

Ethical practices and ethical dilemmas in universities education essay

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The article is entitled, "(Un) Ethical Practices and Ethical Dilemmas in Universities: Academic Leaders' Perceptions" was written by Lisa Catherine Ehrich, Neil Cranston, Megan Kimber and Karen Starr in 2012. In the article, the authors reported on a qualitative component of a study that investigated middle-level academic leaders' involvement in (un)ethical practices as well as ethical dilemmas in their everyday labour. The article involves an electronic survey that had been distributed to academic leaders from universities in three Australian states. The article concentrates on three major findings of the study: first, " the messy context of universities is providing a fertile ground for ethical dilemmas to flourish; second, the two main categories of unethical practices identified by participants were academic dishonesty and inappropriate behaviour towards staff and students and third, the ethical dilemmas that emerged focused on the academic leaders' strong sense of professional ethics that were in conflict with an ethic of care, supervisors' directives, and the rules and policies of the organisation" (cited in the article's Abstract, p. 99).

Critical Review of the Article

The article starts by assessing some relevant literature studies that present three elements such as the recent changes in the background of university context, the influence of the changes on practices of academics and its leaders. Next, the article presented research related to diverse literature types regarding unethical conduct in universities. Lastly, the article discussed several theoretical approaches that are necessary for background knowledge on ethical decision-making. First and foremost, there is importance of knowing the meaning of ethics, such as the ones indicated by

Hosmer (1987: 91 as cited in p. 100) as the "study of proper thought and conduct". This definition implies that ethics sanctions the proper nature of thinking, reasoning as well as behaviour of a particular individual and or group. When dealing with ethics formation, ethical leaders practically want to continually behave according to ethics; therefore they set ethical standards and reward ethical conduct (Minkes et al., 1999). Peter Singer has asserted that ethics can be understood as a "set of rules, principles or ways of thinking that guide, or claim authority to guide, the actions of a particular group" (Singer 1994: 4 as cited in p. 100). Agreeing that ethics is vital to values generation as well as application by the parties involved, nowadays we are seeing people being bombarded with examples of unethical behaviour such as reported in this article in the area of higher education and this conforms to public awareness as well as the media as a whole. There have been ethical concerns by university students and staff such as the ones that involve intellectual theft or stealing or, in other words, unethical conduct surrounding plagiarism. In a similar manner other activities such as accepting gifts from students in exchange for a passing grade can be construed as a form of plagiarism. The latter point is reflected in the insights of Robie and Keeping (2004) as well as those of Ashford and Davis (2006). Nowadays, there is a heightened interest in all levels of education and some measures of reform as well as restructuring have begun in many countries, in some respects created by the knowledge explosion and emerging technologies. There has been criticism also of executive performance in the higher levels of education. There has been much pressure placed on university outcomes and this pressure has created a degree of unrest and, in

some cases, inconsistency in teaching practices. Getting people through the course, no matter what, appears too rampant in some institutions according to this article. As well, the reduction of government funding to institutions of higher learning in some countries has created another problem for the executives in these institutions. The literature base of the article further explains about the commodification of universities with education being marketed as a product to be bought and sold. Often the reduction in funding causes universities to employ teaching staff on casual and short-term contracts, thus being considered as disposable assets by university management. The value of this practice is the perspective of Pring (in Fitzmaurice, 2008 as cited in the article p. 100). In the article there are discussions on academic power and linking this with the influences of managerialism that focuses on certain academic job responsibilities with the apparent outcome that academics today have lost their autonomy as well as direction. This is of course one outcome of the continuing drift toward managerialism that has been evident nowadays. The article further elaborates that the unethical conduct conducted by leaders is said to happen when they exercise pressures on staff to perform in unethical ways. This point is supported by authors Campbell (2003) and Helton and Ray (2005). The article concentrates on one specific example namely the schooling context such as limiting parents' information, which ideally is contrary to the beliefs of parents regarding to best interests of students. You might want to rephrase this last bit. What exactly did the article say? In addition, the article tackles the problem of the emergence of ethical dilemmas and that these dilemmas can be decisions ' that require a choice among competing sets of

