

DO RELIGIOUS PEOPLE CHEAT TOO? A QUANTITATIVE STUDY ON ATTITUDES TOWARD CHEATING AMONG THEOLOGY FACULTY STUDENTS

DİNDARLAR DA KOPYA ÇEKER Mİ? İLAHİYAT FAKÜLTESİ ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN KOPYA ÇEKMEYE YÖNELİK TUTUMLARI ÜZERİNE NİCEL BİR ARAŞTIRMA

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DO RELIGIOUS PEOPLE CHEAT TOO? A QUANTITATIVE STUDY ON ATTITUDES TOWARD CHEATING AMONG THEOLOGY FACULTY STUDENTS

Abstract

In recent years, problems concerning cheating and other forms of academic dishonesty among university students have become more evident and widely discussed in higher education. Academic dishonesty is not only a concern about institutional discipline or educational standards but also deeply connected to students' ethical judgments, moral outlooks, and value systems. Cheating can involve copying during exams, using unauthorized resources, submitting someone else's work, sharing answers, or other dishonest behaviors in assignments and assessments. These actions undermine core principles such as fairness, responsibility, trust, and academic integrity, which are fundamental to university life. In Türkiye, existing research on cheating has most often focused on studies that include students' self-reported cheating behaviors, their perceptions of cheating, their experiences with academic dishonesty, and their attitudes toward such practices. These studies have contributed significantly to understanding the prevalence and forms of cheating among students. However, cheating also has ethical and moral dimensions, and previous research indicates that it is common among university students and is largely linked to ethical concerns. Despite this, researchers have rarely focused on the possible role of students' religiosity orientations in shaping their attitudes toward cheating. In particular, researchers have rarely examined whether religiosity, as a moral and value-based orientation, influences students' acceptance or rejection of cheating behaviors. This quantitative study investigates the relationships between cheating attitudes and religiosity orientation among university students and examines whether religiosity influences moral or immoral behaviors. The sample included a convenience group of undergraduate students aged 17-35 from Sakarya University and Kilis 7 Aralık University. Participants completed a questionnaire with three sections: the first collected socio-demographic data; the second used the Religious Orientation Scale (ROS) by Allport and Ross, adapted into Turkish by Cirhinlioglu; and the third employed Semerci's Attitude Scale Towards Cheating. The study adopted a cross-sectional, correlational design using a survey method to analyze the relationships among these variables. The study indicated that religious orientation correlates negatively with attitudes toward cheating. Specifically, students with higher religious involvement tended to view cheating less favorably. The findings also identified religious orientation as a negative predictor of cheating attitudes, suggesting religiosity might serve as a protective factor against academic dishonesty. Notably, this negative link was more pronounced among female students but not among males. This gender difference suggested that the moral and behavioral impacts of religious orientation may differ across students' socio-demographic backgrounds. Taken together, this research points out that religion may be an important reference source in relation to cheating, which can be considered an immoral academic behavior. By highlighting the association between religious orientation and attitudes toward cheating, this study contributes to the literature on academic dishonesty, morality, and religiosity among university students in Türkiye. I will discuss the study's implications, limitations, and future research directions in detail.

Keywords: Psychology of Religion, Cheating, Cheating Attitudes, Religiosity, Religious Attitude.

DİNDARLAR DA KOPYA ÇEKER Mİ? İLAHİYAT FAKÜLTESİ ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN KOPYA ÇEKMEYE YÖNELİK TUTUMLARI ÜZERİNE NİCEL BİR ARAŞTIRMA

Öz

Son yıllarda, üniversite öğrencilerinin kopya çekme ve diğer akademik dürüstlük ihlalleriyle ilgili sorunlar yükseköğretim kurumlarında giderek daha belirgin ve yaygın bir şekilde tartışılır hale gelmiştir. Akademik dürüstlük ihlali sadece kurumsal disiplin veya eğitim standartları ile ilişkili bir mesele değil, aynı zamanda öğrencilerin etik muhakemeleri, ahlâki bakış açıları ve değer sistemleri ile de yakından bağlantılıdır. Kopya çekme kavramı sınav esnasında bir başkasının cevaplarını kopyalama, izinsiz kaynaklar kullanma, başkasının ödevini kendi ödeviymiş gibi gösterme, soruların cevaplarını başkalarıyla paylaşma veya ödev ve sorumlulukların yerine getirilmesinde dürüstlikle bağdaşmayan başka davranışlar sergileme gibi eylemleri kapsayabilir. Bu tür davranışlar adil davranma, sorumluluk, güven, ve akademik dürüstlük gibi üniversite yaşamının temelini teşkil eden merkezi prensiplere zarar verir. Türkiye'deki kopya çekmeye ilgili araştırmalar çoğunlukla öğrencilerin kopya çekme davranışları, algıları, deneyimleri ve tutumları hakkındaki kendi beyanlarını içeren çalışmalara odaklanmıştır. Bu çalışmalar, kopya çekmenin öğrenciler arasındaki türleri ve yaygınlığını anlama noktasında önemli katkılar üretmiştir. Bununla birlikte kopya çekmenin etik ve ahlaki boyutları vardır ve araştırmalar, bunun üniversite öğrencileri arasında yaygın olduğunu ve büyük ölçüde etik kaygılarla bağlantılı olduğunu göstermektedir. Buna rağmen araştırmacılar, öğrencilerin dindarlık yönelimlerinin kopya çekme tutumlarını nasıl etkileyebileceği veya etkilediği konusunda nadiren odaklanmışlardır. Araştırmacılar, özellikle ahlâki ve değer temelli bir yönelim olarak dindarlığın öğrencilerin kopya çekme davranışlarını kabullenmelerine veya reddetmelerine etki edip etmediğini yeterince araştırmamıştır. Bu nicel çalışma, üniversite öğrencileri arasında kopya çekme tutumları ile dindarlık yönelimi arasındaki ilişkilerin yapısını ve dindarlığın ahlaki veya ahlaka aykırı davranışları etkileyip etkilemediğini incelemektedir. Katılımcılar, 17-35 yaş aralığında Sakarya ve Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitelerinde okuyan lisans öğrencilerinden kolayda örnekleme yöntemiyle belirlenmiş öğrencilerden oluşmaktadır. Kendilerine üç bölümden oluşan bir anket formu sunulmuş ve bunu doldurmaları istenmiştir. Birinci bölüm sosyodemografik özellikleri, ikinci bölüm Allport ve Ross tarafından geliştirilen ve Türkçe uyarlaması Cırhinlioğlu tarafından yapılan Dini Yönelim Ölçeğini ve üçüncü bölüm ise Semerci tarafından geliştirilen Kopya Çekmeye Yönelik Tutum Ölçeğini içermektedir. Kesitsel ve ilişkisel desen ile tasarlanan ve tarama yöntemini kullanan bu çalışma, ilgili kavramlar arasında ilişkileri analiz etmektedir. Bu çalışma, dini yönelimin kopya çekmeye yönelik tutumlarla olumsuz bir ilişkiye sahip olduğunu göstermiştir. Bir diğer ifadeyle yüksek dindarlık seviyesine sahip katılımcılar kopya çekme davranışına daha olumsuz bir şekilde değerlendirme eğiliminde olmuşlardır. Bulgular ayrıca, dini yönelimin kopya çekmeye karşı tutumları olumsuz bir şekilde yordadığını göstermiştir. Yani dindarlık, akademik dürüstlük ihlallerlerine karşı koruyucu bir işleve üretebilir. İlginçtir ki; bu olumsuz bağlantı, kadınlarda erkeklere göre daha yaygındır. Cinsiyete dayalı bu farklılık, dini yönelimin ahlâki ve davranışsal etkilerinin öğrencilerin sosyodemografik özelliklerine göre farklılaşabileceğini göstermiştir. Sonuç olarak bu araştırma, ahlâka aykırı akademik bir davranış olarak değerlendirilen kopya çekme noktasında, dinin önemli bir dayanak noktası teşkil edebileceğine dikkat çeker. Dini yönelim ve kopya çekmeye yönelik tutumlar arasındaki muhtemel ilişkileri ortaya çıkarması açısından bu çalışma, Türkiye'deki üniversite öğrencileri arasında akademik dürüstlüğü aykırı davranış, ahlâk ve dindarlık konularına ilişkin mevcut literatüre katkıda bulunmaktadır. Çalışmanın sonuçları, sınırlılıkları ve gelecekteki araştırma yönelimleri makedalede ayrıntılı olarak tartışılacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Din psikolojisi, Kopya Çekme, Kopya Çekme Tutumları, Dindarlık, Dinî Tutum.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of cheating has a long-standing history. It is still used today across various fields and with different meanings. When cheating is mentioned, the first response is often disciplinary action, far removed from the sense of justice that individuals rely on at every stage of their education, from primary to higher education. A body of literature indicates that individuals' tendency to cheat ranges from 70 to 80 percent, underscoring that this behavior is both an ethical problem and a disciplinary offense.¹ Cheating can be defined as an individual taking an exam and secretly using materials they have prepared in advance.² This concept is addressed within this study's framework. Individuals may be inclined to cheat in order to appear successful in the eyes of their teachers and peers, driven by concerns about passing classes and graduating on time.³ If no measures are taken to prevent copying behavior and it is not stopped, the perception that it is bad and morally inappropriate among individuals may fade over time.⁴ This situation may negatively affect individuals morally

