

Effect of Religiosity on Cheating Behavior in Universitas Indonesia Students With Moral Identity as a Mediating Factor

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ABSTRACT

Religiosity is often considered to be a determinant of cheating behavior. In this study, moral identity was tested as a mediating factor on the effect of religiosity on cheating behavior. Data on religiosity, moral identity, and cheating behavior were collected from 197 students aged 18–25 years enrolled at Universitas Indonesia (45 men, 152 women). The mediation regression test revealed no significant effect of intrinsic religiosity, extrinsic religiosity, and religiosity as a quest on cheating behavior; moral identity does not mediate the effect of religiosity on cheating behavior. The conclusion is that religiosity has no direct or indirect effect, through moral identity, on cheating behavior.

Keywords: cheating, college student, moral identity, religiosity.

1. INTRODUCTION

Cheating behavior is a widely discussed and studied topic. The discussion related to academic cheating is indeed common among students in the context of student life. The reporting rate of academic cheating is high; based on studies conducted in several countries, the incidence of academic fraud ranges from 61% to 85% (Al-Dwairi & Al-Waheidi, 2004; Lin & Wen, 2007; McCabe & Trevino, 1997). In fact, Arifah, Setiyani, and Arief (2018) reported that in Indonesia, 100% of accounting education students at a well-known university believed that they had discovered the practice of academic cheating on campus. Cheating is not only prevalent in the academic field. As emerging adults, individuals aged 18–25 years (Papalia &

Martorell, 2014), cannot be separated from their responsibilities in the world of work, the economy, until marriage context (Schulenberg, O'Maley, Backman, & Johnson, 2005), that is why students are not also free from the issue of cheating in these other fields.

In Indonesia, cheating itself is often discussed in the context of religiosity and morality. As stated in the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia (Undang-Undang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia Tahun 1945), one of the principles possessed by this country is divinity. These divine principles are related to Indonesian religious and cultural values, which are set forth in legal matters and become a logical foundation regarding what is right and what is wrong (Wasitaatmadja, 2015). Therefore, when

considering the issue of cheating, the community will relate it to religiosity. Several studies found that students with high levels of religiosity had a reduced tendency to exhibit cheating behavior (Arifah et al., 2018; Casidy, Lwin, & Phau, 2017; Rettinger & Jordan, 2005; Said, Alam, Karim, & Johari, 2018).

Conversely, some studies have reported that there is no relationship between the level of religiosity and the appearance of cheating behavior (Mensah & Azila-Gbettor, 2018; Mustapha, Hussin, & Siraj, 2017; Willson, 2016). The inconsistency of results on this topic underlies the researcher's assumption that there are gaps in the understanding of the relationship or influence of religiosity on cheating behavior.

Cheating itself is considered a form of immoral behavior that is present because of the absence of morality. Researchers have identified moral identity as a variable that might mediate the effect of religiosity on cheating behavior. Moral identity speaks of individual self-identification as moral human beings; individuals who place high importance on moral values identify themselves as moral individuals (Hardy & Carlo, 2005). Hardy and Carlo (2005) explain that in essence, an individual will commit immoral actions like cheating if they do not have moral motivations stemming from moral identity. In addition, religiosity is said to be the source (antecedent) for the formation of moral identity (Vitell et al., 2009). Geyer and Baumeister (2005) reported that religion or religious beliefs are determining factors of an individual's morality. Thus, the researchers consider that religiosity may not directly influence the emergence of cheating behavior, but

instead, it is mediated by moral identity; low moral identity in individuals directly affects cheating behavior.

The context of this research focuses on cheating behaviors in students, specifically, University of Indonesia (UI) students. The selection of the scope of students is based on the moral maturity of individual students. As emerging adults, students are considered capable of defining moral values and principles and applying them in real life (Kohlberg, 1973). UI was chosen because of UI's attention to moral issues, especially the values of integrity, honesty, and justice, as stated in the regulation named *Peraturan Majelis Wali Amanat Universitas Indonesia nomor 004 tahun 2015 tentang Anggaran Rumah Tangga Universitas Indonesia*. The researchers hope that the results of this research can be utilized to solve the problem of cheating behavior in students.

