

Scrutinizing cheating behavior

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**Scrutinizing Cheating Behavior among EFL Students at Islamic
Higher Education Institutions in Indonesia**

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7 **Scrutinizing Cheating Behavior among EFL Students at Islamic Higher Education Institutions in Indonesia**

Abstract

Incidence of cheating has remained a significant issue over the years throughout the world, including in Indonesian Higher Education. This study was aimed at exploring students' perceptions of cheating, their cheating practices, the factors influencing their cheating behavior, and possible solutions to stop cheating practices, especially in the context of Islamic Higher Education. This mixed-method research involved 43 undergraduate students in the Department of English Language Education of two Islamic Higher Education institutions; the University of Muhammadiyah Aceh, and Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Ar-Raniry Darussalam, Banda Aceh - Indonesia. A set of a questionnaire comprising the demographic and cheating-related questions was emailed to students taking *Ilmu Akidah* subject (Theology). This subject is one of the third-semester optional subjects offered to students at both universities. The subject covers issues about ethical-moral, being good Muslim citizenship, and other universal Islamic teaching values. 8 (eight) students were interviewed to seek their opinions about cheating in the Islamic context and possible ways to stop cheating practices. Findings indicated that the cheating prevalence of Islamic university students reached 84%, with the most common cheating practices included requesting/exchanging answers with friends during exams, duplicating texts from the internet/books and then submitting them and cooperating with friends in doing individual assignments. The underlying factors for the practices involved external (i.e., exam difficulty, overloaded assignments, inadequate time for finishing assignments, and assisting friends) and internal reasons (i.e., fear of low grades and failure in exams, and motivation for gaining high scores). Nevertheless, there was approximately 16% of the students claiming that they never cheated because of religious/moral awareness, sense of accomplishment in own ability, and fear of academic sanctions. The interview results, in addition, confirmed that cheating was sinful and those who cheat must repent. Habituation and care in the works of students were two significant approaches that must be carried out by lecturers to alleviate students' prevalence to cheat.

Keywords

Academic integrity, cheating, undergraduate students, 2 higher education

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1. Introduction

Cheating has been a major concern in academia with many strategies employed in the hope of extinguishing this problem. Cheating is nevertheless prevalent and deeply-rooted in the context of education throughout the world. Haines, Diekhoff, LaBeff, and Clark (as cited in Davis, 1993) even considered cheating as an epidemic. Reports on cheating incidents have been numerous (e.g., Alutu & Aluede, 2006; Davis, 1993; Jones, Blankenship, & Hollier, 2013; McCabe, Butterfield, & Trevino, 2006; Perianto, 2015; Sheard & Dick, 2003) with one study by Drake (as cited in Bolin, 2004) which found that at least 23% of students in the United States had cheated. It is of concern that despite being aware of the negativity that cheating casts on education, society has come to tolerate cheating behavior due to its prevalence (Morrisette, as cited in Boehm, Justice, & Weeks, 2009; Alutu & Aluede, 2006; Perianto, 2015). A perception is that cheating looks “harmless” which ignores that cheating benefits cheaters while causing loss for others (Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, as cited in Royer, 2013).

The education sector in Indonesia, like other countries, also faces this serious issue. Incidence of cheating has been rampant, occurring at all levels of education from elementary to university, and, at times supported by student-student to student-teacher cooperation (Jahja, as cited in Yulianto, 2015; Ompusunggu, 2017). This behavior contradicts the values of education as stated in the Law No. 20/2003 Article 3 on the Indonesian National Education Policy. The law expects that education can develop and nurture Indonesian society to become knowledgeable and to graduate responsible beings who will act with high integrity, including integrity in academic settings.

This study seeks to answer the following main research questions: how do students perceive cheating, why do they choose to cheat or not cheat, and what are

possible solutions to stop cheating? By identifying these issues, we hope that the study can provide valuable information that may be beneficial for developing the policies and strategies that will contribute to prevent and reduce cheating practices in education, particularly at Islamic Higher Education institutions.

