

Academic Integrity as an Educational Planning in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

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ABSTRACT

Educational planning in Kurdistan has been an issue of importance for those who shape the future of the citizens in this region of Iraq. It is about determining the factors which are going to influence the future development of the people of Kurdistan and their culture. Thus, complying with the rest of the academic policies around the world, the foundations of the Kurdish education is expected to be based upon important values and principles which reinforce quality academic learning. Academic integrity among students, lecturers and administrators becomes a significant attribute and, without any doubt, it is involved in the educational planning process. This research paper points out the different aspects of academic integrity, focuses on the necessity of including the issue of academic integrity in educational planning and shows through a field research project how educators in the Region perceive the concept of academic integrity and its practice.

I INTRODUCTION

Academic integrity is the set of the significant values and principles which offer meaning to the overall mission of any institution of higher learning. It is the value system which determines the scientific, individual as well as professional attitude and behaviour of everyone involved in education, primarily faculty members and students; alongside its formal application, academic integrity is about the informal "contract" between faculty and students who both agree to behave in a professional and ethical manner and, of course, share common standards and common perception about excellence.

In the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, the issue of academic integrity among universities has been questioned a lot and most research studies show that there is limited focus on the issue; related with a general absence of social integrity and corruption, academic integrity remains a fundamental priority for educational institutions which are determined to lead education in this area of the world through effective planning.

Academic integrity is connected with other important issues such as academic fraud or academic dishonesty and for years it is a key topic for academic research. Most well-known universities in the world have institutionalized their success by applying strong academic ethics and codes of conduct. Academic integrity and ethics is a fundamental issue concerning the operation and the value system of the colleges and universities around the world for the last ten years at least. Most major well-known institutions of higher learning around the world -such as Georgetown University, Howard University, Cornell University, University of Utah, MIT publicize their philosophy and practice of academic integrity on their websites. Selected of approaches as they are presented on the web are listed below.

Ethical Standards & Code of Conduct is a major issue of the University of Utah: "The University of Utah is an institution with a remarkable history of world-class achievements brought about by the shared vision of many talented individuals. Our successes are well known and acknowledged, providing a solid foundation for future

growth as we build on our potential. As the flagship institution of the Utah State System of Higher Education,

we are committed to the highest professional standards in teaching, research, and community service. It is our collective efforts and stewardship that will allow us to move the University forward. As we move forward, the values and standards embedded in our organizational missions will be subject to scrutiny and challenge. If we are to effectively meet the challenges that await us, it is essential we individually, and collectively, understand the responsibilities each of us has in making a positive contribution to the success of the University of Utah."

Howard University in Washington DC places an emphasis on the issue through the statement by its Board of trustees and the powerful statement of purpose: "It is the policy of the University to conduct itself with the highest degree of integrity and honesty in all of its dealings. This is a responsibility that we share as a University Community. Each Trustee, student, Faculty member, and administrative employee must be bound by this common duty in the pursuit of his or her individual responsibility to the educational objectives of the University

Georgetown University states on the issues of honesty and integrity: "Honesty and integrity are fundamental bonds in a community of people who strive for "serious and sustained discourse" Georgetown University faculty and staff are expected to provide truth, accuracy and objectivity in their work and interactions"

Cornell University (New York) refers to the following clear policy: "Cornell University expects all executive officers, trustees, faculty, staff student employees, and others, when acting on behalf of the university, to maintain the highest standard of ethical conduct"

MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA) mentions the following: "Honesty is the foundation of good academic work. Whether you are working on a problem set, lab report, project or paper, avoid engaging in plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, cheating, or facilitating academic dishonesty"

II HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

In antiquity, books were published by hand-copying. Scholars freely made digests or commentaries on other works, which could contain as much or as little original material as the author desired. There was no standard

system of citation and scholars were a small group who knew and generally trusted each other. This system continued through the middle ages in Europe. Education was in Latin and Greek. Many scholars were monks who lived in monasteries. Since they spent their time in monasteries, they used much of their time copying manuscripts. Other scholars were in urban universities connected to the Roman Catholic Church. Academic dishonesty dates back to the first tests. Scholars note that cheating was prevalent on the Chinese civil service exams thousands of years ago, even when cheating carried the penalty of death for both examinee and examiner. Until the end of the 19th century, there were no specific rules on how to properly cite quotations from others' writings, which may have caused many cases of plagiarism out of ignorance." (W.Cross, Wiley Online library, 2003)

The same practice occurred in the Islamic schools. Islamic students and scholars were also staying at rooms attached to mosques and studied Islamic religion, Islamic Sharia, Arabic language and grammar along with other sciences. Obviously there were no rules regarding hand copying of those materials (Mohammad, 1987, "The Place of Pre-school Education in the Iraqi Educational System" Unpublished Thesis.

