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HOW PERCEIVE THE STUDENTS ON POLITICAL SCIENCES THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND INTEGRITY? EXPLORATORY CASE STUDY

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to emphasize the social perception of the academic integrity. Beyond the theoretical framework this research aims: 1. to identify the main factors which are related to academic integrity starting from the student's perception; 2. to estimate the magnitude of the association between academic trust and student's motivation for choosing the BA programme; 3. to explore the nexus between initial perception of the academic performance, academic integrity and the current satisfaction related to academic activities. The research design is quantitative being based on a questionnaire applied to 55 participants, students in political sciences. The main findings of the paper reflect that academic integrity is perceived in terms of respect for human rights ($r = 0.463$, $p = 0.003$) and institutional transparency ($r = 0.489$, $p = 0.002$). Moreover we can stress the fact that there is a linear statistical relation between the satisfaction regarding the activity of the instructors and the satisfaction regarding the specialisation or the programme of study ($r = 0.820$, $p < 0.001$). Respect for human rights and human dignity, institutional transparency, academic trust, personal motivation for developing professional skills and knowledge and the quality of the academic staff are the main issues perceived by the students in political sciences as being predictors for academic integrity.

Key words: social perception, academic integrity, human rights, institutional transparency, academic staff, academic performance

1. The importance of the social perception. Theoretical framework

One of the most important themes in the field of psycho-sociology is represented by the problem of the social cognition. It is very difficult to create a general framework for exploring social cognition and perception. Moreover, we can stress that social cognition could be reduced to a form of social knowledge. In a general meaning, social cognition refers to the individual's ability for computing and signifying different salient or vividness stimuli from social reality. Moreover, beyond computing reality (Miclea, 2003; Zlate, 2009; Moskowitz 2001) we have to underline the relation between the sign and its metal or logical significance. “There is an implicit sense that individuals of those species that have this capacity are especially sensitive to social contexts, and that this context brings into play a specialized suite of cognitive mechanisms not normally used in more mundane physical world contexts” (Dunbar, 2011, p. 25). Moreover, we can integrate the cognitive perspective in the field of developing beliefs and attitudes. In this context, all social beliefs are expressed in a systematic manner, being associated to a kind of metal short-cuts (Houghton, 2009). The playground variable in cognitive processes is represented by the social environment. The main channels for transferring social or political attitudes and beliefs are represented by the

mass-media and social proximity / environment (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1944; da Silva Antunes, 2010; Russel, 2000; Rowden, Lloyd & Gilbert, 2014; Elf, 2017).

If cognition is characterized by a rational mechanism for computing information from external world, social and political cognition could be reduced to a hybrid model based on both rational and emotional dimensions (Adolphs, 2003). "Social perception and cognition traditionally have been associated with the proposition that people perceive and think about the social world differently from what would be expected based solely on the stimulus information and principles of formal logic" (Higgins & Bargh, 1987, p. 370). Moreover the quality of the social perception depends on the quality of the social stimulus. The magnitude, the typology and the influence of the stimuli should shape the perceptual process. Another important variable in the social perception process is represented by the episodic memory. Researchers demonstrated that there are several „prototypical memory structures that represent dimensions of personality and serve to organize social behavioural input" (Cantor & Mischel, 1977). Beyond the implications of the episodic memory social perception should be analysed in terms of automatic activations of abstract representations (Higgins & Bargh, 1987, p. 373).

In a general meaning we can stress the fact that „we can define social perception as the process through which we use available information to form impressions of other people, to assess what they are like. We will not refer to physical characteristics that form impression, but on a broader system of characteristics which belong to the target (i.e. physical aspect), to the perceiver (i.e. personal memories), to the situations (i.e. conflict or friendship), to behaviour and interaction features" (Camodeca & Goossens, 2008, p.82). The main analytical framework for explaining social perception is represented by the social information processing (SIP) theory. Particularly, this theoretical approach explains how "individual perceive the world around them and process information about it" (Palmer, 2005, p. 357). This theoretical perspective is based on several steps: 1. encoding of cues; 2. interpretations of cues; 3. clarifications of goals; 4. response access or construction; 5. response decision; 6. behavioural enactment (Camodeca & Goossens, 2008, pp.83-84). The social perception process involves high rates of emotional responses. As a prerequisite for social cognition, the perceptual level oscillates between emotional and moral dimensions. The level of cognitive accuracy depends on the interference between emotional moods with the cognitive process. The accuracy of the cognitive and perceptual process depends on the relation between personal interpretation and the structure of the social reality. „People make meaning by abstracting relevant essential structures, which then substitute for the original. The familiarity and simplicity of the abstracted structure then make it workable for everyday undertakings. In person perception, the simple, familiar "extracted characters" are most likely to be traits, stereotypes, and stories" (Fiske, 1993, p.162).

