

# Psychoeducation Group and Its Effect on Students' Academic Integrity

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## Psychoeducation Group and Its Effect on Students' Academic Integrity

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Academic integrity covers five fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility, and is essential for students during the educational process. Students with low academic integrity are more likely to commit academic fraud, decreasing the opportunity to gain competence. This research examined the effectiveness of a psychoeducation group using modeling to teach Islamic values on increasing academic integrity. The program's effectiveness was compared to a group psychoeducation program that used modeling without Islamic values teaching. The experiment implemented a 2 x 2 factorial design involving 40 students (20 girls and 20 boys) divided into four groups based on modeling intervention and gender. The data of students' academic integrity were assessed using Academic Integrity Scale before and after intervention for all group. The results of t-tests and ANCOVAs showed that the psychoeducation group using modeling with Islamic values teaching was more effective in improving academic integrity than the modeling without Islamic values teaching, and female students had a higher increase in academic integrity than males. The findings confirmed that religious values, such as Islamic values, could be integrated into modeling techniques to improve students' character, particularly academic integrity.

Keywords: psychoeducation group, modelling, modelling with Islamic values teaching, academic integrity, teaching

### INTRODUCTION

Academic integrity is a shared value in the academic world and is consistent with the moral code taught by many religions. It is based on the fundamental values of honesty, trust, justice, respect, and responsibility (International Center for Academic Integrity, 2020; Brettag, 2016; MacFarlane, Zhang, & Pun, 2014; Jiang Emmerton, & McKaige.,

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2013; Kwong et al., 2013; Firmantyo & Alsa, 2016). Based on these perspectives, it is crucial to instill academic integrity in students so that they can fully engage in the learning process.

Unfortunately, many students think that academic integrity is not an important consideration (Morris, 2018). Consequently, they may commit academic fraud without taking into consideration the immorality of cheating on an exam, copying a paper, stealing intellectual property, providing answers during an exam, paying for someone else to do assignments, and plagiarizing printed or electronic sources (Krueger, 2014; Giluk, & Postlethwaite, 2015). In one study, 80% of college students viewed academic fraud as a common violation and did not consider it a serious problem; academic fraud was even habitual among some students (Boehm et al. 2009).

A global phenomenon (Jowana, 2012; Ghias, Lakho, Asim, Azam, & Saeed, 2014; Hensley, Kirkpatrick, & Burgoon, 2013; Jurdi, Hage, & Chow, 2012; Ma, McCabe, & Liu, 2013; Mwamwenda, 2012; Sattler, Graeff, & Willen, 2013) has been shown the occurs of academic fraud from primary education to higher education. In one study, 75% of college students admitted to some form of cheating (Biswas, 2014). A survey of 20,000 middle and high students showed that 80% admitted to having cheated on work at school, 70% had cheated on tests, and 90% had cheated on homework (Strom & Strom, 2008). The impact of academic fraud can damage the quality of education, thwart efforts to create graduates who are professional and honest, accountable, and trustworthy in the future (Bashir, & Bala, 2018). These findings emphasize the importance of developing the value of academic integrity.

Modeling is a practical technique to improve students' achievement (Kusairi, Novandari, Parno, & Pratiwi, 2019), academic integrity (Arthur, 2011) and to reduce cheating behavior (Cote, Jean, Abu, & Capson, 2016). Unfortunately, other study showed that the effectiveness of modeling to improve integrity is reduced when it is not followed by feedback (Digennaro-Reed, Codding, Catania, & Maguire, 2010). Therefore, the results of current study are expected to provide clarification on the effect of modeling for improving academic integrity.

Furthermore, modeling can help teach religious values (Bandura, 2003). However, the use of modeling for those purposes requires further exploration (Oman, Thoresen, Park, Shaver, Hood, & Plente, 2009). Following recommendation from Oman, et al (2009), in the current research we also developed a modeling program with Islamic values teaching as part of a psychoeducational group to promote academic integrity and compared its effectiveness to a similar psychoeducation program that used modeling without Islamic values teaching. The programs were implemented in a group of 7<sup>th</sup> graders who were identified based on very low scores on a self-report measure of academic integrity.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Academic Integrity

The word integrity comes from Latin *integer*, meaning complete, total, or whole. The concept is important in many fields. Moral integrity is essential in business (Audi &

Murphi, 2006), and in the legal system there is a focus of moral integrity in relation to ownership rights (Macfarlane, Zhang & Pun, 2014) and responsibility for others' actions (Jones, 2011). Our focus in present study is on moral integrity in education.

