

FIRST AID KIT FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

a know how guide for student researchers

ACSN  SEE
Anti-Corruption Student Network in SEE





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I. About the Know-How Package



The book ***First Aid Kit for Higher Education: A Know-How Guide for Student Research*** that you have in your hands is a guide for student organizations, NGOs, student activists and everyone else who is interested in the problems of higher education and who seek different methods for monitoring them.

This unique know-how package is published as a result of a three year work for developing monitoring methodology under a project named ***Anti-corruption Student Network in South-East Europe (ACSN in SEE)***. As it is clear from the title, the project was implemented by student and youth organizations from South-East European countries, namely Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Moldova and Serbia covering the research on different types of corruption.

Why we have chosen to monitor corruption in the higher education institutions?

The level of education is one of the factors to consider one society as developed or developing. Hence, education system is very important for progress and quality can guarantee steady progress and development. Moreover the quality of higher education is what will in future bring prosperity

for the whole society. That is why our efforts are directed to find out how this quality can be raised and how the main problems can be solved.

The problems which Universities in the South-East European countries face are numerous and different. One of the major problems comprehended by society is corruption. Corruption has many faces and many dimensions. The problem of simply giving money is no longer acute, but other so called “softer” forms on different levels of higher education institutions are very widespread.

The reason we put our efforts into researching corruption in higher education institutions (HEI) was initially based on our desire to understand neglect of the problem of corruption in our academic and social environments. As active members of youth and student organizations we have faced many challenges due to this problem. Among them was the permanent lack of awareness about all the possible forms of corruption, about the general problem itself, about the legal means for protection from it, and most of all, about the freedom to speak about the corruption problem publicly. However, the problem that still remains is that students continue to look at

corruptive behaviour as “the easy way out”; a dominant type of conduct which does not bother them.

We, the ACSN members, have developed and conducted research on particular higher education institution in each country in order to develop the specific methodology presented in this book.

The common objectives of the project were:

- to describe forms, actors and frequencies of corruption in HE;
- to describe attitudes of the different actors – students, professors, administration staff toward corruption;
- to develop a system of instruments for research of corruption in HE, relevant both to the specific conditions in South-East Europe and HE as a whole
- to draw some conclusions and explanations on reasons of corruption;
- to raise awareness on the different forms of corruption in HE;

Main and common monitoring topics for all members were:

- **Academic fraud:** Cheating, Bribery and Enrolment process ;

- **Finances:** Tuition fees and Financial flows ;
- **Administrative service and practices:** due to the national differences in higher education systems network members have chosen additional national monitoring topics in the field of administrative service and practices: textbooks (purchase as a condition to take an exam), student dorms (enrolment, rights and obligations), student mobility, private tutoring and nepotism.

We hope this book helps many other students to conduct research; understand and try to change the *status quo*.

During the research process we found out that corruption is one of the main reasons why students don't receive quality education and lose their motivation which considerably reduces their chances for good job acquisition.

We hope that with this book we can help many students to apply their motivation and change the system by giving them the means to research the main problems.

Good luck dear friends and success!

II. About the Anti-Corruption Student Network in SEE



Anti-Corruption Student Network in South-East Europe is an international project which is comprised of Belgrade Open School's Centre for Development of Education in Serbia, student organizations from the Youth Society for Peace and Development in the Balkans (YSPDB) from Bulgaria, Monitor Statistica in Croatia, Youth Educational Forum in Macedonia and The National Center for Transparency and Human Rights (NCTHR) in Moldova. The project includes research on corruption in higher education, exchanges among the partners of the methodologies and findings, workshops and trainings for students.

The network members are informing and raising awareness about the level of corruption in higher education and advocating for institutional mechanisms for the prevention of corruption by organizing round tables, press conferences and training for students' empowerment for participation in reforms, protection of students rights, team work and lobbying.

The project has been active since 2003. To the date a comprehensive research on corruption in state Universities in Serbia has been conducted and the team organized numerous

educational programmes and workshops in which more than 450 students from Serbia participated. Also, four generations of BOS' Department for Advanced Undergraduate Studies students were included as assistants and junior researchers in surveys and qualitative research about specific corruption issues of higher education in numerous universities.

In the first phase of the project a regional research on corruption in five countries was conducted and the results were analyzed. In the second phase of this project (in 2005) the main aim of the network members was to inform and raise awareness of universities' communities and general public about the level and type of corruption at universities.

The third phase of the project started in February, 2008. In this project cycle the network members focused on the monitoring of various corruption processes at higher education institutions in SEE.

The long term aims of the network members are to lower the level of corruption at universities and to create a transparent higher education environment in the region.

Belgrade Open School (BOS) is a non-for-profit, educational civil society organisation. BOS contributes to the overall development of society through additional education and training for agents of social change, professional support to institutions, research and policy development in order to build a modern society based on democratic values.

BOS' Centre for the Development of Education (CDE) enhances the systems of education, training and employment through research and education, aiming to support the overall social development of Serbia. CDE promotes regional and international cooperation in order to introduce the best European educational practices.

Youth Educational Forum (YEF) is a non-governmental, nonpartisan and non profit-organization which was established in June 1999. Several centers throughout the country operate as part of YEF, which conduct activities from the main programs of YEF: Non-formal Education Program, Youth and Educational Policies Program and Youth Activism Program. The programs which are realized by YEF are educational and youth oriented.

The mission of Youth Educational Forum is to provide positioning of the youth as a relevant social factor that will promote the internal and external integration of the Republic of Macedonia.

YEF defines the following strategic priorities for the period 2011 – 2014: Development of critical thought of the youth, promotion of freedom of expression and informing of the youth; Promotion of the youth policies on local and national level; Promotion of the youth organization and youth activism, based on the principles of democracy, human rights and pluralism.

Youth Educational Forum would like to express gratitude to all the members who contributed in the Anti-Corruption Student Network - SEE project and this publication.

Monitor Statistica started in Zagreb in 2002 as an initiative of students involved in Mathematics Students' Society (MASS). The goal of their project was to explore corruption in higher education in Croatia, analyze its forms, frequency and how to prevent it. After the initial period of activities as a section of MASS, Monitor Statistica was founded as a civil organization in 2004 in Zagreb. In 2002 it was one of the founding members of Anti-Corruption Student Network in Southeast Europe. Since then the network members started a project with support from Open Society Institute dealing with questions of corruption in higher education that runs till today.

The Youth Society for Peace and Development of the Balkans (YSPDB) was created in 1998 in Bulgaria as an informal alliance of NGO leaders. In the middle of 2001 it was officially registered as a non-governmental organization according to Bulgarian legislature. Its members are students, young people and citizens who work for:

- Strengthening the stability on the Balkans and South East Europe;
- Encouraging and promoting of the creative process in arts and sciences;
- Encouraging and promoting the Bulgarian Cultural Heritage;
- Creation of new practices of sustainable development;
- The establishment of new models in the area of secondary, higher and civil education;
- Improving the intercultural dialogue and overcoming of ethnic differences;
- Respecting the human rights;
- Improving the dialogue between NGOs and local and national authorities.

Since the beginning of 2003 the Society is part of the youth information network **Eurodesk**, with opportunity to exchange information with European NGOs. Within Bulgaria the Society is a partner of information centers, youth and civil clubs and NGOs working throughout the country. Since 2003, YSPDB is an associate member of the **European Bureau for Conscientious Objection (EBCO)** and representative of the same in Bulgaria. A representative of the organization – Veselin Iliev is an EBCO board member and its representative to the **European Youth Forum**.

YSPDB is a member and co-founder of the **Anti-corruption student network (ACSN) in the South-East Europe**. ACSN includes student organizations from Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Moldova and Serbia.

The National Center for Transparency and Human Rights (NCTHR) is the founder member of the Anti Corruption Alliance of the Republic of Moldova. NCTHR' activities are primarily directed towards raising the students' and youth's awareness on the risks and consequences related to this phenomenon, but also the decision-makers concerning the problems of corruption and fraud, transparency and information access. The direct beneficiaries of our programs are mostly students and youth organizations, the academic community in general and the policy makers in the field of education. Therefore, the organization's main goal is to continue the development in this direction by widening the scope of the actions and providing more assistance to its beneficiaries. Currently, the work of the center is concentrated on monitoring corruption and other academic fraud, development of recommendations and policies for the decision makers in the field of youth and education as well as assisting students and youth in protecting their rights and freedoms against the impact of corruption.



III. General introduction in methodology



III.1. What is monitoring?

Monitoring is the systematic and continuous observation of actual events and comparison with the planned situation, in order to check performance against an expectation. The process of monitoring implies collection of information, which can be used in measuring a phenomena and identifying trends. Monitoring indicators are essential components of the monitoring system. They provide the basis of the measuring system, used to assess the actual situation and compare it against specified targets.

Corruption monitoring refers to the regular (e.g. once a year) measurement of the levels of corruption and perceptions about corrupt behavior patterns. The basic function of monitoring is to assess the effectiveness of public authorities' efforts in reducing corruption, to evaluate the effectiveness of anti-corruption institutions, and to track the change in intensity and specific manifestations of this phenomenon. Monitoring also serves as a "watchdog" tool of the public policy

process and as a way to provoke public discussions. Therefore, monitoring is not only a research instrument for measuring the spread and dynamics of corruption, but also has a powerful anti-corruption potential. The monitoring process comprises 2 major elements: measurement and verifying progress.

Measurement is the process of estimating the magnitude, nature, impact and costs of corruption. The measurement of corruption can be done in various ways, and using different sources of data: for instance, by making audits of specific projects, or by tracking countries' institutional features. But the most common way of measuring corruption is gathering informed views of relevant stakeholders, or in other orders, conducting research. There are two types of measures of the level of corruption by the means of surveys. First, experience based measures, which register the level of incidence of cases of corruption among the population of a given country. Second, perception based measures, which account for the perceptions about the level of corruption. A research can only make an assessment on the magnitude and characteristics

of corruption at a given period of time (when the research is being conducted). In the order to serve as monitoring tool, the measurement of corruption has to be done regularly, using the same methodology and the same indicators.

It is clear that if measurement of corruption is to provide a valid comparison from one period to the next, the questions and the sample should be chosen with great care for they will have to be repeated each time. The bulk of the questions should remain unchanged from one survey to the next, but a few questions can be topical and variable from year to year. Using a similar methodology in many countries could provide valuable international comparisons and would allow a comparative evaluation of the effectiveness of different national anticorruption strategies.

Verifying progress is an essential element of monitoring, and it involves the comparison of measurement results at different periods of time. By comparing the information about the scale and trends in corruption, we can verify whether the anti-corruption measures are effective and meet their objectives.

The KHP includes a brief description of different empirical methods for monitoring corruption. The methodology which is used for monitoring coincides with the methodology of sociological research. However, they were developed as monitoring, rather than research tools, because the aim of the designed instruments is to systematically collect data on corruption, and depicts trends in the evolution of this phenomena. Also, the use of the same methods and research instruments will enable international comparisons and assessments of the spread and dynamics of corruption in the South-Eastern European countries.

III.2. How to conduct a preliminary research?

Before actually conducting a research there are a few steps which are important to be done prior to the research.

First, to ensure material and social preconditions for research, a project idea should be written, explained and have arguments and it should be sent to the institutions which are responsible for approving or funding the project. Afterwards, it is advisable to make a detailed plan of everything that should be done during the research.

The preliminary research is an important stage where the researcher should define the research problem, analyze the literature, determine the research goals, set up a hypothesis, identify variables and design a research.

1. Defining a research problem

A researcher should have certain criteria to follow when choosing

a research problem. The chosen problem should have the highest probability to be solved successfully and it should correspond to the researchers' expertise. A research problem shouldn't be set too broad or too narrow in order to get useful results. There is no point in research if it doesn't bring something new, therefore a researcher should choose a problem that has never been researched before, or to repeat or expand an already existing research if this will produce new findings. The research process is time-consuming and requires a great deal of resources, so it shouldn't be wasted on an unimportant or dated problem with little applications in practice.

The research problem should be formulated clearly and precisely and it should contain a question which defines what is it intended to be found out. A problem formulation determines a spatial, temporal and population extent of a research problem.

2. Literature and term analysis

After a respective literature is collected, a researcher should check if and to what extent the problem is already researched. If the problem is not researched, or not researched enough, a

new research should focus on aspects which are less or poorly researched, this is also pointed out in the problem formulation. Theoretical approaches and data from the literature help in setting up and elaborating hypotheses, in choosing and applying methods for data collection, setting up a research design, etc.

Literature analysis serves for the collection of key terms, and their definitions, for term analysis. After a number of definitions are collected, a researcher will extract the common sense of most definitions, and on that basis set a precise and applicable definition which corresponds to the research needs. This is important for ensuring certain clarity in using key terms in the research. For instance, if you are conducting a research on bribery in higher education, you should determine what does that imply, and what extent of that term will you be using in your research (e.g. would the focus be on money bribes, or exchanging services also be involved in the term definition). Key terms should be precisely defined and used in the manner of that definition.

3. Determining research goals

Setting the research goal requires clear identification of what the research is designed for, or what we want to know at the end of it. The goal of the research is a general outcome that has to be achieved as the result of the research.

Before determining a research goal a researcher should know what the research most important beneficiaries are and what are the research possible uses and benefits.

4. Setting up hypotheses

A hypothesis offers a possible answer to the research question which is tested by the research. It is expressed in the form of a clearly stated relation between independent ('cause') and dependent ('effect') variables. They serve for an orientation in a research, with a help of a hypothesis a researcher knows which facts to collect and how to relate these facts to each other.

A good hypothesis is valid (relates to the research problem), stated clearly with clear and appropriate terminology, testable, specific (a broader hypothesis should be divided in more specific ones) and related to the theory.

5. Identification, classification and organization of variables

Variables are sizes used in hypotheses on which we are trying to make a prediction in a research. In order to validate that prediction variables are described and measured in the research.

Dependent variable is actually in a focus of a research and it is brought to relation with an *independent variable* which describes, classifies or explains it. A researcher chooses which dependent and independent variables would he put in relation to each other, but the research results determine if and how much these variables are correlated.

Variables could be *qualitative* and *quantitative*. Qualitative variables don't have intensity; they consist of categories (e.g. gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation). Quantitative variables have intensity and can be measured numerically (e.g. height, weight, temperature). If we want to empirically describe general or abstract variables, they should be organized into a greater number of measurable indicators. For example, in order to measure student motivation we should organize that variable into indicators such as time spent

studying, participation in extracurricular activities or attendance at classes. Indicators should be chosen by following certain criteria: they have to be valid (relate to the variable), objective (results depend on the object of measurement, and not on a researcher), reliable (an indicator is reliable if it's used repeatedly to measure the same attribute with similar results in each measurement), unambiguous, precise and representative.

6. Determining a research design

In research design we decide upon which research method is best to be used to collect data in a research, what is the population we are interested in, what kind of sample would be used, and where, when and in what conditions the research would be done.

There are various *quantitative and qualitative methods* that could be used in research, such as questionnaire surveys, experiments, focus-groups, interviews, case studies, content analysis, etc. This guide focuses on questionnaire surveys, focus-groups, interviews and requests for public information. These methods will be explained in the following chapters.

There are various *quantitative and qualitative methods* that could be used in research to gain data you need to prove your hypothesis or describe a population or a phenomenon you are dealing with. The best method is chosen depending on the goal of your research, type of the research and the resources you have.

Quantitative methods measure and count the object of the research and often rely on statistical analysis. Some of the quantitative methods are questionnaire surveys, tests or experiments. Quantitative methods are often seen as more “scientific” because they deal with numbers and because the data could be analyzed with specialized computer programs. On the other hand, qualitative methods could provide more in-depth interpretations and be more fruitful in describing meanings of certain phenomena. Qualitative research methods include focus-groups, interviews, case studies, ethnographical research methods, archival research... Some methods, such as content analysis, could be quantitative and qualitative.

This guide focuses on the methods used during the Anti-corruption student network project- questionnaire survey,

focus-groups, interviews and requests for public information. These are both quantitative and qualitative methods, combined to get a wider picture of reality. For instance, a questionnaire survey carried out to discover the number of cheating methods used by students or cases of bribery and focus groups could reveal how students interpret cheating or bribery. By the request for public information we gained important documents which we used to analyze financial flows on faculties. Interviews with academic and administrative staff gave us the opportunity to see beyond financial reports and discover the politics under that or attitudes that different groups have about this issue. These methods will be further explained in the following chapters.

Literature:

1. Vujević, M. (2002.), *Uvođenje u znanstveni rad: u području društvenih znanosti (Introduction in a Scientific Work in the Field of Social Sciences)*, Zagreb.

III.3. What is a public information access request?

I.) General Consideration

The Law on Free Access to Information of a Public Character allows both natural persons and physical entities (in countries where the Law has been passed) to request any information considered to be of public importance from the institution holding those information.

Public information is defined as: information held by a public authority, created during work or related to the work of the public authority, contained in a document and related to the public authority (may vary dependant on the wording of the Law).

The institution holding the information is legally bound to provide the information to the ones requesting it in a certain time period. If the institution does not provide the requested information, additional legal

mechanisms are activated enabling its acquisition.

Bearing in mind that the universities, faculties, the Ministry of Education, inspection commissions, etc. are considered to be holders of public information, this tool is of great importance when researching corruption in the HE (higher education) process. Unlike the other tools used in the measuring of corruption, the request for public information provides factual instead of perceptual data.

The PIA (Public Information Access) legislation has been implemented in over 85 countries around the world, and is considered to be a basic human right. Although certain segments of the legislature may differ from one country to another, its application in the monitoring of corruption in the higher education process remains the same. It provides the researchers with insight of the information held by relevant HE institutions, and the right to legally pursue and obtain that information.

II.) How to make?

1. First stage of the process – Analyzing the Public Information Access Legislation

The first step to a successful application of the law is to read and comprehend the law itself. Getting acquainted with the specifics of the law in your country is crucial to its proper application. The following points can be used by you to quickly identify the details of a PIA act:

- Which institutions can be considered as holders of public information?
- What are the holder's **duties**? Based on the provisions in the PIA legislature.
- What kind of information can be requested?
- What is the **procedure** for exercising the right to PIA?
- What are the administrative costs related to obtaining the information?
- Does an authorized institution for the protection of the right to PIA exist?
- Are there any penal provisions?

2. Second stage of the process – Procedure for exercising the right to PIA

a. Writing precise questions

It is of utmost importance to produce specific and understandable questions. Having analyzed the PIA legislature, the next step is to review the legal frame in relation to the topic of research (provisions of laws related to anti-corruption, the Law on Higher Education, the Law on Student Standards), as well as other literature, (e.g. the Bologna Declaration), comparative examples and statistical data. This will enable you to create precise questions, obtain the desired answer and remove the possibility of getting vague or unrelated answers. Oftentimes the institutions will attempt to evade the answer; a precisely posed question will minimize the risk of that happening.

b. PIA form

In many countries the law prescribes a form used to simplify the PIA process. This form can be found at the body authorized to implement the law (commission, the Ministry of Justice, etc.). If the law doesn't prescribe a specific form, the request can be addressed orally or as a letter.

c. Sending the question

When an extensive research is conducted, it is recommended that the requests are sent in phases in order to synchronize the deadlines and enable easier tracking. It is of great importance to obtain the proof of sending and the date of the mailing. These are used for the filing of a complaint when the addressed institution does not provide the required information. The requests can be sent by mail (preferably a registered letter), personally delivered to the institution (in which case the archive number of the request and proof of reception should be

acquired), by e-mail or orally. For the purposes of the research, it is preferable to specify in the request that the answer should be given in written form (e-mail or delivered by the post office.) Oral responses are harder to analyze and publish, and should be evaded when possible.

d. Action plan

The action plan is a database of all the sent requests, their recipients, dates of sending and expected response. The action plan gives an overview of the relevant dates, easing the monitoring of the deadlines for the potential complaints.

Sample action plan:

Information holder	Question	Address of information holder	Name and contact of official information holder	Date of mailing	Date of expected answer
Dean's Office	1.5. Please send us a list of students who have participated in any of the University's mobility programs within the last 5 years.			15.09.2010	15.09.2010
Ministry of Education	2.2. Does the Ministry offer any resources for the purpose of student mobility? If yes, please send us an overview of those resources for the previous 5 years.			15.09.2010	15.09.2010
Faculty of Law	3.2 Does your University possess a database of student and academic exchanges? If yes, who is responsible for its maintenance?			15.09.2010	15.09.2010
Date of return receipt or registered letter	Date of received answer	Complaint submission date	Response from the Commission	Lawsuit submission date	Lawyer
16.09.2010	21.09.2010				
16.09.2010		22.10.2010	25.11.2010		
16.09.2010	08.10.2010				

3. Third stage of the process – Analysis

a. Archiving

The archive offers an overview of the entire procedure, and can be used as evidence when the authorities do not give the required information, when they do not answer the requests at all or miss the deadlines for answering.

The archive consists of:

- a copy of the question;
- a proof from the post office that the question was sent, or proof of reception if the request was submitted personally;
- a copy of the response.

b. Deadlines

The research team has to keep track of several important deadlines:

- the time the institution has to prepare and send the response;
- the time the team has to prepare and file the complaint to the PIA Commission (institution authorized to act on complaints);
- the time the institution has to answer the complaint;
- if there is still no answer or an inadequate answer, the time the team has to file a lawsuit.

Respecting the deadlines is of utmost importance. Failing to file a complaint or lawsuit on time results in a voided request and having to start the procedure from the beginning.

c. Complaints

A complaint is used to legally oblige the institutions (that refuse to cooperate) to provide the requested information. The complaint should be filed to the institution authorized to protect the right to PIA. Depending on the specific legislature the name of the institution may vary. The complaint is filed to the authorized institution within a time period (depending on the specific legislature) in the following cases:

- The holder of the information refuses to inform the applicant whether it holds the requested information of public importance. The holder of the information refuses to issue a copy of the document, or failed to do so within the prescribed deadline;
- The holder of the information failed to reply to a submitted request within the prescribed deadline;
- The holder of the information conditioned the issuing of the copy of the document containing the requested

information by payment of a fee exceeding the necessary costs of duplication;

- The holder of the information refuses to enable the team to examine the document containing the requested information.

III.) How to report?

a. Analysis

Once all the responses have been acquired and archived they can be analyzed. The analysis should address the hypothesis established in the research (e.g. the higher education institutions do not comply with the objectives declared in the Bologna Declaration; taking in consideration the results that only 2 out of 8 faculties provide English lectures). Analysis is crucial when determining the degree to which the official data and statements of the officials match the received answers. Furthermore, analyzing the responses enables the detection of violations of the rules, statutes and regulations of the HEI, and determines the degree of transparency of the HE institutions.

The analysis provides precise information about irregularity, corruption and shortcomings of the system, which can be used for rethinking and enforcing

effective anti-corruption measures. Moreover, when analyzing, you should compare the results by answers given to the questions, not by the HE institution that has been asked to provide with the information (e.g. 3 out of seven faculties do not have conducted any kind of student or academic exchange). It is also very useful for drawing conclusions about the whole research that was conducted, and for the planning of additional or future activities.

III.4. How to conduct a focus group?

A: The choice of methodology: why precisely the focus groups?

In spite of the existence of numerous explicit and implicit social and institutional directives (un)said and (un)listed sanctions, corruption, corrupt people and the ones corrupting - they all survive and thrive in the countries of South-East Europe. Transition countries represent a convenient ground for building corruption. The phenomenon of corruption, as a research topic, is a complex

and sensible subject both for research facilitators as well as other participants of research. The number of these researches has been in rise in the recent years. However, the majority of them go as far as identifying the problem. In our opinion, in order to develop a further anti-corruption strategy and put the social response into action, we need to do more than just recognize the problem and resign ourselves to establishing the spheres and the forms of presence of this issue.

The social phenomenon such as corruption needs to be seen from the perspectives of all the people involved in it. It is necessary that we ask the questions of how and why the corruption happens, with the emphasis on the approach to the issue of the corruption through the eyes of all the participants and spectators in the process. This way is the only possible way to carry out a socially responsible action and to understand the sorts of theories and hypothesis that are accountable for the behaviour of the participants in corruption. Using the method of a focus group we can explore the subject from many different aspects, which allow us detailed inspection of the problem and which makes it possible for

each voice to be heard. This cannot be obtained neither by structured questionnaires nor by interviews, since we are talking about a social phenomenon that many people are involved in and that has to be observed in the context, so that ecological assertiveness of the results can be provided.

Only afterwards can we check the obtained working hypotheses and describe the particularities of the phenomenon itself in more detail by means of thorough interviews and rather structured questionnaires (surveys) using quantification and statistic analysis. Due to the all abovementioned factors, we suggest starting with the focus groups.

Nevertheless, the use of the focus group method does not end here. Other possibilities are:

- Create a rough evidence of experience about the subject of research;
- Getting to know the research environment;
- Getting to know general patterns of relations in the researched environment;
- Making the decision about further field research strategy;
- Choosing data gathering

techniques for later phases of the research;

- Selection of key informants;
- Identifying the language and the symbols of the researched community;
- Creating a hypothetic basis for further research of the problem;
- Testing of insufficiently clear and solid hypotheses;
- Complementary use of the focus group method with other, more standardized techniques;
- Constructing standardized research techniques (questionnaires, scales);
- Testing of research techniques for the later use;
- Better understanding and interpretation of data gathered with other techniques;
- Valuation of previously gathered data etc.

B. Classification of methodology: definition of focus groups

A focus group consists of a group of people gathered by the moderators and who have a task, on the basis of their own personal experiences, to discuss and comment on a certain topic which is the subject of the research. The focus group represents a guided discussion which generates an

abundance of details relevant to the complex phenomenon as well as reasoning that is behind behaviour, beliefs, opinions and attitudes connected with that phenomenon. The focus group, as a method, is determined by the group situation in which all of the participants are involved in a conversation, guided by a person who facilitates and moderates the discussion. The goal of such a set up is to produce relevant ideas and information concerning limited number of questions. The emphasis here is not on the interaction between the respondents and the moderator, but on the interaction between the respondents themselves who encourage one another in making different points. Therefore, a scheme of conducting the focus group in the form of the written manual should be flexible and not completely structured. The scheme should be based on or inspired with specific ideas and established research goals, but in the way that the social interaction of the group is not obstructed.

Definitions of the focus groups range from structured group interviews, which serve the research purpose and which take place in the formal settings to unstructured field interview

of the small groups of people within the local communities whose objective is to promote the social change. The focus group is the type of the qualitative research technique. We point out the one aspect of the focus groups that underlines the use of various techniques of the dialogue that provide us with the perspectives of the people involved in the discussion, their attitudes towards the certain phenomenon and the dynamics of the group that is taking place before our eyes. Thus, it is also possible for us to understand what the real meaning is behind the words as well behind actions done, or unfinished.

C. The phases of focus-group-based research and the basic instructions on conducting the focus groups

We can roughly single out the following phases while conducting the focus group:

- Phase 1 Definition of the “research topic”
- Phase 2 Study of the secondary sources - desk research
- Phase 3 Choice of methodology
- Phase 4 Procedure of selecting the participants of the research
- Phase 5 Writing of the “scenario” for carrying out the focus groups
- Phase 6 Set up of the surroundings and scheduling of

- the focus groups
- Phase 7 Carrying out the focus groups, i.e. the phase of collecting the information
- Phase 8 Transcription of the focus groups and organisation of the information
- Phase 9 Analysis and interpretation of data and writing of the report including the main conclusions

1. Definition of the “research topic”

At the very beginning of the research, it is essential that we set up a clear objective and working hypotheses of the study which will be subject to changes during the research process. While studying this topic, it is also necessary that we establish the transitional diagnosis of the state both the society and the institutions are in. The diagnosis itself will be reviewed but it will anticipate the final outcome of the research as well, additionally providing the clearly defined criteria of successful research, so that the evaluation is an option. Also, we must not forget the necessity of choosing only a specific and limited number of questions which will help us better understand the issue we are focused on. This phase should last as long as necessary, and considerable time should be spent working on this since sometimes it requires more

time than the total required for other phases. Phases 1 to 6 are preparatory phases and it's extremely important that enough time is devoted to each one of them, as that is the precondition of a comprehensive research.

2. Studying of the secondary sources - desk research

Some previous research may have answered some of the questions; somebody may have already written something about our subject and explored the topic of our research. We can determine this by the studying of the secondary sources. That principally implies enlisting all relevant sources, and then contacting them in order to obtain useful directives on how to approach the research topic and how to circumvent bad practice from the past, inventing the questions that have not been answered, yet.

3. The choice of methodology

After defining the problem and the selection of the questions which need to be posed and that have not yet been answered, i.e. after answering the question "WHAT" proceeds the phase that deals with "HOW" to do it, i.e. what is the best way to answer the question. We have already discussed this

in the introductory part of the methodological directives. Apart from the above mentioned it is vital that we underscore the fact that the choice of methodology is determined by the topic and the objectives of the research and not vice versa.

4. Procedure of selecting the participants of the research

Usually, the number of participants in the focus groups varies from 6 to 10 people that do not know each other, as it is essential that participants feel free to state their opinions. This ongoing process should be dictated by the spontaneity of the respondents and not by some transfer from the past experience. Thus, multiple relations between the participants of the group are prevented. This size for a group is neither small nor big, but it's ideal for a group discussion where all the voices can be heard.

The choice of the participants depends on the research subject and research design. Our main intention was to create research tools for other interested parties so they could effectively follow the phenomenon of corruption in Higher Education. Thus, we selected one faculty for every particular topic where we

conducted the research. This means that the selection of the participants was influenced by the choice of faculty. Groups of participants in focus groups should be selected in their relation to the problem. For example, when we tried to find out more about cheating we divided students into several groups depending on how many exams had they taken thus far. So we had groups with older, younger and mixed groups of students. But, for the topics enrolment and enrolment preparation, where we tried to establish which of the several models of entrance exam was the best we had a different division of groups of participants: high schools graduates and candidates, the first year students and final year students. The previous division in this case wouldn't have worked.

In this sense groups should be homogenous, whether comes to the year of study, age or some other characteristic chosen by the researcher. This means that homogeneity of the participants and the choice of the criteria depends on the problem definition and/or research strategy, as pictured in the examples above.

Since the selection of the

participants is not random, but an intentional, it is essential that we make sure that they are the good representatives of the population that the researcher is particularly interested in. However, we should point out that the heterogeneous aspect of the group, in some cases such as ours, is welcome since it can contribute to the dynamics and better understanding of the ongoing phenomenon. This means that we can confront students from different years to talk about cheating or students and student representatives to talk about student charges and tuition. This heterogeneous aspect provides us with the confrontations, points out the difference in perspectives and interests, encourages the dynamics and supports the ecological assertiveness of conclusions.

