ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND WORKPLACE DISHONESTY. AN OVERVIEW

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ABSTRACT

It is known by many names...unethical behavior in higher education, academic fraud, academic misconduct. It takes many forms...plagiarism, cheating on tests or exams, cybercheating. But all describe the characteristics of the same phenomenon: academic dishonesty. It is met in all societies and in the academic environments since ancient times. The aim of this overview was to analyze the major studies and research having as central points of discussion academic dishonesty and workplace dishonesty. In this respect, a relationship between the two phenomena has been identified. The students who are engaged in unethical behaviours are more likely to behave in such manner also in the workplace.

KEYWORDS: academic dishonesty, workplace dishonesty, honor codes, codes of ethics, plagiarism

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1. INTRODUCTION

"What is the relationship between academic dishonesty and workplace dishonesty? If a student is prone to cheating in college, will that same student be prone to cheating in the workplace?" asked themselves, Nonis and Swift (2001a, p.69).

Some time ago, when reading the papers written by students, we found that some of them were susceptible to questionable behaviors. Among other things, the way the text was edited as well as the bibliographic references made at random, led us to believe this. By checking these materials, we found that the students had inserted in their papers paragraphs and whole pieces from other works and from the internet. These fragments were presented in their own papers without giving credit to the original authors. The interesting fact was that...some of the students were "decent" enough to mention in their references the works and sites from where they had copied the information. We asked ourselves...what part was actually their work? Probably the effort put into "transferring" the information from those books and sites into their own text? It appears so. Certainly, these examples cannot be generalized. But are these behaviors and many others intentionally or unintentionally made? Why are these things happening? In the following, we will try to seek some answers to all this questions and more.

In many colleges and universities around the globe there are rules of conduct and codes of honor (e.g. Princeton University, University of Maryland, The George Washington University, West Point Academy, The College of William and Mary, Purdue University Calumet) (Rujoiu, 2009). They require certain ethical and professional standards that shape the behavior and attitudes of young people who want to gain access to different areas. McCabe and Trevino (1993) showed the significance of the honor codes in the academic environment through a research conducted in several colleges and universities. Some of these had codes of honor, and some not. Thus, it was

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found that cheating behaviors (e.g. test cheating, cheating on written exams) were more common in faculties and colleges that lacked codes of honor. Analyzing the situation of universities in Turkey, Yazici et al. (2011) found that Turkish teachers have an unclear position regarding plagiarism and cheating. Turkish scholars point out that one explanation could be the fact that Turkish universities have not required honor codes, except for two of them: one public and one private. Such educational institutions, many corporations and companies have business and professional codes of conduct under which they and their members operate. But not always the rules of professional coduct are followed.

However, female students are less likely to be dishonest than male students both in the university and on the job (Nonis & Swift, 2001a). Teaching in class about integrity and business ethics is very important in achieving awareness of what is moral and immoral or right and wrong. Students are more responsible for their actions when they are aware of having taken a pledge and signing for it. We can say that these codes of honor defend and support academic integrity. Kidwell (2001, p.46) noted: "When expectations have been clarified, it is also more difficult for students to rationalize or justify cheating. Students may also value the trust and related privileges implied in the codes more than the edge they gain from cheating".

2. THIS THEORETICAL ANALYSIS

We have begun our search with international academic databases such as Taylor & Francis Online, Proquest Central, Ebsco, Springer having as central points keywords such as academic dishonesty and workplace dishonesty. Moreover, other concepts related such as honor codes, codes of ethics, cheating, plagiarism were included in order to have a more precise view of the topic studied. In this respect, we have considered for the present exhaustive analysis peer-reviewed articles, review and opinion papers as well as comparative research papers (national and cross-cultural) from different periods of time. Also, other sources were used (e.g. PhD thesis, research paper, material presented at a conference). In brief, this short overview represents a reflection and an update of the main considerations on academic dishonesty and workplace dishonesty.

The fight against academic dishonesty knows new approaches due to the advanced technology. Our interest in this subject is, in part, because it has been given less attention to the issue of academic dishonesty from the perspective of future implications in the workplace and regarding how workplace dishonesty occurs. We will use in our discussion the terms academic dishonesty and workplace dishonesty referring to unethical and misconduct behaviors which violate the rules and professional codes in university (e.g. test cheating, cheating on written exams, plagiarizing, cybercheating) and to the workplace (e.g. lying, cheating, stealing, using unauthorized materials).