2. Literature Review

Although we understand that cheating is a common occurrence, what actually constitutes cheating is not always clear (Maramark & Maline, 1993). The definitions of cheating as a concept are quite diverse (Sheard & Dick, 2003) and some cases of cheating are able to continue to exist due to the lack of clarity and a shared understanding (Buchmann, 2014). In this study, we focus on learning assessment and refer to cheating as the use of “unauthorized materials” in order to gain an advantage in an assignment or an exam (McCabe & Pavela, as cited in Lozier, 2012, p. 5).

In terms of cheating characteristics, Hetherington and Feldman (as cited in Jackson, Levine, Furnham, & Burr, 2002, p. 1033) identify four types of cheating behavior: (1) “individualistic-opportunistic” for someone who cheats without prior planning or by chance, (2) “individualistic-planned” for someone who has made cheating plan beforehand, (3) “social-active” for a group of people who actively cheat together, and (4) “social-passive” for those who only act as receivers in a group of cheaters. As a form of academic dishonesty, Lozier (2012) argues that there is an interrelationship between the incidence of cheating and certain processes used in assessing learning. For example, where there is evidence of cheating, instructors are forced to spend more time assessing students’ assignments and tests (Royer, 2013) as a result there is a risk that instructors will produce erroneous assessments of the students’

capabilities rather than carry out the necessary extra time required to confront the suspected cheating (Cizek, as cited in Royer, 2013).

Another significant issue is that incidences of cheating are not without their causes. Various reasons of cheating have been identified in prior studies, “too stress and competition” are considered to be major contributors (Gehring, Nuss, & Pavela, as cited in Maramark & Maline, 1993, p. 5). Brown (cited in Sheard & Dick, 2003, p. 46) argues that the main reasons for cheating ¹ were to get a high grade, time pressures, and laziness. However, most students feel that cheating is, in fact, “morally wrong” (Bowers, as cited in Maramark & Maline, 1993, p. 5). Despite this, cheating is regarded as acceptable under social-based motives (Jarvinen & Lindeman, as cited in Jensen Arnett, Feldman, & Cauffman, 2002); for example, cheating in order to help others (Jensen et al., 2002). These examples concur with Wowra’s (2007) notion that the motivation for cheating is “grounded in social anxiety and social relations” (p. 304). He argues that being anxious for the sake of pleasing others (i.e., having good grades, never failing in exams) makes people ignore the core value of academic integrity, and thus justifies students’ recourse to cheating. Motivated by increased social pressures to perform well, the prevalence rate of cheating is rising over recent years.

⁵ Contexts also have an impact on the extent to which cheating takes place and in some instances contribute to the observable increase (Vohs & Schooler, 2008; Rettinger & Kramer, 2009; Jensen et al., 2002; Klein, Levenburg, McKendall, & Mothersell, 2006; Maramark & Maline, 1993; Ompusunggu, 2017). A study by Yulianto (2015) on university students found that all of his respondents admitted to having engaged in academic dishonesty, although not often. On the other hand, Jena and Sihotang (2015) found that cheating frequency varied, with approximately 27% of university students admitting to cheating often. In addition, Perianto’s study (2015) showed that about 66%

of university students perceived cheating as acceptable. Such results are not surprising because even at the high school level, cheating is prevalent. Ompusunggu (2017) reported a concerning contextual enabling factor, namely, that some teachers collude with their students, encouraging cheating by selling them answer keys for high school national examinations.

¹² In the context of Islamic Higher Education, the availability of literature on academic cheating practices is difficult to find. Most researches in religious context, in addition, focuses mostly on the relationship between religion and morality (e.g., Bouhmama, 2006; McKay & Whitehouse, 2015; Gaudin, 2016). These existing researches do not firmly discuss issues dealing with cheating behavior in academic fields performed by tertiary education students. Bouhmama (2006) argues ¹¹ that there is no correlation between religious affiliation and moral judgment. Yet, in the Islamic religious context, Islamic scholars believe that religiosity influences a person's moral; good or bad, and it is reflected in ways such the person behaves and acts in his or her daily life (Muhammad, 2013; Norenzayan, 2014; Shariff, 2015). In the light of Muhammad's (2013), Norenzayan's (2014), and Shariff's (2015) research findings, this research will further enrich literature on cheating practices carried out by tertiary education students at Islamic ¹⁹ Higher Education institutions.

