

In Search of Social Acceptance: Self-Reported Academic Behaviors and Social Desirability in the Business Area

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Edited by:

Elisabeth de Oliveira Vendramin

Abstract

Objective: The research aimed at analyzing the association between self-reported academic behaviors and the social desirability of postgraduate master's and doctoral students in the business area. Academic behaviors are positive or negative attitudes performed by students, while social desirability represents those who seek to build a socially accepted image, but that does not match reality.

Method: For data collection, an online survey was carried out with postgraduate master's and doctoral students linked to Brazilian courses in the business area, obtaining 1,816 valid participations that were analyzed using the Mann-Whitney test and Spearman Correlation.

Results: The results found indicate that there is a positive association between academic citizenship behaviors and social desirability and a negative association between counterproductive academic behaviors and social desirability.

Contributions: Stimulating a culture anchored in socially accepted norms of conduct can prove to be effective in directing student behavior, as fostering students' social desirability can encourage them to minimize counterproductive academic behavior and maximize academic citizen behavior. These behaviors are responsible for shaping the Higher Education environment, being able to influence the development of scientific research and the context in which future teachers are formed.

Keywords: Academic behavior; Social desirability; Academic citizen behavior; Counterproductive academic behavior; Business area.

How to cite:

Meurer, A. M., & Costa, F. (2023). In Search of Social Acceptance: Self-Reported Academic Behaviors and Social Desirability in the Business Area. *Advances in Scientific and Applied Accounting*, 129–143/144. <https://doi.org/10.14392/asaa.2023160205>

Submitted: October 18, 2022
Revisions Required: October 28, 2022
Accepted: July 18, 2023

Introduction

The academic behavior manifested by students can be characterized by positive attitudes that are citizen behaviors and that contribute to the university environment or by negative attitudes called counterproductive behaviors and that destabilize the university environment (Allison et al., 2001; Islam et al., 2018; Meriac, 2012; Spector & Fox, 2002).

Citizen behavior, if inhibited, can affect the climate of cooperation and mutual help, which are important for the development of research and other tasks outlined in *stricto sensu*. On the other hand, counterproductive behaviors, if manifested, can undermine interpersonal relationships, harm the development of university activities, create a climate of competitiveness and lead to losses that affect the educational institution financially and socially (Allison et al., 2001; Islam et al., 2018; Meriac, 2012; Spector & Fox, 2002).

These academic behaviors have been the subject of a range of studies (e.g. Allison et al., 2001; Gore et al., 2014; Meriac, 2012) that has allowed to expand knowledge about the motivations and consequences that students' attitudes have on academic performance, organizational effectiveness and students' well-being. However, in Brazilian postgraduate studies, the theme is still incipient, lacking even methodological elements, such as measurement scales and analysis protocols, which allow these investigations to be expanded.

In this sense, social desirability has been presented as a topic of interest as it can shape the way in which behaviors are reported with the aim at reinforcing a certain image in society. Social desirability occurs when the individual reports behaviors that seek to build a socially accepted and desirable image, but which sometimes does not match reality (Paulhus, 1991). In this sense, managing impressions becomes one of the main objectives of individuals (Ural & Özbirecikli, 2006). Such desire for social acceptance is a latent human personality trait directed towards the search for social approval (Dunn & Shome, 2009; Ural & Özbirecikli, 2006).

Observing social desirability is important, as this construct has been shown to be associated to the ethical behavior of individuals and when it comes to students in the business area, there is a concern with the training of future organizational leaders, since these students are within the scope of future business leaders (Dunn & Shome, 2009). Regarding to postgraduate studies, in particular master's and doctoral courses, this level of education is responsible for training, in addition to future leaders, professors who will be responsible for teaching university students. Therefore, as the cultural environment affects people's behavioral posture, it is important to analyze the academic behavior manifested in the university environment and its possible interactions.

In addition, the specificities of the Brazilian postgraduate environment lead to the adoption of different behavioral postures by students. Competitiveness, excessive charging for publications, psychological and financial pressures are among the elements that outline this scenario capable of awakening counterproductive and citizen attitudes (Meurer et al., 2020) and observing this scenario presents itself as a research contribution.

The importance of the theme and the desire to identify possible relationships and differences caused by social desirability on the behavior of individuals direct this research, which is based on the following question: What is the association between self-reported academic behaviors and the social desirability of postgraduate master's and doctoral students in the business area? The objective of the research is to analyze the association between self-reported academic behaviors and the social desirability of postgraduate master's and doctoral students in the business area. The business area in this study consists of the participation of 1,816 students of master's and doctoral courses in Administration, Accounting and Economics.

The research aims at filling a gap in the discussion about the role of the interaction of social desirability with the behavior of graduate students in the business area. With this, the innovation of the research consists of bringing psychological elements to help in the understanding of the behaviors adopted by students at the master's and doctoral level.

By proposing such an analysis, one can identify the main behaviors manifested by students and seek ways to promote academic engagement as engaged students manifest citizen behavior and can contribute to building a more harmonious society. This involvement occurs in different ways and helps the university and its interaction with the community (Khaola, 2014; Leblanc, 2014) through voluble attitudes that promote well-being and social interaction.

