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Knowledge Bias: Perceptions of Copying among Lecturers and Students of Education Case Study of a Teaching College

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Abstract- Everywhere in the world, the academically immoral and unethical behavior of copying in academic institutions no longer shocks anyone. In this study, the authors argue that this phenomenon is prevalent even within academic institutions of education intended for the training of teachers. That is, students who soon would be responsible for the ethical code of their students. This phenomenon of copying is based on three main factors: Students, the academic institution, and the teaching staff. The students' perception of copying was examined through questionnaires and it can be stated that the phenomenon is considered significantly normative. The lecturers' perception was examined through in-depth interviews and it is emphasized that they are indeed aware of the phenomenon being widespread. Nevertheless, they also think that the institution sets double standards regarding it. On the one hand, the academic institution declares its intent to stamp out the copying phenomenon, while simultaneously encouraging it by being overly tolerant and by not addressing the issue when it does arise in disciplinary committees. Therefore, a self-reinforcing cycle emerges with the students seeing the phenomenon as significantly normative, the academic institution setting double standards, and the lecturing staff finding itself stuck between a rock and a hard place when dealing with the problem.

Keywords: knowledge-bias; learning-processes; copying; ethical code; education.

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Knowledge Bias: Perceptions of Copying among Lecturers and Students of Education Case Study of a Teaching College

Yoav Gal [α] & Adiv Gal [σ]

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I. Introduction

It is not possible from past studies to conclusively conclude that academically immoral behavior among students of higher education is gender-related. Some studies find that the percentage of males behaving in an academically immoral way during their studies is greater than that among females (Bowers 1964; Jensen et al. 2002; Newstead et al. 1996). Others have found opposite results (Graham et al. 1994), and some have found no gender-related differences in academically immoral behavior during studies (Yardley et al. 2009). This study began with the main intent of identifying the general perception of education students towards copying, with the gender question remaining secondary. However, totally unexpectedly, over 96% of questionnaire responders in the chosen education college were women. Therefore, the results were gender biased by definition and so also were their ramifications.

However, the global phenomenon of copying, academically immoral behavior and transgression of ethical rules in colleges and universities has been increasing over the years (Ogilby 1995; Murdock and Anderman 2006; Schmelkin et al. 2008). Some persons, such the Dean of Duke University, have declared that 10% of students taking the final exam in Fuqua College of Business were caught copying (Conlin 2007). Others (McCade and Bowers 1994; Bowers 1964) speak of a much wider phenomenon, especially in institutions training future executives. In these institutions, the phenomenon reaches 50% of students who copy during their studies. Some allude to it as an epidemic (Simkin and McLeod 2010). According to their data, upwards of 80% of students copy during their studies. Additional studies back up these findings, and report high percentages of copying students, at 60% (Rokovski and Levi 2007), at 70% (Klien et al. 2007), and at 56% (McCabe et al. 2006).

The phenomenon has not passed over Israel either. Prof. Asa Kasher, an expert on ethics, states not only that the phenomenon is widespread in Israeli academia, but that it is also well known to the management of the university institutions and that they choose to ignore the subject (Kasher 2012). Kasher claims that this silence is part of the problem, and that ignoring the copying phenomenon does not fix it. Peled and Haldi (2011) also studied the phenomenon in three academic colleges in Northern Israel, and the results show that among Arabic-speakers copying is largely perceived as legitimate. This perception by students is accompanied by lowering of standards in academic institutions, intended to draw students paying particularly high tuition rates (Frey 2010).

The phenomenon of copying, academically immoral behavior and transgression of ethical rules in colleges and universities is based on three primary elements that mutually reinforce each other's decision making processes in a feedback loop. These three elements are:

- *Students*
- *Academic institution*
- *Teaching staff*

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From the students' point of view, there are many explanations and excuses for copying and academically immoral behavior. One of the main motivations for these improper behaviors among students is the desire for success, the perception that winning is all, and that all means are legitimate for achieving this goal (Simkin and McLeod 2010; Williams et al. 2010; Shu et al. 2011). Another reason is pressure, and there are many students who see copying as a legitimate means to deal with the rat-race and with the many demands to "cut corners" (Murdock and Anderman 2006; Williams et al. 2010). Other studies found another explanation for improper behavior among students in academic institutions, and they claim that there is great variance in the definition of moral behavior and ambiguity, such as Palgiat's definition (Jensen et al. 2002, 2008; Abdolmohammadi and Baker 2008). The murkiness in the definition and/or ambiguity regarding the question of what is included in the colleges' demands for academic integrity makes it difficult for the students. This ambiguity, and the demands from the students, which are different from those they are familiar with from high school, also cause the phenomenon of copying and lack of integrity during academic studies (Owunwanne et al. 2010). One should not think that academically immoral behavior is confined to the duration of studies in academic institutions and from then onwards all ethical rules are adhered to. Lovett-Hooper et al. (2007) found positive correlation among students between copying and general rule-breaking. Blankenship and Whitley (2000) also found a positive correlation between students who used a variety of false excuses and lies, and dangerous behaviors of reckless driving and drug use.