To mitigate this worsening problem of student academic cheating, especially at Islamic Higher Education institutions, Islamic scholars in Indonesia, who have an abiding concern for the moral integrity of students, strongly urged the national government to issue a particular regulation that makes explicit that such immoral practices are not to be tolerated. These scholars argue that cheating in any form is strictly against the Islamic teaching, policies and values, "Islam views cheating and other kinds of misbehaviors as heinous sins, a source of shame to the individuals of

committing them” (Mustapha, Hussin, Siraj, Darussalam, 2016, p. 392). To this end, it seems that all ¹⁸ Islamic Higher Education institutions in Indonesia, including the University of Muhammadiyah Aceh, and UIN Ar-Raniry have stipulated policies on academic honesty and integrity in order to take a firm stand on confronting students’ cheating practices. Despite this, no penalties have been imposed on students’ cheating activities.

3. The Study

²² This study employed a case study approach, using a mixed method research design to investigate the perceptions of the students on cheating and its solutions in two Islamic universities in Aceh - Indonesia; the University of Muhammadiyah, Aceh, and ² Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Ar-Raniry, Banda Aceh. 43 out of 55 English Education Department students taking *Ilmu Akidah* (Theology) subject in 2019 were purposively selected to participate in this study. Approximately, 70% were females and 19% were males while 11% did not state their gender.

The study used ⁵ a paper-based survey questionnaire adapted from Sheard and Dick (2003) to collect the data. A set of survey question was emailed to 55 students taking *Ilmu Akidah* (Theology) subject. Yet, only 43 questionnaires were returned. The questions included demographic information and used scenarios to gain responses regarding the acceptability of cheating, admission to ⁹ cheating practices, reasons for cheating, and reasons for not cheating. The questions provided two types of responses: “Acceptable-Not Acceptable” and “Yes-No”. The questionnaire items sought to identify students’ perceptions, without investigating the prevalence or frequency of cheating practices. The survey format, in addition, allowed the students to declare if they are willing to be interviewed or not confirming their perception on cheating and ways to

stop cheating as they are Muslim and studying at Islamic universities. From 43 students returning their survey questions, only 8 (eight) students wanted to get involved in the interview process. In the interview process, the researchers only focused on students' understanding about cheating and ways to stop it. The survey data were compiled and analyzed by using basic SPSS in order to find out the descriptive statistics. Furthermore, thematic analysis approach through a coding process was used for the analysis of the interview data (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014). The names of the 8 (eight) students were kept anonymous and labeled as interviewee 1 - 8.

4. Findings

4.1 Survey results

The first section of the questionnaire deals with students' attitudes towards cheating scenarios contained in the survey. The students responded to whether a scenario was "Acceptable" or "Not Acceptable". Their responses are depicted in Table 1.

Table 1: Students' acceptability of cheating

No	Scenario	Percentage %	
		Acceptable	Not Acceptable
1	Bringing a cheat sheet during an exam	9.3	88.4
2	Swapping answers with your friends during an exam	25.6	74.4
3	Asking answers from your friends during an exam	14.0	86.0
4	Looking for answers using a hand phone during an exam	16.3	81.4
5	Hiring someone to sit an exam for you	2.3	97.7
6	Asking someone to do your assignment	9.3	88.4
7	Taking your friend's assignment from a lecturer's desk and copying it, and then submitting it	7.0	93.0
8	Copying all of an assignment given to you by a	14.0	86.0

	friend and submitting it		
9	Copying all of your friend's assignment from their computer without their knowledge and submitting it	2.3	97.7
10	Copying some writing from the internet and submitting it as your assignment	55.8	41.9
11	Copying some writing from a book and submitting it as your assignment	67.4	32.6
12	Submitting an assignment from a student who had taken the subject as your own	7.0	90.7
13	Resubmitting an assignment from a previous subject in a new subject	27.9	69.8
14	Collaborating with a friend on an assignment meant to be completed individually	72.1	27.9

The next section of the questionnaire required the students to answer whether or not they have cheated. Figure 1 illustrates that of 43 students responding, 84% admitted to cheating on learning assessment tasks, whereas 16% claimed to never cheat.

