

**CAUSAL RELATIONS IN EDUCATION BETWEEN SOCIAL AND ACADEMIC
CORRUPTION FROM THE ASPECT OF THE ROLE OF EDUCATION AS A KEY
PRECONDITION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESS OF SOCIETY**

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Abstract: Education is one of the fundamental human rights and it is sometimes the only way for individuals to break out of poverty, while it is crucial for development and progress of a state. Also, education transmits values such as integrity, equality and justice, as well as a sense of shared responsibility, which is a key factor for social cohesion and good governance in society in general.

Of course, there are strong causal links between social and academic corruption. The universities are not isolated islands, but are part of a community and are subject to social norms, and corruption is part of the economic and social life in many countries, including, unfortunately, in the Western Balkans. Societies that do not have detailed and neatly prescribed meritocratic norms are especially vulnerable to corruption in higher education, and the idea that someone can be promoted or receive an academic title only because s/he belongs to a particular group, or has strong family ties, becomes acceptable in such circumstances.

Misconduct regarding academic degrees, in the most general sense, is any form of violation of prescribed rules and procedures defining the manner of obtaining academic degrees and titles. An academic fraud may, directly or indirectly, involve teachers, while this term is usually associated with student cheating, i.e. students attempting to circumvent prescribed rules and procedures in meeting their academic obligations. There are many forms of student frauds, such as copying in exams, plagiarizing term papers and other papers, using ideas of others without citing sources, forging signatures and documents, identity swap, etc.

Academic fraud is one of the forms of corrupt behavior. Namely, since corruption is any form of misuse of public office for personal gain, and students misuse their position by cheating in order to avoid their obligations - studying.

Academic fraud is a common form of corrupt behavior in education especially in higher education that can have many negative consequences. Students who participate in cheating could finish college with poor work habits, lack of knowledge, and following the problematic principles can continue with such behavior in the future professional life. These consequences have a negative effect on the society as a whole and it is necessary to act to suppress them by amending policies in the higher education system.

Keywords: Education, Integrity, Fraud, Development, Progress, Economy

1. INTRODUCTION

Quality higher education and scientific and research work is one of the most important resources of today, in the field of hi-tech and in all areas of human activity. It goes without saying that higher education in itself, acquired at universities is just a necessary initial step and the process of education continues throughout the entire working life through the so-called lifelong learning /1/.

When it comes to higher education where we come from, it usually refers only to acquiring of higher education diplomas, which is quite wrong. Higher education is an activity that in addition to the educational process includes scientific and research work. If teaching activities would be separated from the research, then the question arises as to how it would be possible to keep up with the needs of society, the state and the development of scientific knowledge, particularly in against the backdrop of rapid progress.

Experience around the world has confirmed that education and science are the basis of the progress of each country; they push forward and support its development. Experience has also shown that the ones who allocated more for science and education turned out to be more successful. Saving on higher education breeds a great damage in the long run. Investing in science is increasing gross national income as confirmed by numerous studies. Finally, either one invests in science to get modern technology and patents or one pays expensively for foreign expertise. Given the situation in the Western Balkans, we cannot be satisfied, nor with the educational process nor with scientific and research work. For many years, higher education in these countries is on the edge of existence while symbolic funding is provided for scientific and research work. It is obvious that the authorities in these countries are still not sufficiently aware of the importance of higher education and science

for the development of society and the state. These relations must be urgently changed because it will take us more and more time to find a way out of the crisis.

2. IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

At the beginning of the 21st century the world is faced with great challenges, which are becoming more prominent year after year. It is necessary to answer many questions, among which the most important are the lack of drinking water, food, energy, environmental threats, overpopulation, sustainable development, health, information technology etc.

Regardless of the fact that science has not answered many questions, we have witnessed a vertiginous development of science and technology as well as the fact that science is precisely what created the modern world.

It was not a long ago when we were communicating by letters, traveled slowly by ships and steam railways and today we cannot imagine life without airplanes, the Internet and mobile phone.