In turn, social desirability is a variable capable of interfering with students' behavior, as the relationship between students' attitudes and behavior is significantly affected by concerns about how they are seen by other people, and those with lower levels of social desirability tend to manifest dishonest behavior more intensely (Iyer & Eastman, 2008).

In practical terms, research such as that by McCabe et al. (2006) point out that business students are more likely to engage in counterproductive behaviors that harm the academic environment and that are harmful to the educational objectives of educational institutions.

Therefore, identifying these behaviors and the role of social desirability can generate a practical impact and be useful for outlining actions aimed at minimizing these attitudes.

In the academic context, research has been directed towards investigating the behavior of individuals in the work environment (Allison et al., 2001), neglecting the behaviors manifested in the academic environment. By ignoring these elements of students in the business area, the possibilities of dealing with the problems already discussed at a stage closer to their origin, in this case the phase of professional training, succumb, since behaviors carried out in the university environment tend to be carried out also in the work environment (Meriac, 2012), and it is opportune to investigate them during the academic trajectory. This proposition becomes adequate as corporate scandals "brought additional attention to the ethical behavior of business leaders and the role of higher education in training tomorrow's leaders" (Rakovski & Levy, 2007, p. 466).

2 Theoretical framework and construction of research hypotheses

The term citizen behavior emerged in the organizational context to define "individual behaviors that are discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and which, as a whole, promote the effective functioning of the organization" (Organ, 1988, p. 4). After, Organ (1997) developed some directions to clarify the concept, namely: (i) discretion characterizes organizational citizen behavior by not being mandatory and by means of the individual's degree of choice and power, since its omission does not imply punishment; (ii) non-recognition by the formal reward system does not prevent remuneration for organizational citizen behavior, but envisions returns that are not contractually guaranteed; and, finally, (iii) such attitudes must effectively contribute to organizational effectiveness.

Studies subdivide organizational citizen behavior (OCB) into dimensions that represent the types of behavior of individuals (Rose, 2012). There is intense debate in the literature regarding to the number of dimensions of this construct, for example, Organ (1990) divided the OCB in altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy and civic virtue. While Podsakoff et al. (2000), when reviewing the literature, discovered thirty possible OCB categories that allowed delineating the dimensions of helping behavior (or altruism), sportsmanship, organizational loyalty, organizational conformity, individual initiative, civic virtue and self-development.

In turn, counterproductive behavior is based on negative attitudes, harmful to the organization and characterized

by retaliatory attitudes or behaviors carried out with the intention of obtaining advantages (Islam et al., 2018; Spector & Fox, 2002). These attitudes can occur occasionally or frequently, depending on the individual (Cummings et al., 2017).

Authors such as Allison et al. (2001) and Meriac (2012) adapted and investigated these types of discretionary behaviors in the educational context using different nomenclatures. In this investigation, the terms "academic citizen behavior" (ACC) and "counterproductive academic behavior" (CAC) are used to characterize a general construct called "academic behavior".

When checking the literature, it is noted that the study of these behaviors has consolidated its importance from the relationship with the generation of positive results in organizations and traditional work environments (Leblanc, 2014), such as industry and retail.

In the investigation of Allison et al. (2001), two multiple regression models were put into operation, the first with the dependent variable of Productivity (hour load of subjects taken divided by academic performance) and the second with Accumulated Academic Performance, measured by the average of the subjects grades. Although the joint analysis indicated a relevant relationship between the ACC and both measures of academic performance, when individually checking the dimensions, significant relationships were found only between sportsmanship, conscientiousness and civic virtue in the first model and sportsmanship and conscientiousness in the second model. The results also showed that students in the business area tend to manifest citizen behaviors in a ponderously high way. In addition, the ACC proved to be an important predictor of academic performance, encouraging educators to encourage student involvement in such practices, through actions such as:

incorporate an ACC component into each lecture, (b) dedicate an entire lecture session to ACC, (c) dedicate a seminar (e.g., short course) to ACC, and (d) use a ACC scale to help guide and encourage students to exhibit ACC. (Allison et al., 2001, p. 288).

Regarding to teachers, Khalid et al. (2010) when investigating university students from courses in the business area of a public educational institution in Malaysia, identified through multiple regression that some dimensions of the ACC of professors perceived by students influence academic performance. Significant relationships were found between academic performance and the dimensions of altruism and courtesy, which are the behavioral categories that most directly benefit students, as they encompass teaching attitudes that range from individual assistance in understanding complex subjects, to advance communication of activities that will be developed during classes.

Gore et al. (2014) when conducting a study with American university students, realized that professors can use citizen behavior to increase the well-being of students and encourage them to perform ACC. As a consequence, there is a tendency to have better levels of student motivation in the classroom and in other academic environments. By addressing, encouraging and developing students' ACC and directing the applicability of these attitudes to the work environment and the community, it contributes to the formation of professionals who are more mature and prepared for social interaction (Leblanc, 2014).

Regarding to the attributions of educational institutions, Schmitt et al. (2008) point out from a relational study with American university students from different institutions that the student's adaptation to the university environment leads to higher levels of satisfaction, which in turn affects citizen behavior and is related to student turnover, which can interfere in the various spheres of organizational performance.