During the early 20th century, cheating was a common phenomenon at college campuses in the United States, and was not considered a dishonourable act. It has been estimated that as many as two-thirds of students cheated at some point of their college careers at the turn of the 20th century (enc.wikimedia.com')

The first scholarly studies in the 1960s of academic dishonesty in higher education found that nationally in the U.S., somewhere between 50%-70% of college students had cheated at least once. While nationally, these rates of cheating in the U.S. remain stable today, there are large disparities between different schools, depending on the size, selectivity, and anti-cheating policies of the school. Generally, the smaller and more selective the college, the less cheating occurs there. For instance, the number of students who have engaged in academic dishonesty at small elite liberal arts colleges can be as low as 15%-20%, while cheating at large public universities can be as high as 75%. Moreover, researchers have found that students who attend a school with an honour code are less likely to cheat than students at schools with other ways of enforcing academic integrity.1- As for graduate education, a recent study found that 56% of MBA students admitted cheating, along with 54% of graduate students in engineering, 48% in education, and 45% in law. There is no doubt that there is a serious concern on the rise of academic dishonesty among students in the United States. Justin Pope, an expert on this issue expresses the seriousness of the matter of cheating (Pope, 2007)

A typology of academic misconduct has been devised by Perry (2010). Perry's typology presents a two dimensional model of academic misconduct with one dimension measuring the degree to which rules are understood and the other dimension measuring how closely these rules are followed. According to the typology only those students

who understand the rules but fail to adhere to the rules are classified as 'cheats'

(www.openleft.com/diary 15589/Perry's Typology)

III ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

There are various types of academic misconduct. Among them, plagiarism and cheating on tests are the most common ones. The following is a brief reference to the different forms of academic dishonesty:

(a) **Plagiarism-** Plagiarism, as defined in the 1995 Random House Compact Unabridged Dictionary, is the "use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work." In academia, it is seen more broadly as the adoption or reproduction of original intellectual creations (such as ideas, concepts, pieces of information or expressions, etc.) of another author (person, collective, organization, community or other type of author, including anonymous authors) without acknowledgment, in contexts where originality is acknowledged and rewarded. This can range from borrowing without attribution a particularly apt phrase, to paraphrasing someone else's original idea without citation, to wholesale contract cheating. The modern concept of plagiarism as immoral and originality as an ideal emerged in Europe only in the 18th century, while earlier in centuries, authors and artists were encouraged to "copy the masters as closely as possible" and avoid "unnecessary invention". The 18th century new morals have been institutionalized and enforced prominently in the sectors of academia (including academic science, education, engineering etc.) and journalism, where plagiarism is now considered academic dishonesty and a breach of journalistic ethics, subject to sanctions like expulsion and other severe career damages. Not so in the arts, which have resisted in their long-established tradition of copying as a fundamental practice of the creative process. with plagiarism being still hugely tolerated by 21st century artists. Law making is a professional field which is not structured around the concept of originality and for which plagiarism is less relevant. Plagiarism is not a crime but is disapproved more on the grounds of moral offence It may be a case for civil law if it is so substantial to constitute copyright infringement (Edit lib INDEX, 2012)

During the last ten years, discussions on the subjects of student plagiarism have increased with a major focus of this discussion on the issue of how university students can avoid plagiarism.

(b) **Fabrication-** Fabrication is the falsification of data, information, or citations in any formal academic exercise. This includes making up citations to back up arguments or inventing quotations. Fabrication is very common in the natural sciences, where students sometimes falsify data to make experiments "work". It includes data falsification, in which false claims are made about research performed, including selective submitting of results to exclude inconvenient data to generating bogus data.

Bibliographical references are often fabricated, especially when a certain minimum number of references is required

or considered sufficient for the particular kind of paper. This type of fabrication can range from referring to works whose titles look relevant but which the student did not read, to making up bogus titles and authors.

(c) **Deception**—Deception is providing false information to a teacher/instructor concerning a formal academic exercise. Examples of this include taking more time on a take-home test than is allowed, giving a dishonest excuse when asking for a deadline extension, or falsely claiming to have submitted work. This type of academic misconduct is often considered softer than the more obvious forms of cheating, and otherwise-honest students sometimes engage in this type of dishonesty without considering themselves cheaters. It is also sometimes done by students who have failed to complete an assignment, to avoid responsibility for doing so.

(d) **Sabotage**—It occurs when a student prevents others from completing their work. It includes cutting pages out of library books or disrupting the experiments of others. Sabotage is usually only found in highly competitive environments, where class rankings are highly prized. Poor behaviour and the low level disruption of other students' learning, however, is extremely common in all educational settings. Some medical school librarians have noted that important articles—required reading for specific courses—are frequently missing from bound journals—sliced out with razor blades (Wikipedia)

(e) **Cheating**—The use of crib notes during an examination is typically viewed as cheating. Cheating can take the form of crib notes, looking over someone's shoulder during an exam, or any forbidden sharing of information between students regarding an exam or exercise. Many elaborate methods of cheating have been developed over the years. For instance, students have been documented hiding notes in the bathroom toilet tank, in the brims of their baseball caps, or up their sleeves (Reader's Digest, 2006).

Also, the storing of information in graphing calculators, pagers, cell phones, and other electronic devices has cropped up since the information revolution began. While students have long surreptitiously scanned the tests of those seated near them, some students actively try to aid those who are trying to cheat. Methods of secretly signalling the right answer to friends are quite varied, ranging from coded sneezes or pencil tapping to high-pitched noises beyond the hearing range of most teachers. Some students have been known to use more elaborate means, such as using a system of repetitive body signals like hand movements or foot jerking to distribute answers (i.e. where a tap of the foot could correspond to answer "A", two taps for answer "B", and so on). Cheating differs from most other forms of academic dishonesty, in that people can engage in it without benefiting themselves academically at all. For example, a student who illicitly telegraphed answers to a friend during a test would be cheating, even though the student's own work is in no way affected. Another example of academic dishonesty is a dialogue between students in the same class but in two different time periods, both of which a test is scheduled for that day (Callahan, 2004).

