is an example of an organizational context where there are cultures that differ from each other in exactly the same way as the organizational sphere (Beugelsdijk, Kostova, & Roth, 2017).

There are marked differences between Spanish, South African, Indian, Swedish, Italian and Irish cultures in terms of power distance, individualism and masculinity (Hofstede 2001, 2007). (See Appendix 1 for information about countries cultural dimensions.)

Countries with a high level of power distance are characterized by hierarchical organizational structures where superiors act autocratically and communicate indirectly. Furthermore, the fear of expressing oneself contrary to superiors makes them prefer not to make decisions and defer them to their bosses; while the low level in power distance makes individuals more responsible for their role and autonomous in the decision making (Li, Roberts, Yan, and Tan, 2016). Consequently, professors in cultures with low power distance (compared to those with high power distance) might be expected to see their role as educator and communicator of academic integrity and also take a proactive role compared with countries with low power distance.

Individualistic cultures (high level of individualism) value personal freedom and the individual interest prevails over the collective (Hofstede, 1980). Therefore, faculty members from more individualistic cultures might be expected to see academic integrity as an individual responsibility, while faculty members from collectivist cultures could perceive it as everyone's responsibility and be less attentive in being educators of academic integrity. Finally, feminine societies (those with a lower level of masculinity) give greater value to people to preserve equality. It might therefore be expected that faculty members from feminine culture would have a much stronger focus on academic integrity.

In education research, Hofstede's cultural dimensions have been perceived as predictive of teaching style and responses to certain behaviour (Cortina, Arel, and Smith-Darden, 2017). Therefore, since teachers play a pivotal role in shaping students' behaviour and can potentially influence a culture of ethics and help students foster "authorial identities" (Cheung et al., 2018), the investigation of cultural differences among faculty members can be useful in providing answers regarding academic integrity responses in different contexts. Thus, the purpose of the present study is to explore whether faculty members' ideal

practices and beliefs align with their actual practices regarding academic integrity in different cultural contexts.

Answering these questions and exploring the deviations between actual and ideal roles is important for several reasons. First, teaching is the result of a collective process that is influenced by institutional factors. These, in turn, shape teachers' actions and require them to consider factors not directly related to classroom education. Second, how teachers view their role affects the results they produce: their concept of their role can determine how they define their work, what they think should be taught, and the ways in which these issues are covered. Therefore, if a self-idealized role diverges from the professor's actual role, this limits how he/she implements the standards of integrity and the support provided to students toward achieving ethical behaviour. Teacher training should focus on fostering the ideal role, making possible the improvement of educational practices.

The purpose of the present study is to understand how certain sociocultural contexts can create deviations in the ideal and actual roles of faculty members in academic integrity management processes. Specifically, we sought to capture faculty members' ideas regarding the role they play in HEIs in relation to the topic of academic integrity and what their conceptions reveal about the way in which this role is different from the role they consider ideal. To this end, the present study describes (a) the approach used by faculty members to address the possible infringement of integrity and (b) the approach they would like to take if they had the choice.

Theoretical framework

Definition of academic integrity

Integrity is a suitcase word. Most of the time it means different things to different people (c.f. Karabag and Berggren, 2012) and to those in different fields. Therefore, it can be difficult to define. For instance, in the field of moral philosophy, it is commonly associated with the good virtues of a human being and is often synonymous with honesty (Palanski and Yammarino, 2007).

Integrity is similarly used in the legal field and represents the legitimate private sphere of a person as a citizen, to possess certain rights, and the right to have the private sphere protected against possible external intrusion (Fjellstrom, 2005; Macfarlane, Zhang, and Pun, 2014). Integrity is also related to the respect of human dignity and refers to both the equal treatment and the protection a human being deserves and the equal treatment and protection due to oneself (Honneth, 1992). Therefore, integrity is an intrinsic value and an intersubjective virtue of each human being when relating to others, and expresses their position in the universe (Palanski, and Yammarino, 2007; Rendtorff and Kemp, 2019). Moreover, the protection of integrity at the centre of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union establishes that each individual has an infinite dignity that must be respected (Macfarlane et al., 2014). Whereas in the academic field, it is defined as a commitment, “to six fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage” (ICAI, 2014). More specifically, it refers to humility and respect in relation to academic functions or assigned tasks (Macfarlane, 2011).

Academic integrity studies focus on the breach of the ethical standard, which materialize in incidents of plagiarism, and cheating—the most widely practiced forms of dishonest behaviour on the university level (Chesney, 2009; Macfarlane *et al.*, 2014; de Maio, et al., 2020).