The consequences on organizational performance are justified from the moment that students dissatisfied with the HEIs may drop out of the course or change institutions, and not engage in achieving good results in official assessments, reducing the HEI's score. Thus, studies (eg, Gore et al., 2014) reinforce the importance of paying attention to student satisfaction, as this variable is linked to the ACC and is among the main predictors of these behaviors.

Thus, it is noted that educational institutions need to observe and hone the necessary skills for academics to develop their functions in the professional market with aptitude and efficiency. Restricting themselves to the business area, it is possible for students to occupy or come to occupy management or training positions, and it is important to work on understanding ACC in university education. By being satisfied and engaging in pleasant university experiences, students will be more likely to engage in citizen behavior in society and in the organizational environment (Elsharnouby, 2015).

In turn, McCabe et al. (2006) address the counterproductive behavior in terms of academic dishonesty performed in exams and written works, directing the discussions to attitudes that impact students in a more individual and self-focused way, than actions directly related to the results of HEIs. The research was carried out with graduate students from 32 higher education institutions in Canada and the United States of America, with the main objectives of identifying the factors that contribute to academic cheating and comparing graduate students in the business area with other areas of knowledge.

The analyzes of the study by McCabe et al. (2006) indicated that academics from the business area reported more intense academic cheating than students from

other areas of knowledge. The perception that academic dishonesty attitudes will not be reported by colleagues and that the institution's ethical policies are not efficient, as well as impunity for this type of attitude, contribute to the perpetuation of these counterproductive behaviors.

The evidence brought by McCabe et al. (2006) indicate the need to observe technological elements that contribute to academic cheating and the context of graduate students, who can be encouraged to practice dishonest attitudes in the face of the high volume of tasks and daily commitments.

Credé and Niehorster (2009) found in their study carried out with American university students that variables of self-control, effort and unconventional attitudes are more strongly and negatively related to counterproductive behaviors that affect the person himself than those that impact others. Self-control concerns the person's ability to control impulsive behaviors and actions aimed at a greater goal; effort is characterized by the intensity of persistence to perform a given task; while unconventionality is consubstantiated by behaviors below social standards. Additionally, the results showed that counterproductive behaviors are negatively related to the academic performance self-reported by the sample members, allowing to infer the existence of consequences that go beyond the moral and contextual aspects and that also include formal evaluations.

Zettler (2011) further investigated the influence of self-control on citizen behavior and counterproductive behavior among university students in Germany. The associations indicated that individuals with a higher level of self-control tend to present more citizen behavior and less counterproductive behavior, as they have greater control over their emotions and impulses. In this context, misconduct at the university level can be minimized by improving students' emotional self-control.

Meriac (2012) analyzed the possible relationship between ethics in the work environment and academic performance measured by the grades obtained in the disciplines, citizen behavior and counterproductive behavior of US students. The results obtained through structural equation modeling showed that academics who have a high sense of morality and ethics in the work environment and spend time with activities outside the academic scope tend to behave in a less counterproductive way. In addition, students who realize that citizen actions can generate benefits and make an intense effort at work will possibly show citizen behavior more frequently.

Freire (2014) investigated the determining factors of misconduct in the development of academic activities among undergraduate students and compared possible differences between students in the Business Administration and Economics courses with those in other areas of

knowledge at Portuguese public universities. Research carried out with more than two thousand university students showed that students in the area of Administration and Economics are aware of the seriousness of academic misconduct, but are more likely to cheat than students in other areas of knowledge, such as Law and Medicine.

Freire's results (2014) also indicated that younger people tend to present this type of behavior, on the other hand, no significant differences were found in the intention to cheat between different levels of academic performance and gender. The pressure exerted by peers and the learning process based on memorization were indicated as the main motivators of counterproductive behaviors.

In this context, the environment in which the teaching-learning process takes place is a catalyst and driver of the behavior developed by the student, and it is important to observe courses in the business areas, since the moral and ethical values developed and manifested in the university context can be transposed into social life (Meriac, 2012).

In this sense, King and Bruner (2000) warn of the importance of observing the social convenience of the environment in which the individual is inserted, since depending on the predefined social norms in a given environment, people with a greater desire for social acceptance tend to shape their behavior in order to obtain the approval of others. This yearning for social acceptance is called social desirability, which is defined "as the tendency of individuals to deny socially undesirable traits and behaviors and admit socially desirable behaviors" (Randall & Fernandes 1991, p. 805).

Discussions about the relationship between academic behavior and social desirability were carried out by Iyer and Eastman (2008) who exposed that students' behavior tends to differ according to the importance they attribute to the way in which others perceive them. Therefore, students who are more concerned with their image in society tend to manifest counterproductive behaviors less frequently or less explicitly. Credé and Niehorster (2009) also found that the way individuals perceive how society sees them affects their behavior in the university environment.

It is also noteworthy that research that addresses academic behavior is usually based on an intra-individual perspective, in which the individual performs a certain behavior driven by internal motivations. However, the focus of this investigation is aligned with that proposed by Jouffre et al. (2012) who claim that impression management affects people's behavior, as discretionary behaviors can be used as a tool to achieve their personal goals and create a favorable image of themselves to others, and this need to manage their social image is supported by social desirability.