IV PROFESSORIAL MISCONDUCT

Professorial misconduct includes improper grading of students' papers and oral exams, grade fraud, deliberate negligence towards cheating or assistance in cheating. This can be done for reasons of personal bias towards students (favouritism) or a particular viewpoint (intellectual dishonesty), for a bribe, or to improve the teacher's own perceived performance by increasing the passing rate. It is still occasionally done for matters of ego or to procure sexual favours (sexual harassment).

(a) **Impersonation**— Impersonation is a form of cheating whereby a different person than the student assigned an assignment or exam completes it. Unlike in cheating the academic work is totally 'outsourced' to another person or organization, often for money (Bushway, 1977)

(b) **Causes of academic misconduct**— There are a variety of causes of academic misconduct. Researchers have studied the correlation of cheating to personal characteristics, demographics, contextual factors, and methods of punishing misconduct, even stages of moral development.

(c) **Incentives to cheat**—Some scholars believe that there are students who have a pathological urge to cheat. The writer Thomas Mallon noted that many scholars had found plagiarism in Literature to often be perpetrated in a way similar to kleptomania. That is, a psychological disease associated with uncontrollable stealing, even when it is against the interests of the thief. On the other hand, Mallon concludes it is probable that most "cheaters" make a rational choice to commit academic misconduct.

Other experts on the issue, such as Richard Fass put forward the possibility that business scandals in the real world make students believe dishonesty is an acceptable method for achieving success in contemporary society. Academic dishonesty, in this case, would be practice for the real world. For some students, there would be a dichotomy between success and honesty, and their decision is that: "It is not that we love honesty less, but that we love success more." Conversely, other scholars consider that with the recent rise in corporate ethics related dismissals in the business world, this approach to cheating may be losing its appeal, if it ever really had any. Recent studies have indicated that there is no clear link between academic dishonesty and academic success. (Fass, 1986).

Studies show that in the USA, on average one third of grade A students have cheated. And asserts that academic dishonesty acts as a shortcut, so even grade 'A' students might be tempted to cheat. He contends that even if a plagiarized paper receives a relatively low grade, that grade is actually high, given how much time and effort went into the paper. In the study mentioned above (in which students were allowed to bring crib sheets to a test but did not improve their scores), the researcher concluded that the students used the crib notes as alternatives to studying, rather than as complements to studying, and thus spent less time preparing for the exam.

(d) **Teachers-** The federal government of the United States has mandated high-stakes testing as part of the “No Child Left Behind Act”, signed into law in 2002. Schools and teachers are held accountable for the results. According to Steven Levitt and Stephen Dubner, teachers are known to “teach to the test”: while not teaching the actual answers, they teach the questions and similar ones, and they neglect any topic that will not be tested on. Levitt also states that teachers may inflate the results of tests given in their classroom (D. Levitt,2003). Teachers and librarians can have a significant proactive impact on doing honest work. Faculty issues in deterring academic dishonesty. There are limitations to relying on the faculty to police academic dishonesty. One study found that up to 21% of professors have ignored at least one clear cut case of cheating (McCabe,2003). Another study revealed that 40% of professors “never” report cheating, 54% “seldom” report cheating, and that a mere 6% act on all cases of academic misconduct that confront them. A third survey of professors found that while 79% had observed cheating, only 9% had penalized the student (L. McCabe, 2003)

(e) **Demographic and personal causes-** Research has identified a number of demographic characteristics that appear to be important influences on cheating, including age, gender and grade point average Older students, females, and students with higher academic achievement are less likely to cheat, whereas students involved with many extra-curricular activities are more likely to do so. Students involved in extra-curricular activities may be less committed to their studies, or may have more demands on their time, that interfere with their studies, creating a greater incentive to cheat. It has been found that younger students are somewhat more likely to cheat: one study finding the highest incidence of cheating occurs during Sophomore year at college. Although, cheating might be expected to decline with greater moral development, one experiment found that there was no relationship between how a student performed on a morality test and his likelihood of cheating (that is, students at a pre-conventional stage of morality are as likely to cheat as those at a post-conventional stage).

Race, nationality, and class all show little correlation with academic misconduct. There is also no correlation between how religious someone is and the likelihood that that person will cheat. A comparison between students of different religions yielded similar results, although the study did show that Jews tend to cheat less than members of other religions. One of the strongest demographic correlations with academic misconduct in the United States is with language. Students who speak English as a second language have been shown to commit academic dishonesty more and are more likely to be caught than native speakers, since they will often not want to rewrite sources in their own words, fearing that the meaning of the sentence will be lost through poor paraphrasing skills.

(f) **Contextual causes-**Academic misconduct is more easily traced to the academic and social environment of the student than to his or her background. These contextual factors can be as broad as the social milieu at school to as narrow as what instructions a teacher gives before an exam.