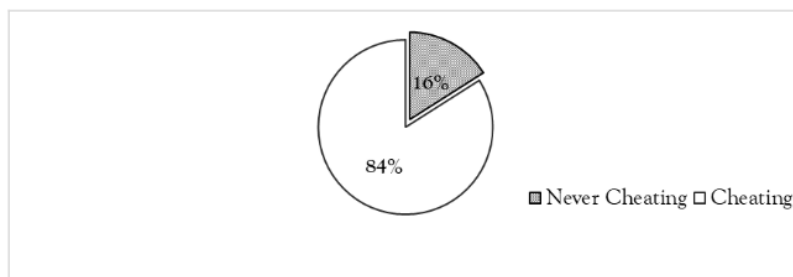


Figure 1: Proportion of Students' Cheating and Not Cheating

Those who admitted to cheating were asked to further respond, focusing on the cheating practices while those who did not, could skip to the fourth part of the questionnaire (reasons for cheating/not cheating). The students' responses to cheating practices are shown in Table 2 in which the practices are similar to the cheating scenarios provided in Table 1.

Table 2: Students' admission to cheating practices

No	Practice	Percentage %	
		Yes	No
1	Bringing a cheat sheet during an exam	30.2	69.8
2	Swapping answers with your friends during an exam	46.5	53.5
3	Asking answers from your friends during an exam	62.8	37.2
4	Looking for answers using a hand phone during an exam	27.9	72.1
5	Hiring someone to sit an exam for you	4.7	95.3
6	Asking someone to do your assignment	14.0	86.0
7	Taking your friend's assignment from a lecturer's desk and copying it, and then submitting it	9.3	90.7
8	Copying all of an assignment given to you by a friend and submitting it	18.6	81.4
9	Copying all of your friend's assignment from their computer without their knowledge and submitting it	11.6	88.4
10	Copying some writing from the internet and submitting it as your assignment	69.8	30.2
11	Copying some writing from a book and submitting it as your assignment	72.1	27.9
12	Submitting an assignment from a student who had taken the subject as your own	9.3	88.4
13	Resubmitting an assignment from a previous subject in a new subject	27.9	72.1
14	Collaborating with a friend on an assignment meant to be completed individually	74.4	25.6

Among the cheating practices identified in Table 2, students admitted mainly to four practices that occurred during learning assessments (above 50%), namely:

- item 14 “collaborating with a friend on an assignment meant to be completed individually” (74.4%),
- item 11 “copying some writing from a book and submitting it as your assignment”,
- item 10 “copying some writing from the internet and submitting it as your assignment”, and
- item 3 “asking answers from your friends during an exam”.

These results are quite similar to those in Table 1 that sought to identify what students perceived to be acceptable when doing their assignments with the exception of item 3 which related to answering exam questions. The type of cheating that was least chosen (below 5%) was item 5 “hiring someone to sit an exam for you” (4.7%). This finding also aligns with table 1 as the least acceptable cheating scenario. The following table (Table 3) elucidates the proportion of students’ cheating practices.

Table 3: Proportion of cheating practices done by students

Category	Cheating Students %
<i>Substitution:</i>	
³ Hiring someone to sit an exam for you	4.7
Asking someone to do your assignment	14.0
<i>Collusion:</i>	
Swapping answers with your friends during an exam	46.5
Asking answers from your friends during an exam	62.8
Collaborating with a friend ¹ on an assignment meant to be completed	74.4

individually

Copying:

Taking your friend's ¹ assignment from a lecturer's desk and copying it, and then ⁶ submitting it	9.3
Copying all of an assignment given to you by a friend and submitting it	18.6
Copying all of your friend' ¹ assignment from their computer without their knowledge and submitting it	11.6
Copying some writing from the internet and submitting it as your assignment	69.8
Copying some writing from a book and submitting it as your assignment	72.1
Submitting an assignment from a student who had taken the subject as your own	9.3
⁸ Resubmitting an assignment from a previous subject in a new subject	27.9
<i>Other Cheating:</i>	
Bringing a cheat sheet during an exam	30.2
Looking for answers using a hand phone during an exam	27.9

From the table above, it can be seen that most students typically cheat by colluding with their friends either during an exam or while doing an assignment and also by duplicating their friends' answers in the exam or assignment. In addition, a considerable number of the students still prefer cheating by looking at their cheat sheets as well as mobile phones when they are in exams. It is interesting to note that the least identified behavior was substituting themselves in an exam (4.7%). A possible reason for this is because the students perceived it as a high-risk or serious type of cheating. This finding has a close result with Sheard and Dick's (2003) study in which they found that a small number of their respondents would cheat less if they considered the cheating practice had the major or huge consequence.