In social cognitive theory, integrity can be understood as a moral self-regulation mechanism, or how a person regulates actions related to moral and behavioral standards (Bandura, 2016). The person who commits academic fraud shows a disengagement of internal control or moral standards. It happened when he or she success to dissociate the consequences of their behavior cognitively (Bandura, 1999). For example, the student may consciously commit academic fraud even though they do know that it is wrong because knowing many of their friends also conduct and support academic fraud activities. Stephens (2018) also showed that the link between moral judgment and the decision to not to commit academic fraud was mediated by self-regulation and motivation. Deliberate violations of academic integrity can be due to low levels of morality (Wahyuni, 2019), motivation and self-efficacy (Baran & Jonason, 2020), ethics (Henning et al., 2013), locus of control (Rinn et al., 2014), and goal orientation (Krou, Fong & Hoff, 2020), all of which are associated with disengagement of internal control.

#### **The Use of Modeling in Psychoeducation Group to Increase Academic Integrity**

Many studies have shown the psychoeducation group effectiveness in improving students' character, including academic integrity. Psychoeducation groups have been shown to be effective in reducing high school students' academic fraud on exams (Anymene, Nwokolo, Madegbuna, 2015), encouraging adolescents to seek help in overcoming mental health problems (Taylor-Rodgers & Batterham, 2014), and effectively increasing adolescent's sense of responsibility (Marino-Carper, Negy, Burns, & Lunt, 2010). The psychoeducation group activities are preventive and instructional, designed to provide information, improve psychological functioning, and improve communication skills (DeLucia-Waack, 2006). They focus on topics such as attitudes, cooperation, communication, teamwork, and adaptive beliefs for all education levels (Brown, 2018; Henderson & Thomshon, 2016).

Psychoeducation is a educational activities that delivered by school counselor to help students increase their skills, competences, and attitudes to be success. Psychoeducation can be defined as the provision of systematic, relevant, broad, and up-to-date information about an illness or condition (Motlova, Balon, Beresin, et al., 2017) and usually presented in a group format (Howell, Miller, Lilly, Graham-Bermann, 2013). The psychoeducation group often implement modeling technique and involving various media such as videos, movies, audiotapes, and computer presentations (DeLucia-Waack, 2006; Brown 2018). In school counseling services, psychoeducation groups have a strategic position in facilitating students' optimal development, including the development of integrity so they can achieve success (American School Counselor Association, 2019).

Psychoeducational groups are conducted in four stages, namely the stages of formation, transition, work, and termination (Brown, 2018). In the formation stage, group members feel both excited and confused and afraid to be in a group. Therefore, the formation

stage is directed at creating group cohesiveness by encouraging the creation of comfort and mutual trust between group members as well as group leaders. The transition stage is carried out to manage resistance and conflict between group members and group leaders before entering the core activities of psychoeducation group, namely the work stage. Armed with cohesiveness and self-disclosure among group members and leaders, psychoeducation groups conduct the working stage to explore and discuss the academic integrity issues. The termination stage is carried out when the goals of the psychoeducation group have been achieved. A satisfactory termination is important to build on the group members and leaders so that they do not leave the group with a residual feeling and unfinished business.

At working stage, the issue of academic integrity is discussed by implementing modeling techniques which is implemented in four processes (Orford, 2021). First, it shows the behavior of the model presented in the video which includes the situation experienced by the model, the behavior carried out by the model, and the reinforcement obtained by the model after performing a set of actions. Second, group members pay attention to and understand the behavior of the model and its interaction with the environment. Third, group members design actions related to academic integrity as a form of model behavior reproduction. Fourth, group members are encouraged to design self-reinforcement that strengthens the motivation to implement academic integrity in action.

#### **Teaching Islamic Values in Modeling to Increase Academic Integrity**

Modeling by teachers, peers and other credible or success person has been used in many interventions to develop students' character and integrity (Hershberg, 2016). For example, one program for various grades of elementary students used digital-based stories to model humility (Batanova et al., 2016). The modeling with religious values teachings can also be used to support interventions for behavioral change, what Bandura (1999) called as symbolic modeling. Religion and spirituality significantly affect attitudes, honesty, academic dishonesty, and life satisfaction (Muñoz-García, & Aviles-Herrera, 2014; Nelson, James, Miles, Morrell, & Sledge, 2016).