In addition, the evidence presented by Dunn and Shome

(2009) indicate that social desirability is aligned with similar values shared among the members of the group to which the individual belongs, and a higher desirability bias occurs when an individual has different values from their peers, and these values are linked to socially manifested behavior. It is argued, therefore, that social desirability is associated to the intensity with which academic behaviors are manifested. Thus, the following theoretical research hypotheses are declared:

HT1: Social desirability is positively associated to self-reported academic citizen behaviors by *stricto sensu* postgraduate students in the business area.

HT2: Social desirability is negatively associated to self-reported counterproductive academic behaviors by *stricto sensu* graduate students in the business area.

Therefore, it is hypothesized that manifested or self-reported academic citizenship behaviors are positively associated to the desire for social acceptance. On the other hand, the manifestation or self-declaration of counterproductive academic behaviors is negatively associated to social desirability.

3 Methodological Trajectory

The research focuses on the analysis of responses obtained from *stricto sensu* graduate students enrolled in Brazilian courses in Administration, Accounting and Economics, called Business area. Data collection was carried out online from October to December 2018, operationalized through a questionnaire registered on the Survey Monkey platform, with two invitations being sent to the participants.

To measure academic behavior, the Meurer and Costa Scale of Academic Behaviors – *Stricto Sensu* (MCSAB-SS) (Meurer & Costa, 2020) was used, originally composed of 62 assertions, 28 referring to citizen behavior and 34 referring to counterproductive behavior, built specifically for the scenario of Brazilian postgraduate studies at the master's and doctoral level, measured from 1 to 5 points, where 1 = Not true, 2 = Rare mind, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, and 5 = Very true.

Initially, the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) of the MCSAB-SS was used to identify possible subdimensions of citizen behavior and counterproductive behavior. EFA allows a set of variables to have their underlying structure explored, aiming at identifying patterns and grouping variables, in this study represented by assertions, in latent factors (Fávero & Belfiore, 2017). This grouping is necessary to enable the analysis of possible differences between the dimensions according to the groupings to be defined ahead.

The criteria used in the analysis of the EFA derive from the literature, namely: preference communalities above 0.50, in which communalities above 0.30 are acceptable for samples with more than 500 observations (Field, 2009); factor loadings above 0.40 (Hair Jr. et al, 2009) and at least three variables per factor (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000); KMO above 0.70 (Fávero & Belfiore, 2017); and Bartlett's sphericity test with a significance level below 0.050 (p -value < 0.050), Sample Adequacy Measure (MAS) close to or above 0.70 (Hair Jr et al., 2009), and explained variance in factor retention of at least 50% (Marôco, 2007). Due to unsatisfactory factorial indicators, three ACC assertions (ACC1, ACC2 and ACC21) and nine CAC assertions (CAC4, CAC5, CAC6, CAC8, CAC15, CAC16, CAC17, CAC29 and CAC33) were excluded.

In turn, the Social Desirability scale is a metric that is not linked to the identification of psychopathologies, but which is "consisting of behaviors desired by society, but with unlikely occurrence, and unwanted behaviors, but quite common" (Scagliusi et al., 2004, p. 273), as an example of an assertion: "I was never upset when people expressed ideas very different from mine". For uncommon and highly desired behaviors, a score of 1 is assigned, and for very common and undesirable behaviors, a score of 0 is assigned.

The original version consists of 33 items and during a pre-test carried out with 100 stricto sensu graduate students, this version was identified as long by some respondents. Reduced versions built from the original instrument by Crowne and Marlowe (1960) were searched in the literature. After analyzing Cronbach's Alpha, the version proposed by Ballard (1992) was chosen, which considers 13 items of the 33 items of the original scale, which are: 06, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 21, 26, 28, 30 and 33. The Cronbach Alpha of this version presented a value of 0.70, meeting the desired parameter. The Social Desirability Scale was translated into Portuguese by Scagliusi et al. (2004), obtaining authorization to use the translated scale from the authors via e-mail.

It is noteworthy that on the 33-item scale, individuals with scores equal to or above 17 are considered to have a high desire for social acceptance. In the reduced scale of 13 items, this cut dropped to 7 points. Thus, the full scale

scores were compared to the scores obtained by reducing the scale to 13 items. Each respondent had their level of desire for social acceptance analyzed using both scales and to verify whether there were differences in the identification of individuals with a high level of desire for social acceptance between both scales, the McNemar test was applied to identify the presence of significant changes.

The McNemar test is used for binary, qualitative or categorical variables, in which significant differences are analyzed before and after the occurrence of a certain event (Fávero & Belfiore, 2017) which, in this case, is characterized by the change in the number of items analyzed on the scale. McNemar's test did not indicate significance (p -value = 0.453) when comparing the results obtained between the complete scale of Social Desirability and the reduced scale of Social Desirability. In the 33-item scale, 56 participants had a high desire for social acceptance, and in the 13-item scale, this number is 53 participants. Thus, it can be inferred that the metrics are equivalent, in this case we chose to use the scale reduced to 13 items in the final collection of the research.

In addition to the pre-test, the research was also submitted to the evaluation and approval of the Ethics and Research Committee of the educational institution to which the researchers are linked and registered on Plataforma Brasil under CCAE number: 95480818.9.0000.0102. The Informed Consent Form (TCLE) was presented, in which the respondent was informed about the possibility of interrupting his or her participation in the study at any time. Following the indications of Af Wählberg and Poom (2015), the non-response bias was tested, and no significant differences were identified between the first and last respondents of the survey.

