

THE ACTS OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY IN A CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

The problem of academic dishonesty is a common problem in academia, but it is a serious problem that needs to be solved. Academic dishonesty, as the opposite of academic integrity, is the condition where students carry out their academic work (i.e., assignments and tests) dishonestly. From a Christian perspective, when students truly know Christ and have integrity in their lives, problems like academic dishonesty should not exist because students are supposed to live out their Christian values. In the brokenness of this world, these problems still happen even in Christian academic institutions. The purpose of this paper is to examine the factors causing academic dishonesty and other problems resulting from academic dishonesty, determine how to deal with acts of academic dishonesty, and suggest some ways to prevent academic dishonesty. To deal with academic dishonesty, the authors suggest some ways that are adapted from the PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Action) theory, also known as The Deming Cycle. Ultimately, helping students act with academic integrity, instead of with academic dishonesty, requires the involvement of everyone in the school, including students and parents.

Keywords: academic, dishonesty, integrity, causing factor, PDCA

ABSTRAK

Masalah ketidakjujuran akademik adalah masalah umum yang terjadi dalam bidang akademik, tapi masalah ini adalah masalah serius yang harus diselesaikan. Ketidakjujuran akademik adalah lawan dari integritas akademik yaitu kondisi ketika siswa mengerjakan berbagai aktivitas mereka di bidang akademik (seperti tugas dan ujian) secara tidak jujur. Dari perspektif Kristen, ketika siswa mengenal Kristus dan memiliki integritas dalam hidup mereka, masalah ketidakjujuran akademik seharusnya tidak pernah ada lagi dalam sekolah Kristen, karena siswa seharusnya hidup berdasarkan nilai tersebut. Kenyataannya dalam kejatuhan dunia ini, masalah ketidakjujuran akademik masih terjadi bahkan di institusi pendidikan Kristen. Kajian literatur ini memiliki tujuan untuk menguji berbagai faktor penyebab masalah ketidakjujuran akademik, masalah lain akibat perbuatan ketidakjujuran akademik, bagaimana menangani masalah ketidakjujuran akademik, dan beberapa saran untuk mencegah masalah ketidakjujuran akademik. Untuk menangani masalah ketidakjujuran akademik, penulis menyarankan beberapa langkah yang diambil dari teori *PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Action)* yang juga dikenal sebagai siklus *Deming*. Dari semuanya itu, mencegah kemungkinan yang membuat siswa melakukan tindakan ketidakjujuran akademik perlu dilakukan oleh guru, sekolah, dan semua orang yang terlibat dalam dunia akademik termasuk orang tua.

Kata kunci: ketidakjujuran, akademik, integritas, faktor penyebab, *PDCA*

Introduction

The problems of academic dishonesty are common problems in the education field and mostly academic institutions have already had their academic honesty policies to manage

these problems. Promoting academic integrity is a responsibility of all academic institution, but it is not an easy thing to do because there are so many causing factors of academic dishonesty problem that make this problem look more complicated than only a violation towards academic honesty policies. More than only promoting and giving knowledge about academic integrity, academic institutions also need to teach how to value academic integrity for the sake of the development of knowledge to students, so students will understand how important academic integrity as long as their lives.

Academic dishonesty problems are serious problems that need to be solved by educators and all people that involve in the academic field, including students and parents because the acts of academic dishonesty can impact other aspects of students' lives such as students' thinking way. McCabe & Pavela (2004) stated in their journal, "Although faculty members should be the primary role models for academic integrity, the fact is that defining, promoting, and protecting academic integrity must be a community-wide responsibility." (p. 15). The problems of academic dishonesty may look simple such as students who do violation towards academic dishonesty policies in the school and then they have to accept the consequences, but Gallant & Drinan (2006) stated in their journal, "The fact that student cheating affects the core of the learning process itself tends to be so salient and embarrassing an issue in the academy that, ironically, it becomes easy to avoid if not completely ignore." (p. 840). So, educators and all people who involve in the academic field should never look down to these problems.