Regarding the neurophysiologic implication of the social perception we can underline the fact that there is a closer and causal relationship between brain activation, perceptual processes and observed behaviour. The direct effect of the perceptual process on social action and behaviour is represented by the imitation. Researchers demonstrate that both perception and action share the same neurological system. "That is, the assumption of such a link does not necessarily imply that perception leads to behavior that corresponds with perception, or *that which resembles that what has just been perceived*. The reason that this happens is that perception and action share neurological systems. This means that the translation of perception into corresponding action is a consequence of the way we are wired. In what follows, we review both neurological evidence and research on the "common-coding" hypothesis that support the view of shared neurological systems or shared mental representations" (Dijksterhuis & Bargh, 2001, p.6). In this respect, both cortical areas and temporal lobes are involved in social perception. But, emotional implications are revealed on

empirical studies with EEG and neuroimaging studies, because in processing sensorial information researchers observed the role played by the cerebral amygdala (Allison, Puce & McCarthy, 2000).

Synthesising, “social perception refers to initial stages in the processing of information that culminates in the accurate analysis of the dispositions and intentions of other individuals” (Allison, Puce & McCarthy, 2000). For our research design is very important to stress this theoretical framework, because all cognitive processes are based on both emotional attitudes and rational encoding of the social information. The perception of the different social or political information shapes beliefs, attitudes and behaviors related to different social or political phenomena. In this respect, we are interested in testing different ways and factors for processing information related to academic integrity, performance and efficiency.

2. Social perception of the academic integrity

The main problem revealed in the scientific literature regarding the academic field is related to dishonesty and student’s cheating. Research studies in educational policies or in educational psychology demonstrate a high rate of the students with a non-academic behavior. For example, Schab have shown that “ that cheating behaviors have doubled from 1969, when 34 percent of students at the University of Georgia admitted to cheating, to 1989, when 68 percent of students at the same university admitted to cheating” (Andrews, Smith, Henzi & Demps, 2007, p.1027). Both personal considerations and institutional architecture are relevant for the lack of academic integrity. Despite the academic rules, norms or ethical codes, in practice we can observe a high rate of the students with non-ethical and non-academic behaviour. Thus, plagiarisms, lack of institutional transparency, educational strategy or policies and the non-ethical behaviour are the main variables for explaining the lack of integrity in the academic sphere. New technologies and on-line education are several challenges for ethical perspectives and academic integrity. Moreover, “maintaining academic integrity is equally a challenge in both traditional and online education. Student cheating is, unfortunately, a given at all colleges and universities. While it is impossible to eradicate student cheating completely, it can be minimized if both the faculty and administration work together” (Heberling, 2002, p. 5).

In the educational literature we can mention several important studies related to the topic of academic dishonesty and integrity. In this meaning we can stress several motivations for students cheating: “i. the desire to compete successfully against others; ii. lack of academic preparations and a willingness to use any means available in order to get by; iii. not having learned that this behaviour is wrong; iv. a desire to <<feel the thrill or not being caught>>” (Carroll, 2004, p.10). For researchers in education “higher education institutions are not immune to cheating and other unethical behaviors” (Boehm, Justice, & Weeks, 2009, p.46). Moreover, “institutions without academic integrity practices in place, along with those that fail to place priority on character development, face ethical dilemmas” (Boehm, Justice, & Weeks, 2009, p.47). The ethical dimension should be the main symbolically resource for academic performance, institutional transparency, academic management and efficiency. The public expectations regarding the academic performance are translated, at the perceptual level, on efficiency, satisfaction, motivation for study and research, honesty and integrity.

