



Research Article

Academic integrity: an analysis of student responses in high schools

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to describe the trends in academic integrity among high school students. This research employs a quantitative descriptive design with a cross-sectional survey technique. The subjects participating in the study come from two different provincial school backgrounds, namely South Sumatra and West Java. Sample selection was distributed through proportional random sampling. From the formulation results, the total sample of high school students obtained was 185 students in South Sumatra and 185 students in West Java. The data collection technique was through a scale with Likert scale provisions of 1-5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree). Data analysis utilized a variable description concerning academic integrity. Based on the results of the academic integrity analysis, it can be concluded that, in general, students in both South Sumatra and West Java possess good academic integrity. Three indicators assessed as the most significant in forming student integrity are consistency in words and actions, being wise and mature, and being honest. Studies limited to high schools in certain areas may not adequately represent the diverse experiences of students across various geographical and cultural environments, thus the results might not be universally applicable. This study offers an opportunity to understand academic integrity in high schools further and to explore effective strategies for developing ethical values and behaviors among students.

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Introduction

In the current era, the world of research on issues related to academic integrity has become one of the most discussed themes in the field of education. This is associated with the attitude of honesty in the implementation of education. Values such as honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage form the foundation of academic integrity. The International Center for Academic Integrity (ICAI) (2018). By internalizing these values, it is hoped that every individual can behave honestly, creating an orderly and supportive academic environment (Davis, 2023). Essentially, academic integrity is established as a highly important normative framework in the academic field to build moral values where thoughts and behaviors are consistent. This can prevent violations and errors in the academic field.

Furthermore, Tasoulis et al. (2019) conveyed that integrity as a form of commitment in action involves principles and values that are morally justified. A person of high integrity is affiliated with positive behavior, ethics, insight, care in thinking, and accuracy in acting. In addition, it will simultaneously build a culture with a strong commitment and foster community spirit. In addition, Astore (2009) emphasizes the importance of instilling integrity as an ethos in the

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academic community, involving teachers and students. The behavioral traits of people with integrity essentially have a dimension related to people who have social awareness or community consciousness.

Additionally, Holden et al. (2021) explained that integrity in the academic environment is one of the most important aspects in the provision of national education because it relates to normative behavior for every academic expected to possess academic integrity as a development-oriented perspective. The need to enhance integrity in the academic realm is crucial due to its significant impact on the future of education. One important aspect is forming student behavior that is responsible, honest, fair, respectful, and trusting, which will contribute to achieving high educational values and the development of their intellectual abilities. According to Barnard et al. (2008) a person's integrity is formed from the values and principles they hold, influenced by the educational and cultural context. The impact of academic integrity in the social field can provide benefits in discipline; having integrity encourages an individual to be more committed and demonstrate intellectual growth, ultimately producing better educational outcomes, including high grades and success in completing education (Luniachek et al., 2020). Conversely, a lack of integrity in the academic realm will negatively impact, such as cheating and dishonesty in the future. If this condition is allowed to continue, it will impact unethical behavior in the school environment, thereby disturbing the student learning environment.

Issues related to the low integrity in the academic environment and becoming one of the public concerns are cases of plagiarism and cheating (Uyun, 2018). In the context of rapid technological advancement, there is an increase in the facilitation of academic integrity violations, acting as a major factor in the rise of academic dishonesty incidents. This condition demands an increased focus on developing integrity as a strategic step to address the escalation of academic integrity violations. Violations committed by students not only reflect a decline in academic standards but also indicate a loss of integrity in the educational environment, neglect of values and ethics, and the failure of educational institutions to implement applicable standards and policies. The increasing number of academic violation cases also contributes to the normalization of cheating in the social context, promoting the perception that cheating practices are a common aspect of the academic world.

