THE ROLE OF MORALITY IN MEDIATING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGIOSITY AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY IN STUDENTS

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Abstrak

Mencegah kecurangan akademik adalah komponen penting dari budaya akademik yang disebut integritas akademik. Nilai-nilai agama dan moral dapat digunakan untuk memprediksi integritas akademik. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk memahami bagaimana moralitas memengaruhi hubungan antara integritas akademik dan religiusitas mahasiswa. Korelasi eksplanatori kuantitatif digunakan dalam penelitian ini, dengan menggunakan metode pengambilan sampel acak sederhana untuk memilih subjek. Terdapat 60 responden dalam penelitian ini. Tiga instrumen skala integritas akademik, skala religiusitas, dan skala moralitas digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data. Analisis data menggunakan analisis jalur bootstrapping dengan koreksi bias berdasarkan regresi dan mediasi dengan interval kepercayaan 95%. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa moralitas dapat berperan sebagai mediasi dalam hubungan antara religiusitas dan integritas akademik.

Kata Kunci: Integritas Akademik, Religiusitas, Moralitas

Abstract

Preventing academic cheating, a significant component of academic culture, is essential for maintaining academic integrity. Religious and moral values can be used to predict academic integrity. The goal of this research is to investigate the impact of morality on the relationship between students' academic integrity and religiosity. A quantitative kind of explanatory correlation is used in this research. Employing simple random sampling methods to select the subject. The survey had 60 respondents. Three instruments, the Academic Integrity Scale, the Religiosity Scale, and the Morality Scale, are used to collect data. Data analysis employed bootstrapping bias-corrected path analysis, based on regression and mediation, with

a 95% confidence interval. The findings of this research suggest that morality may play a mediating role in the relationship between religiousness and academic integrity.

Key Words: *Academic Integrity, Religiosity, Morality*

Introduction

Education is crucial in nurturing a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent but also possesses good character traits, such as honesty, sincerity, and a pure heart, which embody noble morals. One form of educational disparity is plagiarism (Park, Park, & Jang, 2013). This phenomenon refers to behaviour where someone claims and reproduces the work of others as their own, without citing the source (Lim & Nather, 2015). We cannot deny that plagiarism still exists in our education system. Cases of plagiarism highlighted by the media and widely reported to the public serve as confirmation. Numerous cases of plagiarism by lecturers and students at several universities, as reported by Tempo.com, have been reported. These cases are certainly concerning and tarnish the image of our education system. They also confirm the fact that something is wrong with our education system and demand our commitment to fixing it (Naben & Widyawati, 2024; Puspita, 2024)

Creating a quality education requires a crucial element in its implementation: academic integrity. A lack of strong character within an individual increases the likelihood of immoral behaviour (Comas-Forgas & Sureda-Negre, 2010). Academic integrity is viewed by many as one of the main challenges in education (Simon et al., 2018). Academic integrity is an expectation of honesty, professionalism, and trustworthiness (Jiang et al., 2013; Kwong et al., 2013) or an individual's tendency to act and behave in accordance with norms of truth and uphold effective ideals in academic contexts (Lofstrom, 2016; Macfarlane et al., 2014; Ramdani, 2018).

Honesty in the educational context is often referred to as academic honesty (Brimble, 2016; McKay, Cray, & Mittelman, 2019; Taylor & Bicak, 2018). Keohane defines five values that must be present in building academic integrity: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility (Keohane, 1999). Integrity enables individuals to acknowledge their strengths and weaknesses, which directly influences their future thinking patterns (Bultas, Schmuke, Davis, & Janice, 2017). This, in turn, increases self-confidence, a valuable asset in making informed decisions (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Integrity is demonstrated by consistency between words and actions, as reflected in daily behaviour. Likewise, individual integrity reflects the individual's honesty (Nawawi et al., 2022). Previous research by Hadijah & Jamaluddin (2020), Putry& Agung (2021), and Puasaningsih et al. (2022) found that integrity influences academic dishonesty. This means that if individual integrity increases, academic dishonesty decreases, and vice versa (Novianti, 2021). The crisis of academic integrity is a public issue. The danger facing today's students is being

perceived as a generation with lazy morals and a habit of cheating. The importance of integrity is essential in all aspects of life, including social, political, economic, educational, and cultural spheres. Without integrity, all these sectors of life will be paralysed. Pavela and McCabe state that developing academic integrity involves responding to any dishonesty that occurs in the academic environment (Alia, 2019).

