

Religiosity as a Predictor of Cheating Behavior in Junior High School Students: A Correlational Study

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Abstract

Cheating among students is a serious issue that undermines academic integrity and the quality of education. This study explores the relationship between religiosity and cheating behavior among junior high school students. Using a correlational approach, the research involved 77 students to measure religiosity levels and the frequency of cheating behaviors using scales validated for reliability and validity. Simple linear regression analysis revealed a significant effect of religiosity on cheating behavior ($p < 0.05$), with a 20.3% contribution. These findings indicate that higher levels of religiosity are associated with a lower tendency to cheat. The study suggests integrating character education based on religiosity into the curriculum to enhance academic integrity. Future research is recommended to explore other factors that may mediate this relationship in various cultural and religious contexts.

Keywords: cheating behavior, religiosity, guidance and counseling, adolescence

Abstrak

Perilaku menyontek di kalangan siswa merupakan isu serius yang berdampak negatif pada integritas akademik dan kualitas pendidikan. Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi hubungan antara religiusitas dan perilaku menyontek di kalangan siswa SMP. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan korelasi, studi ini melibatkan 77 siswa untuk mengukur tingkat religiusitas dan frekuensi perilaku menyontek melalui skala yang telah teruji validitas dan reliabilitasnya. Analisis regresi linier sederhana menunjukkan pengaruh signifikan ($p < 0.05$) religiusitas terhadap perilaku menyontek, dengan kontribusi sebesar 20,3%. Temuan ini mengindikasikan bahwa meningkatnya religiusitas berhubungan dengan penurunan kecenderungan menyontek. Penelitian ini menyarankan integrasi pendidikan karakter berbasis religiusitas dalam kurikulum untuk meningkatkan integritas akademik. Riset lanjutan disarankan untuk mengeksplorasi faktor lain yang memediasi hubungan ini di berbagai konteks budaya dan agama.

Kata kunci: perilaku menyontek, religiusitas, bimbingan dan konseling, remaja

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INTRODUCTION

Learning is a transformation process that occurs in a person as a result of contact with the environment to fulfill their life needs, which can affect their behavior (Santika & Zikra, 2023). In Indonesia, formal schools are where the learning process takes place. Through evaluation activities at the end of the period, the extent of students' understanding of the material taught can be determined. Exams are one of the ways to measure how well students learn at school (Atikah & Netrawati, 2023). However, as stated, Santika & Zikra (2023) some students take the exam honestly, using the skills they have, while others resort to dishonest tactics, such as cheating.

Cheating or plagiarizing, imitating, taking other people's work with or without permission, or making special notes that one makes oneself before taking an exam to achieve success, is a reprehensible act or act of cheating in academic matters related to the evaluation/examination of learning outcomes Samiroh (Angelia, 2019). Cheating is dishonest behavior by students in completing assignments or during exams to achieve academic success.

Based on research conducted by Atikah & Netrawati (2023) who found that cheating behavior among students in general has high accuracy or 34.18%, and Devi et.al. (2023) found that cheating behavior among students also has high accuracy, namely 75.1%. This shows that most students continue to cheat when doing homework and tests. However, it cannot be denied that various variables, such as a person's laziness, anxiety, the assumption that their activities are unknown, and the perception that the action is not detrimental and immoral (Hutton, 2006; French, 2006; Hartanto, 2012; Amelia et.al., 2017) self-confidence, self-efficacy, procrastination, (Meydiansyah, 2021) influence the level of a person's cheating behavior, and a number of other studies state that the role of religiosity and self-confidence in cheating behavior will have an impact on the degree of cheating behavior among students.

Religious factors are an interesting topic in relation to cheating behavior. According to Glock and Stark (Falikah, 2021), religiosity is defined as an individual's level of understanding and knowledge of their religion, as well as their commitment to its teachings. The level of commitment mentioned here is something that every individual needs to understand as a whole so that the individual can later have various ways to become a religious person. Religiosity can be interpreted as a person's understanding and knowledge of the values of the religion they believe in (Saleh, 2022; Sugiyarto et al., 2024).

According to Kusdiana et.al (2018) students who apply religious values in their lives, they will know the boundaries between good and bad, permissible and not, rewarding or sinful, so that these students have the awareness that whatever they do, God always sees them, which will be different from students who do not apply religious values in themselves, these students do not have a fear of cheating such as cheating and do not feel that they have committed a sin (Khamidah & Brata, 2021; Syahnaz et al., 2023; Yuhani`ah, 2021). Therefore, when students commit to following religious rules, they will realize that cheating is against religious values.

