

## Academic Dishonesty and Achievement Motivation: A Delicate Relationship

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### Abstract

The paper examines the connection between academic dishonesty and achievement motivation among year two, three and four undergraduate students at the two selected kulliyah (faculties) of the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). The overall finding of this investigation reveals that there are significant differences in relation to the level of academic dishonesty, gender, and kulliyah but not on achievement motivation. In general, both intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation are predominantly apparent in influencing the academic dishonesty among students at International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM).

**Key words:** Academic dishonesty; Intrinsic motivation; Extrinsic motivation; Achievement motivation; Undergraduate students; Quantitative study.

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### INTRODUCTION

Academic integrity (AI) is a crucial element in maintaining honesty and the integrity of every educational institution especially at a university. It is more than just obeying stimulated rules in academic. It is seen as

an ongoing issue due to its prevalence and occurrence almost in every other university students (McCabe, 2002). Academic dishonesty can be considered as a dishonest behaviour in terms of academic matters; for instance, using unapproved materials in an exam, submitting a paper done by other friends, copying in test, permitting other student to copy in a test, plagiarizing paper partially or as a whole, browsing the internet during exams and writing a paper for other friends (Miranda, 2011).

When students are admitted into higher education institutions, they are required to practice the values consisting of moral and character development from their past educational experience. Many studies have discussed dishonest behaviours among university students involving at least one or two different types of academic dishonesty. Many of these researches stated that academic misconduct among university students was an ordinary encounter. For instance, some researchers roughly estimated that the number of university students who had participated in dishonest academic behaviour was approximately 60%. (Haines, Diekhoff, LaBeff, & Clark 1986; Davis, Grover, Becker, & McGregor, 1992; McCabe, 1993). Other researchers pointed out it was 70% and more (Ames, 1992).

Consequently, there is an increase number of dishonest academic behaviour among college students over the last decade that is successfully exposed (Murdock, Beauchamp, & Hinton, 2008). Bartlett (2006) stated that the high rate of academic dishonesty in universities included cheating on exams, plagiarizing other scholastic works, fabricating research results, and forging academic documents. Furthermore, Dawkins (2004) estimated that 71% were reported to have witnessed others cheating at least once in their studies. However, from these groups only one percent agreed to inform and tell their professors when they incidentally saw others involved in the act of cheating (Jensen, Arnett, Feldman, & Cauffman, 2002).

Anderman (1998) attests that students generally do not cheat for fun but rather are motivated by specific individual variable outcomes. He further maintains that in fact students are motivated to cheat due to several reasons and motivation that can be the primary reason for committing such an act. These include one primary motive which is to improve grades or fear of failure (Finn & Frone, 2004). Another factor that has influenced student motivation to cheat is a lack of awareness of what constitutes academic dishonesty (Gehring, Nuss, & Pavela, 1986).

Several studies have found that cheating is actively widespread (Baird, 1980; Barnett & Dalton, 1981), rising (Wellborn, 1980), and regarded by majority of students to be a perfectly acceptable and relevant way to go for academic success (Baird, 1980) although accepting that it is a wrongful action.

There is a growing concern about the possibility of students who cheat in the university who will also cheat in the workplace in the future. Harding et al., (2004) substantiated that students who cheat in high school tend to cheat in college. Students cheating in college may be more likely to commit misconduct in the workplace.

Therefore, the primary purpose of this current investigation is to find the connection between academic dishonesty and achievement motivation with specific reference to students at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). It also examines academic dishonesty in a variety of individual factors, such as gender, grade-point average (GPA), kulliyah and levels of study. This study also identifies their motivation in engaging with any of the act of academic dishonesty mentioned at the outset.

The objective of this investigation is twofold which are:

(a) To explore the prevalence of academic dishonesty and achievement motivation among the undergraduate students at the selected kulliyah of IIUM in relation to:

- i. Gender
- ii. Kulliyah
- iii. Level of Study

(b) To examine the relationship between academic dishonesty and achievement motivation of undergraduate students.

Four (4) research questions are constructed:

(a) What is the nature of academic dishonesty among the undergraduate students at the selected kulliyah?

(b) What is the nature of achievement motivation among the undergraduate students at the selected kulliyah?

(c) Is there any significant differences in academic dishonesty and achievement motivation among undergraduate students with respect to the following:

- i. Gender
- ii. Kulliyah
- iii. Level of study

(d) What is the relationship between academic dishonesty and achievement motivation?

