Examining the Impact of Social Support, Self-Adjustment, and Self-Control on Fostering Morality in University Students

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Abstract
Moral issues, particularly bullying and academic dishonesty, are currently of great concern in education. The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of social support, adjustment, and self-control on students' morality levels. This quantitative study was conducted within the undergraduate program at the Faculty of Economics in Universitas Negeri Medan. Ninety-nine undergraduate students were selected for the study using a simple random sampling technique. The hypotheses underwent examination using SmartPLS 3.2.8 to conduct structural equation modeling (SEM) on the research model. Validity and reliability tests on research data were also applied to ensure the quality and prior hypotheses testing. The study's results indicate that morality affects self-control and social support, including indirect social support. Additionally, social support influences self-adjustment, while it has no impact to self-control. The research emphasizes the significance of both internal factors, such as self-control, and external factors, such as social support, in shaping student morality.
Keywords: social support, self-adjustment, self-control, morality.

Изучение влияния социальной поддержки, саморегуляции и самоконтроля на формирование нравственности у студентов университета

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Аннотация
В настоящее время в области образования большую озабоченность вызывают моральные вопросы, особенно буллинг и академическая нечестность. Цель данного исследования – изучить влияние социальной поддержки, саморегуляции и самоконтроля на уровень нравственности студентов. Это количественное исследование было проведено в рамках программы бакалавриата на факультете экономики в Государственном университете Медан (Universitas Negeri Medan, Индонезия). Девяносто девять студентов были отобраны для исследования с помощью метода случайной выборки. Гипотезы были подвергнуты анализу с использованием SmartPLS 3.2.8 для моделирования структурными уравнениями (SEM) на исследовательской модели. Для обеспечения качества и предварительного тестирования гипотез также проводились проверки достоверности и надежности данных исследований. Результаты показывают, что нравственность зависит от самоконтроля и социальной поддержки, включая косвенную социальную поддержку. Кроме того, социальная поддержка влияет на саморегуляцию, но не оказывает воздействия на самоконтроль. Исследование подтверждает значение как внутренних факторов, таких как самоконтроль, так и внешних, таких как социальная поддержка, в формировании нравственности у студентов университета.
Ключевые слова: социальная поддержка, саморегуляция, самоконтроль, нравственность.

Introduction

Education aims not only to find the appropriate methods for classroom learning but also to shape students' morals. The myriad educational problems, such as bullying, academic cheating, and other moral-related issues, represent the key tasks teaching staff must address. Moral development is essential in upbringing for the maintenance of balance and equilibrium between the intellectual, mental, emotional and bodily dimensions (Gui et al., 2020). Moreover, ethical behavior is vital to living and working in society as it fosters good conduct and values. However, in reality, numerous moral transgressions still arise, including recurrent fights at both high school and college level, cheating in assessments and assignments, and dilemmas around effective communication between students, parents, as well as students and instructors.

Ethical concerns play a pivotal role in shaping the academic landscape for students, especially in Indonesia. Issues, such as academic dishonesty, including inadequate citation practices in assignments, unethical behavior during examinations, and the submission of research papers to journals with questionable credibility and review standards, are pressing challenges. This finding emphasizes the urgent need for a collective effort to address factors affecting student ethics and underscores the individual responsibility in tackling these issues effectively.

Education plays a vital role in shaping moral character. Vietnam offers a relevant example, where moral education is a prominent focus within its education system at all levels. In primary education, the focus is on building character and personality. This evolves into civic education at the secondary level, and universities emphasize developing intellectual abilities. For instance, when cheating is tolerated or students are allowed to communicate disrespectfully without correction, negative moral traits are inadvertently reinforced. Unchecked, these issues may lead to adverse behavioral outcomes, such as aggression and bullying in familial, educational, and societal contexts (van den Berg et al., 2020). Therefore, character education is crucial in fostering positive attitudes that benefit both society and the workplace.