But, beyond personal factors, in the academic literature researchers have demonstrated that the institutional architecture and social mentalities are relevant for explaining the non-ethical behaviour. Regarding the ethical behaviours and academic integrity in business schools or faculties, researchers empathized the fact that, “students’ ethical and moral behaviour concerns both the academic and business communities” (Allen, Fuller & Lockett, 1998, p.51). If we analyze, from the philosophical point of view, the ethical dimension we can stress that there is closer synonymy between ethics and virtues. “This

example demonstrates two important things: virtues can vary across cultural contexts and are themselves subject to changing societal mores” (Macfarlane, 2009, p.35). The academic integrity could be reduced to Aristotelian virtue. The main purpose for academic institutions is to create both specialists and ethical premises for scientific research and knowledge.

Related to the topic of the non-ethical practices in the academic activities, scholars have proposed the concept of *culture of integrity* (Caldwell, 2010). The culture of integrity supposes the existence of the ethical codes and practices for generating an optimum climate for academic study and scientific research. Moreover, the quality of the academic institutions should depend on the quality of the culture of integrity. Normative rules, ethical codes and good research practices should be the main vectors for shaping the symbolical dimension of the culture of integrity. These ethical premises are related to several challenges. “The challenge is to share as widely as possible information about those changes and their impact. Through sound research, energetic programs, intelligent policies, and enforcement procedures that involve students and faculty, progress is clearly being made. Judicial administrators can play a key role in the prevention and adjudication of academic integrity violations. Awareness and action concerning these issues are needed” (Cole & McCabe, 1996, p.77). In other academic studies participants perceive academic integrity in axiological terms. The quantitative results demonstrate that there is important to have penalties for the cases of academic dishonesty. All the participants to these empirical studies „recommend penalties for such actions and believe that their tutors have responsibility for safeguarding educational integrity. The prevalence of attitudes and behaviours regarding academic misconduct are no different in these students from those observed in western medical schools” (Elzubeir & Rizk, 2003, p. 595). Thus, the key-role in combating academic dishonesty is played both by administrative staff and academic tutors. They are perceived as the main safeguards for the educational integrity.

Regarding the scientific research we can stress the fact that this academic activity is perceived as the main vector of the social, economic and political progress. In this respect, academic institutions must have a very high level of transparency in generating social or scientific knowledge and, also, in shaping new modalities for human action. Moreover, “these arguments lead to a perspective that the essential elements of the scientific method are basically a transparent and argumentative way of reasoning, building on empirical evidence. The scientific way of making sense of a particular phenomenon is grounded in having constructed something identified as data that is considered necessary to answer the question in focus through applying a methodology both for generating data and for analyzing data” (Levin, 2012, 138). The ethical issues are related to the methodological aspects, to scientific results, data and procedures. A non-ethical perspective of the academic research is strongly associated to social manipulation, dishonesty and lack of the performance and perspectives for academic institutions.

All these non-ethical perspectives affect negatively the public perception and international rankings of the academic institutions. As public or private organizations, all these academic structures are faced to the problem of integrity and organizational ethics. „Integrity failures damage institutional brands and the credibility of higher education systems” (Altbach, 2004). The high number of public or private universities involves a high rate of academic competition for the acquisition of the symbolically capital and credibility (Macfarlane, Zhang, Pun, 2012, pp.1-2). Thus, ethical problems, corruption stories or other integrity issues are strongly associated to a negative social perception. As we have emphasized in the first part, social perception has a high level of sensitivity to salient stimuli. Thus, all these negative stories about the dishonesty in the academic sphere could be considered a kind of salient stimuli for the social perception. In general, individuals aren’t interested in identifying arguments or other rational motivations for understanding a

particular situation. In our case, if in mass-media or in other communication channels are presented elements of academic dishonesty, the main effect is the rapid decreasing of the academic trust and symbolical capital.