Some characteristics of individuals who demonstrate academic honesty include: not plagiarising, not copying work/assignments, not referencing work without permission or citing sources, and avoiding other cheating practices such as using calculators, stealing answer keys, opening notes during exams, and so on (Lancaster, 2020; Yu et al., 2017). The issue of academic integrity should be a crucial and priority concern. Several findings suggest that numerous cases related to academic integrity still exist, including instances of academic dishonesty. At the high school level, cheating is commonplace. Research in the United States indicates that more than 60% of high school students have cheated on exams and plagiarised, and 90% have plagiarised a friend's work (Marques et al., 2019). Plagiarism in Indonesia is not a new problem. According to kompas.com, 30% to 83% of plagiarism cases were detected between 2019 and 2020, specifically from August 2019 to October 2020 (Sahrani, 2020). Susanti's study explains that, as of January 4, 2012, the Directorate General of Higher Education had recorded 21 state universities and seven private universities in Indonesia that had committed plagiarism. Some of these 21 universities are even among the country's leading universities. Cases that have shocked the Indonesian education world, as reported by, include the case of the former rector of the Maliki State Islamic University (UIN) Malang, Prof. Mudjia Rahardjo, who was suspected of plagiarising eight papers written by students in a book entitled "Quranic Sociolinguistics." The book was published by UIN Press in 2008. Then there is the case of the former rector of Jakarta State University (UNJ), Prof. Djaali, who was dismissed by the Minister of Research, Technology, and Higher Education for committing massive plagiarism. Another case concerns Dr Muhammad Zamrun, the rector of Halu Oleo University (UHO), who was accused of plagiarism by 30 UHO professors. He is also strongly suspected of plagiarism in several scientific papers he wrote for journals. In another case, the Rector of Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa University, Banten, Prof. Sholeh Hidayat, when he held the rank of Intermediate/IVd Principal Advisor, received a verbal warning for copyright infringement. Ade Juhana, a lecturer at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, allegedly completed his dissertation by plagiarising parts of Prof. Tihami's thesis and Mohamad Hudaeri's book. Heri Ahmad Sukria, a lecturer at the Bogor Agricultural Institute, was also accused of plagiarism for his book, "Sources and Availability of Raw Materials for Animal Feed in Indonesia." (Arifah, 2018; Susanti, 2014). This proves that plagiarism is not restricted by position; anyone can commit it

In fact, academic dishonesty is also found in Indonesia. The forms of academic dishonesty committed by students vary, including photographing exam results and distributing them to other students, cheating, using excuses for being absent from class, and failing to complete homework. Furthermore, during class, some students excuse themselves by asking to leave, claiming to be collecting their diplomas, when in reality they are going for a walk (Lusiane& Garvin, 2018; Qudsyi et al., 2018). A preliminary study conducted at SMK Darul Kamal NW Kembang Kerang found that many students still copy and paste homework assignments, collaborate, and cheat on tests. These findings were further supported by the violations recorded in the school counsellor's violation log. These violations reflect low academic integrity. This case requires attention, as schools are one of the educational institutions responsible for producing graduates with character for the future. Factors influencing academic integrity include religiosity and morality (Anderman & Murdock, 2011).