The researchers aim to investigate the effect of religiosity on cheating behavior with moral identity as a mediating factor. Few studies have examined the relationship between these three variables together in a mediation model. In addition, the issue of cheating behavior is prevalent, especially among students. The existence of cheating behavior issues in the scope of student life can negatively impact various parties. The greatest impact is on the educational institution, where college students will experience distortion of the results of educational assessments (Bloodgood, Turnley, & Mudrack, 2008). Misrepresentation may also lead to other disadvantages, such as difficulty determining ethical policies for educational institutions and government in the field of education due to unclear evaluation results.

Bloodgood et al. (2008) explained that distorted assessment results could also be detrimental to peers and employment providers because individuals who successfully passed job selection examinations were actually less competent. UI created a rule regarding cheating behavior on campus. Through the provision named *Ketetapan Majelis Wali Amanat Universitas Indonesia nomor 005 tahun 2004 tentang Tata Tertib Kehidupan Kampus Universitas Indonesia*, UI regulates all forms of cheating and specifically, plagiarism, as behaviors that are strictly prohibited by UI residents. The highest sanction for violating the provision is the revocation of a position as a citizen of UI or, if they are students, they cannot continue their education at the UI campus.

From the matters related to the importance of overcoming the issue of cheating behavior, the researchers seek to contribute to the community and specifically educational institutions. The results of this study are expected to enrich the knowledge and academic literature related to cheating behavior, religiosity, and moral identity, as well as the dynamics of the relationship between the three. In practical terms, researchers hope to contribute input to institutions to provide appropriate interventions for dealing with cheating behaviors. Specifically, for the University of Indonesia educational institutions, the results of this study are expected to provide input for the preparation of curriculum related to moral and religious education.

1.1. Theoretical Review

Cheating is defined as behavior carried out to gain benefits by violating standards and rules that have been agreed upon or

accepted (Shu, Gino, & Bazerman, 2011). The intended benefits can be wealth, fame, pleasure, and success (van Prooijen & van Lange, 2016). Cheating behavior may arise due to several factors, some internal in nature, such as personality and religiosity (Casidy et al., 2017; Giluk & Postlethwaite, 2015; Said et al., 2018); some are external, such as social conditions and opportunities or benefits obtained from cheating (Mazar, Amir, & Ariely, 2008; Tsui & Ngo, 2016). In this study, researchers focus on internal factors, specifically, religiosity.

Allport (1950 in Walborn, 2004) defines religiosity as an individual's sentiments about the interests, forms, or systems of belief. He also stated that each individual has a self-scheme that influences the direction of their true self. In this context, sentiments toward a belief determine the direction of identity formation. Referring to Allport (1966), which divides the adherents of religious beliefs into two groups, some individuals are oriented to intrinsic religiosity while others are oriented to extrinsic religiosity.

Allport and Ross (1967) explain that individuals with high intrinsic religiosity are able to build harmony between their beliefs and religious decisions, in other words, they internalize their religious values or teachings. Intrinsic religiosity is referred to as, "... lives their religion." In contrast, individuals with extrinsic religiosity use religious beliefs to fulfill their personal goals, i.e., "... to use religion for their own ends" (Allport & Ross, 1967). Those who possess this religious orientation are more inclined to the instrumental and utilitarian values; therefore, they view religion or religious beliefs as a means of achievement.

Complementing Allport's concept of religiosity above, Batson (1976) suggests that some individuals are religiously oriented toward the "quest." Individuals of this type emphasize their religious orientation on the "why"-related questions to the reasons behind the existence of social structures and life itself. These questions will be triggered by tensions, contradictions, and tragedies in the life of the individual in society (Batson, 1976).

Moral identity is a variable proposed by the researchers as a mediator connecting religiosity with cheating. Moral identity itself is an individual self-concept related to moral traits, which more simply, can be interpreted as a mental picture of being a moral human being (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Hardy & Carlo, 2011). Aquino and Reed (2002) also describe moral identity as a form of self-regulation that leads to the emergence of moral action. An individual who has a moral identity will construct a sense of moral concerns (Hardy & Carlo, 2005).

