

MAKING SENSE OF PROSOCIAL EXPLANATIONS FOR VIOLATIONS OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

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Abstract: In academic programs that foster and teach collaboration and its importance in work and life, there can be mismatched perceptions of what constitutes a violation of academic integrity. Where students believe that they are engaging in prosocial behaviours by helping their classmates, the institutional perspective is that students are engaging in facilitation by enabling another student's departure from academic integrity (whether through sharing their own assignment or making other information (e.g. the content of an exam) available to other students). These mismatched perceptions present specific challenges for institutions: managing perceptions of unfair punishment of what are perceived to be desirable behaviours, fostering a student culture that encourages prosocial behaviours in certain contexts but not in others, and educating students about appropriate collaboration and where the line gets drawn between collaboration and facilitation. Our work reviews students' prosocial motivations in academic integrity issues by highlighting distinct case studies that illuminate the institutional impact of these mismatched perceptions. This work allows for a better understanding of students' perspectives relating to the challenges that emerge when trying to manage these multi-faceted situations, which, in turn, allows for a more robust institutional response. We focus specifically on a business school context, where collaboration is explicitly built into the curriculum through coursework (as well as through courses in managing teamwork and collaboration), and present recommendations for how to allow collaboration to flourish without negative implications for academic integrity.

Key words: prosocial behaviours, perceptions

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