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# Understanding What Reduces Academic Misconduct Intention Among College Students in the AI Era

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**Abstract**

*The rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) has created new challenges for academic integrity in higher education. Although previous studies have primarily examined academic misconduct among university students, less attention has been paid to college students and the factors that may mitigate their intentions to engage in such misconduct. Accordingly, this study examines the relationships between four factors and college students' intentions to violate academic integrity in the context of AI use. A survey was conducted with 358 college students in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The data were analyzed using Cronbach's alpha, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), Pearson's correlation analysis, and multiple linear regression. The results indicate that perceived risk, perceived behavioral control, and attitudes toward academic misconduct are significantly and negatively associated with misconduct intentions, whereas subjective norms are not statistically significant. Perceived risk exhibits the strongest negative association with misconduct intentions ($\beta = -0.514$). This study contributes empirical evidence from a college student population and extends the application of the theory of planned behavior (TPB) by incorporating perceived risk alongside its original components. The findings suggest that educational institutions should establish clearer academic integrity policies, communicate the consequences of misconduct, and provide students with practical guidance on the acceptable use of AI.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Academic integrity is widely regarded as a fundamental foundation for ensuring educational quality, maintaining the reputation of educational institutions, and strengthening public trust in the value of knowledge (Macfarlane et al., 2014; Hoang et al., 2024; Ortiz-Bonnin & Blahopoulou, 2025). However, beside the expansion of higher education, violations of academic integrity have become increasingly common and diverse, creating significant challenges for educational institutions (Salamah & Kusumanto, 2022; Hoang et al., 2024). In recent years, the emergence of generative AI tools, particularly ChatGPT, has significantly changed the way students learn and access knowledge (Perkins, 2023; Dang & Bui, 2025; Nguyen, 2025). While AI offers many benefits for learning support, it has also created new forms of academic misconduct. One example is the concept of "AI-giarism," which refers to the use of AI-generated content without proper disclosure or citation (Chan, 2025; Lund et al., 2025). Many studies have examined why students choose to use AI as a tool for academic misconduct, with findings highlighting the roles of attitudes, the influence of significant others, and access to AI tools (Hoang et al., 2024; Baig & Paparo, 2026). In addition, academic performance pressure, career expectations, and the tendency to rationalize AI use as a learning aid rather than an unethical practice have also been identified as factors that may increase the intention to engage in academic dishonesty (Ariani et al., 2020; Hoang et al., 2024; Nguyen, 2025). These developments suggest a need for further research to better understand the factors influencing students' intention to violate academic integrity in an environment where AI is becoming widespread.

Although academic integrity violations have attracted considerable scholarly attention, several critical research gaps remain. First, most existing studies have focused on university students, while college students – a group characterized by practice-oriented training and a distinct learning environment – have received much less attention (Shmeleva & Semenova, 2019; Salamah & Kusumanto, 2022). Furthermore, many studies have concentrated on identifying factors that encourage academic misconduct rather than examining factors that may reduce or prevent such intentions (Hoang et al., 2024; Nguyen & Do, 2025; Baig & Paparo, 2026). As AI increases opportunities to access and engage in academic misconduct (Bui & Nguyen, 2024; Rahmatika et al., 2025), the lack of empirical evidence regarding cognitive mechanisms that can regulate students' behavior represents a significant gap in both research and educational practice. To address this gap, the present study examines the influence of several factors on reducing AI-related academic integrity violation intentions among college students. The findings are expected to provide a scientific basis for developing appropriate policies and practical solutions to promote a culture of academic integrity in the era of digital transformation and artificial intelligence.

Based on these research gaps, this study addresses the following research questions:

RQ1: How do attitude toward academic misconduct, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, and perceived risk influence college students' intention to violate academic integrity?

RQ2: Which of the above factors has the strongest influence on students' intention to violate academic integrity?

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Theory of Planned Behavior

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), developed by Ajzen (1991), is an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) that aims to explain behaviors that individuals cannot

fully control through their own will. Under this theory, a person's intention to perform a behavior is shaped by three main factors: attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control. In turn, this personal intention directly influences whether the behavior will actually be carried out.