Social perception of the academic integrity is reduced to “the values, behaviour and conduct of academics in all aspects of their practice teaching, research and service” (Macfarlane, Zhang, & Pun, 2012, p. 3). Thus, the concept of academic integrity should be based on two psychological dimensions: cognitive approach (based on the internalization of the academic rules, codes, procedures and other axiological elements) and the behavioural responses (actions conforming to personal and institutional axiological sphere). In many cases, the academic dishonesty could be interpreted in terms of cognitive bias or cognitive dissonance. Moreover, in practice we can identify several specific psychological complexes as: cognitive dissonances, errors of attribution, bandwagon effect or Dunning-Kruger effect.

The psychological implications are related to the cultural variables. Academic integrity as a cultural and ethical issue depends on both the organizational culture and national social and political culture. “Exploration of cultural differences is applied in understanding teaching dilemmas (e.g. the receipt of gifts), research ethics and plagiarism. Relevant studies have taken place in a wide range of national contexts” (Macfarlane, Zhang, & Pun, 2012, p. 6). Thus individual factors, cultural variables and psychological perception are relevant for discussing and explaining the phenomenon of the academic integrity (Burnaz, Serap Atakan & Topcu, 2010 ; Cossette, 2004; Gao, Sirgy & Johar 2010; Kidwell & Kidwell 2008; Laband & Piette , 2000; Macfarlane & Saitoh, 2008).

At the educational policies level scholars and trainers are interested in developing strategies, codes and procedures for reducing the negative impact of the academic dishonesty. Thus, McCabe and Pavela have developed a coherent set of principles for preserving academic integrity (McCabe & Pavela, 2004). In this respect they have emphasized ten principles for preserving academic ethics and integrity: 1. *Recognize and affirm academic integrity as a core institutional value*; 2) *Foster a lifelong commitment to learning*; 3) *Affirm the role of teacher as guide and mentor*; 4) *Help students understand the potential of the internet*; 5) *Encourage student responsibility for academic integrity*; 6) *Clarify expectations for students*; 7) *Develop fair and creative forms of assessment*; 8) *Reduce opportunities to engage in academic dishonesty*; 9) *Respond to academic dishonesty when it occurs*; 10) *Help define and support campus-wide academic integrity standards* (McCabe & Pavela, 2004, pp.12-15). All these principles derive from previous empirical studies, where scholars have demonstrated the positive impact of the ethical codes on the academic activity and integrity (McCabe, Butterfield & Trevino, 2003).

Related to the cultural topics and ethical codes, one of the most important factors in reducing academic cheating and dishonesty is represented by the professors or tutors. Academic staff should play a key role in maintaining a good climate for study and research. „The most studied area of the instructor’s role in maintaining honesty in the classroom focuses on the methods instructors use to promote academic integrity and to minimize cheating” (Stearns, 2001, p. 276)

Synthesizing, cultural perspectives, national political contexts (Bretag, 2016), organizational culture and the relation between students and tutors are several variables which could shape the ethical perspective in higher education. Moreover, academic integrity is related to public and social perception of the universities. High rates of academic integrity are associated to academic performances and good positions in international academic rankings. All these theoretical perspectives should be integrated in a coherent political strategy for developing an efficient and optimal educational system.

3. Research Methods

In correlation with the theoretical framework of this study we are interested to explore what are the main relevant factors for academic integrity in the perception of the political sciences 'students? Thus, for answering to this research question, this empirical study has several research objectives as: 1. to identify the main factors which are related to academic integrity starting from the student's perception; 2. to estimate the magnitude of the association between academic trust and student's motivation for choosing the BA programme; 3. to explore the nexus between initial perception of the academic performance, academic integrity and the current satisfaction related to academic activities. For attending these research objectives we test the hypotheses: h_1 : *The perception of the academic performance depends on the level of perceived academic integrity*; h_2 : *There is a positive relation between academic trust and academic performance*.

Data were collected directly through a standardized questionnaire. Through this research tool we were interested in collecting data regarding several variables as:

Y= academic integrity, which is the dependent variable of the study.

