SOURCES OF (UN)ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR OF STUDENTS

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Abstract: This presentation discusses possible sources of (un)ethical behaviour of students. It is based on the findings of internal academic ethics research conducted in one of the main social science universities in Lithuania. This was the first attempt to investigate academic ethics at the university level in Lithuania. Therefore, the findings are primarily relevant for mapping key challenges and fostering research at the context of the country as well as placing the case of Lithuania among other European countries as a further step of investigation. Qualitative research (conducted during 2016) involved three groups of research participants: bachelor and master level students (7 focus group discussions), doctoral students (6 in-depth interviews), and lecturers (academic personnel) (15 in-depth interviews). The research aimed at covering areas of study process and scientific performance. This presentation focuses on study process and two forms of unethical behaviour—cheating in examination (cribbing) and plagiarism. They were discussed as the main forms of unethical behaviour experienced in the study process by bachelor and master level students as well as lecturers. The aim of the presentation is to reveal potential sources that stimulate students to involve into unethical behaviour or vice versa to refrain from it. Understanding these sources is substantial for shaping environment that discourages unethical behaviour of students and motivates the ethical one. The sources of (un)ethical behaviour revealed in the research relate to the culture and practices of the university (e. g. roles of lecturers; ambiance of students' group; forms of examination, etc.) and beyond it (e. g. general culture in the society; shaping of values, attitudes and practices before entering the university; labour market, etc.). Students stress the role of lecturers in preventing unethical behaviour whereas lecturers emphasize university level support in framing students' behaviour. However, both highlight that clear, transparent and consistently applied procedures of awareness raising, control and sanctions would be highly efficient. Rich qualitative evidence will be presented to elaborate these conclusions.

Key words: Cheating; plagiarism; students; lecturers; university

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