Christian academic institutions hold biblical values as the foundation of all policies in the institution. In the Bible, there is one value that is taught very often explicitly and implicitly besides love and faith, which is integrity. For examples in Proverbs 28:6 written, "Better the poor whose walk is blameless than the rich whose ways are preserve," Or in Proverbs 21: 3 that stated, "To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice." Integrity is a part of the holistic education. Holistic education looks on the whole process including all things that happen during the learning process, more than only the final result or the achievement. When students truly know Christ and have the integrity in their life, the problem such as academic dishonesty should never exist anymore in the Christian school because students are supposed to live based on that value. The fact is that because of the brokenness of this world, these problems still happen including in the Christian academic institution. However, still there are some preventive ways that might be taken by Christian institution to reduce the case of academic dishonesty and to guide back students who are trapped in the problems of academic dishonesty. Christian institutions should declare that they fight for solving or at least reducing the problem of academic dishonesty and upholding academic integrity in their institution.

Widely there are many ways how to solve and prevent the problems of academic dishonesty in every academic institution. Mostly every institution has already had its thoughts and written policies about these problems. It is like what McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield (2001) stated in their journal, "One strategy that has received renewed attention is the use of academic honor codes." (p. 29). In this paper the author will focus on the causing factors of

academic dishonesty, another problem because of academic dishonesty, how to deal with the problem of academic dishonesty, and some recommendations to prevent the problems of academic dishonesty. All those things above also will be seen from the Christian perspective.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty as the opposite of academic integrity is the condition when students do their activities in the academic field (i.e., assignments and tests) dishonestly. Academic dishonesty is well known in two forms, plagiarism and cheating. It is supported by what Fox (1988) stated in her journal that there are two most common types of students' academic dishonesty: cheating through the illicit use of notes, and plagiarism, meaning representing thoughts and words of other people without right contribution to the source. Nowadays, the forms of those two activities are more varied in some ways like copying friends' answer, asking or paying friends to do the assignment and writing other people's thoughts without putting the right citations or references.

Based on the empirical observation, the problems of academic dishonesty can be found in every classroom in any stage of education. Hawley stated in his journal, "Plagiarism is perhaps as old as education itself." (p. 35). Therefore, the problems of academic dishonesty are not new shocking news for everyone because these problems have been happening from generation to generation. It is also like what McCabe (2001) stated in his journal, "Students cheating is not news." (p. 38). The problems of academic dishonesty look like an unending problem. Nuss (1984) in her journal stated, "Academic dishonesty has been allowed to persist largely because the academic community has not been successful in communicating the value of independent scholarship to its students." (p. 140). It seems how people communicate about the problems of academic dishonesty has impacted the existence of these problems in academic field.

Academic dishonesty is also a moral issue of students that should be solved when students are still involved in education area because these unethical acts can lead to some problems outside the education field. Cole & Smith (1996) reported in their research about student and businessman, when students think that cheating is a common thing and acceptable, later they may also do some unethical business practices.

From Christian perspective, academic dishonesty is one of the evidence of the brokenness of this world. The fall of human has made human to be self-centered, including in reaching their purposes through all ways. Students tend to believe that the end justifies the means. Thus, the role of the Christian school is needed in guiding students to reach their purposes with integrity and in the way that is pleased by God. Academic integrity is important because good work in academic field must come from the integrity of the students for the sake of the development and originality of the knowledge. Nuss (1984) also stated in her journal that "The issue of academic integrity is relevant to several of the essential elements of college life, specifically, the acquisition of knowledge, the development of intellectual competence, and the moral development of students." (p. 140). For students, to hold academic integrity is one way to glorify God through the learning process. Getting good

grades by doing the acts of academic dishonesty is not a pleasing way before God even though the result looks awesome before other people.

There are some causing factors of academic dishonesty. McCabe and Trevino (1997) reported in their journal that the acts of academic dishonesty are influenced by individual and contextual factors. Levy & Rakovski (2006) stated in their journal, "It is caused by many factors including student perceptions about faculty and their dishonest behaviors, the use of technology, and evolving cultural norms. It is also deterred by many factors including honor codes and faculty behavior." (p. 736). Dahiya and Sarita (2015) also added that parent and teachers pressures are also the causes of academic dishonesty in the school. Based on those thoughts, there are some causing factors of academic dishonesty that will be explained roughly.

The Wrong Perception about The Using of Technology

Technology always grows and gets better from day to day. Nowadays everyone needs technology to survive in the modern era of globalization. The using of technology helps people to do many things more easily, Unfortunately, students nowadays use the technology in the wrong way in the academic field. Richard (2003) stated in his journal, "It appears that technology and other cultural factors may be synergizing to produce the perfect storm of increasing academic dishonesty." (p. 192). People are used to getting any information that they need from the internet, including the information about assignments. Students nowadays thought that internet information is public and free to use for the academic sake, so they do not put any effort to do the right citation and that is what Schrimsher, Northrup, & Alverson (2011) stated in their research as one cause of the acts of academic dishonesty. Actually, technology is good and helpful to be used in academic field, but it can be a tool that leads to academic dishonesty problems.

