AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF ARMENIA

PLAGIARISM AS AN ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:

THE CASE OF ARMENIAN UNIVERSITIES

AN INTERSHIP POLICY PAPER SUBMITTED TO

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LIST OF ABBREVATIONS

ASUE-Armenian State University of Economics

AUA-American University of Armenia

EPF-Eurasia Partnership Foundation

SEUA-State Engineering University of Armenia

SIDA- Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

YSLU-Yerevan State Linguistic University after Valeri Brusov

YSU-Yerevan State University

ABSTRACT

The aim of this internship policy paper is to study the problem of plagiarism at the Armenian universities.

The paper aims to find out whether students are aware what actions constitute plagiarism, what kind of attitude they have towards this academic dishonesty and what are the major factors (in the case of the Armenian universities) that lead students to commit plagiarism.

The research is based on primary and secondary source data which reveal the major problems that the Armenian universities face connected with the plagiarism. A survey was conducted in May 2012 in five universities of Armenia to study the problem. It was found out that in general students know what types of actions constitute plagiarism but they continue to commit academic dishonesty because they are no sanctions or punishments for it.

Finally, the paper comes up with conclusions and some recommendations, the fulfilment of which will beneficially affect the process of addressing this challenge and will help to decrease the plagiarism rate at the higher educational institutions of Armenia.

Introduction

"The Plagiarism of orators is the art, or an ingenious and easy mode, which some adroitly employ to change, or disguise, all sorts of speeches or their own composition, or that of other authors, for their pleasure, or their utility; in such a manner that it becomes impossible even for the author himself to recognize his own work, his own genius, and his own style, so skillfully shall the whole be disguised."

Isaac D'Israeli

It is well recognized fact that plagiarism in not a modern thing. Throughout the history of the academic pursuit the question of plagiarism has remained one of the major challenges that academicians tried to address. However, in recent decades the problem of this academic dishonesty has gained a momentum, since there has been a huge increase in the incidence of the use of plagiarism, particularly in the academic writing.

Recently, scientists and academicians have been involved in manifold researches to identify the major causes and factors of plagiarism and try to find appropriate solutions to prevent, decrease or eventually eliminate the issue of academic dishonesty from all the academic institutions of the world.

It has been recognized that the plagiarism as an academic dishonesty has been evident since the very first days of publishing and has evolved alongside the developments and advancement of technology.

In more recent times, the main factor that has been identified as crucial in the dramatic increase of the plagiarism in universities as well as in high schools is considered to be the creation of the World Wide Web (Internet). The ready availability of the material in electronic

form in the Internet makes written research more accessible, therefore, making it much easier for students to plagiarize.

Despite the fact that the Internet has also made detection tools available to find and identify plagiarism, the detection itself is only a part of the solution to combat this academic dishonesty.

Recognizing and accepting the fact that plagiarism can really have a devastating effect in the further development of academic writing is the first significant step to face the problem. It should be followed by raising awareness of this issue among general public, academicians and, more importantly, among students. Greater awareness of the problem will inevitably increase the imaginative ways of combating it.

Currently, many colleges and universities are undertaking steps to prevent, detect and punish plagiarism. Therefore, different universities throughout the world have adopted specific handbooks on academic conduct of behavior where plagiarism is recognized as one of the major academic dishonesties. These handbooks are meant to make students realize that plagiarism can not only have negative effect on their creation as a specialist, depriving them from enhancing their analytical skills and creating individual creative way of thinking, but also destroy their career at one of the stages of their professional life. Thus, the importance of encouraging students to develop good research and citation techniques is also very important step towards meeting the problem.

Hence, the present internship policy paper tries to address the problem of plagiarism as an academic dishonesty in the Armenian reality, and raise awareness among different layers of the society towards this contemporary issue.

Through studying different scholarly articles it, first of all, tries to draw a clear portrait of the problem throughout the world, meanwhile explaining the major factors and causes of the problem according to different scholars.

For giving detailed understanding of the situation concerning this academic dishonesty at Armenian Universities, the policy paper uses primary and secondary source data. A survey, conducted in May 2012 at five universities of Yerevan, is used as primary source data and a plagiarism report by Khachmerouk Banavechayin Akoumb NGO which involves in-depth interview and focus group discussion results is used as a secondary source data.

The analysis of both data gives a detailed understating of the present situation in Armenian academic institutions and reveals different manifestations of plagiarism that are characteristic particularly to the case of Armenian universities.

The final part of the policy paper discusses the limitations of the research, makes final remarks in the conclusion and gives policy recommendations, which are, presently, very essential to combat the plagiarism in the higher educational institutions of the Republic of Armenia.

Literature review

"Plagiarism is the act of copying or including in one's own work, without adequate acknowledgement, intentionally or unintentionally, the work of another, for one's own benefit." (Charles Anderson, University of Edinburgh).

In recent decades plagiarism and plagiarism-related concepts and phenomena have become a central issue for researchers to study.

According to Arthur Sterngold the digital revolution (mainly in the field of information technology) has made it easy for students to plagiarize. Using Internet search engines, DVD-based reference works, online journals, Web-based news sources, article databases, and other electronic sources, students can find information about nearly any topic and put the data directly into their written works (Sterngold, 2004). That is, the Internet could be exacerbating the problem of student plagiarism because, presumably, the technology makes illicit cutting and pasting so easy as to be nearly irresistible.

Therefore, the perception that Internet plagiarism by university students is on the rise has alarmed academicians, leading to the adoption of electronic plagiarism checkers, among other responses.

However, it was during last decade when the online plagiarism started to be studied systematically and the results suggested that anxiety over Internet facilitated textual theft by college students may be fueled by misperceptions. In a survey of 698 students on nine campuses (in US), Scanlon and Neumann found that students who went online to cut and paste text without citation constituted 24.5 percent of the sample (Scanlon and Neumann, 2002). Levels of Internet plagiarism are similar to the numbers reported by McCabe and Trevino for "conventional" plagiarism (McCabe and Trevino, 1996). Only 2.3 percent of students in Scanlon and Neumann's

study reported purchasing papers from online term-paper mills "often" or "very frequently," and 6 percent admitted to buying papers "sometimes." In another multicampus study from a survey of 2,200 college students on twenty-one campuses, McCabe found that 10 percent reported copying "a few sentences from a Web site without footnoting them," and 5 percent admitted to turning in a paper "obtained in large part from a term-paper mill or Web site" (McCabe, 2001, 41).

Higher levels of plagiarism among high school students as compared with undergraduates are not unexpected. McCabe pointed out that the younger students "are typically still learning about plagiarism and proper techniques for citation" (McCabe, 2001, 42). Nevertheless, he maintained that online cutting and pasting "is dramatically higher among the high school students. They find Internet plagiarism so easy and consider it so unlikely to be detected that it is almost too tempting to resist (McCabe, 2001, 42)."

However, as Strengold puts, not all students cheat; most students write their own papers and properly cite sources because they know plagiarism is wrong (the fear of getting caught) or they don't feel the need to cheat (they are confident about their writing skills) (Sterngold, 2004).

