

The Role of Academic Stress and Religiosity on Academic Dishonesty

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Abstract

Academic dishonesty is still an interesting issue in universities: especially many assignments and the weak level of religiosity among students as part of the academic campus. This study aimed to examine the effect of academic stress and religiosity on academic dishonesty among students at private Islamic universities in Indonesia. As many as 277 students participated in this study. Data collection tools use The Academic Stress Inventory, The Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS) 15, and The Academic Dishonesty Scale. Data analysis used multiple regression analysis to see the effect of two independent variables on one independent variable. The results showed that the hypothesis we proposed was accepted, namely that there was an effect of academic stress and religiosity on academic dishonesty. The effect value is 0.080, or about 8%. The religiosity variable has a negative equation line value, while academic stress has a positive equation line value. The implications of this study are discussed.

Key Words

Academic dishonesty • Religiosity • Stress academic

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Academic dishonesty continues today. The problem of academic dishonesty has been around for a long time, dating back thousands of years, and it is done by most of the students. In comparison, efforts to improve academic integrity are relatively new and relatively rare, lasting only a few hundred years and being implemented by a small proportion of schools and colleges (Stephens et al., 2021).

The terms academic violation, academic dishonesty, or academic cheating are often used interchangeably, but the term academic misconduct is the negative side of the concept of academic integrity (Stephens et al., 2021). Academic offenses affect students, regardless of age, gender, or GPA. While individual and contextual influences play an essential role, understanding why students choose to cheat provides greater guidance when considering promoting academic integrity and preventing academic errors (Parnther, 2020). Some researchers specifically use the term cheating rather than academic error, letting participants define behavior according to their own moral and ethical guidelines (Morris, 2012).

This refers to the notion of academic dishonesty, which is an attitude that refers to the degree to which the person has a good evaluation or not (Beck & Ajzen, 1991). Academic dishonesty is broadly defined as any deceptive act or attempt by students to use illegal or unacceptable means in academic work (Lambert et al., 2003). It is more operationally explained by Simpson (2016) that when students misrepresent the words of others and are claimed as their own, whatever the conditions, they are doing work dishonestly. Academic dishonesty as intentional use or attempted material (cheating), making information or quotes (fabrication), assisting others in engaging in academically dishonest behavior (facilitation) and taking the action of others' words, ideas, or statements as their property (plagiarism).

Academic dishonesty research has been widely studied by linking several educational psychology variables, including motivation (Siaputra, 2013), growth mindset (Thomas, 2017), learning styles that are not deep (Jurdi et al., 2011), stress (Simpson, 2016) and others. Especially for students working on their final project, academic dishonesty is also found in students who use qualitative and quantitative methods (Herdian & Na'imah, 2018).

Religiosity

Religiosity is defined as how far the knowledge is, how strong the belief is, how obedient one is in the implementation of worship and rules, and how deep is one's appreciation of one's religion (Rahmawati, 2016). Religiosity is the deepening of a person's religion that involves symbols, beliefs, values, and behaviors driven by spiritual forces. These strengths are a complex combination of religious knowledge, feelings, and religious actions in a person (Astogini et al., 2011).

Several studies have reported a factor of religiosity that affects academic dishonesty (Khan et al., 2019; Onu et al., 2019). More clearly, Khan et al., (2019) examined the religiosity of Islam, where the behavior of students who pray five times and attend their places of worship for prayer activities tend to behave positively and ethically because of the awareness of right and wrong in every field of work, this activity. Implications for academics too. In Nelson et al., (2017), which examined religiosity in Christianity, students who behaved in "religious activities" also showed higher academic integrity. The act of attending church and participating in other religious activities is likely to reinforce the positive and ethical behavior of students by keeping their values prominent to them. In this case, the students' strong attitude in attending church and participating in other religious activities raises awareness of right and wrong, resulting in academic integrity (Nelson et al., 2017).

Based on the research results above, we also believe that religiosity teaches an understanding of good and bad behavior so that it can affect moral reasoning. So that it also affects their academic activities. Provides an experience of the core values that are important for academic integrity and decision-making and ethical behavior (Baumsteiger et al., 2013).

However, several other studies have found a positive relationship between religiosity and cheating. The more religious the subject, the more cheating they will commit (Guttmann, 1984; Pruckner & Sausgruber, 2008). We conclude that there is an imbalance in the results of previous studies that examined religiosity with unethical behavior, namely academic dishonesty. So this research needs to be done to reevaluate previous studies.

Academic Stress

The stress that students often experience is academic stress (Taufik et al., 2013). Academic stress is a source of stress that occurs in school settings (Calaguas, 2011). Sayekti, (2016) Academic stress is a condition in which students cannot face academic demands and perceive academic demands as a nuisance. Academic stressors cause academic stress.