3. ACADEMIC DISHONESTY. A GLOBAL ISSUE

According to Gehring and Pavela (1994, p.5), academic dishonesty is "an intentional act of fraud, in which a student seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization, or uses unauthorized materials or fabricated information in any academic exercise. We also consider academic dishonesty to include forgery of academic documents, intentionally impeding or damaging the academic work of others, or assisting other students in acts of dishonesty." (quoted in Hulsart & McCarthy, 2011, p.92) Linda Krueger (2014, p.77) added that "academic dishonesty includes the misrepresentation of knowledge, of work produced, or of skills performed as authentic by the student in an educational setting."

To be honest or dishonest? It seems that this is the question. During college years, many students believe that there is nothing wrong with obtaining their grades by any type of cheating: cyber

cheating, cheating on tests or exams, plagiarizing from different materials or books. For these, moral and ethical values carry no significance, at least from this point of view.

Promoting academic honesty and integrity must be one of the objectives of any university. According to Lipson (2004/2008) there are three basic principles when we talk about honesty in academic culture: "1) when you say you did the work yourself, you actually did it, 2) when you rely on someone else's work, you cite it. When you use their words, you quote them openly and accurately, and you cite them too, 3) when you present research materials, you present them fairly and truthfully. That's true whether the research involves data, documents, or the writings of other scholars." (Lipson, 2004/2008, p.3) From our point of view, these principles can be applied very well in other professional environments.

Academic misconduct has been the subject of many analyses and research all over the world. The dishonesty behaviors have been studied among high school students as well as among college students (even among doctoral students, see the case of Norway) from countries as the United States (Brown & Choong, 2005; Brown & McInerney, 2008; O'Neill & Pfeiffer, 2011; Youmans, 2011), Canada (Genereux & McLeod, 1995; Black, 1961; Harpp & Hogan, 1993, 1998), Russia (Poltorak, 1995), the United Kingdom (Guo, 2011; Franklyn-Stokes & Newstead, 1995; Mackenzie & Smith, 1995), Sweden (Trost, 2009), Norway (Hofmann et al., 2013), Poland (Curry, 1997) Germany (Rost & Wild, 1990), Croatia (Hrabak et al., 2004), Austria (Hanisch, 1990), Italy (TES, 1996), Romania (Chelcea, 2008; Chelcea et al., 2008; Teodorescu & Andrei, 2009; Rujoiu, 2009), France and Hungary (Orosz, 2009, 2010), Spain and Portugal (Teixeira & Rocha, 2008), Turcia (Yazici et al., 2011), Lebanon (McCabe et al., 2008), Taiwan (Lin & Wen, 2007; Hsiao & Yang, 2011), Palestine (Surkes, 1994), Pakistan (Aslam & Nazir, 2011), Iran (Sohrabi et al., 2011; Nejati et al., 2009), India (Babu et al., 2011; Taylor-Bianco & Deeter-Schmelz, 2007), Korea (Ledesma, 2011), Philippines (Resurreccion, 2012), Singapore (Lim & See, 2001), Barbados (Alleyne & Phillips, 2011), Hong Kong and United States (Chapman & Lupton, 2004), New Zeeland (Lambert et al., 2003) and Australia (Maslen, 1996; Waugh & Godfrey, 1994). For example, in Iran, Nejati et al. (2009) found that female students act more ethically than male students. Thus, "male students have a significantly less ethical behavior in three factors: selfishness, academic cheating and computer ethics" (Nejati et al., 2009, p.277). Also, Swedish students are cheating. Trost (2009) found that the most three dishonest behaviors are: "1) lying about medical or other circumstances to get special consideration by examiners (81%), 2) lying about medical or other circumstances to get an extended deadline or exemption for a piece of work (79%), 3) copying material for coursework from a book or other publication without acknowledging the source (61%)" (Trost, 2009, p.371). In others areas also academic dishonesty is present, like in medicine. In India, Babu et al. (2011, p.759) identified that 75% of medical students from their sample "have given proxy for attendance", a significant percentage (49%) plagiarize from different books or cheated on written exams with the support of their colleagues (74%). Having a sample of 827 medical students from Zagreb University School of Medicine, Hrabak et al. (2004) underlined that 94% "cheated at least once" and 89,1% were "signing in an absent student on a class attendance list." (Hrabak et al., 2004, p.276)