In his article "Plagiarism: Suggestions for Its Cure and Prevention" Leo Hamalian notes there are several basic factors that move students towards committing a plagiarism. Thus, the poor programming of time is mentioned as one of the vital reasons. As Holman notes, despite repeated warnings from instructors, students frequently wait until two weeks before deadline to do his/her paper (Hamalian, 1959[1]). Hence, the only possible solution for them remains the plagiarism and at the end they present a "non-competent" paper.

Moreover, Holman goes on mentioning, that even the systematic student will sometimes plagiarize. When the teacher limits the student's choice of topic for the research or term paper, it

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[1] Although it is an old source still it is considered to be one of the major works on plagiarism.

becomes terribly tough for him/her to write about a subject which holds no interest and over which he/she cannot work up enthusiasm in a short time (Hamalian, 1959).

In their research Neli Granitz and Dana Loewy speak about ethical reasons for plagiarism. According to Granitz and Loewy, when faced with an ethical dilemma, individuals form their ethical reasoning and moral intent based upon different theories of ethics (Granitz and Loewy, 2007). Hence students engage in varied reasoning based on these different theories (deontology, utilitarianism, rational self-interest, Machiavellianism, etc.). The predominant categorization scheme employed for general cheating has been Sykes's and Matza's Neutralization Techniques. Hence, the potential violators are tempted to perform the unethical act, recognize that the act is wrong, use one of the techniques to justify the act and then perform the act (Sykes and Matza, 1957).

Therefore, Granits and Loewy urge that examining and understanding the theory of ethical reasoning will help academic institutions and instructors to develop techniques to prevent plagiarism in all student populations.

Thus, under deontology, plagiarism is considered to be morally wrong; perpetrators are stealing and presenting someone else's work as their own. If students subscribe to this theory, they can only plagiarize if they misunderstand or are unaware of the theory (e.g., "I didn't know what plagiarism was"/"I didn't know that plagiarism was wrong") (Granitz and Loewy, 2007). The basis for this can bet that faculty members do not seem to offer clear guidelines to help struggling students figure out how to use the Internet in an acceptable fashion. In other words, students do not understand what plagiarism is and how to give correct references.

Utilitarianism holds that an individual should weigh the costs versus the benefits and act to provide the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people. A moral decision is one that

creates the greatest total utility. Individuals who follow a utilitarian philosophy could only justify plagiarism if the outcomes were good (e.g., "Plagiarism leads to better learning or higher grades'/'Nobody gets hurt") (De George, 1990).

According to rational self-interest (social contract theory) theory, one acts to benefit oneself; however, no sacrifice is involved - people should relate to one another strictly on a trading basis, exchanging value for value in all endeavors (Rand, 1964). Thus, under this theory, plagiarism may be justified only if the plagiarists felt they were engaging in a fair exchange (e.g., "I'm publicizing the author's work'/'The teacher doesn't put much effort into this, so why should I?") (Granitz and Loewy, 2007).

As Granitz and Loewy mention, under Machiavellianism (ethical egoism) individuals have no qualms about sacrificing others for their own benefit, and they are always motivated to act in their own perceived self-interest. Therefore, for students subscribing to Machiavellianism, plagiarism could be justified if they managed to get away with it and did not get blamed or caught (e.g., "Look how clever I am... I can plagiarize, do well, and not get caught"). If caught, they'll blame others (e.g., "It's the teacher's fault") (Granitz and Loewy, 2007).

Since ethical standards are different across cultures and an act that is ethical in one culture may be considered unethical in another culture students justifying plagiarism with the help of cultural relativism theory would focus on how plagiarism is acceptable in their culture (e.g., "It's allowable in the country where I come from") (Robertson and Fadill, 1999).

Ferrell and Gresham introduced a "contingency" framework of ethics specifying that individual (knowledge, values), social (significant others), and organizational (opportunity, rewards, punishment) situational elements could affect an individual's response to an ethical dilemma (Ferrell and Gresham, 1985). To avoid overlap with other categories, situational ethics

has been restricted to instances when students justify an act due to circumstances beyond their control (external impacts). Students who plagiarize using this theory of ethics would cite a situational element as a justification (e.g., "My kid was sick"/"My boyfriend just dumped me") (Ferrell and Gresham, 1985).

It should be noted that under deontology and cultural relativism perpetrators may not realize that they are doing anything wrong. For utilitarianism, rational self-interest, Machiavellianism and situational ethics, an awareness of so-called "wrongdoing" exists (Granitz and Loewy, 2007).

Hence, according to Kock and Davison the limited knowledge may also have an influence on whether someone commits plagiarism, particularly limited knowledge about what level of idea-borrowing is acceptable and how this idea-borrowing should be conducted (Kock and Davison, 2003).

Moreover, numerous studies have demonstrated the presence of implicit memory in people who have severely impaired explicit memory or conscious recollection. In other, words recently presented information can remain highly accessible in memory even if the participant does not-or cannot-consciously recollect the earlier presentation (Warrington & Weiskrantz, 1968). Several researchers have proposed that implicit memory underlies the phenomenon of "cryptomnesia" defined as mistakenly "generating a word, an idea, a song, or a solution to a problem, with the belief that it is either totally original, or at least original within the present context (Brown, & Murphy, 1989.) Usually, the knowledge that the idea originated with someone else will also be retrieved, but an old idea may occasionally come to mind unaccompanied by any information about its external source. Under these circumstances, one may honestly believe that the idea is one's own, hence inadvertently committing plagiarism.

However, as Strengold puts, apart attributing the growing plagiarism to students' laziness, lax morals, or ignorance of the rules, and demanding tougher academic policies, detection efforts, and punishments to stop it, the impact of conventional teaching methods and strategies designed to improve student learning should be examined in order to find out how first of all to prevent academic cheating (Sterngold, 2004).

Hence, according to Ron Scollon, problems of plagiarism cannot be understood unless a broader culturally contrastive perspective is taken (Scollon, 1995). That is, plagiarism has quite different interpretation in different cultures, and to solve the problem cultural perspective should be taken as an indispensable part of prevention techniques.

Different cultures have different attitudes towards plagiarism and different ways in which relationships to text, memory, and learning differ. The important point here is that whereas we can see how the notion of plagiarism needs to be understood within the particular cultural and historical context of its development, it also needs to be understood relative to alternative cultural practices.

According to Pennycook, the particular version of meaning, originality, and authorship is located within a Western cultural and historical tradition that emphasizes creative and possessive individualism (Pennycook, 1996).

In comparing cultures of memorization, it is tempting to make a comparison between former Western practices of memorization and more recent Chinese (and other) practices, thus perhaps suggesting that the West has simply developed a more modern attitude to the text. For instance, the Chinese learners are considered to be passive, imitative memorizers, they can memorize long articles and texts without even understanding it (Pennycook, 1996).

"The issue of textual borrowing is connected to a number of key issues in second language education: the role of memory, the nature of language learning, the ownership of texts, the concepts of the author, authority, and authenticity, and the cross-cultural relations that emerge in educational contexts (Pennycook, 1996)".

