

## ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT IN BACHELOR DEGREE PROGRAMS—AN EMPIRICAL INSIGHT INTO CURRENT STUDENTS' ETHICAL BEHAVIOR

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**Abstract:** Today, academic misconduct and plagiarism are on the spot as never before in Germany. Way beyond academia, such issues became common currency through media. Spectacular cases of scientists who fake data and prominent politicians who plagiarise are repeatedly in the news. In the field of universities, and especially within universities of applied sciences, the problem of methodologically incorrect and deliberately deceptive performing students is in the foreground. Even though examination boards and students develop a growing awareness of these problems, the number of objectionable papers does not decrease.

The present research approach is based upon the assumption that the majority of academic misconduct in the sense of plagiarism or non-consideration of academic citing standards cannot be ascribed to wilfully and knowingly inadequate behaviour of the examined students. To a great degree this research supposes that there is a gap between the awareness of students and their actual behaviour.

In order to highlight selected factors that may influence the quality of scientific papers, three perspectives were analyzed, by following the research question Are bachelor degree students' awareness and position about plagiarism congruent when writing a scientific paper for class?

Research Method: 1. Quantitative, standardized questionnaire—generate data about bachelor degree students' personal awareness of plagiarism and reasons for plagiarism in higher education (303 questionnaires/faculty business and law). 2. Quantitative content analysis—analyze term papers (43 term papers/ faculty business and law). 3. Compare and contrast findings with personal observations and experiences of two professors.

This research approach explores a small cut-out of the entire issue and tries to find out how successful communication is at the moment. In the case of deficient findings, improvement suggestions could be deduced, and more detailed empirical research conducted.

**Key words:** Misconduct, bachelor degree programs, students' ethical behavior

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