More specifically, the components of TPB influence behavior both directly and indirectly through behavioral intention. Attitude refers to an individual's positive or negative evaluation of a particular behavior (Ajzen, 1991). In the context of academic integrity, attitude reflects how students view academic misconduct, including whether they consider such behavior acceptable or unacceptable and how serious they perceive it to be (Chudzicka-Czupała et al., 2015). Subjective norm refers to social pressure and an individual's perception of the expectations and opinions of important people around them, such as family members and friends (Ajzen, 1991). Students who believe that people around them accept or engage in similar behaviors may be more influenced by these social norms (Baig & Paparo, 2026). Perceived behavioral control refers to an individual's belief about how easy or difficult it is to perform a behavior, based on previous experiences and expected barriers (Ajzen, 1991). In the digital learning environment, easy access to AI tools, together with students' understanding of academic integrity policies and regulations, may influence their perceived control over engaging in academic misconduct (Nguyen, 2025).

Although TPB provides a useful framework for explaining academic misconduct intention, its three original components may not fully show how students make decisions in the current digital learning environment. Previous studies suggest that students do not only consider whether a behavior is acceptable, socially supported, or easy to perform; they may also consider the possible risks and consequences of being detected (Shmeleva & Semenova, 2019; Ortiz-Bonnin & Blahopoulou, 2025; Rahmatika et al., 2025). This issue becomes more relevant in the context of AI, where new tools may make misconduct easier to happen while also creating uncertainty about detection and institutional responses. Therefore, this study extends the TPB framework by adding perceived risk as an additional factor. Rather than replacing the original TPB components, perceived risk is expected to complement them by capturing students' consideration of possible consequences before deciding whether to engage in academic misconduct.

### 2.2. Academic Integrity in the Context of AI Development

Academic integrity is generally understood as a commitment to ethical values and honest behavior in all academic activities, including learning, teaching, and research (Macfarlane et al., 2014; Dang & Nguyen, 2021). Although it has been viewed from different perspectives, most studies agree that academic integrity is more than simply following institutional rules and regulations. It is also closely connected to a set of core values that guide students' behavior. Under the International Center for Academic Integrity (ICAI, 2021), these values include honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage (Hoang et al., 2024; Dang & Bui, 2025). Recent studies have shown that these values play an important role in maintaining academic quality and protecting the reputation of educational institutions (Hoang et al., 2024; Ortiz-Bonnin & Blahopoulou, 2025). However, some scholars argue that viewing academic integrity only as compliance with rules does not fully capture its meaning. From this perspective, academic integrity also reflects an individual's internal moral commitment, requiring people to act honestly and responsibly even when no direct supervision is present (Taugienė, 2019; Dang & Bui, 2025). Previous studies have also pointed out that academic misconduct, such as plagiarism and falsifying academic work, can have long-term negative effects on public trust in graduates' professional competence and ethical standards (Salamah & Kusumanto, 2022; Ortiz-Bonnin & Blahopoulou, 2025).

The rapid growth of digital technologies and artificial intelligence has created new challenges for traditional standards of academic integrity (Perkins, 2023; Dang & Bui, 2025). The emergence of generative AI tools has made it more difficult to distinguish between legitimate learning support and academic misconduct (Bui & Nguyen, 2024). Some researchers have introduced the term "AI-giarism" to describe new forms of plagiarism involving AI-generated content (Chan, 2025; Lund et al., 2025). However, there is still no clear agreement among researchers regarding the use of AI in education. While many scholars consider the undisclosed use of AI to be a violation of academic integrity, others argue that students often see AI as a legitimate learning tool, especially when guidelines for its use are unclear (Hoang et al., 2024; Rahmatika et al., 2025; Nguyen & Do, 2025). Based on the existing literature, the author argues that the main challenge to academic integrity in the AI era lies not only in the technology itself but also in changing perceptions of what is considered acceptable academic behavior. This suggests that maintaining academic integrity cannot rely solely on monitoring and detecting violations. Instead, it also requires educational efforts to raise awareness, clear institutional policies, and guidance on the responsible use of AI (Hua, 2023; Perkins, 2023; Baig & Paparo, 2026).

### 2.3. Factors Influencing the Intention of Academic Integrity

Previous studies generally agree that academic misconduct intention is influenced by both personal views and the learning environment. However, the strength of these influences is not always the same across studies. Attitude and perceived risk are often found to have a clear relationship with misconduct intention, while the effect of subjective norm appears to vary across different educational and cultural settings (Shmeleva & Semenova, 2019; Hoang et al., 2024; Baig & Paparo, 2026). This difference shows that students may respond to peer influence, institutional rules, and the risk of being detected in different ways depending on their learning context. In addition, academic pressure and the desire to achieve high grades have been reported as important factors that can increase students' intention to violate academic integrity (Ariani et al., 2020; Elom et al., 2025; Nguyen, 2025). In digital learning environments, the development of generative AI tools has further increased opportunities for misconduct, as some students believe that these technologies can help them complete academic tasks more efficiently while reducing the likelihood of being detected (Hoang et al., 2023; Rahmatika et al., 2025).