Recruiting should be done specially employed recruiters so that they could follow the instructions given by the researches regarding the selection of the participants with the purpose of enabling the representativeness. The recruiter should not recruit more than two respondents per each group. Recruitment can also be done via phone. In this case, the researchers should carefully choose the information they will

give to the participants of the focus group. The participant should be given enough pieces of information so that he feels no anxiety about what will be going on during the discussion or what the topic of the discussion will be.

5. Writing of the 'scenario' for carrying out the focus groups

A focus group is concentrated on small number of questions. The guide for the focus groups should embody all the topics and questions that need to be discussed, i.e. that need to be answered. The total number of these topics or questions should not be more than 6 or 7, so that enough time would be left for a detailed and thorough interview. A good guide also stresses out the importance of the moderator's readiness just before the start of the focus group. It is impossible to precisely plan and predict the course of the discussion and the potential topics a conversation can lead to. That is also a crucial advantage of such an approach.

6. Set up of the surroundings and scheduling of the focus groups

It usually takes up a lot more planning to organize a focus group than it is the case with other types of interviews. The reason for that is rather simple-

it is not easy to gather many people in one place at the same time. A neutral location should be chosen for conducting a focus group, the one that would trigger neither good nor bad associations in participants. The setting of the room where the focus group is taking place should encourage the interaction and exchange between the participants to the highest extent. It should also make the discussion flow. The room needs to be spacious and comfortable enough so that it can fit at least 10 people sitting in a circle, and that there is enough fresh air and light in it. There is frequently a table in the room that participants sit at and its role is to create a feeling of security and to provide the protection of the individual space of each participant. If a group is homogeneous, the table is not necessary. If there is a need to write down or draw something or to express one's opinion in non-verbal way through the use of other media, the table wouldn't go amiss. Visual aids, movies and slides can also be applied in order to provoke discussion on the certain topic. Some refreshing soft drinks and snacks should be provided for the participants as they are prone to feel a need for them after two-hour engagement. You should not forget to furnish

each participant with additional material such as stickers, markers, sheets of paper. It is a slight gesture of attention to give a modest and neutral incentive to each participant in the shape of a notebook, a notepad or a pen. You should call all the participants a day before as well as on the very day of the scheduled focus group and remind them of the arranged time, confirm that they are coming and ask them to come 15 minutes prior to the beginning of the meeting. Ask them to show up on time and you in return reciprocate with informing them of the duration of the meeting and sticking to the time frame you announced. Once you start a focus group, you should not let the participants who are running late interrupt it. You should always prevent such situations as they would interfere with the dynamics of the group.

7. Carrying out the focus groups, i.e. the phase of collecting the information and the role of a moderator

It is common to carry out more than one focus group. It is possible to have several meetings with the same group, or (the more usual case) to have couple of meetings with different focus groups. The ideal duration of the focus groups is one and

a half hour to two hours without a break. Providing you establish an interesting dialogue you should feel free to go on with it with the participants' approval. After the short introductory speech, the facilitator should explain the purpose of conducting a focus group and also introduce the participants to one another. The use of name tags or small cards with the participants' names on them is suggested. The emphasis should be on informing the people that as an informal group, they have all the freedom to express their opinions. In order to lead the discussion towards a deeper understanding the moderator should encourage the group by occasionally asking them questions and thus direct the group process. It is smart to use icebreakers at the very beginning in order to make the group relax, warm up and make report. To achieve this, the conditions for informal chit-chat should be provided before the very start of the focus group.

The moderator should facilitate an open and spontaneous dialogue, and should also be relaxed, objective and unprejudiced, a good listener who is of the approximately same age as the participants and of the similar social and demographic background. The

experience and the training of the moderator plays significant role in conducting the focus groups. A special attention should be paid to his education and training. A good choice of a skilful and experienced moderator must be made.

At the very beginning of the focus group, the participants need to be informed of everything that will be going on during the focus group and the moderator has to ask them for a permission to write down the highlights of the discussion in a certain way. They should as well be informed of the policy of confidentiality and asked to accept it and promise to respect it. Ethical principles of the research must be clearly applied. The sensitivity of the topic being considered, we advise making only audio record of the meeting with the participants' approval; video recording would be threatening for the participants who will be discussing corruption and so we do not recommend this kind of recording.

On the other hand, we do suggest the presence of one or two assistants who will be helping the moderator and everything that is going on. Their role should be clearly defined and explained to the participants

at the beginning of the focus group. These assistants will follow the course of the dialogue and look for everything that is not verbal and that moderator cannot see or notice. The practice of allowing assistants to ask a question or two at the very end of the focus group, have proven to be useful.

On starting the discussion after introductory chattering one should always begin with the universal questions narrowing them down to more specific ones (following the 'funnel' principle). In the case of a delicate topic or question a conversation should be led in the third person singular, "How do you think someone would react in that situation?", "Have you heard of...?" When somebody in the group points out either positive or negative aspects of the problem, the moderator should always ask them why they feel that way. He/She should also ask others if they agree. The facilitator is allowed to bring up the examples he/she knows of or even the imaginary ones, but he/she should keep their own opinions to themselves. The facilitator must not answer the participants' question not even if they start insulting him/her. The sub questions such as: why, how, because of what,

and when, need to be asked. After the participant answers, the moderator needs to ask 'Why?', but only after he/she has repeated the participant's answer and ask: 'What did you mean by that?', and not just ask them simply 'Why?' since the most frequent answer to that is 'Because'. In addition to being relaxed, impartial and non-judgemental, the moderator should also preserve an attitude of 'tabula rasa' i.e. he is not supposed to answer any question addressed to him.

8. Transcription of the focus groups and organisation of the information

There should be some kind of a record of a focus group. In addition to the audio record of the discussion the moderator himself should chronicle his conclusions regarding non verbal behaviour of the participants and also his own inspections, ideas and thoughts during the focus group. This applies to the moderator's assistants as well. They all need to listen to the audio recording again, and make a transcript out of it. From this point on, the researcher will have to cope with an organization and analysis of the numerous pieces of provided information. After the focus group has been completed, the first thing to do is to write our

observations down, listen to the audio recording and then review the transcript, and at last rewrite our impressions and inspections.

9. Analysis and interpretation of data and writing of the report including the main conclusions

It is possible to do analysis by a simple observation and comparison of the participants of the group, by the mutual comparison of different groups and a mutual comparison of the moderators' impressions.

In researching corruption it is to be expected to encounter obscurity of information and less opened respondents, especially regarding their own experience. That is why comparison between different groups and/or mapping differing opinions is important. It would not only allow us to see different meanings of corruption between groups or interpretations of certain events, results or other issues related to the subject, but it would also provide significant signals where to look further, what to ask during an interview or in a questionnaire. Of course, as mentioned above, it is also possible and recommended to use the focus group method at the very end of the research for interpretation of the gathered data, for example, or to even try to examine proposals

for possible solutions of the observed problem. This is especially the case with student representatives, where we usually tried to organize a focus group with them after we had finished implementation of other techniques (questionnaires, interviews, public information access requests) because they were in a particular position to influence effectively and impose changing of bad governance in H.E. This also proved to be a useful way to assess capacities of student representatives to act in the interests of students and fight corruption at the faculty (macro-level) or department (micro-level) level, especially with all the information we had gathered with other techniques.

The main conclusions of the report should be supplied by the arguments from the transcript. The researcher is the one who reconstructs what happened during the focus group and portrays the meanings that the participants' words conveyed.

He/she also detects the similarities and contrasts in the attitudes towards the phenomenon in question and tries to decode the theories that are conveyed behind the participants' words. Thus, he/she makes an ongoing process that vividly unfolds

before his/her eyes and eyes of his/her assistants even more transparent. There is also a necessity of analysing dynamics of the groups and identifying of all the problems that have occurred, as well as the issues that participants could not possibly agree on and the ones that the consensus has been reached about.

III.5. How to conduct an interview?

1. General considerations

An interview is a specialized type of communication, usually verbal, between two or more people and it is carried out for a specific purpose.

The interviewer can pursue in-depth information around the topic. Interviews may be useful as follow-up to certain respondents to questionnaires, etc., to further investigate their responses.

For the purposes of the survey you can use three types of the interview which defer from the types of the questions:

- **Open-ended or informal interviews:** no predetermined questions are asked, in order to remain as open and adaptable as possible to the interviewee's nature and priorities; during the interview the interviewer "goes with the flow".
- **Semi-structured interviews:** These interviews are typically more structured than open-ended interviews. They generally consist of a series of open-ended questions asked in a pre-determined order. If an interviewee starts to cover a new area as a response to a question, then the interviewer keeps the flow going by asking relevant questions on his list of topics. Each question is followed by additional probes until the answer is explored in some depth.
- **Structured interviews:** This type of interview is the opposite of the free-flowing, informal interview. These interviews can be useful when the existing data base is already substantial and

what is needed is a quick quantification of narrowly defined topics.

2. How to make it?

The first step you have to take is to determine the object and subject of the interview.

To be able to select suitable contingent of people who will be interviewed, first you need to determine the type of interviewees – students, professors, administration. The interview normally takes place after all other research methods (public information access requests, focus groups, questionnaires) as you already have concrete issues to comment. The interviewees could be preliminary selected or randomly chosen.

- **Preliminary selection**
According to the data collected you can point out who are the most suitable respondents who you will get most eligible information from. However, have in mind that the people you have chosen may not always agree to participate. Make a list with interviewees you want to include in your research and verify that they are available to meet you and provide the information you need. Confirm the appointment.

Example:

Table 1 – Statistics of accepted interviews

Faculty	Number of sent interview requests	Number of e-mail answers	Number of interviews accepted
Faculty of Economics	6	1	0
Faculty of Philosophy	4	2	1
Dean of the Faculty of....	1	1	1

- Random selection

This approach might take more time especially when having a sensitive topic to discuss. In order to find respondents for

your survey you could dispose an advertisement about the interview (topic, place, contact person) on a place available for the public or just to interview people by chance (see Table 2).

Table 2 - Methods of choosing examinees if using random sample:

Static examinees:	Dynamic examinees:	By the entrance/ exit:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• choose every third examinee• give the first questionnaire to the third person• if someone refuses, he becomes 0, and then start counting until 3• you should be consistent in the method you use, and not choose examinees based on their looks, or affability!	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• give the questionnaire to the closest person– stand on a fixed position and choose the closest person to you• after finishing the interview get back to the start position and choose the closest person again	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• interview every fifth person which passes through the door

The interviewer can switch his position from time to time, depending on the students positions (e.g. go to another hallway, etc.)

The second step, which is also the most critical part for a successful interview, is to determine and formulate the questions. The strength

of survey design is asking people about the first-hand experiences: what they have done, their current situation, their feelings and perceptions. It is better to use open questions and to have an order of questions. The following table should provide a helpful set of suggestions for how this might be done.

Table 3 - Questionnaire for the interview – a standard set of questions:

I.) Introduction – giving some general information about the connection of the interviewed with the topic:

- What is your specialty? (for students)
- What year of your studies are you currently in? (for students)
- What is your field of work (subject)? (for professors)
- On which faculties do you teach/have lectures? (for professors)

This first stage of the interview is very important for the interviewer to gain the confidence of the interviewed people. Not only posing the questions, but also the attitude and the contact give influence. An appropriate atmosphere must be created for a sincere conversation on this so sensitive issue – both for students and professors.

Of course these questions are only examples for starting questions. The interviewer has full freedom to improvise, but should have in mind that the distance should be kept in all circumstances. This will contribute afterwards to obtain honest answers.

II.) Directing questions:

1. Who do you think are more inclined to the ... phenomenon (depends on the specific topic) at the universities?
2. What do you think, which are the reasons that push a student to the...?

This part of the interview is created to facilitate the transition from the introduction to the problem itself. This approach aims at directing the conversation in the desired direction. Due to the unwillingness of part of the people to share their thoughts about the concrete problem, the interviewer needs to present them the subject in a way that they wouldn't apprehend as pressure or threat.

III.)Apprehension of the problem:

1. What do you think, which are the reasons that push a professor to the... phenomenon (depends on the specific topic)?
2. How often do the professors and students take part to the ... phenomenon (depends on the specific topic) process? Is this act a necessary thing for the moment or is it part of our behavior?
3. 3. Which are those things that make the student responsible and at the same time help him to take part in this illegal activity?

Such type of questions is designed to provide information to the interviewer about the current situation. It must be cleared out to what extent the phenomenon exists. For this part knowledge about concrete facts and numbers is acquired. On this basis the interviewer should develop his further strategy for conduction the final part of the interview.

This stage is crucial for the successful elaboration of the interview. From here on it becomes clear if the interviewee is willing to cooperate because this is the moment when serious questions start.

IV.) Attitude towards the problem

What is your opinion and position about the ... phenomenon (depends on the specific topic)?

According to you, should there be sanctions for a corrupted professor?

What should be, according to you, the sanctions for a student that takes part in the... phenomenon (depends on the specific topic)?

The aim of this last part is to provoke the interviewees to give their opinion on the problem.

The interviewer needs to prepare questions, suitable for the different people interviewed. The preliminary information about the course, specialty and year of studies could be useful, but also could bring some level of subjectivity in the research.

V.) Ending the interview:

Be sensitive to the person's schedule and time limits. Try to "wind down" rather than end abruptly. See if you can summarize their major points. Ask them again if they have any questions about the project. Let them know how to contact you if they need to. Thank the examinee for the collaboration.

The examinees needed about half an hour or even less to answer these questions.

Here are some basic techniques and statements that can help you help interviewees to open up and clearly express their ideas:

Clarification: Getting the person to clearly explain himself/herself.

"Could you tell me more about the part about ..."

"I'm not sure I understood the part about ... - could you explain that a bit more?"

Reflection: Reflecting back something important the person just said in order to get them to expand on that idea.

„So you believe that ...” “Then, you do disagree with ...”

Encouragement: Encouraging them to pursue a line of thought.

„What you have said about ... is interesting. Could you say more about that?“

„I find that fascinating! Tell me more.“

Spurring: Saying something to tease, spur, or challenge the person (in a friendly way) to say more.

„But isn't it true that ...?“

„But some people would say that ...“

„Do you honestly believe that..?“

Summary: Try to summarize the person's ideas to see if you really understood what he or she was saying.

„So what you're saying is ...“

„So your major point is that ...“

„Let me see if I can summarize what you have said...“

Third step is to conduct the interview. After having the right set of questions and in order to ensure that you would conduct a quality interview you should have in mind several main issues. First, you need to find a quiet place for the interviewee to concentrate on the questions; then greet the interviewee and provide short information about the project and the scope of the monitoring/interview; explain in few words the technical details of the interview, ask permission/inform the official that you are going to record the interview; record the answers without violating interviewer's discretion; if the interviewee asks for clarification you should respond, but don't suggest answers, or provide your personal opinion – the interviewee is

the one who has to express opinion about something; if the respondent's answer is incomplete or inadequate, probe for clarification or elaboration in a non-directive way; do not provide any positive or negative feedback regarding the specific content of respondent's answers; do not express your opinion regarding this topic in any way, it could alter respondent's answers and make them less honest; all the questions, comments and complaints should be written in the record list.

3. How to make a report?

Analyzing data after the interview is very important. Make sure that you do it soon after the interview itself.

- Check if the record chart is filled in;
- Write the Interviewer Serial Number (ISN), Questionnaire Serial Number (QSN) and if needed the place where the interview was held on the questionnaire's front page;
- Write the interviewees' answers You may summarize, but be careful not to change the respondent's ideas.

Table 4 - Example of the record chart

Interviewer Serial Number						
QSN	Date	Time	Place or method of choosing examinees	Rejections	Summary	Comments

Interviews provide in-depth information about a particular research issue or question. Since the information is not quantifiable (i.e., not amenable to statistical analysis), the interview often is described as a qualitative research method. Whereas quantitative research methods (e.g., the experiment) gather a small amount of information from many subjects, interviews gather a broad range of information from a

few subjects. In that sense it is crucial to interpret the outcomes of the interviews, so that they can be valid. Sometimes it is necessary just to present the “big picture” and how all the statements made by the interviewee correspond to it. Make sure to define the facts and opinions. Thus you can write a relevant and true report.

**Writing a report: See
CHAPTER REPORTING**

III.6. How to develop a questionnaire?

1. General considerations

1.1. Definition

A questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions for the purpose of gathering information from respondents. It is a series of written or verbal questions for which the respondent provides answers. A questionnaire is a quantitative technique that offers the possibility to collect objective and veridical data from a large number of respondents. The results obtained from the research can be used for making conclusions about the entire population, if the study is made according to the methodological prescriptions and the sample is selected correctly¹.

¹ Making a representative study implies strong knowledge and skills in methodology of sociological research, therefore the results obtained by non-professionals may not be entirely reliable.

1.2. Structure of a questionnaire

A well-designed questionnaire should contain the following elements:

Introductory text – This should contain the title of the questionnaire, a brief description of the purpose of the study, the way in which the information will be used, promise of anonymity, and some clear instruction on how the questionnaire should be completed. The header of the questionnaire must contain empty boxes that will be filled in with the number of respondents, the number of operators, and the code of locality.

Blocks of questions – a group of questions that cover the same topic or correspond to the same objective. The links between two successive blocks of questions are made by the buffer questions.

- The first block of questions is represented by *introductory questions* – a few general questions that are easy to respond and that should introduce the respondent into the research topic;
- The last block *consists of socio-demographic questions*: such as age, sex, civil status, education, etc.

2. Guidelines on questionnaire design and administration

2.1. The steps required to design and administer a questionnaire include:

- 2.1.1. Designing stage;
- 2.1.2. Piloting;
- 2.1.3. Training and Fieldwork;
- 2.1.4. Data Processing;
- 2.1.5. Interpretation of the Results.

2.1.1. Designing stage

2.1.1.1 Defining the problem

The first step in designing a research is determining what exactly we are going to study. A *problem* is a contradiction between the actual situation and the desirable situation, or how the things are and how they should be (examples of social problems: corruption, delinquency, domestic violence and drug abuse). But the research problem does not necessary have to be a social problem. We can study any social phenomenon (e.g. marriage, electoral behavior, leisure), choosing a specific aspect and approach.

2.1.1.2. Documentation

After you have decided what exactly you are going to study, the next activity will be conducting a literature search. There is a big probability that your research topic has already been researched before. Other relevant information, like normative documents, statistical data, scientific work on your topic, has to be consulted before proceeding to the next steps.

2.1.1.3. Defining the goal and the objectives

Setting *the research goal* requires clear identification of what the research is designed for, or what we want to know at the end of it. The goal of the research is a general outcome that has to be achieved as a result of the research. The research has to address *only one goal*.

The objectives are concrete steps that have to be undertaken in the order to achieve the goal of the research.

When the objectives of a study can be expressed in a few clear and concise sentences, the design of the questionnaire becomes considerably easier. The objectives must be ranked by importance. Low priority objectives or those that can be

met using existing data from other sources should then be dropped. The optimal number of objectives in a research is 5 to 10.

2.1.1.4 Determining the object and subject of the research

The object is the general research “target” (for example corruption at the universities).

The subjects of the research is an important aspect or characteristic of the object (for example, dynamics of corruption in the region, key types of corruption, differences in corruption patterns registered for state and private universities, etc.).

2.1.1.5. Defining research hypothesis

A research hypothesis is a tentative answer to a research problem or a “provisional prediction” expressed in the form of a clearly stated relation between independent (‘cause’) and dependent (‘effect’) variables. Hypotheses are built around a more general research problem.

Hypotheses should be:

- stated clearly, using appropriate terminology;
- testable; and

- a statement of relationships between variables.

Examples:

- Experience of providing bribes at the stage of baccalaureate exams increases the chances of reproduction of this deviant behavior at the admission in the institutions of higher education;
- Students are poorly informed on the dorm enrolment procedure and the rule-setting documents regulating the dorm enrolment process and everyday life in dorms;
- Cheating is a universal phenomenon practiced by most students regardless of their academic success.

2.1.1.6. Selecting Your Sample

Sampling describes the process of selecting a sample of elements from a target population in order to conduct a survey. Usually the target population is too large and it is impossible to apply a questionnaire to the entire target population. That’s why we select a sample, or a smaller group of representatives, that have the same characteristics as the target population so that one can make inferences or extrapolations from the sample to the population.

There are four types of samples that are most frequently used in surveys. Each of them has their advantages and limitations, which are expressed in the table below:

Type of sampling	Advantages	Limitations
<p><i>Simple random sampling</i> is the simplest form of random sampling. Each individual is chosen entirely by chance and each member of the population has an equal chance of being included in the sample. Simple random sampling is akin to pulling a number out of a hat.</p> <p>Somewhat more common than simple random samples are <i>systematic samples</i>, which are drawn by starting at a randomly selected element in the sampling frame and then taking every <i>n</i>th element (e.g., starting at a random location in a telephone book and then taking every 100th name).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Highly representative if all subjects participate; ● Technically easy to execute; ● Does not need additional knowledge of the target population. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Not possible without complete list of population members; ● Potentially uneconomical to achieve; ● Can be disruptive to isolate members from a group (do not take into account social characteristics).

Type of sampling	Advantages	Limitations
<p><i>Stratified Random Sampling</i> also called proportional or quota random sample, is obtained by taking samples from each stratum or sub-group of a population. It involves dividing your population into homogeneous subgroups and then taking a simple random sample in each subgroup. Stratified sampling techniques are generally used when the population is heterogeneous, or dissimilar, where certain homogeneous, or similar, sub-populations can be isolated.</p> <p>E.g.: We want to select a sample of 500 students from the Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, the stratification criteria is year of study and specialty:</p> <p>Total number of students = 500 Social Work, year I = 150 Social Work, year II = 75 Social Work, year III = 75 Sociology, year I = 100 Sociology, year II = 50 Sociology, year III = 50</p> <p>The first step is to calculate the percentage in each strata: Social Work, year I = $150/500 \times 100 = 30\%$ Social Work, year II = $75/500 \times 100 = 15\%$ Social Work, year III = $75/500 \times 100 = 15\%$ Sociology, year I = $100/500 \times 100 = 20\%$ Sociology, year II = $50/500 \times 100 = 10\%$ Sociology, year III = $50/500 \times 100 = 10\%$</p> <p>Next, we calculate the number of respondents from our 150 students sample, according to the proportions: Social Work, year I = $30 \times 150 / 100 = 45$ Social Work, year II = $15 \times 150 / 100 = 22$ Social Work, year III = $15 \times 150 / 100 = 22$ Sociology, year I = $20 \times 150 / 100 = 30$ Sociology, year II = $10 \times 150 / 100 = 15$ Sociology, year III = $10 \times 150 / 100 = 15$</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can ensure that specific groups are represented, even proportionally, in the sample(s) (e.g., by gender), by selecting individuals from strata list; • Can show different tendencies within each category (e.g. men and women). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More complex, requires greater effort than simple random; strata must be carefully defined; • Need additional information about the target population.

Cluster Sampling is a sampling technique where the entire population is divided into groups, or clusters, and a random sample of these clusters is selected. It is typically used when the researcher cannot get a complete list of the members of a population they wish to study but can get a complete list of groups or clusters of the population. It is also used when a random sample would produce a list of subjects so widely scattered that surveying them would prove to be far too expensive.

For example, if we want to study corruption in higher education in Moldova, according to the stratified sampling method we have to select students from all the higher education institutions, and apply 3-4 questionnaires at each of the 30 universities. Instead, we can select 2-3 clusters (universities) and interview a significant number of students from these universities.

Multistage Sampling This is the most complex sampling strategy. The researcher combines simpler sampling methods to address sampling needs in the most effective way possible. For example, the administrator might begin with a cluster sample of all schools in the district. Then he might set up a stratified sampling process within clusters. Within schools, the administrator could conduct a simple random sample of classes or grades.

- Less expensive and time consuming than a fully random sample;
- Efficiently used on large samples, where the target population is geographically dispersive;
- It ensures that selected population units will be closer together, thus costs for personal interviews will be reduced, and field work will be simplified;

- By combining various methods, researchers achieve a rich variety of results useful in different contexts.

- It is not a genuine random sampling;
- Likely to yield a biased result (especially if only a few clusters are sampled).

- The same disadvantages as in the techniques used for the multistage sampling (e.g. if we use stratified and cluster sampling together);
- It is more time-consuming.

Selecting respondents is another issue that is not less important than selecting a sample, as it also has an impact on the representativeness of the study. The selection of respondents has to be made randomly, according to a prescribed procedure. If the unit of research is a household, we must select randomly the streets, numbers of the house and the floors, and the respondents (e.g. the member of the household who was celebrated his birthday most recently). If we conduct the study at an institution, we may use a the selection “leap” (e.g. by determining that we need to interview 10 students from Social Work, year II, we may distribute questionnaires to every 3rd student from the register, or to every 3rd student, as they sit at their desks).

2.1.1.7. Writing the questionnaire

Meeting the objectives

- Make sure that all objectives of the research are fully translated into question;
- Make sure that the questions derive from the hypothesis of the study;

- Exclude questions that are not relevant for meeting the objectives of the study;
- All the questions included must be adequate and in conformity with the purpose of the research.

The types of questions

There are three major types of questions in a questionnaire:

1. An open-ended question asks the respondent to formulate his own answer;
2. A closed-ended question asks the respondent to pick an answer from a given number of options;
3. A semi-closed question has, besides a given number of options, the option “Other” to be filled in.

The following *types of response scales for closed-ended and semi-closed-ended questions* are distinguished:

- two-choice questions;
- multiple choice questions;
- rating scale questions;
- agreement scale questions; and
- bounded/continuous questions.

Double choice, is when the respondent has two options. For example:

In your opinion, is it possible or not to fully eliminate corruption from the university enrolment process? (Please select one option)

1. Yes.
2. No.

Multiple-choice² – where the respondent has more than two unordered options. For example:

In your opinion, where are the acts of corruption during the BAC exams more common? (Please select one option)

1. Rural areas.
2. Urban areas.
3. Equally common in rural and urban areas.
4. I don't know.

In a multiple choice question, the respondent has to pick:

- one single option (see the example above);
- a limited number of options (2-3). For example:

What are the main problems which the higher education institutions face today? (Please select up to three variants.)

1. Lack of proper equipment / adequate class-rooms.
2. Low level of the academic staff's proficiency.
3. Low level of communication between students and professors.
4. Low level of student's education.
5. Students' irresponsible attitude towards studies.
6. Professors' superficial attitude towards the studying process.
7. Corruption.
8. Nepotism, protectionism.
9. Other (specify) _____

² Data Collection: Planning for and Collecting All Types of Data, By Patricia Pulliam Phillips, Cathy A. Stawarski, p.2

Unlimited numbers of options. For example:

In your opinion, which are the main causes of corruption acts at the BAC exams? (Unlimited number of options)

1. The wish to obtain a positive (passing) mark/grade.
2. The wish to obtain a mark/grade as high as possible.
3. The wish to ensure better chances for the university enrolment.
4. Following the example of other colleagues.
5. Pressure from colleagues and the parent's association.
6. Pressure from professors, lyceum administration and other officials.
7. Other (Specify) _____

Rating Scale Questions – where the respondent is asked to rate a particular issue on a scale that ranges *from poor to good* or other types of ranges. For example:

In your opinion, what is the level of development of the higher education in our country? (Please select one option)

1. Very good
2. Good
3. Satisfactory
4. Unsatisfactory
5. Bad
6. Very bad

Agreement scale questions (Likert questions) – ascertain how strongly respondents agree with a particular statement, or how they feel towards a certain issue. For example:

Below are indicated certain statements, estimate how much you agree or disagree with each of them.	I disagree completely	I disagree	I equally agree and disagree	I agree	I agree completely	I don't know
1. The professors have a right to sell their books while they teach, if they set no prerequisites to the students in doing so.	1	2	3	4	5	8
2. Forcing someone to buy the books is a severe form of corruption.	1	2	3	4	5	8
3. It is okay to buy the professor's book if I receive higher grade or the pass in the examination in exchange.	1	2	3	4	5	8

4. Forcing the students to buy books is justified due to widespread book photocopying which passes with impunity.	1	2	3	4	5	8
5. Forcing students to buy books is justified due to professor's low salaries.	1	2	3	4	5	8
6. Forcing students to buy books cannot be justified by any means.	1	2	3	4	5	8

Bounded/Continuous – where the respondent is presented with a continuous scale. For example:

Please estimate the level of corruption related to the process of admission to the higher education institutions on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means total lack of corruption and 10 – very high level.

|_____|

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Lack of corruption

Very high level

2.1.1.8. *The order of the questions*

In general, questions should flow logically from one to the next. To achieve the best response rates, you should structure the questionnaire as following:

- Put the most important items in the first half of the questionnaire – this will ensure you get the most significant data from the non-finishers;
- Questions should flow logically from one to the next;
- The researcher must ensure that the answer to a question is not influenced by previous questions;
- Questions should flow from the more general to the more specific;
- Questions should flow from the least sensitive to the most sensitive;
- Questions should flow from factual and behavioral questions to attitudinal and opinion questions.

2.1.1.9. **Basic rules for questionnaire item construction**

- Question concepts should be clear and understandable, with as little ambiguity as possible – it should be interpreted in only one way;
- Use positive statements and

avoid negatives or double negatives;

- In the case of sensitive questions, use a neutral form (neither negative nor positive), so that you make sure that you don't suggest the answer;
- Do not make assumptions about the respondent;
- Use clear and comprehensible wording, easily understandable for all educational levels;
- Use correct spelling, grammar and punctuation;
- Avoid items that contain more than one question per item (e.g. Do you like strawberries and potatoes?);
- Sensitive subject areas should be explored through appropriately sensitive or even indirect questions.

2.1.1.10. **The length of the questionnaire**

The number of questions in a questionnaire depends on the objectives of the research, and on the type of the research (e.g. simple polls can be limited to a few questions, whereas surveys need a more complex instrument). Both short and long questionnaire have their advantages and disadvantages. As a general rule, long questionnaires get less response than short questionnaires. But on the

other hand long questionnaire provides more extensive, complex, detailed data about the object of the research, offers the possibility to test correlations or interdependence between variables. Also, the validity/reliability is higher due to the fact that we can introduce control questions (questions that have the same sense as some previous questions but are differently formulated, so that we can check if the answers contain no contradictions).

Short questionnaires have one big advantage mentioned below – they get a higher response rate. They are easier and faster to administer, the data obtained is easier to introduce in SPSS/Excel. The disadvantage is that we obtain more superficial data, that doesn't allow making a lot of findings and interpretations.

