

Chapter 17

Institutional Attitudes Towards Research–Related Academic Integrity in Recently Internationalizing Higher Education Institutions: A Comparative Analysis of Chinese and Turkish HEIs

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ABSTRACT

Higher education systems throughout the world are mostly based on the institutions and values of the Western education system. World university ranking systems, quality assurance mechanisms, assessment frameworks, promotion, and evaluation systems are universalized. Many universities in developing countries have now joined these ranking systems and introduced vigorous faculty promotion criteria to create world-class universities. Research reveals that those who publish in predatory journals are mostly young and inexperienced researchers from developing countries. China and Turkey are among the countries frequently associated with predatory journals and related academic corruption schemes. In this chapter, both regulations and discourses that shape the institutional cultures in these two countries that are in close cooperation with the EU regarding higher education are examined. It is concluded that there is a global diffusion of rules and values, and national identity construction processes influence actual practices.

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INTRODUCTION

Higher education systems throughout the world are largely modeled on the institutions and values of the Western education system. While the rules and regulations are of universal applicability, actual practices vary according to the local ecosystems of higher education depending on the given contexts. University ranking systems across countries and regions have been gradually centralized through ranking agencies like Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), Times Higher Education or Shanghai; and quality assurance, assessment frameworks, promotion and evaluation systems become increasingly universalized. Many universities in developing countries have now joined these ranking systems and introduced rigorous faculty promotion criteria in the ambition to create world-class universities and attract international students. Ranking systems mainly evaluate institutional research outcomes.

As negative side effect is that the structural changes of promotion criteria in those countries have created loopholes and “side industries” that primarily serve to increase publication rates. Research reveals that those who publish in predatory journals are mostly young and inexperienced researchers from developing countries (Beall, 2016; Xia et al., 2015). Experts have also detected several systematic fraud attempts in the recent past (e.g. Beall, 2016; Normile, 2017). Research-related academic integrity is a code of ethics that upholds honesty with regards to the ownership and authenticity of data and ideas used in scientific publications.

China and Turkey are among the countries frequently associated with predatory journals and related academic corruption schemes. While the fraud schemes are similar in these two cases, the ways China and Turkey fight against it differ. Higher education institutions and central supervisory agencies in China crack down on fraudulent networks altogether, while their Turkish counterparts only investigate individual cases. This chapter examines the differences in official and public attitudes towards academic pollution in China and Turkey. The research on centralized institutional responses to research-related academic corruption is based on comparative case study approach using the method of difference. The method of difference inquires factors that lead to different outcomes in otherwise similar case studies.

There are many dimensions of internationalization of higher education such as teaching and academic governance that academic integrity is a concern. The reason why this chapter focuses solely on academic integrity in research is that institutional research outcomes weigh significantly more than other factors in the university ranking systems and therefore academic fraudulence in this pillar of higher education affects internationalization practices directly.

Since a longitudinal dataset on the academic corruption and the legal and administrative action taken against them is not available in neither of the selected cases, a causal argument regarding the effectiveness of the intervention by the central state cannot be tested at this point. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to describe the difference in institutional responses in two otherwise similar cases and analyze the reasons behind this difference.

For this purpose, this chapter is divided into three sections. The first section outlines the similarities in the higher education environment in China and Turkey. We look at both regulations and discourses that shape the institutional cultures in these two countries that are in close cooperation with the EU regarding higher education are examined. The next section offers prominent cases of academic dishonesty in China and Turkey. While the cases used in this work are far from being exhaustive, their widespread coverage in media shapes the debates on academic integrity in these two countries both in domestic and international public sphere. The final section discusses the reasons behind the difference in institutional

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