On the other hand, many studies have identified factors that can reduce the intention to violate academic integrity by strengthening personal ethical values and increasing external deterrents. Moral obligation is considered an important factor that encourages students to reject dishonest behavior based on their sense of responsibility and personal beliefs, even when opportunities for misconduct are available (Kamarudin et al., 2024). Similarly, individuals with higher self-esteem and stronger confidence in their own abilities are generally less likely to rely on dishonest academic practices (Ariani et al., 2020). Beyond personal factors, previous studies have highlighted the importance of academic integrity policies, honor codes, and students' awareness of the risks of being caught or punished for misconduct (McCabe et al., 2001; Baig & Paparo, 2026). College students have also received less attention in previous studies. Most existing evidence comes from university students, while college students often study in more practice-oriented programs and may face different academic requirements and career expectations (Shmeleva & Semenova, 2019; Salamah & Kusumanto, 2022). Therefore, findings from university settings may not fully reflect the experiences of this group. Based on the existing literature, this study suggests that factors reducing misconduct intentions are often related to increasing students' ethical awareness and their perception of the risks associated with violating academic integrity. Therefore, promoting academic integrity requires not only

awareness-raising efforts and ethical education but also a learning environment supported by clear and consistent policies.

### 2.4. Hypothesis Development

On academic integrity, many researchers consider attitude to be one of the most important predictors of students' intention to engage in academic misconduct (Hendy & Montargot, 2019; Baig & Paparo, 2026). Students who view academic misconduct as less serious are generally more likely to develop intentions to engage in such behaviors (Dang & Nguyen, 2021; Hoang et al., 2024). In contrast, when students clearly understand the ethical and academic consequences of misconduct, they are more likely to avoid or reject such behaviors (Lund et al., 2025). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Attitude toward academic misconduct has a negative effect on students' intention to violate academic integrity.

Many studies have shown that the opinions and behaviors of peers can significantly influence students' decisions (Shmeleva & Semenova, 2019; McCabe et al., 2001). When students perceive academic misconduct as common or accepted among their peers, they may be more likely to develop similar intentions to avoid disadvantages in academic performance (Dang & Nguyen, 2021; Hoang et al., 2024). On the other hand, a learning environment where academic misconduct is clearly discouraged by institutions, instructors, and fellow students can help reduce students' intention to violate academic integrity. Based on previous findings, this study argues that social expectations and disapproval of academic misconduct can discourage students from engaging in such behaviors. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Subjective norm has a negative effect on students' intention to violate academic integrity.

In the context of academic integrity, perceived behavioral control is not only related to access to learning support tools but also to students' understanding of academic integrity policies, regulations, and standards. Previous studies have shown that a clear understanding of rules related to academic misconduct can help students better control their behavior and reduce their intention to cheat (Dang & Nguyen, 2021; Hoang et al., 2024). In contrast, limited knowledge of academic integrity policies or uncertainty about acceptable boundaries may increase the risk of misconduct. Thereby, this study suggests that higher perceived behavioral control is associated with a lower intention to violate academic integrity. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Perceived behavioral control has a negative effect on students' intention to violate academic integrity.

According to rational choice theory, individuals often weigh potential benefits against possible risks before making behavioral decisions (Ortiz-Bonnin & Blahopoulou, 2025). In the context of academic integrity, perceived risk is commonly reflected in the likelihood of being detected, the severity of penalties, and the possible consequences of misconduct (McCabe et al., 2002; Rahmatika et al., 2025). Many studies have found that when students believe monitoring systems are effective and disciplinary actions are strictly enforced, their intention to engage in academic misconduct decreases significantly (Shmeleva & Semenova, 2019; Hoang et al., 2024). Based on previous findings, this study argues that perceived risk serves as an important deterrent to academic misconduct. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Perceived risk has a negative effect on students' intention to violate academic integrity.

Based on these hypotheses, a research model was developed to illustrate the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable in this study. The proposed research model is presented in Figure 1.