Significantly, the results of this study are capable of enriching the theory of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation by relating to academic dishonesty especially in IIUM. It is also expected that the study would enable to heighten the awareness of IIUM academics on the relationship between motivation and academic dishonesty among their students. This is to ensure that IIUM continues to produce honest, good and qualified students based on IIUM vision and mission as well as produce marketable and employable students because honesty will be embedded in their personality and practice in their workplace upon graduation. In addition, as an a'bid (slave) and khalifah (leader), the whole process of seeking knowledge is important to be done in Amanah (trusted) based on four attributes of the prophet: siddiq (honest), amanah (trusted), tabligh (advocacy) and fatonah (wisdom).

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## 1. CRISIS OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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Academic dishonesty at higher educational institutions especially at a university is not a new phenomenon. It seems to be widespread and more serious. It is extensively discussed and debated within the literature and the academic perspective which indicate that there is a change and a rapid increase of this phenomenon in recent years. Bowers (1964), Boresellino (1983), Brown and Emmett (2001), Haines et al. (1986), McCabe, Trevino, and Butterfield (2001) have explored rather extensively on academic dishonesty. However, research on academic dishonesty in the Malaysian educational institutions is still scarce as compared to the studies that have been conducted at international level (Idzuafi, 2013).

### 1.1 Forms of Academic Dishonesty

The term academic dishonesty can be expanded into other terms like academic misconduct, academic cheating, plagiarism, academic fraud and misrepresentation. Hughes and McCabe (2006) suggested that the terms academic dishonesty, academic misconduct, and academic integrity could be applied in every circumstance which accounts to improper behaviours students are engaged in completing their academic work and assignment.

Forms of academic dishonesty that cut across educational process come from many aspects that are probably used by students throughout the entire learning process at the university. McCabe and Trevino (1993) maintain that forms of academic dishonesty are among others using crib notes in a test, imitating from another student's work in exam, using unwanted methods to learn what was on an exam beforehand, copying from another student during a test without any permission from the owner, helping his or her friends cheat on

a test, cheating on a test with different way, copying material and submitting it as own work, fabricating a bibliography, handing in work done by others, receiving substantial, illegal or unpermitted help on an assignment, collaborating in pair on an individual assignment, copying a few sentences of material from a published source without footnoting (Bernard & Patricia, 2002).

### 1.2 Factors Contributing to Academic Dishonesty

The prevalence of academic dishonesty is well discussed by many researchers, but the factors contributing to academic dishonesty are not consistently discussed in the literature. The factors of academic dishonesty are vital and have to be investigated in finding the reasons have led students to commit this act. If academic staff want to better understand why students cheat and what to do to decrease the tendency of academic dishonesty, it is essential to study the variables in the literature that constitutes prevalence of these acts.

Students' attitudes toward academic dishonesty, their intelligence of academic policy and motivation to take courses are all related to the student's decision to engage in academic dishonesty (Jordan, 2001). Callahan (2004) mentions that several researchers speculated the cause of increased academic dishonesty was due to increased pressure for success. Pressure and desperation are common reasons for academic dishonesty. The types of pressure that students probably have are pressure to attain high grades and highest mark, to get into university, to be a top student, pressure from parents, teachers, society, friends and peers who have always expected student to get the best result and the pressure of the numbers of students engaged in academic dishonesty. This is supported by Iyer & Eastman (2006) where he mentioned college students stated that pressures for high grades from parents, peers and teachers will contribute to academic dishonesty.

Another factor to why students are more likely to cheat is owing to having low academic self-concept, poor budget, poor study time management, avoid effort, being afraid of Academic failure, pushed by their parents to get satisfactory score, and are influenced by peers (Ann, 2000).

In addition to these factors, learning strategies may influence academic dishonesty in which students are less likely to cheat if their strategy is to process information deeply, instead of superficially (Anderman, Griesinger, & Westerfield, 1998). University students stated that they cheated less when the subject made them interested (Pulvers & Diekhoff, 1999; Schraw et al., 1995). Therefore, pedagogies that stimulate intrinsic interests in class materials should reduce the prevalence of academic dishonesty. Also being free from symptoms of social anxiety causes unlikely to cheat compared to students who avoid shyness and this is also one of the factors of cheating (Wowra, 2007).

### 1.3 Motivational Perspectives on Academic Dishonesty

Studies have also shown the factors of academic dishonesty could be related to the type of motivation they have whether intrinsic or extrinsic motivation.

A cross relation between motivation and academic dishonesty was reported for university students in the United Kingdom (Newstead et al., 1996). In this study, students who were intrinsically motivated in their personal development significantly committed less cheating behaviour than students who studied on focusing to get a better job or for financial gain, including hoping to increase the living standard, career building, and career competitiveness. Students who studied primarily for extrinsic reasons, showed a significantly wider range of academic dishonesty than intrinsic motivation students.

