

## The Prediction of Religiosity on Students' Academic Dishonesty

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose** – Previous findings show that the relationship between students' levels of religiosity and academic dishonesty is inconsistent. The purpose of the present study is to clarify the relationship between religiosity with academic dishonesty.

**Design/methods/approach** – This correlational research involved 251 students (60.6% female) of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Batang Regency, Central Java who were selected using cluster random sampling. Religiosity data was collected using the centrality of religiosity scale (TCR), and academic dishonesty data was assessed using the academic dishonesty scale (ADS). Data analysis was used using SPSS regression analysis.

**Findings** – The results showed that religiosity predicted a decrease in academic dishonesty. This research also confirms that three dimensions of the 5 dimensions of religiosity significantly predict academic dishonesty, namely ideology, personal practice, and experience. The other two dimensions, namely intelligence and public practice, do not correlate with academic dishonesty.

**Research implications/limitations** – These findings can strengthen collaboration between guidance and counseling teachers and religious education teachers to reduce students' academic dishonesty by strengthening students' levels of religiosity. Religiosity is not only seen as a ritual of worship.

**Originality/value** – These findings have clarified and confirmed the relationship between religiosity and academic dishonesty, particularly the three dimensions of religiosity that contribute to explaining academic dishonesty.

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## Introduction

The education process carried out with integrity will produce high-quality graduates and human resources. A process with integrity in the provision of education will encourage high standards in learning, encourage students to be more creative, and disciplined, demonstrate high intellectual development, attain optimal learning achievements, and increase resilience (Clark et al., 2014). Giluk & Postlethwaite (2015) reveal that the value of honesty plays an important role in character development in an academic context. However, in an academic context, dishonesty can still be found. Findings from Dami et al. (2020) revealed that there were students who cheated during the Computer-Based National Examination (UNBK) in 2017, such as students asking for answers from friends or looking for sources from the internet, and bringing notes/cheats during the exam. Another form of academic dishonesty that is most commonly found is that students commit acts of unlawful cooperation in the academic process (Ampuni et al., 2019). The survey results from Dejene (2021) estimated that 70-80% of respondents in public and private secondary education found that students were actively involved in committing fraudulent actions in academics, such as making small notes, or plagiarizing other people's work.

Academic dishonesty is a world phenomenon that continues to grow among academics and hurts the quality of education (Olafson et al., 2014). Education that does not prioritize the enforcement of academic integrity, especially the value of honesty, predicts the occurrence of academic errors and academic failure for graduates in the future (Lucky et al., 2019), obscures moral values and character such as lack of confidence, lack of discipline and avoidance of responsibility (Brooks et al., 2019), directing students to psychological problems such as being a problem of guilt and shame (Pivetti et al., 2016). Thus, it is very important to find solutions to minimize dishonesty behavior, especially in an academic context (Peled et al., 2019).

The problem of dishonesty in the academic world can be more easily brought up by students in everyday life. This is what every party needs to be afraid of because doing something bad will be easier than doing something good (Milyavskaya et al., 2018; Wiseman, 2016). Students who dare to be dishonest in the academic world will find it easier to be dishonest in social life (Jereb et al., 2018). It is feared that this dishonesty will be the beginning of other worse crimes. Sometimes every student can become hypocritical when they are used to being dishonest (Jordan et al., 2017). Students can disagree between what they know and what they say or act. Over time, an attitude of dishonesty becomes the beginning of lies in every matter, especially when urgent conditions threaten the interests of the individual (Leavitt & Sluss, 2015). Therefore, it is necessary to have a strong fortress of religiosity to be able to control oneself against momentary, detrimental desires.

The results of previous studies have shown that the level of religiosity predicts a decrease in the tendency of individuals to commit unethical acts (Rettinger & Jordan, 2005), including academic dishonesty (Khan et al., 2019). Religiosity encourages individuals to use religious values as a reference in building moral standards (Kashif et al., 2017) so that every decision and attitude is always based on religious values, including decisions and attitudes towards academic dishonesty. Interestingly, not all studies support the

prediction of religiosity in reducing academic dishonesty. The research findings of Huelsman et al. (2006) confirmed that religiosity had no relationship with academic dishonesty in both male and female respondents. The results of Hadjar (2017) also confirm that religious beliefs and behavior in religiosity have no significant effect or can be said to have no direct or indirect effect on dishonest behavior. Therefore, this research is specifically intended to provide clarification regarding the correlation and gap in the impact of religiosity on academic dishonesty.