Thus, apart from stressing the individualism, one aspect of the problem should also be taken into consideration; the fact that many students are writing in a second language and to be original and critical very often occurs to be a very tough job for them.

Therefore, understanding the other side of the coin-the students' textual and language learning worlds as well as the constraints on their lives and their perceptions of how academic norms operate. As Willinsky suggests for these reasons discussions can take place with students and part of any discussion of citation, paraphrase, textual borrowing, and so forth, needs to include discussion of how and why these notions have been constructed, how authorship, authenticity, and authority have been linked together, and how these practices may be in a process of flux (Willinsky, 1990).

According to Barton and Hamilton, plagiarism is a literacy practice; plagiarism is something that people do with reading and writing. As with all literacy practices, plagiarism is "an activity, located in the space between thought and text" and "in the interaction between people" (Barton and Hamilton, 1998).

Plagiarism becomes plagiarism as part of a practice that involves participants' values, attitudes, and feelings as well as their social relationships to each other and to the institutions in which they work (Valentine, 2006).

Similarly, Gerry Brookes notes that when confronting the issues of plagiarism, instructors should not lose sight of their students in the context of their own communities. While we are

invoking one set of values-the academy's-to try to dissuade students from plagiarizing work, another set of values-their peer community's-is exerting tremendous pressure, as well (Brookes, 1989).

As Wilhoit argues, the values that govern acts of plagiarism are "continuous with values and feelings students display in their living", such as, the value of friendship or of getting ahead, loyalty to the interests of a group, fear of shame at performing inadequately, distrust of faculty, obligations to work and play. Students often face situations where these value systems come into conflict and even students making a good faith effort to avoid plagiarism can run into problems (Wilhoit, 1994).

Very often plagiarism and copyright infringement are identified as one issue, and this misunderstanding further deepens the problem and disseminates extra misunderstanding among students.

"Wrongful copying in literature or academia is called plagiarism by writers and scholars and copyright infringement by lawyers and judges" (Stearns, 1992). Although these two phenomena seem similar, the concepts of plagiarism and infringement are fundamentally different in the significance they attach to such characteristics of the offense as amount of copying, attribution of authorship, and intent. Hence, Laurie Stearns argues that the different understandings of both copying and wrongfulness implicit in the two concepts reveal different perspectives on creativity: plagiarism emphasizes the creative process, while infringement emphasizes the creative result (Stearns, 1992). The legal emphasis on result has manifested itself in the law's choice of the intellectual-property framework for the resolution of literary disputes. However, the property metaphor is incomplete and misleading when applied to words. Therefore, Stearns recommends a supplementary legal metaphor: the creative contract. "Contract

principles provide a framework with which to analyze the creative process as a transaction between creator and audience, enabling the law to recognize that creativity is an ongoing act of communication among people-as is the law itself (Stearns, 1992)."

Research process involves building on previous knowledge and adding new insights to that knowledge. This is a process that can seldom be accomplished without borrowing, developing, and extending ideas previously proposed by other researchers. However, knowing how to borrow ideas and present them with the proper attribution in a publication can be tricky and few students enter college fully understanding the relationship between plagiarism and the rules about quoting, paraphrasing, and documenting material.

Methodology

Having studied the problem and its relevance to the case of Armenia, in this study following research questions are proposed:

RQ 1: Do students know what types of actions constitute plagiarism?

RQ 2: What is the attitude of students towards plagiarism?

RQ 3: Does the confidence of not being penalized lead students to plagiarize?

RQ 4: Does the format of the given tasks lead student to commit plagiarism?

The hypothesis of this study is: Plagiarism is a serious problem in Armenian universities.

The variables of this study were conceptualized as follows:

Plagiarism was conceptualized as the practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own without even citing the real author.

The students' attitude towards plagiarism was conceptualized as attitude that they have towards plagiarism, whether they consider it as an honest or dishonest conduct of behavior.

The format of given tasks was conceptualized as different forms of written assignments, particularly essays, term papers, master's essays.

The confidence of not being penalized was conceptualized as having no fear that the students can get lower marks or even get "unsatisfactory" grade or "fail" for plagiarizing.

In order to answer the proposed research questions and to support the hypothesis, a survey of 125 respondents (25 from each university) was conducted in 2012 among students of five different universities of the Republic of Armenia: Yerevan State University (YSU), Armenian State University of Economics (ASUE), Yerevan State Linguistic University after Valery Brusov (YSLU),   State Engineering University of Armenia and Russian-Armenian

Slavonic University. The survey questionnaire from which questions from 1 to 14 were used for this study can be found in Appendix.

The data was analyzed by SPSS: descriptive statistics, T-test; ANOVA and Chi-square tests were run.

For having broader understanding of the situation in Armenia secondary source data was used as well. The plagiarism report of Khachmerouk Banavechayin Akoumb NGO was taken as a secondary source. The study was conducted from May 2011 to June 2011 with the help of Eurasia Partnership Foundation (EPF) and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). The study results are based on the 40 in-depth interviews with instructors and 5 focus groups among students. The participants of both interviews and focus groups were chosen from different higher education institutions of Yerevan: Yerevan State University, Armenian State Pedagogical University, Yerevan State Linguistic University after Valery Brusov, Russian-Armenian Slavonic University, Yerevan State University of Architecture and Construction, State Engineering University of Armenia, Armenian State University of Economics and Armenian State agrarian university. The American University of Armenia (AUA) and a private university were taken only for interviews mainly for the purposes of comparison.

Findings

For finding out whether students have some knowledge about plagiarism, they were asked whether they have ever been informed about plagiarism. The survey shows that out of 125 respondents only 44.8% are informed about plagiarism by their university instructors (see Table 1).

Table 1. Have you ever been informed about plagiarism by your university instructors?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	64	51.2	53.3	53.3
Yes	56	44.8	46.7	100.0
Total	120	96.0	100.0	
Don't know/can't say	5	4.0		
Total	125	100		

Moreover, out of 125 respondents of five universities only 11.2% stated that there are informative seminars about plagiarism at their universities. Surprisingly 12.8% did not know whether there are any seminars or not at their institutions (see Table 2).

Table 2. Are there any informative seminars at your university where students can learn about plagiarism?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	95	76.0	87.2	87.2
Yes	14	11.2	12.8	100.0
Total	109	87.2	100.0	
Don't know/can't say	16	12.8		
Total	125	100.0		

From all respondents 40% did not know what kind of actions can be considered plagiarism (see Table 3).

Table 3. Do you know what kind of actions can be considered as plagiarism?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	50	40.0	41.7	41.7
Yes	70	56.0	58.3	100.0
Total	120	96.0	100.0	
Don't know/can't say	5	4.0		
Total	125	100.0		

The students' knowledge of plagiarism is measured with the help of three measures. With the first statement, taking the whole text from the Internet and presenting it as your own work almost everybody (123 out of 125 persons) understands that this is plagiarism, one person fought it was not plagiarism, one more person was undecided. Clearly, this kind of action is easily understood as plagiarism even by those, who said they did not know what plagiarism is in the previous question (see Table 4).