This phenomenon is supported by Davy et al., (2007) who said that students who perceived that their education extrinsically such as to have a high-paying job is more likely to be dishonest in academic compared to students who view education as a reward of itself. There are enough evidence showing that students who have the motivation to master a subject matter to be most likely able to demonstrate and implement that knowledge, thereby avoiding themselves from any forms of academic dishonesty (Baker, 2004).

Across the theory of motivation, including intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Deci, 1975; Deci & Ryan, 1985) there is a difference between students who approach classroom tasks with a strong desire to understand (i.e., high intrinsic value, strong mastery or learning goals) versus those who are more interested in external indicators of accomplishment (i.e., performance goals, ego goals, extrinsic motivation). Those who are motivated by extrinsic motivation are more likely to get valued outcomes and to avoid negative outcomes they may potentially involve in such academic dishonesty. On the other hand, those who are intrinsically motivated by an inner desire to learn will not be engaged in any kind of unethical behaviours such as academic dishonesty. While intrinsic motivation deemed to contribute towards positive elements in learning, there is proof that extrinsic motivation impairs learning, resulting in poorer and bad performance also elevates the need to cheat (Baker, 2004).

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## 2. METHODOLOGY

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This study employs quantitative survey design which describes specific behaviours in a given population that might be engaged in academic dishonesty and also describes achievement motivation of the populations which aimed to investigate the relationship between achievement motivation and academic dishonesty among undergraduate students at IIUM. These were measured by two instruments from McCabe Academic Integrity Survey

and Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire Subscales (MLSQ). (Please see below)

The exact data of population were collected and verified from the Academic Management and Admission Division (AMAD) of the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). There were 18,630 undergraduates who were registered in semester 1, 2014/2015 from all 14 Kulliyah and 7,462 came from year one, year two and year four undergraduate students from two Kulliyahs namely Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and

Human Science (KIRKHS) and Kulliyah of Engineering (KOE) at the International Islamic University of Malaysia. 4,143 were female and 3,319 were male students.

Kulliyah of Engineering and Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge were chosen because they represented the majority of the students in IIUM. These two kulliyah have had higher number of students compared to others kulliyah. Table 1 illustrates the numbers of population involved in this investigation in detail:

**Table 1**  
**The Numbers of Population Involved**

Kulliyah/Department	Population					
	Male		Female		Total	
	Num	Percentage	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
Ahmad Ibrahim Kulliyah of Laws	442	2.91	992	6.53	1434	9.44
Economics and Management Sciences	1075	7.07	1756	11.56	2831	18.64
Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences	1157	7.61	3050	20.08	4207	27.7
Kulliyah of Education	215	1.41	793	5.22	1008	6.63
Language and Management	28	0.18	99	0.65	127	0.83
Engineering	2162	14.23	1093	7.19	3255	21.43
Architecture and Enviromental Desin	619	4.07	713	4.69	1332	8.77
Information and Communication Technology	646	4.24	347	2.28	993	6.53
Total	6344	41.77	8843	58.23	15187	100

The instrument used which consisted of items from McCabe Academic Integrity Survey (McCabe, 1999), included 19 plagiarism behaviour items. To examine student cheating from a motivational perspective, the instrument included statements from Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire Subscales (MLSQ) (Pintrich et al., 1990).

MSLQ used four items to estimate intrinsic goal orientation and four items to estimate extrinsic goal orientation. Items included to represent intrinsic goal include:

(a) During the study I choose subjects and assignments that really give me challenges so I can gain new knowledge.

(b) During the study, I choose the subjects, assignments and course material that stimulate my interest, even if it is complicated to study.

(c) The most satisfying thing for me during learning process is trying to understand the content as comprehensively as possible.

(d) When I have the chance in class or lecture, I prefer course assignments, task and quizzes that I can learn from even if they do not promise a good mark.

The four items used to represent extrinsic goal orientation are:

(a) Obtaining a higher rank in class is the most rewarding thing for me right now.

(b) The most significant and important thing for me during study is improving my overall grade point average, so my main objective in class is getting a good grade and rank.

(c) If it is possible, I hope for to get highest grade and mark in class than most of the other students.

(d) I wish to perform well in class since it is very important to demonstrate my ability, expertise and talent to my family, friends, employer and society.

Based on the items above, respondents who scored more on intrinsic motivation and less on extrinsic motivation were measured as a person with high intrinsic motivation. While the one who graded themselves more on extrinsic motivation and low on intrinsic motivation was categorized as a person with low intrinsic motivation.