Both internal and external factors influence moral judgment. External factors include environmental influences, family dynamics, peer relationships, and cultural norms (Schauster et al., 2021). On the other hand, internal factors involve intrinsic elements such as emotions (Eisenberg, 2004), self-regulation (Aslan, 2021), and gender (Kennedy et al., 2017). The research indicates that psychological factors, including attitudes, self-adjustment and self-control, also play a significant role in shaping morality (Abd Rahim et al., 2021). Understanding these influencing factors is critical for designing effective policies on moral education. This study aims to investigate how social support, self-adjustment, and self-control impact students' moral development.

Literature review

Morality

The educational system is designed to facilitate the development of students' cognitive abilities, including their capacity for critical thinking and reflection (Szyliowicz & Vazquez, 2024). This is with a view to fostering the formation of positive behavioral traits and moral values. Furthermore, moral behavior is an action that shows a social response to the interests and needs of other people. This morality is affected by environmental conditions, both family and society (Limone & Toto, 2022).

Moreover, there are three basic elements in moral reasoning, which are (1) Cognitive aspect, (2) Affective aspect, and (3) Behavioral Aspect (Kumar & Suppiah, 2023). Cognitive Aspect is an aspect to understanding right and wrong, which involves the mental processes used to evaluate moral dilemmas. Affective aspect relates to feelings

and personal values that shape moral judgments. Finally, behavioral aspect focuses on how individuals behave based on their moral reasoning. It is important to understand the basic concepts in building morality so that it is easy to form moral behavior and attitudes in students.

The most important factor in preventing academic cheating is social support, self-adjustment, and self-control. The research indicates a negative correlation between lack of social support and reduced student morality. Other supporting factors in determining the morality of an individual is the ability of a man to conduct and control himself. A person who can control and adjust himself based on the norms, will gain a higher level of morality. On the other hand, the perpetration of academic fraud stems from an inability to self-govern and adapt to existing norms. There have been other case studies that have conducted research on similar topics related to morality, like Li & Hu (2023) and Waltzer et al. (2024).

Social support

Social support shows how the social environment has impact on the formation of students' character and morals, which can be in the form of family, community or school. Social support is indicated by several key factors, including responsibility, family, cooperation, the ability to integrate, peace, and friendliness (Feeney & Collins, 2015). Conversely, negative external impact, such as violence, which is often prevalent in society, can foster negative behaviors, as evidenced by the research of Cutrona & Russell (1987). The impact of the family unit in teaching and instilling responsible attitudes and a strong sense of family identity can contribute to the development of positive moral values in individuals. Zimet et al. (1988) shows that social support will produce respect, love and mutual help for individuals, families and other people close to them.

Additionally, social support affects self-control. Students who are able to form connections and find respite in their familial and environmental surroundings, as well as foster a positive, amiable disposition, may endeavor to exercise restraint in their actions to prevent any actions that may cause harm or distress to others. Negative social support can have a detrimental effect on self-control, including bullying, fighting, academic performance, and other issues. Therefore, the significance of social support indirectly affects the development of morality through students' capacity for self-control. This ultimately has an impact on student morality. Building on the preceding account, the following hypotheses may be formulated:

H1: social support impacts morality;

H2: social support impacts self-adjustment;

H3: social support impacts self-control;

H4: social support indirectly impacts morality through self-adjustment;

H5: social support has an indirect impact on morality through self-control.

Self-Adjustment

The internal factor that has an impact on moral formation is self-adjustment. Self-adjustment is an individual's attitude towards adapting to the environment. There are external and internal factors that impact self-adjustment, namely perception, self-concept, intelligence, interests and personality, while external factors include family and community environment, school environment, parenting patterns, norms and culture, and customs (Schneiders, 1964). The research by Schneiders (1964), has further stated that self-adjustment consists of three aspects: personal harmony, ability to absorb shock, frustration and conflict, and harmony with the environment. This study measured self-adjustment through self-awareness, self-control, and intelligence, as outlined by Haber &

Runyon (1984). An individual who possesses self-awareness and is capable of self-control exhibits a mature nature and demonstrates an understanding of positive behavior and the ability to regulate actions that may be detrimental to others. This ability to adjust will ultimately improve individual morals. Based on the description above, the following hypothesis can be built:

H6: self-adjustment impacts morality.