Sims (1993) and Thompson (2000) claim that academically immoral behavior of copying in academic institutions is a reflection of the immoral behavior that exists in the real life business world. It has also been found that there is a positive and significant correlation between lying at work and the frequency of copying in academic studies; that is, between unethical behavior at work and copying at studies (Sims 1993; Nonis and Swift 2001; Lawson 2004). The founder and president of Duke University's Center for Academic Integrity supports the claim that students are redefining morality in the academia. His claim is that peeking at the exam paper of the next student or the copying phenomenon simply aren't part of the lexicon of morality or ethics, and that these terms are "under the radar" for students (McCabe et al. 2006). One can also add to this group the students who are accountable only to themselves and do not see the assigned task as relevant to them. This is a sufficient excuse to reduce investment in studies and to actively seek out ways to copy. Occasionally this group will include students who did not understand the task at hand or did not fully understand the lecturer and they also fall into inappropriate behaviors (Williams et al. 2010; Anderman et al. 1998).

The fields of study which have most of the academically immoral student behavior are the sciences, technology, engineering, mathematics and business (Newstead et al. 1996; Marsden et al. 2005). In an attempt to neutralize the effect of the field of study, it was found that there are students who begin academic studies with a low skill level and who are required to deal with demands for skills they do not have or did not acquire in high school. When students lack skills such as reading, writing, materials composition, scientific thinking, etc., they tend more to adopt academically immoral behaviors to make up for their lacking and limited skills (Williams et al. 2010).

Technological developments are an aid to copying in academic institutions (Etter et al. 2006). Information availability only helps the students to shorten their learning curve and invest more time in cheating, copying and lack of academic integrity. Email, smartphones (Johnson and Martin 2005), Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and other social networks have made communications and information transfer easier and more accessible to students, and copying and pasting have become common (Ma et al. 2008). Instead of thinking of answers to questions, of integrating information or solving problems given in lectures, the students send a question to all the "friends" and wait for an answer. In addition, the rise of websites that provide written papers on all academic levels and problem solutions in return for payment are also a factor that increases the copying phenomenon and academically immoral behavior in academic institutions (Boehm et al. 2009).

But not all the blame and responsibility for this ethical failure can be placed on the students. The students themselves raise another reason for the trend of copying, academically immoral behavior and disobeying ethical rules in colleges and universities. This reason is the double standards held by the institutions themselves. The implicit or even explicit message sent out by the institutions includes lack of punishment or very lenient punishment for those caught copying, or, as the saying goes, the righteous suffer while the wicked triumph (West et al. 2004; Rettinger and Kramer 2008; Simkin and McLeod 2010).

In the commercial competition for the heart and wallet of the student, the institution tries to minimize the costs to the student in order to create "satisfied customers". The commonly held and popular view sees the higher education system as a producer-consumer relationship. Students and their parents are often seen as the main customers of the educational or academic institution and these institutions today accept and treat them as such (Douglas et al. 2006). The product in this case is the combination of the degree at the end of the process, together with the total educational experience.

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This experience includes the content of the studies, the quality of teaching and the material studied but also the management aspect, the quality of services and the social atmosphere in the institution (Gibson 2010). Customer satisfaction can be influenced by additional unique factors such as sufficiently rewarding post-graduation employment, and the expectation for a higher standard of living upon receipt of the degree (Browne et al. 1998). We can see that the management of the institution understands perfectly that it will profit if there is a high level of satisfaction among those studying there, that is, the customers. It is only logical that a satisfied customer will show a more positive attitude towards the institution and its processes than one with a low level of satisfaction (Tessema et al. 2012). As a result of this, satisfied customers are an important marketing asset for the institution and the accepted policy is to cultivate them in accordance with this understanding. From here the distance is short to making decisions that will discriminate between students in various selection processes in order to choose those students who will finish their studies with a high level of satisfaction. Accordingly, and unsurprisingly, it has been found that those who have a high grade point average experience greater satisfaction than those with a lower grade point average (Moro-Egido and Panades 2010). This is easily explained, but it is also easy to understand those decision makers and lecturers in the institution who would tend to be favorably biased towards those who show high levels of satisfaction while diverting those with lower levels of satisfaction to other study tracks, of lower prestige, lower quality, and preferably in other educational systems. Therefore, the evaluation and grading processes accompanying the learning processes in these conditions are suspect of being fundamentally biased. The bias here is in fact doubled, since in the first place those with high grades will be preferentially accepted, and in the second place, lacking sufficient applicants with high grades, the institution will lower its academic standards in order to generate higher grades for less qualified students as well, and so to turn them into satisfied customers.

The customers' satisfaction is important also because it will lead to: a) greater numbers of students registering to study in the next year, and b) sufficiently rewarding post-graduation employment, and the expectation for a higher standard of living upon receipt of the degree (Browne et al. 1998). Therefore, as part and parcel of the minimizing of costs there is also a lenient and very significantly forgiving attitude regarding adherence to the ethical code of the institution, minimal enforcement of copying prevention, and creation of a double standard which declares, on the one hand, that it is forbidden to copy, but on the other hand if the copying is not overt, the institution will turn a blind eye. We can see that the management of the institution understands perfectly that it will profit if there is a high level of satisfaction among those studying there, that is, the customers. It is only logical that a satisfied customer will show a more positive attitude towards the institution and its processes than one with a low level of satisfaction (Tessema et al. 2012).

