



## **“Who actually does the online exam?” Student assistant experience in online learning**

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### **Abstract**

Online learning is still ongoing during the pandemic in Indonesia until August 2021. Online learning has been going on for a year and a half, so there needs to be an evaluation related to the impact and experience of companions in online student learning. A total of 323 companions, including father, mother, and sibling, participated in offline and online interviews. We specialize participants are companions for elementary school students during online learning. Online learning provides additional activities for companions during the pandemic. The involvement of the companion contributes to unethical behavior, especially since the student companion is the mother. We provide an overview of how the process of academic dishonesty behavior occurs in students. The importance of academic ethical education for all online learning companions. Besides the need for collaboration with online learning Assistant with teachers to equalize perceptions of student learning goals. So that learning objectives are still achieved by promoting academic honesty.

**Key words:** COVID-19, online learning, pandemic, academic dishonesty, student assistant

### **Introduction**

The spread of COVID-19 that has occurred throughout the world has changed many aspects of human life. The news on TV and social media reports how the virus spreads and information about deaths that continues until this article is done. Simultaneously, pandemics affect many aspects of life, both in micro and macro contexts. Many studies investigate how the impact of the global pandemic includes economic aspects such as the number of employees being laid off, psychological aspects such as mental health, and environmental impacts such as large-scale closures of agricultural land, tourism, and so on (Hiscott et al., 2020).

It is undeniable that the COVID-19 pandemic has proven its impact on high psychological stress (López-Castro, Brandt, Anthonipillai, Espinosa, & Melara, 2021), which includes depression (García-Álvarez et al., 2020; Khan et al., 2020) and stress (Goothy et al., 2020; Rossi et al., 2020). In particular, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has had a serious impact on children and adolescents. A study of quality of life related to mental health and health on 1586 children and adolescents in Germany said that two-thirds reported being severely burdened by the pandemic, mental health which was much lower than before the pandemic, especially the significant impact felt on children with low socioeconomic status and backgrounds. migration in limited living spaces (Ravens-Sieberer et al., 2021). Other studies have reported

an increase in sleep difficulties in children and an increase in behavioral or emotional problems in children (López-Castro et al., 2021). Another study on 1000 university students in Germany on the impact of lockdown found anxiety, increased suicidal thoughts, worsening sleep quality, and worsening quality of life (Kaparounaki et al., 2020). A review and meta-analysis of longitudinal studies and natural experiments on 25 studies involving 72,0004 participants said that lockdowns do not have a uniform detrimental effect on mental health and that most people are psychologically resistant to its effects (Prati & Mancini, 2021). This proves that in general (not all), the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is felt by everyone.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health in general is being felt. Another impact that is the focus of our research is the very significant impact of the pandemic on education around the world. Based on the policies of each country, all schools ranging from early childhood education to universities are simultaneously closed and changing the learning system to online learning. Online learning is part of distance learning that uses internet networks as the main means of connecting between teachers and students (Belawati, 2019). Online learning is a newer enhanced version of distance learning (Benson, 2002).

There are two types of online learning, namely synchronous, which is online learning with direct or real-time interaction patterns, and asynchronous, which means online learning which is not implemented at the same time, usually asynchronous learning uses a learning management system (LMS) program, and the interaction uses email, discussion, -message boards, online forums, or other social media (Belawati, 2019). online learning is a solution to save education during a pandemic; this is based on the advantages of online learning methods that are more student-centered and offer flexibility in time and location. However, besides having advantages in terms of flexibility, online learning has weaknesses, including student behavior that is not serious, uncomfortable, confused, and frustrated, as well as technical problems such as signals and the learning environment (Dhawan, 2020). In addition, some of the weaknesses of online learning, such as student discipline, lack of internet access, and lack of social interaction, have become common challenges for educational organizations and stakeholders (Hermanto & Srimulyani, 2021). Other studies also report that online learning is not in line with expectations in underdeveloped countries with technical problems such as accessing the internet and finance (Adnan & Anwar, 2020). This happens because online learning is very dependent on several integrated components, such as students, educators, learning resources, and the technology used. So students and teachers face many problems during online learning and teaching (Hafeez, Ajmal, & Kazmi, 2021).