Contextual factors that individual teachers can affect often makes the least difference on cheating behavior. A study found that increasing the distance between students taking an exam has little effect on academic misconduct, and that threatening students before an exam with expulsion if they cheat actually promotes cheating behavior. Indeed, increased exam proctoring and other methods of detecting cheating in the classroom are largely ineffective. According to one survey of American college students, while 50% had cheated at least once in the previous six months, and 7% had cheated more than five times in that period, only 2.5% of the cheaters had been caught. As teachers invent more elaborate methods of deterring cheating, students invent even more elaborate methods of cheating (sometimes even treating it as a game), leading to what some teachers call a costly and unwinnable arms race Increased punishment for academic misconduct also has little correlation with cheating behavior. It has been found that students with markedly different perceptions of what the severity of the punishment for cheating were all equally likely to cheat, probably indicating that they thought that increased penalties were immaterial since their cheating would never be discovered. However, if a professor makes clear that he disapproves of cheating, either in the syllabus, in the first class, or at the beginning of a test, academic dishonesty can drop by 12%.Some professors may have little incentive to reduce cheating in their classes below a point that would otherwise be obvious to outside observers, as they are rated by how many research papers they publish and research grants they win for the college, and not by how well they teach

Teachers can, however, accidentally promote cheating behavior. A study found a correlation between how harsh or unfair a professor is perceived as and academic misconduct, since students see cheating as a way of getting back at the teacher. Also, students who see themselves in a competition, such as when the teacher is using a grade curve, are more likely to cheat.

Research has also shown a correlation between goal orientation and the occurrence of academic cheating. Students who perceive their classroom to have high mastery goals are less likely to engage in cheating than those who perceive their classroom to emphasize performance goals. In other words, students who are encouraged to learn for the sake of learning and who exhibit an intrinsic value of education are less likely to cheat than those who are encouraged primarily by grades and other extrinsic rewards.

The most important contextual causes of academic misconduct are often out of individual teachers' hands. One very important factor is time management. One survey reported two- thirds of teachers believed that poor time management was the principal cause of cheating. Often social engagements are to blame. It has been found that there is a strong correlation between extracurricular activities and cheating, especially among athletes, even those on intramural teams. It has also been found that student cheating rates rise significantly the more time students spend playing cards, watching television, or having a few drinks with friends. Relatedly, fraternity or sorority membership is also strongly correlated with academic misconduct(Bernardi, 2004).

One of the most important causes of academic misconduct is the contextual factor of an environment of peer disapproval of cheating, that is, peer pressure. Psychologists note that all people tend to follow the norms of their peer group, which would include norms about academic dishonesty. Thus, students who believe that their peers disapprove of cheating are less likely to cheat. Indeed, multiple studies show that the most decisive factor in a student's decision to cheat is his perception of his peers' relationship with academic dishonesty. For instance, on average 69% of students cheat at colleges with low community disapproval of academic misconduct, whereas only about 23% of students cheat at colleges with strong community disapproval of academic misconduct. Peer pressure works both ways, as a study found that there is a 41% increase in the probability of a student cheating if he or she has seen someone else cheat. However, even if most students strongly disapprove of cheating, there has to be a community in order for those norms to be enforced via peer pressure. For instance, larger schools, which usually have much higher cheating rates than small schools, tend to have a weaker community, being more split up into different peer groups that exert little social pressure on each other. Another measure of a college community, how many students live on campus, further shows a significant relation with a school's cheating rate. Relatedly, many professors argue that smaller classes reduce cheating habits.

- (g) **Ethical causes-** No matter what the demographic or contextual influences are on a student who decides to engage in cheating behaviour, before they can cheat they must overcome their own conscience. This depends both on how strongly someone disapproves of academic dishonesty and what types of justifications the student uses to escape a sense of guilt.

Students who personally do not have a moral problem with academic misconduct can cheat without feeling guilty (Bernardi, 2004).

However, while many students have been taught and have internalized that academic dishonesty is wrong, it has been shown that about a third of students who strongly disapprove of cheating have in fact cheated. People who cheat despite personal disapproval of cheating engage in something called "neutralization", in which a student rationalizes the cheating as being acceptable due to certain circumstances (enc.wikipedia.com).

- (h) **Negative effects of cheating-** Cheating in academia has negative effects on students, on teachers, on individual schools, and on the educational system itself. For instance, students who engage in neutralization to justify cheating, even once, are more likely to engage in cheating in the future, potentially putting them on a road to a life of dishonesty. Studies show that students who are dishonest in class are more likely to engage in fraud and theft on the job when they enter the workplace. Students are also negatively affected by academic dishonesty after graduation. A university diploma is an important document in the labor market. Potential employers use a degree as a representation of a graduate's knowledge and ability. However, due to academic dishonesty, not all

graduates with the same grades actually did the same work or have the same skills. The more students who cheat, getting by without achieving the required skills or learning, the lower the quality of the average graduate of a school, and thus the less employers are willing to pay a new hire from that school. Because of this reason, all students, even those that do not cheat themselves, are negatively affected by academic misconduct.

Academic dishonesty also creates problems for teachers. In economic terms, cheating causes an underproduction of knowledge, where the professor's job is to produce knowledge. Moreover, a case of cheating often will cause emotional distress to faculty members, many considering it to be a personal slight against them or a violation of their trust. Dealing with academic misconduct is often one of the worst parts of a career in education, one survey claiming that 77% of academics agreed with the statement "dealing with a cheating student is one of the most onerous aspects of the job. A professor's job is about producing known.

