



Plagiarism and Academic Integrity in Indonesian Islamic Higher Education: Factors and Policy Implications

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ABSTRACT

Plagiarism has become a pressing concern in higher education, yet its dynamics within Islamic universities remain largely underexplored. Addressing this gap, the present study investigates the extent of plagiarism among students at an Indonesian State Islamic University and the main factors influencing this academic misconduct. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study combined survey data with interview evidence to capture both the prevalence and underlying causes of plagiarism. The findings reveal that the overall level of plagiarism among students is relatively high. Among the contributing factors, deficiencies in academic skills emerged as the most prominent, particularly in the ability to paraphrase, synthesize, and properly reference academic work. In addition, the growing familiarity with information and communication technologies (ICT), including artificial intelligence tools, and certain pedagogical practices further facilitated students' engagement in plagiarism. The convergence of quantitative and qualitative evidence underscores the interplay between limited academic competencies and technological accessibility as key drivers of plagiarism in this context. This study advances the understanding of plagiarism in Islamic higher education by providing empirical evidence from an under-researched region in Indonesia. The findings also carry significant policy implications for the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Islamic universities, highlighting the need for curriculum reforms that integrate academic integrity education, systematic skill training, and the deployment of effective plagiarism- and AI-detection tools. By addressing both structural and pedagogical dimensions, this study contributes to strengthening a culture of academic honesty in Islamic higher education.

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Plagiarism, Academic Integrity, Islamic Higher Education, Academic Skills, Educational Policy.

ABSTRAK

Plagiarisme telah menjadi kekhawatiran serius dalam pendidikan tinggi, namun dinamika kasus ini di lingkungan universitas Islam masih jarang diteliti. Untuk mengisi kekosongan tersebut, penelitian ini bertujuan menyelidiki sejauh mana mahasiswa di salah satu Universitas Islam Negeri di Indonesia melakukan plagiarisme serta faktor utama yang memengaruhi pelanggaran akademik tersebut. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan mixed-methods, penelitian ini menggabungkan data survei dengan wawancara untuk menangkap baik tingkat prevalensi maupun penyebab mendasar plagiarisme. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa tingkat plagiarisme mahasiswa secara keseluruhan tergolong relatif tinggi. Di antara faktor yang berkontribusi, keterbatasan keterampilan akademik muncul sebagai yang paling dominan, khususnya dalam kemampuan memparafrase, mensintesis, dan menggunakan sitasi secara tepat. Selain itu, meningkatnya keterbiasaan mahasiswa dengan teknologi informasi dan komunikasi (TIK), termasuk alat berbasis kecerdasan buatan (AI), serta praktik pedagogis tertentu, semakin memfasilitasi keterlibatan mahasiswa dalam plagiarisme. Konvergensi bukti kuantitatif dan kualitatif menegaskan bahwa keterbatasan kompetensi akademik dan aksesibilitas teknologi merupakan pendorong utama praktik plagiarisme dalam konteks ini. Penelitian ini memperkaya pemahaman tentang plagiarisme di pendidikan tinggi Islam dengan memberikan bukti empiris dari kawasan Indonesia timur yang masih jarang diteliti. Temuan juga memiliki implikasi kebijakan penting bagi Kementerian Agama dan universitas Islam, terutama terkait kebutuhan reformasi kurikulum yang mengintegrasikan pendidikan integritas akademik, pelatihan keterampilan secara sistematis, serta penerapan perangkat deteksi plagiarisme dan AI yang efektif. Dengan menangani dimensi struktural dan pedagogis sekaligus, penelitian ini berkontribusi pada penguatan budaya kejujuran akademik di perguruan tinggi Islam.

KATA KUNCI

Plagiarisme, Integritas Akademik, Pendidikan Tinggi Islam, Keterampilan Akademik, Kebijakan Pendidikan.

Introduction

The Plagiarism, generally regarded as an (un)intentional act of manipulating and copying someone else work without proper acknowledgment (Pecorari, 2013), remains prevalent in the academia (Adiningrum, 2015; Pecorari, 2013)(Pecorari, 2013) offered four distinct criteria to define plagiarism: intertextuality of two different texts, provision of similarity, inappropriate relationship of texts, and intention to commit this academic fraud. The increasing cases of plagiarism were caused partly by the nature of cheating, as a part of human civilization (Adiningrum, 2015; Gallant, 2011).

Similarly, in the Indonesian Higher Education (HE) context, plagiarism continuous to prevail (Akbar & Picard, 2019; Ampuni et al., 2019), following the Indonesian government's demand to globalize its international academic reputation (Adiningrum, 2015). The emergence of internet technology also contributes to the sheer cases of plagiarism making it easier for students and academics to plagiarize and making it difficult for institutions to cease this heinous academic crime (Pecorari, 2013). Despite the stipulation of the Ministry of National Education decree No. 17 Year 2010 on mitigating plagiarism in the Indonesian higher education context and the individual initiatives of Indonesian universities to combat against the plagiarism practices, the number of cases has remained immensely increasing (Adiningrum, 2015). Combating this academic dishonesty requires a joint responsibility of the administrations, students, educators (Adiningrum, 2015).

