

Psychology of Corrupt Behavior in the Armenian Higher Education System

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The President:

Prof. Dr. Bernhard Ehrenzeller

Ani Hovhannisyan
Psychology of Corrupt Behavior in the Armenian Higher Education System

*This thesis is dedicated to my family,
for their unconditional love and
immense trust in me.*

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Abstract

Corruption erodes education systems worldwide, and the former Soviet countries are among the most affected ones. Being a former Soviet Republic, Armenia is not an exemption. Corruption freely manifests itself in the Armenian Higher Educational System since the implemented anti-corruption practices have not been successful so far. Notwithstanding, only limited research has been done in the prevalence and harm of Educational Corruption in Armenia. This dissertation contributes to the ongoing Educational Corruption research worldwide and the approach is from a psychological perspective. For this purpose, this dissertation pioneers theory-driven research on corruption in Armenia, and uses the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) as well as the Model of Prospective Cognition and Psychological Dynamics as contextual frameworks. Using the term Academic Misconduct as a proxy for Educational Corruption, the research investigates the following main question: *How do individual perceptions coupled with a university's anti-corruption performance impact the educational actors' intentions to engage in academic misconduct?*

To provide a comprehensive answer to the posed question, I follow the Mixed Methods approach and conducted qualitative and quantitative analysis with faculty members, administrators, and students from three Armenian public universities. The integrated findings of this dissertation indicate that cheating and plagiarism are the most common forms of Academic Misconduct, followed by favoritism. These forms of misconduct occur in corrupt interactions between the administration and students, the administration and faculty members, the faculty members and students, the faculty members and colleagues. Depending on the type of interaction, decision making processes entail complex mental simulations and social-psychological dynamics. The administration's decisions not to fight against these practices are mostly guided by the urgency to suppress student dismissals and by the pressure to follow social norms. The faculty members' decisions to engage in misconduct are guided by fear and frustration, coupled with the need to follow socially acceptable rules. The students' decisions to engage in cheating and plagiarism are mostly guided by their perceptions that Academic Misconduct is a widespread practice, which is relatively easy to perform and can remain unpunished.

Overall, the findings indicate that Academic Misconduct is not only perceived as a broad, common, and accepted practice that is not difficult to carry out, but that in most cases, it will go unpenalized, is a justifiable action, and even the *right thing* to do. As a result, in conditions of malfunctioning anti-corruption rules and regulations, and strong social norms that encourage corrupt practices, Academic Misconduct endures in the Armenian Higher Education System.

Zusammenfassung

Korruption untergräbt weltweit Bildungssysteme und ehemalige Sowjetstaaten gehören zu den meist Betroffenen. Als eine dieser ist Armenien keine Ausnahme. Korruption manifestiert sich im armenischen Hochschulsystem frei, da umgesetzte Antikorruptionsmassnahmen bisher nicht erfolgreich waren. Nichtsdestotrotz wurde nur sehr wenig zur Grössenordnung der Bildungskorruption in Armenien und dem resultierenden Schaden geforscht. Diese Dissertation trägt auf dem Ansatz der psychologischen Perspektive zur laufenden Forschung im Bereich der Bildungskorruption bei. Sie leistet Pionierarbeit bei der theoriegeleiteten Korruptionsforschung in Armenien und nutzt dabei die Theorie des geplanten Verhaltens (TGV) sowie das Modell der prospektiven Kognition und der psychologischen Dynamik als kontextbezogene Rahmenbedingungen. Unter Verwendung des Begriffs "akademisches Fehlverhalten" als Stellvertreter für Korruption im Bildungsbereich untersucht die Studie die folgende Hauptfrage: "Wie wirken sich individuelle Wahrnehmungen in Verbindung mit der Antikorruptionsleistung einer Universität auf die Absichten der Bildungsakteure aus, sich auf akademisches Fehlverhalten einzulassen?"

Um eine umfassende Antwort auf die gestellte Frage zu geben, wird dem Ansatz der gemischten Methodik gefolgt und eine qualitative und quantitative Analyse mit Fakultätsmitgliedern, Verwaltungsverantwortlichen und Studenten von drei öffentlichen armenischen Universitäten durchgeführt. Die Ergebnisse dieser Dissertation zeigen, dass Betrug und Plagiat die häufigsten Formen akademischen Fehlverhaltens sind, gefolgt von Bevorzugung. Diese Formen des Fehlverhaltens treten in Interaktionen zwischen der Verwaltung, Studierenden und Fakultätsmitgliedern auf. Entscheidungsprozesse beinhalten je nach Art der Interaktion unterschiedliche sozialpsychologische Dynamiken. Die Untätigkeit der Verwaltung wird hauptsächlich von der Not geleitet, den Austritt von Studenten zu unterbinden, sowie vom Druck, sozialen Normen zu folgen. Die Entscheidungen der Fakultätsmitglieder, sich auf Fehlverhalten einzulassen, werden von Angst und Frustration geleitet, verbunden mit der Notwendigkeit, sozialverträgliche Normen zu befolgen. Die Entscheidungen der Studenten, sich auf Betrug und Plagiate einzulassen, richten sich hauptsächlich nach ihrer Auffassung, dass akademisches Fehlverhalten weit verbreitet und relativ einfach durchzuführen ist und ungestraft bleibt.

Insgesamt zeigen die Ergebnisse, dass akademisches Fehlverhalten nicht nur als umfassende, verbreitete, akzeptierte, einfach durchzuführende und ungestrafte Praxis wahrgenommen wird. Vielmehr bleibt es in den meisten Fällen ungestraft, wird gerechtfertigt und verkörpert sogar das *richtige Verhalten*. Infolgedessen bleibt das akademische Fehlverhalten im armenischen Hochschulsystem aufgrund fehlerhafter Antikorruptionsnormen und aufgrund starker sozialer Normen, die korrupte Praktiken fördern, bestehen.

Acronyms

CHEA	Council for Higher Education Accreditation
CPI	Corruption Perception Index
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
EU	European Union
GCB	Global Corruption Barometer
GPA	Grade Point Average
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Educational Institution
ICR	Inter-Coder Reliability
IIEP	International Institute of Educational Planning
MMR	Mixed Methods Research
QCA	Qualitative Content Analysis
TI	Transparency International
TPB	The Theory of Planned Behavior
TRA	Theory of Reasoned Action
UAI	Uncertainty Avoidance Index
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WJB	World Justice Project

Introduction

Corruption in education is a global issue. Unfortunately, it manifests itself almost in every culture throughout the world. The cost of Educational Corruption is high. It limits equal access and the quality of education, lowers public trust, erodes confidence in the value of a university's diploma as well as affects a person's values and life perceptions.

Existing research in the field so far shows that Post-Soviet countries are among those where Educational Corruption is an urgent challenge to overcome. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, corruption emerged as a crucial issue in the former Soviet Republics. During last two decades, scholars have been actively studying the peculiarities of this phenomenon worldwide, particularly in Post-Soviet countries (Heyneman, 2004, 2007, 2010, 2014; Temple & Petrov, 2004; Osipian, 2008, 2008a, 2009, 2009a, 2009b, Hallak & Poisson, 2007; Rumyantzeva, 2015; Denisova-Schmidt, 2016, 2017). One of the most practical definitions is provided by Osipian (2007) who states that "corruption in Higher Education as a system of informal relations established to regulate unsanctioned access to material and nonmaterial assets through abuse of the office of public or corporate trust" (p.315). Scholars distinguish between various forms of educational corruption, among them: embezzlement, bribery, fraud, extortion, favoritism, nepotism, cheating, plagiarism, ethical misconduct, breach of contract, and private tutoring (Amudsen, 2000, Hallak & Poisson, 2007, Osipian, 2008, Bray, 2003). These forms of educational corruption manifest themselves in corrupt relationships established between various groups of educational actors.

Armenia, a former Soviet Republic, did not escape corruption. During the transition period after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Armenian Higher Education System experienced profound structural changes. Universities were not ready to face the challenges that globalization, decentralization, and massification posed for Higher Education; neither were they ready for their new-found autonomy. Among various managerial challenges, corruption rose as a harmful issue at different educational levels. So far, several attempts have been made to fight against Educational Corruption. These initiations, however, have not been successful due to their declarative and generic nature. Only limited research has been conducted to examine corruption in the Armenian Higher Education System (OSCE, 2010, Aslanyan *et al.*, 2010, Avetisyan, 2014, Milovanovitch *et al.*, 2015). It is important to mention that recently, though, there is rising interest among students to study academic corruption in higher education within the framework of their Master theses (Hovakimyan, 2012, Avagyan, 2012) or other research projects (Garoyan *et al.*, 2015, OSF Armenia).

Nevertheless, the existing research on Educational Corruption in Armenia is scarce and does not provide a comprehensive understanding of this complex phenomenon. Further research is needed to examine the reasons and the domains where corruption occurs, to identify the main influential factors that have direct or indirect influences on its endurance, the relationship between current educational challenges and corruption, and the reasons why universities struggle so much to fight anti-corruption. It is important to address these topics for the sake of designing successful interventions to prevent and combat corruption in Armenian universities. This dissertation aims to move forward the Educational Corruption research in general, and particularly for the case of Armenia. While the economic and political aspects of Educational Corruption have been the main focus for scholars, the psychology of corrupt behavior remains understudied. To contribute to the Educational Corruption research from a psychological perspective, this dissertation has a theory-driven nature. So far, research has mainly addressed the demographic and situational factors of the problem in question, whereas studies that are guided by a certain theoretical framework are rare. Nevertheless, theory-driven studies are helpful since they enable a context-specific and thorough examination of this perplexing phenomenon (Stone *et al.*, 2009). Hence, this dissertation relies on the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) and the model of Prospective Cognition and Psychological Dynamics (Köbis, *et al.*, 2015) as contextual frameworks for studying the corrupt behaviors of educational actors. This study focuses on the educational actors' perceptions of such corrupt actions as cheating, plagiarism, nepotism, and favoritism as well as bribery performed by students, faculty members, and the university administration. Given this, during the empirical stages of my research, the term Academic Misconduct is used as a proxy for Educational Corruption. In contrast to the umbrella term Educational Corruption, the term Academic Misconduct is more context-specific and refers to corrupt behaviors performed during various educational processes such as retention, assessment, and graduation. Nevertheless, the term Educational Corruption is used in the theoretical part in its broad sense.

Based on the extensive literature review, and on existing research on Academic Misconduct in Armenian Universities, this research raises the assumption that the lack of state funding puts Armenian public universities in a state of conflict of interests, which has the potential to turn into various corrupt practices. This condition constrains a university's anti-corruption actions. Moreover, university administrators not only do not fight, but also create possibilities for Academic Misconduct to take place by not properly investing in and improving anti-corruption regulations and/or Codes of Conduct/Ethics. It is also assumed that these conditions might further foster possibilities for various corrupt practices since the educational actors might be inclined to think that academic misconduct can remain unpunished. Guided by these assumptions, this dissertation poses the following research question: *How do individual perceptions coupled with a university's anti-corruption performance impact the educational actors' intentions to engage in academic misconduct?*

A Mixed Methods Research (MMR) design will be provided to answer the research question. This dissertation is one of the few cases that brings together the perspectives of three groups of educational actors within a single study, namely students, faculty members, and the university administration. Moreover, it is the first time that a mixed methods research design is used to investigate Academic Misconduct in Armenia.

Hence, following the principles of equal-status and concurrent-independent Mixed Methods Design (Schoonenboom and Johnson, 2017), both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used to study the educational actors' decision-making processes. More specifically, a qualitative study was conducted with faculty members and administrators in three Armenian Universities. Qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted to assess the perceptions of these groups of educational actors towards cheating, plagiarism, nepotism/favoritism, and bribery. The sample of the quantitative study consists of students from the same public universities. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) questionnaire was used to examine student attitudes, subjective norms, control beliefs, and intentions with regards to cheating and plagiarism. To understand which one of these factors strongly impacts student decisions regarding engaging in cheating and plagiarism, multiple linear regression analysis were conducted. The results of both approaches have been integrated and presented as final conclusions.

This dissertation deepened the conversation regarding Academic Misconduct in four theoretical and four practical chapters. Part I introduces the theoretical foundations of the thesis. Chapter 1 discusses the phenomenon of corruption in general, the required considerations when defining corruption, and its complex and context-specific nature. This chapter also describes the current available means to measure and successfully combat corruption. Chapter 2 focuses specifically on Educational Corruption. Based on an extensive literature review, it provides definitions, forms and domains as well as the main groups of influential factors that lead to its manifestation. The chapter also discusses why it is important to fight Educational Corruption and how to achieve this goal. Chapter 3 reflects on the recent changes and challenges in the Armenian Higher Education system that directly or indirectly create opportunities for Academic Misconduct to remain and prosper. This chapter addresses the current state of research regarding Academic Misconduct in Armenia and poses the assumptions and the research question of this dissertation. Chapter 4 gives detailed explanations of the two theoretical frameworks and discusses why they are a good fit for the current research.

Part II presents the methodology and research design. Chapter 5 describes the peculiarities of mixed methods research design and explains why it is beneficial for this dissertation. The methods and the samples of the qualitative and quantitative studies are presented respectively.

Part III offers an empirical analysis of the qualitative and quantitative studies. Chapter 6 presents the process of the qualitative content analysis conducted separately for three different

public universities and provides a summary for each of them. Chapter 7 describes the quantitative analysis on the peculiarities of student decision-making processes regarding cheating and plagiarism. Chapter 8 is the conclusion section, which presents the integrated conclusions of the qualitative and quantitative studies and provides a comprehensive model on the institutional and social-psychological characteristics of Academic Misconduct. Anti-corruption and integrity strengthening suggestions are then provided based on these findings. The final sections of the chapter addresses the theoretical and practical implications as well as the study limitations and suggestions for future research.

In sum, this dissertation covers the key issues necessary to consider while investigating the complex phenomenon of Educational Corruption. It aims to serve as a reliable source for future research on this vital topic for Armenia. Moreover, it contains helpful insights for all the educational actors to raise their awareness and educate themselves on the peculiarities of Academic Misconduct. University administrators can particularly benefit from these findings to design evidence-based anti-corruption regulations.

Part I – Theoretical foundations

1. Corruption - a brief introduction to a broad issue

“With corruption there is no sustainable development.”

José Ugaz Chair of Transparency International

On December 8th, 2018, on the eve of the International Anti-Corruption Day UN Secretary-General António Guterres tweeted: “Corruption is present in all countries, robbing societies of schools, hospitals and other vital services”¹ and made an encouraging call to stand for integrity. This was a wake-up alarm for united action. Notwithstanding, after various international and national efforts to curb corruption, it continues to be a dangerous threat for a state as well as human development, and for economic, social and political growth. In the 21st century, it is more than ever important to fight corruption. Now, when the world is facing global challenges, countries must first free themselves from corruption to become immune and better prepared for those challenges in a sustainable way, because as Huguette Labelle states “fighting against corruption is not an end in itself, but there is a fight in social justice, for peace and security”². Indeed, anti-corruption measures are at the top of agendas of many countries across the world, international and national organizations, academia, policymakers, civil society, and mass media.

To fight against something, first of all, it is important to understand it in detail, then to be able to measure it, and only after these steps can one design and develop combatting mechanisms.

1.1. Corruption and its definition - what do we know so far?

The concept of corruption itself is broad, thus, it is challenging to give a single and comprehensive definition. The root of the word “corruption” itself comes from the Medieval Latin word “*corruptio*”, which means “moral decay, wicked behavior, putridity, rottenness” (Johnston, 1996, p.322 as cited in Osipian 2008). Gardiner (1993) points out the major issues of defining corruption. The first one is that there are some complications that would seem to be similar, but in fact are different problems. By stating this, he distinguishes corruption and similar concepts such as abuse, fraud, and organizational crime. The second consideration is that there are “important differences among “corruption” as it is defined in the official laws of nations, “corruption” as it affects the public, and “corruption” as it is defined by public opinion, by the people who are both

¹ <https://twitter.com/antonioguterres/status/1071456623011352576>

² <https://iaccseries.org/blog/iacc-2018-concludes-what-are-the-next-steps/>

the ultimate authorities in democratic nations and the ones who by their complacency and their collusion may contribute to corruption taking place or who by their vigilance and integrity may assist authorities in monitoring public officials” (Gardiner, 1993, as cited in Heidenheimer & Johnston 2002, p.25). Furthermore, the third challenge is the differences in corruption among nations (Gardner, 1993, as cited in Heidenheimer & Johnston 2002). It is also important to notice that the definition of corruption differs among the areas where it manifests itself. Heidenheimer and Johnston (2002) mention that contemporary social science scholars are inclined to define corruption in three types of models. The first one is the so-called “public-office-centered definitions”, when scholars (D. Bayley, G. Myrdal, J. Nye) define corruption in the context of the duties and the functions of the public office. The second group is named “market-centered definitions” (N. Leff, T. Klaveren) which relate to “demand, supply, and exchange concepts derived from economic theory” (Heidenheimer & Johnston, 2002, p.7). The third group of definitions called “public-interest-centered” definitions try to discuss the problem of corruption with regard to public interest, as the scholars holding this position state that “public interest is not only still useful but necessary to illustrate the essence of concepts like corruption” (Heidenheimer & Johnston, 2002, p.9).

Indeed, defining corruption is not an easy task. As Waite and Allen note “Agreed-on definitions are rare, definitions of corruption run the gamut from being too broad as to be rendered relatively useless to being too narrow and thus be applicable to only limited, rare, well-defined cases” (Waite & Allen, 2003, p.282). One of the simplest definitions is provided by Palmier (1983) who notes that corruption “is the use of public office for private advantage” (Palmier, 1983, p.207 as cited in Temple & Petrov, 2004, p.85). Waite and Allen (2003) are more inclined to state a broad and social approach considering corruption as “... any use of power or position through discrete acts or behavior(s) that benefit an individual, group, or organization...benefits derived through corruption can be other than financial” (Waite & Allen, 2003, p.282). Sayed and Bruce (1998) note that “a corrupt act involves at least two parties (i.e. a ‘corrupter’ and a ‘corruptee’) and an exchange of some benefit that is not legally required in return for favorable treatment with regards to the discharging of some powers or responsibilities of an office” (Sayed & Bruce 1998, p.4). Coming to a more working definition, they argue that “corruption is any illegal conduct or misconduct involving the use of occupational power for personal, group or organisational gain” (Sayed & Bruce, 1998, p.12).

Transparency International considers corruption as “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain” and classifies it “as grand, petty and political, depending on the amounts of money lost and the sector where it occurs”³. Another definition is offered by Nye (1967), who states that

³ <http://www.transparency.org/glossary/term/corruption>

“corruption is behavior which deviates from the normal duties of a public role because of private-regarding (family, close private clique), pecuniary or status gains, or violates rules against the exercise of certain types of private-regarding influence. This includes such behavior as bribery (use of reward to pervert the judgment of a person in a position of trust); nepotism (bestowal of patronage by reasons of ascriptive relationship rather than merit); and misappropriation (illegal appropriation of public resources for private-regarding use)” (Nye, 1967, p.419, as cited in Osipian, 2009, pp.183-184). Gardiner (1993) partly agrees with this definition, particularly with the notion of “public role” as the behavior can be considered as corrupt only when it involves an official’s public role. However, he states that Nye’s definition has two main limitations. First of all, “the requirement of personal gain” does not cover the situations where the goal of the abuse is to benefit the official’s political party, ethnic group, etc., rather than the official and the officials’ family “(as cited in Heidenheimer & Johnston, 2002, p.25). The second limitation is concerning the requirement that the “behavior is deviated from normal duties”, and Gardiner argues with this statement that there are differences among nations with regards as to what they consider as corruption. These “normal duties” vary across nations and governments as “for an official in one country it (“normal duties”) may include accepting a “gift” or making a decision even if it involves a conflict of interest” (Gardiner, 1993, as cited in Heidenheimer & Johnston, 2002, p.26). Indeed, corruption is a complex phenomenon, and as Osipian (2008) notes, discussions of corruption should be field specific. Context related discussions and treatments would enhance the chances to make the issue in question more precise and manageable.

As we can notice, all the above-mentioned definitions emphasize that corruption is an act power violations to obtain private gain in a broader sense of the word private. This gain is not always monetary, as it could be expected. It also can occur in forms of receiving desirable status, position, etc., both for the person who is directly engaged in a corrupt action, also for his/her family members and/or favorite ones. Moreover, the private gain does not need to be always personal. At the same time, these explanations of corruption are quite flexible and provide opportunities to apply them in observations of this phenomenon in specific fields.

1.2. Forms and measurements of corruption - what and how do we track?

Corruption often is understood as bribery, however, this is a misperception. Bribery is only one of many forms of corruption. The typology of corruption includes, but it is not limited to the following forms of corrupt practices:

Bribery – the offering, promising, giving, accepting, or soliciting of an advantage as an inducement for an action which is illegal, unethical, or a breach of trust. Inducements take the form of gifts, loans, fees, rewards, or other advantages (taxes, services, donations, favors, etc.)⁴ Promising or giving bribes is considered an “active bribery”, whereas receiving is “passive bribery”. This does not necessarily mean that a passive briber has taken no initiative, in many cases he or she may have demanded the bribe in the first place⁵. *Kickbacks* and *facilitation payments* are also common forms of bribery. The former refers to the bribe being paid after the fact for an undue favor or service (e.g., a company that receives a government contract might send the responsible official regular payoffs for the duration of the contract)⁶. The latter refers to a small bribe, also called a “speed” or “grease” payment; made to secure or expedite the performance of a routine or necessary action to which the payer has legal or other entitlement⁷.

Fraud – an economic crime⁸, an offense of intentionally deceiving someone to gain unfair or illegal advantage (e.g., financial, political or otherwise)⁹.

Embezzlement – when a person holding office in an institution, organization, or company dishonestly and illegally appropriates, uses or traffics the funds and goods they have been entrusted with for personal enrichment or other activities¹⁰.

Extortion – act of utilizing, either directly or indirectly, one’s access to a position of power or knowledge to demand unmerited cooperation or compensation as a result of coercive threats.¹¹

Conflicts of interests – a conflict between an entrusted duty on the one hand, and the private interest of the duty-bearer on the other hand. The existence of this private interest could improperly influence the performance of entrusted responsibilities.¹²

Favoritism, Nepotism, Cronyism – another group of terms that are often used interchangeably. However, they have nuances in definitions. Favoritism generally refers to the

⁴ <https://www.transparency.org/glossary/term/bribery>

⁵ <https://www.u4.no/terms#passive-bribery>

⁶ <https://www.u4.no/terms#kickback>

⁷ https://www.transparency.org/glossary/term/facilitation_payments

⁸ <https://www.u4.no/terms#fraud>

⁹ <https://www.transparency.org/glossary/term/fraud>

¹⁰ <https://www.transparency.org/glossary/term/embezzlement>

¹¹ <https://www.transparency.org/glossary/term/extortion>

¹² <https://www.u4.no/terms#conflict-of-interest>

biased distribution of resources based on personal preference. Nepotism is a form of favoritism involving family relationships in which someone exploits his or her authority to procure jobs or other favors for relatives. When this treatment is extended to friends and associates, the appropriate term is cronyism¹³.

The list of these forms could be continued. Corruption is a complex and flexible phenomenon, depending on its context, it has an ability to shift its forms of manifestation. This complexity and secretive character of corruption makes it even more difficult to tackle and measure. Corruption *per se* is hard to measure, but the perception of it, is indeed measurable, at least to some extent. The most famous measures of corruption so far are the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) and the Global Corruption Barometer (GCB) by Transparency International (TI).

Since 1995, the CPI¹⁴ annually ranks countries according to the extent to which corruption is perceived to exist in a country. CPI is a “composing index, drawing on 16 different polls from 10 independent institutions” (Hallak and Poisson, 2007, p.38). It uses the scale from 0-100, where 0 stands for highly corrupt and 100 stands for very clean, to show and compare the extend of corruption among the participating countries. The CPI is based on perceptions of particular groups of people, such as academics, risk analysts, and corporate executive. The GCB (2013) is the largest survey conducted so far, and tracks public opinion on corruption throughout the world. More specifically, 114,000 persons from 107 countries were asked about their direct experience with corruption, particularly with active/passive bribery¹⁵.

Among other important corruption perception measures are the Worldwide Governance Indictors (World Bank)¹⁶, the Index of Public Integrity (EU)¹⁷, the World Justice Project Rule of Law Index (WJI)¹⁸, and Global Integrity¹⁹.

What unites these measures is their primary objective to shed light on the level of corruption and make it visible to some extent. By doing so, those corruption measures enable governments and other responsible actors to understand the issue of corruption, its forms, and domains of manifestation as well as to develop and implement anti-corruption remedies correspondingly. Overall, the primary purpose of those various corruption measures is to push countries towards transparent and accountable governance.

¹³ <https://www.u4.no/terms#nepotism>

¹⁴ https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2017

¹⁵ <https://www.transparency.org/gcb2013>

¹⁶ <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/WGI/#home>

¹⁷ <https://integrity-index.org/>

¹⁸ <https://worldjusticeproject.org/our-work/wjp-rule-law-index/wjp-rule-law-index-2017%E2%80%93932018>

¹⁹ <https://www.globalintegrity.org/>

1.3. Fighting corruption- is it even possible?

“Every week at least one journalist is killed in a country that is highly corrupt.”²⁰

“In 2017, 30 children lost their lives in 48 hours at a hospital in Uttar Pradesh, India, because of corruption in the procurement of oxygen cylinders.”²¹

“Earthquake doesn’t kill people, corruption does... Engineers confirm that most of the houses that collapsed during the April 2015 earthquake were built without proper design, and with poor quality construction material.”²²

These examples of corrupt practices shed light on the real cost of the disease called corruption. The latter is a common problem across the world, found among both the public and private sectors. States, institutions, organizations, and individuals can all be affected by corruption in a particular way, to a certain degree. Corruption negatively affects economic growth, democracy, and governance. It lowers public trust in the state, institutions, and in their services. Moreover, it has a negative impact on individual beliefs and values in general. Most of the time, it is ordinary people who are the direct victims of either grand or petty corruption in everyday life. A question might arise, if corruption is so harmful, then why does it persist in the 21st century? If approached very broadly, one of the answers could be that corruption is an attractive and comparably easy way to achieve the desired results with minimum efforts and resources. Another answer to the above-posed question is that most countries and societies have not succeeded with effective anti-corruption cures and pathways so far. Although corruption is a worldwide phenomenon, it manifests itself in different ways, depending on the context. That is why it is difficult and sometimes even dangerous to take the successful anti-corruption models of certain countries and apply them in some other societies. Although extremely difficult, time and energy consuming, the research shows, that the fight against corruption is possible, and indisputably, it is worth it. Until now, various interested actors (*see* Table 1), who are key-players in anti-corruption around the world, have designed, developed, and implemented a large variety of strategies and mechanism to combat corruption.

²⁰ https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2017

²¹ <https://www.u4.no/topics/health/basics#basic-guide-to-corruption-and-anti-corruption-efforts-in-the-health-sector>

²² <https://www.nepalitimes.com/from-the-nepali-press/earthquake-doesnt-kill-people-corruption-does/>

Table 1. Key actors involved in the anti-corruption fight

National development agencies	The German Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development (BMZ), the Danish Agency for Development Assistance (DANIDA), the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands (MinBuZA), the Norwegian Agency for development cooperation (NORAD) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).
Development banks	World Bank, Asian Development Bank.
International Organizations and Networks	The UN, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), OECD, International Group for Anti-Corruption Coordination (IGAC) and the Utstein group (U4).
Civil society organizations	The Soros Foundation (Open Society Institute/OSI) and Transparency International (TI).

Source: Hallak and Poisson, 2007 (pp.48-49).

Many countries have tried to curb corruption, however, only some of them (*e.g.*, Nordic Countries, New Zealand, Canada, *etc.*) have succeeded in this fight so far. The results of the CPI (2017) are quite frightening. None of the 180 countries have scored 100, which is the best corruption free score. More than two-thirds of the countries scored below 50, with an average score of 43. This means that most of the countries are still struggling with corruption. Profound tools and measures must be introduced and consistently implemented to succeed in this struggle.

Up to now, governments, international anti-corruption agencies, and academics have come up with various approaches and guidelines to fight, prevent and/or cure corruption that can be summarized as follows:

Political will - no matter how brilliant is the anti-corruption idea, its proper and effective implementation would be almost impossible without a strong and profound leadership, which in this context is a synonym for political will. Political will is considered as a highly important determinant in anti-corruption actions (Rotberg, 2017; Brinkerhoff, 2000). It is a “specific core quality that leaders in charge of countries or regions employ to attempt to transform existing political cultures – to try to inculcate new, uplifting norms. Political will is the exercise of political leadership to influence, direct, or alter public choice outcomes within a particular contextual situation” (Rotberg, 2017, p.46). This definition puts the main responsibility to manage and

proceed with political will on an individual leader's own volition and intent. In contrast, some critics argue that political will is more of a governmental than a personal component, by stating that "only dictators can force their preferences on entire polities" (Rotberg, 2017, p.46). Many researchers, however, give a central role to individual leaders when defining political will. Brinkerhoff (2000) also provides a leader-centered definition when stating that political will is "the commitment of actors to undertake actions to achieve a set of objectives - in this case anti-corruption policies and programmes - and to sustain the costs of those actions over time" (p.242). Furthermore, he points out that "this commitment is manifested by elected or appointed leaders and public agency senior officials" (p.242). Throughout history, political will, was one of the main success factors of historical leaders such as Nelson Mandela, US presidents Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt (Rotberg, 2017). In the context of its use in anti-corruption actions in the modern world, political will has been proven to be a central factor for successful anti-corruption fights in those countries that have shown drastic improvements and successful results (e.g., Denmark, The Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, New Zealand and Australia, Canada, *etc.*). Political will solely is not sufficient to curb corruption, but it is paramount for the success of various other anti-corruption actions, as Rotberg (2017) mentions, "rarely do effective, sustainable, remedial actions occur without the exercise of consummate political will on the part of a national or regional political chief executive" (p.45).

Deep Democratization – we learn from the successful cases that to make the best use of strong political volition, it is also important to bring more actors into the anti-corruption game. Johnson (2014) introduces the concept of deep democratization, which is an essential requirement for lasting corruption control. By using this term, Johnson invites attention to a central point that "deep democratization does not mean that democracy itself, or processes like competitive elections, will control corruption" (p.3). Moreover, he explains that "it is a continuing process of building workable rules and accountability by bringing more voices and interests into the governing process" (p.4). On the one hand, deep democratization "draws force for many levels of society, reflecting the lasting interests of the humblest as well as the elites" (p.4). On the other hand, it also "extends deep into the institutions and processes of government, making those social interests a factor in policy-making and implementation, not just slogans at election time" (p.4). The World Bank also supports this statement by labeling one of the ten guidelines for successful anti-corruption actions, "Power of the People"; adding that it is beneficial to "create pathways that give citizens relevant tools to engage and participate in their governments – identify priorities, problems and find solutions."²³

²³ <http://blogs.worldbank.org/governance/here-are-10-ways-fight-corruption>

Ethical Universalism – the transition from corrupt to non-corrupt state/society happens slowly, as it requires not only structural changes in politics, government, institutions and/or organizations, but also a change of national mindset. Such a transition requires time until people become educated with new laws, regulations, rules, and guidelines provided by the “owner” of the political will aiming to control, prevent and/or punish corruption. Also, time is needed to prepare the public to change and adapt to new beliefs and behavioral practices in any given situation. This consistent shift of cultural mindset is described using the term ethical universalism. Rotberg (2017) explains that “ethical universalism presumes that all inhabitants of a jurisdiction will be threatened fairly, equally, and tolerantly, and the groups large and small can anticipate receiving similar rights and privileges” (p.37). Fisman and Golden (2017) also provide supportive insights, referring to corruption as an “equilibrium, or a set of shared expectations about how to behave. Reducing corruption requires changing expectations. And doing this requires creating new beliefs and changing common understanding about how to behave, which in turn means that effective anticorruption activities involve groups of people operating in public, rather than individual moralism” (p.246). They additionally discuss the cases of the pioneer countries who succeed in the anti-corruption fight, and argue that positive change was possible also as a result of long years of persistent political will and the shared perception of acceptable and non-acceptable practices, norms, and beliefs.

For successful anti-corruption remedies, it is important that the whole of society, or the vast majority, have profound education on the negative impact of various corrupt practices in the everyday life of individuals. This education should guide society to the point where it resists complying with corrupt enforcement, be that political or institutional corruption. Individuals in corruption-intolerant societies should have deep beliefs that all the other members of that society are also against corrupt practices too. In other words, they have a shared understanding of socially acceptable and non-acceptable practices. Social norms have been at the center of attention of social science researchers while studying the concept of corruption. I will discuss the role of social norms in making corrupt decisions more in detail in Chapter 4.

Laws and regulations – it is not a matter of dispute that laws and regulations are crucial in anti-corruption actions. The laws that define the variety of illegal anti-corruption actions also regulate the punishment and sanction procedures in case of corruption. However, it is neither the existence of the laws and regulations *per se* that allow to successfully curb corruption, nor the extend of how well and precise they are defined (Rotberg, 2017). In contrast, it is about “how political leaders choose to use whatever legal armaments they possess – that the extent to which corruption flourishes or subsides” (Rotberg, 2017, p.80). Here again, the role of political will is highly emphasized. It is expected that political will is the “foundation” of the whole anti-corruption “building”. The stronger and better-founded that the “ground” is, the higher are the chances of the better functionality of the next “floors”. Following this logic, all other anti-corruption practices

(see Table 2) accepted to be successful (particularly applied in political, and/or institutional anti-corruption actions) are considered effective only if they go hand in hand with political will and are in effective cooperation with each other. In sum, research shows that a successful anti-corruption fight is possible. Many pioneer countries have proven so (Rotberg, 2017). Yet, it requires tremendous efforts and tolerance. To enhance the chances to win in this fight, it is required to have strong and well-determined leadership that expresses unshrinkable commitment to succeed. It is the task of political leadership to initiate and carefully guide anti-corruption practices. Political will *per se*, however, is not a guaranty for triumph. Leaders should encourage intolerance of corrupt actions among society by creating an environment where integrity is valued. Most of the time, this public as well as individual growth of awareness, takes decades and changes of generations for the society to adapt new norms and practices until a culture of integrity is created. Another important task of political leadership is to create opportunities for active participation of civil society.

Table 2. Effective anti-corruption practices

Media and Civil Society	“Observant, investigative, and courageous to discover and report corrupt act.”
National Commissions	“Charged specifically with the detection of corruption and investigation of individuals accused of illegal corrupt activity.”
Diligent prosecutors or attorneys	“Willing to try offenders, no matter their political heft.”
Fearless judiciary	“Sufficiently independent to try cases of corruption fairly.” Source: Rotberg (2017, p.78).
Informants	“Are important source of information for law enforcement agencies, especially in areas such as drug-dealing and corruption where there is no direct victim as such, <i>e.g.</i> , drugs and corruption, or in relation to other hard to reach groups where it is difficult to find voluntary information, <i>e.g.</i> , terrorist groups. Typically, informants are members or associates of criminal element. And they inform on other criminals, or provide information on police, for a multiplicity of reasons; though primarily for their own advantage. Accordingly, the information provided is not necessarily accurate.”

Whistleblowing	“Disclosure of information that organization or member of such , has not disclosed and does not want disclosed. For an act to be consider as whistleblowing the whistleblower must be a current or former member of and organization, he or she deliberately places information about nontrivial wrongdoing on the public record, doing so for the purpose of having the wrongdoing stopped, and in the expectation that he or she may suffer from some form of unwarranted interference and/or real or threatened reprisal.” Source: Miller (2017), (pp. 174, 175; 212, 213).
Use of the technology	To build dynamic and continuous exchanges between key stakeholders: government, citizens, business, civil society groups, media, academia etc.
Delivering the goods	Investing in institutions and policy – sustainable improvement in how a government delivers services is only possible if the people in these institutions endorse sensible rules and practices that allow for change while making the best use of tested traditions and legacies – imported models often do not work.
Learning by doing	Any good strategy must be continually monitored and evaluated to make sure it can be easily adapted as situations on the ground change. Source: World Bank Blogs²⁴.

Source: Table is compiled by the author based on literature review, namely: Rotberg, 2017 (p.78); Miller, 2017 (pp. 174, 175, 212, 213); World Bank Blogs.

For this purpose, it is required to educate society on the highly negative costs of corruption as well as to raise public awareness of the fundamental human rights.

All these discussions regarding the common anti-corruption practices are quite general and are mostly related to political corruption at a state level. This general information is important for the understanding of the characteristics of anti-corruption practices and strategies at an institutional and organizational level. Indeed, corruption is like a chameleon that changes its colors depending on the environment. Correspondingly, as was mentioned earlier in this chapter, corruption requires specific treatment depending on its context. Furthermore, in Chapter 2, I

²⁴ <http://blogs.worldbank.org/governance/here-are-10-ways-fight-corruption>

discuss the main practices and effective pathways that have been implemented and applied to curb and/or prevent corruption in the Education sector so far. Before diving into these aspects, however, it is important to dig deeper to explore what is Educational Corruption, how it manifests itself, what are the costs of corruption in education, and last, but not least, how to fight Educational Corruption.

1.4. Summary

- Corruption is a growing issue and a dangerous harm to political, economic, and societal growth across the world. Now, more than ever, there is an urgency to fight corruption for the sake of sustainable growth. Global leaders call to stand for integrity and transparency. Various anti-corruption actors, among them countries, international organizations, academia, civil society, and mass media, address the issue from different perspectives aiming to understand, predict, prevent and/or to cure corruption.

- Scholars find it quite challenging to provide a comprehensive definition of corruption. Various factors such as the context of corruption, forms of its manifestation, the perception of it among various groups of people within as well as across nations and cultures, should be considered while attempting to define it. Thus, so far, the existing definitions are either quite broad or narrowed. However, most of the definitions agree upon a central statement that corruption is the abuse of power for private gain. The complexity of corruption requires to address it in a specific context. This gives more clarity to understand who the power holders are and how they abuse that power for private gains as well as what must be done to prevent that abuse.

- Most of the time, corruption and bribery are perceived as synonyms. However, bribery is only one of many faces of corruption. Depending on the context, goal, and actors engaged, corruption might manifest itself in various forms, including: bribery (which could occur in the form of kickbacks or facilitation of payments), fraud, embezzlement, extortion, conflicts of interest, favoritism, nepotism, cronyism, etc.

- The complex and context-specific characteristics of corruption as well as its secretive nature make it difficult to measure it. While corruption per se cannot be precisely assessed, the most common practice is to measure the perception of it. Thus, various corruption perception indexes have been developed and implemented so far. Among those, the most famous ones are the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) and the Global Corruption Barometer (GCP) by Transparency International. Overall, all those indexes aim to diagnose corruption across the world with the purpose to make it visible and understandable for those in charge of providing anti-corruption services.

- The cost of corruption is higher than one can expect. Whether it is grand or petty corruption, the damage is still significant. Corruption affects economic and human development. It targets all the vital public services such as health, education, police, etc. In the worst cases, corruption results in the death of many ordinary people. Corruption is like a disease in the body, if one organ is infected the likelihood is high that it will be spread throughout the whole system. Thus, preventive and curbing actions are urgent for stopping the damage of corruption.

- Fighting corruption is an extremely difficult, but possible task. The fight for anti-corruption is on the agenda of many countries, but only some of them have succeeded so far. The triumphant pioneers have served as an example of drastic anti-corruption transformations. Political will, ethical universalism, laws, and regulations are proven to be the key determinants for anti-corruption action. To enhance the efficiency of the fight, it is required that all those practices walk hand in hand. Combatting corruption is the primary task of a country's leadership, but to succeed in this battle, public awareness and engagement must be actively encouraged and included in anti-corruption practices.

2. Corrupt by poor education, healed through strong education

“Integrity, transparency and anti-corruption, have to be part of the culture. They have to be thought as fundamental values”²⁵

Angel Gurría, OECD Secretary General

The preliminary role of Education is equal access and high-quality for everyone for the sake of human, societal, economic and political development as well as sustainable well-being in the broad sense of the word. What happens, however, if Education itself is corrupt? A corrupt Education System is an alarming red light. So far, corruption has been mainly addressed from political and economic contexts; whereas Educational Corruption is an emerging topic, and only recently have scholars started to give more focus to this phenomenon.

2.1. Corruption in Higher Education - different systems, same struggles

Corruption in Education is a worldwide issue. Globalization, massification, and decentralization have rapidly changed Higher Education, which have also created new opportunities for Educational Corruption to occur in various levels of the systems across the world.

As the existing research in the field shows so far, the former Soviet countries are affected in particular ways. The Education Systems of these countries have witnessed not only the current global trends of Higher Education, but also the challenges that came as a consequence of the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Heyneman (2010) distinguishes three main groups of educational requirements to adapt to these changes, which the former Soviet countries needed to meet after the collapse: “immediate”, “medium-term” and “long-term” (Heyneman, 2010, p.77). As immediate requirements, he identifies the changes in “structure”, “curriculum”, “modernization” and “student demand” (Heyneman, 2010, p.78). The medium-term requirements include “faculty salaries”, and “relationships with universities and university systems in other countries”. In other words, the need to have standards that are more or less similar to other regions of the world (Heyneman, 2010, p.79). Among the long-term requirements, he notes the need to bring scientific research and universities together since they used to operate separately during soviet times. Not surprisingly, corruption was also to be expected amongst all the other consequences of the collapse of the Soviet Union. According to Heyneman, however, the very high

²⁵ <https://voices.transparency.org/10-quotes-about-corruption-and-transparency-to-inspire-you-cd107d594148>

levels did come as a surprise, “no one in 1991 anticipated the depth to which this disease [corruption] would take over or the impact it would have on the reputation of the higher education system” (p.80). Since the extent of corruption was underestimated, the former Soviet states were not prepared to effectively handle it. As a result, Educational Corruption is an urgent issue in many of these countries now, even after 29 years of independence.

Academic research is only recently shining light in this issue. Hence, there are not that many possibilities to investigate Educational Corruption. Currently there are only limited sources, including surveys of perceptions, surveys that collect reports on behaviors engaged in or observed by the respondent, media accounts, citizen reports, and studies of court reports (Chapman and Lindner, 2016, p.250). Waite and Allen (2003) are the pioneers who discussed the problem of Educational Corruption focusing on its manifestations at an administrative level. Heyneman (2004) provided the main categories of Educational Corruption, discussed the corruption of ethics (Heyneman, 2011), and emphasized the risks (Heyneman, 2014) and the high cost of corruption in education in some Post-Soviet countries and in Central Asia (Heyneman *et al.*, 2007, 2007a). Temple and Petrov (2004) studied corruption at the universities of Russia and Azerbaijan, focusing on different types of bribery. Osipian (2008, 2008a, 2009, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2009d, 2014) studied the issue of corruption mainly at Russian, Ukrainian and American Higher Education Systems. He addressed the problem of dissertation sales in Russia (2009a), discussed the peculiarities of corruption in state-university relations (2009), and reviewed the reflections on corruption both in the Russian and Ukrainian media (2008, 2008a). Corruption in the Russian and Ukrainian Higher Education Systems has been widely researched also by Denisova-Schmidt (2012, 2013, 2014, 2014a, 2015, 2016,). A comparative study conducted by Denisova-Schmidt *et al.*, (2016) on student attitudes toward corruption poses the assumption that university systems might impact student attitudes toward corrupt activities by providing a space for them to engage in those practices. Altbach (2012) discussed the negative impact of Educational Corruption on internationalization procedures. Rumyantseva (2015) emphasises the direct and indirect impact of corruption in students’ lives.

Post-Soviet countries are not alone in facing the problem of Corruption in Education Systems. It is a worldwide issue and as Johnson states, corruption “... and relative challenges observe no geographic boundaries. Educational corruption exists in all cultures” (2008, p.7). Focusing on the major shifts in contemporary Higher Education across the world, Hallak and Poisson mention that these changes come with challenges concerning transparency and accountability, and if not very carefully managed, they could open new possibilities for academic fraud and corruption in quality assurance and accreditation (2007a). The Global Corruption Barometer (2013) states that 41 percent of respondents around the world think that the Education

System of their countries is corrupt or extremely corrupt²⁶. Table 3 compiled by Chapman and Lindner (2016) provides the percent of these respondents per country. As one can notice, the number of people who believe that the Education System in their country is corrupt has increased in many countries since 2010/2011.

Table 3. Percent of respondents who believe that the Education System of their country (all levels) is corrupt or extremely corrupt

Country	2010/ 2011	2013	Country	2010/ 2011	2013	Country	2010/ 2011	2013
Afghanistan	35	33	Indonesia	36	49	Russia	58	72
Albania	–	70	Iraq	27	22	Rwanda	17	4
Algeria	–	62	Israel	25	23	Senegal	56	54
Argentina	19	23	Italy	28	29	Serbia	54	70
Armenia	76	58	Jamaica	–	19	Sierra Leone	64	64
Australia	14	19	Japan	52	55	Slovakia	–	39
Azerbaijan	–	37	Kazakhstan	–	55	Slovenia	30	26
Bangladesh	23	12	Kenya	34	37	Solomon Isl.	28	29
Belgium	–	17	Korea (South)	48	30	South Africa	32	32
Bolivia	20	36	Kosovo	24	47	South Sudan	39	48
Bosnia and Herzegovina	56	64	Kyrgyzstan	–	82	Spain	21	11
Brazil	19	33	Latvia	19	19	Sri Lanka	34	33
Bulgaria	39	47	Lebanon	38	67	Sudan	38	61
Burundi	87	46	Liberia	69	87	Switzerland	7	11
Cambodia	41	26	Libya	–	47	Taiwan	37	45
Cameroon	57	72	Lithuania	31	40	Tanzania	56	74
Canada	19	20	Luxembourg	18	21	Thailand	41	32
Chile	35	60	Madagascar	–	56	Tunisia	–	39

²⁶ https://www.transparency.org/gcb2013/in_detail

Colombia	22	37	Malawi	61	71	Turkey	46	42
Croatia	49	50	Malaysia	20	13	Uganda	49	46
Cyprus	—	27	Maldives	32	26	Ukraine	68	69
Czech Rep.	38	30	Mexico	34	43	UK	13	18
DR Congo	74	75	Moldova	61	58	USA	31	34
Denmark	5	6	Mongolia	57	63	Uruguay	—	24
Egypt	—	67	Morocco	_a	60	Vanuatu	16	41
El Salvador	16	40	Mozambique	67	79	Venezuela	26	49
Estonia	—	13	Nepal	38	45	Vietnam	45	49
Ethiopia	13	36	New Zealand	13	16	Yemen	62	62
FYR Macedonia	50	46	Nigeria	66	54	Zambia	55	77
Fiji	15	24	Norway	11	13	Zimbabwe	42	67
Finland	10	7	Pakistan	43	43	Global	35	41
France	13	16	Palestine	16	19			
Georgia	13	22	Papua N.G.	29	47			
Germany	12	19	Paraguay	—	32			
Ghana	66	66	Peru	36	48			
Greece	42	45	Philippines	28	32			
Hungary	17	19	Portugal	20	35			
India	51	61	Romania	37	33			

Source²⁷: Chapman and Lindner (2016) compiled from Transparency International, Global Corruption Barometer 2010/2011 and 2013.

The table emphasizes the global nature of Educational Corruption. A study conducted by Osipian (2009d) provides detailed investigation of the existing research regarding the problem of Educational Corruption in the USA. He notes that the USA Education System can be described by its “complexity and plurality of the forms of organization, governance, management, financing

²⁷ “—” denotes the lack of data for that year. These countries are retained in the table since data for years in which they were available are included in calculation of the global mean.

a – The original value of “0” for Morocco was dropped from the table by the authors as it was judged to need further explanation.

and property... Financial flows in the higher education industry, including the educational loans, government grants, and returns on endowments are plentiful. As in any other industry, organizational complexity, unclear nature of the final product, and significant financial flows serve as necessary grounds for corruption” (Osipian, 2009 d, pp.49-50). Moreover, “the growing significance of private educational loans in the USA lead to an increase in corruption in the area of access to higher education” (Osipian, 2014). Reviewing the existing works in the field of Educational Corruption, Osipian states that although they provide good material for both policy makers and theorists, they still lack “cohesive theoretical frameworks, synthesis, and carefully thought out policy implications” (2009d, p.49). Issues such as corruption in admissions, examinations, graduation, financing, bribery, embezzlement, and fraud are in need of investigation (Osipian, 2009c). On later research, Osipian (2014) states that “the major means of advancing corrupt actions in the US higher education sector are fraud and, to a lesser extent, bribes and kickbacks” (2014, p.260).

Cheating appears to be the most common and widespread practice in both high school and university levels in the USA. Reports on the evidence of fraud, cheating, and plagiarism are reported not only in scholarly works (McCabe 2012; Lupton *et al.*, 2000, Stone *et al.*, 2009), but also by USA media sources (Osipian, 2008). Lupton *et al.*, (2000) conducted one of the first cross-cultural comparative studies, and point out that “international differences exist in attitudes about cheating, perceptions of what constitutes cheating, and perhaps how often students cheat” (Lupton *et al.*, 2000, p. 235).

According to various media reports and research as well as a considerable amount of scholarly work, cheating and plagiarism are also urgent issues in the UK Education System. Hayes and Introna approach the topic from a cultural perspective, mainly focusing on the cultural differences in the perceptions and attitudes towards plagiarism among overseas and UK students (2005). One of the most prevalent corrupt practices is called “*contract cheating*”, which is when students pay money to various agencies who sell papers to them (Lankaster, 2017). The students then submit those written papers or essays as their own. This practice is so widespread, that one can find advertisements for this type of companies and services at the London underground, and especially at tube stops close to universities (Lankaster, 2017).