The impact of these behaviours on societal standards of integrity has raised alarm bells, indicating that raised awareness is needed by faculties of economics and management, as they are the source of inspiration for future business leaders. Since these faculties face more and more criticism for ignoring the relevance of promoting a culture of integrity and teach ethical norms, they need an overarching approach that can help to develop a portfolio of different skills (Mitchell, 2007). In this sense, during the last decade, there has been consensus over the importance of building a complete vision that reinforces students' understanding of honesty (Weber, 2006; Caldwell, 2010; Ransome and Newton, 2018) and promotes academic integrity (Sutherland-Smith, 2008). The strategies to generate this vision take different forms: educational programs that foster students' academic literacy, ensuring they cultivate an understanding of the importance of acting with integrity in the educational and professional world; the development and implementation of policies and academic integrity practices (Morris and Carroll, 2016). The creation of university policies linked to academic integrity is an element that ensures university responsibility in this regard (Anohina-Naumeca, Tauginienè, and Odineca, 2018). These policies are usually

part of the set of university policies and clarify the identity role of the universities, defining what is acceptable and unacceptable, the responsible agencies and the possible sanctions (Spain and Robles, 2011).

The implementation of academic integrity policies can be facilitated by their publication in places widely available to students, such as web pages or student manuals. However, authors such as Whitley and Keith-Spiegel (2001) suggest that the discussion of academic integrity is more effective in raising the awareness of the policies. In part this is because on many occasions academic integrity policies are legal documents, drafted by legal experts where there is little or no participation by academics, and are focused more on sanctioning than educating (Sutherland-Smith, 2010; de Maio, et al., 2020). The decisions made reflect to what extent policies are followed, thus helping to increase trust and credibility of the university towards their stakeholders (Anohina-Naumeca, et al., 2018). Research suggests the significance of involving different stakeholders with the aim of maintaining a culture of academic integrity (Park, 2004) and finding approaches for academic staff to react consistently with the responses their institutions expect from them (de Maio, et al., 2020; Gallant and Drinan, 2006).

The varying ways of interpreting the meaning of academic integrity and how it affects students' attitudes and practices is clearly evident. Therefore, a wide range of skills and knowledge is required to develop an action-oriented approach toward preserving it in HEIs.

Faculty members' roles in academic integrity

Faculty members play several key roles: not only are they responsible for pedagogical duties and engaging students in learning (Zaring et al., 2019; Chirikov, et al., 2019) but they are the key players in developing encouraging fair, honest, practices and promote standards of integrity.

However, according to existing studies, many professors believe they are not responsible for guiding students' integrity (Curtis and Vardanega, 2016) or have not been sufficiently educated in promoting it (Srivastava and Dhar, 2016). Thus, it is seen that some faculty members' actions—and inactions—related to integrity are mainly based on their personal traits and experience.

Contrary to this, certain researchers argue that while some faculty members believe they are responsible for students' integrity, factors such as work overload and pressure to publish may prevent them from doing so (Roberts *et al.*, 2001). Faculty members' beliefs and practices can also depend on context (Mansour, 2009): the culture in which a professor is raised/socialized (Robertson and Crittendon, 2003) and the presence of community norms (Baartman *et al.* 2007). A professional group, also known as "hyper-norms" (Bailey and Spicer, 2007), can also influence his/her ethical beliefs. These norms constitute ethical prescriptions against violating some basic rights, moderate the effect of national identity on ethical decision-making, and create institutional logic (Goldstein *et al.*, 2008; Berggren and Karabag, 2019). This would mean that individuals employ a common morality in order to achieve the goals desired by their institution and would be less likely to disregard ethical norms. That said, contextual factors (national culture and organizational norms) may influence faculty members' beliefs that they do not play a role in student integrity. They may also believe they play a role but not practice it. The existence of different beliefs and understanding between faculty members' roles may generate inconsistency of practices at universities (Buehl and Beck, 2015). In this case, faculty members' actual practices could contradict their ideal practices and beliefs.

After examining the research published on academic integrity, we noticed that a few studies have analysed faculty members' viewpoints about reasons for students' academic misconduct and ways to identify it. These studies employed a quantitative approach (Robinson-Zañartu *et al.*, 2005) or have investigated the phenomenon in a narrow spectrum of cultural backgrounds, such as English-speaking countries (Cheung, et al., 2018; Ashworth et al, 1997). Although literature has found conflicting views (de Jager and Brown, 2010) in the interpretation of academic integrity in different contexts (Rest, 1986), there has been minimal focus on the influence of context on faculty members' beliefs in relation to their roles regarding academic integrity.

Some attempt has been made to study if and how teachers' beliefs differ from their practices in primary and secondary education (Billot, 2003). The "real" practices and behaviours of the teacher who integrates teaching and research, and who puts forth her/his most equitable efforts in all areas of teaching work to help preserve academic integrity, may be different from his/her "ideal" practices (Bailey and Spicer, 2007). That said, later studies conducted in fields such as international management (Paik *et al.*, 2019) show that a disparity may

exist between managers' beliefs and practices and that cultural context may impact these convergences/divergences. However, studies have not explored the beliefs and actual practices of faculty members in HEIs.

To contribute to the literature, we undertook the current research to determine how faculty members in different contexts perceive their roles in the area of academic integrity and whether conflicts exist between what they believe their role should be and what they perceive it to be in reality. As such, we established the following research questions.

1. What do university professors do to maintain and manage academic integrity in their teaching?
2. What is the professor's real and ideal role in maintaining and managing academic integrity in their teaching?
3. How much do the professor's ideal role and actual integrity management practices deviate from each other?