In correlation with the dependent variable we intend to test several independent and non collinear factors as:

x_1 = trust in the academic institution

x_2 = trust in the academic programme (Bachelor Degree; Master Degree)

x_3 = motivations for the academic study:

x_{31} = professional insertion

x_{32} = financial independence

x_{33} = professional independence

x_{34} = developing skills for professional integration

x_{35} = professional development

x_{36} = I behave as my friends

x_4 = confirmation of the initial expectations

x_5 = over the initial expectations

x_6 = satisfaction for the academic programme

x_7 = satisfaction for the instructor's activity

x_8 = factors for predicting academic performance

x_{81} = instructor/ teacher's academic experience

x_{82} = institutional academic experience

x_{83} = public academic institution

x_{84} = private academic institution

x_{85} = institutional transparency (communication and information)

x_{86} = respect for human rights

x_{87} = diversity of academic services/ specialisations

x_{88} = the correspondence with the labour market

x_{89} = the accessibility of the educational/ academic services

All the data are measured on a Likert scale, with values between 1-5, where 1 means the lowest value/ lack of importance and 5 is the highest value/ very important.

The participants to the study are students from the specialisation Political Sciences from 1st, 2nd and 3rd degree of the study. All the participants are registered as students in the Faculty of Philosophy and Social-Political Sciences, University "Al.I. Cuza", Iași. From a general population of the students in political sciences of 110 students in political sciences, we extract a non-probabilistic sample of 55 participants. Regarding the ethical issues all the participants agreed to complete the questionnaire. Also, regarding the ethical issue we didn't collect any personal or demographic information. All the quantitative items were associated only to the research variables.

The procedure for collect data was announced to the students registered to the specialisation political sciences. They were informed through the first part of the questionnaire that this study is only exploratory and their accord is equivalent to complete all the fields of the questionnaire. For collecting data in real-time we have exposed this tool in on-line environment¹, in the format of Google Drive. The language of the questionnaire is Romanian language.

The research design is only exploratory, this study aiming to observe several factors which could predict the perception of the academic integrity for students in the field of social and political sciences. All quantitative data are available only for the sample.

Regarding the *reliability analysis* we measure the Cronbach's α . This measure is 0.786 for 22 items of the questionnaire and 55 responses. We can observe a good rate of validity and consistency in our tool of measurement.

4. Empirical findings. Mapping the perception of the academic integrity

The academic integrity is one of the most important factors for predicting the performance of the academic institutions or organizations. In this respect, in our case study 47,3% of the participants consider that academic integrity is very important for organizational sphere and 38,2% consider academic integrity important for performance and efficiency. Our data are in accord with academic literature, where more than 75% consider academic integrity a model of academic practice being based on values and behaviours. In the graph below (fig. no. 1) are displayed the percentages for each value of the Likert scale. Regarding the descriptive dimension we can stress that this variable has a normal symmetrical distribution with $\mu = 4.27$, median and mode = 5, $\sigma = 0.87$. The lowest rate of the dispersion and standard deviation reflect the fact that this variable could be considered to be "constant" in respondents' perception regarding the most important values of the academic organizations. Also, if we compare Q1 with Q3 we can observe a low rate of the range (1). Also, there are no differences between Q1 and Q2.

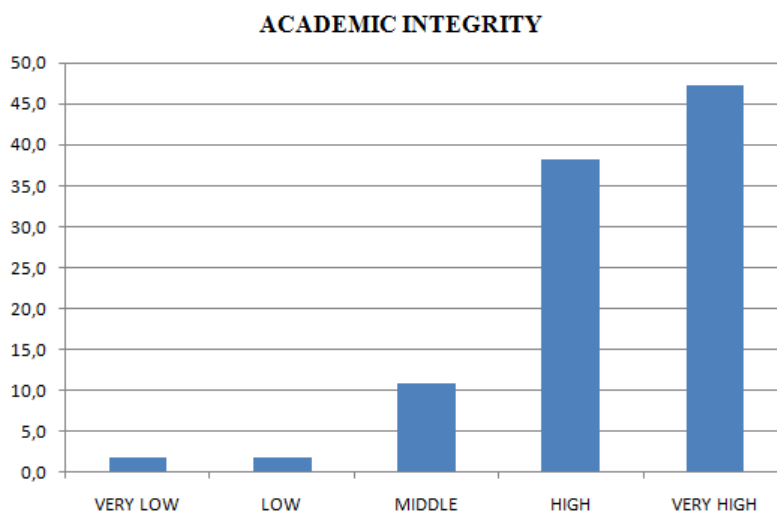


Figure 1: Percents for Academic Integrity

The first objective of the research is to observe several factors which could affect the perception of the academic integrity. In this respect, at the quantitative level we use a STEPWISE regression with academic integrity as dependent variable. We have obtained two statistical models with $r^2 < 0.688$. Although we couldn't obtain a high level of likelihood in