School needs to help teachers and also students to prepare how to use the technology wisely and effectively (Hidayat, 1997). Teachers are highly advised to guide students to use gadgets and technology wisely and effectively. Sometimes, if needed, the use of technology needs to be significantly reduced and even temporarily banned in the classroom (i.e., during the test and practice session), because students can be tempted to do the acts of academic dishonesty with their gadgets during those times. Genereux and McLeod (1995) stated the result of their research that one way to strongly prevent the acts of cheating among students is by having high consequences and making difficult circumstances for students to cheat during the test.

High Expectation from Parents or Teachers

It cannot be denied that parents and teachers may show and put their expectations on students too high. Moreover, based on what McCabe (2001) stated in his journal, parents usually do not only have a big pressure to their children, but also they forget to help their children to value the meaning of academic honesty. Those high expectations can lead students to acts of academic dishonesty. Murdock and Anderman (2006) stated in their

journal, "Conceptually, cheating can be viewed as a viable strategy to attain extrinsic or performance goals." (p. 131). However, there is nothing wrong to put expectations on students both as parents and teacher for it is one way of accountability for students to be responsible in reaching their goal in the academic field.

The Lack of Respect to the Teacher Behavior

Eastman, Iyear, & Reisenwitz (2008) stated that there is a variety of reasons why students do some unethical behavior in the academic field and instructor who is poor or indifferent is one of those reasons. When students cannot appreciate values such as discipline and honesty from their teachers, there will be the lack of respect for their teachers. McCabe and Pavela (2004) stated in their journal "Students observe how faculty members behave and what values they embrace." (p. 15). This problem is also caused by the lack of pedagogical skill of the teachers in the classroom. A teacher who cannot plan how to execute a learning lesson in the classroom will have nothing to do in front of the classroom, and it will make students do not respect their teachers as teachers. As the contrary, McGuire, Lay, & Peters (2009) stated in their journal, "Educators in professional programs must use pedagogical approaches that prepare students with knowledge, values, and skills to meet the emerging challenges for practices in their respective fields." (p. 93). The problem of the lack of respect to the teacher is able to lead students to do the acts of academic dishonesty because students cannot see their teachers as the role model to value academic integrity.

Levy & Ravoski (2006) stated, "...cheating is strongly dependent on what occurs in the classroom and the biggest factor is the instructor." (p. 738). Teachers are the role models for students in the classroom. Students may look up to their teachers in all things including the integrity of the teachers during their learning progress in the classroom. To be able to do so, teachers need to prepare every meeting that they have nicely. The research shows that students will respect their teachers when their teachers have some values that can be seen and imitated by them. Moreover, a teacher who has good pedagogical skill and masters the content will have some more values in the eyes of their students. Geddes (2011) stated in her journal that the instructor can take part to reduce the possibility of students to cheat during the exam by developing many versions of the same exams during exam administration.

Students Know Very Little about Plagiarism and Student's Wrong Perception on Cheating

Some students, especially senior high school students, may not realize that they do the acts of academic dishonesty because of the lack of information and knowledge about plagiarism. Senior high school students are prepared to enter the next stage of education, which is college or university. In higher education level, people will see these problems more seriously rather than senior high school students. Thus, in senior high school stage, every academic institution needs to start introducing academic dishonesty problems and how harmful they are, and also about the value of academic integrity and how important it is to hold those values of academic integrity for the development of the knowledge.

Another problem is when students only know about plagiarism without having the right understanding about it. Rettinger & Kramer (2009) in their journal stated that student neutralizing attitudes such as, "no one else is hurt if I cheat," or "the instructor doesn't seem to care if I learn the material," lead to increased cheating. Rettinger & Kramer (2009) also added in their journal, "Social desirability would require appropriate behavior, and therefore those students who cheat on exams must be those who are able to justify it." (p. 310). At this step, students have no right understanding about academic dishonesty. Waithaka & Gitimu (2012) stated, "Researchers have shown that students sometime view academic dishonesty as a normal incidence and something ordinary." (p. 2). The last, Saana, Ablordeppey, Mensah, & Karikar (2016) also found the same problem in their research and they stated, "Institutions should therefore develop approaches aimed at providing practical measures to help students better understand and avoid unethical acts." (p. 11).