Method

Research design

A qualitative research design was used. The choice of this design facilitated comprehensive access to the university teachers' beliefs and their practices and allowed us "to capture the voice and the way they make meaning of their experience" (Rabionet, 2011, p. 203). This design also helped us to gather rich information, elaborated description, and the meaning (Denzin, 1989) of faculty members' roles in academic integrity. The study employed purposeful sampling (Patton, 2015) since the aim was not to identify a representative, randomly selected sample of the population but rather a sample of information-rich cases, and selected professors for their capacity to provide valuable information on the phenomenon of interest and insight over the questions under study. As part of the purposive sampling, we selected participants from the faculty of economics and management in order to avoid that possible differences in their understanding were due to other aspects, such as the discipline and/or field of knowledge instead of their culture.

Context of the study

To observe if and how context may impact teachers' actual and ideal practices about integrity, we collected data from the faculties of economics and management schools in six different countries (India, Italy, Ireland, Spain, Sweden, and South Africa). The countries were selected using a set of criteria that allowed a wide variety of cultural differences according to the cultural dimensions proposed by Hofstede *et al.* (2005) and that could add valuable information to the topic.

To compare professors' viewpoints in the six countries, one university was selected from each based on the degree to which they offered different types of economics and management programs to undergraduate and postgraduate students so as to provide a suitable means for comparison across the six countries.

Participants

A total of 82 teachers participated in this study: 20 from Spain, 11 from Italy, 11 from Sweden, 17 from Ireland, 12 from South Africa, and 11 from India. All of professors contacted to schedule an interview consented to participate. The sample size was based on the principle of theoretical saturation introduced by Glaser and Strauss (1967).

Participants at the different universities were all full-time faculty members. All groups were heterogeneous in terms of the teachers' ages, years of experience, and gender. There was a wide range of economics and management subjects taught, with some overlap between the groups. Table 2 shows a summary of the informants in each country and their main characteristics.

Table 2. General information on interviewed professors.

General information	Spain	Italy	Ireland	Sweden	South Africa	India	In this study
Total number of teachers	20	11	17	11	12	11	82
Female	12	6	9	7	5	6	55%
Male	8	5	8	4	7	5	45%
	Spain	Italy	Ireland	Sweden	South Africa	India	Average
Average years of teachers' experiences	11	12	13	12	10	8	11
Average age of teachers	44	42	44	43	41	37	42
Tenure	8	7	10	7	7	4	52%

Non-Tenure	12	4	7	4	5	7	48%
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Data collection

A semi-structured interview technique was employed since it was considered an appropriate technique to ascertain faculty members' understanding of research integrity and give meaning to these experiences rather than testing or evaluating the hypotheses (Seidman, 1998). The interviews were conducted either in English or, if it was possible, in the language spoken. The same questions were used for all interviews, but follow-up questions were posed in a few cases.

The interview guide had two sets of questions. In the first set, questions were closed ended and were used to obtain the teachers' general demographic characteristics. The second set of questions was open ended. These explored the university teacher's actual integrity management role and what he/she thought that role should be. The questions that are asked in this study can be found in Appendix 2. The interviews lasted between 60 and 100 minutes.

During the interviews, we took into consideration important ethical concerns such as confidentiality and anonymity. In order to guarantee their confidentiality, each participant was assigned a code in order to avoid revealing their identities and compromising the anonymity of interviewees.

Analysis of data

This research was supported by the software NVivo11. All the interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. In order to triangulate the data and validate our findings, field notes were written during and after each interview. These notes were particularly helpful as shed further light on the interview transcripts, allowing a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon under study (Denzin, 1989). Personal comments about what was done, body languages and descriptions of the setting gave us precious insight. This valuable information was entered into the software and used for analysis together with the interview transcripts. Moreover, interviews took place in a location of the participant's choice to express themselves openly without forcing them to reveal any information that they were

not comfortable with. All these aspects allowed us to create a comprehensive and reliable picture of the data (Denzin, 2009).

An interpretative approach was used as an epistemological stance (Charmaz, 2006), and an inductive position was proposed as an analysis technique, with the aim of building and extracting information through a combination of theory and data (Glasser and Strauss, 1967).

To analyse the data, we used open coding followed by axial coding, a two-stage process recommended by Strauss and Corbin (1998). In the open coding stage, we read through the transcriptions several times with the aim of identifying, categorizing, and describing phenomena found and identifying the principal themes and issues. We then proceeded to compare the data to explore possible relations and patterns. We identified and classified sub-themes by interrogating the data with the codes to obtain greater improvement. Even though the interpretations were constant through the collection, transcription, and codification of the data, the researcher proceeded to interpret according to the suggestions of the literature (Patton, 2015) and constantly related data with codes and theory.

Results

Through analysis, we identified codes and sub-codes that offered a more detailed overview of the actual roles that the professor played regarding academic integrity, student plagiarism, and the roles they perceive as ideal.