Academic misconduct usually has a negative effect on a college's reputation, one of the most important assets of any school. An institution plagued by cheating scandals may become less attractive to potential donors and students and especially prospective employers. Alternatively, schools with low levels of academic dishonesty can use their reputation to attract students and employers.

Academic dishonesty undermines the academic world. It interferes with the basic mission of education, the transfer of knowledge, by allowing students to get by without having to master the knowledge. Furthermore, academic dishonesty creates an atmosphere that is not conducive to the learning process, which affects honest students as well. When honest students see cheaters escape detection, it can discourage student morale, as they see the rewards for their work cheapened (Pope, 2007).

V PUNISHING DISHONESTY

Punishments for academic dishonesty vary according to the age of the party involved and the nature of the infraction. In high school, a standard penalty for cheating is a failing grade; in college, it can result in expulsion or dismissal (At the University of Virginia for instance, there are no lesser penalties than dismissal for breaches of the honor code). In rare instances, college professors have been fired when it was discovered that they plagiarized during college or graduate school. All parties involved in the dishonesty—not just the individual whose grade is increased by it—can be punished.

Historically the job of preventing cheating has been given to the teacher. It used to be that in college the professor acted in loco parentis and was able to regulate student behavior as a parent. Thus, professors who discovered cheating could assign essentially any punishment they deemed appropriate. This system often had no recourse by which students could appeal judgments. Generally, proctors were hired to patrol exams. If a case was particularly serious, a dean or other top-level administrator might have been involved. Against this inconsistent and paternalistic system, students at some schools rebelled and

demanded to be treated as adults. Stephen Davis (1992) describes various techniques and determinants on student punishment.

- (a) **Judicial boards-** However, many people doubted the advisability of relying on an abstract notion of honor to prevent academic dishonesty. This doubt has perhaps led to the reality that no more than a quarter of American universities have adopted honor codes. Moreover, many professors could not envisage a student run trial process that treated faculty accusers fairly. In response to these concerns, in the middle of the twentieth century, many schools devised mixed judicial panels composed of both students and faculty. This type of academic integrity system was similar to the traditional faculty control system in that it relied on professors to detect cheating, except in this system cheaters were brought before centralized boards of students and faculty for punishment. By the 1960s over a quarter of American universities had adopted this system of mixed judicial boards. Still, though, over half of American universities continued to use faculty-centred control systems (Bowers, 1964).
- (b) **Student due process rights-** Starting in the 1960s, the U.S. Supreme Court began giving college students more civil liberties such as the right of due process in disciplinary proceedings (Dixon v. Alabama Board of Education, 1961). In Cooper v. Blair (1973), specifically academic misconduct was ruled to require due process, being a disciplinary matter and not an educational matter. The due process-rights of students in academic misconduct cases are not to the same degree as in a court of law. For instance, the student has no right to representation and the burden of proof is not necessarily stringent. In the "General Order on Judicial Standards of Procedure and Substance in Review of Student Discipline in Tax Supported Institutions of Higher Education", (1968) student due process rights were laid out as follows:
 - (i) The student should be given adequate notice in writing of the specific ground or grounds and the nature of the evidence on which the discipline proceedings are based.
 - (ii) The student should be given an opportunity for a hearing in which the disciplinary authority provides a fair opportunity for hearing of the student's position, explanations, or evidence.
 - (iii) No disciplinary action may be taken on grounds which are not supported by any substantial evidence.

These new rules put an end to the old faculty based system of policing academic dishonesty, now students were entitled to an impartial hearing. While schools using the old honour code method or the mixed judicial system were not affected by these decisions, schools using the faculty based system generally instituted systems that relied on a committee of faculty and administrators or a dean to run the academic misconduct hearings.

- (c) **Honour codes-** Donald L. McCabe and Linda Klebe Trevino, two experts in the field of academic dishonesty, have proposed a new way of deterring cheating that has

been implemented in schools such as the University of Maryland. Modified honor codes put students in charge of the judicial hearing process, making it clear that it is the students' responsibility to stop cheating amongst themselves, but at the same time students still have proctored exams and are not allowed to take pledges of good conduct in place of professor oversight. The researchers who advocate this type of code seem to think that the normal honor code is something of a special case that is not applicable to many schools. According to supporters of this system, schools with a large student body, a weak college community, or no history of student self-governance will not be able to support a full honor code. However, while modified honor codes seem to be more effective than faculty or administration run integrity codes of conduct, research shows that schools with modified codes still have higher rates of cheating than schools with full honor codes. Studies show that honor codes are not applicable to all schools (McCabe, Trevino and Butterfield, "Modified Honor Code" 357). Gary Pavele has presented a model of a Model Code in 1997 providing the guidelines of a code which could be applied in educational institutions.