In spite of the pressure to please the customers, the academic institutions fully understand that turning a blind eye, ignoring the copying phenomenon and tolerating improper and academically immoral behavior are causing accumulated damage to the dignity and prestige of the institution (Gulli et al. 2007). The decline in student academic morality and the accelerating rise in cheating, copying and academically immoral behavior in business schools have driven the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business to demand that ethics courses be put into the students' curricula (AACSB 2009). In addition, lack of academic integrity has long since transgressed the lecture hall boundaries and lecturer-student relations, and in many institutions the topic is addressed at institutional level (Boehm et al. 2009; Craig et al. 2010; Piascik and Brazeau 2010; Whitley and Keith-Spiegel 2002). In this manner an organizational culture is developing within the academic system that partially recognizes the existence of copying among students, who are clearly aware that that their behavior is not ethical, but that the temptation is too great to resist. The institutional system, in its desire to satisfy its customers' wants, turns a blind eye and so sets a double standard that de jure forbids but de facto permits.

More specifically regarding students undergoing training at colleges specializing in teacher training, the entire educational system in which they learn and are trained does not contribute to upholding ethical values. The dominant contemporary pattern of teacher training is of a bureaucratic educational system. In most cases, this is a world view and attitude which places its greatest emphasis on exams, grades and degrees. Even if educational institutions try to change and to lead changes, the accepted didactic practices in today's educational system depend greatly upon principles rooted in the theories of the latter half of the 19th century. In this period various opinion leaders began examining the issue of the education of the individual, and on the basis of this, schools were built in parallel to and in the same manner in which factories were constructed. The educational system known to us today is organized, generally speaking, in a fashion similar to the organization of an assembly line factory. That is, it is made up of the teacher, a board, and rows of pupils who sit during a defined time frame and write down the things said to them by the instructor, whether freely or by dictation. This was part of the concept of socialization, which saw the process of knowledge accumulation as a process in which without the support of a responsible adult the child could not survive and

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advance. In this process the pupil acquires a world view, skills, and the tools with which to meet professional demands. One can say with a great degree of confidence that the educational system cultivates conformity, and trains the next generation of workers to be a disciplined one. In this case conformity and going with the flow is achieved by encouraging the average type of student. The higher education system emphasized conformity and the internalization of occupational norms by teaching students to think within the boundaries of the field of study. Since the educational and the higher education systems invest significant and unceasing effort into sorting the students within them according to various metrics, the students are taught to think in a certain way and undergo socialization in accordance with their field of study and in accordance with their perceived status. It is not the place for this article to expand upon and to go into the details of the extensive literature existing regarding this, but an example of this kind of process can be seen in the submission guidelines for a student paper in the 2013 Fall semester, in one of the teacher training undergraduate colleges:

Paper number 1, submission date 8.12.13

A. *You must answer one out of the two questions.*
B. *The length of the answer must be between 2-3 typed pages and when I request 2-3 pages I mean it (1.5 spaced).*
C. *Be sure to formulate your claim and to substantiate your arguments solely on the basis of the material learned in class and on the reading material. Do not rely on other sources (it will reduce your grade).*
D. *Avoid giving examples (whether personal examples or examples given during the lecture) and stick to the relevant theories.*
E. *Do not create a cover page or table of contents. Do not submit your paper in binders, plastic slipcovers or by electronic mail. Print your paper, staple it in the upper right hand corner and on the first page state your name, identification number and the number of the question you answered. Do not copy the question. Every work submitted in any other format will not be examined.*
F. *The work must be submitted by 8.12.13 in class. Students who do not appear in class must verify that their work is submitted to my mailbox until 8.12.13 at 19:00. Papers submitted later that this without my written approval will not be examined.*

In addition to the fact that the tone of the guidelines is rather belligerent, one should pay special attention to guideline C. This is a sharp and clear message that in order to succeed in the assignment one must faithfully reproduce the views of the lecturer, in accordance with his statements in class, and that anything else will be met with sanctions. This, of course, is not a learning process, especially not in an institution meant to train teachers. This guideline makes no didactic or pedagogical sense, and certainly is not appropriate for a culture of learning out of interest in proper learning processes. Moreover, what is the significance of the guidelines written above? The answer to that question is that the lecturer sends a very clear message to his students: There is the right 'School" Solution', and that solution is what I teach you in class. Take note that no one really cares what kind of learning process you are going through as long as on the one hand you do not fall below a certain minimal level of achievement, and that on the other hand you do not burden the system by thinking creatively. When this message is mapped to the dimension of student decision making and of cost/benefit analysis, the one educational ramification that this kind of message delivers is: copy, and on the one hand avoid getting caught while on the other hand do so in accordance with the lecturer's formulations.

The second section of the task, which has not been quoted above, is equally problematic since there is no clear guideline in the task framework. In addition, from analysis of the case it was found that there was no prior significant discussion of the required analysis process, and that the learning method was based on that the students were required, in addition to the obligatory classroom lectures, to read both mandatory and discretionary literature, without any reference to them being made in the classroom. That is, on the one hand the student is obligated to read on his own cognizance but without the lecturer's guidance. On the other hand, the student still has to address the material in the literature in accordance with the lecturer's intent. What is the result of all this? That almost immediately there develops a brisk market in summaries written by those few students who managed to get the meaning of the articles or who managed to obtain organized summaries from previous years without bothering to actually learn the material. It is especially worthwhile to read one of the messages received in the email inbox of one of the most highly regarded students, which summarized the issue excellently, and is an example of the lively conversation that takes place and is meant to obtain one of the summaries that would help deal with the lecturer's demands:

> "*I'm sending you this email after receiving many requests and pleas from desperate students over the past two days who have become addicted to your summaries, and can't study without them. I am therefore turning to you again, hoping that I'm not disturbing you. I request that you be so kind and generous as to send me the summaries you have made of the articles we will be tested on in two weeks' time*".

