Jupiter: Jurnal Pendidikan Terapan
Homepage : https://journal.diginus.id/jupiter/index
Email: jurnalpendidikanterapan@gmail.com

p-ISSN : 2985-3214; e-ISSN : 2964-3171
Jupiter, Vol. 4, No. 2, May 2026
Page 157-169

Short-Video Addiction and Academic Dishonesty Among University Students: The Mediating Role of Fear of Failure and Self-Regulation Factors

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Submitted: March 18, 2026
Final Revised: March 26, 2026
Accepted: April 08, 2026
Published: May 30, 2026

Keywords:
Academic Dishonesty; Emotion Regulation; Fear of Failure; Short-Video Addiction; Time Management.

ABSTRACT

Purpose: Academic dishonesty is a critical concern in higher education, increasingly exacerbated by digital distractions like short-video platforms. Recent evidence indicates 77% of students report fear of failure as a primary reason for cheating. Yet, the interplay between digital addiction, psychological self-regulation, and integrity remains underexplored in contemporary environments. **Purpose:** This study investigates relationships between short-video addiction, emotion regulation difficulties, time management, fear of failure, and academic dishonesty among university students. **Methods:** A quantitative cross-sectional approach involved 336 undergraduates from Universitas Negeri Makassar. Data were collected via online survey using validated scales and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS 4 software. **Findings:** Short-video addiction significantly predicted academic dishonesty, with emotion regulation difficulties emerging as a significant indirect predictor. Fear of failure mediated these relationships, transforming psychological distress into unethical behavior. Unexpectedly, time management skills indirectly positively predicted dishonesty, contrary to hypotheses, suggesting an overcommitment trap among high-achievers facing performance pressure rather than protection against misconduct. **Research Implications:** Universities should prioritize reducing psychological stigma around failure and promoting digital wellbeing over punitive measures. Interventions targeting emotion coping may reduce misconduct. Educators should emphasize mastery learning over competitive grading. Additionally, policy reviews regarding student overcommitment are necessary. **Conclusion:** Short-video addiction directly drives unethical behavior, while emotion dysregulation operates indirectly through failure anxiety. Uniquely, time management skills indirectly correlate with increased dishonesty, indicating organization may serve grade preservation rather than learning integrity. Interventions must address psychological distress and digital wellbeing to foster honesty. **Originality:** This study uniquely integrates short-video addiction with self-regulation factors through fear of failure, uncovering a paradoxical time management role in Indonesian higher education contexts.

Doi: https://doi.org/10.61255/jupiter.v4i2.872

INTRODUCTION

Academic dishonesty has emerged as a critical concern in higher education institutions worldwide, with profound implications for educational quality, institutional integrity, and student development (Sozon et al., 2024; Stone, 2023). The proliferation of digital technologies and social media platforms has introduced new dimensions to this phenomenon, particularly among university students who navigate increasingly complex academic and social environments (J. Li et al., 2025). Recent empirical evidence indicates that fear of failure represents one of the most predominant motivations for engaging in academic dishonesty, with approximately 77% of students reporting this as their primary reason for cheating behaviors in contemporary studies (Ajit et al., 2024; Arellano et al., 2024). This alarming statistic underscores the psychological underpinnings of academic misconduct and highlights the need for comprehensive investigation into the antecedent factors that contribute to such behaviors. The contemporary university landscape presents students with unprecedented challenges, including heightened academic competition, performance pressure, and the pervasive influence of digital distractions (Barbayannis et al., 2022; Martin et al., 2025). Among these digital distractions, short-form video platforms such as TikTok have gained substantial traction among university populations. Research indicates that short-form video is associated

with reduced academic engagement and increased academic anxiety among undergraduates, which may negatively affect academic performance (G. Li et al., 2024; Miedzobrodzka et al., 2024). Consequently, navigating these stressors requires effective coping mechanisms, highlighting the pivotal role of emotion regulation in determining student behavioral responses.

Emotion regulation difficulties have been identified as a transdiagnostic risk factor that underpins various psychological disorders and maladaptive behaviors among university students (Laure et al., 2024; Mohsenabadi et al., 2025). According to Gross's Process Model, emotion regulation involves modifying emotion reactions to suit individual goals, with effective regulation strategies associated with enhanced academic performance and mental health outcomes (Martínez-Priego et al., 2024; Thomson et al., 2025). Conversely, difficulties in emotion regulation have been linked to increased stress and depression, with adverse effects on academic wellbeing and behavioral choices (Colonnello et al., 2024; Peixoto et al., 2022). Recent research utilizing latent profile analysis identified that approximately 14.5% of university students demonstrate global emotion dysregulation, characterized by significant difficulties in goal-directed behavior, impulse control, and acceptance of emotion responses (Oliveira et al., 2024). Students with emotion regulation difficulties exhibit higher prevalence of internet addiction and repetitive negative thinking, both of which function as maladaptive coping mechanisms associated with reduced subjective wellbeing and academic difficulties (Oliveira et al., 2024; Raposo et al., 2025). Extending this framework to academic integrity, emotion dysregulation may predispose students to academic dishonesty as an avoidance-based coping strategy to mitigate failure-related distress, functioning similarly to other maladaptive behaviors rooted in broader self-regulatory deficits.