The answers to all the challenges can be provided, to a lesser or greater extent, only through education i.e. science and they will depend on its development. The modern world recognizes that the development of society largely depends on the application of scientific and technological achievements. There are no areas where the benefits of education, i.e. knowledge and science are not visible. Scientific discoveries have led the contemporary society to such a level of development, which could not have been imagined just a few decades ago. The use of scientific knowledge has long ago become a need on which the quality of life depends /2/.

The role of education and science in the future will be all the greater because its role is not only to better understand natural phenomena and the world around us, but it is also an important lever of economic development of each country. The economic power of a state at the present depends a lot on the mastery of new knowledge and technologies. In modern developed societies without connection of science and technology, i.e. without new scientific and technological discoveries there is no progress in the technology nor solving of problems in production and social processes. Unfortunately, there are scientific discoveries that bring more harm than good to mankind, which are fortunately not numerous, but regardless of that, we must accept the fact that without the development of science there is no further development of economy and society.

The decisions made while solving the problems of development, achieving production and other processes in the society must be knowledge-based. Thus, the societies which base their own development knowledge find their way out of the crisis in a faster and easier manner. Conversely, the way out of the crisis is takes place slowly with painful cuts, which affect the society and each individual. Any country that wants to develop normally and go forward must rely on education as the cornerstone of its development.

3. ACADEMIC FRAUD – HOW TO FIND A WAY OUT OF THIS SOCIAL PHENOMENON

3.1. Description of the problem of academic fraud

Academic fraud involves various forms of behaviour that constitute violations of the duty and the academic discipline by students. The most common of these forms are: plagiarising of papers and gray market of term papers, Bachelor, Master and Doctoral theses; the use of technical means; writing on the bench, use of cheat sheets; taking exam instead of another person.

The reasons for resorting to various forms of academic fraud are found in the desire for easier fulfilling of students' duties and the rapid acquisition of a diploma, as evidenced by students /3/.

However, other factors can influence the motivation for cheating. Survey on the perception of incidence of academic fraud, conducted on a representative sample of 972 students of the University of Montenegro in 2015 gave the following results regarding the factors that motivate students to cheat: the majority of students (57.6%) recognized that the situation when the deadlines for taking tests/exams are too close would influence their decision to resort to some form of cheating. Then, 52.7% of the students recognized hat a small period of time for preparation for the tests/exams would have an impact on their decision to cheat. In 52.6% of students, their decision on cheating would be influenced by too difficult learning materials, and in 48.2% by a professor who unfairly grades students /3/.

The consequences of academic fraud problems are diverse and vary depending on its type. Plagiarism and gray market for academic papers lead to a series of other problems, such as recycling of obsolete data, many of the same papers, different assessments of the same work by different professors, etc. Due to lack of sanctions and the lack of measures, the older generations transfers the tradition of cheating on the exam to the younger ones, maintaining the eternal circle of academic fraud, and the quality of the acquired knowledge decreases.

Finally, taking the exam instead of another person, i.e. identity swap has identical effects as the previous actions.

3.2. Education in the Western Balkans - open space for corruption

Education is one of the fundamental human rights and it is sometimes the only way to break out of poverty for individuals, while it is crucial for development and progress of states.

Also, the education transmits values such as integrity, joint responsibility which is a key factor for social cohesion and good governance.

Corruption in education is not a topic that is often discussed in academic circles or even in the media where it is almost impossible to find headlines regarding this subject.

Academic institutions are considered to be somehow above such low impulses that are connected mainly to other segments of society. On the other hand, the society very often looks at universities as special institutions which should embody virtues and integrity.

According to the available results of surveys conducted in the countries and international organizations (Transparency International, UNDP and other organizations), it seems that the least amount of attention was paid to corruption in the education sector. Hence, the main subject-matter of this paper is precisely corruption in education, with a focus on the countries in the region.

Corruption in education means the systematic use of public educational services and public authorities in the education system for the personal benefit of individuals who have access to and impact on the quality of the educational process /4/. In the reference papers today there is a full consensus worldwide that corruption is the most harmful social phenomenon precisely in education. Corruption undermines the reputation of the education sector in many countries and represents a dangerous obstacle to further social and economic development of the countries in which it exists.