¹ https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1VD9ho1nefQW2QLuMQ_AqqUWJltgh5X2opMesjhWRq4/edit

our models, we can observe that two factors are relevant for explaining the perception of the academic integrity. Thus, institutional transparency and the respect for human rights are two significant factors perceived by the students as being representative for academic integrity. Institutional transparency is perceived in terms of institutional communication and information of the students.

This variable has a middle positive association with academic integrity, with $B = 0.489$, $p = 0.02$, $t = 3.336$. Thus, the institutional transparency corresponds to democratic approach of the educational process. Only in open-universities, where we have a good communication strategy between administrative or academic staff and students we can identify a high level of social trust and a high level of perception of the academic integrity. Moreover, beyond the institutional transparency, academic integrity is perceived by the students in terms of respect for the human rights. This variable is very important for understanding the ethical dimension of the academic integrity. The equality of the opportunities and the preservation of the human dignity should be the main ethical and normative directions for shaping a good climate for academic study and scientific research. In this context, the respect for human rights has a middle positive association with academic integrity, with $B = 0.463$, $t = 3.165$, $p = 0.003$. In both cases the collinearity diagnostics has tolerance coefficient = 0.701 and $VIF = 1.427$

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.976	.596		1.637	.108		
	FACTORS: INSTITUTIONAL TRANSPARENCY	.743	.133	.610	5.598	.000	1.000	1.000
2	(Constant)	.040	.626		.063	.950		
	FACTORS: INSTITUTIONAL TRANSPARENCY	.489	.147	.401	3.336	.002	.701	1.427
	FACTORS: RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS	.463	.146	.381	3.165	.003	.701	1.427

Figure 2: Regression models for Academic Integrity

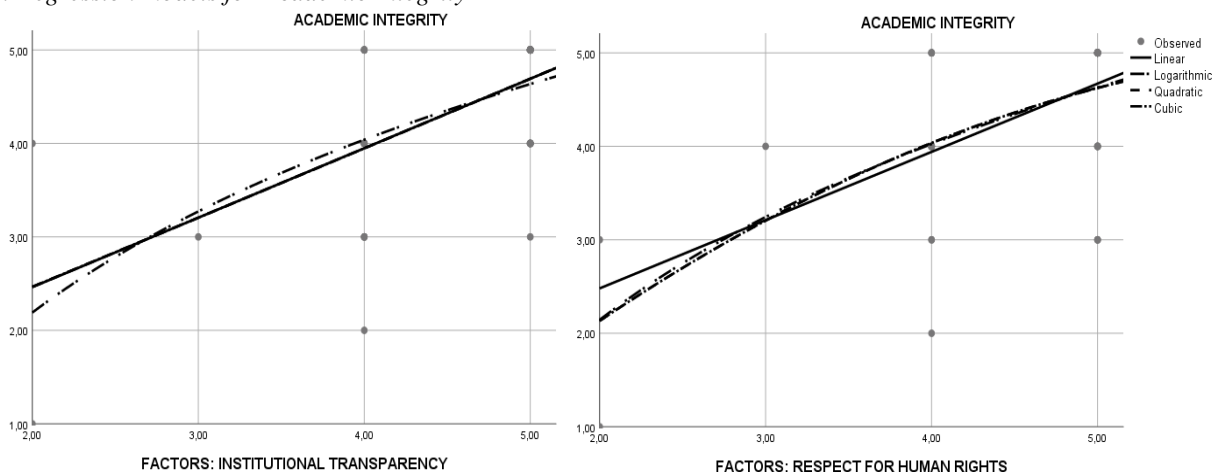


Figure 3: Scatter graphs for academic integrity, institutional transparency and respect for human rights