Self-Control

Self-control represents a state in which an individual is able to control and prevent negative actions from being taken which will ultimately affect other people. Self-control also demonstrates an individual's ability to regulate and adapt to the environment (Vitell et al., 2009). The indicators of self-control can be defined as the ability to regulate emotions, adapt to challenging situations, resist temptation, demonstrate discipline, and establish clear goals (Tangney et al., 2004). Furthermore, people, who are good at self-control, will possess a clear vision and mission, which will foster a more focused and positive attitude, as well as good moral conduct. Research shows that self-control impacts the formation of an individual's morality (Hidayah, 2021).

According to Hirtenlehner & Kunz (2016), self-control is closely linked to psychological morality. Meanwhile, research conducted by Tangney et al. (2004) suggests that a person is deemed to possess strong moral character if he possesses excellent self-control. Therefore, identifying factors that impact students' morality is crucial in nurturing virtuous character and conduct. Subsequent research by Caprara et al. (2020) indicates that negative attitudes impact life satisfaction and subsequently affect an individual's behavior towards others. Based on the description above, the following hypothesis can be built:

H7: self-control impacts morality.

Research methods

The questionnaires used in this study were translated from English into Bahasa Indonesia through a collaborative effort. The questionnaires were derived from Cutrona & Russell (1987); Haber & Runyon (1984); Tirri & Nokelainen (2011); Tongsuebsai et al. (2015). A bilingual scholar, an associate professor of linguistics and English, led the translation process. With fluency in both English and Bahasa Indonesia, and prior experience in translating quantitative instruments, he was a valuable asset to the team. After several meetings, the assistant professor authors – three specializing in instrument development – and the forward translators understood the instrument's forward translation. We also included a specialist who was a senior lecturer in business ethics. The author facilitated this group, where members discussed differences between the back translation and the original until an agreement was reached, which later resulted in a sense of inclusion and collaboration among the team members.

Research variables

a. The social support questionnaire consists of 34 questions (Cutrona & Russell, 1987).

b. The self-adjustment questionnaire consists of 19 items (Haber & Runyon, 1984).

c. Self-control questionnaire consists of 13 questions (Tangney et al., 2004).

d. The measurement of morality consists of 28 questions (Tirri & Nokelainen, 2011; Tongsuebsai et al., 2015).

Prior to testing the hypothesis, validity and reliability tests are conducted. The analytical technique used to interpret and analyze the data is the Structural Equation

Model (SEM). Furthermore, SmartPLS and AMOS also provide model fit statistics. The number of respondents in this study was 99. The following is a description of the respondents.

Table 1. *Demographical Backgrounds of The Respondents*

Statistic Frequency		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	81	81.8
	Male	18	18.2
Semester	Semester 3	39	39.4
	Semester 5	46	46.5
	Semester 7	14	14.1
Department of Education	Department of Economics Education	69	69.7
	Department of Accounting Education	9	9.1
	Department of Business Education	21	21.2
Residency	Boarding House	72	72.7
	Parents	19	19.2
	Family	8	8.1

Source: data processed in 2023

The gender description shows that the majority are women with a percentage of 81.8%, while men are only 18.2%. At the semester level, the figures are almost the same in semesters 3, 5 and 7 with 39.4%, 46.5% and 14% respectively. Furthermore, the field of economics dominates in terms of enrolment with 69.7%. This is followed by business and accounting education with 21.2% and 9.1% respectively. Finally, the place of residence during studies shows that the majority of students (72.7%) rent a room / house, followed by 19.2% who live with their parents and only 8% who live with their families. Prior to testing the hypothesis, the researcher conducted validity and reliability tests. This test was carried out with the aim of determining the suitability of the research questionnaire for the representation of the research variables. The following section presents the results of the validity and reliability testing.