2. METHODS

Referring to Johnson and Christensen (2014), this study can be classified as non-experimental research with a correlational approach. The researchers examined the dynamics of the relationships between religiosity, cheating, and moral identity; more precisely, we investigated the effect of religiosity on cheating behavior, positioning moral identity as a mediating factor.

A total of 213 people participated in this study, but data from 16 participants were excluded from the analysis due to incompleteness or incompatibility with the criteria. Therefore, data from 187 participants were included in this

research. All participants were UI undergraduate or diploma (vocational) students, aged 18-25 years. A non-probability sampling technique was used, which can be specifically classified as convenience sampling (Gravetter & Forzano, 2012). Three measuring instruments were used in this study, two self-reporting scales and one *procedural behavioral* technique.

For measuring religiosity, researchers used the Religious Life and Orientation Scale (RLOS) by Voci, Bosetti, and Veneziani (2017). The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was > 0.8 for each of the three subscales that measure different dimensions of religiosity. The instrument consists of 18 items; eight items measure intrinsic dimensions, five items measure extrinsic dimensions, and five items measure quest dimensions. All subscale responses are in the form of a 7-point Likert Scale that describes an individual's conformity to a statement. The researchers used the Moral Identity Questionnaire (MIQ) by Black and Reynolds (2016) to measure moral identity. The MIQ consists of 19 statement items that must be responded to with a 6-point Likert Scale to express agreement. This measuring instrument has a high reliability coefficient of 0.89 using Cronbach's alpha.

To quantify cheating behavior, researchers used the *Tugas Matriks Angka* instrument, which was adapted from the "Adding-to-10 Task" created by Mazar et al. (2008). This instrument consists of a mathematical task, where participants are asked to find two decimal numbers that add to 10. Before the task is started, the researchers will trigger cheating behavior by stating that there is a reward of Rp. 1,000.00 for each correct answer. Rp

1,000.00 was chosen as the triggering reward because people show more interest in monetary rewards, especially if the money is awarded directly after the activity, than other rewards such as snacks, shopping vouchers, or lotteries. The participants were asked to answer 20 questions on the worksheet provided and report their scores on a separate sheet. A deception procedure was employed by asking participants to discard the worksheet in the trash before writing the report and handing it in to the researcher. Thus, participants assume that the researchers do not check the actual workmanship, creating an opportunity to provide false reporting.

The researchers will identify cheating behavior by examining the difference between the questions that are actually successfully answered and those self-reported as correct by participants. Researchers will cross check the worksheet that has been discarded with the report sheet. If the report sheet shows more correct answers, cheating behavior is identified.

This research seems similar to experimental research because of the procedural behavioral technique used to measure cheating behavior. However, cheating behavior in this study is an output variable. Researchers were not differentiating the treatment or condition of the participants; thus, there is no random assignment procedure to look for differences between groups of participants.

Three types of analysis techniques were used, namely, demographic descriptive analysis, Pearson's correlation analysis, and regression analysis with mediation models. Descriptive

demographic analysis was conducted to determine the analyze the general characteristics of the participants. Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted to determine the relationship or correlation between variables. The regression analysis with mediation models was carried out to identify the effect of religiosity dimensions on cheating behavior with moral identity as a mediator. These analysis techniques were combined to determine the effect of religiosity on cheating behavior and the role of moral identity.

3. RESULTS

The descriptive analysis results related to demographic data revealed that 22.8% of participants were men and 77.2% were women. Most participants (28.9%) were 20 years old and the average age was 19.78 years. Among the participants, 79.2% identified themselves as Muslim. In addition, the majority of participants (38.1%) were second-semester students. Finally, of the 197 participants, 174 people did not cheat on the *Tugas Matriks Angka*. Meanwhile, there were 23 people (11.7%) who demonstrated cheating behavior.

