

Addressing contract cheating and international practises

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The contract cheating is a problem that affects the society of Western Balkan countries and western countries. Higher education institutions of these countries are facing such phenomena and are making efforts to address it.

Of course, the western countries like for example Germany and England, are more advanced in this regard by taking many appropriate technical, administrative and legal measures to address such problem. Different from these countries, the Western Balkan countries are more at the debate level of addressing such problem.

Therefore, the aim of this article is to present the current situation with regard to the contract cheating in Kosovo as one of the Western Balkan Countries and compare it with western countries in order to identify the best international practices in fighting contract cheating, including better legal solutions. For the purpose of proposing a more successful approach in fighting contract cheating, the following questions will be addressed throughout this research : Is there any legal measure in place by higher education institutions of Kosovo that sanction the contract cheating? Would the new approach based on the practices of western countries decrease these illegal practices? Can the new approach be implementable in Kosovo considering the local circumstances? All these questions will be addressed by analyzing legal documents of the countries under research, reports and previous scientific articles on fighting contract cheating through international practices. In addition, an anonymous survey with students on self-reporting of contract cheating and awareness about the negative effect of contract cheating will be conducted. And, several research papers will be analyzed in order to the access the quality of the work and to detect contract cheating.

Based on the preliminary research, Kosovo higher education institutions have sanctioned plagiarism in general, and right of authorship; however the fight against contract cheating is very superficially regulated on their legal documents (Shala et al., 2019). Considering the practices of other western countries (Newton 2018, Medway et al., 2018, Bretag et al., 2019)., Kosovo higher education institutions lack detailed legal provisions in defining the term contract cheating, prohibiting these illegal practices as well as specific administrative and technical mechanisms that prevent and detect contract cheating (Shala et al., 2019). While in the United Kingdom, students reported themselves contract cheating through anonymous surveys (Medway et al., 2018), self-reporting among Kosovo's students is very limited or unexciting. However, Kosovo media have reported scandals suggest that university students are outsourcing their graduation and post-graduation theses to third

parties (Gazeta Blic 2018). Since 2002, Kosovo higher education institutions asked by Ministry of Education to comply with Bologna process, have started to implement new assessment methods for evaluation of students' work such are written exams, research papers, ect. But these institutions do not have yet the basic infrastructure to support this new way of assessments so as the detect plagiarism of the written work, institutional storage of student's written work neither national storage of thesis (Shala et al. 2018).

Based on the recommendations of the other authors for the western universities, Kosovo higher education institutions should use more "old" methods that use "face to face assessment methods (Bretag 2018). In addition, the Kosovo higher education institutions should amend the legal provisions to define the term "contract cheating" in higher education sector and make this behavior illegal. The digital tool to detect plagiarism is also needed to be in place as soon as possible. The campaign on awareness rising among Kosovar students about the meaning of "contract cheating as well as negative effect to such illegal act for their own futures is very important to be conducted continuously.

Conclusions

The results of this research proves that there is no proper legal base in place in Kosovo higher education institutions that sanction firstly the contract cheating. Therefore, Kosovo higher education institutions have to review the legal, guiding and policy documents on ethics specifically in order to define more concretely the meaning of contract cheating and measures on prohibiting it in order to include international best practices. The change of assessment methods as well as activities of awareness rising among students about the meaning of such illegal act is more than necessary. In this way, the mechanism for preventing and punishing the contract cheating acts will be more efficient.

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