- (d) **Different systems of enforcement-** Research has shown that there is a strong correlation between forms of academic integrity system and levels of cheating at a school. Several studies have found students who attend schools with honour codes are less likely to cheat than students at schools with traditional integrity codes (McCabe and Trevino, "Multi campus investigation", 384). Another study found that only 28% of schools with honour codes have high levels of cheating, whereas 81% of schools with mixed judicial boards have high rates of cheating. Whereas faculty or administration run codes of conduct tend to rely on policing and punishment to deter students from cheating, honour codes tend to rely on and cultivate student senses of honour and group peer pressure to deter academic misconduct. As mentioned above in the section on causes of cheating, increased enforcement or punishment is rarely effective at discouraging cheating, whereas there is a high correlation between peer pressure and academic honesty. The modified honour code attempts to cultivate peer disapproval of cheating while maintaining the traditional proctor system, although critics argue that the proctor system undermines the creation of an atmosphere of student self-policing, reducing the effectiveness of the honour code, possibly explaining why modified honour codes have not been as effective as the original version (McCabe and Trevino, "Multi campus investigation", 1997, p384)..
- (e) **Guarding academic dishonesty-**Historically the job of guarding and preventing cheating has been given to the teacher. It used to be that in college the professor acted as a parent ("Richard Hardy and David Burch, "What Political Science Professors Should Know in Dealing with Academic Dishonesty", Teaching Political Science 9, no. 2 (Fall 1981). It is true that here are limitations to relying on the faculty members of an institution to guard and control academic dishonesty and fraud. Studies show that teachers often either ignore cases of student cheating in examinations or do not report cheating. The reasons for this lack of action focus on the unwillingness to spend time and energy to such cases, reluctance to experience

emotional confrontation, and fear of retaliation by the student; in many cases, faculty members act like that because they are afraid of losing students, of being accused for harassment. There are other reasons as well. Some professors are reluctant to report violations to the appropriate authorities because they believe the punishment to be too harsh.

Some professors may have little incentive to reduce cheating in their classes below a point that would otherwise be obvious to outside observers, as they are rated by how many research papers they publish and research grants they win for the college, and not by how well they teach.

Others do not report academic misconduct because of postmodernist views on cheating. Postmodernism calls into question the very concepts of "authorship" and "originality." From the perspective of cultural studies and historicism, authors themselves are simply constructs of their social surroundings, and thus they simply rewrite already written cultural stories. Moreover, in the field of composition studies, students are being encouraged more and more to do group work and participate in ongoing collective revision. The postmodernist view is that "the concept of intellectual malpractice is of limited epistemological value. Under the ironic gaze of postmodernism, the distinctions between guilt and innocence, integrity and deceit permeating the scandal debates appear irrelevant." However, there is an argument that postmodernism is just moral relativism, therefore cheating is condoned as a valid academic method, even if it is morally and legally wrong. One professor wrote in an article in *The English Journal* that when he peeked in on an unproctored class taking a test and saw several students up and consulting with one another, he decided that they were not cheating, but were using non-traditional techniques and collaborative learning to surmount the obstacles teachers had put in their way. Issues of cultural relativism also affect professors' views on cheating; the standard objection being that "students from certain Middle Eastern, Asian, and African cultures are baffled by the notion that one can 'own' ideas, since their cultures regard words and ideas as the property of all rather than as individual property." Culture and psychology play a significant role in understanding and practicing academic cheating (E. Auderman et al., 2007)

Another issue teachers may have with deterring cheating is that they may decide that it is not their job. The argument that "they are professors, not policemen" is often heard in academic environments. In economic terms, some professors believe they are being paid to provide knowledge and learning and, if the student loses that learning through cheating, he/she is only cheating him/herself out of the money they paid (www.professorbee.com)

VI UNDERSTANDING THE ESSENCE OF INTEGRITY

During a recent training course of university faculty members, run by the researchers, the initial question was "how do you define integrity?" Surprisingly, the given definitions varied among the participants, lecturers in

different departments. It was obvious that educators perceived the issue of integrity in different ways: some views related integrity solely to plagiarism or cheating in examinations, others to the lack of professional attitude within the classroom and others related integrity to teacher-student interpersonal miscommunication. Only few definitions "touched" the issue of integration of values. The difficulty in understanding academic integrity has to do with the realization of the combination of values which determine its texture.

- (a) **Field Research-** The perception of academic integrity among educators

It is known that according to the Code of Ethics for Educators professional educators act with conscientious effort to exemplify the highest ethical standards

The researcher Dr Mohammad Sadik, an academic advisor at Cihan University, a major private university located in North Iraq, run

A field study on academic integrity among professional faculty members. The study focused on how faculty members perceive academic integrity. Prior to this research project, the researcher checked more than fifteen university websites to identify written official policies on academic integrity: none of the institutions had a clear policy on academic ethics and conduct. The questionnaire focused on respondents' perceptions. Among other questions, participants were asked to identify the core values underlying academic integrity, identify the causes of academic dishonesty and suggest methods to strengthen academic integrity within their institution. Interpreting the answers of the questionnaires, the following were determined:

- (i) Faculty members defined academic integrity as a set of significant values which offer meaning to the mission of an academic institution
- (ii) The phenomenon of cheating is not more often appearing in Middle Eastern universities
- (iii) Weak and lazy students have a stronger tendency for cheating Ethics is a fundamental ingredient in defining academic integrity
- (iv) Academic integrity considers mostly educators in higher learning
- (v) Academic integrity appears to be a kind of "contract" between faculty and students who both agree to behave in a professional and ethical manner
- (vi) Lack of specific policies on the matter permit academic dishonesty and fraud to grow
- (vii) The formalization of policies on academic integrity as well as the proper training of faculty and students helps in strengthening academic honesty
- (viii) The majority of institutions lack the application of a specific policy on academic integrity

Analyzing the questions on the "sources" of academic dishonesty and the proposed actions to minimize it, respondents referred to the following:

Sources of the lack of academic integrity include the lack of specific and clear policies and regulations on the matter,

cultural influence which permits academic cheating, lack of training on the importance of integrity among teachers, administrators and students, along with the fact that underpaid faculty is many times apathetic in chasing student cheating.

