



Exploring Students' Ethical and Social Responsibilities in Academic Behavior and Community Impact

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Abstract: This study explored students' ethical and social responsibilities in academic and community settings, emphasizing the interplay between ethical awareness and social engagement. Ethical responsibility included adherence to academic integrity policies, respect for intellectual property, and institutional conduct codes, while social responsibility involved participation in volunteer work, leadership, and advocacy for diversity. Using a mixed-methods approach, this research integrated quantitative analysis from structured questionnaires and qualitative insights from in-depth interviews with students from higher education institutions in Indonesia. The findings revealed a strong correlation between ethical and social responsibilities, where students with higher ethical awareness demonstrated greater social engagement. However, social responsibility remained moderate, suggesting further institutional support was needed. Gender differences indicated that male students showed slightly higher social responsibility levels than females. This study contributed to educational policies by offering a framework to strengthen ethical integrity and civic involvement, ensuring students were prepared for academic and professional ethical challenges. The results could guide curriculum development and institutional strategies to foster responsible academic practices, ultimately shaping students into morally and socially responsible individuals.

Keywords: academic integrity; ethical responsibility; higher education; social engagement

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INTRODUCTION

As future leaders and active participants in society, students hold ethical and social responsibilities. Beyond academic excellence, they are expected to uphold integrity, fairness, and respect while contributing to the well-being of their communities. Ethical responsibility encompasses adherence to academic integrity policies, respect for intellectual property, and compliance with institutional conduct codes (Capelle et al., 2023; Wijaya & Gruber, 2018; Hidayat et al., 2019). Meanwhile, social responsibility involves engagement in volunteer work, leadership roles, and advocacy for diversity and inclusivity (Blaique et al., 2023; Walia, 2022). The interplay between these responsibilities is crucial in shaping students into morally conscious and socially engaged individuals (Miron et al., 2022).

Higher education institutions play a key role in fostering these values by promoting ethical awareness and encouraging social participation. However, existing research often examines academic integrity and social responsibility as separate constructs, overlooking their interdependence (Eshet, 2024; Morris, 2024; Rossi, 2024). Studies on academic integrity emphasize its link to learning motivation and institutional policies (Ratu et al., 2024), while studies on social responsibility highlight students' contributions to civic engagement and community service (Fonseca et al., 2020; Tilak, 2022).

Despite these insights, little is known about how ethical awareness influences students' commitment to social causes and vice versa, necessitating further exploration. Additionally, gender differences in ethical and social responsibility remain an underexamined area. Female students tend to demonstrate higher ethical responsibility, particularly in academic integrity and adherence to institutional codes, whereas male students are often more engaged in leadership and activism related to social responsibility (Rubel et al., 2024; Sánchez et al., 2024). However, the extent to which gender influences these responsibilities and their interaction requires further investigation to understand better students' academic and civic behaviors (Gurrieri & Finn, 2023; Lourenço et al., 2022).

This study addresses these gaps by examining the relationship between students' ethical and social responsibilities, specifically focusing on gender differences. It explores how ethical integrity fosters social engagement, the role of institutional support in strengthening these dimensions, and how gender dynamics influence students' responsibilities. By integrating ethical and social aspects, this research offers insights into strategies for cultivating responsible academic and community practices. The findings contribute to policy

recommendations for higher education institutions, ensuring students develop the ethical and social competencies necessary for academic and professional success.

METHODS

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies to explore students' ethical and social responsibilities comprehensively. The mixed-methods design allowed for data triangulation, enhancing the reliability and depth of findings. A sequential explanatory strategy (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) was used, where quantitative data was collected and analyzed first, followed by qualitative data to provide deeper insights into the observed patterns. This approach ensured a robust understanding of how students engaged with ethical and social responsibilities in academic settings and broader societal contexts.

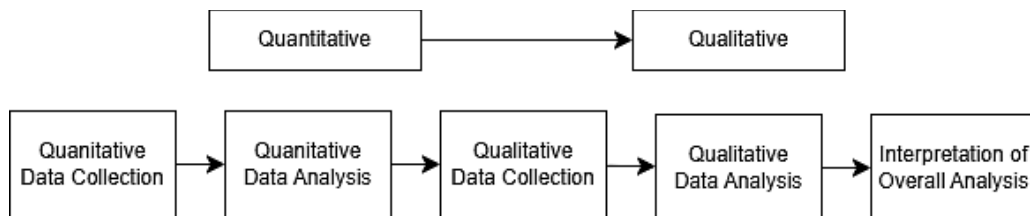


Figure 1. Sequential Explanatory Strategy

Conversely, the qualitative method assessed each variable's importance in promoting social and ethical obligations. The study's participants were students enrolled in postsecondary educational institutions, and information was gathered via interviews and a questionnaire with 30 closed-ended questions. While qualitative analysis used data triangulation to elucidate links not apparent in quantitative data, quantitative data analysis utilized statistical tests and descriptive statistics to identify relationships between variables. The quantitative analysis stage can be seen in Figure 2.