If we interpret the academic integrity in terms of respect for the human rights, we have to stress that academic integrity refers to human dignity. “Finally, integrity can be

understood as respecting the intrinsic worth of each individual and their human dignity” (Macfarlane, Zhang & Pun, 2012, p. 2). Academic integrity should be perceived in terms of respect for other individuals. Academic staff, instructors and other social factors which are involved in higher educational system have to protect and respect human rights and dignities. Their actions should be in accord with judicial frameworks and ethical perspectives.

Regarding the second research objective we can emphasize the fact that initial trust in academic institution is related positively with the institutional capacity for developing skills for a better professional integration. Thus, from all variables which compound the sphere of personal motivations in choosing the academic specialisation we can identify with a middle correlation the importance of developing different professional skills. Thus, academic institution is perceived in terms of an institutional framework which is able to facilitate the professional insertion through different academic trainings. Students perceive that the aim of the academic organization is to develop professional skills or abilities. Thus, for this variable we can mention that $\text{Beta} = 0.398$, $t = 3,159$, $p = 0.003$. If we test this variable in relation with academic integrity we cannot estimate a significant statistical relationship ($r = 0.173$, $p > 0.10$).

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Collinearity Statistics		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	2,640	,411		6,417	,000		
	MOTIVATIONS: TO DEVELOP SKILLS FOR PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION	,318	,101	,398	3,159	,003	1,000	1,000

a. Dependent Variable: THE TRUST IN ACADEMIC BA PROGRAMME

Figure 4: Regression models for Trust in academic BA programme

The third objective of the study consists in identifying several correlations between initial perceptions of the academic institution, academic integrity and the satisfaction for academic services and activities. In a general meaning, quantitative estimations reflect that academic trust is representative for 71% of the respondents. A high value is associated with academic integrity, which is perceived as very important for the academic organizations by the 85.5% of the participants. Also, in this sphere we can integrate the satisfaction for the activity in this academic institution, which is considered to be important and very important by 80,1% of the respondents. Regarding the satisfaction with the academic instructors/professors we can estimate a middle value: 59.9% of participants are satisfied by the academic relation between students and instructors. Thus, at the perceptual level we can stress the fact that academic integrity, ethical issues and ethical behavior are relevant variables for shaping academic trust and for generating premises for academic performance.