Academic stress is related to cheating behavior (Barseli et al., 2017). Davis et al., (1992) said that academic stress is an essential determinant of academic fraud that occurs. It is similar to the case in postgraduate where the causes of cheating in postgraduate students find stress an important factor (Maramark & Maline, 1993). Several other studies have also shown that unethical behavior such as cheating is related to the level of student academic stress arising from excessive workloads, poor course delivery, and inadequate learning materials (Kohn & Frazer, 1986; Whitley, 1998).

Psychologically, students who experience academic stress will find it difficult to think well. So that if under certain conditions, it will, in turn, affect how these students do academic tasks. We assume that unethical behavior such as academic dishonesty is influenced by academic stress that occurs in students. According to Safaria et al., (2009) cheating behavior is a characteristic of students who experience academic stress.

Based on previous research results, we conclude that academic pressure or burden that makes students stressed and religious affects their ethical behavior, in this case on academic dishonesty. The purpose of this study is to examine how the two independent variables, namely religiosity and academic stress, together affect academic dishonesty?. The hypothesis in this study is academic stress and religiosity affecting academic dishonesty.

Method

This study uses a quantitative approach to determine the effect of two independent variables, including the dependent variable. Research participants were 227 students of private Islamic universities in Indonesia. We collected demographic data regarding the participant, for example, age, gender, faculty, and semester (see table 1).

Participants

In table 1. Participants based on age, it can be seen that 20 years of an age dominated this study, namely as many as 113 students, then students aged 19 years were 96 students. Meanwhile, the ages of 23 and 24 years are the minimum ages, namely three students respectively. Based on sex, female participants dominated this study as

many as 171 students and male as many as 106 students. Based on faculty, students from the faculty of Economics and business dominate this research, namely as many as 73 students, while students from agriculture are at least as many as 15 students.

Table 1

Profile of research participants

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<i>age</i>	18	7	2.527	2.527	2.527
	19	96	34.657	34.657	37.184
	20	113	40.794	40.794	77.978
	21	44	15.884	15.884	93.863
	22	11	3.971	3.971	97.834
	23	3	1.083	1.083	98.917
	24	3	1.083	1.083	100.000
	Total	277	100.000		
<i>sex</i>	Male	106	38.267	38.267	38.267
	Female	171	61.733	61.733	100.000
	Total	277	100.000		
<i>faculty</i>	Agriculture	15	5.415	5.415	5.415
	Economics and business	73	26.354	26.354	31.769
	Engineering & science	29	10.469	10.469	42.238
	Health science	38	13.718	13.718	55.957
	Pharmacy	30	10.830	10.830	66.787
	Psychology	37	13.357	13.357	80.144
	Teacher training and education	55	19.856	19.856	100.000
	Total	277	100.000		
<i>semester</i>	1	103	37.184	37.184	37.184
	3	107	38.628	38.628	75.812
	5	56	20.217	20.217	96.029
	7	5	1.805	1.805	97.834
	9	6	2.166	2.166	100.000
	Total	277	100.000		

Instruments**Stress Academic Scale**

The data collection tool uses The academic stress inventory developed by [Lin and Chen \(2009\)](#) and adapted into the Indonesian version. The measuring instrument consists of 7 factors: such as teachers' stress, stress levels, tests stress, studying in groups stress, peer stress, time management stress, and self-inflicted stress. Thirty-four statement items with Likert's five-point scale were used, ranging from 5 completely agree to 1 completely disagree. The Academic stress inventory scale's reliability value is 0.925 with a validity value between 0.354 to 0.672.

Religiosity Scale

The data collection tool uses the measuring instrument The Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS) 15 by Huber & Huber, (2012) arranged based on five dimensions: Intellect, Ideology, Public practice, and Private practice, and Experience. Each item of the dimension has three statements and has a reliability of 0.869 with a validity value of 0.394 to 0.607.

Academic Dishonesty Scale

Data collection tools use an academic dishonesty scale that is built based on academic dishonesty measurements developed by McCabe & Trevino, (1993) and Stone et al., (2010) and has been adopted in Indonesia by Ampuni (2019). The academic dishonesty scale is based on three forms of academic dishonesty: cheating, illegal collaboration, and plagiarism, with several 14. Participants are asked to respond to statements such as: "Using tools that are not allowed to complete assignments" using a scale of 0-4 that has an explanation of 0 (never) up to 4 (very often). The academic dishonesty scale has a reliability of 0.904 with a validity value of 0.359 to 0.733.

