

Research Article

From Belief to Behavior: The Correlation of Religiosity With Academic Dishonesty Among College Students

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Abstract.

Several studies have explored the relationship between religiosity and academic dishonesty, but the findings have often been contradicted. This research aims to understand the correlation between religiosity and academic dishonesty among university students. It uses a correlational quantitative approach involving a sample of 208 students, 176 females and 32 males, selected through accidental or convenience sampling. A scale with four dimensions and 20 items was used to measure religiosity, while academic dishonesty was assessed with four dimensions and 17 items using five-point response options. The analysis revealed a significant negative relationship between religiosity and academic dishonesty ($p < 0.05$, sig. -0.202). This study aims to enhance our understanding, particularly in the psychology of religion and educational psychology.

Keywords: academic dishonesty, education, religiosity

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Published: 27 March 2025

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Selection and Peer-review under the responsibility of the ICAP-H Conference Committee.

1. INTRODUCTION

Academic dishonesty among university students is a widespread issue across various countries. A study conducted at several universities in European countries found that at least 31% of students admitted to copying text from various sources without citing the original author (1). Similarly, research conducted at a university in Indonesia revealed that at least 73% of students had engaged in academic dishonesty (2).

Academic dishonesty can have detrimental effects on many people, including the students themselves. Students who frequently engage in academic dishonesty may find it increasingly difficult to develop their character (3). Additionally, academic dishonesty can harm educational institutions, as an increase in such behavior among students can diminish the institution's reputation.

Various studies have identified the behaviors and forms of academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty includes cheating, whether manually or using digital aids, collaborating improperly, falsifying information, and committing plagiarism (4). Another similar

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definition of academic dishonesty is cheating on exams, plagiarism, seeking external assistance, preparing to cheat, falsifying, and lying to educators about assignments (5). academic dishonesty frequently occurs during assignments and midterm and final exams (6). This is supported by one study, which found that 90% of students engaged in academic dishonesty by collaborating on assignments or take-home exams that were supposed to be completed independently, 82% whispered answers during exams, and 82% failed to properly cite sources (7).

Several factors influence academic dishonesty. Self-resilience is a key factor, encompassing self-efficacy, self-control, and moral actions (8). This is corroborated by research that found a negative relationship between self-efficacy and academic dishonesty (9). Another contributing factor is student integrity; lower individual integrity is associated with higher academic dishonesty (10). Furthermore, social anxiety plays a role in academic dishonesty. Individuals with social anxiety may feel uneasy or uncomfortable around others, impairing their critical thinking and increasing their likelihood of engaging in dishonest behavior (11). Other research on students indicates that the prevalence of academic dishonesty among peers or within the environment also influences (12)

In addition to these factors, religiosity is another factor that may influence academic dishonesty. A study conducted among students at several universities in Pakistan revealed a negative relationship between religiosity and academic dishonesty. In other words, the higher the students' religiosity, the lower the likelihood of them engaging in academic dishonesty, and vice versa—the lower the students' religiosity, the higher their tendency to engage in academic dishonesty (13). However, other studies have found no relationship between religiosity and academic dishonesty (14)

Given the inconsistency in research findings regarding the relationship between religiosity and academic dishonesty, this study aims to determine whether there is a relationship between religiosity and academic dishonesty among university students. This study hypothesizes that there is a significant relationship between religiosity and academic dishonesty.

2. METHODS

2.1. Participants

This research used a sample size of 208 students from Muhammadiyah University Malang, ranging in age from 17 to 21 years. The sample included 32 male and 176

female students. The sampling method used was non-probability sampling with an accidental sampling or convenience sampling technique.

2.2. Research Instruments

The instrument used in this study was the (15), which was translated into Indonesian by the researcher, with a Cronbach’s α coefficient of 0.898. The scale consists of four dimensions—preoccupation, conviction, environmental involvement, and guidance—comprising 20 items with five response options: 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neutral), 4 (agree), and 5 (strongly agree). The Academic Dishonesty Scale, adapted from Iyer & Eastman (2008) into Indonesian by (4), with a Cronbach’s α coefficient of 0.929, was used to measure academic dishonesty. This scale consists of four dimensions—cheating, outside help, plagiarism, and electronic cheating—comprising 17 items with five response options: 1 (never), 2 (once), 3 (occasionally), 4 (several times), and 5 (frequently). Both scales were administered via Google Forms, with instructions emphasizing the research purpose to encourage students to respond as accurately and honestly as possible.

2.3. Data Analysis Techniques

This study employed a nonexperimental quantitative design of a correlational type. The data analysis technique used was Spearman’s correlation due to the non-normal distribution of the data. To analyze it, we used JASP software version 0.16.0.0.

3. RESULTS

The frequency analysis of the two variables is presented in the two tables below.