Beyond emotion factors, time management skills represent a critical competency for academic success, with poor time management identified as a common precipitating factor for academic misconduct (Aruğaslan, 2024). Research indicates that students who struggle with time management are more likely to experience deadline pressure, leading to increased temptation to engage in cheating behaviors as a last-resort solution. The relationship between time management deficiencies and academic dishonesty has been particularly pronounced in distance education contexts, where self-regulation demands are heightened (Aruğaslan, 2024; Miles et al., 2022). Effective time management enables students to distribute academic workload appropriately, reduce procrastination, and maintain academic integrity under pressure (Aruğaslan, 2024). However, when time management skills are inadequate, students may perceive academic dishonesty as a viable strategy to compensate for poor planning and last-minute preparation (Miles et al., 2022).

Compounding these internal challenges, the contemporary digital environment introduces external distractions that further undermine the self-regulation necessary for academic integrity. The emergence of short-form video platforms has introduced a novel antecedent factor in the relationship between psychological factors and academic outcomes (G. Li et al., 2024; Xie et al., 2023). Short video addiction has significantly altered university students' learning, living, and entertainment habits, exerting negative impacts on sustained attention and academic engagement. Research demonstrates that short video addiction is associated with poorer sustained attention, making it more difficult for students to filter distractions and maintain focus on academic tasks (G. Li et al., 2024). The addictive properties of short video content, characterized by rapid stimulus changes and immediate reward mechanisms, may directly contribute to emotion regulation difficulties and time management challenges (Nguyen et al., 2025). Students with high short video addiction levels demonstrate reduced self-regulated learning strategies, such as impaired emotion management and time management (Ye et al., 2024); given that poor self-regulation is linked to academic dishonesty (Aruğaslan, 2024), this may indirectly increase vulnerability to unethical academic behaviors when facing challenges.

Complementing these internal self-regulation challenges, the contemporary digital landscape introduces external stressors that further undermine students' ability to manage their academic responsibilities effectively. Fear of failure has been identified as a central psychological mechanism linking various antecedent factors to academic dishonesty (Ajit et al., 2024). This finding aligns with broader evidence indicating that fear of failure functions as a mediating psychological mechanism within academic contexts (Cashman et al., 2024). Specifically, this construct encompasses avoidance behaviors in academic domains, wherein students experiencing fear of failure demonstrate reduced academic satisfaction and increased reliance on maladaptive coping strategies (Duru et al., 2024). Research indicates that fear of failure significantly influences academic motivation and engagement, exhibiting both direct and indirect effects on student behavior (Cashman et al., 2024; Tan & Prihadi, 2022). Specifically, this psychological factor serves as a conduit that transforms emotion and behavioral difficulties into actual academic misconduct. This dynamic is exacerbated by lower academic buoyancy among students with elevated fear of failure, compromising their capacity to overcome routine academic setbacks.

Despite substantial research on individual factors contributing to academic dishonesty, several critical gaps remain in the current literature. First, while emotion regulation difficulties have been extensively studied in relation to mental health outcomes, limited research has examined their direct relationship with academic dishonesty among university students (Oliveira et al., 2024; Pereira et al., 2025). Second, although time management skills have been identified as a protective factor against academic misconduct, the mechanisms through which this relationship operates remain inadequately explored (Aruğaslan, 2024). Third, the predictive role of short video

addiction in relation to psychological self-regulation factors represents an emerging area requiring systematic investigation. Current literature has not adequately addressed how short video addiction may directly influence emotion regulation difficulties and time management skills as antecedent factors (T. Li et al., 2025; Zhan & Zhu, 2025). Fourth, while fear of failure has been recognized as a mediator in various academic contexts, comprehensive models integrating multiple antecedent factors through this mediating mechanism remain limited (Cashman et al., 2024; Duru et al., 2024). Finally, while existing research has employed variable-centered approaches, studies often examine these factors in isolation or partial models. Comprehensive path models that simultaneously integrate short video addiction, self-regulation factors, and fear of failure to explain academic dishonesty remain scarce.