Asia is not an exemption either in terms of having corrupt Education Systems. Chinese scholars also address the problem of corruption. Changgeng (2007) mentions the evidence of eight hidden or latent manifestations of academic misconduct. Among them, are indiscriminate use of footnotes and reference materials as well as use of personal reputation and university prestige for unmerited gain. The later can signify a favorable treatment by editors towards scholars who belong to famous institutions, and an unfavorable and biased treatment towards scholars from ordinary institutions. He considers that latent manifestations are as dangerous for academic research as other forms of corruption such as plagiarism and copying (*Ibid*). Jin and Bin describe the main internal

and external reasons for the prevalence of corrupt practices in the Chinese Education System, and also provide a few measures to fight against academic corruption. These scholars particularly mention personal profit, the lack of integrity in education as well as the lesser ability of some academics to innovate as specific internal reasons (Jin & Bin, 2007). They claim that some Chinese scholars merely translate the works of foreign researchers and present it as their own. In regards to the external causes, they indicate systemic reasons such as restricted academic freedoms, and the limited research funds provided by the government as well as the absence of academic sanction mechanisms (Jin & Bin, 2007).

As one can see, Johnson’s (2008) statement that corruption is typical for every culture is supported by many researchers worldwide. Table 4 provides more insights on the evidence of various types of corrupt practices across the world.

Table 4. Worldwide evidence of forms of corruption in the education sector

Example	Illustration	Citation
Cronyism/nepotism	In Italy, the 1998 decentralization process that granted universities greater autonomy appears to have increased incidences of local professors engaging in favoritism in hiring.	Durante, Labartino and Perotti, 2011
Nepotism and/or cronyism in hiring, promotions, assignments, salaries	A 2008 survey conducted by the University of Zagreb found that 9% of the teaching staff were offered bribes, one-third of them knew of a case of plagiarism among their colleagues, and 26% of the student respondents admitted to plagiarizing in their written assignments.	Dražen, 2013
Awarding degrees in return for favors	Estimates suggest that about 600 out of the approximate 25,000 persons per year who	Wolf, 2013

	receive a doctoral degree in Germany have used undue means.	
Plagiarism	To improve his publication record in advance of a promotion review, a faculty member in Greece engaged in plagiarism.	Pastra, 2013
Paying for non-merit-based publications	In Nigeria, a faculty member paid a journal to publish her article without any scientific reviews.	Omotola, 2013
Cheating	A 2005 study found that 72% of Australian students admitted to cheating.	Brimble and Stevensin-Clarke, 2005
	A 2010 study of undergraduate students pursuing economic/business degrees in Portugal found that 62% of students admitted to having copied at least once.	Teixeira and Rocha, 2010
	In a 2007 study in Taiwan, over 60% of undergraduate students reported some form of academic dishonesty.	Chun-Hua, Lin, and Ling-Yu, 2007
Using positional power to extort for personal benefits	A 2007 Soros Foundation study of 1,007 teaching staff and 1,171 students at a Romanian University found that about 11% of the students stated that dormitory managers asked directly for gifts, money or services, whereas 10% admitted to	Leu, 2013

	actually having paid such “incentives”.	
	A dormitory manager in Romania accepted money in return for providing campus accommodation to ineligible students.	Leu, 2013
	In Bosnia and Herzegovina, a professor allowed only those students who bought the book authored by the professor to take the examination.	Transparency International Bosnia and Herzegovina 2013
Faculty plagiarism	A 2008 survey conducted by the University of Zagreb found that one-third of the teaching staff knew of a case of plagiarism among their colleagues.	Cepić, 2013
Purchase of term papers	In a study in Latvia, 46% of respondents admitted that most of their reports and term papers were bought.	Danovskis, 2013
Exam bribery	In 2012, police arrested 12 suspects from a Zagreb Medical School for engaging in examination bribery; in April 2013, police arrested 39 students and members of the teaching staff on corruption and examination bribery charges.	Cepić, 2013

Source: Adjusted from Chapman and Lindner (2016, pp. 257-260).

2.2. Educational Corruption - attempts to define and classify

Due to the variety of corrupt practices in education as well as its cultural and contextual characteristics, it is challenging for researchers to precisely and comprehensively define this phenomenon. Heyneman emphasizes three main areas concerning Educational Corruption that need to be discussed carefully. The first area is the definition and its limits, the second concerns the differences in levels where corruption occurs, and the third one is the distinction between institutional (which needs to be controlled through legislation and enforced in the courts) and individual corruption (which can be a violation of the codes of conduct and in this case should be controlled internally by the university) (2014, p.3). The definition of Educational Corruption has evolved and become more practical as time has passed. One of the most common definitions is offered by Anechiaro and Jacobs who note that corruption can be defined as an abuse of authority for material gain (Anechiaro and Jacobs, 1995, as cited in Osipian, 2008 p.346). Heyneman expands this definition and suggests that “because education is an important public good, its professional standards include more than just material goods; hence the definition of education corruption includes the abuse of authority for personal as well as material gain” (Heyneman, 2004, p.637). Yet the definitions suggested by Anechiaro, Jacobs, and Heyneman are only one side of the coin. Going further, Hallak and Poisson (2007) provide a more expanded definition that considers “the systematic use of public office for private benefit, whose impact is significant on the availability and quality of educational goods and services, and, as a consequence on access, quality or equity in education” (p.29). This definition gives more details in comparison to former ones, providing a bigger picture of the phenomenon and emphasizing particularly the cost of corruption in the domains that it affects. Osipian (2007) suggests quite a similar and operational definition considering “corruption in Higher Education as a system of informal relations established to regulate unsanctioned access to material and nonmaterial assets through abuse of the office of public or corporate trust” (p.315).

Hallak and Poisson (2007) distinguish between political, legislative, administrative and bureaucratic corruption, and state that in each case “corruption involves a transaction between private and public sector actors through which collective goods are illegitimately converted into private benefit. In addition to money, these benefits can take the form of protection, special treatment, commendation, promotion, or sometimes the favours of women or men” (p.30). They also make distinction between grand and petty corruption, the former addresses high-level officials, politicians and large amounts of money; the latter involves officers at all levels and small amounts of money (p.31). Denisova-Schmidt *et al.*, (2016) distinguish between monetary and non-monetary corruption, stating that non-monetary forms of corruption are more common and difficult to identify.

The definitions of Educational Corruption are closely related to the educational levels and different actors as well as to the forms in which it manifests itself. It seems to occur at every level as a result of established relationships among various actors who are jointly interested in engaging in unethical behavior for a particular purpose. Such relations where corruption usually occurs can include the combinations of state-university, business-university, faculty-students, faculty-administration, students-administration, and state-student pairings (Osipian, 2008). In this context, it is very important to consider the main educational levels where corruption happens when addressing this phenomenon. Chapman (as cited in Rumyantseva, 2005, p.84) provides five principal spaces and levels where corruption tends to happen: Ministry of Education, regional, district, schools, classroom, and international agencies. Heyneman (2004) and Osipian (2008) also provide the main processes where corruption happens. Heyneman (2004) categorizes these processes as corruption in functions, systems of accreditation, supplies (which include corruption in procurement), selection activities, educational property and taxes, and professional misconduct. Osipian, on the other hand, gives a broader picture on the main spheres where corruption occurs, such as access to higher education, academic processes, graduation, credentials, licensing and accreditation, faculty hiring and promotion, research grants, and medical services (2008). These broad varieties of relationships in different educational levels open the door for corruption to manifest itself in numerous shapes and forms.

Corruption also includes embezzlement, bribery, fraud, extortion, favoritism, nepotism, cheating, plagiarism, ethical misconduct, breach of contract, and private tutoring (Amudsen, 2000, Hallak & Poisson, 2007, Osipian, 2008, Bray, 2003, Chapman, 2016). Heyneman (2014) offers expanded definitions for corruption. Considering that academic integrity is highly important for the reputation of academic institutions, he states that it “consists of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, and responsibility”; whereas the practices of plagiarism, cheating, unauthorized use of others’ work, paying for assignments claimed as one’s own, falsification of data, downloading assignments from the internet, the misrepresentation of records, fraudulent publishing, and paying for grades with gifts, money, or sexual favors are a lack of integrity (Heyneman 2014, p.2). Table 5, offered by Hallak and Poisson (adapted version from Amudsen 2000) presents and explains the above-mentioned forms of corruption and their related family terms. Osipian offers a broad and comprehensive criteria and classification of Corruption in Higher Education (*see* Table 6). He defines the main forms of Educational Corruption and provides the means that are used in corrupt activities to achieve objectives. He also identifies the locus (domains and processes) and draws upon the above-mentioned relations and interactions where corruption occurs (2008).

Table 5. Definitions of the various forms of corruption in the education sector

Form of corruption	Embezzlement	Bribery	Fraud	Extortion	Favoritism
Definition	Theft of public resources by public officials.	Payment (in money or in kind) given or taken in a corrupt relationship.	Economic crime that involves some kind of trickery, swindle, or deceit.	Money and other resources extracted by the use of coercion, violence, or threats to use force.	Mechanisms of abuse of power implying “privatization” and a highly biased distribution of state resources.
Family of terms	Misappropriation, diversion, leakage, capture of funds.	Kickbacks, gratuities, baksheesh, pay-offs, speed and grease money.	Forgery, smuggling, counterfeit.	Blackmail, informal taxation.	Nepotism, cronyism, clientelism, bias.
Examples from the education sector	Educational funds used for political campaigns. School funds diverted for private interest.	Bribery paid to be recruited as a teacher. Bribes paid to be admitted to university.	Ghost teachers. Paper and diploma mills.	Illegal fees collected to be admitted to school. Sexual harassment for promotion.	Recruitment of administrators based on their membership of a political party. Good marks obtained due to favoritism.

Source: Hallak and Poisson (2007, p.58, adopted by Amudsen, 2000)

Table 6. Criteria used and classification of corruption in higher education

Phenomenon. What takes place?
Bribery of all types and forms
Nepotism: kinship
Favoritism: preferential treatment
Fraud: research fraud, healthcare fraud, non-compliance, managed and biased information flow
Embezzlement: from the university, by the university
Cheating: by students, prospective students
Plagiarism: by students, faculty
Ethics misconduct, including sexual misconduct
Breach of contract
Means. What means are used in corrupt activities to achieve certain goals?
Bribes: monetary, non-monetary (services, etc.)
Kickbacks: monetary (normally a percentage of the total contract value)
Kinship: relatives
Personal connections: relations
Reciprocity: exchange of favours
Fraud: fraudulent documents, claims
Locus. What are the areas and processes that get corrupted?
Access to higher education: tests (SAT, CET, TOEFL, GRE, GMAT, LSAT, GSE), admission decisions, entry examinations, donations, gifts, corporate sponsorship
Academic process: grades, additional time for ADDs, time to a client/consumer (student)
Graduation: gifts, petitioning, banquets, etc.
Credentials: diploma mills, transfer of credits, fake diplomas
Licensing and accreditation: provision of services below established standards (have to pay)
Faculty hiring and promotion: bribes, nepotism, expectation of favours, pass-overs, discrimination
Research: fraud
Grants: embezzlement
Healthcare: time to a client/consumer (patient)

Interactions. What are the interactions, relations where corruption takes place?

State–university: funding, student financial aid, grants, non-profit status, taxation

Business–university: research with biased results, educational loans, healthcare fraud

Faculty–students: all kinds of bribes, misconduct, underpaid and free services

Faculty–administration: unfair treatment, promotions, dismissals

Students–administration: breach of contract

State–students: financial aid fraud, aliens

Source: Osipian (2008, p.349)

Chapman and Lindner (2016) suggest a broad list of the forms of corrupt practices (*see* Table 7) in Higher Education, distinguished between the main performers (namely, administrators, faculty/staff, and students).

Table 7. Examples of corrupt practices in higher education

Administrators

Embezzlement

Misappropriation of fund

Changing students' grades for money or favors

Basing promotions on inappropriate criteria

Running sham journals

Allowing donors to have undue influence in academic decision making

Nepotism/cronyism/favoritism in hiring, promotions, assignments, salaries

Awarding degrees in return for favors

Running or collaborating in the operation of degree mills

Awarding sham degrees

Faculty/staff

Embezzlement

Misappropriation of fund

Changing students' grades for money or favors

Selling admissions

Selling examination scores or grades

Falsifying data

Plagiarism

Gift authoring

Ghost authoring
Withholding research data needed for replication
Paying for non-merit based publication

Students

Giving payments, barter, or other incentives for admission
Giving payments, barter, or other incentives for advance copies of tests
Giving payments, barter, or other incentives for grades
Giving payments, barter, or other incentives for graduation
Giving payments, barter, or other incentives for preferential and special treatment
Plagiarism
Cheating

Source: Chapman and Lindner (2016, p. 256).

The variety of these corrupt practices indicates that Educational Corruption is quite flexible. It might adjust and adapt almost at any level if there is an opportunity to do so.

2.3. Factors that influence Educational Corruption

Corruption does not lack favorable opportunities to flourish in the Education System. Research sheds light on the most prevalent groups of factors that foster corrupt possibilities. These are discussed in the following sections.

2.3.1. Systemic challenges and corruption

We live in an era of massification and the internalization of Higher Education and its services. The high demand for Higher Education is accompanied with increasing levels of competition among students and educational institutions as well as potentially hidden risks. Every year, more students become admitted to various traditional as well as alternative forms of Higher Education. These changes result in the disruptive readjustments of educational systems, policies, management models, and university rules and regulations. Recently, many scholars have discussed the impact of globalization and other contemporary trends in Higher Education.

Hallak and Poisson (2007) provide a comprehensive list of factors that either separately or interrelatedly contribute to corruption in the Education System (*see* Table 8). They distinguish between internal and external factors. The first factors relate more to the administrative level of the education sectors, such as decision making and management. This group of factors also include globalization, the decentralization of educational resources, and privatization. The second group of factors are considered external and they relate more to the general conditions where Education Systems operate, where neither policy makers nor administrators normally have a significant impact. While the internal factors have administrative character, the external ones can be considered as more political and economic.

Shaw (2013) discusses the influence of globalization on Higher Education and provides five systemic and organizational conditions as to when faculty members and administrators become engaged in corrupt activities:

Excessive competition – nowadays education has become a profit-making activity that as a consequence leads to an increasing level of competition among faculty members. Competition *per se* is not a bad thing. However, when it creates an environment where individual achievements are more valued, it could put pressure on faculty members “to cross the line into abusing their authority for private gain... Competition can affect academics’ perceptions of what is and is not ethical” (Shaw 2013, p.193).

Table 8. Factors that foster corruption in education

Internal factors		External factors	
<i>Decentralization</i>	• non-transparent norms • opacity of procedures • monopoly and discretionary power	• absence of political will • political/economic/social structures in place • decline of ethical values (corruption as a norm)	<i>SWAp (sector-wide approaches)</i>
		• low salaries in the public sector	
		• no ethical codes • lack of external audit • poor judiciary • strong competition for jobs • education as a “gatekeeper” to jobs (importance of credentials) • no right to information	<i>Rapid disbursement</i>
<i>School management</i>	• no independent system of quality assurance		
<i>Privatization</i>	• low salaries and lack of incentives		
<i>Use of ICTs</i>	• no professional norms • low management capacity		

CORRUPTION IN EDUCATION

Globalization

- lack of absorption capacity
 - weak accounting/monitoring system
 - lack of supervision/control
 - poor public information
-

Source: Hallak and Poisson, 2007, (p.66).

Misalignment of teaching and research – to achieve coveted international recognition, universities recently pay more attention to faculty members’ research activities. Faculty members are required to have as many publications in top-tier journals as is possible. Again, there is nothing wrong with publishing. Nevertheless, in an environment where faculty members have to combine both teaching duties in the classroom and research activities, very often without significant changes in workload and salaries, there is a risk that they will abuse their authority to meet expectations and stay competitive.

Disproportional rewards – having a high number of publications can put huge pressure on faculty members, but it can also be a chance to have additional income. To encourage faculty members, many universities provide some financial rewards for publishing in peer reviewed journals. In some extreme cases, having a top journal publication is a pre-requirement to get the annual working contract extended. This practice might lead to dishonesty in the publication process and might result in faculty paying more attention on the quantity rather the quality of their academic work.

Injustice in the working environment – ethical conduct in the workplace also plays an important role and has an impact on a faculty member’s decision to engage or not in corrupt activities. However, there is not significant research that demonstrates the relationship between injustice and acts of corruption. Individual factors can play an important role here, as it is assumed that “Unfair treatment of those in a vulnerable employment position creates a fertile ground for abuses of authority, especially when adjunct faculty do not receive sufficient mentoring” (Shaw, 2013, p.255).

Concentration of power with insufficient checks and balances – most of the universities in many countries operate in a self-funding basis. This has given a significant level of autonomy in decision making processes, and more importantly, in the control of their funds and budget.

Currently, one of the main challenges for institutions of higher learning is to meet the needs of a market economy. Thus, to live up to market requirements and to enhance efficiency, many universities have come up with a solution to give more power to their managerial team. Doing so, concentrating the executive power at the administrative level, universities challenge the previous model of shared faculty governance. In this situation, accountability is a key regulating factor in terms of preventing corruption, particularly embezzlement. However, “whether power lies in the hands of administrators or faculty, its excessive concentration without sufficient accountability carries increased risks of corruption” (Shaw, 2013, p.198).

Osipian discusses the political reasons for corruption in Higher Education systems in Central Eurasia (Osipian, 2009). First of all, he considers corruption as “a product of interrelations between the government and academia” and states that “suppressed university autonomy is used by the state to impose its will on faculty and control the curriculum and political agenda in the universities” (p.183). He notes that corruption is a tool of administrative control in the hands of ruling regimes in the countries of Central Asia. By this, he means “control based on coercion of corrupt educators and selective justice applied who do not comply with the government” (p.183). By directly or indirectly controlling administrators and faculty, a government can take control over the student community as well, because the former have influence on the latter. Osipian (2009) introduces the concept of “feed from the service” meaning that “the government no longer honors its obligation to fund public HEIs [Higher Educational Institution] and pay middle-class salaries to faculty. At the same time, the monopolistic position of the faculty remains intact. Armed with the state’s permission to “feed from the service”, faculty members earn a living by abusing their office, including the functions of selection, retention, evaluation, graduation, and conferral of academic degrees” (p.192). In other words, by decreasing funding of education and lagging or lowering salaries, a state gives faculty and administrators silent permission to step the line of integrity and use the service for their own personal benefit. Thus, on the one hand, the state closes its eyes regarding the corrupt activities of faculty and administrators. On the other hand, by doing so, it is also requiring an exchange of loyalty and compliance. However, Osipian (2009) adds that this concept is not new evidence. It has been the case in the Russian Empire as well, where it became a dominant practice in the Soviet Union, and then transferred to newly independent Post-Soviet countries. One can first assume that governments do not want to get rid of corruption as it is a powerful tool to have control on Education Systems as well as earning the compliance and loyalty of administrators and faculty. Second, the fact that corruption still exists indicates that the means to combat corruption have not been efficient and powerful enough so far, and there is a need for new trials, approaches, and changes. Among them, most importantly, “further market reforms may be needed to develop university autonomy and to increase the demand for high-quality educational programs, not the worthless diplomas and degrees” (Osipian, 2009, p.199).

2.3.2. Cultural factors

The same action can be perceived as corrupt or non-corrupt depending on the culture where it occurs. The most common example is the practice of gift giving. In many cultures gifts are symbolic ways to express one's gratitude towards someone, and it is initiated merely by a grateful person's will. In this case, gift giving is by no means corruption. However, the same action might be considered corrupt when one person requires a gift for providing a service that is anyway a part of his/her job or obligation. For instance, in post-soviet Armenia, this controversial practice of gift giving even has a special term, "magharich" refers to a "traditional gift-giving practice in Armenian culture, which in more modern times has also become a euphemism for a bribe" (Avetisyan, 2018). There are two ways that magharich' manifests itself. First, it is when someone has some good news or events to celebrate, then he/she gives gifts, or organizes a celebration to share the joy of an achievement. This is perceived as a cultural practice and is very widespread in Armenian society. The second form of manifestation could be considered as corruption. In these cases, magarich' is a pre-requirement to succeed in a career or in any desired activity. For this purpose, magarich' is not limited to an expensive gift, but very often takes on a monetary form. As Avetisyan (2018) notes, magharich' is simply a 'camouflage' word for a bribe. To give a magharich' or to ask for magharich' commonly means to bribe or to solicit a bribe (p.155).

Another quite common cultural term for a corrupt practice is *blat*, which is typical to Russian culture, and "is a colloquial term to denote ways of getting things done through personal contacts, associated with using connections, pulling strings and exchanging favours. Just like other economies of favours –guanxi, jeitinho, kombinacja, pituto, vruzki, wasta and torpil... blat practices are associated with sociability, i.e. maintaining social contacts or networks, but also serve an instrumental purpose of gaining influence or accessing limited resources. The blurred lines between sociability and instrumentality – the two sides of the coin in an exchange of favours – highlight the ambivalence of 'favour'" (Ledeneva, 2018, p. 40).

As further investigations of the literature show, similar practices are common in many other countries as well. This only emphasises once again the fact that corruption is a worldwide issue. Thus, it is important to pay attention to cultural characteristics while investigating and/or fighting corruption. The link between culture and corruption is undeniable considering that culture itself is a "collective programming of the mind" which includes core values and beliefs that lead human behavior (Hofstede *et al.*, 2010, p.6). Husted tried to investigate the connection between state corruption and culture, and stated that cultural values play a fundamental role in the structural aspects related to corruption (1999). He examined the impact of culture on corruption alongside other factors such as national wealth and government size. Furthermore, Husted measured the influence of culture on corruption using the framework of cultural dimensions suggested by

Hofstede (see Table 9). Based on the research results, Husted suggests that through the description of a corrupt country “we can tentatively describe a cultural profile of a corrupt country as one in which there is high uncertainty avoidance, high masculinity, and high power distance. In the case of collectivistic and high power distance countries, high masculinity is the single cultural variable that contributes to corruption” (Husted, 1999, p.354).

Hofstede himself links corruption and culture by connecting the latter to the dimension of uncertainty avoidance. He discusses that while wealth is an important factor for perceiving a country as being corrupt or not, we can compare the corruption perception index of a wealthy country with the one of a poor country. In poor countries “under the conditions of poverty, acquiring money in unofficial ways is not simply a matter of greed; it may be a matter of survival” (Hofstede, 2010, p.222).

Table 9. Definitions of dimensions of national cultures

Power distance	“the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept power is distributed unequally” (p. 61).
Individualism vs Collectivism	<i>Individualism</i> pertains to societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after him- or herself and his or her immediate family. <i>Collectivism</i> as its opposite pertains to societies in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people’s lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty (p.92).
Masculinity vs Femininity	A society is called <i>masculine</i> when emotional gender roles are clearly distinct: men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success, whereas woman are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life. A society is called <i>feminine</i> when emotional gender roles overlap: both men and women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life (p.140).
Uncertainty avoidance	The extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations. This feeling is among other manifestations, expressed through nervous stress and in a need for predictability: a need for written or unwritten rules” (p.191).

Source: “Cultures and organizations, software of the mind”, Geert Hofstede *et al.*, 2010.

Concluding the analysis of the CPI (2008), he states that among wealthier countries, wealth should not be the only explanatory factor of the corruption perception level; rather, “among the thirty wealthiest countries in our data set, more than half of the differences in the 2008 CPI [Corruption Perception Index] scores could be explained by UAI [Uncertainty Avoidance Index]” (Hofstede *et al.*, 2010 p.222).

Although the above-mentioned statements refer to corruption at a state level, however, one can assume that this would be true for Education Systems as well, since they are an indivisible part of the whole state system and should not be discussed separately. If the whole system is corrupt, one should expect its functional units to be corrupt too.

2.3.3. Individual and psychological factors linked to corrupt behavior

Corruption in Higher Education is mostly discussed in the context of political, systemic, economic, or cultural factors. Individual and psychological factors that can influence the corrupt decisions and/or behavioral performance of educational actors have not traditionally been the primary concern of researchers. However, a considerable amount of research has been conducted at the high school and college level (McCabe, 1997, 2001, 2012; Miller *et al.*, 2007). These findings indicate that individual factors could have a strong influence on a student’s corrupt behavior, particularly regarding academic cheating. Scholars have mostly addressed demographics (*e.g.*, gender, age), motivational (*e.g.*, academic achievement, interest in subject and study goals), and psychological characteristics (*e.g.*, impulsivity, sensation-seeking, self-control and locus of control, and self-efficacy) that have a relationship with Educational Corruption. A more detailed explanation follows:

Demographic factors

Gender is probably one of the most frequently studied individual factors. However, research findings are controversial. Most of the gender studies show that male students tend to cheat more often than females (Aiken 1991; Bowers 1964; Davis *et al.*, 1992; Kelly and Worrell 1978; Ward 1986, as cited in McCabe *et al.*, 2012, p.74). This statement is not supported by some other studies (Antion and Michael, 1983; Leming, 1980) that demonstrate that woman cheat more than men. Moreover, many other studies (Baird, 1980; Haines *et al.*, 1986; Lipson and McGavern, 1993) fail to find differences between men and women’s cheating frequency (as cited in McCabe *et al.*, 2012). McCabe *et al.*, after conducting many gender studies that focus on self-reported cheating by men and women in relation to their majors, suggest that gender in general does not actually play an essential role in relation to cheating (2012). The reason for the differences between various levels of self-cheating reporting between men and women should be understood by paying

attention to the main mechanism that underline the relationship “if a relationship exists” between gender and academic cheating (*Ibid*). For example, internal control mechanisms such as self-control, shame, embarrassment, and moral beliefs could be reasons why cheating behavior is different between men and woman (Gibson, Khey, Schreck (2008) as cited in McCabe *et al.*, 2012, p.80). Tibbetts (1997, 1999) provides support to this statement and notes that “higher levels of anticipated shame among woman and less self-control among men accounted for most of the difference in cheating intentions between women and men” (Tibbetts, 1997, as cited in McCabe *et al.*, 2012, p.81). Miller *et al.*, (2007) try to explain these inconsistencies and reason that “gender differences may be moderated by both the context in which the cheating took place and the way in which cheating was assessed in a given study (p.11)”. This statement is supported by Calabrese and Cochran (1990) who mention that women reported to cheat as frequently as men when the intention was to help others (as cited in Miller *et al.*, 2007, p.11). Another study by Whitely *et al.*, (1990) describes men and women as inclined to cheat equally even when they have different attitudes towards the cheating, thus, it is important to take into account that “whether males are actually cheating more than females is speculative; the reported differences might be more a result of self-reporting procedures used rather than actual cheating occurrences” (Miller *et al.*, 2007, p.11).

Age is another commonly studied factor with regards to cheating. The existing research in the field provides an agreed-upon statement that younger students cheat more than older ones (Antion and Michael, 1983; Haines *et al.*, 1986; Lipson and McGavern, 1993; Mustaine and Tewksbury, 2005; Klein, 2007, as cited in McCabe *et al.*, 2012). Although the above-mentioned statement shows consistency, McCabe *et al.*, (2012) argue that it is still not sure if the age factor or the grade level explains these differences. Miller *et al.*, (2007) support this doubt by stating that “the strong correlation between chronological age and progression through an educational system makes it difficult to disentangle these effects” (p.12). McCabe *et al.*, (2012) argue that high school seniors consider college studies as more serious and important than their high school studies. Moreover, they tend to consider high school merely as a necessary step to get to college. Thus, with this attitude in mind, high school students are more inclined to cheat than colleague students. The results of McCabe *et al.*, (1998) focus on the belief that “college-bound high school seniors envisioned college as a place where it would be time to get more serious about academics and where cheating would not occur as frequently as it is seemed to in high school”; even if new students have this mental attitude, it tended to last only “until they observed cheating among others and begun to feel that this was the norm or that they had no choice but to engage in cheating to maintain a competitive GPA[Grade Point Avarage] ” (McCabe *et al.*, 2012, p.83).

Motivational factors

Academic achievement is considered as one of the main individual factors that affect a student's decision. Research shows that students who have higher GPAs reported less cheating than students with lower GPAs (Antion and Michael, 1983; Baird, 1980; Bowers, 1964; Hains *et al.*, 1968; Hetherington and Feldman, 1964; Klein *et al.*, 2007; Lipson and McGavern, 1993; Michaels and Miethe, 1989; Roig and Caso, 2005; Singhal, 1982; Davy *et al.*, 2007; McCabe and Trevino, 1997, as cited in McCabe *et al.*, 2012). One of the reasons for this difference is discussed by Leming (1980) who states that "students with lower academic achievement have more to gain and less to lose by cheating and are therefore more likely to take the risk" (Leming, 1980, as cited in McCabe *et al.*, 2012, p.84). In contrast, many other researchers hold the position that students with higher GPAs are more likely to cheat as they feel more pressure to succeed and stay competitive (Whitely, 1998; Anderman *et al.*, 1998; McCabe *et al.*, 2012). This statement is supported also by Taylor *et al.*, (2002) who note that "the pressure these high achievers experience in highly competitive environments was a primary reason many of the students interviewed stated for engaging in dishonest academic behaviors" (Taylor *et al.*, 2002, as cited in Miller *et al.*, 2007, p.17).

Interest in subject and study goals are a student's personal interest in specific subjects and the reasons for studying in general. These also have an impact on a student's decision to engage or not in academic cheating. Depending on the reasons or motives to study in an academic institution as well as their educational goals, there are differences in the frequency of engaging in cheating behavior. The students who are less interested in learning are more likely to cheat (Miller *et al.*, 2007).

Evidently, all of the above-mentioned factors are affected by the personal characteristics of the decision makers. Hence, personality traits deserve a lot of attention when discussing the issue of corrupt behavior.

Psychological factors

Scholars distinguish some specific personality traits such as *impulsivity*, *sensation-seeking*, *self-control* and *locus of control*, and *self-efficacy* in relation to behavioral misconducts, among them also academic cheating.

The Cambridge Dictionary of Psychology (2009) defines impulsivity as "a characteristic or a trait in which the individual tends to act quickly on motives as they arise with little reflection as to the consequences of his or her actions or their effect on others or on plans for satisfying other motives" (p.252). The same source defines sensation-seeking as "the tendency to search out exciting or thrilling experiences whose strength differs measurably among individuals in many cultures (p. 484). So far, personal psychology shows that the above-mentioned personality traits are associated with and relate to an adolescent's risky behavior. Miller *et al.*, (2007) consider

cheating as risky behavior by stating that “from the perspective of need for sensation, individuals high in need for sensation may be more likely to cheat because of the risky nature of cheating” (p.22). Following the same logic, they also state that if the individual’s decision is guided by impulsivity and not by careful reasoning, then he/she would be more inclined to cheat (Miller *et al.*, 2007). Although academic cheating might be considered as risky behavior, taking into account the possibility that strict sanctions could follow, it is nevertheless rarely an impulsive action. It is assumed that students are supposed to be informed about the exact dates of their exams in advance. Thus, they have time to decide whether they will cheat in the exam or not, in case there is a need or opportunity to do so. In other words, most of the time the corrupt decision is under a student’s volitional control.

The contrast of impulsivity is *self-control*, and it is defined as “the capacity to command one’s mental activities and overt behavior, especially so as to formulate and carry out plans despite environmental distractions and contrary impulses” (The Cambridge Dictionary of Psychology, 2009, p.467). Grasmick *et al.*, (1993) state that “lack of self-control was posited to be a personality trait to engage in deviant behaviors such as cheating” (as cited in Miller *et al.*, 2007, p.23). Another personality trait that stays close to the above-mentioned ones is the locus of control. This concept is suggested by Rotter (1954) and refers to the level of control that one has over his/her life. In other words, a person’s belief as to what extend he or she is responsible for the results of their actions or for the life events happening to them is important. Rotter (1966) defines the locus of control as follows, “when a reinforcement is perceived by the subject as following some action of his own but not being entirely contingent upon his action, then, in our culture, it is typically perceived as the result of luck, chance, fate, as under the control of powerful others, or as unpredictable because of the great complexity of the forces surrounding him. When the event is interpreted in this way by an individual, we have labeled this a belief in external control. If the person perceives that the event is contingent upon his own behavior or his own relatively permanent characteristics, we have termed this a belief in internal control” (p.1). Research shows that persons who have external locus of control are inclined to cheat more than the ones who have internal locus of control (Forsyth, Pope, and McMillan, 1985; Karabenick & Snull, 1978; Lemig, 1980 as cited in Miller *et al.*, 2007, p.25).

Self-efficacy is considered as another important factor in relation to cheating behavior. Perceived self-efficacy are the “beliefs in one’s capability to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attachments” (Bandura, 1997, p.3). In other words, perceived self-efficacy are one’s judgments about personal capabilities for the required action (*Ibid*). Research shows that students who have high levels of academic self-efficacy are more confident and resistant to difficulties (Pajares, 1996 as cited in Miller *et al.*, 2007). At the same time, those students with lower academic self-efficacy experience lack of confidence and are inclined to cheat (Miller *et al.*, 2007).

As we can see, Educational Corruption is easily affected by a series of factors depending on the state, culture, education level where it occurs as well as by the educational actors that are engaged in the corrupt act. This complexity makes it even harder to study and cure corruption.

2.4. Fighting Educational Corruption - the why and the how?

2.4.1. The why

If corruption itself is already a very complicated issue, then Educational Corruption is an even more complex and harmful phenomenon. As Heyneman (2011) mentions, when universities are corrupt it might even be more dangerous and costly than a corrupt customs or police service since “one purpose of the university is to purposefully teach how to behave in the future, if the university is corrupt, one can expect future citizens to be corrupt as well” (p.8). Indeed, the costs of corruption are high. Broadly described, the main damages of Educational Corruption are limited access and low quality of education. The consequences of corruption are expressed in various forms and inflict different extents of harm across societies. Educational Corruption lowers public trust in the whole Educational System, it erodes confidence in the value of a university diploma, and thus questions the quality of education in general. When people do not trust the Education System, they probably do not trust its products as well (Heyneman, 2004). Another harmful consequence is the “traveling” nature of corrupt behavior. Students who get used to corrupt practices such as paying bribes for admission or for grades, cheating in their exams or using personal connections to achieve desired results can even apply this same strategy to get a job or to advance in the workplace (Stone *et al.*, 2009). Moreover, the psychological cost of Educational Corruption is not less harmful than other societal and economic consequences. It strongly affects an individual’s values, attitudes, and perceptions towards education and life in general. Most students are young adults whose life perceptions and attitudes are just being formed. A corrupt atmosphere can lead to a formulation of destructive values and positive attitudes toward unethical practices. For instance, when a highly motivated student works hard to achieve desired results, it can be very detrimental if he or she can witness how another less motivated student gets the same results without putting much effort. Corrupt behavior in certain contexts could be seen as behavior that is rewarded. In other cases, when students hold negative attitudes toward corrupt practices, they might lose their study motivation, being convinced that no matter how hard they try, they will not be fairly treated. This could result in corrupt behavior, and affect a student’s whole life perception as well (Rumyantzeva, 2015). Thus, corruption affects not only a student’s career opportunities, but it can also shape their values, beliefs, and perceptions.

Finally, the hidden danger of Educational Corruption is that it can result in “a social acceptance of corruption through a corrupted Education System”²⁸. The negative consequences of corruption becoming an acceptable behavior has already been discussed in Chapter 1. As it was mentioned, one of the ways to shift from a corrupt to a non-corrupt culture is possible through

²⁸ <https://www.transparency.org/topic/detail/education>

raising public awareness in educational programs. This means that education can hold a huge influence to guide the perception of corruption among the public. Thus, the question arises as to what can be done if an Education System itself creates an environment where corruption is not only encouraged, but also learnt as an acceptable behavioral practice. Hence, strong determination and a commitment to successfully fight Educational Corruption are needed.

2.4.2. The how

Reducing or eliminating corruption is a difficult, but possible practice. Not surprisingly, as we have already discussed, laws *per se* are not the most successful means to fight political corruption. They seem not to be effective in cases of institutional corruption either. What works better, might be well-grounded Integrity Systems (Miller, 2017). Broadly defined, an integrity system is an “assemblage of institutional entities, mechanisms, and procedures, the fundamental purpose (collective end) of which is to ensure compliance with minimum *moral* standards, and to promote the pursuit of *ethical* ideals, among members of occupations, organizations, and industries, *i.e.*, among institutional role occupants” (p.147). According to Miller (2017), Integrity Systems can be artificially distinguished between predominantly reactive, and predominantly preventive systems. Referring to the reactive approach to managing corrupt practices, Miller (2017) states that they “are fundamentally linear: setting out a series of offences (usually in legislation or regulations), waiting for an individual to transgress, then investigating, adjudicating, and finally taking punitive actions” (p.154). Although, this approach is highly important, it nevertheless has some weaknesses, such as its passive character, which means that they have retrospective influence because they address the issue only once corruption has already taken place. Another issue is the secretive nature of corruption, obviously a “bribe can be known only to the briber and bribe (both of whom have an interest in keeping this transaction secret)”, and professional associations may even “close ranks to protect the reputation of the group” (Miller, 2017, p.154). Furthermore, Miller gives examples of regulatory models such as self-regulatory, “*black-letter*” explicit government regulatory models, and meta regulatory models. The first model’s name is self-explanatory, it assumes that regulations and codes of conduct are designed and adopted voluntarily by institutions and/or members of a particular occupational group. For the second model, in contrast, all the regulations and codes of conduct are designed and enforced by the government through legislation and through legal sanctions. The third model is somewhat a mix of the previous two. Here, governments give freedom to the institutions to self-regulate, but at the same time ensure that the self-regulation operates properly and effectively by adopting monitoring and accountability mechanisms (Miller, 2017).

Preventive Integrity Systems in their turn are mostly considered alongside ethical and professional misconduct issues. Functioning together with reactive integrity services as well as

being independent from them, preventive mechanisms can be distinguished in four groups as follows:

a) mechanism that create an environment where integrity is valued and unethical behavior is discouraged. The goal of these kinds of mechanisms are to reduce a person's motivation to engage in unethical actions even if he or she has opportunities to do so, for instance, by introducing a Code of Ethics.

b) mechanisms that aim to reduce the capacity of those who would have the motivation to act unethically and "legislation to downsize oligopolists in order to prevent cartels" (Miller (2017).

c) mechanisms that eliminate the *opportunity* for unethical acts, for instance, to reduce the likelihood of fraud, corporate government mechanisms could be applied to separate the roles of receiving and paying accounts.

d) the fourth group of mechanism are those that "act to expose unethical behavior, so that the organization or community can deal with them. In other words, these are the mechanisms that are targeting *transparency*" (Miller, 2017).

These distinctions between reactive and preventive Education Systems, however, is done more for theoretical reasons. In real-life, institutions and organization mostly involve components from both systems to combat unethical behavior. Miller (2017) calls this combination of systems "Holistic Integrity System" and finds this model to be the most effective one.

Educational Corruption itself is a form of institutional corruption. The mechanisms for tackling corruption discussed above have been implemented in anti-corruption practices in the education sectors in different countries by various governments, international institutions, policy makers, and researchers.

The UNESCO International Institute of Educational Planning (IIEP-UNESCO) is a key actor in the field of educational planning and management around the world. Over the course of many decades, IIEP has developed various strategies that help countries to fight academic fraud and improve ethics in their Education Systems. Academic fraud is the term that IIEP uses to refer to Educational Corruption, and defines it as "any prescribed action taken in connection with an examination or test that attempts to gain unfair advantage. Beyond examination or test issues, it covers malpractices related to credentials, diplomas, research, academic journals and publications, admission to universities and accreditation fraud" ²⁹. IIEP suggests 6 main paths to address academic fraud, which are: a) regulating the market with transparent criteria, b) reducing the risk of conflicts of interest, c) developing standards and codes of practice of academic integrity, d) using more effective and transparent management tools, c) facilitating public access to

²⁹ <http://etico.iiep.unesco.org/en/academic-corruption>

information, and d) establishing and using awareness indicators *i.e.*, ‘red flags’³⁰. In 2016, IIEP together with the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) published the “Advisory Statement for Effective International Practice”³¹; a comprehensive guide which suggests preventive mechanisms to support governments and Higher Education Systems as well as teachers and policy makers to fight corruption, and to enhance integrity and higher quality of education.

The Advisory Statement targets seven key areas where corruption occurs and correspondingly suggests preventive mechanisms that must be applied to combat corruption. Those areas and preventive mechanism include:

Regulations in Higher Education system – e.g., create transparent processes for appointments to governing councils of all state bodies involved in the regulation and administration of higher education, *etc.* (p.5).

1. *The teaching role of Higher Education institutions – e.g.*, create an Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) framework through wide consultation, *etc.* (p.6).
2. *Student admissions and recruitment – e.g.*, monitor behavior of recruitment staff/agents for observance of HEI’s requirements and the law, *etc.* (p.6).
3. *Student assessment – e.g.*, adapt, publicize and implement codes of conduct for the behavior for staff and students, anonymize exam scripts with bar codes and monitor standards of marking, appoint external examiners or use double marking to ensure comparability of standards, *etc.* (p.7).
4. *Credentials and qualifications – e.g.*, develop international security standards for documents relating to HE credentials, *etc.* (p.7).
5. *Research these and publications – e.g.*, publish and implement ethical codes of research, implement a code of conduct for research supervision, check research these with antiplagiarism software, *etc.* (p.8).
6. *Combating through public awareness and mass media –* encourage faculty to write about corrupt practices in local, regional and international press, conduct and publish anonymous surveys of students/alumni on their perception of corruption in their institution, *etc.* (p.8).

All of the above-mentioned suggestions as well as most anti-corruption strategies effectively operate based on the existence of the following core conditions: *Transparency, Accountability, Regulations, and Codes of Conduct.*

Transparency: In an educational context, transparency is the “extent to which stakeholders can understand the basis on which educational resources are allocated to their individual establishment and how they are used” (Hallak and Poisson, 2007, p.33). The system is

³⁰ <http://etico.iiep.unesco.org/en/academic-fraud-higher-education>

³¹ <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000249460>

transparent if it meets three basic criteria: visibility, predictability, and understandability³². Nevertheless, it is quite a difficult task for educational stakeholders to master the art of transparent management of information (Hallak and Poisson, 2007). Thus, to improve transparency “it entails a massive need for training at all levels in the Education System, in particular, in the production, analysis, dissemination and understanding of information (p.34).

Accountability: The main function of educational institutions such as schools and universities is to provide high quality education. Corruption hinders the proper functionality of schools and universities. To address this issue, those institutions, as already discussed, develop rules and regulations. However, this is not enough. Neither is only being transparent. As Eckstein (2003) states, “accountability by personnel involved at all stages and levels of academic affairs is a basic condition for dealing with academic fraud” (p.75). Educational accountability mechanisms are required to check whether an institution applies regulations properly, and to investigate and punish unethical behavior. Accountability can be distinguished in 4 models (Hallak and Poisson, 2007): a) bureaucratic accountability (compliance with statutes and regulations), b) professional accountability (adherence to professional norms), c) performance-based accountability model (refers to students learning), and d) market accountability (regulating quality assurance through the market) (pp.35-36).

Codes of Ethics and Codes of Conducts are two concepts that are sometimes used and perceived interchangeably. However, there are differences, and depending on whether the code is related to ethics or to conduct, different strategies apply. Branks (2003) gives a detailed definition of ethics, stating that a “code of ethics is usually a written document produced by a professional association, occupational regulatory body, or other professional body, with the stated aim of guiding the practitioners who are members, protecting service users and safeguarding the reputation of the profession” (as cited in Nuland, 2009, p.19). Nuland (2009) simplifies this definition by describing professional ethics in an educational context as “a set of beliefs that a teacher accepts concerning relationships with students, colleagues, employers, and parents... these principles guide the teachers in their daily activities in working with their (above-mentioned) stakeholder” (*Ibid*). While the Codes of Ethics is mainly concerned with the teacher’s beliefs related to their occupational role, then Codes of Conduct target the behavioral aspect. Typically, a Code of Conduct “sets out principles of action and standards of behavior, how the members of the group will operate and work” (Nuland, 2009, p.20). These descriptions of the different types of codes, however, address only their educative character. Codes aim to provide ethical education to respective actors, they give supportive guidelines for them. However, codes are implemented not only for preventive and protective aims, but also for regulatory purposes. Evidently, they also

³² <https://www.u4.no/terms#transparency>

include some measures for sanctions and punishment in case of non-compliance by educational stakeholders. In other words, these codes are meant to guide, prevent, and punish. For an effective application of the codes, it is important that the code is profoundly defined, and the sanctions are thoroughly specified. Nuland (2009, p.20) provides three reasons for what is important to clearly state and identify in a code, including;

- to maintain the clarity and comprehensiveness of the code,
- to allow the individual an opportunity to decide if an improper action is worth the corresponding punishment which will be set out,
- for the sake of the enforcement of the code.

Last, but not least, codes aim to “promote public trust in- and support for- the education profession” and they can do so “by presenting a positive image of the education profession, by emphasizing the social responsibility and public accountability of the profession towards pupils, parents and beyond the classroom to the community at large, and by establishing the conditions conducive to the best possible professional service” (Poisson, 2009, p.17).

Overall, all of the above-mentioned practices are proven to be supportive and helpful while dealing with Educational Corruption, however, for the most effective and successful results, it is important that they walk hand in hand, rather than interchangeably. Poisson (2010), uses the term “virtuous triangle” stating that for reducing corruption “what is required is concerted action on three main fronts: the development of transparent regulations systems and standards, building management capacity, and greater public ownership of administrative and financial processes” (p.23).

To conclude, the fight against Educational Corruption and the enforcement of an integrity culture in schools and higher educational institutions is possible by preventive and punitive pathways. While applied separately, those mechanisms can be quite effective. Nevertheless, for more profound success, a combined implementation is recommended. Preventive mechanisms against Educational Corruption should be encouraged. While punitive mechanisms deal with the symptoms, preventive mechanism are meant to avoid corruption itself. Hence, financial, social, and human resources can be used to create an environment that builds and supports integrity, human well-being, and educational achievements. Corruption- free Education Systems mean healthy systems that properly function to provide high quality and equal access to education for everyone at all levels. Education is the core of human, social, economic and political development. A failure in education can lead to failure everywhere else.

2.4. Summary

- Corruption in education is a worldwide issue that manifests itself almost in every culture throughout the world. Former Soviet countries have been affected in very particular ways. The Education Systems of those countries have witnessed not only the rapid change of current trends of Higher Education such as globalization, decentralization, and privatization, but have also had to face economic and social challenges that were a consequence of the Soviet Union's collapse (1991). All those events negatively affected all the levels of the Education Systems. Particularly since then, Educational Corruption started to receive more attention from scholars who approach the topic from different contextual perspectives.

- Some difficulties arise while researching Educational Corruption. One of them is the definition of Educational Corruption itself. To be specific and at the same time comprehensive, the definition of corruption in education should address at least the level of education where it occurs, the actors that establish corrupt relationships as well as the damage that it does. All the suggested definitions so far agree that corruption in education is the abuse of office (*e.g.*, rectors, faculty) for material (*e.g.*, money, gifts) and non-material gains (*e.g.*, position, status), which happen as a result of established relationships with different educational actors, and which result in non-equal access to and low quality of education.

- Educational Corruption most of the time proceeds in the following forms of relationships between different actors: state-university/school (both public and private), business-university, administration-faculty/students, and student-student. Corruption happens among these actors at various educational processes such as admissions, examinations, credentials, the graduation of students, accreditation of universities, and the hiring and promoting of faculty. Depending on the context as well as the involved actors and levels, Educational Corruption can manifest itself in many forms, including embezzlement, bribery, fraud, extortion, favoritism, nepotism, cheating, plagiarism, ethical misconduct, breach of contract, and private tutoring.

- Factors that influence Educational Corruption can be distinguished in three main groups such as systemic, cultural, and individual factors. Systemic factors include the massification or privatization of higher education as well as the mismanagement of a university system, competition as a growing demand both for faculty and students, and the work environment. While most of the systemic challenges are quite new, and they keep changing and developing very quickly, the cultural factors often have deep roots in societies. In many societies, corruption is a perceived norm which manifests itself in specific forms typical for that culture, such as “magarich” and “blat” are for the Armenian and Russian cultures. The individual group of factors, which include the demographics and psychological characteristics should also be taken into account while addressing the topic.

- The variety of corrupt practices, their flexible and controversial nature, the different educational levels of their occurrence, individual characteristics of the main performers of them as well as the cultural and systemic factors that influence them make it difficult to study Educational Corruption. However, all these efforts are required to understand the essence of the problem and act against it, as the cost of corruption in education is dramatically high. Education is the cornerstone of a state's human development, and a corrupt Education System is an indicator that the whole system is affected. Corruption in education results in inequality of access and low quality of education. Learned corrupt practices can be transferred to the job market. In this way, corruption can spread its roots deep in different layers across the whole state system. Thus, anti-corruption initiatives must be implemented to stop the harms of corruption.

- Fighting corruption in education must be a top priority task for governments and educational institutions. To accomplish this, transparency and accountability are the key requirements that must be guaranteed and well implemented in the education sectors. Well written and communicated Rules and Regulations, Codes of Ethics, and Codes of conducts are considered effective instruments for fighting corruption in, for instance, university admissions, exams and credentials, and faculty misconduct. Anti-corruption instruments have either preventive or punitive characteristics. For successful results, it is important that all anti-corruption practices are implemented together because no single remedy is completely effective. Efforts to build a culture of integrity in the Education System are highly encouraged to prevent corruption. Corruption-free education means an atmosphere of equal possibilities and high-quality education for all, resulting in a flourishing state and thriving society.

3. The Armenian Higher Education System: changes and challenges

*“For the things we have to learn before we can do them,
we learn by doing them.”*

Aristotle, The Nicomachean Ethics

3.1. General background on the Armenian Higher Education System

Armenia was one of the first countries that joined the Soviet Union in 1920. It was a part of the Soviet state for seven decades. Starting from the late 1980s, though, massive public demonstrations began to cover the streets of Yerevan demanding the separation of Armenia from the Soviet Union. Eventually, on September 21, 1991, Armenia declared its independence and entered a new era of challenges and developments. This historical transformation was based on a promise for democracy and an advanced market economy as well as cultural and social prosperity. However, the cost of independence was extremely high. As history unfolded, Armenia was not ready for this big change. The entire nation was affected in terms of political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental settings. The country suddenly found itself in an environment of complete uncertainty, political crisis, a destroyed economy, and social disappointment. Soon the situation became even more dramatic when Armenia had to face another immense shock: the conflict between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan turned into a war (1989-1994). Only after the ceasefire in 1994 did Armenia slowly start the healing process and was able to achieve some stabilization, particularly in the economic and social-cultural dimensions.