In another case, reported in the course of research in the same college, one lecturer explained in the following words to his students:

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"*I am not qualified to judge your learning processes, but only the knowledge you have acquired. You need to answer the questions on the exam using the same words used in the lecture in order to get a high grade. Even if you obviously know the material but do not make use of the right combinations of words, you will not receive the maximal score*".

As has been stated before, in this sort of case the lecturer communicates a very clear message to his students: There is a 'school' answer, and that answer is what I have said to you in class, and your learning process is unimportant as long as the right answer is provided. When this information is transferred to the decision making dimension and the cost / benefit analysis of the student, the insight given by this kind of message is that one should choose the well trodden and well understood path of school solutions, without caring how the solution has been obtained. This kind of learning process not only causes the lecturer to become indifferent and to fall to the lowest possible level of teaching, but also creates very strong resistance to changes that might demand greater effort.

One should remember that regarding this group, that of the lecturers, there is relatively very little research literature addressing the question of adherence to a code of ethics. But the vicious cycle model, made up of students, academic institution and lecturers, indicates that the lecturer group is situated in a complicated system of pressures, since this is its source of income, sometimes the main source of income for the lecturer's family. In a stormy and unstable economic world, it is not a simple matter to take one's occupational security lightly, and few would want to jeopardize their economic future for vague ethical principles. That is, on the one hand one does not want to blatantly violate the declarations of the institutional system, and of course it may be dangerous to go against the double standard. Therefore, the lecturers will seemingly adhere to a minimal level of the ethical code, but will ignore, as much as possible, ethical transgressions by students. On the other hand, the lecturers are exposed to student criticism and student feedback surveys, which in this aspect is intimidating in that their employment contract may not be renewed, which would harm their financial security and their status as lecturers in the institution (Gal and Gal 2014). The lecturers, even more than the students, are directly exposed to the institutional system's double standard and to possible penalty by negative feedback in the student surveys. They therefore, just like the students, have decision making processes that lead them to cost benefit analysis. The result is that lecturers tend as much as possible to ignore ethical failure, and so to strengthen the students' perception that they are indeed acting correctly, and therefore the lecturers tend not to file complaints regarding breaches of academic ethics against transgressing students (Parameswaran 2007). By not filing complaints against copying students, not only is the phenomenon not eradicated, indeed the opposite is the case. Lack of response leads to spreading of the copying phenomenon and of academically immoral behavior (Schmelkin et al. 2008).

In a vicious circle, the lecturer avoids risk by not taking any strong steps against student behavior, and this in turn encourages the students to think that copying is the accepted norm, even though unethical. The considerations of both the lecturers and the students are strengthened by the academic institution's double standard, which arises from the desire to ensure satisfied customers. The question becomes even more interesting when the students are teachers in training. That is, those who will soon find themselves standing before a classroom of pupils and will responsible for safeguarding the ethical values that they themselves do not uphold. In this context it would be interesting to know how the educators of these future teachers perceive the phenomenon, which is the subject of this study.

II. Research Methods

The attitudes of students of education were gathered by an attitudes questionnaire (table 1) which was correctly filled out by 185 first-year and third-year students (table 2).

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Table 1: The questionnaire

Question#	Question description
1	I think that copying in an exam is a serious matter and should have significant consequences
2	The way I see it, there are many students who think that copying should be addressed forgivingly
3	Given the choice, students would choose most of their courses based on difficulty, preferring the easiest
4	Students, when choosing courses, will generally choose courses that interest them
5	There are some courses that do not interest me but that is no reason to neglect studies
6	When a student is not able to enter the courses he wants, he will consider copying in order to improve his grade
7	The way I see it, a rise in the level of knowledge correlates with a rise in the level of motivation to study
8	In my opinion, as one progresses in one's studies, there is less desire to work and there is more motivation to cut corners
9	Students who are close to finishing their studies appreciate greater honesty in exams
10	In my opinion, a first year student will feel good about helping a friend during an exam
11	A final year student has no strength left and no desire to devote himself to studies
12	First year students have a lot of motivation and desire to be noticed in their studies
13	Students in my department copy more than students in other departments
14	I think that the copying phenomenon exists to an equal degree everywhere in academia

The answers to the closed-ended questionnaire were on a 1-5 Likert scale. 1 means "completely disagree" while 5 means "strongly agree".

Table 2 : General facts about the participating students

Major field of study (n)	Minor field of study (n)	Year of study(n)	Gender(n)
Preschool	Special Education(63)	First(43)	Men(1)
			Women(42)
		Third(20)	Men(0)
			Women(20)
	Dialogic(55)	First(35)	Men(1)
			Women(34)
		Third(20)	Men(1)
			Women(19)
Special Education(26)	Sciences(26)	First(14)	Men(0)
			Women(14)
		Third(12)	Men(0)
			Women(12)
Elementary(21)	Sciences(21)	First(9)	Men(0)
			Women(9)

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Major field of study (n)	Minor field of study (n)	Year of study(n)	Gender(n)
		Third(12)	Men(0)
			Women(12)
High school(20)	Sciences(20)	First(12)	Men(4)
			Women(8)
		Third(8)	Men(2)
			Women(6)

The lecturers' attitudes were discovered via the use of in depth interviews. The in depth interview included 7 main questions (table 3) which were the base for the interview that was then flexibly adapted onwards according to the lecturers' answers. All in all, eight college lecturers were interviewed, all of whom held Ph.D. degrees and were of lecturer grade with tenure in an academic institution.

