A pilot study on students’ and lecturers’ perspective on plagiarism in higher professional education in Flanders

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Plagiarism in higher education

- Cases of student plagiarism (Dee & Jacob, 2012)
- Guidelines introduced – not straightforward (Bretag, 2013)
- No legal term + no legal framework in Belgium
- Students + staff not familiar with complexity
Plagiarism in higher education

- Internet – easier copy paste culture

- European project ‘Impact of policies for plagiarism in HE across Europe’ (Glendinning, 2013):
  - Belgian HEIs aware of software tools detecting plagiarism
Plagiarism in higher education

• Staff in HEIs come across plagiarism in career (Park, 2004)
• But no priority
Present research

• Research Questions:
  - Awareness-students?
  - Tolerance-students/lecturers?
  - Dealing with plagiarism-lecturers?
Definition plagiarism

• Education and Examination Regulations:

“[…] irregularity… copying other people’s work literally or slightly modified without adequately citing the source. This also applies to copying one’s own work without citing sources” (art. 128)
Present research

• Participants

115 lecturers and 524 students

6 bachelor programmes:
  - Teacher training
  - Social work
  - Health care
  - School of arts
  - Business studies

• Method: Internet questionnaire
Present research

• Questionnaire lecturers:
  ▪ defining/describing
  ▪ knowledge on Education and Examination Regulations
  ▪ actions undertaken
  ▪ attitude towards HEI’s policy

• Questionnaire students:
  ▪ defining/describing
  ▪ scenarios on perceived justice of fraudulent situations
  ▪ perception undertaken actions by lecturers
  ▪ whether + how action undertaken to avoid plagiarism own work
Present research
Results questionnaire lecturers

- Participants: 31 men and 84 women
- Educational program:
  - Health care: 6
  - Business studies: 49
  - Teacher training: 29
  - Social work: 19
  - Technology: 12
Present research
Results questionnaire lecturers

• Knowledge on Education and Examination Regulations:
  ▪ 21% necessary knowledge <> 17% no knowledge on content
  ▪ 62% moderate knowledge
Present research
Results questionnaire lecturers
Present research
Results questionnaire lecturers

Actions undertaken by staff members' against plagiarism

[Chart showing actions taken against plagiarism for five statements labeled Statement 1 to Statement 5. The chart indicates the proportion of responses with 'no' and 'yes' to each statement.]
Present research
Results questionnaire students

- Participants: 524 students
- Educational program:
  - School of arts: 11
  - Health care: 40
  - Business studies: 249
  - Teacher training: 123
  - Social work: 74
  - Technology: 27
Present research

Results questionnaire students

• 3 fraudulent situations (7-point scale: totally unjust - totally just)
Present research
Results questionnaire students
Present research
Results questionnaire students

• Describing plagiarism: 6 statements– mean for further analyses

• Sequential Anova on GLM:
  ▪ plagiarism description as response variable
  ▪ educational program as explanatory variable

  educational program significant impact on description plagiarism

• Which program is responsible?
Present research
Results questionnaire students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational program</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health Care</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>[4.01;4.59]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>[3.94;4.36]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>[3.75;4.45]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Arts</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>[3.45;4.55]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Training</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>[3.71;4.04]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Studies</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>[3.73;3.96]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Present research
Results questionnaire students

• Sequential Anova on GLM:
  ▪ plagiarism description as response variable
  ▪ study duration as explanatory variable

  significant lineair effect of how long students take to finish their program on description
Present research

Results questionnaire students

- Actions undertaken by lecturers - 4 statements (7-point scale: totally disagree - totally agree)
  - $M = 3.87$  $SD = 1.23$

- Sequential Anova on GLM:
  - perceived actions undertaken by lecturers as response variable
  - educational program as explanatory variable

  a significant relation
### Present research

#### Results questionnaire students

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<td>4.52</td>
<td>[4.06;4.97]</td>
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<td>Business Studies</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>[3.89;4.19]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Training</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>[3.62;4.05]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Arts</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>[2.88;4.31]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3.57</td>
<td>[3.19;3.94]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>[3.12;3.67]</td>
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Present research
Results questionnaire students

• Actions undertaken to avoid plagiarism in own work:
  
  ▪ Use in HEI of Turnitin
  
  ▪ Only 21% students is aware of its purpose
  
  ▪ Active use of Turnitin (those who know it): 38% already used it
  
  ▪ 14 students (13%) indicated to have adjusted their work based on Turnitin results
Discussion and conclusion

• HEI provides description of plagiarism – awareness students lacks

• Majority of lecturers indicated having notions of description, < 25% states having detailed knowledge on articles on plagiarism

• Lecturers have more restrictive definition than students
Discussion and conclusion

• work to be done to familiarize staff
• currently: not a priority in institutional culture
• possibly: management & staff threatened by confronting departments - situation far from optimal + improvement needed
• mindset turned in every HEI, not just Flanders
• give plagiarism necessary attention in educational program:
  ▪ focus on prevention
  ▪ stress out importance of academic integrity = part of policy
Future research

• Pilot study:
  ▪ replicate in other HEIs in Belgium
  ▪ by extension Europe