Indonesian English Learners' Attitudes towards Cheating, Absenteeism, and Gender: Interactions with L2 Achievement

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Abstract

The present study was conducted to find out Indonesian English as a Second/Foreign Language (L2) learners' attitudes towards cheating (AtC) in online English classes, as well as the possible influence of the combination of three variables, which are their AtC, absenteeism, and gender, on their L2 achievement as measured with their final grades. The study employed a survey method and was conducted by distributing an online questionnaire. In total, 164 Indonesian learners from various non-English departments at a university in Java participated in the study. Through descriptive statistics, it was found that generally learners reported their negative AtC in English class, suggesting disapproval towards cheating. Through multiple regression analysis, the study further found that the combination of learners' AtC, absenteeism, and gender significantly influenced their L2 achievement, and the overall model could predict 34.5% of the total variance in L2 achievement. However, based on the beta coefficient of the three variables, only learners' absenteeism and gender significantly affected their L2 achievement. As learners had higher absenteeism, they obtained lower L2 achievement. From a t-test analysis, female learners were found to have significantly better L2 achievement than their male counterparts. While the findings on the influence of absenteeism on L2 achievement generally conformed to literature in the

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field, the findings on the influence of AtC and gender on L2 achievement may suggest that further explorations may be necessary.

1. INTRODUCTION

The issue of cheating is not at all a new phenomenon in education, including in second/foreign (L2) language learning. Cheating behaviors affect the cheating learners and their peers, as such practices create an unfair system around learners (Asrifan et al., 2020). The non-cheaters may feel disadvantaged, and as such, cheating may be seen as an acceptable way of staying and getting ahead (Tacker, 2020). Cheating eventually negatively affects the quality of assessment, further giving a false impression of learners' learning achievement. A quantitative study involving 800 Iranian Junior High School learners by Rahimi and Goli (2016) investigated the relationship between L2 achievement and cheating attitudes. They found that the higher learners' L2 achievement, the more likely they agreed that the instances mentioned in the scale were cheating and dishonest behaviors. This finding suggested that negative attitudes towards cheating are associated with better achievement. Cheating may also be more widespread in online learning contexts (Rofiah & Waluyo, 2020). A study in an Indonesian university context found that a lack of teacher-learner and learner-learner social interactions during online learning hindered the learning process (Subekti, 2020a), and this may be a contributing factor for learners to cheat. In line with that, several studies reported that online learning situations, with all practicalities the advancement of technology could offer, are often prone to cheating behaviors (Dewi, 2021; Rofiah & Waluyo, 2020; Tacker, 2020).

Another issue concerning L2 learners is the lack of attendance or absenteeism. Several studies on absenteeism have been conducted in various L2 learning contexts, mostly in the Middle East, e.g., Yemen (Al-Mekhlafi, 2016), Oman (Ancheta et al., 2021), Iran (Niknezhad & Heidar, 2017; Rajabnejad et al., 2017), Iran and Iraq (Pishghadam et al., 2019, 2021), and China (Yan & He, 2019). Studies suggested that learners' lack of attendance resulted in insufficient learning and academic failure (Al-Mekhlafi, 2016; Ozkanal & Arikan, 2011). Absenteeism may have a downward spiraling effect; that is, learners who are often absent could be lagging behind their peers in terms of language performance, which could stimulate them to continue skipping the class (Klem & Connell, 2004). A study in a Tunisian university context by Ali and Manouba (2014) found that regularly attending classes gave them the opportunity to learn all the materials, thus their better understanding and achievement.

Among studies on absenteeism in L2 classes, several specifically investigated the relationship between learners' absenteeism and their L2 achievement (Al-Mekhlafi, 2016; Ancheta et al., 2021; Karabiyik, 2016; Rajabnejad et al., 2017) and they were all conducted in the Middle East while the issue of absenteeism seems to be quite common in various L2 contexts, such as in China (Yan & He, 2019) and Indonesia (Subekti, 2020b). Investigating un-motivation (Sakui & Cowie, 2012), the combination of motivation and demotivation among Indonesian L2 learners from non-English departments, a qualitative study by Subekti (2020b) reported widespread

absenteeism in English classes. The English teacher participants in the study reported that the position of English classes as complementary in these learners' departments leads to their lack of motivation to strive in English classes, including regularly attending them.