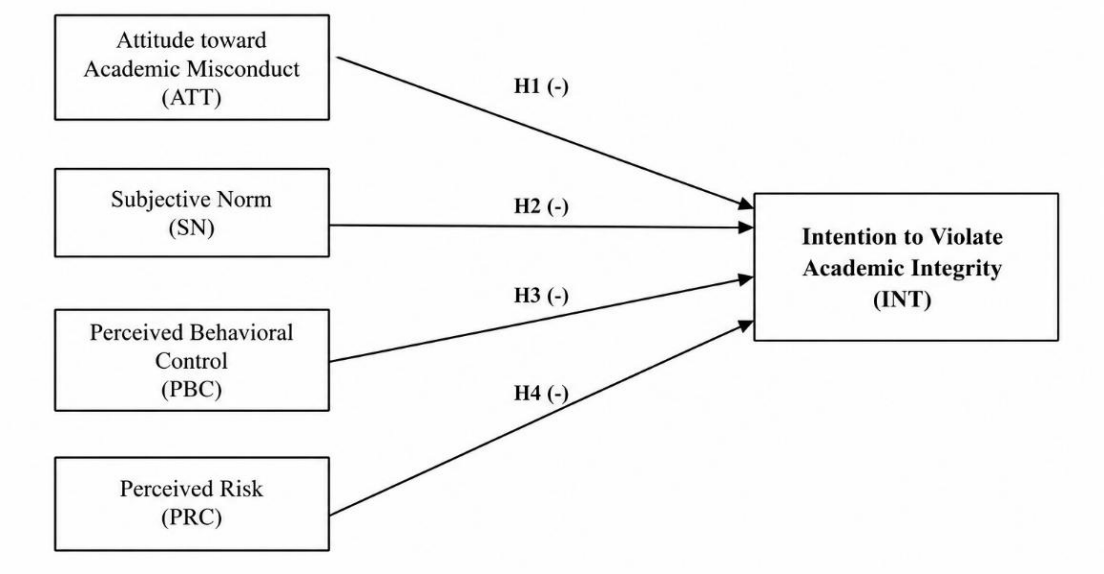



**Figure 1. Proposed Research Model**

## 3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach, consisting of both qualitative and quantitative phases. In the qualitative phase, relevant theories and previous studies were reviewed to develop the research hypotheses and research model. The questionnaire included five constructs in the research model. Attitude toward academic misconduct (ATT) was measured using five items, while subjective norm (SN), perceived behavioral control (PBC), perceived risk (PRC), and intention to violate academic integrity (INT) were each measured using four items. In total, the questionnaire included 21 measurement items. The scales were adapted from previous studies of Chudzicka-Czupała et al. (2015), Sallam et al. (2023), Acosta-Enriquez et al. (2024), and Ortiz-Bonnin and Blahopoulou (2025) with modifications made to better fit the Vietnamese context and the respondents as college students.

In the quantitative phase, a pilot test was first conducted with 10 full-time college students. The purpose of this step was to check whether the questionnaire wording was clear and understandable to the target respondents. Based on their feedback, several expressions were adjusted before the main survey. The main survey was conducted from December 2026 to January 2027 using Google Form through lecturers during classes. Participants were full-time college students in Ho Chi Minh City from different faculties and academic years. A total of 380 responses were collected through convenience sampling. After data cleaning, 358 valid responses remained are used for final analysis, accounting for 94.2% of the collected responses. This sample size met the recommended requirement of at least ten respondents per item (Hair et al., 2010). The data were analysed using SPSS 27.0 through Cronbach's Alpha reliability testing, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), and multiple linear regression analysis. EFA was used because the measurement items were adapted from previous studies and modified for the context of college students and AI-assisted learning in Vietnam.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1. Descriptive Statistics of Respondents

The main target group of this study consisted of college students in Ho Chi Minh City. The descriptive statistics of the respondents are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Respondents Result**

| | Characteristics | Frequency (person) | Percent (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 194 | 54.2 |
| | Female | 164 | 45.8 |
| | **Total** | **358** | **100** |
| Academic year | First-year student | 170 | 47.5 |
| | Second-year student | 126 | 35.2 |
| | Third-year student | 59 | 16.5 |
| | Other | 3 | 0.8 |
| | **Total** | **358** | **100** |
| The perception of the concept of academic integrity | Used to know | 164 | 45.8 |
| | Never knew | 194 | 54.2 |
| | **Total** | **358** | **100** |

*(Source: SPSS analysis result)*

The results show that the sample included 358 college students. Male students accounted for 54.2% of the sample, slightly higher than female students (45.8%). Regarding academic year, first-year students represented the largest group (47.5%), followed by second-year students (35.2%) and third-year students (16.5%). This indicates that the sample was mainly composed of students in the early stages of their college education. Notably, the proportion of students who had never heard of the concept of academic integrity (54.2%) was higher than those who were already familiar with it (45.8%).