Table 3 : The questions asked of the lecturers, with special emphasis

Question number	Question	Special emphasis
1	Tell us about yourself and your connection to teaching and education	Personal development, the place of teaching in your personal life, the reasons you came to be teaching teachers
2	Students claim that the copying phenomenon is practically a norm. How is it expressed when you meet with students of education? Can you give an example?	Focus on exams and seminar papers
3	Studies claim that students come to academic institutions mainly to integrate into the workforce (to purchase a degree). What is the significance of this information? What are the reasons that students of education choose this occupation? How is this expressed in your meeting with students of education? Can you give an example?	What is the distance between education, self-development and 'purchasing a degree'?
4	Studies claim that technological development permits the 'cutting of corners' in ethical values during the school year. What is the significance of this information? How is this expressed in your meeting with students of education? Can you give an example?	
5	The phenomenon of copying, academically immoral behavior and disregard for ethical rules has been increasing globally. What is the significance for the teachers of the future? How is this opinion expressed among students of education? Can you give an example?	
6	What is the significance of the professional development process of the students during their training in the seminar for academically immoral behavior and disregard for ethical rules? Give examples.	
Question number	Question	Special emphasis
7	What, in your opinion, are the motives students have when they come to study?	
8	What do you think is the attitude of the academic institution towards academically immoral behavior and disregard for ethical rules?	

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III. Discussion

Although it was not the original intention of this study, the fact that mostly women answered the questionnaire (about 96 percent of the responders) prevented the possibility of conducting a gender-based comparison and the results are significantly biased on the base of gender. If anyone had the impression that women who choose the field of education and teaching as their future career would be characterized by a higher level of ethical values than that described in the literature as characterizing the typical student, then the findings show that this is not the case. The women in the college of education chosen as the test case are no different in their outlook than any other average academic rule breaker throughout the academic world, as described in the wide body of literature dealing with this topic. In addition, from a summary of the findings above it is rather clear that the female students understand well that the copying phenomenon is wrong and is incompatible with accepted ethical values, and that they know this throughout the course of their studies. The responses to question no. 1 indicate this clearly, as well as the significant negative correlation between questions 1 and 2. This finding is consistent with the many depictions in the literature dealing with the topic, and it is apparent that the students involved are not 'innocent'. That is, their actions do not result from ignorance or from a lack of knowledge, but are transgressions performed in full knowledge and awareness of the ethical significance of ethically improper behavior in a learning framework. In spite of this, the students choose to use this method in order to improve grades or to help a friend, as arises from the answers to questions 6 and 10.

When unlawful behavior is widespread, carried out with the understanding and awareness that it is wrong, with disregard for possible penalties and damage, the question that arises is, why? The answer is far less complex than it may have seemed. The lecturers themselves answer this question very clearly when they state that the perception among students of copying as a norm receives positive and continuous reinforcement from the double standards set by the academic institution that wishes to create satisfied customers. The lecturers are themselves greatly constrained in their choice of actions, being under pressure both from the students on the one hand, and by the institution which is their employer on the other, and oftentimes choose to turn a blind eye to the phenomenon, for as long as it is possible to do so. This of course is a feedback loop that only encourages the prevalence of the ethically improper behavior.

IV. Questionnaire Results: Student of Education Perception of the Copying Question

As stated in the beginning of this paper, out of 185 valid questionnaires that were collected, in a completely unplanned manner only 8 were filled out by men, so the study results can certainly be seen as gender biased. In addition, as can be seen from the questions above, there are various formulations for the different aspects of the problem at hand. In order to avoid the possibility of that people would answer on autopilot, both positively worded and negatively worded formulations were used, in such a way that the answer would be strong agreement, or strong disagreement in such a way as to create reversely scored answers.

Examining the descriptive results of the sample shows that out of all the questions the most extreme average result (mean=1.52) was also the one with the lowest standard deviation (STD=0.83), this namely being the answer to question no. 13: "Students in my department copy more than students in other departments". The interpretation of this result is that students in general do not agree with this statement, and in a relatively focused manner. One should note the way the question is phrased, taking it as given that students copy and the only question is whether in the immediate company of the respondent the phenomenon is more common. The answer, as stated, was negative, but now the question arises as to whether the adamant negative response was in regard to the general statement about students copying, or that perhaps it was the respondents' intent to state that in their immediate environment no one copies at all. The answer to this question can be derived from the responses to other questions. Question no. 2, which states: "The way I see it, there are many students who think that copying should be addressed forgivingly", had the average answer of moderate agreement (mean=2.59), with a relatively large variance (STD=1.23). Question no. 8, which states: "In my opinion, as one progresses in one's studies, there is less desire to work and there is more motivation to cut corners", the average answer was also one of moderate agreement (mean=2.76) and a relatively large variance (STD=1.10). Question no. 14, which states: "I think that the copying phenomenon exists to an equal degree everywhere in academia", also had an average answer of moderate agreement (mean=3.31), and a relatively large variance (STD=1.28). If we were to add the average answer to question no. 11: "A final year student has no strength left and no desire to devote himself to studies", which came out to a degree of agreement (mean=3.08, STD=1.12), then it is reasonably clear from these answers that the students in the college of education are definitely aware that the copying phenomenon exists in their

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environment. The qualification they make is that they are not to be accused of copying more than others, but only to the same degree as others. Therefore, according to the accepted rule of 'everyone is doing it', and although de jure it is the wrong thing to do, one should not, in practice, regard the matter too harshly.

