



# Factors Affecting Academic Dishonesty: Empirical Study on Distance Learning

Revita Yuni<sup>1</sup>(✉), Hendra Saputra<sup>2</sup>, Ivo Selvia Agusti<sup>3</sup>, and Pasca Dwi Putra<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Economics Education, Universitas Negeri Medan, Medan, Indonesia  
revitayuni@unimed.ac.id

<sup>2</sup> Department of Management, Universitas Negeri Medan, Medan, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup> Department of Business Education, Universitas Negeri Medan, Medan, Indonesia

**Abstract.** The Covid-19 pandemic forces us to do distance learning to suppress the spread. However, there are problems, and one of them is academic dishonesty in providing sources of information, compiling references, doing assignments, and other academic violations. This research aims to determine the effect of distress, ethical attitudes, and self-efficacy on academic dishonesty. Academic integrity is a serious issue that impacts not only universities but also the government, society, and workplace. This research was carried out in Department of Economics Education at the Faculty of Economics in Universitas Negeri Medan, where distance learners are the main emphasis. The Structural Equation Model was employed in the data analysis process (SEM). According to the study's findings, academic dishonesty and the ethical attitude variable will be significantly impacted by distress, which will also have an influence on diminishing ethical attitudes. Nevertheless, self-efficacy did not show a significant effect on academic integrity. The study's findings offer a summary of the state of students' academic integrity in higher education and serve as a template for legislation aimed at enhancing it.

**Keywords:** Distress · Ethical Attitude · Self-Efficacy · Academic Dishonesty

## 1 Introduction

Academic dishonesty is a significant issue that should be taken seriously in both the educational and professional fields [1, 2]. The rapid development of technology makes it easy to obtain information. The worlds of employment and education are negatively impacted by this convenience. Starting from the world of education, academic dishonesty will cause a decrease in economic growth through a decrease in investment and consumption [3] and have an impact on social and economic inequality between the upper and lower classes of society [4]. Academic dishonesty is a serious problem related to all areas of life, whether social, economic, political [5].

Given the Covid-19 pandemic's circumstances, academic dishonesty is a special concern in the world of education. This is because learning must be done online, causing a lack of supervision from both the faculty level and the lecturers themselves. Universities and faculty levels must play an important role in preventing academic fraud [6]

through making rules regarding prevention and overcoming this problem [2]. The final impact if academic dishonesty occurs are academic cheating, cheating in the workplace, tax evasion, corruption, bribery, and plagiarism which will ultimately have an impact to educational institutions. Therefore, it's crucial to understand the variables that must be taken into account when influencing the occurrence of academic dishonesty. In earlier research, administration, interactions in the teaching and learning process, and satisfaction were used as elements that influence academic dishonesty. The results demonstrate that these interactions in learning have an impact on lowering the amount of academic dishonesty. The presence of administration will enhance interaction and satisfaction but has little impact on cheating in the classroom. Distress, an ethical attitude, and self-efficacy are the three lenses through which this study attempts to examine the variables that impact academic dishonesty.

One of the things that affects academic dishonesty is distress. This is because kids are under immense pressure to perform well in class rather than comprehend the material [7]. Constraints obstruct options and behaviors, which is a condition known as distress. High stress among students is a motive for cheating behavior, according to research [8].

The second factor influencing academic dishonesty is ethical attitude. Ethical attitude helps a person to determine whether it is right, fair, good in terms of action. This is associated with academic dishonesty where if someone has an ethical attitude then he will know whether the fraud committed is true or not.

The third factor that influences academic dishonesty is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is an attitude related to belief in students' abilities in completing assignments and exams and understanding learning materials. This attitude gives students confidence to be able to complete assignments and exams without cheating. Someone who has high self-efficacy will also tend not to commit fraud and provide better performance because they feel able to solve problems and process information. Therefore, having this self-efficacy will ultimately have a detrimental effect on academic dishonesty.