### 1. Academic Dishonesty

The practice of academic dishonesty includes forms of common actions taken such as secretly looking at notes during a test, copying a classmate's answers during a test, and using unacceptable methods to find out what will be on a previous exam (Buccioli et al., 2020). Then, helping a classmate cheat during a test, finding other ways to cheat during a test, copying material and acknowledging it as one's work, and falsifying references (Kocdar et al., 2018). Besides that, submitting work that is not theirs, receiving unacceptable help on individual assignments, cooperating with classmates on assignments that should have been done individually, and copying sentences from published sources without giving credit to the authors (Memon et al., 2016). Jones (2011) revealed that he focused more on forms of dishonesty including cheating and plagiarism, both published and unpublished ideas. Therefore, many forms of dishonesty appear in the world of education which over time, if not minimized or eliminated, will become a parasite and cause harm to education.

To update research on academic cheating and dishonesty, this study discusses academic dishonesty which focuses on cheating, unacceptable cooperation with others, and plagiarism. In line with research by Colnerud & Rosander (2009) revealed that cheating, unauthorized collaboration, plagiarism, and fabrication include acts of academic dishonesty. Cheating describes when someone views notes or other material when not allowed. Illegal collaboration describes collaborating with other students when it is unacceptable, such as working together to complete individual assignments outside of class (Borup, 2016). Examples of plagiarism and fabrication include copying part or all of the text written by others without acknowledging the source and falsifying data or information. Dishonesty especially related to the scope of cooperation involving other people is not accepted. Ampuni et al. (2019) revealed that dishonesty includes violating the norms that have been set based on the level of awareness and intention during the act, including in the form of giving or receiving unauthorized assistance, or receiving credit for works that are not original to their abilities, and there are acts of claiming other people's academic works.

### 2. The relationship of religiosity with students' academic dishonesty

Academic dishonesty is influenced by several things that are taught in religion such as the values of honesty, truth, and justice (Coghlan et al., 2021). Religion is always

associated with beliefs about God and carrying out the obligations that God commands such as praying, visiting places of worship, celebrating religious holidays, and obeying the rules and norms in religion (Achour et al., 2015). Huber & Huber (2012) stated that religiosity is a personal construct system. This means that personality related to religion has faith and intellectual belief in someone to view the world from various life events based on the construction of his religion so that it can influence a person's experiences, actions, and thoughts in everyday life. Therefore, a person's level of religiosity can affect the thoughts and emotions that are reflected in student behavior (Jennings et al., 2015). Religiosity provides an understanding of the good and bad of one's actions that can affect moral thinking (McKay & Whitehouse, 2015). Therefore, this study estimates that the level of religiosity will reduce students' academic dishonesty.

This research is specifically directed to prove the relationship between religiosity and academic dishonesty. This research is important because several findings contradict the results of previous studies on religiosity and dishonesty. In addition, several studies of academic dishonesty discussed more related to the context of plagiarism and cheating in students compared to the context of unauthorized collaboration among students. Therefore, this research tested further related to religiosity in terms of dimensions (intellectual, ideology, public practice, private practice, and experience) with academic dishonesty in terms of aspects (cheating, unauthorized collaboration, and plagiarism). This research is expected to be useful for school counselors and religious education teachers to provide recommendations for reducing academic dishonesty behavior, especially students at Madrasah Aliyah in Batang District from the side of religiosity provided through guidance and counseling services.

## Methods

### 1. Research Design

This ex post facto research uses a correlational design that tries to connect and see the influence of two variables (Lodico et al., 2010). The variable that will be investigated is the correlation between the level of religiosity and academic dishonesty. The relationship between the two will be transformed into statistical figures to draw conclusions using hierarchical regression testing by controlling for gender and class. Thus, conclusions can be drawn regarding the accurate predictive power of religiosity on academic dishonesty.