In the context of Islamic world, plagiarism is undoubtedly high and seems to prevail partly due to the cultural influence (Akbar & Picard, 2020). Previous studies on plagiarism in the Islamic HE suggest that producing texts closely resembling the source texts and remembrance of Islamic texts are the norm, indicating the acceptance of action attributed to the cause of committing plagiarism (e.g., (Bretag & Mahmud, 2016; Ismail & Yussof, 2016). Likewise, in the context of an Indonesian State Islamic University on the Island of Lombok, where this study took place, it is necessary to attenuate the academic breach. The initial step taken is to mitigate the plagiarism through the examination the extent to which students commit plagiarism, while simultaneously examining the factors promoting them to breach the academic integrity.

Studies on plagiarism in the Islamic HE landscape have been inundated with qualitative inquiries (Akbar & Picard, 2020; Englizar et al., 2017; Moten, 2014), and little attention has been given on the factors. (Ampuni et al., 2019) and (Pecorari, 2013) assert that understanding the factors promoting plagiarism in HE can be a precautionary measure to attenuate the academic dishonesty. More importantly, none of previous studies, to the best of authors' knowledge, has examined plagiarism and its factors in the context of the Islamic HE, particularly in the Eastern part of Indonesia. (Ampuni et al., 2019) reported that more students from universities outside of Java committed plagiarism than their counterparts in Javanese universities.

Previous Studies on Plagiarism in Higher Education Context

Plagiarism derives from the Latin word "*Plagiarius*", meaning "kidnapping" and "kidnapper" (Englizar et al., 2017; Moten, 2014). In the context of HE, plagiarism continues to rise (Moten, 2014). Several recent studies have examined this type of academic dishonesty at HE setting (Cutri et al., 2021; Fatima et al., 2018; Hu & Lei, 2014). (Fatima et al., 2018) examined the perceived internal factors, such as academic skill, pressure and pride and external factors, namely the use of technologies, control, and teaching, influencing Chinese university students to commit plagiarism. The study revealed that the internal factors had positive effects on plagiarism, except for the academic competence. It also unveiled that the external factors had substantial effects on the students' plagiarism, but the correlation between the use of ICT and plagiarism did not significantly exist. The study also revealed that the plagiarism did not significantly correlate with gender, level of study, and disciplines, and that the higher the levels of study, the less likely they will commit plagiarism. Another study by (Hu & Lei, 2014) examining whether Chinese university students with two distinct study backgrounds, social and natural sciences, perceived plagiarism differently. It was uncovered that the former group was more tolerant toward the plagiarism compared to their counterparts studying natural sciences. It also found that gender did not significantly affect their perception on plagiarism.

In the Indonesian HE context, studies on plagiarism have gained exponential interests among academic researchers (Abbasi et al., 2021; Adiningrum, 2015; Akbar & Picard, 2019; Ampuni et al., 2019; Patak et al., 2020; Putra et al., 2022; Sandy & Shen, 2018). (Ampuni et al., 2019) examined the academic integrity of Indonesian students from different levels of tertiary education, diploma, undergraduate and post-graduate from universities in Java and beyond (Suprpto, 2019). It was found that almost 100% of the students committed plagiarism with more students from universities outside the Javanese island and that students with diploma level of education plagiarised more than their counterparts. Unlike previous studies of plagiarism in HE, this study revealed that male students outnumbered their female counterparts in committing this heinous academic breach significantly. The majority of the remaining studies in the Indonesian HE examined plagiarism qualitatively. Using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), (Akbar & Picard, 2019) examined the plagiarism policies by looking into two documents issued by

the Directorate General of Indonesian Higher Education (DIKTIS) and a prominent Indonesian University, Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB). It was found that the policies focused more on the lecturers and graduating students at the expense of the under-going students. It also revealed that concept of plagiarism did not include inappropriate references or not giving credits to the authors of cited sources. (Adiningrum, 2015) conducting a focused-group discussion involving representatives of several Indonesian universities aimed to examine their perceptions of plagiarism. The participants generally perceived that plagiarism was committed by students and lecturers because of their inadequacy of academic writing skills and a lack of awareness of plagiarism, such as using ghost-writers, fake research, copying someone else theses. (Patak et al., 2020) also qualitatively explored English lecturers' perspectives on plagiarism committed by university students. The study revealed three emerging factors promoting plagiarism among the students, namely the widespread use of the internet, a lack of assessment criteria, and inadequacy of academic writing skills.

Plagiarism in the Islamic Higher Education Context

Although studies on plagiarism involving Islamic universities are relatively sparse (Akbar & Picard, 2020; Moten, 2014), several research have shown that there is an increasing trend of this academic breach partly because the tradition in the Islamic world perceives memorization of texts as virtues (Akbar & Picard, 2020; Riwanda et al., 2024) (Akbar & Picard, 2020), attributing to the increasing number of plagiarism committed by Muslim students and scholars (Akbar & Picard, 2020; Bretag & Mahmud, 2016; Ismail & Yussof, 2016). A myriad of studies report that most academics in Islamic HE remains hesitant to willingly address the issue of academic integrity partly because it may not be their priority and perceive themselves as being inferior in this matter (Akbar & Picard, 2020; Kozok & Siaputra, 2023) (Akbar & Picard, 2020). Based on the qualitative evidence, (Moten, 2014) unveiled that some Muslim nations were lenient to plagiarism, while others intend to cease it. A mixed-method study by (Englizar et al., 2017) examining the factors and behaviours of bachelor degree students of Islamic religion education at an Indonesian university uncovered that there were three types of plagiarism, namely quoting without attributing the sources, quoting half or parts of the source texts, and converting others' works as their own. It also revealed that a lack of understanding of plagiarism, wanting to quickly complete the tasks, overload tasks, lack of reading interest, limited amount of time to find the answer, ease of information on the internet, less purchasing power and a lack of academic writing skills. An integrative literature review analysis, (Akbar & Picard, 2020) reported that five categories of challenging planes, namely institution, social, learning and technology, professors or lecturers, and students themselves.