Academic cheating is a form of violation of academic norms and values committed by students (Halimatusyadiah & Nugraha, 2019). In this situation, religiosity can serve as a driving force in fostering moral and ethical awareness among students. Religiosity is an individual's way of expressing and practising all aspects of the religion they believe in. For example, a Muslim is encouraged to obey religious commands in both words and actions (Ancok& Suroso, 2008; Giovano et al., 2020; Koening & Bussing, 2010; Tonasa et al., 2021). Glock &Strak define religiosity as a religious attitude based on the presence of elements of internalised religion within an individual. It is considered religiosity if it tends toward an individual's internal belief in God (Ghufron & S, 2010). Religiosity has three dimensions: organisational religiosity, non-organisational religiosity, and intrinsic religiosity. If someone is highly religious, they should be more aware of morals and honesty, thus minimising the possibility of cheating. The Quran emphasises the importance of always being honest in every interaction, as one of the key aspects emphasised in the Quran is the concept of integrity and honesty. This principle is particularly relevant in the context of academic integrity among adolescents, who are expected to be honest and take responsibility for their actions (Chelmidar et al., 2025). Previous research has shown that religiosity has a negative influence on academic dishonesty among students (Herlyana et al., 2017).

Suryono (2022). Shafina et al. (2021) stated that religiosity influences academic dishonesty. This finding is supported by Saadah et al. (2020, who found that religiosity influences academic integrity. The higher a person's religiosity, the higher their level of academic integrity, and vice versa (Saadah et al., 2020). This suggests that individuals with high levels of religiosity tend to have a more substantial commitment to moral values, making them better able to distinguish between right and wrong. This contributes to reducing academic dishonesty. Another factor considered to influence academic dishonesty is morality. Santrock (2011) defines moral

development as changes in reasoning, feelings, and behaviour regarding standards of right and wrong. Crain (2014) suggests that moral reasoning is an individual's ability to evaluate right and wrong behaviours according to societal norms. Kohlberg (1995) defines moral reasoning as an individual's ability to consider, assess, and decide whether an action is good or bad, appropriate or inappropriate, worthy or unworthy, and to consider the consequences of such behaviour. There are three aspects of moral development: cognitive, affective, and behavioural.

A person with moral integrity is expected to demonstrate fairness and consistency in their actions. Moral integrity is constantly tested through challenges that assess an individual's adherence to rules and social norms. Moral integrity is a life based on principles (being integrated around principles) (Bettawinda&Nurmina, 2019). Individuals will act and behave in harmony with the morals they possess in response to a situation or condition around them. Individuals will determine the good or bad of a behaviour that will be carried out in accordance with their respective perceptions of control (Nazaruddin et al., 2023). Thomas & Sassi (2011) added that those who lack moral integrity are more likely to commit academic fraud, a dishonest behaviour in academic activities within the educational environment. When an individual wants to commit academic fraud, they will carefully consider the consequences before making a decision. The higher an individual's moral reasoning, the better their decision-making process, because the factors considered in decision-making are not only regulations but also the good or bad consequences of the decision taken. This is in line with research conducted by Farida Nur (2018), which showed that individuals with high moral reasoning exhibit lower levels of academic dishonesty behaviour. Strengthened by Sartika Dewi (2019), who found that the higher the academic dishonesty that students display, the lower their level of moral reasoning, or the lower the academic dishonesty, the higher their moral reasoning.

The development of a positive religiosity level will be accompanied by good morals and ethics within the individual, reflected in their behaviour (Pulungan et al., 2018). Individuals with high levels of religiosity and morality are considered less likely to engage in dishonest acts, including those in academics, because they have a basis in internalised binding rules. On the other hand, some research suggests that religiosity does not affect academic dishonesty. Christianto (2017) found no relationship between religiosity and academic dishonesty. The study found that levels of academic dishonesty were generally low. Several studies have conducted research on cheating, such as individual morality (Firmansyah, 2019; Sholehah, 2018), religiosity (Cipta, 2021; Mita &Indraswarawati, 2021), and integrity (Anggara&Suprasto, 2020; Apriliana et al., 2018), but previous research has primarily been conducted on employees and used morality as a predictor. Therefore, this research offers a novel approach by utilising morality as an intervention and implementing it with students. Based on the findings of a series of preliminary studies on

phenomena occurring among students and the literature review, further research is needed to clarify the role of morality in mediating the relationship between religiosity and academic integrity in students.