¹ Peter Ashworth et al., "Guilty in Whose Eyes? University Students' Perceptions of Cheating and Plagiarism in Academic Work and Assessment," *Studies in Higher Education* 22/2 (2017), 187; Gülşah Başol - Emine Duran, "Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Kopya Çekme ve Etik Konusuna İlişkin Görüşleri," *INES II. International Academic Research Congress*, (2017), 2; Aykut Emre Bozdoğan - Çağrı Öztürk, "Öğretmen Adayları Neden Kopya Çeker?," *İlköğretim Online* 7/1 (2008), 142; Türkan Çelik, "Sosyal Bilgiler Öğretmenliği ve İlahiyat Fakültesi Öğrencilerinin Kopya Çekme Eğilimlerinin İncelenmesi," *Muallim Rifat Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi* 2/2 (2020), 98; Mine Çeliköz, "Öğretmen Adaylarının Kopya Çekmeye Yönelik Tutumları ve Kopya Çekme Nedenleri," *Eğitim ve Öğretim Araştırmaları Dergisi* 5/2 (2016), 242; Hasan Dam, "Örgün Din Eğitiminde Kopya Sorunu," *Ondokuz Mayıs Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 34/34 (2013), 73; Mehmet Demir - Serdar Arcagök, "Sınıf Öğretmeni Adaylarının Sınavlarda Kopya Çekilmesine İlişkin Görüşlerinin Değerlendirilmesi," *Erzincan Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi* 15/1 (2013), 149; Mustafa Durmuşçelebi, "Lise Öğrencilerinin ve Öğretmen Adaylarının Kopya Çekme Davranışlarına İlişkin Görüşleri," *Kuram ve Uygulamada Eğitim Yönetimi* 1/1 (2011), 80; Kemal Oğuz Er - Uğur Gürkan, "Öğretmen Adaylarının Öz-Yeterlilik Algıları ve Kopya Çekmeye İlişkin Tutumları Arasındaki İlişki," *Balıkesir Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 14/26 (2011), 4; Recep Kaymakcan, "İlahiyat Öğrencilerinin Kopya Çekmeye Karşı Yaklaşımları," *Sakarya Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 4/5 (2002), 122; Sevgi Koç - Hasan Basri Memduhoğlu, "Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Kopya Çekmeye Yönelik Genel Eğilimlerinin Belirlenmesi," *Abant İzzet Baysal Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi* 21/1 (2021), 194; Şeref Tan, "Sınavlarda Kopya Çekmeyi Önlemeye Yönelik Önlemler," *Eğitim ve Bilim* 26/122 (2001), 32; Songül Tümkaya, "Sınıf Öğretmenliği Öğrencilerinin Kopya Çekme Tutumları, Görüşleri ve Benlik Saygısının İncelenmesi," *SDU International Journal of Educational Studies* 6/2 (2019), 16; Azmi Türkan et al., "Öğretmen Adaylarının Kopya Çekme Davranışına İlişkin Görüşlerinin İncelenmesi," *Bingöl Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 25 (2023), 107; Selami Yangın - Mustafa Kahyaoglu, "İlköğretim Öğretmen Adaylarının Kopya Çekmeye Yönelik Tutum ve Görüşleri," *Balıkesir Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 12/21 (2009), 47.

² Esra Lüle Mert, "Temel İşlevi Bilim İnsanı Yetiştirmek Olan Bazı Bölümlerde Kopya," *Turkish Studies -International Periodical For The Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic-* 7/3 (2012), 1815.

³ Bilgen Kırıl, "Kopya Çekmenin Değerlendirilmesi Üzerine Bir Durum Çalışması," *Eğitimde Nitel Araştırmalar Dergisi* 6/1 (2018), 134.

⁴ Şuayip Özdemir - Tuncay Karateke, "İlahiyat Fakültesi Öğrencilerinin Kopya Çekme Davranışları -Fırat Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Örneği-," *Dinbilimleri Akademik Araştırma Dergisi* 17/2 (2018),

and spiritually by leading them to believe that cheating is acceptable as long as they are not caught, and that stealing or taking something is permissible if no one sees them.⁵ Indeed, considering that cheating infringes upon the rights of individuals who prepare for exams as they should, it is possible to say that religion does not approve of this type of behavior.

Studies conducted in Türkiye have examined theology faculty students' attitudes toward cheating, cheating behaviors, and the relationships between cheating and moral maturity. They have reported that most theology students cheat, even those with high moral maturity.⁶ On the other hand, the worldwide literature has explored the association in question from different perspectives among both Muslim and non-Muslim participants.⁷ However, to my knowledge, no study in Türkiye explores the relationship between religious involvement and cheating. This study is the first to examine the relationship between religiosity and cheating, highlighting its originality and relevance. It is also vital to examine whether there is a contradiction between religion's knowledge, beliefs, and influence and its behavior. The lack of specific studies on religiosity and attitudes toward cheating, combined with previous findings, shows a need for further research. Therefore, I conducted this study to augment the literature.

This study examines the relationship between cheating and religiosity. Within this scope, I aim to determine the relationship between religiosity and cheating using data from students in the theology faculty. In line with the study's purpose, the main question is: "Is there a relationship between the participants' level of cheating and their level of religiosity?" In addition to the relationships among the main variables, the study also controlled for

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⁵ Mustafa Akdağ - Hasan Güneş, "Kopya Çekme Davranışları ve Kopya Çekmeye İlişkin Tutumlar," *Kuram ve Uygulamada Eğitim Yönetimi* 31/31 (2002), 332.

⁶ Dam, "Örgün Din Eğitiminde Kopya Sorunu"; Kaymakcan, "İlahiyat Öğrencilerinin Kopya Çekmeye Karşı Yaklaşımları"; Mustafa Memiş, "İlahiyat Fakültesi Öğrencilerinin Kopya Çekmeye Yönelik Tutumları İle Ahlaki Olgunluk Düzeyleri Arasındaki İlişki Üzerine Ampirik Bir Araştırma: SDÜ İlahiyat Fakültesi Örnekleme," *İhya Uluslararası İslam Araştırmaları Dergisi* 11/1 (2025), 58-85; Özdemir - Karateke, "İlahiyat Fakültesi Öğrencilerinin Kopya Çekme Davranışları -Fırat Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Örneği-."

⁷ James M. Bloodgood et al., "The Influence of Ethics Instruction, Religiosity, and Intelligence on Cheating Behavior," *Journal of Business Ethics* 82/3 (October 2008), 557-571; M. Moring, "Everybody's Doing It," *Campus Life* 58/4 (1999), 34-39; Ramlan Mustapha et al., "Does Islamic Religiosity Influence the Cheating Intention Among Malaysian Muslim Students? A Modified Theory of Planned Behavior," *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* 6/12 (December 20, 2016), Pages 389-406; Tze Wei Ooi et al., "Self-Reported Religiosity and Erosion of Honesty in an Unmonitored Environment with Repeated Opportunities to Cheat: Experimental Evidence from Malaysia," *Decision*, (February 12, 2026); Azim F. Shariff - Ara Norenzayan, "Mean Gods Make Good People: Different Views of God Predict Cheating Behavior," *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 21/2 (March 31, 2011), 85-96.

relationships with demographic variables, including age, gender, socioeconomic status, and class level.

1. THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL BACKGROUND

1.1. Cheating

The word “copy” is derived from the Italian word “copia.” In English, this concept is used with the word “cheating,” referring to “making a copy, imitating a work of art or written text, secretly benefiting from another person or material during an exam, a paper prepared to look at without anyone seeing during a written exam, or a counterfeit item.”⁸ Similarly, cheating includes any preparation or initiative by students to facilitate the exchange of information.⁹

Individuals can cheat in various ways. They may prepare small cheat sheets, use hand and foot signals, use technological devices, copy other individuals’ answers onto paper, write something on their bodies or objects, change exam papers, look around at others, use course materials, whisper to each other during the exam, help someone else cheat, and swap the exam paper with a pre-prepared answer sheet.¹⁰

Although cheating is not the right behavior, there are various reasons that lead individuals to engage in it during the process. These reasons may arise depending on the individuals and the instructor or teaching program. The relevant reasons include: continuing rote learning despite advances in technology, individuals wanting to guarantee success, individuals not considering certain subjects worth studying, being unprepared for exams, encouragement to cheat in order to get high grades, the exam environment not being sufficiently secure, inadequate penalties for cheating, the desire to be admired by others after receiving high grades, fear of failing classes, parental pressure, the inability to understand subjects sufficiently due to

⁸ *Kopya Çekmek*, “Türkçe Sözlük - Türk Dil Kurumu” (Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları, 2011); *Cheat*, “Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English Online,” March 2, 2026.

⁹ Aynur Oksal - Asude Bilgin, “Üniversitede Kopya Sorunu,” *Uludağ Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi* 12/1 (1999), 85–86; Tan, “Sınavlarda Kopya Çekmeyi Önlemeye Yönelik Önlemler” 32.

¹⁰ Akdağ - Güneş, “Kopya Çekme Davranışları ve Kopya Çekmeye İlişkin Tutumlar”; Bozdoğan - Öztürk, “Öğretmen Adayları Neden Kopya Çeker?”; Ann Bushway - William R. Nash, “School Cheating Behavior,” *Review of Educational Research* 47/4 (1977), 623–632; Durmuşçelebi, “Lise Öğrencilerinin ve Öğretmen Adaylarının Kopya Çekme Davranışlarına İlişkin Görüşleri”; Koç - Memduhoğlu, “Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Kopya Çekmeye Yönelik Genel Eğilimlerinin Belirlenmesi”; Helen Marsden et al., “Who Cheats at University? A Self-Report Study of Dishonest Academic Behaviours in a Sample of Australian University Students,” *Australian Journal of Psychology* 57/1 (2005), 1–10; Ziya Selçuk, “Bir Eğitim ve Rehberlik Sorunu: Okullarda Kopya Çekme,” *Kuram ve Uygulamada Eğitim Yönetimi* 3/3 (1995), 397–418; B. Yeşilyaprak - B. Öztürk, “Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Kopya Çekme Olayına İlişkin Eğilimleri ve Görüşleri,” *II. Ulusal Eğitim Sempozyumu Bildirileri* (II. Ulusal Eğitim Sempozyumu, İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi, 1996), 231–238.

the teacher's lack of adequate equipment, the decline in teacher-student relationships due to overcrowded classrooms, fear of low grade point averages, an unsuitable exam environment, the ease and effortlessness of cheating, a competition-based education system, difficult courses, gender or status-based injustice, lack of study habits and the belief that cheating is wrong, lack of sufficient time to study, fear of falling behind others, low self-confidence, incorrect study techniques, habitual cheating, losing too many points for minor mistakes, individuals having problematic personalities and ethical understandings, individuals sitting close to each other in tests, the school's success-oriented policy, and foreign students exposed to racism wanting to finish school early.¹¹

Although there are many reasons individuals cheat, this situation has different consequences for both exam security and the individual. These consequences comprise: failure to achieve program objectives due to reduced exam validity, inability to determine what learning deficiencies exist, rewarding those who do not deserve it and punishing those who do due to exam cancellation, impeded learning, the possibility of negative effects on

¹¹ Mustafa Adıbatmaz - Fatma Betül Kurnaz, "Karabük Üniversitesi Sağlık Hizmetleri Meslek Yüksekokulu'nda Öğrenim Gören Öğrencilerin Kopya Çekme Tutumları," *Abant İzzet Baysal Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi* 17/3 (2017), 1061-1078; Akdağ - Güneş, "Kopya Çekme Davranışları ve Kopya Çekmeye İlişkin Tutumlar"; Ceyhan Alemdağ - Serdar Alemdağ, "Beden Eğitimi ve Spor Yüksekokulu Öğrencilerinin Kopya Çekme Davranışları," *International Journal of Science Culture and Sport* 3/11 (2015), 317-317; Cüneyt Altan Altay et al., "Menkıbelerle Yapılan Söyleşilerin Lise Öğrencilerin Esnek Dayanıklılık Düzeylerine ve Sınavda Kopya Çekme Eğilimlerine Olan Etkisinin İncelenmesi," *International Social Sciences Studies Journal* 10/10 (2024), 1705-1711; Ashworth et al., "Guilty in Whose Eyes? University Students' Perceptions of Cheating and Plagiarism in Academic Work and Assessment"; Bozdoğan - Öztürk, "Öğretmen Adayları Neden Kopya Çeker?"; Çeliköz, "Öğretmen Adaylarının Kopya Çekmeye Yönelik Tutumları ve Kopya Çekme Nedenleri"; Dam, "Örgün Din Eğitiminde Kopya Sorunu"; Demir - Arcagök, "Sınıf Öğretmeni Adaylarının Sınavlarda Kopya Çekilmesine İlişkin Görüşlerinin Değerlendirilmesi"; Er - Gürgan, "Öğretmen Adaylarının Öz-Yeterlilik Algıları ve Kopya Çekmeye İlişkin Tutumları Arasındaki İlişki"; Kırıl, "Kopya Çekmenin Değerlendirilmesi Üzerine Bir Durum Çalışması"; Koç - Memduhoğlu, "Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Kopya Çekmeye Yönelik Genel Eğilimlerinin Belirlenmesi"; Seval Eminoğlu Küçüktepe - Coşkun Küçüktepe, "Tarih Öğretmeni Adaylarının Kopya Çekme Eğilimlerinin Çeşitli Değişkenler Açısından İncelenmesi," *Hasan Ali Yücel Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi* 17 (2012), 115-125; Donald L. McCabe - Linda Klebe Trevino, "Individual and Contextual Influences on Academic Dishonesty: A Multicampus Investigation," *Research in Higher Education* 38/3 (1997), 379-396; Memiş, "İlahiyat Fakültesi Öğrencilerinin Kopya Çekmeye Yönelik Tutumları İle Ahlaki Olgunluk Düzeyleri Arasındaki İlişki Üzerine Ampirik Bir Araştırma: SDÜ İlahiyat Fakültesi Örnekleme"; Moring, "Everybody's Doing It," 34-35; Oksal - Bilgin, "Üniversitede Kopya Sorunu"; Sevgi Özgüngör, "Üniversite Öğrencilerinde Öğretmene İlişkin Algıların ve Öğrenci Özelliklerinin Kopya Çekme Davranışlarıyla İlişkisi," *Eğitim ve Bilim* 33/149 (2008), 68-79; Mustafa Özmen et al., "Adaptation of the Racial Microaggression Scale to Turkish Culture: Validity and Reliability Study," *İçtimaiyat* 6/2 (2022), 717-729; Fred Schab, "Schooling Without Learning: Thirty Years of Cheating in High School," *Adolescence* 26 (1991), 839-847; Selçuk, "Bir Eğitim ve Rehberlik Sorunu: Okullarda Kopya Çekme"; Çetin Semerci, "Tıp Fakültesi Öğrencilerinin Kopya Çekmeye İlişkin Tutum ve Görüşleri," *Fırat Üniversitesi Sağlık Bilimleri Dergisi* 18/3 (2004), 139-146; Tan, "Sınavlarda Kopya Çekmeyi Önlemeye Yönelik Önlemler"; Türkan et al., "Öğretmen Adaylarının Kopya Çekme Davranışına İlişkin Görüşlerinin İncelenmesi"; Yangın - Kahyaoglu, "İlköğretim Öğretmen Adaylarının Kopya Çekmeye Yönelik Tutum ve Görüşleri."

the mental health of the individual who cheated due to feelings of guilt, the high probability that an individual who passed their class by cheating may resort to unethical behavior later in life, the inability to impart the necessary and sufficient knowledge and skills to the individual if cheating continues, the inability to raise individuals with the expected ethical values, the individual receiving incorrect feedback due to cheating, the cheating individual's self-esteem decreasing, the individual deceiving others by getting a high score on the exam despite not knowing the material, the individual feeling that they will lose their teacher's trust, and the feeling that they are infringing on the rights of individuals who did not cheat.¹²

