



ACADEMIC INTEGRITY - AN INDICATOR FOR QUALITY AUGMENTATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Traditionally Colleges and Universities were predictable not only to develop students' academic abilities and expand their knowledge but also to instill values, to impart standards of conduct and to mould character. Now they are called upon to respond to an apparent increase in ethical misconduct. Academic dishonesty in educational institutions is a cause for concern at present. It is a fundamental issue for the academic integrity of higher education institutions. Academic dishonesty is an unscrupulous as well as illegal behaviour. Cheating and plagiarism rank first within the behaviour of academic dishonesty. Ethics begin with each individual's inner feelings, which later transform into their behaviour. Academicians should confront dishonesty, concern students fairly and promote moral character development and the transfer of ethical knowledge.

KEYWORDS : Universities, academic dishonesty, academic integrity and higher education

Introduction

Higher education occupies a vital position in the education system of a nation as it affects the overall progress of a country. The Hartog Committee (1929) Report suggested for enhancement of quality and standards at the University level education in India. The development of higher education in India after independence has been remarkable. The National Policy on Education (1968) demanded qualitative improvement at higher education level. India is subsequent to China and the United States in terms of the size of higher education. Grades are essential measures in society, significantly impact the lives of students; therefore students are under pressure (Mc Cabe et al.,2006; Norton et al.,2001) and are extremely concerned about the grades they receive (Choi, 2010, Mc Cabe et al.,2006; Wilkerson, 2009).

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty can be defined as "students' attempt to present others' academic work as their own." (Jensen, Arnett, Feldman & Cauffman, 2002). Academic dishonesty refers to any kind of cheating which occurs in relation to a formal academic exercise. It is prevalent in all levels of education. Academic Dishonesty is any action or attempted action that may result in creating an unfair academic advantage for oneself or an unfair academic advantage or disadvantage for any other member or members of the academic community. It encompasses all behaviour; involving the misrepresentation of academic achievement; or undermining the core values (honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility) of academic integrity; or breaching academic integrity.

Prevalence of Academic Dishonesty

One of the key roles of institutions of higher education is to build an environment conducive to learning that will generate graduates who not only are greatly skilled and technically competent but also exhibit high standards of honesty, ethical responsibility and commitment to serve their relevant profession and society. The Academic dishonesty is an indicator of undesirable character, deliberate dishonesty and is the subversion of the truth. In the digital epoch, promoting and building academic culture and integrity is one of the big challenges for education. This generation has provoked new forms of academic dishonest behaviours and practices by using the innovative types of technology.

Rationale of the study

Roberts (2002) pointed out that students have a propensity to engage in unethical behaviour because of time constraints, laziness, uncaring instructors, peer pressure, fear of failure, poor role model, influences of scholarship and technology which allow it to be done at ease. Academic dishonesty seems to occur more frequently when others are engaging in said behaviour. Thus it is significant to set high standards, make expectations clear, demonstrate ethical

behaviour, and punish students' unethical behaviour, all of which may be necessary to alter the attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control of students regarding academic dishonesty. Academicians should confront dishonesty, concern students fairly and encourage moral character development and the transfer of ethical knowledge. Graves (2008) recognized that academic dishonesty is a critical academic disease as its powerful impact is on the quality of education and the reliability of assessment. This deviant behaviour, not only bring the harms to students, but also affect the reputation of the educational institutions. Staats et al (2009) noted that academic dishonesty is a type of deviant behaviour and it will impact detrimental on development of character, hurt others and endanger the academic integrity of the particular institution. Students who involve in such deviant behaviour place their individual benefit over that of others and put the institution's integrity at risk.

Forms of Academic Dishonesty

Plagiarism

According to Random House Compact Unabridged Dictionary, 1995, Plagiarism is defined as the " use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work". In academia, it is seen as the adoption or reproduction of original intellectual creations (such as concepts, ideas, methods, pieces of information or expressions, etc) of another author (person, organization, community or other type of authors, including anonymous authors) without due acknowledgment. Plagiarism is defined as the use of intellectual material produced by another person without acknowledging its source. Carrol (2002) defines plagiarism as "passing off someone else's work, whether intentionally, for your own benefit." Colnerud and Rosander (2009) defines plagiarism as " using parts, or the whole, of a text written by another person without acknowledgment; submitting the same paper or parts of it for credit in more than one course, and falsification of information"(p.506). Park (2003)states that "plagiarism involves literary theft, stealing (by copying) the words or ideas of someone else and passing them off as one's own without crediting the source"(p.472). Williams, Nathanson, and Paulhus (2010) gives a technology- laced definition of "any nonzero percentage detected by Turnitin (after screening)" (p.294).

Cheating

Cheating can take the type of crib notes, looking over someone's shoulder in the exam, or any illicit sharing of information between students about the exam or exercise. Many convoluted methods of cheating have been developed over the years, for example, students have been documented hiding notes in the bathroom toilet tank, in the brims of their baseball caps, or up their sleeves. Moreover, the storing of information in graphing calculators, pagers, cell phones,

and other electronic devices has cropped up since the information revolution began. While students have long underhandedly scanned the tests of those seated near them, some students actively attempt to aid those who are trying to cheat. Methods of secretly signaling the right answer to friends are quite diverse, ranging from coded sneezes or pencil tapping to high-pitched noises beyond the hearing range of most teachers, some students have been known to use more elaborate means, such as using a system of repetitive body signals like hand movements or foot jerking to distribute answers.