When examining the Pearson's coefficient (alpha=0.05, n=185) of the linear relationship between every two variables in the questionnaire, additional results arose that define the students' perception of copying. A significant and strong correlation, especially for this type of study (rho=0.400), was found between question no. 2, which states: "The way I see it, there are many students who think that copying should be addressed forgivingly", and question no. 6, which states: "When a student is not able to enter the courses he wants, he will consider copying in order to improve his grade". In contrast, a significant negative correlation (rho=-0.171) was found between question no. 2 and question no. 7: "The way I see it, a rise in the level of knowledge correlates with a rise in the level of motivation to study". That is, those who agreed that there are students who are forgiving towards copying did not agree that there is a connection between the level of knowledge and the level of motivation to study. When the direct link between questions no. 6 and no. 7 was examined, no significant correlation was found, but by indirectly measuring the correlation of each of the questions with question no. 2 a more complex picture was seen. The students answered question no. 6 with an average answer of moderate disagreement (mean=2.30, STD=1.19), and question no. 7 with the average answer of strong agreement (mean=3.92, STD=0.98), but the correlation indicated, on the one hand, a significant positive link between the tendency to be lenient with regard to copying and justifying copying due to being in a course not of one's choosing, and, on the other hand, a significant negative link with acknowledgement of the connection between level of knowledge and level of devotion to studies.

In spite of the facts above, the average answer to question no. 1: "I think that copying in an exam is a serious matter and should have significant consequences" was of moderate agreement (mean=3.34, STD=1.18), similarly to the answer to question no. 2 which states: "The way I see it, there are many students who think that copying should be addressed forgivingly", and which had the average answer of moderate agreement (mean=2.59, STD=1.23). When examining the correlation, however, a significantly negative correlation was found (rho=-0.172). That is, whoever agrees with the fact that copying is something that should be addressed seriously also thinks that the phenomenon should not be dealt with lightly.

An additional, important, significant and positive correlation (rho=0.320) was found between question no. 6, which states: "When a student is not able to enter the courses he wants, he will consider copying in order to improve his grade", and question no. 10, which states: "In my opinion, a first year student will feel good about helping a friend during an exam".

The variable with which the general perception of the students regarding the subject of copying can be estimated consists of the sum of the answers to questions 2 + 6 + 8 + 10, which are all answers that express explicit agreement with the copying phenomenon. In order to examine whether the learning process itself had effect on this perception, special emphasis was placed in certain questions in order to distinguish between first year and last year students. It would seem from the results that there is indeed such a difference between study years. This is in light of the average responses to questions no. 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 that express agreement with the statements that characterize differences. In question no. 8, which states: "In my opinion, as one progresses in one's studies, there is less desire to work and there is more motivation to cut corners", the average answer was of moderate agreement (mean=2.76, STD=1.10). In question no. 9, which states: "Students who are close to finishing their studies appreciate greater honesty in exams", the average answer was of moderate agreement (mean=3.36, STD=1.37). In question no. 10, which states: "In my opinion, a first year student will feel good about helping a friend during an exam", the average answer was of moderate agreement (mean=2.66, STD=1.15). In question no. 11, which states: "A final year student has no strength left and no desire to devote himself to studies", the average answer was of moderate agreement (mean=3.08, STD=1.12). In question no. 12, which states: "First year students have a lot of motivation and desire to be noticed in their studies", the average answer was of strong agreement (mean=4.27, STD=0.93).

An F-test conducted to examine the variances between the results of the first year students and those of the third year students showed that there was no statistically significant difference between the variances (F=0.707, P=0.246). A T-test performed to compare the results of last year students with those of first year students showed that there was no statistically significant difference in student attitudes between the years (One-tailed t-test, t= 1.653, P=0.103).

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F-Test Two-Sample for Variances

Novices	Seniors	
10.549	9.957	Mean
9.080	10.480	Variance
113	72	Observations
112	71	Df
0.8664		F
0.2464		P(F<=f) one-tail
0.7070		F Critical one-tail

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Equal Variances

Novices	Seniors	
10.549	9.957	Mean
9.080	10.480	Variance
113	72	Observations
9.623		Pooled Variance
0		Hypothesized Mean Difference
183		Df
1.267		t Stat
0.103		P(T<=t) one-tail
1.653		t Critical one-tail

V. In-Depth Interviews: Lecturer Perceptions of the Student Copying Phenomenon

It may be that the most worrying finding in this research is that every one of the eight lecturers who participated in the in depth interviews, all Ph.D.s with many years of teachers training experience, acknowledged the fact that the copying phenomenon exists as a relatively accepted norm. Moreover, none of the interviewees claimed that students training themselves to be teachers were ethically different from any other student. That is, the lecturers see the students training themselves to be the educators of society's young as completely ordinary students, acting in accordance to a cost / benefit ratio, just like any ordinary students, and the choice of education as a vocation had no influence on their actual behavior during their studies. Beyond the ethical failure of the copying phenomenon, the topic of the lack of discipline was also expounded upon. D., for example, emphasized the topic of lack of discipline throughout the interview with her, and repeatedly noted the difficulties caused by faulty behavior upon the learning processes.