Drawing upon the review of previous studies, it is encapsulated that first, studies on the relationship of plagiarism and gender, levels of education, and majors result in contradictory findings. Secondly, there remains a paucity of studies examining the extent to which students commit plagiarism and the factors encouraging them to commit such a heinous academic crime at an Islamic university, particularly beyond the Java island. (Ampuni et al., 2019), (Akbar & Picard, 2020) and (Pecorari, 2013) suggested that understanding the factors promoting plagiarism at an Islamic HE context be a stepping stone for mitigating or extenuating the plagiarism as it may provide appropriate preventive measures for the HE education institutions to curb it. It also helps the institutions avoid the impartial judgement on the motivation of students and academics to commit the plagiarism (Pecorari, 2013).

Based on the rationales above, this study aims to examine and extenuate plagiarism at an Indonesian Islamic university.

Theoretical Framework

Addressing the factors affecting plagiarism is central to mitigating the academic breach in HE context (Ampuni et al., 2019; Pecorari, 2013). Therefore, studies examining factors promoting plagiarism have been thriving (Abbasi et al., 2021; Bennett & Bennett, 2010; Comas-Forgas & Sureda-Negre, 2010; Fatima et al., 2018; Husain et al., 2017; Jereb et al., 2018; Šprajc et al., 2017). (Abbasi et al., 2021) established a model for understanding the causes of plagiarism in Iran. Their grounder theory study unveiled five factors responsible for the rise of plagiarism, namely causal condition, intervening, ground, strategy and interventions, and outcomes factors. (Bennett & Bennett, 2010) looked into the factors affecting plagiarism at a post-1992 university and unveiled that despite almost fifty percent of the students' admission of plagiarism being immoral acts, most of them admitted that they had committed it. The study also unveiled that gender, ages, and study programs did not have significant influence on plagiarism. Among the many measured factors, academic integration, attitudes to plagiarism, fear of failure, and relationship with staff significantly attributed to the minor and major plagiarism. A mixed method study by (Comas-Forgas & Sureda-Negre, 2010) reported that lacking of time to do the assignment, bad time and organizational management, overload tasks, ease of access to the internet, and more theoretical assignments were the major causes of plagiarism. Similarly, (Šprajc et al., 2017) reported that the Information communication and Technology (ICT) and teachers were major causes of plagiarism in HE setting, and that male students committed plagiarism more frequently than their counterparts due to the tendency of the former to procrastinate.

The factors attributing to the rise of plagiarism as unveiled by the abovementioned studies can be classified into two major categories, namely Internal and External factors. The former includes the Technologies (ICT), control (CTL), Pedagogy (PDG), while the later comprises academic skills (AS), pressure (PR), and Pride (PRD). The emergence of internet technologies have contributed positively to plagiarism, making it difficult to control (Fatima et al., 2018; Pecorari, 2013; Šprajc et al., 2017). A lack of control from the HE (CTL) is also perceived as one of the factors for the growth of plagiarism. This negligence continuously allows the students and academics to commit the academic breach (Akbar & Picard, 2020; Pecorari, 2013; Šprajc et al., 2017). In addition, poor teachers' pedagogy (PDG) were also said to promote plagiarism. Many admitted that too much assignment and ignorance of teachers' on their the students' tasks were found to promote plagiarism (Fatima et al., 2018; Šprajc et al., 2017). A lack of academic writing skills among the students and academics were also found to contribute to plagiarism, mainly unintentional plagiarism, such as inappropriate referencing (Akbar & Picard, 2020; Pecorari, 2003, 2013). Poor reading skills force the individuals to commit the academic dishonesty (Pecorari, 2013). Pressure (PR) from the faculty, peers, and individual economic conditions were deemed to promote individual to commit plagiarism (Fatima et al., 2018; Šprajc et al., 2017). (Jereb et al., 2018) reported that Germany students committed plagiarism due to these pressures. Last but not least is the factors associated with pride (PRD). (Fatima et al., 2018) and (Jereb et al., 2018) reported that the students committing plagiarism were motivated by their prides, wanting to achieve high mark and avoiding being ashamed of failure.

All the abovementioned factors were categorised into internal and external factors following the (Fatima et al., 2018).

Based on the review of previous studies on plagiarism in HE, particularly in the Indonesian and Islamic HE, including the factors promoting the thrive of this academic crime, the following causal model was established adapted from (Fatima et al., 2018) (see Figure 1).

