DEVELOPING AN ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY WRITING ASSISTANT FOR K12 SCHOOLS

Özgür Çelik[1], Salim Razı[2]

[1] *Balikesir University, Turkey*
[2] *Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Turkey*

KEY WORDS

academic integrity, academic integrity policy, K12 schools, policy assistant

Academic integrity is a core requirement of teaching, learning, and research (Bretag, 2016). It is essential to build educational activities on the fundamental values of academic integrity (honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage) proposed by the International Center for Academic Integrity (ICAI, 2021). These values can be best maintained by creating a culture of academic integrity throughout the institution. The first step of creating a culture of academic integrity is to develop an institution-specific academic integrity policy because sustainable changes and effective academic integrity strategies can be achieved through designing and implementing academic integrity policies (Morris, 2016). This is especially crucial because students mainly develop their academic identities at the K12 level, and it is essential to do this within a culture of academic integrity. However, writing an academic integrity policy is a challenging process that requires a systematic effort from all stakeholders in the institution. Policy writers may need guidelines to help them develop a practical and functional academic integrity policy.

Within this scope, we set out to develop a tool that guides K12 schools to write their own academic integrity policies. In the first step, we compiled an academic integrity policy corpus comprised of 79 academic integrity policies from K12 schools around the world. In the second step, we conducted a content analysis to identify emerging themes in the policies. We used MAXQDA software for content analysis. As a result of the content analysis, 39 main themes and 151 sub-themes were identified. In the third step, we worked with two academic integrity experts to transform the emerging themes into sections of an academic integrity policy. In the first round, we sent the list of emerging themes and asked them to add, modify, delete, and combine the themes and translate them into sections. In the second round, we created the draft version of the sections in academic integrity policies based on expert feedback and sent them back for the final revision. In this respect, we transformed the themes into sections after a two-round process. In the fourth step, we created another corpus that includes the extracts of each section in the academic integrity policies. Using this corpus, we conducted a secondary content analysis to determine how these sections were written, which phrases were used, and what the main topics were. We utilized the content analysis results to write instructions for each section of the policy. In the end, we created a website that guides policy writers step-by-step and helps them write their own academic integrity policies. We are planning to ensure the validity and reliability of the policy writing assistant in two ways. First, we are going to send the current version of the website to academic integrity researchers to get expert feedback. Second, we are going to test the usability of the website at a high school. Teachers will use the website to write their school's academic integrity policy, and we will get their feedback regarding the writing process. Based on the feedback of experts and teachers, we are going to improve the policy writing assistant. In addition, we are going to present the first working version of the website and the participants of this session will be encouraged to provide feedback about the tool.

Developing an academic integrity policy is not easy and has many dimensions to consider. Therefore, the academic integrity policy writing assistant offers an easy-to-use, systematic and evidence-based tool for K12 schools. With the help of the tool, K12 schools will take the first step to create a culture of academic integrity in their settings.

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