The types, causes, and consequences of the aforementioned copying have noticeable negative effects on exams, on individuals, on teachers, and on the system. It is imperative that certain measures be taken to prevent the situations mentioned from occurring. The measures that can be taken in this regard include the following:¹³

- Creating brochures on the sanctions to be applied as a result of cheating and carrying out promotional activities,
- Schools should clearly and transparently define their policies on cheating,
- Teachers should maintain consistent and objective attitudes,
- Providing counseling services regarding the consequences of cheating and the penalties that will be imposed afterward,
- Seeking support from school counselors,
- Holding informational meetings about cheating and its consequences at every level, from primary to higher education,

¹² Adıbatmaz - Kurnaz, "Karabük Üniversitesi Sağlık Hizmetleri Meslek Yüksekokulu'nda Öğrenim Gören Öğrencilerin Kopya Çekme Tutumları"; Akdağ - Güneş, "Kopya Çekme Davranışları ve Kopya Çekmeye İlişkin Tutumlar"; Dam, "Örgün Din Eğitiminde Kopya Sorunu"; Demir - Arcagök, "Sınıf Öğretmeni Adaylarının Sınavlarda Kopya Çekilmesine İlişkin Görüşlerinin Değerlendirilmesi"; Durmuşçelebi, "Lise Öğrencilerinin ve Öğretmen Adaylarının Kopya Çekme Davranışlarına İlişkin Görüşleri"; T. Lickona, *Educating for Character How Our Schools Can Teach Respect and Responsibility* (Bantam Books, 1991); Honor J. Passow et al., "Factors Influencing Engineering Students' Decisions to Cheat by Type of Assessment," *Research in Higher Education* 47/6 (2006), 643-684; Semerci, "Tıp Fakültesi Öğrencilerinin Kopya Çekmeye İlişkin Tutum ve Görüşleri"; Mehmet Ali Seven - Ali Osman Engin, "Eğitim Fakültesi Öğrencilerinin Kopya Çekmeye Duydukları İhtiyaç ve Kopya Çekme Sebepleri," *Atatürk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 11/1 (2008), 121-136; Tan, "Sınavlarda Kopya Çekmeyi Önlemeye Yönelik Önlemler"; Yavuz Topcu - Ahmet Semih Uzunumlu, "Yüksek Öğretimde Öğrencilerin Kopya Çekme Motivasyonu İle İlgili Tutum ve Davranışları," *Uluslararası İnsan Bilimleri Dergisi* 8/2 (2011), 302-313; Tümkaya, "Sınıf Öğretmenliği Öğrencilerinin Kopya Çekme Tutumları, Görüşleri ve Benlik Saygısının İncelenmesi"; Yangın - Kahyaoglu, "İlköğretim Öğretmen Adaylarının Kopya Çekmeye Yönelik Tutum ve Görüşleri."

¹³ Kırıl, "Kopya Çekmenin Değerlendirilmesi Üzerine Bir Durum Çalışması"; Vivien K. G. Lim - Sean K. B. See, "Attitudes Toward, and Intentions to Report, Academic Cheating Among Students in Singapore," *Ethics & Behavior* 11/3 (2001), 261-274; S. Maramark - M.B. Maline, *Academic Dishonesty Among College Students. Issues in Education* (Washington: Office of Research, 1993); Tan, "Sınavlarda Kopya Çekmeyi Önlemeye Yönelik Önlemler."

- Reminding students of the student discipline regulations before and after exam periods,
- Individualizing teaching and exams as much as possible according to students' abilities,
- Implementing measures based on a defined legal basis at every level of education.

A body of research indicates that studies on cheating have been conducted in various countries. In the United States, a study found that 75% of high school students had tried to cheat. An interesting point from the results was that the students involved admitted that cheating was wrong.¹⁴ Although awareness of ethical behavior in education exists, the same isn't true for academic integrity. Factors encouraging cheating include academic pressures, easy access to technology, and a lack of emphasis on ethical values. Moreover, Magnus and colleagues¹⁵ aimed to determine students' tolerance of cheating behavior across different countries. Research involving students from the US, Russia, and the Netherlands revealed regional variations in perceptions of help and individuality. Tolerance towards cheating varies depending on whether students themselves cheat. Results highlight how cultural and educational contexts affect academic behavior. The link between tolerance and personal tendencies suggests that individual interests influence ethics.

Various studies on cheating have been found in the worldwide literature. One of these studies concluded that students who cheat do not view this behavior negatively, whereas students who do not cheat characterize cheating as negative behavior.¹⁶ The findings indicate that individuals' moral attitudes align with their actions and that cheating is closely linked to their value judgments. The fact that students who cheat do not see this as problematic suggests that such behavior has become habitual for them. Conversely, students who do not cheat view the situation negatively, reflecting their strong commitment to moral rules and their belief that cheating is wrong. Furthermore, Lüle and Mert¹⁷ studied 140 students from various departments and found that most cheated, indicating widespread academic integrity issues across disciplines. This highlights the need to enhance ethical values and exam security in education.

¹⁴ Angela D. Miller et al., "Addressing Academic Dishonesty Among the Highest Achievers," *Theory Into Practice* 56/2 (2017), 121–128.

¹⁵ Jan R. Magnus et al., "Tolerance of Cheating: An Analysis Across Countries," *The Journal of Economic Education* 33/2 (2002), 125–135.

¹⁶ Yeşilyaprak - Öztürk, "Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Kopya Çekme Olayına İlişkin Eğilimleri ve Görüşleri"

¹⁷ Lüle Mert, "Temel İşlevi Bilim İnsanı Yetiştirmek Olan Bazı Bölümlerde Kopya."

Overall, studies across the countries address cheating from various perspectives. In addition to the aforementioned studies, numerous studies conducted among high school and university students also highlight cheating as an academic and ethical issue that warrants appropriate attention.¹⁸