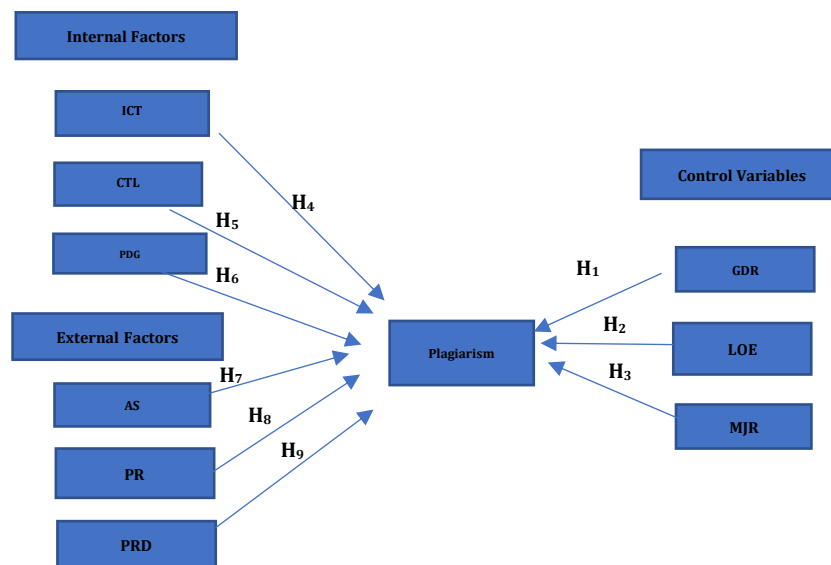


Figure 1. Measurement Model: Factors Promoting Plagiarism

Based on the model above, the following hypothetical relationships are formulated:

- H₁: Gender has a significant influence on plagiarism committed by the students of the State Islamic University*
- H₂: Levels of Education has significant influence on plagiarism committed by the students of the State Islamic University*
- H₃: Majors have a significant influence on plagiarism committed by the students of the State Islamic University*
- H₄: ICT has a significant influence on plagiarism committed by the students of the State Islamic University*
- H₅: CTL has a significant influence on plagiarism committed by the students of the State Islamic University*
- H₆: PDG has a significant influence on plagiarism committed by the students of the State Islamic University*
- H₇: AS has a significant influence on plagiarism committed by the students of the State Islamic University*
- H₈: PR has a significant influence on plagiarism committed by the students of the State Islamic University*
- H₉: PRD has a significant influence on plagiarism committed by the students of the State Islamic University*

In addition to measuring the hypothetical relationships above, this study also sets out to unveil the descriptive statistics portraying the plagiarism levels committed by the students in terms of gender, majors, and grades. As this study employed a mixed-method data, the factors mentioned above will be used to categorize the qualitative data.

Based on the rationales above, this study aims to extenuate plagiarism committed by the students by examining its associated factors at an Indonesian State Islamic University. To meet the above objective, three research questions guided this study:

1. To what extent did the students commit plagiarism at the Islamic University?

2. How did the plagiarism committed by the students differ according to gender, grades, and majors?
3. What were the factors causing the students to commit the plagiarism?

Methods

This study employed a convergent mixed-methods design, which allowed the integration of quantitative and qualitative data to provide a more comprehensive understanding of plagiarism and its influencing factors (Creswell & Clark, 2017). Quantitative results were complemented and validated through qualitative interviews, enabling triangulation and a deeper exploration of students' experiences.

The research was conducted at an Indonesian State Islamic University located on the island of Lombok. From approximately 12,000 undergraduate students across 27 majors, a total of 940 students from nine selected majors fully participated in the survey. The nine majors Physics Education (PE), Chemistry Education (CE), Falak and Astronomy (FLA), Arabic Education (AE), Islamic Civil Development (ICD), Shariah Economy (SE), Islamic Political Thought (IPT), Islamic Education (IE), and English Language Education (ELE) were purposively chosen to represent the three main clusters of disciplines offered by the university: natural sciences, social sciences, and religious studies. The sample size of 940 was determined to ensure representativeness across these clusters and to meet the recommended minimum threshold for Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), which requires large samples to ensure statistical power (Hair et al., 2019). Respondents were selected using stratified sampling to capture variations across majors and academic backgrounds.

For the qualitative strand, two students from each of the nine majors were purposively selected, resulting in a total of 18 interviewees. The selection was based on their willingness to participate and their reported plagiarism frequency, particularly those scoring in the higher categories (5 or 6, i.e., frequent plagiarism). Although this number may be considered relatively small for full data saturation, the participants were drawn from diverse academic fields, and the thematic patterns that emerged were consistent across cases. This cross-major representation strengthens the trustworthiness of the qualitative findings while acknowledging the limitation.

Quantitative data were collected using two adapted instruments: (1) a questionnaire on plagiarism-related factors from (Fatima et al., 2018), which employed a seven-point Likert scale, and (2) a questionnaire on students' self-reported plagiarism practices from (Ampuni et al., 2019), which employed a five-point Likert scale. Both instruments were translated into Indonesian and contextually adapted. The first questionnaire comprised six constructs: Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Control (CTL), Pedagogy (PDG), Academic Skills (AS), Pressure (PR), and Pride (PRD). The second measured plagiarism behavior through four items. To ensure reliability, Cronbach's alpha values were calculated for each construct: ICT ($\alpha = 0.81$), Control ($\alpha = 0.79$), Pedagogy ($\alpha = 0.83$), Academic Skills ($\alpha = 0.85$), Pressure ($\alpha = 0.82$), Pride ($\alpha = 0.80$), and Plagiarism ($\alpha = 0.84$). All values exceeded the acceptable threshold of 0.70, confirming the internal consistency of the measures (Hair et al., 2019).

Quantitative data were analyzed using PLS-SEM with SmartPLS 3.0, which involved assessing construct validity and reliability followed by hypothesis testing. Qualitative data were analyzed using Braun & Clarke (2016), thematic analysis framework, which included familiarization with the data, coding, theme identification, and refinement. The themes were then mapped onto the internal and external factors of plagiarism, allowing comparison and integration with the quantitative findings.