A total of 2,259 participations were obtained, and responses completed by undergraduate, specialization, MBA students, professional doctoral students who had access to the questionnaire and incomplete responses were excluded. Thus, 1,816 responses were considered valid for analysis, representing 11.37% of the population of 15,971 graduate students regularly enrolled in 2018 in business courses.

The profile of respondents is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Profile of respondents – Personal characteristics

Gender	F	%	Age*	F	%
Feminine	930	51,21	Part 1: from 21 years old to 29 years old	567	31,22
Masculine	852	46,92	Part 2: from 30 years old to 33 years old	377	20,76
Agender or Non-binary	12	0,66	Part 3: from 34 years old to 40 years old	448	24,67
Rather not answer	22	1,21	Part 4: from 41 years old to 66 years old	424	23,35
HEI region	F	%	Color or ethnicity	F	%
Midwest	140	7,71	Yellow	50	2,75
North East	272	14,98	White	1.280	70,48
North	44	2,42	Indigenous	04	0,22
Southeast	840	46,25	Brown	392	21,59
South	520	28,64	Black	90	4,96
HEI	F	%	CAPES concept of the program	F	%
Comunitary	46	2,53	3	428	23,57
Particular	558	30,73	4	574	31,61
Public	1.212	66,74	5	565	31,11
			6	131	7,21
			7	118	6,50
Stage of the course	F	%	Scholarship or financial aid	F	%
Stage of the course	F	%	Scholarship or financial aid	F	%
Starting the course	128	7,05	No, I never received any kind of scholarship or financial aid	948	52,20
In Qualifying	464	25,55	Yes, only part of the course		
In post-qualification phase	277	15,25	Yes, throughout the course	381	20,98
Close to my defense	947	52,15	Scholarship or financial aid	487	26,82

Note. F = frequency; % = percentage; * = parts calculated by quartile inclusive. Source: Prepared by the authors.

It is noted that most respondents identify with the female gender (51.21%); are between 21 and 66 years old; most belong to a higher education institution in the Southeast (46.25%); self-declared white (70.48%); most attend courses at public universities; there is a greater concentration of students in courses with a score of 4 at

CAPES; about 52.15% of respondents are close to the defense of scientific research; and 52.20% never received any type of scholarship or financial aid during the course.

The dispersion of students according to the region of the country where the course's HEI is located can be seen in Table 2.

The southeast region is the one that concentrates the largest number of students from all courses, followed by the south, northeast, midwest and north regions. It should be noted that in the northern region there are no stricto sensu courses in Accounting, a fact that justifies the lack of students from this region in the sample for these courses. Regarding to the professional master's degree in Economics, there are only two courses in the northern region, and there were no valid participations by these students.

The data were analyzed quantitatively, using the Spearman Correlation techniques and the Mann-Whitney test of differences between groups, operationalized with the aid of the software IBM SPSS Statistics v. 19.1®. The option for using non-parametric tests occurred after identifying the non-normality of the data verified by the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, histogram analysis and normal Q-Q graph.

4 Results

4.1 Analysis of Descriptive and Multivariate Statistics of Data

The first stage of data analysis consisted of identifying factors related to academic citizen behavior and counterproductive academic behavior. The grouping of assertions made it possible to identify six factors for the ACC and six other factors for the CAC. Figure 1 presents the nomenclature of the factors identified for the ACC, the assertions that make up the factors and the description of the factors:

Table 2: Profile of respondents – Dispersion of courses by region of the country

Region	Administration				Accounting				Economic			
	MA	Doc	MP	%	MA	Doc	MP	%	MA	Doc	MP	%
Midwest	18	25	51	7,06	8	5	3	7,80	14	10	6	10,71
North East	63	56	93	15,93	9	9	6	11,71	21	12	3	12,86
North	10	12	18	3,01	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	1,43
Southeast	159	181	254	44,63	49	32	20	49,27	56	60	29	51,79
South	146	121	124	29,37	44	19	1	31,22	31	25	9	23,21
	396	395	540	100	110	65	30	100	124	109	47	100
Totais		1.331		+		205		+		280		=

1.816 respondents

Note. % = percentage; MA = Academic Master; Doc = Academic Doc; MP = Professional Master. Source: elaborated by authors.

Factor 1 – Academic Cooperation [ACC12, ACC13, ACC16, ACC14, ACC15]: Behaviors that help colleagues in the development of scientific research or in understanding subjects addressed during the disciplines.
Factor 2 – Academic Engagement [ACC7, ACC3, ACC5, ACC8, ACC4]: Aspects of proactivity and volunteering during the postgraduate course, involving dedication and academic collaboration.
Factor 3 – Interpersonal Support [ACC17, ACC18, ACC19, ACC20]: Support for colleagues with personal problems or assistance in broader situations than those specifically related to scientific research or the content covered in the disciplines.
Factor 4 – Academic Commitment [ACC10, ACC9, ACC6]: The student's commitment to stricto sensu obligations, such as punctuality, meeting deadlines and attendance.
Factor 5 – Academic Empathy [ACC25, ACC24, ACC23, ACC11]: Elements related to respect and good coexistence with colleagues, marked by attitudes such as avoiding interrupting speeches, being silent in study environments and being respectful and kind to others.
Factor 6 – Academic Integration [ACC27, ACC26, ACC28]: Aspects of interpersonal interaction with graduate colleagues

Figure 1: Descriptions of the factors ACC.
Source: elaborated by authors.