Alongside other institutions, the Education System had gone through various challenges and changes during this transmission period (*see* 3.2.). It took decades of reforms and interventions until the system reached some significant achievements. Nevertheless, challenges and problems still remain.

The current Armenian Higher Education (hereinafter HE) is regulated by The Law of Education (1999) which defines the three qualifications for higher education; (1) the Bachelor's, (2) the Master's (alongside the diploma Specialist and the Clinical Intern), (3) Researcher's and Candidate's of Sciences (Postgraduate/doctoral) degrees, and the Law on higher and postgraduate professional education (Budaghyan, *et al.*, 2015).

Higher and postgraduate education is provided by two types of Higher Educational Institutions (hereinafter HEI): public (23 non-profit) and private (31 for-profit). There is evidence of rising interest in interstate HEIs that are operating in Armenia. There are four such examples: The American University of Armenia (1991), the Russian (Slavonic) Armenian University (1999),

the French University in Armenia (2000), and the European Regional Institute of Information and Communication Technologies in Armenia (2001). Those HEIs are established based on agreements between the Republic of Armenia and foreign governments. They are regulated by the laws of both countries as well as licensed and accredited from both states (Gharibyan, 2017). There are also seven institutions in Armenia that are branches of Russian, Ukrainian, and Belarussian universities. According to the World Bank (2015), the enrollment rate in Higher Education is 44,31%³³.

Recently, governance authorities gave the Armenian HEIs flexibility and freedom to self-organize. Currently, Armenian HEIs are governed by the Governing Board³⁴, Scientific Council³⁵, and the Rector³⁶. HEIs have also complete staffing autonomy, which means that they have all the freedom to proceed with the recruitment of personnel as well as to discuss employment conditions and determine salaries. Armenian public HEIs receive annual block grants from the state budget based on the number of enrolled students. The entire state expenditures are spent on student scholarships and teaching activities; whereas the university budget is almost entirely formed from the student tuition fees. Only 15-20% of all enrolled students do not have to pay fees and the rest pay tuition, which differ depending on institutions and/or specializations. The universities have the freedom to establish their own standards for charging fees (Tsaturyan, K., *et al.*, 2017).

The Challenges that the Armenian Education System faces nowadays are not the easiest ones. Limited financial resources and corruption at various educational levels on the one hand, and the need to live up to the global educational challenges on the other hand, are among the main issues to be addressed. Moreover, the *Armenian Velvet Revolution* which took place in the spring of 2018 to change the government brought about a new wave of challenges. The current government has declared its political will to combat corruption at all levels, including the education sector. Disruptive change sounds promising, however, it comes with high risks too. This means that the Armenian HE system again is entering into a new challenging transition period. It is important not to forget that the current corruption in the system still carries components from the Soviet era. Its persistence is a sign of weak anti-corruption practices.

³³ Armenia has approximately 3million inhabitants.

³⁴ The Governing Board is a collegial governance body whose members are representatives of the university faculty and students, and members appointed to five-year terms by the Government and the Ministry of Education and Science-equally represented (25% each). The boards' functions include approval of the strategic program, annual budget and reports of the institution, election of the Rector, and decision-making on important aspects of operation (Budagyan *et al.*, 2015, p.60).

³⁵ The Scientific Council of the HEI is an advisory body that deals with the organization, planning and governance of teaching and learning processes, research and scholarship, meanwhile the day-to-day management of the institution Rector (Budagyan *et al.*, 2015, p.60).

³⁶ The Rector is selected on a competitive basis by the Board for a period of 5 years (Budagyan *et al.*, 2015, p.60).

Thus, to succeed in anti-corruption reforms the current government, educational leaders, and decision makers who are responsible for the system and change management should be conscious not to repeat the mistakes of the past.

The next sessions addresses “the past”, particularly the transition period of the Armenian Higher Education System and the heavy consequences that came with it.

3.2. The “odyssey” of the Armenian Higher Education System- reforms and challenges

The Armenian Higher Education System has a long and rich history and it has played an important political, economic as well as social, and cultural role for Armenia throughout many centuries. During hundreds of years, the Education System has had to face many challenges and to shift accordingly to contemporary demands of each decade. Nowadays, specialists distinguish between four main periods of educational development: the pre-soviet (up to 1921), Soviet (1922-1991), transition (1991-2004) and formative (2004-present) (Budaghyan *et al.*, 2015). Contemporary developments in the Armenian Higher Education have started to transpire particularly during the transition period when Armenia declared its independence from the Soviet Union. The major difference in this period is that education became less centralized and universities received more freedom and autonomy, with significantly reduced levels of funding by the state. This is in contrast to the Soviet period, when universities had very little autonomy and Higher Education was completely centralized and funded by the state. This freedom and decentralization alongside with other modern trends such as globalization and the continuing growth and demand for Higher Education put the Armenian Education System in a very challenging position: to act in an era of uncertainty, economic challenges, and lack of resources.

Two basic changes happened during this transition period (1991-2004). First, the establishment of many private universities. This mostly was done to meet the increasing demand for higher education. Soon this became a growing tendency, and by 1997 the number of private universities in Armenia was 103 (Budaghyan *et al.*, 2015). In response to scarce state funding, to be able to sustain themselves, state universities also started to charge higher tuition fees. Free education was still possible, but only a small percentage of students would be awarded these spots based on their grades in admission exams and other social conditions. However, “the low level of state funding and the high reliance on private spending have led to restricted access to tertiary education among the poor, thus raising a major concern about equity” (Navoyan, 2011, p.198).

The second basic change was the transition (since 1992) from the one-tier system (4 - 6-year standard degree offered during the Soviet period) to a two-tier Higher Education System (Bachelor’s and Master’s qualifications). The pre-existing Diploma Specialist qualification remained (Budaghyan *et al.*, 2015). This new structure particularly aimed to meet the contemporary needs of the job market and enhance the chances of the Armenian Education System to live up to international educational standards.

Although current developments are still challenging and require significant efforts, resources, and management, the crucial reforms started to happen in 2004 when Armenia signed The Lisbon Convention on qualifications recognition. A year later, in 2005, Armenia joined the

Bologna process, and “by this act Armenia agreed to comply with its policies in order to integrate into EHEA³⁷ and thus contribute to fostering democracy development, human rights protection and the rule of law in the country” (Karakhanyan *et al.*, 2011, p.71). So far, various fundamental reforms have been undertaken in the Armenian HE accordingly to the requirements of the Bologna Declaration (*see* Table 10).

Table 10. Fundamental changes in Armenian Higher Education within the framework of the Bologna Process

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- Introduction of a consistent and internationally compatible three-tier qualification system;
 - Transition to ECTS;
 - Institution of national standards and procedures for quality assurance as well as for university program accreditation consistent with European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance;
 - Development and approval of a National Qualifications Framework, Consistent with Overarching Framework for Qualifications in EHEA;
 - Introduction to transparent procedures for recognition of qualifications in accordance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention;
 - Issuance of Diploma Supplement to the graduates of HEIs in a format recommended throughout EHEA free of charge in both Armenian and English.
 - Increasing international academic mobility of students and professors;
 - Enhancing student involvement in university governance;
 - Improving mechanisms for funding and governance of HEIs;
 - Implementing a targeted public policy aimed at social and financial support to students;
 - Introducing new transparency tools: national system of university ranking, tertiary education management information system etc.;
 - Transition to student-centered learning, promoting students’ critical, analytical, creative and autonomous learning;
 - Designing and institutionalizing a system of lifelong learning.
-

Source: A. Baginayan *et al.*, 2015, p.24.

³⁷ European Higher Education Area

Notwithstanding, even though there was a strong motivation to succeed, the implementation phase was far from being a smooth and successful one. Karakhanyan *et al.*, (2011, 2011a) conducted profound policy studies that shed light on the issues that arose during the Higher Education reforms when implementing the West-European Bologna principles. The study found that during this implementation phase administrators gave preference to first order-changes, in other words, they focused on improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the existing system (p.62). The second-order changes sought to “alter the fundamental ways in which organizations are pulled together, including new goals, structures, and roles” (p.62). However, the administration failed in both cases. The core challenges, according to the authors, particularly at the very beginning were related to the main procedures of policy diffusion³⁸ and policy transfer³⁹, *i.e.*, to “the process of adopting reforms from other countries” (p.54). The study claims that the policy transfer took place “in isolation from the actual implementer, which implies opposition of the latter because of the imposition of changes, which are not internalized” (p.79). Other crucial factors that hindered the success and the quality of implementation were the “change knowledge” (p.61) and the communication gaps between “change owners” (p.60). The first term refers to the inability to deeply study and understand the purpose and the meaning of the change. Rather, the main concern of administrators was to “make superficial changes for the sake of reporting to the governing bodies” (p. 80). The second hindering point refers to the lack of communication between educational actors who were engaged in change process. Karakhanyan *et al.*, (2011) present those actors in the following pairings: “(a) researchers’ and policymakers’ agendas, (b) policymakers and implementers/policy and practice, (c) administrators and teachers, and (d) researchers and teachers (p.60). The communication between those actors, as explained in the study, is important for successful results since “if a change is to reach its goal, then it’s necessary for all stakeholders to buy in, a condition which is possible when the stakeholders feel they belong to it and are fully and collectively committed to it” (Karakhanyan *et al.*, 2011, p.60).

As a result, the underestimation of the importance of internalized knowledge on reforms and its fundamental details as well as the communication gap, led to the frustration and high resistance among the university teachers towards the Bologna processes (Karakhanyan *et al.*, 2011a). Feeling underestimated and lacking the knowledge and skills on how to act properly,

³⁸ Policy diffusion - “is commonly defined as a process through which policy choices in one country affect those made in a second country (McLendon, 2003; Marsh and Sharman, 2009). Work on policy diffusion mainly emphasize structure and research mainly focuses on exploring why some states either adopt or adapt policies more readily than others. Policy innovation spreads can be either *vertical* or *horizontal*. *Vertical* policy diffusion occurs when the national government influences policies through either sending clear signals with regards to future actions or mandates, fiscal incentives or sanctions. *Horizontal* policy diffusion occurs when state consider and adopt policies similar to those in nearby states (Daun-Barnett and Perorazio, 2006)” (Karakhanyan *et al.*, 2011, p.57).

³⁹ Policy transfer - “Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) define as a process by which “knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in one political setting (past or present) is used in development of policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in another political setting”. (Karakhanyan, 2011, p. 58).

teachers started experiencing more hardship, which resulted in them feeling nostalgic towards the “good old Soviet times”. The result was enhanced resistance towards change. The absence of trust towards both the reforms and administrators led to a lack of motivation and ownership towards change (Karakhanyan *et al.*, 2011a). Nevertheless, this does not mean that teachers held negative attitudes towards new practice in general, what they exactly needed and wanted was “to improve and change, but in a safe environment” (p.251).

Overall, the findings of these studies are highly informative and could be applied to other central issues that the Armenian Higher Education System currently faces. One of those crucial topics is Educational Corruption, which is the central focus of this dissertation.

3.3. Corruption in the Armenian Higher Education System

One of the main problems that the Armenian Education System inherited from the Soviet Union and which remains so far is Educational Corruption. With the new system, corruption simply has changed its forms of manifestation. It is a common fact that during the Soviet period corruption was too sensitive of a topic to address, and it required personal courage to talk about it, particularly to bring it up in the field of educational research. Thus, due to the lack of scientific research, it is difficult to discuss the state of Educational Corruption and its extent during Soviet times. Fortunately, nowadays, researchers and policy makers show interest and curiosity to investigate this problem from a scientific perspective.

The results of various international⁴⁰ as well as national⁴¹ surveys state that corruption is an important issue in the Armenian Education System. The previous Government's anti-corruption actions to decrease the level of corruption and to prevent the possibilities of its occurrence (*see* Table 11) had a strong legal basis and were continually being improved. However, those were mostly multi-target and general anti-corruption actions, rather than education sector-centered reforms. Moreover, most of the time, those regulations were declarative and still too weak and flawed at the implementation level. Additionally, as already discussed in previous chapters, well-written laws and regulations *per se* are not enough to successfully fight corruption. The existing research on Education Corruption in Armenian universities is scarce and outdated, considering the intensity of the educational changes that have occurred in recent decades.

The results of the Global Corruption Barometer (2013) show that 58% of Armenians think that the Education sector is corrupt or extremely corrupt, and 12 % reported paying bribes for education services⁴². Moreover, students perceive corruption as a systemic and unpunished phenomenon and that the government is the main source of corruption (Avagyan, 2012). Although few, but existing research in the field provides a general understanding regarding the forms of manifestation and some peculiarities of perception of Educational Corruption among students. According to a 2010 study (OSCE, 2010), approximately 30% of 1, 200 Armenian students think that corruption exists, but not to the extent that they should be worried about it.

⁴⁰ Transparency International, Corruption Barometer (2013).

⁴¹ (1) 2010 Armenia Corruption Survey of Households; (2) OSCE: Student's perception on Corruption in Armenian Higher Education System, Yerevan 2010; (3) Government of the Republic of Armenia, "The Republic of Armenia Anti-Corruption Strategy and Its Implication Action Plan for 2009-2012"; Yerevan 2009; and (4) H. Aleksanyan, "Cases of Corruption and its Prevention in Armenia's Education System; Yerevan 2012.", (5) M. Milovanovitch "Strengthening integrity and fighting corruption in education: Armenia", Yerevan, Open Society Foundations – Armenia 2015 *etc.*, (6) Caucasus Research Resource Centers, "Caucasus Barometer" <http://caucasusbarometer.org/en/cb2017am/codebook/>.

⁴² <https://www.transparency.org/gcb2013/country?country=armenia>

Table 11. A list of anti-corruption actions undertaken by the previous Government of the Republic of Armenia since 2000s

1. The state anti-corruption policy (2001-2003)	Outlined the main legislative and institutional frameworks within which the anti-corruption strategy was to be implemented.
2. The RA Anti - corruption Strategy and its Implementation Action Plan for 2003-2008 (ACSIAP).	Aimed at overcoming corruption, removing reasons and conditions contributing to the emergence and spreading of corruption, establishing a healthy moral/psychological climate in the country.
3. 2004, June 1st Establishment of Anti-Corruption Council (ACC). 2015 February, 19th In accordance with ACC regulations, Anti-Corruption Strategy Implementation Monitoring Commission (MC) was also established.	The ACC is chaired by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, the Council is composed as follows: Minister-Chief of Government Staff, Minister of Justice, Minister of Finance, Prosecutor General, Chairman of Ethics Committee, representatives from parliamentary opposition parties, President of Public Council, a representative from the Union of Communities.
4. Republic of Armenia Anti-Corruption Strategy and Implementation Action Plan 2009-2012.	Aimed to adopt the Law on Public Service, introduce e-governance to give access to databases of various state sectors and agencies, and undertake reforms in education, health, police, public registry, tax and customs sectors.
5. Republic of Armenia Anti-Corruption Strategy and Implementation Action Plan 2015-2018.	Aimed-to improve anti-corruption implementations in education, health, police, public registry, tax and customs sectors.

6. Establishment of several institutions.	Anti-Corruption Council, Anti-Corruption Strategy Implementation Monitoring Commission).
7. International anti-corruption conventions and agreements were signed and ratified.	December 2004 the Civil Law Convention on Corruption. January 2004, within the framework of the Council of Europe's anti-corruption body, Armenia became a member of GRECO (Group of States against Corruption). June, 2004 Council of Europe's Criminal Law Convention.
8. 50 laws and by-laws were passed during that period, as part of anti-corruption measures.	<i>e.g.</i> , Law on Public Service.

Source: Avagyan (2012) ; <http://www.gov.am/en/anti-corruption-strategy/>

The same research shows that corruption is an issue both during admissions and mid-term examinations (OSCE, 2010) as well as during final exams. For instance, since recently, Bachelor students had to pass one final exam closely related to their core subjects and submit a Bachelor thesis. The extent of corruption during final exams was so high, that to fight against it, the Ministry of Science and Education decided to remove the final examination and leave only the thesis. This, however, is not a solution since many other various types of corrupt practices are particularly dominant during the academic year. Recent policy research (Milovanovitch *et al.*, 2015) admits that the most common practices that could be considered as a violation of academic integrity are cheating and plagiarism (Milovanovitch *et al.*, 2015). Students cheat mostly during midterm exams and sometimes plagiarize academic papers as well as bachelor and master theses. Cheating manifests itself in different forms such as copying from unauthorized materials during exams, copying from a peer's work, exchanging information with peers during exams, etc. Moreover, the use of various gadgets makes cheating easy for students and more difficult for faculty members to control. Currently one of the prevalent forms of cheating and/or plagiarism among Armenian students is contract cheating. As already discussed in Chapter 2, the term is used

by Lankaster (2017) to describe the act of purchasing academic papers from different agencies that are registered mostly as printing studios but also sell academic works to students. Alongside a variety of forms of academic papers, doing translations, or preparing cheat sheets, these agencies also offer Bachelor and Master theses. They have complete freedom to operate in Armenia and there is no state control. For instance, one of these agencies called kursayin.am⁴³ is quite famous among students, and has been functioning for over a decade. They have two offices in the center of Yerevan. More interestingly, they are located next to the two biggest public universities. The company actively advertises its services on online platforms too. It has a webpage page in Armenian and Russian as well as social media accounts. As of July 2020, its Facebook page has 2,850 likes and 2,862 followers. Page reviews mostly represent the extent of user satisfaction with their services, “rather than questioning the consequences of those services, namely, lowering the quality of education, on the one hand, and affecting the status of universities on the other hand, thus lowering public trust in Higher Education in general” (Hovhannisyan, 2018, p.8). The services of these kinds of agencies are popular and affordable. According to Garoyan *et al.*, (2015), 16% of 576 students reported buying academic papers at least once during their studies. Students mostly plagiarize up to 10-30% of their essays, term papers, and theses (Hovakimyan, 2012).

Other factors that provide opportunities for cheating and plagiarism are the lack of proper knowledge and the extent of awareness about these practices (Hovakimyan, 2012) as well as an environment of ignorance and impunity (Hovakimyan, 2012, Milovanovitch, *et al.*, 2015). While these structural factors are predominantly the main determinants of corruption, some individual factors such as laziness, lack of time, lack of academic skills, bad peer examples, students’ awareness of their rights, reluctance of students in general (OSCE, 2010; Hovakimyan, 2012) also play an important role in dishonest behaviors. So far cheating and plagiarism are the most reported types of fraudulent actions, and there are barely any research reports regarding bribery, nepotism or other forms of Educational Corruption. Evidence of bribery has been slightly mentioned only once by Avagyan (2012). However, both the student and faculty participants of the pilot study (*see* Appendix 1), conducted at the early stages of this research, reported that bribery and nepotism are also dominant types of corruption. For instance, one of the students interviewed mentioned that “there are some professors, who came here to run their business and make money on students... everything is inclined to that... it doesn’t matter how hard you study. They will insist so much that it is better to give them that particular money than to come and go on the subject so many times”.

So far, most of the studies on Educational Corruption in Armenia are based on data obtained from only one group of educational actors: students. The only exemption is the above-

⁴³ “kursayin” in Armenian means a type of “term-paper”, particularly the one that students have to submit mostly after the second year of their studies.

mentioned pilot study and another research conducted by Antonian (2013). This last study examined students’ as well as faculty members’ and administrators’ perceptions from various universities and Educational Corruption. While addressing the reasons that lead to corrupt practices, the study showed that all groups have common incentives, particularly “motivation factors turned out to be the common underlying reasons for the unscrupulous behavior” (Antonian, 2013, p.125).

Summarizing the results of the available data on the field, we can derive some conclusions, which in their turn lead to several discussions and assumptions. Overall, two general groups of influential factors are perceived to foster Educational Corruption: systemic/organisational and individual (*see* Table 12). A closer look at the individual factors related to student study motivation indicate that some of them could be considered as the consequences of poor functioning education management procedures within universities.

Table 12. Summary of the main reasons of corrupt behavior reported by Armenian students so far

Structural factors	Individual factors
Imperfection of Education System	Laziness
Lack of control	Lack of time
Absence/lack of penalty	Lack of academic skills
Lack of awareness rising informative events	Peers’ “bad” examples
Absence, or poor implementation of ethical norms at the universities	Reluctance of students
Indifference by academics	Students’ awareness of their rights
	Low study motivation
	Perceived irrelevance of the task

Sources: compiled by the author base on literature review, namely OSCE, 2010; Hovakimyan, 2012; Avagyan, 2012.

The summary of existing research on Educational Corruption in Armenian HE indicates that universities are failing to provide profound education on academic writing and academic integrity in general. As we can see, one of the most reported reasons to engage in corrupt actions is the lack of proper education (*e.g.*, lack of awareness, lack of academic skills, students’ knowledge of their rights) that can help students to distinguish between acceptable or non-acceptable behaviors in regards to academic misconduct. Other factors that foster corrupt behavior

are perceived to be a result of low study motivation. The study program is mostly overloaded, particularly with secondary subjects that are perceived by the students as irrelevant. Hence, they have to prioritize which subjects to study and which ones to cheat on, especially when experiencing time pressure during midterm exams. Moreover, as shown in Table 12, students report that one of the main factors that make cheating and plagiarism possible is the lack of control and detection as well as an atmosphere of impunity.

Overall, the existing research so far provides scarce information on the common forms and possible causes of Educational Corruption among students in Armenian universities. The available data is not sufficient for a comprehensive understanding of this complex phenomenon. Further scientific research is needed to fill the gap. Particularly, the research so far has not addressed the role of these organisational/systemic and individual factors in decision-making processes regarding corruption. In other words, we still need to understand how educational actors make decisions to engage or not in the behavior in question. Hence, this dissertation is especially concerned with the individual and institutional processes that lead educational actors (faculty members, administrators, and students) towards corrupt intentions and behavior.

The analysis of the available data on Educational Corruption in Armenian universities, discussed in the context of current systemic challenges and interventions, steers towards several assumptions and questions.

Assumption 1. The lack of significant state funding might put universities in a complicated state of conflict of interests that in favorable conditions turns into corrupt practices.

As already mentioned above, universities merely rely on student tuition fees for their budget. Hence, an urgent need arises for having as many enrollees as possible to sustain employee salaries. To secure students from dropping out, universities might need to lower the requirements regarding the quality of education and academic/professional conduct. In other words, to put quantity above quality and integrity. This situation might create a favorable atmosphere for cheating and plagiarism among students, and for favoritism and nepotism among faculty members to arise. Some faculty members who participated in the above-mentioned pilot study reported that they have experienced pressure not to drop or fail students since their salaries depend on tuition fees. One of them specifically mentioned that “when our salaries started to depend on tuition fees, as a result, a non-written agreement emerged that we should do everything not to drop students” (Hovhannisyan, 2018, p.8).

Assumption 2. University anti-corruption (preventive/punitive) strategies are not properly designed, implemented in practice, and communicated with educational actors.

The universities are required to provide annual anti-corruption reports. While there is a standard set of requirements assigned by the Ministry of Education, each university has the freedom to design its own legislative grounds to fight or prevent Educational Corruption. This might be challenging for universities considering the current lack of financial and educational

resources as well as the above discussed communication gap between the educational actors. With this regard, difficulties might arise while ensuring the quality of anti-corruption regulations and codes of conducts/ethics (assumed that they exist), and management issues during the execution phase. For instance, a closer look at the anti-corruption strategic plans/reports in the years 2009-2016⁴⁴ (the only available documents on anti-corruption) of one of the major Armenian public universities clearly shows that they are quite far from being effective. Firstly, they are too broad and general. The content is almost entirely identical to the general anti-corruption strategic plan template introduced to the universities by the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES⁴⁵). Thus, they are not localized and do not represent the individual state of each university regarding Educational Corruption. Secondly, these strategic plans are mostly theoretic rather than practical. The main statements are well formulated, but the measures and means, the *hows* and *whys*, are missing. They are lacking a clear action plan and do not shed light on the implementation processes, neither do they describe the expected results. Hence, the lack of clear goal-setting makes the plan less measurable. Thirdly, they neither precisely indicate the required behavior of the educational actors during the academic processes nor do they introduce sanctions that would follow in case of non-compliance. Fourthly, many statements in these reports lack evidence-based proofs and thereby, authenticity. For instance, one of the statements of the annual anti-corruption report (2016)⁴⁶ indicates that the level of corrupt risks is reduced at universities. By stating this, they neither define what the expression “corrupt risks” entails nor do they provide further measurable evidence or analytical proof. All of this, together with the student reports regarding their lack of knowledge on academic integrity (*see* Table 12) clearly indicate that these strategic plans/reports lack accountability and transparency. As already discussed above, these are two crucial components for building an environment of academic integrity.

Assumption 3. Educational actors might feel free to engage in corruption if they perceive their study/work environment as favorable, where corruption is an unpunished option to overcome various educational challenges.

This assumption is the logical continuation of the first two. Since universities need a certain number of students, the requirements regarding academic abilities and integrity are low. This will create opportunities for students with low cognitive abilities to fail to keep up with educational challenges, to perhaps freely engage in misconduct, particularly if they believe that the latter is neither controlled nor punished. The perception of a favorable atmosphere for corruption to thrive in and impunity might affect the educational actors’ behaviors differently. Students, assumingly, will feel safe and secure to constantly engage in corrupt practices. This is paired with

⁴⁵ Currently called Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport: <http://escs.am/en>.

⁴⁶ There is no online access to the 2017-2018 anti-corruption projects and/or reports.

the circumstances for faculty members to personally gain from keeping corrupt students enrolled to secure their salaries.

To test the above-mentioned assumptions, this dissertation poses the following research question: *How do individual perceptions, coupled with a university's anti-corruption performance impact the educational actors' intentions to engage in academic misconduct?* In this analysis, individual perceptions stand for educational actors' attitudes towards misconduct, beliefs on how prevalent, accepted, or permitted it is (*i.e.*, social norms) as well as anticipations regarding a university's anti-corruption efforts. The notion of anti-corruption performance entails the state of a university's preventive and punitive initiations. Finally, the term academic misconduct is used as a context-specific proxy for Educational Corruption. The latter is an umbrella term and, as already discussed, has quite a broad definition with a large variety of applications. Hence, I use the more practical term of academic misconduct, which better fits this research. The term precisely mentions a focus on the misbehaviors that occur during academic processes (*e.g.*, retention, assessment, graduation). The term Academic Misconduct refers to such practices as cheating and plagiarism among students, and nepotism and favoritism among faculty members and administrators. Overall, this dissertation centers on the social-psychological and institutional factors that together influence educational actors' decisions with regards to academic misconduct.

3.4. Summary

- The Armenian Higher Education System entered a new era of fundamental changes starting in 1991, after independence from the Soviet Union. Drastic changes, however, started to happen when in 2004 Armenia signed the Lisbon convention on qualifications recognition, and most importantly, when Armenia joined the Bologna process in 2005 thereby bringing the structural and conceptual challenges of Higher Education into a new level of developments.

- Armenia showed a high motivation to undertake the Bologna reforms. Although they were designed at a theoretical level, it failed in the implementation phase. One of the reasons was that Armenia showed a willingness to accept the ready-made policies by entering the field of educational challenges without its own evidence-based educational policies and clear vision. These crucial mistakes regarding policy diffusion and transfer as well as the lack of change management skills led to a communication gap between educational agents, resulted in frustration, nostalgic feelings, and reluctance to change, particularly among the teaching staff. Alongside all the challenges regarding integration into the new system, corruption arose as one of the most crucial issues. Previous government anti-corruption actions, however, were not that successful due to several reasons. Even though these initiatives had a strong legal basis, they still did not tackle education corruption as a separate phenomenon. Those projects also seemed to be mostly declarative and were poorly implemented. As a result, universities had to come up with effective solutions for combating corruption on their own, without any frameworks or guidelines.

- Although corruption is an important issue in the Armenian Higher Education there is a lack of significant scientific research on the topic. The existing and limited research so far tackles only student perceptions on the forms and reasons for corruption. The research gap is vast, and further scientific investigation is needed to have a more comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon.

- The research raises assumptions that the current Education System creates not only possibilities for Educational Corruption, but that it is also limited to fight against it. These conditions, combined with the educational actors' perceptions that corruption can go unpunished, might further foster conditions for corrupt practices. Hence, this dissertation attempts to understand how institutional and individual factors impact educational actors' decisions.

4. Conceptual frameworks

“The proper work of the mind is the exercise of choice, refusal, yearning, repulsion, preparation, purpose, and assent. What then can pollute and clog the mind’s proper functioning? Nothing but its own corrupt decision”

Epictetus

So far, the existing research in this field does not provide significant insights on the peculiarities of corrupt decision making processes. As already mentioned (*see* 3.3), the current research aims to understand how individual and organizational factors impact educational actors’ corrupt intentions/decisions. To understand and explain faculty members’ decisions/intentions, this research relies on a theoretical framework suggested by Köbis and his colleagues on Prospective Cognition and Psychological Dynamics involved in corruption (Köbis *et al.*, 2016) (*see* 4.1.). A student’s corrupt decisions/intentions are also explained, relying on the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) (*see* 4.2.).

4.1. Conceptual framework - Prospective Cognition and Psychological Dynamics involved in corruption

Köbis *et al.*, (2016) approach corruption as a social dilemma, “a situation in which short-term self-interest is at odds with longer term collective interests” (p.71). Thus, the corruption dilemma is a “conflict between abusing power and using the power responsibility: corruption (power abuse) serves short-term self-interest and no corruption (using power responsibility) serves long term collective interest” (Blau, 2009, as cited in Köbis *et al.*, 2016, p.71-72). Translated into an educational context, a faculty member could experience a corrupt dilemma when deciding whether to take a bribe (*e.g.*, abuse of the entrusted power) and to use that money for personal benefits (*e.g.*, short-term self-interest), or to refuse it and remain fair (*e.g.* using power responsibility); and in this way treat equally all the students as well as provide quality education to everyone (*e.g.*, long-term collective interest). Emphasizing the importance of distinguishing between individual and interpersonal corruption, Köbis *et al.*, (2016) define the former as “corrupt acts in which one agent single-handedly abuses entrusted power for private gains”, which “entails a trade-off between two parties: power holder *vs* collective” (p.72)”. Interpersonal corruption is therefore related to “corrupt acts in which *multiple* agents abuse entrusted power for private gains in collaboration” (Köbis *et al.*, p.72). This second form of corruption is very complex because it becomes a “nested corruption dilemma” that includes three actors, “power holder *vs* corrupt

partners vs collective” (Köbis *et al.*, p.74). As argued by Köbis and his colleagues, each type of corruption involves different prospecting and psychological dynamics in corrupt decision-making processes. The authors state that the process of corrupt decision making brings about mental simulation of the consequences of the corrupt act for both the power holder and the collective. This process of prior mental forecasting of the expected consequences of a corrupt act is described as “prospective cognition” (Köbis *et al.*, p.74), which entails at least two parties, “For one, a power holder who faces corruption dilemma mentally forecasts their *own* outcomes. Second, because of the entrusted power over shared resources, a power holder also prospects the *collective* outcomes, which importantly include power holder as well” (Blau, 2009, as cited in Köbis *et al.*, 2016, p.74). Considering an example of individual corrupt prospection, let us suppose that a faculty member in taking a bribe he/she would have a short-term benefit, but will suffer more long-term results because he/she is contributing to the expansion of a more corrupt and less trustworthy education system. When facing corruption dilemmas, people most of the time are inclined to undermine the long term negative consequences of corrupt actions for the whole group (*i.e.*, collective), thus giving preference to short-term individual gains and “this temporal dilemma is at the heart of all forms of corruption and underlines the important role of prospective cognition in corrupt decision-making” (Köbis *et al.*, 2016, p.74).

Meanwhile, in the case of interpersonal corruption, a human being who is experiencing a corrupt dilemma needs to prospect not only in terms of individual interest, but that of the collective as well. There is an additional “sub-dilemma between the corrupt partners” (p.74) which makes the decision making even more complex (Köbis *et al.*, 2016). For instance, consider a situation when a dean of faculty wants to abuse his/her authority and suggests to another faculty member to engage in nepotism in exchange for a promotion. In this case, the dean should assess the costs of corrupt actions on himself/herself, on that of the faculty member (*i.e.*, corrupt partner), and on the collective too. Mental simulations in these conditions cover various areas. If the faculty member refuses to engage in nepotism, this would have a negative influence on the deans’ self-interest. If the faculty member agrees, but the dean does not keep the promise of promotion then it would create a negative situation both for the faculty member and the collective. A third scenario, when the faculty member agrees and the dean keeps the promise, then the interest of the collective is the only victim. In short, in contrast to individual corruption, a corrupt decision in interpersonal corrupt dilemmas is made by taking account the interests of at least the three parties, rather than that of two.

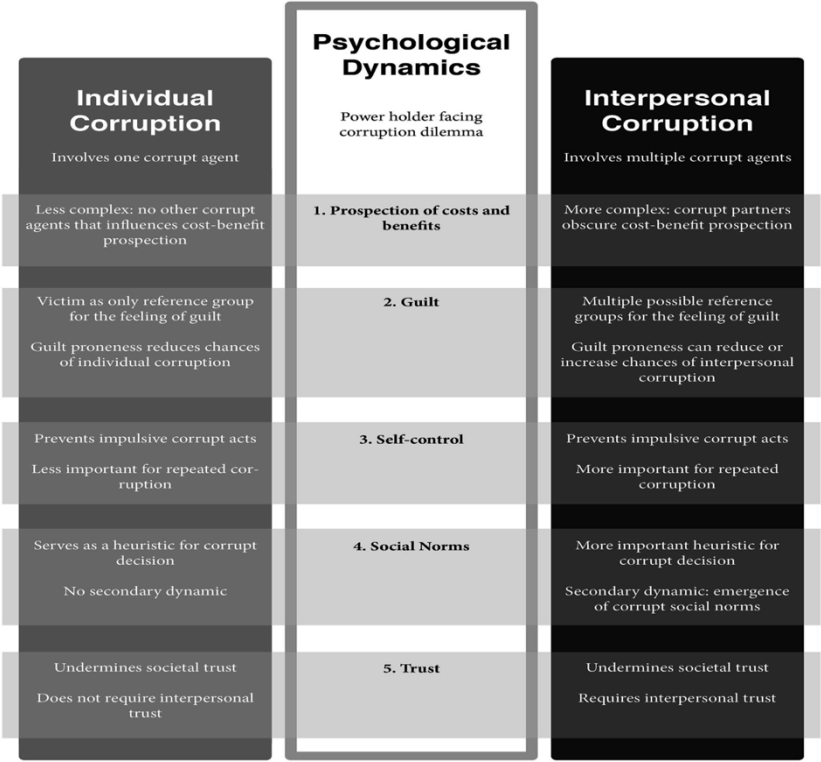
Distinguishing between individual and interpersonal corruption, as well as based on the extensive literature on social dilemmas, Köbis *et al.*, (2016) provide a theoretical model on these prospection processes and psychological dynamics involved in various corrupt acts (*see* Figure 1). The introduced model is related to corrupt decisions in general. Further on in the next sections, I will attempt to discuss in more details this phenomenon in the context of educational corruption.

The authors differentiate between intrapersonal and interpersonal psychological dynamics that play a crucial role in corrupt decision making. As Figure 1 shows, the group of intrapersonal dynamics includes constructs such as cost-benefit calculations, self-control, and guilt. The second group, interpersonal psychological factors, are social norms and trust. All these characteristics impact prospections on corrupt decisions, however, their influence is different for individual and interpersonal corruption.

The first component of the model is the calculation of costs and benefits of a corrupt action in question. This refers to the rational assessment of all the material and nonmaterial gains (*i.e.*, benefits), as well as the consequences (*i.e.*, costs) that a given corrupt act entails. As Köbis *et al.*, mention, this prospection is easy to predict, and more importantly, is not so complex in the case of individual corruption because the power holder solely is responsible for his/her decision and no other actors are engaged in this process. The same prospection regarding the costs and benefits is more complex for interpersonal corrupt decisions, because more corrupt actors are involved. In this case, low predictability and high uncertainty are typical for interpersonal corruption, whereas a more detailed and cautious prospection is needed to understand the extent of corruptibility when numerous partners are involved. There is also a high risk that one of the persons might be a whistleblower. Moreover, the more partners there are, the higher the complexity of the prospection (Köbis *et al.*, 2016).

While the calculation of benefits and consequences requires rational and cognitive evaluations of the situation, anticipated guilt is more related to emotions. As explained by Köbis *et al.*, (2016) people who are inclined to feel guilty more frequently, guilt-prone individuals, are less inclined to perform individual corruption. The power holder in this case prospects on the consequences of his/her corrupt performance on the victims. If a guilt-prone power holder pre-experiences guilt towards the victim “especially if the victim is salient and concrete” (p.75) then he/she is less likely to perform individual corrupt behavior.

Figure 1. The intrapersonal and interpersonal dynamics of corruption and how they differ for individual and interpersonal corruption



Source: Köbis *et al.*, 2016, p.73.

One can assume that a guilt-prone faculty member who pre-experiences guilt towards his/her group of students, would not accept a bribe if suggested by a particular student from that group. More complex guilt related psychological dynamics are involved in the case of interpersonal corruption. First, there is a clash of moral values since interpersonal corruption “often constitutes a conflict between fairness and loyalty principles” (Dungan *et al.*, 2014 as cited in Köbis *et al.*, 2016, p.75). Furthermore, if fairness is about “equal treatment to all persons and groups, loyalty dictates a preferential treatment to one’s own in-group over other groups (Waytz, Dungan, and Young, 2013) as cited in Köbis *et al.*, 2016, p.75). When facing this conflict, a person must decide whether to remain fair and not engage in corruption, or to be loyal to his/her group members and become corrupt. If a person’s decision is guided by the principle of fairness, then it

is expected that he/she would feel guilty for not engaging in corruption if the group asks for it, thereby letting down his/her partners. In an educational context, a person who faces this dilemma might be a faculty member who is asked by one of his/her colleagues (*i.e.*, in-group members) to let a student cheat on an exam. If this faculty member chooses to remain fair, then he/she will not consent and will treat that student equal to the others. However, refusing the request of an in-group member might trigger feelings of guilt towards that member. It is assumed that in these cases, power holders are mostly inclined to stay loyal to group members. The reason is that the victims are less visible and more abstract: the entire group of students, other faculty members, and the institution's long-term reputation. In contrast, an in-group member such as a colleague is more immediately visible and present. Thus, "the anticipated guilt towards potential corrupt partners likely overshadows the anticipated guilt toward the victim" (p.75). Therefore, there is a higher likelihood that this figurative faculty member would decide to cooperate with corrupt partners. Moreover, the second component that relates guilt to corruption is that it fosters corrupt cooperation "because of the importance of the above-mentioned loyalty norms among in-group members, failing to cooperate with corrupt partners triggers negative moral emotions. Thus, people may often exercise guilt when not cooperating with the salient corrupt partner(s)" (Köbis *et al.*, p.75). Another factor that creates opportunities for guilty feelings is the hierarchical relationship between group members. In this case, "the chances of corrupt cooperation likely increase when instigated by power holders since people frequently feel guilt when not adhering to authority" (Messick and Bazerman, 1996, as cited in Köbis *et al.*, p.75). In the context of educational corruption, for instance, faculty members might feel emotional pressure and guilt when refusing the request of a dean of the faculty. The dean might have the same affective prospections when not engaging in corrupt agreement with an administrative representative who has an even higher position. Also, when a person thinks that "other corrupt agent(s) stand to gain from the corrupt act, it facilitates the justification process and additionally alleviates guilt toward the victim" (Köbis *et al.*, p.76). These justifications and alleviation of guilt, as argued by the authors, allow people to violate fairness for the sake of in-group gains. Moreover, the more people engage in corrupt cooperation, the more responsibility is diffused. Hence, "in big and established corrupt networks, each corrupt agent feels less responsible for the negative externalities caused by corruption compared to smaller corrupt networks. This tendency minimizes the anticipated guilt" (Köbis *et al.*, p.76).

In sum, the authors state that guilt is a common emotional factor that is involved in corrupt prospections. However, while the case of individual corruption reduces the likelihood of corrupt performance, interpersonal corruption involves more complex psychological processes which can contribute to the possibility of more corrupt performances.

The third construct discussed in the model is self-control, addressed earlier in Chapter 2, within individual impulsive behaviors, but not in a real corruption context. Köbis *et al.*, (2016)

highlight the importance of high self-control both for recognizing and for resisting individual and interpersonal corrupt distractions and temptations. As discussed above, when the main victims of corrupt actions are not visible and are distant, those engaged in corruption might underestimate the consequences of their actions. Moreover, “without recognition of the possible negative consequences for the collective, the corruption dilemma might not even appear to be a dilemma” (p.76). As explained by the authors, in the case of guilt in individual corrupt dilemmas, a high level of self-control can play a preventive role while at the same time lowering the likelihood of corrupt actions. A person with high self-control can resist the temptation to abuse power for self-interest. In contrast, it is assumed that people with low self-control, and particularly in situations when spontaneous and fast decisions must be made, are more likely to engage in corrupt cooperation rather than those who have time to think. Another component that together with low self-control leads to interpersonal corruption is the partner. If the corrupt partner is a close person, then it is assumed that the one who faces a corrupt dilemma might have an impulsive tendency to comply with that partner, particularly if they have already been engaged in corrupt cooperation before (Köbis *et al.*, 2016). Repeated corrupt actions, as explained by the authors, can have a damaging impact in both individual and interpersonal corruption. A corrupt individual needs a high self-control to be able to play a dual role by continually engaging in corrupt actions and hiding them. At the same time, he/she needs to be able to “give the impression of being innocent. Thus, moral hypocrisy emerges” (p.77). In context of interpersonal repeated corruption, high self-control is crucial. First, a corrupt person needs not only to keep successfully incorporating the repeated corruption and have a positive self-image, but also to create a public image of fairness and honesty. Long-lasting repeated corruption might even result in cognitive-dissonance. Meanwhile, a corrupt agent has to have an impression of corruptibility among corrupt partners, and show willingness to cooperate with them while being a non-corrupt person for the rest of the world (Köbis *et al.*, 2016).

The last two components of the model of interpersonal corrupt dynamics are social norms and trust. As already touches upon in earlier chapters, social norms play a crucial role both for facilitating and preventing corrupt actions. Drawing on the extensive literature that exists, Köbis *et al.*, (2016) provide a comprehensive picture on how social norms impact humans decisions to perform or not a corrupt behavior, particularly for interpersonal corruption. Social norms are defined as a “shared understanding about actions that are obligatory, permitted or forbidden” (Crawford and Ostrom, 1995, as cited in Köbis *et al.*, 2016, p.77). There are two main types of social norms: a) injunctive, evaluating “whether the anticipated corrupt act is permissible” and b) descriptive, calculating “whether the others engage in it as well” (p.77). As explained in the same source, in the context of individual corruption, injunctive norms facilitate negative pre-experiences when facing corrupt dilemmas, and thus reduce the chances of corrupt action to occur. For instance, when a faculty member thinks that the consequence of his/her corrupt action might result in strict punishment because this kind of behavior is not permitted, then the chances are

lower that he/she would perform the corrupt act. In contrast, descriptive norms most of the time facilitate corrupt actions by serving as a rationalization that those corrupt behaviors are common and everybody is doing them. Hence, the faculty member might feel less guilty and be inclined to engage in corruption, as it is an acceptable type of behavior at his/her university; especially if he/she thinks that colleagues and administrators are also corrupt. This perception that “if I don’t do it, somebody else will, paves the way for corruption” (p.77) and alleviates the negative consequences of corrupt action. The perception that even if corruption is a bad thing, but everybody else is doing it, leads to rationalization of a corrupt behavior before its actual performance as well as to the alleviation of any negative consequences (Köbis et al., 77). For instance, if a faculty member perceives that asking for a bribe in exchange of high grades is an acceptable practice in his/her university, and all of his/her colleagues are also doing so, then the likelihood is high that he/she will also demand a bribe from a student. In the case of interpersonal corruption prospections, the behavior is more complex since “perceived descriptive norms convey crucial information about chances of success for a corrupt transaction” (p.78). A person, prior to engaging in corrupt action, needs to “shape prospections about the behavior of corrupt partners” (p.78). For example, a faculty member estimates the likelihood of a positive outcome of a corrupt action based on his/her perception, whether the corruption is widespread among colleagues or not. Let us consider that this faculty member wants to engage in nepotism and asks the dean of the faculty to secure high grades for his/her relative. Before actually asking, the faculty member first estimates whether nepotism is widely practiced by the dean and in the university in general. If the prospection on this is positive and his/her corrupt intention will not be punished or perceived negatively by the dean, then the faculty member might go ahead and initiate an act of nepotism. In contrast, if the faculty member perceives that nepotism is not an approved practice by the dean and that the punishment would be severe, the chances are low that he/she would commit nepotism.

The last component of the model is trust, which also needs a close reading. Earlier in Chapter 2, I discussed that corruption lowers public trust. However, this gives a general overview on the costs of corruption, which is only one role that trust plays in the context of corruption. In this case, if corruption is perceived to be high, then the trust of society towards the system is low. In the context of corrupt cooperation, a high level of trust among the corrupt partners is crucial to establish that collaboration. This form of trust is called particularized trust and it is “the belief that another person is positively concerned about the outcomes for oneself” (Balliet & Van Lange, 2013, as cited in Köbis *et al.*, (2016), p.78). In other words, particularized trust is the trust between corrupt partners, which “entails the belief that corrupt partners care about the *positive* outcomes for each other, but at the same time disregard the *negative* outcomes for the victim” (p.78). For example, a person who prospects engaging in a corrupt action needs to assess whether the partner shares the same motivation to perform the behavior and is ready to undermine the negative impact of that behavior on others. In the context of educational corruption, it can be a situation where a

faculty member wants to initiate nepotism and ask his/her colleague to accept the plagiarized work of a certain student. In this case, the faculty member needs to prospect whether his/her colleague too wants this student to benefit as well as whether the colleague will be fine with the fact that this action will have negative consequences for the rest of the students. If the prospected trust on a colleague's mutual interest in nepotism is high, then the chances are also high that a corrupt cooperation will occur. Besides this willingness, the prospection that corrupt cooperation has the potential to be repeated in the future also facilitates corrupt cooperation (Köbis, *et al.*, 2016).

4.1.1. Why the model of Prospective Cognition and Psychological Dynamics?

The model Prospective Cognition and Psychological Dynamics provides a detailed explanation of the psychology of corrupt behavior, unique in its type in the field of corruption research, and provides a profound framework for studying the problem of Educational Corruption within a university system. This model of psychological dynamics of corrupt prospections allows to better understand the corrupt behavior of faculty members and administrators in the Armenian higher education system. Hence, the model is a proper framework for this research for a couple of reasons.

First, the existing few research mostly draws on individual factors typical for corrupt people. Köbis *et al.*, (2016) discuss the psychology of corrupt decision making processes both at the individual and group level by addressing the core psychological dynamics of corrupt prospections. This dissertation is particularly concerned with how educational actors make their corrupt decisions in student-faculty, faculty-faculty, and faculty-administration interactions. Therefore, the model is very useful. Second, the model is comprehensive and draws upon the extensive research on behavioral and social psychology as well as corruption research in general. This enrichment of theoretical and practical knowledge increases the likelihood of having a close understanding of the corruption phenomena, particularly from a social-psychological perspective.

While all the above-mentioned constructs play a central role in corrupt decision making processes, two components of the model are particularly central for this research. To understand faculty members' and administrators' corrupt decisions/intentions, I will focus mainly on their prospection on costs and benefits and their perceptions on injunctive and descriptive social norms. The choice of these two was made for several reasons: First, as already discussed prospections on cost and benefits, and the perceptions on social norm, are in the core of corruption and have the highest impact on corrupt decisions. Second, the chosen research method, qualitative interviews, allows me to assess these constructs; whereas other methods and measures are needed for evaluating the levels of guilt proneness or self-control. Third, social norms are one of the main means for successful anti-corruption, since it is assumed that a close understanding of their role in corrupt

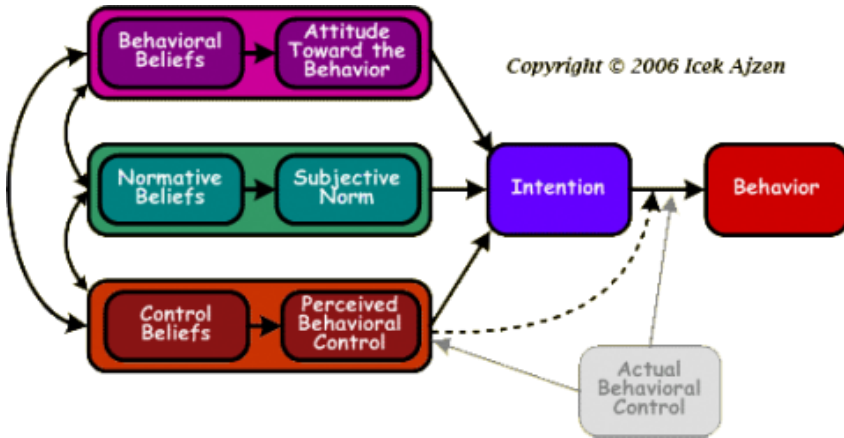
collaboration in Armenian universities might provide important insights for anti-corruption suggestions.

The conceptual framework suggested by Köbis *et al.*, (2016) is therefore suitable to study faculty members' and administrators' positions because here the focus is on the power holders. Nevertheless, students also widely engage in various corrupt acts too. Hence, to understand how both individual and organizational factors impact corrupt decisions, this research also relies on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB).