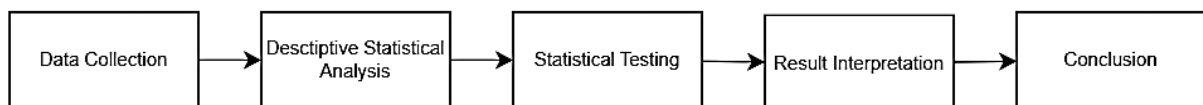


Figure 2. Quantitative Analysis Stage

Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlation tests to examine the ethical and social responsibility relationship. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for processing data, applying a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ to test the strength of associations. A correlation coefficient above 0.5 indicated a strong relationship, while values below 0.5 suggested a weaker link. The qualitative approach was used to assess the importance of each variable in strengthening efforts to enhance ethical and social responsibility, providing insights for researchers, faculty, and institutional leaders in shaping responsible academic behavior. The study involved 160 actively enrolled students from 12 higher education institutions across Indonesia, selected through stratified random sampling to ensure gender balance and academic diversity. Data was collected using structured questionnaires with 30 closed-ended questions on ethical responsibility, social engagement, and academic integrity, employing an ordinal scale format. Additionally, in-depth interviews with some participants explored their motivations, challenges, and perspectives on ethical and social responsibilities in greater depth.

The combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis provided a strong perspective on the moral and social obligations of students' academic conduct. This methodology facilitated the effective promotion of responsible academic practices by researchers and stakeholders. The primary objective of this study was to analyze the relationship between ethical and social responsibilities among students in higher education. Specifically, it examined how ethical awareness influenced social participation and vice versa. Additionally, the study aimed to assess the role of higher education institutions in shaping ethical and socially responsible behavior among students. By employing a mixed-methods approach, the research ensured that both statistical trends and personal experiences contributed to a nuanced understanding of these complex interactions.

Data was collected using two key instruments: structured questionnaires and in-depth interviews. The questionnaire consisted of 30 closed-ended questions to assess students' adherence to academic integrity policies, involvement in social movements, and perceptions of ethical responsibility. Quantitative data was gathered from 160 students enrolled in various higher education institutions in Indonesia. Additionally, qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews, allowing for a deeper exploration of students' motivations and challenges in maintaining ethical and social responsibilities. A dual approach was employed for data analysis. Quantitative data was processed using statistical software to measure correlations and identify

significant trends. Descriptive statistics highlighted the distribution of responses, while inferential tests determined the strength of associations between ethical awareness and social engagement. For qualitative data, thematic coding and data triangulation were used to uncover nuanced perspectives that may not have been evident in numerical results. This integrated analysis comprehensively evaluated students' ethical and social responsibilities, guiding educational institutions in fostering responsible academic and community practices.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study's findings highlighted the issues with students' capacity for social and ethical responsibility in the academic community. On a scale of 1 to 5, the degree of responsibility was classified as follows:

Table 1. Responsibility Level Categories

Index	Category/Quality
>4.5	Has a very strong responsibility
>3.5 - 4.5	Has strong responsibility
>2.5 - 3.5	Has moderate responsibility
>1.5 - 2.5	Has weak responsibility
≤1.5	Has very weak responsibility

The gathered data was processed and examined to use quantitative approaches to address the study concerns. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program was used to process and analyze the data for this investigation. A discussion of the findings took place following the research findings. Based on these results, the discussion covered several topics to optimize the research's contributions to resolving problems that the community and students experienced. The level of student ethical responsibility was the level or gradation of the ability to recognize, interpret, and act based on various principles and values following standards in the field and/or context of academic behavior in life on campus and in society. The data processing results were carried out using descriptive statistics, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Ethical and Social Responsibility Levels in 2024

		Ethical Responsibility	Social Responsibility
N	Valid	160	160
	Missing	0	0
	Mean	3.9783	3.3984
	Std. Error of Mean	.04849	.06003
	Median	4.0667	3.3750
	Mode	4.00	4.00
	Std. Deviation	.61341	.75933
	Variance	.376	.577
	Sum	636.53	543.75

The descriptive statistical results indicated that the mean level of ethical responsibility was 3.99, reflecting respondents' strong sense of ethical responsibility. The total number of valid responses available for further statistical analysis was 160, with no missing data, ensuring that all responses were complete and suitable for further processing. The standard deviation for ethical responsibility was 0.61341, with a variance of 0.376, indicating a relatively low dispersion of data. This suggested that the responses were closely clustered around the mean, reflecting a well-distributed dataset. The findings highlight that students demonstrate a high level of ethical responsibility, which aligns with previous studies emphasizing the role of ethics in academic and social settings. Ethical responsibility is fundamental for students, as it influences their decision-making processes and interactions in educational institutions and communities (Schiff et al., 2024).