Professors' actual roles in academic integrity management processes

Seven categories of teacher roles emerged in response to the first research question (Table 3 provides the codes and sub-codes and how they are observed in the six countries)

Educator of academic integrity: Nearly all professors in all six countries shared that they were educating students about integrity and plagiarism while also providing support to help students understand these concepts. From the professors' perspectives, one way of educating students about plagiarism entailed discussing integrity in class. These discussions are part of a module or are used to clarify the issue in the final year—that is, to teach students who are in the process of finishing their formal education about plagiarism.

This quote from one of the professors illustrates this way of expressing the role of teacher as an educator of academic integrity:

“Students have to understand academic integrity. They are studying how to run a company, so they must know what it means to act with integrity. Every year, I give them these boring lessons [that] they don’t understand but [that] are really important. I educate them, and I give them more knowledge of what it means to steal the work of others, what [...] it means disrespecting others,” (Spain, 28).

This expression of the professor’s role shows that the professor informs students about what constitutes plagiarism in academia. By incorporating detailed instruction about academic dishonesty into the class, this professor emphasizes the importance of integrity. Some professors said that they let students know the negatives of plagiarism and the uselessness of engaging in it. Others stated that they provide examples, both in relation to past students’ works that have been plagiarized and in a relation to examples of phrases that are copied:

“I try to give examples that they can easily remember. We all recall with examples. I had a very good student. He had to write the paper with comments that we had just received from a conference’...so he sent me the same paper with more words, but it was exactly the same paper. This is self-plagiarism! I told him: ‘... students don’t understand and ask me: ‘I cannot write what I have written? In short, I have to explain what they can and cannot do in order to avoid them making the same mistake” (Ireland, 12).

These words show that emphasizing plagiarism in education allows professors to discourage student misconduct. The professor’s words also provide proof of how this function is an essential aspect of teaching. Analysis of this category suggested that professors are willing to teach the significance of integrity, explain to students that plagiarism is a serious problem, and suggest ways to avoid it.

Teacher of academic writing: More than half of the professors in all six countries indicated that they teach citation style, as many students do not understand how to cite the work of others and often struggle to select a standard citation format. The professors indicated that they have a clear responsibility to assist students in becoming proficient in academic writing. The analysis suggested three different ways in which supervisors teach students in

this endeavour. First, they include the citation requirement on the course outline or in introductory writing courses. Some of the professors said that instead of merely explaining what plagiarism means, they educate students on citing and teach them how to use the work of others. One professor stated:

“At the beginning of the semester when they start the course, I give them a session about academic writing. It is our responsibility to introduce them to this new world. In this introductory course, I indicate [the rules for quoting]. I provide the ‘instruction book’. It is a guide that indicates what they have to do if they want to reproduce the words of others, the citation style etc. Besides, the university has mandatory courses” (Sweden, 08).

One group of professors stated that they create an environment in which to discuss ways of writing. During these discussions, they provide examples of how to properly paraphrase and quote sources. They also distribute materials on the correct use of sources at the beginning of the module or within the course and help students to identify and frame the assignments:

“I give them examples and tell them: you should be very careful about using quotations and how to modify the word and phrases and cite...so that, we discuss it” (India, 9).

In doing this, they express to students the importance of referencing the work of others. More specifically, they talk with the students about the significance of developing their own knowledge and acknowledging the work of others. These statements can be illustrated with the following quotation:

“I always tell students to cite other people’s words and modify them with their own words. If they like this phrase, they can’t use it just like it is written, but they need to reference” (South Africa, 3).

Some professors declared that they discuss methodology issues during a regular class session, providing citations, paraphrasing examples, and giving students a clear message about how to do their job and the need to acknowledge sources in their assignments.

Developer of research integrity assignment: In comparing the countries, we see how this teacher role only came up in South Africa, where teachers have adopted new assignments in accordance with sustainable education principles to foster the understanding of student

integrity. Professors explained how they included service-learning in the curriculum with the aim of engaging students in their communities. They recognized it as an important strategy since they are characterized by greater student participation—those who get involved in tasks that show the importance of integrity and respect for others play a more active role in the learning process and better understand the essential values for the community. Some participants stated that they have adopted these types of assignments based on cooperative learning. As more and more instances of misbehaviour occur on campuses, teachers name dishonest practices such as theft or violations that make intervention necessary. They also believe that plagiarism is included in these practices:

“We try to get students to learn how they have to respect the community, and outreach programs and service-learning helps them awaken a sense of respect...everything is the same, theft, plagiarism, violence in the campus, and if we start by involving them, they will understand more. I believe we need to teach integrity, and Service Learning is a way to let them understand respect and .. is the starting point of the education for sustainability. (South Africa, 2).

Teachers in South Africa find this type of teaching useful in preventing cases of misbehaviour because students become involved in their communities and are introduced to a form of quality control at the beginning of the curriculum. This, in turn, increases the likelihood of *integrity*.