4. CROSS-CULTURAL STUDIES ON ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Comparative studies have been done to show whether there are differences in how students from different countries relate to academic dishonesty and in particular on cheating (Bernardi et al., 2004). For example, researching on a sample of business students from Hong Kong (n=622) and United States (n=443), Chapman and Lupton (2004, p.429) found that 55.4% of American students and 30.2% of those in Hong Kong admitted of having copied in college at least once. American female students were found to be more honest. Regarding the sample of students from Hong Kong, there were no significant differences between how men and women relate to intellectual fraud. In

another research, were studied the business students' perceptions and attitudes in Poland and the United States. Unlike students in the United States (who think that 24% of their colleagues copy on the exams), the Polish students believe that many "of their colleagues (61%) are cheating on exams" (Lupton et al., 2000, p.234). In another study, it was found that Russian students are engaged in more cheating behaviors than American students (Lupton & Chapman, 2002).

Most times when the phenomenon of academic dishonesty is studied, the people investigated are high school students and college students; less, are the professors, academic staff or others instructors. So, we may ask: How academic instructors relate to academic misbehaviors encountered in their universities? In their study, Brown et al. (2010) wanted to find out the view and perception on academic dishonesty of several business school deans in the United States. Interestingly, of those who responded to the questionnaire, only 5,1% believe that the in institutions they lead, academic dishonesty is "a very serious problem" (Brown et al., 2010, p.306). The same scholars show that there is a huge difference in perception between the answers given by the students and teachers of the same schools (in this case, deans). Thus, 78% of deans estimate that the percentage of students engaged in acts of fraud is "fewer than 40%" (Brown et al., 2010). On the other hand, only 6.8% consider that over 60% of students have such a behavior. The researchers explain the major differences between the perceptions of the deans and what more study and research have resulted. Being involved in many administrative and decision-making activities, the dean's position allows only limited participation in classes. Often, the fellow teachers are those who must identify and report academic dishonesty. According to the same authors, "another factor that might explain deans' perceptions of the extent and seriousness of student academic dishonesty is that either there are few complaints being filed and serious disciplinary measures being handed out relevant to the problem or information about these actions is not being communicated up to the dean's level" (Brown et al., 2010, p.306). Thus, to prevent the appearance of unethical behavior among students, teachers must explain from the first day of class academic standards and rules of citation and conduct, as well as different editing techniques. Moreover, the teacher must not be seen as a "cop" always ready to "punish" but as a "mentor" and a model for his students. He also must continuously improve his pedagogy and method of working with students (Howard, 2001).

5. ACADEMIC DISHONESTY IN ROMANIA. WHAT'S NEW?

Academic dishonesty has spread over all educational levels for years (Chelcea, coord. 2008). The studies and research on academic dishonesty are relatively new if we take into consideration only the last two decades (e.g. Chelcea, coord. 2008; Teodorescu & Andrei, 2009; Rujoiu, 2009; Stănescu & Iorga, 2013; Iorga & Sztankovszky, 2013). For example, in Romania, academic dishonesty has been studied in relation to the social emotions of shame and guilt. In the case of senior high school students was found that shame occurs in the situation in which the teacher identified the fraudulent behaviors and "disclosed them to the public" (Rujoiu, 2009, p.59). The reasons for which the Romanian high school students (and by extension even university students) copies do not differ greatly from those identified in the international academic literature: assurance for obtaining high marks and extreme fear of failure, large volume of information, the student's lack of interest for certain courses, teacher tolerance, lack of clear regulation to sanction the intellectual fraud. Regarding the attitude of Romanian students concerning intellectual fraud, Chelcea (2008, pp.268-269) noted that "the academic environment deters students to reject intellectual fraud and makes them not be ashamed and not to feel guilty even if their colleagues know about incriminating evidence. Those who resort to illegal methods only experience emotions of shame and guilt to a small extent, probably because they appreciate that other students practice in one form or another intellectual fraud." Among the reasons for which the Romanian students copy/cheat on exams and plagiarize in their papers are also found: the misunderstanding of what it means to plagiarize, lack of time due to their job, and in some cases, higher ratings providing easier access to the labor market. Another reason may be the negative attitudes towards teachers. We believe that consideration should be given to what some students mention when academic dishonesty is brought up: "If there are teachers who copy/plagiarize, why wouldn't we do it? They are not punished?" The worst forms of intellectual fraud mentioned by Romanian students are "presenting the work of others as their own product", "helping a colleague to pass an examination by fraud" (Chelcea et al., 2008, p.299), cheating on exams and plagiarism of papers. From this point of view, there is no difference between how female students and male students relate to these behaviors (Chelcea et al., 2008, p.299). According to Chelcea (2008, p.264) "depending on the form of academic dishonesty, the processes are becoming increasingly sophisticated [...] However, I believe that we can talk about the following types of processes: a) traditional/modern, b) individual/collective, c) ingenious/foolish, and d) laborious/facile. Undoubtedly, irrespective of types or procedures, intellectual fraud remains fraud and encouraging fraud it should be punished as fraud itself." The sentence "Information on the Internet is an asset to be shared by everyone" seems to be reflected in the case of Romanian students. They feel that taking some information from various sites without mentioning the source is not a serious problem. In the fight against plagiarism from the internet or from other sources, many universities use software packages. However, we believe that moral and professional standards must be the most valuable reasons of each individual in the fight against academic dishonesty.