Table 4. Do you consider taking the whole text from the Internet and presenting it as your own work as a plagiarism?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	1	.8	.8	.8
Yes	123	98.4	99.2	100.0
Total	124	99.2	100.	
Don't know/can't say	1	.8		
Total	125	100.0		

As for the second statement, taking some parts of the text from the Internet or from other sources without giving the citation, 7.2% (9 respondents) answered that it was not a plagiarism, 88.8% said it was an act of plagiarism. While the percentage of people recognizing it as plagiarism drops compared to the previous measurement, there is still an overwhelming majority of respondents who clearly identify such behavior as an act of plagiarism (see Table 5).

Table 5. Do you consider taking some parts of the text from the Internet or from other sources without giving the citation?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	9	7.2	7.5	7.5
Yes	111	88.8	92.5	100.0
Total	120	96.0	100.0	
Don't know/can't say	5	4.0		
Total	125	100.0		

Concerning the third statement, describing the ideas and thoughts of other authors with their own words without mentioning the source, 60.8% of respondents identified it as plagiarism while 35.2% of all participants did not consider it as plagiarism (see Table 6). Thus, for this measurement, there is already a large group of respondents who fail to identify this as an act of plagiarism.

Table 6. Do you consider describing the ideas and thoughts of other authors with your own words without mentioning the source as plagiarism?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	44	35.2	36.7	36.7
Yes	76	60.8	63.3	100.0
Total	120	96.0	100.0	
Don't know/can't say	5	4.0		
Total	125	100.0		

The variable "attitudes towards plagiarism" is measured by asking students whether they consider plagiarism as dishonesty. 76.8% of all participants answered "yes", in other words, according to them it is dishonesty (see Table 7).

Table 7. Do you consider plagiarism as dishonesty?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	21	16.8	17.9	17.9
Yes	96	76.8	82.1	100.0
Total	117	93.6	100.0	
Don't know/can't say	8	6.4		
Total	125	100.0		

From 125 respondents mentioned that while writing a paper they plagiarize for about 10-30% of the whole work (see Table 8).

Table 8. While writing a paper what proportion of the text are you copying from the Internet or from other sources?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Whole work	1	.8	.8	.8
80% and more	2	1.6	1.6	2.4
50-80%	3	2.4	2.4	4.8
30-50%	8	6.4	6.4	11.2
10-30%	62	49.6	49.6	60.8
10% no more	20	16.0	16.0	76.8
Never	29	23.2	23.2	100.0
Total	125	100.0	100.0	

The variable "confidence of not being penalized" is measured by asking students how much it is likely to get penalized for plagiarizing. The scale for the measure is from 1 to 4, where 4 denotes very likely and 1-not likely at all. Thus, 39.2% of all participants think that it is not likely to be penalized for plagiarism based on their student experience, another 3.2% think it is not likely at all, so taken together 42.4% of students surveyed tend to think this way (see Table 9).

Table 9. Based on your student experience how much is it possible to be penalized for committing a plagiarism.				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not likely at all	4	3.2	3.2	3.2
Not likely	49	39.2	39.2	42.4
Likely	50	40.0	40.0	82.4
Very Likely	22	17.6	17.6	100.0
Total	125	100.0	100.0	

More than half (58.4%) of the respondents answered that they do not think that they can get lower mark, even "unsatisfactory" for plagiarizing (see Table 10). While for about 17.6% answered that they do not plagiarize at all.

Table 10. While plagiarizing do you think that your work can be marked as unsatisfactory?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	73	58.4	76.0	76.0
Yes	23	18.4	24.0	100.0
Total	96	76.8	100.0	
Don't know/can't say	7	5.6		
Not Plagiarizing at all	22	17.6		
Total	29	23.2		
Total	125	100.0		

To the question whether they have ever been reprimanded for plagiarizing in written works by their instructors from all participants 12% answered yes (see Table 11).

Table 11. Have you ever been reprimanded for plagiarizing in written works by your instructors?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	74	59.2	83.1	83.1
Yes	15	12.0	16.9	100.0
Total	89	71.2	100.0	
Don't know/can't say	4	3.2		
Not plagiarizing at all	32	25.6		
Total	36	28.8		
Total	125	100.0		

From all students 44.8% answered that they tend to plagiarize more in term papers while only one person answered that he/she has plagiarized more in his/her thesis (see Table 12).

Table 12. In which formats of written works do you plagiarize more?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Essays	28	22.4	32.9	32.9
Term papers	56	44.8	65.9	98.8
Thesis	1	.8	1.2	100
Total	85	68.0	100	
Don't know/can't say	7	5.6		
Not plagiarizing at all	33	26.4		
Total	40	32.0		
Total	40	100		

From all participants 43.2% thinks that the assigned tasks are not relevant to their academic interests (see Table 13).

Table 13. Do you think that the assigned tasks are relevant to your academic interests?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	50	40.0	48.1	48.1
Yes	54	43.2	59.1	100.0
Total	104	83.2	100.0	
Don't know/can't say	21	16.8		
Total	125	100.0		

To find out the main factors for plagiarizing the students were asked to mention (from the given list) the reasons, according to them, which lead students to plagiarize. Hence, the three main reasons came out to be laziness (20%), not having enough time (20%) and the absence of penalty (19.2%). From all 125 respondents only 2 persons answered that the main reason can be to follow others example (1.6%) (see Table 14).

Table 14. In your opinion, what is the main factor for students to plagiarize?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not having enough time	25	20.0	20.0	20.0
Not having enough skills in academic writing	17	13.6	13.6	33.6
The irrelevance of the task	5	4.0	4.0	37.6
Laziness	42	33.6	33.6	71.2
Following others' example	2	1.6	1.6	72.8
The indifferent attitude of the professors	10	8.0	8.0	80.8
The absence of penalty	24	19.2	19.2	100.0
Total	125	100.0	100.0	

A similar question with somewhat more personal appeal was asked and received answers that were not very different. Thus, the main two reasons were not having enough time (22.4%) and the absence of penalty (22.4%). This time 3 persons (2.4%) answered that the main factor for them to commit a plagiarism is to follow others example. Six persons (4.8%) mentioned "other," and added that they do not plagiarize at all (see Table 15).

Table 15. What is the main reason for you to plagiarize?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not having enough time	28	22.4	23.5	23.5
Not having enough skills in academic writing	5	4.0	4.2	27.7
The irrelevance of the task	9	7.2	7.6	35.3
Laziness	27	21.6	22.7	58.0
Following others' example	3	2.4	2.5	60.5
The indifferent attitude of the professors	19	15.2	16.0	76.5
The absence of penalty	28	22.4	23.5	100.0
Total	119	95.2	100.0	
Other	6	4.8		
Total	125	100.0		

To find out whether the format of the given tasks leads students to commit plagiarism, students were asked to answer whether they strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree that the uninteresting essence of the assigned tasks makes them plagiarize. The scale for the measure is from 1 to 4, where 4 denotes strongly agree and 1-strongly disagree. Thus, 64.8% of all participants agree that the uninteresting tasks can make them plagiarize, another 6.4% strongly agree with the statement, making it a total of 71.2% (see Table 16).