The proposed solutions to minimize academic dishonesty included the declaration of specific rules and regulations, proper training on the issue, rigid punishment measures for cheaters, more interaction with foreign universities which are more sensitive on this matter, rewarding policies for students who do not cheat, employment of faculty who acquire high professional standards. A quantitative analysis is attached in Appendix 1

This research focuses on determining the perception of academic integrity among faculty members so to understand how an academic code of conduct will be initialized in the near future. There is no doubt that no university in will grow and develop without having a firm policy with commitment towards academic and scientific integrity

It is evident that after the end of the socio-political turbulence and the end of dictatorship in Iraq, a lot of changes have occurred and social values have been influenced. In Middle East, the social integrity is expected to influence the academic one and that is a significant element in most past research projects regarding academic integrity.

The outcome of this research will eventually help academic institutions in the Middle East to accept the value and the benefit of applying academic integrity in all aspects of academic life. Surely, by emphasizing on ethical academic codes, students will add value to their degrees and the sad phenomena of cheating, plagiarism; disciplinary misconduct and dishonesty will eventually diminish. It is noticeable that the researchers found very little reference on academic integrity in the websites of universities operating in Kurdistan, Iraq. Out of 20 universities in the region, only 3 appear to have a policy on academic dishonesty: the American University of Iraq and Ishik University (table 1).

| University | Website | Type of university |
|--------------------------------|--|--------------------|
| Hawler Medical University | www.hawlermu.org | Public |
| University of Duhok | www.uod.ac | Public |
| University of Kurdistan Erbil | www.ukh.ac | Public |
| University of Salahaddin | www.suh-edu.com | Public |
| University of Koya | www.koyauniv.ac | Public |
| University of Soran | www.soranu.com | Public |
| University of Garmian | www.gannianuniv.com | Public |
| University of Sulimania | www.univsu.org | Public |
| University of Zakho | www.uoz-krq.org | Public |
| Komar University -KUST | www.komar.edu | Public |
| Cihan University | www.cihanuniversity.edu.iq | Private |
| Lebanese-French University | mvw.lfo-bmu.net | Private |
| SABIS University | mvw.sabisuniversity.net | Private |
| University of Human Resources | www.hduuniv.com | Private |
| Nawroz University | mvw.nawrozuniversity.com | Private |
| British Royal University Erbil | www.broyalu.net | Private |
| American University of Iraq | www.auiis.edu | Private |
| Ishik University -Erbil | www.iu.ac | Private |
| | | |
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| | | |

Table: 1

Ishik University, the American University of Iraq (AUIS) and Komar University are the only universities whose websites include specific information on academic integrity.

AUIS refers to an Honour Code which "...embodies the honesty and integrity on which academic success is based" We read: "The Honour Code was written by AUIS students, representing the Academic Preparatory Program and the Undergraduate Program, in February 2011. All students entering AUIS sign the Honour Code. In order to create and sustain a healthy educational environment, students are encouraged to follow the guidelines offered here. These guidelines will be considered as the Honour Code of the University. Any act that violates them will be considered dishonourable.

- (i) Each student's work will be the result of his or her own honest academic efforts.
- (ii) Students will use English during all educational pursuits at A UIS; no other languages should be used during class discussions and examinations.
- (iii) Students will not give or receive aid from their classmates during examinations, home works, assignments ... etc, unless permitted by the professor.
- (iv) Students will not lie, plagiarize, or steal.
- (v) Students will respect one another and University property and personnel.

"On my honour, I will follow the above guidelines about academic ethics and codes of conduct". (www.auiis.edu. iq) Ishik University in Erbil refers to specific regulations for student discipline. We read; "Chapter I: General Provisions. Article 1- These regulations are in place to arrange the consequences for actions, such as, non-compliance issues, unethical conduct, plagiarism, and other alleged misconducts and actions that require penalties determined by university disciplinary committee. " Chapter II-Disciplinary Cases and Resulting Sanctions

Article 4: General Student Obligations to Avoid Disciplinary Actions

Each Ishik University student is expected to demonstrate respect for every other human being. Each student must in particular: Behave in an honest and responsible way. Comply with all legal provisions that apply to students, (www.iu.ac).

Komar University refers to its statement on Values and Moral Standards. We read: "The moral norm which guides conduct and informs policy at Komar University of Science and Technology is responsible freedom. " Freedom is an important experience that the university, one of the freest of institutions, provides for its entire community member (faculty, students, administrators, and staff). Freedom is responsibly exercised when it is guided by ethical standards.Truthfulness in one's claims and representations and honesty in one's activities are essential in life and vocation, and the realization of truthfulness and honesty is an intrinsic part of the educational process. Guided by these principles, this Academic Honor Policy outlines the university 's expectations for students " academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged

violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty throughout the process.