Global Corruption Barometer for 2015 encompassing 167 countries in which the level of corruption is measured presents the ranking of the Western Balkans countries in Table 1 /5/:

2015 ranking	state	2015 score
35	Slovenia	60
50	Croatia	51
66	Macedonia	42
61	Montenegro	44
76	Bosnia and Herzegovina	38
71	Serbia	40
103	Kosovo	33

Slovenia ranks 35th, with the corruption score 60; Croatia ranks 50th, with the corruption index 51; Bosnia and Herzegovina ranks 76th with the corruption index 38; Montenegro ranks 61st with the corruption index 44; Serbia ranks 71st, with the corruption index 40; Kosovo ranks 103rd with the corruption index 33; country with the best corruption index still remains Denmark as number 1 with the corruption score 91.

Alike in the past 15 years the Western Balkan countries except for Slovenia are classified as countries with very widespread corruption /6/.

Corruption in education is an extremely harmful social phenomenon that generates corruption in other sectors of society and opens the door to great social harm that inflicted on contemporary countries. Practically, there is corruption which is more dangerous than that in the education system because individuals who acquired a higher education qualification, thanks to corruption, usually, sooner or later, occupy an important place in the public authorities and then strive for a return on investment in all legal and illegal manners.

If the education system is not sound, then it is difficult to expect that the values deriving from it would be sound. In this way, the seeds of corruption are sown in an increasing extent in the public, government and private sector. People who were buying a diploma of higher, secondary and primary education and paying for grades during schooling, due to the labour pains brought about by the development of democracy, market economy and the rule of law in the Balkan countries, rather opt for work in the public sector, where more importance is attached to the form than to the substance, than in the private sector, where the employer is more interested in recruiting educated people who demonstrate enviable knowledge in the scope of work that the company is dealing with.

4. INCIDENCE OF THE PROBLEM OF ACADEMIC FRAUD

4.1. Institutional

In the education systems of Western Balkan countries, there are numerous forms of corruption that at different levels responsible for planning, programming, budgeting, organization and implementation of education.

The first and highest level of corruption in education in these countries takes place in the **ministries** of education and science and reflects primarily in /7/:

- taking bribe in the accreditation and granting licenses for operation of educational institutions, regardless of whether the conditions prescribed by the competent national authority have been met;
- favouring certain institutions when selecting and purchasing textbooks and other teaching aids to be used in the educational process;
- constant "cosmetic changes" in the curricula and textbooks which force students and students to buy new books;
- Inadequate enrollment policy and inflation of new occupations that do not exist in a standardized nomenclature and classification of occupations which leads to constant problems and misunderstandings in the labour market;
- soliciting and taking bribe in the process of licensing of university professors, teachers;
- soliciting and taking bribe for recognition of foreign diplomas;
- soliciting and taking bribe for granting research projects to educational institutions;
- soliciting and taking bribe in the categorization of scientific and technical journals;
- Pure commercialization in publishing scientific papers in scientific journals of international and national importance, important for the promotion of professors and lecturers to higher-level educational and scientific titles, etc.

Secondly, in educational institutions

- seeking and taking bribe on the occasion of employment in the educational institution;
- organizing and commercialization of educational activities (trips, excursions, sporting events for students, etc.);
- illegal enrolment of students and students beyond the approved quota at the expense of the state budget;
- prescribing certain standards for payment of services provided to students t all levels of schooling, in contravention with the applicable regulations;
- recruiting on the basis of parental, political, national, religious and friendly ties and soliciting money for a position in an educational institution;
- Presentation of "non-existent professors and teachers" resulting in impossibility of hiring younger teachers and professors, as well as the amount of misappropriated funds received from the budget based on the number of employees.

4.2. Personally

by professors, lecturers, teachers which is most commonly reflected in:

- selling exam questions, soliciting or receiving money, non-cash gifts or favours or seeking any other material and financial benefits from students/parents, to achieve better success in college or school;
- giving private tuitions to their students, while teaching the same subject in the regular teaching process;
- exploiting and abusing students (physical, sexual, mobbing and any form of abuse);
- taking unjustified absence from work in the educational institutions where they have full time employment in order to work in other institutions.
- etc.