This study investigates the relationships between short-video addiction, emotion regulation difficulties, time management skills, fear of failure, and academic dishonesty among university students. Specifically, it proposes an integrated model wherein short-video addiction serves as an exogenous antecedent, while emotion regulation difficulties and time management skills function as mediating variables, and fear of failure acts as a proximal mediator leading to academic dishonesty. To address these gaps, this research employs a comprehensive Structural Equation Modeling approach (SEM-PLS) to simultaneously analyze the direct and indirect pathways between digital distractions, self-regulation factors, and academic integrity. Unlike previous variable-centered approaches that examine factors in isolation, this analytical framework facilitates the examination of fear of failure as a central mediating mechanism, thereby providing a robust test of the proposed model within the Indonesian higher education context. Drawing on this theoretical and empirical evidence, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1a. Short video addiction positively predict academic dishonesty
H1b. Emotion regulation difficulties positively predict academic dishonesty.
H1c. Time management skills negatively predict academic dishonesty.
H2a. Emotion regulation difficulties exert a positive indirect effect on academic dishonesty via fear of failure.
H2b. Time management skills exert a negative indirect effect on academic dishonesty via fear of failure.
H3a. Short video addiction exerts a positive indirect effect on fear of failure via emotion regulation difficulties.
H3b. Short video addiction exerts a positive indirect effect on fear of failure via time management skills.

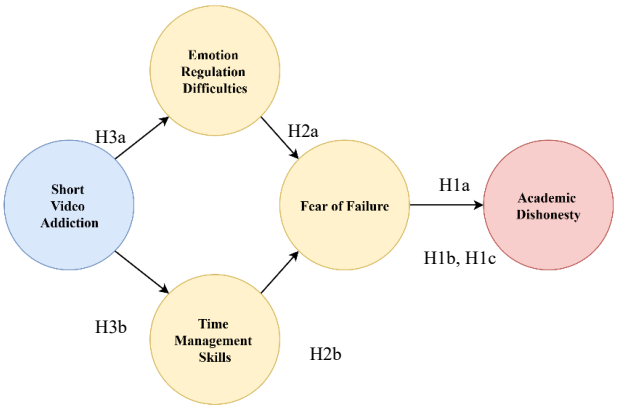

Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the proposed mediation model

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design with a cross-sectional approach to examine the structural relationships between short-video addiction, emotion regulation difficulties, time management skills, fear of failure, and academic dishonesty. Structural Equation Modeling based on Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) was selected as the analytical framework due to its robustness in handling complex mediation models.

Participants and Sampling

The population for this study comprised undergraduate students enrolled at Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia, during the 2024–2025 academic year, with a total of 336 participants. The minimum sample size was determined through an a priori power analysis using G*Power 3.1.9.7 (Faul et al., 2009; Hair et al., 2022). Based on the proposed model, which includes four direct predictors of academic dishonesty, the analysis was configured with a medium effect size ($f^2 = 0.15$), significance level $\alpha = 0.05$, and a statistical power of 0.95 (Cohen, 2013; Faul et al., 2009). This calculation indicated a minimum required sample size of 74 participants. Consequently, the obtained sample of 336 substantially exceeds this threshold, ensuring adequate statistical power for model estimation and hypothesis testing. Participants were selected via proportional stratified random sampling (Lohr, 2021), stratified by academic major and semester to ensure representation across academic exposure levels. Inclusion criteria required active enrollment and regular use of short-form video platforms (e.g., TikTok, Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts).

Table 1. Sociodemographic profile of participants in the current study

Background	Full sample	
	n	%
Gender		
Female	187	55.7
Male	149	44.3
Major		
STEM	234	61.5
Non STEM	102	38.5
Semester		
Second	125	37.2
Fourth	110	32.7
Sixth	95	28.3
Eight	6	1.8
Frequency of Short Video App Usage		
More than once per day	253	75.3
4-6 times per week	71	21.1
2-3 times per week	9	2.7
1-4 times per month	2	0.6
Less than once per month	1	0.3

Note. N = 336

Instrumentation

Data collection employed a structured questionnaire comprising adapted and validated instruments for five primary variables. To ensure methodological parsimony and minimize respondent burden, a concise set of representative items (ranging from 3 to 5 items per construct) was selected based on factor loading criteria. Specifically, short-video addiction was measured using an adapted version of the Short-Video Dependence Scale (SVDS). SVDS scale was modified to enhance contextual relevance for academic populations (Jiang et al., 2025). Emotion regulation difficulties were assessed via an academically-adapted Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS), with items focusing on key dimensions such as frustration with academic difficulties, difficulty refocusing after academic stress, and lacking coping strategies for academic anxiety (Gratz & Roemer, 2004; Macan et al., 1990). Time management skills were evaluated using the Time Management Behavior Scale (TMBS), an academically-adapted instrument, measuring planning, prioritization, effective time use, avoidance of time waste, and consistency (García-Ros & Pérez-González, 2012). Fear of failure was measured using an academically-adapted version of the Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory (PFAI). The adapted scale comprised five dimensions: academic anxiety, fear of disappointing family, social comparison, institutional academic pressure, and concern about future consequences. (Conroy, 2001). Finally, academic dishonesty was assessed using an adapted version of the Academic Dishonesty Scale (ADS). The original scale was modified to include contemporary forms of dishonesty, evaluating cheating behaviors ranging from copying answers and plagiarism to the newly added item on unreferenced use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as ChatGPT (Bashir & Bala, 2018). The survey was administered in the Indonesian language. All scales were translated using a back-translation procedure to ensure linguistic equivalence. The psychometric properties of all instruments were established through prior validation studies. In this study, internal consistency was verified using Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability (CR), while validity was assessed using Average Variance Extracted (AVE) (Hair et al., 2022).