### 3. ANALYSES, RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 2 shows the age mean for the participants. 23.2% of the respondents fall in to the group of age between 18-20 years old, followed by 21-23 years old group (58.4%), and the age scale of 24-26 year old group is 17.9%.

**Table 2**  
**Descriptive Analysis: Description of the Students Based on Their Level of Study**

Level of study	Sample, N	Percentage, %
2 <sup>nd</sup> year	208	54.7
3 <sup>rd</sup> year	123	32.4
4 <sup>th</sup> year	49	12.9
Total	380	100

From the 380 respondents, 175 respondents (46.1%) were male and 202 respondents (53.2%) were female (Table 3)



**Table 3**  
**Descriptive Analysis: Description of the Students Based on their Gender**

Gender	Sample, N	Percentage, %
Male	178	46.8
Female	202	53.2
Total	380	100

Out of the 380 students, 200 students (52.6%) were from kulliyah of IRK and 180 (47.4%) were from kulliyah of engineering. The demographic of kulliyah is presented in Table 4 below:

**Table 4**  
**Descriptive Analysis: Description of the Students Based on Their Kulliyah**

Kulliyah	Sample, N	Percentage, %
IRK	200	52.6
Engineering	180	47.4
Total	380	100

From the analyses of the two Kulliyahs, most of the IRK and Engineering respondents have experienced academic dishonesty in their studies. It can be generalized that more than the average of the IRK and engineering students in IIUM are extrinsically as well as intrinsically motivated in their study, though not that high.

### 3.1 The Nature of Academic Dishonesty

Participants' achievement motivation responses were measured through the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire Subscales (MLSQ), All 8 items were categorized into intrinsic motivation (items number 1, 3, 5 and 7) and extrinsic motivation (questions number 2, 4, 6 and 8). The highest numbers of respondents who chose between "describe me well" and "describe me very well" was 58% for intrinsic motivation. For extrinsic items, majority of students also chose between "describe me well" and "describe me very well".

**Table 5**  
**Descriptive Analysis: Nature of Academic Dishonesty From Two Kulliyahs**

	Kulliyah	N	Mean	Std, deviation
Level of academic dishonesty	IRK	200	2.0394	.30686
	Engineering	180	2.1333	.33601

Table 5 above reveals the average mean score of the respondents. Respondents from Kulliyah of IRK show a mean score of 2.0394, which is slightly lower than Kulliyah of Engineering where the mean score is 2.1333. It indicates that the respondents from Kulliyah of Engineering had higher academic dishonesty than respondents from Kulliyah of IRK.

### 3.2 The Nature of Achievement Motivation

From the descriptive analysis conducted, the result shows that the mean score for Intrinsic Motivation is 3.3575

( $SD=0.6$ ) for Kulliyah of IRK and the mean score for Kulliyah of Engineering is 3.2903 ( $SD=0.53$ ). The mean difference of intrinsic motivation between Kulliyah of IRK and Kulliyah of Engineering was .06.

The mean score of Extrinsic motivation is 3.3575 ( $SD=0.65$ ) for Kulliyah of IRK and 3.8444 ( $SD=0.67$ ) for KOE. The mean difference for intrinsic motivation between Kulliyah of IRK and Kulliyah of Engineering is .18.

**Table 6**  
**Descriptive Analysis: Nature of Achievement Motivation From Two Kulliyahs**

Kulliyah		Intrinsic motivation	Extrinsic motivation
IRK	Mean	3.357	3.667
	Std. deviation	.6513	.6626
Engineering	Mean	3.290	3.844
	Std. deviation	.5312	.6789
Total	Mean	3.325	3.751
	Std. deviation	.5976	.6753

Significant difference in academic dishonesty among undergraduate students with respect to:

#### (a) Gender

Table 7 below presents a descriptive analysis designed for academic dishonesty among undergraduate students based on Academic Integrity Students Survey (McCabe) obtained through gender differences. Generally, result shows there is no significant difference in terms of mean score between male and female respondents. Male respondents generally show dominant mean score than females students on the academic dishonesty; male ( $M: 3.1242, SD: 0.31341$ ) and female ( $M: 2.0484, SD: 0.32973$ ).

**Table 7**  
**Descriptive Analysis: Nature of Academic Dishonesty by Gender**

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. deviation
Level of academic dishonesty	Male	178	2.1242	.31341
	Female	202	2.0484	.32973

Hence, an independent sample *t*-test was used to evaluate the nature of academic dishonesty for both male and female students. Tables 8 below presents the result of the *t*-test analysis and demonstrates that there are significant differences among male female groups at the significant alpha level of .05 in academic dishonesty level ( $t(378) = 2.288, p = .023$ ).