The relatively high mean score suggests that most respondents possess a strong ethical orientation, potentially due to institutional policies promoting academic integrity and community engagement. In contrast, the mean score for social responsibility was lower (3.40), indicating that while students recognize their ethical duties, their engagement in broader community responsibilities might be less pronounced. This aligns with studies suggesting that although students know ethical principles, translating this awareness into active community participation remains challenging (Schiff et al., 2024). The level of social responsibility reflected students' ability to fulfill their civic duties and take actions that benefited society. This included participation, empowerment, and advocacy for social justice and equality within their community. The research findings indicated that students' average level of social responsibility was 3.40, which fell within the moderate range. One hundred sixty valid responses were collected, with no missing data, ensuring that all information was

complete and suitable for further statistical analysis. The standard deviation for social responsibility was 0.75933, with a variance of 0.577, indicating a relatively low dispersion of data. This suggested that the responses were well-distributed and accurately represented students' social responsibility levels.

The role of gender in students' ethical responsibility influences how individuals uphold moral and academic integrity in both academic and community settings. Ethical responsibility includes dedication to protecting the intellectual property of others by refraining from plagiarism (Wijaya & Gruber, 2018), adhering to established guidelines and deadlines (Capelle et al., 2023), and complying with institutional codes of conduct relating to research and academic integrity. Gender norms may shape students' perceptions of their ethical obligations, with some studies suggesting that female students tend to be more conscientious in following ethical guidelines. In contrast, male students may strongly adhere to institutional rules and leadership in ethical decision-making. However, fostering a shared ethical responsibility, regardless of gender, is essential in promoting fairness, accountability, and integrity in academic and community life.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Ethical Responsibility Level Based on Gender

	Ethical Responsibility Level	
	Female	Male
Mean	3.9654	4.0323
Std. Error of Mean	.05227	.12531
Median	4.0000	4.2000
Mode	4.00	4.53
Std. Deviation	.59366	.69769
Variance	.352	.487
Sum	511.53	125.00

The descriptive statistical results indicated that both male and female students demonstrated strong ethical responsibility. Female students' average ethical responsibility score was 3.97, while male students had a slightly higher average of 4.03. Despite this slight difference, both groups fell within the strong category, reflecting high ethical awareness and responsibility among students regardless of gender.

The findings suggest that both male and female students commit to ethical responsibility in academic and community settings. While the mean score for male students (4.03) is slightly higher than that of female students (3.97), the difference remains relatively small, indicating that ethical awareness and responsibility are upheld consistently across genders. The median and mode values further support this observation, showing that both groups score within a high ethical responsibility range. One possible explanation for this result is the influence of institutional policies and academic culture emphasizing ethical integrity among students, regardless of gender. Female students are more meticulous in following ethical guidelines (Sánchez et al., 2024), and male students show more decisive leadership in ethical decision-making. The variance and standard deviation values suggest that male students exhibit slightly more significant variability in their ethical responsibility scores than female students. This could indicate that while some male students demonstrate exceptionally high ethical responsibility, others may deviate slightly from the mean. Conversely, the lower variance among female students suggests more consistency in ethical responsibility levels within this group. The role of gender in students' social responsibility greatly influenced how individuals participated in society and the campus community. Gender stereotypes often shape social expectations of male and female students' roles in social activities, such as leadership, activism, or volunteering. Female students, for example, were considered more responsible in caregiving or empathy-related activities, while male students were often expected to take on leadership roles. It was important for students to go beyond these stereotypical boundaries and contribute equally to social responsibility, promoting inclusivity and gender equality in every aspect of social activities and community service.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Social Responsibility Level Based on Gender

	Social Responsibility	
	Female	Male
Mean	3.3566	3.5726
Std. Error of Mean	.06776	.12571
Median	3.2500	3.6875
Mode	4.00	3.00
Std. Deviation	.76962	.69991
Variance	.592	.490
Sum	433.00	110.75

The descriptive statistical results revealed differences in social responsibility levels between male and female students. Female students had an average social responsibility score of 3.36, which fell within the moderate category. In contrast, male students had a higher average score of 3.57, indicating a strong level of social responsibility. These findings challenge common gender stereotypes that often associate social responsibility, particularly in caregiving and community engagement, more strongly with female students. Instead, the data suggests that male students are equal, if not more, engaged in social responsibilities within academic and community settings. The variability in responses, as indicated by the standard deviation and variance values, suggests greater consistency in social responsibility levels among female students than males. This means that while male students, on average, score higher, there is also a wider range of responses, indicating that some male students may exhibit exceptionally high social responsibility while others score lower.