Table 16. Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that the uninteresting essence of the assigned tasks leads student to plagiarize?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly disagree	10	8.0	8.0	8.0
Disagree	26	20.8	20.8	28.8
Agree	81	64.8	64.8	93.6
Strongly agree	8	6.4	6.4	100.0
Total	125	100.0	100.0	

Focus group and in-depth interview results[2]

According to the Plagiarism Report of Khachmerouk Banavechayin Akoumb NGO the Armenian educational system does not consider plagiarism as a vital problem, since the rectors, provosts and instructors of various universities do not think that it is one of the most problematic issues that require an urgent solution. Therefore, it is not surprising, that this kind of attitude further deepens the problem.

It should be noted that all the instructors that have taken part in the research, acknowledged that during their working experience have come across different types of plagiarism, and the majority of the participants mentioned that plagiarism is a widespread phenomenon in Armenian universities. Some of the instructors even gave specific numbers. *"For about 80% of students' works can be considered as plagiarism. In every group only 3 or 4 people do an individual work and do not plagiarize."* (Instructor, in-depth interview participant)

Although instructors noted that plagiarism is present in all kinds of written works, they mentioned that it is more widely spread in the essay-type of works. Some of them even mentioned that students are keen to plagiarize more those works which are not related to their professional subjects.

The results of the five focus groups reviled the same picture. They do confirm that plagiarism is quite a widespread notion. *"Plagiarism makes me angry, because someone copies your ideas and thoughts. But on the other hand we ourselves while writing an essay do not say that we have taken this or that part from the other author, we just simply organize the ideas to make it fit with the overall topic."* (Student, focus group participant)

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[2] All the focus group and in-depth interview results are taken from the plagiarism report of Khachmerouk Banavechayin Akoumb NGO

Students mention that they plagiarize more in their essay, less in the term papers and final papers. However, they also mentioned that they plagiarize also in their master's essays.

Both students and professors call plagiarism as copy-paste action or just copying and, according to them, the main source for plagiarism is the Internet, books, academic journals, the works of other students who have already completed the same course and, of course, the offices which provide ready papers for very small amount of money.

The most widely spread opinion among instructors is that previously students copied from different book, whereas, currently plagiarizing has become easier, since it takes too little effort to find the relevant material from the Internet. As mentioned one of the participant of in-depth interviews; *"Plagiarism has always been present in the academic institutions of Armenia, but presently its manifestation has been changed. Previously students just copied from the book, later copied from the photocopies, but nowadays they students just download the whole written work from the internet."* (Instructor, in-depth interview participant)

It should be noted that instructors have mentioned that there are different manifestations of plagiarism; some students plagiarize the whole work and just add their name while submitting the work, the others make slight changes to the original text and just paraphrase the ideas and words of the original writer. As an example of plagiarism instructors have also mentioned translation from other languages; students translate either the whole work or a part of it and do not give any citation. Moreover, some of the professors mentioned that since the level of the quality of education presently has been going down they have to accept works which are full of plagiarism and be "thankful" that students have done such a "great" work like translating the text.

From the results of the focus groups it can be understood that students are more or less aware of plagiarism and realize that it dishonesty. The participant of in-depth interviews noted that usually first-year students have no idea about plagiarism, since they do not get any knowledge from the high-school.

Both professors and students agreed that there are cases when students unintentionally plagiarize. In other words, a student can take the idea of another author, put it in his/her work and does not realize he/she should give a citation. However, they also added that in the case of graduate students the case of unintentional plagiarism is excluded, since throughout the whole academic life students somehow get informed about plagiarism (from their classmates or directly from their supervisors).

However, especially based the focus group discussion it can be argued that during the early stages of the learning process at the universities the probability of the unintentional plagiarism is too high. For instance, according to the majority of the focus group participants, just giving the reference list at the end of the written work is enough to avoid plagiarism, therefore, there is no need to give citation in the text. There are also cases when students are not sure whether there is a need to cite the author in the case they paraphrased the text and not copied it directly.

The plagiarism report has also discussed how often instructors speak about plagiarism with their students. As focus group participants have noted that are very few professors who devote time during their lectures to plagiarism, its consequences and citation techniques. Moreover, as students have noted discussions about plagiarism are more of a personal matter, that is the majority of professors speak to their students about it only when they are supervising their term papers, final diploma papers of master's essays.

Concerning the penalties and punishment for plagiarism, the participants of the focus groups have mentioned that getting a lower grade for the plagiarism is impossible and it can be found in the "fantastic stories." Students could not even find an example when someone got punished for plagiarizing. Even, if the instructor finds the case of plagiarism he/she usually gives it back to the student and urges him/her to rewrite the paper excluding the plagiarized parts or adding the citations.

The same opinion has been expressed by the professors. They have mentioned that if they have to grade the plagiarized work as unsatisfactory, in some cases they have to do the same to the whole group, which, is of course, is impossible. *"Since the plagiarism is not considered as problem, professors as well as I accept the works which are full of plagiarism, and as the authorities of the university mention we should be thankful that students at least copy and present a final work."* (Instructor, in-depth interview participant)

Nearly none of the participants of in-depth interviews were aware whether they were any internal agenda in their academic institutions to prevent or punish the examples of plagiarism. This can once again prove that either there is no agenda at the Armenian universities or the instructors are not informed about it. In this matter the American University of Armenia and the Russian-Armenian Slavonic University are exceptions. At the American University of Armenia students take a course of academic writing before starting their graduate studies and learn how to avoid the plagiarism. Moreover, any student that commits a plagiarism can fail the course. In the case of Slavonic university, each time students are assigned to write a paper they get a special informative sheet of paper which informs students about different citation tools.

Speaking about the main causes of plagiarism it should also be taken into consideration that besides the Internet and different publications, there are also small offices usually located

very close to the universities which "sell" ready essays and term papers, which are, of course, full of plagiarism. Nearly, all participants of the focus groups have mentioned that these kind of services have a great demand among university students.

Moreover, it is a well-known fact the essays are the most common type of written assignments at the Armenian universities and not surprisingly they we can come across to different manifestations of plagiarism especially in this type of works. The essays are also the main "products" that the offices sell, since they are of a great demand among students.