Procedure

Data were collected in March 2025 through an online survey administered using Google Forms. The questionnaire link was distributed to target participants via group chats and direct messages. This mode of dissemination was chosen for its accessibility and familiarity among undergraduate students, thereby improving the likelihood of participation. The survey invitation was accompanied by an introductory statement outlining the purpose of the study, criteria for participation, and assurances of anonymity and confidentiality. Participants were informed that their involvement was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time without consequence. Informed consent was obtained electronically prior to accessing the questionnaire, and no personally identifiable information was collected. To enhance data validity, the survey was configured to prevent multiple submissions and required responses for all items. All form and spreadsheet data were stored securely in cloud-based files that were exclusively accessible to the research team.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was performed using SmartPLS 4, following the two-stage PLS-SEM approach (Hair et al., 2022). The first stage focused on evaluating the measurement model for reliability and validity. This encompassed factor loading analysis, internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability), and convergent

validity assessed through Average Variance Extracted (AVE), where values exceeding 0.50 indicate adequacy. While a threshold of 0.708 is ideal for indicator loadings, loadings between 0.60 and 0.70 were retained consistent with exploratory research guidelines, provided their removal did not improve Composite Reliability or AVE. Conversely, items with factor loadings below 0.60 were excluded to ensure indicator reliability. Discriminant validity was evaluated to ensure each construct is empirically distinct, employing both the Fornell–Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio. According to the Fornell-Larcker criterion, the square root of the AVE for each construct must exceed its correlation with any other construct, while HTMT values below 0.85 confirm discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2022; Henseler et al., 2015).

The second stage involved the assessment of the structural model to examine the hypothesized relationships. This evaluation was conducted via path coefficients, coefficient of determination (R^2), and effect size (f^2). Mediation hypotheses were tested using bootstrapping with 10,000 subsamples to generate t-statistics and confidence intervals for indirect effects. Additionally, the predictive relevance of the model was examined using Stone-Geisser's Q^2 (Hair et al., 2022).

RESULTS

The evaluation of the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was conducted in two distinct stages to ensure methodological rigor. The first stage focused on assessing the validity and reliability of the measurement model. The second stage involved the assessment of the structural model, which included the analysis of regression coefficients, direct and indirect path coefficients, and relevant quality criteria to validate the proposed hypotheses.

Prior to the assessment of the measurement model, common method bias was evaluated using the full collinearity approach. Table 2 presents the VIF values for all constructs. All VIF values ranged from 1.533 to 2.126, well below the recommended threshold of 3.3, confirming that common method bias is not a significant concern.

Table 2. Full collinearity VIF Values

Construct	VIF
Academic Dishonesty (AD)	1.579
Emotion Regulation Difficulties (ERD)	2.126
Fear of Failure (FoF)	1.801
Time Management Skills (TMS)	1.722
Short Video Addiction (SVA)	1.533

Analysis of the Measurement Model

The evaluation of the reflective measurement models encompassed factor loading analysis, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and internal consistency reliability. The measurement model was estimated using the PLS algorithm in SmartPLS version 4, incorporating parameters for each construct. The initial phase involved evaluating the loading of each indicator within its reflecting construct to determine the reliability of the underlying elements.

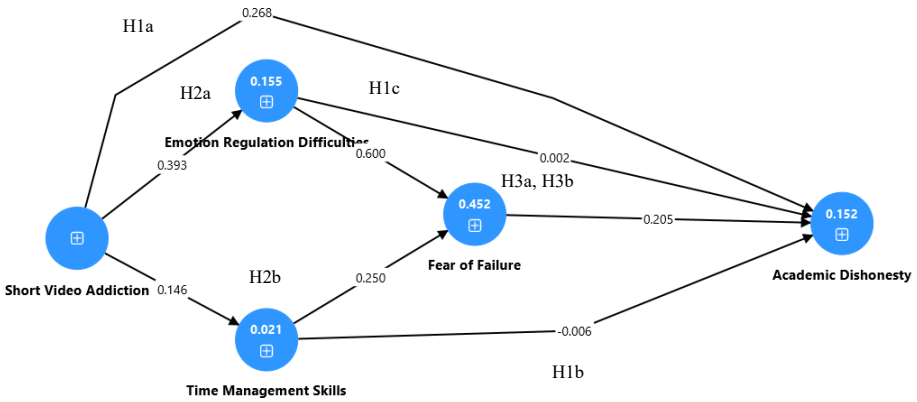

Figure 2. Full structural and measurement model assessment

Convergent validity examines the extent to which indicators within a single construct correlate with one another. This study utilized the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value, where each construct in the measurement model must exceed 0.50 to demonstrate adequacy (Hair et al., 2022). As shown in Table 3, the AVE values ranged from 0.577 to 0.671, and Composite Reliability (CR) values ranged from 0.839 to 0.911. These findings indicate that all constructs satisfy the accepted standards for convergent validity.