"*This [the lack of discipline – G.G.] is a very painful point. I raise the issue in every staff meeting and the behavior [of the students – G.G.] is disrespectful. There are 'scenes', as I see it, in which you say: This is not good, this is not good. Not among people who are going to be teachers. I can give you an example: There was an exam, and at the end of the exam the tester came to me, saying: Here, have a look at this, I wrote it all down. She wrote down an entire page of infractions of discipline during the exam. For example, there was a student who exited the room in the middle of the exam to speak on the phone. What is the meaning of this? I asked [the student – G.G.]: you are a teacher. Do you permit your pupils to leave the room in the middle of an exam to talk on the phone? The tester also reported two other test takers who chatted incessantly during the exam and the tester said it was a 'catastrophe'. My conclusion is that when a person is a student then he is a student, and he has a kind of box through which he totally cannot see in which direction he is going. He is a student, and students are permitted 'X' things by the institution, or that the institution does not emphasize their importance. There are codes of behavior that the institution can make clear, and should make clear [vigorously emphasizing by pounding on the table – G.G.], one two three, and copying falls into this. Students, if you are too lax with them, they cannot resist the temptation and then they copy, because they need the grades. I shout it out at every staff meeting and feel very alone in this fight.*"

This claim, which is not made only by D., when seen in the context of decision making processes, very clearly confirms that there is a perception of copying as being basically wrong, but seen in the light of the institution's double standards, they are not seen by the students as being a real wrongdoing. Therefore, in the student's cost / benefit analysis of getting the highest

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grade possible with the minimal effort, there is no real fault in copying. There is great flexibility in the use of the word ethics, and the disciplinary norm in general is more open, including within it the question of copying.

Another lecturer, S., made it very clear when she said:

"*I agree with the students that the copying phenomenon is a norm, and it is a norm everywhere, including the teacher training college. The students did indeed choose to study education, but they are not yet educators. They don't see themselves as educators. They have to pass the test, and they have a task that they have to complete with maximal success. They don't see it as a values issue at all, rather as: I have a goal, I have a mission, and I want to pass it successfully.*

Adherence to a value system and maintaining an ethical code is something that one gets from his home background, but students today see it all as a ratio of cost to benefit. In theory there is a disciplinary committee mechanism, but it's not an everyday occurrence, and I don't know of a single student of mine who was expelled. I do, however, know of a student who came before the disciplinary committee after he was caught copying but immediately enlisted legal counsel who proceeded to 'attack' the college and the committee, and the matter was smoothed over. He wasn't even expelled from the course. There is an official regulation and institutional declaration that copying is forbidden, but under the radar the phenomenon continues to exist. The fact that students perceive copying as a norm is a fact, and the double standard set by the institution also contributes to this. One could bypass the ethical problem by ceasing the use of the old style of testing, but that's not happening. The great majority of lecturers prefer the old style exams because it's easier. It's learning by rote that can be checked by computer in a few minutes."

In fact, in all the in-depth interviews, in various formulations and varying emphases, there is the repeated assertion that a self-reinforcing feedback loop exists that begins with the perception of copying as a normative act in order to achieve the maximum benefit in return for the least effort on the part of the students, continues with the institution which in its turn has a policy of double standards that declares on the one hand that the value system must be upheld, while on the other hand turns a blind eye as much as possible to the phenomenon, and ending up with lecturers who find themselves between a rock and a hard place, between their desire to safeguard their place of employment and the need to compromise with both student norms and institutional norms, so that their most common mode of coping behavior is to try not to antagonize anyone. This behavior in turn strengthens the students' perception that copying is a legitimate norm. This vicious cycle, described above in the literary survey, is composed of students – academic institution – lecturers, and was repeatedly mentioned in all the in depth interviews with the lecturers. All of them, in varying degrees, complained that the lecturer in the academic system is subject to a complicated system of pressures resulting mainly in ignoring the copying phenomenon as much as possible without exceeding the accepted norm, which is in any case quite lax. That is, a minimal adherence to the ethical code and ignoring of ethical breaches by students.

In an interview with L., she described how she became an educator of teachers as a development based on chance, without advance intent or a goal oriented value system. L. says of herself that although she sees the copying phenomenon as unacceptable at an ethical level, she can understand it on the psychological level. That is, already at the beginning of the interview, student copying arises as an existing and common phenomenon. It would seem that when entering the role of a student, there is an automatic shirking of the value of integrity. L. understands, on the psychological level, the axiom of the student who wants to achieve the maximum accomplishment with the minimum amount of effort, which brings with it a moral failure. She does not think it acceptable, but when she catches a student in the act she politely asks him to do the work again. This is in spite of the fact that according to the college regulations, copying requires disciplinary action. Even in the case of a wholly-copied work, the only consequence was that the student was required to redo the work. When lesser infractions are detected, the students are only required to correct them. L. emphasized that the students tend to complain vigorously whenever they are asked to exert themselves in their studies. The students explain away their unwillingness to invest themselves in their studies by their having to work in parallel to studying and they should not be overburdened. Their working also legitimizes a lower standard of adherence to ethical standards. Student complaints also in many cases cause lecturers to lower standards and to regard their role as being in a workplace where they have to compromise with the situation. L. does indeed think that the academic institution's fear of confrontation with lawyers and with students during disciplinary committee proceedings explicitly creates a double standard. Therefore a situation is created wherein the institutional system generally supports the copying phenomenon, and the lecturers do not desire to confront the issue and give up on fighting it.