In reality, there are acts of cheating in the academic environment occurring in South Sumatra. According to the news, seven students from public and private high schools in South Sumatra were declared by the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) to have cheated during the National Exam (UN) (Tribun Sumsel, 2019). Consequently, the seven students from six schools in public and private high schools in South Sumatra did not receive UN results, as they were proven to have cheated. According to Anditya et al. (2018) issues related to cheating and dishonesty in the academic environment are very high-risk because they relate to morals, which require early action. This is because if no action is taken while still in the academic environment, it will continue to become a habit once graduated. Students who uphold the value of integrity focus on achieving high academic scores and respect various other aspects, such as compliance with rules, rather than merely pursuing excellence in school grades. There was a lack of research specifically evaluating the effectiveness of various interventions and educational strategies in enhancing academic integrity among high school students. This research can integrate educational psychology, ethics, and sociology theories to provide a holistic understanding of academic integrity, combining theoretical and applicative perspectives. This is also supported by several authors such as (Cotton et al., 2023; Holden et al., 2021; Stone, 2023; Wong et al., 2016).

Based on the description of several cases and previous research related to academic integrity, there were still many issues related to academic integrity in the educational environment. This is one of the factors that lower the ethical values and behavior of students. Therefore, this study is designed to acquire empirical data on the pattern of academic integrity among high school students. This research included a comparative analysis between two schools located in different geographical regions, namely South Sumatra and West Java, to gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics of academic integrity in diverse educational environments.

Literature Review

Tasoulis et al. (2019) s a commitment in action to a set of morally justified principles and values. This commitment in action denotes an alignment between deeds and words (Nangoli et al., 2020). Integrity represents honesty, fairness, transparency, and responsibility. An individual's integrity is demonstrated by attitudes that uphold honesty, loyalty, love for truth, moral commitment, justice, responsibility, anti-corruption, exemplariness, and respect for the dignity of others, especially individuals with disabilities. Thus, integrity is the embodiment of consistency between actions and environmental principles. Consequently, an individual with integrity tends to be a person who upholds principles of honesty and justice. Integrity refers to the congruence between an individual's actions and the values and principles they hold. In the academic context, particularly for students, integrity relates to the basis of trustful behavior, avoiding dishonest acts such as cheating, forgery, and plagiarism. A person who holds integrity values can be identified from several characteristics, for example, their way of behaving, interacting, facing and solving problems, and positioning themselves in societal and national life. According to Nangoli et al. (2020) individuals with integrity affiliate with various forms of positive behavior, such as being moral, visionary, careful in thinking and acting, capable of building a culture of togetherness with strong commitment, capable of building community spirit, and being trustworthy to others.

Moreover, Tasoulis et al. (2019) state that the characteristics of individuals with integrity are represented by behavior guided by:

- Strong personal values, an individual with a strong personality reflects having firmness in acting or behaving and being responsible in any situation.
- Consistency in values and behavior. Consistency is a depiction of a person's uniformity in behavior. An individual with integrity will have good behavior in their environment.
- Consistency in words and actions. Similarly to behavior, consistency in actions is built on how an individual performs something under their control. Consistency in positive actions reflects an individual has integrity.
- Being honest. Honesty, whether in deeds, treatment, or speech, is based on existing facts. An individual who upholds the principle of honesty will be accompanied by fair attitudes in their environment.
- Being fair. Fairness is an action that acts the same without discriminating one from another, without differentiating portions, and without differentiating status. An individual who can be fair certainly has a high level of honesty.
- Being open and transparent. Being open or transparent is synonymous with honesty. Usually, in an organization, transparency is very necessary. This is due to the openness regarding important matters to all responsible parties, thus preventing any unfair attitudes.
- Having mature consideration, respect, and responsibility towards others. An individual in their daily actions certainly requires mature consideration both in problem-solving and decision-making. Thus, an individual's decisions are based on consideration so as not to harm others. This as a form of responsibility and respect for the decisions taken in the future.
- Complying with applicable rules. Rules are made not only to be obeyed but also to serve as guidelines for policies enforced in the organization. An individual who obeys the existing regulations shows a sense of responsibility for what has become their duty. Thus, with the creation of rules, individuals will not recklessly act outside of what should be acted upon. Making decisions wisely based on mature consideration. In line with the previous point, making a decision requires very mature consideration so that in the future, a good decision can be obtained.