Bribery

Bribery is an act of giving money or gift giving that alters the behaviour of the recipient. Bribery constitutes a crime and is defined by Black's Law Dictionary as the offering, giving, receiving, or soliciting of any item of value to influence the actions of an official or another person in charge of a public or legal duty. Bribery takes on two forms: Bribing someone for an academic advantage, or accepting such a bribe (i.e. a student offers a professor money, goods, or services in exchange for a passing grade, or a professor accepts this bribe). Using an academic advantage as a bribe (i.e. a professor offers a student a passing grade in exchange for money, goods, or services, or a student accepts this bribe).

Deception

Deception is providing false information to a teacher or instructor concerning a formal academic exercise. This type of academic dishonesty is often considered more obvious than other forms of dishonesty, and otherwise – honest students sometimes engage in this type of dishonesty without considering themselves cheaters. It is also at times done by students who have failed to complete an assignment, to avoid responsibility for doing so.

Fabrication

Fabrication is the falsification of data, information, or citations in any formal academic exercise. This includes making up citations to back up arguments or inventing quotations. It includes data falsification, in which false claims are made about research performed, including selective submitting of results to exclude inconvenient data to generating bogus data. Bibliographical references are often fabricated, especially when a certain minimum number of references is required or considered sufficient for the particular kind of paper.

Impersonation

Impersonation is a form of cheating whereby a different person than the student assigned an assignment or exam completes it. Different from regular cheating the academic work is totally 'outsourced' to any other person or organization, usually for pay. It is assuming a student's identity with intent to provide an advantage for the student.

Professorial misconduct

Professorial misconduct includes improper grading of student's papers and oral exams, grade fraud, deliberate negligence towards cheating or assistance in cheating. This can be done for reasons of personal prejudice towards students' favouritism or a particular viewpoint intellectual dishonesty, for a bribe, or to perk up the teacher's own perceived performance by increasing the passing rate. It is still occasionally done for matters of ego or to acquire some sort of favours.

Sabotage

Sabotage is when a student or professor prevent others from completing their work. This includes cutting pages out of library books, deleting data from classmate's computer or otherwise intentionally disrupting the experiments of others. Sabotage is usually found in highly competitive, cutthroat environments, such as at extremely elite institutions where class rankings are highly prized. Poor behaviour and the low level disruption of other students' learning, however, are extremely common in all educational settings. Some librarians have noted that important

articles- required reading for key courses- are frequently missing from bound journals- sliced out with razor blades, scalpels, or other sharp blades.

Developing a sense of academic integrity among the students

Academic integrity is based upon a number of principles. The teacher has to train and motivate the students to

- Take accountability for their own efforts and studies
- Respect the views of others, even though they do not be of the same mind with them
- Value the rights of others to work and study within the learning community
- Acknowledge the work of others, wherever it has contributed to their own studies, research or publications
- Make sure that the individual's involvement to group work is respected honestly
- Support others to perform with academic integrity
- Follow the ethical requirements and professional standards appropriate to the discipline
- Evade actions which would give an unfair advantage over others
- Ensure that the results of research or experimental data are presented honestly

The following are the necessary steps that has to be taken by the teachers to prevent Academic dishonesty. The teacher should

- Comply with the assessment methods which make academic dishonesty more difficult and doing course projects under examination conditions
- Discuss what kinds of assistance are acceptable for writing papers
- Share conceptions of intellectual property and to what extent ideas expressed in a paper must be the students own
- Provide guidelines for peer editing
- In the syllabus and for assignment provide information about the institution's definition of plagiarism
- Make students aware of services that facilitate teachers to resolve what proportion of a paper matches content written by others
- Provide examples and resources that enable the students for the citation and reference used in the course
- Refer students to campus resources that provide suitable assistance for paper writing
- Discuss appropriate behaviour for students' participating in study groups
- Announce whether or not students are allowed to work together on homework assignments and take- home examinations
- Discuss the implications of sharing test questions and answers with other students who have not yet taken the exam
- Create new exams every term and administer multiple forms to students sitting in propinquity of one another or students in different course sections
- State any attendance policies in the course syllabus, along with mechanisms for making up work when absence is unavoidable
- Elucidate the importance of attending classes
- Ensure the content discussed in class extends beyond that is provided in the course text
- Engage students in classroom activities that necessitate the application of higher- order thinking skills
- Educate students by providing exercises which aid students to notify reference giving practices, improving writing skills in order to make students feel confident about their writing abilities
- Promote ethical behaviour by incorporating courses on research ethics
- Collect anti- plagiarism statements signed by the students before they submit the course projects

Conclusion

Education has become an imperative factor of every individual for

endurance in this competitive era. Teachers who are in a key position to elevate qualified individuals should possess the preferred characteristics to be able to execute their duty. Prevention is best to reduce academic dishonesty. The primary focus should be on promoting writing and analytical skills, emphasizing the academic and economic benefits of proper techniques and good ethics, providing technological tools to train students to quote, reference and paraphrase properly. Faculty members who are more proactive about educating students about academic integrity issues are also likely to feel comfortable reporting incidents of academic dishonesty because they will be confident that they have provided clear guidelines for students to follow. Faculty members who take no notice of incidents of cheating are devaluing the efforts of students who are honest in demonstrating their acquisition of knowledge. Educating students about academic honesty is a significant function in higher education and in preparing students to be honest. Commitment to high standards demands honourable behaviour that creates a climate of academic honesty and integrity. Unethical actions may lead to success but ethical actions will lead to a longer lasting success – Sami El Okaily.

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