When asked about the reasons they cheated, students (over 50%) mainly identified that it was because of the following:

- item 12 “helping a friend” (65.1%),
- item 1 “too great a workload at university” (62.8%),
- item 9 “everyone does it” (58.1%),
- item 4 “not enough time to do an exam/assignment” (58.1%),
- item 2 “afraid of failing in a subject” (58.1%), and
- item 5 “exams are too difficult” (53.5%).

The summary of these responses is provided in ²¹Table 4.

Table 4: Students’ reasons for cheating

No	Reason for cheating	Percentage %	
		Yes	No
¹ 1	Too great a workload at university	62.8	20.9
2	Afraid of failing in a subject	58.1	25.6
3	Low grades	44.2	39.5
4	Not enough time to do an exam/assignment	58.1	25.6
5	¹ Exams are too difficult	53.5	30.2
6	Assignments are too hard	48.8	32.6
7	Wanted to get higher marks	39.5	44.2
8	Gaining money from friends’s requests	4.7	79.1
9	Everyone does it	58.1	25.6
10	Parental pressure	2.3	81.4
11	Unable to do assignments due to ill	23.3	60.4

12	Helping a friend	65.1	18.6
13	Lazy to do an assignment	11.6	69.8
14	Lazy to study for an exam	9.3	72.1

Students who stated that they never cheated, they selected underlying reasons for not doing so. The main reasons, as can be seen in Table 5. The most frequently selected were:

- item 1 “want to know what your work is worth”,
- item 2 “pride in your work”,
- item 3 “can get good marks without cheating”,
- item 5 “getting penalties if caught”,
- item 6 “fear of being found out”,

All has the same percentage of 16.3%, while item 4 “against your moral values” reached 14%.

Table 5: Students’ reasons for not cheating

No	Reason for not cheating	Percentage %	
		Yes	No
1	Want to know what your work is worth	16.3	0
2	Pride in your work	16.3	0
3	Can get good marks without cheating	16.3	0
4	Against your moral (religious) values	14.0	2.3
5	Getting penalties if caught	16.3	0
6	Fear of being found out	16.3	0

7	¹ Never thought about it	9.3	7.0
8	Don't know how to	9.3	7.0

4.2 Interview results

As the interview questions dealt with two main issues; the students' perception on cheating, and possible ways to stop it, the interview results only cover these two related issues. The interview results regarding the students' perception on cheating are summarized in two main themes: sinful and repentance.

4.2.1 Sinful

When asked what they (students) think about cheating in terms of Islamic context, most students asserted that cheating was against the Islamic teaching; it was sinful and forbidden as quoted below:

I know that cheating is not allowed in Islam, it is sinful. But I want to get good grades to please my parents, because they have paid my tuition and fees. If I get bad grades, my parents can stop sending me money. So, I do not have a choice. Sometimes, I am sad because *Allah* will punish me one day. (Interviewee 3).

Similar thought was also raised by another student saying ¹⁶ that the most important thing after graduation is to get a job, and it needs to have good grades. Sometimes, they will do whatever they can do to get a good grade, including cheating on assignments. This student knows the cheating consequences. "I know the effect of cheating. Cheating is one of the most sinful actions. We are not allowed to do it" (Interviewee 1). Interviewee 1 also claimed that cheating is sinful, but God is the most forgiving entity. "No one denies that cheating is a bad habit, it is sinful. But, one day I will seek God's forgiveness, He is the most merciful" (Interviewee 1).

In line with the interviewee's 1 viewpoint, another student also reported similar opinion regarding the cheating at Islamic university. His opinion is as following:

Probably I am not a good Muslim. A religion is the humankind's way of life. As such, we cannot blame religion when someone behaves out of such the religion norms. We cannot hide beyond the "religion umbrella" to make use the religion to justify our intolerable behaviors. We must be honest to acknowledge that cheating is wrong, it is sinful. (Interviewee 8)

The excerpts above elucidated that students were aware that cheating was against the Islamic values, and it was sinful. Yet, when there were some pressures, including financial supports or future careers, students tend to ignore the religious orders.