6. FROM UNIVERSITY TO... THE WORKPLACE: WORKPLACE DISHONESTY

Also, corporations, firms and companies have codes of ethics (or codes of professional conduct, business code). Business ethics, perceptions of business ethics, ethical decision making or the influence of ethical conduct, including from comparative perspective have been studied in different organizational contexts: the United States and China (Gift et al., 2013), United States and Norway (Beekun & Westerman, 2012), United States, Canada and Australia (Wood, 2000), China and Peru (Robertson et al., 2008), Eastern and Southern Africa (Milanzi, 1997), former Soviet Union and Russia (Neimanis, 1997; Apressyan, 1997), Latin America (Arruda, 1997), Canada (McDonald, 1997), New Zeeland (Alam, 1999), Japan (Taka, 1997), China (Chan et al., 2009), India (Chakraborty, 1997), Czech Republic (Bohatá, 1997), Greece (Kavali, 2001), Iran (Mujtaba & Tajaddini, 2011), Spain (Argandona, 1999), and Ireland (O'Dwyer & Madden, 2006). A business code is, according to Kaptein (2004, p.16), "an independent, company-specific policy document which delineates company responsibilities towards stakeholders and/or employee responsibilities." Regarding the codes of ethics, Frankel (1989, p.110) stressed that "[...] A code embodies the collective conscience of a profession and is testimony to the group's recognition of its moral dimension." To what extent do these codes of ethics influence the employee's behavior?

There is a chain of weaknesses in terms of the manifestation of unethical behavior. The individuals who have chosen to be dishonest in high school and college can hardly "rid" from it in the workplace. Many students demonstrate this through their behavior. Harding et al. (2004ab) have investigated academic dishonesty among the engineering undergraduate students and the relationship between these unethical behaviors and misconduct behaviors in the workplace, named "professional dishonesty". For example, they found that the most three frequently "pressures to cheat and to violate workplace policies" (Harding et al., 2004a) are: "not enough time", "grade pressure", "the professor deserved it" as well as "the lack of time, money, or equipment to do job", "wanted to seem better than I was", and "the company deserved it" (Harding et al., 2004a, p.324). Consequently, according to Grover (1993, p.478), "lying, cheating, and stealing are fundamental unethical behaviors that may be conducted in business, and each behavior may differ in its ontogeny."

In corporations and companies as well as in other professional environments, the principles and values that underlie individual and professional development are important in shaping and

promoting an ethical climate. On the other hand, the education provided by the family or school is fundamental (Hosmer, 1988). Studies have shown that business executives compared to other professions are becoming increasingly challenged in terms of ethical violations and ignorance (Stevens & Stevens, 1987). Interestingly, the same thing happens to business students compared to students in other fields. Moreover, there appears to be a connection between dishonest behavior during university and dishonest and unethical behavior at the workplace (Silver & Valentine, 2000; Nonis & Swift, 2001b; Sims, 1993). Thus, there is a high probability that those who adopt dishonest and fraudulent behavior during university years do not forget the old habits at their workplace (Rakowski & Levy, 2007; Newstrom & Ruch, 1976). In a representative sample of 1.051 of American business students (52% males and 48% females, 74% undergraduates and 26% graduates), Nonis and Swift (2001a) have analyzed the possible relationship between academic dishonesty and workplace dishonesty. It has been found that men and especially the younger ones engage more in dishonest behavior, both during university years and in the workplace. The cited authors mentioned that in general "students who believed that dishonest acts are acceptable were more likely to engage in those dishonest acts than were those who believed the dishonest acts were unacceptable, and students who engaged in dishonest behavior in their college classes were more likely to engage in dishonest behavior on the job" (Nonis & Swift, 2001a, p.76). It seems that among the reasons that lead to employee dishonesty are also accumulated frustration at work, lack of personal integrity, the various opportunities that arise over time or the pressure on the individual (Nonis & Swift, 2001a).