Results and Discussion

Results

The Extent to which the Students Committed Plagiarism at the Islamic University

Prior to measuring the hypothetical analysis, the analysis of reliability and validity of the constructs and assessing the causal relationships between variables were carried out. The first analysis of the measurement model shows that the data have acceptable level of reliability and validity as indicated by the values of Cronbach's Alpha, and Composite Reliability (CR); and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) were respectively above ≥ 0.70 , except in PR variable with slightly less than the recommended level as shown in Table 1 (Becker et al., 2023; Hair et al., 2019).

Table 1. Construct Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	CR	AVE
AS	0.702	0.759	0.828	0.619
CTL	0.705	0.785	0.830	0.622
ICT	0.766	0.879	0.869	0.700
PDG	0.738	1.066	0.853	0.670
PLG	0.770	0.791	0.872	0.699
PR	0.687	0.707	0.826	0.614
PRD	0.753	0.955	0.857	0.688

Pertaining to the students' overall level of plagiarism, the statistical analysis reveals that they have a moderate level of plagiarism PLG ($M=3.95$). It means that the students admitted that they occasionally committed plagiarism. Other variables, such as CTL, PDG, AS, and PRD, were found to be slightly above the moderate level, given the average means above 4.5, with ICT skill being the highest ($M=5.47$) as shown in Table 2. It indicates that the students have relatively higher technological knowledge or skills.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Items	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
PLG	3	1	6	3.95	1.19
ICT	3	2	7	5.47	0.94
CTL	3	1	7	4.41	1.49
PDG	3	1	7	4.62	1.28
AS	3	1	7	4.84	1.35
PR	3	1	7	4.58	1.26
PRD	3	1	7	4.39	1.55

N: 940

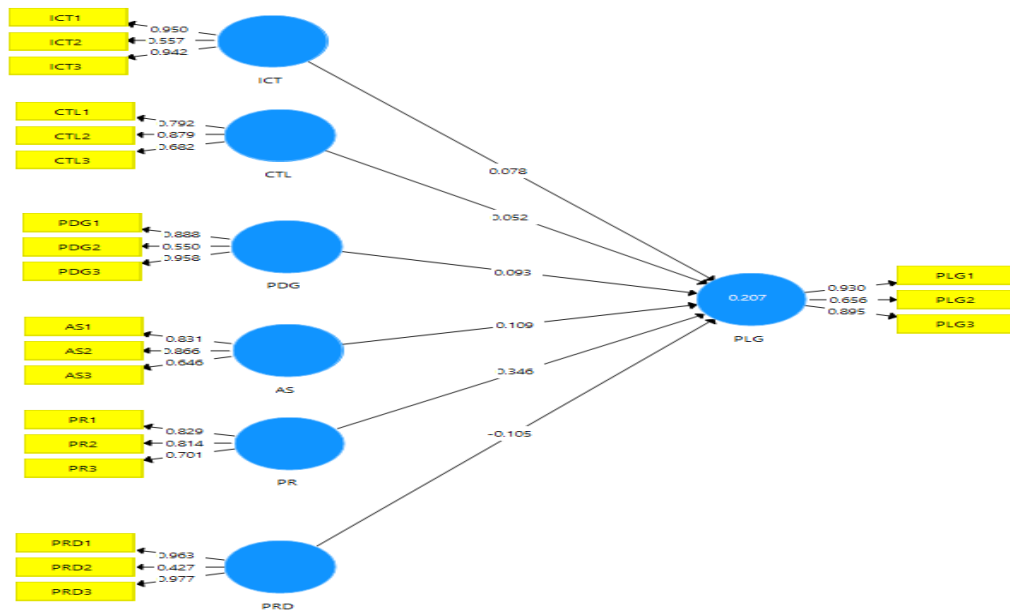


Figure 2. Measurement Model

Due to the acceptable level of reliability and validity, the causal relationship between the variables were measured by carrying out the structural model measurement (Hair et al., 2019). Table 3 shows the outcomes of the hypothetical tests in this study depicting the variables above.

The statistical evidence suggests that all hypotheses, except the impact of control (CTL) on the plagiarism (PLG), were accepted. The results reveal that the ability to use technologies significantly affects the rise of plagiarism (H_4) as evidenced by the beta and significant values of ($\beta=0.078$, $t=2.416$, $p<0.016$). However, the institutional controls have no significant impacts on the plagiarism (H_5), given the beta and significant values ($\beta=0.052$, $t=1.656$, $p<0.096$). Pedagogy has a significant impact on the plagiarism committed by the students (H_6) ($\beta=0.093$, $t=3.085$, $p<0.002$) and ($\beta=0.406$, $t=5.662$, $p<0.000$). Similarly, the students' academic skills also substantially impact on their level of plagiarism (H_7) ($\beta=0.109$, $t=3.531$, $p<0.000$). It also applies to the two remaining hypotheses measured the institutional pressure and pride on the students' plagiarism (H_8) and (H_9) respectively evidenced by beta and significant values ($\beta=0.346$, $t=11.205$, $p<0.000$) and ($\beta=-0.105$, $t=3.667$, $p<0.000$). The details are presented in Table 3 below:

Table 3. Hypothetical Relationship

	Constructs	β	SD	T	P	Decisions
4	ICT -> PLG	0.078	0.032	2.416	0.016	Accepted
5	CTL -> PLG	0.052	0.032	1.656	0.098	Rejected
6	PDG -> PLG	0.093	0.03	3.095	0.002	Accepted
7	AS -> PLG	0.109	0.031	3.531	0.000	Accepted
8	PR -> PLG	0.346	0.031	11.205	0.000	Accepted
9	PRD -> PLG	-0.105	0.029	3.667	0.000	Accepted

The Extent to Which Plagiarism Differs According to Gender, Grades, and Majors

The second general research question that this study aimed to answer was the extent to which the control variables: gender, grades (GRD), and majors (MJR) differ in terms of plagiarism (PLG). To attain the objective, another bootstrapping test was carried out as illustrated in Figure 3.