Table 2. *Validity and Reliability Test*

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Morality	0.857	0.865	0.891	0.542
Self-Adjustment	0.830	0.854	0.876	0.544
Self-Control	0.882	0.917	0.910	0.595
Social Support	0.770	0.777	0.843	0.518

Source: data processed in 2023

In accordance with the findings of Thorndike (1995) and Vinzi et al. (2010), a model is regarded as effective if it demonstrates a Cronbach's Alpha value exceeding 0.7. As evidenced by the results of this test, the Cronbach's Alpha value is greater than 0.7. Furthermore, an examination of the rho_A value, which Vinzi et al. (2010) stipulate must exceed 0.7, also reveals that the results exceed this threshold. The next stage of the analysis is to assess the viability of the model by conducting composite reliability testing. In line

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with the criteria set out by Chin & Dibbern (2010), a model is deemed feasible if the composite reliability value exceeds 0.6. The results of this test indicate a value exceeding 0.6. The next model feasibility test is to carry out the average variance extracted (AVE) test. According to Bagozzi & Yi (1988); Chin & Dibbern (2010); Fornell & Larcker (1981), the model is deemed feasible if the AVE value is greater than 0.5. As illustrated in Table 2, the AVE value for all variables exceeds this threshold, indicating that the model is indeed feasible.

The subsequent evaluation is to ascertain the suitability of the research model. This is achieved through the examination of the CMI/DF, GFI, RMSEA. The first test to identification the value of CMI-DF. According Kline (1998), if the resulting value is less than 3, it is concluded that the model is a good fit. The ensuing section details the outcomes of the model's fit assessment in this study.

Table 3. *CMI/DF Result Test*

Model	NPAR	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF
Default model	55	609.036	270	.000	2.256
Saturated model	325	.000	0		
Independence model	25	1658.485	300	.000	5.528

Source: data processed in 2023

As demonstrated in Table 3 above, it can be concluded that the research model is a good fit, since the CMIN/DF results are less than 3 (i. e. 2.256). The next test to show the model fit is GFI (Goodness of Fit Index). The model is considered fit if its value exceeds 0.9. Below are the results of the GFI test.

Table 4. *GFI Result Test*

Model	RMR	GFI	AGFI	PGFI
Default model	.025	.837	.773	.603
Saturated model	.000	1.000		
Independence model	.094	.287	.227	.265

Source: data processed in 2023

The results of the research indicate that the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) is near the value of 0.9, suggesting that the model is a good fit. The final test involves assessing the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). A model is considered to fit well if the RMSEA value is less than 0.05. The results of the RMSEA test are as follows:

Table 5. *RMSEA Result Test*

Model	RMSEA	LO 90		HI 90	PCLOSE
Default model	.037	.000		.058	.830
Independence model	.215	.205		.225	.000

Source: data processed in 2023

The test results indicate an RMSEA value of 0.037, which is less than 0.05, allowing us to conclude that the model fits well.

Results and discussions

Results

The impact of social support, self-adjustment and self-control on students' morality was investigated in this study. This research was carried out in three study programs, namely the study program of economic education, the study program of accounting education and the study program of business education. The questionnaire was given to students in the 3rd, 5th and 7th semesters.

Testing the hypotheses

Hypothesis testing was conducted using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to identify the factors that impact morality through social support, self-adjustment and self-control. The direct and indirect impact on students' morality is examined in this test. The results of the hypothesis testing are presented below.