Medan State University, Faculty of Economics is where this study was carried out. The administration, interaction, and satisfaction factors were used in the prior study on online learning. In contrast, the focus of this study is on students' perspectives on what constitutes academic dishonesty in face-to-face instruction.

## 2 Literature Review

Academic dishonesty is an attitude or behavior that aims to obtain, receive, or transfer information from others without acknowledging the source [5, 9] and this behavior is unethical in academic environment [10, 11]. Academic dishonesty sees behavior that aims to obtain or receive information from others without acknowledging a legitimate source, avoiding the approved process in an academic context [12] and relating right and wrong, especially in the field of education [13, 14]. In connection with the above, this study looks at the factors that influence academic dishonesty in the form of distress, ethical attitudes and self-efficacy.

## 2.1 Distress

When a person is in distress, they are unable to make moral decisions and experience moral failure as a result of a situation. While distress is defined by [15] a condition where feelings are not in accordance with beliefs and actions. Stress is one of the motivations for someone to commit academic fraud in class [8]. This, if associated with the definition, shows that there are problems that cause feelings that are not in accordance with beliefs and actions. As a result of distress, students try to solve problems by committing academic fraud and plagiarism. Therefore, the presence of distress may increase academic dishonesty.

## 2.2 Ethical Attitude

Ethical attitude is behavior from within to see an action as good, right and fair [16]. Ethical attitudes refer to the principles and standards of behavior that govern academics [17]. Ethical attitude is defined as the student's view of all violations, selfishness, academic cheating and ethics in taking computer resources [16]. The planning behavior hypothesis asserts that conduct, subjective norms, and behavioral control all have an impact on people's intentions to behave [18]. Positive behavior, subjective norms and behavioral control can generate academic honesty and direct a person to behave positively which results in avoiding all kinds of academic dishonesty. Research conducted [19] shows that high moral standards will encourage students to be more honest. This is also supported by research which shows that the presence of positive moral beliefs and attitudes will reduce behavior to commit acts of academic dishonesty.

## 2.3 Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy was first introduced by Albert Bandura which states that a person will complete his task well if he has confidence in his abilities [20]. In addition, self-efficacy also includes hope and belief in one's self in overcoming challenging situations and solving them all [21]. Self-efficacy is part of choice, effort expenditure, and persistence. Self-efficacy is an attitude related to belief in students' abilities in completing assignments and exams and understanding learning materials. This attitude gives students confidence to be able to complete assignments and exams without cheating. Someone who has high self-efficacy will also tend not to commit fraud and provide better performance because they feel able to solve problems and process information. Therefore, having this self-efficacy will ultimately have a detrimental effect on academic dishonesty. conducted studies that demonstrate how effectiveness will have a detrimental impact on academic dishonesty. A person who tends to plagiarize, cheat, or counterfeit has low self-efficacy, according to [22].

## 3 Method

The Medan State University, especially in Faculty of Economics is where this study was conducted. The study's findings were used as a benchmark for assessing cases

of academic misconduct at the University of Negeri Medan’s Faculty of Economics. Students from the Faculty of Economics at Universitas Negeri Medan’s Department of Economic Education make up the study’s population. With the requirement that all students have engaged in both in-person and online learning, sampling was done using a random sampling technique.

Google Forms are being used to collect data. Researchers set up questions and evaluate their reliability and validity. After that, credible and valid questions were put into a Google form. Students are given the Google form’s link to complete. This model permits effects that are coherent with the temporary theory and for simultaneous evaluation of variables (including latent variables); in furthermore, SEM also provides model fit statistics.

## 4 Result and Discussion

### 4.1 Result

The purpose of this study is to investigate factors affecting academic integrity during distance learning. In this study, the variables include distress, ethical attitude, and self-efficacy. Students from all semester levels the department of economic education study program at the State University of Medan’s Economics Faculty served as the survey’s respondents. Data for this study was gathered by surveying participants online using a google form. 94 respondents completed the questionnaire, making up the total number of respondents. The outcomes of descriptive statistics for study participants are shown in Tables 1 and 2.