Methods

This research used a quantitative method with an explanatory correlational approach. Quantitative research emphasises the use of numbers and quantitative data in numerical analysis, which are collected through measurement and then processed using statistical methods (Azwar, 2017). Correlational research aims to determine the level of relationship between two variables without altering the data obtained (Arikunto, 2011). The sampling technique used in this study was simple random sampling. Simple random sampling is a sampling technique in which every member of the population has an equal chance of being selected as part of the research sample (Sugiyono, 2017). The rationale for using simple random sampling is that all members of the population share the same criteria as the phenomenon being studied. This study has one independent variable, namely religiosity, one moderator variable, namely morality, and one dependent variable, namely academic integrity. The subjects in this study were 160 students in grades 10-12 of SMK Darul Kamal NW Kembang Kerang, comprising 61 males and 99 females, aged 17-19 years. For more details on participant characteristics, see Table 1

Table 1 Participant Characteristics

Variable		Amount	Percentage
Gender	Male	61	38,12 %
	Female	99	61,88 %
Age	17 years	78	48,76 %
	18 years	45	28,12 %
	19 years old	37	23, 12 %

This study used three scales to measure each variable. The short version of the academic integrity scale, comprising 17 questions, is based on the conceptual alignment presented by Keohane (1999) and Ramdani (2018), with indicators including honesty, trustworthiness, fairness, respect, and responsibility. An example statement is "For me, honesty starts with myself," with a reliability level of 0.71.

The morality scale, comprising 30 questions, utilises a measurement tool developed by Kohlberg (1995) to assess aspects of moral development, including cognitive, affective, and behavioural components. An example statement is "For me, everyone deserves equal rights," with a reliability level of 0.73. The religiosity scale, with 15 questions, uses a measurement tool developed by Koenig et al. (2010). An example statement is "I feel the presence of God in my life," with a reliability level of 0.71. An instrument is considered reliable if its alpha value is greater

than the r value in the table. A Cronbach's Alpha of 0.60–0.799 indicates high reliability (Purwanto, 2016); thus, the reliability of the research scale used is categorised as high. The reason for using this scale is that other researchers widely use it to test similar variables. Furthermore, the indicators in the instrument also refer to the same theory and have been tested for validity and reliability. Data analysis utilised Hayes Process Analysis (SPSS) version 22 to determine the relationships between variables, including the dependent and independent variables, the dependent and mediator variables, and the mediator and dependent variables. After determining the relationships, bias-corrected bootstrapping with a 95% confidence interval was performed to assess the mediating effect or indirect relationship between the independent and dependent variables, specifically the role of morality in mediating the relationship between religiosity and academic integrity in students.

Results

The study aimed to determine the role of morality in mediating the relationship between religiosity and academic integrity in students. The respondents were 60 students from SMK Darul Kamal NW Kembang Kerang, as described in Table 2.

Table 2. Respondent Characteristics

Variable	Level	NumberofRespondents	Presentation	Mean	SD
Religiosity	Light	-	-		
	Currently	80	50%	42.10	5.15
	High	80	50%		
Morality	Light	-	-		
	Currently	75	46,87%	42.20	5.93
	High	85	53,13%		
AcademicIntegrity	Light	-	-		
	Currently	60	37,50%	49.95	6.43
	High	100	62,50%		