Even though students admit that cheating is a bad and dishonest practice or behavior that should be avoided, on the other hand, students consider cheating as a shortcut to achieve the desired results or grades without having to take the risk of getting bad grades and failing/not passing certain subjects (Luthfiana et.al., 2022). When students already know that cheating is bad or shameful behavior but still do it, this is evidence that there is moral stretching in the students. Therefore, the aim of this study is to determine the



influence of religiosity on cheating behavior in junior high school students. This study offers novelty in the study of cheating behavior among students, by examining the relationship between religiosity and the tendency to cheat among junior high school (SMP) students.

Although many previous studies have examined the psychological and social factors that influence cheating behavior, few have highlighted the role of religiosity as a major predictor in the educational context of adolescence, particularly at the junior high school level. The novelty of this research lies in its more focused approach to the demographics of adolescents, who are at a crucial stage of moral and social identity development. By examining how students' religious values shape their ethical decision-making, this study helps fill a gap in the previous literature. In addition, this study examines the influence of religiosity from various aspects, whether in the form of faith, adherence to religious teachings, or daily religious practices, on students' tendency to engage in cheating behavior. Thus, this research is not only relevant to addressing academic issues but also has the potential to offer an innovative approach, especially in guidance and counseling, in educating future generations to value integrity.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used in this study is quantitative, with a correlational or causal design. Correlational or causal research aims to determine whether there is a relationship or influence between two or more variables (Sugiyono, 2019). The study used religiosity as the independent variable and cheating behavior as the dependent variable. The instruments used in this study were compiled based on a study of adjustment variables. The aspects of religiosity refer to the concept proposed by Glock & Stark (Falikah, 2021), which include belief, religious practice (worship), feeling, religious knowledge, and effect.

Meanwhile, the cheating behavior variable was developed based on the aspects put forward by Hill et al. (1977) which include behavior, suggestions (target), situation, and time. The respondents in this study were 77 students selected through random sampling. The data collection instruments were a religiosity scale and a cheating behavior scale administered via an online survey. Validity testing was carried out using product-moment and person reliability using Cronbach's alpha.

The validity results of the religiosity instrument showed that all items were declared valid (15 items), while the cheating behavior instrument produced 14 items that were declared valid. The reliability test yielded 0.927 for the religiosity instrument and 0.792 for the cheating behavior instrument. Based on these results, the instrument is considered highly reliable because both instruments have reliability coefficients > 0.60 (Ghazali, 2018). The data were analyzed using simple linear regression based on the simultaneous significance test (F test), the coefficient of determination (R^2), and the individual parameter significance test (t test) using SPSS version 25.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

When conducting simple linear regression, it is important to ensure that the data used meet several basic assumptions, known as classical assumptions. This classical assumption test consists of several components that must be assessed before proceeding to the regression analysis. These components include normality, linearity, and heteroscedasticity tests.



First, based on the results of the normality test carried out using the one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test with a significance level of 0.05 (5%). According to Widana & Muliani (2020) the decision-making process for the normality test, if the significance value (sig value) of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is greater than α ($\alpha = 0.05$), then the data is considered to be normally distributed. After analyzing the results of the one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov, the asym value was obtained. Sig (2-tailed) with a significance value (sig) of 0.200. Thus, it can be concluded that the normality test results are normally distributed because of the asym value. Sig (2-tailed) is $0.200 > 0.05$.

Second, researchers conducted a linearity test to determine whether a linear relationship existed between religiosity and cheating behavior. According to Widana & Muliani (2020) the decision-making criteria in this test, if the sig. deviation from linearity value is greater than 0.05, then there is a linear relationship between the two variables. Based on the results of the linearity test, the sig.deviation value for linearity was $0.891 > 0.05$. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant linear relationship between religiosity and cheating behavior.

Finally, a heteroscedasticity test was conducted to assess whether the regression model was biased. In this study, the Glejser test was used to test heteroscedasticity. According to Widana & Muliani (2020) the decision-making criteria for this test, if the significance value (Sig) between the independent variable and the absolute residual variable is greater than 0.05 ($\text{Sig} > 0.05$), then there are no signs of heteroscedasticity. On the other hand, if the value is less than 0.05 ($\text{Sig} < 0.05$), then there are signs of heteroscedasticity. Based on the heteroscedasticity test, the p-value was $0.265 > 0.05$. Therefore, there are no signs of heteroscedasticity across all observations in the regression model.