Students' ethical and social responsibilities complemented each other in shaping responsible behavior and contributing to the well-being of society. Ethical responsibility focuses on an individual's commitment to moral principles, such as honesty, integrity, and a sense of justice, which guide students in acting correctly. Meanwhile, social responsibility relates to students' contributions to solving social problems and improving the quality of life in their environment. The relationship between the two lay in how ethical values guided students' social actions; with strong ethical awareness, students were more aware of carrying out their social roles somewhat, empathetically, and responsibly, thus positively impacting society.

Table 5. Correlation between Students' Ethical and Social Responsibility Levels

		Ethical Responsibility	Social Responsibility
Ethical Responsibility	Pearson Correlation	1	.555**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	160	160
Social Responsibility	Pearson Correlation	.555**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	160	160

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 presents the findings on the relationship between ethical responsibility and social responsibility among students. The correlation coefficient 0.555 indicated a strong positive relationship between these two variables. Furthermore, the significance level of the correlation was 0.000, effectively zero, which was well below the 0.05 threshold. This confirmed that the correlation between ethical and social responsibility was statistically significant, highlighting a meaningful and substantial connection. This study finds a correlation between students' ethical and social responsibility. A strong level of ethical responsibility means that students are highly aware of the moral principles that guide their behavior and decisions (Gustina, 2024). This includes their commitment to act with integrity, honesty, fairness, and respect for the rights and dignity of others in various situations (Ariani & Islami, 2022). Students with strong ethical responsibility strive to do the right thing even when unsupervised and consider the impact of their actions on others. They are also more likely to reject unethical behavior, such as plagiarism or discrimination, and actively support social justice and the well-being of all.

The strong level of ethical responsibility among students reflects several positive characteristics that contribute to personal and institutional growth. These students uphold high academic integrity by producing quality work free from plagiarism. They consistently apply ethical principles in various aspects of life, including collaboration and research, fostering a culture of honesty and responsibility. Their strong sense of integrity also plays a crucial role in character development, preparing them for future professional endeavors. Additionally, their ethical engagement enhances the institution's reputation among stakeholders while creating a positive social impact through active participation in community initiatives. Furthermore, their ethical competence strengthens interpersonal skills, allowing them to communicate and collaborate effectively in team settings.

Students' moderate levels of social responsibility mean they show awareness and involvement in social issues but are not consistently committed to taking more profound or sustained action. They may engage in social activities, such as campaigns or charity events, but their participation is often sporadic and not based on a deep understanding of the issues. Students with moderate social responsibility recognize the importance of contributing to society but may need encouragement or motivation to engage more actively in social efforts and understand the impact of their actions on the community. This category reflects the potential to become more proactive and committed to social issues if given the proper understanding and support.

Students' moderate level of social responsibility has several implications in both individual and community contexts. Students in this category may not fully recognize the broader impact of their actions on social issues, resulting in a less significant contribution to problem-solving and societal change. Additionally, their inconsistent engagement in social activities may lead to missed opportunities for networking and gaining

valuable experience in community service, which are essential for developing leadership and collaboration skills. Without encouragement to increase their involvement, there is also a risk that this moderate level of responsibility could foster a culture of indifference among peers, potentially hindering efforts to create a more inclusive and socially responsive academic environment.

The strong ethical responsibility of both male and female students reflects a high commitment to moral and ethical principles in their academic and social lives. For female students, strong ethical responsibility manifests in efforts to promote gender justice and equality, where they actively oppose discrimination and strive to create a supportive environment for all genders (Gurrieri & Finn, 2023). They tend to be highly aware of social and ethical issues affecting women, advocate for women's rights, and support peers facing gender-related challenges. Meanwhile, male students with strong ethical responsibility are committed to challenging traditional norms that may limit their role in creating equality. They are more likely to be allies in movements fighting for women's rights and work to change misperceptions of masculinity that can be detrimental to both men and women. This strong ethical responsibility in both genders creates synergy in achieving a more just and inclusive environment, where everyone feels valued and empowered. Thus, both groups of students contribute significantly to positive social change and the sustainability of ethical values in society.