"*Our educational system is like a situation, when we propose a student 10 different meals and make him eat all of them. It would be much better if we tell him to eat 4 meals and make other 2 for himself/herself. After graduating from the university a student goes to work somewhere and when he/she is told to make a meal, he/she answers that he/she is not the one to make a meal, he/she can only eat it.* (Instructor, in-depth interview participant)

Therefore, besides mentioning that the main reason for increasing incidence of plagiarism is the absence of informative tools, it should be noted that one of the main problems concerns to the fact that in the Armenian educational system the essay-type of papers are seen not as creating and developing individual, analytical way of thinking but as reproducing the existing knowledge. Both participants of the focus groups and interviews proved that in the Armenian universities students are not encouraged to express their viewpoints and opinions in their essays. Some students have even mentioned that there are instructors who express indifferent sometimes neglecting attitude towards the opinions of the students. "*We have professors who require biographic information, copied sentences from various sources. They require a very long copied written work which does not contain any opinion of the student at all and especially these kinds of works get higher scores.*" (Student, focus group participant)

The other side of the coin is that mostly the topics for the essays are of "abstract" notion and mostly descriptive. Thus, there is no room for doing an individual work, analyzing some phenomena and expressing viewpoints. As one of the participants of the focus groups has mentioned "*If you are writing about a clergy meeting there is no need and way to express your personal opinion. You are just required to present the key points of the meeting. It is not an interesting international question, upon which you can express you standpoint.*" (Student, focus group participant)

Moreover, at the Armenian universities students usually choose the topics for their papers from the fixed list of topics prepared by their departments. This put an additional burden on them, and they again face the tough job to write about topics which are in 90% of cases out of their academic interests. The only solution for them to deal with this problem again remains the plagiarism. This is a question of utmost importance which can be classified as one of the basic causes of academic dishonest in Armenian universities.

Nearly all the focus group participants have noted that usually professors do not read their essays. This factor also "motivates" students to plagiarize. "*As a rule, professors read one sentence from the introduction, one sentence from the conclusion and look into the bibliography to see whether students have used the assigned books.*" (Student, focus group participants)

Moreover, the instructors through different questions relating to the content of the essay try to understand how much student is familiar with the topic. "*I have got the highest grade from the History of Armenia not because the instructor have read and liked my essay, but because I was present at all the lectures and sometimes answered to the questions.*" (Student, focus group participants)

As the professors have noted during the interviews, reading all the essays in the case of a large group is impossible since they lack time and are always overloaded.

"*It is well-known fact that during the term paper or final essay defense students tell what they have written in their papers. That is, they copy from different sources and later tell the commission what they have copied, sometimes the commission asks questions*" (Instructor, in-depth interview participant)

During focus group discussions students have complained that apart from other factors they usually plagiarize because they do not have enough time. Since they are overloaded with various papers and usually have to write from 3 to 5 term papers each term they do not have time to write a proper term paper without plagiarizing. Furthermore, during the discussions it has become obvious that usually students wait until two weeks before the deadline to write their papers. Since it is extremely tough to manage to write all the required papers in a short period of time, students as a rule plagiarize and submit not-adequate papers.

Based on the plagiarism report result it can be assumed that the "tradition" to write essays comes from the high school. Pupils and later students are used to write different essays on abstract topics. Presently, with the help of the Internet, it has become much easier for them to copy-paste the required material from the Web and present as their own. As one of the participants of in-depth interviews mentioned; "*The children of my colleagues ask their mothers to download the material for their papers and write their names on the title page for them to hand in at school. In all this process importance is not given to the essence of the material but to the external beauty of the work. In our educational system not only do not we encourage individual creative work, but we even punish pupils and students for it.*" (Instructor, in-depth interview participant)

Analysis

For all of the data statistical tests were run to check whether students are aware of plagiarism, to find out in which universities students are more informed about plagiarism, whether the format of the given tasks leads students to plagiarize and whether the confidence of not being penalized leads students to plagiarize.

The first research question was: *Do students know what types of action constitute plagiarism?* To test whether there is a difference among students from different universities Chi-squares were run for all measures. Statistically significant differences were found in all cases. In Slavonic University all 25 respondents stated that they are informed about plagiarism by their university instructors. Whereas in SEUA there was quite reverse pattern, students mentioned that they have never been informed about plagiarism by their professors, neither in written form nor orally.

Statistically significant difference was also found in the case of the second measure: whether there are any informative seminars at the universities where students can learn about plagiarism. Thus, the majority of the students of Armenian universities said that there are no such seminars taking place at their universities. Even students of Slavonic University, who in the case of the first measure answered that they are informed about plagiarism by their instructors, denied the presence of the seminars. The reason, however, is that in Slavonic University every time when students should write a term paper they get a special guideline where all they get comprehensive information how to avoid plagiarism, how to use citation techniques and tools. In the rest of the universities no such actions are taking place, students are not even informed about citation tools orally.

Concerning the third measure: whether students know what kind of actions are considered to be a plagiarism a statistically significant difference was found as well. It became obvious that more than half of the respondents (70 persons) know what plagiarism actually is. It should be noted that in comparison to ASUE and SEUA, proportionally more students at Slavonic University, YSLU and YSU knew what actions constitute plagiarism.

For more precise findings concerning the level of knowledge about plagiarism, more specific measures were asked. Hence, a statistically significant difference was find out among representatives of different universities in the case of whether they consider taking the whole text from the Internet and presenting it as their own work as plagiarism. Only one person form State Linguistic University did not consider it as a plagiarism. The rest of the respondents were sure that taking the whole work and presenting it without any citation, that is just copying and pasting is a plagiarism.

As to the measure: taking some parts of the text from the Internet or from other sources without giving the citation, again statistically significant difference was found. Surprisingly, this time all the participants from SEUA agreed that it is an act of plagiarism. The huge majority of the respondents of other universities were informed that even taking some parts of the text without giving a proper citation is a plagiarism. Despite the fact that the students are not informed by faculty members through seminars about plagiarism, they can learn about it from their friends and peers.

A statistically significant difference was also found in the case of the measure: whether describing the ideas and thoughts of other authors with their own words without mentioning the source is considered as plagiarism by the students. Thus, the majority of the students of Slavonic University and ASUE were not informed that it is considered to be a plagiarism. Therefore, this

can be identified as one of the main causes of plagiarism. Students are not aware that changing the word of the others but presenting their whole idea is a plagiarism.

Hence, it should be noted that in different universities students have quite different levels of knowledge about plagiarism. Students of Slavonic University, comparably, are more aware about plagiarism than participants from other universities. While, most of the students are aware that taking a whole ready work from the internet and just presenting it as their own work is a plagiarism, they are not aware that just changing the content but preserving the idea without any citation is also a plagiarism. Therefore, it can be argued that the main reason is the absence of informative tools and the majority of students do not know what types of actions constitute plagiarism.

The second research question was: *What is the attitude of students towards plagiarism?* To answer this research question Chi-square test was run to find out whether students consider the plagiarism as dishonesty. A statistically significant difference was found. Hence, in the majority of universities students consider plagiarising as dishonesty; in the case of SEUA all students mentioned it as dishonesty, while in the case of Slavonic university more than half of the respondents denied it. Although, students are informed about plagiarism in their university they do not consider it as a bad thing and, moreover, think that there is nothing serious in taking other ideas and presenting them as theirs.

To have more precise answer for this research question ANOVA test was run to find out in what universities more students take great proportions of their works from the internet or from other sources. A statistically significant difference was found based on which it can be proved that students from Linguistic University tend to plagiarize more in their written works than representatives of other universities (mean=5.72). In contrast, students of ASUE plagiarise less.

This trend can be explained by the fact that in ASUE the vast majority of term papers are based on solving different mathematical or logical problems which cannot be found in the internet and, therefore, there is less room left for plagiarizing, while in the case of Linguistic University students can easily find their materials in electronic form in the World Wide Web.