**Table 1.** Statistic Frequency

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	78	83.0
	Male	16	17.0
Semester	Semester 2	1	1.1
	Semester 4	19	20.2
	Semester 6	74	78.7
Study Duration	Nothing	3	3.2
	<1 h	13	13.8
	1–2 h	40	42.6
	>3 h	38	40.4
Media E-Learning	SIPDA	11	11.7
	Google Classroom	83	88.3

**Table 2.** Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
GPA	94	2.54	3.91	3.4534

**Table 3.** Construct Validity and Reliability

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Academic Dishonesty	0.910	0.924	0.925	0.512
Distress	0.868	0.881	0.895	0.516
Ethical Attitude	0.791	0.814	0.853	0.539
Self-Efficacy	0.873	0.902	0.900	0.532

#### 4.1.1 Model Feasibility Test

We first examine the model's feasibility before testing the hypothesis. This test will determine whether the research model can be deemed appropriate for hypothesis testing. Cronbach's Alpha, rho A, composite reliability, and average extracted variance values were used to conduct the tests (AVE). All variables were found to meet these requirements based on the test (Table 3).

#### 4.1.2 Hypothesis Test

The purpose of hypothesis testing is to identify the variables influencing academic integrity in distance learning. Structural equation modelling was used to test the model (SEM). Distress, ethical attitudes, and self-efficacy were the variables employed in this study, with academic dishonesty serving as the dependent variable. Either directly or indirectly, testing is done. The outcomes of the hypothesis test are shown in Table 4.

### 4.2 Discussion

The purpose of this study is to examine the variables that affect academic dishonesty among students enrolled in the Department of Economic Education at Universitas Negeri Medan. The first variable is distress. This variable shows feelings or thoughts that are not in accordance with the action [15]. Distress also shows someone who has difficulty so that it is constrained in carrying out activities. Students who experience distress in learning will have an impact on disrupting concentration or focus in completing assignments. The existence of task demands will have an impact on increasing the distress experienced so that it will have an impact on ethical attitudes. Conversely, if the distress experienced by students decreases, it will result in an increase in ethical attitudes. So, the results of this study indicate that the higher the distress experienced by students will lead to a decrease

**Table 4.** Result of Hypothesis

Variable		Direct Effects	Indirect Effects	Total Effects
Distress -> Academic Dishonesty	Path Coefficient	-0.140	-0.208	-0.347
	t statistic	1.627	2.655	3.192
	p value	0.104	0.008	0.002
Distress -> Ethical Attitude	Path Coefficient	-0.317	-	-0.317
	t statistic	3.548	-	3.548
	p value	0.000	-	0.000
Ethical Attitude -> Academic Dishonesty	Path Coefficient	0.640	0.016	0.656
	t statistic	6.143	0.770	6.503
	p value	0.000	0.442	0.000
Ethical Attitude -> Self Efficacy	Path Coefficient	-0.114	-	-0.114
	t statistic	1.160	-	1.160
	p value	0.247	-	0.247
Self-Efficacy -> Academic Dishonesty	Path Coefficient	-0.143	-	-0.143
	t statistic	1.409	-	1.409
	p value	0.159	-	0.159

in academic dishonesty, although it does not have a significant effect but indirectly has a significant effect through ethical attitudes. This is because students who experience high levels of distress only think how to complete assignments on time without paying attention to whether the task violates the academic code of ethics or not. But the results of the study indicate that an increase in distress will reduce ethical attitudes that make students ignore violations or applicable academic rules. Therefore, this study shows that the higher the pressure obtained by students, the less their ethical attitude.