Method

Research Design

This study is a quantitative descriptive research Uyun & Yoseanto (2022). Descriptive research is conducted to describe certain phenomena, symptoms, or events. Data collection is carried out to obtain information related to specific conditions, phenomena, or variables and is not intended for hypothesis testing. The research design used in this study is a survey research design. A cross-sectional survey design (Creswell, 2012) was chosen to measure behavior in a population through a sample related to the level of academic integrity of students as the research variable. The reason for choosing this design is its popularity in educational research, as well as its effectiveness in collecting data on attitudes, beliefs, opinions, and behaviors. The main advantage of the cross-sectional survey design is its ability to provide information quickly and efficiently.

Sample

The implementation of this research was conducted in South Sumatra and West Java in the academic year 2020/2021. The number of high schools in South Sumatra is 65, and in West Java, it is 172, while the number of schools and Islamic Senior High Schools (MA) in South Sumatra is 40, and in West Java, it is 77. If the number of subjects in the population is too large, thus the sample size that can be selected is 10-15%, 20-25% (Watson, 2015). Therefore, the sample size for this research is 25% of the population. The sample selection for schools in South Sumatra from 105 schools was randomly selected to 26 schools, while for schools in West Java from 249 schools, the random sample was chosen to be 62 schools. Based on the number of schools randomly selected from the population, proportional random sampling will then be distributed to determine the number of research subjects. Based on the results formulation, the number of student samples in South Sumatra was 185 students, and in West Java, 185 students.

Instrument

The data collection instrument used is a scale. The type of scale used in this study is closed, where respondents answer each question independently without being known by others. The rating scale using the Likert scale. The Likert scale is a tool for assessing the opinions, attitudes, and perceptions of an individual or group towards social events or phenomena (Samoilenko & Osei-Bryson, 2021). The level of the Likert scale used as measurement uses a scale of 1-5 (strongly disagree to agree strongly).

Data collection was carried out in two ways, online and offline, considering the distance and time, especially in West Java. The dissemination medium used is Google Forms. Then, the second large-scale data collection for the research discussion test involved 370 students in South Sumatra and West Java. In this large-scale data collection, especially in West Java, it was assisted by research colleagues at the Islamic State University of Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung

Data Analysis

The description of the research variable is used to assess the perception responses related to student integrity. This study utilizes the weighting values from the Likert scale. The maximum weight is 5, and the minimum weight is 1, with a total of 370 students in South Sumatra and West Java.

Below is the calculation of the frequency distribution as an explanation of the respondent's perception categories, which are divided into 4 categories.

Highest score = $1 \times 5 = 5$; Lowest score = $1 \times 1 = 1$

Therefore, the range for the survey results is $= \frac{5-1}{4} = 1,00$

Thus, the categories of perception description are obtained as follows:

Table 1. Categorization

Score Range	Categorization
1,00 – 2,00	Very Low
2,01 – 3,00	Low
3,01 – 4,00	High
>4,00	Very High

Results

This article aims to gather data on the trends of academic integrity among high school students. Through descriptive analysis by province, this study evaluates student integrity based on 10 indicators: (1) possession of strong personal values, (2) consistency between values and behavior, (3) alignment between words and actions, (4) honesty, (5) fairness, (6) openness and transparency, (7) the ability to make mature judgments, (8) respect and responsibility towards others, (9) adherence to rules, and (10) the ability to make wise decisions based on mature consideration. Here is a description of the student integrity assessment results:

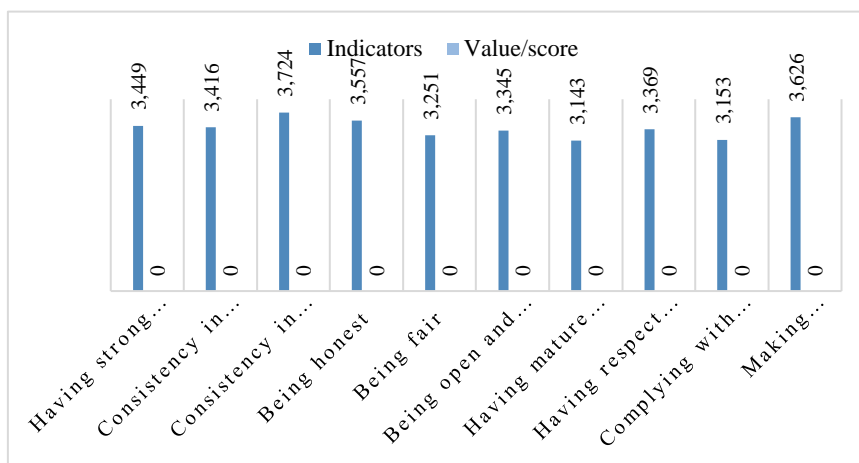


Figure 1. Students' Integrity in South Sumatra

Based on the figure above, the assessment of student integrity trends is observed from 10 indicators. The overall indicators reach an average of 3.403, meaning all student integrity indicators in South Sumatra fall into the high category. It can be concluded that students possess high integrity in the school environment during the learning process, interactions, and work among peers.

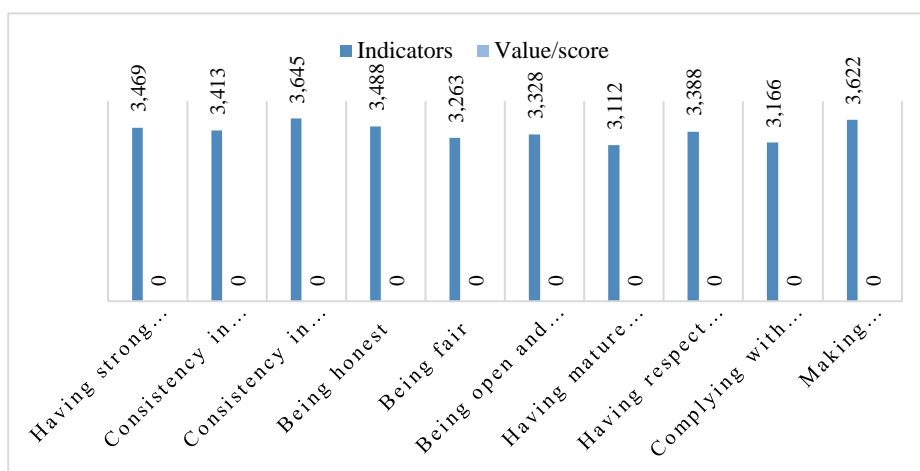


Figure 2. Student Integration in West Java

Furthermore, based on Figure 2, the integrity indicators of students in West Java show an average score of 3.399. This means that all aspects of integrity possessed by students in West Java also fall into the high category. However, in this case,

when viewed from the average numbers, students in South Sumatra have higher integrity compared to students in West Java.

Discussion

All indicators of student integrity show that they possess a high level or category in academic culture within the school environment. The first assessment is strong personal values; an individual with strong personal values reflects having firmness in action and behavior and being responsible in any situation. Tuhuteru et al. (2023) outline that integrity includes aspects of responsibility as a citizen and active engagement in social activities. This integrity is reflected through consistent actions and words grounded in truth. Fitrah & Kusnadi (2022) explain that integrity values can be formed through learning methods, where the habit of disciplined reasoning formed in following learning gives rise to an attitude of responsibility for the execution of duties that should be done, especially responsibility towards oneself. An individual with integrity also respects individual dignity and can be exemplary. Moreover, the presence of integrity values embedded in students enables them to act according to the values and beliefs they hold. For example, they serve others wholeheartedly, even if it means sacrificing time or personal interests. They are also brave in acting according to these values, even when it is difficult, like advising someone who often pays installments late. Moreover, they act based on these values despite significant costs and risks, such as avoiding discrimination and misuse of authority.

The second assessment is seen from the consistency in values and behavior; the assessment results of student perceptions in South Sumatra obtained an average of 3.416, categorized as high. Similarly, in West Java, it was 3.413, also categorized as high. This means the student's integrity in consistency of values and behavior is considered good. Consistency is a portrayal of a person's uniformity in behavior. An individual with integrity will have good behavior in their environment. Anggara et al. (2020) state that integrity is a solid personal commitment to ethical ideological principles, integrated into a concept of self expressed through behavior. If an individual commits to acting based on correct and ethical principles, in line with existing values and norms, and consistent in that commitment, this will prevent them from engaging in cheating. A study by Owusu-Agyeman (2022) studied the significance of intercultural relationships between diverse university students. Recognizing and appreciating individual differences in the classroom fosters feelings of acceptance and social connectedness that can impact student integrity. Bretag (2020) states that academic integrity is a primary part of academic culture, referring to morals, honesty, and self-unity; in terms of moral character, academic integrity deals not only with violations but also with doing the right thing and taking pride in meeting the highest moral standards in academic activities (Löfström, 2016). Integrity relates to consistency in actions, values, and principles, and the outcomes achieved. Factors such as information gaps, non-compliance with rules, and unprincipled actions can trigger unethical behavior. Students with good behavior in school and the community, including using appropriate language according to the situation, respecting parents, and being responsible, are examples of applied integrity.