Data Analysis

This research consists of two independent variables: academic stress and religiosity and one independent variable, namely academic dishonesty. The analysis used is multiple regression analysis to determine how the influence of the two independent variables on the dependent variable.

Findings

Based on the statistical analysis results, the results show that Table 2. above explains that the academic dishonesty variable can be explained by the religiosity and academic stress variables of 0.080 or about 8%. While the remaining 92% is explained by other factors not described in this study.

Table 2

Model Summary - Academic Dishonesty

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	RMSE
H ₀	0.000	0.000	0.000	8.001
H ₁	0.283	0.080	0.073	7.703

Furthermore, the F statistical test is carried out to determine the significance value of the model used. If the significance value <0.05, this model can be declared significant. The results of the F test analysis can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3

Test F statistic

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Regression	1410.365	2	705.182	11.886	< .001
Residual	16256.328	274	59.330		
Total	17666.693	276			

Note. The intercept model is omitted, as no meaningful information can be shown.

Based on Table 3. shows that the calculated F value is 11,886 with a probability <0,000 less than 0.05. This regression model can predict academic dishonesty or said that religiosity, academic stress, affect academic dishonesty.

Table 4

Partial Test Results of Significance (t-Test)

Model		Unstandardized	Standard Error	Standardized	t	p
H ₀	(Intercept)	24.729	0.481		51.443	< .001
H ₁	(Intercept)	33.873	5.763		5.877	< .001
	Academic Stress	0.074	0.023	0.189	3.247	0.001
	Religiosity	-0.262	0.076	-0.199	-3.436	< .001

Based on the results of multiple regression analysis presented in table 5, it shows that the constant value (α) = 33,873, the regression coefficient value (β_1) is 0.074, and the regression coefficient value (β_2) is -0.262. Based on these results, the regression equation can be determined as follows: $Y = 33,873 + (0.074) X_1 + (-0.262) X_2$. When viewed from the value of the positive academic stress regression coefficient, academic stress has a positive effect. Meanwhile, religiosity's regression coefficient is negative, meaning that religiosity variables have a negative effect on academic dishonesty.

Discussion

Based on this study's results, it was found that academic stress and religiosity affected academic dishonesty. In this study, religiosity and academic stress have a significant effect even though the effect value is not high.

Religiosity is defined as the deepening of one's religion that involves symbols, beliefs, values, and behavior-driven by spiritual forces. These strengths are a complex combination of religious knowledge, feelings, and religious actions in a person (Astogini et al., 2011). In previous research studies, we believe that religiosity's influence on unethical behavior such as academic dishonesty. Regarding the relationship between religiosity and academic dishonesty, they have a negative equation line, so it can be concluded that it can reduce academic dishonesty when religiosity increases. Our study differs from previous research, which states that there is a positive relationship between religiosity's influence on academic dishonesty, which means that the more religious the subject, the more cheating they commit (Guttman, 1984; Pruckner & Sausgruber, 2008).

Regarding academic stress, this study confirms that academic stress influences academic dishonesty. Regarding the relationship between academic stress and academic dishonesty, it has a positive equation line, so it can be concluded that when academic stress increases, academic dishonesty also increases.

Based on a review of previous research results, stress on students can be a determinant of unethical behavior in academics, especially in academic dishonesty. Lal, (2014) states that academic stress is the stress related to the many academic demands such as pressures to show academic achievement, school exams, answering questions in class, and demands to show progress in learning. Academic stress in students is very subjective to an academic condition (Barseli et al., 2017).

The implementation of this research is that universities can pay attention to their students' religiosity as an effort that can be done to reduce unethical behavior of academic dishonesty. Besides, the staff at higher education institutions, in this case, lecturers as teachers, can pay attention to students' academic workload. We realize that students' subjective perceptions of academic load are difficult for lecturers to control, but this study can consider lecturers in providing fun learning strategies. This is intended so that students do not feel burdened by their responsibilities. Besides, we realize that there are several shortcomings in this study, including in data analysis techniques. We did not separate the two independent variables in the data analysis.

Based on our research results, which states that there is an effect of the two independent variables, namely religiosity and academic stress, on academic dishonesty. At the same time, the results of this study confirm the results of previous studies that state a positive relationship between religiosity and academic dishonesty. However, in this study, we found negative equation line values of religiosity against academic dishonesty. The implication of this research can be used on the faculty in higher education, especially religion-based, to increase religiosity in students. This is done to reduce dishonest behavior among students. Besides, academic stress that affects academic dishonesty with a positive equation line value can be applied in academics, especially lecturers to pay attention to how the academic workload is given to students.

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