by parents

- buying a place in an educational institution, or providing financial or non-financial services to ensure a place in an educational institution, without meeting the requirements of the competition for admission to college/faculty and secondary school;
- buying grades, diplomas or offering bribe to professors/teachers, and giving money, in-kind gift in order to provide better grades, safe passage in an educational institution, as well as illegal obtaining of a diploma;
- illegally employ and enrol at colleges, faculties and secondary schools on the basis of kinship, political, national, religious or friendly ties, without meeting the requirements of the competition for a job or admission to an educational institution.
- sexually harassing, offering sexual favours or hinting at sexual activities to professors, lecturers, teachers, assistant professors

- etc.

by students

Plagiarism and gray market of term papers, Bachelor, Master and Doctoral theses are two types of academic fraud that are fairly represented at faculties. The survey showed that only 27.9% of respondents think that plagiarism does not exist at all /8/. Plagiarism (lat. plagere = snatch away), means the act of appropriation or copying someone else's writing, artistic or other creative work into one's own, either in part or in whole, without specifying the original authorship /9/. When it comes to plagiarism, it is an illegal and unethical appropriation of another's work, which is displayed as one's own. This problem is directly related to the protection of copyright. So, plagiarism violates the rights of the author of the original text, and this is sanctioned by our applicable Law on Copyright and Related Rights /10/. This means that persons engaged in plagiarism can be subject to the court, and not just disciplinary proceedings. From discussions with students during one of the focus groups held, it can be concluded that the students know the exact price list of papers, ranging from three to five euros per page or thirty to forty euros per paper. Term papers cost up to seventy euros, while the master theses can be purchased at a price of five hundred to six hundred euros. Students refer to certain web-sites where term papers can be found, for example. www.seminarski.com. Advertisements for term papers and other papers are found in copy shops, in the newspaper advertisements and on social networks such as Facebook. Based on the data from the survey on academic fraud, 20.5% or every fifth student considers that purchasing of academic papers is common at universities, while 72.5% of students said that they had never resorted to this kind of plagiarism.

Copying, writing on a bench and using cheat sheets are the most common examples of academic fraud. Research has shown that, in the opinion of 32% of the respondents, this type of academic fraud occurs frequently, while 30.2% believe that it occurs sometimes. More than half of the students surveyed admitted that they had resorted to this kind of cheating at some point. Namely, the capacities of the faculties are insufficient for the large number of students who annually enroll at college, so this type of academic fraud is frequent, according to students /11/. Due to the volume of studying materials and the desire to reach the goal (passing the exam, diploma) in the easiest way possible students are more than willing to act in this way.

Identity swap is one of the forms of academic fraud. This corrupt act is usually resorted to by members of the classes with a large number of students, where there is no control of students' ID before taking tests or examinations, or where the students are not roll-called. In one focus group, students pointed out that there are cases where a student attends lectures under the name of another, and his student ID is not verified at the exam because the professor knows him from the lectures/12/. Students resort to such actions due to poor controls and poorly organized schedule of exams. This problem directly affects the motivation and behavior of other students who, as pointed out by certain students in the conversation, receive poorer grades in comparison to those using some form of academic fraud, so they resort to easier method of taking the exam /13/.

The use of technical means is another form of academic fraud. There are different technical means in use: bugs, telephones, special watches, etc., which range from twenty to thirty euros and can be ordered via advertisements in copy shops, newspaper advertisements, social networks. In the survey, 60.8% of students said they had never used technical equipment for copying, while 7.9% of them always or frequently used them for the purpose of copying. As for the use of mobile phone for communication with others during exams/tests, 61.4% have never used it. Students resort to the use of these means due to the lack of control by the teaching staff. From an interview with one of the students, we found that the practice of the use of those means is fairly widespread among students. According to the answer upon the request for access to information, eleven cases of the use of mobile phones during the exams were recorded at the Faculty of Economics in Podgorica, which were sanctioned by suspension for a period of one or two semesters. An additional problem in the fight against these forms of academic fraud is that students are not sufficiently familiar with the Rulebook on Disciplinary Accountability of students of the University of Montenegro. The survey showed that 50.4% of respondents did not know whether the Rulebook was posted on a website of their faculty, and 15.7% of them thought it was not posted. Students are aware of the existence of sanctions for cheating at the University, but an extremely small number of respondents believe that the sanctions are applied (for example, only 8.5% of respondents believe that sanctions are applied consistently when it comes to the suspension of the right to take exams/tests, while only 8.9% of respondents consider that the sanction of reducing the final grade is consistently applied, etc.). This kind of ignorance is the ally of the students in the exercise of academic fraud, in the sense that it does not produce preventive effect by

presenting sanctions as an imminent consequence of their cheating. Such perception of students is aided by the faculty and administration of university units that do not show enough readiness in combating the various forms of academic fraud.