The results of the correlation analysis revealed no relationship between the three dimensions of religiosity, moral identity, and cheating behavior. The correlation coefficients of intrinsic, extrinsic, religiosity as quests, and moral identity with cheating behavior are $r = 0.07$, $r = 0.10$, $r = -0.11$, and $r = -0.08$, respectively ($p > 0.05$ for all). In the same analysis, there was a significant relationship between religiosity and moral identity. The correlation coefficients of intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity with moral identity are $r = 0.35$ and $r = 0.31$,

respectively, both are significant with $p < 0.05$. Thus, a significant positive correlation between intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity with moral identity was observed. The correlation coefficient of religiosity as a quest with moral identity is $r = -0.10$, which was not significant ($p >$

0.05), indicating that there is no relationship between religiosity as a quest and moral identity. All results of the correlation analysis are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Matrix of the relationships between cheating behavior, religiosity, and moral identity

Variable		1	2	3	4	5
1. Cheating Behavior	r	1	0.07	0.10	-0.11	-0.08
	Sig.	-	0.18	0.08	0.07	0.15
2. Intrinsic Religiosity	r	0.07	1	0.70*	-0.60*	0.35*
	Sig.	0.18	-	0.00	0.00	0.00
3. Extrinsic Religiosity	r	0.10	0.70*	1	-0.42*	0.31*
	Sig.	0.08	0.00	-	0.00	0.00
4. Religiosity as Quest	r	-0.11	-0.60*	-0.42*	1	-0.10
	Sig.	0.07	0.00	0.00	-	0.07
5. Moral Identity	r	-0.08	0.35*	0.31*	-0.10	1
	Sig.	0.15	0.00	0.00	0.07	-

*sign. at LoS 0,05 (1-tailed)

To answer the main research question, researchers used regression analysis techniques with mediation models. The results of the first regression analysis

examined the direct effect of each dimension of religiosity on cheating behavior. These results are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Direct effect of the dimensions of religiosity on cheating behavior

Predictor	Outcome	B	p	LLCI	ULCI
Intrinsic Religiosity	Cheating Behavior	0.04	0.85	-4.46	3.66
Extrinsic Religiosity	Cheating Behavior	0.09	0.07	-0.01	0.20
Religiosity as Quest	Cheating Behavior	-0.06	0.11	-0.13	0.01

In Table 2, we can see that the regression coefficients testing the effect of intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity on cheating, respectively are $B = 0.04$ (CI: -4.46; 3.66) and $B = 0.09$ (CI: -0.01; 0.20). These results indicate an insignificant positive effect with $p > 0.05$, from intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity to cheating behavior. The regression

coefficient testing the effect of religiosity as a quest on cheating behavior is $B = -0.06$ (CI: -0.13; 0.01), meaning that there is an insignificant negative effect with $p > 0.05$. The regression analysis also shows the indirect effect of each dimension of religiosity on cheating through moral identity mediators. These results are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Indirect Effect of Each Dimension of Religiosity on Cheating Behavior

Predictor	Mediator	Outcome	B	LLCI	ULCI
Intrinsic Religiosity	Moral Identity	Cheating Behavior	-0.01	-0.04	0.01
Extrinsic Religiosity	Moral Identity	Cheating Behavior	-0.02	-0.07	0.00
Religiosity as Quest	Moral Identity	Cheating Behavior	0.00	-0.00	0.02

In Table 3, we can see the coefficient of the indirect effect of each dimension of religiosity on cheating behavior through the mediation of moral identity. First, the coefficient of the indirect effect of intrinsic religiosity on cheating behavior through moral identity is $B = -0.01$ (CI: -0.04; 0.01). Second, the coefficient of the indirect effect of extrinsic religiosity on

cheating behavior through moral identity is $B = -0.02$ (CI: -0.07; 0.00). Finally, the coefficient of the indirect effect of religiosity as a quest on cheating behavior through moral identity is $B = 0.00$ (CI: -0.01; 0.02). The three results are not significant because they meet the criteria of crossing the zero-confidence interval.

4. DISCUSSION

The results of this study do not support findings from previous studies, which state that religiosity is related to or influences cheating behavior (e.g., Arifah et al., 2018; Casidy et al., 2017; Purnamasari & Amaliah, 2015; Rettinger & Jordan, 2005; Said et al., 2018). Instead, our results support the findings of other studies, which reported that religiosity has no relationship and/or influence on cheating behavior (e.g., Mensah & Azila-Gbettor, 2018; Mustapha et al., 2017; Willson, 2016). Additionally, moral identity was not proven to have a role as a mediator between each dimension of religiosity and cheating behavior. Thus, the researchers' assumption that religiosity is a source of moral identity and moral identity will affect individual moral behavior has not been proven.