The third assessment is seen from consistency in words and actions; the assessment results of student perceptions in South Sumatra obtained an average of 3.724, categorized as high. Similarly, the student's perception in West Java was categorized as high. Meaning the student's integrity in speaking and acting is considered good, as students can make smart decisions and take appropriate actions. Like behavior, consistency in actions is built on how an individual performs something under their control. Consistency in positive actions reflects an individual has integrity. Tuhuteru et al. (2023) state that integrity is one of the essential fundamental values that must exist in society. This includes consistency in actions and attitudes, commitment to fighting corruption, objectivity in problem-solving, courage and firmness in decision-making and risk acceptance, as well as responsibility and discipline in performing duties. Individuals who maintain integrity tend to avoid corruption, making honesty a key value in its prevention. Therefore, integrity is not only related to consistency in actions but also to the maintenance of ethical values in various aspects of life (Patahullah, 2021; Simatupang et al., 2023a)

The fourth assessment is seen from being honest; the assessment results of student perceptions in South Sumatra obtained an average of 3.557, categorized as high. Similarly, the student's perception in West Java was 3.488, also categorized as high. Meaning the student's integrity to be honest is considered good, where students have sincerity, genuineness, and transparency in various matters. Honesty, whether in deeds, treatment, or speech, is grounded in existing facts. An individual who upholds the principle of honesty will be accompanied by fair attitudes in their environment. Tuhuteru et al. (2023) argue that integrity is one of the essential fundamental values in society, demonstrated through honest behavior towards the environment and oneself. Simatupang et al. (2023b) define integrity as consistency in behavior aligned with the values, norms, and/or ethics of the organization, along with honesty. Integrity includes aspects of honesty and consistency between words and actions, a quality closely associated with honesty and ethical principles.

The fifth assessment, seen from being fair, showed that the assessment results of student perceptions in South Sumatra obtained an average of 3.251, categorized as high. Similarly, the student perceptions in West Java obtained 3.263, also categorized as high. This means the students' integrity in being fair is considered good. Fairness is an action that treats everyone equally, without discrimination, portioning, or status differentiation. An individual capable of being fair is assured to possess a high level of honesty. In the academic environment, promoting integrity within the school is crucial. According to Sundayani et al. (2023), one aspect related to integrity is being fair and consistent toward one's responsibilities. Syakoer (2023) links the understanding of integrity with the theory of justice where an individual consistent in attitude and actions, both in their internal and external environments, can offer good attitudes and actions. Therefore, an individual with integrity will be able to act fairly and objectively.

The sixth assessment, seen from being open and transparent, showed that the assessment results of student perceptions in South Sumatra obtained an average of 3.345, categorized as very high. Similarly, student perceptions in West Java obtained 3.328, categorized as high. This means students can be transparent, such as working on assignments independently without cheating, being honest about school fees with parents, and being honest with fellow members in school management. Being open or transparent is synonymous with honesty. Usually, openness or transparency within the school environment is crucial for all stakeholders, so decisions must be made fairly. Implementing integrity in the academic environment is necessary to educate students to have good attitudes, actions, and behaviors. This requires a comprehensive approach focused on efforts to apply integrity that can be undertaken by the students themselves. Puteri (2023) states this can prevent deviant behavior both now and in the future. One principle of integrity is honesty, requiring members to be honest and open without compromising the confidentiality of the recipient. Honesty requires an auditor to be open, brave, wise, and responsible in their duties (Paranoan et al., 2023; Pradita Eka et al., 2020).