### 4.2. Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Test

Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess the reliability of the measurement scales employed in this study. The results are presented in Table 2 together with the wording of all 21 measurement items.

**Table 2. Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Test Result**

| Items | Item Statement | Corrected Item-Total Correlation |
|---|---|---|
| | ATT Cronbach's Alpha = 0.868 | |
| ATT1 | Using AI to complete an entire individual assignment is a serious form of academic misconduct. | 0.722 |
| ATT2 | Using AI to make presentation without acknowledging the source is a serious violation of academic integrity. | 0.756 |
| ATT3 | Using AI to complete a test or examination is a serious form of academic misconduct. | 0.640 |
| ATT4 | Using AI to complete a group assignment is a serious violation of academic integrity. | 0.575 |
| ATT5 | Using AI to plagiarize is a serious violation of academic integrity. | 0.778 |
| | SN Cronbach's Alpha = 0.854 | |

| Items | Item Statement | Corrected Item-Total Correlation |
|---|---|---|
| SN1 | People who are important to me expect me to follow academic integrity rules. | 0.708 |
| SN2 | My friends would disapprove if I engaged in academic misconduct. | 0.680 |
| SN3 | My instructors expect students to avoid all forms of academic misconduct. | 0.744 |
| SN4 | People around me encourage me to complete my academic work honestly. | 0.663 |
| | PBC Cronbach's Alpha = 0.899 | |
| PBC1 | I clearly understand my institution's regulations on academic integrity. | 0.772 |
| PBC2 | I know which behaviors are considered academic misconduct. | 0.768 |
| PBC3 | I understand the penalties for violating academic integrity. | 0.824 |
| PBC4 | My institution/instructors have clearly explained the academic integrity policies to me. | 0.741 |
| | PRC Cronbach's Alpha = 0.894 | |
| PRC1 | I believe that academic misconduct is likely to be detected. | 0.706 |
| PRC2 | I believe that the consequences of academic misconduct are serious. | 0.792 |
| PRC3 | I think academic misconduct can have long-term negative effects on me. | 0.800 |
| PRC4 | I feel that engaging in academic misconduct involves considerable risk. | 0.765 |
| | INT Cronbach's Alpha = 0.943 | |
| INT1 | I may use AI to complete academic work in ways that are not allowed by my institution. | 0.850 |
| INT2 | I would consider using AI for academic tasks even if its use is not permitted. | 0.877 |
| INT3 | I may engage in academic misconduct if I am under strong pressure to achieve good grades. | 0.872 |
| INT4 | I would consider using dishonest methods in my academic work if they could help me achieve better results. | 0.853 |

*(Source: SPSS analysis result)*

The results indicate that all measurement scales met the required reliability standards and were retained for further analysis. The Cronbach's Alpha values for both the independent and dependent variables ranged from 0.854 to 0.943, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.8 and demonstrating good reliability (Hair et al., 2010). In addition, all corrected item-total correlation values were above 0.5, ranging from 0.575 to 0.877, which also met the recommended criteria (Hair et al., 2010). These findings suggest that all observed variables were strongly related to their corresponding constructs and contributed effectively to measuring the research concepts. Therefore, no items were removed and all 21 items were retained for the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA).

### 4.3. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

After the reliability assessment, EFA was conducted on the 21 items to identify the underlying factor structure. The KMO values for the independent variables (0.879) and the dependent variable (0.859) were both greater than 0.5 (Hair et al., 2010). Similarly, Bartlett's

Test was significant for both the independent variables ($p = 0.000$) and the dependent variable ($p < 0.001$), satisfying the requirements for factor analysis.

The EFA results extracted four factors for the independent variables, with the lowest eigenvalue equal to 1.400 and a total variance explained of 64.372%. For the dependent variable, one factor was extracted with an eigenvalue of 3.415 and a total variance explained of 80.514%. The rotated factor matrix showed that all items loaded on their expected factors, with the lowest factor loading being 0.540. Since all factor loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2010), all items were retained and the extracted factor structure was generally consistent with the expected grouping of the items.