¹⁸ Adıbatmaz - Kurnaz, "Karabük Üniversitesi Sağlık Hizmetleri Meslek Yüksekokulu'nda Öğrenim Gören Öğrencilerin Kopya Çekme Tutumları"; Akdağ - Güneş, "Kopya Çekme Davranışları ve Kopya Çekmeye İlişkin Tutumlar"; Alemdağ - Alemdağ, "Beden Eğitimi ve Spor Yüksekokulu Öğrencilerinin Kopya Çekme Davranışları"; Şeyma Alkan, *İlköğretim İkinci Kademe ile Ortaöğretim Öğrencilerinin ve Öğretmenlerinin Kopya Çekmeye İlişkin Görüşleri* (Elazığ: Fırat Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2008); Altay et al., "Menkubelerle Yapılan Söyleşilerin Lise Öğrencilerin Esnek Dayanıklılık Düzeylerine ve Sınavda Kopya Çekme Eğilimlerine Olan Etkisinin İncelenmesi"; Ashworth et al., "Guilty in Whose Eyes? University Students' Perceptions of Cheating and Plagiarism in Academic Work and Assessment"; Başol - Duran, "Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Kopya Çekme ve Etik Konusuna İlişkin Görüşleri"; Demir - Arcagök, "Sınıf Öğretmeni Adaylarının Sınavlarda Kopya Çekilmesine İlişkin Görüşlerinin Değerlendirilmesi"; Ahmet Duran, *Kopya Çekme Eğilimleri ile Akademik Başarı, Akademik Özyeterlik ve Akademik Ertelemeçilik Arasındaki İlişkiler* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2020); Durmuşçelebi, "Lise Öğrencilerinin ve Öğretmen Adaylarının Kopya Çekme Davranışlarına İlişkin Görüşleri"; Esra Eminoğlu, *Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Akademik Sahtekârlık Eğilimlerinin Ölçülmesine Yönelik Bir Ölçek Geliştirme Çalışması* (Bolu: Abant İzzet Baysal Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2008); Er - Gürkan, "Öğretmen Adaylarının Öz-Yeterlilik Algıları ve Kopya Çekmeye İlişkin Tutumları Arasındaki İlişki"; Ayhan Güneş, *Liselerde Görev Yapan Öğretmenlerin Kopya Çekme Davranışına İlişkin Görüşleri* (İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2014); Melike Gürdoğan, "Lise Öğrencilerinde Bilim Etiği: Kopya Çekme, Dürüst Ol, Sorumluluğunu Bil," *İhlara Eğitim Araştırmaları Dergisi* 4/2 (2019), 174–188; Kırıl, "Kopya Çekmenin Değerlendirilmesi Üzerine Bir Durum Çalışması"; Gizem İlkin Kiltan, *Beden Eğitimi Öğretmen Adaylarının Kopya Çekmeye Yönelik Tutumları ile Mesleki Etik İlkelerine Yönelik Tutumları Arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi* (Konya: Selçuk Üniversitesi Sağlık Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2021); Sevgi Koç, *Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Kopya Çekmeye Yönelik Eğilimleri ve Planlanmış Davranış Teorisi Bağlamında Kopya Çekme Davranışına Yönelik Model Sınaması* (Van: Van Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Doktora Tezi, 2018); Koç - Memduhoğlu, "Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Kopya Çekmeye Yönelik Genel Eğilimlerinin Belirlenmesi"; Eminoğlu Küçüktepe - Küçüktepe, "Tarih Öğretmeni Adaylarının Kopya Çekme Eğilimlerinin Çeşitli Değişkenler Açısından İncelenmesi"; Lim - See, "Attitudes Toward, and Intentions to Report, Academic Cheating Among Students in Singapore"; Maramark - Maline, *Academic Dishonesty Among College Students. Issues in Education*; Marsden et al., "Who Cheats at University? A Self-Report Study of Dishonest Academic Behaviours in a Sample of Australian University Students"; McCabe - Trevino, "Individual and Contextual Influences on Academic Dishonesty: A Multicampus Investigation"; Miller et al., "Addressing Academic Dishonesty Among the Highest Achievers"; Moring, "Everybody's Doing It"; Oksal - Bilgin, "Üniversitede Kopya Sorunu"; Özdemir - Karateke, "İlahiyat Fakültesi Öğrencilerinin Kopya Çekme Davranışları -Fırat Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Örneği-"; Muahmmet Özden et al., "Kopya Çektim, Çünkü... : Bir Olgubilim Çalışması," *Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry* 6/4 (2015), 57; Özgüngör, "Üniversite Öğrencilerinde Öğretmene İlişkin Algıların ve Öğrenci Özelliklerinin Kopya Çekme Davranışlarıyla İlişkisi"; Selver Özgür, *Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Kopya Çekme Davranışını Meşrulaştırmada Kullandıkları Açıklayıcı Repertuarlar ve Konum Alışlar* (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2015); Passow et al., "Factors Influencing Engineering Students' Decisions to Cheat by Type of Assessment"; Schab, "Schooling Without Learning: Thirty Years of Cheating in High School"; Selçuk, "Bir Eğitim ve Rehberlik Sorunu: Okullarda Kopya Çekme"; Seven - Engin, "Eğitim Fakültesi Öğrencilerinin Kopya Çekmeye Duydukları İhtiyaç ve Kopya Çekme Sebepleri"; Semerci, "Tıp Fakültesi Öğrencilerinin Kopya Çekmeye İlişkin Tutum ve Görüşleri"; Tan, "Sınavlarda Kopya Çekmeyi Öllemeye Yönelik Önemler"; Topcu - Uzundumlu, "Yüksek Öğretimde Öğrencilerin Kopya Çekme Motivasyonu ile İlgili Tutum ve Davranışları"; Tümkaya, "Sınıf Öğretmenliği Öğrencilerinin Kopya Çekme Tutumları, Görüşleri ve Benlik Saygısının İncelenmesi"; Türkkan et al., "Öğretmen Adaylarının Kopya Çekme Davranışına İlişkin Görüşlerinin İncelenmesi"; Hüseyin Ünlü - Cihan Eroğlu, "Beden Eğitimi Öğretmen Adaylarının Kopya Çekmeye Yönelik Tutumları," *SPORMETRE Beden Eğitimi ve Spor Bilimleri Dergisi* 10/3 (2012), 101–106; Yangın - Kahyaoglu, "İlköğretim Öğretmen Adaylarının Kopya Çekmeye Yönelik Tutum ve Görüşleri"; Seda Yıldırım, *Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Akademik Başarı, Akademik Erteleme, Kopya*

1.2. Cheating in the Context of Religious Principles

Individuals cheat in different ways and for various reasons during their education. Cheating also raises moral concerns. Religion teaches that individuals should not violate others' rights and helps protect those who are careful during exams. Furthermore, by emphasizing honesty and truthfulness, it reminds people that such actions are unacceptable. Indeed, although not directly, verses and hadiths indirectly emphasize truthfulness,¹⁹ justice and adherence to rights,²⁰ deception and fraud,²¹ adherence to trust,²² and the rights of servants.²³

Religion may serve as an inhibitory factor in cheating behavior, particularly through knowledge, belief, and influence. This is because religion encourages its followers to respect others' rights within the framework of truth and honesty and to act accordingly.²⁴ Individuals who are aware of their religion's requirements are expected to apply this knowledge to their lives. In this context, given that cheating infringes on others' rights and constitutes information theft, it is reasonable to say that this inhibitory aspect of religion should shape the individual's behavior. In this regard, a hadith of the Prophet Mohammad – “Whoever bears arms against us is not one of us, and whoever cheats us is not one of us.”²⁵ – clearly underscores how bad cheating is and the consequences that would follow.

A growing body of literature has examined the relationship between cheating and religiosity across various cultures and countries. Moring²⁶ reported that 73% of individuals do not cheat because of their religious beliefs. Based on the above framework, individuals who follow their religion's rules and principles, motivated by a respect for others' rights, act with integrity, honor their word, depend on their own efforts, and behave morally, thereby setting a positive example for society. They shape their behavior within the framework of knowledge, belief, and religious influence to avoid wrongdoing. On the other hand, studies conducted in Türkiye have focused on the tendency to cheat among theology faculty students rather than on the re-

Çekme ve Devamsızlık Durumlarının Yordayıcısı Olarak Sosyal Bağlılık (Tokat: Gaziosmanpaşa Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2015).

¹⁹ “Kur’ân Yolu” (Access January 29, 2026), al-Ahḏāb 33/70.

²⁰ Hûd 11/85.

²¹ Ebu’l-Huseyn Müslim b. el-Haccâc Müslim, *El-Câmi ‘u’s-Şaḥîh*, nşr. Muhammed Fuâd Abdülbâkî (Kahire: y.y., 1374-75/1955-56), “İman”, 101.

²² al-Nisâ’ 4/58.

²³ Ebû Abdullah Muhammed b. İsmail Buhârî, *El-Câmiu’s-Sahîh* (Dımaşk-Beyrût: Dâr’u-İbn Kesîr, 1993), “Mezâlim”, 10.

²⁴ Halil Altuntaş, “Kur’an’a Göre İnsanın Hak ve Sorumlulukları,” *Sorumluluk Bilinci* (Ankara: Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Yayınları, 2020), 13–24.

²⁵ Müslim, *El-Câmi ‘u’s-Şaḥîh*, “İman”, 101.

²⁶ Moring, “Everybody’s Doing It,” 34–35.

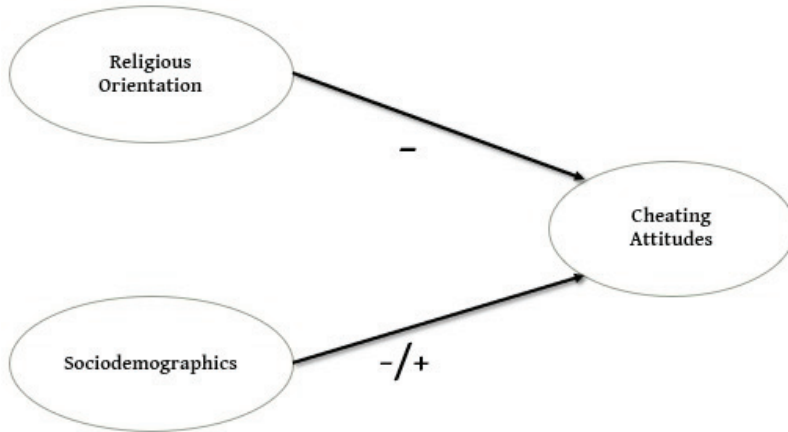
relationship between cheating and religiosity. The relevant research findings show that, despite being theology faculty students, individuals have a high tendency to cheat²⁷ Taken together, this study has defined its hypotheses below within the framework of the theoretical information, research, and identified matters in the literature:

Hypothesis 1: Religious orientation is negatively correlated with cheating attitudes.

Hypothesis 2: Religious orientation is a negative predictor of cheating attitudes.

Hypothesis 3: Religious orientation is negatively associated with cheating attitudes among females, not males.