2.1.1.11. Physical Characteristics of the Questionnaire

- Physical aspects such as the page layout, font type and size, question spacing, and type of paper should be considered;
- In order to eliminate the need to flip back and forth between pages, the layout should be designed so that a question at the bottom of the page does not need to be continued onto the next page;

- The font should be readable by respondents who have less-than-perfect visual acuity;
- The paper stock should be good of quality to project the image that the questionnaire is important enough to warrant the respondents' time;
- Each questionnaire should have a unique number in order to better account for it and to know if any have been lost.

2.1.2. Piloting

On quantitative surveys, a small number (10-20-30) of test questionnaires should ideally be applied to test the feasibility and appropriateness of the questionnaire. The respondents selected for the pilot survey should be broadly representative of the type of respondent to be interviewed in the main survey. The purpose of piloting is to test the questionnaire for length, comprehensibility, and general good sense.

The purpose of pre-testing the questionnaire is to determine:

- Whether the questions as they are worded will achieve the desired results;
- Whether the questions have been placed in the best order;
- Whether the questions are

understood by all classes of respondents;

- Whether additional or specifying questions are needed or whether some questions should be eliminated;
- Whether the instructions are adequate to interviewers;
- Whether the questions offend or rise negative emotions among respondents, particularly where sensitive issues or subjects are involved.

2.1.3. Training and Fieldwork

The third stage involves training field staff and conducting fieldwork.

2.1.3.1. Training includes the following activities:

- Explaining in details the goal and objectives of the research;
- Explaining the content of the questionnaire (the significance of each item);
- The mode of administration of the questionnaire – how the operator will find the respondent and how he will interact with the respondent, e.g. the operator must know how to explain to the respondent the correct

modality of filling the questionnaire.

2.1.3.2. Fieldwork includes the process of administering the questionnaire.

The most commonly used *modes of questionnaire administration* are:

- *Face-to-face questionnaire administration* – where the interviewer reads out the questions and marks the responses;
- *Self-administered questionnaire* – where the items are presented on paper, and the respondent reads and marks the responses him/herself.

The questionnaire may also be administered *via internet, telephone, post*.

2.1.4. Data processing

Data processing includes editing, coding, entering and verifying the data as well as checking them for consistency. Data entry and editing take place simultaneously with data collection, allowing for quality control of the data collected and for the provision of preliminary results one month after the end of data collection. Agree on the

statistical package you wish to use (such as SPSS, Stata, EpiInfo, Excel, or Access) and decide on a coding system before anyone starts working on the data set.

Data analysis involves the use of statistical techniques to identify interrelationships between the answers given (e.g. analysis of frequencies, correlations, variance and factorial analysis).

2.1.5. Interpretation of the Results

2.1.5.1. Writing up and reporting

Once you have completed your data analysis, you will need to think creatively about the clearest and most parsimonious way to report and present your findings.

The following *outline* is the suggested format for writing the research report:

- Title page
- Table of contents
- Introduction
 - Background to the research problem
 - Goal and Objectives
 - Hypotheses

- Methodology/Data collection
 - Sample and sampling method
 - Statistical or qualitative methods used for data analysis
 - Sample description
- Findings
 - Results, interpretation and conclusions
- List of tables
- List of figures

When drafting the final report, we must take into consideration the following rules:

- Make sure that all the conclusions are clearly supported by the data.
- The final report contains information based on facts. Make a clear distinction between facts and interpretations.
- Make clear which data you are using to support your interpretations.

2.1.5.2. Data presentation

Easy-to-understand tables and graphics will greatly enhance the readability of the written

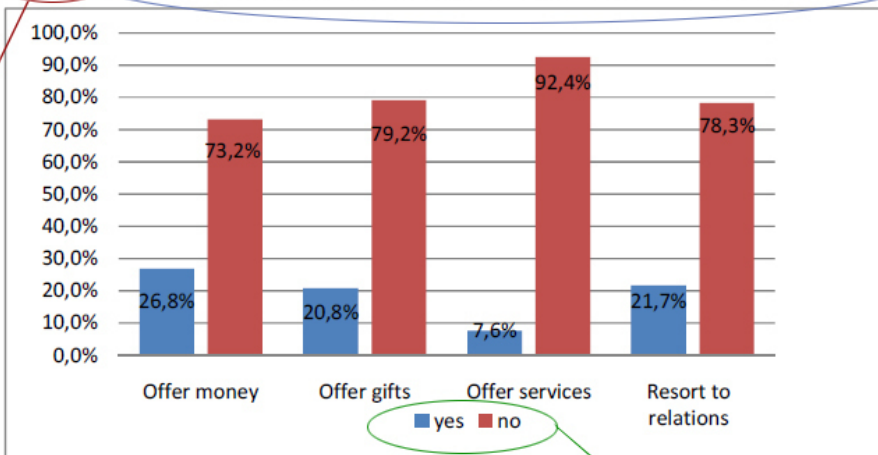
research report. As a general rule, all tables and figures should contain:

Table no 6. The responses to the question "In your opinion, how should the subjects listed below be responsible for preventing corruption in the process of admission?"

	Absolute Responsible	Somehow Responsible	Do not think they should be responsible
Admission committee	69,4%	28,2%	2,4%
Prospective students	31,9%	57,1%	11,0%
Prospective students' parents	27,9%	47,8%	24,3%
University administration	71,9%	24,3%	3,8%
Representatives of the controlling structures	78,9%	18,6%	2,5%

1. Identification number corresponding to the list of tables and the list of figures
2. A title that conveys the content of the table or figure, also corresponding to the list of tables and the list of figures
3. Appropriate column labels and row labels for tables, and figure legends defining specific elements in the figure.

Chart no 6. The responses to the question "Personally, during high school graduation exams, did you :"



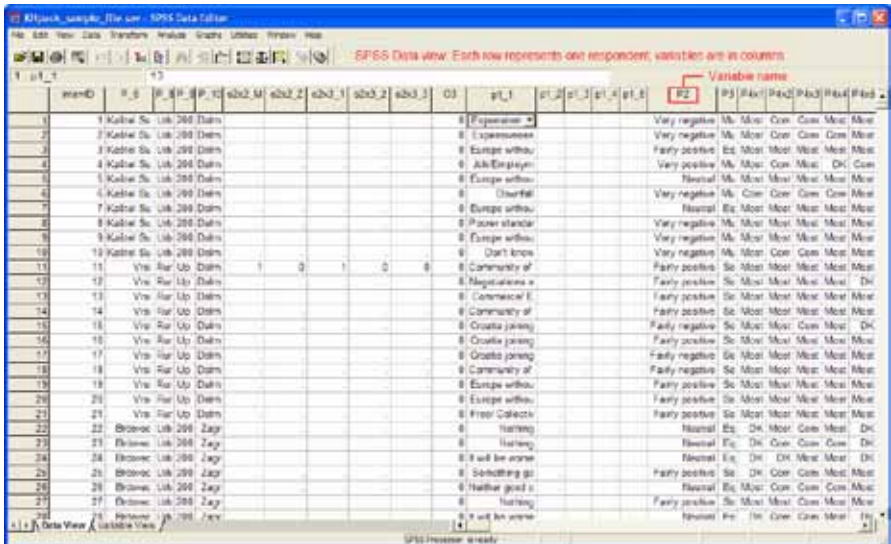
For data analyzes we can use SPSS.

Introductory guidelines for SPSS

1. The first and most important step – make sure that every question in the questionnaire is clearly marked as a single response (one answer only) or multiple responses (more answers possible). This step determines the way you prepare the SPSS matrix to enter the data and also the way of analyzing the data.
2. If in doubt, use single response questions only –

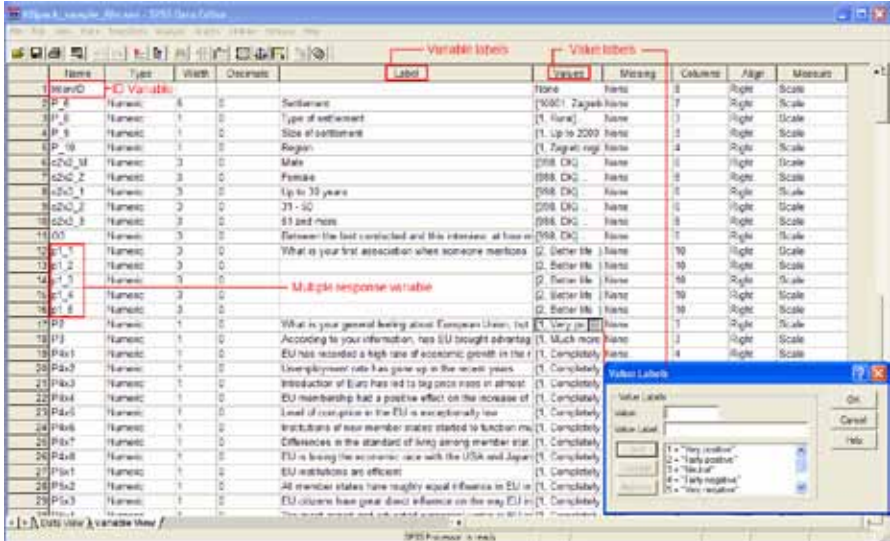
they are much simpler to enter, analyze and interpret. However, multiple response questions are often worth the extra energy spent in preparing and analyzing the data.

3. The basic idea of SPSS: columns represent variables, rows represent respondents. A questionnaire of 20 single response questions, done on a sample of 300 respondents will have 20 columns and 300 rows. Always add an ID variable, which gives a unique identification to each respondent.



4. In SPSS you can choose between 'data view' and 'variable view'. You first need the 'variable view' to

enter the variable names and labels (more on labels later). After that, you enter your data in the 'data view'.

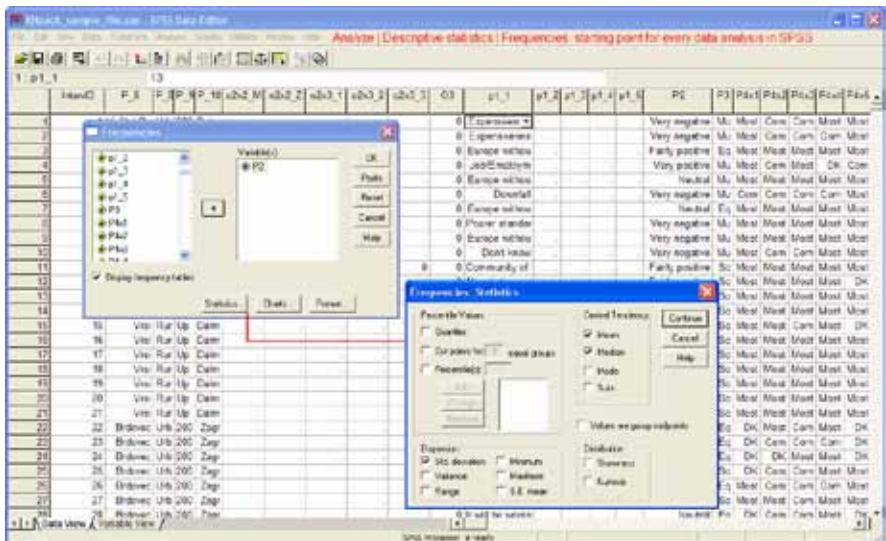


5. Before you start entering the data, it is advisable to label the variables. Labels are just descriptions, there are 2 kinds:

a) Variable label – this is just an extended variable name. For example, a variable that represents household income could have a name like 'income' to keep it short and a longer label like 'Household income' to describe it better.

b) Value label – more important than variable labels. They describe the values which the variable has. The best example is gender: in SPSS, you would code gender as 1 and 2, but only the value labels tell us that 1 means female and 2 means male (or vice versa). We could have used totally different numbers (1 for male and 1000 for female) and as long the value labels are correct, there would be no difference.

6. Single response variables data are simple to enter once you prepared the variables. Multiple response data are more difficult and I will outline the basic idea here. You should have as many variables as options and then mark every option with either 0 (not selected) or 1 (selected). Example: we have a question which asks the respondents to state the reasons why they decided to go to the university. We offer them 3 choices. In SPSS we code it as 3 variables: university_1, university_2 and university_3. Each of the options gets a value of 0 or 1.
7. The basis of all data analysis in SPSS is the menu entry Analyze – Descriptive Statistics – Frequencies. Besides frequencies (counts and percentages), you also get almost all of the basic statistics there: mean, median, standard deviation (shown in the picture) and a very useful graphical representation - histogram. Further data analysis is beyond the scope of this introduction: some hints to help you to explore further options are crosstabs, vicariate correlation, ANOVA and so on.



8. SPSS can be used to design charts and the latest versions can do it well. However, a standard procedure many people follow is to paste the tables (normally the output of frequencies command) into Excel and design the chart there. Do not forget that charts are a very useful device – people are much better at judging shapes and colors than numbers.
9. You can also use Excel to enter the data and perform basic analysis. Once you need something that is not easily done in Excel, you can import the data into SPSS easily. This also means that not every computer you use to enter the data must have SPSS installed – Excel, Open Office or even Notepad if you are skilled enough to use it.
10. To learn more, there is a good built-in help in SPSS. If you want to learn even more, there is a great online resource called Raynald's SPSS Tools (<http://www.spsstools.net/>).



IV. How to write a report?



Introduction

The context of the research and the monitoring instrument in the scope of the general theme, the reason for the research of that particular target group or individual (for example, what is the role of the student vice-dean in the process of cheating, why the student representatives are important in the process of financial flows) - 3 sentences

Problem definition

A more concrete picture of the problem and situation to be researched (what we already know or think about the problem, for example; what the results of the questionnaire showed about cheating, what is known and what is assumed about the financial flows) - from 3 to 5 sentences

Methodology

The concept of research, what do we want to achieve and find out: research (main) question, objectives, assumptions and theories of potential discoveries, major issues, etc...) – About 5 sentences

What methodology to use in order to obtain useful results, why this particular methodology, why these questions?
Make a list of all of the questions that were asked in

the focus group or interview (on the basis of these questions we get the “results”) – list all of the questions, even those that didn’t receive direct answers, but were asked.

Implementation (the description of the research)

The realization of the research with expected and unexpected results, how the implementation of the methodology looked in reality (step-by-step): organization and preparation for the monitoring instrument, the reactions of participants, problems or difficulties during the realization of the monitoring instrument (for example, refusal to participate and cooperate in the focus groups, debates and opposing opinions, etc...) - *the more the better*

Research results

All the information obtained by this monitoring instrument, everything that respondents said (quotes or group opinions) sorted in several major units (the section “other” should be put at the end of the paragraph, in the form of, “Finally, _____” or “ And further, _____”) - not everything is equally important, so when writing this part have in mind that those results should correspond with the problem of the research, objectives and

hypothesis stated in the previous sections; the results can be presented with charts, graphs and tables as well, so choose the most informative ones to put in the text and others can be placed as an addendum or a separate attachment; the presented results should provide an obvious adequate answer whether they support the hypothesis or not.

Conclusion and recommendations

Results, what we have found out new - *about 3 sentences*
Comment > Methodology vs. results in the context of the definition of the problem (was the research question answered, was your thinking confirmed, etc.) - *3 to 5 sentences*

Recommendations

What should be done differently and / or better next time (in access, technical implementation etc.) - *2 sentences*

Questions not to be asked next time, in which direction to go deeper – list of questions (however)

V. Describing the topics



V.1. Cheating

1. Introduction

Problem definition

The definition of students' cheating is every student's attempt to circumvent prescribed rules in fulfilling their obligations, without their professors and other faculty staff's knowledge. The academic cheating appears in multiple forms, such as copying and cheating on exams, plagiarizing of seminar and other papers, using others' ideas without citing the source, signature and document falsification, etc.

Cheating on the exams could be done by technical devices such as earpieces and small cameras. In that case, not only the students are involved in cheating, but the providers of these devices too. That is why it would be good to find out someone from that population as well when dealing with this topic.

The importance of the topic in higher education

The corruption is a problem in many Eastern European countries prevalent in all of the public sectors, in the education as well. Academic cheating is

a form of a corrupt behaviour which is probably the most prevalent and it can have many negative impacts. The students who participate in cheating could leave college with poor work habits and questionable ethics and continue with that behaviour in their future professional life.

2. Instruments

2.1. Requests for public information

2.1.1 Introduction

By sending a request for a public access to information we collect official information – in which way, with the aid of which documents is the problem of student cheating regulated, how many faculties have an officially recorded case of cheating and similar.

In the later phases of the research, the answers obtained from the faculty are useful for the comparison of the results obtained in this, official way and those obtained through focus groups, interviews, or the questionnaire.

The requests are sent to the addresses of the institutions (in this case all of the faculties at the university which are of interest to us, as well as the

Ministry of Science, Education and Sports), and via e-mail. The institutions have a set deadline within which they are obliged to answer our request.

2.1.2. Sample

The sample consists of all of the institutions, which possess potentially useful information for the beginning of the research. To be more specific, for the subject of cheating in higher education those are the faculties (when choosing the faculties which will receive the requests, the sample should not be limited only to those which are unofficially notorious for bribery) and the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports.

2.1.3. Questions

The questions posed in the requests ask for information about documents and formal ways of conduct in cases of students' cheating, as well as information on real recorded cases of cheating. An interesting indicator of the state of affairs in the institutions to whom the requests are sent are the documents they refer to in their answers, as well as the estimated penalties for student cheating.

Examples of questions:

1. Has a case of students' cheating been recorded on

your faculty during the last five years?

2. If such a case has been recorded, in what manner has it been settled?
3. If it has, which regulations you used as reference points during the settlement of that case?
4. Are there any books of regulations which clearly and explicitly forbid such actions, as well as clearly define sanctions for the offenders?
5. Which regulations would you use if such a case was reported to you?
6. What are the prescribed sanctions for the student who cheated on the exam?

2.1.4. Positive and negative experiences

A large number of faculties replied neither to the sent requests nor to the lodged complaints. Some of those who did respond to our requests replied negatively without a sufficient explanation.

2.1.5. Advice and recommendations

We recommend sending the requests also via regular mail, as more institutions replied to such a request than to those sent via e-mail. The customary form of the request should be observed, official seal and signature are obligatory, otherwise the

institutions may send a negative reply. We also recommend you to enclose along with the request a petition to access data with the description of the purpose of the project in whose name the requests are sent. If the institutions do not respond to the request within the legally binding deadline, it is possible to lodge a complaint.

2.2. Focus groups

2.2.1. Why focus groups?

The focus groups are a source of qualitative data and they allow the interviewers/moderators to study people in a more natural setting than in a one-to-one interview. In these groups an interviewer/moderator can encourage participants to freely discuss their opinions and concerns about the topic. But there are also some disadvantages in comparison to an interview that an interviewer needs to bear in mind. He has less control over a group than in one-to-one interview and thus time can be lost on issues irrelevant to the topic; the data are difficult to analyze because the talking is often in reaction to the comments of other group members; interviewers/moderators need to be trained and groups are quite variable and can prove difficult to get together.

The number of members of a focus group is not large enough to be a representative sample of a population; thus, the data obtained from the groups is not necessarily representative of the whole population, unlike the data of opinion polls.

For the topic of cheating the main goal of student focus groups of various fields of study is to collect as much different and useful information as possible in order to understand the phenomenon of cheating better. For this topic it is an invaluable preparatory activity for creating a thorough all-round questionnaire for students.

2.2.2. Sample

The sample for the focus groups depends on the size of your research. The criteria for the sample can vary in accordance with whether you are monitoring just one faculty, a group of faculties or the whole university.

If you are monitoring only one faculty, the criteria for homogeneous groups can be the year of study or the major. If your research includes the whole university or a group of faculties, the participants of the focus groups should be homogeneous groups of students based on the faculties at which they are studying.

The first criterion should be to gather students from different fields of studies. One focus group can be with the students from the Faculty of Social Sciences as a representative for that group of faculties, the second can be with students from some of the technical faculties and etc. The participants in one focus group could be from the largest faculty so you can see their experience and methods of cheating. The second criterion on which the sample for a focus group can be based is the faculties' "reputation" regarding student cheating. You can choose one with the strictest rules and sanctions in regard to cheating and one with a reputation as the most corrupted. The main idea behind these criteria was to find out more about different "cultures of cheating" and to examine whether students believe that the reputation of either institution is justified or not. Whether such claims for those faculties are justified remains to be tested on a much broader sample using the questionnaire which you can develop and tune according to the information gathered in the focus groups.

2.2.3. Questions for the student focus groups

Before you start with the questions for the students you can use this intro for the focus groups to describe to them how to behave during the focus group, why you are recording it and what you are going to do with the results.

Intro for the focus groups:

Before we start with the real business, I would like to use this opportunity to say something about the reasons why this is being recorded. The reason is simply because we don't have enough time to write down all of your answers and it would be even harder to remember them all. Also, at the end of this focus group we will need material from which we can draw some conclusions. The audio tape is here so that we can remember the whole conversation. There are many of you here and it's hard to remember all of the answers while at the same time concentrating on the conversation.

Please introduce yourself by personal name only, you can even use an imaginary name if you wish, we guarantee you privacy and everything you say will be used only for this research and nowhere else. Please turn off your mobile

phones, if you haven't done so already, and if it's possible please don't talk at the same time as the others, because then we won't be able to accurately extract the points you have made. Those were some technical details, now let me tell you something about the conversation we will have. Of course, we want all of you to say what you think; it doesn't matter if it's a positive or a negative opinion. We are interested in good and bad things and everything you say is a big help for us in our research. We're not asking you to explicitly mention someone's name or something similar. I would also like to make clear that the questions we're asking have no wrong or right answers, nor do you need to have some knowledge in advance to answer them. You're free to say anything you want in any given moment. So, let's start with the conversation now.

Let's first introduce ourselves, my name is _____ and what is yours?

Questions:

Questions are split into a few themes concerning the topic of cheating. You should find out as much as possible from the students about these topics. To

be effective, the focus groups' questions should be open-ended and move from general to specific.

Introduction:

Asking about participants' names, the university they attend etc.; something to „break the ice“.

Cheating in general

- What do you think students' cheating is?
- What sorts of behaviour can be described as student cheating?
- What are the boundaries between cheating and following the rules at university?
- Do you think there are "lighter" forms of cheating, which shouldn't be forbidden? What are they? (e.g. some forms of team work)

Types of cheating:

- Could you please say which types of student cheating are you familiar with?
- Have you heard about _____?
- Do you consider that to be cheating?
- Why?
- In written exams (copying from someone else, using crib notes etc.)

- * Plagiarism (types)
- * Counterfeiting (types)
- Which of the types mentioned are the most frequent?
- Which are the most frequent at your faculty/university?
- Have you ever heard of someone using some technical gadgets for cheating?

Motives

- What motivates students to cheat? (e.g. lack of supervision, bad professor etc.)
- Imagine the person who cheats and the person who doesn't and try to compare them.
- What are the motives for their behaviour or attitudes towards education?
- What can prevent students from cheating?
- If you cheated, how would you feel about it?
- How do other students feel after cheating?
- Are there any situations in which cheating can be justified?
- Which ones?
- Are there any types of cheating which are never justified?
- What are the boundaries between such behaviours?
- Have you ever cheated?

- Hypothetically, in which situations would you cheat more often?

Cultural influence/Class norms

What are your colleagues' attitudes towards cheating? Which types of cheating are acceptable in your environment? Could you compare it with other faculties?

What do you think of students who cheat?

What do you think of students who don't cheat? (e.g. students who won't let you copy from them during a written exam)

Have any of you ever reported someone for cheating?

Have you ever heard of such a case?

Could you please comment on the above?

Why students report or don't report cheating?

In which cases would you report cheating? Why?

Control/Supervision

Which methods do teachers use for preventing cheating in written exams? (e.g. they warn students to turn off their mobile phones...)

How do they act during the exam?

Do teachers inspect tests/ homework/seminar work etc. to

see if students cheated/copied someone's work?

Have you ever been informed about what plagiarism really is? If not, do you know where could you find this kind of information?

Sanctions/Penalties

Are you familiar with rules and penalties for cheating at your faculty?

Which rules and penalties exist? Where and how were you introduced to those rules? How often and in which way are you reminded of them?

Do you know where to find these rules if you want to be informed?

Do you take those rules and penalties seriously? How strict are they and does everyone follow them? What does that depend on?

If you got caught cheating, would you get punished according to the rules? Which forms of cheating are sanctioned, and which are not?

What is the worst penalty someone can receive at your faculty? How often does that happen? Do these penalties have any effect on students and the frequency of cheating?

Do you think stricter penalties would prevent cheating? Why?

Do you know if anything like a "code of honour" exists at your faculty?

Ending

What can be done in order to prevent academic cheating? Which forms of supervision or penalties would have an effect?

What would you do to prevent cheating?

Do you have any real life examples from other faculties?

2.2.4. Positive and negative experiences

A positive experience with the focus groups on the topic of cheating was connected to the fact that the students were willing to openly talk about this topic. The topic is delicate and its open discussion is not in students' favour. However, they were willing to share their personal experiences and techniques of cheating with us. A negative experience is one connected to the response of the participants. The possibility that some of the participants don't show up even though they voluntarily applied for participation in the focus group is always present. You should always bear this problem in mind

and think in advance how to solve it if it happens. The best option is to call a few more participants than the desired number, even if everybody has said that they will come to the focus group. You should also stay in touch with people who were interested in the focus group, but were refused by you because you already had enough participants. You can call them later if necessary.

2.2.5. Recommendations

1. Interviewer/moderator needs to be trained
2. Focus group results are not representative for the whole population
3. Create homogeneous groups for the focus groups
4. Prepare questions before the focus group
5. Don't judge anybody due to the things they say during the focus group
6. Be neutral with your opinion as the moderator of the focus group

2.3. Interviews

2.3.1. Why interviews?

Interviews are a good source of qualitative data. In combination with the focus groups, the interviews could reveal themes

or information which could be used in preparing the questionnaire.

However, in this case, the main goal of the interviews should be to gain extra information of the issue, to explore different angles of the topic, and to find contradictions in opinions between different groups. For example, while interviewing the professors, it's interesting to see how much their awareness of cheating or opinions of it differ from that of the students'.

The main goal while interviewing the professors is to find out whether they are fighting against student cheating and in what way. Members of disciplinary bodies should reveal which misdemeanours they deal with and what were the sanctions imposed.

2.3.2. Sample

The most interesting participants for the interviews about cheating would be the members of the academic staff and the sellers of hidden earphones, that is, the "bug sellers" (or "bug renters"). The number of interviews with professors depends on the scale of the research - are you monitoring your faculty, a group of faculties or the whole university? If you have to make interviews with a limited number of participants it would be

advisable to include participants who are relevant on a larger scale. Getting information about professors who are willing to talk about this topic, or have dealt with this issue in some way, is a good way to select participants for the interview.

To get relevant results, it's important to include members of the teaching staff who:

- have at some point started disciplinary procedures against students because of cheating,
- who are members of bodies that are dealing with that problem (for example, the members of Disciplinary commission for students)
- are responsible for the quality of education.

It is enough to interview one bug seller, who would serve as a case study. Reaching a participant is much harder in this case, since the bug sellers could be viewed as members of a kind of a hidden population and the methods of reaching them have some ethical implications. There are a few ways to make this easier. One way would be to find an interviewer who has privileged access to that population, which would make a bug renter more willing to answer questions and hopefully, to answer with more honesty. This could be done by finding a participant through social networks, through snowball

sampling etc. Bug sellers could also be reached through various internet forums where they advertise.

If it's impossible to reach a bug seller who is willing to participate in a face to face interview, another step would be to suggest a telephone or an online interview. This kind of interview surely provides more anonymity than a face to face interview, and could make a participant more comfortable with answering questions, but it could also facilitate misunderstandings in communication.

It is important for these participants to be reassured of the protection of their anonymity, and the information they don't want to be exposed to public.

2.3.3. Questions

Questions for the members of university teaching staff

This is a set of questions designed for interviews with the members of the university teaching staff. Do not consider these questions as rigid and infallible, but rather as a set of guidelines for your own interviews. Feel free to tweak and tune them according to your own situation.

Introduction

Due to the sensitive issues being discussed, we believe it is best to start the interview with some

easy questions. The goal in this phase is building up mutual trust, as much as is possible in the given circumstances, and creating an atmosphere appropriate for an open talk. There is no point in trying to design a universal ice-breaking chat, it is up to the interviewers to prepare for that or improvise on the spot. However, some of the topic questions that might be put forward in this phase are these:

- For how long have you been teaching at the university?
- How would you describe your field of academic study?

These can be seen as sort of transit questions, simple enough for getting them warmed up for talking, without any unexpected surprises.

Generally about cheating

Now that you are properly acquainted, you can start with the main topic. In this part of the interview we want to hear about their general experience with cheating. Try to put forward those kinds of questions that will make them answer as much of the following questions as they can. Here are some suggestions:

- What kind of experience do you, as a member of academic staff, have with students' cheating?
- How often do you encounter

this phenomenon?

- What is, in your opinion, the reason of its appearance, in general?
- Is there, in your experience, any relevant distinction between those students that cheat and those that do not?

Techniques and methods

Here we want to find out more about how familiar the academic staff is with modern-day technique and methods of students' cheating. Same as before, it is not overly recommended for the interviewer to follow the suggested questions to the last letter – it would most probably result in an awkward situation. Rather, just focus on getting at least some of the answers by formulating the questions as you see fit.

- Would you perhaps be able to compare 'modern' and 'old' ways of cheating? Perhaps when you were a student the techniques and frequency of cheating were different?
- In your own estimate, how familiar is the academic staff with the modern ways of students' cheating?
- Which methods of cheating are the most frequent among students? With which have you so far had an encounter as a member of the academic staff? Which

technical gadgets used for cheating are you familiar with?

- Do you consider it as cheating when students collect questions from previous exams and exchange other information about exams?

Rules

This is the part where the goal is finding out about rules and regulations regarding cheating. Here are some suggestions of questions that should help direct the interview.

- Is there some kind of an honour code at your institution, one that obliges students not to cheat? If not, do you think it would make a difference if it existed?
- Are the rules regarding cheating emphasized enough? Are the students properly informed about the rules? How do you personally inform students on the rules? (Do you repeat to them quite often, to make sure that each of your students is aware of the rules and sanctions for cheating?)
- Do you have any rules of your own, particular for your exams?
- Do you find existing regulation of sanctions satisfactory? Do you adhere

to it or do you sanction the students on your own?