Another area closely related to L2 learning is learners' gender. Several studies suggested that female learners are superior to their male counterparts in language learning. For example, they were reported to be more self-directed in L2 learning (Subekti, 2022), to have higher motivation (Polat, 2011), to perform better in language tests (Zoghi et al., 2013), and to be able to write better (Al-Saadi, 2020). Such studies may strengthen the widespread belief that learning belongs to a feminine domain (MacIntyre et al., 2002). Nevertheless, several recent studies suggested it may not be the case. Studies in Austria (Wucherer & Reiterer, 2018) and Ethiopia (Menuta & Wubshet, 2019) reported that male learners outperformed female learners, while a study in Spain by Agudo (2022) found that there was no gender difference among the participants' L2 listening proficiency. These conflicting studies may suggest that the gender factor could not be well understood despite its possible influence on L2 learning.

Notwithstanding the possible contributions of the aforementioned previous studies, several aspects warrant further investigation. First, there seems to be a need to explore Indonesian L2 learners' attitudes towards cheating (AtC) in online learning contexts in a survey study to obtain a general picture of the phenomenon in this particular context considering such studies, to the best of our knowledge, have not been conducted previously. Second, investigating the possible influence of the combined factors, namely learners' AtC, absenteeism, and gender on their L2 achievement could be worthwhile as the existing studies were thus far somewhat overwhelmed with correlation studies unable to investigate whether the aforementioned constructs influence L2 achievement. Besides, in practice, these three variables may be intertwined. Moreover, considering the scarcity of studies on absenteeism and the inconclusive findings of studies on gender, conducting a single study involving these constructs in the Indonesian context, home to one of the largest L2 learners of English, may pave the way for further research investigating the combination of learner factors influencing the success of L2 learning.

In light of the aforementioned rationales, the present study seeks to answer the following research questions.
1. What are Indonesian English as L2 learners' attitudes towards cheating (AtC) in online English classes?
2. To what extent does the combination of three variables, namely learners' AtC, absenteeism, and gender, influence learners' L2 achievement in online English classes?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Academic Cheating

Though there seems to be no universally accepted definition of academic cheating among scholars; academic cheating is generally understood as academic dishonesty or deception to obtain certain favorable academic results (Bensaada, 2017;

Quaidy et al., 2018). Several typical cheating behaviors include copying someone's work and claiming it as one's own and using dishonest ways to complete certain tasks (Bensaada, 2017). In a rather old yet relevant publication, Anderman and Murdock (2007) stated that cheating, from the perspective of learning, is a strategy serving as a cognitive shortcut. Effective learning typically necessitates learners to employ complex cognitive and self-regulatory strategies. The need to employ such strategies could be precluded by cheating. Hence, cheating learners may not have effective learning strategies or not be willing to invest more time in their learning (Anderman & Murdock, 2007).

Learning an L2, including English, furthermore, is a tedious and challenging process involving trial and error (Dornyei, 2005), and in this process, learners may be tempted to look for shortcuts such as cheating. Cheating is a widespread phenomenon in English Language Teaching (ELT), and this can be seen from a plethora of research investigating cheating behaviors among English as L2 learners (Al-Darwish & Sadeqi, 2016; Asrifan et al., 2020; Bensaada, 2017; Doro, 2014; Fadila, 2022; Rahimi & Goli, 2016). The advancement of technology, despite being reported to enhance learning in many aspects, is also reported to help evolve learners' modes of cheating. In Japan, for example, "kopi-pe" – the Japanese term for "copy and paste" was arguably the most popular way of cheating using technology (Tacker, 2020). In this regard, plagiarism, the practice of taking someone else's ideas or works and passing them off as their own, which is often reported in L2 learning, especially in writing (Silfiani et al., 2018; Sulaiman, 2015), could also be considered a cheating practice. Other forms of cheating include preparing notes and asking or giving answers during closed-book examinations (Asrifan et al., 2020).