The application of online learning has been studied for its effectiveness; not a few studies say that online learning is not practical for early childhood education (Nurdin & Anhusadar, 2020), junior high school (Aisyah, Maulana, & Ahnaf, 2021), high school (Sari & Haryono, 2021), even in college students (Dewantara & Nurgiansah, 2020). In contrast to other studies, online learning is effective (Darmalaksana, Hambali, Masrur, & Muhlas, 2020; Simatupang, Sitohang, Situmorang, & Simatupang, 2020) technical problems and lack of physical interaction are weaknesses of online learning (Hazaymeh, 2021).

The causes of ineffective online learning include lack of enthusiasm and boredom (Mujahidin, 2021; Mustakim, 2020), lack of positive reinforcement (Mantasiah, Yusri, Sinring, & Aryani, 2021) and lack of teacher skills in using technology (Calderón-Garrido, Gustems-Carnicer, & Faure-Carvallo, 2021). In online learning, students learn less at home, lack self-management, have more workloads compared to offline school learning, and prefer the closeness of collaborating in class (Yates, Starkey, Egerton, & Flueggen, 2021). another study found that college students with low computer skills reported the highest negative psychological effects (Alomyan, 2021). Furthermore, student age was significantly associated with changes in motivation (Zaccoletti et al., 2020). Seeing the many problems in online learning, not a few students ask for immediate offline learning (Dewantara & Nurgiansah, 2020). Another reported impact of online learning is the occurrence of academic stress felt by students (Herdian & Mildaeni, 2021), besides that the teacher feels the same thing that they are stressed at work (Anita, Tjitrosumarto, & Setyohadi, 2021) due to lack of technology mastery (Ula et al., 2021) Worse yet, recent research suggests that there are various ways that undergraduate students have in making strategies to commit academic dishonesty in online learning (Herdian, Mildaeni, & Wahidah, 2021).

As previously stated, online learning is carried out at all levels of education. Elementary school education also applies the same thing. However, online learning at the primary level is generally accompanied by a companion such as a family member, including mother, father, or siblings. So that learning can take place with assistance which is expected to help deliver information using gadgets. However, we think that the assistance provided by family members is not entirely as expected. Based on previous studies report that technology provides more opportunities for students' unethical behavior such as cheating. Due to the use of technology for education (especially for assessment), it has the potential to support academic dishonesty, namely making it easier for students to cheat and plagiarize (Peytcheva-Forsyth, Aleksieva, & Yovkova, 2018). Even technology-driven academic dishonesty is spreading among college students (Hollman, Palmer, Chaffin, & Luthans, 2021).

This has become one of the main concerns in online teaching and learning in the context of distance education related to academic integrity (Ravasco, 2012). Even some of the most common high-tech cheating techniques have been described previously (Kelley & Dooley, 2014). Plagiarism is a common form of academic dishonesty in the use of digital technology, while cheating and fabrication are the most common types of academic dishonesty without technology (Blau & Eshet-Alkalai, 2017). Therefore new strategies need to be considered in utilizing technology because it is better used for illegitimate purposes (Curran, Middleton, & Doherty, 2011).

Research on academic dishonesty is not new to students; previous research has said that this behavior appears since elementary school (Herdian & Sabrina, 2021)(Herdian & Sabrina, 2021), junior high school (Lestari & Asyanti, 2015), high school (Jensen, Arnett, Feldman, & Cauffman, 2002), to the university level (Herdian & Wahidah, 2020). We focus on academic dishonesty perpetrated in elementary schools. The results of research conducted by Herdian & Sabrina (2021) on elementary school students found that forms of academic dishonesty include copying answers, cheating, doing homework by others, asking and giving answers, cooperating in cheating, correcting answers, bringing notes, and lying on the job. In contrast, the factors that cause students to commit dishonesty are low self-confidence, low internal motivation, gender, low control, unpreparedness for exams, conformity, and ease of technology.