Supervision

These are some questions about how the academic staff members supervise students and whether they do something themselves to prevent or reduce cheating.

- How do you behave during a written exam? (How do you supervise your students? Do you use the help of some assistants?)
- How do you supervise your students when it comes to disclosing plagiarism?
- What about forgery? (If applicable: Do you check student attendance at your lectures? How? If you use attendance lists, how do you struggle against students signing other students?)

Sanctions

One of the more important segments of the interview is to be careful not to forget asking them about sanctions.

- How do you behave towards students that you caught cheating? (Does it vary according to the cheating method or the task at which they were caught cheating?)
- What do you do when you detect copied or very similar essays and such? (When

you're sure it's a case of plagiarism?)

- Could you describe the ways in which students try to evade sanctions? How successful are they?
- Do you talk about students' cheating with other members of the teaching staff? What do you think about the way others deal with it?
- Do you consider it necessary to supervise the teaching staff more when they try to handle students' cheating? Do you know of any occurrence when a member of the teaching staff was sanctioned for badly handling a case of students' cheating?

Struggle against cheating

This is a natural continuation of the previous part, but on a more general scale.

- Do you have any ideas what should be done to reduce student cheating? How much room is there for improvement and better efficiency of confronting this issue?
- Would you be willing to participate in a committee that would have the task of reducing student cheating?
- Do your students report on their colleagues cheating? How often, in which way

(anonymously, openly, etc.)? Do you encourage that?

- How do you feel about implementing surveillance cameras into all of the classrooms?
- Besides the honour code, do you believe some other measure might help to fight cheating?
- How do you assess the work of the institutions in charge of dealing with this issue?

Conclusion

Since the interview probably lasted for quite some time now, find an elegant way to conclude it. This one should be good enough, but the interviewers will probably manage to do it anyhow.

- (If not already mentioned) Do you have any interesting anecdotes related to this topic?

That is all about it. Don't forget to thank them for their time and cooperation. Make sure to let them know when the results of the research will be made public.

Questions for the "bugmen" (people who sell hidden earphones)

Introduction

The same as in the interview with academic staff, it would be the best to start with introductory, ice-breaking questions, like these:

- What do you do in life? What is your preoccupation?
- Are you a student? What do you study, where? What is it like?
- How did you end up in the bug renting business? For how long have you been doing it?

About the business

- In case you have been in the business for a longer period, could you describe what it was like when you were beginning, have there been any changes in the business, has it improved or degraded over time?
- Have there been any changes in the profile of the people you have been working with?
- What can you tell us about competition? Are there many bug renters out there? Does some kind of understanding between you exist, explicit or implicit?
- Where do you get your bugs, do you stay up-to-date with new products or do you hold on to what you have got?
- What portion of your income is generated by your bug

renting business?

- Could you please describe how the whole process works? To whom do you rent, how do you get in touch with your clients, or how do your clients get in touch with you?
- Do you provide any other services besides renting? How do you explain the technique of using the bug? Who is responsible for finding the assistant (the person that gives answers)?
- What measures do you take to make sure your bug isn't stolen or confiscated?
- How do your prices range regarding the rent period? Do students bargain with you, do you have any special customers, do you provide discounts, etc.?
- What else do you rent, besides bugs? Do you have any other technical gadgets that students might be interested in, such as cameras and similar products?
- Do you advertise explicitly, openly? Did you ever have any problems with the law because of that?

About students

The important thing is to find out what kind of students use bugs, and to see if bug renters deal with a minority of students who become regular customers,

or is bug renting more spread and bug renters deal with more different clients.

- Could you estimate as to what kind of students predominantly takes advantage of your services (by gender, age, faculty, field of study etc.)? Do you have any regular customers? Do you have any customers that you refuse to work with?
- When you rent out a bug, do you guarantee that your customers will pass their exams?
- Do you need to provide special instructions for your first-time customers as to how to use the bug?
- In case your customers don't manage to use the bug in their exam, do they complain, or do they want their money back?
- Do you know the motives students have to contact you and ask for bugs? Is it because they are too lazy, because they have too much money, is it the adrenaline, is it because the exam is too difficult to pass otherwise...?
- Is there any special exam or a special professor who makes it so difficult to pass that you get a bunch of people asking for a bug specifically for that exam (for example, some extremely difficult exam that generally

only a few people manage to pass by studying)?

- Can you tell us if there are any changes between faculties or universities when it comes to the way of using a bug? For example, is there some special technique specific for some types of written exams, perhaps including the use of cameras or mobile phones etc.? Or maybe the bugs are used for oral exams only; in one-to-one or group exams?
- Are there any differences in success rates of using the bug?

Conclusion

- Are you afraid of getting caught? Are you familiar with a case of some bug renter getting caught? What is the punishment for that? What is the punishment for students getting caught?
- Does your family know what you're doing? What about your friends? How do all of them perceive this business of yours?
- Can you share any interesting anecdotes, stories regarding renting bugs?

2.3.4. Positive and negative experiences, recommendations

The worst thing that could happen is to get a negative

response when asking to arrange an interview. Whether you are arranging a meeting via e-mail or telephone, it is important to fully present yourself, your organization and your project. Providing a possible respondent with a set of questions which would lead him into the subject is also advisable.

The good thing with this topic is that professors don't think of it as a sensitive issue. That's why arranging and making an interview on this topic should be the least troubling. The exceptions are, of course, the bug sellers/renters; as explained earlier in the text.

2.3.5. Examples of the results

An interview with a professor could reveal his attitudes on cheating and previous experience with this form of academic misdemeanour.

For example, this professor thinks that cheating is a marginal problem in higher education. It would be interesting to compare his opinion with students' opinions and the frequency of cheating.

"The frequency of cheating hasn't changed in the last 20 years, only the technology changed".

"Cheating isn't considered as

a significant social problem. It should be prevented and criticized, but I also don't think that it's a serious problem".

This is what this professor believes is the cause of student's unawareness of faculty or university rules and regulations:

"A part of the student culture is that not knowing anything about the faculty and having no interest in it except passing the exam and getting a degree is normal".

This professor is categorically against too strict sanctions and too much control. He describes his way of dealing with cheaters, which he finds the most suitable: "If I catch a student cheating, I make sure to make a scandal in front of other students and get the cheater feel ashamed and uncomfortable – my experience shows that only this has any effect".

2.4. Questionnaire

2.4.1. Why questionnaire?

The questionnaire is the basic, and often the only way of collecting quantitative data in social sciences. It is often the most frequently used research method in sociology. It enables quick and relatively cheap collecting of a larger quantity of data, as well as

enabling generalization (with corresponding sample) of given results to the population which we research.

The questionnaire presents itself as a logical research method by this topic. The phenomenon is decidedly widespread: the majority of students have at least once resorted to one form of academic dishonesty and almost every student has at least once met with some of its forms. The questionnaire enables us examination of a relatively large number of students, at the same time ensuring them complete privacy and anonymity and so providing us with sincere answers to a delicate subject. Carefully elaborated questions provide us with sufficient analytical depth of insight, while at the same time allowing us to examine a greater number of topics related to academic dishonesty and partially explain which characteristics of the examinees and institutions contribute to greater or lesser frequency of cheating. Aside from a detailed descriptive “recording” of the situation, a quality questionnaire also provides us with an explanation, that is, an answer to the question why is academic dishonesty somewhere less and somewhere more widespread.

2.4.2. Sample

The sample for this topic should be representative random sample. There are number of reasons for that.

Firstly, of all elaborated topics, this one is the most suitable for questionnaire survey.

The students meet cheating frequently enough, so there is a high probability for them to be personally involved in a form of cheating, see someone to cheat, or discuss the topic of cheating, which suggests that they will have rich experiences and clearly defined attitudes. The representative random sample enables us to examine these experiences and attitudes with utmost precision.

Secondly, a quality realized representative random sample enables generalization to the examined population. In other words, our results on the sample can, with an acceptable level of mistake, be proclaimed valid for the examined population as well.

Thirdly, after determining certain indicators of frequency or prevalence of cheating we can confront the expressed interest of media for our results. It is extremely difficult to appear in the media with numbers behind which stands no representative sample, because media interpretation always implies generalization, which

is not justifiable in case of an occasional sample. This can provoke an extremely unpleasant situation through subsequent relativization of the results and attempts of explaining that the indicators are not after all valid for the whole student population of the target faculty or university. The creation and realization of such a sample has been explained in many methodological textbooks – inevitably consult them if you are not completely acquainted to the process of sampling. Our proposals are at the end of the chapter.

2.4.3. Questions

The topic provides sufficient liberty concerning the choice of questions to be used. It is important and very useful to have some sort of concept at the beginning, in order to more easily manage the development of the questionnaire and later data analysis. Our basic concept looked like this:

1. the prevalence of cheating – do the examinees themselves engage in cheating
2. individual factors – how much do certain inner characteristics of the examinees influence whether they will or won't cheat
3. external factors – how much do characteristics of the examinees' environment influence whether they will or won't cheat

2.4.3.1. Prevalence of cheating

The basic part of the questionnaire which analyzes cheating is the set of questions with which we try to determine prevalence, that is, the frequency of cheating. Academic dishonesty or cheating occurs in many forms, so this part should include as many as possible in order to get as realistic picture as it is possible of how widespread academic dishonesty is, and in what forms.

Listed hereafter are the forms of cheating which we noted as relevant at the Zagreb University. Of course, at your university or faculty another specific form can exist which is not included in our proposal or some of our forms of cheating are not relevant for your institution, in such case these forms should be added or omitted, respectively.

This way of putting questions has an important limitation: it is not sensitive to different possibilities for frequent or less frequent cheating which exist on different faculties. We found that students of technical

faculties cheat more than the students at the Faculty of Social Sciences, but we consider that this is very much conditioned by larger quantity of written exams on which it is possible to copy the exam. Every similar finding should receive critical treatment and warning of possible limitations.

- copied from notes prepared in advance, using crib notes
- copied from books or study notes during an exam
- copied input data from technical devices (mobile phone, calculator, handheld computer and so on)
- copied from a colleague during an exam
- used mobile phone to communicate with others (SMS, photographing the exam, and so on)
- helped someone by using a “bug” (receiver put inside the ear)
- used a “bug” on your exam
- used stolen exam questions
- have written an exam instead of someone else
- someone wrote an exam instead of me
- copied an entire seminar paper
- used parts of someone else’s text without citing sources
- added books and articles which I haven’t read to my bibliography index

- presented someone else’s idea as my own
- forged professor’s signature in my grade book (“index”)
- counterfeited my grade transcript
- brought a fake doctor’s note

2.4.3.2. Individual factors

The individual factors refer primarily to examinees’ individual characteristics, like their study motivation, study satisfaction, and attitudes towards behaviour related to cheating.

All those elements can influence students’ readiness to cheat, or don’t cheat, report the perpetrators or similar. The influence of a particular element on cheating can be determined in data analysis by using multivariate statistical models. The scales of evaluation are not specifically mentioned in this part, but we indicate attached example of the questionnaire. The most frequently used scales of evaluation are five degree consensus scales which are suitable for later quantitative data analysis.

Motivation

- I read only those materials which are necessary to pass the exam.
- To me, it is more important to fully understand the subject

matter, than just to get a good grade.

- The wish to get a degree is the main reason for my studying.
- I study because I want to be an expert in my field.
- I study only those things for which I am certain they will be on the exam.
- One of the important reasons why I study is that my parents' wish that I do so.
- I study this subject because it makes me happy.
- When I'm interested in the subject, I do much more than it is required from me.
- Professional development outside the curriculum does not interest me at all.
- I study because I like to learn new things.
- I learn firstly and fore mostly because of my grades.
- Sometimes I learn although I know it won't affect my grade.
- I study because I consider education to be worthy in itself.
- To me, it is more important to study something with which I'll easily find a job, than to study something I like.
- I learn only that what is sufficient to pass the exam.
- Desire to outdo myself is an important stimulus to learn.
- I learn in order to satisfy my parents' expectations.

- It seems to me that I'm losing time on this study.
- It is important to me that someone else sets the tasks I need to fulfil.
- The most important reason why I study this is that it interests me.
- Desire for a good salary is the most important reason why I study.
- I study because I am afraid that it will be difficult to find a good job without a degree.
- I study because I believe that I'll find a job in this field easily with my faculty's degree.
- I study this because my parents wanted it.
- I study this because I couldn't enrol in what I wanted.
- I don't know why I study this.

Study satisfaction

Generally speaking, how satisfied are you with your study?

Bearing all in mind, did the study you enrolled into fulfil your expectations?

If you consider everything you now know, would you again decide for studying?

Attitudes towards cheating

It is ok to paraphrase someone else's sentence and present it as your own.

Student who turns in a copied paper should not be penalized.

There is nothing immoral in copying someone else's work. There is nothing wrong with cheating, except the risk of getting caught.

It is justifiable to cheat in case of too great student load.

Cheating in the exam is not morally wrong.

It is justifiable to cheat if the majority of other students cheat as well.

Attitudes towards penalties

Turning in copied seminar paper

Turning in copied graduation thesis

Exam copying

Theft of exam questions

Forgery of professor's signature in the grade book

Counterfeiting of grades' transcript

Attitudes towards reporting

Exam copying

Using "bug" during an exam

Stole exam questions

Copied/plagiarized seminar paper

Copied/plagiarized graduation thesis

Forged professor's signature in the grade book

Counterfeited grades' transcript

2.4.3.3. Situational factors

Institutions

Have you been, at the beginning of your study, warned by the

officials (the dean, teaching staff) that the students will be penalized if caught cheating during their study, for example, in exam copying, copying or plagiarizing seminar and other papers, forgery of receipts and signatures and similar?

Did the students of your faculty have to sign a document obliging them not to cheat during their study?

Can any books of regulations (code of ethics, book of regulations concerning students' disciplinary responsibility and similar) which define penalties for cheating during study can be found in the below mentioned places:

Official faculty website

Faculty notice boards

Student guide

Add specifically for your faculty

Teacher control

They check our classroom presence in detail

They check student identity before allowing them to take the exam

They tell us before the exam what the penalty for exam copying is

They warn us before the examination that only things necessary for writing an exam can be left on the table (pencil, eraser, calculator and similar)

During a written exam they

check our desks in search for things from which we could copy
They check if we use any illegal technical devices (“bugs”, cell phones and similar)
They check whether papers on which we write our exams have any answers written beforehand
They warn us that we mustn’t use any parts of a text without citing sources
They compare our written papers or exercises to each other in order to find out have we copied from one another

Penalties

Removal from the exam
Ban on taking the exam for a specific amount of time
Ban on studying for a year
Expelling from a course
Announcing offenders’ names in faculty organs (notice boards, website and so on)
Lowering of grade for that course
Teachers give offenders extra assignments (seminars, exercises, literature)
Expelling from the faculty

Influence of the course or teacher

The teacher is a bad lecturer.
Teacher does his/hers work carelessly.
Teacher grades unfairly.
Teacher does not respect students.
Course material is too difficult.

Course material is outdated.
Course is uninteresting to me.
Course is unnecessary to me.
Questions which have not been covered in class appear in the exam.
The exam covers too much course material.
Unimportant things are required in the exam.
We too little time for exam preparation.
Exam terms are too close to one another.

Possible influence of potential penalties

Expelling from the faculty
Refusal of granting signature from that course
Ban on taking that exam for a time
Lowering of grade for that course
Announcement of offenders’ names on the faculty notice board or website
Expelling from the exam

Sociodemographics

Basic data

(sex, age, settlement size, faculty, year of study)

Study success

How high is your average score?

1. 2.49 or lower
2. 2.50 - 2.99

3. 3.00 - 3.49
4. 3.50 - 3.99
5. 4.00 - 4.49
6. 4.50 or higher

Educational aspirations

What is the highest level of education you'd like to attain?

1. To finish undergraduate study.
2. To finish graduate study.
3. To finish doctoral studies.

Your relationship towards religion is:

1. I am a convinced believer.
2. I'm more prone to believing than to non-believing.
3. I'm more prone to non-believing than to believing.
4. I am a convinced atheist.
5. I don't know, I can't estimate.

Socioeconomic status

Estimate your family financial status:

1. Extremely worse than the majority of others.
2. Worse than the majority of others.
3. Neither better nor worse than the majority of others.
4. Better than the majority of others.
5. Extremely better than the majority of others.

Which source of income is at the moment most important to you, that is, constitutes the majority

of your total income?

1. Parents
2. Scholarship
3. Steady job
4. Occasional honorary jobs
5. Something else? Write down what: _____

Do you receive any kind of scholarship?

1. Yes
2. No – skip next question

If you receive any kind of scholarship, what are the conditions of keeping it (it is possible to circle more than one answer):

1. High grade average
2. Passing through the study without repeating a year
3. Obligation to find a job in an area of special state welfare or on the islands after finishing my studies
4. There are no conditions for the scholarship I receive
5. Obligation to take employment in the company which sponsors my scholarship after graduation
6. Something else, what? _____

2.4.4. Positive and negative experiences

2.4.4.1. Positive experiences

Readiness of students to take part in the research regardless of the sensitivity of the topic

and the information they reveal (personal experiences, confessions they cheated). The majority of the examinees answered to all questions, the number of invalid questionnaires are small.

We noticed many positive commentaries of the examinees who recognized topic's relevancy and show desire to change the situation where cheating is frequent.

Relatively low rates of refusal (about 52%) occur regardless of the relatively long questionnaire (about 15 minutes).

There were no problems with obtaining permits to conduct the questionnaire survey at any of the faculties. We consider that cooperation can be expected because the universities recognize the problem and expect student help about it; their work is not directly inspected.

The collected data are relevant, they have a lot of substance and the possibility for interpretation, quality conclusions and recommendations is great.

2.4.4.2. Negative experiences

Problems with interpretation, frequent by application of quantitative methods. Sometimes it is difficult to explain what the examinees actually think – the qualitative

research is an important supplement!

Long-lasting drafting of the questionnaire.

2.4.5. Recommendations

- In no way should the questionnaire be conducted during class, in professor's presence! According to our experiences, a successful survey could be conducted in faculty backyards, halls, hallways. The examinee should be provided with a hard pad (map) which will help them fill in the questionnaire.
- It is important to emphasise that the research is conducted by an independent organization and not the faculty or a similar institution.
- Special attention should be given to the part of the questionnaire about cheating prevalence. It is the central part of the questionnaire, it carries the most information, and the data is difficult to interpret. It is important to steer towards the point do the students even have the opportunity to cheat, a part of the research should be devoted to this problem.

2.4.6. Example of the results

In the end we can conclude that this research has shown student cheating to be relatively widespread at Zagreb University, and student acquaintance with regulations on cheating to be low.

Likewise, the students claim that a number of professors do not apply surveillance measures, and the offenders often go unpunished.

As expected, it has been shown that more severe penalties force students to think better whether they'll cheat or not, although a conclusion can also be drawn that even more severe penalties wouldn't affect a certain number of students.

Part of the solution is definitely promotion of honesty and the desire for knowledge and improvement as key academic values, as well as further improvement of the educational system in order to increase student satisfaction.

2.4.7. Recommended literature

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V.2. Textbooks selling

1. Introduction

1.1. Problem definition

Students are often forced to buy the textbook written by the professor as a condition to take or pass the exam. These textbooks can be sold in official bookstores or by the professors themselves. Students cannot use the borrowed copy from library or from their friend. They have to show the proof that that have bought new textbook. Sometimes new editions of the same textbook appear with slight changes and in this case students have to buy the new updated version of the textbook. This is abuse of power and illigally gained additional income.

1.2. The importance of the topic in higher education

The problems that the Universities and colleges had faced were numerous and different. One of the major problems apprehended by the whole society is the corruption. The corruption has many faces and many dimensions. The

problem of simply giving money is no longer acute, but other so called “softer” forms. These forms of corruption are even more dangerous because they are mixing and changing the ideas of the higher education and its quality.

One of the biggest and mostly discussed problems at the universities nowadays is: bookselling as a conditional to take an exam. Having in mind that buying a book itself is not a corruptive activity we focused our efforts on actually defining where the problem stands and which actions make the simple act of buying a book or study materials a corruption, what those textbooks are and who are the professors who abuse their power.

1.3 Methodology -

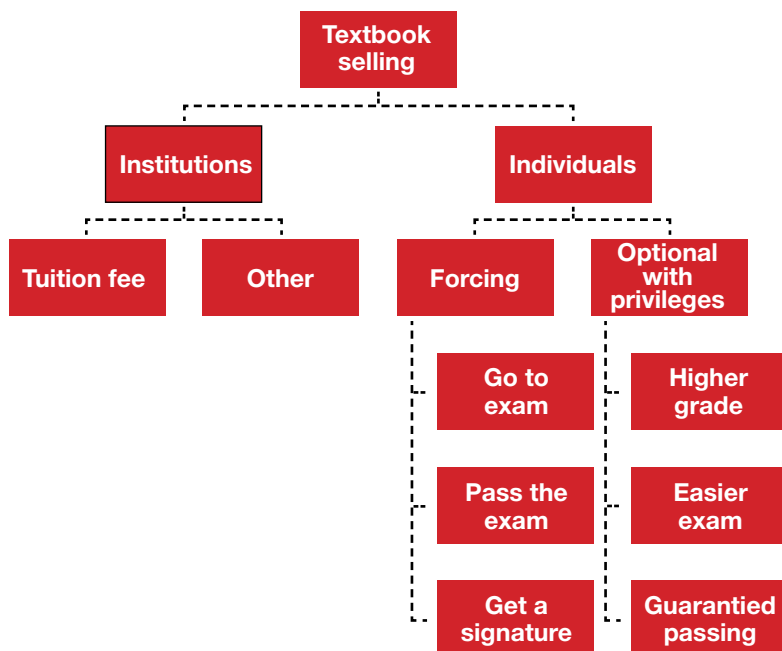
The main aim of Bulgaria as a part of the project team was to elaborate a methodology regarding the problem of textbook selling as a corruptive practice in the higher education. By developing the strategy there were included real examples of the current situation at the Agricultural University in Plovdiv.

During our pre-project studies of the higher education in Bulgaria, we found out that at many universities buying the book that the professors have written is considered enough in order to ensure the satisfactory mark to pass the exam.

Our logical next step was to explore what our legislation says about the topics and if the affected parties are aware of it. That is why we organized our monitoring tool development in the following model and steps:

Clear out what we want to find out
Decide how we are going to obtain the needed information
Plan the exact steps that we are going to follow in order to get this information
Collect the information
Use the information

The methodology for the textbook selling was elaborated on the base of this scheme:



2. Instruments

Very important objective of the project was to implement a monitoring scheme while preparing the methodology by using different tools: interviews, focus groups, questionnaires and requests for public information access with representative of the students, administrative and academic staff. Each one of them is very important for building up the whole “picture”.

2.1. Requests for public information

2.1.1. Introduction

During the work on the topic we decided to gain better understanding of the problem by sending a request for the public access to information. The request was sent to the administrative staff of the Agricultural University in Plovdiv by post.

2.1.2. Sample

The sample consists of official public information request to the administrative staff of the chosen university. Specifically, for the topic of textbook selling as a condition to take or pass an exam in higher education is important to find out the price and the profit that the professor and the faculty as distributor gained.

2.1.3. Questions

In order to start with the process we sent to the administrative staff of the university a request for information. The questions we were interested in were the following:

- Are there legislative act and rules that treat the situation of a professor selling his textbooks directly to the students?
- How many cases of bookselling corruption are officially reported to the university administration?
- What are the measures that the university authority undertakes for preventing the corruption practice and what is the procedure when a case like this is reported?

2.1.4. Positive and negative experiences

Positives:

- We got an answer of our public information request which contains detailed information of all of our questions.

Negatives:

- One of the main difficulties is the slow administration of the university;
- Another issue that we face is the lack of fixed deadlines for some of the university activities.

2.1.5. Advice and recommendations

Some tips when making a public information access request:

- Public Records Acts set very strict time limits for the state agency to respond to your request.
- Make your request as specific as possible. If your written request is complex, or requires a unique compilation of data.
- There are exceptions to your right to official information. Personal information could not be requested.
- Follow-up on your request. If you don't get an answer of your public information access request you could make an official complaint to the adequate institution.

2.2. Focus groups

2.2.1. Introduction

The focus group is a suitable instrument for facilitating even deeper understanding of the problem and the situation at the university, and for testing some different approaches for acquiring reliable information.

Three main groups of questions:

- How do you now that you have to buy a book written by your professors?
- Why do you buy this specific book?
- Where do you buy the books from?

All this groups of questions are extremely important because they define the practice of buying books as corruptive or not.

The questions should be discussed in different aspects. The reasons for buying a book are very different. Some students think that in such way they will be better prepared for the exams and some of them simply believe that buying of the book will bring them a satisfactory mark. The interesting thing in the case will be the percentages of these students to be discovered by deeper inquiry and trough questionnaires.

2.2.2. Sample

In focus groups you have to test the survey plan and gather information in order to make good questionnaire, or try to understand why students behave in particular way. The goal of focus groups is to get to the premises that should be investigated in monitoring. In your sample you have to organize focus groups of students and if possible academic and administrative staff. Each focus group should have 10 participants and 2 facilitators who will stimulate discussion and analyze the responses. For the topic “textbook selling as a condition to take or pass the exam” you could make questionnaires for the focus group. Also you have to try to find out what the distribution channels are and how the profit is divided.

2.2.3. Questions

There should be used open-ended questions that reveal diverse points of view. The moderator then can follow up on various themes or issues that emerge from participants’ responses. Questions that will provoke both positive and negative responses about the topic should be posed. Straying too far in either direction will make data not objective. For a

1.5 to 2-hour session, ten or less questions should be asked.

The inquiry questions come before the focus group questions, but the moderator should be open to unexpected issues that emerge during the focus group and follow up on those as time allows.

Inquiry questions:

1. How do you now that you have to buy a book, written by your professors?
2. Why do you buy this specific book?
3. Where do you buy the books from?

Those questions should be developed during the conversation itself which once again shows the need of flexibility in this topic. The structure in the focus group could be the same as this one from the interviews.

Identifying focus group participants

The most important thing in choosing a focus group attendees is that they are affected by the problem and they have ability to give a range of answers. It should be determined whose perspectives, opinions, or experiences are relevant to the inquiry question

– bookselling in this case. Demographic particularities such as age, gender, etc, must be also taken into consideration to ensure that the gathered data is a representative sample.

Having a safe environment in which people feel they can express their points of view is very important for the successful realization of the focus group. Mixing individuals who have obvious power relationships or predictably different viewpoints, for example, faculty and students definitely should be avoided.

The desirable number in a focus group is 5 to 8 participants. This allows the moderator to make good eye contact with them, have a more personal conversation, and track non-verbal expressions.

Recruiting participants

Getting participants to the focus group can be a challenge. If you want to have 5 to 8 participants, you may need to invite up to 20 in order to get the desired group size. Make phone calls to confirm attendance, explain the process, inquire about special needs, and to thank them for their time and insights they are going to provide. Consider sending a reminder email the day before the focus group. Provide something (e.g., food)

to encourage participation. It is good to offer a small sign of appreciation or snacks during the focus group. The method we used was to provide free tickets for the university swimming pool to the participants in the focus groups.

Selecting a location and time

The environment should be comfortable, non-threatening, and conveniently located. The location must be neutral and large enough for everyone to fit comfortably.

Organizers of the focus groups must choose times that are convenient for participants in order to increase the numbers who will be able to participate.

Conducting the focus group

The moderator's job is to conduct the focus group beginning with introductions, setting the ground rules of the session. He notes:

- the length of the focus group is expected;
- the conversation will be recorded;
- how the data will be used;
- topic of conversation.

During the focus group the moderator must:

- test techniques to encourage people to elaborate on their thoughts or feelings;
- redirect the conversation to other participants if one person begins to dominate the discussion and draw out those who are not participating;
- remain neutral in his/her responses to participants' comments;
- attend to participants' body language;
- summarize from time to time what has been said and ask the participants if the summary is correct.

At the end of the session, the moderator could ask for additional comments or suggestions after he/she turns off the recording devices, as some of the participants might share additional information when it is not being recorded. Some people might wait until this point to share things that they want to say but that did not fit the questions that were asked.

The interview should represent the following structure:

1. Moderator's introduction & general rules
2. Introduction of participants (10 minutes)
 - the names of the participants in the conversation
 - for how long they have been involved in the university
3. General questions (10 minutes)
 - general questions that give everyone the opportunity to talk
4. Specific questions (30 minutes)
 - about 3 questions in a 30-minute period
 1. How do you now that you have to buy a book, written by your professors?
 2. Why do you buy this specific book?
 3. Where do you buy the books from?
5. Closing question (10 minutes)
 - what advice they would give regarding the topic and to whom
6. Closing (2 minutes)
 - The moderator thanks to the people from the group.

2.2.4. Positive and negative experiences

The positive experience with the focus groups on the topic of textbook selling as a condition to take an exam was connected to the fact that the participants give us additional examples for concert practices in this topic. They spoke open and they were willing to share their personal experiences and problems in this area.

The negative experience is connected to fact that the two key participants in the educational process present entirely different pictures of the educational process, and this calls into question the existence of real partnership between them. This difference is an indicator of the blurring of the publicly beneficial purpose of higher education in general, and of the possibility for constant redefinition of this purpose from the point of view of private interest - in other words, of the possibility for generating corruption in the narrow and broader sense of the word, of rendering education meaningless as a public activity, turning it into an instrument for quick and easy acquisition of higher status.

2.2.5. Advice and recommendations

The best moderator is a good strategic questioner and quickly puts people at ease. He/she builds a rapport with the group so there is a good level of trust. The moderator should also keep the group focused and use a series of techniques to gain maximum participation and feedback. If possible find a trained moderator.

If an individual has been extremely vocal and public on the topic of discussion, it may be best to exclude him/her from the focus group. He/she could distort the group's discussion. Instead, gather that person's views through other means.

It is very useful to have a person assisting the moderator. This person takes care of details so that the moderator is not distracted. The assistant takes care of the recording equipment, helps with refreshments and attends to all the small details that can make a focus group go smoothly.

2.2.6. Examples of the results

According to 2/3 of the students it is common practice lecturers to oblige the students to buy their own personal copy of a book written by them. Only 12%

have never had this situation. This is form of corruption, as far as it is refocusing the academic criteria of educational results and the quality of the qualification gained thus changing the principles of Higher education.

Such interactions become a normal background for any corruptive "games"

Some of the most popular practices in the Bulgaria are:

- the students sit for the exam with a textbook at the end of which one can find the examination tests, printed copies are not allowed;
- another widely spread "trick" is the republishing of the textbooks with small correction just before the exam date;
- signature for the semester is given in case the student presents the textbook as a proof for having bought it. In order to avoid using the same textbook by different students the tutor signs each.