4.2.2 Repentance

Repentance is also the theme commonly emerged in dealing with the students' opinion regarding the cheating practices. Students claimed that sometimes they did not have any intention to cheat; they felt guilty of doing it. But, it seemed that they had to do it, and they sometimes regretted doing it, especially when they remembered that they are Muslim studying at Islamic Higher Education institutions as stated by interviewee 8:

As a Muslim, I am sad and feel guilty because I have cheated in some subjects. I will ask God for his forgiveness, and I do hope that God will forgive me". Another student also reported the similar point. He said "God is merciful. I know that I am wrong, I will pray and seriously repent to seek his mercy. (Interviewee 2).

In the interview with students regarding the cheating practice conducted by Islamic university students, they acknowledged that there is a correlation between faith and deeds. "I know some of my friends who have never cheated. They are very faithful students. They do not want to cheat because it is against their belief (Interviewee 7)". During the interview process, students also believed that sometimes bad deeds can

easily beat the religious conviction. Yet, students acknowledged that all bad deeds will be washed away by a sincere repentance. As depicted in the following acknowledgement:

As human beings, we might sometimes perform a bad action, especially when our ways are locked or blocked. When we are trapped in a very bad situation, in addition, we could lose our mind forcing our brain to quickly act and react. This could be positive or negative reaction. Yet, as a believer, I am convinced that there is a way to get closer back to *Allah* the almighty through his mercy; repentance. *Allah* loves his servants and He is the perpetual forgiver of whoever repents and believes and does righteousness and then continues in guidance. (Interviewee 4).

The students acknowledged that in Islamic context, repentance was the only way to purify human beings' soul from any sinful actions, including cheating. They said that this was in line with the quranic teaching in *Surah Az-Zumar: 53* stating that: Say, "O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of *Allah*. Indeed, *Allah* forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful". (Interviewee 5).

The findings on possible ways to stop cheating practice are summarized in 2 (two) main themes: habituation and care.

4.2.3 *Habituation*

In general, students acknowledged that as human beings, they sometimes performed bad actions, including cheating in academic world. They argued that everyone tended to do both good and bad deeds because they were familiarized with it. They conducted various activities in accordance with religious norms because they were accustomed to it, and sometimes they behaved and conducted certain intolerable actions because they also had ever done it. To this end, if we wanted our students to perform good deeds, lecturers needed to habituate their students to do it. Lecturers should not

tolerate or permeate students to do intolerable actions. “If lecturers want to see us (students) behave like what our universities want us to do, they (lecturers) should habituate their students to behave accordingly” (Interviewee 1).

Another student added that in order for the students to obey and practice any regulation stipulated in religion and endorsed by university, it should be put into practice, and students should be guided on how to do it appropriately. Teaching various concepts and theories on religious values and other universal rights could not guaranty to have real implications on students’ moral and behavior. Students must be guided and trained to perform good actions.

Students should be nurtured to perform every activity in line with both the Islamic teaching values and academic norms, lecturers must make students familiarized with good deeds, and they must also ensure that students are used to perform noble actions ...teaching and introducing various theories on Islamic values, and other universal rights to us is not enough, we must be trained to familiarize with such noble teachings. (Interviewee 2).

Students also confirmed that every activity performed continuously by everyone will be ingrained within their life and it becomes a habit or tradition. This was reported in the following quote:

If someone conducts a bad thing repeatedly, including cheating, they will continuously conduct it. So, in order for students not to cheat, they should familiarize themselves from the beginning of their school not to cheat. This habituation will protect them from conducting intolerable academic activities; they will always abide by every stipulated law. (Interviewee 6).

The quotations above indicate that habituation could keep students do their regular activities. If they are habituated to perform commendable deeds and such the habituation is ingrained within their soul, they have an inclination to remain in keeping good deeds.

4.2.4 Care

Care is another most common theme raised by students during the interview process regarding ways the schools could do to stop cheating. The interview results indicate that students do cheating because their lecturers do not care about what their students do regarding their assignments and other academic assessment approaches. To this end, they asserted that to stop cheating practice, lecturers should care and pay a close attention on their students' academic works. "Sometimes, I found my lecturers who do not care about my assignments, they only look at the assignment cover, its table of contents, number of pages, and references. They even do not know the content of my assignments (Interviewee 7)". This excerpt indicates that students will make use the lecturers' negligence in assessing their students to cheat. They were brave to cheat because they knew that their lecturers would not read their assignments.