There are several factors reported to stimulate learners to cheat. Peers have been reported to affect cheating behaviors (Boysen, 2007; Fadila, 2022). Outside the ELT field, a study in a high school context by Boysen (2007) reported that learners cheated less if the classroom environment was more positive. In Asia, culture may also play a role in amplifying the effects of peers toward cheating behaviors. A study by Diego (2017) in a Philippines high school reported that sharing answers during exams was attributed to social acceptance and friendship. Those who did not share their answers may be labeled negatively by their peers. Another factor is the learners' lack of time management (Daif-Allah & Alsamani, 2013; Doro, 2014; Muluk et al., 2021; Silfiani et al., 2018). A quantitative study involving Indonesian learners from an English major by Silfiani et al. (2018), for example, found that lack of time management was one of four significant factors of committing plagiarism besides lack of understanding about the materials, efficiency gain, temptation, and opportunity. Furthermore, the nature of the assessment may also play a part in creating the temptation and opportunity to cheat, such as multiple-choice questions in online settings (Michael & Williams, 2013). They further mentioned that cheating practices could be minimized in online learning settings by teachers having more open-ended assessments and being familiar with learners' levels to determine whether these learners indeed write specific assignments. Perceived irrelevance and uselessness of the materials were also reported as factors triggering learners to cheat (Farah, 2021). A study in an Indonesian university context found that learners from non-English departments may be susceptible to having such perceptions as they may second-prioritize English classes compared to content classes in their respective departments (Subekti, 2020b). Furthermore, desperation to obtain favorable results was another contributing factor to cheating. A quantitative study

involving 102 Saudi Arabian L2 learners of English by Daif-Allah and Alsamani (2013) reported that although the majority of the participants were honest, several participants reported they cheated out of desperation due to fear of failure, parental expectations, pressure to obtain good grades and high levels of stress.

2.2 Absenteeism

Learners' absenteeism or lack of attendance in class is often believed to affect learning negatively. Studies primarily conducted in the Middle East could support this debilitating effect of absenteeism on learning (Al-Mekhlafi, 2016; Ancheta et al., 2021; Karabiyik, 2016). A study by Karabiyik (2016) involving 244 Turkish learners from various departments reported that learners with higher attendance tended to obtain higher grades in the language proficiency exams than those with lower attendance rates. Similarly, Al-Mekhlafi (2016), involving 140 Yemeni student teachers, found a statistically significant, positive association between the participants' final examination grades in the Morphology and Syntax course and their attendance rates in the class. A slightly similar finding was also reported by Ancheta et al. (2021) in Oman, in which learners at the undergraduate level accumulated poor attendance and performed poorly in class. A statistically significant negative correlation was found between these learners' absences and grades (Ancheta et al., 2021). Though a correlation does not signify cause and effect, the aforementioned correlation studies in various learning contexts reporting relatively the same findings may indicate the role of absenteeism in negatively affecting language achievement.

Furthermore, several studies reported possible contributing factors to learners' absenteeism. Teachers' performance and knowledge were the primary causal factors for (non) attendance in a study in Iran (Niknezhad & Heidar, 2017). Similarly, studies in Iran and Iraq by Pishghadam et al. (2019, 2021) reported that perceived teacher praise or stroke, credibility, and success could significantly predict L2 learners' attendance. In other words, when learners perceived their teachers as successful teachers who could provide relevant materials and build a trusting relationship with learners, they were more likely to attend the classes (Pishghadam et al., 2019, 2021). Besides teacher factors, learners and their environments may also be at play. A longitudinal study involving 300 Chinese university learners of English by Yan and He (2019) also reported an "obsession with employment, a series of curricular and pedagogical shortcomings" as well as limited self-discipline and management became contributing factors to skipping L2 classes (p. 1).

2.3 Gender in L2 Learning

Besides cheating and absenteeism, one variable that may affect L2 learning is learners' gender; however, several recent studies investigating gender differences in various L2 learning contexts seem to produce somewhat inconclusive findings (Agudo, 2022; Al-Saadi, 2020; Menuta & Wubshet, 2019; Wucherer & Reiterer, 2018). In the Omani context, Al-Saadi (2020) aimed to investigate the sources of gender difference in English as L2 writing achievement among undergraduate learners. The study found that female learners outperformed their male counterparts in overall text quality, and L2 writing fluency became an essential explanatory variable accounting for female learners' superiority in text quality. In comparison, in Austria,

Wucherer and Reiterer (2018) involved sixty German native-speaker learners of English in their study and found that male participants outperformed their female counterparts in pronunciation while they were outperformed in grammar learning.

Furthermore, in a relatively under-researched Ethiopian context involving 200 High School learners from four different schools as the participants, Menuta and Wubshet (2019) found that male learners significantly outperformed female learners in both Sidamuafo language (learners' first language) and English (learners L2). In comparison, a recent study in Spain by Agudo (2022) reported no substantial gender gap in L2 listening achievement among learner participants. All in all, from these studies, it can be seen that findings on gender differences thus far seem to be inconclusive, and further studies on this issue may still be necessary.