There are the different variations of the corruptive phenomenon – textbook selling as a condition for taking an exam:

- Buying a textbook in order to be admitted to sit for an exam.
- Buying a textbook from the

professor to have the right to use is as a subsidiary material during the exam.

- Getting a better grade on the exam because you have bought a textbook from the professor.
- Not being allowed to use the textbook taken from the university library as subsidiary material during the exam.
- Not being allowed to sit for an exam because the textbook you have is from the university bookstore and not from the professor directly.
- Not being allowed to use the textbook bought from the university bookstore as subsidiary material during the exam.
- Not being allowed to share one textbook with a colleague.
- The price of the textbook offered from the professor is lower than the official one.

The analysis of the results of the survey shows that the problem of textbook selling as a condition to take an exam exists as part of the informal culture of the academic environment and that the gravity of this problem is judged differently by the key participants in the educational process: students are the most critical, followed by non-habilitated members

of teaching staff, whereas habilitated members of teaching staff are the most satisfied with the situation. This means that perceptions of the problem are determined by academic status which, as the analysis shows, is constituted above a power status. In the respondents' perceptions the phenomenon of corruption includes various forms that are specific of teaching staff and students as well as the administration.

2.3. Interviews

2.3.1. Introduction

This stage is considered as the basic stage for the entire monitoring methodology. From this level there can be seen the main reason provoking the phenomenon as well as different perspectives towards the problem which should be included in the further investigation.

2.3.2. Sample

To the topic: Textbook selling as a condition to take an exam, it's relevant to choose the rights interviewees who will give you the information you need. In our case this could be the students, professors or administrative staff. This first stage of the interview is very important for the interviewer to gain the

confidence of the interviewees. Not only posing the questions, but also the attitude and the contact give influence. Also, there is a necessity of an appropriate atmosphere for a sincere conversation on this sensitive issue – both for students and professors.

2.3.3. Questions

All interviews conducted (with students, professors or administrative staff) should consist of several stages of development:

Introduction – giving some general information about the connection of the interviewees with the topic:

- What is your specialty? (for students)
- What year of your studies are you currently in? (for students)
- What is your field of work (subject)? (for professors)
- On what faculties do you teach/have lectures? (for professors)

Of course these questions are only examples for starting questions. The interviewer was completely free to improvise, but also had to have in mind that a certain distance should be kept in all circumstances. This would contribute afterwards to obtaining honest answers.

○ Directing questions:

- What kind of study materials do you usually advise your students to use in order to...? (for professors)
- What kind of study materials do you usually use? (for students)
- How many books do you usually buy per year? (for students)

This part of the interview is created to facilitate the transition from the introduction to the problem itself. This approach aims at leading the conversation in the desired direction. Due to the unwillingness of some people to share their opinions about the problem, the interviewer needs to present the subject to them in a way they would not perceive it as a pressure or threat.

○ Apprehension of the problem:

- Have you ever heard of cases when buying a book guaranteed a student passing a certain exam? (for students)
- Have you heard of the practice for textbook to be sold in order a student could attend an exam or signature? (for professors)

Such questions are designed to provide information to the

interviewer about the current situation. It must be cleared out to what extent the phenomenon exists. For this part, knowledge of concrete facts and numbers is acquired. On this basis, the interviewer should develop his further strategy for conducting the final part of the interview. This stage is crucial for the successful elaboration of the interview. From here on it becomes clear if the interviewee is willing to cooperate because this is the moment when serious questions start.

- Attitude toward the problem
 - Do you know to whom you have to file your complaint, if you are **forced to** buy a particular textbook? (for students)
 - What do you think are the main reasons for a lecturer/professor to sell their books directly to the students? (for professors)

The aim of this last part is to provoke the interviewees to give their own opinion on the problem. The greatest challenge here is when interviewees are the professors themselves. Even if the interviewer had already gained the trust of the professor, he/she may tactfully approach the subject.

The interviewer needs to prepare questions suitable for the

different interviewees. Some preliminary information about the course, the specialty and year of studies could be useful, but they could also bring a certain level of subjectivity in the research.

2.3.4. Positive and negative experiences

The main problem when conducting the interviews with the students and professors is the fear of negative consequences. Getting answers to this question requires preserving anonymity for both the interviewees and the names they mention. Although a great number of interviewed students believe that would not be changes made, they are scared to reply to any questions. **Due to this reason it is extremely important to assure the interviewed people that the results from the interview would be taken into consideration.**

2.3.5. Advice and recommendations

Useful knowledge before starting the interview:

- Warming up

Before beginning an interview, the interviewer should review appropriate working materials in order to ensure important information not to be overlooked.

The interviewer should determine what type of information can be supplied by each of the interviewees. The most vulnerable people should be interviewed after the people who are most reluctant. This provides a broader base of information that can be used to formulate further questions. However, the timing of the interviews is at the discretion of the examination team.

● Experienced interviewer

Successful interviewers are the types of people with whom others are willing to share information. They do not interrupt the respondent with unnecessary questions since during an interview, much pertinent information results from volunteered information, as opposed to responses to a specific question. The good interviewer displays interest in the subject, and in what is being said.

The interviewer should be on time, be professionally attired, and be fair in all dealings with the respondent. It is absolutely vital that the interviewer does not appear as a threat, for if people perceive they are the target of an inquiry, they will be less likely to cooperate.

Steps that should be undertaken during all interviews:

- Insuring privacy and security of the interviewee;
- Creating a semi-formal atmosphere which gives the opportunity for the interviewer to be considered as reliable person and be given honest answer, however at the same time keeping the formality of the research;
- Flexibility in conducting the interviews – some of the subtopics could be discussed more widely at the expense of others; some new subtopics could pop up and they should be given special attention in order to be included in the next stages of the methodology.

Advices for the interviewer:

- Privacy The interview is the best conducted out of the sight of friends or colleagues since people are very reluctant to furnish information within the hearing range of others.
- Introductory Questions In many instances the interviewer and the respondent have not previously met. The

interviewer has a strict task: meet the person, state a reason for the interview, establish the necessary report, and get the information. The introduction is accomplished through questions rather than statements. Questions allow the interviewer to assess feedback from the respondent. This is an important aspect of the introduction. If the respondent is reluctant to be interviewed this fact will become established through the introductory questions.

- Establish the purpose of the interview

Obviously, when the interviewer makes official contact with a respondent some reason must be given. The reason or purpose of the interview should be general, not specific. The specific interview purpose will be related to the respondent later in the interview process. The stated purpose for the interview should be one that is logical enough for the respondent to accept and easy for the interviewer to explain. Usually, the more general the given explanation for the reason is, the better it is.

- Ask non-sensitive questions

The sensitive questions

should be avoided until the apprehension part on the interview, and then such questions should be asked only after careful deliberation and planning. During the introductory part, emotive words of all types should generally be avoided. Since they normally make people more defensive and less reluctant to answer and to cooperate.

- Expressing no subjective opinion concerning the subject;
- Persisting in asking the prepared questions but not pressing the interviewed to give an answer when this might finish the interview;

2.3.6. Examples of the results

The opinions of students given during interviews which show the reasons why corruption in the aspect of textbook selling as a condition to take the exam exists at the Agricultural University - Plovdiv:

- there is no agreement among stakeholders on the question of which are the publicly significant purposes of education, or they are not subject to debate (for example, the question of the

present quality of education), because this allows redefining those purposes from the position of private interest;

- there are no clear and publicly checkable criteria and procedures for the achievement of those purposes (for example, effective quality control systems or objective examination procedures), as a result of which any means can be used even if they might be in contravention of the declared purpose;
- there are no procedures for public control over positions of power, as a result of which the use/abuse of power depends entirely on the power-holders' good or ill will;

Moreover, students do not feel that they are an actor in the educational process (the majority of them do not believe in the objectivity of academic assessment and grading, but neither do they believe that anything would change if they protested; just one-third in focus groups that they are asked for their opinion, but more than half of them say that even if they are asked for their opinion, nothing really changes), and in this sense they are not a real academic partner. This makes it possible

to substitute academic statuses by power hierarchies and to increase discretionary power - the survey has shown clearly that there is such substitution. In this situation, there is no need for strict regulation of the rules for conducting the educational process and examination procedures. And the study shows this: members of teaching staff themselves admit that teaching staff/student relationships are the least regulated; students note the lack of transparency both in the functioning of the administration and in the regulation of the examinations.

An interview with a professor

“Each student has become vitally necessary [for the existence of the university], so university authorities have started extending examination periods, offering more and more retest dates. They are violating the law, which states clearly that students may pass to the next year provisionally if they have failed only a single exam from a previous year, but now we have students who have failed three or even four exams from previous years... So what do they drive us to do in order to get the due state subsidies for students? Let them pass exams which they have clearly failed? Is or isn't

that corruption? The state compels us to let them pass exams so that we could get our subsidies and-our salaries. So how could we possibly condemn fellows who take cash for the same thing?”

Talking about academic staff:

The regulation of academic life depends entirely on the goodwill of the academic community and on the introduction of internal systems of quality control. As far as the habilitated members of teaching staff are concerned, on the whole they see no problems in higher education, even though they admit that there is a corrupt practice of textbook selling. The majority of them claim that quality maintenance systems have been introduced, others say that there is growing interest towards their subject; they as a whole are satisfied with the objectivity of the assessment in their academic courses. In other words, they think that the teaching and learning process is proceeding smoothly, and they identify themselves with their academic institution. The non-habilitated members of teaching staff are slightly, but not considerably, more critical than the habilitated ones. Up to this point the conclusion may be optimistic - despite the noted structural flaws in the functioning of the higher education system

that generates corruption, the quality of education in Bulgaria is good, according to teaching staff.

2.4. Questionnaires

2.4.1 Introduction

The development of specialized questionnaires including all aspects of the problem, as well as the information of other bad practices concerning this process and the relationship between lecturers and students at the university.

The main respondents are the students. They have to answer questions that were mainly designed to explore their understanding of the problem and what is their primary reaction on the questions asked. The number of respondents had to be preliminary determined per speciality per year of study. When a questionnaire is being written any factors must be taken into consideration. The questions should be carefully tested before launching the full survey:

- Topic - the topic has to be clearly defined;
- Applicability - the applicability of the questionnaire must be established;
- Perspective - the perspective that the people filling in the

questionnaire will adopt when answering the questions should be specified

2.4.2 Sample

There are several steps through which the questionnaire must go in order to contain sufficient and representative information about the issue:

- It must be determined who, where, how and when the questionnaires will be distributed, to make sure that the answers won't be subjective.
- The number of questionnaires must also be determined having in mind the institution where you want to distribute them. The more responses you get, the better your results will be.
- Create an introduction for your questionnaire. Include a brief summary of the reason for your questionnaire and instructions of what to do. This will clear up most of the questions that you will have.
- The questions must be written in a way that they have clear meaning so that they can't be misinterpreted.
- Limit the responses for each question. Make it a multiple choice questionnaire so that the group knows what you're looking for and has options.
- The questions shouldn't be too much because they will

bore the people who are filling in the papers.

- Double check your questionnaire for any mistakes.
- Keep your questionnaire as professional as possible, have it easy to read. This will help both the people you are giving it to as well as yourself when you gather the results.

2.4.3 Questions

Questionnaires should gather demographic information on the people who are filling it in. This method is used to show a connection between different groups of people and their answers. The demographic data could be put anywhere in the questionnaire.

In the questionnaire most questions are closed format questions which usually take the form of a multiple-choice question. They are easy for the respondent, give a variety of answers.

There is no rule on the number of options that should be given in a closed format question. Obviously, there needs to be sufficient choices to cover the range of answers. This gives from five to ten possible answers per questions. For questions that measure a single variable or opinion, over a complete range, there should be a large number of alternatives. This allows a neutral or no opinion response.

2.4.4 Positive and negative experiences

Positive experience was the implementation of the questionnaires - the majority of the examinees answered to all questions, the number of invalid questionnaires are small.

The negative experience was to summarize and analyze the results- this took more than expected time.

2.4.5 Advice and recommendations

There are several points that must be considered when writing and interpreting questionnaires:

1. **Clarity:** Questions must be clear, simple, and unambiguous. The aim is to avoid the possibility that the questions will mean something different to different people.
2. **Misleading answers:** For the closed format questions is essential that the given answers are easy to be understood. They must supply answers that not only cover the whole range of responses, but that are also equally distributed throughout the range.
3. **Language used in the questions:** The language that is used in presenting the

questions must be very well structured. The sentences must be short, easy to understand from a great variety of people.

4. **Place the most important questions in the first half of the questionnaire:**

Respondents sometimes only complete part of a questionnaire. By putting the most important items near the beginning, the partially completed questionnaires will still contain important information.

2.4.6 Examples of the results

Here are some results from the questionnaires:

- The most circulated practices of forcing students to buy textbooks are:
 - Buying a textbook in order to be admitted to sit for an exam – 73%
 - Getting a better grade on the exam because you have bought a textbook from the professor – 40%
 - The price of the textbook offered from the professor is lower than the official one – 39%
- According to students' personal opinion the most effective way of forcing them to buy a textbook is not being

allowed to use the textbook bought from the university bookstore as subsidiary material during the exam – 56%.

- Talking about the reasons why students buy textbooks those that influence more are:
 - Buying a textbook in order to be admitted to sit for an exam – 39%
 - Not being allowed to use the textbook bought from the university bookstore as subsidiary material during the exam – 36%
 - The price of the textbook offered from the professor is lower than the official one – 42%

Those that influence less are:

- Getting a better grade on the exam because you have bought a textbook from the professor – 33%
- Not being allowed to sit for an exam because the textbook you have is from the university – 52%
- The opinion with which 76% of the students completely agree is that buying a textbook as a condition to take an exam is always morally wrong. But they also add that it's even worse selling textbooks for this reason. In spite of this 66% consider stupid not to take

advantage of exam questions obtained in advance.

- The results from the question about the personal approach towards studying give positive feedback. 73% of the students consider important to study for a degree in something they like.
- Personal motives for studying differ a lot. This is normal having in mind that students express more than one motive for entering a university. The most insignificant reasons are receiving a scholarship, getting a place in a dorm and unfortunately because the course is interesting. On the opposite side – the most important motives for studying are earning a degree, getting better chances for job and having better grades.
- A disturbing fact comes out of the question “What are the reasons for you being a student”. 34% of the students claim that they are enrolled in the particular field of studies only because they failed on the entry exams. As a counteraction of this 76% of all asked students admit that their motivation for being a student is that it will be easier for them to get a well paid job when they earn their degree.

V.3. Bribery

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Problem definition

Bribery is one of the most serious forms of corruption in higher education. The definition of bribery is offering, promising or giving something in order to influence a public official in the execution of his/her official duties. Bribery is also a very complex form of corruption. Bribe can be offered voluntarily or extorted. Bribes can take the form of money, merchandise, other pecuniary advantages (such as scholarship for a child's college education or a monetary donation) or non-pecuniary benefits, such as favourable publicity.

1.2. The importance of the topic in higher education

Corruption may be found in many public sectors, including higher education. There are several reasons why this severe form of corruption, bribery, is harmful for the broader society and economy if it occurs in institutions of higher education. It hinders the efficiency of the system, negatively affects the

educational program and it diminishes social cohesion, because students learn corrupt practices. Corruption in higher education negatively affects the access to higher education, quality of higher education services and equity. It also diminishes values of knowledge and work ethics. Corrupted professors don't perform their duties professionally, and the students who give bribe could later have important roles in society or economy. The continuation of that corrupted behaviour could harm the society as a whole.

2. INSTRUMENTS

2.1. Requests for public information

2.1.1 Why request for public information?

By sending requests for access to information we gather basic information and receive insight into the "official" side of the problem – in which way, with help of which documents is the problem of bribery at faculties regulated, how many faculties have an officially recorded case of giving or receiving a bribe or similar. In later research phases the answers obtained from the faculties are useful

for comparison of the results obtained in this official manner and those obtained from the focus groups, interviews or questionnaire surveys. The data about which institutions did not respond to a request or refused to allow access to information is also interesting for comparison with the results obtained in the later phases of the research. The requests are sent to the addresses of the institutions (in this case all faculties of the university which are of interest to us, as well as the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports), and also via e-mail. The institutions have a set deadline within which they are obliged to answer the request.

2.1.2. Sample

The sample consists of all of the institutions which possess potentially useful information for the beginning of the research. Specifically, for the topic of bribery in higher education, those are the faculties (while selecting faculties to which the requests are sent, the sample should not be limited only to those faculties which are unofficially known for bribery) and the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports.

2.1.3. Questions

The questions raised in the requests ask for information about the documents and formal ways of conduct in cases of giving or receiving a bribe, as well as information on actual recorded cases of giving/receiving a bribe. An interesting indicator of the situation in the institutions to whom the requests are sent are the documents to which they refer to in their answers, as well as sanctions provided for people who have received or given a bribe at a particular faculty.

Question examples:

- Has a case of giving/receiving a bribe been recorded at your faculty in the last 5 years?
- If yes, in which way has it been resolved?
- If yes, which books of regulations did you use as a guide by its resolution?
- Are there any books of regulations which clearly and explicitly forbid such acts and clearly define sanctions for the offenders?
- Which books of regulations would you use as guidelines if someone reported such a case?
- What are the sanctions prescribed for a student who has given a bribe?
- What are the sanctions prescribed for a professor who has received a bribe?

2.1.4. Positive and negative experiences

The majority of faculties have sent replies, but many faculties (38%) still haven't responded to the requests we sent, or they sent negative replies without a satisfactory explanation.

2.1.5. Recommendations and advice

We recommend the requests to be sent by regular mail as well, because more institutions answered to such requests than to those sent by e-mail. The customary form of the request should be observed, and an official seal and signature should be an obligatory part of the request, otherwise the institutions may send a negative reply. We also recommend including a petition for access to information with a description of the project goals along with the requests. If the institutions do not reply within the law prescribed time limit, there is a possibility of sending a complaint.

2.2. Focus groups

2.2.1 Why focus groups?

You're going to get qualitative data from the focus group that you can't use as representative results for the whole population,

but you can use them for different purposes. You can backup your quantitative results gained from the questionnaire; you can interpret interesting qualitative data or use the results to create a better questionnaire. A group discussion produces data and insights that some of the participants may not think of or consider important the interaction which is an integral part of the focus group. They can listen to others and it can stimulate their memories, ideas and experiences.

The main goal of the focus groups is to use the results to expand the questionnaire and obtain qualitative data which is impossible to obtain only by implementation of the questionnaire.

2.2.2. Sample

The length of the sample depends on the size of the research. It also depends whether you are conducting research at only one faculty, group of faculties or a whole university. If you are monitoring only one faculty, the criteria for homogenous groups can be the year of study or mayor. If your research includes the whole university or a group of faculties, the participants of the focus groups should be homogenous groups of students based on the

faculties at which they study. If that is the case, focus groups should be conducted with students from different faculties. Keep in mind that in one focus group there should be only students from the same faculty, because the sample needs to be homogenous. Focus groups can be conducted with students from the Faculty of Social Sciences, the Faculty of Technical Sciences, the Faculty of Natural Sciences, etc. You need to receive as varied results as possible, especially if you have limited number of groups. Further, you can also choose those faculties that you think will provide you with the most interesting results, because they have a “reputation” of the most corrupted faculties etc. The most important criterion for the sample should be the goal to find out as much interesting and varied results as possible, such as different ways of giving a bribe, different opinions about the corruption, different penalties for the professors and students related to the corruption etc.

2.2.3. Questions for the student focus groups

Before you begin with the questions intended for the students you can use this intro for the focus groups in order to explain to them how

to obtain information during the focus group, why you are taping it and what you are going to do with the results.

Intro for the focus groups:

Hello everybody! My name is _____ and this is my colleague _____. We are students (or something else) of _____ at the Faculty of _____ and we are working on a _____ project concerning the situation in higher education. Thank you for deciding to help us with our research.

Before get to work, we would just like to explain to you why this is being recorded. The reason is simple – we don’t have enough time to write everything down, especially not to memorize everything, and in the end we have to draw certain conclusions from the conversation or similar. The recording serves exclusively the purpose of remembering the whole conversation because there are several participants in the conversation and it would be difficult to concentrate on the conversation and simultaneously memorize the answers.

You can introduce yourselves with your name only. You can even use other name, because we are only interested in what you have to say. We guarantee

you complete anonymity. Your names will not be mentioned in the report. Everything you say will be used exclusively for research purposes. Please just turn off your mobile phones and do not talk at the same time because the recording will be unintelligible. Those were some technical details, now something about the conversation itself. Of course, we would like everyone to share their opinion, whether positive or negative. We are interested in both the good and bad experiences and any kind of information you give us is of great help to our research. You do not have to explicitly name certain people and the like. Remember that there are no correct or incorrect answers to our questions. At any given moment feel free to speak your mind. So, let us start with the conversation.

Questions:

The questions for the focus groups consist of three parts – 1) introductory questions, 2) questions about the outspread and forms of bribery as well as attitudes towards it and 3) questions about the books of regulations, sanctions, reporting and fight against bribery. The introductory questions are unrelated to the topic and serve

as an informal introduction and “ice breakers“. Additional questions can be included in the described set of questions, pertaining to specific situation in your country, faculty or university.

Introductory questions:

Those are a few general questions which would help us break the ice.

What is your name?

Which year of study are you in?

What department?

How are things going at faculty?

What is your overall impression of the professors? Are they available and approachable?

General information on the topic of bribery – presence, forms and attitudes

What do you consider as a bribery? (Moderator helps them reach an adequate definition)

Do you consider bribery to be a big and frequent problem in _____ (your country)? Which sectors would you single out?

If we compare higher education to other public sectors like health care, politics, the police or similar, which place, in your opinion, would it take considering the level of corruption? Do you consider it to be more or less corrupted than the other institutions?

How frequent do you consider such practices (*exam sale*) to

be in _____ (your country) higher education?

Have you personally heard or experienced such practices at your faculty or somewhere else?

Do you have any specific examples you could describe?

(Depending upon whether the examinee has personally experienced it or has just heard about the case.)

(This needs to be specified – are they personally acquainted with the case or those are rumours, complaints, specific charges...?)

Who has asked for a bribe? How many professors? When?

Who has given a bribe? The number of students involved?

How much money/what services were required?

Anything else the examinees can say about the case...

(If the examinee has personally given a bribe, ask them additionally):

Why have they decided to do it?

Did someone put pressure on them?

Was it possible to avoid it?

How did they reach the professor?

Are they afraid of being sanctioned?

Would they repeat it?

Have you heard of someone being sanctioned for giving or receiving a bribe? In what manner did this happen?

(Not considering media high profile cases everyone knows about... unless the examinees

are personally, and in detail acquainted with them. We are not interested in mere retelling of media stories.)

Have you heard anything about the ways in which these practices function?

Who takes part in it? Who is a middleman?

How is the money divided?

If you wanted to offer a bribe, would you know how to do it?

Can everyone offer a bribe or one has to connections to even reach the middleman and the professor?

What forms of bribery have you heard of, except for money payments (various services, gifts, sponsorships, sexual services...)?

Are such informal services even more frequent because they are covert?

If examples which could be named “legal” or “half-legal” bribery really exist – do you consider them to be more frequent than the completely illegal ones? Do you have any examples?

What is your opinion of bribery?

Is the rising alarm about it justified?

How severe is this form of corruption? Is it severe? Is it the most severe?

Is this the most negative occurrence in higher education, or there are some other/more severe problems?

What is the immorality of giving or receiving a bribe?

Who has a bigger moral responsibility (if it even exists) in a case of giving/receiving a bribe – the professor or the student?

Do you consider the number of quality discussions on the topic of bribery in higher education sufficient?

The causes of bribery, sanctions, reporting and fight against bribery, books of regulations:

What do you think are the reasons which encourage the professors to ask for and receive bribes?

What do you think about such professors?

Can there be justification for such actions such as economic pressure?

Would there be less bribery and corruption if professors' salaries were higher?

According to you, what should be the sanctions for the professors who receive bribes?

According to you, what are the reasons which encourage students to give bribes?

In which situations or occasions would you personally give a bribe?

What if you had to, because you couldn't pass a particular exam in any other way?

What would you do if the professor blackmailed you with

a too difficult exam or informal suggestions/pressures that you had to give a bribe in order to pass the exam or receive a higher grade?

Can the behaviour of a student who has given a bribe be justified in such cases?

What is your attitude towards the colleagues who give bribes in order to finish their studies easily?

According to you, which kinds of students are more inclined to give bribes? Are they bad students... rich students...?

Would you report a colleague who has given a bribe?

Do you consider that students who give bribes should be sanctioned, and in what manner? Appropriate sanctions (written or oral reprimand, being expelled from the faculty, banned from studying...?)

How should a student react in a situation when they are being blackmailed with a difficult exam, or informal suggestions/pressures are put on him/her to pay a bribe in order to pass the exam or receive a higher grade?

Should it be reported or succumb to the pressure?

Should the students in general report bribery and similar practices at their faculties?

Why yes/no?

How and to whom to report this?

Which institutions and services exist in order to ensure

anonymity and safety of student whistleblowers? (Student Ombudsmen, the possibility of anonymous reports and similar...) Do you know of any of them?

Are you personally and students in general acquainted with the existence of such services and possibilities?

Do those institutions perform their duties?

Which books of regulations or codes you know that sanction bribery and/or protect those who report it?

Do you consider them to be sufficient and that student population is well-informed about them?

How willing are they to report corruption? Why yes/no?

Does it pay off to report a bribery?

If you personally get involved in a situation where someone at your faculty asks for a bribe from you...

Would you report that person? Why yes/no?

Who would you contact?

Is there a person or a service at your faculty whom you trust?

Do you think that the case would be successfully solved?

Would you be scared? Why?

Do you think that you would be protected from negative consequences?

Do you think that your faculty and the society in general pay

sufficient attention to the issue of bribery?

Should the fight against bribery be more aggressive?

If you believe that there hasn't been done enough to fight corruption in higher education, in your opinion, what is the reason for that?

What should be changed in order to suppress bribery and make bribery reporting easier?

What would you suggest?

(Specific measures... what are their suggestions...?)

Should the laws/books of regulations/codes be changed?

Should there be more services and institutions (Student ombudsmen, the possibility of

anonymous complaints to an independent body)?

Do you have anything to add to this topic?

Thank the participants for their cooperation!

2.2.4. Positive and negative experiences

The positive experience with the focus groups on the topic of bribery was connected to the fact that the students were willing to talk about that topic openly. The topic is delicate and the enthusiasm to talk about it is minimal. But they were willing to share what they know about it. The negative experience was regarding the fact that

the students didn't have any personal experience or at least have heard of a fact how a single case of bribery progressed from the beginning till the end. We are not sure if the reason for this is the fact that the students who took part in the focus group didn't actually participate in an action of bribery or haven't heard of a case from their friends or acquaintances or they didn't want to admit such thing. All of their examples are stories they heard from a friend of a friend. This is also connected to the response of the participants. There is always an option some of the participants not to show up even though they voluntarily applied for participation in the focus group. You should always have this problem in mind and think in advance how to solve it if it occurs.

The best option is to call a few extra participants even though everybody confirmed their presence in the focus group. You should also keep the contact information of the people who were interested in the focus group, but you turned them down, because you already had enough participants. You can call them if necessary.

2.2.5. Recommendations

- The interviewer/moderator needs to be trained.

- The focus group results are not representative for the whole population.
- Make homogenous groups for the focus groups.
- Prepare questions for the focus group in advance.
- Don't judge anybody because of things they are saying during the focus group.
- Provide a neutral opinion as a focus group moderator.
- If the questions are sensitive ask the students if they heard about it or know anybody, don't ask them only if they had a personal experience.

2.2.6. Examples of the results

- Some of the interesting results are that the students consider corruption to be widespread in the whole society, at the faculties as well.
- They think that bribery at faculties sometimes receives too much attention while at the same time much bigger problems in higher education, such as the quality of studies and professors, remain neglected.
- Students point out that the most frequent form of corruption is usually the nepotism and friendly favours.

- None of the examinees has had a personal experience with bribery.
- Students are not acquainted with the books of regulations and due to lack of trust in institutions within the university they would report corruption to someone outside the faculty.

2.3. Interview

2.3.1. Why interviews?

Bribery is a delicate subject, and if the goal is to get information in a form of facts, and not just opinions and attitudes, a good choice would be to make interviews rather than focus groups. People are prone to reveal more information about this topic when interviewed, because they might feel intimidated to speak about certain things in a group of other people. If interviews and questionnaires are made at the same faculty, the results could be compared later on with possibly some interesting results.

2.3.2. Sample

It is important to choose individuals for an interview who would be a good source of information. Above all, those are the deans, professors, assistants and other faculty staff. One of

the best interviewees would probably be a professor or a member of the faculty staff who is also a member of the ethical committee. The faculty staff members are often middlemen between students and professors. The administrative staff is also a good source of information as they have an insight into students' files and grades and can often notice certain irregularities.

2.3.3. Recommendations

Due to the delicate nature of the research topic and potential unwillingness of professors to participate in the interviews, relying on previous contacts with professors is one of the things that might help. All potential examinees should receive an e-mail explaining that their absolute anonymity is guaranteed, that you are only interested in their experiences with bribery and attitudes towards it and that they won't be asked to name any specific individuals. If the examinee is unable to meet you in person, the interview could be conducted by e-mail, which could be useful if the answers are constructive and detailed. When the interview starts it is important to check if the examinee agrees to a recorded interview. Explain why you want

to record the conversation in order to make the examinee more comfortable. Explain him/her that you guarantee anonymity – his/her name won't be mentioned in the report. Telling the examinee that there is no need to name anyone, because names are not important for the research, should also make the examinee feel more comfortable and honest when answering the questions. You should emphasize that you are interested in everything he or she can say on the subject of giving/receiving a bribe, regardless of where the cases happened - at that specific faculty, or another one.

2.3.4. Questions

Introductory questions:

How long have you been working as a college professor?
Are you teaching only at this faculty or at another as well?
How many courses?

General information on the topic of bribery – presence, forms and attitudes

These questions are meant to introduce the subject without focusing on the specific cases. Do you consider bribery to be a substantial and frequent problem in Croatia?
Do you consider bribery to

be just a current (transitional) problem of the Croatian society, or is such behaviour deeply ingrained in our culture and tradition as it is sometimes claimed?

What do you think, what is the situation within the academic community?