H3a, H3b

H2b

Table 3. Indicator Loadings, Internal Consistency, and Convergent Validity Metrics

Item code	Item Description (Constructs)	Loading	Alpha	Rho_A	CR	AVE
Short Video Addiction (SVA)			**0.713**	**0.757**	**0.839**	**0.638**
SVA1	I frequently devote a greater amount of time to consuming short-form video content (e.g., TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts) than I initially intend or plan.	0.874				
SVA2	I frequently engage with short-form video content (e.g., TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts) to an extent that significantly encroaches upon and disrupts my designated study schedule.	0.649				
SVA3	I often perceive a compelling need to engage with short-form video content (e.g., TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts) as a means of mitigating stress or alleviating boredom.	0.852				
Emotion Regulation Difficulties (ERD)			**0.877**	**0.88**	**0.911**	**0.671**
ERD1	I frequently encounter difficulties in effectively regulating stress or anxiety when confronted with challenging academic tasks.	0.791				
ERD2	I often experience feelings of hopelessness or diminished motivation when encountering persistent difficulties in comprehending course materials.	0.856				
ERD3	I experience considerable difficulty in re-establishing cognitive focus following exposure to significant academic pressures, such as high-stakes examinations or demanding assignments.	0.839				
ERD4	I frequently report elevated levels of psychological distress when confronted with an accumulation of academic responsibilities or imminent deadlines.	0.811				
ERD5	I often lack sufficient knowledge of evidence-based strategies to manage anxiety when facing examinations or other high-priority academic obligations.	0.796				
Time Management Skills (TMS)			**0.828**	**0.884**	**0.872**	**0.577**
TMS1	I typically construct a structured schedule to systematically allocate time for academic study and other extracurricular or personal commitments.	0.746				
TMS2	I effectively distribute my available time among academic learning, assignment completion, and supplementary activities to ensure that no responsibilities are unduly deferred or neglected.	0.752				
TMS3	I prioritize tasks according to multiple evaluative criteria, including submission deadlines, task complexity, and concurrent obligations such as organizational involvement, part-time employment, or social engagements.	0.792				
TMS4	I deliberately minimize engagement in non-essential or distracting activities during designated study periods to preserve cognitive focus and task-related efficiency.	0.720				
TMS5	I strive to adhere to the study schedule I have established, while maintaining adaptive flexibility to accommodate unforeseen modifications or contextual adjustments.	0.785				
Fear of Failure (FoF)			**0.831**	**0.832**	**0.881**	**0.596**
FoF1	I frequently experience heightened psychological tension and impaired concentration when confronted with examinations or imminent deadlines for high-stakes academic assignments.	0.709				

Item code	Item Description (Constructs)	Loading	Alpha	Rho_A	CR	AVE
FoF2	I often experience apprehension that unsuccessful academic performance would elicit disappointment from my parents.	0.773				
FoF3	I frequently report feelings of inadequacy and reduced motivational engagement when I perceive myself as academically underperforming relative to my peers.	0.801				
FoF4	I experience significant stress attributable to substantial academic workload, institutional policies, and expectations regarding timely degree completion.	0.807				
FoF5	I frequently harbor concerns that academic setbacks would substantially hinder my ability to achieve long-term personal and professional aspirations.	0.767				
Academic Dishonesty (AD)			**0.756**	**0.818**	**0.857**	**0.667**
AD1	I have, on occasion, viewed or utilized a peer's responses during proctored examinations or in the completion of assessed academic assignments.	0.886				
AD2	I have previously employed unauthorized materials or aids, including personal notes, mobile devices, or other unapproved external resources, during formal examination settings.	0.805				
AD5	I have reproduced written content, conceptual frameworks, or intellectual ideas from external sources, including generative artificial intelligence tools (for example, ChatGPT), without providing appropriate citation or attribution in my submitted academic work.	0.753				

The analysis confirms that discriminant validity has not been violated, as the AVE square root for each construct is consistently higher than its correlation with other constructs. This indicates that respondents can distinguish well between each construct, supporting the discriminant validity of the measurement model. To ensure indicator reliability, items with factor loadings below 0.60 were excluded, yielding a three-item specification for both Short-Video Addiction (SVA4 and SVA5 removed) and Academic Dishonesty (AD3 and AD4 removed).

Table 4. Discriminant validity based on Fornell-Larcker criterion

	AD	ERD	FoF	SVA	TMS
AD	0.817				
ERD	0.234	0.819			
FoF	0.304	0.625	0.772		
SVA	0.250	0.364	0.368	0.799	
TMS	0.097	0.095	0.305	0.253	0.760

Furthermore, discriminant validity was evaluated using the HTMT ratio, with all construct pairs falling below the recommended 0.85 threshold (Table 5). These coefficients indicate minimal inter-construct correlation, preserving each construct's conceptual clarity and minimizing overlap. When combined with the Fornell-Larcker results, these findings robustly confirm that the measurement model satisfies discriminant validity, ensuring the constructs are empirically distinct and accurately measured.