Through the academic journey of everyone in every place and every stage, students will always be required to write academic papers in any forms. It is important for students to have fundamental values of appreciating the originality of the idea for the development of the knowledge. Eldin & Ela (2016) stated in their journal that "Meanwhile, accuracy and integrity are fundamental components of scientific writing. Thus, valuable scientific writing should be characterized by obvious expression and precision of what is being reported." (p. 124). School should equip students with the information about plagiarism by having seminars about it. It is like what Williams & Williams (2011) stated in his journal, "Before investing authority in a role or person, it is necessary to clarify the student's mandate and the expectations of his or her performance." (p. 16).

Students Do Not Value the Entire Process of Learning in the School

Not valuing the learning in the school can lead students to the acts of academic dishonesty. When the value that students could only take about learning in the school is getting the final scores, so they can pass the passing grades to continue to the next stage of education, students will not be able to see that learning is important to build all aspects of their life, including learning about humility and social life as living creatures. School should be a place for students to train their social skill and construct their knowledge. Through the process of education, there are more than good grades that students need to achieve in the school because education is not only about the final result but it is a holistic learning process. Palmer (2007) in his book stated, "...good education is always more process than product. If a students has received no more than a packet of information at the end of an educational transaction, that students has been duped." (p. 96). In the end, the school is a place for students to learn many things including the lesson cognitively, to decide the values about life and to set the final goals that they want to reach in the real life.

It is important to teach the students how learning in the school is very valuable more than only getting good grades. What students can learn from all things that happen in the school, with their friends and teachers, it will help them understand more about other values besides academic field such as social values, humility and even Christian values in the

Christian community. Nuss (1984) stated that "Academicians and student development theorist agree that the purpose of higher education is more than just the acquisition of information or the developing of intellectual competence." (p. 140). Evaluating students' academic achievement is not only about grading their final score on the test. Teachers should collaborate with other teachers and parents, so they can guide and help students to value the meaning of learning in the school. Teacher also needs to arrange assignments that can stimulate students to honor academic integrity. Kessler (2003) in her journal stated that "Another way teachers can help their students examine what constitutes academic integrity is to create assignments that ask students to research honor codes of colleges they dream of attending." (p. 61). Having positive attitude to education is important to have by parents, students and all school system, so they will be more able in valuing the meaning of education.

Students Believe that the End Justifies the Means.

The wrong way of thinking in the real life like using all ways to reach the goals is one cause of the acts of academic dishonesty. It is like what Geddes (2011) in her journal stated, "The student may rationalize the behavior by arguing that the end gain justifies the methods used." (p. 51). Academic dishonesty is one of the moral issues of students. The acts of academic dishonesty have a purpose which is to pass or even get more than the minimum grade without working hard and mastering the content that should be learned by students. Academic dishonesty is one kind of ignorance of norms. The effect of these acts do not stop in violation of academic honesty policies, but it can lead to a thinking way that cheating is not a big deal for the final result is the most important thing.

From all the causing factors above, there is still no reason that can be used by students to do the acts of academic dishonesty in the school. The acts of academic dishonesty are complicated and these acts have its many reasons behind, but still the main purpose of the acts of academic dishonesty is only to get good scores and achievements without putting too much effort to appreciate the source.

In the Bible, God does not look only at the final result, but also the process. For the example, Saul was succeeded to fight all the enemies but he didn't listen to the truth that God had told him before the fight, which is to burn all of his enemies and their farms. Saul won the fight, then he looked that his enemies had good farms. He did not burn all of them but kept the best animals from their farms and even gave them as the sacrifice before God. God was not pleased with the sacrifice that Saul offered to him because obedient to the truth is more important rather than giving good sacrifices.

Another Problem Because of Academic Dishonesty

When students are not academically honest, there will be another problem that can occur in the academic field. Honest students will get frustrated when they see their friends look better when they cheat. Academic dishonesty affects other people and it should be the concern for all people who involve in education and to never look down to these problems. A school is an environment for students to learn many things, not only to learn about the

lessons in the classroom but also to learn about values and behaviors from all people in the school environment including teachers, friends, and staff. At school, most students will interact more with their friends when they are in the classroom. When they see their friends did the act of academic dishonesty and got great scores without any consequences, there will be some possibilities that they will be affected to do the acts of academic dishonesty also. This condition is well known as peer pressure. It is like what Rettinger & Kramer (2009) stated in their journal "...the belief that many other students are cheating, and that others believe cheating to be acceptable, can constitute "peer pressure" to cheat." (p. 296).