4.2. Conceptual Framework: The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (*see* Figure 2.) is an extended version of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), which states that behavioral intentions are immediate antecedents of the action or the behavior in question. Except for unforeseen events, people are usually inclined to act accordingly to their intentions. It is important to note that TRA applies to behaviors that are under volitional control; in other words, to the cases where people make conscious choices to act or not in certain behaviors. In this case, intentions can serve as behavioral predictors (Fishbern and Ajzen, 2010). Behavioral Intentions assumingly capture the motivational factors that impact a behavior (Ajzen, 1991). They are “indications of how hard people are willing to try, of how much of an effort they are planning to exert in order to perform the behavior” (Beck and Ajzen, 1991, p.286). Behavioral Intention itself is a function of two basic determinants. One of them is the Attitude towards a behavior, that is more personal and reflects the individual’s positive or negative evaluation of performing the behavior. The second factor is the Subjective Norm, which reflects the person’s perception of the social pressure put on him/her to perform or not a certain behavior. The Attitude towards the behavior is shaped by behavioral beliefs (*see* Figure 2), a “person’s probability that performing a certain behavior will produce a particular outcome” (Ajzen, 2012, p.3) and evaluations of the outcomes of a particular behavior. Whereas the Subjective Norm forms from normative beliefs, which is “the person’s subjective probability that a particular normative referent wants a person to perform or not the given behavior” and the motivation to comply with the referent (Ajzen, 2012, p.4). People are usually inclined to have favorable attitudes toward a behavior when they evaluate the outcome of that behavior positively. Moreover, if they also think that there are other more important persons who will perform that behavior, then it is more likely that they will also perform the given behavior. Conversely, when the evaluation of the behavior’s outcome is negative, alongside with the perception that the behavior in question is not permissible, the person is more likely not to perform the behavior in question (Ajzen, 2012). For example, if a student perceives that cheating might help him/her get a high grade (positive outcome) and if cheating is an expected behavior among peers, then the chances are high that the student would engage in cheating.

Figure 2. TPB model⁴⁷



It might seem that this intention-behavior interaction occurs very frequently, that intentions are always turning to behavioral performances very easily, but this is not the case. Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) introduce the principle of *correspondence or compatibility* so that it is possible to clarify the relation of verbal attitudes with performed behavior. In general, the principle states that “attitudes and behavior correlate with each other to the extent that they are compatible in terms of their action, target, context and time elements” (p.44). The verbal responses to perform a behavior do not always lead to an actual behavior since “the relations of beliefs, attitudes, and subjective norms are more clearly delineated than are the factors that determine whether or not the behavioral intentions will be carried out” (Ajzen, 1985, p.18). Intentions might change under the influence of various factors; among them, time factors, the emergence of new information, changes in strength and confidence of intentions, and other individual factors (Ajzen, 1985, p.3). Here the TRA reaches its limits since the verbal responses to perform the behavior so not always lead to an actual behavior, and the chances for accurate prediction of the behavior are low. According to the TRA, “intentions can be expected to predict behavior only when two conditions are met. First, the measure of intention available to the investigator must reflect a respondent’s intentions as they exist just prior to performance of the behavior; and, second, the behavior must be under volitional control” (Ajzen, 1985, p.18).

To enhance the predictive accuracy, especially for the behaviors that are not completely under volitional control, the Perceived Behavioral Control was added to the original model of TRA, thus extending the later to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). This inclusion not only provides

⁴⁷ <https://people.umass.edu/ajzen/tpb.diag.html>

information on a person's perceived restrictions regarding the action in question, but also identifies the reason why intentions do not always predict a behavior (Armitage & Conner, 2001). Perceived Behavioral Control is "the extent to which people believe that they are capable of, or have control over, performing a given behavior" and "it is assumed to take into account the availability of information, skills, opportunities, and other resources required to perform the behavior as well as possible barriers or obstacles that may have to be overcome" (Fishbein, Ajzen, 2010 p.155). Briefly stated, it is the perceived ease of difficulty of performing the behavior in question (Ajzen, 2002), and is formed from control beliefs which are perceptions about the presence of factors that facilitate or impede the adoption of a given behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

As Figure 3 shows, the TPB model includes a construct of Actual Behavioral Control . This entails the extent of actual resources (*e.g.*, time, money, skills, cooperation of others) and opportunities which are required for performing the behavior in question (Ajzen, 1991). The importance of actual behavioral control is self-evident since "the resources and opportunities available to a person must to some extent direct the likelihood of behavioral achievement" (Ajzen, 1991, p.183). Whereas, perceived behavioral control and its impact on intentions and actions are of a greater psychological interest, according to the author of TPB. Ajzen (1991) argues that perceived behavioral control together with behavioral intention can be used directly to predict the behavior in question. He supports these arguments with two statements. His first statement entails that "holding intentions constant, the effort expended to bring a course of behavior to a successful conclusion is likely to increase with perceived behavioral control" (Ajzen, 1991, p.184). For example, if two students have equally strong intentions to buy a term-paper, and both try to perform accordingly, the student who is more self-assured that he/she has enough resources and opportunities (money, knows where to buy, is not afraid to submit plagiarized work *etc.*) is more likely to persist, than the other student who has concerns and doubts about his/her abilities and resources. The second statement of Ajzen (1991) is that it is reasonable to expect a direct link between perceived behavioral control and behavior in question since the "perceived behavioral control can be used as a substitute for a measure of actual control" (Köbis *et al.*, p.184). However, perceptions over behavioral control may not be accurate and realistic due to various reasons (little information change in requirements and available resources, entrance of unforeseen elements in the situation, *etc.*). These situations might result in little accuracy of the prediction of a given behavior. However, "to the extent that perceived control is realistic, it can be used to predict the probability of a successful behavioral attempt" (Köbis *et al.*, p.185). For example, as long as students are realistic about their mental prospections of the ease or difficulty of performing cheating during an upcoming exam, their self-reported perceptions on behavioral control can be used as a proxy for their actual behavioral control, and help to predict their intentions to engage in cheating behavior.

4.2.1. Why the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) model?

The Theory of Planned Behavior provides a conceptual framework for understanding student corrupt intentions due to its predictive validity and comprehensiveness. It covers the primary determinants of human behavior and leaves room for researchers to adjust the model according to research goals. TPB is widely used among social science researchers. There is a sufficient amount of research that supports the efficiency and predictive validity of TPB model in general (Armitage & Conner, 2001, Passow *et al.*, 2006, Mayhew *et al.*, 2009). Scholars use TPB to explain and predict quite a broad range of intentions and behaviors. Ajzen's official webpage provide a bibliography list of articles that use TPB. The list includes 56 theories and reviews approximately 690 empirical papers (Stone *et al.*, 2009). These articles present various fields of research such as public relations, advertising campaigns and healthcare. Although the TPB is widely used in various types of research there is only few research that applies it for investigating integrity misconducts (Beck & Ajzen, 1991, Whitley, 1998, Harding *et al.*, 2007, Passow *et al.*, 2006, Stone *et. al.*, 2009a; 2010, Mayhew, *et al.*, 2009, Chudzicka-Czupala *et al.*, 2016, Maloshonok *et al.*, 2019). All the studies single-handedly admit that TPB is a valid model to study academic dishonesty.

Thus, this dissertation relies on the strong explanatory and predictive value of TPB for studying a student's decision-making processes in regards to Academic Misconduct in the Armenian Higher Education System. In other words, the current study uses TPB to understand student perceptions, namely evaluations of costs and benefits (Attitude), the extent of permissibility and prevalence (Subjective Norms) together with mental prospections on available resources and opportunities (Perceived Behavioral Control), and how all of this impacts their intentions regarding cheating and plagiarism.

4.3. Summary

- To understand and explain faculty members' and administrators' perceptions and their impact on corrupt activities, I will rely on the theoretical model of Prospective Cognition and Psychological Dynamics involved in corruption introduced by Köbis *et al.*, (2016). Based on the analysis of the extensive research on unethical behavior and decision making processes, the authors suggest a unique theoretical framework to study the psychological mechanism of corrupt decisions. Moreover, the framework distinguishes between individual and interpersonal corruption, which allows corruption researchers to better understand this complex phenomenon. This framework sheds light on the cognitive projections experienced by actors prior to actual behavioral performance. Hence, the use of this theoretical framework for the current research is reasonable, since I am concerned with understanding the individual and organizational factors that influence educational actors—in this context, faculty members' decisions and prospects as to whether or not to engage in academic misconduct.

- To study a student's individual perceptions and their impact on the student's decision to engage or not in academic misconduct, I will rely on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991). The theory is widely used by scholars to study various ranges of behaviors. The TPB model consists of 5 constructs. Namely, attitudes towards behavior, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, intentions, and behavior. TPB is a unique framework which enables to explain and predict volitional human behavior.

Part II – Research Design and Methodology

5. The Mixed Methods Research design (MMR)

So far, research on Academic Misconduct has mostly been mono methodological: either qualitative or quantitative approaches have been implemented to study this complex phenomenon. Both approaches have limitations and weaknesses, which to certain extent, reduce the possibility of obtaining the best answers for my research question. Therefore, to enhance the chances of reaching a comprehensive understanding of the problem of Academic Misconduct in the Armenian Higher Education System, this research relies on a Mixed Methods Research (hereinafter MMR) approach. MMR has emerged as a third paradigm to support the research in solving the everlasting quantitative or qualitative dilemma. Although this approach so far has been called several different names such as blended research (Thomas, 2003), triangulated studies (Sandelovski, 2003), integrative research (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004), and mixed research (Johnson, 2006; Johnson and Christensen, 2004), the most common and relatively broad term is the Mixed Methods Research (Johnson *et al.*, 2007, p.118). This emerging methodological paradigm “sits in a new third chair, with qualitative research sitting on the left side and quantitative research sitting on the right side” (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p.15). MMR does not aim to replace either the qualitative or the quantitative approach, rather its goal is to “strengthen and minimize the weaknesses of both in single research studies” (p.15). Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2004) develop this idea further by stating that “mixed methods as the third research paradigm can also help to bridge the schism between quantitative and qualitative research” (as cited in Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p.15). It is the “methodological pluralism or eclecticism” of MMR which promises to deliver “superior results (compared to mono method results)” (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p.14). The primary philosophy of MMR is pragmatism that rejects the notion of incompatibility, and while stating that research paradigms stand separately, there is a possibility for them to mix into a new paradigm (Johnson *et al.*, 2007). Recently, Johnson (2017) proposed dialectical pluralism, “a metaparadigm whose time has come”, as a philosophical support for MMR. Broadly defined, dialectical pluralism is a process “to carefully, systematically, and thoughtfully listen, understand, appreciate, and learn from multiple paradigms, disciplines, values, methodologies, standpoints, ethnicities, and perspectives” (Johnson, 2017, p.156). The paradigm accepts the multiple nature of reality, stating that “there are multiple true statements that can be made about reality” (p.163) and that “multiple ways of conceptualizing reality should usually be articulated and embraced” (p.163).

Currently, leading scholars define MMR in a number of ways. After analyzing 19 contemporary definitions suggested separately or paired by 36 methodologists in the field, Johnson *et al.*, (2007) provide a general definition of MMR. They state that “mixed methods research is a type of research on which a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g. use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data

collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration” (p.123). In addition, it is important to mention that “a mixed methods study would involve mixing within a single study; a mixed program would involve mixing within a program of research and the mixing might occur across a closely related set of studies” (p.123). The notions of “breadth and depth” and “corroboration”, as explained by the authors, refer to the purpose of conducting a mixed research. The aims vary from providing a better, fuller, deeper, and more comprehensive understanding and description, to triangulation and validation of the findings (Johnson *et al.*, (2007).

5.1. Why a Mixed Method Research Design?

As already mentioned, corruption is a complex phenomenon to research due to its intricacy and limited availability of studies. Moreover, research on Academic Misconduct in Armenia is scarce, and so far, mono-methodological. This dissertation aims to fill the research gap by applying these new approaches. Hence, this study relies on the promise of MMR to provide a comprehensive understanding of the problem in question by allowing to combine diverse realities in a single research. Following the principles of MMR design, this research applies both qualitative and quantitative methods to obtain a deeper and more expansive understanding of decision making processes regarding Academic Misconduct performed by different groups of educational actors in Armenian universities. MMR design allows to cover the perceptions of three educational actors in a single study. Speaking in the language of MMR terminology, the current study at its first stages follows the equal-status and concurrent-independent design (Schoonenboom and Johnson, 2017). In other words, equal-status means that both qualitative and quantitative methods have equal value and are the core components of this study. The concurrent-independent design refers to the timing of the data collection. The qualitative data has been collected from faculty members and administrators simultaneously and independently from the quantitative data with students. This can be expressed in the following formula “QUAL+QUAN” suggested by Morse (1991) using the mixed methods notation system. The capitalized four letters, which indicate qualitative and quantitative inquiries respectfully, refer to their equality, whereas the plus sign means that those inquiries are concurrent (Schoonenboom and Johnson, 2017), *i.e.*, conducted simultaneously in a single study. However, there are some components that add complexity to this traditional form of design. As already discussed, this research aims to mix the data conducted from different sources, namely students, faculty members, and administrators. These three groups of participants represent different and multiple levels of reality. Moreover, since the research sample consists of educational actors from three different public universities, the data obtained from them will also be mixed

during the final analysis stage. In theory, this type of complex or non-traditional design is called a “multilevel mixed design” (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009, Schoonenboom, 2016).

In sum, following the logic of QUAL+QUAN, the data collection phase as well as the data analysis phase have been proceeded independently. Qualitative, semi-structured interviews have been conducted with faculty members and administrators, whereas students were instructed to fill in a quantitative questionnaire designed with the TPB questionnaire construction principles (Fishbein and Ajzen, 2010, Ajzen 2006). The same order was executed during the data analyzing stages. The order, however, has no significance in this context as the results of one method did not affect the results of the other. The following sections discuss the method and the process of data collection for both studies. The results of the qualitative study are presented in Chapter 6, and Chapter 7 showcases the results of the quantitative study.

In the last Chapter, the qualitative and quantitative results have been combined and presented as a joint display (*see* Figure 11) following the logic of integration at an interpretation and reporting level (Fetter *et al.*, 2013) or results point integration (Schoonenboom and Johnson, 2017).

5.2. Qualitative study

5.2.1. Why Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA)?

Qualitative Content Analysis (hereinafter QCA) is a good fit for this dissertation due to several reasons. First, it is widely used among qualitative researchers and therefore has much credibility. The term “qualitative content analysis” for the first time was explicitly introduced in 1952 by Kracauer, stating that it is “focused on discovering the *meaning* within texts and analyzing their communicative content” (Kracauer, 1952, as cited in Kuckartz, 2014, p.31). Nowadays, QCA is mostly defined as “a method for systematically describing the meaning of qualitative data” (Schreier, 2014, p.170). Compared to Quantitative Content Analysis, QCA is a “form of analysis in which an understanding and interpretation of the text play a far larger role than in classical content analysis, which is more limited to the so-called ‘manifest content’” (Kuckartz, 2014, p.33). Mayring (2014) defines QCA as a “mixed methods approach: assignment of categories to the text as qualitative step, working through many text passages and analysis of frequencies of categories as quantitative step” (p.10).

Second, QCA is “extremely rule guided” (Mayring, 2014), which means that it requires a strict commitment to those rules and steps even from the very first stages of research. Mayring (2015) distinguishes several basic rules that are essential for QCA: 1) text in qualitative content analysis must always be interpreted within its context; 2) it is highly important to define a specific procedural model of analysis before starting the analysis, *e.g.*, “deciding in advance how the material is to be approached, which parts are to be analyzed in what sequence, what condition must be obtained in order for an encoding to be carried out”; 3) categories are in the focus of analysis; 4) “the alliance with the individual object of analysis is an especially important concern” and “it is the object of analysis which is paramount”; 5) testing specific instruments via pilot study; 6) analysis should have theory-guided character, which means that “in all procedural decisions systematic reference is made to the latest research on the particular subject and on comparable subject fields; 7) integrating quantitative steps of analysis is “the chief task to determine those points in the analytical process at which quantitative measures can be sensibly brought in”; and 8) quality criteria as inter-coder reliability is of central importance (Mayring, 2014, pp.39-42).

All these procedural and content requirements aim to establish a model of analysis that enables detailed permanent work with the text material, helps to systematize and summarize it, and proceed with the final analysis. This highly systematic and rule-guided nature of QCA enhances the transparency of data analysis as well as its replicability to certain extent; thus, reducing the level of subjectivity in qualitative analysis. Relying on the promise of practicality, transparency and reliability, the current study adopts QCA for the peculiarities of Academic Misconduct among

faculty members in Armenian universities. All of these factors together make QCA an appropriate approach for the current study.

As already discussed, categories are of central importance in QCA, and traditionally there are two approaches to construct those categories: inductive and deductive category assignments (Mayring, 2014). The former means that categories are developed or constructed directly from the empirical data. Whereas the latter refers to category construction from the existing research in the field and/or the interview agenda, and aims to identify and classify the text passages that correspond to the category in question (Mayring, 2014). Both inductive and deductive approaches require thoroughly systematized procedural models, and can be equally efficient methods for profound qualitative content analysis. However, each of these approaches have some limitations. The inductive approach might limit and narrow the interpretation and the understanding of the material being analyzed, while the deductive approach might miss some parts of the material that could be very important and informative for the research question. In fact, as mentioned by Kuckartz (2014), “the extremes of the spectrum how to construct categories – completely inductively or completely deductively – are rarely found in research practice. In most cases, a multi-stage process of categorization and coding is used” (p.69). Consequently, to make the best use of the qualitative semi-structured interview data, instead of an “*either / or*” principle, the current research follows *both* principles according to the mixed content analytical procedure. This means that both deductive and inductive approaches are applied to construct categories and to proceed with the text material. A prototype example of this approach is called the “Content Structuring/Theme Analysis” (Mayring (2014) or “Thematic qualitative text analysis” (Kuckartz, 2014).

5.2.2. Method

The qualitative Interview method was used to conduct the qualitative part of the current study. The choice of the qualitative interview method is appropriate for the current research for several reasons. As mentioned by Arksey and Knight (1999), interviews are a “central data collection method for exploring data on understandings, opinions, what people remember doing, attitudes, feelings and the like, that people have in common” (as cited in Savin-Baden and Major, 2013, p.358). The focus of the current research is to understand the educational actors’ corrupt behaviors based on the peculiarities of their perceptions and decision making processes regarding Academic Misconduct. Additionally, interviews are appropriate when a researcher wants to take advantage of one-to-one communication to go deeply into a participant’s experiences. Interviews are particularly helpful “when the information to be shared is sensitive or confidential” (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013, p.358). Hence, interviews are appropriate for studying Academic Misconduct since both sensitivity and confidentiality are typical characteristics for this issue. The

human communication between researchers and the interviewees, particularly at the beginning of an interview, helps to establish a “rapport” (*Ibid*). A rapport is needed to facilitate natural conversation, where the interviewer guides the talk in a way that he/she can understand the essence and the meaning of what the interviewees say (Svin-Baden and Major, 2013). To create and atmosphere for an authentic, but at the same time deep and detailed conversation, I conducted semi-structured interviews. Comparing structured and semi-structured interviews, Brinkman (2018) states that “semi structured interviews can make better use of the knowledge-producing potentials of dialogues by allowing much more leeway for following up on whatever angles are deemed important by the interviewee, and the interviewer has a greater chance of becoming visible as a knowledge-producing participant in the process itself, rather than hiding behind a preset interview guide. Compared to unstructured interviews, the interviewer has a greater say in focusing the conversation on issues that he or she deems important in relation to the research project” (p.579). Hence, semi-structured interviews give to certain extent freedom to both the researcher and the interviewees to have a directed dialogue; but they are, at the same time, flexible to generate ideas related to the topics that might have not initially been included in the interview agenda.

Like other scientific methods, qualitative interviews have some limitations as well. For instance, the data obtained solely from interviews is limited to a researcher’s “interactions with a set of participants and their self-reported behavior, beliefs, and perceptions” (Yin, 2009, p.132). This consideration is particularly important in the case of Academic Misconduct research since the respondents are mostly aware that this behavior is a form of deviation, it is considered as misconduct, and is an act that should not be performed. To address this limitation, prior to the interviews with faculty members and administrators, I presented myself as a person who is very well familiar with the Armenian Education System and the way it functions, so the interviews could accept me as someone who is internal and who can hopefully understand them well. Afterwards, as explained, the main goal of the study is to contribute to academic research, which can be helpful for future anti-corruption practices. I also provided all interviewees a detailed definition of Academic Misconduct and its forms. Hence, by being open about myself as a researcher, about the research aims, and by talking to them about the research topic, I attempted to create an atmosphere of trust and safety so that respondents could feel free to express themselves.

5.2.3. Sample

To understand faculty members’ perceptions on academic misconduct and the peculiarities of their decision-making processes regarding Academic Misconduct, I have conducted semi-structured qualitative interviews with 10 faculty members and 3 administrative representatives from 3 Armenian state universities (*see* Table 13). For the semi-structured interviews (*see* Appendix 2) with faculty members, this study applied a snowball sampling approach (Goodman,

1961). The latter is defined by Goodman as a process where “a random sample of individuals is drawn from a given finite population. Each individual in the sample is asked to name key different individuals” (p.1). For the administrative representatives, purposeful sampling principles (Yin, 2011) have been applied since it is helpful for “the selection of participants or sources of data to be used in a study, based on their anticipated richness and relevance of information in relation to the study’s research question” (Yin, 2011, as cited in Gentles *et al.*, 2015, p.1778). Two of these administrators were vice-rectors at that time, the third one is the head of a Department Chair since the vice-rector representing this particular university refused to participate in the interview. All the interviews have been conducted face to face in Yerevan in the Autumn of 2017 during the months of September and October.

Table 13. Sample characteristics (qualitative study)

N	Label	Gender	Place of interview	Duration of interview
FACULTY MEMBERS				
1.	University 1. Case A	f	Yerevan, Armenia	35:29
2.	University 1. Case B.	m	Yerevan, Armenia	28:07
3.	University 1. Case C	f	Yerevan, Armenia	16:58
4.	University 1. Case D.	f	Yerevan, Armenia	17:23
5.	University 2. Case E.	f	Yerevan, Armenia	41:12
6.	University 2. Case F.	f	Yerevan, Armenia	41:00
7.	University 2. Case G.	f	Yerevan, Armenia	22:40
8.	University 3. Case H.	f	Yerevan, Armenia	16:23
9.	University 3. Case J.	m	Yerevan, Armenia	12:25
10.	University 3. Case I.	f	Yerevan, Armenia	16:05
ADMINISRATORS				
1.	University 1. Case 1.	m	Yerevan, Armenia	15:07
2.	University 2. Case 2.	m	Yerevan, Armenia	10:33
3.	University 3. Case 3.	m	Yerevan, Armenia	26:03

Source: own design.

The semi-structured interviews with faculty members and administrators were conducted and audio-recorded in Armenian. Then they were transcribed following the “pure verbatim protocol” (Mayring, 2014), which means that the dialect words, context-specific and/or slang expressions remain exactly the way they were expressed by the respondents. Tiny adjustments were made only when some sentences were incomplete and did not make any sense without comments added by the interviewer. Thus, the text is almost identical to the audio file. Afterwards, I translated the transcribes from Armenian into English. During the translation phase, some text passages which were abrupt, incomplete, or not clear, as well as some expressions which were a result of non-fluent speech have been removed. The non-verbal expressions of the respondents were also transcribed. Field notes taken during and after interviews were paraphrased and commented as memos. The duration of the interviews vary from 10:33 minutes to 41:12 minutes. In total, the script length is 84 pages in Armenian, and 80 pages in English. The final text material was imported to MAXQDA software for further analyses. MAXQDA is a user-friendly program that allows for flexible, fast, quick, and sophisticated coding and analysis processes (Given, 2012). MAXQDA is also a mixed-method friendly qualitative software and is commonly used among MMR scholars.

The process and the results of the qualitative content analysis is presented in Chapter 6.

5.2. Quantitative study

The purpose of the quantitative study is to understand a student’s decision making processes in regards to Academic Misconduct in Armenian universities. As already discussed in the previous chapters, to meet this goal and to answer the research question, this study relies on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991). It has been proven by previous research (*see* 4.2.) that TPB provides a valid model that allows the study of academic dishonest behaviors.

5.3.1. Sample

A total of 180 students were drawn to participate in the study in the autumn of 2017 during the months of September and October. 149 respondents provided applicable answers with an 83% response rate. The students were enrolled in three major Armenian public universities in the capital city Yerevan. In total, 40 students from the University 1 participated, 58 from the University 2, and 51 from the University 3. Among them, 102 were female, 36 were male, and 11 respondents did not mention their gender. The primary sampling rule was to select students with at least three years of study experience. The aim was to assure that students have spent enough time at the university to have some extent of understanding on the situation at the university regarding academic misconduct. Previous research has shown that there is a difference in perception of Academic Misconduct between freshman and higher year students (Denisova-Schmidt, 2016). Thus, the study sample consists of 60 third year Bachelor students, 68 of fourth year, and 21 first-year Master students (*see* Table 14).

Table 14. Sample characteristics (quantitative study)

	Sample			Gender			Grade	
	N	%		N	%		N	%
University 1	40	26.8	Female	102	68.5	Bachelors’ 3	60	40.3
University 2	58	38.9	Male	36	24.2	Bachelors’ 4	68	45.6
University 3	51	34.2	Missing	11	7.4	Masters’ 1	21	14.1
In total	149	100		149	100		149	100

Source: own design.

To receive permission to collect data from the above-discussed universities, I had personal meetings with some administrative representatives in advance. After explaining the purpose of my study and providing a confirmation letter as proof, they assigned me to certain study groups with permission to execute the data collection within 45-minute classroom sessions. Before proceeding with the data collection, the administration representatives introduced me to the groups and left the classroom. Following that procedure, I gave a quick introduction on the key concepts included in the questionnaire and provided instructions on how to use it. These instructions were also mentioned in the first page of the hard copy of the questionnaire (*see* Appendix 3) to assure that students had proper guideline during the whole process. The questionnaire was translated in Armenian⁴⁸, to make sure that all the students have equal opportunities to participate in the study. Students were also encouraged to ask me questions when having difficulties with working with the scale. In the next steps, I informed the students that their participation is voluntary, and I assured their anonymity.

After the introductory session, students agreed to participate in the study except two from the University 3. One of them returned the questionnaire after reading the first page, stating that he does not want corruption to be fought. The second one, refused my suggestion to take a hard copy of the questionnaire stating that any research on this topic is useless.

5.3.2. Measures

The dependent variables of the study are Behavioral Intention and Behavioral justification regarding Cheating and Plagiarism. The four behavioral manifestations of interest within the framework of this study are defined as follows:

Cheating- using unauthorized materials/devices, copying from peers during exams and or written assignments.

Plagiarism - buying, downloading, borrowing academic papers from others and presenting them as one's own.

The items included in the questionnaire were borrowed from Stone *et al.*, (2009). While these authors use one model for both cheating and plagiarism, the current study uses two different models. Cheating and plagiarism are separate forms of academic misconduct that have different ways of manifestation. Therefore, they require different skills, prospections as well as treatment. Hence, it is assumed that different psychological mechanism will be involved in a student's decision in regards to those behaviors. This assumption is based on the findings of Passow *et al.*, (2006) who state that "students' decisions are influenced differently depending on the type of the

⁴⁸After completing the collection stage, the data was digitalized and translated into English.

assignment” (p.643). Thus, it is assumed that differences will be salient in case of these two forms of Academic Misconduct as well. Based on the scales provided by Stone *et al.*, (2009), two sets of questionnaires have been adjusted to study these behaviors (cheating and plagiarism). To enhance the chances to get the best answers for the research question, the items have been adopted based on the research on Academic Misconduct in Armenian universities and following the TPB questionnaire construction principles (Fishbein and Ajzen, 2010, Ajzen, 2016).

The constructs of TPB within the framework of the current study are defined and measured as follows:

Attitude (A) is defined as a student’s favorable or unfavorable evaluation towards cheating behavior (Beck and Ajzen, 1991, p.287). The three items of the Attitude scale are related to their willingness to report on cheating and plagiarism. Stone *et al.*, (2009) suggest that willingness to report is considered as an indirect measure for Attitudes. Since cheating and plagiarism are forms of dishonest behavior, it is assumed that students might be biased and provide socially desirable answers. This assumption is supported by Beck and Ajzen (1991) who state that dishonest behaviors, among them cheating, “are sufficiently sensitive to be potentially subject to systematic biases and dishonest reporting due to social desirability concerns” (p. 291). To reduce these factors, this study gives preference to the indirect measure for Attitudes.

Subjective Norm (SN) is defined as perceived social pressure to perform or not on cheating and plagiarism (Ajzen, 1991, p.188). Ajzen (2016) suggested that the scale Subjective Norm for dishonest behaviors should include both descriptive (i.e. a student’s perceptions on how common the behavior is, on what other students do in regards to the behavior in question) and injunctive norms (i.e. a student’s perception on whether others expect them to engage in cheating and plagiarism).

Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) is defined a student’s perception on the ease or difficulty (Beck and Ajzen, 1991, p.287) of performing cheating and plagiarism at their universities. The items of the scale measure a student’s perception on how easy or difficult cheating and plagiarism are in the context of a university’s control and punishment.

Intention (I) is the dependent variable of the current study. Intentions are considered as immediate antecedents of actual behavior (Beck and Ajzen, 1991, p.277). Intentions reflect a student’s behavioral motivation, willingness to perform or not to on cheating and plagiarism. According to the TPB, the higher a person’s intention to perform the behavior in question, the greater is the likelihood that this behavior will be performed in the future. This dissertation is concerned about the relationships between TBP’s primary construct and Intentions. As already discussed in Chapter 4, this study relies on the promise of the TPB model for having strong predictive validity on a range of behaviors (Armitage and Conner, 2001) as well as on academic dishonesty (Beck and Ajzen, 1991, Harding *et al.*, 2007, Stone *et al.*, 2007, 2009, Whitley, 1998, Maloshonok *et al.*, 2019). The scale Intention consist of situation specific items that measure a

student's likelihood for engaging in cheating and plagiarism in the future since research has shown that situation specific factors tend to reflect cheating intentions more accurately than global measures of cheating (Chapman, 2004, p.237).

Past Behavior (PB) - the variable/construct called Past Behavior measures a participant's engagement in the above-mentioned forms of misconduct in the past. Using the construct of past behavior as a predictor for the future. Instead of doing follow up studies like Beck and Ajzen (1991) when validating the use of TPB for predicting the behavior in question, many scholars measure the frequency of the given behavior in the past (Harding *et al.*, 2007, Stone *et al.*, 2009, 2010, Mayhew *et al.*, 2009). Whitley (1998) suggests that past behaviors as a construct add more explanatory power to the model regarding college cheating (as cited in Mayhew, *et al.*, 2009, p.446). Hence, the scale of Past Behavior consists of situation specific items measuring a student's past experiences regarding cheating and plagiarism.

The results of the items measuring Attitudes, Subjective Norms, Perceived Behavioral Control, Intention, and Past Behavior are separately presented in the next sections (*see* Tables 17, 20).

To enhance the reliability of the questionnaire, it has been reviewed and edited by my supervisors and two other academic researchers: a PhD graduate and a postdoctoral researcher. The final version of the questionnaire consists of 38 items, which are measured by a seven point likert type scale (agree/disagree, true/false), where the numbers correspond to "1-strongly agree, 2-quite agree, 3-slightly agree, 4-neutral, 5-slightly disagree, 6-quite disagree, 7-strongly disagree" (Fishbein and Ajzen, 2010, p.457). The same logic of calculation applies to the statements in the questionnaire requiring true or false answers.

To analyse the data and test the relationships between the study variables, I used SPSS statistics software, which is commonly employed in social science research due to its pragmatic treatment of social science research methods (Rovai, *et al.*, 2014) as well as its capability to help researchers understand the essence of human and organisational behavior (Bala, 2016). Besides the above-discussed factors, the choice of SPSS over other quantitative software such as R, SAS, or Stata, SPSS allowed for easy data entry (Ward, 2013). This is an important function since the data of my study was not in a digital format and it would have been much more complex and time consuming to insert it in any other software. Another advantage of SPSS is that data values/labels are displayed with tabulations and it allows direct edits of graphs/tables (Ward, 2013), hence it is time efficient.

The process of data analysis and the results of the quantitative study are presented in Chapter 7.

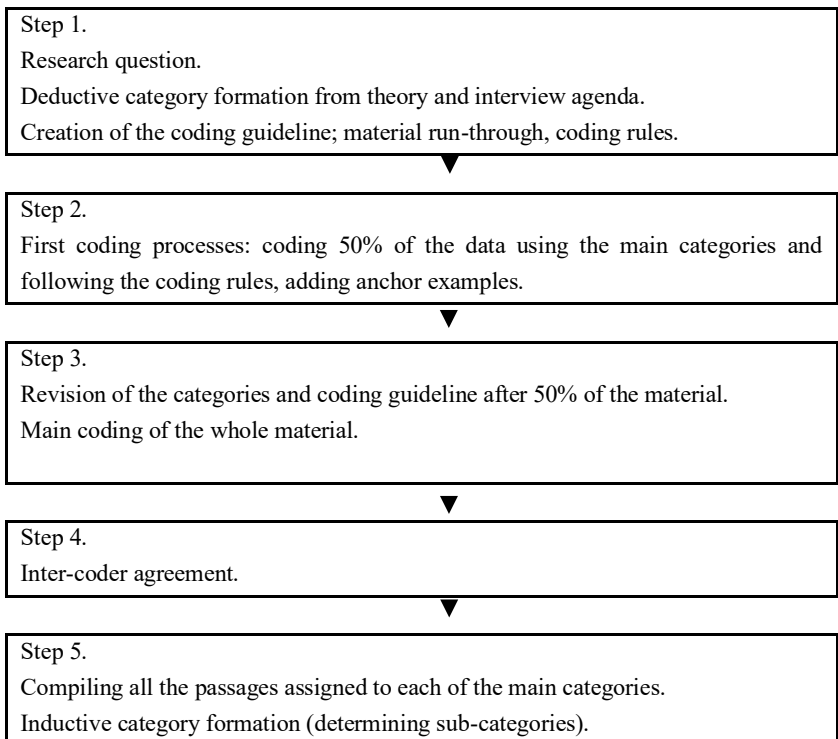
Part III – Empirical analysis

6. Qualitative study - understanding faculty member and administrator corrupt behavior

To understand the impact of individual and organizational factors on faculty member and administrator decisions regarding Academic Misconduct, this chapter centers on a qualitative study with the required stages of “Content Structuring/Theme Analysis” (Mayring (2014) or “Thematic qualitative text analysis” (Kuckartz, 2014) (*see* Figure 3). At its first stages, the analysis follow the rules of the deductive category assignment proposed by Mayring (2014), whereas the later steps are guided by the requirements of thematic qualitative text analyses suggested by Kuckartz (2014).

In the next sections, this chapter will discuss the entire process of data analysis and present the results and findings.

Figure 3. The process of thematic qualitative analysis



▼

Step 6.

Final coding of the data using the elaborate category system.

▼

Step 7.

Results: category based analysis case summaries, category frequencies and contingencies interpretations.

Source: Adjusted by the author from Mayring (2014, p.96) and Kuckartz (2014, p.70).

6.1. Step 1: The research question

The first theoretical part of this dissertation project thoroughly describes the existing research on Academic Misconduct worldwide and particularly in Armenia so far. Based on the literature review, this research identifies the gaps in the field and aims to close this gap by answering the following question:

How do individual perceptions coupled with a university's anti-corruption performance impact the educational actors' intentions to engage in academic misconduct? As already discussed in Chapter 3, the research question follows the deductive logic of Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA), which means that there are specific aspects of priori interest and importance for the analysis. On the one hand, the research focuses on respondent perceptions regarding cheating, plagiarism, nepotism/favoritism, and bribery. On the other hand, the research aims to understand how university preventive and punishing measures influence faculty member and administrator decisions regarding the above discussed forms of misconduct.

6.2. Steps 2 and 3: Deductive category formation, coding guideline creation, and coding processes

The analysis of the state of the art and research question have been operationalized into deductive themes and categories. This was an iterative process that required continuous systematic work with the data and theoretical section. First, the main themes were formed directly from the research question as well as from the theory and interview agenda (*see* Appendix 2). Then followed the category formation processes according to the same deductive assignment logic. Overall, 5 relatively broad themes were derived, which included 18 specific categories (*see* Table 15). When

the final list of the themes and categories were ready, I proceeded with the formation of the coding guideline. This means that to each theme and category were assigned a profound description based on the previous studies. Lastly, the final coding rules were established to make the procedure of coding more precise and structured.

After completing the guideline, I proceeded with the first round of coding. Approximately, 50% percent of the material were coded through MAXQDA. Prototypical passages were chosen from the interview material and added in the coding guideline as anchor examples for each category.

After the first stage of coding of half of the material, some adjustments were made to enhance the clarity of the coding definitions. Those changes did not affect the quantity of the codes and themes, rather were mostly focused on making coding definitions more precise and practical for the final coding stage. After the final revision and adjustments, all of the material were coded according to the guideline.

Table 15. Coding guideline for deductive coding assignment

THEME				
1. Forms of academic misconduct (AM) - The theme includes all the statements by the respondents regarding the existence or the absence as well as the prevalence or the rare evidences of the forms of misconduct such as bribery, cheating, plagiarism, and nepotism/favoritism.				
CATEGORIES				
1. Bribery; 2. Cheating; 3. Plagiarism; 4. Nepotism/Favoritism				
1. Bribery - A type of AM that is described as an action, when at least two persons are engaged to exchange favors by suggesting, asking, and accepting money or other material goods or non-material goods and services. Mostly refers to cases:				
a) when a <i>faculty member</i> abuses his/her power for a material (money, goods, services <i>etc.</i>) or non-material (reputation, status, position <i>etc.</i>) gain.				
b) when a university <i>administration representative</i> abuses his/her power for a material or non-material gain.				
c) when a <i>student (friend or relative of that student, etc.)</i> suggests money or another material good/s or service/s to a faculty member and/or to an administration representative.				

ANCHOR EXAMPLE/S

“Regarding the prevalence of bribery, it is comparably less now than it was before.”

CODING RULE*

Any word, expression, sentence, paragraph of the text that carries complete information about the category in question. Those could be either reports when respondents talk about their own experience or bring other’s experiences as an example of bribery happening in their university.

*For all the categories, there is one general coding rule that applies to any text passage which reflects the code definition. The size of the text passage can vary as long as it has complete meaning when taken away from its context and discussed independently.

2. Cheating - Type of AM that manifests itself in the following forms:

- a) helping each other by giving information during the exam.
 - b) using notes, cheat sheets with answers, books/copybooks, or various gadgets.
-

ANCHOR EXAMPLE/S

“Regarding the cheating, this is very common among students, and I do not know what to say, even those students who study a lot try to cheat.”

3. Plagiarism (among students) - Type of AM which manifests itself in the following forms:

- a) using other authors words in academic papers without giving a reference.
 - b) submitting the same paper for different subjects with little adjustments.
 - c) submitting papers downloaded directly from the internet without any adjustments or only translating them into Armenian.
 - d) using a senior colleague’s previous academic papers.
 - e) purchasing papers from special agencies.
-

ANCHOR EXAMPLE/S

“Plagiarism is widespread, when they bring others’ work and present it as their own, or when they buy those works.”

-
- 4. Nepotism/Favoritism** - Favoritism refers to a favorable treatment of a power holder to friends, family, and anybody else who is close and trusted. Nepotism is a special form of favoritism that refers to only the power holder's family members. Refers to the cases:

- a) when a faculty member is *asked* by a colleague, university administration, and/or a family member to treat favorably a particular student.
- b) when a faculty member is *commanded* by a colleague, university administration, and/or a family member to treat favorably a particular student.
- c) when a faculty member *perceives* that a colleague, university administration, and/or a family member expects or *forces* him/her to treat favorably a particular student.
- d) when a faculty member personally *asks or forces* a colleague, university administration to treat favorably a student with whom he/she has a personal connection (family member, friend's child, etc.).

ANCHOR EXAMPLE/S

Nepotism - "These kinds of things exist. It is accepted here. For instance, a student is the daughter of a certain person, so let's give her a high grade. The other student is someone's son, so let's give him a high grade."

Favoritism - "It might be a kindly request to provide a small favorable treatment to a colleague or acquaintance."

THEME

2. Corrupt interactions - addresses either individual or interpersonal types of AM which manifest themselves in various relationships established between educational actors as well as between actors and their relatives and acquaintances.

ANCHOR EXAMPLE/S

"R. What about other cases, let's say when a colleague would ask, would you refuse?"

I. When a colleague asks...no! These kinds of things happen. Well yes, I have done it, I am not a saint [laughing]. I've done it."

THEME

3. Anti-corruption - Regulations, Codes of Conduct/Ethics, any other control mechanisms and practices that are introduced and/or implemented by a certain university aiming to prevent and/or fight corruption.

CATEGORIES 5. Regulations; 6. Codes of Conduct/Ethics; 7. Personal strategies. 8. Control mechanisms 9. Communication between educational actors 10. Needs and Suggestions; 11. Efficiency so far.

5. Regulations - Rules and laws introduced by a government and/or a certain university with the purpose to control, prevent, or punish AM at universities.

ANCHOR EXAMPLE/S

“Well, there are these statements, but the question is to what extend are these rules being followed.”

6. Codes of Conduct/Ethics - agreement on ethical norms and rules of behavior within a university.

ANCHOR EXAMPLE/S

“Yes, there is something like this, a booklet that provides some guidelines concerning term exams and so on.”

7. Control mechanisms - any practice and attempt applied by the university administration or the faculty members that aim to control the corrupt behavior within a university and to reduce the risks of corruption performed by the educational actors.

ANCHOR EXAMPLES

“For the written exams, all the responsibility to control lies on a faculty member, and it is too difficult to do so.”

8. Personal strategies - Set of actions that each faculty member uses and performs in potentially corrupt situations.

ANCHOR EXAMPLE/S

“So, I am thinking about changing the type of task. It would not be just a theoretical question that they can find somewhere and cheat, rather it would be something that requires individual thinking.”

9. Communication - is related to the process of communication between the main educational actors regarding the anti-corruption means and regulations. For example, how do faculty members or students become familiar about the anti-corruption regulations, and to what extend they are familiar with them.

ANCHOR EXAMPLE/S

“I have not read it, but I assume that there must be one. We are just in a verbal way introduced to both our rights and duties.”

10. Needs and Suggestions - refers to the means and remedies suggested by the respondents that are needed for effective anti-corruption.

ANCHOR EXAMPLE/S

“I. Well, to apply and to implement all those statements that are already written. Because if it exists in a written form and is considered as university policy, it cannot work per se right?”

11. Achievements so far – refers to how useful and effective the anti-corruption fight has been so far for the universities from the perspective of university administration and faculty members.

ANCHOR EXAMPLES/S

“Normal... normal... normal... I would not evaluate it as low but would not risk to say that it is high either.”

THEME

4. Influential factors - refers to respondent responses regarding the causes and reasons of AM.

CATEGORIES- 11. Systemic factors: 12. Organizational factors: 13. Cultural factors:

12. Systemic factors – refer to challenges in the education system that create opportunities for AM (*e.g.*, transmission period challenges). The category also includes a sub-category, decentralization, changes in university funding system, administrative issues regarding three-tier education system, joining Bologna process, *etc.*

ANCHOR EXAMPLE/S

“nowadays, there is a competition to involve many students. Unfortunately, the state funding is very little or is completely absent, which creates an unpleasant situation for the universities.”

13. Organizational factors - refer to the issues within a university management system, for instance class structures, group sizes, and workload as well as various behavioral performances by the university administration, faculty members, or students that indirectly open door for various forms of AM.

ANCHOR EXAMPLE/S

“There is one faculty member for a big group, and it is very difficult to control”

14. Cultural factors - refer to faculty member perceptions and interpretations of the role of the Armenian national mentality, beliefs, and norms related to AM.

ANCHOR EXAMPLE/S

“Engaging in academic misconduct might happen because of Armenian mentality, when you do not want to damage students, you don’t want to have a fatal impact on them.”

THEME

5. Social-psychological factors of corrupt behavior - the theme includes psychological characteristics and dynamics that guide educational actors’ decision making processes regarding AM.

CATEGORIES- 14. **Attitudes; perceived and personal.** 15. **Social Norms** 16. **Justification**

14. Perceived attitudes - faculty member perceptions of the attitudes of university administration and/or their colleagues towards AM, and corrupt behavior performed by faculty members and/or students. **Personal attitudes** - faculty member positive or negative personal evaluations of AM as well as towards those colleagues, administrators and students who engage in AM.

ANCHOR EXAMPLE/S

“...it seems that the administration by stating that has a negative attitude and is only showing off, whereas in reality it has quite an encouraging position.”

15. Social norms; Injunctive norms - faculty member perceptions on whether AM is a permissible or expectable practice at their universities. **Descriptive norms** - faculty member perceptions on how frequent AM and its various types are among colleagues and administration in their university.

ANCHOR EXAMPLE/S

“My impression is that in general most of the faculty members are inclined to accept it as normal evidence, nothing special... Well, they might judge it, might be critical, but if they see that a student is committing misconduct, or someone is interceding, in general, this is not perceived as a very bad thing or something like ‘wow, how can one do that?’. It is just something natural, and yeah, it is supposed to happen. Well, they may refuse to engage in misconduct themselves, but the perception is normal, let me put in this way, it is expected.”

16. Justifications - respondent cognitive or affective interpretations aimed to alleviate the impact of AM at universities by educational actors.

ANCHOR EXAMPLE/S

“Regarding the faculty members, at least for me, one justification can be the fear to go against the administration, and the disappointment like ‘anyway, even without me all these things will happen, at the end of the day what can I do?’”

THEME

6. Case narratives - cases reported by respondents when they recall evidences of being directly engaged in AM, or stories that happened with their colleagues and/or university administration during their professional experience in the university.

CATEGORIES- 17. Personal experience; 18. Other's experiences

17. Personal experience - Individual examples when respondents report about being directly engaged in any form of AM during their professional experience at the university where they currently work.

ANCHOR EXAMPLE/S

“For instance, in a recent case, one of my relatives did not manage to submit on time, and she and her family asked me if she could submit it a bit later... yes, this kind of cases have happened.”

18. Other's experiences - examples when respondents recall cases when their colleague/s or someone from the administration were engaged in any form of AM during their professional experience in the university where they currently work.

ANCHOR EXAMPLE/S

“There have been some cases, for instance, a faculty member has asked students that they need additional training */private tutoring/* and so on... and the students recorded and posted that on Facebook. We have fired that colleague, but then this faculty member applied to the court stating that the recording is not legal. Then, if I am not mistaken, he/she got his job back and we had to pay a fee.

6.3. Step 4: Inter-coder agreement

The deductive coding guideline has been generated solely by the author of this dissertation (Coder 1). This raises some issues of subjectivity and reliability. To address this problem and meet the quality criteria, an inter-coder reliability (ICR) or inter-coder agreement test is required, which is of central importance in QCA (Mayring, 2014). As this PhD research is a solo project, and the inter-coder agreement test for all of the material is a time-consuming process, it was difficult to find a second person who would agree to code the entire qualitative data set. Hence, a randomly chosen sample of interviews have been double coded by a Coder 2⁴⁹ who joined the project voluntarily. Although one sample is not representative, however, it is still an acceptable practice in QCA (Mayring, 2014, p.114). Overall, the most important point of an inter-coder agreement in qualitative research is to reduce the errors and improve the coding procedures, rather than only focusing on getting a scientifically significant percentage of coding agreements. Nevertheless, the latter also has an important role in a qualitative inter-coder agreement test. We proceeded with the ICR in the following way.

Getting ready. The Coder 2, who did not take part in the processes of deductive category generation, was given the coding guideline to become familiar with the definitions of the themes and categories as well as the instructions regarding coding rule. Moreover, as the categories have been deductively developed based on theory and the interview agenda, Coder 2 was also introduced to the previous chapters of the dissertation as well as the interview questions for a more detailed understanding of the codes background.

Second coding process. After becoming familiar with the coding guideline, a copy of the MAXQDA project with a random interview transcript was given to Coder 2 for independent coding. The document included the whole interview and the final code frame. The latter basically included the main themes and categories described in Table 14. Prior to the second coding and ICR test, two coders agreed that the Coder 2 could not delete any code from the final frame. However, she was allowed to add new codes if necessary or suggest some adjustments to improve the existing ones. Overall, Coder 2 was given the freedom to use as many codes for as many text segments that she would find necessary.

Inter-coder agreement test; round 1. When Coder 2 finished the coding of the document, we merged the two projects. It is important that the document that was independently coded by two coders exists twice in the same MAXQDA project. This enables the inter-coder agreement test for which MAXQDA suggests three main options. The first one provides the code occurrence percentage in both documents, the second option indicates the percentage of the frequency of codes

⁴⁹ Meri Avetisyan; PhD in psychology, with a rich experience in corruption research. Network Fellow (2013-2014) at Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics, Harvard University, Cambridge, USA.

used by the two coders, and the third one evaluates the level of agreement for individual coded segments between the two documents. This third option is of particular importance for the qualitative analysis. In contrast to the previous two options, which mostly shed light on quantitative indicators for the agreement level, this third option provides both quantitative and qualitative results. It gives a code-specific overview on agreements or disagreements. In other words, this level of code agreement shows the matches and non-matches of the codes between Coder 1 and Coder 2. It provides a final percentage of agreement level both separately for each code as well as for the entire codes assigned to the text.