### 2. Population and Samples

The population in this study were students of Islamic senior high school (Madrasah Aliyah) in Batang District, including public Islamic senior high school (Madrasah Aliyah Negeri) Batang, Islamic senior high school (Madrasah Aliyah) Nadhatul Ulama Batang, and Islamic senior high school (Madrasah Aliyah) Muhammadiyah Batang. This study used cluster random sampling as a sampling method, the sample selection was conducted in several stages. Sampling was determined using cluster random sampling because the three schools used as research sites had differences from each other that could be differentiated, including the core of religious scholarship (Pfaff et al., 2021). First, the researcher arranged

the total number of classes of Madrasah Aliyah students in Batang District. Second, to determine the total sample size using Isaac and Michael's table with a 95% significance, namely a population of 874 students to 251 students (60,6% female). Third, the researcher chose a class randomly, in which each class of Madrasah Aliyah students in Batang District had the opportunity to be used as a sample (Clark & Manning, 2018). Based on the sub-groups of sample calculations, it can be seen in Table 1.

**Table 1. The Research Population**

Schools	Total of Classroom	Total of Students
Public Islamic Senior High School (MAN) Batang	21	728
Islamic Senior High School (MA) Nadhatul Ulama Batang	6	102
Islamic Senior High School (MA) Muhamadiyah Batang	3	44
<b>Total of Population</b>		<b>874</b>

### 3. Instruments and Data Collection

This study uses two adaptation scales of instruments that have been studied previously in English. Therefore, the process is carried out through backtranslation which is carried out in several stages as recommended by Tyupa (2011). The first step, contact the author of the instrument to ask permission to use the instrument. The second step is translating the source instrument into the researcher's language and translating it back from the researcher's language to the original language (back-translation). The third step is an expert review of the instrument and a readability test to see the instrument readings and revise the items in the form of a customized instrument. The fourth step is to try out the instruments that have been made to the respondents, then make revisions to eliminate invalid and reliable instrument items to see if the instrument items are valid and reliable. The last step is to revise and review the overall instrument that has been adjusted and the instrument is ready to be used in research.

Data on respondents' academic dishonesty was collected using the Academic Dishonesty Scale developed by Ampuni et al. (2019), with 14 items and 3 dimensions. This scale has five levels of scale (1 = never, 5 = very often). The results of the validity test showed 14 valid items with a total-item correlation coefficient between 0.515 - 0.742 and an alpha reliability coefficient of 0.886. This shows that the instrument is declared feasible to collect data on academic dishonesty. Respondents' religiosity data was collected using the centrality of religiosity scale developed by Huber & Huber (2012), with 15 items and 5 dimensions. This scale has five levels of scale that vary according to the item's statement. Items related to the objective frequency of prayer are personal and mandatory (1 = never, 5 = more than once per day). Objective frequency of participation in religious services (1 = never, 5 = more than once per week).

Subjective frequency of less regular (1 = never, 5 = very often). Frequency of little significance (1 = not at all, 5 = very much). The results of the validity test showed 15 valid items with the item-total correlation coefficient between 0.275 - 0.643 and the reliability coefficient alpha of 0.760. Thus, the Centrality of Religiosity scale can be declared feasible to collect religiosity data. Furthermore, data collection on religiosity and academic



dishonesty is conducted classically or offline. The class that was selected as the sample was asked to fill out the scale voluntarily. Before filling out the scale, the respondents already knew that the answers that the researcher gave were confidential and not related to learning achievement. Respondents were also asked to state their willingness to fill out the scale in writing.

#### 4. Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study was carried out using descriptive analysis techniques and hierarchical regression analysis. The descriptive analysis technique is used to provide an overview of the research in general (Colorafi & Evans, 2016). The data obtained from the questionnaire and the scale of the research results were analyzed to describe using the calculation of the mean and standard deviation with the help of the SPSS 23 program. Meanwhile, hierarchical regression analysis was used to obtain more accurate predictions about the direction of the correlation between the variables of religiosity and academic dishonesty and controlled by demographic variables, namely gender and class.