It is noticed that the academic citizen behavior is composed of six factors that characterize positive attitudes that can be manifested in the academic environment. Likewise, Figure 2 presents the nomenclature of the factors identified for the CAC, the assertions that make up the factors and the description of the factors:

Factor 1 – Academic Disrespect [CAC26, CAC27, CAC28, CAC25, CAC34, CAC18]: Disrespectful attitudes, such as raising your voice, talking badly about colleagues and blaming others for your failures
Factor 2 – Academic Competitiveness [CAC22, CAC23, CAC21, CAC30, CAC24]: Dispute for recognition, attention and academic prestige
Factor 3 – Academic Disengagement [CAC12, CAC13, CAC14, CAC7]: Disinterest and distraction during activities developed in stricto sensu
Factor 4 – Academic Procrastination [CAC9, CAC10, CAC11]: Attitudes of postponing the performance of academic activities and which can sometimes imply carrying out these activities superficially
Factor 5 – Academic Isolation [CAC31, CAC19, CAC32, CAC20]: Academic individualism that implies performing solitary tasks and even workaholic practices;
Factor 6 – Academic Indifference [CAC1, CAC2, CAC3]: Attitudes that interfere with collective interaction due to the fact that the individual is indifferent to the attitudes of his behavior towards others

Figure 2: Descriptions of the factors CAC
Source: elaborated by authors.

Counterproductive academic behavior was also composed of six factors that characterize negative attitudes that are

harmful to the academic environment. Table 3 presents the details of the total variance explained by the factors that make up the academic citizen behavior and the counterproductive academic behavior obtained from the Exploratory Factor Analysis.

Table 3: AFE MCSAB-SS – Total variance explained by the ACC and CAC factors

Factor	Academic Citizen Behavior					
	Initial eigenvalues			Rotating sums of squared loads		
	Total	% variance	% cumulative	Total	% variance	% cumulative
Factor 1 – Academic Cooperation	6,648	26,593	26,593	3,098	12,392	12,392
Factor 2 – Academic Engagement	2,422	9,688	36,281	2,583	10,334	22,726
Factor 3 – Interpersonal Support	2,193	8,774	45,055	2,566	10,263	32,989
Factor 4 – Academic Commitment	1,412	5,648	50,704	2,419	9,676	42,664
Factor 5 – Academic Empathy	1,226	4,905	55,608	2,173	8,691	51,356
Factor 6 – Academic Integration	1,054	4,217	59,825	2,117	8,470	59,825
Factor	Counterproductive Academic Behavior					
	Initial eigenvalues			Rotating sums of squared loads		
	Total	% variance	% cumulative	Total	% variance	% cumulative
Factor 1 – Academic Disrespect	5,455	21,819	21,819	2,509	10,038	10,038
Factor 2 – Academic Competitiveness	1,979	7,916	29,735	2,320	9,281	19,319
Factor 3 – Academic Disengagement	1,894	7,578	37,313	2,320	9,281	28,600
Factor 4 – Academic Procrastination	1,185	4,738	42,051	2,036	8,143	36,744
Factor 5 – Academic Isolation	1,136	4,546	46,596	1,858	7,433	44,177
Factor 6 – Academic Indifference	1,049	4,194	50,790	1,653	6,613	50,790

Fonte: Elaborado pelos autores.

Note that the factors explain 59.825% of the total variance of academic citizen behavior and 50.790% of the total variance of counterproductive academic behavior. Then, the analysis of the level of social desirability of the respondents was carried out, and those who reached a score equal to or greater than 7 points are considered with high social desirability, while those who have a score equal to or less than six points have a low level of social desirability. Table 4 presents the results of the groupings obtained.

Table 4: Profile of respondents – Dispersion of courses by region of the country

Group	Score	Quantity Total	Quantity	Percentual	Quantity Total
Low level of social desirability	0	2	412	0,11%	22,69%
	1	11		0,61%	
	2	15		0,83%	
	3	30		1,65%	
	4	72		3,96%	
	5	107		5,89%	
High level of social desirability	6	175	1.404	9,64%	77,31%
	7	236		13,00%	
	8	264		14,54%	
	9	279		15,36%	
	10	253		13,93%	
	11	193		10,63%	
	12	129		7,10%	
13	50	2,75%			

Source: elaborated by authors.

It is noted that the majority of students, about 77.31%, have a high level of social desirability, with the highest concentration of respondents reaching the score of number 9. At the ends, only two participants did not reach any score in terms of social desirability and 50 respondents reached the maximum score of social desirability, in this case 13 points.

After identifying the level and group of social desirability, the Mann-Whitney test was performed to analyze possible differences between the academic behavior presented by those students who belong to the low level of social desirability group in relation to those allocated in the high level of social desirability group. Table 5 lists the results.