However, it can be noted that overall students have a negative attitude towards plagiarising. The main reason can be that in the era of globalization and the Internet when the information is disseminated in a very high speed students are aware of some examples when people were recognized as guilty for plagiarizing and carried bad consequences, like in the case of the president of Hungary Pal Schmitt, who copied his dissertation from three sources and was stripped of his doctoral title by the academic senate of Semmelweis University (Bogar, 2012).

The third research question was: *Does the confidence of not being penalized lead students to plagiarize?* To test whether there is a relationship between the confidence of not being penalized and committing a plagiarism Pearson's product moment correlation and ANOA tests were run.

A statistically significant weak positive relationship was found (according to Pearson's product moment correlation test): how much it possible to be penalized and what proportion of the text is copied from the internet or from other sources (p=0.003), (r=0.264).

To have more specific answer to this research question ANOVA test was run as well, and, according to test results, it was found out that in YSU (mean=3.16) and Slavonic University (mean=3.04) it is more possible to get lower grade for plagiarism than in other universities. Comparably, it less possible to have lower marks for plagiarizing at SEUA.

Hence, it can be argued that the higher the confidence of not being penalized the greater the proportion of taking plagiarizing. Since, students are confident that they will not get lower

grade they easily take the whole, ready written work or vast majority of it from the Internet or other sources like books, academic journals, articles or even from the works of their peers and students who have previously taken the same course.

The fourth research question was: *Does the format of the given tasks lead student to commit plagiarism?* To answer to this question T-test was run and a statistically significant difference was found. Thus, it was found out that there is a relationship between the proportion of plagiarism in the written work and the interesting essence of the assigned tasks (mean=5.6296). Therefore, it can be argued that students are keener to plagiarize when the assigned written work is out of their scope of interests or when their choice of the topic is limited. Hence, they found it extremely tough to express enthusiasm towards the work which is uninteresting to them and to write a proper paper in a short period of time therefore the only thing which is usually left for them is to commit a plagiarism.

The hypothesis of this study is: *Plagiarism is a serious problem in Armenian universities.* From the answers to the research questions and focus group results it became obvious that the vast majority of students of Armenian universities are not aware of plagiarism. They are not informed which kinds of actions constitute plagiarism; they do not even know how to give citation. Moreover, they plagiarize and are not afraid of being punished for it, since they are confident that they will not get unsatisfactory, fail the course of at least get a lower grade. Besides, in the current situation when students usually have to write papers or essay on the topics which are out of their academic interests and are just assigned to them from the fixed list of topic prepared by the department of the whole faculty, student go to plagiarizing because it is not a big "deal" to navigate through the Internet for 10 to 30 minutes and find an appropriate paper which fits the topic.

Conclusion

From the reviewed literature review it became obvious that plagiarism is a very broad phenomena and it is connected with manifold factors. First of all, the digital revolution has made it easier for students to plagiarize. Using Internet search engines students can find information about nearly any topic they are interested. Therefore, the Internet is presently considered to be the main source for plagiarism. Moreover, it was found out that generally students' laziness, lax morals or ignorance of the rules are not the only reasons for plagiarizing.

Concerning the case of Armenian universities very complicating and contradictory results were found. In general, it can be argued that the majority of the students of the Armenian universities know what types of actions constitute plagiarism. However, the other side of the coin is to what extent they are aware of it, that is, what the average level of knowledge about plagiarism is. Nearly all students acknowledge that taking the whole work or some paragraphs of it without giving any citation is plagiarism. Unfortunately, the situation is quite annoying if we take into consideration the fact that more than half of the students are not aware that taking other authors' ideas, changing the words, in other words, just paraphrasing and again not putting any citation is plagiarism.

Hence, the main factors of the plagiarism at the Armenian universities can be identified as the lack of information, knowledge about plagiarism. As it was found out, in most of the universities there are no informative seminars where students can learn how to avoid plagiarism and different citation techniques. Moreover, from the conducted research it became evident that even instructors speak about plagiarism-related issues and concepts very rarely and have a very indifferent attitude towards the discussed academic dishonesty. Thus, there is a total absence of the information concerning this issue at the universities.

Therefore, as an answer to the first research question, whether students know what types of actions constitute plagiarism, it can be noted that generally students know what types of actions constitute plagiarism (though the levels of knowledge vary a lot). Unfortunately, the information they possess does not come from the academic institutions and, thus, can be wrong, bewildering and, therefore, can further deepen the problem.

Moreover, institutional reasons can be identified among the major causes of the plagiarism. A possible and reasonable institutional change can beneficially affect the whole process of addressing the issue.

Concerning the attitude of the students towards plagiarism, which constitutes the second research study of this policy paper, it should be mentioned that students acknowledge that plagiarizing is a vital academic dishonesty, and it can have a devastating effect on their academic studies and the whole career. However, this does not prevent them from plagiarizing and this is mainly connected with the answer of the third research question which studies the issue of the penalties of the present research.

Since there are absolutely no penalties and punishments for plagiarism at the academic institutions of the Republic of Armenia, students become more confident that they will not be penalized and plagiarize as much as they want. Therefore, the next major factor that leads to the increase of the incidence of plagiarism at the Armenian universities can be identified as the absence of punishment tools.

Both the focus group discussions and the survey data showed that in reality the format of the given tasks can also lead students to commit plagiarism. Since, it is hard for them to write several papers in a short period of time the uninteresting essence of the topic leads students to plagiarize more. Throughout the research it has become evident that at the Armenian universities

students have to write papers about the topics of the fixed lists prepared by their department. Very often these topics are about abstract phenomena in accordance to which students find extremely tough to make analysis and express their own critical viewpoints. Therefore, the only thing which is left for them is to plagiarize and submit a non-competent paper.

As to the hypothesis, whether the plagiarism is a serious problem in Armenian universities, it should be noted that it was proved, since the answers of the fours proposed research question clearly identify that plagiarism represents a huge problem in the whole educational system of Armenian. First of all it is not recognized by the academicians as a major challenge, which is a fundamental mistake, secondly there is a complete, even perfect absence of information connected to this academic dishonesty and, thirdly there are no penalties for plagiarizing. Therefore, it can be concluded that the plagiarism as an academic dishonesty is as a serious problem that the Armenian universities are currently facing.

Limitations

The analysis of the tests revealed some limitations. As for the first question, the firs and the most important limitation was the small sample size. Since the conducted survey was not representative and rather it was a pilot one, the clear representative image cannot be viewed. With bigger sample size more students would be involved which would give an immense opportunity to find more precisely the level of knowledge of the students about plagiarism, how much they are informed about it. It would also give a chance to understand how often and especially in which universities instructors are more open to discuss plagiarism-related issues. With bigger sample size the difference among students' attitudes towards plagiarism would also be more vivid.

The other very important limitation is the purposefully selected five universities. Studying only five universities is very little for drawing broad conclusions. For more appropriate results not only state universities should be involved in the survey but also private universities, because, currently private universities possess a huge number of students and their opinions would also be crucial in making final conclusions.