### Result

#### 1. Data Description

The data obtained in this research is described in an intercorrelation matrix table to determine the correlation between the variables studied. As presented in Table 2, the level of academic dishonesty tends to be low, while the level of religiosity tends to be high.

**Table 2.** Mean, Standard Deviation, and Intercorrelation Matric

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Gender								
Grade	.009							
Dishonesty	-.114*	-.005						
Intellect	.031	.029	-.019					
Ideology	-.014	-.042	-.549**	.058				
Public Practice	.002	.079	.030	.460**	-.061			
Private Practice	.027	.064	-.695**	.068	.455**	.168**		
Experience	.001	.071	-.516**	.145*	.556**	.081	.470**	
M	-	-	1.85	4.23	4.10	4.27	4.27	4.36
SD	-	-	0.563	0.656	0.554	0.473	0.514	0.442

\*p<0.05    \*\*p<0.01

Academic dishonesty is negatively correlated with ideology, public practice, and experience, while intellect and public practice are not correlated with academic dishonesty. Therefore, these findings indicate that the level of academic dishonesty tends to be uncorrelated or negatively correlated with the level of student religiosity. In the intercorrelation matrix, it is explained that men tend to have higher academic dishonesty than women.

#### 2. Religiosity and Academic Dishonesty

The results of the complete hierarchical regression analysis are presented in Table 3. Hierarchical regression analysis was used to explore the predictions of the level of

religiosity on academic dishonesty by controlling for gender and grade. The test results of model 1 show that gender and grade are not correlated with academic dishonesty, but when it involves aspects of religiosity (model 2), gender is negatively correlated with academic dishonesty ( $\beta = -0.105$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This finding confirms the existence of a gender control test on the relationship between religiosity and academic dishonesty.

**Table 3.** Results of Hierarchical Regression Analysis on Religiosity Against Academic Dishonesty

Predictors	Model 1			Model 2		
	$\beta$	t	p	$\beta$	t	p
Gender	-0.114	-1.808	>0.05	-0.105	-2.551	<0.05
Grade	0.006	0.100	>0.05	0.034	0.824	>0.05
Intellect				0.000	-0.009	>0.05
Ideology				-0.206	-3.924	<0.01
Public Private				0.121	2.534	<0.05
Private Practice				-0.547	-11.053	<0.01
Experience				-0.156	-2.972	<0.01
$\Delta R$					0.654	
$\Delta R^2$					0.576	
$\Delta F$					68.130	
$\Delta P$					<0.01	
R		0.114			0.768	
R <sup>2</sup>		0.013			0.589	
F		1.639			49.766	
P		>0.05			<0.01	

The results of hierarchical regression analysis showed that there was a significant relationship between religiosity and academic dishonesty ( $\Delta R = 0.654$ ;  $F(5.243) = 68.130$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). Meanwhile, religiosity explains the variance of academic dishonesty by 57.6% ( $\Delta R^2 = 0.576$ ). The test results of the five dimensions of religiosity show that not all dimensions explain academic dishonesty. As presented in Table 3, it is known that only three dimensions of religiosity negatively predict academic dishonesty, namely the ideological dimension ( $\beta = -0.206$ ,  $t = -3.924$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), private practice ( $\beta = -0.547$ ,  $t = -11.053$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and experience ( $\beta = -0.156$ ,  $t = -2.972$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). However, two dimensions of religiosity do not predict academic dishonesty, namely Intellect ( $\beta = -0.000$ ,  $t = -0.009$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) and public practice ( $\beta = 0.121$ ,  $t = 2.534$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

## Discussion

This research was directed to clarify the relationship between religiosity and academic dishonesty. The findings of this study proved that the level of religiosity predicts a decrease in academic dishonesty. The results of this study support the findings of previous studies which have proven a negative relationship between religiosity and academic dishonesty (Burton et al., 2011). Thus, the results of this study contribute to generalizing the negative relationship between religiosity and academic dishonesty in the population of Madrasah Aliyah students in Batang District, Central Java.