The seventh assessment, seen from mature consideration, showed that the assessment results of student perceptions in South Sumatra obtained an average of 3.143, categorized as very high. Similarly, student perceptions in West Java obtained a high category. This means students can have mature considerations in decision-making for personal, organizational, and environmental matters. Mature consideration involves having respect and a sense of responsibility towards others. An individual in their daily actions certainly requires mature consideration both in problem-solving and decision-making. Thus, an individual's decisions are based on consideration so as not to harm others. This as a form of responsibility and respect for future decisions.

The eighth assessment, seen from having respect and responsibility, showed that the assessment results of student perceptions in South Sumatra obtained an average of 3.369, categorized as very high. Similarly, student perceptions in West Java obtained a high category. This means students strive to maintain and improve self-quality. Students also avoid actions that can harm themselves, others, and the school. Whereas responsibility is acknowledging actions and accountability in daily actions. Banks (2010) states one of the core values of integrity is honesty in life; being punctual for appointments; responsibility for tasks; consistency in what is said and thought; consequences of actions; and being open when interacting with friends, thus becoming more transparent and understood. Academic integrity issues include not

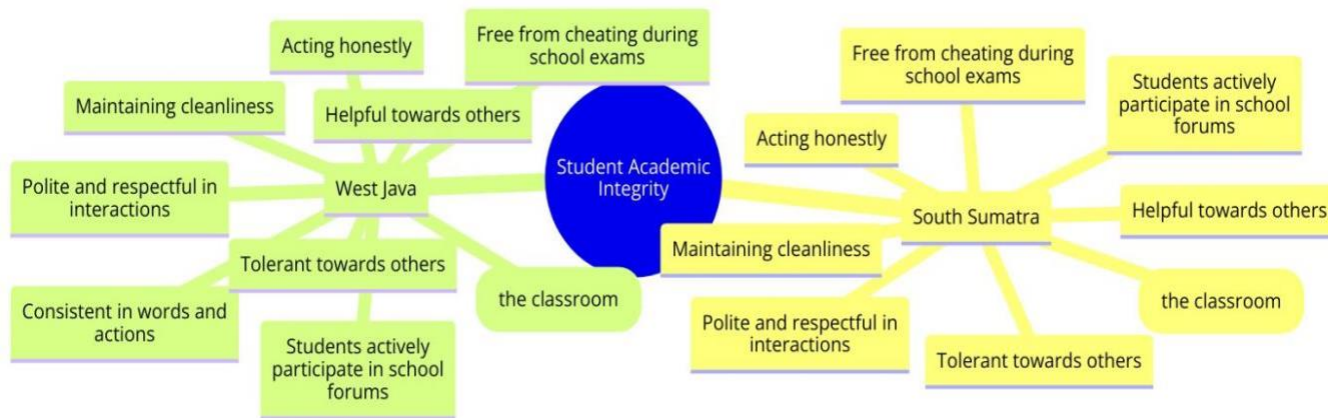
only dishonesty and plagiarism in academics but also committed behavior in honesty, responsibility, trust, fairness, and respect for the work of others (Macfarlane et al., 2014).

The ninth assessment, seen from complying with applicable rules, showed that the assessment results of student perceptions in South Sumatra obtained an average of 3.153, categorized as very high. Similarly, student perceptions in West Java obtained a high category. This means students have compliance within the school scope and compliance within the community scope. For example, students are punctual to school, participate in community activities, and more. Rules are not only made to be obeyed but also to serve as guidelines for policies enforced in the organization. An individual who obeys the existing regulations shows a sense of responsibility for what has become their duty. Thus, with the creation of rules, individuals will not recklessly act outside of what should be acted upon. The tenth assessment, seen from Making Decisions Wisely, showed that the assessment results of student perceptions in South Sumatra obtained an average of 3.626, categorized as very high. Similarly, student perceptions in West Java obtained a high category. This means students are capable of making good, honest, and fair decisions in their environment

Overall, it can be concluded that the integration of students in South Sumatra and West Java is considered good. It is making decisions wisely based on mature consideration. In line with the previous point, making a decision requires very mature consideration so that in the future, a good decision can be obtained.