Based on the above background, we conducted a study on the experience of assisting learning in assisting children as elementary school students at home. This study covers how the involvement of parents in doing the teacher's orders such as homework, mid-semester exams, and end-semester exams.

### **Research Objectives**

This study is guided by the following research objectives:

1. To explain online learning from the point of view of online learning companion
2. To investigate the role of online learning companions in academic dishonesty
3. To explain the impact of online learning on students.

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

This research uses mixed quantitative and qualitative methods. A quantitative approach is used for closed questions so that the results are descriptive figures. In contrast, qualitative in the form of open-ended questions to describe perceptions, opinions, and responses qualitatively. Participants in this study amounted to 323 online learning assistants for elementary school students from grade 1 to grade 6. Based on the information in table 1. Participants were dominated by mothers (N=149) 46% and siblings (N=144) 45%, while father participants (N=30) 9%. Participants were dominated by class 5 (N=66) 20.4% and class 6 (N=63) 19.5%.

#### **Instrumentation**

The data collection tool used questions in the form of an open questionnaire and a closed questionnaire. The preparation of questions based on the research objective is to describe the companion experience in online learning. The following is an example of a questionnaire in the form of a closed question "Have you

ever done your child's homework/ assignments?", an example of a questionnaire in the form of an open question "Do you think your child understands the material presented by the teacher in online learning?. We recruited psychology students as interviewers for this study. Participant search was based on information obtained from the neighborhood where the interviewer lived. It should be noted that this research was conducted when the pandemic was still ongoing in Indonesia, around March to April 2021. So the participants were people who were still affordable for offline interviews with strict health protocols. However, some participants were asked to be interviewed online. The data that has been obtained is sent in an online form for later analysis. Before the interview, the interviewer conveyed the participants' willingness to the prospective participants. Then the interview continued after the participants stated their agreement.

**Table 1.**  
*Frequencies of Participants*

Participants as?	The child's class						n	%
	1	2	3	4	5	6		
Father	3	4	9	5	4	5	30	9%
Mother	21	23	22	27	26	30	149	46%
Sibling	19	12	24	25	36	28	144	45%
<i>n</i>	43	39	55	57	66	63	323	
<i>%</i>	13.3%	12.1%	17.0%	17.6%	20.4%	19.5%		

### Data analysis

The data collected were analyzed based on the type of question. Closed questions were analyzed descriptively in percentage figures and tabulated analysis to obtain more comprehensive data. Meanwhile, open-ended questions were analyzed by content analysis.

### Results

Based on the results obtained, we divided it into three themes: experiences in assisting children during online learning, experiences of companion involvement in academic dishonesty, and the impact of online learning using smartphones.

### Data analysis

In discussing experiences assisting children during online learning, we divided them into three forms of closed questions. Based on table 2, the study results, as many as 103 or 31.9% of students bought smartphones specifically for online learning, while 220 or 68.1% did not buy or use smartphones owned by family members. On the question of the effectiveness of online learning, in this case, the child's understanding of the lessons delivered by the teacher, the results obtained are 189 or 58.5% of the companions said "possible". This can be interpreted that the companion does not know for sure whether the child understands or not. As many as 83 or 25.7% of the companions said "no," meaning the child did not understand what was learned or what was conveyed by the teacher. As many as 51 or 15.8% said "yes" or parents believe that the child understands what is learned or conveyed by the teacher in online learning. In another question, regarding the busyness of parents who have to accompany their children in online learning, it was found that 180 or 55.7% of the companions felt that it was difficult for their children to learn online. While 37 or 11.5% of the companions did not feel bothered, 106 or 32.8% said it was normal. It can be concluded that accompanying children's online learning is not a troublesome or hassle-free activity.