The key point of this segment level coding is that it allows researchers to go deeper into the code text passages and to discuss the similarities and differences of the coding by both Coders. However, here too, the quantitative percentage of the agreement is important, particularly to exclude the possibility of code agreements by chance. Hence, to provide a chance-corrected percentage, MAXQDA calculates the Kappa coefficient using the formula suggested by Brennan and Predigier (1991). They provide an alternative use of Cohen's Kappa, by proposing a calculation of chance agreement where "the random match is determined by the number of different categories that have been used by both coders. This corresponds to the number of codes in the code-specific results table"⁵⁰. Cohen's Kappa has a value from -1 to 1, "where 0 represents the amount of agreement that can be expected from random chance, and 1 represents perfect agreement between the raters" (McHugh, 2012, p.279). Hence, the closer the score is to 1, the better the reached coding agreement is between independent coders. However, a "conclusion criterion for kappa value that donates sufficient agreement remains elusive" (MacPhail *et al.*, 2016, p.3). Cohen suggests the following interpretation of Kappa results: "values ≤ 0 as indicating no agreement and 0.01–0.20 as none to slight, 0.21–0.40 as fair, 0.41– 0.60 as moderate, 0.61–0.80 as substantial, and 0.81– 1.00 as almost perfect agreement" (McHugh, 2012, p.279). While Landis and Koch (1977) proposed that "0.81–1.00 = almost perfect; 0.61–0.80 = substantial; 0.41–0.60 = moderate; 0.21–0.40 = fair; 0.00–0.20 = slight; and < 0.00 = poor." Adapting Landis and Koch's work, Cicchetti (1994) proposes the following: "0.75–1.00 = excellent; 0.60–0.74 = good; 0.40–0.59 = fair; and < 0.40 = poor" (as cited in Hruschka, 2015, p.313). Burla *et al.*, (2008) suggest that "kappa values of 0.40–0.60 are considered satisfactory agreement and values above 0.80 suggest perfect agreement" (as cited MacPhail *et al.*, 2016, p.3). Krippendorff (2004) states that "Coefficients should be higher than 0,8 with minimum for acceptance of 0.67" (as cited in Mayring, 2014, p.114). While those proposals are mostly applicable for quantitative research, in qualitative research it is almost impossible to get the perfect scores, because as Mayring (2014) argues, "interpretative elements (even if extreme rule guided like in Quantitative Content Analysis)

⁵⁰ <https://www.maxqda.com/help-max18/teamwork/problem-intercoder-agreement-qualitative-research>

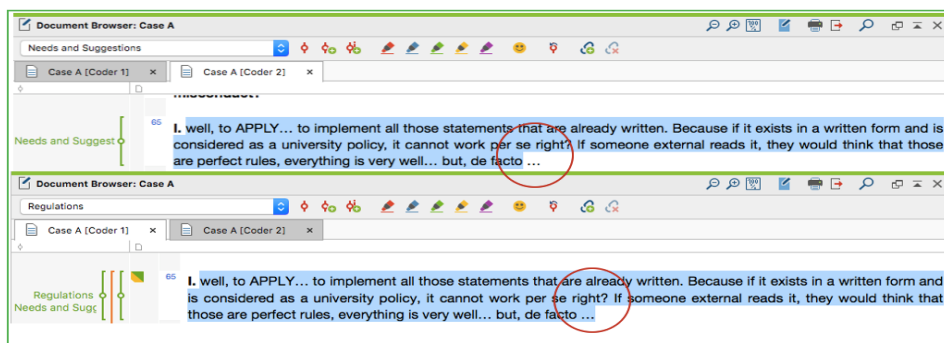
always bear a subjective element” (p.114). Hence, taking this into account, this qualitative study follows Mayring’s advice that “we must be a little bit modest” (p.114). For this purpose, I use the above-mentioned suggestions by Cicchetti (1994) and Burla (2008) who propose relatively lower values of significance; hence, they are more appropriate for the evaluation of our qualitative inter-coder agreement test.

The results of the first round of the agreement test were not satisfying. We got the following levels of agreement percentages: 81,25% for code occurrence, 25% for code frequency, 29.27% code specific agreement percentage, and the Kappa value was 0.27%. The last indicator is particularly central for qualitative studies. Thus, we needed to address this low level of code agreements per segment first by understanding what the reasons of those disagreements were.

Errors and improvements. A close study of these quantitative results led us to an understanding of some errors and reasons that caused the low level of agreement, particularly for the coding disagreements at the text segment level. As it appeared, the major causes of the low level of agreement were more technical in their nature. For instance, issues when one of the coders selected more space after ellipsis, whereas the others stopped exactly after it, and some other similar errors such as missing out some letters, pronouns, punctuation marks, and spacing in selecting the text segments (*see* Figure 4). The above-mentioned differences do not matter in terms of qualitative content, nevertheless, the software considers them as disagreements or as artificial non-matches.

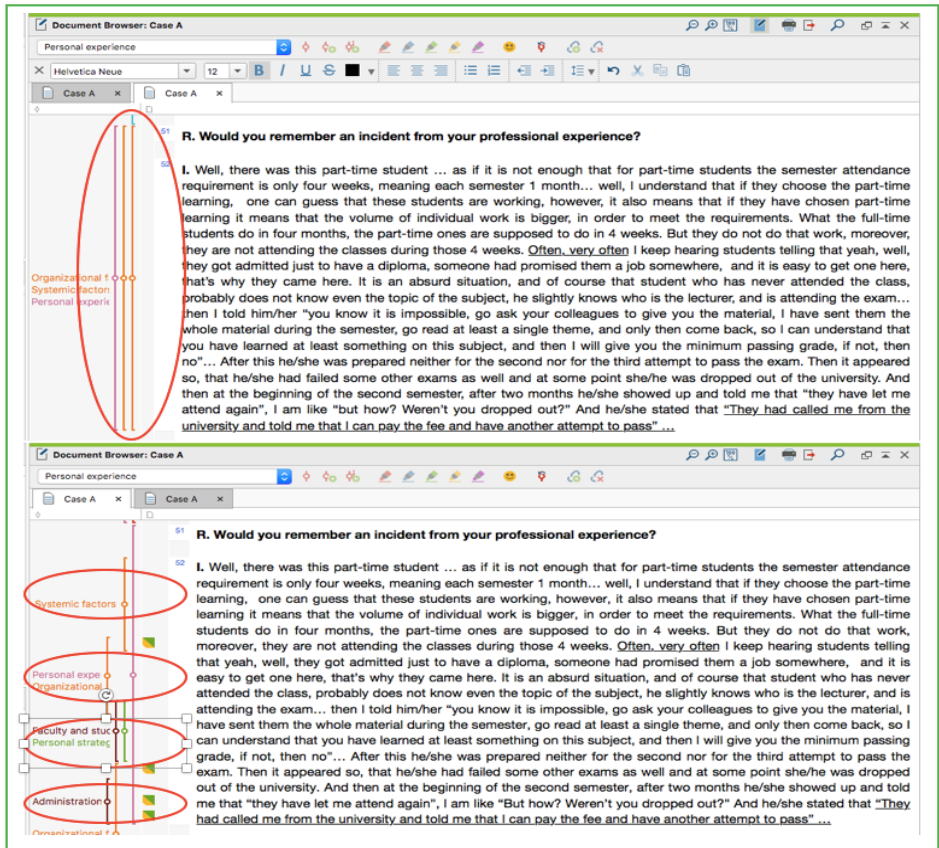
The main reason for the low-level agreement, however, was related to the coding styles of the coders. As Figure 5 shows, Coder 2 was more inclined to broad coding, whereas Coder 1 tended to use specific coding. For instance, Coder 2 coded all of the big paragraph with three deductive codes at the same time: “organization factors”, “systemic factors”, and “personal experience.”

Figure 4. Errors in text-size selection



All those codes address the general meaning of the paragraph, but do not target concrete segments that are a better match with any of those codes. In contrast, Coder 1 stayed close to the coding guideline and chose specific codes for smaller text segments.

Figure 5. Broad vs specific coding



After fruitful discussions, both coders came to the same conclusion regarding the differences between their coding approaches. The main reason for the differences of coding styles was the extent of the Coders familiarity with the code definitions and coding rule. As it was Coder 1 who generated and established the final coding frame based on the deductive category guideline,

it was easy for her to code by staying close to those rules. Coder 2 was less familiar with them, since she did not participate in the code-frame creation process.

Although Coder 2 was introduced to the guideline in advance, it was difficult for her to remember all the definitions of the codes in such a short time. Besides the above-mentioned issues, the coding between the two Coders was very coherent. We did not find cases of wrong code assignments, which led us to an assumption that the code descriptions and coding rule were quite clear and to the point. Nevertheless, more time was needed to become familiar with all of them. Hence, before proceeding with the second round of the agreement test, Coder 2 was given additional time for a detailed studying of the coding guideline. To reduce the gap between broad and specific coding, both coders came to the agreement that in those cases when the statements are quite clear and there are codes in the guideline which are appropriate for that segment, then we both assign that specific code to the segment. But for those cases when the idea is broad and none of the existing codes are accurate for the segment's main point, we use either broad codes, or in extreme cases came up with new ones. In regards to the size of the coding unit, we agreed to strictly follow the coding rule, meaning that the text segment could have any size as long as it expresses a complete meaning even when taken away from its context. Both coders also agreed on technical coding procedures, particularly regarding the segment selecting procedure. For instance, to end the selection when punctuation mark ends, and be careful not to include additional spacing, or when it is necessary to include the question of the researcher, also select the letter R. that is in front of the question and stands for Researcher. Afterwards, Coder 1 also applied those slight adjustments to all of the data set, aiming to correct the above-mentioned errors. Meanwhile, Coder 2 coded the same document on the agreement test.

Inter-coder agreement test, Round 2. The process of coding during the second round was smoother and more precise. When both coders finished the independent coding of the same sample following the new adjusted rules and principles, we ran the second inter-coder agreement test. Compared to the first round, this time we got significantly improved results.

The total segment level percentage increased from 29,27% to 58, 54%. The final chance corrected agreement percentage or the Kappa is 0, 57% (see Figure 6) which indicates a “fair” or “satisfactory” level of agreement (Cicchetti, 1994, Burla, 2008). A close look at the results showed that this time both coders were precise with the technical parts of coding, such as text punctuation marks, *etc.* Most importantly, the approaches of the coders were not that much polarized in the cases of broad and specific coding anymore (see Figure 5). For example, after the second round of coding, there is a different picture (see Figure 7). As we can see from Figure 3, Coder 2, who initially assigned only 3 large codes to the whole paragraph, now selected small size passages within the same paragraph and used more codes, most of which are matches with the assignments of Coder 1.

Figure 6. Cohens' Kappa Value

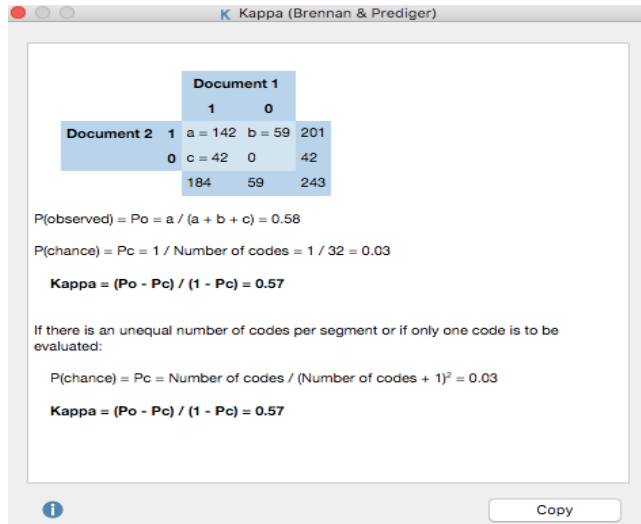
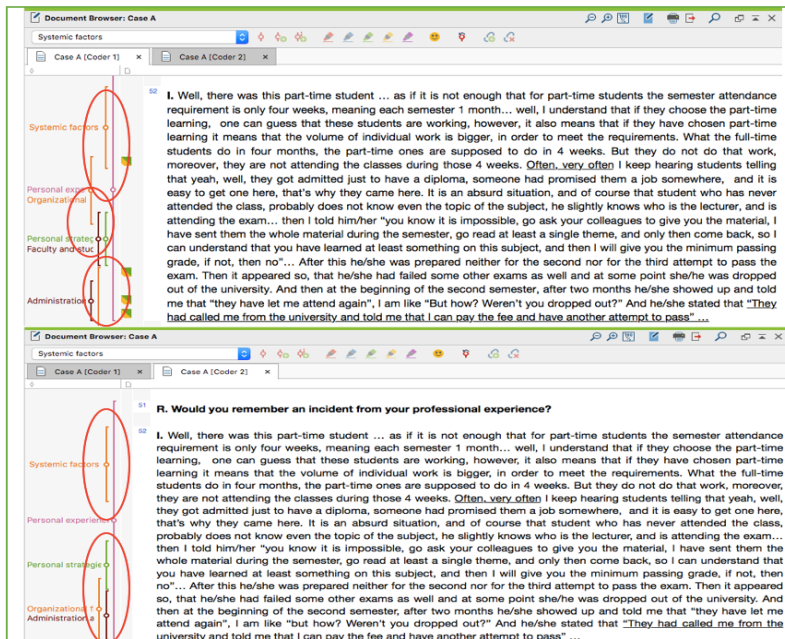


Figure 7. Broad coding vs specific coding: improvements.



Nevertheless, there is always some extent of subjectivity behind every qualitative analysis. This time as well, there were differences regarding segment sizes, and it is a process that cannot be completely controlled. For instance, the differences when coders included one or more words, expressions, or entire sentences. These disagreements, although reduce the overall agreement percentage, do not affect the content because they are still coded with the same code/s with little text size differences. Those cases when coders used different codes for the more or less same text segments have also been very carefully discussed by the coders who agreed that most of those issues could be successfully addressed if we would use new codes for some of those segments. The next step of this qualitative content analysis is inductive, and new codes are expected to be extracted already from the data. After a very long process and bearing these notions in mind as well as based on the satisfactory level of the final agreements, both Coders finally agreed that the results of the second round of the agreement test are satisfying and trustworthy.

Overall, we can admit that this inter-coder agreement test served its main purpose. On the one hand, it improved the main guidelines and instructions of coding by making them more precise and practical. On the other hand, those improvements led to a satisfactory level of agreement, which enhances the reliability of the qualitative study.

6.4. Step 5: Inductive category formation

The next step after the inter-coder agreement test was the creation of inductive sub-categories from the data. These inductive categories were extracted from the broad main categories which were assigned to the text passages during the first coding stage. This was a four-step procedure, which included:

- First, selecting the main relatively broad categories and compiling all the text passages from the entire data that have been coded with these categories.
- Second, closely reading of all those passages while openly coding and creating a list of potential sub-categories.
- Third, grouping the list of sub-categories by identifying the main dimensions.
- Fourth, defining the new sub-categories and providing anchor examples from the data.

Stage 1. Selecting the main categories.

For this first step of inductive coding, I selected those deductive categories that were quite broad and frequently used during the first stage of coding. Hence, there was a need to deconstruct those categories to make them more distinguished. The following main categories were selected for further differentiation: *administration and students, faculty and students, faculty and administration, faculty and faculty, perceived attitudes, justifications, descriptive norms, systemic*

factors, organizational factors, Codes of Conduct/Ethics, regulations, personal strategies, control mechanisms, communication, needs and suggestions, and achievements so far.

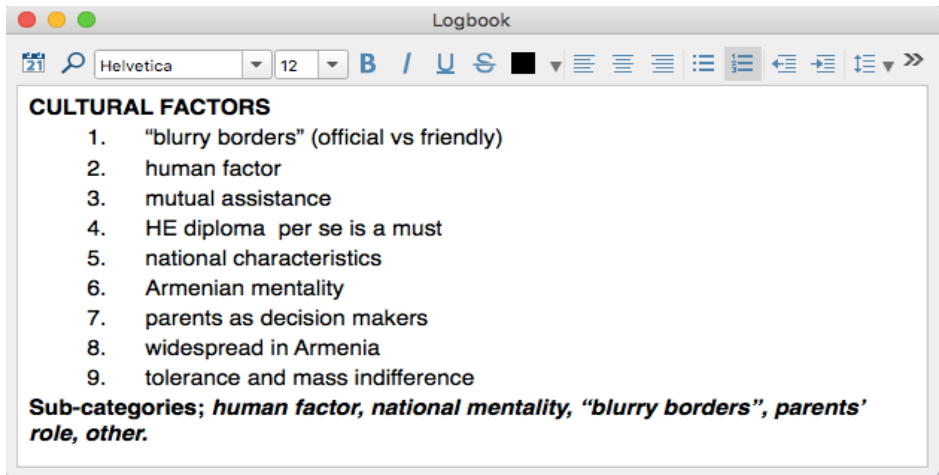
Stage 2. Text retrieval and open coding.

After the selection of the main categories, all the text passages assigned with those codes were closely read and open coded. As a result, a list of new sub-categories were formed for each selected deductive category. For example, for the main category *cultural factors*, I created a list of nine open coded potential sub-categories (see Figure 8). At this stage, the list of useful sub-categories was not organized yet. The same procedures applied to all the other above-mentioned main categories.

Stage 3. Creating final inductive sub-categories.

When the lists of new sub-categories of all the main categories was accomplished, I proceeded with the third stage of organizing those sub-categories by summarizing them in groups based on their dimensions. For instance, for those nine sub-categories of the main category cultural factors (see Figure 8), three main dimensions were identified: the nature of relationships between educational actors, the main factors that guide educational actor decisions and behaviors, and some characteristics of national mentality in general. As a final result, the following four inductive sub-categories were formed from those nine potential sub-categories: human factor, national mentality, “blurry borders”, and the role of parents. The same logic applied for the creation of the rest of the sub-categories.

Figure 8. Example of sub-category creation



Stage 4. Defining the final inductive sub-categories.

As a final step, the main sub-categories for the second coding of the entire data were defined. Table 16 presents definitions of those sub-categories and provides anchor examples extracted from the data. The listed sub-categories represent the perspectives of both faculty members and administrators.

Table 16. Inductive sub-category formation⁵¹

THEME: Corrupt Interactions		
Sub-categories of the main category “Administration and students”	Definitions⁵²	Anchor examples from the data
Forgiving treatment	Refers to statements when students are given more opportunities to pass the exams, including the final ones, or are not being punished, for engaging in and/or promoting AM.	“Yes, he/she was dismissed. But then was given another chance to do an additional payment for each subject and given another try for the exam. They gave him/her an opportunity for a new attempt.”
Direct interventions	Refers to those statements when the administrators directly or indirectly intervene during exams and /grading processes in favor of students.	“What they do, you do not get your turn to grade. They invent a story, let’s say a student’s dad has died, and they ‘solve’ all those problems from above.”

⁵¹ * Coding rule - for all the sub-categories there is one general coding rule, which applies to any text passage which reflects the code definition. The size of the text passage can vary as long as it has a complete meaning when take away from its context and discussed independently.

⁵² Sub-categories represent the perspectives of both faculty members and administrators.

Sub-categories of the main category “Administration and faculty”	Definitions	Anchor examples from the data
Instructions and requests	Refers to those statements when administrators tell/command/ask/request faculty members (FMs) not to be strict, and/or to consent during the exams, and/or during grading.	“Only in those cases when I am told by the administration. I find this as pressure on me. They tell me, and well, I cannot somehow reply and refuse to do that.”
Psychological pressure	Refers to those statements when faculty members experience pressure from the administrators.	“But I don’t know, there is a general atmosphere of fear.”
Hard to oppose	Refers to those statements when FMs have difficulties to reject an administrator’s request to consent.	“I find this as a pressure on me. They tell me, and well, I cannot somehow reply and refuse to do that.”
Strict demands and control	Refers to those statements when the administrators are very demanding and have strict requirements for the faculty members. It is related to AM as well as to educational processes in general.	“Bad, very bad. They discuss those issues during the sessions. If the information is proven than the superior of that faculty member, it could be the head of chair, the dean gets a strict notice.”
Sub-categories of the main category “students and faculty”	Definitions	Anchor examples from the data
Minimum demands	Refers to those statements when the faculty members are inclined to give passing grades in exchange for a student’s minimum efforts.	“You know it is impossible. Go ask your colleagues to give you the material. I have sent them

		the whole material during the semester. Go read at least a single theme, and only then come back. So I can understand that you have learned at least something on this subject. Then I will give you the minimum passing grade. If not, then no.”
FMs’ image	Refers to those statements when the image of the faculty members play a role in a student’s decision to initiate or not an AM.	“I do not want to sound not modest, but students kind of filter and differentiate faculty members from each other. And then it becomes easy to work.”
Arguments	Refers to those statements when students try to provoke, manipulate, and/or put pressure on the faculty members.	“Those students later started to blame me and the other student who came to the chair had a deal. And the head of the chair also knows about that. Thus, as a result, we organized another oral exam, and everybody was examined in front of everyone else. Afterwards, we compared the results with the grades of the writings, and they were exactly the same. In short, this was kind of manipulation by those students, but they failed it.”

Inclined to consent	Refers to those statements when the FMs show readiness to consent to the students.	“You know there are some cases like when a girl is pregnant. In these cases, do not break them. Don’t try to ‘play the law’ in a reality where this law, anyway, is not manifested everywhere.”
Sub-categories of the main category “faculty and faculty”	Definitions	Anchor examples from the data
Respect	Refers to those statements when the FMs are inclined to meet their colleagues’ requests to consent as a sign of their respect towards them.	“It might happen that someone, who I really respect, and is an authority for me, for instance, he/she could be my former faculty member and would ask to consent. In this case I cannot refuse.”
Kind requests	Refers to those statements when FMs ask each other to show nice treatment towards a particular student.	“Well, the other day, a colleague of mine asked me to treat his cousin nicely. You know it was a summer exam at distance learning. I told him that I am not inclined to do these things. Usually I ask questions, and then I give the passing grade, so there is no need to ask... but she had asked, anyway.”
Prevalence	Refers to those statements that refer to the commonness of the AM.	“Before, the colleagues would call and ask you to consent, now these

situations are not that common.”

THEME: Social-Psychological factors

Sub-categories of the thematic category “social-psychological factors”	Definitions	Anchor examples from the data
Non-significance	Refers to those statements when faculty members feel powerless or useless to influence a certain situation, and/or they cannot prevent or fight AM.	“I mean, at the moment I felt myself as someone who has no contribution or someone who has nothing. I thought about the aim of my previous actions so far... why I didn’t give him that grade. Anyway, he/she would come again, and they would let him/her try again. I felt that my activities are useless, and some feelings like that.”
Fear	Refers to those statements when the FMs experience fear in the relationship with their superiors or colleagues as well as in their work activities in general.	“Now the faculty members are quite frightened.”
Giving up	Refers to those statements when the faculty members have to go against their values or moral principles to meet the administrators’ or colleagues’ requests to consent.	“But when they interact, ask, or tell you to consent, then you have to give up on some of your principles...”

Sub-categories of the main category “perceived attitudes”	Definitions	Anchor examples from the data
PAs of 1. students 2. colleagues 3. administrators *separate codes	Refers to those statements when respondents report the attitudes and perceptions of different educational actors towards AM.	“might judge it, might be critical, but if they see that a student is committing misconduct, or someone is interceding, in general, this is not perceived as a very bad thing or something like “wow, how can one do that?””
Sub-categories of the main category “justifications”	Definitions	Anchor examples from the data
J-s for 1. students 2. colleagues 3. administrators 4. themselves *separate codes	Refers to those statements when the respondents talk about factors that might justify the students’, administrators’, colleagues’, and/or their own intentions or actual engagement in AM.	“Students have very different justifications. They can say, ‘it was my sister’s wedding’ or ‘my mom/dad is at the hospital’. They use different excuses connected with daily life issues or even justifications such as ‘It is hard, I cannot study’. Mostly, those are very naive justifications that cannot be accepted.”
Sub-categories of the main category “descriptive norms”	Definitions	Anchor examples from the data

DNs at	Refers to those statements when the	“Here, someone from the
1. university level	respondents report the prevalence of	administration tells me
2. ed. system level	AM at either the university, systemic,	that it happens often, very
3. country level	or country level.	often. I am not able to say
*separate codes		no to them.”

THEME: Influential Factors

Sub-categories of the main thematic category	Definitions	Anchor examples from the data
“Influential factors”		
Students’ mindset	Refers to those statements when the respondents report that student mindsets, perceptions, beliefs, motivation to study, and the way they treat education in general play a role in their intentions or actual corrupt behavior.	“The worst thing is that students do not have a high level of consciousness. I mean, they only think, ‘I pay. I am not really here to study and to gain knowledge. I rather cheat and get that grade’. This is absurd for me, these students are adults, they have chosen to attend university and to get a higher education. They pay, and they pay quite a significant amount of money, but what they demand for this payment is only the diploma.”
Moral vs AM	Refers to those statements when engaging in AM is a matter of one’s own value system and/or moral principles.	“I mean, you do not take a bribe because your salary is low. You take a bribe because some principles are absent from your value system.”

Sub-categories of the main category “systemic factors”	Definitions	Anchor examples from the data
Rotation System	Refers to all those statements when respondents mention that the new system of rotation (switching from tuition-free to tuition-based education) promotes students to engage in AMs.	“I think this rotation system triggers competition among students, which at the same time results in cheating. There is this problem among students, and they sometimes say, ‘X person’ cheated and passed. I did not cheat and that is why I did not pass’.”
Need of students	Includes those statements when respondents mention that it is urgent for universities to enroll and keep as many students as possible.	“Here the problem is that too many students get accepted and they stay until the end. Let’s say only 10 students out of 80 who got admitted to the university study well during the whole process. The rest (70) somehow reaches the end, and by saying somehow I mean all those things that they do...”
Grades	Refers to those statements when the respondents state that grades at some point cause students to engage in AMs.	“X person cheated and got a higher grade. I did not cheat, and as a result my grade is low.” Other cases when they state that “the faculty member pays attention and grades the

		volume of the text, but not the content of it.”
Sub-categories of the main thematic category “organisational factors”	Definitions	Anchor examples from the data
Too many attempts	Refers to those statements when the respondents report that students have too many chances to pass the exams, or too many opportunities to graduate.	“Yes, he/she was dismissed. But then was given another chance to do an additional payment for each subject and given another try for the exam, they gave him/her an opportunity for a new attempt.”
Keeping vs dropping out	Refers to all those statements when the respondents say that the quantity of students is a necessity for the university, and that they are interested more in keeping students than dropping them out.	“As long as the University system depends on the students, one should not expect serious changes.”
Administrations’ role	Refers to those statements when the respondents report the administration’s role in promoting AM.	“They show a participatory treatment. Right now, we are at that university which is the most famous one ((<i>laughing</i>)) in the Republic regarding those issues.”
Busy workload (Students)	Refers to those statements when the respondents report that too many educational tasks and assignments lead students and/or themselves to engage in AM.	“If we look closer, we see that there are lots of things in our system that lead to these issues. For instance, during one week, students have to take ten

		mid-term exams as well as submit several papers. Even me, a specialist, I am not able to write that volume of work in one day. How are students supposed to do it? That is why they need to cheat. Imagine, they write three exams in one day. I think even if the student had learned the material well, after being so tired at the end of that day, he/she would not be able to write effectively.” “You know we have big groups, mostly 50, 60, 80 people per group. And when you have to check 80 papers, especially when you are not co-teaching with a colleague, then you cannot check all the 80 papers that attentively, although you have to. And as the students know that many faculty members do not check, yes, many faculty members do not check, they take advantage of it.”
Busy and complex workload (FMs)	Refers to those statements when the respondents report that course requirements, exam structure, group size and overwhelming educational tasks promote AM.	
Sub-categories of the main category “cultural factors”	Definitions	Anchor examples from the data

Human factor	Refers to those statements when the respondents report cases when they treat students guided by their personal values and moral principles rather than by strictly following the rules and regulations.	“In Armenia, I have noticed this human factor thing, with the good meaning of this word, it might not be that expedient in terms of the effectiveness of the educational processes. However, it also has positive effects”
“Blurry borders”	Refers to those statements when the respondents mentions that there are no clear distinctions between professional and friendly/relatively relationships at the universities.	“All these things are affected by culture, those borders are blurry. I know so many people that work together, are colleagues, but at the same time they are best friends.”
Parents’ role	Refers to those statements when the respondents mention that the mentality of the students’ parents to some extent promote AM.	“For instance, when the student is not capable, the parents have to spend a lot of money to have him or her admitted.”
National mentality	Refers to those statements when the respondents refer to national characteristics that are typically “Armenian” regarding AM and education in general.	“Look what happens. After school, at the age of 16-17, one might consider them even children. The students are not well oriented yet, and he/she is just told that you must have a higher education. Everything starts from this point, “a guy must have a higher education.” “Who cares that he even does not attend classes.”

THEME: Anti-corruption means

Sub-categories of the main categories “Codes of Conduct/Ethics” and “regulations”	Definitions	Anchor examples from the data
Awareness	Refers to those statements when the respondents report whether the university has Codes of Conduct/Ethics and/or anti-corruption regulations or not as well as whether they FMs are familiar with them.	“It is not written somewhere that the faculty member should have this or that. Maybe there are some rules, but I am not familiar with them.”
Implementation	Refers to those cases when the respondents report about the needs and complications related to the implementation of the Codes of Conduct/Ethics and/or regulations.	“Well, there are these statements, but the question is to what extent are these rules being followed.”
Other means	Refers to those statements when the respondents mention some means that are used to prevent and/or fight corruption. These are the means that are not included in the deductive coding guideline.	“There is a very good mechanism against that misconduct, there are social surveys that are anonymous.”
Sub-categories of the main category “communication”	Definitions	Anchor examples from the data
FMs and students	Refers to those statements when the respondents report how faculty members communicate with students regarding anti-corruption issues.	“As a rule, the dean sends it to the head of the chair, and the latter informs the faculty members during the sessions. Everybody receives these regulations and is instructed to study them, to become familiar

		with their rights and duties.”
ADMs and FMs	Refers to those statements when the respondents report how the administrators communicate with the FMs and students regarding the universities’ anti-corruption strategies and actions.	“We explain to them how the academic work should be written considering both the scientific and ethical requirements.”
FMs and FMs	Refers to those statements when the faculty members communicate with each other regarding anti-corruption issues.	“Probably, they are told from some other colleagues. Although I do not think so.”
Verbal communication	Refers to those statements when anti-corruption communication between the educational actors happens at a level of talks and conversations.	“I have not read it, but I assume that there must be one. We are just in a verbal way introduced to both our rights and duties.”
Written communication	Refers to those statements when anti-corruption communication between the educational actors happens based on written rules and guidelines.	“I mean, yes, there are regulations. We even provided those documents to students so they can study it, they even signed them stating that they are familiar that in the case of cheating, plagiarism, or using electronic devices during the exam, there are some certain punishments that can result even in dismissal.”
Sub-categories of the main category “personal strategies”	Definitions	Anchor examples from the data
Exams	Refers to all those strategies that the respondents use to prevent/fight	“I do explain to those students who write under

	Academic Misconduct prior and/or during exams.	my supervision what is plagiarism. I precisely explain them the rules of quotation and so on.”
Grading	Refers to grading criteria in general as well as to grading strategies, particularly to prevent and/or punish AM.	“It also could be that the faculty member immediately grades the work 0 for cheating. Myself, when I see a student cheating, I approach him/her and then sign the copybook. So later on, while checking, I would know that this work had been cheated. But I let them continue with the exam.”
“fair deal”	Refers to those cases when the respondents negotiate with the students their behavior during and requirements for the exams, aiming to escape and/or minimize AM.	“Then I told him/her ‘you know it is impossible, go ask your colleagues to give you the material’. I have sent them the whole material during the semester, go read at least a single theme, and only then come back. So I can understand that you have learned at least something on this subject, and then I will give you the minimum passing grade. If not, then no.”

Refuse to consent⁵³	Refers to those statements when the respondents report scenarios when they would strictly refuse to engage in AM.	“I do consent only in those cases if it would not affect the rotation system.”
Sub-categories of the main category “control mechanisms”	Definitions	Anchor examples from the data
Exams	Refers to those cases when the respondents report controlling mechanisms during the exams.	“If the faculty member notices that the student is cheating, then he/she has a right to interrupt the exam, ask the student to leave the room. Then this faculty member must inform the dean of the department in a written form.”
Term Papers	Refers to those cases when the respondents report controlling mechanisms during the term papers.	“But still it is very difficult because there are no programs. All the responsibility lies on the supervisor, on his/her awareness. Well it could happen that the students bring the work. Even if you somehow can feel that it is plagiarized, or bought from somewhere, you still might not have sufficient proof.”
Individual control	Refers to those statements when the faculty members are in charge of controlling exams or papers.	“You know, we have big groups, mostly 50, 60, 80 persons per group. And when you have to check

⁵³ Term 'consent' is commonly used among educational actors in Armenian universities as proxy for engagement in Academic Misconduct.

		80 papers, especially when you are not co-teaching with a colleague, then you cannot check all the 80 papers that attentively, although you have to. And as the students know, many faculty members do not check. Yes, many faculty members do not check, they take advantage of it.”
Administrative control	Refers to those statements when the administrators are in charge of controlling faculty members and/or students during the educational process and/or exams.	“I tell you, this strictness is at some point right. Although sometimes when they ‘are pushing too hard’ you do not feel respected. I can tell you that the administrative control, that strictness, the person who controls whether you are late or not, works well.”
Sub-categories of the main category “needs and suggestions”	Definitions	Anchor examples from the data
Need to apply	Refers to those statements when there is a need to apply and implement the rules and norms mentioned in the regulations.	“Well ... to implement all those statements that are already written. Because if it exists in a written form and is considered as a university policy, it cannot work per se right?”
Precise anti-corruption policy	Refers to those statements when respondents speak about the necessity	“First of all, you should form juridical grounds for

	to have clear regulations and Codes of Conduct/Ethics.	this fight, this is important. Because if there are no juridical grounds, you find yourself in a situation trying to use some problems with a walking stick.”
Control and punishment	Refers to those statements when the respondents speak about the necessity to apply strict punishments.	“Now we do not have a clear structure. Precise punishment means everything is kind of in a swimming state, and thus people can find all the hidden ways.”
Educational policy	Refers to those statements when the respondents speak about the necessity to have precise educational policy, grading criteria, examination structures, <i>etc.</i>	“If the student fails the exam, the university should not give them an opportunity to pay for it after a week and come to the exam again.”
Social/financial /working conditions	Refers to those statements when the faculty members speak about the necessity to have appropriate social, financial, and work conditions.	“On the other hand, you know social conditions play a big role. The previous rector of the X, Y person, whenever being asked, he would reply that, ‘unless the faculty member has not proper social conditions, I cannot neither forbid nor control them’.”
Shift of mindset	Refers to those statements when the respondents speak about the necessity to change students as well as society’s perceptions and attitudes towards AMs and education in general.	“I think students should change their treatment. Quality education and the value of knowledge must be appreciated. The

		students must evaluate that by cheating they would not achieve anything. The diploma, solely, would give them nothing.”
Sub-categories of the main category “achievements so far”	Definitions	Anchor examples from the data
Regulations per se	Refers to those statements when the respondents evaluate the existence of Regulations as a positive achievement.	“For instance, the university currently is designing regulations that includes those corrupt issues, conflicts of interest regarding those definitions, mechanisms, and so on. It is still being designed and is not completed yet, but this fact is already can be evaluated as good evidence.”
Individual efforts	Refers to those statements when the respondents report an anti-corruption fight initiated at an individual level.	“You know, we do not have it now. I haven’t heard this at our chair. This is a result of the superiors’ activities.”
Structural changes	Refers to those statements when the respondents report that some structural changes in education management as an achievement in anti-corruption actions.	“Look what they have done, they have implemented a system that allows them with a simple click of a mouse to see that you were planning to have a seminar on the 6th

		week. This is very technical, right, and they see that it's the 6th week. And you are doing something else, so why? Look this keeps us very alert. You know that they can come and check you anytime.
Punishments	Refers to those statements when the respondents report that some individual cases of punishment have had a positive impact in terms of reducing the levels of AMs.	"I have heard so many times that in our university some faculty members have been punished. I do not know how many cases there are. But I have heard about some of them. That when a faculty member took a bribe, he/she had to take the criminal responsibility and is bearing the punishment now."
Academic writing	Refers to those statements when the respondents report various ways of educating students and FMs on academic writing and consider that as an achievement in the context of fighting AMs.	"One of the fighting mechanisms was the publication of a small guide regarding academic writing standards. I mean, there was a uniformed approach that would give students the opportunities to orient, to have personal guidelines. This is also an attempt that must be positively evaluated."

6.5. Step 6: Final coding of the data using the elaborate category system

After defining the sub-categories, I proceeded with the second coding stage. The new sub-categorical codes were assigned to the respective text passages within the main category. This was a systematic process, which required to go thoroughly through the entire data again. After completing the second coding, the data was ready for the final categorical analysis stage. The results of the final qualitative analysis are presented in the next sections.

6.6. Step 7: Results: Category based analysis

The final stages of the qualitative study categorical and sub-categorical analysis were conducted for each university separately, and individual discussions were provided. The combined conclusions of the qualitative and quantitative results are presented in Chapter 8.

6.6.1. University 1

Theme: Academic Misconduct and social-psychological characteristics of corrupt interactions

All the interviewed faculty members (100%) unanimously reported that cheating and plagiarism are the most common corrupt practices at the university, followed by favoritism. The cases of bribery are rare at this university and are completely absent in the departments. These forms of misconduct occur in corrupt interactions established between educational actors: *administration and students, administration and faculty members, faculty members and students, faculty members and colleagues, faculty members/administration and relatives.*

Administration and Students

The faculty members of University 1 report that the university administration is tolerant and forgiving towards student engagements in misconduct. The salaries of university employees are derived from student tuitions. Hence, the university has no choice than to put quantity over quality, and to keep as many students enrolled as possible, “*the more students the more fees, and it is not that important how do they graduate*” (FM_A, P59⁵⁴). Due to these circumstances, as reported, the university administration is not only forgiving towards student engagement in misconduct, but also, “*very often, these misconducts are initiated by the administration*” (FM_A, P28). Faculty members report the following ways that administrators encourage misconduct:

⁵⁴ FM=faculty member, A = interviewee, P = paragraph N

- not punishing students for committing a misconduct, rather providing them with many opportunities/attempts to pass the exam. Although dismissal is possible only in extreme cases, for instance when a student does not show up at all, but not for engaging in misconduct or for bad academic performance, *"They give too many attempts to pass the exam ... I mean, too many, I do not know, unless they do not die, they will not get dropped out of the university"* (FM_D, P22).
- intervening faculty member anti-corruption actions, and/or instructing/requesting faculty members to consent (*see* administrators and faculty members p.131).
- not being congruent with the anti-corruption fight (*see* organisational factors, p.137).

Administration and faculty members

As already mentioned above, according to the faculty members, the university cannot afford dismissals. Thus, there is an urgent need to create opportunities so that the students get at least significant grades that will enable them to continue their education at the university. Faculty members are directly responsible for the grading. Hence, the university administration is frequently instructing faculty members to be forgiving and less strict towards student corrupt activities. Faculty members report receiving two types of instructions to consent, "kind requests" and "strict commands" that they receive from the university administration. The first type of instructions are given in a friendly manner, *"in my case, it is also impossible that someone from the university administration can tell me something in a commanding manner, I exclude it ... I, myself, have never noticed that, for instance, the dean of our faculty, or the head of the chair, tells that "this must be done like this," no, there are no these kinds of things. It might be a kindly request to provide a small favorable treatment"* (FM_B, P18). Whereas the strict commands are asked in an authoritarian way: "there was a student who was a relative of some high level public official, and all the faculty members were strictly instructed by our administration that if this student has attended the exam, then it means he must be allowed to cheat" (FM_A, 48). The cases of strict commands are rare, whereas kind requests are very common. Faculty members perceive both types of instructions as psychological pressure and offensive treatment towards them. They feel forced to obey, because as reported, they experience fear to go against a superior's will, *"... at least for me one justification (to engage in misconduct) can be, the fear to go against the administration* (FM_A, P72), *"I also get affected a lot when someone asks me to consent, someone who has a higher status"* (FM_D, 23).

Faculty members and students

The most common forms of misconduct that occur in this interaction between faculty members and students, as reported by the faculty members, are cheating and plagiarism. All the interviewed faculty members (100%) admit that they frequently face these practices performed by the students. Students widely cheat during the written exams, *"since my student years until now*

when I am already working, the most prevalent misconduct is the cheating (FM_C, P4), and plagiarize midterm/final academic papers, “Plagiarism is widespread, when they bring others’ work and present it as their own, or when they buy those works” (FM_D, P4). As cheating sources, they surreptitiously use various electronic devices, and/or cheat sheets which are small sized printed copies or hand-written scripts of their study material. For the academic papers, students either buy them from the paper-selling agencies, or simply copy and/or translate someone else’s work without giving any references and present them as their own. These practices are so widespread that faculty members perceive them as an expectable behavior typical for the majority of the students, “they (faculty members) might judge it, might be critical, but if they see that a student is committing misconduct, or someone is interceding, in general, this is not perceived as a very bad thing or something like ‘wow, how can one do that?’. It is just something natural, and yeah, it is supposed to happen. Well, they may refuse to engage in misconduct themselves, but the perception is normal, let me put it this way, it is expected”(FM_A, P30). Students, in turn, expect faculty members not to be strict, and to engage in Academic Misconduct. That is an acceptable behavior. When faculty members strictly control students’ work, the latter get surprised and start to negotiate and/or argue about their grades with them, “the faculty member says ‘no, you have to study for your grade’ ... this will surprise a student like ‘What? You cannot say no. X person asked you to consent.’” (FM_A, P32). Faculty members are the direct controllers of the examinations. They report about having significant difficulties to prevent cheating and plagiarism because of several reasons. First, there are no administrative strict control and punishments (see administrators and students), and students feel safe and secure to cheat and/or plagiarize. Second, the student groups are big (e.g., more than 80 people), and there is only one faculty member in the classroom during the exam. Third, the university is not armed with anti-plagiarism tools and software. Hence, lacking precise administrative guideline and persistent support, faculty members have developed several personal strategies to control cheating and plagiarism, “At a personal level everyone fights as much as they can” (FM_B, P16).

Cheating during the written exams

Changing the assignment format – the standard written exam requires students to mostly reproduce the previous study material. The closer the writing is to the original study material, the better are the chances for a high grade. Hence, students make cheat sheets from their study materials and cheat during the exam by simply reproducing the text. To limit the chances for cheating, some of the faculty members try to introduce alternative forms of assignments, where students would need to use their creativity and critical thinking, and have no source to cheat from, “It would not be just a theoretical question that they can find somewhere and cheat, rather it would be something that requires individual thinking” (FM_A, P36).

The five-minute rule - a strategy when a faculty member gives students approximately five minutes to revise the study material prior to the exam, warning that afterwards, any attempt of cheating would be strictly punished. The aim is to reduce the psychological pressure and prevent them from cheating, *"I've come up with a mechanism, which might be even considered as some misconduct, but I do not think so... Well, as I know that the exam is quite hard, I make a deal with my students. The exam takes 80 minutes, so I tell my students, 'I will give you five minutes, at a certain point, to the whole group, only five minutes to use all the study material that you have with you to revise, but if I notice a cheating before or after those five minutes, then I will not accept any excuses or apologies, you must leave the classroom'. I mean if one had studied the material, then I do not want him/her not to be able to express their knowledge due to some psychological issues"* (FM_B, P11).

From strict control to no control - most of the faculty members (75%) report that they actively collect the various electronic devices and cheat sheets from the students, persistently checking out student desks, *"usually during the exam, even if it is a big group of 80 students, I am very attentive, I walk in the room and collect the notes and all the things that they can use to cheat"* (FM_A, P48). However, they admit that controlling is not a pleasant activity for them. It becomes even harder when the groups are big, hence, one faculty member is not able to effectively control and prevent the cheating. Some of the faculty members (25%) believe that their role as teachers does not include being "police officers" (FM_C, P4), cheating is widespread, most of the students are inclined to cheat, and it is impossible to prevent it no matter how attentive a faculty member is. Therefore, to some extent, faculty members give up and do not control the exam at all, letting all the responsibility on student consciousness, *"Cheating is very difficult to prevent. Why? Because in this case the faculty member is performing the role of a police officer. Actually, on the one hand, you are not that police officer who needs to walk through the room and check. On the other hand, you just cannot pretend as if you do not see it"* (FM_C, P4). Another case of not controlling the exam is illustrated in the following statement, *"How can I control some students and not let them cheat? But then let this one cheat? So, what I did, I did not control at all and let everyone do what they did"* (FM_A,48).

Plagiarism;

"GIYF; google is your friend" - the university does not obtain proper means to detect plagiarism. All the responsibility to prevent and/or identify plagiarism lies on the faculty members. The latter do not have many options. They either rely on their own knowledge regarding the topic and/or on the information that they possess about a student's cognitive abilities and academic performance, or they simply use google search services, *"Well, the students might bring their work even if somehow can feel that it is plagiarized, or bought from somewhere. You still might not have sufficient proofs. You google it but it is not there, you try to compare with the previous work, but*

it seems not exactly the same, the student says that 'no, I wrote it on my own, I didn't sleep for nights''" (FM_C, P6).

Overall, faculty members reported having negative attitudes towards cheating and plagiarism, hence, they try to control it as much as possible. However, all of the interviewed faculty members (100%) also reported engaging in misconduct many times during their professional activities. Nevertheless, they acknowledge its negative impact on the quality of education, *"I have noticed this human factor thing, with the good meaning of this word, it might not be that expedient in terms of the effectiveness of the educational processes. However, it also has positive effects"* (FM_B, P3). Faculty members state that Academic Misconduct could be considered as a justifiable behavior since it is a culturally acceptable practice, which represents care and humanity towards students. Hence, most of the time faculty members are guided by this human factor rather than anti-corruption rules. They are forgiving and tolerant towards students' corrupt behaviors for the sake of preventing them from dropping out, which would negatively impact the student's future career and life quality, *"for example, there is this student, that due to some factors, does not have sufficient knowledge, and will be dropped out. He will end up on the street. We have this mentality in Armenia ... You give this student a chance to continue and prove himself next semester, even if you would not teach him/her further. You still hope that he/she will correct him/herself, and thus the little misconduct committed by him/her will not have fatal consequences. Of course, I repeat myself it is not expedient in terms of the development of the educational process"* (FM_B, P3). Faculty members report that misconduct is also justifiable, and they are inclined to engage in if the students provide at least a minimum amount of work or if by consenting they would not impact one's fee-free position. Faculty members are also inclined to consent without even being asked by someone, in those extreme cases when students have serious health problems, or other life-threatening issues.

Faculty members and colleagues

While instructions from the university administration are frequent, requests of consent among colleagues are not that common. Faculty members report that there is an atmosphere of safety and trust among the colleagues in the chair. However, some cases favoritism still rarely occur in this interaction. FMs are inclined to meet a colleague's request because of two justifiable reasons. First, it is a matter of respect and loyalty towards the colleague, *"there is this issue of superior-interior, it is just a matter of respect, this person is older than you, and you love and respect him/her, and when he/she tells you, 'You know, this student is my relative, or it is my friend's child, please consent him/her', in these cases I cannot say no"* (FM_D16). Second, the fear of being judged and misunderstood. Younger faculty members find it difficult to oppose their older-generation colleagues, *"there are some inner processes connected to my values to oppose superiors. On the other hand, there is fear to be misunderstood. What would he/she think? What*

would he/she say? Moreover, I am a young faculty member who is just starting. I don't know, the older generation would definitely perceive opposing them as, 'Well, you have just started but are already talking these kinds of things. How could you behave like this?'" (FM_A, P40).

The university administration also shares the faculty members' positions regarding favoritism, and admits that faculty members are under intensive social pressure to engage in Academic Misconduct, *"Thus, again, the inner structure...the same is when one doesn't want to support one's colleague. It is again perceived to be not a positive and nice thing. This means that there is a lot of social pressure on people, on workers, when they start to ask, to intercede and so on..."* (ADM/U1⁵⁵, P8).

Faculty members feel trusted within their narrow network of trusted people. In rare cases of favoritism, they are inclined to meet a colleague's requests since it is a sign of respect. They will also give into an older colleague's requests since they find it inconvenient to oppose someone from an older generation.

Faculty members and relatives

Faculty members also report receiving requests from their relatives to engage in nepotism. However, they do not find it hard to refuse requests from family members and/or acquaintances, *"in other cases when relatives, family members, and acquaintances ask, I refuse, again until that point when someone from administration instructs me to engage in misconduct/* (FM_A, P50). *"*In contrast, the university administration reports that administrators are sometimes under social pressure by their relatives and/or acquaintances. They cannot reject those requests for nepotism/favoritism since the rejection is socially and morally unacceptable, and can even be considered shameful behavior, *"if their acquaintance or relative is calling and asking for support, the dean or the head of the chair cannot say no... because their reaction would be, 'How can you say no? What kind of ugly things are you telling me? That is a shame'"* (ADM/U1, P8). The origins of this mindset come from Soviet times and are still very prevalent in Armenian society. Moreover, the university administration also reports experiencing fear of being misunderstood by their social network. They are concerned that if they refuse to consent by bring logical and juridical explanations for that refusal, their relatives/acquaintances would anyway find a way to approach to someone else who would agree to consent, *"they are also afraid, if they deny then maybe someone else would help, and then the acquaintance/relative would get offended because it was possible but the administrator did not support them"* (ADM/U1, P8).

⁵⁵ ADM= administration, U1 = university 1

Theme: factors that influence Academic Misconduct

The faculty members and the administration of the university report about systemic, organizational, individual, and cultural factors that result and/or promote Academic Misconduct.

Systemic factors

Lack of funding - as already mentioned above (see Administration and students), the university does not have significant funding from the state, and to sustain itself, it has to keep a certain number of enrolled students by any means, regardless of their academic or ethical performance, *“nowadays, there is a competition to involve many students. Unfortunately, the state funding is very little or is completely absent, which creates an unpleasant situation for the universities”* (FM_B, P6).

Educational regulations - faculty members mention several examples of how the educational regulations create good opportunities for Academic Misconduct to occur. For instance, a student who initially applies for a certain study program and does not get the required amount of points for that program, is still eligible for another program for which he/she has enough points. As a result, many students find themselves in programs that they are not interested in, but they still want to pursue a university diploma. Those students normally lack the motivation to study and engage in misconduct to attain the required grades so that they can graduate, *“those students have trouble studying. They do not get it, they do not want to learn things, they are lazy, and are attracted by the Facebook world. These are just examples, all they need is to have that sufficient grade”*(FM_B, P11). Faculty members also report about other misconduct-friendly educational regulations. According to these rules, students are allowed several attempts to pass an exam aiming to prevent students from dropping out of the university. Students tend to take advantage of this rule and feel safe to engage in misconduct, bearing in mind that in the case of failure, they would be given more than one chance to pass the exam. However, if somehow a student manages to dismissal, he/she would be able to re-enroll without further complications since the re-matriculation policies are very flexible, *“after two months, he/she showed up and told me, ‘they allowed me to attend again, they called me from the university and told me that I could pay the fee and have another attempt to pass’”* (FM_A, P52).