Table 5. Discriminant validity based on HTMT0.85

	AD	ERD	FoF	SVA	TMS
AD					
ERD	0.284				
FoF	0.353	0.720			
SVA	0.343	0.452	0.473		
TMS	0.130	0.122	0.329	0.292	

Analysis of the Structural Model & Hypothesis Testing

Following the measurement model assessment, the structural model was evaluated for predictive power. Table 6 presents the coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), and predictive relevance (Q^2) for all endogenous constructs. All Q^2 values exceeded zero, confirming satisfactory predictive relevance, while R^2 and f^2 indicate variance explained and predictor impact, respectively.

Table 6. Structural Model Assessment: R^2, Q^2, and f^2 Values

Construct	R^2	Q^2	Predictors	f^2
Academic Dishonesty (AD)	0.105	0.052		
Emotion Regulation Difficulties (ERD)	0.130	0.122	ERD → FoF	0.654
Fear of Failure (FoF)	0.448	0.122	ERD → AD	0.001
			FoF → AD	0.032
Time Management Skills (TMS)	0.061	0.052	TMS → FoF	0.111
			TMS → AD	0.000
Short Video Addiction (SVA)			SVA → ERD	0.152
			SVA → AD	0.022
			SVA → TMS	0.068

The structural model was assessed to examine the hypothesized relationships among the constructs. Table 7 presents the path coefficients, including both direct and indirect effects within the model. This analysis illustrates how Short-Video Addiction (SVA), Emotion Regulation Difficulties (ERD), and Time Management Skills (TMS) influence Fear of Failure (FoF) and Academic Dishonesty (AD). The hypothesized path from SVA → AD (H1a) was significant (β = 0.157; T = 2.36; p = 0.018), indicating that short-video addiction positively predicts academic dishonesty. Thus, H1a was supported. The ERD → AD path (H1b) was not significant (β = 0.036; T = 0.382; p = 0.702), therefore H1b was not supported. The path from TMS → AD (H1c) was not significant (β = -0.015; T = 0.23; p = 0.818). Therefore, H1c was not supported. The structural model also confirmed the path from FoF → AD as part of the mediation mechanism, evidenced by the significant indirect effects flowing through FoF.

In addition, the antecedent paths were examined. The relationship between SVA → ERD was supported by significant indirect pathways (H3a: β = 0.05; T = 2.604; p = 0.009), suggesting that variation in Short-Video Addiction explains differences in emotion regulation, which subsequently influence academic dishonesty behavior. However, the SVA → TMS pathway (H3b) was not significant (β = 0.014; T = 1.894; p = 0.058), indicating that time management skills did not serve as a significant mediating pathway. The model's predictive relevance was assessed using R^2 and f^2 values, indicating the proportion of variance explained in the endogenous constructs.

Table 7. Summary of path analysis results

Hypothesis	Path coefficient	T Statistics	p	Bias, 95% Confidence interval	Conclusion
Direct Effect					
SVA→ AD (H1a)	0.157	2.360	0.018	[0.023, 0.285]	Significant, Positive
ERD → AD (H1b)	0.036	0.382	0.702	[-0.141, 0.233]	Not Significant
TMS → AD (H1c)	-0.015	0.230	0.818	[-0.154, 0.106]	Not Significant
Indirect Effect					
ERD → FoF → AD (H2a)	0.137	2.767	0.006	[0.038, 0.233]	Significant, Positive
TMS → FoF → AD (H2b)	0.056	2.346	0.019	[0.014, 0.091]	Significant, Positive
SVA → ERD → FoF → AD (H3a)	0.050	2.604	0.009	[0.015, 0.101]	Significant, Positive
SVA → TMS → FoF → AD (H3b)	0.014	1.894	0.058	[0.003, 0.032]	Not Significant

Note: Short Video Addiction (SVA), Emotion Regulation Difficulties (ERD), Time Management Skills (TMS), Fear of Failure (FoF), Academic Dishonesty (AD)

Hypotheses 2 and 3 examined the mediating role of Fear of Failure. The indirect effect of ERD → FoF → AD (H2a) was significant (β = 0.137; t = 2.767; p = 0.006), indicating that FoF mediates the effect of emotion regulation difficulties on academic dishonesty. Thus, H2a was supported. The indirect effect of TMS → FoF → AD (H2b) was significant (β = 0.056; t = 2.346; p = 0.019), supporting H2b. Similarly, the indirect effects of SVA through ERD (H3a) and TMS (H3b) on FoF were tested. The path SVA → ERD → FoF → AD (H3a) was significant (β = 0.05; t = 2.604; p = 0.009), supporting H3a. The path SVA → TMS → FoF → AD (H3b) was not significant (β = 0.014; t = 1.894; p = 0.058), therefore H3b was not supported.