It is noted that only for Factor 3 – Interpersonal Support, there was no significant difference between academic citizen behavior manifested by those with low and high levels of social desirability (p-value > 0.050). It should be noted that this factor represents support for colleagues with personal problems or assistance in broader situations than those specifically related to scientific research or the content addressed in the disciplines. This support becomes important during the postgraduate course, both to overcome academic challenges and to deal with personal problems. This result indicates that the fact that the academic belongs to the group with a low or high level of social desirability does not interfere in the way in which academic citizen behaviors, which touch on interpersonal support, are manifested.

Based on these results, the association between social desirability and academic behavior presented by respondents

in the university environment was verified. Table 6 shows the results obtained through Spearman's correlation.

Table 6: Correlation of academic behaviors with the level of social desirability

Factors	Total	Low level of social desirability	High level of social desirability
Academic Citizen Behavior			
Factor 1 – Academic Cooperation	0,060 [*]	0,021	-0,007
Factor 2 – Academic Engagement	0,081 ^{**}	0,044	0,135 ^{**}
Factor 3 – Interpersonal Support	0,034	0,021	0,001
Factor 4 – Academic Commitment	0,092 ^{**}	0,064 [*]	0,101 [*]
Factor 5 – Academic Empathy	0,303 ^{**}	0,229 ^{**}	0,132 ^{**}
Factor 6 – Academic Integration	0,042	-0,008	-0,048
Counterproductive Academic Behavior			
Factor 1 – Academic Disrespect	-0,250 ^{**}	-0,136 ^{**}	-0,176 ^{**}
Factor 2 – Academic Competitiveness	-0,182 ^{**}	-0,195 ^{**}	0,022
Factor 3 – Academic Disengagement	-0,175 ^{**}	-0,174 ^{**}	-0,040
Factor 4 – Academic Procrastination	-0,161 ^{**}	-0,094 ^{**}	-0,158 ^{**}
Factor 5 – Academic Isolation	-0,155 ^{**}	-0,144 ^{**}	-0,049
Factor 6 – Academic Indifference	-0,049 [*]	-0,009	-0,012

Note. * = 0,050 (significance); ** = 0,010 (significance). Source: elaborated by authors.

Table 5: Comparação de comportamentos acadêmicos manifestados conforme o nível de desejabilidade social

Factors	Low level of social desirability	High level of social desirability	p-value
	Media ranks	Media ranks	
Academic Citizen Behavior			
Factor 1 – Academic Cooperation	844,18	927,37	0,005
Factor 2 – Academic Engagement	844,08	927,40	0,005
Factor 3 – Interpersonal Support	880,21	916,80	0,213
Factor 4 – Academic Commitment	843,07	927,70	0,004
Factor 5 – Academic Empathy	690,57	972,45	0,000
Factor 6 – Academic Integration	843,82	927,48	0,004
Counterproductive Academic Behavior			
Factor 1 – Academic Disrespect	1.120,96	846,15	0,000
Factor 2 – Academic Competitiveness	1.003,93	880,50	0,000
Factor 3 – Academic Disengagement	1.002,57	880,90	0,000
Factor 4 – Academic Procrastination	1.038,55	870,34	0,000
Factor 5 – Academic Isolation	997,66	882,34	0,000
Factor 6 – Academic Indifference	964,82	891,97	0,013

Source: elaborated by authors.

When analyzing the total correlation between academic cooperation and social desirability ($r = 0.060$; p -value = 0.050), a positive association is noted that is not identified when these behaviors are correlated only with individuals with low ($r = 0.021$; p -value > 0.050) or high social desirability ($r = -0.007$; p -value > 0.050). Therefore, students with higher levels of social desirability report expressing, more frequently, support for colleagues in the development of scientific research, in understanding the contents studied or research discussions.

The academic engagement factor is characterized by participation in the organization of academic events, student representation, proactivity and volunteering. The findings indicate an association between social desirability and the academic engagement factor, and when analyzing the separate groups, it is noted that the correlation is only significant for those belonging to the high social desirability group ($r = 0.135$; p -value = 0.010). One of the possible motivators of this result is that academic engagement contributes to the construction of a socially positive image, as such attitudes expose students to others, and this construction of positive impressions is sought by those who have higher levels of social desirability.

Interpersonal support did not show a positive correlation in any of the tests performed (p -value > 0.050). Therefore, the manifestation of academic commitment seems to have a stronger correlation among those who have higher levels of social desirability ($r = 0.101$; p -value = 0.050). This type of behavior permeates elements of responsibility and tend to affect the way others see the student, as it involves commitment to punctuality, meeting deadlines and attendance.

Academic empathy showed a positive correlation in all tests performed, and when observing only those with lower levels of social desirability, this association showed a higher intensity ($r = 0.229$; p -value = 0.010) than those with a higher level of social desirability ($r = 0.132$; p -value = 0.010). Academic empathy is based on good coexistence and respect for colleagues. This construct includes being silent in study environments and avoiding interrupting others' speeches, however, in order to build a social image, it is sometimes necessary to arouse the attention of others, a fact that may justify the lower association of those with higher levels of social desirability with this construct. Academic integration did not present any significant association (p -value > 0.050).

Based on the correlations analyzed, the theoretical hypothesis "HT1: Social desirability is positively associated to self-reported academic citizen behaviors by stricto sensu graduate students in the business area" cannot be rejected, since all the significant relationships found between academic citizen behaviors and social desirability were positive, indicating that higher levels of social

desirability can stimulate the manifestation and self-report of citizen behaviors more intensely.