Figure 1: The Offsetting Effect Model



2. METHODS

2.1. Data

As a quantitative study, this research employed a correlational design and used cross-sectional data from a convenience sample of 206 undergraduate students aged 17-35. Using a survey method, I administered a paper-based questionnaire in Turkish to theology students at Sakarya and Kilis 7 Aralık Universities between September 1st and November 30th in

²⁷ Türkan Çelik, "Sosyal Bilgiler Öğretmenliği ve İlahiyat Fakültesi Öğrencilerinin Kopya Çekme Eğilimlerinin İncelenmesi," *Muallim Rifat Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi* 2/2 (July 10, 2020), 97–120; Dam, "Örgün Din Eğitiminde Kopya Sorunu"; Kaymakcan, "İlahiyat Öğrencilerinin Kopya Çekmeye Karşı Yaklaşımları"; Memiş, "İlahiyat Fakültesi Öğrencilerinin Kopya Çekmeye Yönelik Tutumları İle Ahlaki Olgunluk Düzeyleri Arasındaki İlişki Üzerine Ampirik Bir Araştırma: SDÜ İlahiyat Fakültesi Örneklemini"; Özdemir - Karateke, "İlahiyat Fakültesi Öğrencilerinin Kopya Çekme Davranışları -Fırat Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Örneği-."

2019. The dataset enabled me to examine relevant associations by evaluating sociocultural contexts, achieve sample homogeneity by collecting data from the same academic discipline, and incorporate environmental influences into the analyses. Because I collected the data before 2020, when ethical approval was not required, this study did not need ethical approval.

2.2. Measures

I used cheating attitudes as the dependent variable, religious orientation and its subdimensions as the independent variables, and demographics as the control variables. The following presents the details of the study measures.

2.2.1. Dependent Variable: Cheating Attitudes

I measured cheating attitudes with a 67-item scale ($\alpha = .96$) developed by Semerci,²⁸ comprising thirty positive and thirty-seven (items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 32, 33, 35, 37, 38, 41, 44, 47, 48, 50, 53, 56, 58, 61, 63, 64, 65, 66, and 67) negative reverse-coded items. Response categories were between 1= “strongly disagree” and 5= “strongly agree.” When creating the scale as a linear measure, I averaged the items, with higher values indicating greater cheating attitudes ($\alpha = .98$). The following are some of the scale items responded by the participants: (1) “Whenever I cheat, I feel an inner discomfort,” (17) “Whatever reason matters, cheating is a form of theft,” (32) “A person who has a self-respect does not cheat,” and (55) “I do not like cheating,” etc.

2.2.2. Independent Variables: Religious Orientation

I gauged the participants’ religiosity with a 22-item scale originally developed by Allport and Ross²⁹ and adopted into Turkish by Cirhinlioğlu,³⁰ comprising their subdimensions and three reverse-coded items (6, 10, and 18). The subdimensions are intrinsic religious orientation (items 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 10, 13, 14, 16, 18, and 22), extrinsic-social religious orientation (items 2, 9, 11, 12, 19, and 23), and extrinsic-individual religious orientation (items 4, 15, 17, 20, and 21). Response categories ranged from 1= “strongly disagree” to 5= “strongly agree.” To create a linear scale, I also combined the

²⁸ Çetin Semerci, “Kopya Çekmeye İlişkin Tutum Ölçeği,” *Fırat Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 13/1 (2003), 227–234.

²⁹ Gordon W. Allport - J. Michael Ross, “Personal Religious Orientation and Prejudice,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 5/4 (1967), 432–443.

³⁰ Fatma Gül Cirhinlioğlu, “Dini Yönelimler ve Önyargı,” *Uluslararası İnsan Bilimleri Dergisi* 7/1 (2010), 1366–1384.

items by averaging them ($\alpha = .83$), with higher scores meaning greater levels of religious orientation. The following are some of the items answered by the participants: (8) “I give zakah once a year,” (13) “I read books related to my faith,” (17) “Worshipping must provide a happy and peaceful life to me,” (20) “Worship places are important in terms of having social relations,” etc.

2.2.3. Demographics

I also included several demographic variables, such as age, gender, socioeconomic status, and class level, into the regression models. This approach was to control potential confounding factors and ensure that the observed associations were genuine. Whereas I deployed age as a continuous variable, gender, socioeconomic status, and class level were recoded as dummy variables: “female= 1 and male= 0,” “medium socioeconomic status= 1 and others= 0,” and “freshmen= 1 and others= 0.”

2.3. Procedure

Using IBM SPSS Statistics 22.0, I conducted all analyses required for this study. The dataset contained a few missing values. Therefore, first, I used the “Replace Missing Values” command to impute missing values in the series using the series mean and then reran the analysis with the new variables. Afterward, I run descriptive statistics on the variables and check whether the dependent variable – cheating attitude – is normally distributed. The participants indicated a moderate level of cheating attitudes ($X = 2.49$, $SD = .820$). Skewness (0.445) and Kurtosis (-0.287) values indicate that the study’s dependent variable is normally distributed. Accordingly, I decided to use parametric tests to assess the study hypotheses. Then, I conducted Independent Samples T-Tests, Pearson Correlation Coefficients, and Ordinary Least Squares Regression Analyses, reporting significant associations among the variables.

3. RESULTS

As seen in Table 1, the participants report a moderate level of cheating attitudes ($X = 2.49$); however, their levels of religious orientation and religious subdimensions are remarkably high. As the focal independent variable, the average religious orientation score is 3.91. Regarding the subdimensions of religious orientation, participants report the highest average intrinsic religious orientation ($X = 4.14$), whereas their extrinsic personal

religious orientation has the lowest average ($X = 3.26$). The table also presents descriptive statistics for the demographic variables.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	Range		X	S.D.	Skewness	Kurtosis
	Min.	Max.	(%)			
<i>Dependent Variable</i>						
Cheating attitudes	1	5	2.49	.820	.445	-.287
<i>Religious Measures</i>						
Religious orientation	2	5	3.91	.487	-1.380	3.507
Intrinsic religious orientation	2	5	4.14	.587	-1.296	2.725
Extrinsic social religious orientation	2	5	4.05	.598	-1.157	2.283
Extrinsic personal religious orientation	1	5	3.26	.696	-.440	.637
<i>Sociodemographics</i>						
Age (in years)	18	35	22.43	3.808	-	-
Gender (1= female, 0= male)	0	1	(62.1)	-	-	-
Socioeconomic status (1= medium SES, 0= others)	0	1	(75.2)	-	-	-
Class level (1= freshman, 0= others)	0	1	(30.6)	-	-	-
n= 206						

n= 206

According to the Independent Samples T-test findings in Table 2, males report a higher mean of cheating attitudes than females, and the difference is statistically significant ($t(204) = 3.541$; $p < 0.001$). Additionally, the table indicates that females have a slightly higher level of religious orientation. However, the levels of religious orientation among males and females do not differ statistically ($t(204) = -1.710$; $p > 0.05$). This finding suggests that the influence of religious orientation may operate differently among males and females because of the significant difference in their cheating attitudes.

Table 2: Cheating Attitudes and Religious Orientation by Gender (Independent Samples, T-test).

Cheating attitudes	Gender	N	X	SD	t	p
	Male	78	2.74	.82	3.541	.000
	Female	128	2.33	.79		
Religious orientation	Gender	N	X	SD	t	p
	Male	78	3.84	.57	-1.710	.089
	Female	128	3.96	.43		

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Table 3 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients for the study's focal variables. The findings show that religious orientation is inversely asso-

ciated with cheating attitudes ($r = -.274, p < 0.01$). That is, as participants' religious orientation increases, their cheating attitudes decrease. Thus, this supports my first hypothesis: "Religious orientation is negatively correlated with cheating attitudes." In addition, intrinsic religious orientation ($r = -.367, p < 0.01$) and extrinsic social religious orientation ($r = -.152, p < 0.05$). are both negatively linked with cheating attitudes, whereas there is no correlation between extrinsic personal religious orientation and cheating attitudes ($r = -.007, p > 0.05$). Age has no correlation with cheating attitudes, religious orientation, and its subdimensions.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Coefficients of Focal Variables (n= 206)

	Cheating attitudes	Age	Religious orientation	Intrinsic Religious orientation	Extrinsic social religious orientation	Extrinsic personal religious orientation
Cheating attitudes	1					
Age	.133	1				
Religious orientation	-.274**	-.063	1			
Intrinsic Religious orientation	-.367**	-.063	.869**	1		
Extrinsic social religious orientation	-.152*	-.038	.830**	.576**	1	
Extrinsic personal religious orientation	-.007	-.037	.614**	.227**	.456**	1

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Table 4 reports the unstandardized coefficients from the Ordinary Least Squares regression model of cheating attitudes. As shown, the model is statistically significant ($F = 6.024, p < 0.001$) and explains 13% of the variance in cheating attitudes ($R^2 = 0.131$), indicating that the variable in the model contributes slightly to the dependent variable's variance. Furthermore, religious orientation is a predictor of cheating attitudes, with a strong negative association ($p < 0.001$). Namely, for each unit increase in religious orientation, there is a .414-unit decrease in cheating attitudes, controlling for the other variables. Therefore, I find support for my second hypothesis: "Religious orientation is a negative predictor of cheating attitudes." Also, the

model indicates that being a female student decreases the expected cheating attitudes by a factor of .327 ($p < 0.01$), implying that male students are more likely to have cheating attitudes. Furthermore, neither age, medium SES, nor freshman status predicts cheating attitudes ($p > 0.05$).