Guide in assignment writing: Another important responsibility named by most professors in Ireland, Italy, and Sweden is the need to give guidelines on assignments. This includes two steps. First, they explain how to do assignments. More precisely, professors consider that students are on a learning journey. For this reason, they need clear guidance about the requirements of the assignments:

“It is a part of the education and of teaching, how to behave, and that is a very important role for a teacher or supervisor of Ph.D. students—for example, to educate them about how to prepare and write properly their assignments. I put an effort into this aspect in providing insight and information about the assignments, along a path of continuous learning and growth” (Italy, 2).

Professors tend to be clear about the nature of the task, the format, and even expectations for students' work. They also provide detailed and comprehensive information about how to complete and organize assignments. Because students tend to give the same weight to all sources of information, regardless of whether they are reliable, other professors reported that they explain where to find information. The following quote summarizes these statements:

"I tend to give them a complete vision of what can and cannot be done in the academic field, how an academic work must be done. In the second year, they are still immature in some aspects...they are in a learning process; this process is what I tend to reinforce because, they believe that all sources of information are the same: Wikipedia is the same as [as] Facebook or whatever. They wonder: 'What is the difference? What else if I get from here and there'? I explain the source they have to use and where they can find [it]," (Ireland, 10).

Intimidator: Some professors noted that they try to scare students about the consequences of academic misbehaviour such as plagiarism. They mentioned different strategies, such as informing students about the specific consequences of plagiarizing by sharing previous examples. Other professors explained to their students what happens when plagiarism is encountered:

"I explain to them the consequences of plagiarism and the violation of integrity. I tell them the penalties and what can happen to them, normally scaring them. They get enough deterrent results" (India, 7).

Some professors give students examples of situations of past and actual punishments. Specifically, they display examples of students who plagiarized the work of others and explain the penalties imposed on them or remind students of the proceedings if a case of plagiarism is found:

"They are surprised when I say, 'send your work again; it is plagiarism' and I [tell] them a tale. I had a student who earned her bachelor here. There was a research proposal. So, the Software T. report showed that a part was copied from a student at Y, and I realized ... was her own. I knew that it was based on her previous work, so I explained her, and have

a conversation about how much needs to be different. In some ways, some of them couldn't be any different ...I just let them know that Software T. catches a lot” (Ireland, 020).

Sometimes professors clarify the use of tools to detect in the course and warn students to pay attention when submitting a task. They advise that antiplagiarism software automatically detects those assignments that do not meet methodological requirements. They also warn that the tools can detect similarities between students' assignments and those submitted in the past. Some professors show students the results of plagiarism detection software as they consider whether students understand the real processes of incorporating references into their individual work.

Feedbacker: Other activities include professors *giving feedback* to students. Some professors follow up on the assignments and involve their students in creating an environment of trust. Many professors consider providing feedback a critical part of their job. Not only does feedback give students helpful information about how their work is progressing, but it allows them an opportunity to understand their mistakes and improve their assignments. Feedback can include monthly or weekly meetings with students or even emails before they hand something in. One interviewee remarked:

“when I am a supervisor for project, I mark that each time they have to present the documentation: at the beginning, every fifteen days, to see how they do their task day by day. If a student never comes and presents a perfect final work, that is fine...It has not happened to me, but...I think it's forcing them to come here every fortnight or every three weeks. Even though they have not done much, they see that this is serious” (Spain, 9).

Teacher of practices: We created this code after reviewing the data several times, comparing professors' ideas about teaching roles, responsible conduct for good scientific and professional practice policies, and codes of best practices, and resolving that all those roles are related to the teaching of good practices. Twenty-four supervisors cited the value they place on strengthening good practices. Many of the statements and activities espoused by the professors were along the lines of letting students understand how to observe good practice. Thus, they share knowledge on the importance and meaning of correct behaviour in the university setting. This teaching involves information about and discussion of codes of responsible practices, standards, and guidelines for best practices. According to these professors, students need to be engaged in the meaning and value of good behaviour. In

doing so, they become aware of the possible ethical risks that can arise from ignoring what constitutes an act of plagiarism or cheating. For these professors, their role includes training students about proper practices:

“ I discussed [in a lecture] about the rules in academia which are very related with good practices in general...and the consequences of their bad practices in...society, is the way of working in a part of the industry, that’s...ethical behaviour. So, I explain to them what the good practice is and give indications of what is behaving integrally in the university and in the workplace” (Sweden, 41).

The results showed that the role of teaching practices was primarily expressed in Italy and Sweden. Among these, all professors from Sweden mentioned that they offer lectures on ways of complying with best practices and explain to students how misappropriations are deceptive practices in academia and in the future workplace. They also inform about the need to develop honest rather than dishonest practices and protect against violation of integrity. In contrast to these countries, only few professors in Spain and India addressed these issues.