Therefore, these results indicate that male students in this research stated significantly greater in academic dishonesty than female counterparts. Nevertheless, the finding is not uncommon as it is similar to that of the other results of the earlier research which investigated the impact of sexual category on academic dishonesty.

**Table 8**  
**Independent Samples *t*-Test: The Nature**

		Levene's test for equality of variances		<i>t</i> -test for equality of means			
		<i>F</i>	Sig.	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean difference
Level of academic dishonesty	Equal variances assumed	.200	.655	2.288	378	0.23	0.7580
	Equal variances not assumed			2.296	375.822	.022	0.7580

(b) Kulliyah

Students in this investigation were obtained from two different kulliyahs at the International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM). The kulliyahs consisted of kulliyah of IRK and kulliyah of Engineering. A descriptive analysis of the academic dishonesty by kulliyah (Table 9) below reveals the mean score for the kulliyah which is not far different with the respondents from Kulliyah of Engineering posted a higher mean score (*M*: 2.1333, *SD*: 0.3068) followed by kulliyah of IRK (*M*: 2.039, *SD*: 0.3068). Of academic dishonesty by gender.

**Table 9**  
**Descriptive Analysis: The Nature of Academic Dishonesty by Kulliyah**

	Kulliyah	<i>N</i>	Mean	Std. deviation
Level of academic dishonesty	IRK	200	2.0394	.30686
	Engineering	180	2.1333	.33601

To ascertain the differences between the sample means for the kulliyah and the level of academic dishonesty of the respondents, independent sample *t*-test was conducted to compare the nature of academic dishonesty for both kulliyahs. Table 10 below formulates the outcomes of the *t*-test analysis and establishes that there are significant difference among two of kulliyah at the significant alpha level .05 in the level of academic dishonesty with (*t* (378) = -2.847, *p* = 0.005)

This investigation produced several important findings.

(a) The finding indicated that the respondents from Kulliyah of Engineering had higher involvement towards academic dishonesty than respondents from Kulliyah of IRK and both kulliyahs possessed intermediate level of academic dishonesty which means between “rarely” and “sometimes”.

(b) The respondents from Kulliyah of Engineering had higher extrinsic motivation on achievement motivation than respondents from Kulliyah of IRK. However, the respondents from Kulliyah of IRK had higher of intrinsic motivation on achievement motivation than respondents from Kulliyah of Engineering. On the other hand, the mean difference of intrinsic motivation between Kulliyah of IRK and Kulliyah of Engineering was not so high which was .0672.

(c) Male respondents in this study were reported to have slightly higher in academic dishonesty than female respondents. This shows almost no significant difference involving the gender and academic dishonesty.

(d) The finding revealed that the respondents from 3<sup>rd</sup> year undergraduate posted higher academic dishonesty followed by 4<sup>th</sup> year undergraduate and finally 2<sup>nd</sup> year undergraduate respondents.

(e) Female respondents in this study were reported to have higher intrinsic motivation than male counterparts. However, in the extrinsic motivation, there was no difference reported between male and female from both kulliyah in which they had similar level on extrinsic motivation.

(f) The result also revealed that the respondents from 3<sup>rd</sup> year undergraduate dominated a higher level of intrinsic motivation followed by 2<sup>nd</sup> year and finally 4<sup>th</sup> year undergraduate students.

(g) Meanwhile for extrinsic motivation, the study revealed that the highest level is the 4<sup>th</sup> year followed by 3<sup>rd</sup> year and finally 2<sup>nd</sup> year undergraduate.

(h) There is significant relationship between academic dishonesty and extrinsic motivation and no significant relationship between academic dishonesty and intrinsic motivation. That means most of the students who had extrinsic motivation possessed higher score in academic dishonesty as compared to students who dominate in intrinsic motivation that reported having lower score in academic dishonesty.

**CONCLUSION**

From the findings, it can be concluded that on the lecturers' side, they have challenging tasks ahead to combat academic dishonesty in order to create intrinsic learning motivation in their pedagogy. They are also responsible to boost students' motivation especially intrinsic motivation by enhancing their students' knowledge with internal factors namely their habits and thinking about academic integrity, and improve students' skills such as skills in answering questions for examination and test.

Through verbal persuasion, lecturers could play a role in persuading the students to behave honestly in their studies and examination. Through convincing communication and guidance in finishing a task or assignments, it will encourage students to perform well and motivate them to do their best.

On the other hand, a vital conclusion is that students must equip themselves with the knowledge of academic integrity so that they are aware of the potential pitfalls in their journey to success.

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