The final limitation is connected with the secondary source data. It would be much more beneficial if focus group discussions would involve also students from the American University of Armenia. Since the students of AUA are well-informed about plagiarism it would be useful to learn also their attitude towards this issue.

Hence, all of these limitations should be taken into account for further research. And for further research it will be reasonable to enlarge the number of variables. Since the plagiarism is a very broad phenomenon it would be useful to study more dependent and independent variables and find the existing or non-existing relationships among them. Inevitably, more variables and

therefore, more measurements would give stronger ground for making reasonable assumptions about the situation in the Armenian universities and find adequate solutions to combat plagiarism at the higher educational institutions of Armenia.

Recommendations

- The Ministry of Education should officially identify the plagiarism as one of the major academic dishonesties. Not only will this raise awareness towards the problem but also warn students that it is quite a serious "offence."

- Since there is a lack of knowledge about plagiarism at the Armenian universities, first of all common ground must be established at all academic institutions. This can be done through the Ministry of Education, that is, one all-recognized definition of plagiarism should be adopted to make clear for both academicians and students what plagiarism is and what kind of manifestations it can have.

- Different NGOs can have a great contribution to raise awareness towards this contemporary issue. Various seminars and workshops can be organized where plagiarism will be discussed thoroughly. Hypothetical cases can be discussed and through the help of the participants new solutions can be found.

- As it was found out the "tradition" of plagiarism comes from the high-schools. Therefore, to fully and effectively solve the problem the certain policies should be developed to combat this behavior from the high-school. Thus, when students will start their studies at higher academic institutions of Armenia they will already know that they should avoid plagiarism since it is a vital academic dishonesty and, which is more important, will have sufficient skills to write academic papers.

- Systematically colleges and universities should update their policies on academic honesty to include different sanctions, particularly punishment tools, regarding plagiarism, and they should regularly publish or otherwise draw attention to these policies.

- Since, there is a total absence of informative seminars about plagiarism at the Armenian universities the courses of academic writing will be an appropriate solution to it. It would be reasonable to take this course before starting the studies at the universities. Thus, students will learn different citation techniques.

- In the current situation when there are a lot of different reference styles students get confused trying to find which one to use and this can add an extra burden to the problem. Thus, not to deepen the problem even more one common reference style could be created to be used in all academic institutions in Armenia.

- Create a special handbook on academic dishonesty which will clearly portray the problem of plagiarism and its negative consequences. The handbook should be both for the students and their instructors.

- Plagiarism-checking software (in Armenian) can be created and used by both the universities and high-school to detect the cases of plagiarism. This will gradually decrease the incidence of the plagiarism and create a culture of individual and analytical thinking which is a long-term goal in the context of this problem.

- Departments can publish small brochures about citation techniques and give these to students every time they are writing a paper. This will add an extra "warning" and show the seriousness of the problem.

- As it was proposed in the plagiarism report of Khachmerouk Banavechayin Akoumb NGO special database should be created for each university where all the essays and papers will be kept. This will prevent students to use the use or plagiarize from their friends' papers who have previously taken the same course.

- Since it was found out that the uninteresting and abstract topics for essays and term papers can leads students to plagiarize, the departments of the universities should eliminate those fixed lists of topics and give freedom to students to choose any topic that is of interest to them and, of course, related to the course. The other solution can be to require the students to submit three topics, in order of preference, about which they have curiosity and later the instructors can discuss with them their topics and give useful advice. In this matter control the whole process of paper-writing and prevent the use of plagiarism as well.

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Appendix: Survey questionnaire

1. Have you ever been informed about plagiarism by your university instructors?

   _____Yes
   _____No
   _____Don't know/can't say

2. Are there any informative seminars at your university where students can learn about plagiarism?

   _____Yes
   _____No
   _____Don't know/can't say

3. Do you know what kind of actions can be considered as plagiarism?

   _____Yes
   _____No
   _____Don't know/can't say

4. In your opinion can the following actions be considered as plagiarism?

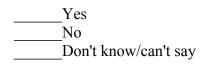|	Yes	No	Don't know/can't say
Taking the whole text from the Internet and presenting it as your own work as a plagiarism			
Taking some parts of the text from the Internet or from other sources without giving the citation			
Describing the ideas and thoughts of other authors with your own words without mentioning the source as plagiarism			

5. Do you consider plagiarism as dishonesty?

   _____Yes
   _____No
   _____Don't know/can't say

6.   While writing a paper what proportion of the text are you copying from the Internet or from other sources?

      Never
      10% no more
      10-30%
      30-50%
      50-80%
      80% and more
      Whole work

7.   Based on your student experience how much is it possible to be penalized for committing a plagiarism.

      Nery likely
      Likely
      Not likely
      Not likely at all

8.   While plagiarizing do you think that your work can be marked as unsatisfactory?

      Yes
      No
      Don't know/can't say
      Not plagiarizing at all

9.   Have you ever been reprimanded for plagiarizing in written works by your instructors?

      Yes
      No
      Don't know/can't say
      Not plagiarizing at all

10.   In which formats of written works do you plagiarize more? (choose only one answer):

Essays	
Term papers	
Thesis	
Don't know/can't say	
Not plagiarizing at all	

11. Do you think that the assigned tasks are relevant to you academic interests?

_____Yes
_____No
_____Don't know/can't say

12. In your opinion, what is the main factor for students to plagiarize? (choose only one answer)

Not having enough time	
Not having enough skills in academic writing	
The irrelevance of the task	
Laziness	
Following others' example	
The indifferent attitude of the professors	
The absence of penalty	
Other	

13. What is the main reason for you to plagiarize? (choose only one answer)

_____ Not having enough time
_____ Not having enough skills in academic writing
_____ The irrelevance of the task
_____ Laziness
_____ Following others' example
_____ The indifferent attitude of the professors
_____ The absence of penalty
_____Other

14. Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that the uninteresting essence of the assigned tasks leads student to plagiarize?

_____Strongly agree
_____ Agree
_____ Disagree
_____Strongly Disagree

15. How satisfied are you with the effectiveness of the credit system?

_____Very satisfied
_____Somewhat satisfied
_____Somewhat not satisfied
_____Not satisfied at all
_____Don't know/can't say

16.   Do you think the credit system is effective?

_____Very effective system
_____Somewhat effective system
_____Somewhat not effective system
_____Not effective system at all
_____Don't know/can't say

17.   How do you evaluate the effect of the credit system, on the quality of education?

_____Very positive
_____Somewhat positive
_____No effect
_____Somewhat negative
_____Very negative
_____Don't know/can't say

18.   How does the credit system affect the motivation of the students?

_____Very positive
_____Somewhat positive
_____No effect
_____Somewhat negative
_____Very negative
_____Don't know/can't say

19.   How does the credit system affect the advancement of the students?

      _____Very positive
      _____Somewhat positive
      _____No effect
      _____Somewhat negative
      _____Very negative
      _____Don't know/can't say

20.   Your gender, please.

      _____Male
      _____Female