If we compare higher education to other public sectors such as the health care, politics, the police and the like, on which place would you put it according to the level of corruption? Do you consider it to be more or less corrupted than the other institutions?

How frequent do you consider such practices to be in the Croatian higher education? Do you consider the number of quality discussions on the subject of bribery in higher education which is now being held to be sufficient?

What is your opinion of bribery? How severe is this form of corruption? Is it the most severe form?

Have you ever personally heard of such a practice at your faculty or any other? *(Not counting generally well-known cases with high media coverage, unless the professor is personally and in detail familiar with them.*

We are not interested in mere recounting of the media stories.)

Do you have any specific examples you could describe?

(They do not need to name anyone if they consider it to be inappropriate.)

Are these rumours, student complaints or specific charges? Have you heard of anyone being penalized for giving/receiving a bribe? In what manner?

(Not counting generally well-known cases with high media coverage, unless the professor is personally and in detail familiar with them. We are not interested in mere recounting of the media stories.)

Have you heard anything about the ways in which such practices function? Who takes part in it? Middlemen? How is the money divided?

How available is the bribe? Can anyone offer it or do you need to have good connections in order to gain access to the middleman and the professor?

What forms of bribery have you heard about except money payments (various services, gifts, sponsorships, sexual services...)? Are these informal services more frequent because they are veiled?

Causes of bribery and sanctions.

Who bears more moral responsibility in case of giving and receiving a bribe, the professor or the student? What do you think what are the reasons which encourage

professors to ask for and receive bribes?

What individuals are more inclined to give/receive bribes at the university?

Are there any justifications for such proceedings? Economic pressure? Would there be less bribery if professors' salaries were higher?

What kind of sanctions would you apply to those who receive bribes?

What kind of sanctions would you apply to students who give bribes?

What do you think of the reasons which encourage students to give bribes? Are there any justifications for such proceedings?

What about blackmailing of students or informal pressure/suggestions from the professor in order to make the student give bribe for a pass or a higher grade? Can the student who gave bribe be justified in such a case?

Fight against bribery, books of regulations.

How should a student react to a situation where they are being blackmailed?

What institutions or books of regulations exist in order to secure the anonymity and safety of the "whistleblowers"? (Student Ombudsmen, possibility of anonymous

denunciations or similar...) Do these institutions/regulations function?

How well are the students acquainted with the ways in which they can report corruption?

How willing are they to report corruption? Why they are/aren't willing?

If you find yourself in a situation where someone at your faculty requires a bribe from you or a student offers you one... Would you report such a person? If yes, to whom? If no, why?

What steps do the faculty and the university take in the fight against bribery?

a. Your faculty?

b. The university?

Are there any regulations sanctioning such practices?

a. At your faculty?

b. At the university?

Do you consider it sufficient to prevent such practices? Do the books of regulations and codes of behaviour function?

What is the level of acquaintance of professors and students with the regulations and sanctions?

If those regulations and sanctions are not sufficient, what is lacking in the fight against bribery in higher education?

What would you suggest for improving the situation?

Do you have anything to add to this subject?

Thank participant for cooperation!

2.3.5. Positive and negative experiences

The most negative experience when doing interviews regarding this topic is examinees' unwillingness to participate, due to the sensitivity of the subject. However, some examinees might agree to answer the questions via e-mail. The answers gathered from an interview can describe some situations and opinions much better than the ones gathered from a questionnaire. This deeper insight into the subject is a far more positive experience.

2.3.6. Examples of the results

Interviewing professors could reveal some cases of bribery. "I've heard of cases of buying exams at my own and other faculties of the University and also about a professor who was discharged for accepting bribes. I've also heard about other forms of bribery (sexual and other favours, sponsorships)." You could also find out how tolerant the education system towards bribery is, whether the members of the academic staff

protect each other, and how easy it is for whistleblowers to report cases of bribery. “If a student offered me a bribe, I’d report him to the faculty administration. I’d report him now because much has changed, but in the past maybe not.”

2.4. Questionnaire survey

2.4.1. Why questionnaire survey?

Questionnaire survey is a basic and quite often the only way of collecting quantitative data in social sciences. It is also the most frequently used research method in sociology. It enables quick and relatively cheap acquisition of a larger amount of data, so, with a corresponding sample, it enables generalization of given results on the population that is being researched.

Questionnaire survey is a logical research method with this subject. The phenomenon is extremely widespread: the majority of students have at least once resorted to one of the forms of academic dishonesty, and almost every student has at least once met with some of its forms. The questionnaire survey enables us to examine a relatively large number of

students, at the same time ensuring their complete privacy and anonymity. Anonymity is an imperative request precisely in case of this subject, because bribery is the most severe form of corruption, so we cannot expect even a minimum of honest answers on this subject if we haven’t ensured the utmost possible anonymity for the examinees during the survey. The advantage of the questionnaire survey is also the fact that carefully elaborated questions provide satisfactory analytical depth and insight, and simultaneously we can examine a larger number of topics related to academic dishonesty and partially explain which characteristics of the examinees and institutions contribute to greater or lesser frequency of cheating. Aside from a detailed descriptive “scanning” of the situation, a quality survey enables us to provide an explanation, that is, an answer to the question why academic dishonesty is somewhere less and somewhere more widespread.

2.4.2. Sample

As in the cases of the other subjects, we recommend a random representative sample. Although this subject is not perfect for a questionnaire

survey research, because bribery is less widespread than, for example, cheating, still each student possesses a certain set of attitudes, perceptions and values related to this subject.

The questionnaire survey on a representative sample enables us to draw conclusions or generalizations about the entire population, whereby the conclusions gain more relevance and can become the basis of the activity.

The random and impartial sample can be especially important at the presentation of the results to the media and wider public. As we have pointed out several times – this is the most sensitive subject, so a special emphasis should be put on the importance of gathering data which can be justifiably generalized to the entire population. Each relativization of our data weakens our credibility and makes us vulnerable to attacks from the institutions which will not be satisfied with our indication of serious corruption problems within the system. Partiality of sample exposes us to accusations “how we intentionally want to show that faculty “X” is corrupted” or similar.

The creation and realization of this kind of sample has been explained in many methodology textbooks – we oblige you to

consult them if you are not completely familiar with the process of sampling. Our suggestions are at the end of the chapter.

2.4.3. Questions

The subject provides substantial liberty concerning the choice of questions to be used. It is important and very useful to have some sort of concept at the beginning, in order to make it easier to manage during questionnaire construction and later data analysis. Our basic concept was as follows:

1. Perception of frequency of bribery in different institutions in the society
2. Personal experience with bribery (and nepotism)
3. Perception of the presence of bribery (and nepotism) at the target institution (in our case the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb)
4. Individual variables (examinees' attitudes)
5. Importance of the problem of bribery in comparison with other possible problems at the faculty
6. Questions about institutions
7. Suggestions of examinees for suppression of bribery and corruption
8. Other

9. Some specific socio-demographic questions

2.4.3.1. Perception of frequency of bribery in different social institutions

This is a classic question in corruption research. The aim is to become familiar with the respondents' perception on how prevalent corruption is in different social segments and institutions. The goal is to receive comparative insight – how large is the perceived corruption of educational system in comparison to other social institutions. The question can be interesting, but is not necessary in this kind of questionnaire. Examples of questions from the Croatian questionnaire: In your opinion, to what extent does bribery exist in these institutions and parts of Croatian society?

- Civil services
- Health
- Judiciary
- Police
- Government
- Parliament
- Primary and secondary schools
- Local government
- Faculties and other institutions of higher education

Note: It is possible to increase and decrease the list of institutions offered to which the educational system is compared, depending on the available space in the questionnaire. For each institution/segment it is necessary to offer a scale of responses, for example:

- 1 - It doesn't exist;
- 2 - Just as an exception;
- 3 - Present, but not especially;
- 4 - Widespread;
- 5 - Very widespread;
- 6 - I don't know.

2.4.3.2. Personal experience with bribery (and nepotism)

With this kind of questions, where we seek personal experience of the examinees with a grand corruptive act, one should be especially careful. There is a high probability that the number of those who will admit something like that will be very low. Besides, the examinees (students) and the institutions at which the survey is conducted (faculties) could be "intimidated" by such direct questions, and could refuse cooperation. It is also possible to raise a question whether it is "smart" to put such questions in the questionnaire, because many people will interpret given answers as a "solid proof of corruption". However, "solid

proofs” should be in the domain of the police and the judiciary system, while questionnaires in such sensitive cases are a much better way to learn about the values, attitudes and perceptions.

Examples of questions:

- Have you ever given a bribe during your study?
- Have you ever tried to give a bribe during your study?
- Scale: 1 - Yes, more than once; 2 - Yes, once; 3 – No; 9 - I don't want to answer this question

The first question (with the formulation of “giving a bribe”) is good for measuring whether the bribe which the student offered was really accepted by the other party. Therefore, it points out the guilt of the examinee, but also the guilt of the official who received a bribe. The second question gives us no such answer because it doesn't portend that the bribe offered was actually received. Similar questions can be formulated in regard to nepotism as well:

- Have you ever received any kind of benefit at this faculty by using familial, kinship or friends' connections?
- Have you ever tried to influence any person at the faculty by using familial, kinship or friends' connections?

- Scale: 1 – Yes, more than once; 2 - Yes, once; 3 – No; 9 - I don't want to answer this question.

2.4.3.3. Perception of presence of bribery at the faculty

The perception tells us nothing about the real state of this phenomenon. The fact that people have different perception of the state of the society can be merely a sign of distorted perceptions, prejudices or stereotypes. One should always bear this in mind, especially when interpreting the results of such sensitive subjects.

Examples of questions:

In your opinion, how frequent are the forms of bribery mentioned below at the Faculty of Humanities?

- Bribery in form of giving professors/officials money in exchange for certain services.
- Bribery in form of doing favours for professors/officials in order to receive certain services.
- Bribery in form of giving sexual services to professors/officials in order to achieve benefit.
- As opposed to bribery, nepotism includes doing favours for relatives/friends, while not asking for money or favours in exchange. Please estimate how frequent

nepotism is at the Faculty of Humanities:

Scale:

1 – Never; 2 – Rare; 3 – Sometimes; 4 – Frequent; 8 - I don't know; 9 – I don't want to answer this question.

After these general questions about the examinee's perception of the frequency of bribery at his/her faculty, we have moved to perception of the level of corruption at his/her faculty in comparison to corruption at other faculties:

Concerning giving/receiving bribes, the Faculty of Humanities is:

- 1 - A lot less corrupted than the other faculties at the university.
- 2 - Less corrupted than the other faculties at the university.
- 3 - Equally corrupted as the other faculties at the university.
- 4 - More corrupted than the other faculties at the university.
- 5 - A lot more corrupted than the other faculties at the university.
- 8 - I don't know.

Considering the specific decentralization of our faculty, we believed there was a theoretical possibility that certain departments have different “moral rules” regarding the tolerance of dishonourable behaviour. Therefore we asked the students to express their own view: Is bribery equally widespread in different departments at the

Faculty of Humanities?

1 - Yes, it is equally widespread in all departments.

2 - Giving/receiving bribes exists in all departments, but some are more prominent for it than the others.

3 - In the majority of departments this form of corruption doesn't exist, but there are some departments which are exceptions.

4 - Bribery doesn't exist anywhere at the Faculty of Humanities.

8 - I don't know.

2.4.3.4. Individual variables (attitudes towards bribery)

So far we have measured the perception of bribery outspread. It should be emphasized that perception also means attitude in the wider sense. It is a way of seeing things, an attitude of how present corruption is somewhere. However, in this part we will show questions which examine students' attitudes towards bribery itself and corruption as phenomena. We examine what kind of moral and ethical relationship students have towards corruption. Is it good/bad, how it should be punished, would they be willing to report it, would they themselves be willing to break the rules in certain situations?

Below we have a set of questions which we use to examine students' personal willingness

to obey the rules and principles. Would they be willing to offer a bribe or use connections? Estimate how much the below mentioned statements refer to you:

- Would you like to have a “connection” at the faculty which would help you pass the exam, get a better grade or similar?
- Would you bribe your professor or provide him with other services in exchange of a grade or an academic achievement, if you are certain you won't be discovered and punished?
Scale: 1 – Yes; 2 – Maybe; 3 – No; 8 - I don't know

The following question could be interesting, since the student is put in a hypothetically difficult and unfavourable situation from which there is no legal way out (e.g. according to the study rules he/she will definitely lose a year or the right to study), and then we ask him/her would they be ready to “save themselves” using illegal methods.

If you found yourself in a situation that you lose a year, the right to study or a scholarship and similar, would you do anything of the below mentioned?

- I would ask my family for help or use my political connections or acquaintances.

- I would procure fake medical documentation which would serve me as an excuse/pretence.
- I would try to make myself attractive to the teacher by wearing provocative clothes or by provocative behaviour.
- I would offer money or any other material gain to the professor.
- I would “work off” the exam by unpaid physical or any other work for professor's private needs.
- I would offer the professor sexual contact, short-term relationship or similar “services”.
Scale: 1 – I wouldn't do it in any case; 2 – I would reconsider such a possibility; 3 – I would do it; 8 - I don't know.

The following questions likewise examine students' ethical attitude towards bribery. This time we asked them to estimate an appropriate penalty for those proven to have participated in bribery. The penalties range from those benign to very strict, and the examinees can choose a combination of penalties if they consider just one to be insufficient. Of course, there is also the option of not penalizing the corrupt individuals at all. What would be appropriate penalties for the professors who ask for or receive bribes?

Circle the number before the appropriate penalty – you can choose one or a combination of more of them!

Scale:

- 1 - Admonition
- 2 - Temporary prohibition to work/suspension
- 3 - Discharge
- 4 - Prohibition of further work in any educational institution
- 5 - Monetary fine
- 6 - Prison sentence
- 7 - They shouldn't be punished

What would be appropriate penalties for students who give bribes? Circle the number before the appropriate penalty – you can choose one or a combination of more of them!

Scale:

- 1 - Admonition
- 2 - Being temporarily suspended from studying
- 3 - Prohibition to study at that faculty
- 4 - General prohibition to study
- 5 - Monetary fine
- 6 - Prison sentence
- 7 - They shouldn't be punished

The following set of questions we consider very important for each thorough examination of attitudes towards bribery and corruption. Those are again hypothetical questions in which we examine the students' willingness to report corruption

and in doing so to give their contribution to the fight against it. As we have already said, the fight against bribery cannot be efficient if there is no real determination and willingness to report such cases to the institutions.

Would you report a student of your faculty if you had evidence they bribed a professor or gave him services in exchange for a grade or any other academic achievement?

Scale:

- 1 - I would not report them.
- 2 - I would report him/her, but only by sending an anonymous, unsigned report.
- 3 - I would report them in person, signed by my name and surname.
- 8 - I don't know.

Would you report a professor of your faculty if you had had evidence they received a bribe or gave undeserved favours to his friends/relatives?

Scale: same as in previous question.

Besides, we wanted to see the students' attitude towards the causes of bribery:

What do you think – why does bribery appear at some faculties of the Zagreb University?

- Bribery occurs, because employees' salaries are too low.

- Bribery occurs due to the negligence of the faculty administration.
- Bribery occurs due to the negligence of the state bodies.
- Bribery occurs, because nobody reports it.
- Bribery occurs, because individuals know they will pass unscathed.
- Bribery occurs, because in some parts of the academic community themoral and ethic principles are non-existent.
- Bribery occurs, because there is no surveillance and insight in examinations/ transparency.
- Bribery occurs, because some students feel forced to succeed at any cost.
- Bribery occurs, because the students' load of study obligations is too big.

Scale: 1 - I disagree completely; 2 - I disagree; 3 - I equally agree and disagree; 4 - I agree; 5 - I agree completely.

2.4.3.5. Suggestions of the examinees for suppression of bribery and corruption

Examinees' attitudes towards the suppression of corruption can be read out of these questions. Which measures are lacking, and should start to be maintained.

Some possible measures for prevention of bribery in higher education are enumerated below. Please circle three measures you consider the best and which should be immediately implemented.

1. Establish surveillance from the side of the faculty and the university.
2. Introduce permanent surveillance services over faculties which would be completely independent from the academic community.
3. Enact clearer rules and laws.
4. Execute current rules and laws more efficiently.
5. Offenders should be more severe sanctioned.
6. Ensure that all exams and their results be public and transparent.
7. Recording of all exams with a camera.
8. Raise salaries of all faculty employees.
9. Reduce students' study obligations load.
10. Affirm and strengthen student bodies (Ombudsmen, Assembly, or similar).
11. Ensure protection and anonymity of persons who report bribery and corruption.

2.4.3.6. Comparative importance of bribery as a problem at faculty

This is not a very important set of questions. The aim is

only to get deeper insight of student's perception of bribery as a problem. For example, the students may consider corruption to be extremely widespread at their faculty, however, if there are 10 or more problems which burden average students much more (and on everyday level), than the motivation of students and student organizations to tackle the problem of bribery will be low. Therefore we wanted to see how bribery would be ranked in comparison to other possible faculty problems.

Some of the possible problems at the Faculty of Humanities are enumerated below. Please estimate how important each of them.

- The amount of the tuition fee
- Organization of study
- Teaching load on the students
- Quality of teaching material
- Timetable
- Nepotism
- Quality of teaching staff
- Course offer
- Library equipment
- Bribery
- Something else, say what:

Scale: 1 - Not a problem at all; 2 - Smaller problem; 3- Medium problem; 4 - Big problem; 5 - Very big problem; 8 - I don't know.

2.4.3.7. Questions about institutions

Institutions are those who are endangered by corruption, and they carry the largest responsibility to fight against it. We considered it important to examine students' trust in those institutions, because only trust in the institutions can lead to reporting of those actions whose occurrence is familiar to everyone. If the student does not believe that his/her complaint will be accepted, thoroughly examined, and followed by an action then he or she has no rational reason to report a dishonourable action. Likewise, if no complete protection of consequences which could follow the report of a felony has been ensured, no one would dare to report.

We were first and foremost interested in two aspects – is there a possibility of an anonymous complaint which would not put the “whistleblower” in an unpleasant situation – and to which institution (if any) would the students have the most confidence to complain or report. This enables us to compare the institutions according to the students' trust in them, and points out certain problems – for example, it could show that the very institutions which share the greatest

responsibility for fighting against corruption at the University also share the lowest level of students' trust, which should be very problematic.

Can the students of your faculty complain about the cases of corruption (including bribery and forced textbook purchase) to a competent person or institution, without bringing themselves into a risky situation (e.g. anonymous complaints)?

Scale:

- 1 - Yes - please, indicate to whom: _____
- 2 - They cannot
- 8 - I don't know

Which of the following people or institutions would you personally trust the most and refer a complaint about corruption to?. Circle the number before one of the offered answers!

- Student representative at the faculty or department council
- Student Ombudsman of the Faculty of Humanities
- Student Assembly of the Faculty of Humanities
- Plenum of the Faculty of Humanities
- A professor whom I trust
- Head of my department
- Associate dean of teaching
- Dean
- Student service
- Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Humanities

- Zagreb University Rector's Office
- Police
- USKOK
- Someone else - please write down who: _____

- I wouldn't refer my complaint to anybody

2.4.3.8. Other

Examples of some questions which cannot be classified into any of the aforementioned categories of questions were put here. The question below tries to measure the perception of the possibility of bribery.

Who could offer a bribe (money or services) to the professor at your faculty?

Scale:

- 1 - Anyone who wishes it and has enough money.
- 2 - Only "special" students who have connections or whom the middlemen or the professors trust.
- 3 - It is impossible to offer bribe at my faculty.
- 8 - I don't know.

The next two questions have been included due to a specific Croatian context which has been greatly characterized by the action "Index", so we considered it necessary to refer to students' attitudes towards this action and

its effects. Similar questions can be raised in all countries which share the similar context.

What has, according to your opinion, changed with the action “Index”? Circle the number before the answer you consider correct.

Scale:

1 - The problem of corruption in higher education has been solved.

2 - The problem of corruption has been solved, but only at specific faculties, it is still present at the other faculties.

3 - The problem of corruption has not been solved anywhere, but it is a bit less present.

4 - Corruption is equally present as before, but is now better hidden.

8 - Nothing has changed.

Do you think that the students are more ready to report corruption after the action “Index” than before?

Scale: 1 – Yes.; 2 – No.; 8 - I don’t know.

2.4.4. Positive and negative experiences

2.4.4.1. Positive experiences

There were none.

2.4.4.2. Negative experiences

Obtaining permission to conduct

the questionnaire survey at the faculties has shown to be extremely difficult. The deans don’t want negative publicity, and in the atmosphere created after the action “Index” there is a significant amount of fear of any questioning about the state at the faculties.

2.4.5. Recommendations

For an attempt to obtain permission to conduct the survey from the faculty, it is necessary to gather all possible arguments and try to get the institution to cooperate using any official and unofficial channels. If you are nevertheless refused, the research may be possible to conduct by enabling the students of that faculty to fill in the questionnaire outside the faculty premises, which could be a tedious work and depend on the weather.

It is also possible to conduct the survey in student dorms, which is relatively easy to perform, but one should bear in mind that it is absolutely impossible to get a representative student sample in that way. The students who live in a particular dormitory can represent only the population of students of that particular dormitory, in no way representing collective population of all students, so that out of such results we

cannot draw any generalizations which would refer to all students of a faculty or all students in general!

The questionnaire survey should in no way be conducted during a class, in presence of the professor! According to our experiences from a previous research, the surveys conducted in faculty hallways, yards or the Great Hall were successful. The examinee should be provided with a hard pad (map) which will help him/her to fill in the questionnaire. It is important to emphasize that the survey is not being conducted by the faculty or a similar institution, but an independent organization. All possible steps must be taken to ensure the examinee's utmost anonymity and instil him/her confidence.

2.4.6. Recommended literature

Aronson et al (2005), «Socijalna psihologija» («Social Psychology»), Naklada Mate, Zagreb.

Kufrin, Krešimir (2008), «Indeksi i skale» («Indices and scales»), Unpublished

V.4. Enrolment process

1. Introduction

1.1. Problem definition

Matriculation is a fundamental process which relates to a series of actions of organisation and management of selection from the list of competitors, based on well defined criteria, which are to be subsequently matriculated to study in the higher education institution.

1.2. The importance of the topic in higher education

Admission is a process which should guarantee the universal nature of the right to become a student of the higher education institution, based on an open and transparent competition. The actions directed towards avoiding these principles and obtaining unjustified advantages represent a serious threat for the image of the higher education. Additionally, the existence of corruption at this early stage of the higher education brings us to the feeling of existence of this phenomenon on all the other

stages, as a result the entire educational process is being exposed to serious doubts. Thus, while aiming at thoroughly researching the admission process in higher education institutions the following steps are envisaged: analysis of the particularities of the admission process at the universities of the countries members to the anticorruption network; underline the ways to organise and manage the admission process; normative coverage of this process; analysis of the possibilities to favour certain candidates compared to the others and evaluate the ways to prevent and fight such practices.

2. Instruments

2.1. Requests for public information

2.1.1. Introduction

The request of information represents a formal method to obtain data of a public nature from certain institutions. The obtained data are used to develop research instruments for the upcoming stages of the study, to analyse and evaluate the results obtained after the use of qualitative and quantitative methods (with particular emphasis on the interviews

and focus groups, as well as questionnaires).

2.1.2. Sample

The institutions which hold data on the procedures, principles of admission to the higher education institutions, as well as certain legislative and statistical data have been selected to ensure gathering of relevant data for the subject matter (the admission process). Thus, public request for information have been sent to the higher education institutions and responsible ministries (Ministry of Youth and Sports).

2.1.3. Questions

The information requested from the mentioned institutions is related to the official documents which regulate the process of admission, explanations on the setting of quotas for students which are to be admitted for each particular department, methods and principles of monitoring of admission committees. The above mentioned institutions received official requests for information which included well defined questions (usually 4 to 5).

2.1.4. Positive and negative experiences

The requests for information allow receipt of official, secure data from first source. Most of the time the institutions which were asked to offer information breached the deadlines for the respective requests, frequently ignoring these applications. The obtained results did not contain sufficient information and were formal in nature.

2.1.5. Advice and recommendations

The observance of certain drafting rules and recommendations are imperative to increase the chances to obtain answers to the requests for clarifications addressed to the institutions.

Therefore:

- The request must contain information about the applicant organisation, including the organisation's label, its full name, legal address and the name of the director of the organisation;
- There should be a brief description of the project in which the organisation is involved;
- The aims according to which the information is requested

and the way it shall be used must be explained;

- Additionally, it is necessary to gently mention the right of the NGO to ask for public information, citing the respective law;
- The request for information must be made in an official letter sent to the postal address of the institution.

2.2. Focus groups

2.2.1. Why focus groups?

The focus group is a qualitative research method, which allows obtaining information directly from its holders by means of a collective discussion, moderated by a person accordingly trained for these purposes. This is a flexible method and allows both personalised information and opinions and impressions from all the participants. It is necessary to adequately select the participants in the focus groups and a well prepared moderator.

2.2.2. Sample

The selection of the participants to take part in the focus groups is managed based on the principles of homogeneity, however not from the point of view of all socio-demographical criteria, but from the point of view of the experience in the

subject matter.

If a certain issue is tackled at the university level, the most relevant criteria are the department and the year of study.

Other selection criteria of participants could include: the profile of the departments, the size of departments, the matriculation fees etc.

The participants should take part in the focus groups on a voluntary basis.

2.2.3. Questions for the student focus groups

Example of introductory part:

1. Moderator's introduction
 2. Explaining the method of focus group
 3. General presentation of the topic
- This is not a knowledge test and there are no right or wrong answers.
 - Participants may have different opinions. What is important for us is your own opinion. So please provide sincere and complete answers.

- Please respect the opinions and beliefs of the other participants, regardless of their content.
- Speak loudly and clearly.
- It is important that everyone should participate in the discussion.

The questions of the focus group guide should follow a certain logic and be positioned as a guide in accordance with certain principles.

Thus, the guide should start with simple introductory questions which are not related to the core of the issues, but which determine the boundaries of the discussion. After this group of questions should follow the questions which are directly linked to the subject matter, but they should relate to the opinions and the knowledge of the participants. The next group should refer to the particularities and the forms of corruption, whilst the final group – at fighting corruption or the non academic behaviour.

An example of the structure of questions within the interview is presented below:

1st set: Introductory questions

1. What do you think of higher education establishments in Moldova? Why so?

2nd set: Reasons for attending higher education institution

1. Why have you personally decided to continue your education at the university?
2. Which establishment have you chosen in order to continue studying? Why?

3rd set: Knowledge regarding the enrolment process

1. You have all applied for matriculation at the State University of Moldova. What does the enrolment process require? Describe shortly the stages that make up the enrolment process.
2. How well do you know the rules of matriculation in the higher education establishments?
3. Where did you get this information from?
4. Do you know the duties of the matriculation commission? Which are they? Where did you get this information from?

4th set: Aspects of corruption during enrolment process

1. In your opinion, how prevalent is corruption during the enrolment process?
2. What forms of corruption (bribery, protectionism etc.) exist at enrolment within the higher education establishments?
3. Have you heard about real cases of offering money or presents, with the aim of facilitating the matriculation at the faculty?
4. If someone proposes you to simplify/facilitate your enrolment in a budget funded place, in exchange for a sum of money, will you accept? Why?

5th set: Prophylaxis of corruption during the enrolment process

1. In your opinion, are there any measures of prevention/combating corruption taken during the enrolment process?
 - Yes – Name them. Who performs them? How?
 - No – Why isn't anything done? Who should deal with this problem?
2. If you confronted a corruption case, would you address certain institutions? Which? Why?
3. What should be done in order to make the graduates responsible and address the existent institutions for combating corruption?

2.2.4. Positive and negative experience

The positive aspects of this method refer to the free and relaxed discussion of the issue of admission, which offered the possibility to obtain information pertinent to certain acts and specific cases of breach of admission principles. The correct organisation and management of the focus groups offered the involvement of all participants in discussions and ensured the sincerity and involvement in the tackling of various aspects related to admission. Another positive aspect is the fact that the subject under discussion is not very sensible and students are open to talk about it.

The negative aspects relate to the fact that certain participants at focus groups are tempted to laconically answer to the questions of the moderator. Additionally, it has been noticed that sometimes certain participants of the focus groups have the tendency to monopolise the discussion. Another negative aspect is the fact that the students do not have specific information to objectively evaluate the efficiency of the admission process.

2.2.5. Recommendations

- The recruitment should take place on the basis of a small questionnaire directed to the persons who have shown interest to participate in the focus groups.
- Participation in the focus groups should be confirmed several times, including immediately before the start of the event with the focus group.
- The number of invited people should be higher than the number of actual participants at the focus group (exceeding 2-3 people).
- The guide of the focus group must be first piloted before its actual use during the focus groups.

2.2.6. Examples of the results¹³

- The majority of the candidates are not familiar with the methodology of calculation of the average admission grade for admission.
- The students consider the facilitation of admission by means of illegal methods reality, especially by means of protectionism.

³ The focus group is not a representative method. Therefore the use of the terms such as candidates and students is strictly related to the participants of the focus groups.

- Among the most frequent forms of corruption during admission are the “money” and the “acquaintances”, or the bribe and the protectionism.
- From the students’ point of view the most efficient methods to diminish corruption during admission are harsher penalties for such offences and increased salaries for the employees of the universities.

2.3. Interview

2.3.1. Why interviews?

Previously, we have mentioned that a fairly efficient method to obtain certain official information is the request for public information from the representatives of the institutions involved in the organisation and management of this process. It must be underlined that if such requests for information are not well based, they could generate:

- Request for fragmented or less relevant information;
- Incorrect interpretation of the obtained documentation;
- Lack of information pertinent to various organisational settings, etc.

In this case, the method of comprehensive interviews with

experts should be used to obtain detailed and specific descriptive data.

2.3.2. Sample

The interviewees should be selected based on their competence and access to data relevant to us. With respect to the admission process the following people are considered relevant: the members of the university administration responsible for the admission process, the professors who were part of the admission committees, the representatives of the Ministry of Education responsible for the admission in higher education institutions.

2.3.3. Recommendations

The interviews must take place only with the consent of the person, obtained directly from the contacted person via telephone, e-mail or at a meeting. The potential participants must be informed on the organisation which intends to organise the interviews, the project under the auspices of which these interviews have been planned and the aims of these interviews. Subsequently, the representative of the organisation shall inform the invited person that the participation at the interview shall be kept confidential and

anonymous and the obtained information shall be used for analytical purposes only.