**Table 2.**  
*frequency related to online learning*

	Levels	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
did you buy a smartphone for online learning?	No	220	68.1 %	68.1 %
	Yes	103	31.9 %	100.0 %
Do you think your child understands the material presented by the teacher in online learning?	Possible	189	58.5 %	58.5 %
	No	83	25.7 %	84.2 %
Do you find it difficult to accompany your child to learn online?	Yes	51	15.8 %	100.0 %
	No	37	11.5 %	11.5 %
	Yes	180	55.7 %	67.2 %
	Normally	106	32.8 %	100.0 %

Based on the data obtained, in table 3, we make three situations in the percentage of companion involvement in children's academic dishonesty behavior. On the question of the experience of doing assignments or homework, 226 or 70% of the companions said "yes" had participated in doing assignments or homework, while 97 or 30% said no. The comparison is quite large, meaning that most of the assistants have committed academic dishonesty to students in doing assignments or homework. Regarding experience in taking mid-semester exams, 124 or 38.4% said "yes" had taken part in mid-semester exams, while 119 or 61.6% said never. On the question of the experience of taking the end-of-semester exam, 116 or 35.9% said "yes" or had taken the end-of-semester exam.

Meanwhile, 207 or 64.1% said they had never taken part in the final semester exam. Comparison of the three categories of mentor involvement situations in students' academic dishonesty, in the situation of doing assignments or homework, most of the assistants have committed dishonesty compared to the mid-semester exam and end-semester exam situations. This is because when doing assignments or homework, students have quite a lot of free time, so parents can participate in "petrifying" their children's homework. Although, perhaps parents understand that this should not be done.

**Table 3.**  
*Frequency of involvement in academic dishonesty*

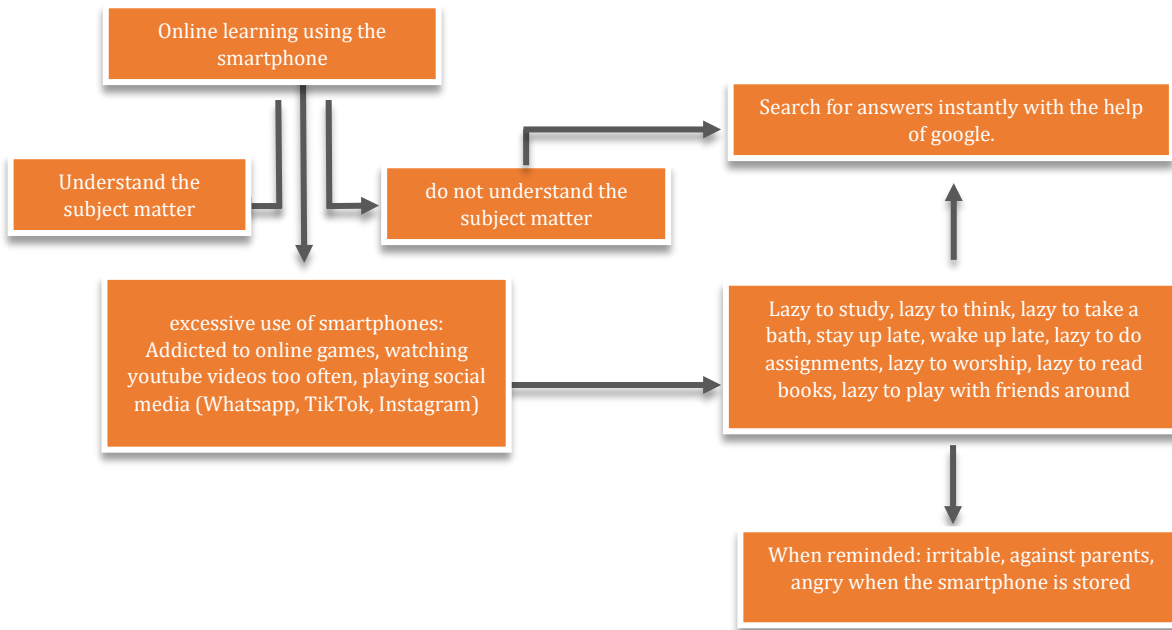
	Levels	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Have you ever done your child's homework/ homework?	No	97	30.0 %	30.0 %
	Yes	226	70.0 %	100.0 %
Have you ever taken your child's Mid Semester Exam?	No	199	61.6 %	61.6 %
	Yes	124	38.4 %	100.0 %
Have you ever taken your child's final Semester Exam?	No	207	64.1 %	64.1 %
	Yes	116	35.9 %	100.0 %