Rotation system - the switch from a tuition-free to a tuition-based system promotes unhealthy competition between students, which results in cheating, *“I think this rotation system triggers competition among students, which at the same time results in cheating. There is this problem among students, and they sometimes say, ‘X person’ cheated and passed. I did not cheat and that is why I did not pass”* (FM_A, P78).

Massification and digitalization - according to the university administration, the massification of higher education leads to big study groups, which makes it difficult to control the exams. Moreover, controlling cheating and plagiarism is a hard task for the university since

students use various devices to cheat and gain access to information. The university is not equipped with detecting these devices, *“Look, some years ago, they used ‘shpargalka’ or something else to cheat. Now we entered into a new period when it is digitalized. Before it was a big radio in that famous Soviet movie, now it is super-small headphones, and students use it often. The universities became helpless and were not ready for that new reality. First of all, the massification of education led to big study groups. It is challenging for a faculty member to control”* (ADM/U1, P3).

Organizational factors

“To fight or not to fight” - the faculty members of the university find that the university’s anti-corruption actions are weak and formal in nature, *“On the one hand, we have that law/rule. On the other hand, it is not being applied”* (FM_A, P66). The university has the urgency to keep as many students enrolled as possible by any means, yet, it cannot not fight misconduct at all. Hence, the university tries to cover the formalities, such as publicly expressing negative attitudes towards the problem in question, and thereby including anti-corruption statements in the regulations. However, it does not put significant efforts to communicate and raise awareness among the educational actors, and does not persist in the implementation of those anti-corruption rules mentioned in the regulations. Regarding their awareness of the existence of the Codes of Conduct/Ethics at the university, faculty members provide contradicting answers. Half of them (50%) admit that there is a guide on ethical rules, and some of the faculty members are aware of them, *“there is something like this, a booklet”* (FM_C, P10). The other 50% assure that there are regulations and Codes of Conduct/Ethics and neither them nor many of the other faculty members are aware of their existence, *“No, nothing like that exists”* (FM_A, P20); *“Maybe there is one, but I am not familiar with it”* (FM_D, P8). However, they all (100%) unanimously agree that even if there are Codes of Conduct/Ethics, they are not being properly implemented in practice. Most of the time, the behavior of faculty members is guided by their own moral and ethical principles, *“Well, there are these statements, but the question is to what extend are these rules being followed”* (FM_C, P10); *“That is something that is guided by personal values and norms, it is not written somewhere that the faculty member should have this or that”* (FM_A, P26).

The anti-corruption regulations include several statements on Academic Misconduct in the general regulations of the university, particularly regarding cheating and plagiarism. The rules state that faculty members should report any misconduct to the university administration in a form of written notice. The university administration provides the regulations to faculty members as well as to students, and everyone is expected to study and to sign them. However, as reported, faculty members perceive this as a mere formal act from the administration side, *“I think not many of them are aware of it. It is something like a check mark somewhere on the paper, but not everyone reads it”* (FM_A, P14). The administration does not follow up to make sure that those rules are implemented in practice. Moreover, in some cases, the university administration itself initiates a

misconduct, and/or hinders a faculty member's attempt to follow the regulations, *"I, myself, once had to ask a student to leave the room, but when I wanted to write a notice, the administration told me, 'Come on, let's give him/her a chance'"* (FM_A, P4). The university administration's position also influences faculty members' anti-corruption motivation. They report experiencing constant frustration and disappointment since they believe that their individual anti-corruption actions are useless, and that they will never succeed under these conditions, *"My anger means nothing? Or my fight? I mean, at that moment, I felt myself as someone who has no contribution. I felt that my activities are useless, and some other terrible emotions like that"* (FM_A, P50, 52).

The university administration, however, states that faculty members do not put significant efforts to control the exams and that they do not supervise and check academic papers, *"To save time, they often do not supervise that well. They even do not read carefully the work, and just give some positive grades. This indifference and careless work also makes it possible for the students to present someone else's work as his/her own"* (ADM/U1, P4). Moreover, when the faculty members notice cheating and/or plagiarism, they only give verbal notices to the students, but do not report such cases to the administration, *"Well, if a faculty member notices cheating during an exam, he/she gets angry at that student, but still lets him/her continue writing. Usually, faculty members do not report on a student cheating neither suggest to dismiss them"* (ADM/U1, P20). Moreover, the university administration, when teaching, also do not properly follow the statements included in the anti-corruption regulations, *"It happened during my class too, they have tried to cheat, and I told them 'aren't you ashamed? Do you think I do not notice what you are doing? Stop it'"* (ADM/U1, P20).

Individual factors

Students' motivation to study - students are not conscious about the purpose of education. They do not value knowledge and are often not interested in the academic program. Their main motive is purely to receive a university diploma, *"The worst thing is that students do not have a high level of consciousness. I mean, they only think, 'I pay. I am not really here to study and to gain knowledge. I rather cheat and get that grade'. This is absurd for me, these students are adults, they have chosen to attend university and to get a higher education. They pay, and they pay quite a significant amount of money, but what they demand for this payment is only the diploma. There is no consciousness. Thus, as a result, on the one hand, we have students who want to cheat by any means. On the other hand, we have faculty members who are 'police officers' and do not let them cheat"* (FM_C, P4).

Student mindsets - students acknowledge the fact that the university cannot afford dismissals, and that this also provides flexible opportunities for them to stay admitted despite their low level of cognitive skills, academic performance, or corrupt behavior. Hence, they feel safe and secure. If needed, they initiate misconduct, keeping in mind that getting kicked out would only

happen in a very extreme case, *“There are some dismissals every year, but in general, students do understand that getting kicked out is possible only in exceptional or critical cases”* (FM_B, P3, 28).

Cultural factors (manifestations of social norms)

“Blurry borders” - non-professional relationships established between colleagues is one of the main causes of Academic Misconduct at a university (favoritism). Faculty members often cross the line between friendship and formal work ethics. Moreover, faculty members support each other expecting that the colleague whose request of consent is being met would reciprocate the favor if it is needed in the future. As reported, this exchange of favors is typical in the Armenian mentality and manifests itself in the education system as well, *“All these things are affected by culture, those borders are blurry. I know so many people that work together, are colleagues, but at the same time they are best friends”* (FM_A, P20); *“On the other hand, we have this atmosphere of mutual assistance, when you support someone, but there are some borders of fairness that you should not cross”* (FM_B, P20).

“Human factor” - human factor is another component of the Armenian mentality, and also plays an important role in faculty member decisions to give a chance to a student. Students are mostly given a chance so that they can improve and correct themselves. The mentality is that, otherwise, the failure in education would cause failure in life in general (*see* faculty members and students, p.131) Hence, the human factor is the caring, the wanting students to succeed.

“Non-written rules” - according to the university administration, starting from the Soviet Union times, Academic Misconduct has not been perceived as something negative in society. Those students who could manage to cheat were considered as being “crafty” in a positive sense. This perception and values transferred to contemporary times, entered the education system, and still serve as powerful non-written rules that guide people’s behavior, *“We used to have that value system of cheating, and we entered in the new transmission reality with the same value systems that already existed in the 90s, during the period of our independence. And, unfortunately, since today the core manifestation of this value system has not been destroyed. This is a big, big problem, a background problem in general, and it is very important. There are non-written rules in society, and very often these non-written rules are more effective”* (ADM/U1, P3).

The anti-corruption fight; achievements and needs

The university administration reported that Academic Misconduct is a common practice in the entire Armenian Higher Education system. Their university is not an exemption, however, *“I think regarding these issues, our university is in quite a good condition”* (ADM/U1, P10).” So far, the university has implemented the following anti-corruption steps:

- pioneering in including anti-corruption statements in the university's educational regulations.
- annual anti-corruption reports.
- the university has established an anti-corruption committee, which is responsible for the improvement/development of anti-corruption rules and improvements of educational regulations.
- collaboration with The Council of Europe (Yerevan office) for designing "Ethical codes."
- discussing possibilities to collaborate with other state universities to unify the fight against corruption.
- an idea to create an Intranet, an anti-corruption online platform which will be a database for academic papers submitted by students. Its purpose is to prevent plagiarism. Once a paper is submitted, it can be easy to detect whether it already exists on the database or not.

Even though the above-mentioned measures have had some positive impact in the anti-corruption fight, as reported by the administration, the university currently still faces various challenges that need to be met to successfully fight Academic Misconduct. Among these challenges are:

Regulations - there is a need to establish profound juridical acts that specifically address Academic Misconduct.

External monitoring - it is important that the government and the ministry of education conduct external monitoring, which will keep universities alert and encourage them to properly fight corruption instead of pretending to do so.

Digitalization - there is an urgency to digitalize the control and grading system: to provide digital technologies (for instance, anti-plagiarism software), to digitalize the grading system so that neither the faculty members nor the administrators have direct responsibility to grade the students.

Shift of mindset and value system - it is important that faculty members do not "imitate" anti-corruption behavior, work more committed and attentively so that students cannot plagiarize.

The faculty members of the university also reported the following current needs to prevent Academic Misconduct, reduce its levels, and/or successfully fight against it:

Control and punishment - both the university administrators and faculty members need to implement anti-corruption rules in practice. The existence of those rules per se is not helpful. The university must strictly punish Academic Misconduct and be transparent enough to publicize and communicate such cases with the educational actors. This would raise awareness that the university does not tolerate misconduct and send the signal that it is implementing punishment

measures. Hence, educational actors would become more alert and would not tend to engage in Academic Misconduct.

Funding - the university needs significant funding so that it can afford to implement punishment measures and cover the loss of student tuition if students drop out. The university also needs to put quality over quantity.

Shift of student mindsets – Currently, the motivation of many students is to attain a diploma rather than to gain knowledge and skills. Moreover, students lack literacy on academic integrity. They need to become conscious about the negative long-term personal, social, and economic impacts of misconduct as well as to re-think their study goals and behavior.

6.6.1.1. Summary: University 1

As the results show, the faculty members and the university administration perceive Academic Misconduct as a common and expectable practice in University 1. It mostly manifests itself in forms of cheating, plagiarism, favoritism as well as nepotism (in rare cases). These forms of misconduct occur in corrupt interactions established between the university administration and students, faculty members and university administration, faculty members and colleagues, faculty members and students, and faculty members/university administration and relatives/acquaintances. Each of these relationships include a special set of systemic, organizational, individual, and cultural factors that influence and/or determine the educational actors' decisions and behavior concerning their engagement in misconduct. While both the faculty members and administration single handedly agree that Academic Misconduct is a common practice and that it occurs in the above-mentioned relationships, they also report having different, sometimes conflicting, perceptions and interpretations of the problem in question. Particularly, they disagree concerning the reasons that result in Academic Misconduct at the university. The faculty members find that the main causes of Academic Misconduct are the university's non-congruent anti-corruption actions, and the poorly designed educational regulations that indirectly create opportunities for Academic Misconduct. Whereas the university administration mostly emphasizes the negative impact of cultural norms and the faculty members' non-dedicated work, interestingly, both parties justify each other's friendly actions and acceptance of misconduct.

The faculty members find that the university administration tolerates student engagement in misconduct. The university has the need to enroll and keep as many students as possible to sustain itself financially since there is lack of state funding. This financial dependence puts the university in a conflicting situation. It needs to sustain the necessary number of enrolled students at the cost of Academic Misconduct. The university accepts low academic performance and corrupt behavior in exchange for tuition fees. According to faculty members, the majority of enrolled students do not have high levels of motivation and many of them are not interested in their

study programs or appreciate the value and purpose of education. For many students, the main intention is to get a diploma without having to do the work. They need the diploma to ensure career opportunities in the future and to maintain or improve their social status, which is important not only for them, but also for their families. Hence, lacking motivation to study and not valuing the impact of knowledge, students promote and intend to engage in misconduct. In most cases, their intentions materialize into corrupt actions since the university cannot afford implementing strict anti-corruption means because it would lead to a large number of students being dismissed. Hence, the university administration is in a complicated condition of playing a double role. To meet the requirements of accountability, transparency, and integrity, they introduced anti-corruption statements regarding the punishment of cheating and plagiarism in the regulations and designed ethical guidelines for faculty members. However, these anti-corruption actions of the university are perceived as merely demonstrative formalities. Those rules are only on the papers since the university does not make significant efforts to implement them in practice or to properly communicate them or raise awareness among students and faculty members. Moreover, the university administration not only does not control the implementation of these anti-corruption rules, but in some cases, it hinders the attempts of faculty members to follow the rules. Most of the time, the administration directly instructs the faculty members to engage in misconduct. In these kinds of situations, faculty members experience intensive psychological pressure, and their main reaction is obedience since they do not feel secure to go against the administration's will. The lack of implementing anti-corruption strict measures results in persistent Academic Misconduct. Some educational regulations even promote Academic Misconduct at the university. Those regulations provide flexible admission policies that allow students lacking motivation and a low level of cognitive abilities to enroll. After being admitted, students have the right to try many times to pass an exam, which means that dismissal is not an actual threat.

The above discussed position of the university creates an atmosphere of impunity and permissiveness, which opens doors for Academic Misconduct to persist and spread. Both the students and the faculty members find themselves in a favorable atmosphere where Academic Misconduct not only goes unpunished but is also welcomed. Since the university is not strict with the anti-corruption measures, and does not have the tools to detect misconduct, the faculty members find themselves left alone to face the responsibility of controlling student behavior during exams. Controlling Academic Misconduct is a difficult task for them, not only because of technical reasons such as having big groups, the use of various electronic devices, the absence of an anti-plagiarism software, but most importantly, because of the faculty member believes that their anti-corruption actions are worthless. Lacking administrative support and considering that students anyway will have other opportunities and go unpunished, the faculty members get frustrated and give up on their attempts to fight against Academic Misconduct. They believe that with or without their interventions Academic Misconduct will continue prospering in the university, both because

of the above-described systemic and organizational reasons, but also because of cultural factors. Both the faculty members and the administration representatives mentioned that corruption is an indivisible part of Armenian mentality. Educational actors come from a cultural background where non-written rules (*i.e.*, social norms) play a key role in their decisions. Consequently, these social norms manifest themselves during the educational process at the universities as well. Many faculty members stated that since those non-written rules are deeply rooted in the culture, it is impossible to fight against it in the university. Moreover, to some extent, that one even should not. As reported, depending on its purpose, Academic Misconduct could even have a positive impact. Consenting a student is perceived as a socially acceptable behavior and demonstrates that both the faculty members and the administration are more concerned about a student's future success, which will almost be impossible without a higher education degree. Although faculty members acknowledge that Academic Misconduct has a negative impact on the quality of education, however, they also believe that following regulations and/or dropping out those students would cause direct and severe damage to their professional and personal life. Social norms also play role in corrupt interactions between faculty members and their colleagues. Faculty members most of the time are inclined to meet their colleagues' requests to consent, because by doing so they express their loyalty and respect. By refusing a colleague, guilt related feelings are triggered. Overall, meeting a colleague's request is perceived as a socially and morally right thing to do. Both the university administration and the faculty members to some extent have to choose between being a good colleague/friend/acquaintance/relative and engage in misconduct, or to stay non-corrupt and to behave according to professional ethics. In most of the cases, both the faculty members and the university administration engage in misconduct and justify it with cultural norms.

The university administration shares the faculty members' perceptions regarding the influence of cultural factors on all three educational actor decisions regarding Academic Misconduct. According to the administration, the national mentality, which largely controls the behavior of all three educational actors' behavior, is the main reason that the university has difficulty to fight against Academic Misconduct. However, the university administration does not provide supportive statements to the faculty members' opinion that the university is not paying significant efforts to fight corruption. In contrast, they find that it is the faculty members who do not follow the regulations and report cases of misconduct. In addition, due to bad working conditions and low salaries, the faculty members solely seem and imitate to control, rather than to actually make an effort to control misconduct. It seems that there is a communication gap between the faculty members and the administration. In contrast to the faculty member's reports, the administrative representative states that the university has been constantly implementing anti-corruption measures. Moreover, it is still in the active process of forming legal documents and regulations as well as cooperating and establishing connections with other universities and Ethical Committees to implement efficient anti-corruption measures. Regarding the current needs of the

university, the faculty members and the university administration have quite diverse expectations. While the university administration admits that there is a need to design precise rules that will regulate Academic Misconduct, the faculty members state that the existing rules are good enough, that they merely need to be strictly followed. Faculty members are consistent in their statements that the university needs more state funding so that it can get financial independence from the students. This independence would enable the university to afford implementing strict punishments and dismissals, to hopefully create an atmosphere of integrity. The university administration, however, did not mention the need for state funding. What they expect from the state is external monitoring to keep the universities alert and responsible. Both the faculty members and the university administration agreed that there is a need to enrich the university with digital controlling devices and detective software. Both parties anticipate significant changes in the future only if the value system and the mindset of all three educational actors as well as the Armenian society would start changing. This might be possible in the near future. However, it requires time, and consistent work starting from the state level, including the main educational actors, and ending with their families and social network.

6.6.2. University 2

Theme: Academic Misconduct and social-psychological characteristics of corrupt interactions.

All the interviewed faculty members and the administration (100%) of the University 2 reported that Academic Misconduct has been a common practice for many decades. Currently, the most widespread forms of Academic Misconduct are cheating and plagiarism among students, followed by seldom cases of favoritism and nepotism among faculty members and administrators. The prevalence of the latter, compared to previous years, however, has significantly increased at the university. These above-mentioned forms of misconduct manifest themselves in various combinations of corrupt interactions between educational actors.

Administrators and students

The faculty members of the University 2 report that due to the need for student enrollment, the university administrators show forgiveness towards a student's engagement in Academic Misconduct, their non-appropriate behavioral manners, or low academic performance, "I have never seen a student get punished. I do accept that they are very demanding regarding the faculty members, but I do not see the same approach towards the students. This is because we must have students. But there are many cases when the students misbehave, they are absent, or do not study but still get good grades" (FM_F, P24). The university administration in its turn reports that

the existence of cheating and plagiarism is harmful, however, there are no targeted anti-plagiarism actions and strict punishment executions yet, *“Concerning what the University does, it is just perceived as bad evidence, but it is not that there is a specific fight against it”* (ADM/U2, P4).

Administrators and faculty members

As reported by faculty members, the university administration is highly demanding. This strict administrative control mainly follows two purposes: to prevent faculty members from engaging in favoritism as well as to ensure that they properly execute their professional duties. As faculty members report, during recent years, many of their colleagues have gotten fired. The university administration puts a lot of effort to spread this information as a warning for others. However, they are not transparent about the reasons for dismissals, *“If it is a result of misconduct, I do not think that they will openly announce it”* (FM_F, P22). Since the university is not communicating explicitly any details, the faculty members’ main source of information are rumors, *“These are rumors when you get informed that someone got fired because of whatever reason... but, in parallel to this, you also know that some other things are being done that are not transparent”* (FM_G, P29). These conditions cause alertness and fear to engage in misconduct. Moreover, as reported, the university administration puts pressure on faculty members by requiring them to bring students to the university. The administration constantly investigates faculty members to verify whether they followed this demand and secured a certain number of students for the university, *“They would ask you, ‘How many students have you brought to our university this year?’ and then you would tell them a specific number, then they would ask, ‘Who are those students?’, this means that they will inspect you. You need to mention the names of those students so that they call them later...to ask, ‘Are you the one who (respondents’ surname) has brought to our university?’”* (FM_F, P48). The faculty members feel obliged to meet the administrative request, otherwise, the administration might consider them as not being loyal or devoted employees. However, as reported, this administrative enforcement creates opportunities for Academic Misconduct. Those students, as a rule, do not have an intrinsic motivation to study, sometimes they do not have high academic skills, and as a result they expect and put pressure on the faculty members to help them graduate, *“You know, now we are told to bring students to the university. Well, you bring them, but these students do not like their program, and they do not want to study. Thus, the person who has brought them is ‘falling in the fire’⁵⁶, because those students tell them, ‘ok, you’ve brought us here, now help us to graduate.’ Thus, you are forced to engage in misconduct to protect them from dropping out so that the university can have the money”* (FM_G, P55).

⁵⁶ Expression in Armenian, meaning to put one into a trouble/complicated situation.

Besides this demand for bringing students, faculty members also report receiving instructions to show favorable treatments towards certain students. These are either strict instructions, *“they force you to give grades”* (FM_F, P44) or kind requests, *“some of the university workers might ask to consent”* (FM_G, P35). In most of the cases, however, these administrative requests reach them in a non-direct way, through their immediate superiors. In other words, a representative of the rectorate instructs a dean of a faculty or a head of a chair to request a faculty member to consent a certain student, *“Well, first of all, these requests are not that open, they ask your superior, then the latter asks you to treat the student nicely”* (FM_F, P34). Overall, faculty members report that in all the cases mentioned above, they have to comply with administrative requests, *“At some point, I can justify the faculty members because they know if they do not obey, it can have bad consequences. Maybe next year, the administrators deliberately will not allocate sufficient working hours for them. Or if there would be a chance for a promotion, they would not choose them”* (FM-G, P69). Obviously, in these conditions, faculty members are not only afraid to go against the administration’s will, but also cannot confront them for promoting and engaging in Academic Misconduct, *“There are not these kinds of cases, this question is not a matter of discussion. Who is brave enough to confront them?”* (FM_F, P27). The faculty members also report that the university is not fulfilling its obligations to provide quality working conditions, as it is mentioned in the employment contract. Moreover, the faculty members are strongly criticized when they try to bring the administration’s attention to those issues. Overall, the faculty members find that the administrative control is performed in a non-respectful and offensive way, *“It might sound ridiculous, but they are even secretly recording us”* (FM_F, P22). However, as reported, the University’s position is justifiable to some extent, since it is in a complicated situation. It is attempting to dispose the reputation of being corrupt and to gain public trust, hence, the university has to be strict and demanding towards faculty members. Meanwhile, the university needs students, and it therefore tolerates and supports Academic Misconduct to avoid dismissals.

Faculty members and students

According to the faculty members, cheating is widely performed by the majority of students, *“Regarding the cheating, this is very common among students, and I do not know what to say, even those students who study a lot try to cheat”* (FM_E, P3). For those students who have low motivation to study and poor cognitive skills, Academic Misconduct comes easy, and it might be the only way to get the required grade. The other students who are motivated and are not primarily inclined to cheat or plagiarize feel obliged to engage in misconduct too because if they do not cheat/plagiarize, they will have low grades compared to the students who do cheat. The faculty members report that those students who are initially inclined to engage in Academic Misconduct feel free to negotiate and argue with them, they try to convince them to be understanding. They openly ask faculty members to let them cheat as they expect the faculty members to probably

consent. Moreover, when the later refuse to consent, students are either surprised or become angry since they expect the faculty members to be supportive, *“From the perspective of a student, you must give them a chance”* (FM_F, P59). Motivated and hardworking students constantly blame the faculty members for not being fair towards everyone, and not controlling properly. Ironically, the underperforming students who have the opportunity to cheat sometimes even get better grades compared to those who do not cheat, *“I mean, I might not notice, but the students confront me with those statements. This means I need to be so attentive that they cannot blame me”* (FM_E, P3). Plagiarism is another form of misconduct constantly performed by the majority of students, *“I would say that 90%”* (FM_F, P2) of the time students buy their coursework from certain agencies, which alongside printing or selling stationary items also provide academic paper writing offers, *“For instance, the purchase of academic papers. Well, very often we know from where they buy them, there is nothing to hide, for example, from the ‘Blue’ office next to our university. They write announcements, send private messages to inform about their offers and prices. We all know it. It is obvious who students can contact to get those works”* (FM_E, P3; P35). Students also borrow works from senior students or do not follow quotation rules.

Both faculty members and the university administration have negative attitudes towards student cheating and plagiarism. However, currently they experience huge difficulties to control and prevent students from engaging in Academic Misconduct.

Controlling cheating:

For the oral examinations, besides two faculty members, an administrative controller might also be present in the classroom. This kind of control, however, according to faculty members, is not effective in terms of preventing favoritism/nepotism. For the written exams, only the teaching faculty member is responsible to control the entire group. As a rule, the groups are big, which makes controlling even more difficult. Students use various cheating means, starting from old-school cheat sheets to using cutting-edge electronic devices. Even if the faculty members do their best, they would not be able to control everyone. Overall, the faculty members report that controlling is not a pleasant activity for them since they do not want to behave as “police officers” and to have to check students’ pockets. They interrupt the exam and grade 0, only in obvious cases. Another reason why faculty members are not too strict is that they would otherwise need to take time from their already busy workload to conduct yet another exam with those students who cheated and did not pass the first attempt. This is an unpleasant situation for faculty members, and they try to avoid it by letting students cheat and pass.

Controlling plagiarism:

Since the university controls plagiarism only at the doctoral level, the faculty members are responsible for controlling the mid-term and final academic papers at the Bachelor and Master

levels. Students, most of the time, either buy papers or present an elder peer's work as their own. In some cases, they copy long passages or the entire work without providing references. They need to be extremely attentive and knowledgeable to identify plagiarism. In other cases, when receiving the same work from different students, the faculty members have no reliable tools to identify who the main author is and who is plagiarizing. In this situation, they normally do not accept the work from any of them, so the students need to submit a different paper. The plagiarism is normally revealed through additional questioning. However, the study groups are big, and it is impossible for faculty members to question all of the suspicious cases because there are too many of them. As a result, many plagiarized works might get accepted by faculty members. Students, in turn, are aware of these issues and therefore feel safe to submit a plagiarized work, *"students know that many faculty members do not check. Yes, many faculty members do not check, and students take advantage of it"* (FM_F, P3). The university administration, as reported, are aware of the faculty members' concerns and difficulties. However, currently there are no targeted anti-plagiarism actions at the Bachelor and Master levels.

Since controlling is very hard, some of the faculty members put significant individual effort towards preventing Academic Misconduct. Those efforts entail:

- *anti-corruption education* - face to face verbal communication with students regarding academic writing and the consequences of Academic Misconduct.
- *change of the format of the assignments* - introducing tasks that would require students to think analytically so that it would be impossible to cheat from anyone else.
- *The 5-minute rule* - letting students review their notes for 5 minutes before the exam starts.

Overall, although all (100%) of the interviewed faculty members report having negative attitudes towards Academic Misconduct, all of them report engaging both forcefully and volitionally in corrupt practices many times during their professional experience, *"These kinds of things happen. Well yes, I have done it, I am not a saint"* (FM_G, P55). Engagement in misconduct many times is unavoidable since, *"Yes, and you know if you consent to someone, you have to consent to others as well"* (FM_G, P61). However, there is also an urge to take care of personal reputations as well as to be fair towards students as much as possible. Hence, as reported, to alleviate the conflicting situation, the faculty members have come up with personal strategies that according to them justify both their and the students' engagement in Academic Misconduct. The faculty members mentioned that they do and will consent if the following conditions are met:

- if the request is made in a respectful manner and is only for passing rather than getting a high grade, *"Well, I have nothing against it (consenting) since I do respect that we are colleagues, but the student must behave correctly. Well, I do not know how others consent, but I do it only by maintaining respect, even if it is called nepotism"* (FM_F, P36).

- if the request does not concern the final exams, *“For instance, in cases of final papers or final exams, when they are about to graduate and enter the job market, I am not consenting. But during other exams I have consented”* (FM_G, P57).
- if the student who is being consented puts at least minimal efforts to study the exam material and keeps the corrupt deal in secret to protect the faculty member’s reputation: *“You know I have always had this attitude. You see, our work is very open and public, and when there are these kinds of issues, I suggest that they prepare at least something and then present it in a way so that others will not know about this communication”* (FM_E, P30).
- to engage in a fair deal, when forced to consent to someone, the faculty members let others cheat as well, *“When I am told that Poghos Poghosyan /invented name of a student/ did not attend the classes, but I know that he is the son of some ‘Cattle’⁵⁷ and he must have his grade. In this case, I grade the others with higher grades as well. If he must have his grade without doing anything, then the others also should have it”* (FM_F, P32).
- human factor, when consenting is perceived as a culturally acceptable practice performed to support students when they have special medical conditions or are going through difficult times in their personal lives, *“I had a student who had a car accident and was in a coma for quite an extended period of time. When he/she was back, the abilities were not the same, and he/she had to continue the semester. Then we consented without the need to be told anything by anyone. Well, you do it, but at the same time, you know that it is not right”* (FM_G, P51).

All the faculty members admit that their personal strategies are not only less effective, but that in some cases even open new opportunities for Academic Misconduct. However, as reported, they strongly believe that with or without their engagement, Academic Misconduct would persist at the university. The university administration, would anyway consent, *“Let’s say I am not supportive, what will happen? Do you think they will tell me to dismiss them? No, we dismiss students only in clear cases. Let’s say only when they do not show up at all”* (FM_F, P42).

Faculty members and colleagues

Faculty members state that engaging in favoritism is unavoidable, *“it is accepted that someone can ask someone else for a favor”* (FM_G, P61), however, this practice is not as common at the university as it used to be. As reported by both faculty members and the university administration, most of the time they are inclined to meet those requests merely for the sake of being nice to other colleagues, *“Well, I do accept that idea of support, there is nothing criminal*

⁵⁷ Slang word used to describe public officials who abuse their power or very rich people who use their authority and connections to achieve their goals in a non-fair way.

there, but from the juridical perspective, of course, it is not allowed” (FM_F,P60). Nevertheless, faculty members do not completely trust colleagues who request consenting since they cannot be sure whether or not that colleague is involved in a corrupt deal with other educational parties or not, *“You know, when they ask, you are still not sure if the person they are asking a favor for is a true relative or not. Maybe this person to whom you are giving that grade to thinks that you too somehow are involved in that deal” (FM_F, P11).* From the perspective of the administrators, faculty members engage in favoritism to escape the possible conflict that might occur in case of refusal, *“These kinds of things exist. It is accepted here. For instance, a student is the daughter of a certain person, so let’s give her a high grade. The other student is someone’s son, so let’s give him a high grade.” (ADM/U2, P10).*

Faculty and Relatives

Faculty members report some rare cases of engaging in corrupt agreements with their relatives, *“For instance, recently, one of my relatives who did not manage to submit a paper on time asked me if he could hand it in a bit later than the deadline. Yes, these kinds of cases happen.” (FM_E, P28)* However, as reported, nepotism is currently not a widespread practice, compared to previous years. Due to the administration’s strict rules towards faculty members, they are afraid to engage in misconduct and have to refuse their relatives’ requests, *“One of my relatives was about to graduate. She was writing under the supervision of /name of the person/. When she asked me to intercede, I told her, ‘Please, do not engage me in that issue. I will never ask him for you’. Because I knew her supervisor would never consent” (FM_F, P38).*

Theme: factors that influence Academic Misconduct

The faculty members and the administration representatives reported several factors that promote and/or contribute to the manifestation of various forms of Academic Misconduct at the university. Those factors could be included in four groups: systemic, organizational, individual, and cultural.

Systemic factors

Lack of state funding - the university does not have sufficient funding from the state. Its budget is derived mostly from student tuitions. This condition opens the possibilities for Academic Misconduct to manifest and persist, *“The university needs this quantity of students, and they are careful in order not to dismissal the students” (FM_G, P63).* Since the university cannot afford dismissals, it is also limited in its preventive and fighting measures, *“they are tolerant because the students bring money to the university and now there is a need for students” (FM_G, P33).*

Educational Regulations - faculty member report that the transmission period and the implementation of the new educational system rules following the integration to the Bologna

process have caused many difficulties that create opportunities for Academic Misconduct, *“as a result of this transmission, now we do not have specific educational structures or precise punishment, that means that everything is kind of in a non-stable state, and thus people can find all the hidden and flexible ways to perform misconduct”* (FM_G, P67). For example, current educational regulations are designed in a way that allow students to make more than two attempts for an exam. This format creates favorable conditions for Academic Misconduct. As reported, students take advantage of this opportunity and feel secure to cheat and plagiarize, having in mind that in case of being identified, they would have other chances to pass. At the same time, faculty members try to escape these extra attempts and deliberately are not strict in controlling the exams and assignments due to their heavy work schedule, *“I tell you directly that in the situation a very busy workload, faculty members sometimes could refuse to control strictly. There are many variations of examinations and it might be that a faculty member has to control exams of 15-20 groups”* (FM_E, P39). Too much control and strictness can also mean that they allocate time for several attempts of exams, *“So, if they behave like very strict police officers, then at the end of the semester they would need to deal with endless failed first and second attempts. And you never know for which attempt the students will show up for”* (FM_G, P4). The student workload is also extremely busy compared to previous years. According to the faculty members, students are overwhelmed with assignments and short deadlines. In these conditions, they have no choice but to cheat and plagiarize, *“If we look closer, we see that there are lots of things in our system that lead to these issues. For instance, during one week, students have to take ten mid-term exams as well as submit several papers. Even me, a specialist, I am not able to write that volume of work in one day. How are students supposed to do it? That is why they need to cheat. Imagine, they write three exams in one day. I think even if the student had learned the material well, after being so tired at the end of that day, he/she would not be able to write effectively”* (FM_E, P4).

Organizational factors

Regulations and Codes of Conduct/Ethics - Some of the faculty members (33.3%) report not being informed whether there are any regulations or Codes of Conduct/Ethics addressing the issue of Academic Misconduct. Whereas the other 66.7% state that they are aware of the existence of regulations and an ethical guideline. However, they are not familiar with the content: *“Perhaps the university has one. I haven’t read it. I know that there is one. I am guided by my ethics. But I know that they have some, they had prepared it during these accreditation processes”* (FM_F, P18). The faculty members unanimously agree that the university does not provide proper anti-corruption communication, *“It is there, it is transparent, but it is not being discussed”* (FM_G,P18) with faculty members and/or with students, neither are they being implemented in practice.

Educational conditions - Big study groups, as reported both by the faculty members and the administrators, create opportunities for Academic Misconduct. One faculty member can be responsible for controlling an exam of up to eighty students, and most of them are inclined to cheat. Also, checking so many mid-term papers without the support of anti-plagiarism software is nearly an impossible task for a single faculty member. Particularly, considering the fact that each faculty member has to check the work of more than one group of students, and sometimes all of that has to be done in one day, *“this is a tremendous mental and physical work”* (FM_E, P39; P26).

Individual factors

Student mindsets - Faculty members report that due to low admission requirements, the majority of students enrolled do not possess advanced cognitive abilities that are sufficient for university studies, neither do they have high levels of motivation to study. Hence, for many the only way that they can graduate is to engage in Academic Misconduct, *“The level of admittance is very low, that is why we do not have students with a proper level of abilities. It is not an easy task for the student with a low level of skills. Thus, he/she will try to find ways to cheat because he/she cannot do that on their own”* (FM_E, P22). The university administration states that students are not motivated to accumulate knowledge and develop different skillsets since the students believe that corruption is anyway the main pathway to find a spot in the job market, *“It’s a very important factor that in the job market they are hired because of a bribery or kinship. Hence, there is no reason to study hard. The students are just here somehow to graduate and to find a job somewhere”* (ADM/U2, P24).

Cultural factors

Parents role - Both the university administration and the faculty members mention that parents play a big role in promoting Academic Misconduct. They not only make educational decisions instead of their children, but also pay admission bribes or initiate other forms of misconduct, *“There is lots of bribery or nepotism/favoritism. These include some national peculiarities. For instance, when the student is not capable, the parents have to spend a lot of money to have him or her admitted”* (FM_E, P43). According to the university administration, these volitional corrupt actions from the parents’ side make it impossible to eliminate favoritism and nepotism, *“Concerning the use of kinship to get some grades, I do not see a way to fight it because it is an intentional decision, and a person should be conscious that the most direct way to destroy their own child is precisely to try to achieve something through someone else... that means to destroy your child. You morally harm them. After that, the child is a morally degraded person, and he/she will later on go on to do the same in the future”* (ADM/U2, P26).

Human factor - faculty members believe that Academic Misconduct is a part of the national mentality. It is prevalent in every system, *“The same happens in the hospitals and in the*

kindergartens. This is a matter of national mentality...” (FM_G, P72) and the education system is not an exemption. Committing misconduct is considered as a willingness to support and motivate students, “Yes, this I relate to culture. I think you should give a chance to the students. I mean, if you can motivate them, then do it. You know there are some cases like when a girl is pregnant. In these cases, do not break them. Don’t try to ‘play the law’ in a reality where this law, anyway, is not manifested everywhere” (FM_F, P59). Additionally, giving into a colleague’s or the administration’s requests to consent is seen as a sign of loyalty and dedication (see faculty members and colleagues).

Theme: the anti-corruption fight; achievements and needs

The faculty members and the university administration report that in recent years the university has achieved significant success in its attempt to reduce the levels of Academic Misconduct. For instance, to exclude the possibility of bribing members of the examination committee of the final graduation assessment, which used to be common in the near past, the university has dismissed the final oral examination. Currently, students are required to submit final papers. Here the risks for misconduct are less since it might be easier to detect plagiarism. Another helpful move, according to both faculty members and administrators, has been the introduction of a course on the basic academic writing, which aims to provide students valuable knowledge and skills to prevent them from engaging in plagiarism. The most effective means, however, as reported by faculty members, has been to set an example. As a result of actions to punish several faculty members, others became more alert and scared to initiate or engage in misconduct, *“I tell you, these cases /favoritism/ are rare because the one who asks is scared, the one who is being asked is also frightened. It is now strict at the university. You could be a docent and you could be making an outstanding contribution, but in case of engaging in misconduct, you could be fired in one second” (FM_F, P56). Faculty members report that their non-corrupt behavior, however, is mostly guided by fear rather than by ethics, “all this happens at the lowest level of moral development. I mean, you behave correctly under the impression of fear and threat. This is the first level, right? Pre-conventional level” (FM_F, P63). Faculty members and the administration mention that to achieve more significant results in their fight against misconduct, the university needs to meet the following conditions:*

- have significant state funding to get financial independence from student fees.
- set precise legal regulations and implement strict punishment measures in case of student engagement in various forms of corrupt activities.
- have transparent and consistent communication on its anti-corruption measures regarding faculty members.
- improve study/work conditions (e.g., small groups, big classrooms, exam assistants) and appropriate detective devices to control cheating and plagiarism.

- provide anti-corruption education to shift student mindsets: students should change their current positive attitudes towards Academic Misconduct and re-think their educational goals.

6.6.2.1. Summary: University 2

As the results show, University 2 has a similar experience regarding Academic Misconduct as University 1. The most reported forms of misconduct are, again, cheating, plagiarism, and seldom cases of favoritism and nepotism. Depending on the form of corrupt interaction, where these forms of misconduct occur, the influential factors on decisions with regard to the forms of misconduct in question are different. Both the faculty members and the administration representatives agree that there is no targeted fight against student cheating and plagiarism. Rather, the central target of the university's anti-corruption fight are faculty members. The reason of the current selected anti-corruption strategy is that the university, as in the previous case, needs a certain number of students for financial reasons. Since the admission requirements are not that difficult, many students with low academic skills and lack of motivation to study, sometimes guided by their parents' decisions, find themselves admitted at the university. Their main motivation is to earn a diploma with as little effort as possible. Hence, being conscious about the university's dependence on them, students lacking academic skills feel free to engage in misconduct. This means that albeit the low quality of student performance, the university needs to find ways to keep these students enrolled and to help them graduate. Hence, to achieve this goal, but at the same time to meet the requirement of transparency and accountability, the university administration is forced to play a double role. On the one hand, it seems that the University is determined to fight Academic Misconduct by being strict towards faculty members. Faculty members report that they are under pressure from the administration's side. The university administration has fired several faculty members for engaging in misconduct. However, they did not communicate the reasons for these firings with other educational actors in a transparent manner. As a result, the other faculty members found themselves in an atmosphere of uncertainty and needed alertness. They feel fear to initiate Academic Misconduct. On the other hand, however, the university opens the doors for misconduct to occur by forcing faculty members to secure a certain number of students for the university or by commanding them to consent to certain student favors and demands. In both cases, the faculty members decide to obey because of the fear to go against the administration or the fear of being perceived as non-loyal or dedicated employees. Hence, it can be concluded that like in the case of University 1, the faculty members of University 2 also make their decisions based on fear.

The relationships between faculty members and students are influenced by several factors. Since students anticipate that the university depends on them, they also expect faculty

members to be tolerant and to be inclined to engage in misconduct. The students who are inclined to misconduct constantly argue with faculty members or find various ways to cheat and plagiarize; the other students who are not, constantly blame faculty members for not being fair. This situation requires high levels of self-control since faculty members are expected to be both tolerant towards misconduct while at the same also protect their reputation. As a result, faculty members implement strategies to control or to intend to alleviate the impact of these practices. Faculty members find themselves alone in the fight against cheating and plagiarism. These preventive and trivializing mechanisms are not sufficient or effective, and Academic Misconduct persists among students.

In contrast to University 1, the faculty members of University 2 do not feel in a safe environment. Although, in some rare cases, when asked to consent, they interpret it as a sign of loyalty, there is a general lack of trust between colleagues. The only interaction where faculty members feel free to refuse a request to consent is with their relatives.

Regarding the anti-corruption fight, the situation in University 2 is not much different from that of University 1. Here as well, the main issues are related to poor implementations of the existing regulations and the lack of anti-corruption education and communication with educational actors. As a result, a huge portion of responsibility for controlling student cheating and plagiarism relies on the shoulders of the faculty members. Since the groups are big and students use a variety of cheating and plagiarism strategies, faculty members find it impossible to completely prevent them from engaging in Academic Misconduct. They lack the administration's support and proper detective mechanism, while holding beliefs that misconduct is widespread and will continue to persist despite their actions. Hence, faculty members refuse to put deliberate efforts to control since they feel powerless. Due to their heavy workloads, they also avoid providing numerous changes for examinations. Given all of the above discussed reasons, students have favorable conditions to cheat and plagiarize. The most important condition, nevertheless, seems to be that faculty members have reconciled the fact that the university administration will always guarantee that underserving students get passing grades in the end.

Both faculty members and the administration agree that the university has advanced in its anti-corruption fight at least with regards to nepotism and favoritism. Interestingly, this success, as reported by both parties, arises out of the fear to be punished as well as the positive examples of fairness and integrity set by the administration. These two factors seem to be the most important for a faculty member's decision not to initiate in Academic Misconduct. Moreover, both educational actors share a similar understanding of the needs of the university for long-term success in anti-corruption practices.

6.6.3. University 3

Theme: Academic Misconduct and social-psychological characteristics of corrupt interactions.

The faculty members (100%) report that Academic Misconduct is a common and expectable practice at the university. The most common forms of misconduct among the faculty members and the administration are bribery, nepotism and favoritism; whereas cheating and plagiarism are widespread among the students. According to 33,3% of the faculty members, University 3 is the most corrupt one in the country, where bribery is a widespread practice. In contrast, 66,7% state that the university is not as highly corrupt as it used to be, at least not to the extent that it is perceived to be among the society. The administration, in turn, reports that Academic Misconduct is an important issue. However, the fight against it has been on the agenda for quite a long time. As a result, the university achieved significant success in improving its arsenal for anti-corruption actions as well as in reducing the levels of Academic Misconduct (see needs and achievements, p.164).

Administrators and students

100% of the faculty members of University 3 report that the administration is forgiving towards student engagement in various corrupt activities. Moreover, the administration does not only tolerate, but also creates opportunities for students to initiate Academic Misconduct, *“They are not only aware of it. They even take part in it. They enroll students without admission exams. They do not measure their knowledge. They give them ten attempts to pass the exam. I mean, everything is already said by these things”* (FM_H, P31). The university administration, in turn, agrees with these statements and admits that administrators show tolerance and do not punish student misconduct. Only light punishments are evidenced, such as rejecting to accept a plagiarized work. Nevertheless, students are given a chance to submit again, *“When students cheat in a term paper, for example, if we see that there is plagiarism, we won’t accept it. The student can write it again. But we do not see stricter punishments such as an expulsion of the student. I have not seen this. Maybe it is me who is not informed, but this punishment is not implemented”* (ADM/U3, P13).

Administrators and faculty members

The faculty members report that the university administration gives them explicit requests to engage in misconduct. The administration either directly instructs faculty members to consent or they inflict psychological pressure trying to awaken a sense of pity towards the students, to convince faculty members to consent, *“They tell a faculty member to please, consent to this person. The reasons are different. It could be to help a relative. Or they try to awaken pity for the students by saying that they might lose their tuition-free spots or the ones who are already studying*

free of charge might lose that position. They use psychological pressures” (FM_I, P5). In some other cases, as 33.3% reported, the university administration might intervene in the grading process, “I mean, it can happen that I am not at the university, and that they can accept an exam grade or another exam attempt, and sign for me. They have the right to assign a grade when you are not there. During the summer, when we the faculty members have holidays, the Study Center works and during this season all these things can be done instead of me” (FM_H, P39).

Faculty members, as a rule, obey those instructions to consent in order to avoid future complications and conflict with the administration. This situation results in an internal conflict since obeying means engaging in corruption. Hence, as reported, they are forced to give up their personal moral principles so as not to damage their personal reputation, *“Here, the faculty member finds him/herself in a very hard situation and has to defend his/her reputation in front of the group” (FM_I, P5).*

Faculty members and students

Faculty members report that students expect them to be tolerant and to engage in misconduct. Students become surprised and even get angry if the faculty members do not meet their corrupt requests. Students who are inclined to cheat and plagiarize do not like strict and controlling faculty members. When a faculty member has an image of not being corrupt, students are reluctant to initiate misconduct. However, in some other cases, when a faculty member refuses to consent, students might report them to the administration. 100% of the faculty members, however, report having negative attitudes towards Academic Misconduct, particularly towards bribery, *“I am strictly against bribery, I cannot justify it by any means” (FM_I, P23).* They also state that in some cases, consenting to a student can be justified. As reported, all the faculty members (100%) said that they have engaged in misconduct several times, *“Sometimes I also consent, I am not going to hide it” (FM_H, P41).* Overall, they report that they consent only by providing passing grades to motivate students, when a student has serious health issues, or to be fair towards everyone, *“You face this problem because they tell you from above/administration/, then you try to keep the equality. When I have to give a grade of 17 to a certain student who does not deserve that grade, I get angry. As a result, I also give high grades to the other students. For instance, there are students whose actual point is 18, but I grade them a 20” (FM_H, P13).* As reported, faculty members will not consent to a non-deserving students if the request is for a high grade, or if consenting might impact those students who hold tuition-free spots, *“You know, there is this question of rotation, you cannot affect people’s economic interests. I do not touch people’s pocket. One must not be unfair” (FM_I, P5).* The faculty members report that the majority of students cheat during the written exams, plagiarize in academic papers, or buy them from various agencies. These are serious, widespread problems among students, and faculty members find it difficult to control.

Controlling exams

The university administration controls the first attempt of the exams. This type of exam is called centralized: *“by saying centralized, we mean that the exams happen at specific classrooms and are controlled by the rectorate, by the department’s dean staff, by the head of the chair. For instance, we bring together different groups of different professions who have an exam for a specific subject at a particular room, and then we proceed with the exam in both verbal and written forms”* (ADM/U3, P3). While the university administration finds this step a significantly effective action to reduce and prevent corruption, the faculty members have a different opinion. As mentioned by some of them (66,7%), since there are many attempts to pass the exam, students prefer to skip the main exam, which is strictly controlled, and attend the other attempts because it will be easy for them to cheat, *“The exams here happen under the control of special committees. There are representatives from the rectorate, assistants... but all of this is well-organized only at the beginning, for the first exam phase. The control is weakened, especially during the failed exam phases. Students know this. That’s why they often do not attend the main exam and prefer to attend the next attempts where they feel free to cheat”* (FM_I, P13).

Controlling plagiarism

Faculty members (100%) report that students buy academic papers as *“they are lazy to write a 5-page work”* (FM_H, P3). Since there are no specific programs/software to detect plagiarism, faculty members have to be extra attentive. Another reason reported both by the faculty members and the administrators is that students plagiarize because of the lack of significant knowledge on academic writing, *“Regarding the academic writing culture, it is very weak here. They write term/final papers and there are pages of plagiarism. They do not quote at all”* (FM_I, P19).

Faculty members and Colleagues

Faculty members of University 3 reported as being divided into two groups: corrupt, and non-corrupt. As a rule, the members of these groups try to escape any communication with each other, *“so it is organized in a way that the colleagues who are inclined to engage in misconduct somehow do not cooperate with the ones who fight against it”* (FM_H, P19). They do not have contact with each other, *“I am trying to isolate myself from the networks that might have these kinds of corrupt people. Of course, these people in turn escape me because they know my attitudes”* (FM_I, P27). Besides those cases, when forced by the university administration, faculty members engage in misconduct in order to be nice towards their colleagues. Some of them (33.3%) justify this form of misconduct, *“How can you not support your colleague’s requests? Of course, it depends on what kind of request that is. I have always been a supporter of that approach. No one can escape it if the colleague asks for one extra point or so...”* (FM_J, P5). Others state that there

is no justification for any type of misconduct, *“There are no justifications. Let them go and work as taxi drivers. Let them clean the floors. These kinds of questions must not be a matter of dispute in science”* (FM_H, P43).

Theme: factors that influence Academic Misconduct

Systemic factors

Lack of funding - due to the lack of state funding, the university cannot afford dismissals. Hence, it has to be both forgiving and promoting of Academic Misconduct, *“You know if I look from the perspective of the administration, they are right. Because today, losing a student means to lose finances. You get it, right?”* (FM_J, P11).

Social conditions - faculty members (66,7%) report that low salaries are another systemic factor that influences a faculty member's decision to engage in misconduct, and that the university administration is aware of this fact, *“You know, when they pay 90.000 AMD to a faculty member, and this faculty member has eight entrances per day, and the university administration knows that is the case, the faculty member will not be able to work somewhere else. Moreover, the administration also knows that he/she will have to do ‘other activities’ within the university”* (FM_H, P29). Faculty member, however, agree that *“salaries play a role, but are not the main reason”* to engage in misconduct (FM_J, P7).

Organizational factors

Anti-corruption measures - Faculty members report that the university does not place significant efforts to fight against misconduct, and that it very often promotes it. The anti-corruption fight most of the time is limited by weak verbal communication and unclear instructions regarding professional discipline. It is not regulated by a specific set of written rules. None of the interviewed faculty members were aware as to whether or not there are anti-corruption regulations or Codes of Conduct/Ethics at the university, *“I have not read it, but I assume that there must be one. We are just in a verbal way introduced to both our rights and duties”* (FM_I, P11). The faculty members (66.7%) report that the rare anti-corruption attempts executed by the university are not consistent and are merely informal in nature, *“Yes, once in a while there are some news that someone was arrested or that someone else was fired. However, it [corruption] is very common! They apply some punishments to silence some rumors”* (FM_H, P7).