3. METHODS

3.1 Research design

The present study employed a quantitative method of distributing an online questionnaire. The eight questionnaire items on attitudes towards cheating (AtC) were adapted from a study by Carpenter et al. (2006) involving 643 learners at engineering departments from 11 institutions in the United States and abroad. In the present study, there were four possible responses: "Strongly Agree" equal to 5 points, "Agree" equal to 4, "Disagree" equal to 2, and "Strongly Disagree" equal to 1. The higher the points, the more positive the participants' AtC, indicating approval towards cheating, and likewise, the lower the points, the more negative their AtC, indicating disapproval. The eight selected items in the present study were modified to adjust the L2 learning context. These items produced .86 Cronbach's Alpha coefficient and .86 McDonald's omega coefficient, indicating high internal reliability. Furthermore, the data about absenteeism were obtained from the participants' total absences in class, whilst the data on the L2 achievement were taken from the participants' final grades in class obtained from the course secretary upon the participants' approval. The final grades were the cumulative grades from several progress assessments obtained during the second semester of the 2021/2022 academic year.

3.2 Research Setting and Participants

The setting of the present study was online General English (GE) classes at a private university in Java, Indonesia. GE classes were obligatory non-credited matriculation classes for learners from non-English departments at the university. There were three GE levels, Levels 1, 2, and 3. Depending on learners' language levels assessed through a placement test at the time of their registration at the university, learners were placed at a certain GE level. Only after passing GE Level 3 could they take the English for Academic Purposes class in their respective departments. At the time of data collection, some 500 learners were enrolling in the GE classes, with the majority being in Level 3. These GE classes typically had various communicative and collaborative activities, and the assessments were mainly in the form of group projects such as making video blogs, doing role-plays, writing infographics of business or project ideas, delivering a project presentation, as well as making business plan videos

and videos raising awareness about specific issues. The classes were conducted once a week for a total of 16 meetings in a semester for each level. Unless scheduled for certain assignment submissions, meetings were conducted synchronously through Zoom platform for a maximum of 75 minutes each.

The participants of this study were 164 English as L2 learners taking GE Levels 1, 2, and 3. Of these 164 participants, 118 (72%) were taking GE Level 3, 40 (24.4%) were taking GE Level 2, and 6 (3.7%) were taking GE Level 1. Of all participants, 79 (48.2%) were male and 85 (51.8%) were female. The mean of their age was 19.27, with 16 and 22 being the minimum and maximum, respectively. These participants were from eight departments. The data can be observed in Table 1.

Table 1. Participants' departments.

Department	Number of Participants	Percentage
Management	54	32.9
Informatics	33	20.1
Architecture	24	14.6
Accounting	23	14
Medical	10	6.1
Biology	9	5.5
Information System	6	3.7
Product Design	5	3
Total	164	100.0

At the time of data collection, these participants resided in various islands or regions in Indonesia, and the data could be observed in Table 2.

Table 2. Participants' domiciles.

Domiciles	Number of Participants	Percentage
Java	124	75.6
Nusa Tenggara	11	6.7
Sumatera	10	6.1
Kalimantan	8	4.9
Papua	5	3.0
Sulawesi	3	1.8
Bali	1	.6
Other islands/regions	2	1.2
Total	164	100.0

3.3 Ethical Consideration

The present study adhered to several principles of research ethics. First, autonomy, respecting the participants' rights to voluntarily participate in the study (Israel & Hay, 2006), was maintained through the use of a consent form in the first part of the online questionnaire. The consent form detailed the objectives of the study and the expectations from the participants if they agreed to participate. One hundred and one of the 164 survey participants indicated their disagreement to be invited to possible follow-up interviews, and this indicated that participation was voluntary (Oliver, 2003). Furthermore, monetary rewards were given to some selected participants, indicating the implementation of the beneficence principle (Beauchamp, 2008).