Overall, the hypothesis testing results are summarized in Table 7. Among the direct predictors, only Short-Video Addiction exhibited a significant direct influence on academic dishonesty (β = 0.157), while Emotion Regulation Difficulties (β = 0.036) and Time Management Skills (β = -0.015) were not significant. Not all hypothesized paths were statistically significant; only H1a, H2a, H2b, and H3a were supported, while H1b, H1c, and H3b were not supported.

DISCUSSION

This study examined the structural relationships between short-video addiction, emotion regulation difficulties, time management skills, fear of failure, and academic dishonesty among university students. The findings provide empirical evidence that short-video addiction is a significant positive predictor of academic dishonesty, both directly and indirectly through the mechanism of fear of failure. However, emotion regulation difficulties and time management skills demonstrated significant indirect effects on academic dishonesty through fear of failure, but not direct effects. These results contribute to the evolving literature on academic integrity in the digital age by highlighting the complex interplay between technological distractions, psychological self-regulation, and performance anxiety (Ajit et al., 2024; G. Li et al., 2024). Importantly, this study extends these global findings into the context of Indonesian higher education, where collectivist cultural pressures may amplify the psychological mechanisms driving misconduct (Zhao et al., 2022).

The positive relationship between short-video addiction and academic dishonesty confirms growing concerns regarding the impact of fragmented media consumption on academic behavior. This finding aligns with recent evidence suggesting that excessive engagement with short-form video platforms is associated with reduced academic engagement and heightened academic anxiety (G. Li et al., 2024; Miedzobrodzka et al., 2024). In the Indonesian context, where smartphone penetration among students is nearly universal, the ubiquity of platforms like TikTok creates a constant environment of distraction. The mechanism underlying this relationship may involve the erosion of sustained attention and the reinforcement of instant gratification preferences (Chen et al., 2023). Students accustomed to the rapid stimulus changes of short-video content may find prolonged academic tasks aversive, leading them to seek shortcuts through dishonest means to achieve results without the requisite cognitive effort (Aruğaslan, 2024; Xie et al., 2023). Furthermore, the time displaced by addictive video consumption reduces opportunities for adequate study preparation, thereby increasing pressure near deadlines and triggering cheating behaviors as a coping response (Aruğaslan, 2024; G. Li et al., 2024). This displacement effect is particularly critical in rigorous academic programs where the workload demands consistent engagement, making the loss of study time due to addiction more consequential.

Emotion regulation difficulties were identified as a significant indirect predictor of academic dishonesty through fear of failure in this model. This supports the conceptualization of academic misconduct as a maladaptive avoidance strategy used to mitigate distress associated with academic challenges (Yin et al., 2025). Students who lack effective strategies to manage frustration, anxiety, and hopelessness when facing difficult coursework are more likely to engage in dishonest behaviors to escape the negative emotion consequences of potential failure (Miles et al., 2022; Tindall et al., 2021). This is particularly relevant in cultures where academic success is closely tied to family honor and future socioeconomic mobility, intensifying the emotion stakes of failure (Guo et al., 2022). This finding extends the transdiagnostic risk factor model of emotion dysregulation to the domain of academic integrity, suggesting that interventions aimed at improving emotion coping skills may inadvertently reduce unethical academic behaviors. Universities in Indonesia should recognize that cheating is often not a moral deficit but a symptom of emotion overwhelm, requiring psychological support rather than purely punitive measures.

Contrary to the initial hypothesis, time management skills did not exhibit a significant direct relationship with academic dishonesty. While existing literature typically posits time management as a protective factor, the current results suggest a more nuanced dynamic within this specific population (Aruğaslan, 2024). However, time management skills demonstrated significant indirect effects through fear of failure, suggesting that organized students may still experience performance anxiety that drives dishonest behavior. In Indonesian universities, high-achieving students are often expected to participate actively in student organizations and community service alongside their coursework, creating an ‘overcommitment trap’. For these high-functioning students, academic dishonesty may be perceived not as a result of poor planning, but as a strategic efficiency measure to maintain performance across multiple domains (Miller et al., 2017). Additionally, high levels of organization often correlate with perfectionism, which can exacerbate fear of failure. When strict scheduling does not guarantee the desired perfect outcome, these students may resort to dishonesty to protect their academic standing (Miles et al., 2022; Yin et al., 2025). This suggests a "dark side" of self-regulation where organization serves the goal of grade preservation rather than learning integrity. This anomaly highlights the need for future research to explore the boundary conditions under which time management skills may fail to protect against misconduct.