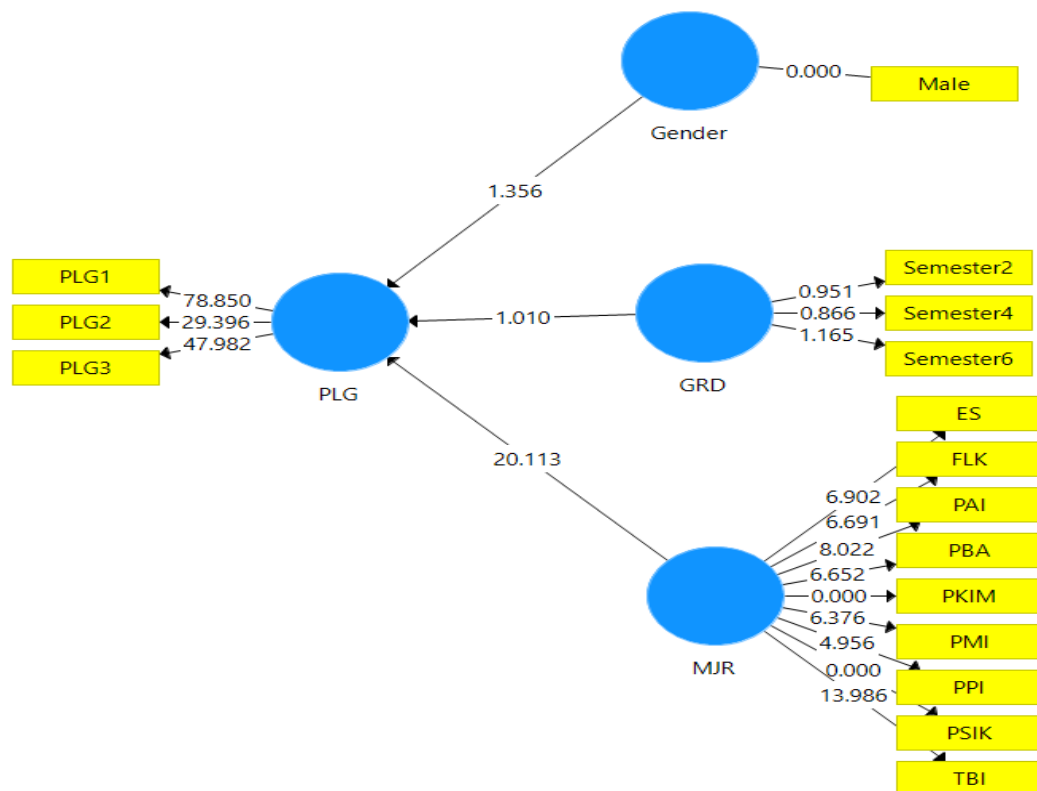


Figure 3. Measurement Model across Gender, grades, and Majors

It is statistically evidenced that gender does not differ significantly, which also applies to grade, semester 2, semester 4, and semester 6, but it was significantly different across the nine majors, as displayed in Table 4.

Table 4. Hypothesis Relationship

		β	SD	t	P	Decisions
H ₁	Gender -> PLG	0.037	0.028	1.338	0.181	Rejected
H ₂	GRD -> PLG	-0.113	0.111	1.02	0.308	Rejected
H ₃	MJR -> PLG	0.498	0.022	23.128	0.000	Accepted

Table 5 shows the descriptive statistics of plagiarism committed by the students according to the three controlling variables. It shows that plagiarism committed by male students ($M=4$) is slightly higher than that of their female counterparts ($M=3.8$). Similarly, across different grades, semester 2, semester 4, and semester 6 have a level of plagiarism, given the *Mean* values of above 0.1 margin. Based on the nine different majors, it can be seen that students majoring in English language education (TBI) committed the least plagiarism given the *Mean* value ($M=2.9$), followed by Islamic Religion Education (PAI) and Islamic Political Thoughts (PPI) ($M=3$). The other remaining majors committed an

average of 4.5 plagiarism levels. This supports the significant difference in the academic breach level by the students from the nine different majors.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of Plagiarism based on Gender, Grades, and Majors

Variables	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
Gender				
Male	1	6	4	1.02
Female	1	6	3.8	1.17
Grades				
Semester 2	1	6	3.8	1.21
Semester 4	1	6	3.9	1.12
Semester 6	1	6	4	0.98
Majors				
PE	3	6	4.5	0.61
CE	3	6	4.5	0.7
FLA	3	6	4.5	0.66
AE	3	6	4	0.69
ICD	3	6	4.5	0.73
SE	2	6	4	0.83
IPT	1	6	3	1.10
IE	1	5	3	1.08
ELE	1	5	2.9	1.14

Factors Causing the Students to Plagiarize

The qualitative evidence suggests that the main factors can be categorized according to the following themes in order, namely internal factors, such as a lack of academic writing skills, pressure, and pride; and external factors, such as the use of technologies, teaching, and control.

Internal Factors for Plagiarism: A lack of academic writing skill, pressure, and pride. A lack of Academic Skills

Most of the students admitted that they did not intend to plagiarize, but they did not know how to cite and quote the references appropriately. They thought that it is normal to simply copy paste without changing all the sentences.