Table 4: OLS Regression Models Predicting Unstandardized Coefficients of Cheating Attitudes (n=206)

Focal Variables	B		F	R ²	p
Religious orientation	-.414	***			
Age	.012				
Gender (Female)	-.327	**	6.024	.131	.000
Socioeconomic status (Medium SES)	-.183				
Class level (Freshman)	.028				

Dependent Variable: Cheating attitudes

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Moreover, Table 5 presents the unstandardized coefficients for gender-specific regression models of cheating attitudes. First, the model for males is not statistically significant ($F = 1.396$, $p > 0.05$), indicating that the variables in the model do not explain the variance in cheating attitudes. There is no significant effect of religious orientation, age, medium SES, or freshman status on cheating attitudes among males ($p > 0.05$). However, the regression model for females presents a different story, indicating a statistically significant structure ($F = 3.362$, $p < 0.05$) and explaining 10% of the variance in cheating attitudes ($R^2 = 0.099$). Religious orientation is a predictor of cheating attitudes among females, with a strong negative association ($p < 0.001$). That is, for each unit increase in religious orientation, there is an expected decrease of 0.551 units in cheating attitudes among females. However, age, medium SES, or freshman status are not associated with cheating attitudes among females. Taken together, these findings support my third hypothesis: "Religious orientation is positively associated with cheating attitudes among females, not males." Religious orientation serves as a strong moral regulator of academic honesty among females.

Table 5: OLS Regression Models Predicting Unstandardized Coefficients of Cheating Attitudes by Gender (n= 206)

Gender	Focal Variables	B	F	R ²	<i>p</i>
Male	Religious orientation	-.288	1.396	.071	.244
	Age	.007			
	Socioeconomic status (Medium SES)	-.327			
	Class level (Freshman)	-.061			
		B	F	R ²	<i>p</i>
Female	Religious orientation	-.551	3.362	.099	.012
	Age	.014			
	Socioeconomic status (Medium SES)	-.084			
	Class level (Freshman)	.051			
Dependent Variable: Cheating attitudes					

p*<.05; *p*<.01; ****p*<.001.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The existing literature has examined cheating attitudes and related matters in various ways, aiming to understand the perceptions, reasons, motivations, and justifications behind cheating. In the case of Türkiye, researchers have mostly focused on university students’ opinions and experiences, yet have overlooked the role of religious orientation in attitudes toward cheating and academic dishonesty.³¹ This study has augmented the literature by (a) presenting a theoretical argument explaining why religious orientation would predict low cheating attitudes, (b) testing the related hypotheses using data from theology faculty students, (c) examining the main effect of religious orientation on cheating attitudes, and (d) reporting whether religious orientation is a predictor of attitudes toward cheating among males and females. The findings indicate that religious orientation is a strong negative predictor of cheating attitudes and is adversely associated with attitudes toward cheating among females, not males. Particularly, these patterns occurred among Muslim university students studying theology (i.e., Basic Islamic studies, philosophy, and religious sciences).

Several findings deserve detailed discussion. First, there is a negative

³¹ Çeliköz, “Öğretmen Adaylarının Kopya Çekmeye Yönelik Tutumları ve Kopya Çekme Nedenleri”; Kaymakcan, “İlahiyat Öğrencilerinin Kopya Çekmeye Karşı Yaklaşımları”; Selçuk, “Bir Eğitim ve Rehberlik Sorunu: Okullarda Kopya Çekme”; Seven - Engin, “Eğitim Fakültesi Öğrencilerinin Kopya Çekmeye Duydukları İhtiyaç ve Kopya Çekme Sebepleri”; Tümkaya, “Sınıf Öğretmenliği Öğrencilerinin Kopya Çekme Tutumları, Görüşleri ve Benlik Saygısının İncelenmesi.”

correlation between religious orientation and cheating attitudes, and religious orientation is a strong negative predictor of cheating attitudes. Why would that be? Primarily, religion is an important source of reference for believers, fostering belief in divine monitoring. Such a perception of being watched by God may create moral deterrence, especially in situations that are hard to detect or punish. The “Supernatural monitoring hypothesis” suggests that belief in an omniscient, morally concerned God reduces norm violations, even in the absence of weak external surveillance.³² Also, cross-cultural research shows that a punitive perception of God enhances believers’ conformity to norms.³³ Furthermore, religious tenets would enable believers to internalize their moral identity, answer the question of who they are, and strengthen their self-conceptions, such as self-control, self-esteem, and mastery. This structure may foster an internal norm orientation among believers, thereby helping them avoid immoral attitudes and behaviors that create intellectual and emotional conflicts.³⁴ In addition, religious involvement may shape believers’ perception of time and prompt them to consider long-term benefits rather than short-term ones. For instance, beliefs in the hereafter, in being accountable for the consequences of their behavior, and in ultimate justice may lead believers to avoid behaviors such as cheating that offer short-term benefits rather than long-term moral ones.³⁵ Moreover, religious orientation may amplify feelings of being sinful, guilty, and responsible for believers’ misbehavior. In Islam, cheating is one of the major sins and a source of shame for whoever commits it.³⁶ In this regard, the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) explicitly states that anyone who

³² Scott Atran - Ara Norenzayan, “Religion’s Evolutionary Landscape: Counterintuition, Commitment, Compassion, Communion,” *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 27/6 (December 2004), 713–730; Shariff - Norenzayan, “Mean Gods Make Good People.”

³³ Benjamin Grant Purzycki et al., “Moralistic Gods, Supernatural Punishment and the Expansion of Human Sociality,” *Nature* 530/7590 (February 2016), 327–330.

³⁴ Karl Aquino - Americus Reed II, “The Self-Importance of Moral Identity,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 83/6 (2002), 1423–1440; Christopher G. Ellison et al., “Perceived Neighborhood Disorder, Self-Esteem, and the Moderating Role of Religion,” *Review of Religious Research* 65/3 (September 2023), 317–343; Michael E. McCullough - Brian L. B. Willoughby, “Religion, Self-Regulation, and Self-Control: Associations, Explanations, and Implications,” *Psychological Bulletin* 135/1 (2009), 69–93.

³⁵ Ibnu Hadjar, “The Effect of Religiosity and Perception on Academic Cheating among Muslim Students in Indonesia,” *Journal of Education and Human Development* 6/1 (2017), 141; Faruk Karaca, *Din Psikolojisi* (Trabzon: Eser Ofset Matbaacılık, 2015); Kevin Rounding et al., “Religion Replenishes Self-Control,” *Psychological Science* 23/6 (June 2012), 635–642; Azim F. Shariff et al., “Religious Priming: A Meta-Analysis With a Focus on Prosociality,” *Personality and Social Psychology Review: An Official Journal of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Inc* 20/1 (February 2016), 27–48.

³⁶ Hidayet Aydar, “Kur’an’da Mesuliyete Riayet ve Riayetsizliğin Dünyevî ve Uhrevî Sonuçları,” *KURAN-I KERİM’DE MES’ULİYET (Kaynağı, Sınırları, Sonuçları)* (İstanbul: Ensar Neşriyat, 2006), 247–314; Mustapha et al., “Does Islamic Religiosity Influence the Cheating Intention Among Malaysian Muslim Students? A Modified Theory of Planned Behavior”; Behlül Tokur, *Klasik ve Güncel Konularıyla Din Psikolojisi* (Ankara: Sonçağ Yayınları, 2020).

cheats Muslims is not regarded as part of the Muslim community.³⁷ In sum, these mechanisms provide coherent reasons why religious involvement predicts lower cheating attitudes by emphasizing cognitive, emotional, and social aspects.