Supporting Bandura (2003), teaching religious values as an integrating part of modeling have been shown to be beneficial for a range of outcomes related to morals and ethics. Everyone understands that religious teachings guide their followers to do good and have goodness, but it is not an easy to translate religious beliefs into religious practices. Modeling with Islamic values teaching facilitates individuals to learn how to model in translating religious teachings into religious practices, such as academic integrity. Through this modeling process, observers can understand values, self-efficacy, and self-regulation standards for implementing academic integrity. For example, one such program was associated with reductions in immodesty and greed (Stronge et al., 2021).

Moreover, religious-based interventions have also been shown to be effective for reducing psychological distress, improving social intelligence, reducing delinquency, helping individuals meet their needs, and coping with other personality problems (Kennedy, Macnab & Ross, 2015; Mihaljevic et al., 2014). Based on these findings, the

present study explored the effect of modeling with teaching Islamic values in a psychoeducation group activity to increase students' academic integrity.

The modeling with Islamic values teaching program discussed and understood a model who demonstrated and practiced academic integrity from perspective of the values of sincerity and *sidiq* (trust). This modeling included the religious belief that group members believed that academic integrity is rewarded by God (Allah SWT) now and in the hereafter. Allah's reward in the world may be in the form of convenience in facing difficult situations and conditions that support their future success in many aspects of life. In the afterlife, the reward is Allah's protection in an eternal heaven of beautiful houses built under flowing rivers.

#### **Gender Differences in Academic Integrity**

There are inconsistency results of study about gender differences and its impact on level of students' academic integrity. Several studies indicated that male students' level of academic integrity was significantly lower than female students (Brown, Isbel, Logan, & Etherington, 2020; Chertok, Barnes, & Gilleland, 2014; Clariana, Badia, & Cladellas, 2013). However, other studies have shown that there is no significant difference of students' level of academic integrity between male and female students (Amzalag, Shapira, & Dolev, 2021; Honny, et.al, 2010; Soroya, Hashmi, & Soroya, 2020; Veerachamy, 2021). Responding to the gap in research findings about the level of academic integrity between men and women, the effectiveness of the modeling program in this experiment was controlled for its impact on male and female subjects.

Following up a study from Stephen's (2018) recommendation regarding students' academic integrity, we tested the effectiveness of a psychoeducational group that was fully informed by the local religious context as an intervention to improve academic integrity. The comparison psychoeducational group used a modeling techniques without Islamic values teaching. In order to generalize the impact of modeling on academic integrity in terms of gender, we examined the effect of modeling interventions on both male and female students.

#### **METHOD**

##### **Research Design**

The current experiment used a 2 x 2 factorial design, which allows an examination of the independent and simultaneous effects of two independent variables on an outcome (Creswell, 2014). The independent variables were modeling technique (modeling with Islamic values teaching vs. modeling without Islamic values teaching) and gender (male and female), and the outcome variable was academic integrity.

##### **Subjects and Data Collection**

This research involved 40 students (20 girls and 20 boys) from a public junior high school in Semarang, Indonesia. They were selected from 619 students in Grade 7 based on having lowest scores on the self-report Academic Integrity Scale.



All students in the grade completed the Academic Integrity Scale developed by Ramdani (2017) in Bahasa Indonesia version. The scale contains 17 items, covering five aspects: honesty ("I believe that every job done honestly will have satisfactory results"), trust ("Mutually trusting friends is a strong basis for collaborating at schools"), fairness ("Accurate and fair academic evaluation is very important in the learning process"), respect ("I like to discuss my school assignments with my friends"), and responsibility ("I feel the good image of the school is our shared responsibility"). The validity and reliability test of the Academic Integrity test based on data from 619 students and conducted using statistical software of JASP 0.16.1 (JASP Team, 2022). Each item is rated using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Results of validity test of principal component analysis showed that the range of loading factor of honesty (.41 to .80), trust (.55 to .71), fairness (.48 to .73), respect (.49 to .65), and responsibility (.50 to .61). Then, the factor of the Academic Integrity Scale had eigenvalue of 3.01 (honesty), 1.07 (trust), 1.73 (fairness), 1.42 (respect), and 1.09 (responsibility). The scale explained 49% variance of academic integrity. The alpha coefficient were range from .69 to .84 in the current study.

#### **Experiment Procedures**

*Participant selection and pre-test.* The 40 participants were the students who has lowest scores on the Academic Integrity Scale among the 619 students in Grade 7. Their data were used as the pre-test scores. They were assigned to one of four groups: 10 boys who received modeling without Islamic value teaching, 10 girls who received modeling without Islamic value teaching, 10 boys who received modeling with Islamic value teaching, and 10 girls who received modeling with Islamic value teaching.