The ethical and financial problems of companies like Beech-Nut, E.F. Horton, Solomon Brothers, Enron, Tyco, WorldCom, Global Crossing, Qwest, HealthSouth have led to a lack of confidence and credibility in the international market (Smyth et al., 2009; Sims, 1992). Ludlum and Moskaloinov (2005) examined how Russian students understand and perceive business ethics. The study was conducted after what happened with Enron. Many Russian students also find it risky and difficult to work in U.S. companies considering that they are perceived as "unethical" (Ludlum & Moskaloinov, 2005). The two researchers emphasized that "this represents a serious crisis for American companies wishing to do business in Russia and recruit students from within Russia" (Ludlum & Moskaloinov, 2005, p.161). Using a sample of 786 respondents from three academic institutions, Smyth et al. (2009, p.229) have demonstrated that students from others areas of study are and act "more ethical" than business students. Other significant findings are that female students are engaged in more honest behaviors than males, "and when analyzing the results by class, upper division students are more ethical than lower division students." (Smyth et al., 2009, p.229) Also, in Australia, female business students are more prone to ethical values (Mirshekary et al., 2010). Concerning academic fraud, Resurreccion (2012) indicated that in the sample of surveyed Filipino students, business students do not stand out more than their colleagues in other specialties. Studying the behavior of U.S. and Chinese marketing students regarding academic dishonesty, Rawwas et al. (2004, p.99) noted that "older American and Chinese students were found to have higher ethical standards than younger ones, but male Chinese students exhibited less ethical standards than female students." Romanian business students have different attitudes towards business ethics compared to their colleagues in France. Romanian students are more oriented toward "materialistic values", while the French to "Social Darwinism" (Bageac et al., 2011). The authors concluded: "The responses of Romanian students would focus on 'materialist' values because their pre-adult socialisation took place in a particular national context where living conditions were very difficult. To attain materialist security, they are more focused on the aims than on the means (principles of Machiavellianism)." (Bageac et al., 2011, p.402) French students' attitudes "could be explained by the elitist and selective education system in France (Grandes Ecoles), which is part of the French culture, and particularly important for students" (Bageac et al., 2011, p.402).

7. CONCLUSIONS

As we have seen, academic dishonesty is widespread throughout the world. According to Gillespie (2003, p.30), "academic dishonesty leading to workplace dishonesty has the ability to do harm to members of the society who count on its workers to be productive and honest." In this paper, we insisted on the relationship between academic dishonesty and workplace dishonesty because there is a very high probability that those who adopt misconduct behaviors in college will also do this later at their workplace. Women are less prone to engage in unethical behaviors, perhaps due to socialization as "throughout history, women have been conditioned socially and culturally to be more concerned with obedience to rules and acting morally" (Nonis & Swift, 2001a, p.74). On the other hand, ethics and business ethics courses are very important in college to promote ethical and moral values and principles. When there are no "formal ethical standards" (Elliott et al., 2013) to punish an unethical behavior, issues may arise in order to affect the image of universities: the emergence of ambiguity regarding the type of sanction for plagiarism when there are no clear rules, "the temptation to steal ideas" (Elliott et al., 2013) is high, plagiarism is discovered "accidentally" in the absence of using different methods or software programs (Elliott et al., 2013, p.92). In conclusion, we can give credit to Caldwell (2010) and to his model "in ten steps" in developing and promoting academic integrity: "1) articulation of a clear purpose and mission, 2) orientation and training of faculty, 3) explanation and clarification of current policies, 4) implementation of a realistic process for addressing violations, 5) attainment of student ownership, 6) empowerment of students in education, 7) maintenance of dialogue with stakeholders, 8) refinement of the ethics curriculum, 9) monitored enforcement and documentation of results, and 10) evaluation of outcomes and communication of results." (Caldwell, 2010, pp.5-8)

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