2.3.4. Questions

Similarly to the focus groups, the interview guide must be well based and structured, to allow a smooth switch from certain general and neutral aspects to the ones pertinent to a certain axiological shape. Thus, the used model of structuring questions is presented below:

Introduction

1. Greet the official/authority and provide short information about
 - a. The project
 - b. The scope of the **monitoring / interview**
2. Explain in few words the technical details of the interview, ask for permission / inform the official that you are going to record the interview.

General Questions

1. Moldovan Legislation in terms of admission to HEI is in continuous change. Could you please describe which are the procedures currently applied. Is there any change?
2. Which are the key acts, laws

that regulate the admission to the HEI? What is your opinion / position? Is there place for gaps, or it is perfectly functioning?

3. Which bodies and divisions of the Ministry deal with the admission issue? What is the structure of those divisions?
4. Which is the role of the ministry in managing the admission process compared to the one of the universities?

Administrating the admission / enrolment process

1. What university bodies are in charge with the admission?
2. How are those established? Can you comment on their degree of autonomy?
3. Who monitors the admission committees? Is there any monitoring body available? Whose mandate it holds (national or university)

Frauds and corruption

1. What can you tell about frauds and corruption in the system? Is this often happening?
2. Which is the typology of frauds admitted by the admission procedure? Which types of frauds are mostly perpetuated?
3. What about bribery, are there trends in corrupt activities in the admission process?

Final High school exam: pros and cons ⁴

1. Since the universal high school admission exam is considered the key element of the admission to the university, how is it operated? Who controls the implementation of the exam?
2. How can you qualify the objectivity of the exam? Is there any analysis, data on that?
3. Who controls / monitors the eventual frauds within this process? How can you explain the high average marks of the high school graduates from rural areas?

2.3.5. Positive and negative experiences

The information obtained from the interviews has a complex nature, it is well based and explained. The interviews allow the discussion and multilateral tackling of the subject, involve openness and participation.

However, besides these advantages, certain issues related to the unwillingness to participate, scepticism and lack of trust from the participants must be mentioned.

⁴ This compartment was placed at the end because it does not refer directly to the issue of admission, however is closely linked to it, at least in the case of Moldova.

2.3.6. Examples of the results

The interviews can explain some of the particularities of the admission process:

- The experts during the monitoring do not exclude the possibility of frauds, but consistently are blaming other stakeholders of the process;
- Institutional responsibility and internal control / audit within the enrolment process remains the key factor in developing capacities of the in line institutions to fight with frauds within the system;
- Since the state guarantees different privileges for enrolling different categories of students, there will be enough space for falsification of documents that certify this special status.

2.4. Questionnaire survey

2.4.1. Why questionnaire survey?

The sociological survey is the most used method of research in sociology. This state of affairs is dictated by the fact that the survey method offers the possibility to obtain vast descriptive and explanatory data, valid for the entire investigated collectiveness within a relatively short period of time. Thus, the sociological survey is a quantitative method, which can ensure the representativeness

of data obtained from the sample.

2.4.2. Sample

Sampling is the key element in the use of the survey method. Thus, if our aim is to ensure representativeness of the obtained data, it is important to choose one of the methods of probability sampling - the most preferred being the stratified sampling.

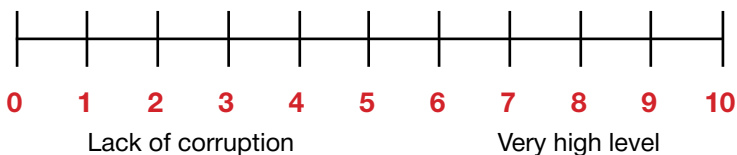
2.4.3. Questions

The subject provides substantial liberty concerning the choice of questions to be used. It is important and very useful to have some sort of concept in the beginning, in order to make it easier to manage during the creation of the questionnaire and later data analysis. Our basic concept looked like this:

1. Corruption incidence during admission;
2. Knowledge of cases of corruption during admission;
3. Forms of corruption which are most frequently used;
4. Individual variables (attitude towards the admission process);
5. Efficiency of fighting corruption.

2.4.3.1. Perception of level of corruption during enrolment process

The spreading of corruption at the admission stage is a very important element for our study. In spite of this, if one has to talk about the level of corruption at admission, there are some necessary objective data about the evaluation of the level of corruption by the ones who have experience in admissions to the higher education institutions. This information can be obtained by means of transforming the concept in a specific indicator and its measurement by means of a questionnaire addressed to students. In our case the question would be as follows:
Please estimate the level of corruption related to the process of admission to the higher education institutions on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means total lack of corruption and 10 – very high level. The scale proposed to the respondents is an ordinal one. The graphical representation of the scale proposed to respondents is presented below:



2.4.3.2. Knowledge about corruption during enrolment process

The knowledge of a corruption case in the period of admission is important for our analysis.

Thus, it is important to identify the presence of personal experience of involvement in corruption actions. The essential elements of the concept are:

Element	Indicator	Question
Personal experience of giving a bribe	Offering a bribe	Face/experience corruption during the enrolment
Non-personal experience	Known cases	Do you know specific cases of corruption during the enrolment
	Heard cases	Have you heard about cases of corruption during the enrolment

2.4.3.3. The most practiced forms of corruption

Corruption can take various shapes. These forms are differently perceived by the members of the society, some of them being viciously accused, others less rejected.

Talking about the reality in the Republic of Moldova, it needs to be mentioned that usually the first experience of corruption for young people comes with the high school graduation exams (baccalaureate). During this period the absolute majority of pupils offer to their professors, directly or indirectly, amounts of money for certain benefits. We have presented to the students the following question:

In your opinion, can the activities listed below be

defined as acts of corruption?

The actions proposed for evaluation are as follows:

1. Offering flowers, sweets, little presents to the commission of observers and the examination committee
2. Organising a diner/supper/ buffet for the commission of observers and the examination committee
3. Offering money in an envelope to the representatives of the commission of observers and the examination committee
4. Protectionism, exercising influence upon the observers/ examiners

Referring to corruption during the admission stage, we presented to the students the

possibility to express their views on the most frequent forms of corruption used during the

admission process. The question presented to the students was the following:

What forms of corruption are practiced at the stage of enrolment in the higher education institution?

The offered variants of answers were

	Firstly	Secondly	Thirdly
Money	1	1	1
Gifts(material goods)	2	2	2
Services	3	3	3
Protectionism	4	4	4
Nepotism	5	5	5

2.4.3.4. Satisfaction with respect to the admission process

The analysis of the admission process in the higher education institutions may not be attained without underlining the level of students' satisfaction with respect to its contents. The general satisfaction of the admission procedure was evaluated using the following question:

How satisfied are you with the current system of university enrolment (based on the high school grades/high school final exam evaluation instead of enrolment exam)?

And the students have received the following variants of answers (scale)

1. Totally satisfied.
2. Rather satisfied.
3. Rather Unsatisfied.
4. Unsatisfied.

The next question had to offer data on the level of students' awareness of the admission procedure. Thus the proposed question was:

To what extent are you acquainted with the procedure of calculating the competition mark/grade for the enrolment in higher education institutions?

The variants of answers were:

1. I am totally acquainted with it.
2. I heard something about it.
3. I am not acquainted with it.

To check the fidelity of the respondents' answers, the students were offered the possibility to answer the question on the procedure which best suits them:

Which enrolment procedure do you find most suitable?

Variants of answers:

1. Based on the high school graduation exam (BAC).
2. Based on enrolment exams. After a complex analysis and correlation among the answers offered by the respondents to the respective questions, a series of conclusions on the level of students' satisfaction with respect to the admission procedure were drawn.

2.4.3.4. Individual variables (attitudes towards the enrolment process)

Until now we have analysed the students' perception of the general level of corruption incidence at admission, the perception of the admission procedure, without tackling the adoptability of corruption. It is known that when expressing the views about a negative social phenomenon, the respondents may answer in line with the generally accepted norms, which they realise, but which cannot be at the heart of their behaviour. In this part we will show questions which examine students' attitudes towards frauds during enrolment process, biasness to recourse to illegal methods in certain cases. To test this hypothesis we offer the following question to students:
If somebody proposes you to facilitate your enrolment process

for a state-funded study place at the university, in exchange for a sum of money, will you accept?

The following variants of answers have been offered: Yes. / Probably yes. / Probably not. / No.

The answer to this question can help us understand the perception of corruption by student not only at the declarative level but at the practical level too. The following situation is more radical compared to the first one because it entails deliberate and accepted breach of the legal provision. Thus, the question obtains the following shape:
If you had the possibility to be enrolled illegally to the university without being caught, would you have done it?

The variants of answers: Yes / No / Don't know.

Besides the formulated cases of accepting to offer a bribe in exchange for support, we have considered useful to include in the questionnaire the questions which relate to the reaction of students to possible cases of corruption.

If you would face/experience/witness a case of corruption, would you report it to the law-enforcement bodies?

With the variants of answers: Yes / No.

A possible continuation of the logic of the question would be

the placement of questions in the questionnaire related to the sanctions which need to be enforced against persons who ask for bribes during the admission process to facilitate matriculation of a candidate.

What would be appropriate penalties for the professors who ask for or receive bribes during the enrolment process?

The available variants of answers:

1. Admonition
2. Temporary prohibition to work/suspension
3. Discharge
4. Prohibition of further work in any educational institution
5. Monetary fine
6. Prison sentence
7. They shouldn't be punished

Besides evaluation of sanctions which need to be enforced against the ones who ask for bribes, it is necessary to find out the opinion of the students with respect to the

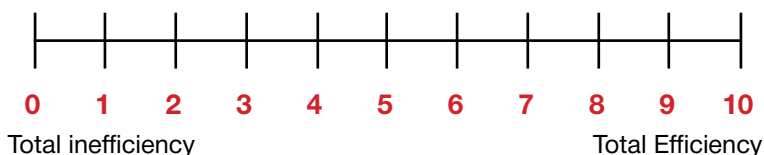
necessary sanctions for those who give bribes. What would be appropriate penalties for students who give bribes?

The available variants of answers are the same as the ones presented above.

The efficiency of fighting corruption during the admission process

We need factual information when talking about the efficiency of fighting corruption, which would demonstrate that students perceive this efficiency at a certain level. Thus, the real way to get data on this issue is linked to the establishment of a specific indicator, measurable by means of a specific question.

Please estimate the efficiency of the measures taken for countering/reducing corruption in the university enrolment process on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means – total inefficiency and 10 – total efficiency of prevention/ countering measures



2.4.3.5. The institutions responsible for the prevention of corruption during the admission procedure

The efficiency of actions of countering/preventing corruption is directly dependant of the activity of the institutions holding this mandate.

Thus, we offered the following question to identify the respondents' perception of the

specific methods of division of responsibilities between various institutions regarding the prevention of corruption:

In your opinion, what degree of responsibility should each of the listed subjects have in preventing corruption during the enrolment process?

We also presented to the respondents a table which implies evaluation of responsibility of various institutions under review:

	Absolute responsibility	Some responsibility	Should not be responsible
The Enrolment Committee	1	2	3
Students-Candidates	1	2	3
Parents	1	2	3
University Administration	1	2	3
Representatives of control/law-enforcement bodies	1	2	3

2.4.4. Positive and negative experiences

2.4.4.1. Positive experiences

The filling in of questionnaires is a fairly easy and interesting task for students. However, the students are curious and tend to accept filling in the questionnaires.

2.4.4.2. Negative experiences

The main difficulties were the scepticism of the representatives of the administration at the departments regarding the study and their initial unwillingness to offer support in the implementation of the research. Also, the professors have tended to be less friendly, unwilling to offer time to distribute the questionnaires to the students.

2.4.5. Recommendations

The success of the survey to a great extent depends on the quality of the research instrument, the correct sampling and proper filling in of the questionnaires by respondents. Thus, the recommendations with respect to the drafting of the questionnaire are:

- The questionnaire should not be too long; the duration of completion of a questionnaire should not exceed 15-20 minutes.
- The questions must be formulated as simple and comprehensible as possible.
- It is necessary to explain how many variants of answers the respondent should choose.
- The number of open questions should be as minimal as possible.
- The questionnaire should be mandatorily piloted before the beginning of collection of empirical data.

Recommendations with respect to the sampling:

- The sampling should be made in accordance with the information held by the research team.
- If there is a lack of sufficient information to draft a probable sampling, it is advisable to develop a sampling based on quotas.

The observance of the sampling principles by operators:

- The operators should be selected based on the previous experience in managing questionnaires or on their respective knowledge (students from the sociology department).
- The operators must be trained with respect to the importance of observing the procedures of selection of respondents and management of the survey.
- Before the implementation of the empirical data collection phase it is necessary to check how well the operators have understood the procedure of selection of respondents and have correctly perceived the importance of its observance.
- The operators must be paid.

2.4.6. Examples of results

[...]

2.4.7. Recommended literature

Chelcea S. *Metologia cercetării sociologice. Metode cantitative și calitative.*- București, 2009

Iluț P. *Abordarea calitativă a sociumanului.* - Iași, 1997.

Jupp V. *The SAGE Dictionary of Social Research Methods.* - London, 2006.

V.5. Dorm enrolment

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Problem definition

The dorm enrolment process entails the application for the student dorms, admission process and division of student dorm rooms. Corruption can be found in many segments of the dorm enrolment process. It manifests itself as an act of giving false information (used to determine the priority in the division of dorms), prioritizing members of political parties or student unions, tampering with the applicants list, selling or renting of dorm rooms, etc.

1.2. The importance of the topic in higher education

Corruption in the dorm enrolment process has a great impact on higher education and the society in general. Due to the limited number of available dorm rooms, corruption in the dorm enrolment process deprives the students (those with the least financial support and that are located far from the

university) who need a place to reside during their studies the most. The victims of corruption in the dorm enrolment process are left with very few choices. They are either forced to choose a university near their hometown (thus limiting their options), find a job to support their stay or give up on higher education. Ironically, oftentimes the students that didn't get into the dorms end up having to rent them from the ones that don't need them.

The suboptimal division of the student dorms leads to the marginalization of the underprivileged members of the society; it decreases the students' motivation and deprives them of the time and focus necessary for the successful completion of their studies. This in turn impacts the work force, social cohesion and quality of life in general.

2. INSTRUMENTS

2.1. Requests for public information

2.1.1 Why request for public information?

The request for public information tool enables the acquisition of a "first-hand" information from various

institutions about issues that are considered to be of public importance.

When researching the dorm enrolment issue, the request for public information tool has a limited, but rather important role. It is impossible to use this tool to directly ask the information holders about corruption, but using the data acquired, corruption can be identified by comparative analysis. An example of this would be comparing the official capacity of the dormitory (information obtained through requests for public information) to the number of dorm rooms actually distributed among students. In the Macedonian research it was proven that several dorm rooms were given to employees of the public administration completely unrelated to the university.

2.1.2. Sample

The sample consists of all of the institutions which possess potentially useful information for the research. Specifically, for the topic of dorm enrolment, those are the State Dorm Centre (SDC) which governs 4 big dormitories, the administration of the individual dormitories and the Ministry of Education.

2.1.3. Questions

The questions raised in the requests ask for information concerning the capacity of the dormitories, flow of the enrolment process in the dormitories, anti-corruption measures and legislation in the dorms, as well as the data concerning the dorm application process. It is also important to determine the role of the Ministry of Education in the dorm enrolment process, and identify any other relevant actors. In the Macedonian research, it was determined that the Student Parliament holds greater power than the ministry representatives during the application and division of student dorms.

Question examples:

- Who is in charge of managing the list of applicants for dorm rooms?
- What is the amount of the fund for recreation and fun, and who is responsible for managing this fund?
- What is the current capacity of your dormitories?
- Are there any mechanisms of reporting corruption to the student dorm administration?
- What are the sanctions prescribed for renting rooms in the student dorm?
- Who represents the Ministry of Education in the dorm

application and division process, and what are their powers?

2.1.4. Positive and negative experiences

2.1.4.1 Negative experiences

The student dorms tend to respond less to the requests than the Ministry of Education and the universities. The reason for this is the lack of administrative staff responsible for handling the requests for public information and the lack of proper bookkeeping. Requests should be sent despite this fact, because the lack of answers is a result per se.

2.1.5. Recommendations and advice

When filing the requests for public information on this topic, one should always pay attention when determining the holder of the information. In the Macedonian research, there is a State Dorm centre (SDC) which holds the information for four big dormitories, while the other dormitories are governed independently. Obviously, the SDC does not hold any information concerning the independent dorms and requests for that information should not be sent to the centre. However, the SDC does have

the responsibility to forward the requests to the holders, but requesting from the initial source is faster and the request is more likely to get a response.

2.2. Focus groups

2.2.1 Why focus groups?

There are very few specific benefits of using focus groups for researching corruption during dorm enrolment aside from those that apply to focus groups in general. Due to the student dorm environment being somewhat closed and unknown to anyone not living in a dorm, a focus group may help in providing some preliminary information that would define the research area more precisely. Some dorm residents may find it easier to talk about the question of corruption, which is often a complex question, when they are outside their dorm and in presence of their peers. Note, however, that sometimes the opposite is true.

2.2.2. Sample

Firstly, the sample should contain students from all the different dorms that are to be researched as the relationship between corruption and dorm enrolment can sometimes differ significantly from one dorm to another. There are some cases

where certain dorms with a higher quality of living conditions are considered as “reserved” for students who have connections or can offer a bribe. When encountering a similar situation, it may be wise to try to organize a separate focus group only with residents of such dorms as they might be reluctant to share information in presence of others if they really have enrolled in their dorms through the means of corruption. However, interviews with individual residents are also a possibility in a situation like this.

Secondly, it is important to make sure that you have participants from all years of study. This will allow one to observe if there have been any changes to how the process of enrolment has been conducted over several years.

2.2.3. Questions

It is recommended that the questions for the focus groups cover six main areas:

- Assessing the degree of corruption present during dorm enrolment (How often do corrupt practices happen during dorm enrolment?)
- Determining the different forms of corruption that are present and to what degree (What are the most common corrupt practices during

dorm enrolment?)

- Determining the working practices that allow the occurrence of corruption (Is the process of dorm enrolment transparent?)
- Assessing the degree of acceptance of corruption (Is corruption seen as a serious problem by the dorm residents?)
- Assessing the level of knowledge of laws, policies and regulation in the area of dorm enrolment (Does the dorm resident know how the enrolment process works?)
- Assessing the effectiveness of the anti-corruption measures implemented in the area of dorm enrolment (Are the dorm residents aware of any actions taken to prevent and fight corruption?)

Examples of the questions:

- Are you aware of any other way of getting a dorm residency besides the official one? Give specific examples from your experience or that of others you personally know.
- How often do you hear of someone getting a dorm residency through personal connections?
- Were you adequately informed of all the requirements for enrolling in your dorms?

- If you found out that a student from your dorm enrolled there illegally, how would you react?
- How familiar are you with the criteria for dorm enrolment?
- Do you know which people decide who gets a dorm residency and who doesn't?
- Are you familiar with any cases of an illegal dorm resident facing any punishment?

2.2.4. Positive and negative experiences

2.2.4.1 Positive experiences

Some students provided us with very detailed information on how certain corrupt practices work. Also, the students were often reminded of experiences or examples they might not have otherwise remembered from listening to the other participants.

2.2.4.2 Negative experiences

Students who have previously agreed to participate in a focus group may cancel their attendance at the last minute. Others, despite agreeing to attend, have very little to share or are afraid to do so in a group setting. These are problems we've faced often when using a random sample for our focus groups.

2.2.5. Recommendations

It is advisable to organize the focus groups well in advance of the actual session. One should make sure that all of the participants will be available at the time you have set for the session and if necessary adjust it so that it works best for as many participants as possible. Additionally, it is smart to double-check with them one or two days before the session in order to make sure that in the case of a last minute cancellation there will be time to find a replacement.

When finding it difficult to find student who are interested in participating in a focus group, there are two things that can be done. One is to provide a bigger incentive for doing so, like offering to pay them (if you have the resources to do so). The other is to go with a snowball sample instead of a random sample. This means that instead of asking random dorm residents to participate, one would ask one's personal contacts to ask dorm residents they personally know if they would like to participate. By taking the "friend of a friend" approach it may be easier to get a group together as the participants may think of it as doing their friends a small favour (if they have no bigger incentive).

Finally, one should make sure that any reluctance on the part of the students is not due to them not having sufficient information on what the focus group is all about and how it works. Most of all, one should not forget to inform potential participants that their identity will be protected.

2.2.6. Examples of the results

The results given below are just summaries of some of our focus group findings. When presenting focus groups findings publicly it is recommended to include quotations from the focus group participants that support the findings.

- Using political party connections is the most common way of illegally attaining a dorm residency.
- Ruling parties have “black lists” that might disable some students from getting a dorm residency.
- The sale and purchase of dorm rooms is a common phenomenon.
- The activists of the ruling party get dorm rooms in the best dorms regardless of their qualifications.
- In some dorms there are residents who are not students (mostly civil servants)

- The right to appeal is not explained to the students when they submit their requests for residency.
- Students are blackmailed with losing their residency if they attend student protests.
- Students feel that getting a dorm residency illegally is sometimes justified because they have no faith in the institutions which they think unjustly distribute dorm rooms.

2.3. Interview

2.3.1. Why interviews?

The interview is a qualitative research tool in which the researcher has a personal access to the respondent, who can transfer his personal perspective on the particular topic. It offers information rich in detail, and is greatly beneficial in the initial stage of the research. Interviews are particularly useful in gathering information when it comes to the enrolment process because the respondent has an opportunity to express freely and to offer their own assessment on the issue. The value of this tool can be seen in the ability to paint a picture of the real situation and impact on the individuals, unlike some other tools that give information on the legal and technical aspects.

2.3.2. Sample

The following subjects can offer relevant information on the topic of dorm enrolment:

- Students directly involved in the process that are able to understand the functionality and disadvantages of the model of dorm enrolment;
- Representatives of the university services in charge of university enrolment
- University departments that are directly involved in the process of enrolment as well as representatives of the authority responsible for university enrolment;
- University professors, who can share their view of the dorm enrolment process, give further evaluation and opinions about potential reforms.

2.3.3. Questions

Sample questions for enrolment (for students):

1. Are you aware of any alternative means of enrolling in the dormitories?
2. What information is required when applying for a dorm room?
3. According to you, is there any manipulation with that information?
Who is responsible for the list of dorm applicants, and

how would you evaluate their work?

4. Do you know where you can report corruption in the dormitories?
5. Would you report corruption in the dormitories?

Examples of results

- The procedure for allocation of seats in the dormitories is non-transparent, full of influences (political parties and the Student Parliament), and always accompanied by rumours of irregularities;
- Students have nowhere to go when their rights are violated, they are not aware of any offices where corruption can be reported, or they do not trust their ability to protect their rights;- Students approve of corruption because they believe the system forces them to be corrupt.

2.3.4. Positive and negative experiences:

Generally, a positive side of the interviews, when it comes to the process of enrolment, is that interviewees feel free to speak and express their perception of the process.

A negative side is that when talking to an official of the university about enrolment, no data can be obtained concerning

the entire process, because the dormitories are not an integral part of universities, but are separate legal entities. There is very little information that can be obtained for extracurricular activities (although there is a separate fund, financed by every student in the dormitory) because they are not part of formal academic curriculum.

2.3.5. Recommendations

The person conducting the interview should be prepared, have a concept with clear, precise questions, structured in several sub-groups in order for the interview to flow in a logical order. Bearing in mind the delicacy of the topic, the questions should be clear, concise and should not cause an inconvenience to the interviewee.

The process of finding interviewees, particularly students, is not followed by major difficulties, however finding officials willing to speak may be a greater challenge.

2.4. Questionnaire survey

2.4.1. Why questionnaire survey?

The survey is generally used to test certain hypothesis as part of Social Sciences. The survey

is designed in that manner, so that it can measure the sample's preferences, opinions, attitudes, values, behaviour and experience. No other method of observation can provide this general capability.

The advantage of the survey approach is the flexibility of the analysis, in this case, regarding the topic of dorm enrolment.

The standardized questions provide a precise measurement because similar data is collected from different groups, and then interpreted comparatively.

This topic is quite sensitive. If the goal is to gain a valuable data, then privacy needs to be ensured for the participants.

There is no better tool for this purpose than the method of survey.

2.4.2. Sample

Since it was decided for 2 different subtopics (enrolment and rights and obligations) to be researched by one questionnaire, it is necessary, for this approach, the pros and cons to be pointed out. The sample consisted of students that have already enrolled in student dorms, with a sampling criterion based on the year of studies. Although in most researches a random representative sample is recommended, for this specific topic that cannot be applied

having in mind that the most reliable data can come from those who are directly involved in the process of student dorm enrolment or introduced to the rights and obligations, while the other results will most probably be based on hear-say. Exception in this case, may be made with the students which applied for a place in a student dorm, but got rejected.

The sampling criterion should be based on the year of studies of the students. It is more likely that the 1st year students are rather less experienced with the rights and obligations of the student dorm, and the level of their involvement is more likely to be lower than the others. However, their recent experiences with the enrolment procedure can provide fresh and objective results.

In the case of the Macedonian research, the survey was conducted among 10% of the students, residing in 8 student dorms in the region.

Regarding the time frame, it is recommended for the questionnaire to be conducted in October/November, after the enrolment process is over. This period is also suitable, because the students are back in the dorms, after the summer break period.

2.4.3. Questions

In order to construct a good questionnaire, a preliminary research should be conducted. The legislative that regulates the issue of student dorm should be revised (ex. Law on Higher Education, Law on Student Standard, bylaws, ordinances and statutes of student dorms, Ministry of Education's acts and directives etc.). This way, an insight to the procedures is provided which helps locate the potential stages where corruption may occur. Media review is also recommended, having in mind that investigative journalism sometimes tackles this issue and reports about corruption. Another approach is conducting semi-structured interviews, preferably with students that are enrolled in a student dorm, or got rejected, so that the research gets a head start.

The questionnaire should be consisted of:

- introductory questions;
- questions based on further explained indicators;
- socio-demographic questions.

I. The introductory questions may focus on:

- reasons for staying in a student dorm;
- present state of affairs of the dorms;
- ranking the problem of corruption among the other problems that may arise in the case of student dorms.

Examples of the introductory questions:

1. *What were the main causes to make you stay in the dorms?*
 - Financial causes
 - Small distance between the dorm and the university building
 - The desire to be independent
2. *How would you describe the present state of affairs of the dorms?*
 - Very good
 - Good
 - Satisfactory
 - Unsatisfactory
 - Bad
 - Very bad
3. *Which of the following problems do you consider to be of primary importance within student dorms?*
 - Overused and out-dated furniture
 - Low level of hygiene
 - The need of a general

- renovation of the dorms
- Lack of lecture % computer pools
- Inadequate attitude of the administration towards the dwellers
- Violations of the rules and regulations of the dorms
- Corruption, nepotism and favouritism

II. Before constructing the questionnaires, a few indicators should be established (a number or ratio - a value on a scale of measurement derived from a series of observed facts; can reveal relative changes as a function of time) that helps in conceptualization of the questionnaire. For this purpose, the following indicators were determined:

- Perception of corruption
- Tolerance of corruption
- Awareness of the regulations

II.1 The basic indicator should be used to derive the information concerning all of the elements that are directly connected to the process of corruption. It should be noted, that these questions will not reflect the index of corruption, but how students perceive this phenomenon.

Using the questions, within the first indicator, answers to the following questions can be obtained:

- Identify the forms of corruption;
- Determine the stages of the process where they occur;
- Identify the actors involved;
- Identify the imitators of the corruptive elements;
- Identify the percentage of students exposed vs. percentage of students familiar with corruption.

Some examples of the questions under the first indicator:

1. According to you, what's the percentage of the students who had gained their student dorm room in a corrupt manner?

- Less than 10%
- 10%-30%
- 30%-50%
- 50%-70%
- More than 70%

The response can contain only one answer.

2. Which of the following activities happened in your student dorm?

- Selling/buying a room illegally
- Illegal residence in a dorm
- Pressure/threats coming from political parties
- Pressure/threats coming from

the student representative body

- Expelling a student that resides in a dorm based on false accusations
- Nepotism for getting enrolled in a student dorm
- Giving money, gifts or services to the administration entitled to conduct the process of enrolment
- Manipulation with the final lists
- Manipulations with the waiting lists
- Student dorm rooms are in advance assigned
- More people are residing in one room, than prescribed
- Irregularities during election of the representatives of the Council of Tenants
- Forgery of the documentation needed for enrolment
- Others (please specify): _____

For this question, the following answers should be provided.

- This has happened to me.
- I know someone who experienced this.
- I'm not familiar with these types of situations.

In this manner, relevant data concerning the student's perception can be gathered. In many occasions even though students are not directly

involved in corruption, living in that environment, can affect their perception of corruption.

3. Please rank the following actors, based on the frequency of initiating corruption:

- Students
- Administration
- Political parties
- Representatives of the student body
- Others (please specify): _____

The answers should address every actor, ranging from “they indicate corruption in many cases” up to “They never indicate corruption”.

4. According to you, which are the main reasons for the existence of corruption in student dorms:

- Too much bureaucracy
- The demand for student dorm rooms is way bigger than the supply
- Insufficient control over the student dorm administration
- The students are willing to offer money, gifts or services for enrolling in a student dorm
- The political influence over the student dorm management
- Other (please specify)

The examinee can choose multiple answers.

1. The second indicator focuses on the issue of tolerance of corruption. One of the hypotheses is that in certain countries, especially in the Balkans, the corruption is considered as “a normal thing”. People are not aware of the cost of the existence of corruption or the way it harms their well-being. By using this indicator this hypothesis may be confirmed or disclaimed.

The questions in this case, should focus on an assessment on:

- The tolerance of specific forms of the corruption;
- Students that would engage in corruption;
- Students that would react i.e. would report corruption;
- The main motives for not reporting/tolerating corruption.

Examples of the questions under the second indicator:

Which of the following activities would you report?

- Selling/buying a room illegally

- Illegal residence in a dorm
- Pressure/threats coming from political parties
- Pressure/threats coming from the student representative body
- Expelling a student that resides in a dorm based on false accusations
- Nepotism for getting enrolled in a student dorm
- Giving money, gifts or services to the administration entitled to conduct the process of enrolment
- Manipulation with the final lists
- Manipulations with the waiting lists
- Student dorm rooms are in advance assigned
- More people are residing in one room, than prescribed
- Irregularities during election of the representatives of the Council of Tenants
- Forgery of the documentation needed for enrolment

The answers should be conceptualized as the following:

- I would report it.
 - I wouldn't report it.
 - I do not know.
2. Which would be your reasons for not reporting corruption?
- I do not know where to report.
 - It wouldn't change anything.