Several factors may have affected the results of this study, including methodological reasons (e.g., number of participants, recruiting method, conditions when collecting data, weaknesses of

measuring instruments), internal factors of individuals (e.g., gender, personality, presence of moral hypocrisy), and external factors of individuals (e.g., characteristics of values, culture integrity in the UI environment, the existence of religious priming).

The proportion of participants who cheated and was quite small; the number of individuals who cheated was less than 12% of the total sample. In fact, according to Gravetter and Forzano (2012), a larger sample size will be more representative of the population. The small sample size in this study may not reflect the representation of individual populations that do tend to cheat.

The recruitment process is also a methodological factor that can influence outcomes. Participants were recruited by spreading messages through online conversation application groups or social media. To get a larger number of participants, the researcher was "asking for help" and without realizing it was actually automatically selecting participants. In this

way, the researcher will find people who exhibit a prosocial motivation to become participants. Based on research, individuals with prosocial characteristics also have agreeableness personality traits (Graziano, Habashi, Sheese, & Tobin, 2007). The results of this study are consistent with other studies that show the same thing (e.g., Carlo, Okun, Knight, & de Guzman, 2005; Habashi, Graziano, & Hoover, 2016). Researchers consider this personality trait important because agreeableness personality traits also have a significant relationship with cheating. Researchers assume that the prosocial motives of participants make them less likely to display cheating behavior. The participants have volunteered for the data collection activities to help the researchers and it can be assumed that they do not want to do something that will harm the researchers, i.e., cheating.

The data collection conditions may also affect the results. There is a possibility that the amount of Rp 1,000.00 is not a large enough reward to trigger cheating behavior (Mazar et al., 2008). In addition, the researcher also highlighted the fact that researchers and colleagues were in the data collection room, which can lead to participants to feel pressured not to be caught cheating or be judged as cheaters. When referring to self-determination theory by Ryan and Deci (2000), evaluation pressure is one of six external factors that can reduce the influence of internal factors in motivating behavior. That means rewards, threats, and evaluation pressures can be a confounding variable in this study.

The last methodological factor is that the RLOS and MIQ measuring instruments are in the form of self-report. The self-

report measuring instrument itself is quite vulnerable to bias. Cohen, Swerdlik, and Sturman (2013) stated that the use of self-reporting has deficiencies related to the response style provided by participants. The response style that poses the most threat to the measurement bias, according to the researcher, is if the participant gives the socially desirable response and gives the best or most positive response. Researchers call these two response styles a threat because the self-report measuring instrument is relative and participants may want to achieve good self-evaluation results and in accordance with social desires.

Next to be discussed are the internal factors that can influence the results of the research. The first factor is gender. Based on the demographic data presented in the results section of the study, the majority of participants were women. Referring to Yu, Glanzer, Sriram, Johnson, and Moore (2017), it was found that men tend to commit more violations in the form of cheating than women. Likewise, if we look at previous studies, men are often reported to display higher rates of cheating (Hensley, Kirkpatrick, & Burgoon, 2013; Niiya, Ballantyne, North, & Crocker, 2008; Whitley Jr., Nelson, & Jones, 1999) and have a more positive or tolerant attitude toward cheating (Whitley Jr. et al., 1999).

Additionally, the personality factor might be another confounding variable in this study. As mentioned earlier, Giluk and Postlethwaite (2015), found that the nature of conscientiousness and agreeableness are two personality traits that have a significant negative effect on cheating. Conscientiousness directs individuals to obey the rules and norms that apply,

preventing cheating, while agreeableness promotes an attitude of caring for the welfare of others, thereby, reducing the possibility of performing actions that may harm others, including cheating (Giluk & Postlethwaite, 2015). This personality factor was not measured or controlled by researchers; thus, it could have a strong influence on the tendency to display cheating behavior, affecting the results of the research.