The following quotes illustrate this problem.

".... Actually, I do not know how to cite the references correctly....." student 1.

"..I read some articles, but I put the texts without changing the word structure and so on..."
Student 6

"...It is difficult for me to use the references in appropriate manners..." students 10.

In addition, other students also claimed that they lacked reading skills, especially students majoring in English and Education.

"My problem is that reading in English is still difficult for me...I don't want to be tired to read to understand..it takes time for me...." Student 5

"...I am majoring in English, and writing and reading in English are still laboring for me...."
Student 8

However, this is not the case for the other remaining students from the other majors as they do understand reading in their second language, Indonesian language.

Pressure

Another internal factor influencing students to commit plagiarism is the level of pressure that they experience. Most of them opined that they had too much homework to do. While running out of time, they had no other alternative, except looking at their friends' related works.

"..I have more than ten courses in one semester. Sometimes, a minimum of three homework assignments happens to be at the same time...while I also had to work to earn for living, I did not have much remaining time. Hence, I decided to copy my friends works with little changes...." Student 1.

"Too many assignments to do, and it is daunting for me, so I ask my close friends' homework as the sample, which I sometimes copy paste with little change..." student 12

"I do plagiarism also because I was running out of time. You know there many assignments from different classes at the same time..." Student 6.

Pride

In addition to these kinds of pressure, the students committed plagiarism also due to the feeling of pride. They do not want to look unintellectual or ashamed in the eyes of their lecturers.

"...Sometimes, I am afraid to be regarded as a stupid or incompetent student by my lecturer. It lures me to find another short cut by copy pasting texts from the internet although it is wrongdoing." Student 11

".....When I feel pressured by the high expectations of my lecturers and classmates, sometimes it's difficult not to be tempted to commit plagiarism in order to avoid embarrassment..." Student 17

"I resort to plagiarism because I am afraid of losing my face...." Student 14

External Factors for Plagiarism: Technologies, teaching, and control.

Technological Factors

The students claimed that their ability to use technologies also influenced them to commit plagiarism. This is evidenced by their voices from the interview data.

"...To be honest, I also often use paraphrasing tools, such as Quillbot to change my friends tasks..." Student 14

"...I sometimes use Google translate to first translate the English texts, and then put it simply as my own..." Student 3

".... Frankly, I used chat GPT sometimes when I am running out of time, and no one knows...." Student 7

Pedagogy

Another reason for students' frequent plagiarism is often caused by a lack of plagiarism check by their lecturers. This is claimed by the following students.

".... throughout my studies, when submitting my assignments, the lecturers never give me feedback even I copy my friends work...." Student 5

"..Also, it is likely that most of my lecturers do not care of plagiarism because I have some friends who copy others' works. It was just fine..." Student 17

"...I have many assignments at one time, which force me to ask my friend's work and copy...." Student 12

Control

Another most important reason causing the plagiarism at the state Islamic university is lacking tight control from the campus. The control of plagiarism only focuses on students' thesis or final project not their assignment, and no strict punishment given to those students found committing this academic breach. The following qualitative data illustrated this situation.

"...Whenever I submit my assignments, my lecturer never asks me to check its plagiarism level...." student 9

"...The campus does not require me to check my assignments regarding plagiarism..." Student 16

"...when I was found plagiarism submitting my thesis, I was only asked to resubmit it once I reduced it...." Student 14.

Discussion

The overall aim of this study is to determine the extent to which students at an Islamic university commit plagiarism; the extent to which plagiarism levels differ based on gender, academic grades, and majors; and the factors that cause students to commit plagiarism. The results indicate that the students' overall levels of plagiarism fall within the category of relatively high, given a mean of 3.95. The results above accord with the findings of the study by Ampuni et al. (2019), who found and claimed that students from universities outside Java island committed more plagiarism. The average number of students committing academic dishonesty in this study was also higher than their counterparts from the study sample in Ampuni et al.'s (2019) research, with a mean value of $M=1.85$ from Java, and $M=2.23$ committed by students from outside Java. This indicates that the level of plagiarism at the State Islamic University in this study was relatively high given that comparison.

Furthermore, among the many factors measured, ICT was the most significant factor affecting plagiarism with a Mean value ($M=5.47$). Further statistical analysis found that the other external factors, except the Control (CTL), were the significant determining causes for the students to plagiarize. These results partially concur with the findings of previous research cited in this study. While Fatima et al. (2018) found that the internal factors, such as the level of pressure and pride, significantly account for the students' plagiarism, this study revealed that all the internal factors, including academic skills, are highly responsible for the students committing plagiarism. Likewise, the current study also contradicts that of Fatima et al. (2018), who also found that ICT did not have a significant influence on the students' plagiarism, while the current study discovered the opposite: ICT did affect the students to plagiarize, except for the control. This might be caused by the contextual differences of the study. The universities in China might have better academic skills and awareness in using technologies than their counterparts in Indonesia. However, in terms of the effects of ICT and academic skills, this study corresponds to the findings of studies by Adiningrum (2015) and Patak et al. (2020) who unveiled that the Indonesian students committing plagiarism were driven by their inadequacy of academic writing skills and rampant use of the internet. Jereb et al. (2018) uncovered that the use of ICT considerably impacted the students' plagiarism. Similarly, Šprajc et al. (2017) and Larkham and Manns (2002) postulated that ICT was the major cause of plagiarism in higher Education institutions.