*Psychoeducational group of modelling without Islamic values teaching (6 sessions).* Students in this groups participated in six sessions of psychoeducational exercises. The amount of six sessions was to cover all topic of academic integrity (4 sessions), report and termination session (2 sessions). Therefore, each session covered a different topic: description of the experiment and group building, honesty and trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and conclusion. Each session lasted about 90 minutes. The modeling component of the intervention was conducted over the course of four sessions, each session covering a different topic: initiation, conflict and confrontation, work and cohesion, and termination. The modeling was presented in videos based on five models' experiences in implementing values of academic integrity (honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility) in their lives. Students were asked to answer some questions before and after watching the videos, such as "Do you think you are a honest person? Why?" (before watching the video) and "We often find people who defend themselves when they lie by saying, "It's okay to lie if it's for good", what do you think about this reason?" (after watching the video). The discussion after the video focused on the possible social reinforcement people receive when they demonstrate academic integrity. At the end of the session the assigned homework was to make a list of behaviors that they planned to change following the contract they made at the initiation session.

*Psychoeducational group of modelling with Islamic values teaching (6 sessions).* Students in this groups also participated in six sessions of psychoeducational exercises.

Each session covered a different topic: description of the experiment and group building, honesty and trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and conclusion. Each session lasted about 90 minutes. The intervention of modeling with Islamic values teaching was also applied in four stages. The 4 sessions modeled Islamic values in everyday life, including sincerity, honesty, and trustworthiness. The students were also asked to answer some questions before and after watching the videos as modeling without Islamic values teaching group. However, the discussion after the video focused on the belief that academic integrity is rewarded by God now and in the hereafter. The homework assignment was the same as in the modeling without Islamic values teaching groups.

*Post-test.* In the last session, all students once again completed the Academic Integrity Scale. All of the research steps were presented in Figure 1.

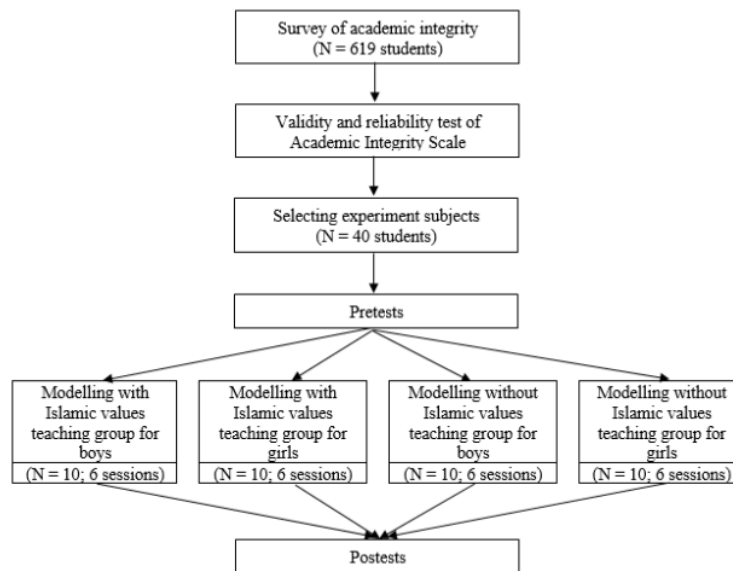


Figure 1  
The research steps

#### Data Analysis

We conducted two ways analysis of covariance using SPSS 21.0 to assess the main effect of psychoeducation interventions and gender and its interactions effect. In this analysis, we controlled the baseline of students' academic integrity by use pretest data as covariance. Partial eta squared ( $\eta^2$ ) was also assess in this data analysis to measure the



effect size of psychoeducation intervention and gender on academic integrity. Following the recommendation from Cohen (1988), we expected of the main effect in this experiment were more than .14 (large effect size). If the main effect of psychoeducation intervention or gender was found, we continue to analysis the within test of differences using the paired sample t-test to assess the main effect for sub-group of psychoeducation intervention or gender.