All the above categories are also in line with and supported by other researchers. First, Huberts (2018) expanded the definition of integrity to encompass ethical governance, illustrating that integrity in the education sector involves more than just individual behavior, but also policies and their impact on the community. Second, Nasution et al. (2023) argue that the concept of integrity in education is a comprehensive concept that can be measured through the integrity levels of learners, how conducive the educational ecosystem is for learners, and the level of compliance in educational management. This measurement is expected to play a key role in encouraging the education network to perform broad and structured evaluations to enhance integrity in the education sector. Consequently, it is hoped that there will ultimately be an improvement in the integrity of the education sector and the quality of the human resources it produces. Furthermore, it highlights that the culture in the educational environment hinders the development of an effective academic culture. A holistic approach to education, which includes interaction in learning and teaching, is needed to build integrity (Piascik & Brazeau, 2010).

Additionally, Sunawan et al. (2020) revealed variations in the level of academic integrity among students influenced by factors such as gender, class level, major, and type of school in the context of the Industry 4.0 Revolution. These results emphasize the need for enhancing academic integrity among students in line with rapid advancements in information and communication technology. Saadah et al. (2020) highlight a significant positive relationship between academic integrity and religiosity, where religiosity contributes effectively by 27.7% to academic integrity. This indicates that the higher a person's level of religiosity, the higher their level of academic integrity. Parnter (2020) discusses aspects of academic integrity education from the perspective of faculty and students, aiming to understand the complexities associated with academic integrity. In this review, characteristics of students who are likely to behave dishonestly in an academic context, effective prevention strategies, and the challenges faced in combating academic cheating and enhancing academic integrity were identified. Last, Bretag (2020) underscored the importance of academic integrity as a fundamental foundation at every level of education, including preschool, elementary school, high school, college, university, and postgraduate research. As a pillar of ethical academic practice, academic integrity is based on a set of values that are widely recognized and promoted by the International Center for Academic Integrity (ICAI), which includes honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility.



Picture 1. Mode of Student Integrity (South Sumatera dan West Java)

Based on the image above, it clarifies the tendencies in academic integrity among high school students. The analysis identified three points as the most significant indicators in forming student integrity: consistency in words and actions, being wise and mature, and being honest. For a student, making policies and decisions within the school or community setting is crucial as a form of self-efficacy in the environment. This can encourage and train students to learn and consider issues so that they can decide on policies fairly and justly. Additionally, they are required to be consistent in words and actions. Consistency is usually associated with self-control in doing something good within both the school and community environments. This means that control, in this case, pertains to positive words and actions, where students are capable of expressing ideas or thoughts in every forum. Next is being honest, where an individual usually upholds the principle of honesty, which will coincide with a fair attitude in their environment. Then, one way to improve the academic integrity to the student they should have a good (Eva et al., 2021).

Conclusion

Based on the results of the descriptive statistical data processing of the academic integrity variable, it can be concluded that, in general, students in both South Sumatra and West Java already possess good academic integrity. There are three indicators assessed as most significant in forming student integrity: consistency in words and actions, being wise and mature and being honest.

As a recommendation from the research findings, especially for schools that hold the responsibility of enforcing an academic integrity culture within the school environment, it is suggested to provide information on instilling integrity values and prohibiting academic dishonesty as situational factors influencing academic integrity. Moreover, active participation in school activities can assess the affective development of students when they engage in activities within both the school and community environments.

This research only involved high school students in South Sumatra and West Java. Therefore, generalizing these findings to student populations in other regions or with different cultural backgrounds may require further testing. Limitations in time and resources might have affected the depth of analysis and scope of the study. Further research with more extended time and adequate resources could provide more comprehensive results.

Recommendations

Future research should explore TPACK and self-efficacy across diverse educational contexts, with longitudinal studies assessing long-term impacts. Teacher education programs must prioritize developing TPACK and self-efficacy through targeted training and practical experiences, while ongoing professional development for in-service teachers is essential. Policymakers should support TPACK integration by providing necessary resources and promoting collaboration with technology providers. Educators should actively seek professional development and collaborate with colleagues to

enhance their teaching practices. These steps aim to improve teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes through effective technology integration.

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