3.4   Data Collection and Analysis

Before collecting the data, a permission letter was sent to the Head of the Language Centre, the organizer of the GE classes, to conduct research in the GE classes. After the permission was granted, the data were collected online for three weeks, from May 9 up to May 27, 2022, with the help of the GE class teachers. The GE teachers distributed the link to the Google Form questionnaire in their respective class WhatsApp groups. The obtained data were downloaded in an Excel file and moved to SPSS 25. The data on gender were recorded as a nominal variable where "0" signified female and "1" signified male. The participants' total absences and their final grades in their respective GE classes were obtained from the course secretary at the end of the semester per the participants' approval in the questionnaire. These data were recorded to SPSS 25. After all the necessary data were obtained and the AtC, absenteeism, and L2 achievement variables were found to be normally distributed *(p > .05)*, we analyzed the SPSS data per the research questions. To answer the first research question on L2 learners' attitudes towards cheating, descriptive statistics were employed to obtain findings in the form of means and percentages. To answer the second research question on the extent to which three variables, namely learners' AtC, absenteeism, and gender, influenced their L2 achievement, multiple regression formula was employed. As gender is a nominal variable, when it was found that learners' gender significantly influenced their L2 achievement, an independent sample t-test formula would be executed to assess female and male learners' differences in L2 achievement. The sequence of data collection and analysis can be seen in Figure 1.
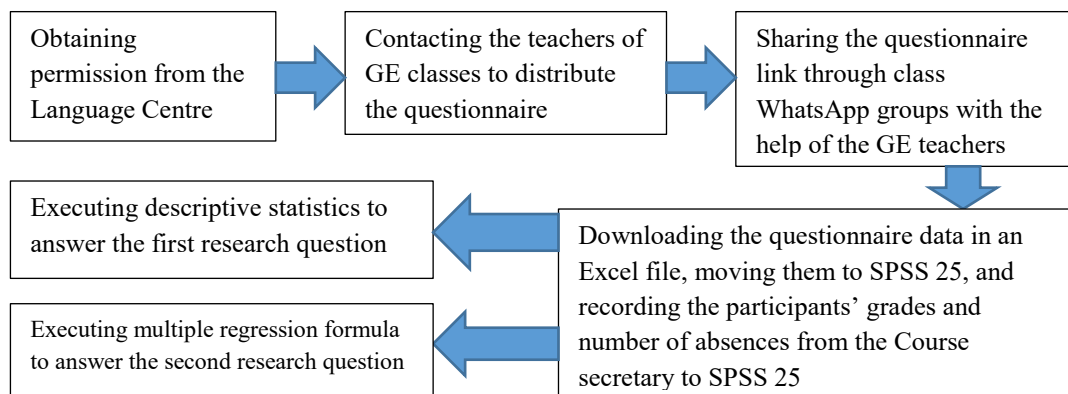

Figure 1. The sequence of data collection and analysis.

4.   RESULTS

4.1   L2 learners' Attitudes towards Cheating (AtC)

The present study found that the composite mean score of the participants' AtC from the eight questionnaire items was 16.46, with the minimum being eight and the maximum being 35 *(SD=5.45)*. This indicates the average mean score of 2.06 for all the questionnaire items, suggesting that the participants generally had negative attitudes towards cheating. The more detailed findings on each item can be observed in Table 3.

Table 3. Learners' attitudes towards cheating.

No	Statements	Mean Scores	*SD*	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
1.	I will cheat in English class if it seems that everyone else is cheating.	1.98	.91	.6	12.2	58.5	28.7
2.	I will cheat in English class to avoid bad grades or failing the English class.	1.97	.88	1.2	9.8	62.8	26.2
3.	Helping someone else cheat is not as bad as cheating myself.	1.82	.84	.6	7.9	56.1	35.4
4.	If a good friend asks me to cheat for them in English class, I will not be able to say no.	1.96	.86	1.8	7.9	64.6	25.6
5.	I will cheat in English class if the teacher gives too many course materials.	2.31	1.11	2.4	22.6	53.7	21.3
6.	I will cheat in English class if the course materials seem to be useless.	2.07	.98	1.2	14.6	58.5	25.6
7.	I will cheat in English class if I do not have time to study or work on a certain assignment.	2.40	1.16	.6	30.5	46.3	22.6
8.	I will cheat in English class to avoid failing people around me if I fail the English class.	1.95	.89	1.2	9.8	60.4	28.7

4.2 The Influence of Learner's AtC, Absenteeism, and Gender to L2 Achievement

The dependent variable, learners' L2 achievement, was regressed on three independent variables, namely learners' AtC, absenteeism, and gender. The ANOVA results and the model summary can be seen in Table 4 and Table 5 respectively.

Table 4. ANOVA results with L2 achievement as the dependent variable.