The last internal factor to discuss is moral hypocrisy. Valdesolo and DeSteno (2007) define hypocrisy as a different or unfair evaluation of violations when committed by other individuals and when carried out by oneself. Whereas, moral hypocrisy is the phenomenon where an individual openly adheres to moral norms and hopes that others obey these moral norms, but violates the norms through their behavior (Lammers, Stapel, & Galinsky, 2010). Moral hypocrisy also explains how individuals face motivational dilemmas between choosing to violate ethics or not (Batson & Thompson, 2001). This variable should be measured in research so that its influence on the decision to cheat can be determined and/or control it from the moral identity variable.

In addition to the methodological reasons and individual internal factors, individual external factors can also influence the results of this study. The external factors that are highlighted by researchers include the characteristics of values and culture of integrity in the UI environment and the existence of religious priming that is not controlled. These contextual characteristics can have a considerable influence on the dynamics of the relationship between variables because

each particular cultural environment has its own characteristics.

UI, as previously explained, is very conscientious of the values raised in the campus environment. *Peraturan Majelis Wali Amanat Universitas Indonesia nomor 004 tahun 2015 tentang Anggaran Rumah Tangga Universitas Indonesia* explains that as a UI community, it is obligatory to instill and develop nine values of life. Two of these values are honesty and fairness, which are a negation of the cheating itself. UI students who display fraud are very few in number, which becomes a positive indicator that UI has succeeded in planting and developing honesty and fairness.

Furthermore, through the *Ketetapan Majelis Wali Amanat Universitas Indonesia nomor 005 tahun 2004 tentang Tata Tertib Kehidupan Kampus Universitas Indonesia*, members of the UI community are prohibited from all forms of cheating. UI citizens can be sanctioned with dismissal as a result of cheating. This provision becomes the foundation of the integrity culture rules at UI. This cultivation of integrity is thought to prevent cheating behavior in all UI community members, the majority of whom are students. Students are aware of the impacts of cheating, specifically realizing that displaying cheating behavior can result in consequences such as expulsion. These results are in line with various theories and studies, which state that threats in the form of the possibility of being caught and punished for cheating can reduce the tendency to cheat (Mazar et al., 2008; Meiseberg et al., 2017).

Finally, external factors may influence the results of the research. One such factor is religious priming, which is different

from religiosity. If religiosity tends to be built along with the stages of individual development, religious priming is a conditional factor that exists in the place and time at which the individual makes a decision. Religious priming itself is a cognitive activation procedure of a religious concept, which aims to manipulate the conditional effects of religious beliefs on the affective, behavioral, or social domains of individuals (Van Tongeren, Newbound, & Johnson, 2016). Several studies have found that religious priming influences individual moral behavior, such as reducing the appearance of moral hypocrisy (Carpenter & Marshall, 2009) and reducing the number of immoral acts of fraud (Aveyard, 2014).

In the context of this study, religious priming that may affect the results of the research include that data collection was conducted in Ramadan. UI is an institution in Indonesia and Indonesia is dominated by Muslim populations. Researchers suspect that in the month of Ramadan, individuals, especially Muslims, will display the conditional effect of fasting activities, which in turn reduces the tendency of individuals to act immorally, in this case, cheating.

The above discussion provides explanations as to why religiosity in all its dimensions did not affect the appearance

of cheating behavior in this study. Cheating behavior is not a simple variable, it has many different factors that must be measured, either to control the variable or to finding out the effect of these factors. The inconsistent results between studies may be attributed to these factors.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the data analysis, researchers provide two conclusions. The first conclusion is that overall, religiosity has not been proven to have a direct influence on cheating behavior. Intrinsic religiosity and extrinsic religiosity had a positive influence on the appearance of cheating behavior, but these influences were not statistically significant. Conversely, religiosity as a quest had a negative but insignificant effect on the emergence of cheating behavior. The second conclusion is that the moral identity variable was not proven to mediate the effect of each dimension of religiosity on cheating behavior. From these two main conclusions, it can be summarized that religiosity in all dimensions (intrinsic religiosity, extrinsic religiosity, religiosity as a quest) does not have a direct influence on cheating behavior and also does not produce an indirect effect on cheating behavior through moral identity as a mediator.

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