### 4.4. Testing the research model

#### *4.4.1. Correlation analysis*

The Pearson correlation analysis showed that all independent variables were significantly correlated with the dependent variable at the 1% significance level ($p < 0.001$). All correlation coefficients were negative, indicating inverse relationships between the independent variables and dependent variable. Furthermore, the correlations among the independent variables ranged from 0.130 to 0.548, all below the threshold of 0.8 (Hair et al., 2010). This suggests that serious multicollinearity was not present and that the variables were suitable for multiple regression analysis.

#### *4.4.2. Multiple linear regression analysis*

The explanatory power of the research model was evaluated using the coefficient of determination ($R^2$) and the adjusted $R^2$. According to Hair et al. (2010), values of 0.5 or above indicate that a model has good explanatory power. The regression model summary is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3. Regression model summary**

| Model | R | $R^2$ | Adjusted $R^2$ | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 0.717 | 0.514 | 0.509 | 0.51506 |

*(Source: SPSS analysis result)*

The results show that the adjusted $R^2$ value was 0.509, indicating that the model explained 50.9% of the variation in students' intention to engage in academic misconduct. The remaining 49.1% could be attributed to factors outside the model and random error. The standardized regression coefficients were then examined to assess the influence of each independent variable. The results are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4. Multiple linear regression analysis result**

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. | Collinearity Statistics | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | | Tolerance | VIF |
| 1 | (Constant) | 5.362 | 0.185 | | 29.026 | 0.000 | | |
| | PBC | -0.175 | 0.036 | -0.197 | -4.830 | 0.000 | 0.832 | 1.202 |
| | ATT | -0.116 | 0.043 | -0.127 | -2.681 | 0.008 | 0.617 | 1.621 |
| | PRC | -0.534 | 0.050 | -0.514 | -10.720 | 0.000 | 0.602 | 1.660 |
| | SN | -0.037 | 0.035 | -0.044 | -1.069 | 0.286 | 0.835 | 1.197 |

*(Source: SPSS analysis result)*

The regression analysis showed that PBC, ATT, and PRC had significant effects on students' intention to violate academic integrity (INT), as their significance levels were below 0.05. Among these variables, PRC had the strongest effect (β = -0.514, p = 0.000), followed by PBC (β = -0.197, p = 0.000) and ATT (β = -0.127, p = 0.008). All standardized coefficients were negative, indicating that higher levels of perceived behavioral control, stronger negative attitudes toward academic misconduct, and greater perceived risk were associated with lower intentions to violate academic integrity. In contrast, subjective norm (SN) was not statistically significant (p = 0.286 > 0.05), indicating that there was insufficient evidence to support its influence on students' intention to violate academic integrity. In addition, all VIF values were below 2 and all tolerance values were above 0.1 (Hair et al., 2010), confirming that multicollinearity was not a concern.

Since SN was not statistically significant, the regression equation can be written as follows:

$$INT = 5{,}362 – 0{,}175(PBC) – 0{,}116(ATT) – 0{,}534(PRC)$$

## 5. DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that attitude, perceived behavioral control (PBC), and perceived risk (PR) all have significant negative effects on students' intention to engage in academic misconduct. Among these factors, perceived risk showed the strongest influence in reducing misconduct intention in the digital learning environment (β = -0.514). This result is similar with previous studies highlighting the important role of perceived consequences, including the severity of penalties for academic misconduct (Dang & Nguyen, 2021), the likelihood of being detected, and institutional disciplinary measures (Rahmatika et al., 2025; Ortiz-Bonnin & Blahopoulou, 2025; Baig & Paparo, 2026). In the context of AI, this finding may be especially relevant because students can access AI tools easily and use them privately. When the opportunity to use AI is high, awareness of possible consequences may become an important consideration in students' decisions. Perceived behavioral control (β = -0.197) and attitude (β = -0.127) also showed significant negative relationships with misconduct intention. This suggests that clear knowledge of academic integrity rules and a stronger view that misconduct is serious may still help reduce students' willingness to engage in dishonest academic behavior, which is similar with previous studies of academic misconduct (Ariani et al., 2020; Dang & Nguyen, 2021; Hoang et al., 2024). In the Vietnamese college context, this may be important because more than half of the respondents in this study had never heard of the concept of academic integrity before the survey. This result suggests that formal guidance from institutions and instructors may still play an important role in helping students understand acceptable and unacceptable academic behavior, especially when AI use is becoming popular.