## FINDINGS

### Data Description

As presented in Table 1, before receiving the modeling intervention, the participants had moderate scores on the measure of academic integrity, and there was an unexpected pattern of gender differences across groups. Male participants in the modeling without Islamic values teaching group had lower academic integrity scores ( $M = 3.58$ ,  $SD = 0.27$ ) than female participants ( $M = 3.95$ ,  $SD = 0.32$ ;  $t(18) = -2.67$ ,  $p < .05$ ). However, in the modeling with Islamic values teaching group, male participants ( $M = 3.94$ ,  $SD = 0.24$ ) had higher scores than female participants ( $M = 3.62$ ,  $SD = 0.34$ ;  $t(18) = 2.34$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

Table 1  
Means, SDs, and t-test results of academic integrity by gender

Group		Pre-test		Posttest	
		M	SD	M	SD
Modeling with Islamic values teaching	Male	3.58	0.27	3.64	0.40
	Female	3.95	0.32	4.00	0.36
t (18)		-2.67**		-2.09*	
Modeling without Islamic values teaching	Male	3.94	0.24	4.70	0.17
	Female	3.62	0.34	4.86	0.13
t (18)		2.34**		-2.35**	

\* $p > .05$       \*\* $p < .05$

### The Effect of Modelling with and without Islamic Values Teaching on Male and Female Students' Academic Integrity

Because there were differences in academic integrity between male and female participants at pre-test in both modeling groups, the pre-test scores were controlled as covariates.

The results of analysis of covariance, as shown in Table 2, showed that there was a main effect of modeling technique on academic integrity ( $F(1, 35) = 108.61$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The modeling with Islamic value teaching group had higher academic integrity scores ( $M = 4.78$ ,  $SD = 0.17$ ) than the modeling without Islamic values teaching group ( $M = 3.82$ ,  $SD = 0.32$ ) at post-test. In separate analyses, we examined the pre-test and post-test scores in each modeling group to assess change due to the interventions. In these within-group analysis, modeling with Islamic values teaching significantly improved academic integrity ( $t(19) = 12.62$ ,  $p < .01$ ), while modeling without Islamic values teaching technique did not ( $t(19) = -0.53$ ,  $p > .05$ ).

There was a significant main effect of gender on academic integrity ( $F(1, 35) = 7.67, p < .01$ ) at post-test; female participants had significantly higher academic integrity scores ( $M = 4.43, SD = 0.52$ ) than males ( $M = 4.17, SD = 3.29$ ). In separate within-group analyses, however, both male and female participants showed a significant increase in academic integrity (male:  $t(19) = -3.29, p < .01$ ; female:  $t(19) = -.25, p < .01$ ).

Finally, the results of two ways analysis of covariance of modelling and gender factors showed no interaction effect between modeling group and gender on academic integrity ( $F(1, 35) = 0.12, p > .05$ ), meaning that the effects of modeling were equally effective for boys and girls. See Table 2. In short, these findings showed that modeling with Islamic values teaching was more effective than modeling without Islamic values teaching for improving students' academic integrity. In both groups, female students improved more than males students did.

Table 2  
Means, SDs, Results of ANCOVA and t-Tests of academic integrity

Factors	Pre-test		Post-test		t (19)	F (1,35)	$\eta^2$
	M	SD	M	SD			
<b>Modeling</b>							
Modeling with Islamic values teaching	3.78	0.33	4.78	0.17	12.62*	108.61*	.76
Modeling without Islamic values teaching	3.77	0.34	3.82	0.32	-0.53		
<b>Gender</b>							
Male	3.76	0.31	4.17	0.62	-3.29*	7.67*	.18
Female	3.79	0.37	4.43	0.52	-4.25*		
Gender*group						0.12	.004

\* $p < .01$

## DISCUSSION

This research explored the impact of integrating Islamic values in a psychoeducation group that used modeling techniques to teach 7<sup>th</sup> grade students academic integrity. The findings indicated that the group of modeling with Islamic values teaching was more effective than the group of modeling without Islamic values teaching. The results are in line with previous research of modeling with religious values which are helpful in building character (Astuti, Suyanto & Yoyo, 2020; Sairah, Syamsuddin & Kuswanjono, 2019). Sham, Nazim, Mastor and Willen (2019) stated that religiosity is a mediator in reducing adolescents' tendency to engage in negative behaviors. In other words, the internalization of religious values is effective in improving students' academic integrity.