Based on the results of the prerequisite test or classical assumption test conducted, the data used meet the required criteria. Therefore, the simple linear regression parametric analysis can continue. The results of this simple linear regression test are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.
 Simple Linear Regression Analysis Results

Religiosity – Cheating Behavior	F test		t-test		Coefficient of Determination (R^2)
	F value	p-value	t value	p-value	
	19.076	0,000	4,368	0,000	0,203

Based on Table 1, it can be seen that the F value is 19.076 with a p-value of 0.000, indicating that the regression model used as a whole is statistically significant. This means that the independent variable (Religiosity) significantly influences the dependent variable (Cheating Behavior). The t-value of 4.368 with a p-value of 0.000 indicates that the regression coefficient for the independent variable (Religiosity) is statistically significant. This means that there is a significant relationship between religiosity and cheating behavior. In addition, the R^2 value of 0.203 indicates that 20.3% of the variability in cheating behavior is explained by religiosity. The remaining 79.7% is explained by other variables not included in this model. This indicates that although religiosity has a significant influence on cheating behavior, there are still other factors that influence cheating behavior that need to be considered in further research.



Discussion

The results of this analysis show that there is a significant relationship between religiosity and cheating behavior. Religiosity significantly reduces cheating behavior, although the effect is relatively small (20.3%). Religiosity can be defined as a condition where an individual believes in the existence of something transcendent that gives meaning to life, carries out activities that connect emotions with their beliefs and spiritual knowledge, is able to distinguish between right and wrong thoughts and behavior, and adheres to these principles and becomes part of a community that has similar beliefs (Djie & Ariela, 2021) or it can also be defined as a person's understanding and commitment to practicing the values of the religion they adhere to.

Students who are religious and have high religiosity can be seen from their lives where they truly practice the teachings of their religion, have faith in the power and authority of God, understand, apply, and practice seriously what God has determined, and can stay away from what is forbidden (Husna & Aslamawati, 2022). Students who apply religious values know the boundaries of what is good, permissible, and beneficial to do and realize that they are always under God's supervision (Musbikin, 2021). On the other hand, students who do not have religious values will not worry about breaking the law, committing sins, or worrying about their behavior being seen by God (Abdullah, 2016).

The findings of this study can support research Kusdiana et.al (2018) that found that there is a relationship between religiosity and cheating behavior, so that the higher the value of religiosity in a student, the less likely it is for the student to cheat. So this can be interpreted as meaning that students who have high religiosity will not cheat, because they are aware that this is contrary to the values or teachings of their religion (Husna & Aslamawati, 2022; Karim, 2022; Sofyan, 2013). This is also in accordance with what was conveyed by Fitri & Pramadi (2019) when a student is committed to following the rules of his religion, then the student will realize that cheating behavior is behavior that is contrary to religion, because religious teachings never justify any act or action of cheating.

Thus, the findings of this study confirm the importance of religiosity in academic behavior, particularly cheating. Although the influence of religiosity on cheating behavior is relatively small (20.3%), the significant relationship shows that the religious values held by students can be a factor in preventing cheating. Therefore, a deeper, more holistic integration of religious education into the school environment can help develop students' ethical character and integrity (Alwi, 2014). Religiousness is also based on the results of studies conducted on Herdiansyah et al (2024) contributing to mental health and individual well-being. In addition, further research should explore other factors that may influence cheating behavior, such as academic pressure, peer influence, and learning strategies implemented by schools.

This study also emphasizes the need for a multi-disciplinary approach in understanding and addressing cheating behavior among students. Psychological, social, and environmental factors must be considered in efforts to reduce cheating. Thus, it is not only religiosity that needs to be considered, but also the family environment, school culture, and applicable educational policies and practices. The combination of these factors is expected to create an educational ecosystem that supports academic integrity and encourages students to be honest in all aspects of their lives.

The implications of these findings for guidance and counseling are significant. School counselors can develop guidance programs that emphasize strengthening religious values as part of efforts to prevent cheating behavior. This program can include activities



that teach the importance of integrity, honesty, and personal responsibility, grounded in religious teachings (Isnaini, 2018). In addition, counselors can also collaborate with religious teachers to develop learning materials that place more emphasis on the practical application of religious values in students' daily lives (Tri, 2015; Isnaini, 2018). Thus, it is hoped that students will not only understand religious teachings theoretically but also internalize and apply them in real-world actions, including in academic contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that religiosity has a significant influence in reducing cheating behavior among junior high school students, although the influence is relatively small (20.3%). Students with high religiosity tend to be more obedient to religious teachings and less likely to cheat. These findings emphasize the importance of in-depth integration of religious education in schools to shape students' ethical and integrity-based character. An important implication for guidance and counseling is the development of programs that emphasize strengthening religious values to prevent cheating. Collaboration with religious teachers and a multi-disciplinary approach that considers psychological, social, and environmental factors is expected to create an educational ecosystem that supports academic integrity and encourages students to behave honestly.

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