Based on the characteristics of respondents from 60 students with the religiosity variable, it shows that there are 360 students with a percentage of 50% included in the medium category and 60 students with a percentage of 50% included in the high category, with an average level of religiosity of 42.10 (m = 42.10, sd = 5.15). The morality variable indicates that 75 students, representing 46.87% of the sample, are included in the medium category, and 85 students, representing 53.13% of the sample, are included in the high category, with an average morality level of 42.20 (m = 42.20, sd = 5.93). Furthermore, the academic integrity variable indicates that 60 students, with a percentage of 37.50%, are included in the medium category, and 100 students, with a percentage of 62.50%, are included in the high category, resulting in an average level of

academic integrity of 49.95 (m = 49.95, sd = 6.43). The model diagram framework and hypothesis testing of the role of morality in mediating the relationship between religiosity and academic integrity in students are outlined in Table 2 and detailed in Table 4

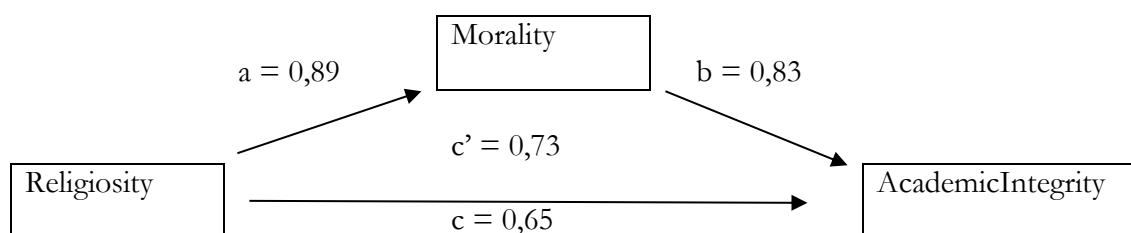Table 3. Model Diagram Framework Test

Table 4. Analysis of Regression and Mediation Results: Bootstrapping Bias-Corrected

Predictor	b	SE	p	LLCI (95%)	ULCI (95&)
Religiosity – Morality (a)	0,89	0.06	<0,05	0.89	1.16
Morality – Academic Integrity (b)	0,83	0.21	<0,05	0.48	1.32
Religiusitas - Academic Integrity (c)	0,65	0.12	<0,05	0.56	1.06
MediationEffect (c')	0,73	0.12	<0,05	0.67	1.18

Based on the model diagram of the effect size of morality in mediating the relationship between religiosity and academic integrity in Table 3, it is explained that path a, representing the relationship between religiosity and morality (β = 0.89, SE = 0.06, p < 0.05), shows a significant direct relationship. Path b, representing the relationship between morality and academic integrity (β=0.83, SE=0.21, and significance p <0.05), shows a significant direct relationship. Path c, representing the relationship between religiosity and academic integrity (β = 0.65, SE = 0.12, p < 0.05), shows a significant direct relationship. Path c', representing the mediating effect or indirect relationship (β=0.73, SE=0.12, and significance p <0.05), shows a significant indirect relationship, namely the role of morality in mediating the relationship between religiosity and academic integrity in students.

Discussion

The depiction of morality levels in mediating the relationship between religiosity and academic integrity in students, as depicted in Table 1, shows that 50% of students fall into the moderate category of religiosity and 50% into the high category. The morality variable shows that 46.87% of students fall into the moderate category and 53.13% into the high category. Furthermore, the academic integrity variable shows that 37.50% of students fall into the moderate category and 62.50% into the high category. From these results, it can be concluded that most

students have moderate to high levels of morality, which mediates the relationship between religiosity and academic integrity.