The effectiveness of modeling with Islamic values teaching in improving students' academic integrity was strengthened by Muslim role models who share Islamic views and who practice sincerity and *sidiq* (trust). Consequently, the students can maintain and improve their academic integrity because it follows religious teachings, and there is a shared belief that academic integrity will be rewarded by Allah SWT in this world and the hereafter. Allah's rewards in the world may be in the form of convenience in facing

complex and challenging situations and conditions that support future success in various aspects of life. Meanwhile, they will also be given protection from Him on the Day of Judgment and put into eternal heaven where there are beautiful houses built under flowing rivers (QS, 4: 145; QS, 5: 85). It seems spirituality and religiosity have included religious scriptures as a source of reinforcement. Bandura (2003) stated that religious scriptures and values related to specific behavioral models provide symbolic modeling and reinforcement, and religious traditions have functioned as guiding spirits in human life.

The credibility of the model to students' situations seems essential and supports interventions to improve subjects' academic integrity. For example, one of the models in this study is a child who has physical deficiencies but has other advantages (such as a child who has physical disabilities can memorize the Qur'an). Seeing this model would make the students more confident in their abilities and less likely to commit academic fraud. The model stories presented to the experimental subjects are derived from the true stories of the models. This condition reflected that in modeling process, a spiritual or religion model promote observers' self-efficacy in practicing Islamic values teaching as explained by Bandura (2003).

Informally, the leaders of the psychoeducational groups of modeling without Islamic values teaching reported when the participants watched a video of a story in which a model acted with integrity, the participants tended to pay more attention to the background of the model and other things around the model, but less focused on the model's integrity. This condition contrasts with the group of modeling with Islamic values teaching where they focus on model behavior along with the rewards or punishments received by the model when showing academic integrity. This phenomenon can be understood considering that religious teachings, including Islamic values, emphasize the importance of preparing for the Day of Judgment in the afterlife (QS, 4: 145; QS, 5: 85). The subject's focus on model behavior and its consequences is one of the important determinants in modeling (Bandura, 1999) because the subject can understand the behavior of the model that is relevant to him and know the motivation to apply the model behavior in his life.

The research findings also indicated that the relevance of the model on this experiment to the subjects' situation is vital, so the scenarios and the models needs to be considered and well prepared. Likewise, the experience of the model of getting reinforcement needs to be shown clearly and unequivocally, including reinforcement in the version of religious teachings, considering that religious teachings also contain a reinforcement system to encourage people to do good (Koenig, 2009). The holy book as a life guide for every adherent in various religions, including Islam, contains life stories of certain figures or models that are believed by adherents. These stories are learning materials and encourage religious people to continue to practice good behavior and avoid behavior that is contrary to moral values, including committing academic fraud. Bandura (2003) stated that religious scriptures and values related to specific behavioral models provide symbolic modeling, and religious traditions have functioned as guiding spirits in human life.

Although the psychoeducational group using modeling technique were effective for increasing students' academic integrity for both male and female, this study still showed that male students tend to have lower level of academic integrity than female. These findings support the results of several studies (Brown, Isbel, Logan, & Etherington, 2020; Jereb, Urh, Jerebic, & Sprajc, 2017; Zhang, Yin, & Zheng, 2017) which showed that men tend to have lower academic integrity than women. The lower level of academic integrity among male students may be caused by a tendency to use the moral disengagement mechanism, a form of moral reasoning that seemingly justifies behavior (Bandura, 2004, 2016), as proved from various studies which indicated that gender was related to the level of moral disengagement, whereas male subjects showing higher moral disengagement than females (Clemente, Espinosa & Padilla, 2019; Proios, 2016; Travlos, Tsorbatzoudis, Barkoukis, & Douma, 2021).

### CONCLUSION

The results of this research confirm that the psychoeducation group with Islamic values teaching is effective in improving students' academic integrity. Female students benefitted from both modeling groups (without and with Islamic values teaching) more than boys did. Model relevance is important in improving students' academic integrity. Internalization of religious values in modeling becomes reinforcement that encourages students to change their behavior, significantly improving their academic integrity.

### LIMITATIONS

Although this study demonstrated the effectiveness of the Islamic values-based modeling psychoeducation group in improving students' academic integrity, several limitations need to be addressed in the future. First, the participants in this study were Grade 7 students in a public junior high school. Future research should involve more diverse research samples of senior high school and college students in public and religion-based schools. Second, there were no follow-up measurements, so it could not be identified how long the effects of the modeling with Islamic values teaching can last in improving students' academic integrity. Future studies will be meaningful if implementing repeated measures designs. Third, the current study does not involved other variables that are likely to affect academic integrity, such as self-efficacy, academic achievement, academic engagement, and broader demographic background. Further research will be more valuable when efforts to improve academic integrity are followed by measuring self-efficacy, academic achievement, learning engagement, and cultural factors.

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