The second factor in influencing academic dishonesty is ethical attitude. Ethical attitude shows a student's view of violations, academic cheating, and ethics in sourcing from the internet [16]. The findings of this study suggest that students' ethical perspectives on these issues are thought to significantly contribute to rising academic dishonesty. Students believe that having an ethical attitude is logical and does not break the code of ethics, so they will not be punished for whatever cheating they may perform. These findings suggest that in order to enhance academic dishonesty, violations, cheating, and ethics are seen as normal learning activities. The results of this study contradict the research conducted [23] which in this study showed a negative effect but, in this study, showed a significant effect. Negative. On the other hand, the existence of this ethical attitude will reduce self-efficacy from within each of them. The last factor that influences academic dishonesty is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy shows an attitude to solve problems well and according to abilities [24]. Someone who has high self-efficacy will try to work well and not break the rules. Based on the results of hypothesis testing, it shows that self-efficacy will have an impact on reducing academic dishonesty, but this study shows

an insignificant effect. This is because they have doubts if they are honest, they will get a high score. The results of this study are same with research conducted [25].

## 5 Conclusion

According to the preceding hypothesis testing, distress does not directly have a major impact on academic dishonesty, but it does have an indirect impact through ethical beliefs. The existence of a view of cheating, violations that are considered reasonable for students will have an impact on increasing academic dishonesty and the presence of self-efficacy will reduce academic dishonesty but not significantly due to ethical attitudes that are considered reasonable during distance learning. The suggestion for this research is that giving a negative view and emphasizing the impact on academic dishonesty will change ethical attitudes that previously considered reasonable to be something important and need to be avoided. Students' attitudes toward academic dishonesty will decline as a result of their increasing self-efficacy.

**Acknowledgments.** We are very grateful to have significant support from Universitas Negeri Medan for the research grant, our student in Faculty of Economics, and comments from the reviewers of the 4th International Conference on Research and Academic Community Services (ICRACOS 2022) for valuable insights towards enriching the quality of paper discussion.

**Authors' Contributions.** Revita Yuni conceived of and designed the study. Hendra Saputra analyzed and interpreted the data. Ivo Selvia Agusti drafted the paper and Pasca Dwi Putra critically revised it for important intellectual content. All authors gave final approval of the version to be published.

## References

1. D. Pascual-Ezama et al., "Context-dependent cheating: Experimental evidence from 16 countries," *J. Econ. Behav. Organ.*, vol. 116, pp. 379–386, 2015, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jebo.2015.04.020>.
2. S. Gächter and J. F. Schulz, "Intrinsic honesty and the prevalence of rule violations across societies," *Nature*, vol. 531, no. 7595, pp. 496–499, 2016, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1038/nature17160>.
3. R. Kerschbamer, D. Neururer, and M. Sutter, "Insurance coverage of customers induces dishonesty of sellers in markets for credence goods," *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U. S. A.*, vol. 113, no. 27, pp. 7454–7458, 2016, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1518015113>.
4. V. Tanzi, "Corruption Around the World: Causes, Consequences, Scope, and Cures," *Staff Pap.*, vol. 45, no. 4, pp. 559–594, 1998.
5. A. Błachnio et al., "Cultural and psychological variables predicting academic dishonesty: a cross-sectional study in nine countries," *Ethics Behav.*, vol. 00, no. 00, pp. 1–46, 2021, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10508422.2021.1910826>.
6. I. Chirikov, E. Shmeleva, and P. Loyalka, "The role of faculty in reducing academic dishonesty among engineering students," *Stud. High. Educ.*, vol. 45, no. 12, pp. 2464–2480, 2020, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2019.1616169>.