In contrast, subjective norm (SN) was not a significant predictor of academic misconduct intention. This finding differs from many previous studies that reported a meaningful influence of peers, instructors, and the surrounding learning environment on students' decisions regarding academic integrity (McCabe et al., 2001; Shmeleva & Semenova, 2019; Hoang et al., 2024; Baig & Paparo, 2026). One possible explaination is that AI use can make academic misconduct more private and individual. Students may use AI tools on personal devices without direct involvement from classmates, so decisions about misconduct may depend less on peer behavior than in more visible forms of cheating. The characteristics of the sample may also be a reason of this result. Most respondents were first and second-year college students, and more than half of them had never heard of academic integrity before the survey. In this context, more direct factors such as PR and understanding of institutional rules may be more closely related to their decisions. However, this explanation

should be viewed with caution because the present study did not directly test these possible reasons.

The study contributes to the literature by providing additional evidence for the TPB in explaining academic misconduct intention among college students. It also adds to the TPB-based literature by examining PR together with the original TPB components. The results show that perceived risk had a stronger relationship with academic misconduct intention than the original TPB factors included in the model. The study also adds evidence from college students, a group that has received less attention in previous research. From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that the factors influencing academic misconduct intention among college students may differ from those reported in studies involving other student groups. These findings can therefore support the development of more suitable strategies for reducing academic integrity violations.

Despite these contributions, the study has several limitations. Although the model explained a meaningful proportion of the variation in academic misconduct intention, a substantial amount of variance remained unexplained, suggesting that additional influencing factors should be considered in future research. Furthermore, some findings differed from those reported in previous studies and may require deeper investigation. Future studies could expand the research model by including additional variables, use Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to further examine the measurement structure with a new sample and combining quantitative approaches with qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews or focus groups. Such approaches would provide a more comprehensive understanding of students' views and experiences, ultimately contributing to the development of a stronger academic integrity culture in the digital era.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Based on the proposed research model, the study examined the influence of different factors on reducing students' intention to engage in academic misconduct. The findings revealed three factors with significant negative effects on misconduct intention. In descending order of influence, these factors were: (1) perceived risk, (2) perceived behavioral control through academic integrity policies, and (3) attitude toward and perceived seriousness of academic misconduct.

Based on these findings, several practical implications can be suggested to improve educational quality and reduce academic misconduct in the current digital environment. The findings suggest several practical actions for educational institutions and instructors. Firstly, institutions should develop clear academic integrity policies that explain different types of misconduct and the consequences of violations. These policies should be easy for students to access and should be introduced early in their study programs. Since perceived risk had the strongest effect in the model, institutions should also ensure that disciplinary procedures are clear, consistent, and proportionate to the level of the violation.

Second, instructors should provide clear guidance on how AI is allowed or not to be used in different learning tasks. This guidance should be given before assignments, presentations, tests, or examinations so that students understand the expected boundaries of AI use. Short examples of acceptable and unacceptable AI use may also help students avoid unintentional violations. Finally, academic integrity education should not focus only on punishment. Students also need support to understand why academic honesty matters and how misconduct may affect their learning and future professional responsibility. For college students, especially those in the early years of study, this type of guidance may be particularly useful because many students may not yet be familiar with academic integrity policies.

## DECLARATIONS

**Funding:** This research received no external funding.

**Institutional Review Board Statement:** This study was conducted with full-time college students using a quantitative survey approach. Prior to data collection, participants were provided with information about the study and its academic purpose. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents, and participation was completely voluntary. No personally identifiable information was collected, ensuring the anonymity of all participants. The collected data were kept confidential and used solely for academic research and statistical analysis.

**Transparency:** The author confirms that this manuscript presents an accurate and transparent account of the research and that all essential aspects of the study have been fully reported.

**Competing Interests:** The author declares that there are no financial or personal relationships that could have influenced the research reported in this study.

**Authors' Contributions:** Phan Nguyen Phong Luan – Sole author who is responsible for designing the study, methodology, data collection and analysis, findings, original manuscript draft, and the revised manuscript. The author has read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

**Disclosure of AI Use:** ChatGPT was used only to support language editing, translation, and manuscript formatting. All academic arguments, data analysis, interpretation of the findings, and final revisions were reviewed and completed by the author. The author takes full responsibility for the final content of the manuscript.

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