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	17365.771	3	5788.590	28.039	.000[b]
	Residual	33032.177	160	206.451		
	Total	50397.947	163			
a. Dependent Variable: L2 achievement						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Learners' AtC, Learners' absenteeism						

Table 5. The model summary of the multiple regression.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.587[a]	.345	.332	14.36841	1.683
a. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Learners' AtC, Learners' absenteeism					
b. Dependent Variable: L2 achievement					

Table 4 shows that overall, the three independent variables, namely learners' AtC, absenteeism, and gender, significantly influenced learners' L2 achievement, $F(3,160) = 28.04, p < .001$. Moreover, from Table 5, it was found that the $R^2 = .345$. This indicated that the model explained 34.5% of the total variance in L2 achievement.

Beta coefficients were further assessed to ascertain the influence of each of the three variables on L2 achievement. The results can be observed in Table 6.

Table 6. Coefficients with L2 achievement as the dependent variable.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**		
1	(Constant)	96.200	4.477		21.489	.000
	Learners' AtC	.079	.216	.025	.367	.714
	Learners' absenteeism	-6.587	.978	-.458	-6.732	.000
	Gender	-9.285	2.395	-.265	-3.877	.000
a. Dependent Variable: L2 achievement						

Several main findings can be drawn from Table 6. First, learners' AtC did not significantly influence their L2 achievement, *B =.08, t = 37, p = .71*. Second, learners' absenteeism significantly influenced their L2 achievement, *B = -6.59, t = -6.73, p < .001*. Based on the beta coefficient, the direction was negative, suggesting that as learners had more absences, they had lower L2 achievement. Furthermore, the study also found that learners' gender significantly influenced their L2 achievement, *B = -9.29, t = -3.88, p < .001*. As gender is a nominal variable, not ordinal, that can be ranked from high to low, the negative beta coefficient was disregarded, and an independent sample t-test formula was performed to further assess female and male learners' L2 achievement. The results can be observed in Table 7.

Table 7. Results of independent sample T-test of female and male learners' L2 achievement.

	Female (N=85)		Male (N=79)		T-test	Sig.
	M	**SD**	**M**	**SD**	**T**	**p**
L2 achievement	85.25	11.81	71.37	19.9	5.48	.001

As seen in Table 7, it was found that female learners significantly outperformed their male counterparts. Whilst the female learners' composite mean score was 85.25 *(SD = 11.81),* the mean score for the male learners was 71.37 *(SD = 19.9).*

5.   DISCUSSION

5.1   L2 learners' Attitudes towards Cheating (AtC)

The present study found that the participants generally had negative attitudes towards cheating (disapproval), evidenced by the cumulative mean score of 2.06 on a scale of 1-5. This finding suggests that the learner participants were generally unlikely to cheat in GE classes. This finding was in line with a study by Daif-Allah and Alsamani (2013) in Saudi Arabia, which reported that learners with a cheating tendency were a minority. Further discussion on the findings of the present study could be elaborated on the results of each questionnaire item, as seen in Table 3.

Questionnaire items 1, 3, and 4 were about cheating behaviors affected by peers or classmates. Only 8.5% (14) up to 12.8% (21) of the 164 participants reported they would likely cheat due to factors related to peers. This finding contrasted with a study in the Philippines by Diego (2017), who reported cheating practices as widespread among high school learners during examinations. In general education, Boysen (2007) reiterated that a positive classroom environment makes learners cheat less. Regarding this, the GE classes may generally and to a certain extent have this quality, such as employing highly communicative and collaborative activities and project assessments, such as making infographics and videos, instead of doing some multiple-choice exams. As there may not be clear-cut right or wrong in completing such assessments, learners may not feel the need to find a 'shortcut' to obtain good grades. Besides, there was little room to cheat in such open-ended assessments (Michael & Williams, 2013).

Furthermore, items 2 and 8 were about cheating behaviors to avoid negative outcomes. Around 11% (18) of the 164 participants reported they wanted to cheat to avoid unfavorable outcomes such as getting bad grades, failing the class, and failing people around them. Some participants of the quantitative study by Daif-Allah and Alsamani (2013) also reported that they cheated due to parental expectations to perform well academically and fear of failure. In this case, some learners who saw a discrepancy between their ability and expected performance could resort to cheating as a shortcut out of desperation or lack of motivation.