In the Bible it is written in 1 Corinthians 15:33, "Do not be misled: Bad company corrupts good character." The pressure that students have when they have been in the environment that attempt them to do the acts of academic dishonesty, even though they know that is not true, is another problem that may be looked up to by teachers and other stakeholders in education or the problems of academic dishonesty will be an unending chain in academic field. Christian school should be a good learning environment for students to practice the truth and humility. It is like what Palmer (2007) stated in his book, "To teach is to create a space in which obedience to truth is practiced." (p.92).

Dealing with the Acts of Academic Dishonesty in Christian School

There are many ways to deal with the acts of academic dishonesty in the school. In this paper, the author suggests some ways that are adapted from the theory of PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Action) that is also well known as Deming Cycle. Sallis (2005) stated in his book that PDCA cycle that was found by Shewhart and developed by Deming, is a method that offers how to manage continuous quality improvement.

In the *Plan* step, a Christian school must be firm in preventing and dealing with the problem of academic dishonesty by declaring clearly to students about their academic honesty policies and applying punishment of course failure to students who break those policies. Dahiya & Sarita (2015) stated "Teachers can play an important role to reduce student cheating. One of the most effective ways of preventing academic cheating is to clearly inform students of your expectations and of school policies." (p. 796). Academic honesty policies seem to have a big role in the academic institution to reduce the acts of academic dishonesty if those policies are clearly given and known by students. In the *Do* step, however, as a Christian institution, the school also needs to show what grace is to students. Showing grace does not mean denying the consequences that students deserve for their violations towards academic honesty policies, but it means the school also need to rebuke and to guide them back to the way of truth. To rebuke here is to show students' mistakes and why they are wrong, and to guide them back means giving a chance for students not to repeat the same mistake in the future.

In the *Check* step, when teachers find there are problems of academic dishonesty in the school, there are some recommendations given. First, the teacher has to check in a reliable way by using some a tool like *TurnItIn.com* to check students did a plagiarism or not. Having enough evidence is needed and a must before the school brings the case of academic

dishonesty up to be solved. And for the second, the school has to see students' reaction when there is enough evidence that they did the acts of academic dishonesty.

In the *Act* step, if students refuse to admit that they did some acts of academic dishonesty, taking a hard way to expel the students can be done. It will give a mental impact that will make them more aware to do a same mistake in the new academic institution. It is also supported by what McCabe and Trevino (1997) stated in their journal "It is quite possible that students who have cheated have paid more attention to the penalties, or have had personal experience with being penalized." (p. 391).

If students admit that they did a plagiarism intentionally, there are some recommended ways given. When the school has declared seriously to fight the acts of academic dishonesty, the first warning must be the last warning. Rettinger & Kramer (2009) stated in their journal "Cheaters tend to consider their behavior acceptable when they can describe it as caused by external forces rather than their own dishonesty." (p. 295). No matter what are the reasons behind their acts, students need to sign a letter of agreement about if they break the rules for the second time, they will be expelled from the school.

CONCLUSION

The problems of academic dishonesty are common problems that happen in any academic institution. The pressures that students have to pass the passing grade is one of the causing reasons of this problem besides the other factors such as technology and their lack knowledge about plagiarism, students' perceptions and believe about those acts of academic dishonesty. Preventing all the possibilities that will make students cheat in the school is truly needed to do by teachers, school, and all people who involve in the academic field, including parents. Christian school also needs to look into this problem deeper. The problems of academic dishonesty have been rooted on another thing which is because teachers and parents forget to emphasize a value that is more important to be learned by students in the school rather than only getting good scores and that value is integrity.

Macfarlane, Zhang & Phun (2012) stated that "Integrity can be understood as respecting the intrinsic worth of each individual and their human dignity." (p. 2). When students have integrity, they will be able to value some other things rather than only getting good grades in the school. The role of parents and teachers are needed to implement the value of integrity into students' lives, not only in the academic field but also in the daily life of students. For students who are already getting into these problems, they need more support from all stakeholders of education to come back to the right way. Only knowing and having the integrity are not enough. Teachers and parents have to teach students how to persevere to live with integrity as a habit by being their real role models and living with integrity as more mature Christians.

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