The results of cross-tabulation analysis between participants who accompany children such as fathers, mothers, and siblings with three situations of academic dishonesty. In the table, we assign different colors to each situation to distinguish them. It should be noted beforehand that at least the participants are fathers, so the percentage cannot be compared with other participants. So it has only compared in its category. In the situation of doing assignments or homework, mother participants were more dishonest than other participants. in the situation doing the mid-semester exam, all participants are mostly not involved or have never done dishonesty, as well as in the situation of working on the end-semester exam.

**Table 4.**  
Companion cross-tabulation with students' academic dishonesty situations

	Have you ever done your child's homework/ homework?				Have you ever taken your child's Mid Semester Exam?				Have you ever taken your child's final Semester Exam?			
	no	%	yes	%	no	%	yes	%	no	%	yes	%
Father	5	5	25	11	21	11	9	7	21	10	9	8
Mother	43	44	106	47	81	41	68	55	85	41	64	55
Sibling	49	51	95	42	97	49	47	38	101	49	43	37
total	97	100	226	100	199	100	124	100	207	100	116	100
%	30		70		62		38		64		36	

The use of smartphones in online learning also has a significant impact on behavior. A total of 287, or 88.9%, reported that smartphone use had a negative impact on children, while 36 or 11.1% of companions said there was no negative impact. The impact of using smartphones on children is shown in figure 1. These impacts include children's excessive use of smartphones, especially in online gaming activities, watching YouTube videos too often, playing social media (Whatsapp, Tiktok, Instagram). So this triggers several behaviors such as being lazy to study, think, take a bath, stay up late, wake up late, lazy to do assignments, lazy to worship, lazy to read books, and lack of socialization with people around. Until in turn, laziness has an impact on academic dishonesty behavior, namely doing academic assignments by looking for instant answers with the help of Google. On the path of delivering material, namely understanding and not understanding, it strengthens students to commit academic dishonesty when they do not understand. In addition, the companion also reported emotional changes that occurred in children before and after using a smartphone. The child's emotions become unstable or often angry when reminded not to overuse the smartphone.



**Figure 1:** Impact of using smartphones in Online learning

The results in figure 1 are extracted from the results of open questions. Here are some excerpts from the answers to the open questionnaire:



"Children become lazy to study because they are too busy with their smartphones, including being used for games and watching YouTube, their emotions cannot be controlled so they fight when reminded, tend to like to be alone..."

"So they have more control over smartphones, open YouTube, if they are serious about playing cellphones, children become more emotional when asked to stop."

"Children like to open YouTube instead of studying and play games more often because children are more likely to hold smartphones."

"sometimes smartphones are misused to play games beyond the allotted time limit, children are less socialized with other people."

"Children are lazy to read books. Always looking for practical answers by going to google for answers."

### Discussion

Online learning is a substitute for face-to-face learning in the classroom. There is no difference in the learning objectives of the two types of learning. This means that face-to-face learning and online learning aim for students to understand what the teacher is saying. This study confirms that most participants do not know for sure whether students understand or not. In contrast, some other participants say that students do not understand the material delivered with the online learning system. on the other hand, participants as mothers/fathers/brothers conveyed activities to assist children in learning as one of the troublesome agendas. This happens by many possibilities, maybe because participants have to provide particular time to accompany children, prepare the materials needed, motivate children to be enthusiastic about learning, provide an understanding of the material that children do not understand, and so on.

We found unethical behavior carried out by student tutors. His involvement in student learning facilitates learning, but the assistant is also involved in the situation of doing the teacher's orders. The teacher's instructions are assignments or homework, mid-semester exams, and end-semester exams. We found that most dishonesty behaviors occurred in doing assignments or homework than in the mid-semester exam and end-semester exam situations. This can be caused by more time doing assignments or homework than mid-semester exams and end-semester exams. The companion's involvement in the dishonesty of students is suspected to be due to the companion's impatience in giving students explanations when students do not understand the material presented by the teacher through online learning.