Next, items 5 and 6 were related to cheating behaviors affected by class instruction. Compared to other items, these two items produced relatively higher mean scores (2.31 and 2.07, respectively). 15.8% up to 25% of the participants reported that they may cheat due to instructional factors, perceived irrelevance of materials, and being given too many materials. A study by Farah (2021) reported that being given exam materials not previously discussed in class could trigger learners to cheat. Besides, in a study focusing on the demotivation phenomenon among learners from non-English departments, Subekti (2020b) also found that learners seemed to second-prioritize English classes and may see English classes as remotely relevant to their immediate academic needs. The findings of these three studies suggest that the perceived relevance and usefulness of materials are crucial for learners to be sufficiently motivated to invest more time to learn them instead of resorting to cheating.

Finally, item 7 produced a mean score of 2.40, the highest of all. 31.1% (51) of the participants reported that they would cheat in their English classes if they did not have time to study or work on a specific assignment. This finding was expected because a lack of time management was also reported as a contributing factor to

cheating (Daif-Allah & Alsamani, 2013; Doro, 2014; Muluk et al., 2021; Silfiani et al., 2018). Though the issue of learners' lack of time management could be multi-faceted, the position of GE classes as non-credited courses could be one of the reasons why some of the learner participants did not invest enough time in studying for the class. They may prioritize their credited content classes and do little to strive in GE classes. Rather than investing more time in studying, they may resort to cheating as a cognitive shortcut (Anderman & Murdock, 2007).

5.2 The Influence of Learner's AtC, Absenteeism, and Gender to L2 Achievement

The finding suggesting that learners' AtC did not influence L2 achievement was in contrast with the reiterations of the negative influence of cheating on L2 learning. This finding was different from that of a study by Rahimi and Goli (2016) in Iran, where learners with higher grades tended to agree that the instances mentioned in the questionnaire were dishonest behaviors or cheating. As suggested in their study, Rahmi and Goli (2016) asserted that learners who disapproved of cheating behaviors tended to get ahead in class. Nevertheless, the present study reported that learner participants' AtC barely affected their L2 achievement. In this case, the assessment types used in GE classes, such as role-play and video-making assessments, may not be prone to cheating behaviors. Some writing assessments, such as making infographics, could be susceptible to copy-paste cheating; however, there may have been scoring components that could affect their grades, such as the oral presentations of the infographics, even if cheating did happen.

Furthermore, the finding that learners' absenteeism negatively influenced L2 achievement may be a step further than the findings of several relevant studies primarily using correlations (Al-Mekhlafi, 2016; Ancheta et al., 2021; Karabiyik, 2016). They generally reported a negative association between absences and L2 achievement or a positive association between attendance and L2 achievement. Al-Mekhlafi (2016), for example, reported a moderate positive relationship between Yemeni L2 learners' attendance and grades, indicating that learners who were absent fewer tended to score higher $(r (133) = .44, p < .01)$. A similar finding was also reported by Karabiyik (2016) in Turkiye $(r (242) = .51, p < .05)$. Similarly, a study in Oman by Ancheta et al. (2021) reported a moderate negative correlation between learners' absences and their grades $(r (308) = -.52, p < .05)$, indicating the more absences, the lower the grades. In this respect, furthermore, the finding of the present study could serve as an affirmation of the reiteration of the debilitating effect of absenteeism, whose empirical investigations were previously confined within a plethora of correlational studies.

Moreover, though the present study did not specifically investigate the predictive power of learners' absenteeism on L2 achievement, the overall model consisting of the three factors in this study could predict 34.5% of the total variance in L2 achievement, with L2 absenteeism being one of the two significant predictors. In line with this finding, a quantitative study in Iran by Rajabnejad et al. (2017) reported that learners' absences could only predict 8% of the total variance of learners' L2 achievement. In this case, the predictive power of absenteeism could vary from one context to another depending on several factors, including the different nature of the English classes, how compact the materials in each meeting, and the assessment types. These factors would

likely determine the extent to which skipping classes affects learners' understanding of materials or contents, eventually affecting their L2 achievements.