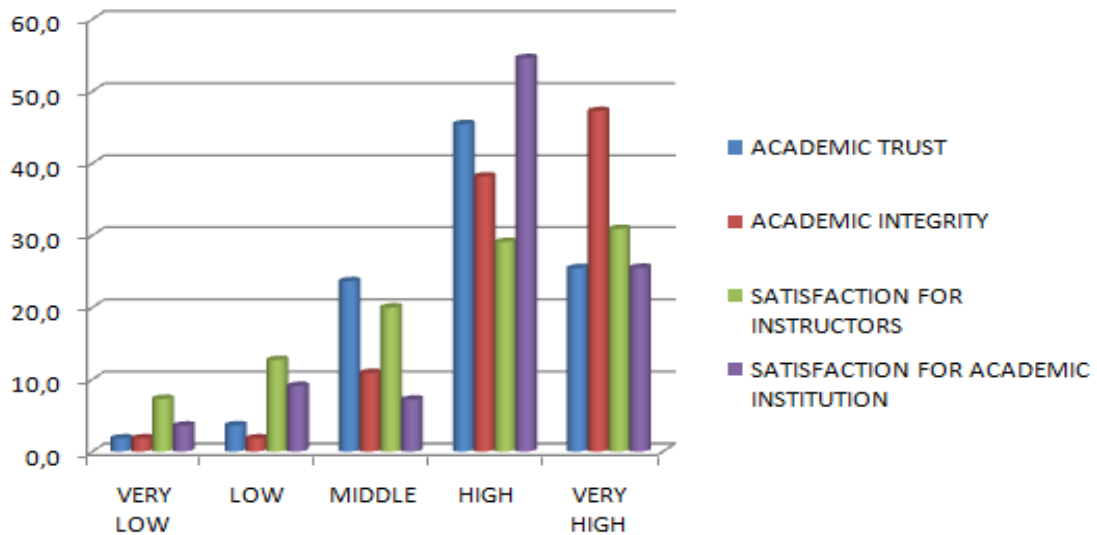


Figure 5: Frequencies of the variables

At the inferential level we cannot estimate any significant association between all these variables. There is a single strong positive relation between the satisfaction of the respondents in academic specialization and their satisfaction for the academic staff (tutors/professors), with $r = 0.820$, $p < 0.001$. Thus, the quality of the academic specialization is perceived by the students in terms of the quality of the human resources (staff, professors, instructors etc). It is rather important what types of activities they realize during their academic specialization, than it is important how students could interact with their instructors. Here, we should emphasize “*role of teacher as guide and mentor*” as it is theorized by McCabe and Pavela in their principles for academic integrity (McCabe & Pavela, 2004).

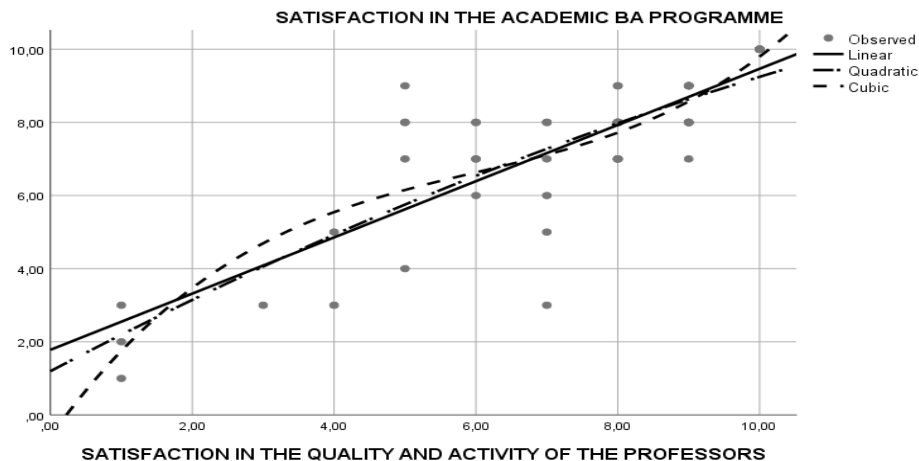


Figure 6: Correlation between satisfaction in BA specialization and satisfaction in the quality of the academic instructors

At the perceptual level we can stress the fact that is very important to create a good climate for study and research. In this respect, an active role in generating both academic ethics and academic integrity should be played by the academic staff. The academic behavior of the instructors is a good statistical indicator for describing and analyzing the performance of the academic organization and the preservation of the ethical procedures. However, we have to underline that respect for human rights, professional communication and information,

the strategy for developing skills for a better professional integration and the relation between students and instructors are the main guidelines which forms the perception of the academic integrity for the students in political sciences.

5. Conclusions

This paper reveals the social perception of the academic integrity and performance for the students in political sciences. Although the research topic is quite universal, we were interested to analyse only the students in political sciences opinion about the academic integrity. In the academic literature, scholars have discovered several factors both individual and systemic which are involved in promoting ethical practices, behaviours and actions in the field of the higher education. Our particularity derives from the judicial perception of the academic integrity: respect for human rights. In scientific literature cultural variables are representative for understanding academic dishonesty. In our case, political culture, political psychology and social mentalities are relevant for sustaining the hypothesis of academic integrity in terms of respect for human rights and human dignity. Moreover, historical past and political institutionalism creates premises for perceiving academic integrity in institutional/ organizational terms. Thus, one of the main variables which are related to the perception of the academic integrity is represented by the institutional transparency. In this context through institutional transparency participants understand a good institutional communication and information. Academic integrity is seen in a dual manner: i. the individual perspective related to the education rights, human dignity and personal development; ii. the systemic perspective based on institutional innovation, institutional transparency, the correspondence between academic specialisation with the labour/ economic market and the degree of the accessibility to the higher educational services.

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