Another student also reported that to stop cheating practice, lecturers should inform their students from the first day of class that cheating has a serious consequence. Lecturers should also clearly describe the meaning of cheating and penalties that students could face if they cheat. After briefing their students regarding the meaning of cheating and its penalties, lecturers should seriously evaluate their students' assignments ensuring that students are not cheating.

Sometimes, my lecturers only informed me not to cheat, but they do not know if I cheat or not because it seemed that they do not always read some of my take home assignments. I know this because I got good mark from the paper that I have submitted to other units. I strongly suggest that the lecturers read every student's assignment and make sure that we (students) do not double submit the paper/assignment to more than one unit. (Interviewee 2).

Care also means that lecturers have to look at the process of students work on their regular assignments or final examinations. Students complained that sometimes lecturers focus only on a product not on a process, as reported by interviewee 8:

Some of my lecturers only look at the product of our assignment, they do not look at the way we work on such the assignments. Often time, my friends who cheated got good grades, while I myself who seriously work on my assignment without cheating got unsatisfactory grades. So, instead of working hard and I got a bad grade, it will be better to cheat then I got good grades without working hard. (Interviewee 8).

Students acknowledged that lecturers' care would value students' works. Lecturers should ensure that all students' assignments including their take home final examinations are read and graded professionally ensuring that students do the right things, they do not cheat.

5. Discussion

In general, there was considerable diversity in the students' responses regarding the acceptability as well as unacceptability to the scenarios regarding cheating in learning assessment tasks. It can be assumed from this outcome that the students perceived and understood that cheating is wrong and against morality as Bowers (as cited in Maramark & Maline, 1993) had already found. However they still identified some aspects of cheating as acceptable. The most acceptable scenarios (over 50%) are:

- item 14 “collaborating with a friend on an assignment meant to be completed individually” (72.1%),
- item 11 “copying some writing from a book and submitting it as your assignment” (67.4%), and.
- item 10 “copying some writing from the internet and submitting it as your assignment” (55.8%).

They also reported the least acceptable aspects of cheating (below 5%) that included item 9 “copying all of your friend’ assignment from their computer without their knowledge and submitting it” (2.3%) and item 5 “hiring someone to sit an exam for you” (2.3%).

The three major forms of cheating reported basically dealt with learning assignments. It is possible that the students were unaware that collaboration with others for individual’s assignments can be considered an act of academic deception. Similarly, copying some texts from textbooks or online sources and passing it off as their own work is also deceiving. Students thought that copying from friends’ work was not quite “okay” if their friends did not know it. It can be assumed that these students considered this practice as an act of stealing regarding which they perceived to be unacceptable.

These students’ cheating behavior can be grouped into four categories that align with Jones, Blacken ship, and Hollier’s (2013) divisions of cheating definitions: Substitution, Collusion, Copying, and Other Cheating. Here, substitution means replacing the students in taking exams or finishing assignments, collusion refers to cooperating with others in completing assignments/exams, copying is using other people’s answers partially or entirely, and other cheatings deal with any misconduct other than the former three categories (Jones, Blackenship, & Hollier, 2013).

The findings above suggest that social motivation (*helping friends*) and social acceptability (*everyone does it*) greatly affect the students’ perceptions and engagement in cheating as mentioned by Jarvinen and Lindeman (as cited in Jensen et al., 2002). Further, these also indicate that Wowra’s (2007) proposition of social anxiety plays a large role in cheating. He states that because the students are surrounded by social pressures, they tend to seek achieve what society perceives as important, such as getting high grades and being successful. Thus, they disregard integrity and moral (religious)

values and begin to engage in misconduct to ease their concerns about academic and achievement (i.e., failing in exams, having low scores) from their academic pressures (great workloads at university, exams/assignments are too hard) and academic demands and time pressures (deadlines for exams/assignments). These results also correspond with those in Gehring, Nuss, and Pavel's (as cited in Maramark & Maline, 1993) study and in Brown's (as cited in Sheard & Dick, 2003) study.