Furthermore, the study found that gender significantly influenced L2 achievement, with female learners outperforming their male counterparts. Whilst the overall mean score of female learners' L2 achievement was 85.25, their male students' mean score of L2 achievement was only 71.37. This finding contrasts with previous studies reporting that male learners outperformed their female counterparts (Menuta & Wubshet, 2019; Wucherer & Reiterer, 2018) or no gender difference in L2 achievement (Agudo, 2022). The context-specific factors in each of these studies may play a part in affecting the results. For example, the GE class in the present study was conducted online with synchronous *Zoom* sessions. Then, to obtain the grades, regarded as their L2 achievement in the present study, learners were required to complete several tasks and projects, such as making video blogs, doing role-plays, writing infographics of business ideas and presenting them, and showcasing multiple language skills. In comparison, studies by Wucherer and Reiterer (2018) in Austria and Agudo (2022) in Spain used different measures of L2 achievement, the first being pronunciation whilst the second being L2 listening. Furthermore, the study by Menuta and Wubshet (2019) was conducted in Ethiopian Senior High School contexts, which may be very different from the Indonesian undergraduate context of the present study. This includes different modes of typical instructions and types of tasks comprising their grades.

Despite the conflicting findings of this study with those of several previous studies on gender, it is essential to note that the finding of this study was in line with the findings of a study in Oman by Al-Saadi (2020). He reported that female learners outperformed their male counterparts in L2 writing. Considering that some of the tasks in GE class necessitated learners to write, for example, writing scripts for role-plays and writing infographics, the similarity of findings between this study and that of Al-Saadi (2020) may have found a certain degree of common ground. However, it is relatively premature to state that female learners outperformed their male counterparts in L2 writing considering the present study did not specifically investigate learners' L2 writing achievement, probably warranting further studies investigating skill-specific L2 achievement in multiple learning contexts.

The present study has several implications for L2 instruction. In light of the findings on the negative influence of learners' absenteeism on L2 achievement, teachers need to motivate learners to attend classes, for example, through instruction with the right amount of challenge in each meeting. Furthermore, though generally, the participants reported negative attitudes towards cheating, several participants, albeit the minority, reported that being given too many materials and their perceived uselessness of the materials may instill cheating. This could inform teachers of the importance of giving materials suitable to learners' needs and levels of proficiency. The findings also highlight the importance of facilitating learners' awareness of avoiding cheating behaviors regardless of the unfavorable situations learners may face. This could also be enhanced through such class policies as giving a zero mark to any works substantially resembling the works of others without proper citations, as checked in plagiarism checker applications. Besides, in the case of English classes taken by learners from non-English departments, relevant people beyond L2 classroom settings, such as the deans, the heads of departments, and the lecturers at which faculties learners study, should play a part. They can motivate learners to invest more

effort in L2 learning and avoid potentially detrimental practices such as absenteeism and cheating.

Generally, the present study contributes to providing a general overview of the influence of the combination of L2 learners' AtC, absenteeism, and gender on their L2 achievement at the undergraduate level, which may be rare considering the scarcity of such study in L2 literature which, as far as these variables were concerned, was somewhat overwhelmed with correlation studies. Besides, this study may also pave the way for further studies on the possible influence between combinations of various learner factors on L2 achievement in the Indonesian context.

6.   CONCLUSION

In summary, the study reported the following main findings. Learners' AtC was reported to be low, suggesting the participants' negative attitude towards cheating. The combination of learners' AtC, absenteeism, and gender significantly influenced learners' L2 achievement, accounting for 34.5% of the total variance in L2 achievement. However, only learners' absenteeism and gender were found to be significant predictors. Absenteeism significantly influenced L2 achievement negatively, and female learners outperformed their male counterparts.

This study has several limitations. First, as the study employed a survey as the only method of data collection, all the data were based on the participants' self-report. Secondly, among some 500 learners enrolling in the GE classes, only 164 participated in the study, indicating a low participation rate. This could be due to some learners' inattentiveness toward information posted in the *WhatsApp* groups of their GE classes and their lack of interest in filling out an online questionnaire. Last, as the study involved three different levels of GE, the participants' final grades were also obtained from three different assessment components. This, to a certain extent, may have affected the findings of the present study in the second research question.

Furthermore, there were three suggestions for future studies. In future studies on gender and L2 achievement, L2 achievement could be categorized more specifically into achievement in four language skills to better map the general forte of L2 learners based on their gender. Furthermore, though the finding suggested that learners' AtC barely influenced L2 achievement, considering there have not been many previous studies investigating this issue, the finding should be treated as an exploration and interpreted with caution. Further quantitative investigations involving more participants may still be necessary. Moreover, it could be worthwhile to conduct qualitative studies involving macro-level policymakers as stakeholders of language management, teachers, and L2 learners on the issue of cheating and absenteeism in English classes with characteristics similar to GE classes. Such studies could better capture the complexities of these issues from multiple perspectives.

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