We found another result from the cross-tabulation analysis that the mentor, in this case, was the mother who was found to be more involved in students' academic dishonesty compared to other mentors such as fathers and siblings. This finding contributes to the role of parents. In this case, the mother is very influential on unethical behavior. Whereas in general, character education is received by children earlier than the family environment. The limitation of our research is the depth of data mining. So the reasons why parents can engage in unethical behavior cannot be answered. However, this research can be used as a basis for further research.

Academic dishonesty in students occurs by many factors. We confirm how the dynamics occur in online learning. Generally, this is motivated by excessive activity in using smartphones. When online learning is implemented, the companion uses a smartphone to facilitate student learning. Then this causes a new culture for children to use smartphones. Attractive features and complete services such as games, online videos, social media cause children to linger on smartphones. So that addictive behavior arises in using smartphones. This addiction triggers other new habits such as laziness to study, do assignments, and so on. This laziness, in turn, causes students to become more irritable and rebellious when reminded. In another form, the impact of lazy behavior is on unethical behavior. Students become more dependent on the smart features of smartphones to help do their assignments. Dishonest behavior is also triggered by the misunderstanding of the material presented by the teacher. So the conclusion is that dishonesty is triggered by the teacher's lack of understanding of the material and reinforced by laziness that occurs due to excessive student habits in using smartphones. Our research confirms that students' dishonest behavior occurs early at the basic education level using a face-to-face learning system at school (Herdian & Sabrina, 2021) and

online learning. This study also confirms that online learning can support academic dishonesty. This was reported by previous research before online learning was simultaneously enforced worldwide (Peytcheva-Forsyth et al., 2018)

Our research provides recommendations for educators or policymakers where academic dishonesty involving online learning assistants must be appropriately handled. The cooperation of parents and teachers is needed in order to establish a commitment to promote ethical behaviour. In addition, there is a need for understanding for everyone involved in online learning regarding academic ethics that must be applied in online learning. This research has identified some methodological and conceptual limitations. Who was the first to collect data using open-ended questions so that the study results were not in-depth and did not provide a comprehensive explanation of the phenomenon of academic dishonesty? Our research is also challenging to do through in-person interviews, even though some respondents use online. Moreover, our research reveals the experience of online learning companions during a pandemic, the usual answers are likely to be obtained because participants close themselves to questions of unethical behaviour. We suggest that future researchers use multiple approaches to unethical research behaviour during a pandemic. Can use in-depth questions with a case study or phenomenological qualitative approach. In addition, it is necessary to understand the meaning of academic honesty from teachers and assistants' perspective to know how they perceive academic ethics.

### Conclusions

Online learning is a solution when the COVID-19 pandemic occurs worldwide, which requires schools to close. Elementary schools also apply an online learning system. However, because elementary school students are in the age range of children who do not understand technology, they need a companion in the online learning process. As stated in several previous research results, technology provides opportunities for students to use better methods of academic dishonesty.

### Recommendations

This study makes an essential contribution to the involvement of chaperones in the academic dishonesty of elementary school students. We found that the companion, the mother, was more involved in dishonesty than the father and sibling. The dynamics of academic dishonesty behavior begins when new habits are formed, such as using smartphones in online learning, which triggers student laziness. This makes students irritable against their parents when they are reminded not to always play with their smartphones.

On the other hand, it ends up triggering academic dishonesty as well. Meanwhile, in other ways, dishonesty involving parents occurs because students do not understand the lessons given by the teacher. So that when the assistant is impatient in re-explaining the material, the possible shortcut is to help do the teacher's orders in the form of doing assignments or homework, mid-semester exams, and end-semester exams. The implications of this research can be used to make policies in making online learning regulations, especially at the elementary school level. The need for education related to ethical behavior for companions to prevent it.

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