Table 6. *Findings from hypothesis testing*

Variables		Direct Impacts	Indirect Impacts	Total Impacts
Self-Adjustment -> Morality	Path Coefficient	0.108	-	**0.108**
	t statistic	1.406	-	**1.406**
	p value	0.160	-	**0.160**
Self-Control -> Morality	Path Coefficient	0.416	-	**0.416**
	t statistic	4.081	-	**4.081**
	p value	0.000	-	**0.000**
Social Support -> Morality	Path Coefficient	0.185	0.186	**0.370**
	t statistic	1.651	2.047	**3.404**
	p value	0.099	0.041	**0.001**
Social Support -> Self-Adjustment	Path Coefficient	0.512	-	**0.512**
	t statistic	5.284	-	**5.284**
	p value	0.000	-	**0.000**
Social Support -> Self-Control	Path Coefficient	0.224	-	**0.224**
	t statistic	1.594	-	**1.594**
	p value	0.112	-	0.112

Source: data processed in 2023

The table above shows the direct and indirect impact between the independent and dependent variables. The results of the test on self-adjustment to morality showed that it had no significant impact. The significant value of 0.160 indicates this result. Meanwhile, the test of the next hypothesis, namely the influence of self-control on morality, shows that the test of the hypothesis has a significant direct impact with a significance level of 0.000.

The model presented in Figure 1 illustrates how exogenous variables, specifically social support, influence self-adjustment, self-control, and morality, as endogenous variables. Additionally, it shows that self-adjustment and self-control also function as exogenous variables that impact morality. The social support variable is composed of five

constructs: peer support, responsibility, environment, and trust, as established by validity and reliability tests. In contrast, self-adjustment consists of six constructs: adapting, expression, relationship-building, and controlling emotions. It's important to note that both self-adjustment (which includes self-control, discipline, focus, and cooperation) and morality (which encompasses consideration of the situation, actions, and choices) have an equal number of constructs contributing to their definitions.
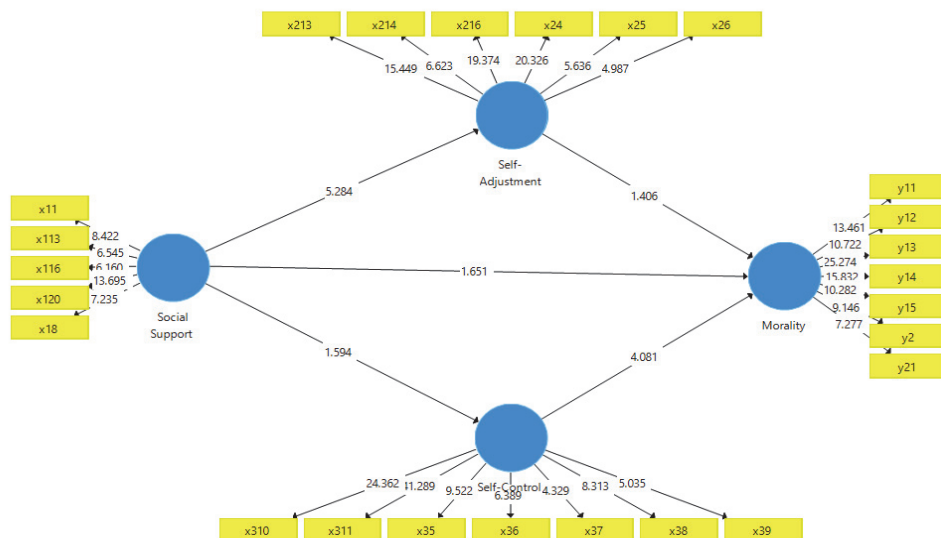

Figure 1. *Standardized path coefficients from the structural equation model*
Source: data processed in 2023

Furthermore, testing social support shows that there is a significant impact on morality indirectly through self-control and self-adjustment with a significance level of 0.001. Social support also has a significant effect on self-control, with a significance level of 0.000. Finally, when testing social support on self-control, there is no significant impact of 0.112.