Path (a) shows a positive and significant relationship between religiosity and morality, meaning that students with high religiosity also have high morality, and vice versa. Morality is fundamental to social life. When discussing adolescents, morality is an important aspect that needs to be developed in children from an early age. The success or failure of instilling moral values in children will greatly determine a person's behaviour in the future (Retno, 2015). Susanto (2011) stated that it refers to customs, habits, rules/values, or ways of life. Meanwhile, morality is the willingness to accept and carry out moral rules, values, and principles, such as calls to do good to others, maintain order and security. According to Anshori (in Ghofur, 2021), humans require rules or boundaries to maintain the ongoing order in their moral, social, and religious lives. Therefore, in this case, more control is needed regarding the formation of behaviour in adolescents, one of which is religiosity. Religiosity refers to an individual's level of interest in their religion, as experienced and internalised through religious teachings, which influences all their actions and outlook on life. (Ancok& Suroso, 2011). Strengthened by Ghufron &Risnawita (2012), religiosity refers to a person's feelings and awareness of their religion, which then influences their actions and behaviour. The results of this study align with research conducted by Aridhona (2018), Ekawati et al. (2022), Aurelia et al. (2022), Jaenudin& Tahrir (2019), and Karimah & Dewanti (2021), which have examined the relationship between religiosity and student morality. The results showed a positive and significant relationship between religiosity and morality. This means that the higher a person's religiosity, the higher their morality.

Path (b) shows that morality has a positive and significant relationship with academic integrity, meaning that students with high morality also have high academic integrity, and vice versa. Academic integrity is often viewed as a significant challenge in education (Simon, 2018). According to Bosch and Cavallotti (2016), the term integrity encompasses four general elements that are described in different ways: fairness, coherence, ethical principles, and appropriate motivation focused on achieving reasonable goals. One factor that influences academic integrity is morality. Thomas and Sassi (2011) noted that individuals lacking moral integrity are more prone to dishonest behaviour in academic settings. Likewise, those who lack moral integrity are characterised by unstable personality conditions, primarily due to anxiety (Topham & Russell, 2012). Academic integrity is not only about avoiding violations, but also about doing the right thing and taking pride in meeting the highest moral standards in academic activities (Lofstrom, 2016). By creating a culture of academic integrity in the school environment, students will develop a sense of moral responsibility for academic integrity. The results of this study align with research conducted by Darmawan & Dariyo (2017), SARI (2022), Dewi & Rosiana (2022), Prayogi &

Pertiwi (2021), and Bettawinda & Nurmina (2019), which have examined the relationship between morality and academic integrity. The results showed a positive and significant relationship between morality and academic integrity. This means that the higher a person's morality, the higher their academic integrity.

Path (c') shows a mediating or indirect effect of morality on religiosity and academic integrity. This means that morality plays a role in mediating the relationship between religiosity and academic integrity in students. Morality is closely tied to spiritual and religious aspects. Individuals with a strong spiritual or religious aspect are automatically able to distinguish between good and evil in every action they perform. There is a mediating effect of moral disengagement on the relationship between religiosity and deviant behaviour (Cardwell, 2018). The results of this study align with those of several studies related to morality, religiosity, and academic integrity conducted by Nazaruddin et al. (2023), Rifani et al. (2021), and Arifah & Arief (2018), which demonstrate a positive and significant relationship between morality, religiosity, and academic integrity. This means that a person's academic integrity is high if their level of religiosity, mediated by morality, is high.

Conclusion

Based on the research results, academic integrity encompasses ethical and behavioural standards in the academic world. Factors influencing academic integrity include religiosity and morality. Religiosity is an individual's way of expressing and practising all aspects of their religion while upholding religious values. A person is considered to have integrity when they uphold their moral principles and are honest with themselves. Morality plays a significant role in explaining the influence of religiosity on unethical decision-making. Individuals who lack moral integrity are more likely to engage in academic fraud, a form of dishonest behaviour in academic activities within an educational environment. Religiosity can strengthen and support moral attitudes or beliefs. Morality helps students develop a more comprehensive understanding of ethical behaviour. The importance of honesty, humility, and traditional personality traits is a key factor in fostering integrity.

Recommendation

This research is limited to the role of morality in mediating the relationship between religiosity and academic integrity among students; therefore, a more in-depth study of the factors influencing academic integrity is needed. It is recommended to use or add variables not yet included in the study.

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