The mediating role of fear of failure provides a critical psychological explanation for how antecedent factors translate into unethical behavior. The results indicate that fear of failure acts as a conduit, transforming emotion dysregulation and digital distractions into actual academic misconduct (Duru et al., 2024; Martin et al., 2025; Tindall et al., 2021). Students who are highly afraid of disappointing parents, falling behind peers, or compromising future prospects exhibit a lower tolerance for academic risk (Abercrombie, Bang, et al., 2022; Abercrombie, Carbonneau, et al., 2022). In the Indonesian cultural context, the concept of "malu" (shame) associated with failing to meet familial expectations can significantly heighten this fear, making cheating a defensive act to preserve social face. In this context, cheating is not merely a moral failure but a defensive mechanism to avoid the psychological threat of failure. The significant indirect effects through fear of failure

suggest that interventions focusing solely on technical skills, such as time management or study habits, may be insufficient if the underlying anxiety and fear of negative evaluation are not addressed (Feng et al., 2025). Reducing the stigma of failure is therefore as important as teaching study skills.

These findings offer critical implications for higher education. Universities must integrate digital literacy programs addressing social media addiction's psychological impacts, including attention management and digital wellbeing modules. Student support services should prioritize emotion regulation training and anxiety management alongside traditional advising. Given the non-significant direct relationship between time management and dishonesty, educators should reduce performance pressure by emphasizing mastery learning over competitive grading. Viewing failure as a learning opportunity rather than catastrophic may reduce cheating motivation. Administrators must review policies encouraging overcommitment among high-performing students to ensure extracurricular expectations do not compromise academic integrity.

Several limitations include the cross-sectional design precluding causal inferences; longitudinal studies are needed to track behavioral development. Reliance on self-reported data may introduce social desirability bias, despite anonymity measures. Social media distribution prevented response rate calculation, limiting bias assessment. Sampling from a single Indonesian public university may limit generalizability to other cultural or institutional contexts. Furthermore, the model accounts for only a modest proportion of variance in academic dishonesty, indicating that predictive claims regarding this behavior should be interpreted with appropriate caution.

Future research should therefore replicate this model across private universities and diverse Indonesian islands to account for cultural and institutional heterogeneity. Additionally, employing mixed-method approaches would be valuable to qualitatively explore why students with strong time management skills still engage in academic dishonesty. Incorporating moderating variables such as institutional integrity climate or peer influence, alongside targeted qualitative interviews, could uncover the specific rationalizations used by highly organized students when deciding to cheat. This integrated approach would further illuminate the paradoxical role of self-regulation in academic misconduct and strengthen the explanatory power of future models.

CONCLUSION

This study elucidated the structural pathways linking short-video addiction, self-regulation factors, fear of failure, and academic dishonesty among university students within the Indonesian higher education context. The findings substantiate that short-video addiction serves as a significant exogenous antecedent to academic dishonesty, operating both directly and indirectly through psychological mechanisms. Central to this model is the mediating role of fear of failure, which functions as a critical conduit transforming emotion regulation difficulties and digital distractions into unethical academic behaviors. Specifically, while emotion regulation difficulties did not predict dishonesty directly, their influence was fully mediated by failure anxiety, suggesting that cheating often serves as a maladaptive avoidance strategy to mitigate psychological distress rather than merely a lapse in moral judgment.

A particularly novel contribution of this research lies in the paradoxical role of time management skills. Contrary to conventional expectations, time management did not exhibit a protective direct effect; instead, it influenced dishonesty indirectly through fear of failure. This suggests an 'overcommitment trap' wherein high organizational competency is utilized for grade preservation rather than learning integrity, particularly among high-achieving students facing multifaceted performance pressures. These results imply that academic integrity interventions must extend beyond technical skill-building to address underlying psychological distress and digital wellbeing. Universities are encouraged to reduce performance pressure and the stigma associated with failure, fostering environments that prioritize mastery learning over competitive grading. Furthermore, digital literacy programs should address the cognitive impacts of short-form media consumption on sustained attention and impulse control.

Despite these insights, several limitations warrant acknowledgment. The cross-sectional design precludes definitive causal inferences, and the reliance on self-reported data may introduce social desirability bias. Additionally, sampling from a single public university limits the generalizability of findings across diverse institutional and cultural contexts. Future research should employ longitudinal designs to track the developmental trajectory of these behaviors and utilize mixed-method approaches to qualitatively explore the rationalizations used by organized students when engaging in misconduct. Replicating this model across private institutions and different cultural settings would further validate the robustness of the proposed framework. Ultimately, fostering academic integrity requires a holistic approach that integrates psychological support, digital wellbeing initiatives, and policy reforms to alleviate the systemic pressures driving student misconduct.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors would like to express their gratitude to Universitas Negeri Makassar for providing institutional support and research facilities. The authors also thank all undergraduate students who participated voluntarily in this study. No specific funding was received for this research.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

AS, conceptualization, methodology, data collection, formal analysis, writing, original draft preparation. ML, validation, supervision, writing, review and editing, project administration. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

AI DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The authors utilized Qwen AI during the preparation of this work for language refinement and structural editing of the manuscript. After using the tool, the authors thoroughly reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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