Table 3. The real roles of professors in academic integrity management processes

Role	Code	Sub-code	Professors in the codes
Real	Educator of academic integrity	Discuss and talk about academic misconduct (in the class) Provide examples of academic misconduct Explain integrity/plagiarism at the beginning Clarify plagiarism in the final year Let students know the negativity of academic misbehaviour Let students know the existence of the student handbook	India Ireland Italy Spain Sweden South Africa
	Teacher of academic writing	Include citing requirements on the course Provide examples of how to paraphrase, and quote sources Express the importance to reference the work of others	India Ireland Italy Spain Sweden South Africa
	Developer of research integrity assignment	Include service-learning into the curriculum	South Africa
	Guide in the assignments writing	Explain how to do assignments Explain where to find information	Ireland Italy Sweden
	Intimidator	Inform students the specific consequences Let them know actual and past punishments Clarify the use of tools to detect in all assignments Show them the results of plagiarism detection software	India Ireland Italy Spain Sweden South Africa

	Feedbacker	Provide feedback on their assignments Check if they do properly their assignments	India Ireland Italy Spain Sweden South Africa
	Teacher of practices	Let understand how to observe good practice Lectures on way of complying with best practice	Italy Sweden
	Protector of integrity	Maintain integrity Protect against violations	Sweden

Professors' ideal roles in academic integrity management processes

The second research question explored the professors' beliefs and ideal roles in managing academic integrity. Table 4 provides the codes and sub-codes and how they are observed in different countries.

Educator and informer about integrity: Most teachers believed that a professor's ideal role is to explain to students the importance of academic integrity and what plagiarism is. Professors in all countries shared that their ideal role should include helping students understand the seriousness of plagiarism. One professor stated:

"We should educate them, making students aware of the importance of integrity and the seriousness of plagiarism, what it is...So I think making students aware of what is actually considered plagiarism...would hit at a lot of the problems, but also what are the consequences of plagiarism for students' degrees or their studies" (Ireland, 19).

Some professors reflected on their students' lack of knowledge about integrity, cheating, and plagiarism and noted that their ideal role should include 'informing students', especially those in the first year, to help them clearly understand integrity and avoid misconduct. This reasoning is seen in the words of two professors:

"Teacher and the tutor have to inform" (Italy, 47).

"Another preventive thing that each and every one of the teachers of all the subjects could do, that a first-year teacher of each subject would make, is to refresh ideas about plagiarism issues, when it is the time of doing a job, they have commended" (Spain, 48).

Other professors believed that they could help students through cases by showing examples of what can be done and demonstrating how to avoid academic fraud. An Indian professor stated:

“Showing examples of [how] this is an academic misbehaviour, this is stealing, this is rude to the teacher, this is disruptive talking, this is plagiarism, this is not plagiarism, this is not perfect, this is how you have to do, etc. So, working through with them, either [in class or in a] workshop which you can make people go to” (India, 25).

According to the professors, another important role in this category entails reminding students what plagiarism is in case they forget its meaning. Such insight is again supported by instances in the literature. Jones (2011) wrote that academic integrity in education includes defining plagiarism for students and teaching them how to avoid it; this is a “learned skill that faculty members can teach and model”. Thus, professors should increase awareness about what constitutes academic integrity/plagiarism and why the latter will not be accepted.

Teacher of ethical standards: Thirty-one professors deemed it essential to create an ethical culture at their university and instil ethical values in students. Citing an association between deviant behaviour in higher education and dishonesty in the business realm, they stated that it is important to teach what comprises unethical behaviour and its consequences for both society and the organization:

“In part, we can prevent it. In our role with the students, we should think in structuring rules—in ethics, the standards are the answer...to be aware that there are ways to be involved, but ...the rules are not enough. We have to explain...we are social agents. I think it’s a question that we have to ask ourselves: what is my space? I have to guarantee competencies of students for the world of work, but ethics is not in textbooks” (Italy, 57).

This highlights an interesting view on the role that professors envision for themselves. Great concern related to ethics or disseminating information about policies and best practices emerged from the interviews. Of particular note is the diversity of this perception across the six countries. In Italy, Ireland, and Sweden, the role of teaching ethical standards is deemed highly important. Professors stated that providing information about this could be preventive and thus reduce the occurrence of deviant behaviours such as falsifying

information, cheating, stealing, corruption, etc. In Spain, South Africa, and India, however, the professors' perceptions about the role of teaching ethics was less encouraging. In addition, some professors claimed that ethics teaching could be delivered through the inclusion of ethics education into the curriculum. Our study confirms the findings of Lopez *et al.* (2005) and Conn (2008) regarding business and management schools about the importance of integrating ethics education into their curricula with the aim of preventing unethical behaviour.

Leader: Professors in Sweden and Italy noted they should, ideally, be role models and motivate, encourage, collaborate, coach, and engage. Leadership is evidenced by teachers' powerful influence not only to improve knowledge skills but to empower students and positively influence their behaviours (Pounder, 2006). Leadership could allow professors to be closely involved in decision-making by motivating rather than concentrating strictly on learning achievement:

“Being a teacher means having a leadership position. You should have to have responsibility to tell them how to act and motivate them in their journey” (Italy, 5).

Interviewees declared it would be invaluable to stimulate students toward the production of creative works and to communicate and engage with them to uncover their potential. This would enable both teachers and students to create goals that were otherwise considered unattainable. One professor stated:

“Motivate and support on [what] to do in a difficult situation: ‘Can I do like this’? ‘No, you can’t’. So, if they have that support, it would be better. And clarify. We should all engage with students. We are those who should motivate students. It is difficult just [to] read an instruction without seeing an example, so there might be a tutorial where students could get examples” (Sweden, 40).