These findings suggest that the students at the Islamic university need to be well-equipped with academic writing skills. Also, the prominent use of technologies, such as AI, should be controlled. There should be a special tool to detect in case the students use these smart machines, such as using Turnitin.

The second research question that this study aims to answer is the extent to which plagiarism differs according to gender, grades, and major. It was found that plagiarism committed by male students ($M=4$) is slightly higher than that of their female counterparts ($M=3.8$). Similarly, across different grades, semester 2, semester 4, and semester 6 have a level of plagiarism, given the *Mean* values above 0.1 margin. Based on the nine different majors, it can be seen that students majoring in English language education (TBI) committed the least plagiarism, given the Mean value ($M=2.9$), followed by Islamic Religion Education (PAI) and Islamic Political Thoughts (PPI) ($M=3$). The other remaining majors committed an average of 4.5 plagiarism level. This supports the significant difference in the academic breach level by the students from the nine different majors.

The results concur with the previous studies on plagiarism. For example, Fatima et al. (2018) and Kelamin et al. (2022) revealed that gender, grades, and majors did not significantly affect students' plagiarism. The number of male students was generally

found to commit more plagiarism than female students because the male students were likely more reluctant to follow the rules (Ampuni et al., 2019) and procrastinate than their female counterparts (Šprajc et al., 2017).

In addition, the current study found that majors considerably affected the students' plagiarism, which contradicts Fatimah et al. (2018), but accords with other studies, such as Ba et al. (2016), who uncovered that the students' majors significantly affected students' plagiarism. In addition, this finding also opposes the claim postulating that students with a social science background might be more tolerant towards plagiarism than those who major in natural science backgrounds (Hu & Lei, 2014). In fact, those students majoring in natural sciences in this study, such as Physical and Chemical Education, were found to commit plagiarism more than their counterparts in other majors. The findings suggest that regardless of gender, levels of education, and majors, the strict rules against plagiarism should be applied to every student.

This study also found that there are several factors that cause students to commit plagiarism, namely internal factors for plagiarism: a lack of academic writing skill, pressure, and pride and external factors for plagiarism: technologies, teaching, and control. In terms of the internal factors, a lack of academic skills followed by the feeling of pressure and pride was the primary cause of the plagiarism (Fitria et al., 2019). The lower students' ability in the academic skills is, the more likely they will commit plagiarism (Intishar et al., 2024; Saleh Djumadil et al., 2024). This happens mainly to the students majoring in English, as they also lack reading and writing skills in English (Safitri & Prasetyarini, 2024). This finding corroborates the statistical evidence in this study, which showed that academic skills significantly account for the students' plagiarism. The pressure the students had, such as too many assignments to complete within a short period of time, also forced them to plagiarize (Harto, 2014). It also applied to the students who might be red in the face when they failed to achieve the desired grades.

Other external factors also encourage the students to plagiarize. Like previous studies revealed, the familiarity of the students to technologies allowed them to easily modify texts, which lured them to commit plagiarism. This finding also confirms the statistical evidence in this study. Similarly, a lack of control from the university and lecturers was another reason for the students to commit cheating (Aryawati et al., 2024). It seems that the Islamic university only pays attention to the final year students. The university only measures the level of plagiarism in the students' theses, while ignoring the tasks of other students (Oktapiani et al., 2023). This also encapsulates that the lecturers should thoroughly examine whether the students commit plagiarism or not. All this qualitative evidence corroborates the statistical evidence in the current study

Conclusion

This study expands the literature on academic integrity by providing empirical insights into the under-researched context of Islamic higher education in eastern Indonesia. Unlike prior research that has predominantly examined plagiarism in general higher education, this study demonstrates that the most critical determinant of plagiarism among students lies in deficiencies in academic skills, particularly among English language education majors. Additionally, the frequent use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools introduces a novel dimension to plagiarism that has not been sufficiently documented in the Islamic university setting. Collectively, these findings advance theoretical understanding by showing how contextual, technological, and skill-related factors intersect to shape plagiarism behaviors in religious higher education institutions.

The implications of these findings are twofold. At the policy level, the study highlights the need for the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which oversees Islamic universities, to adopt anti-plagiarism strategies that move beyond surveillance and punitive measures. Reforms should include embedding academic integrity and research ethics into the curriculum, providing structured training in writing, paraphrasing, citation, and ethical AI use, and developing proactive institutional policies that integrate AI-detection tools alongside clear sanctions and preventive mechanisms. At the institutional level, the findings suggest that Islamic universities can mitigate plagiarism by strengthening students' academic competencies through dedicated courses and writing support, encouraging lecturers to provide formative feedback, deploying advanced plagiarism- and AI-detection systems, and managing workloads to prevent assignment clustering that often drives students toward dishonest practices.

Despite its contributions, this study has limitations. It was conducted within a single regional context and focused on a specific discipline, which may limit the generalizability of its findings. Future research should extend the scope to other Islamic higher education institutions across Indonesia, employ comparative designs with non-Islamic universities, and incorporate mixed-method approaches to measure the impact of academic interventions over time. Furthermore, longitudinal studies examining how students adapt to AI technologies in academic writing could enrich understanding of emerging challenges in academic integrity.

Overall, this research provides both theoretical and practical contributions by deepening insights into plagiarism within Islamic higher education, while also offering actionable pathways for policymakers and practitioners. Addressing skill deficiencies, reforming institutional policies, and responding to the challenges of AI use are essential for fostering a stronger culture of academic integrity across Indonesia's Islamic universities.

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