TABLE 1: Descriptive Frequency Analysis of Religiosity.

	n	Percentage
Low	6	2,9%
Medium	64	30,8%
High	138	66,3%

Based on the descriptive frequency analysis of the religiosity variable, it was found that 66.3% of students had high religiosity (n=138), 30.8% had moderate religiosity (n=64),

TABLE 2: Descriptive Frequency Analysis of Academic Dishonesty.

	n	Percentage
Low	138	66,3%
Medium	66	31,7%
High	4	1,9%

and 2.9% had low religiosity (n=6). While a descriptive frequency analysis of the academic dishonesty variable shows that 66.3% of students have low academic dishonesty (n=138), 31.7% have moderate academic dishonesty (n=66), and 1.9% exhibited high academic dishonesty (n=4).

The results of the Spearman correlation analysis between religiosity and academic dishonesty are as follows.

TABLE 3: Correlation Analysis Between Religiosity and Academic Dishonesty.

	Coefficient	P-value
Spearman's rho	-0.202	0.003

As shown in Table 3, the researchers found a significant relationship between religiosity and academic dishonesty ($p < 0.05$). In other words, the research hypothesis is accepted. The Spearman coefficient indicates a negative direction (-0.202), suggesting a significant negative relationship between religiosity and academic dishonesty. Thus, the higher the religiosity, the lower the academic dishonesty among students, and conversely, the lower the religiosity, the higher the academic dishonesty.

4. DISCUSSION

The results of this study align with our research hypothesis, indicating a significant negative relationship between religiosity and academic dishonesty among students. This result aligns with a study that shows that religiosity and academic dishonesty have a negative relationship and can influence (16). In other words, higher religiosity is associated with a lower tendency for academic dishonesty among students. Religiosity can be seen through how a person shows their ability to understand religious values and implement them in the form of attitudes and behavior (17,18)

Several factors may be the cause of this. One of them is that students with high religiosity believe that the existence of God makes them afraid to do things that are not allowed, such as cheating in academic activities. Students with high religiosity also think

that they will get a “gift” from God if they can avoid such behavior (19). They also believe that their behavior is always monitored by God (20). With an individual’s understanding of the concept of self-monitoring of God and understanding the consequences of each action, a person becomes more aware of everything they do. Individuals tend to be afraid of committing academic fraud because of supervision and punishment (21) Individuals who believe that every action is seen by God will increasingly support their attitude of self-monitoring control. As stated in a study, someone who has an understanding of watching by God will mediate the concept of monitoring by self and plagiarism attitudes (22).

Furthermore, religiosity has a positive influence on students’ ethical impressions (23). In other words, students who have high religiosity tend to be more aware of what behaviors are unethical behaviors (13). Meanwhile, academic dishonesty itself is a collection of unethical behaviors such as cheating, plagiarizing, doing “jockey” assignments or what can be called ghostwriting terms, uploading exam questions to websites without the permission of educators, and lying to educators by collaborating with others on individual assignments (24). Understanding this unethical behavior is related to the level of tolerance embedded in a person’s religiosity. Individuals with high religiosity will have a level of tolerance that is inversely proportional to their religiosity towards things or actions that are not in line with their beliefs (25).

Another factor is related to character and moral integrity. Understanding religion can overcome academic dishonesty and can be the foundation for building student character (26). When understanding religion is not obtained optimally, then there is a possibility that someone has a weak character foundation. This can later have an impact on actions that are not commendable, one of which is academic dishonesty. High academic dishonesty can be influenced by low moral integrity (27). Religiosity often introduces moral values, so individuals with high religiosity will have moral anxiety to commit a despicable act (28). Moral values that have been internalized in religious individuals can make them give up the desire to commit acts that refer to academic dishonesty. This is because the morality formed within the individual can be a regulatory system to stay away from academic dishonesty behavior (29). Morality as a regulatory system to avoid this despicable behavior can be formed through an understanding of religiosity and related activities. This is in line with the results of research, which states that student religiosity and activities have a positive influence on ethical judgment in cheating (16)

This study has limitations; for example, the sample taken is limited to one university. In addition, the sample taken in this study was mostly female, with a total of 176 students, compared to 32 male students. So, this study cannot measure how gender relates to academic dishonesty.

5. CONCLUSION

This study successfully demonstrated a significant negative relationship between religiosity and academic dishonesty among students. In other words, higher religiosity among students is associated with lower levels of academic dishonesty, and conversely, lower religiosity is associated with higher levels of academic dishonesty.

6. Implication

The implications of this study are expected to contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the fields of the psychology of religion and educational psychology. Additionally, the research has demonstrated a significant negative impact of religiosity on academic dishonesty, suggesting that educational practitioners could integrate religious education to enhance ethical behavior among students. This approach may help reduce the tendency of students to engage in dishonest practices in education.

Acknowledgments

The authors have no acknowledgments to declare.

Authors' contributions

MDA. Conceptualized the study, designed the research methodology, performed the data collection, analysis, and interpretation, wrote the manuscript and as a corresponding author.

YMRQ. Review, write, and edit the final manuscript.

Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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