The university administration in turn reports that the massification of the anti-corruption fight so far has been conducted mostly in a verbal manner, *“Concerning the massification, I assure you that we organize different seminars regarding ethical rules and Codes of Conduct to spread this culture. On top of that, we provide these documents to the deans, and those deans invite the heads of chairs. They organize seminars, round-table discussion, and focus groups. Like this, we try to spread all these statements as much as possible”* (ADM/U3, P7). However, the

documentation process is still work in progress and it is expected to be implemented only in the near future, *“We have designed eight documents, which are still in the project status. We have created these documents to strengthen integrity and to fight corruption at the university”* (ADM/U3, P3).

Individual factors

Student mindsets - students do not appreciate the value of knowledge. They are mostly concerned about passing exams or keeping their tuition-free spots. Hence, the majority of students primarily are inclined to cheat and plagiarize. This attitude is calculated depending on the importance of a subject, *“Look, they know that misconduct is an option. Let’s say that they have many exams at the end of the semester. So right at the beginning, they decide which subjects they need to study and prepare, and which ones they can pass by committing misconduct”* (FM_H, P23).

Cultural factors

National mentality - all the faculty members (66.7%) and the university administration report that misconduct is typical for every culture, and that it is deeply rooted in human nature, *“Adam Smith once said, that ‘Sales and bribery are in the blood of human beings’ and then explains that ‘whoever has eyes has seen that dogs exchange bones, but children exchange their toys’”* (FM_J, P7). Hence, neither Armenia, the Armenian Education System, nor the Armenian educational actors are prevented from Academic Misconduct. Forms of misconduct such as nepotism and favoritism are not only accepted, but encouraged practices. Hence, they widely manifest themselves in the education sector as well. To clean the education system from misconduct, first it is needed to achieve a change of the national mindset, *“I have already told you that Academic Misconduct is not a problem at the university. It is a problem of the culture, of the country, of the nation”* (ADM/U3, P17).

Theme: the anti-corruption fight; achievements and needs

The university administration reports that the university *“has a will to fight, and will always persistently fight against all that evidence”* (ADM/U3, P3). Since recent years the university has been conducting several interventions to prevent and fight against Academic Misconduct. Among those are:

- Annual anti-corruption reports required by the Ministry of Education.
- Cooperation with the Council of Europe Armenia (Office in Yerevan) and the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Armenia to design and adapt anti-corruption regulations based on an international experience.

- The establishment of a controlling commission to prevent cheating and plagiarism among students.
- The introduction of centralized examinations to strengthen control and prevent cheating (also *see* Controlling exams, p.161).
- Strict requirement of student physical attendance during the entire semester, aiming to engage them in class discussions and to positively influence learning.
- The acquisition of anti-plagiarism software in the future to control mid-term and final papers.

The university administration states that they have achieved significant improvements to eliminate Academic Misconduct from the university, and that it is important to:

- complete the design phase and proceed with the implementation stage of the above-mentioned anti-corruption regulations. Also, it is necessary, to include the faculty members efforts to fight measures against Academic Misconduct.

The faculty members, in turn, hold the opinion that to eliminate misconduct, a top-down approach is needed. People who are in power (the administration) should re-think their own behavior first, since *“a fish rots from the head down”* (ADM_H, P45). However, they also admit that to achieve a change in attitude and mindset regarding Academic Misconduct, all the educational actors as well as society in general should shift their positive approach towards misconduct to a negative and judgmental one.

6.6.3.1. Summary: University 3

The peculiarities regarding Academic Misconduct in University 3 are quite similar to the previous two universities, with some few exemptions. The results of the analysis show that besides cheating and plagiarism, nepotism/favoritism and bribery are also widespread in University 3. The interviewed administration representative, however, argues that the university's current fight is quite successful, although that there are still ways to improve. The faculty members, nevertheless, mention that this anti-corruption fight has only a declarative nature, is not well communicated, and that neither them nor the administrators follow those rules. Moreover, none of the faculty members were aware of the existence of regulations or Codes of Conduct/Ethics. Hence, the faculty member decisions are not guided by anti-corruption regulations. Depending on the type of interaction, as in the other two universities, the educational actors' decisions are guided by various factors. The faculty members of University 3 also report that the administration is not only forgiving and tolerant towards student cheating and plagiarism, but that they also initiate and promote Academic Misconduct. The administrative representative of University 3 admits that they are not strict towards students nor towards faculty members in terms of applying punishment mechanisms. Rather, they try to be understanding and supportive, and give chances to both to continue studying and teaching at the university. The reasons for this are listed as Armenian culture and mentality.

As reported by faculty members, because of financial reasons, the administrators create opportunities for students to engage in misconduct and to pass exams. One of the ways that the administrators support students, particularly the ones who have low motivation to study and low cognitive skills, is by giving direct instruction to faculty members to engage in misconduct. In other cases, they intervene in the grading process and give grades instead of the teaching faculty members. Most of the time, faculty members feel obliged to consent to the administration's requests. However, this decision comes at a high cost. Faculty members feel psychological pressure and need to protect their reputation vis-à-vis the students. Overall, the faculty members' decisions to engage in misconduct are mostly enforced by the university administration. Faculty members want to escape possible conflict with administrators, fearing future complications.

The peculiarities of the interaction between students and faculty members in University 3 are not different from the previous two universities. Here as well, faculty members are mostly guided by social norms, rather than by anti-corruption rules. First, because they are neither aware whether these practices exist, or are familiar with the contents. Second, misconduct is justified. Albeit having negative attitudes, some faculty members still engage in misconduct if it is to support in hard times or to give passing grades as encouragement. Another reason for forgiving, is to alleviate their feelings of guilt and to protect their own reputation. This is done in those cases when

faculty members are instructed by the administrations to consent to certain students. In these cases, letting all the students cheat is considered as fair treatment towards everyone.

In comparison to the previous two universities, the relationship between the faculty members and their colleagues at the university is different in University 3. As reported, there are two groups of faculty members: corrupt and non-corrupt. The “members” of these two groups do not communicate a lot with one another, and they try not to have much interaction with each other. Like in the case of the other universities, when asked, faculty members are inclined meet a colleague’s request to consent for the sake of loyalty and respect.

While the faculty members admit that the university does not exert significant efforts in anti-corruption, the administrative representative, in contrast, argues that the university has a strong will, and that it is currently almost ready to implement new legal regulations and Codes of Conduct/Ethics that are being designed together with the Ministry of Education and Science⁵⁸ and the Council of Europe (Office in Yerevan). The administrative representative admits that so far the legal grounds are missing, and that it will still take a long time to implement those rules and Codes of Conduct/Ethics in real practice. Both sides of the educational actors agree that Academic Misconduct requires a united fight and shift of personal mindsets and values.

⁵⁸ Currently called Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of the Republic of Armenia.

7. Quantitative study - using the theory of planned behavior (TPB) model to understand student corrupt behavior

7.1. Results

The quantitative analysis was conducted in the following stages. First, the reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of all the latent constructs were assessed. Most of the Cronbach's alpha values were higher than 0.70, which means that there is sufficient internal consistency and that the constructs are reliable since "a general acceptable rule is that α of 0.6-0.7 indicates an acceptable level of reliability, and a 8 or higher a very good level" (Ursachi *et al.*, p.681). Afterwards, the means and the standard deviations of all the items were calculated to identify the level of opinions of the sample representatives. Further on, the mean of each variable was computed and the results were verified by using One Sample T-Test with Test value (4), where the null hypothesis (H_0) was that the mean of the sample is equal to 4 ($H_0 = 4$). The alternative hypothesis (H_a) is that the mean of the sample is not equal to 4 ($H_a \neq 4$).

To assess the relationship between the independent and dependent variables a Multiple Liner Regression analysis was conducted. The effect of Attitudes, Subjective Norm, and Perceived Behavioral Control on Intention was tested. The above-mentioned stages of analysis were executed separately for Cheating and Plagiarism. The results are presented in the next sections.

7.1.1. Cheating

Means and standard deviations for cheating

Attitude towards cheating ($\alpha=.718$): the scale consists of three items that assess student perceptions on the importance of reporting on cheating ($\mu=5.46$), and their willingness to report on peers ($\mu=6.39$) and friends ($\mu=6.47$) cheating (*see* Table 17). Mean values higher than 4 indicate that participants disagree that reporting cheating is important and that they will report either on peer or a friend's cheating behavior. The result of the One Sample T-Test (*see* Table 18) shows that the 6.10 mean of the variable Attitude is statistically significant at 0.001 level.

The results of the attitude scale show that students are reluctant to report about cheating, which expresses their positive attitudes toward cheating behavior. The willingness to report about cheating is considered as an indirect indicator (Stone *et al.*, 2009) of negative attitudes towards cheating. Simon *et al.*, (2004) found that those students who encourage academic integrity policies

are also prone to report about other’s dishonest behavior. Hence, a student’s reluctance to report about cheating refers to their favorable attitude towards this behavior.

Table 17. Scale content: Cronbach’s alpha, item means, and standard deviation

Cheating				
Variable (α)	N	Items	Mean	SD
Attitude ($\alpha = .718$)	1	It is important to report about cheating by others.	5.46	1.901
	2	I will report cheating by my peer students.	6.39	1.427
	3	I will report cheating by my friend.	6.47	1.441
Subjective Norm ($\alpha = .711$)	1	Cheating is a common practice at the university.	3.30	2.114
	2	I think many of my peers cheat.	3.14	2.128
	3	Many students cheat and do not get caught.	2.95	2.085
	4	I think my professors assume that I cheat.	5.50	1.999
	5	I think my peers assume that I cheat.	5.50	1.961
Perceived Behavioral Control ($\alpha = .725$)	1	It is very easy to cheat in the assignments.	4.68	1.963
	2	It is very easy to cheat in the exams.	5.35	1.778
	3	My peers cheat and do not caught.	4.42	2.525
	4	Cheating is not controlled at the university.	4.95	1.902
	5	Cheating is not punished at the university	4.70	1.971
Intention ($\alpha = .799$)	1	I might copy from someone in an exam.	4.63	2.068
	2	I might use unapproved materials during an exam.	4.65	2.248
	3	I might cheat the entire test/assignment.	5.42	2.099
Past Behavior ($\alpha = .678$)	1	It has happened that I copied from someone in an exam.	4.68	2.213
	2	It has happened that I used unapproved materials and notes during an exam/test.	4.60	2.230
	3	I have helped my peers to cheat in an exam.	3.17	2.127

Table 18. One Sample T-Test – Cheating

N	Variable	T	μ'	P	Sd
1	Attitude	20.030	6.10	.000 ***	1.282
2	Subjective Norm	.732	4.08	.465	1.410

3	Perceived Behavioral Control	5.553	4.62	.000 ***	1.366
4	Intention	6.089	4.90	.000 ***	1.807
5	Past Behavior	1.071	4.14	.286	1.708

Note 1. H_0 Mean = 4, H_a Mean $\neq$ 4

Note 2. *** < 0.001

Note 3. Test Value = 4

Subjective Norm ($\alpha=.711$): the scale is measured with five items (see Table 17). The first three items assess participant perceptions on the prevalence of cheating (descriptive norms) at the university ($\mu=3.30$), the commonness of cheating among their peers in general ($\mu=3.14$), and of successful cases of cheating performed by other students ($\mu=2.95$). The fourth and the fifth items demonstrate student beliefs on other people's, namely professor ($\mu=5.50$) and peer ($\mu=5.50$) expectations from them regarding engaging in cheating (injunctive norms). The lower scores of the first three items mean that participants agree that the cheating behavior is a widespread practice committed by their peers, and goes without being punished. The high scores of the last two items mean that the respondents think that their peers and professors do not expect them to engage in cheating. The One Sample T-Test results (see Table 18) indicate that this mean value of Subjective Norm 4.08 is statistically not significant, hence, the H_a is rejected, whereas H_0 is accepted (*i.e.*, the variable mean is not different from the sample mean).

Student subjective norms with regards to cheating should be addressed by considering both injunctive and descriptive norms. As the results of the scale show that in terms of injunctive norms, students believe that their own engagement in cheating is not an expectable behavior by their peers and professors. According to TPB, in this case students will be inclined to act according to the expectations of their important others (*e.g.*, peers and/or professors). However, students also report that cheating is a widespread practice at the university performed by their peers. Previous research on cheating found that descriptive norms have predictive power over subjective norms. According to McCabe *et al.*, (2002), the best predictor for cheating was a student's perception of their peer's behavior (p.358). Chapman's (2002) study found that a friend's involvement plays a significant role in predicting cheating behavior, in other words, that "students are much more likely to cheat with friends" (p.247).

Perceived Behavioral Control ($\alpha=.725$): the scale includes five items (see Table 17). The first two measure student perceptions regarding the ease of cheating assignments ($\mu=4.68$) and exams ($\mu=5.35$). The mean values of these items reveal that on average students disagree that it is easy to cheat. The third item ($\mu=4.42$) evaluates respondent beliefs on the possibility of punishment for engaging in cheating. The last two items assess participant perceptions on administrative control ($\mu=4.95$) and punishment ($\mu=4.70$) of cheating behavior. The mean values of these three items describe that the respondents do not have clearly distinguished perceptions regarding peer

punishment, and they slightly disagree with the statements that the university does not control and punish cheating behavior. The One Sample T-Test shows (*see* Table 18) that the mean value ($\mu=4.62$) of the variable perceived behavioral control is significant at 0.001 level.

As the results show, on average students have a slightly low, close to neutral, level of perceived behavioral control over cheating behavior. That is to say that students find that cheating is slightly difficult. According to the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), if a given behavior is perceived as challenging and there are hindering factors for its performance, it will decrease intentions, and consequently also the likelihood of performing a behavior in question.

Intention ($\alpha=.799$): the scale contains three items (*see* Table 17). These items evaluate the possibility for students to engage in cheating. Three options of cheating are measured: whether the participants aim to copy the exam ($\mu=4.63$), use unapproved materials ($\mu=4.65$), or cheat the entire exam/assignment ($\mu=5.42$). The mean values indicate that the majority of students refuse the possibility for them to engage in these forms of cheating. The One Sample T-Test reveals (*see* Table 18) that the mean 4.90 of the variable Intention is statistically significant at 0.001 level. This means that on average study respondents have slightly low intention to cheat.

The results of the scale show that on average study participant have slightly low motivation/willingness to cheat. All the items of the intention scale are aligned and indicate slightly low extent of consideration to engage in cheating. Intentions are central for the TPB model. Being a function of attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control, they are considered as immediate antecedents of behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Hence, depending on the impact of the primary three variables of the TPB, Intention will increase or decrease.

Past Behavior ($\alpha=.678$): the scale measures student past cheating behavior and involves three items that address participant self-reports regarding their past cheating experiences (*see* Table 17). Three types of cheating behavior are measured, among them: whether students copied from someone else ($\mu=4.68$), used unapproved materials ($\mu=4.60$), and helped other peers to cheat ($\mu=3.17$). These values of the items describe that on average participants did not copy or use forbidden means to cheat, but they report about supporting other peers to cheat. The mean value of Past Behavior is 4.14, which indicates that on average participants neither strongly confirm nor strongly reject engaging in cheating. The One Sample T-Test indicates (*see* Table 18) that the mean value of this variable is statistically not significant, hence, the H_a is rejected and the H_0 is accepted (*i.e.*, the variable mean is not different from the mean value of the sample).

Overall, the mean value of the variable indicates neutral level of past-experience. This is an ambiguous result for the scale Past Behavior since it requires such answers which either confirm or reject engagement in cheating in the past. This confusing result, however, was expected. It was assumed that student responses regarding their engagement in cheating might not have been completely honest, and that they have tried to provide socially desirable responses. This assumption is supported by Beck and Ajzen (1991) who state that dishonest behaviors, among

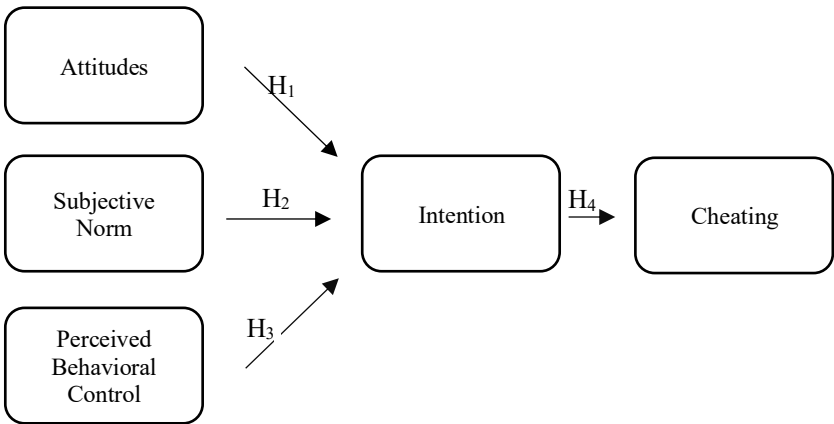
them cheating, “are sufficiently sensitive to be potentially subject to systematic biases and dishonest reporting due to social desirability concerns” (p.291).

TPB model to understand and predict cheating behavior

To assess the relationship between the Attitudes, Subjective Norm, Perceived Behavioral Control, and Intention as well as the relationship between Intention and Past Behavior (*i.e.*, cheating) the study used the TPB model and proposed four hypotheses (see Figure 9) as follows:

- H₁ Attitude has significant effect on cheating Intention.
- H₂ Subjective Norm has significant effect on cheating Intention.
- H₃ Perceived Behavioral Control has significant effect on Intention to cheat.
- H₄ Intention has significant effect on Cheating.

Figure 9. TPB model-cheating.



The results of multiple linear regression analysis are presented in Table 19.

As we can see, the effect of attitudes on cheating intentions is not statistically significant ($\beta = .018$, $p > 0.5$), hence, the H₁ is rejected. Subjective norms ($\beta = .398$, $p < 0.001$) and perceived behavioral control ($\beta = .149$, $p < 0.001$) have significant positive effect on intentions. Thus, H₂ and H₃ are confirmed. All the variables together explain the 36% of the variance in intentions ($R^2 = 0.364$), which is moderately accurate predictive value (Chin, 1998, as cited in Henseler *et al.*, 2009, p.303). Intention in its turn has strong impact ($\beta = .720$, $p < 0.001$) on cheating behavior, hence, H₄ is confirmed. The TPB model explains 52% of variance in cheating ($R^2 = 0.518$).

Table 19. Results of multiple linear regression (MLR) – cheating

N	Hypothesis	β	t	p	Results
H ₁	Attitude → Intention	.018	.270	.788	rejected
H ₂	Subjective Norm → Intention	.398	5.293	.000 ***	confirmed
H ₃	Perceived behavioral control → Intention	.304	4.042	.000 ***	confirmed
H ₄	Intention → Cheating	.720	12.580	.000 ***	confirmed

Note 1: *** < 0.001

Note 1: R² (Intention) = .364; R² (Cheating) =.518

As the results show, subjective norms are the best predictors for cheating intentions, followed by control beliefs (*i.e.*, PBC). Attitudes, however, do not have a statistically significant effect on behavioral intentions. These results are attuned to the findings of Maloshonok *et al.*, (2019), who found that “the perception of subjective norms outperforms the effect of attitudes” (p.324) among students in the Russian universities. These findings are also consistent with McCabe *et al.*, (2002) and Chudzicka-Czupala *et al.*, (2016). One of the reasons that attitudes do not have an impact on student decisions could be explained by cultural factors. Research demonstrates that in countries that have salient collectivistic orientation, personal decisions are guided by perceived social norms, in contrast to individualistic countries where attitudes play a more important role (Chudzicka-Czupala *et al.*, 2016, Maloshonok *et al.*, 2019). These findings could be applicable for Armenian culture as well. Armenia is also considered a collectivistic country where people take responsibility for and protect fellow members in their group.⁵⁹

The low impact of Perceived Behavioral Control could be explained with at least two factors. First, according to TPB, when attitudes or subjective norms have greater impact, the role of Perceived Behavioral control becomes insignificant (Beck and Ajzen, 1991). The function of the perceived behavioral control is primary when there are sufficient constrains for performing a given behavior. Hence, the low impact of PBC might be an indicator that there are favorable conditions for cheating, and it does not require much effort and consideration in advance. The second reason for low perceived behavioral control could be the lack of information regarding the constrains and consequences to performing the behavior. For instance, students might not have enough information whether the professor will be strictly controlling the exam, how many controllers will be in the room, or what will be the consequences in getting caught in cheating. The latter is an indirect indicator that students lack education on academic integrity. It might be that the universities do not have anti-corruption regulations, codes of conducts, or that they are not

⁵⁹ <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/armenia/>

functioning properly. Hence, in these conditions of non-awareness, according to Beck and Ajzen (1991), perceived behavioral control might have low predictive value.

As the regression test shows, Intention is a significant predictor for cheating behavior. This finding is aligned with the TPB, which states that intentions are immediate antecedents of behavior (Beck and Ajzen, 1991). Overall, the regression test demonstrates that the TPB model ($R^2=.518$) has a good predictive value for explaining student cheating (Chin, 1998, as cited in Henseler *et al.*, 2009, p.303). This finding provides support to previous research on the use of TPB for explaining and predicting academic dishonest behavior (Beck and Ajzen, 1991; Harding *et al.*, 2007, Stone *et al.*, 2007, 2009, Whitley, 1998, Maloshonok *et al.*, 2019).

In summary, the results show that students in Armenian universities when deciding to cheat or not, are mostly guided by social norms. In other words, by their perception on how common and expected cheating among peers is. Behavioral control plays a secondary role in decision making, assumingly because social norms are too strong, and students do not have precise perceptions related to the control and punishment at the university.

7.1.2. Plagiarism

Means and standard deviations for plagiarism

Attitude towards plagiarism ($\alpha=.799$): the scale consists of three items (*see* Table 20) which assess student perceptions on the importance of reporting about plagiarism in general ($\mu=5.36$), and their willingness to report about peers ($\mu=6.40$) and friends ($\mu=6.42$) performing plagiarism. The mean values of the items indicate that participants strongly disagree that reporting plagiarism is important and that they will report either a peer or a friend's engagement in plagiarism. The result of the One Sample T-Test shows (*see* Table 21) that the 6.06 mean of the variable Attitude is statistically significant at 0.000 level.

The results of the Attitude scale show that as in the case of cheating, students are reluctant to report about plagiarism as well. As already mentioned, willingness to report misconduct is an indicator of negative attitudes towards a behavior in question (Stone *et al.*, 2009). The reluctance to report about plagiarism indicates students' favorable attitudes towards it (Simon *et al.*, 2004).

Subjective norms ($\alpha=.768$): the scale is measured with six items (*see* Table 20). The first three of them assess participant perceptions on the prevalence (descriptive norms) of plagiarism in general ($\mu=4.04$), or performed by their peers ($\mu=3.54$) as well as more specific forms of it, such as downloading ($\mu=3.52$) or buying papers ($\mu=3.81$) and presenting them as one's own. The last two items reveal student beliefs on whether their professors ($\mu=5.90$) and peers ($\mu=5.79$) expect them to plagiarize (injunctive norms). The mean values of the first four items presenting

descriptive norms indicate that on the average the participants agree that downloading papers are common. Respondents remain neutral regarding the prevalence of buying papers, peer engagement in plagiarism, and plagiarism in general. The values of the last three items, which represent the injunctive norms, indicate that on average the students believe that neither their professors nor their peers expect them to engage in plagiarism. The One Sample T-Test shows (*see* Table 21) that the mean value 4.43 of Subjective Norm is statistically significant at 0.000 level.

Table 20. Scale content: Cronbach’s alpha, item means, and standard deviation.

Plagiarism				
Variable (α)	N	Items	Mean	SD
Attitude ($\alpha = .799$)	1	It is important to report about plagiarism by	5.36	1.932
	2	others.	6.40	1.350
	3	I will report plagiarism by my peer students. I will report plagiarism by my friend.	6.42	1.415
Subjective Norm ($\alpha = .768$)	1	Plagiarism is a common practice at the	4.04	2.149
	2	university.	3.54	1.954
	3	I think many of my peers plagiarize. Downloading papers is a common practice at the	3.52	1.951
	4	university.	3.81	1.904
	5	Buying papers is a common practice at the	5.90	1.747
	6	university. I think my professors assume that I plagiarize. I think my peers assume that I plagiarize.	5.79	1.787
Perceived Behavioral Control ($\alpha = .849$)	1	It is easy to plagiarize the assignments at the	4.46	1.964
	2	university.	4.64	2.034
	3	Plagiarism is not controlled at the university. Plagiarism is not punished at the university.	4.50	2.104
Intention ($\alpha = .753$)	1	I might buy a paper from an agency.	5.87	1.843
	2	I might download a paper from the internet and present it as my own.	5.07	2.212
	3	I might turn in another student’s work as my own	5.70	1.865
Past Behavior ($\alpha = .757$)	1	I have turned in another student’s work as my own.	5.94	1.929
	2	I have bought a paper from an agency and turned it in as my own.	6.13	1.883

3	I have downloaded a paper from the internet and presented it as my own.	5.11	2.233
4	I have helped my peers to plagiarize.	5.29	2.154

Table 21. One Sample T-Test – Plagiarism

N	Variable	T	μ'	P	Sd
1	Attitude	18.768	6.06	.000 ***	1.340
2	Subjective Norm	4.055	4.43	.000 ***	1.306
3	Perceived Behavioral Control	3.629	4.53	.000 ***	1.783
4	Intention	11.675	5.55	.000 ***	1.620
5	Past Behavior	12.625	5.61	.000 ***	1.562

Note 1. H_0 Mean = 4, H_a Mean $\neq$ 4

Note 2. *** < 0.001

Note 3. Test Value = 4

As already discussed, participant perceptions differ regarding how prevalent plagiarism is among peers and how expected that behavior is from themselves. The measures of descriptive norms indicate that students believe that plagiarism is a common practice among their peers, whereas subjective norms express student beliefs that their engagement in plagiarism is not expected. Overall, on average, students have neutral level of Subjective Norm regarding plagiarism. This level is reasonable, considering the strict differences between the descriptive and injunctive norms. A question arises as to which norms will guide student decisions in regards to plagiarism in this case of contradiction between social norms. The empirical research so far suggests that descriptive norms have more power on decisions.

However, Kobis *et al.*, (2018) argue that in corruption and behavioral research, social norms should be studied at a situational level, since depending on the type of corruption they might differ significantly (Kobis *et al.*, 2018, p.10). Given that peer impact on cheating behavior has been confirmed by various studies (McCabe *et al.*, 2002, 2008, Chapman, 2004, Chudzicka-Czupala *et al.*, 2016), this dissertation relies on the results provided by items on descriptive norms.

Perceived Behavioral Control ($\alpha=.849$): the scale includes three items (see Table 20). The first one evaluates respondent beliefs on the ease to plagiarize ($\mu=4.46$). The last two assess student perceptions on administrative control ($\mu=4.64$) and punishment of plagiarism ($\mu=4.50$). The mean values of the items illustrate that the respondents are neutral regarding the easiness to perform plagiarism in general, and they slightly disagree that the university does not control and

punish plagiarism. The One Sample T-Test shows (*see* Table 21) that the mean value 4.53 is statistically significant at 0.000 level.

These results indicate that as in the case of cheating, students report about a low, close to neutral level of control over their behavior regarding plagiarism. In other words, they believe that it is slightly difficult to plagiarize since they are not completely undetected by the university. Previous research on Academic Misconduct (McCabe *et al.*, 2002) has shown that if students suspect that they would be caught and punished, they will most likely not engage in the behavior in question.

Intention ($\alpha=.753$): the scale is comprised of three items (*see* Table 20) which assess whether students find it likely to buy ($\mu=5.87$), download ($\mu=5.07$) or turn in another person's paper ($\mu=5.70$) as their own. The mean scores of the items demonstrate that students disagree to perform the above-discussed behaviors (*e.g.*, plagiarism). The One-Sample T-Test shows (*see* Table 21) that the mean value 5.55 is statistically significant at 0.000. The results of the scale analysis show that on average study participants have quite low motivation/willingness to plagiarize. In this dissertation, as in the case of cheating, situation specific measures were employed to assess intentions as the extent to which students considered various manifestations of plagiarism.

All the items of the intention scale are aligned and indicate a low extent of consideration to perform the given forms of plagiarism. Those situation-specific, hence, more accurate (Chapman *et al.*, 2004) measures, address the possibility/extent of buying, downloading, or turning someone else's papers as one's own. Depending on the impact of the primary three variables of TPB, Intention will increase or decrease.

Past Behavior ($\alpha=.757$): the scale involves four items which address participant self-reports regarding their engagement in plagiarism in the past (*see* Table 20). The items measure whether students bought ($\mu=6.13$), downloaded ($\mu=5.11$), turned in another person's papers as their own ($\mu=5.94$) as well as if they helped their peers to plagiarize ($\mu=5.29$). The mean values of the items indicate that the respondents did not perform any of the above-discussed activities. The One Sample T-Test (*see* Table 21) shows that the mean value 5.61 of the variable Past Behavior is statistically significant at 0.000 level.

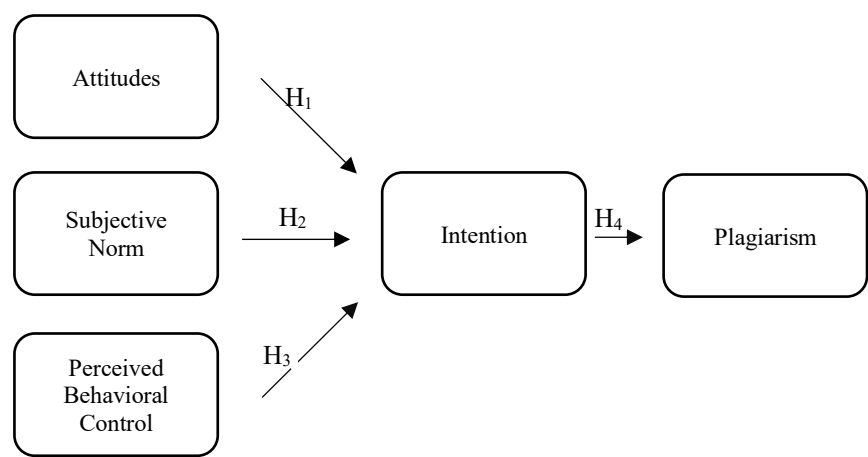
The results of student self-reports indicate that on average students did not engage in plagiarism in the past. Research has shown that past behavior should be considered as a good predictor for future behavior under certain circumstances (Ouellette and Wood, 1998). However, as in the case of cheating, it is important to consider the fact that these student self-reports might be biased because of social desirability concerns. The focus of this research, however, is the impact of the primary constructs of the TPB on Intention, which is the immediate antecedent of the given behavior (*i.e.*, plagiarism).

TPB model to understand and predict plagiarism

To assess the relationship between the Attitudes, Subjective Norm, Perceived Behavioral Control, and Intentions as well as the relationship between Intention and Plagiarism (*i.e.*, Behavior), the study used the TPB model and proposed four hypotheses (*see* Figure 10) as follows:

- H₁ Attitude has significant effect on Intention to plagiarize.
- H₂ Subjective Norm has significant effect on Intention to plagiarize.
- H₃ Perceived Behavioral Control has significant effect on Intention to plagiarize.
- H₄ Intention has significant effect on Plagiarism.

Figure 10. TPB model-plagiarism.



The results of linear regression analysis are presented in Table 22.

As we can see, the effect of attitudes on intentions ($\beta = -.036, p > 0.5$) to plagiarize and perceived behavioral control ($\beta = -.101, p > 0.5$) are not statistically significant, hence, the H₁ and H₃ are rejected. Only subjective norms ($\beta = .482, p < 0.000$) in this model have significant positive effect. Hence, H₂ is confirmed. All the variables together explain the 18% of the variance in intentions ($R^2 = .181$), which indicates weak effect size (Chin, 1998, as cited in Henseler *et al.*, 2009). Intentions, in their turn have positive significant effect on behavior (*i.e.* plagiarism). Overall, the TPB model explains 62% of variance in cheating, which indicates sufficient effect size.

Table 22. Results of multiple linear regression (MLR) – Plagiarism

N	Hypothesis	β	t	P	Results
H ₁	Attitude → Intention	-.036	-.482	.631	rejected
H ₂	Subjective Norm → Intention	.482	4.960	.000***	accepted
H ₃	Perceived Behavioral Control →	-.101	-1.033	.303	rejected
H ₄	Intention Intention → Plagiarism	.790	15.601	.000 ***	accepted

Note: *** < 0.001

R² (Intention) = .181; R² (Plagiarism) = .623

As the results show (*see* Table 22), Attitude and Perceived Behavioral control do not impact student intentions regarding plagiarism. Rather, Subjective Norm is the best predictor for Intention to plagiarize. These findings are supported by previous research (Maloshonok *et al.*, 2019, McCabe *et al.*, 2002, McCabe *et al.*, 2008, Chudzicka-Czupala *et al.*, 2016).

As in the case of Cheating, attitudes are not significant factors for predicting intentions to plagiarize either. This finding is in line with previous research (Chudzicka-Czupala *et al.*, 2016, Maloshonok *et al.*, 2019) supporting the statement that in collectivistic societies decisions are primarily made based on perceived norms (*see* p.172).

The non-significant relationship between perceived behavioral control on intentions could be explained by the same reasons as for cheating. The insignificance of control beliefs during decision making might be an indicator that plagiarism is not strictly controlled. Hence, plagiarizing is not perceived as a very difficult task. This statement is based on previous research that in conditions when there is no strict enforcement of academic integrity (*e.g.*, honor codes, policies to prevent academic dishonesty), student decisions are mostly guided by their perceptions about a peer's performance (McCabe *et al.*, 2002). The existing research on plagiarism in Armenian universities also shows that these practices are widespread and not strictly controlled (Garoyan *et al.*, 2012, Hovhannisyanyan 2018, 2020).

Another reason the insignificance of the Perceived Behavioral Control, as explained by Beck and Ajzen (1991), could be that students do not acquire enough information to be sure about the possibility for successful behavioral performance. For instance, students might know from which agency to buy a paper or how much money the work will cost. However, students might not have control over the quality of the work and cannot be secured that it will not be sold to other students of their group. Hence, in these conditions of uncertainty about the possible consequences, student decisions are mostly guided by their perceived norms regarding peer performance. The more students think that plagiarism is a widespread practice and everyone does it, the higher will

be their motivation to plagiarize as well if needed. Intentions, in turn, as the results show, have high impact on future behavior (*i.e.*, plagiarism).

The difference between the control beliefs regarding cheating and plagiarism could be the ways of in which these behaviors manifest. For instance, cheating during exams might be more difficult since the exams are conducted in groups, and the chances are higher to get detected by professors or peers. Plagiarism is a solo act and has a secretive nature, hence, chances of getting caught are less.

Overall, the regression test shows that the TPB model ($R^2=.623$) has significant substantial predictive value for explaining student plagiarism. This finding provides support to previous research on the use of TPB for explaining and predicting academic dishonest behavior (Beck and Ajzen, 1991, Harding *et al.*, 2007, Stone *et al.*, 2007, 2009, Whitley, 1998, Maloshonok *et al.*, 2019).

In summary, students in Armenian universities when deciding to plagiarize or not are strongly influenced by their perceptions regarding a peer's performance or how widespread and/or expected plagiarism is. The impact of social norms is so strong that it outperforms the influence of personal attitudes and control beliefs.

8. Integrated conclusion: institutional and social-psychological characteristics of academic misconduct in the Armenian Higher Education System

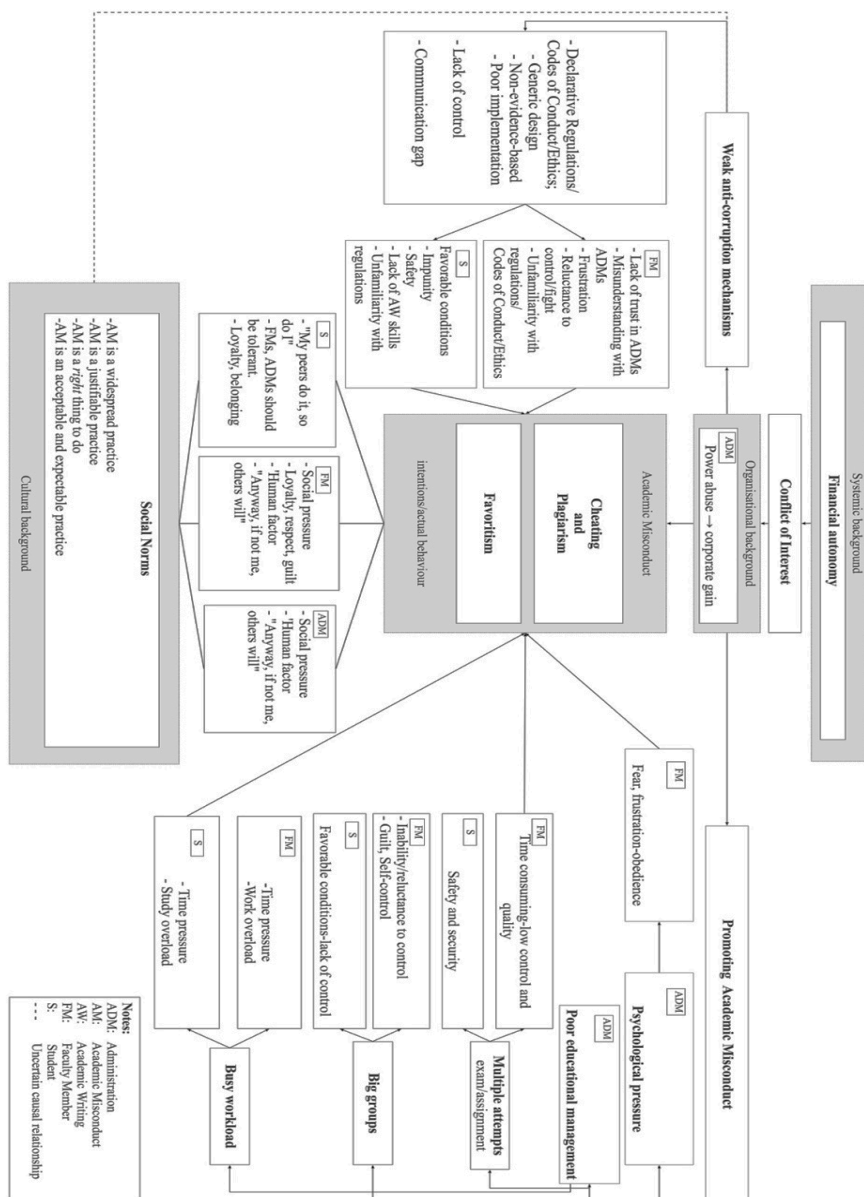
The integration of the results of the qualitative and quantitative studies allow a comprehensive understanding of how institutional and individual factors guide educational actors' decisions regarding Academic Misconduct in three Armenian universities (*see* Figure 11).

The most prevalent forms of Academic Misconduct are cheating and plagiarism, followed by favoritism and rare cases of nepotism. While bribery is not an issue in two universities, it appears to be quite common in the third one. However, it is not as prevalent as the other non-monetary forms. These practices of Academic Misconduct manifest themselves in various interactions between the administration and students, the administration and faculty members, the faculty members and students, the faculty members and colleagues, and in seldom cases, the faculty members/administration and relatives. Each form of interaction entails a context-specific set of institutional and social-psychological factors that influence the educational actors' decisions.

As assumed, the lack of state funding creates a complicated situation for a university administration to commit to the proper implementation of anti-corruption mechanisms. The lack of state funding and the financial dependence on student fees serve as a gateway for Academic Misconduct to occur and persist in Armenian universities. This means that universities are primarily in a state of conflict of interests⁶⁰, which “*occurs when an individual or a corporation is in a position to exploit his or their professional or official capacity in some way for personal or corporate benefit*” (OECD, 2007). The university administration has to exploit its official and professional capacity for the sake of corporate benefit, rather than personal benefit. In this context, corporate benefit means that the university has to secure a significant number of students so that the university can meet its self-financing requirements. In other words, so that it can sustain itself. In this condition, the university administration experiences a corrupt dilemma (Köbis *et al*, 2015). On the one hand, it is important to use the power responsibility and meet the requirements of transparency and accountability as well as to provide quality and equal access to everyone. On the other hand, the need to enroll and keep a certain number of students forces a university administration to abuse its power responsibility to ensure sufficient funding.

⁶⁰ <https://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=7206>

Figure 11. Institutional and social-psychological factors of Academic Misconduct in the Armenian Higher Education System.



The means of power abuse are similar across these three universities. The administrations create pathways for Academic Misconduct in two broad ways: a) by not implementing proper control, preventive, and punishment mechanisms and b) by poor educational management promoting corruption and putting pressure on faculty members.

The findings indicate that universities do not put significant efforts in their anti-corruption fight as it was assumed. Regulations have mostly a declarative nature since they are not being properly implemented in practice. The rare control mechanism initiated by administrators are weak and non-effective. Most of the time, university administrations put the main responsibility of control on the faculty members without equipping them with detective devices or providing proper assistance. The punishment measures are implemented only in extreme cases. The university administrations also do not properly execute anti-corruption education to raise awareness. As a result, there is a communication gap between the educational actors. Most of the faculty members and students are either not aware about the existence of regulations and Codes of Conduct/Ethics, or they are not familiar with their content. While the faculty members believe that the university administration is deliberately failing in its anti-corruption practices, the administrators argue that to succeed in this fight, they need improved legal grounds, skills as well as detective means and measures. Moreover, the university administrations state that Academic Misconduct persists since it is considered as a norm and even the right thing to do. All the educational actors are primarily guided by this perception.

Besides engaging in poor anti-corruption processes, the university administrations also promote Academic Misconduct in direct and indirect ways. The direct ways include threatening and applying means of psychological pressure on faculty members to force them to be tolerant towards student cheating and plagiarism. The indirect ways of promoting academic misconduct are related to the universities' inability to properly manage the challenges that came as a result of the massification of Higher Education. Due to poor management, issues such as big study groups, the possibility of multiple attempts to pass an exam, or the busy workload of both students and faculty members indirectly create opportunities for Academic Misconduct. The findings, however, do not indicate precisely whether this weak educational management is a deliberate intention of a university administration or if it is because of the lack of the necessary knowledge and skills.

Overall, the poor anti-corruption measures and weak educational management as well as strong social norms open the doors for Academic Misconduct to persist in Armenian universities. The university administrations' position towards Academic Misconduct is straightforward: quantity and norms over quality and integrity.

The corrupt introspections of faculty members and students involve more complex social-psychological dynamics. When deciding to whether engage in misconduct or not, faculty members are affected by several psychological factors that depend on the type of interaction between educational actors. When being directly instructed by the university administration, faculty members mostly obey. Their decision is predominantly guided by feelings of fear and disappointment. Fear plays a double role. When strictly commanded or instructed by the administration to be tolerant towards student cheating and plagiarism, they obey out of fear because they are afraid of future conflicts and complications with the administration. Fear, however, in some cases also prevents faculty members from engaging in nepotism/and favoritism since the administration is not as forgiving towards faculty members as it is when it comes to student engagement in Academic Misconduct. This incongruence in the university administration's behavior lowers the trust among faculty members towards a university's anti-corruption intentions. This situation requires high levels of self-control from faculty members. They are forced to engage in Academic Misconduct to meet an administrator's requests to tolerate misconduct, meanwhile while expected to protect their reputation among students. In most of the cases, due to these conditions, faculty members become frustrated and give up on their attempts to fight Academic Misconduct.

Interactions with colleagues entail different psychological dynamics. With or without being asked, faculty members voluntarily engage in favoritism guided by social norms. The latter manifests itself either as guilt-related feelings, such as having difficulties to oppose an older colleague (*i.e.*, generation issues), or as loyalty and respect towards colleagues.

Both in forced and in voluntary cases, the faculty members experience inner conflict and guilt since they engage in misconduct despite holding negative attitudes towards it. To alleviate these feelings, they justify their engagement in misconduct by social norms. The faculty members hold strong beliefs that Academic Misconduct is anyway widespread and will always be since the universities do not properly fight against it. This belief gives the faculty members freedom to make their misconduct-related decisions based on their own moral and social norms. As the findings indicate, the faculty members also engage in Academic Misconduct because they believe that it is not only culturally acceptable, but that it is an expected practice to support colleagues or students. Since these beliefs serve as justifications, engagement in academic misconduct has the tendency to be repeated each time there is a need to perform it.

This environment of poor anti-corruption practices, weak educational management, and strong social norms are most favorable to students. Due to the low admission requirements, many students take the advantage to acquire a Higher Education diploma. Lacking the motivation to

study and strong academic abilities, these students' main motivation is the diploma *per se* rather than the acquisition of knowledge and skills. Moreover, students are conscious of the fact that universities have a financial dependence on them, and that they cannot afford student withdrawals. This feeling of safety and the tolerance from the administrators and faculty members' side coupled with the lack of training in academic integrity provide favorable conditions for students to cheat and plagiarize. Interestingly, these findings are identical with student self-reports on their corrupt decisions. Students hold positive attitudes towards cheating and plagiarism, however, their attitudes do not impact their intentions regarding these corrupt practices. When deciding to engage in misconduct or not, students are primarily guided by their perceived social norms. The dominance of social norms over personal attitudes and control beliefs on student intentions to engage in Academic Misconduct is explained by two central factors. Those factors are the weak anti-corruption measures at universities and the collectivistic Armenian culture. On the one hand, representing a collectivistic culture, Armenian students are reluctant to report misconduct performed by their peers. Loyalty to the group and the need to be accepted by peers influence their decisions to engage in practices that are prevalent and accepted in the student community and in the culture in general. On the other hand, they do not seem to be well aware about the significant constraints (*i.e.*, control and detection) and consequences for (*i.e.*, sanctions and punishment) engaging in these practices. These findings indicate that, once again, anti-corruption practices are weak since they do not have significant power to impact student decisions not to engage in misconduct. Hence, instead of being guided by integrity rules enforced by the university, student decisions, as in the case of faculty members, are primarily based on their perceived social norms (*i.e.*, academic misconduct is acceptable and the right thing to do).

To summarize these conclusions, the answer to the research question *How do individual perceptions coupled with a university's anti-corruption performance impact the educational actors' intentions to engage in academic misconduct?* should be discussed in both the institutional and cultural contexts. Decision-making processes regarding Academic Misconduct entail complex mental simulations and social-psychological dynamics. These dynamics are different, depending on the type of corrupt interaction. The administrators' decisions not to fight misconduct are mostly guided by the urgency to avoid student withdrawals and the pressure to follow social norms. The faculty members' decisions seem to be guided by fear and frustration, coupled with the need to follow socially acceptable rules. The students' decisions are mostly guided by their perception that Academic Misconduct is a widespread practice that is relatively easy to perform at their universities. Notwithstanding the contextual differences, all three groups of educational actors are

primarily guided by their perceived social norms rather than by anti-corruption measures. In these conditions, where anti-corruption malfunctions, social norms have a strong impact that serves as a justification and leads to engagement in Academic Misconduct.

8.1. Anti-corruption suggestions based on these findings

In previous chapters of this dissertation, I have already discussed why it is important to fight corruption (*see* 1.3) particularly in the educational sector (*see* 2.4.) I drew upon the broad amount of literature that addresses the most successful ways and key considerations for successful anti-corruption. This dissertation's primary concern is to shed light on the main institutional and individual factors that lead to corrupt behavior, rather than to provide anti-corruption tools. However, based on these research findings, in this section I discuss several research-proven anti-corruption suggestions that can be helpful to prevent and fight Academic Misconduct in Armenian Universities.

As these findings indicate, the main reasons that sustain Academic Misconduct are university financial needs and the perceived social norms of the educational actors. Hence, corresponding interventions are needed to tackle weaknesses in these areas. To succeed in this task, Armenian universities should focus on implementing two groups of comprehensive strategies. First, universities should be concerned with improving and updating control and punishment measures. The second strategy should focus on creating a culture of integrity, where corrupt practices are not seen as the right thing to do anymore.

8.1.1. Upgrading the game - Anti-corruption 2.0

To succeed in the anti-corruption fight, Armenian universities should give up on the old and inefficient approach ways of addressing this issue. They need to upgrade their anti-corruption game and take it to a new level. The suggestions discussed below might be helpful to achieve these goals. Of course, only if there is the administrative will and strong leadership to execute them.

1. *Context-specific regulations and Codes of Conduct/Ethics* - to meet their purpose, it is important that anti-corruption regulations or the implementation of Codes of Conducts/ethics are not generic or adapted from other organizations, countries, or cultures. Simply because they succeeded in other environments does not mean that they will be successful in the Armenian educational context. Since corruption is a complex issue and is influenced by a large number of factors, it is crucial that the fight against corruption is context-specific. Hence, universities should

encourage academic research to study the forms, reasons, and domains of manifestations of this phenomenon within each university. They should do proper risk analysis and identify the exact needs to design specific anti-corruption regulations and Codes of Conduct/Ethics.

2. *Anti-corruption as a shared responsibility* - representatives from the faculty and student community should participate in the design of anti-corruption and implementation processes. The inclusion of faculty members and students during the design process will secure that their needs and suggestions are taken into account. This, in turn, will not only enhance the quality of anti-corruption practices, but will also strengthen transparency. Moreover, becoming a part of the anti-corruption decision making processes together with the university administration will change the current faculty members and students' expectations that anti-corruption is merely a function of the university administration. Working united in the anti-corruption fight can enable educational actors to play in the team, where each of the actors shares its own portion of responsibility for the overall success. This might also reduce some difficulties regarding the implementation of regulations and Codes of Conduct/Ethics since one can assume that faculty members and students would follow the rules that they have established themselves.