Interestingly, the findings of this study confirm that not all aspects of religiosity predict levels of academic dishonesty. If Huber and Huber (2012) describe the aspect of religiosity which includes intellectual, ideological, public practice, private practice, and experience, this study finds that only three dimensions of religiosity negatively predict academic dishonesty, namely ideology, private practice, and experience. The dimensions of religiosity in the form of intellect and public practice do not correlate with academic dishonesty. Individuals with high levels of religiosity tend to avoid activities that lead to academic dishonesty (Aljurf et al., 2020) because academic dishonesty is seen as a form of violation of religious teachings (Nelson et al., 2016). The link between ideology and academic dishonesty can be explained as follows.

When a person feels a strong self-belief about religion, she or he will feel close to his God so that he is compelled to carry out orders and stay away from religious prohibitions, including avoiding academic dishonesty behavior. They believe that behavior that is contrary to religious teachings will result in sin and accountability on the day of Judgment (Czerny, 2021). The dimension of private practice as individual religious activities such as praying, reading scriptures, and others, tends to prevent individuals from behavior that violates religious teachings, including academic dishonesty. This is because individuals who have high religiosity in personal practice are aware of and know the boundaries of right and wrong and are afraid to violate them (Cook, 2020). Personal worship practices strengthen obedience to God (Ehahoui, 2012).

The experiential dimension of religiosity encourages individuals to avoid acts that are prohibited by religion, such as academic dishonesty (Tong & Turner, 2016). This is because individuals feel the presence of God and His contribution to the achievement of life. In this condition, the individual feels academic dishonesty is an unneeded behavior to be conducted because the determinant of the outcome of a business is not only her/him but also influenced by intervention from God (Ardiansyah et al., 2022). Two other dimensions of religiosity in this study that do not contribute to academic dishonesty are intellectual aspects and public practice. This finding can be interpreted that knowledge about religion (intellectual) without being followed by moral responsibility makes individuals have a weak urge to carry out orders or stay away from religious prohibitions (Rachman et al., 2023).

Public worship tends to be ritualistic so it does not strengthen adherence to religious teachings. This public worship practice seems to have the opposite impact from private worship practices, where obedience to religious teachings tends to be stronger resulting from private worship practices (Krok et al., 2022). However, further studies are needed to explore this issue. This research has implications for school counseling services and religious education, where school counselors need to collaborate with religious teachers to reduce academic dishonesty. Religious teachers are expected to organize religious learning that is oriented not only to the knowledge of religious teachings that are violated when committing academic dishonesty but also to emphasize religious ritual practices, religious ideological values, understanding, and experience of religiosity to avoid academic dishonesty.



On the other hand, counselors seek to help students translate religious norms into behavioral forms that lead to self-development, including avoiding academic dishonesty. Although this study was successful in clarifying the relationship between religiosity and academic dishonesty, there are limitations to the study. First, the relationship between religiosity and academic dishonesty is still correlational, not causal. Second, the population of this study only focuses on three schools, namely Madrasah Aliyah in Batang District.

## Conclusion

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that the level of religiosity predicts a decrease in academic dishonesty. However, knowledge of religion (intellectual) and public worship practices did not contribute to the reduction of academic dishonesty. The teachings of religion as an ideology, private worship practices, and religious experience specifically explain the decline in academic dishonesty. For learning practices, religion teachers are recommended to provide in-depth knowledge of religion so that they can guide students to apply religious teachings in their daily behavior. In guidance and counseling services, school counselors are advised to provide school counseling services that are oriented towards student self-development based on the application of religious teachings, including avoiding academic dishonesty as a form of self-development and at the same time applying religious teachings. Future research is suggested to conduct experiments to explore the impact of religiosity on academic dishonesty. To examine the relationship between religiosity and academic dishonesty in different populations, including in other educational settings and levels.

## Declarations

### Author contribution statement

The main author is the main researcher, the second author is the research supervisor, and the third author provides feedback and discussion of the research findings.

### Data availability statement

Data availability statements provide a statement about where data supporting the results reported in a published article can be found - including, where applicable, hyperlinks to publicly archived datasets analyzed or generated during the study.

### Declaration of Interests Statement

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

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