Discussions

After the hypothesis testing, the following results were obtained. The results showed no significant impact when testing the first hypothesis, namely self-adjustment to morality. This is an indication that self-adjustment has no impact on the improvement of students' morality. This finding contradicts the research conducted by Hidayah (2021). Self-adaptation shows how a person can adapt to the environment. This view assumes that someone who is able to adapt will be able to control his emotions, which will ultimately increase his morality. Nevertheless, the findings of this study reveal a contradictory conclusion, suggesting that the capacity to adapt to socialising does not influence morality. This is evidenced by the fact that the ability to establish social connections and regulate emotions, which are components of self-regulation, do not constitute the primary factors in enhancing student morality. Students who adapt to their atmosphere view this ability as essential for creating comfort and adhering to social norms within their surroundings, whereas from a different perspective, the capacity for self-adjustment does

not necessarily lead to significant moral improvement, suggesting that it alone cannot effectively transform students' moral character.

Furthermore, self-control shows a significant impact on morals, where self-control allows a person to choose between positive and negative factors and their impact on morals. The results of this research are in line with the research conducted by Hidayah (2021) and Vitell et al. (2009). A person who is able to control himself or herself will be able to regulate and adapt to the environment (Vitell et al., 2009). Someone who is able to control himself will act in such a way that he does not commit moral deviations in the university environment, such as fighting, cheating or truancy, so that it reflects high morality. Furthermore, a person's ability to work hard and have high discipline are important factors in increasing morality. It can be seen that people who are serious about their work will have long and clear goals and will also have good moral values.

Social support is an important factor in the impact on other variables. Social support shows encouragement or support from the environment, both family and surroundings, to produce a positive impact. When the hypothesis of social support on morality was tested, it was found to have a significant impact, meaning that the presence of positive social support from the family and surrounding environment would impact on increasing morality. It should be noted that failures in upbringing and environment also lead to a decrease in morality. This is explained in research conducted by Harman (2003) which states that conditions and situations will completely influence a person's moral behavior. This moral behavior will provide a social response to the needs and interests of other people. These findings are also supported by Hardy & Carlo (2011) who stated that social support, which is reflected in helping, caring for others and various representative events, has an impact on moral behavior. The role of parents also plays an important role in the formation of students' moral attitudes (Gui et al., 2020). The study's findings indicate that support from close individuals, particularly parents, offers emotional reassurance and comfort, which plays a key role in fostering improved moral development. Parents serve as the primary role models for their children, imparting core values such as honesty, respect, and empathy (Valavi et al., 2022). The family setting is where children first learn to distinguish between right and wrong, with parental behavior and guidance playing a crucial role in shaping their moral understanding.

In addition, social support also has a significant impact on self-adjustment. This is because social support leads to a person being able to adapt to both the family and community environments. Many cases of crimes against children occur due to a person's inability to adapt to the environment, which ultimately leads to immoral behavior (Xiang et al., 2020). Finally, social support will have no significant impact on the form of self-control to prevent someone from committing crimes that have a negative impact on other people (Tittle et al., 2010). Hypothesis testing results reveal that social support does not significantly influence self-control, as individuals with either positive or negative support may still struggle to regulate their behavior. Social support, as an external factor, has only an indirect effect on an individual. Self-control, being internally driven, is not directly shaped by social support. Instead, it manifests through attributes like respect, compassion, and a willingness to assist others, which are cultivated not only by the surrounding environment but also through familial influence.

Conclusions and suggestions

In conclusion, external factors in terms of social support are important in shaping pupils' morals. The role of family and environment is the most important factor. In addition, this factor also has an impact on the internal factors of students in the form

of attitudes of adaptation and self-control. Furthermore, self-control, in the form of the ability to refrain from actions that produce negative impacts, also has an impact on students' morality. However, the ability of students to adapt to the environment is not a determining factor in the formation of morality. Therefore, it is important for parents and teachers to be aware of both internal and external factors in the formation of morality. The significant discord between students and the environment is a salient factor in the prevention of academic fraud and the promotion of student morality. This research contributes to our understanding of student morality and the factors that influence on a favorable educational environment.

This study has several limitations. First, the respondents are exclusively education students, which means the perspectives of non-education students are not considered. Additionally, the research is focused only on social science students, excluding science students from participation. Finally, the sample size in this study is small; increasing the number of samples is important in order to draw more reliable conclusions.

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