principles, often in complex and value laden contexts' (Ehrich, Cranston & Kimber 2005: 137 as cited in p. 101). The article elaborates that the emergence of such dilemmas is unsurprising and are an outcome of the pressures and complexities of work within modern organisations (Whitton, 1998). In the process, universities are multifaceted, pressured settings where academic front-runners are confronted with challenging pressures as well forces when making decisions that upset students, associates, and business partners. This situation is true even in present times, most particularly in the area of higher education. among structure as well as size of demand for higher education and of labour expectations and social structures. I don't know what you mean here or why you need to elaborate as you have. The article then supports the notion of Fitzmaurice (2008 as cited in p. 101) that teaching in universities provides opportunities for ethical dilemmas to arise as judgements are required in complex situations where there are no simple solutions. So????? The article also has presented the personal research conducted by the authors, some 174 academics across three Australian universities in three different states. Two-thirds of the 174 had observed and experienced ethical dilemmas and indicated that such dilemmas are reasonably common. This finding is supported by Cranston, Ehrich, Kimber and Starr (2012). The article notes that ethical issues in research tend to be given a great deal of attention, via specially established committees that oversee research conduct. This overseeing or monitoring of ethical behaviour is in contrast to teaching practices in universities, where ethical issues may not be raised, as pointed by Wilson (1982 as cited in p. 103). Additionally, there are ethical challenges that the leaders are facing

and there is a need for integrity while respecting others interests. Indeed, the academic leaders have to be conscious of their values as well as moral standards, an important view by Maak and Pless (2006 as cited in p. 103). The methodology of the research described within the article was formally created, understood and executed. The study required the academic leaders from the faculties of three Australian universities to complete an electronic survey that explored their perceptions of the prevalence of ethical dilemmas in their respective institutions. The authors described academic leaders as those staff who hold a course coordinating role at either undergraduate or postgraduate levels within the universities. The authors concentrated on course co-ordinators or the middle-level academic leaders as well as academics who do not hold leadership positions. Participation in the research was voluntary and participants were assured that their anonymous surveys would not reveal their name or the name of their institution, nor would there be any comparisons made across universities. In general, certain categories pertaining to ethical practices and ethical dilemmas within the literature review assisted with deciding on the way the data gained could be analysed in order to come up with the findings. In the article, the key findings relate to the organisational culture which the participants were satisfied were ethical practices in their workplace, and where there was a strong organisational culture that visibly supported ethical practices. For example, one case as described from the findings noted that a specific leader said: " My workplace is a very collegial and supportive one in which community values and commitment is highly valued. There is a strong culture of ethical practice, both towards colleagues and towards students" (cited in p. 104). However,

most participants felt the opposite in that they felt that?? The article discussed how the conceptualisation of university education as a commodity places significant importance on results rather than learning. There was a desire of academic leaders to uphold professional standards by being just in their dealings with students and staff (Fitzmaurice, 2008 as cited in p. 110). Did the article say that this just treatment of students happened in all universities? I don't think so. The article presents the nature of ethical dilemmas pointing to the need for institutional ethical decision-making in universities, not only for individuals and their supervisors but also in terms of the policies and practices within universities (Preston et al., 2002 as cited in p. 111). The article has highlighted that in reality ethics in teaching within universities has received scant attention. Ideally, ethical matters can arise in university teaching and should form part of the professional development of all teaching staff. Thus, the article expresses that leaders in various levels will need to inspire open and straightforward discussion, and also move from the idea that ethical decision making is a single grounded activity within academic institutions (Norberg & Johansson, 2007 as cited in p. 112).

Reflections

In today's frequently vague and unclear settings, most educational leaders are adept at respectable decision-making and, one would hope, take wisdom from their profound critical thinking on life. It can be asserted that they are mature, enthusiastic and are inspiring leaders. These leaders inspire the work and professionalism of those who work under them. Concerning ethics and ethical behaviour, educational leaders must not analyze inconsistency as well as dilemma circumstances in expressions of illogicality and schism

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however in terms of connection that encompasses mutual complement and rivalry. Ambika, this sentence is so jumbled in thinking I cannot see what you want to say. Say it simply!! Lastly, educational leaders who generate choices in pressured circumstances require further management knowledge, abilities as well as competencies. Why do they need this? Does the article imply this? These leaders require imaginative frameworks grounded on the understanding of moral nature as well as of ethics and honesty, essential in human communication in addition to choice. Consequently, proficient leaders are centrally apprehensive with ethics as well as standards and with determining what is correct and valuable. Why are proficient leaders seen to be apprehensive of ethical decision-making? I can't agree with this sentence. Now, the test for educational frontrunners is to construct agreed upon ethical practices where all administrative and teaching associates practice ethical behaviour in all aspects of their work and are respected by their colleagues, the students and the wider community in which they work. Word count: 1, 875I need 1, 500 word counts please concise the article ... thank you.