The difference in social responsibility levels between male and female students, with males in the strong category and females in the moderate category, can lead to an imbalance in participation and contribution to social issues on campus and in society. Male students with strong social responsibility are more likely to take on leadership roles and act as agents of change (Finch, 2016). However, if female students do not engage to their full potential, their voices and perspectives may be underrepresented in social initiatives (Rubel et al., 2024). This could result in a lack of attention to issues affecting women, potentially hindering efforts toward gender equality in social contexts. Additionally, this imbalance may influence group dynamics, where male students dominate discussions and decision-making processes. Over time, this could reinforce gender stereotypes and create the perception that social engagement is primarily a male responsibility, limiting opportunities for more inclusive and diverse participation.

The implications of the relationship between ethical and social responsibility, which has a strong correlation, can be seen in several important aspects. The connection between ethical and social responsibility has significant implications, particularly in fostering socially active behavior among students (Aryabkina et al., 2024). First, students with high ethical responsibility tend to show more active social involvement (Fonseca et al., 2020). They understand that their actions impact themselves, others, and society. As a result, these students are more likely to participate in social activities, such as community service, awareness campaigns, and environmental initiatives, reflecting their commitment to the common good. Essentially, the strong connection between social responsibility and ethics nurtures a generation of individuals who are both proactive in improving their communities and morally conscious (Bocean et al., 2022).

Secondly, this relationship also affects students' character and leadership development. Leadership is a behavior pattern that enables individual and group efforts to accomplish goals, influences others to comprehend and agree on duties, and aligns personal aspirations to reach shared objectives (Rohmatunnisa, 2021). Students who are aware of their ethical responsibilities are better able to make fair and thoughtful decisions in a social context ((Rua et al., 2024). This awareness motivates them to carefully consider the possible outcomes of their choices, ensuring they behave in a way that respects other people's needs and rights (Solvason et al., 2022). They not only focus on the outcome but also consider the process and the impact of their decisions on society. Thus, the strong correlation between ethical and social responsibility can create a generation of students who are academically competent, empathetic, caring, and committed to positive social change. This can result in individuals ready to lead and make a greater impact on their communities and society.

This study fills a critical gap by exploring the connection between ethical and social responsibilities, which are often studied separately. It examines how ethical awareness shapes social engagement and vice versa, providing valuable insights into the factors that encourage responsible behavior among students. The findings aim to help educational institutions foster a culture of integrity and civic involvement. By defining clear measures—such as academic integrity policies, plagiarism cases, institutional conduct codes for ethics, volunteer work, campus leadership, and advocacy for social responsibility, this study contributes to the broader discussion on student ethics. It bridges the gap between academic integrity and social responsibility, offering universities a practical framework to develop ethically conscious and socially engaged graduates. These insights can guide policymaking, curriculum design, and institutional strategies, ensuring students are well-prepared for ethical decision-making and active social participation.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis results, students' ethical responsibility level is in a strong category, while their level of social responsibility is in the moderate category. The breakdown by gender shows that female and male students have strong ethical responsibilities. For the level of social responsibility, female students have an

average score of 3.36, which is still classified as moderate, while male students reach an average score of 4.03, which shows the level of social responsibility in the strong category. Furthermore, there is a strong, significant correlation between ethical responsibility and social responsibility, with a correlation coefficient of 0.555. This indicates that the higher the students' ethical responsibility, the more likely they are to have higher social responsibility. According to the triangulation of qualitative data, students who are morally responsible are more likely to be involved in social issues, driven by a feeling of moral obligation to have a good impact on society. This qualitative finding validates that ethical awareness is a prerequisite for regular social engagement and confirms the quantitative relationship between ethical and social responsibilities. These results emphasize the need for higher education institutions to implement strategies promoting ethical awareness and active participation in social causes. By integrating academic integrity programs with community-based initiatives, universities can foster a generation of students who are academically responsible and socially engaged. Encouraging students to actively participate in volunteer work, leadership roles, and advocacy programs will help bridge the gap between ethical knowledge and practical application. Institutions should design interdisciplinary curricula incorporating ethical training and social responsibility elements, ensuring students develop the necessary skills to navigate complex ethical dilemmas in their academic and professional lives. The study's insights can inform policy development and curriculum design, ensuring students are better prepared to uphold ethical standards and contribute positively to society. Future research should explore the long-term impact of ethical and social responsibility programs on student behavior beyond university settings, examining how these principles translate into professional and civic life. By addressing these aspects, educational institutions can play a pivotal role in shaping individuals who are academically proficient and morally and socially responsible citizens, contributing to a more ethical and just society.

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