5. PROPOSAL FOR MEASURES FOR SOLVING THE PROBLEM OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT I.E. CORRUPTION

The focus of social action in the fight against academic misconduct both in institutions and at a personal level (teachers, parents, students) i.e. corruption in education in the Western Balkan countries should be directed along the following tracks:

1. Adoption of high-quality laws by levels of education and their alignment with the relevant international conventions on corruption and academic misconduct;
2. Adoption and implementation of a common strategy to fight corruption and academic misconduct in education at the level of countries and internal documents at the level of educational institutions (including the special rulebooks) which will regulate in detail the corruption and academic misconduct i.e. measures for preventing and combating corruption and academic misconduct in education;
3. Introducing of a quality assurance system in education with developed procedures for the control of work and operation of educational institutions and a clear defining of the responsibilities of educational institutions and other entities involved in the process of prevention of corruption and academic misconduct in the educational system;
4. Introduction of ethical committees and commissions in the educational institutions and the adoption of codes of ethics that apply only to certain levels of education;
5. At the level of all educational institutions in the countries, it is important to establish a common efficient system for fighting corruption and academic misconduct, tightly linking academia and deepening cooperation with other entities (police, prosecution, courts, etc.);
6. Permanent education of all participants in the education system on corruption;
7. Encouraging students and administrative staff to report instances of corrupt behaviour and academic misconduct and providing protection for persons who report corruption, with the establishment of a hotline for reporting acts of corruption and academic misconduct;
8. Heavy sanctioning;
9. Conducting inspections of people who sell papers and sanctioning them;
10. Introducing video-surveillance for control purposes;
11. Strengthening the integrity of students through various forms of education for students, seminars, workshops, advertising material;
12. Etc.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Education is a fundamental human right and a key driver of development of modern society. It is the key to achieving a better future, both for individuals and society and the global community as a whole. At the same time, education is a subsystem of the global society that consumes significant resources sustaining a large number of beneficiaries at multiple levels. In this fact lies the greatest danger i.e. that public funds intended for education, passing through the hands of a series of irresponsible actors in the educational process, become the target of corruption of varying range and volume.

Precisely, this is the feature of many educational systems in the Balkan countries where spending on education in small amounts is distributed to a large number of remote and scattered locations with relatively poorly developed control system. Hence the risks of corruption in these countries are at all levels of the educational system and range from corruption in the construction and procurement of educational resources, nepotism in the recruitment of teaching and non-teaching staff, to distortion of the survey results in order to achieve personal gain /14/.

The results of scientific researches conducted in the last 10 years in the countries and international organizations have shown that the most important factor causing corruption in the Balkan countries is, in fact, a moral crisis. The following factors follow in the second, third, fourth and fifth positions: *historical, structural, economic and political* factors.

In politico-legal theory and practice, there is general agreement that corruption in education undermines the foundations of the education system and the whole process of education of future citizens in a society. The autonomous character of education in the Balkan countries often leads to various forms of corruption, from conventional forms characteristic of the system of higher education, nepotism in employment, misuse of

entrance exams and academic and educational standards, to the ensuring of benefits for the academic promotion of the staff in educational institutions. From the viewpoint of social development, this type of corruption is more harmful than corruption in other sectors of modern society, since it affects mainly young people in full educational maturity /14/.

These are sufficient reasons for educational institutions to build strong educational potentials and to play a key role in promoting the integrity of the educational institutions, and to continuously teach the students, professors, lecturers, teachers, assistants and other teaching staff to keep on openly and transparently combating corruption in education. From this point of view, education should be an important tool for strengthening the personal integrity of all stakeholders in the educational process in the fight against corruption, because in the long run, corruption in education has extremely negative implications for the quality of education and the development of modern society in general.

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