Academic Honor Pledge

I affirm my commitment to the concept of responsible freedom. I will be honest and truthful and will strive for personal and institutional integrity at Komar University of Science and Technology. I will abide by the Academic Honor Policy at all times." (www.komar.edu)

VII ACADEMIC DISHONESTY TODAY

Academic dishonesty unfortunately exists in all levels of education and in all societies. Studies show that students start cheating in the first grade, while high school is the most common level where cheating is blooming. Of course, not only students but teachers as well do cheat. Cheating among colleagues appears to happen often; such cheating occurs in the form of using each other's notes and tests or inflating grades. Nowadays the phenomenon of buying research papers through the internet has become a serious problem. There are online services that offer to prepare any kind of homework of high school and college level and take online tests for students.

In the Kurdistan Region there is much to happen and be applied on this matter; academic integrity remains a significant issue and academic institutions are moving towards the formulation of policies to empower the benefits of academic honesty. Above all, however, academic authorities in such region are required to pass legislation that protect copyright. Unfortunately, until now, in some countries, textbooks which are used by colleges and universities are copied without permission and sold without any kind of control. Of course, this practice passes the wrong messages to students and academics degrading fundamental values of academic integrity.

Unfortunately, the focus on academic dishonesty in many areas of the world is limited; cheating is a common phenomenon which academics will have to face for years. Students will keep on striving for good grades, discover new ways to cheat and teachers will eventually still be faced with academic dishonesty issues. It is obvious that academic dishonesty is not a problem whose solution can be ordered. Societal values and pressures for success will be always behind the phenomena of academic dishonesty with universities. The mission of contemporary academic organizations, realistically, is to establish and apply sound policies on academic integrity, keep on training everyone involved in the academic community and relate their reputation to the degree they believe in academic integrity.

The researchers' suggestion is that the focus of academic authorities should be the policies which could prevent academic deceit rather than policies focusing on declaring punishments against dishonesty. Thus, proper faculty and student training on the issue, primarily on the benefits of integrity, will eventually eliminate academic malpractice at all levels. Our focus as educators becomes quite clear: to educate everyone involved in academia about the value of academic integrity and its role and influence on professional success.

VIII CONCLUSION

In general, in only a few years the personal computer, the CD-ROM encyclopedia and the Internet have changed the way students do academic research. Unfortunately, technology helps the phenomena of academic dishonesty within universities and academic honesty must be more emphasized. Academic integrity and its application among academic institutions in the Kurdistan Region remains a fundamental issue. Further research should be conducted and more actions should be taken to control academic fraud. This research reveals the importance of passing copyright laws and setting up rigid measures to protect academic integrity. Training faculty and students on the matter and the benefits which derive from its application remains a priority. The researchers plan to repeat their research after a period of two years to identify possible improvement among the perceptions of faculty members on this issue.

Academic integrity is an issue which does not really apply to certain forms or types of academic institutions, regardless if they belong to the public or private sector. Thus, educational planning focusing on academic integrity is absolutely necessary for both the public and private educational institutions in the Kurdistan Region.

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QUESTIONNAIRE & RESULT OF SURVEY

| | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| Question | | | | |
| Read the following 3 statements on “academic integrity” and mark the one that YOU THINK is the most accurate one (please tick or circle your selection') | Academic integrity is the set of significant values and principles which offer meaning to the overall mission of any academic institution 66% | Academic integrity is related with the absence of corruption emphasizing the fair treatment of students within an academic environment 26% | Although not a priority, academic integrity contributes positively to the success of an academic institution, diminishing cheating among students 8% | |
| Q2 | Do you think that student cheating is mostly attempted by | Weak and lazy students 66% | All students regardless studying and learning abilities 44% | Smart students 6% |
| Q3 | Do you think academic dishonesty incidents is a phenomenon appearing more often in Middle Eastern institutions rather than the western ones? | Yes 18% | No 50% | Not sure 32% |
| Q4 | Which set of values you think is closer to the determination of academic integrity ? | ethics, professionalism, justice, achievement of excellence 58% | professional manners, truthfulness, mutual understanding 30% | progress, honesty, inspiration, awareness 12% |
| Q5 | Academic integrity considers mostly | True 44% | False 26% | Possibly true 34% |
| Q6 | “Academic integrity appears as an informal “contract” between faculty and students who both agree to behave in a professional and ethical manner and share common standards and common perceptions about excellence”. Do you agree with such view?' | Yes I agree 68 | No, I do not agree 14 | Not sure 18% |
| Q7 | Do you have a specific policy of academic integrity in the institution you are employed at the present time? | Yes 36% | No 64% | |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Q8 Please indicate or list the major reason(s) permitting academic dishonesty and academic fraud to grow in an academic institution</p> | <p>Lack of policies and regulations Lack of training on academic integrity</p> |
| <p>Q9 Please propose a method of strengthening academic integrity in an educational institution</p> | <p>Faculty training Formalization of punishment rules on academic dishonesty and fraud Student training</p> |

Demographics

Total sample: 50 (Males 41 Females 9)

Years of experience in education: Less than 10 years: 25 10-20 years: 9 over 20 years: 16

Respondents are employed at the following institutions: Cihan University Cihan College, Salahaddin University