7. E. Stanculescu, "Affective Tendencies in Embarrassing Situations and Academic Cheating Behavior," *Procedia - Soc. Behav. Sci.*, vol. 78, no. May 2013, pp. 723–727, 2013, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.04.383>.
8. E. J. Ip, K. Nguyen, B. M. Shah, S. Doroudgar, and M. K. Bidwal, "Motivations and predictors of cheating in pharmacy school," *Am. J. Pharm. Educ.*, vol. 80, no. 8, 2016, doi: <https://doi.org/10.5688/ajpe808133>.
9. J. Walker, "Measuring plagiarism: Researching what students do, not what they say they do," *Stud. High. Educ.*, vol. 35, no. 1, pp. 41–59, 2010, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070902912994>.
10. I. J. M. Arnold, "Cheating at online formative tests: Does it pay off?," *Internet High. Educ.*, vol. 29, pp. 98–106, 2016, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2016.02.001>.
11. Y. Peled, Y. Eshet, C. Barczyk, and K. Grinautski, "Predictors of Academic Dishonesty among undergraduate students in online and face-to-face courses," *Comput. Educ.*, vol. 131, pp. 49–59, 2019, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2018.05.012>.
12. D. Faucher and S. Caves, "Academic dishonesty: Innovative cheating techniques and the detection and prevention of them," *Teach. Learn. Nurs.*, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 37–41, 2009, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.teln.2008.09.003>.
13. D. Martin, A. Rao, and L. Sloan, "Ethnicity, acculturation, and plagiarism: A criterion study of unethical academic conduct," *Hum. Organ.*, vol. 70, no. 1, pp. 88–96, 2011, doi: <https://doi.org/10.17730/humo.70.1.n1775v2u633678k6>.
14. Y. Peled and S. Khaldy, "Discrimination, Survival and Tradition as Argumentation for Academic Dishonesty," *Educ. Pract. Theory*, vol. 35, no. 1, pp. 41–61, 2013, doi: <https://doi.org/10.7459/ept/35.1.04>.
15. L. B. Hardingham, "Integrity and moral residue: nurses as participants in a moral community.," *Nurs. Philos.*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 127–134, 2004, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1466-769X.2004.00160.x>.
16. A. A. Zopiatis and M. Krambia-Kapardis, "Ethical behaviour of tertiary education students in cyprus," *J. Bus. Ethics*, vol. 81, no. 3, pp. 647–663, 2008, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-007-9538-6>.
17. Y. C. Cheng, F. C. Hung, and H. M. Hsu, "The relationship between academic dishonesty, ethical attitude and ethical climate: The evidence from Taiwan," *Sustain.*, vol. 13, no. 21, pp. 1–16, 2021, doi: <https://doi.org/10.3390/su132111615>.
18. I. Ajzen and M. Fishbein, *Personality and Behavior*, 2nd ed. London: Open University Press, 2005.
19. J. Eisenberg, "To cheat or not to cheat: Effects of moral perspective and situational variables on students' attitudes," *J. Moral Educ.*, vol. 33, no. 2, pp. 163–178, 2004, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305724042000215276>.
20. A. Bandura, *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1986.
21. D. U. Onu, M. C. C. Onyedibe, L. E. Ugwu, and G. C. Nche, "Relationship between religious commitment and academic dishonesty: is self-efficacy a factor?," *Ethics Behav.*, vol. 31, no. 1, pp. 13–20, 2021, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10508422.2019.1695618>.
22. W. L. Y. Nora and K. C. Zhang, "Motives of cheating among secondary students: The role of self-efficacy and peer influence," *Asia Pacific Educ. Rev.*, vol. 11, no. 4, pp. 573–584, 2010, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12564-010-9104-2>.
23. A. M. Imran and M. S. Nordin, "Predicting the Underlying Factors of Academic Dishonesty among Undergraduates in Public Universities: A Path Analysis Approach," *J. Acad. Ethics*, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 103–120, 2013, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10805-013-9183-x>.
24. A. Bandura, "Self-Efficacy: Toward a Unifying Theory of Behavioral Change," *Psychol. Rev.*, vol. 84, no. 2, p. 191, 1977, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055400259303>.



25. J. A. Aomo, P. J. O. Aloka, P. A. Raburu, and P. O. Ogolla, "Relationship between Self-Esteem and Indulgence in Behavior Problems among Secondary School Students in Kenya," *Mediterr. J. Soc. Sci.*, vol. 9, no. 3, pp. 135–142, 2018, doi: <https://doi.org/10.2478/mjss-2018-0055>.

**Open Access** This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