Interestingly, with regard to influencing factors for not cheating, although Aceh is a province implementing Sharia law (Islamic law), the results show that only a small percentage of students (14%) identified that cheating is against their moral (religious) values, or "moral identity" as proposed by Wowra (2007, p. 305). This indicates that habituation in performing good deeds is essential. Students should be tough about various theories and values of religion, yet at the same time they should also be directed to familiarize themselves in performing good deeds and ignoring intolerable actions in accordance with the religious values and theories. Perhaps, it is because of this lack of habituation practices that students fail to control their academic honesty and integrity. Thus, they possibly feel less constrained by social and religious pressures and fail to exercise sufficient judgment on whether their conduct in the learning context is right or wrong. It can be concluded that, despite the potential "internal reward" within themselves (Buccioli & Piovesan, as cited in Nugroho, 2015, p. 8) for being honest, the majority of respondents still chose to cheat where it was 'common practice' because they are seeking external rewards.

6. Conclusion and Implications

Our study concludes on the basis that a majority of the students in this study admitted to cheating, that the incidence and rate of cheating remains high in higher education even in morally focused faith-led universities. These findings align the

findings of other Indonesian studies (Jena & Sihotang, 2015; Perianto, 2015) that many students cheat on exams or assignments. The prevalent cheating behaviors in this study included collaborating with others in completing individual assignments, ¹⁰ copying materials from books or the internet and then submitting them as their own, and requesting for answers in the exam from others. In contrast, the least usual cheating practice was replacing themselves during the exam, which might be due to the potential threat of major consequence. In principle, however, they also understood cheating as immoral (sinful), unethical conduct in the academic settings, which can be seen from their perceptions of acceptability of several cheating scenarios and from the small number of them who indicated that they never cheated.

However, in spite of their educational context that places an emphasis on moral behavior, some factors have induced them to cheat in exams/assignments. The biggest influencing factors are external factors such as social reasons (i.e., helping others), academic pressures (i.e., many assignments, difficult exams), time pressures (i.e., deadlines for assignments), and also cheating culture in a classroom in which students generally feel that cheating is allowed because they do it together, either during exams or when completing assignments. The internal reasons are motivation for higher grades and fear of failing in subjects, among others. A quote by Slobogin (as cited in Wowra, 2007, p. 303) that “students know they are completely judged by their grades. [Grades] are so important that we are willing to sacrifice our integrity in order to make a good impression” illustrates the underlying motivation for the students to cheat. The factors that influence the students not to cheat include internal factors such as Stiggins (nd) moral identity and religious teachings.

Our findings regarding students’ understandings of cheating behavior provide useful insights for future efforts ⁵ by teachers to reduce the prevalence of cheating in

higher education, particularly in Islamic Higher Education institutions. Potential strategies for mitigating academic dishonesty by cheating should consider how there might be a reversal of the culture of learning to pass to one of learning to learn (Carroll, 2013), and to familiarize students in performing good deeds, and take care of students in writing their assignments as well as in any other related assessments. Recent research and trends in assessment design now focus on assessment as tool *for* learning (Assessment as Learning, Stiggins (nd)) aiming for educational improvement rather than overwhelmingly assessment *of* learning that aims for quality assurance.

There is also the assessment task design itself to consider, which occupies much of the thinking and work of both teachers and learners. Some assessment tasks are more likely to promote and make cheating possible than others. Better-designed learning assessment requires a reasonable degree of assessment literacy of the academics who are responsible for curriculum design (Habiburrahim, 2018). Institutions that wish ¹ to address the problem of student cheating need to attend not only to policy but also provide professional learning for their academic staff to become better informed about assessment of students' learning and how to design it in such a way as to be productive in enhancing learning and in discouraging cheating. Academic development needs to secure a clear pathway to accommodate stakeholders' requisite, including students' intellectual empowerment (Orrell, 2017). Future research is needed to identify which policies and strategies best support minimization of academic misconduct, particularly those which will best suit the Indonesian Islamic ¹⁴ context of higher education. The goal of the introduction of these policies and strategies should not be focused on punishment but should be educative transformative, focused on the establishment of a reformed academic culture that reduces the performance pressure on students to and emphasizing the moral and educational benefits of exercising academic honesty and integrity.

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