These quotes illustrate how professors consider themselves key figures who can contribute in varied and meaningful ways. These teachers idealize a core role that includes not only instruction but also leadership, assisting the institution with management activities and being the/an academic integrity gatekeeper.

Table 4: The idealized role of professors in academic integrity management processes

Role	Code	Sub-code	Professors in the codes
Ideal	Educator and informer of integrity	Explain to students what academic integrity is Explain plagiarism, cheating Inform Showing examples of what is an academic misbehaviour Remind students what is plagiarism	India Ireland Italy Spain Sweden South Africa
	Teacher of integrity	Create a culture of academic integrity Teach ethics	Ireland Italy Sweden
	Leader	Power to improve knowledge Power to influence student behaviour Power to motivate Power to inspire	Sweden Italy
	Integrity gatekeeper	Guardian of integrity Main key figure in preserving integrity	Sweden

Discussion and conclusion

Overall, professors demonstrated their belief that they represent a key role in the university and possess the capacity to influence students' behaviour, both through their support and by educating about academic misconduct and integrity. Two roles are marked by congruity between university teachers' beliefs and actions: educator of integrity and teacher of practices. On the other hand, several roles show a clear disparity between university teachers' actual practices and what they believe (the real and the ideal): integrity training, giving guidelines, intimidating students or providing feedback about students' academic integrity.

Faculty members agreed with researchers that education is necessary for combating ignorance about academic misbehaviours but, education alone is not sufficient. In all six countries, professors noted that they intimidate, give guidelines, and teach writing methods. It is notable, contrary to what is claimed by Nitterhouse (2003), that economics and management faculty members in our study discuss academic integrity as part of the curriculum and that they teach students to acknowledge the work of others and respect plagiarism rules in their writing. Believing that the teaching role transcends encouraging the learning of the subject matter being studied, they offered education to students about the importance of avoiding plagiarism. The findings are interesting with respect to South Africa, where faculty members claim that engaging students through *Service-Learning* can be a way to prevent plagiarism since students understand the importance of the rights and values of others. This is consistent with the literature that suggests education for sustainable development (ESD) cannot be addressed without resolving behaviours such as plagiarism

and teaching students to embrace integrity (Morris and Carroll, 2015). In Italy and Sweden, faculty members also prevent plagiarism by teaching practices supporting previous literature that underscored how educating about best practices can prevent violations of academic integrity (Weed, 1998).

The analysis revealed that the professors' idealized roles were neither optimal nor better than what they currently undertake, but rather effective roles that faculty members should consider playing in order to foster academic integrity and prevent students' plagiarism. Notably, professors in the study were influenced by educational and working contexts, similar to what Paik *et al.* (2019) found in international business ethics.

In one regard, the professors' ideal roles resembled their actual roles. Professors in all six countries noted the importance of educating about integrity-plagiarism. In this way, this study contributes to the existing research about academic integrity in higher education by demonstrating that professors are one of the most important factors for student outcomes: they are the prime movers of student learning, and the more engagement a professor creates, the better the conditions for students' learning. This research indicates that an ideal professor should make students aware of what plagiarism comprises, illuminate how students can be caught, review the penalties, teach proper citation (Granitz and Loewy, 2007), and provide feedback (Abasi and Graves, 2008).

While acknowledging their role as integrity educators, we noticed that professors in all countries except Sweden declared that they face critical issues that make prevention difficult, stressing that their actual role is not what they would do ideally. Since they have more responsibilities than they should and consider prevention to be a holistic approach. In addition, the lack of institutional support remains prevalent in many countries. In Sweden, professors do not stress the need for a holistic approach. This could be because the rules are clearer or well defined. Teachers in Sweden therefore may not feel overburdened.

Analysing in more detail the qualitative data, through the lens of the Hofstede model we can see how faculty members' perception of their role in academic integrity can accentuate cultural differences.

In our research, Sweden, Italy and Ireland stand out as the most individualistic and low power distance countries. On the opposite side, Spain and India have lower scores in the dimension of individualism, coming to be considered therefore collectivist countries, and higher scores in power distance. South Africa is in an intermediate position of these countries (See table 1). These differences likely affect the way teachers perceive their actual/ideal role when it comes to academic integrity. While teachers in all countries consider that their position (current and ideal) is to be educators of academic integrity, teachers in Sweden, Italy, and Ireland that have individual cultural characteristics compare to others in this study and also consider their role to be to be one in which they foster a culture of integrity and inspiration. The additional role that is envisioned of the participants in these three countries could have its foundations in the cultural dimensions proposed by Hofstede of power distance and individualism. As we said previously, collectivistic cultures (low individualism) and with high power distance, unlike the individualistic and with low power distance, are more concerned with their relationship with other people and avoid taking direct actions autonomously that could damage those relationships (Hofstede, 2001). Communication is indirect, limited to certain issues, with power holders entitled to influence and communicate important issues (such as integrity) (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, and Gupta, 2004). We can think for example that faculty members in Spain and India do not consider that their role is to promote integrity because it would mean taking a responsibility that is not theirs, and so would damage their relationship with superiors who hold power. On the contrary, countries like Sweden, Italy, and Ireland with strong individualism emphasize "self-sufficiency" which, together with the low power distance, leads to a feeling of egalitarianism since power and authority are decentralized.