Regarding to counterproductive academic behaviors, there was a negative relationship in all correlations between academic disrespect and social desirability (p -value < 0.050). It is noteworthy that academic disrespect is characterized by outsourcing the blame for their failures, badmouthing colleagues and raising their voice. These attitudes showed a more intense negative correlation between those with high social desirability ($r = -0.176$; p -value = 0.010) than those with low social desirability ($r = 0.136$; p -value = 0.10).

Academic competitiveness, however, did not present a significant association with the behaviors performed by those individuals with the highest level of social desirability ($r = 0.022$; p -value > 0.050). This factor is characterized by competing for attention and obtaining prestige in the academic environment, behaviors that can destabilize the environment in which university activities are carried out.

Likewise, academic disengagement did not present a significant correlation in the test performed with the group that has higher levels of social desirability ($r = -0.040$; p -value > 0.050). Thus, remaining disinterested and distracted during postgraduate activities is not associated to the fact that the student has more or less high levels of social desirability.

Academic procrastination was significantly associated to the three correlations performed, with an inverse association being more intense among those belonging to the high social desirability group ($r = -0.158$; p -value = 0.010) than those with a low level of desirability ($r = -0.094$; p -value = 0.010). Academic procrastination is characterized by postponing the delivery of postgraduate activities, a fact that can compromise the quality of the work performed. This result may be linked to the negative image that academic procrastination can generate in relation to those who have higher levels of social desirability.

Academic isolation embodied by academic individualism was not significant among those with high social desirability ($r = -0.049$; p -value > 0.050). On the other hand, there was a significant association between the correlation that considered all respondents ($r = -0.155$; p -value = 0.010), as well as between those with a low level of social desirability ($r = -0.144$; p -value = 0.010).

Finally, academic indifference was associated only when considering the responses of all participants ($r = -0.049$; p -value = 0.050). It should be noted that academic indifference is characterized by attitudes that can harm others during academic life, such as the consumption of odorous food or manipulation of packaging causing noise

in the research laboratory or study rooms, disorganization and use of equipment or resources of the institution for activities not related to postgraduate studies.

The results found allow us to accept the second hypothesis of the research, which states that "HT2: Social desirability is negatively associated with self-reported counterproductive academic behaviors by stricto sensu graduate students in the business area". This decision is supported by the fact that all significant correlations between counterproductive academic behaviors and social desirability are negative, indicating that the higher the level of social desirability, the lower the student's propensity to manifest or self-report counterproductive academic behaviors.

4.2 Discussion of Results

King and Bruner's (2000) proposition that the desire for social acceptance is associated to the behaviors externalized by individuals is supported by the results found, since citizen behaviors are maximized by this feeling of acceptance, while counterproductive behaviors are minimized. The findings also collaborate with the discussions set out by Iyer and Eastman (2008) who found that students' behavior tends to differ according to the importance attributed to the way other students and teachers see them.

McCabe et al. (2006) had already indicated for peer observation, in which the perception of impunity and acceptance of unethical attitudes by peers encourage students to engage in counterproductive behaviors. The evidence from this research confirms this evidence based on the associations found.

The results still contribute to the discussions presented by Jouffre et al. (2012) who claim that behavior can be shaped not by an internal desire, but rather to manage the way in which others see and judge the individual, in order to foster their social acceptance by others.

Therefore, the emphasis on more intense correlations between academically visible behaviors and social desirability suggests that people with a high level of search for social acceptance tend to prioritize academic behaviors that are more easily perceived and noticed by others, to the detriment of more subtle and less evident behaviors, such as academic empathy.

The findings indicate that fostering a sense of acceptance by the group based on students' behaviors can encourage them to minimize counterproductive academic behaviors and maximize positive behaviors. These behaviors are responsible for shaping the higher education environment (Freire, 2014), being able to influence the development of scientific research and the context in which future teachers are trained, as well as the performance of the student himself (Credé & Niehorster, 2009).

In this sense, stimulating a culture anchored in socially accepted norms of conduct can prove to be effective in directing students' behavior. Pullin et al. (2000) direct attention to this line of thought, suggesting that the best approach to mold students' behavior is the attempt to change the culture, indicating that acting in a counterproductive way is something socially unacceptable. Such an attempt at change involves stimulating the social desirability of those who have lower levels of this feeling.

5 Conclusion

The research found the existence of a positive association between academic citizenship behaviors and social desirability and a negative correlation between counterproductive academic behaviors and social desirability.

Educational institutions need to disseminate codes of acceptable ethical conduct among students and faculty, indicating that behaviors that violate this standard are not acceptable. The findings discussed and compared to the literature point out that social norms are one of the main factors that shape student behavior. Therefore, actions such as awareness lectures, punishment for non-tolerated behavior and exposure of the benefits of citizen behavior and the harm of counterproductive behavior can be addressed.

The limitations of the research hover over the non-probabilistic choice of the sample. It is suggested that future studies carry out research in other areas of knowledge in order to verify the similarities and differences with the results evidenced in this research. In addition, inferential tests can be applied in order to discover possible explanations for students' social desirability.

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