G. also arrived at education by chance, not because of a lofty ideal, but more through the power of inertia. G. also knows of the phenomenon, and can even point out lecturers who lower the level of demands from the students and raise the grades they give out in order to be liked by the students. He even pointed out an exam that leaked out to the students before the exam day, and when the incident was discovered and the lecturer wanted to cancel it, the academic institution did

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not permit him to do so. He claims that this 'rotten' situation is widespread and many lecturers do not want to confront either the institution or the students. The students perceive that there is a difference between the legal standing and the moral standing, and in many cases legality trumps although the act may be morally and ethically wrong. G. thinks that the system in general does not give backing to the lecturers who may want to uphold ethical standards. In his view, the entire system has to change, and one should avoid as much as possible giving tasks to the students that will almost certainly bring about copying.

VI. Summary and Concluding Remarks

Academically immoral behavior and disregard for ethical rules in colleges and universities is a phenomenon that has long since ceased to be a theoretical question on the fringe. The copying phenomenon has become a behavioral norm with considerable references in professional literature, in scientific conferences, and with widespread research activity. The copying phenomenon rests on a set with three main elements that reinforce each other's decision making in a process of mutual feedback. These three elements are: a) The students and their attitude towards the obligatory behavioral norms; b) The academic institution and the set of messages and values which it expresses and enforces; and c) The teaching staff and its need to bridge between the double standards system on the one hand, and the demands of the students, on the other hand.

From the students' point of view, one of the major reasons driving the copying phenomenon is the desire to receive a high grade, and all means are acceptable in order to achieve this goal. The institutional system on its part supports this trend by its own failure, which is expressed in its double standard. This is an implicit or explicit message expressed by the institutional system, and includes lack of punishment or limited punishment for transgressions. The view of the higher education system as a system of relations between producer and consumer leads to the situation where students and their parents are in many cases considered to be the main clients of the educational or academic institution, and these institutions care very much that their customers feel satisfied. Therefore, as part of the desire to reduce costs for the student there is also a very significantly forgiving and lax attitude towards questions of compliance with the institutions' ethical code, minimal prevention of copying, and creation of a mixed message that declares that while it is indeed wrong to copy, as long as the student doesn't go too far, it will be overlooked. The group of lecturers, which composes the third element, is under pressure of having to safeguard its livelihood and personal position. In a world which has unstable job security, it is no surprise that the lecturers are hesitant to jeopardize their economic future for vague ethical values. That is, the declarations of the institutional system must not be broken, and of course the double standard cannot be directly confronted. Therefore, the lecturing staff will minimally and seemingly adhere to the values of the ethical code, but will ignore, as far as they are able, ethical transgressions by students. Similarly to the decision making processes of the students, the lecturers also act according to a cost / benefit analysis. The result is that in a self-reinforcing process, the lecturers turn a blind eye so as not to involve themselves in an undesirable outcome that could develop if they were to take an adamant stand against the students' behavior, and so strengthen the students' perception that copying is an accepted, if not ethical, behavioral norm. The institution in its turn strengthens the considerations of both the students and the lecturers by the double standard it sets, trying to ensure satisfied customers.

The main significance of the findings of this research is that 'business as usual' is no longer a viable option. The blurring of boundaries between permitted and forbidden, between right and wrong, and in general the value system that up till now had been considered clear and unambiguous, no longer supports this condition. There are no 'magic bullet' solutions to this problem, but it is clear that the way in which the student learns and is assessed should be significantly overhauled, and not with minor cosmetic changes. As the saying goes, "If the flame has fallen among the cedars, what will the wall moss say?", and if students of education see no fault in copying, we cannot criticize students from other disciplines for whom the values of education and ethics are not necessarily their motivating factors in studying. Therefore, "The writing is on the wall" is the right idiom for "the future is predetermined". The idiom generally implies that a bad event is imminent and the expression originates from the Book of Daniel (Old Testament), Chapter 5.

This study's findings reaffirm that no gender based differences were found in the perception of copying, and women as students do not differ in their attitude towards this subject from the findings reported in the literature regarding students in general. As for the fact that the students sampled in this work were all students of education who, at least in theory, should be motivated by ethical values, the results indicate that the respondents from the college of education were aware of the fact that the copying phenomenon was certainly occurring in their own environment. They do not, however, believe that they should be accused of copying in greater frequency than anyone else, but only to the same degree. Therefore, according to the "everybody's doing it" rule, although de jure it may be wrong, the phenomenon should not be addressed too harshly.

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In the course of this research, and contrary to the research hypothesis, senior students were not found to have different attitudes towards copying than did novice students. Although these were students of education who were to find themselves shortly standing in a position of authority before a class of pupils in which they were functioning as teachers responsible for upholding their students' ethical code, no difference in their attitudes could be detected.

Finally, a point that is relatively sparsely covered in the professional literature, is that the lecturing staff, in a series of in depth interviews, acknowledged the existence of the copying phenomenon as a relatively accepted norm. Moreover, none of the interviewees claimed that the students training to be teachers were any different in their values from any other student. That is, the lecturers saw their students, who are training themselves to be the educators of the next generation, as completely ordinary students acting on the basis of a cost / benefit analysis typical of any ordinary student, and the choosing of teaching as a vocation had no effect on their behavior during their studies.

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