Furthermore, the independent initiative is an accepted value and communication is clear and direct (Joy and Kolb, 2009). Because of this motivation, teachers in Italy, Sweden and Ireland believe that they have an active role and take control autonomously. They interact with students on various aspects to promote academic integrity and spread fundamental values, considering they have the same rights and obligations as their superiors. These results are in line with previous investigations such as those carried out by Cortina et al., (2017) which showed how in the educational field in cultures with low power-distance and individualism there is a strong interaction between students and teachers on various aspects related to core values and shared responsibility for communicating these values to students.

Teachers are also free to take the approach they desire by earning a personal sense of accomplishment.

Taking the Hofstede measure from a different perspective, power distance and individualism/collectivism are two cultural dimensions that have also been used to analyse reactions to dishonest behaviour. Thus, it has been shown that in countries with a high power distance and collectivism (low individualism), individuals act more dishonestly (they are more corrupt, for example), which would hamper the ability to implement measures and policies towards integrity and against dishonest behaviour (Hofmann, Myhr, and Holm, 2013). While low power distance and individualism reflect the willingness of people to accept their responsibility to promote the principles of moral reasoning (Kapoor et al., 2003) whose objective is to improve integrity (Weber and Green, 1991) and avoid dishonesty.

In India and Spain, where there is a high-power distance, low individualism (collectivism), teachers do not seem to have a powerful role in implementing measures to defend academic integrity in every way. As we have said previously, South Africa is placed in the middle of the other countries. On the one hand, their high individualism (65%) and low power distance (less than 50%) could explain why teachers see that their role is to educate on academic integrity but not to spread good practices among students. Hofstede collected his data in different countries in the 1960s and 1970s. The situation in South Africa has changed after the abolition of *apartheid*, and Hofstede's model does not take into account the flexible and changing nature of the culture (Signorini et al., 2009) and the changes that have occurred in the context of higher education in South Africa. In this sense, McFarlin et al., (1999) showed that the *ubuntu* philosophy has been put into practice in many public and private organizations implementing an "African version of management". This philosophy contradicts individualism and power distance in that it emphasizes group solidarity and cooperation of the group. People follow clear rules and their behaviours are limited. This would make South African society now more collectivist than ever (Laher and Dockrat, 2019).

Lastly, there is a characteristic that places Sweden in an extreme position with respect to the other countries analysed and that probably has a "moderating" effect on the other dimensions. Namely, our findings suggest that the Swedish culture is strongly feminine (5% of masculinity). People in feminine cultures prioritize and protect essential values. In

other words, they tend to help others and do the good for the society. Masculine societies encourage people to be ambitious, which may contribute to being more tolerant of questionable and unethical competitive behaviour, and less interested in protecting integrity (Hofstede, 1984). Sweden's feminine culture would explain why, in comparison with India, South Africa Spain and even Italy and Ireland, Swedish faculty members also support their actual/ideal role as protector and guardian of integrity, qualities that are often considered of feminine societies (Hofstede, 2001)

Our cross-cultural qualitative analysis of university professors' perceptions of their actual and ideal role in academic integrity highlight a number of opportunities for future research that should be addressed. Culture seems to influence professors' perceptions of their roles. Therefore, it will be necessary to more fully explore other contexts and include more countries. Furthermore, since perceptions of one's own role can have an impact on possible actions taken against certain behaviours (Matteucci, Guglielmi, and Lauermann, 2017), future research should analyse whether different practices are found in similar cultures and should also analyse other education fields.

Appendix 1.

Table 1. *Hofstede cultural dimensions for the six countries selected, based on Hofstede (2001)*

	Spain	Italy	Ireland	Sweden	South Africa	India
Power Distance	57	48	28	31	49	77
Individualism	51	76	70	71	65	48
Masculinity	86	70	68	5	63	56

Appendix 2. Questions that are asked during the interviews

1. What is your role in the topic of academic integrity in the university?
2. What do you do in class in relation to academic integrity in the university?
3. What is your role in the preservation of academic integrity?
4. Do you normally make a point in trying to maintain a climate of academic integrity?
Can you explain.
5. How much effort do you need to place?

6. What type of support do you receive in this topic?
7. What are your thoughts at that point?
8. How do you act or not act to preserve a climate of integrity in the University?
9. To what extent do you consider this part of your job?
10. How could your role as professor assist the university in the topic of academic integrity and anticipate its possible infraction?
11. Is this role different to how you think it should be ideally and why?
12. What practices do you consider should be carried out ideally? Who should carry out these practices?
13. What do you think should be your role in this issue?
14. What could be done ideally to maintain and preserve academic integrity? Who should do it?
15. How would you see your role ideally in students' violation of academic integrity?
16. What type of support would you need ideally?

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