3. *Addressing the communication gap* - faculty member and student participation in anti-corruption initiatives *per se* is not enough. It is important that there is transparent communication between all educational actors. For this purpose, all of the educational actors should be provided with credible information on the frequency and prevalence of academic misconduct at their university. Descriptive norms, *i.e.*, the perception that everyone else engages in misconduct, seem to be the strongest factor that sustain Academic Misconduct. However, research has shown that perceptions about the frequency and number of people performing a given behavior are not always true. In psychology, this phenomenon is called "*pluralistic ignorance*" (Jackson and Köbis, 2018, p.4). Hence, information on the frequency and others' willingness to engage in misconduct might impact the educational actors' decisions not to engage in misconduct. To attain credible and valid information on the extent of corruption, universities should be willing to conduct research on this topic.

Transparent communication also allows for corruption cases to be revealed, and consequently be punished. These procedures should not be hidden from faculty members and students for two reasons. First, because the lack of transparency in communication creates an atmosphere of fear and anxiety among the faculty members, which goes on to impact the quality of their performance. Second, when these cases remain silent or hidden, it creates the impression that corruption is not being punished or is even welcomed at the universities. As the findings show, these perceptions have a strong impact and can drive the educational actors to engage in

misconduct. It is encouraged that universities make these cases public by involving the mass media as well to improve/strengthen their self-image, and hopefully to regain public trust.

4. Anti-corruption education - it is important that the content of the anti-corruption regulations and are properly delivered and explained to all the interested educational actors. Since anti-corruption is a shared responsibility, all the parties involved in this mission should have the same vision and values as well as a clear understanding on what their main target is and how to achieve it. This information should be accessible in an online platform, as it is now, but also in paper form. It is important that universities re-think their current top-down way of information dissemination. Spreading written notices among the departments or uploading files online without further follow-up and evaluation are merely acts of imitation rather than true anti-corruption education. Successful training and education means sharing this responsibility with faculty members and students by enabling them to become anti-corruption ambassadors. Real-life communication should be held in the form of knowledge spreading and capacity-building seminars and workshops or research projects that will require not only active participation, but also cooperation and initiation of the part of the educational actors.

5. *Showing vulnerability* - universities should stop pretending to be successful in the fight against corruption in front of the government. They should ask for help instead. Corruption is a complex issue and tackling it is always a difficult task. Hence, instead of hiding their struggles, universities should inform the state about their weaknesses and needs in this battle as well as discuss the possible ways in which they need support. They should also invite anti-corruption experts who could consult them, eliminate weaknesses, and build capacities to successfully tackle this problem. The university administrations should be more transparent with faculty members and students, and encourage them to cooperate with them. This will also strengthen the sense of belonging and shared responsibility.

It is important to mention that help and assistance should be based on an individual university's needs and goals. This means that external support should be focused on knowledge enhancement and capacity building.

8.1.2. Creating a culture of Integrity

The findings of this dissertation reveal that Academic Misconduct is considered as a norm. In other words, the educational actors engage in various forms of misconduct because they believe that it is widespread and the right thing to do. These beliefs sustain Academic Misconduct in Armenian universities. The impact of social norms is so strong that educational actors are willing to go against their personal attitudes and put their careers and reputation at risk. On a positive note, the strength of social norms could be used to create an environment where integrity instead of corruption becomes the norm. The social norm approach in anti-corruption practices was suggested recently by Jackson and Köbis (2018) and has already been successfully implemented among various cultures and systems. As mentioned by the authors, this approach can be successful if it is implemented carefully based on the specific contextual and peculiarities of corruption. Emphasizing the preventive value of this approach, Jackson and Köbis (2018) mention that the change of social norm *per se* will not end corruption, but can rather become a valuable completion for the main anti-corruption approaches (*i.e.*, regulations, Codes of Conducts, transparency and accountability). Based on the findings in this dissertation regarding the state of Academic Misconduct in Armenia, the above-mentioned suggestions could help universities create an atmosphere of integrity and improve the situation of conflict of interests when it comes to financial autonomy.

1. *Integrity education* - to build a culture of integrity, it is important that the university administrations, together with the faculty members, educate students about the importance of a corruption-free education as well as provide a clear understanding of its benefits. This education will be efficient if alongside theoretical knowledge, faculty members and administrators also provide longitudinal trainings. For example, they can provide psychological and pedagogical workshops or role plays where participants will be encouraged to appreciate honest behavior and the importance of adhering to regulations. This process should entail knowledge cultivation on the essence and importance of Integrity and values as well as skills and capacity building (*i.e.*, learning by doing).

2. *Quality over quantity* - as the findings indicate, the acquisition of new students and their retention are a big problem for the university administrations. Since universities cannot afford dismissals, they lower the quality criteria and sacrifice integrity. As was evidenced in the three case studies, corruption thrives under these conditions. Hence, universities should re-think their “need for students” strategy. Instead of lowering the quality of education, they should consider implementing interventions to help students rise to the necessary level of competence. These

interventions should involve trainings on cognitive capabilities, critical thinking, learning, and sense-making skills. Also, universities should put significant efforts for the enhancement of students' motivation to study by providing them the proper educational resources and conditions to study as well as merit-based scholarships and opportunities for exchange semesters in foreign universities. It will also be helpful if universities actively cooperate with the job market and create internship opportunities for students in various organizations.

Equally essential, universities should provide high quality study modules and re-think the current grading criteria. More space should be left for student curiosity and creativity to flourish. They should be able to produce or make sense of knowledge, instead of merely regurgitating memorized facts, as they do now.

It goes without saying that quality education requires highly qualified professionals to teach students. Hence, faculty members should also consistently improve their capacities to keep up with the current trends of education. For this purpose, universities should provide opportunities for them to attend various national and international conferences, workshops, and seminars to enrich their knowledge and develop the necessary skills for them to provide high quality education.

Overall, by investing in students and faculty members' knowledge and skills, universities will encourage good academic performance that in turn can secure students from dropping out. Moreover, universities can improve their self-image and enhance public trust by ensuring high quality education, providing good study/work conditions for students and faculty members, and creating a culture of Integrity. As a result, they might even attract more students who would want to study under these better conditions.

By providing high quality education, universities could solve the current dilemma of conflict of interests. Nevertheless, it is clear that this change might require large efforts and resources as well as a long period of time to achieve these goals. Considering the negative consequences of corruption, though, it will be well worth it.

8.2. Theoretical and practical implications

Theoretical implications

Academic misconduct has been in the center of scholars' attention worldwide since the 1990s. Most of the studies, however, approach the topic from economic and political perspectives. The psychology of corrupt behavior has received relatively less attention. While corruption research is expanded around the world, there is a big research gap on how Academic Misconduct manifests itself in the Armenian Higher Education System. Existing academic research is scarce. The topic remains understudied while universities fight corruption blindly, relying on generic anti-corruption means adapted from other systems, countries, or cultures. This dissertation contributes to the educational corruption research from a psychological perspective. This study is one of the first to examine the psychological mechanisms behind educational actors' decision-making processes regarding Academic Misconduct in Armenian universities.

Another theoretical contribution of this dissertation is its Mixed Methods design. So far, research on Academic Misconduct has mostly been mono-methodological, using either a qualitative or a quantitative approach. This research is one of the first in Armenia that applies both mixed methods to study Academic Misconduct. This dissertation also brings together the perspectives of various educational actors in one single study.

This study pioneers a theory-driven design in corruption research for studying Academic Misconduct in Armenia. So far, research on this topic mostly addresses demographic, environmental, and situational factors, or a combination of them. Only in rare cases, has research been guided by a certain theoretical framework. Hence, to contribute to theory-driven corruption research in general, and particularly in Armenia, this study relied on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the model of Prospective Cognition and Psychological Dynamics to study decision-making processes with regards to Academic Misconduct. Theory-guided research is beneficial since it better allows to understand the reasoning of Academic Misconduct within a certain context, which in its turn leads to identifying context-specific means to combat or prevent it.

Practical Implications

The main goal of every corruption research is to understand the essence of this phenomenon and to provide possible solutions to fight and/or prevent it. This dissertation project has good potential to serve this purpose. The findings regarding university mistakes in anti-corruption as well as the findings on the impact of social norms on educational behaviors can help university administrators, and educational practitioners in general, to better design efficient anti-

corruption interventions to combat Academic Misconduct. Several possible directions that can be helpful for these kinds of interventions are discussed in section 8.1.

Another practical value of this dissertation is that it has the potential to be used as a textbook to educate students in Armenian universities on the concept of Academic Misconduct, its ways of manifestation, and the current state of it at the universities where these students study. This dissertation, which covers key background concepts regarding the complex phenomenon of Academic Misconduct, could also help raise awareness on this issue among students. Moreover, the study findings could be digitalized and transformed into educational videos that can be accessible to the public.

8.3. Limitations and suggestions for future research

One of the main limitations of this dissertation is that the study findings do not clearly identify the causal relationship between anti-corruption measures and social norms. Further research is needed to understand whether social norms are dominant because universities deliberately do not properly fight corruption, or if the social norms are too strong for anti-corruption measures to succeed. For future research, it will be helpful to conduct a comparative study by targeting state and interstate universities, or universities with and without Codes of Conduct/Ethics and anti-corruption regulations. This will help us understand whether social norms still have the same strong impact on educational actors' decisions, as is currently the case in public universities with poor anti-corruption strategies. Further research is also needed to understand the causal relationship between poor educational management and anti-corruption. Current findings do not precisely cover whether a university's weak education management is a deliberate and indirect way to create opportunities for Academic Misconduct, or if universities lack the necessary resources to successfully manage educational processes.

Another limitation of this dissertation is that the data was collected before the *Velvet Revolution* in Armenia in 2018. After bringing down the former corrupt system, many changes took place in Higher Education. Most likely, many changes also took place in people's mindsets. Therefore, further research is needed to examine the extent of change also in Armenian universities. This dissertation can serve as a comprehensive source to compare with the findings of future research.

Several other limitations and suggestions are particularly related to the quantitative study. The first one is the sampling approach and relatively small size of the sample. Both are results of time limitations during the field research as well as the difficulties regarding permission to study corrupt behavior in Armenian Universities. For future research, it is encouraged to have a bigger sample size to be able to generalize the statistical results. It will be also valuable to do a comparative study by targeting universities with and without Codes of Conduct and anti-corruption regulation to understand how the relationship between the primary TPB constructs change.

The second limitation of the study is related to the measure Attitude. Within the current study, Attitude was measured only by student willingness to report or not about cheating and plagiarism. However, it might be that this reluctance to report does not necessarily mean having positive attitudes towards the given behavior. It might be that students have negative attitudes, but still do not want to report their peers cheating to help them, damage their own reputations, or affect their friendships. For future research, it is also encouraged that the attitude scale includes items regarding student favorable or unfavorable positions, extent of tolerance, and/or positive or negative evaluations. Moreover, further research is needed to examine the reasoning behind student willingness or reluctance to report about cheating or other forms of academic misconduct.

The third limitation of the study is related to the measure Past Behavior. Although many scholars have employed this construct in their studies, however, there are two issues related to this inclusion. First, the items are based on student self-reports about their engagement in cheating and plagiarism. Since these two are manifestations of dishonest actions, the likelihood is high that respondents will be inclined to provide socially desirable answers. The second issue related to the construct is that it represents actions in the past, which cannot be a good predictor for the future, at least within the logic of TPB. The theory states that intentions will turn into actual behavioral performance only when all the other constructs are the same and there are the necessary resources to perform the behavior in question. Hence, introducing past behavior as a proxy for future behavioral performance is a violation of this rule. Additionally, to reduce the biased responses and enhance the predictive validity, it is suggested to design a two-phase longitudinal study alike to that of Beck and Ajzen (1991) when validating the predictive value of TPB. During the first phase, researchers measured all the constructs of TPB. After 6 months, they proceeded with the second phase and measured the behavior of the subsample from the first stage.

In closing, this dissertation has the potential to inspire further research on Academic Misconduct in Armenia. It is the hope of the author that it will raise awareness for this crucial topic and foster evidence-based anti-corruption practices.

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Appendix 1. Pilot-study - the impact of academic corruption on motivation to study and teach

Preliminary data

Holding an assumption that academic corruption has a direct negative impact on the study motivation of students, as well as on the teaching motivation of professors. Back in September 2016, I went to Armenia for field research. The abovementioned assumption was supported by the statement of Heuser and Drake, that there is a strong connection between the reasons for students to pursue higher education, their motivation to study, and academic integrity (Heuser & Drake, 2011, as cited in Milovanovitch *et al.*, p.84) as well as by the argument that “corruption generates lack of competition which latter causes lack of motivation among the students” (Avagyan, 2012, p.36).

For this pilot study, I conducted qualitative interviews with students and professors who study and teach in different public universities in Armenia. Overall, I interviewed 10 students, 7 of them are in the Bachelor level, 2 in Masters, and 1 in PhD. I also interviewed 9 professors, all of whom have more than 4 years of experience in higher education. I choose my sample based on my personal networking. I knew almost all of the students and professors. This approach has both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, it was easy for them to trust me and agree to be recorded; on the other hand, as the further processes of the interview demonstrate, in some cases they tried to please me with their answers, not as a researcher, but a person. Thus, in terms of objectivity, some interviews might be biased. The interviewees were not paid, however, they showed the willingness to participate and be recorded after my assurance regarding the confidentiality of their identities and answers. Therefore, I will not share recordings and transcriptions. Below, is the list including the changed names of interviewees, gender, the educational level/teaching experience, the place, and duration of the interview (see Table 1, Table 2). The duration of the interviews vary from 06:04 minutes to 33:46 minutes. All the interviews were conducted in Armenian. I have transcribed and translated the interviews by myself.

The qualitative interview questions were formulated in a way to get answers to the following research question and sub-questions:

- Do corrupt practices affect the study motivation of students and the teaching motivation of professors?
 - What are the prevalent types of corruption in Armenian universities?
 - How do students and professors interpret educational corruption?

I used Atlati.ti to code the interviews, and will apply the narrative approach to present the results. I choose the narrative approach, as each interview includes a personal narration concerning a person's experiences regarding corrupt activities.

Table 1. Interview details on students

N	Name (changed)	Gender	Educational level	Place of interview	Duration of interview
1.	Nelly	f	Bachelor	Yerevan, Armenia	00:14:05
2.	Narek	m	Bachelor	Yerevan, Armenia	00:26:19
3.	Garik	m	Master	Yerevan, Armenia	00:33:46
4.	Armen	m	Bachelor	Yerevan, Armenia	00:14:01
5.	Meri	f	Bachelor	Yerevan, Armenia	00:06:04
6.	Sevak	m	Bachelor	Yerevan, Armenia	00:09:34
7.	Irina	f	Bachelor	Yerevan, Armenia	00:07:05
8.	Mane	f	PhD	Yerevan, Armenia	00:15:16
9.	Edgar	m	Bachelor	Yerevan, Armenia	00:24:50
10.	Elen	f	Master	Yerevan, Armenia	00:21:14

Table 2. Interview details on professors

N	Name (changed)	Gender	Teaching experience	Place of interview	Duration of interview
1.	A. Khachatryan	f	10	Yerevan, Armenia	00:09:28

2.	N. Avetisyan	f	19	Yerevan, Armenia	00:15:30
3.	L. Hakobyan	f	7	Yerevan, Armenia	00:17:23
4.	M. Petrosyan	f	14	Yerevan, Armenia	00:22:29
5.	S. Sahakyan	f	4,5	Yerevan, Armenia	00:21:22
6.	L. Minasyan	f	12	Yerevan, Armenia	00:24:02
7.	M. Serobyan	f	11	Yerevan, Armenia	00:22:43
8.	E. Harutyunyan	f	9	Yerevan, Armenia	00:10:42
9.	K. Matevosyan	f	13	Yerevan, Armenia	00:06:55

Preliminary results and findings

The analysis of the preliminary data provide not only answers to the posed research question and sub-questions but also shed some light on the peculiarities of sense-making of corruption by the respondents as well as the behavioral strategies the initiate to cope with educational corruption.

a) *Prevalent types of corrupt practices in the Armenian HE*

The analyses of both students' and professors' interviews show that the most common type of academic misconduct reported by them is *nepotism*. Moreover, academic misconduct, does not limit its manifestation only as nepotism, other forms of it related to bribery, cheating, and plagiarism have also been reported to be common. There are also reports regarding other specific types of professional misconduct, namely gifts, bookselling, discrimination and harassment, and enforcement of personal points of view (Figure 1).

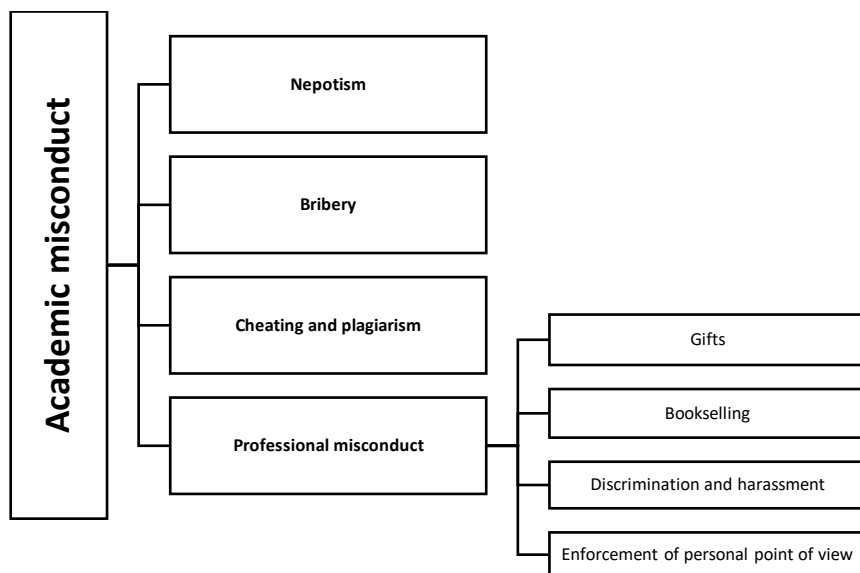


Figure 1. The prevalent types of academic misconduct in the Armenian Universities

Nepotism: this form of academic misconduct is the most prevalent one in Armenian universities. All the interviewees have mentioned that either they or their peers/colleagues have faced this practice in the universities. Nepotism promoted by professors manifests itself mainly in two types. First, when it includes two unequal sides engaged in this practice. In other words, when a professor is “asked” by a person who has a higher position, to give a high grade to a student who is somehow related to this person with the higher position. For instance, one of the interviewed professors stated, “... that happened once, we had a student, and when you have one like this the whole department knows, that there is this person, because he is coming to the University with a security guard, because everybody even the Dean. I have heard that the Dean has warned everybody, that this student should graduate no matter what, of course not with a 5 (higher grade), but he will not attend the classes, but would graduate” (S.Sahakyan, a university professor). These are exceptional and rare cases, which happen in high prestigious universities. However, nepotism is a widespread practice. Another example illustrates how it has an emotional impact on the professors’ motivation and how it limits their freedom, “Yes, it has happened (nepotism)... this is one of the factors that cause disappointment, because you try to organize your whole activity in a way to be as objective as it is possible and be satisfied by your job, to receive a feedback, and suddenly, ‘Hop là’... someone who is an acquaintance of some 3rd person, and this 3rd person has a higher status and position than you, and you don’t have that opportunity to tell him, that you know I am doing my job and I must be objective... and so on, than you are disappointed...why am

I doing it all” (L.Hakobyan, a university professor). In these cases, professors under emotional pressure have to follow the instructions given from “above” against their will⁶¹.

The second type of nepotism is a more widespread practice, when professors are asked by their colleagues to give grades to a student who is somehow related to those who ask. This type of nepotism basically has cultural determination. Considering nepotism as a part of Armenian culture, professors do not feel convenient to refuse their colleague’s request. Otherwise, there is a risk of damaging interpersonal relationships with colleagues or not be accepted by society, “Of course, this evidence per se is not enjoyable, when they might come and ask for one of the worst students, for example when your colleague asks to give a passing grade. It does not affect my motivation, but you are still worried how to refuse your colleague, how they will understand that, will they get it right, or maybe they might feel offended...” (M.Serobyan, a university professor). Even when professors hold negative attitudes toward these practice, they still perform in contrast to their attitudes, like in this case “... I definitely support when my colleagues ask, I definitely support when a university fellow ask. You know I have not come here from the air, I know what is how, I have been adapted to this culture so much, that I do not respect myself for this but if they ask, and even when you might guess, that as a result of this request, he/she has some bargain, and your student thinks that maybe you also have your part here, anyway you cannot prove anything, however you still cannot refuse your colleague. They get refused when the request is not respectful” (M.Petrosyan, a university professor). Another common reason to support a colleague’s request is based on the “principle of boomerang”. In other words, professors give support, as they know that they might ask for a favor as well. Thus, if they refuse a colleagues’ request, then probably they will get refused as well. An example for this statement is the following quote “...on the one hand it has cultural, on the other hand a structural reasoning, and as a result of this you cannot “play” integrity... well, you can, but still you understand that you are a part of this structure, of this culture. Because, to be honest, and you are not here to listen to my toasts... so to tell the truth I have a sister, a cousin who just gave birth, and I myself have asked my colleagues to support her during that period... because you know, that anyway, if you are asked, you will ask as well, you will also face it ...” (M.Petrosyan, a university professor).

Many cases of nepotism have been reported by students as well, where they are either promoted or considered to promote nepotism by themselves, or know peers who use nepotism as an easy way to get grades. For instance, one of the students mentions “...the Head of the Chair, who is fired now. The students were even making jokes, that at least he is not giving recipes. Well in this Chair it was like this (well, there were some students who could somehow escape this) but mostly, for we were 12 in our group, and only two could receive a grade by themselves. You know,

⁶¹ This word is used both by professors and students, to refer to people in higher position in university government or in state government in general.

they would name it as ‘tutoring’, would take the money and like that give the grades... well, as I have had an acquaintance who knew this Head of Chair, thus like this I got my positive grade... this subject was not important for me, I was not treated seriously, moreover when I knew that we have an acquaintance, then there was no motivation to study at all” (Ellen, Master student).

Nepotism, is mainly considered an easy way to escape studying hard, but getting the needed grade. In most cases, it is considered as a normal, acceptable practice, “well, for myself... as I want to have a red diploma⁶², then if I will have a problem concerning this, then I will try to use my acquaintances. Or if they ask for money, I will give that money to solve this problem. I think it’s normal, well, of course there are some negative parts as well, but for myself I accept it, I will do that, for instance if my grade is a four, I will use it to make it five...” (Armen, bachelor student).

In contrast with other forms of academic misconduct, nepotism is perceived as a less dangerous, quite acceptable practice which has cultural determination, and its roots go back to the Soviet Union, when used to be an intangible part of peoples’ social life. Nowadays as well, as nepotism is not limited only in the university, but also is deeply rooted in the society, both students and professors seem to accept the fact of its existence in their daily activities. Thus, almost in most cases, students and professors are tolerant toward nepotism.

Bribery: this form of misconduct very often comes together with nepotism, or manifests itself as nepotism. These are the cases when there is not a family relationship between a student and a person who promotes corruption, thus the students or their families pay a professor to give the desired grade. The example of one of the interviewees illustrates this statement, particularly he says “I don’t know how is it in other places, but in our university, it is a very difficult procedure to give a bribery, it is not like whoever wants can give this bribery, there are some universities that whoever wants to give could, but not at ours... to be able to give a bribery one needs to have a good acquaintance here” (Edgar, Bachelor student).

There are also other cases, where students reported about bribery manifested in its original monetary form, such as in this case, mentioned by a student “... I have never been asked for a bribe in person, probably, it depends on a student, that they ask for... But I have seen all the types of academic misconduct. For instance, one of the students in our group, who was completely 0 at mathematics... in front of me the lecturer ordered that money, and received it... for 40.000 AMD (82 CHF), he gave that grade...” (Meri, Bachelor student). According to the reports, bribery manifests itself as an actual performance of corrupt practice, like in the abovementioned example, and as a covert intention to perform this practice. For instance, in many reports, students mention not the exact cases where bribery has been performed, but rather they emphasize the behaviors performed by professors, intending to receive money. An example of this kind of behavior, reported by many students, is that professors procrastinate the process of grading, “it is not like

⁶² Red diploma is given to the students with excellent grades.

they, the ones who take bribes literary ask for it. Let's assume it is exam time, and even if there is a question that students have made a very small mistake on, then the professors react like they want to find this "black spots" all the time, just because they want to take that bribery, they force the student to come and go all the time, aiming to make this student disappointed and feel to be forced to give that bribery". Another example also supports this perception, "there are some professors, who came here to run their business and make money on students... everything is inclined to that... it doesn't matter how hard you study; however, they will insist so much, that it is better to give that particular money, than to come and go on the subject so many times".

It is important to mention that the cases of bribery are reported mostly by students, but not the professors. Moreover, mainly by the students studying in the same particular university, which leads to an assumption that this practice has organisational character and is typical for a particular university. This assumption is also supported by the other responses provided both by professors and students, which are stating that there is a growing tendency of reducing bribes in their universities, and even if it still exists than it happens in the "above" levels. However, both students and professors agree that even if bribery as a monetary form of corruption is not as common as it was during the last two or three decades, rather it transformed into other forms regarding gifts and acquaintances. The next example illustrates this statement of a student, "The worst thing is that it is getting transformed, they do not ask for money directly, but this money turns into a gift, the gift turns into an acquaintance, or into some kind of service, thus it seems that this evidence does not exist, it exists, just in other forms" (Mane, PhD).

Cheating and plagiarism: are another form of reported academic misconduct, as one of the professors mentions, "...but this is a widespread practice, particularly during the exams, they try to cheat by any means" (L.Minasyan). One of the reasons that students cheat is that either they are not interested in the subject and think that it is a waste of time to study it, or they just find cheating an easy way to receive a grade without putting any hard effort. Regarding the professors' position towards cheating the data shows, that they are "not allowed" to drop students, as the professors' salaries depend on the tuition fees of the students. Thus, the universities try to keep the needed quantity of students, notwithstanding with a lowered level of quality. Therefore, the assumption is that professors let students cheat in order to secure their further studies at a university. This assumption is supported particularly by the statement of professor Petrosyan: "when you start to grade according to the standards, almost half of the group will not pass... but you don't have that right to drop this amount of students", or another notion of the same professor, "When our salaries started to be formulated by the tuition fees and they started to sound that, as a result a non-written agreement emerged, that we should do everything not to drop students" (M. Petrosyan, a university professor).

Professional misconduct: alongside the above-mentioned widespread corrupt practices, there are also reports by students, that they became victims of professional misconduct, namely by gifts, bookselling, discrimination and harassment, and enforcement of personal point of view.

Gifts: “When I have got accepted to do PhD studies without offering any gifts or a flower, I have faced a problem to find a supervisor for me. Nobody agreed to supervise me, only after I found out that there is a special amount for a supervisor. However, somehow I found someone for free, that’s why I still even don’t have a topic. Yep, there was an amount, which I haven’t taken into account. I just went like a naïve child and told them, ‘Hello, I want you to supervise me’. But I didn’t know that there is an agreement, yeah, like this...” (Mane, PhD student).

Bookselling: “hmm... for example, book selling has a huge impact on your grade, there are some professors who give the list of books, but don’t say where to find them, instead, they state that you must buy the books to read. I will be honest, we have a literature club which publishes a newspaper on literature. One of our professors is a member of that club, and she forced a lot of people from our group to buy the newspaper. By the way, this newspaper is useless. Then the people who bought the newspaper started to be treated well, compared with others who didn’t buy it. They started to participate in more events than the ones who had more resources but didn’t buy the newspaper. That’s why, me too, I was probably directly faced with this. I was very interested in those events, but no way! Or when they had quests, or other discussions, many people were interested, but only those who were members of that club could participate. Or the ones who were just paying that 1.700 AMD (3.50 CHF)(3,) per month” (Nelly, Bachelor student).

Enforcement of personal point of view: “They don’t let you express yourself, for instance when you analyze a poem, you need to analyze it according to a professor’s perspective. They don’t let you express yourself, you are not independent. I rarely talk about my ideas, and even when I want, I suddenly feel, ‘what if it wouldn’t be accepted’? Or, ‘what if it’s wrong?’ But, yes, there are also cases when you express yourself, and the professors say that you are wrong” (Nelly, Bachelor student).

Discrimination and harassment: “University is a part of the state, but there is homophobia and sexism there. They forced me to leave the university building, because I was wearing shorts. I had a classic casual look, but they forced me to leave the university. I went to a Dean of Faculty and only then somehow they let me write an exam, only after I went to change my clothes” (Garik, Master student). “I have seen how the Head of a Chair threw a folder of papers on a student on front of the whole group” (Garik, Master student).

All the above-mentioned cases clearly illustrate the consequences of professional misconduct. Namely, they address the unequal treatment of students by professors and unequal access to the study resources. These practices affect not only the quality of education of these

students, but also has a psychological impact by affecting their self-confidence and life perceptions in general.

b) Educational corruption and factors that influence study/teaching motivation

This pilot study initially was designed to find out the extent of influence that corruption has on students' study motivations (Figure 2) as well as the professors' teaching motivation (Figure 3). As the results show, although the current level of students' motivation is not high in most cases, only 4 out of 10 reported having high motivation, moreover these students are also the ones who stated that their primary motivation to study at HEI has been the desire to gain proper knowledge towards the chosen occupation, and realize their potential. The ones, who reported medium or low levels, were guided mostly by the desire to get an academic diploma in order to be able to find a job in future. Only 3 of the students reported that educational corruption affects their motivation, for the rest it is not a big impediment. As for professors, they have mostly reported about high level of motivation, and that education corruption in their case as well is not the most powerful negative factor for teaching motivation. Rather, there are some other factors that are more relevant and strong. Table 3 and Table 4 represent all the factors mentioned by both students and professors that have a negative or positive impact on their corresponding study and teaching motivation. It is important to reveal also the factors that have a positive influence on study and teaching motivation. As we can see, the same factors such as the role of professors/students, relationship with peers/colleagues, studying/working atmosphere, *etc.*, which have a positive impact on students' and professors' motivation, at the same as a result of mismanagement of educational processes and scarce resources can transfer into destructive and negative factors. Alongside with academic misconduct, these factors affect the quality of education by limiting study and career opportunities, creating an environment of conflicts and non-satisfaction, and reducing the productivity of both students and lecturers. Another important issue is the narrow line that connects mismanagement to academic misconduct. Some manifestations of mismanagement could both directly or indirectly lead to a performance of an academic misconduct. For instance, the wrong choice of the subjects and academic programs reduces the interest and motivation towards the subject, or the too busy workload. As a result, students start to skip the classes, or try to find informal easy ways to cope with situation by cheating, engaging in nepotism, *etc.*, to achieve the desired academic goal without putting that much effort for a non-relevant subject.

Figure 2. Academic corruption, current level and the dynamics of study motivation of students during their studies.

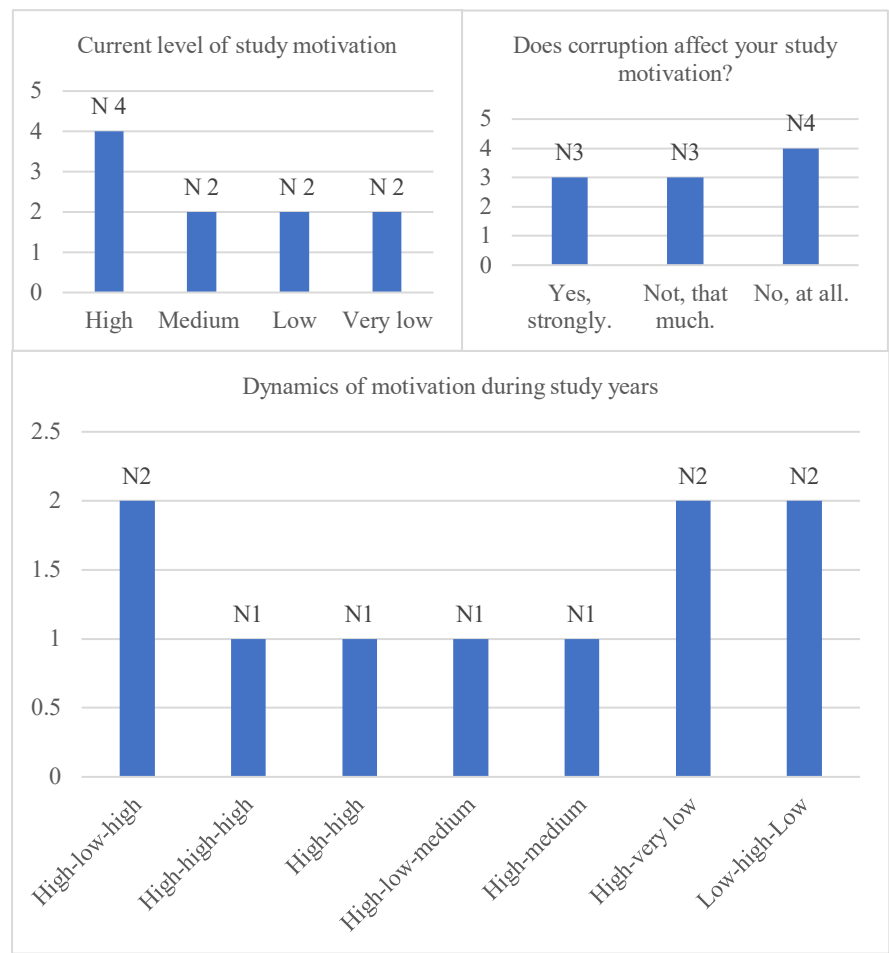


Figure 3. Academic corruption, current level and the dynamics of teaching motivation of professors.

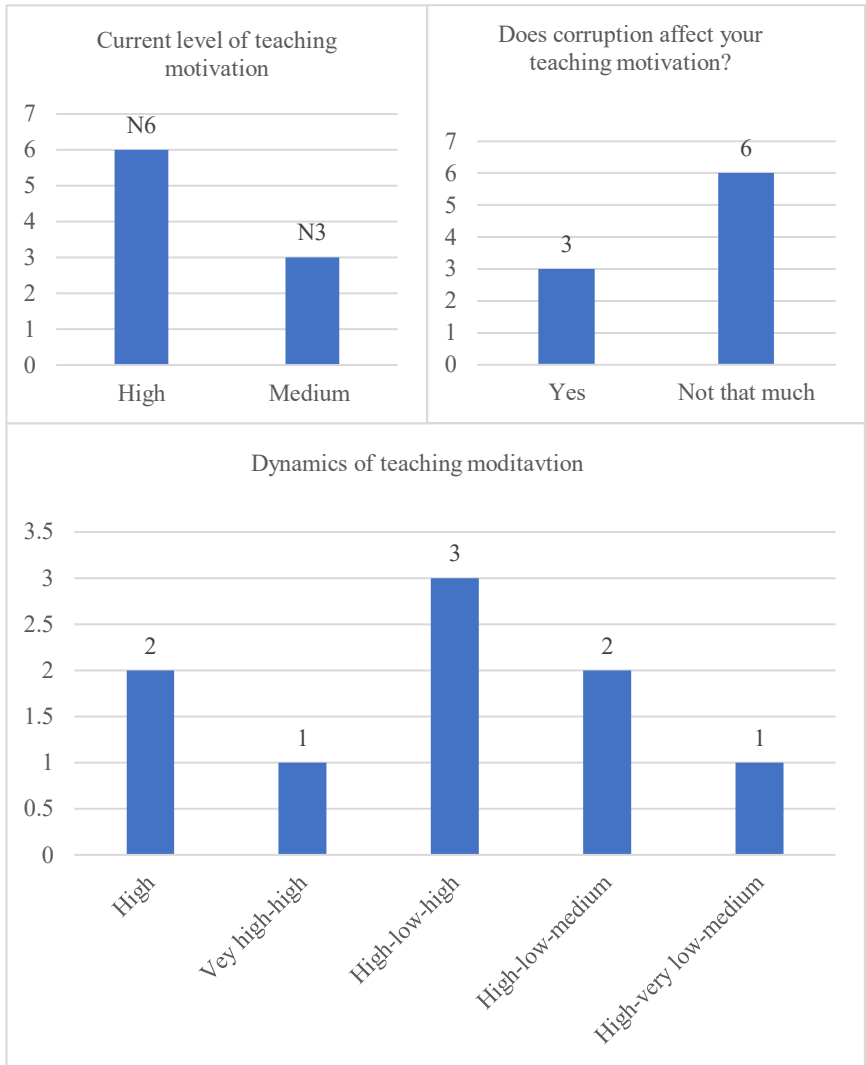


Table 3. Factors that have positive impact on study/teaching motivation.

Positive factors	Quotations
Professors	“During the first week at the university, I really liked it, it was connected with the people at the university. The first professor that we met was very famous in his field, I have heard of him. That was a big motive, I thought if this specialist is teaching us, then we will definitely learn something. After, there have been other professors who gave you knowledge, yes, there are this kind of people, and it is very important”. (Edgar, Bachelor student).
Peers	“I think the relationship with peers is very important. I have felt that. They are your motivation, to engage more in the classes. You can do that. That really gives you power”. (Nelly, Bachelor student).
Success stories	“Well, when you hear that someone has succeeded at their studies, you also try to be like them” (Sevak, Bachelor student)
Study perspectives	“The perspective has a positive impact, when you are conscious that, hmm... what you learn or what you do is productive, and will be applicable somewhere” (Mane. PhD student).
Motivated students	“...when you see students listen to you, ask questions, sometimes argue with you, then my motivation gets higher”. (K.Matevosyan, a university professor).
Career perspectives	“....well, the positive factor is probably, the perspective, for me as a specialist, that what I see after, what kind of opportunities do I have, what kind of recourse and where I can use these resources later”. (L.Hakobyan, a university professor).
Working atmosphere	“... here I understood that our university is an amazing place, in terms of professors’ freedom and autonomy, because at least at our department, at our Chair nobody is ‘sitting on your head’ and controlling all the time”. (L.Minasyan, a university professor).

Table 4. Factors that have negative impact on study/teaching motivation

Negative factors	Quotations
Professors	“...my motivation lowers when the professors are not good professionals, for instance during the lesson, she would talk more about her daily activities than about the subject” (Sevak, Bachelor student). “...there are some professors, who just read the lecture like in an old traditional way ‘till the last sentence, end. Do you have questions, if you ask a question they would reply what kind of primitive question is that... then like this you lose your interest”. (Armen, Bachelor student).
Course structure and study process	“... it is important to reconsider the subjects, syllabuses. It sounds absurd to force students to be present at the classes, to me it is not right. I am the one who takes an exam, and I am responsible whether I pass it or not, but there is no need to force me to attend the classes”. (Narek, Bachelor student). “... for instance, it really makes me angry when we study like in a kindergarten, rising hands to talk, or when the big part of your grade depends on your presence, that decides. They scare us with this and force to attend the classes...” (Garik, Bachelor student). “... this becomes complicated, because I understand that, somehow I need to accept the fact that, that we need to work on quantity, to keep as many paying students as it is possible, but are these students in their proper places, how do they fit to the status of students, this becomes secondary. This is really disturbing for me” (L.Miansyan, a university student)
Academic misconduct	“... there are some professors that do everything to force you to give a bribery or <i>magarich</i>, and of course it affects my willingness to study”. (Sevak, Bachelor student). “It is not motivating at all, moreover disturbing, when they ask you to give a passing grade for a student” (L.Minasyan, a University professor).

Limited recourses and perspectives	“Other factors that brake my motivation are the limited perspectives suggested by the university... (Garik, master student). “...the thing is that you try to conduct research, to present your work, which will not be just a formal one, rather will satisfy yourself, and also will be good for the university, but they don’t give you that opportunity. I just needed some conditions to conduct my research, but they didn’t provide me any, here all my motivation lowered. In short now I am in my Masters, and I am an extremely demotivated student, I force myself to come to this university, I skip the classes ”. (Garik, Master student). “Another negative factor is, when you realize that the resources of the Republic of Armenia, in many cases are not enough for you to develop, I mean at some point you stop“. (E. Harutyunyan, a university professor)
Demotivated Students	“when students are passive, this happens very often... sometimes when you ask them What do you think? The first thought that comes to my mind is, but do they even think all?”. (S.Sahakyan, a university professor student). “I think that our students do not treat education consciously, it seems that they don’t know why they are here, what is their main goal... Why do they pay even, if they don’t want to get anything”. (M.Serobyanyan, a university professor). “There is a widespread saying, that our students are the only ones who pay for not studying”. (L.Hakobyan, a university professor).
Low salaries	“another disturbing thing is that when you want to do something new, but your salary is not enough”. (E.Harutyunyan, a university professor)
Working atmosphere and conditions	“... and 3rd, the working atmosphere, where there is not enough respect towards the scholars and scientists”. (M.Petrosyan, a university professor) “and also my motivation might be affected, when the specialist may have a lower rank (reputation) than the students, I mean... the student centered approach is good, when everything is done

for a students, but the students must not be sure that, no matter what they will pass the modules and exams”. (A.Serobyán, a university professor)

C) Other findings

The results of this pilot study provide some information and open future discussions for the following aspects:

- attitudes towards educational corruption
- copying strategies in context of educational corruption
- sense-making and reasoning
- suggestions for improvement

The answers regarding both students and professors’ attitudes towards and coping strategies against educational corruption could be divided into two groups; negative tolerant and negative intolerant. In the first case, students and professors, find education corruption unacceptable and feel very uncomfortable, however, they have accepted the fact that it is a part of system, its existence is a normal and they cannot change anything about it. Those students and professors also try to provide justifications for this kind of behavior, mostly stating that it has a cultural determination, that intolerance toward those actions could harm their relationships with peers/colleagues. Thus, they adjust they adjust their behavior in a way to minimize the level of harm. For instance, students do not consider reporting about peers or professors’ dishonest behavior, unless that action does not have a direct connection to themselves. Professors, on the one hand prefer to engage in nepotism, thus showing a loyalty towards colleagues, on the other hand protect their reputation, show some supportive treatment towards the whole group students; for instance, grading 1 or 2 points more that the actual grade would be.

The other group of students and professors who hold negative intolerant attitudes, feel strong discomfort and try to undertake some preventive means. For instance, to escape corrupt situations, students make sure to study well, or to be aware of their student rights and duties. If they somehow find their rights violated, they undertake measures to report about the situation to the university administration. Professors belonging to this group in their turn, try to show a high level of professionalism and reluctance to engage in nepotism or any type of negotiation with students, even if thus gaining a reputation of “bad” colleague or a professor among those who prefer to achieve their academic goals in an easy way by engaging in corrupt activities.

Concerning the reasons of educational corruption, both students and professors provide homogeneous answers. The most reported reasons are the following;

- weak educational policies and university management
- low salaries
- social mindset/national mentality
- low level social/legal consciousness
- absence of punishment measures
- lack of a mature attitude of students towards higher education

For improvements of the education system in general and for preventing corruption in particular, students and professors again have similar opinions. They both think that both top-down and bottom-up structural changes are urgent. Proper policies, well developed educational programs and proper management of the workloads, alongside with strict detective and punishment measures will lower the risks of corruption and improve the quality of education, as well as improve study/teaching motivation.

The results of this study provide support to the exiting research in the field, although the sample size is very limited. However, deeper investigation and further research is still needed. Thus, these results serve to further develop the research design for my dissertation. Particularly, to focus on a detailed investigation of the relationship between mismanagement and educational corruption, close observation of university management characteristics; the way they communicate with stakeholders, fight and prevent corruption. The role of organizational culture in context of corruption that data results also emphasize the role of internal psychological factors regarding corrupt behavior.

Moreover, the emotional part of corruption is underestimated by the research so far, however, within the framework of the pilot study corruption is associated with negative emotions such as disappointment, frustration, and in some cases even hate and aggression. I assume that the close investigation of psychological factors that influence the decision-making process, to engage or not in corrupt activities could also enhance the chances of understanding these complex phenomena. Thus, based on the results of the literature review, as well as the limited data of the pilot study, this research shifts its focus onto the investigation of the psychology of corrupt behavior of university students and professors.

Appendix 2. Qualitative Interview Agenda

Faculty members

1. How common is Academic Misconduct in your university? Which forms are the most prevalent ones?
2. How does your university prevent/fight Academic Misconduct? Do you have anti-corruption regulations and/or Codes of Conduct?
3. How do you get informed about your university's anti-corruption initiatives? In your opinion, how effective are they so far?
4. What do you think is the position of the faculty members towards colleagues' engagement in Academic Misconduct?
5. What do you think is the position of the university administration towards faculty members' and students' engagement in Academic Misconduct?
6. What is the position of the students towards professors' and administrators' engagement in Academic Misconduct?
7. What is your personal position towards colleagues', students' and administrators' engagement in Academic Misconduct? How acceptable or non-acceptable is it for you?
8. What do you think justifies your, your colleagues', administrators' and students' engagement in Academic Misconduct?
9. Have you ever engaged in Academic Misconduct during your professional career? Would you remember an example?
10. In which cases will you be inclined to engage in Academic Misconduct?
11. In which cases will you resist engaging in Academic Misconduct?
12. What do you think are the main reasons of Academic Misconduct in your university?

Administrators

1. How common is Academic Misconduct in your university? Which forms are the most prevalent ones?
2. What do you think what are the main reasons of the existence/non-existence of Academic Misconduct in your university?
3. Do you have anti-corruption regulations? How do you design them?
4. Do you have Codes of Conduct/Ethics? How do you design them?
5. What mechanisms does your university execute to control Academic Misconduct?
6. How effective are your anti-corruption initiatives so far?
7. What are the main needs of the university to improve its anti-corruption practices?

Appendix 3: TBP Questionnaire

1. It is important to report about cheating by others.
agree : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : disagree
2. I will report cheating by my peer students.
true : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : false
3. I will report cheating by my friend.
true : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : false
4. Cheating is a common practice at the university.
agree : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : disagree
5. I think many of my peers cheat.
true : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : false
6. Many students cheat and do not get caught.
True : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : false
7. I think my professors assume that I cheat.
true : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : false
8. I think my peers assume that I cheat.
true : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : false
9. It is very easy to cheat in the assignments.
true : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : false
10. It is very easy to cheat in the exams.
true : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : false
11. My peers cheat and do not get caught.
true : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : false
12. Cheating is not controlled at the university.
agree : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : disagree
13. Cheating is not punished at the university.
agree : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : disagree
14. I might copy from someone on an exam.
true : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : false
15. I might use unapproved materials during an exam.
true : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : false
16. I might cheat the entire test/assignment.
true : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : false
17. It has happened that I copied from someone in an exam.
true : 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : false

18. It has happened that I used unapproved materials and notes during an exam/test.
true: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : false
19. I have helped my peers to cheat on an exam
true: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : false
20. It is important to report about the plagiarism by others.
agree: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : disagree
21. I will report the plagiarism by my peers.
true: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : false
22. I will report the plagiarism by my friend.
true: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : false
23. Plagiarism is a common practice at the university.
agree: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : disagree
24. I think Many of my peers plagiarize
agree: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : disagree
25. Downloading papers is a common practice at the university.
agree: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : disagree
26. Buying papers is a common practice at the university.
agree: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : disagree
27. I think my professors assume that I plagiarize.
true: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : false
28. I think my peers assume that I plagiarize.
true: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : false
29. It is easy to plagiarize the assignments at the university.
agree: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : disagree
30. Plagiarism is not controlled at the university.
agree: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : disagree
31. Plagiarism is not punished at the university.
agree: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : disagree
32. I might buy a paper from an agency.
true: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : false
33. I might download a paper from internet and present it as my own.
true: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : false
34. I might turn in other students works as my own.
true: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : false
35. I have turned in another student's work as my own.
true: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : false

36. I have bought a paper from an agency and turned in as my own.
true: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : false
37. I have downloaded a paper from internet and presented it as my own.
true: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : false
38. I have helped my peers to plagiarize.
true: 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : false

Ani Hovhannisyan

I am a dreamer with a problem-solving orientation who genuinely believes in the limitlessness of human potential. My purpose is to help others to embrace their uniqueness and create fulfilled and well-balanced lives.



Education

2015 - present	PhD candidate School of Humanity and Social Sciences (SHSS), Organization Studies and Cultural Theory (DOK), University of St. Gallen, Switzerland.
2011 - 2013	Masters' Degree in Psychology and Pedagogy Armenian State Pedagogical University (ASPU), Armenia.
2007 - 2011	Bachelors' Degree in Psychology and Pedagogy Armenian State Pedagogical University (ASPU), Armenia.

Practical experience

04/2018 - present	Institute of Business Education and Educational Management (IWP), University of St. Gallen (HSG), St. Gallen, Switzerland. Project Assistant (10%) Course evaluation: teaching analysis poll (TAP), supervision.
09/2018 - 09/2019	School of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of St. Gallen (HSG), St. Gallen, Switzerland. Research Assistant (30%) Research: research design, data collection, and data analysis
02/2015 - 08/2015	Gymnasium of the Armenian State Pedagogical University (ASPU), Yerevan, Armenia. Psychology teacher (50%) Teaching, organizing workshops on student well-being and emotional intelligence.
09/2013 - 08/2015	Armenian State Pedagogical University (ASPU), Yerevan Armenia. Assistant to vice rector on Education and Science (100%) Higher Education Management: designing strategic plans, developing policy reports, organizing/giving seminars and workshops.

Extracurricular activities

11/2020-present 02/2021-07/2021	Nor Hayq Educational Foundation Positive Psychology Specialization, University of Pennsylvania, Coursera.org.
2019 - present	St. Gallen Symposium, Academic Jury Member, St. Gallen, Switzerland.
2020	The science of well-being, Yale University (Coursera certificate), Coursera.org
2016-2020	Annual IGNITE conferences: purpose driven leadership and business, IGNITE movement, University of St. Gallen, Switzerland.
2017	Psychological aspects of educational corruption, guest lecture, Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, Freiburg im Breisgau Germany.
2017	Mixed Methods Research Design, Global School of Research Methods (GSERM), University of St. Gallen, Switzerland.
2016	Qualitative Research and Data Analysis, Global school of research methods (GSERM), University of St. Gallen, Switzerland.
2016	Case Study Methods, Global school of research methods (GSERM), University of St. Gallen, Switzerland.

Language and IT Skills

Armenian	Native Language
English	Professional working proficiency (university studies in English)
Russian	Professional working proficiency
German	Intermediate proficiency
Data analysis	Excellent skills in MAXQDA and ATLAS.ti, good skills in SPSS