Furthermore, religious orientation has been a strong negative predictor of cheating attitudes among females, not males. In this study, females reported lower levels of cheating attitudes and slightly higher levels of religious orientation than males, which is consistent with existing studies.³⁸ Although both males and females report similar levels of religious orientation, its role in cheating attitudes may operate more strongly among females. Why would this be the case? First and foremost, females may internalize their religious tenets more and foster their moral identity, thereby strengthening the influence of these factors on attitudes toward cheating. By contrast, males are more prone to competing motivations and risk-taking, thereby weakening the regulatory power of religious orientation.³⁹ Second, gender socialization would lead females to follow societal rules and expectations and to perform norm-compliant, relational, and care-oriented behaviors. Also, females may take the religious normative framework more seriously. Thus, these two structures would interact strongly among females to avoid cheating and related issues.⁴⁰ Third, females are more sensitive to unethical or abnormal behavior, as well as to sinfulness and empathy. Religious orientation may more strongly enhance such tendencies and feelings among females, as it increases feelings of guilt and a sense of obligation to follow the rules in the given context. While norm violations like cheating occur, this may produce more psychological consequences for females. Thus, when religious involvement activates moral feelings, which females

³⁷ Komisyon, "Kur'an Yolu" (January 29, 2026).

³⁸ Ayşe Şentepe - Metin Güven, "Kişilik Özellikleri ve Dindarlık İlişkisi Üzerine Ampirik Bir Araştırma," *Sakarya Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi (SAUIFD)* 17/31 (August 5, 2015), 27–27; Bernard E. Whitley et al., "Gender Differences in Cheating Attitudes and Classroom Cheating Behavior: A Meta-Analysis," *Sex Roles* 41/9 (November 1, 1999), 666; Asım Yapıcı, "Türk Toplumunda Cinsiyete Göre Dindarlık Farklılaşması: Bir Meta-Analiz Denemesi," *Fırat Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 17/2 (December 30, 2012), 1–34.

³⁹ Aquino - Reed II, "The Self-Importance of Moral Identity"; Landon Schnabel, "How Religious Are American Women and Men? Gender Differences and Similarities," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 54/3 (September 2015), 616–622; Marta Trzebiatowska - Steve Bruce, *Why Are Women More Religious than Men?* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

⁴⁰ Susan C. Borkowski - Yusuf J. Ugras, "Business Students and Ethics: A Meta-Analysis," *Journal of Business Ethics* 17/11 (August 1, 1998), 1117–1127; Rachel Croson - Uri Gneezy, "Gender Differences in Preferences," *Journal of Economic Literature* 47/2 (May 1, 2009), 448–474; G. R. Franke et al., "Gender Differences in Ethical Perceptions of Business Practices: A Social Role Theory Perspective," *The Journal of Applied Psychology* 82/6 (December 1997), 920–934; Jennifer J. Kish-Gephart et al., "Bad Apples, Bad Cases, and Bad Barrels: Meta-Analytic Evidence about Sources of Unethical Decisions at Work," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 95/1 (January 2010), 1–31; Larry L. Latham - Richard Perlow, "The Relationship of Client-Directed Aggressive and Nonclient-Directed Aggressive Work Behavior With Self-Control," *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 26/12 (June 1996), 1027–1041.

are more likely to experience, priming religious principles would inhibit academic dishonesty much more strongly.⁴¹ Fourth, cheating comprises certain forms of risk-taking and opportunism, and males are more likely to perform such actions. Therefore, religious orientation may not prevent such tendencies among males; however, it would have a strong deterrent effect by aligning with females' lower level of risk-taking. Similarly, research emphasizes that religious commitment may mitigate risky behaviors, but this effect would vary by gender.⁴² For instance, the existing literature indicates that women are more religious than men in Turkish society,⁴³ have more developed emotions of sin and deed, which shape their religious involvements more specifically,⁴⁴ and are more likely than men to prioritize emotional and relational aspects of religious life.⁴⁵ Taken together, these theoretical explanations and empirical findings highlight the role of female believers' relational self-structure, sensitivity, and accountability in shaping attitudes toward academic cheating, compared with those of their male counterparts.

In sum, this study has augmented the existing literature by examining a neglected research topic – attitudes toward academic cheating – by deploying data from theology undergraduate students, addressing religious orientation as a significant predictor of cheating attitudes, and reporting the adverse association between religious orientation and attitudes toward cheating among females, not males, referring to the role of gender socialization

⁴¹ Leonardo Christov-Moore et al., "Empathy: Gender Effects in Brain and Behavior," *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews* 46 (October 2014), 604–627; Colin Wayne Leach, "Understanding Shame and Guilt," *Handbook of the Psychology of Self-Forgiveness*, ed. Lydia Woodyatt et al. (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017), 17–28; Azim F. Shariff - Ara Norenzayan, "God Is Watching You: Priming God Concepts Increases Prosocial Behavior in an Anonymous Economic Game," *Psychological Science* 18/9 (September 2007), 803–809; June Price Tangney et al., "Moral Emotions and Moral Behavior," *Annual Review of Psychology* 58/1 (January 1, 2007), 345–372; June Price Tangney - Ronda L. Dearing, "Gender Differences in Morality," *The Psychodynamics of Gender and Gender Role*, ed. Robert F. Bornstein - Joseph M. Masling (Washington: American Psychological Association, 2002), 251–269.

⁴² James P. Byrnes et al., "Gender Differences in Risk Taking: A Meta-Analysis," *Psychological Bulletin* 125/3 (May 1999), 367–383; Murat Doğan - Faruk Karaca, "Cinsiyetin Dindarlık Üzerine Etkisi: Bir Meta Analiz Çalışması," *Bilimname* 45 (October 31, 2021), 219–260; John P. Hoffmann, "Risk Preference Theory and Gender Differences in Religiousness: A Replication and Extension," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 58/1 (March 2019), 210–230; Kish-Gephart et al., "Bad Apples, Bad Cases, and Bad Barrels"; Mustafa Koç, "Demografik Özellikler ile Dindarlık Arasındaki İlişki Yetişkinler Üzerine Ampirik Bir Araştırma," *Uludağ Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 19/2 (June 1, 2010), 234–235; Mohammed Y. A. Rawwas et al., "Does Religion Matter? A Comparison Study of the Ethical Beliefs of Marketing Students of Religious and Secular Universities in Japan," *Journal of Business Ethics* 65/1 (April 2006), 235–236.

⁴³ Asım Yapıcı, "Türk Toplumunda Cinsiyete Göre Dindarlık Farklılaşması: Bir Meta-Analiz Denemesi," *Fırat Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 17/2 (2012), 24–25.

⁴⁴ Asım Yapıcı, "Cinsiyete Göre Farklılaşan Dindarlıklar ve Kadınlarda Dinsel Yaşamın Farklı Görünüşleri," *Dini Araştırmalar* 19/49 (November 24, 2016), 154–155.

⁴⁵ Üzeyir Ok - Fatma Gül Cırhınlioğlu, "Kadınlar mı Yoksa Erkekler mi Daha Dindar?," *ZEITSCHRIFT FÜR DIE WELT DER TÜRKEN* 3/1 (April 15, 2011), 135–137.

in transforming religious motivations into academic honesty. Namely, this religious orientation is more likely associated with moral identity information, norm sensitivity, dishonesty tendency, and risky behaviors among females.⁴⁶ Overall, the findings make a genuine contribution to the current body of research.

5. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH AVENUES

This study presents novel findings but has limitations. It used cross-sectional data, so causal interpretations are not possible. The sample was limited to theology students from Kilis and Sakarya, restricting generalizability. Data were self-reported, which may have introduced social desirability bias, especially regarding academic dishonesty. The data is from 2019 and may not reflect current students, especially recent ones. In the AI era, broader student data could provide new insights. I also used the religious orientation measure and the Scale for attitude towards cheating, but future research should employ multidimensional measures to provide a richer understanding. Various values, virtues, and related measures used in Positive Psychology would also enable researchers to conduct comparative studies. Additionally, researchers may explore cheating attitudes by comparing theology faculty students with students from other majors, thereby addressing more comprehensive and authentic findings. Furthermore, studies would conduct qualitative research, conduct in-depth interviews with instructors and students, and provide strengthening information for measures of academic honesty and attitudes toward cheating. Finally, future studies should analyze the subject using behavioral indicators, peer reviews, and empirical data.

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⁴⁶ Aquino - Reed II, "The Self-Importance of Moral Identity"; Byrnes et al., "Gender Differences in Risk Taking"; Croson - Gneezy, "Gender Differences in Preferences."

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