- I would worsen my personal situation if I report.
 - I wouldn't want the same thing to happen to me.
 - I do not care.
 - Other (please specify)
-

III. The awareness of the regulations as the third indicator will help locate one of the potential reasons for the occurrence of corruption.

In this set of questions, the familiarity of the students with the regulations that addresses the following issues is examined:

- The procedure for getting enrolled in a student dorm;
- The procedure for reporting corruption;
- The rights and obligations of the resident in student dorms;
- The organisational structure of the dorm's administration and their jurisdiction.

Examples of the questions under the third indicator:

1. Have you ever read any of the following documents?
 - The Ordinances of your student dorm
 - The Statute of your student dorm

- The Law on Student Standard
- The official call for student dorm enrolment

The following answers are available for every option:

- I have read it.
 - I haven't read it, but I know it exists.
 - I haven't read it.
2. Are you aware of the jurisdiction of the following agents?
 - Dorm Manager
 - Executive board of the Student Dorm
 - Council of Tenants
 - Commission for Enrolment
 - Representatives of the student body
 3. Do you know where to report corruption?
You should give Yes/No answers.
 4. **The socio- demographic questions, are mostly giving you information about the:**
 - age;
 - gender;
 - place of origin;
 - university/faculty; and
 - year of studies.

2.4.4. Positive and negative experiences

2.4.4.1. Positive experiences

When doing a field research (in this case, the dorm utilities and property) it is recommendable to obtain approval in advance. Usually, the approval should be requested from the dorm management. This way any inconveniences or distortion in the time frame will be avoided. Another suggestion is providing proper identification for the researches (badges, tags, stating their name and the organization they come from) so that the students feel more comfortable giving the information that are required.

2.4.4.2. Negative experiences

For this specific topic, it is highly probable that people would not be eager to participate in the survey. In countries where corruption in student dorms is a significant problem, students are afraid that they may lose their place in the student dorm, if they participate in such survey. In this situation, it is recommended that the concept on anonymity is explained, on which this tool is based upon.

2.4.5. Recommendations

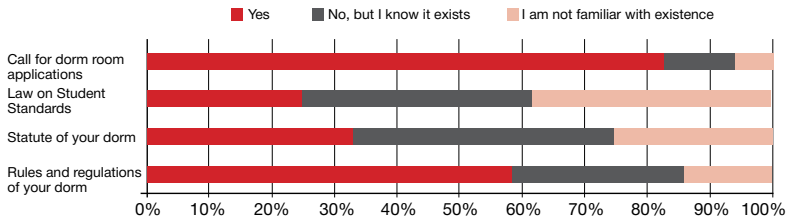
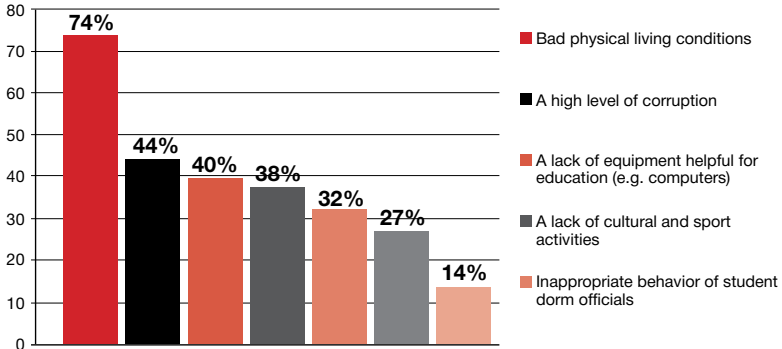
It is suggested for this survey to be conducted on field, face-to face with the students. This way a better input for the purpose of the research can be delivered, giving explanations to questions that may not be understood (even though when creating a questionnaire it is inevitable to adapt the language and construction of the questions to the general level of understanding). Another advantage is that the researchers can analyse the student's behaviour, which is useful when drawing general conclusions on the topic.

If the team that prepares the research is not involved in the field work, the volunteers need to be introduced with the research itself (goals and objectives, time frame, potential outputs).

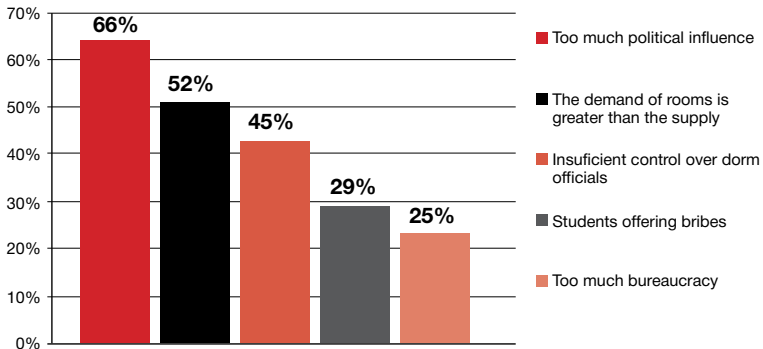
Regarding the questionnaire itself, an option where the examinee can express his experiences, values, attitude, should be included , in case none of the given choices are applicable for him/her (as much as possible, though not an imperative for all the questions). This way the loss of valuable information is minimised.

2.4.6. Examples of results

Which of the following problems do you think are most dominant in student dorms *select three



What do you think are the biggest reasons for the corruption present in student dorms? *select three



V.6. Student mobility

1. Problem definition

The main problem with the mobility issue, in context of corruption, is that the information is usually not equally distributed among the potential users. There is a selective approach which threatens the principle of equal chances and meritocracy. Moreover, if the HE institutions do not provide a solid infrastructure and conditions for implementation of this concept, than it is impossible to gain the benefits explained further. In addition, if the mobility issue is not addressed in certain legal acts, ensuring transparency and legality is only fiction. The students and academic staff will not be stimulated to take part in this process, which will lead to lower competition and inevitably influence the quality of the final choices when mobility scholarships are approved.

2. The importance of the topic for higher education

Mobility is one of the main pillars of the Bologna

process. By harmonization of the HE systems around Europe, the ground for this concept's further implementation was set up. The main purpose of mobility is to increase the productivity of the highly educated by exposing the student to a different cultural environment. This should lead to a bigger competition between the HE institution in attracting the most prosperous students and thus promote quality as the most important criterion for success. Mobility is also at disposal of the academic staff, so that improvement of the teaching techniques and adaptation of the curriculum can be made.

Without addressing the corruption issue we face a lack of competition among the HEI, no improvement in the performance of the academic staff based on comparative experiences and students without any international experience (this will lower their adaptation and communication skills and result in a narrow view of the world).

a. Why FOI?

The Law on Free Access to Information of a Public Character provided us

with the option to gain “first-hand” information from various institutions about various issues that are considered to be of public importance. Regarding the topic of student mobility, we found this monitoring tool – FOI, to be very useful due to many reasons. Firstly, a lot of the information that we wanted to use in this research, such as list of students or academic staff that used mobility programs, were in the hands of the Macedonian institutions, so by using this tool we gained the power to obtain those information.

Another aspect is that regarding the question of mobility we wanted to analyze and compare results from different faculties, so the FOI tool was an excellent method to collect so much information in a limited period of time.

b. Sample

When implementing the topic of student mobility with the freedom of information tool we decided to send the requests for information from public character to

the State Public University – being the biggest university in Macedonia – as we thought it would be the best place to check the level of student participation in mobility programs. So the main focus was on the Public University (7 faculties in particular) and the main selection tool was the number of enrolled students. Among other institutions we sent questions to: the Students Parliament, the Parliament of Republic of Macedonia, and the Ministry of Education.

We sent a total of 420 questions.

c. Questions

The questions asked through FOI had the purpose to cover three main areas of interest:

- Student mobility;
- Mobility of the academic and administrative staff;
- Finances – as a pre-condition for mobility.

Examples of the questions:

- Has your faculty given a diploma supplement from the implementation of the Bologna Declaration until present?

- How many students from your faculty have studied abroad for one or more semesters?
- What is the budget item on your faculty for promoting mobility programs in the year 2009/2010?
- List of subjects that are being held in a foreign language on your faculty? Specify the language used.

d. Examples of the results

The following are some of the results gained from the FOI tool. These results are a summarized version of the answers of all of the faculties in question.

- None of the faculties in question had a supplement degree given to their students.
- None of the faculties in question had any preparatory courses for the foreign students who got a scholarship in Macedonia.
- There was no meeting at the faculties (Student Parliament meeting, a meeting of the professors, etc.) during which the issue of students mobility was discussed.
- None of the faculties has an office or an employee whose job is to inform the students of the scholarships offered.
- Only one faculty had organized a public event

to share information about scholarships.

- Only two people from the administrative staff of these faculties used the scholarships.

e. Positive and negative experiences

Negative experience – One of the problems that you might have if you decide to use this tool is the long process to obtain the information you need. This applies especially if the institution doesn't reply in the timeframe given by state law. So it is advisable to make a clear assessment on the amount of time you have to get the information you need and then start this process.

Positive experience – The advantages of the tool are probably the positive experiences we had, for instance, gaining “first-hand information, provided directly from the institutions“, or the fact that you have the power to simultaneously ask a variety of public institutions as many questions you wish.

3. Focus groups

a. Why focus groups

Focus groups are a requisite to a good questionnaire when

researching mobility. In countries with low levels of mobility it is hard to prepare a questionnaire without being familiar with the models and channels of mobility which are limited to a small group of people. In many cases a large segment of that group is mobile due to corruption and unwillingness of cooperation, so the information necessary for the creation of a good questionnaire are rather limited, unless the members of the research team are experienced in the field. Alternatively, the information necessary for the creation of the questionnaires can be obtained by informal conversation with the students.

Another reason to use focus groups is the wide scope of areas, actors and institutions susceptible to corruption, which can't be researched with a questionnaire (without making it long and inefficient). This makes focus groups an invaluable tool when researching student mobility, and crucial when

identifying the key areas of research.

b. Sample

In environments with a low level of student mobility, the focus should be on the selection of participants. In a country where 89% of the students never initiated a procedure to transfer to another faculty, it is very likely that participants selected only on the "faculty criteria" may have extremely limited knowledge on the topic. There is a real risk that you may end up with very little information after several focus groups since the students are poorly informed. This problem can be addressed by getting in touch with student organizations and NGO's within the faculties working on the field of mobility. Obtaining the contacts of their members or service users will enable you to create a focus group containing relevant information, since they are more likely to be involved in student mobility. You should proceed to group these students by year of study

if researching a single university, or by university if researching more.

c. Questions for the student focus groups

Questions:

The questions for the focus groups should cover three main areas:

- Measuring the degree of academic and student mobility;
- Determining the complexity and level of corruption in the student exchange process (to universities in the same countries, abroad and from abroad);
- Determining the flow of information in the exchange process and its transparency (scholarships, exchanges, internships).

Examples of the questions:

- Have you ever transferred from one faculty to other?
- Do teachers and assistants from other faculties teach on your faculty?
- Are you interested in transferring to other faculty?
- Which are your main sources of information for exchange and mobility?
- How complex is the exchange process (transfer)?
- Are you aware of cases of

corruption or irregularities in the process of transferring and the flow of information?

d. Examples of the results

The results you get from the focus groups can be used to improve the other tools you intend to use, present the situation from the student's perspective and paint a clear picture of the situation to the public when used in articles, press conferences, etc. It is important to bear in mind that because they give only qualitative data they are better presented along with quantitative data.

Examples:

- “We learn about exchanges and scholarships from photos in Facebook upon their return. They are usually children of professors or members of the Student Parliament.
- When transferring to a university abroad, it is extremely difficult to obtain letters of reference. Certain professors do not know how to write them, and others simply refuse to give letters of reference.
- The authorized personal imposes a certain travel agency to be used with the scholarship. The student

gets a plane ticket forth 200 Euros, instead of the 500 Euros intended for the transport in the scholarship.

- Students wait for their degree for months after their graduation.
- The answers for the state graduation exam were known one hour before the exam started.
- “A PE teacher that was present on the Macedonian language exam asked which student was most knowledgeable on the subject. I was pointed out. The teacher proceeded to read my answers and whisper them to other students. “
- Students believe that the system itself forces the students to be corrupt on the graduation exams. A bad teacher leads to a bad grade. The exam punishes the students although they did not have the chance to be taught by a better teacher.

e. Positive and negative experiences

Negative experiences – Sometimes, students elaborate extensively on topics that are of no importance to the research. A good example would be a student arguing against the concept of positive discrimination when asked about

students falsely presenting themselves as a minority to improve their chances of getting a scholarship, and the rest of the group entering a debate on that subject. It is the job of the moderator to discretely put the discussion back on track without thwarting the group’s enthusiasm.

Positive experiences – Students involved in mobility (regardless of the success) were very frustrated by the process and gave a large quantity of precise information. The anonymity of the focus groups is sufficient protection when discussing the topic of mobility; the students are able to share all the information they have without holding back.

4. Interviews

a. Why

Interviews are a good method for gaining information from students who have gone through the process of, or who have had experience with student mobility. Interviews are particularly important because they allow gaining information about the way the whole system is set, in terms of mobility as an element of higher education. In terms of comparison with other tools or methods available for researching mobility, the interviews are particularly

good because they give the respondent a great freedom of expression, not being tied to any specific pattern and enjoying the freedom to answer questions as they want. Also the fact that this kind of interviews often ask questions that are open so the interviewed person has complete freedom to express himself/herself, clearly and concisely explain and share his/her personal experience or give examples. An extra benefit is that most of the interviewees are examined only by one interviewer (as opposed to focus groups), so usually the interviewees feel more comfortable to speak, may share many experiences, data and information.

b. Sample - We found the following to be suitable for interviews:

- Students who are directly involved in the process of mobility and are able to understand the functionality and disadvantages of the mobility models.
- Representatives of the students (student parliaments / associations).
- The Student Ombudsman - as an institution that has jurisdiction to prosecute cases of abuse of students and violation of student rights.

- University departments that are directly involved in the process of mobility as well as representatives of the institution that is responsible for mobility at the national level.
- University professors – they can talk about their perception of mobility as a need/necessity (student mobility, academic mobility, etc.) for the higher education, as well as give further evaluation and opinions about the reforms which need to be implemented.

c. Sample questions for student mobility:

1. At which university/ universities have you experienced mobility?
2. How did you find out about the possibility of student exchange?
3. Are students well informed about the possibilities for mobility?
4. Are there a lot of possibilities for mobility for students from our Universities? If not, why?
5. Can you point out some problems in the whole procedure?
6. What was the role of your university? What were the role and attitude/approach of the responsible person for mobility at your university? Were they student-oriented?

7. How can you rate the responsiveness of our universities regarding the documents and certificates?
8. Can you compare them to the university where you've been on an exchange?

d. Examples of results:

The conclusion from the results obtained during the survey is that one of the biggest problems in the process is the poor awareness of student mobility programs offered or available to the- students.

Interviews indicated that the services of the universities/ faculties are the source from which they receive least information about opportunities and programs for student mobility.

Generally, the students who participated in these interviews evaluated the work of the academic staff responsible for student's mobility programs as poor. They share the same opinion about the responsible people and agencies for mobility.

e. Positive and negative experiences

The positive experience in using interviews as a research tool for mobility is that the interviewees are able to explain how the system of student mobility works in practice. We had the

opportunity to hear from the students' perspective about the difficulties in the procedures for transfer to a different university, as well as the responsiveness of the university services responsible for conducting student's mobility.

This kind of information (personal experiences) is very useful for the research itself, and it is very difficult to obtain them by using other research tools. Another positive experience is that the interviewees are open for discussion about the obstacles they have encountered in the process of mobility, whether due to bad regulations or coordination of the services responsible for the implementation of mobility. Referring this topic we didn't have many negative experiences.

What we can only say that if you want to interview the academic staff, you have to make all the necessary procedures to get to the professors or the people responsible for students/ academic mobility programs. This may take a few weeks, but with a proper planning you will have the information on time.

f. Recommendations

When conducting the interview, you should be ready and have prepared a concept with clear,

precise questions which are structured in several sub-groups (as above) in order to conduct the interview in a logical order. You should also be careful not to restrain the respondent from giving broad answers to the topic related questions especially if they are open questions that offer freedom of expression. These are recommendations for a good and successful interview, which would allow the researcher (the interviewer) to gain information which would be useful and beneficial, although the interview gives a subjective opinion. The questions should be clear, concise and should not cause any inconvenience to the interviewees (such as criticism, etc). It is recommended the issues to be structured well enough for the respondents to feel free to express their opinion, simultaneously offering directions and information (in order to avoid speculation, subjective opinions that do not pertain to the topic of the interview).

5. Questionnaires

a. Why questionnaire survey?

A questionnaire survey enables the gathering of large amounts of data from a large sample in a relatively cheap

and quick manner. With a properly designed sample, a questionnaire survey allows us to make generalized conclusions for the whole population of the research based on the produced results. For a more detailed look at questionnaire surveys, refer to the earlier chapter that is dedicated to questionnaire surveys as a social research instrument.

When researching academic and student mobility in higher education, a questionnaire survey is best applied for gathering data on students' general perception, knowledge and attitudes regarding this topic. In this instance, a survey is not very effective in gathering in-depth information on specific corruption related issues in the area of mobility. This especially applies if the number of students who have been personally involved in the process of student mobility in the research population is low. However, a survey can be used to provide an overview of the situation from the perspective of the students. The manner in which this can be done is discussed in the section on questions below.

b. Sample

Whenever possible, a representative simple random sample is recommended as it

is the easiest way of avoiding sampling errors. However, due to practical considerations, this is not always possible. A simple random sample requires a sampling frame (e.g. a list of all university students with contact information) from which respondents can be randomly selected. Even if you can get access to a proper sampling frame, the researchers will need to track down a large number of randomly selected students in order to interview them. Unless it is possible for the survey to be conducted over the phone, this can be very difficult.

A well designed stratified sample that will take into consideration the major variables that could influence the results is a good alternative. These variables will differ depending on the research population, but the rule of thumb is to make sure that the composition of the sample is as close as possible to the composition of the population. So, for instance, if 30% of your population consists of law students, 30% of all respondents in your sample should also be law students. As an example, our research of this topic was realized on 5 different faculties, each of which was considered as a different stratum. A quota of 8% of the faculty's students was established. Respondents were randomly selected from each

study group by interviewing every 3rd student to a maximum of 10 respondents per group. The survey ended once 8% of all of the students per faculty had been interviewed.

For further information on sampling, refer to the section on sampling in the chapter on questionnaire surveys as a social research instrument or to the suggested literature.

c. Questions

Due to the large variety of questions that can be asked, it is best to start by determining the specific concepts you want to research. This will enable you to group questions into coherent sets and make it easier for you to develop questions based on what you want to examine. Our basic concepts were the following:

1. Level of student mobility (internal and external);
2. Level of academic mobility (internal and external);
3. Students' interest in mobility (internal and external);
4. Knowledge of mobility opportunities;
5. Knowledge of the transfer procedure;
6. Information channels for information on mobility;
7. Students' perception of the complexity of the transfer procedure.

Level of student mobility

This concept simply deals with getting the factual information concerning the levels of student mobility. The students were asked to provide information on the number of students they know, who have transferred to their faculty or other faculties. This data can only be used as an estimate from the perspective of the students and not as a precise number of actual transfers. It is also useful when compared to any data on the number of transfers provided by the faculties through public information access requests.

Examples of questions from the Macedonian questionnaire:

1. Did you start your studies at your current faculty or did you transfer there from another faculty? (select one answer)
 - a. I started at my current faculty.
 - b. I transferred from another faculty.
2. Approximately, how many students do you know at your faculty who transferred there from other faculty in Macedonia? (select one answer)
 - a. 0
 - b. 1-5

- c. 6-10
- d. 11+

3. Approximately, how many students do you know at your faculty who transferred there from other faculty abroad? (select one answer)
 - a. 0
 - b. 1-5
 - c. 6-10
 - d. 11+

Level of academic mobility

This is the same as the previous concept, but this time it serves for getting an estimate from the students on the mobility of the academic staff.

Examples of questions:

1. How many lecturers do you know at your faculty who have transferred from other faculty in Macedonia? (select one answer)
 - a. 0
 - b. 1-3
 - c. 4-6
 - d. 6+
2. How many lecturers do you know at your faculty who have transferred from other faculty abroad? (select one answer)
 - a. 0
 - b. 1-3
 - c. 4-6
 - d. 6+

Students' interest in mobility

This question set is concerned with the attitude of students towards student mobility, or more precisely, their personal level of interest in transferring to other faculty.

Examples of questions:

1. How interested are you in transferring to other faculty abroad? (select one answer)
 - a. Not interested at all.
 - b. Slightly interested.
 - c. Very interested.
2. If you are interested in transferring to other faculty, but have not initiated the transfer procedure, what are your reasons for not doing so? (select all answers that apply)
 - a. I do not have enough information how to initiate the transfer procedure.
 - b. The procedure is too complicated.
 - c. I do not have the necessary finances for the faculty I'm interested in.
 - d. Other (please explain):

Knowledge of mobility opportunities

This concept is very important when it comes to researching mobility as most of the

corruption in this area tends to come from manipulation with information on mobility opportunities (scholarships, student exchange programs, etc.) from the institutions or organizations in charge of disseminating this information. As it is difficult to get reliable information on how informed students are of such opportunities by simply asking them to recall all related bits of information they have come across, the Macedonian research team created questions about specific mobility opportunities (such as major mobility programs) that are known to exist on the faculties being researched.

Examples of questions:

1. How familiar are you with the Erasmus Mundus Programme (European Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students)? (select one answer)
 - a. Not familiar at all.
 - b. Somewhat familiar.
 - c. Very familiar.
2. If your answer to the previous question was a), skip this question.]
Where did you receive information about the Erasmus Mundus program from? (select all of the answers that apply)

- a. From the staff at my faculty.
 - b. From students/friends.
 - c. From the employees of Erasmus Mundus.
 - d. From my personal research.
 - e. Other (please explain):
-

The second question of this section is more important as it is concerned with the actors who are responsible for the dissemination of such information. By observing the results from this question we can see if the organizations/institutions responsible for informing the students about the mobility opportunities are doing their job well.

Knowledge of the transfer procedure

Another responsibility that lies with the higher education institutions is to be transparent about their transfer procedures. Therefore, a set of questions that examines how informed students are of this procedure is needed.

Examples of questions:

1. Have you ever been engaged in a transfer procedure for transferring to other faculty? (select one answer)

- a. No, never.
- b. I am currently engaged in a transfer procedure.
- c. I have been engaged in a transfer procedure in the past.

NOTE: This question simply serves to filter out the students who have been engaged in a transfer and are therefore expected to be well familiar with the procedure.

2. Where should you go first if you want to initiate a transfer procedure? (select one answer)
 - a. The administrative reception
 - b. The ECTS office
 - c. The faculty I want to transfer to
 - d. The Dean's office
 - e. Other (please explain):
-

The aim of this section is to compare the answers of the student to information about the way a transfer is initiated at the faculty through a public information access request. Just as in tests, there is only one correct answer. The more correct answers there are, the more knowledgeable students are considered to be in regards to this part of the transfer procedure.

Information channels for information on mobility

This concept is directly concerned with “if” and “how” faculties fulfil their obligation to pass on information about mobility opportunities and possibilities to their students.

Example question:

1. Has your faculty ever informed you about any possibilities for studies at other faculties? (select one answer)
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
2. [If your answer to the previous question was a), skip this question.]

If your faculty has informed you about the possibilities for studies at other faculties, how was this done? (Select all of the answers that apply)

- a. Through the notice boards
 - b. Through promotional items
 - c. Through informational events
 - d. The faculty staff informs us in person
 - e. Through the faculty web site
 - f. Other (please explain):
-

This question can show how many channels of communication are used by the faculty and, provided there are enough responses, it can be used to compare how successful different faculties that utilize different channels are at passing on mobility information to their students.

Students' perception of the complexity of the transfer procedure

Here we simply examine how students generally perceive the transfer procedure in terms of complexity.

Example question:

1. In your opinion, how simple/complicated is the transfer procedure? (select one answer)
 - a. Very simple.
 - b. Somewhat simple.
 - c. Somewhat complicated.
 - d. Very complicated.

The data from this question can be tested for correlations with the data from questions about engagement in transfer procedures and knowledge of transfer procedures. For instance, you can test the hypothesis that students who have been personally engaged in a transfer procedure find the procedure to be more or less complex than those who had not

had a personal experience with transferring.

a. Positive and negative experiences

Positive experiences – Students were open to answering the survey questions provided they were available when they were approached by the interviewers. Negative experiences – The Macedonian research team conducted the survey before or after classes in the classrooms of the faculty. The interviewers needed permission from the lecturers who happened to be holding the class at that time, but as expected, not all of them were willing to allow this.

b. Recommendations

Depending on where and how you want to conduct your survey, you will need to check if you need permission from anyone beforehand. If you do need permission, make sure to contact the people responsible for this in advance of the time you have planned for conducting the survey in the field. When doing so, be honest about your research and provide all possible arguments for cooperation. If you encounter resistance, you can try persuasion through unofficial channels. In our case, we only needed the permission of the lecturers that were holding

classes, so we had some success by employing student interviewers who were on good terms with the lecturers we needed permission from. Past experience had shown us that it is very difficult to get students to answer any questionnaire that takes longer than a couple of minutes to complete if they are approached while moving through the university or while on a break between classes. We have had the greatest response rate during interviewing students that were in a classroom just before or after the class. Even so, a self-completion questionnaire shouldn't take more than 10-15 minutes to complete. If the questionnaire is too long, students will simply stop answering it half way through or start to give random answers just so they can complete the survey faster. Finally, make sure to emphasize that total anonymity of the survey and how the gathered data will be handled. It also helps if you stress that you and your research are in no way affiliated with the university.

V.7. Financial Flows

1. Introduction

1.1. Problem definition

It is very unclear on what principle and how much funds the faculty receives from the state budget and how much it gets from other sources.

It is even more unclear how those funds are spent. The students and interested public are unaware of the funds allocation within the faculty and its justification. A nonexistent transparency opens a door for manipulation and abuse. Faculties and universities often make a significant income by charging different fees for the services they provide, which is an additional source of manipulation. Additionally, there is no independent audit of the faculty budget and spending.

The question about the financial burden of the students is directly related to the financial management of the faculty, since every decision made by the faculty in this sphere directly affects on students, while in

the same time the quality of teaching is directly affected by the finances. There is a lot of unclarity regarding setting tuition fees, the number of enrolled students, the administrative taxes, the wages, the number of academic staff, etc. The transparency in the work of the faculty can be increased by higher interest of the students in financial flows, which is currently lacking.

1.2. The importance of the topic in higher education

The financial flows at a faculty effect the functioning of a system, which reflects on the quality of education, relations between members of the academic community, as well as on the occurrence of corruption in higher education. Legislation regulates financial flows very generally, which gives the faculties a significant in their managing. The lack of transparency in the work of the faculties' management pinpoints a systemic problem, because it disallows influencing systemic changes that would lead to a better quality of higher education.

1.3. Methodology

Information on monitoring topic of financial flows was received through some research phases conducted in several steps. The monitoring phases are starting from the most general to particular ones, in the following order:

- Regulations analysis;
Analysis of regulations;
- Request for information of public importance from the faculty;
- Focus Group with students and student representatives;
and
- Interview with the Dean.

The first step is a prerequisite of doing the research on finances - analysis of generalities and systematic, institutional framework of financial flows that are defined by a national regulation.

According to the *Law on Higher Education*, a higher education institution shall acquire funds for carrying out its activities in accordance with the Law and the Statute, from the following sources that could be grouped into two main categories:

- Funds provided by the State (as HEI founder), and

- HEI own sources of income (everything else - tuition fees, taxes, projects, donations, etc.).

The Law states that the founder (the State) shall provide funds to a higher education institution for particular purposes (e.g. material expenditure, maintenance and investment; employees' wages and salaries, in accordance with the Law and the collective agreement; equipment; carrying out scientific research and/or artistic work, as a function of teaching quality improvement, etc.). Unfortunately, the State funds for HEI activities proclaimed by Law on Higher Education are very limited leaving the HE institutions to cover, in practice, only the basic minimum employees' wages and salaries and one part of the material expenditure and maintenance.

The second most important document of higher education, is the Government's *Bylaw of Normative and Work Standards of Universities and Faculties for Activities Financed from the State Budget*, which provides further elaborations on how a HEI receives funds.

2. Instruments

2.1. Request for public information

2.1.1. Introduction

Request for information of public importance is a necessary step in the information acquisition since it provides documents and details that are clarifying the general financial flows and implementation of the Law and other regulations on finances.

2.1.2. Sample

If the members of the monitoring team have no particular HEI in mind to do research on financial flows, since there are different possibilities and types of HEI for that matter, some of the following criteria should be taken into consideration:

- the type of HEI – Faculty or university level;
- the field of study of the HEI – humanities, medicine, technical, natural sciences, etc;
- the number of students – big or small;
- the entrepreneurship level of the HEI – are they doing and to what extent various projects and different services.

An important issue on sampling the request is the fact that the private HEI are not a subject of the relevant Law, that is, one cannot request public information from them.

2.1.3. Questions

This request refers to following information and documents regarding:

1. Financial plans for last two calendar years;
2. Financial reports for last two calendar years;
3. Annual Account Reports for last two calendar years;
4. Business Reports for last two calendar years; and
5. Auditor's Reports for last two calendar years.

2.1.4. Positive and negative experiences

The Dean initially refused our request, and actually we received a negative response from the Dean even though we sent a copy of the Decision of the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance. After our phone conversation, during which we expressed our good intentions and endurance in the research, “reminding” the Dean that giving information is not a matter of choice, but an obligation

according to relevant Law, she accepted to talk about the reasons for the research, the choice of the Faculty and enclosing the requested documents. We mentioned that we will not breach the rights to information and ask for business secrets such as information on the exact salaries of the professors, stating that we are very familiar with our rights and the relevant Law.

Unfortunately, we went to the interview without analysis of financial documents, since it was one time offer to get the meeting. It is recommended to receive the documents from request, analyze them and then go to interview with those findings and additional questions.

2.1.5. Advice and recommendations

In addition of the requested documents, in order to be precise and receive wanted information, it is recommended to clarify and ask the faculty for:

1. A notification of possession of the requested information;
2. Specification of the name of the document that contains the requested information; and
3. A photocopy of the document that contains the

requested information, and its electronic form, if it exists.

Ad litteram interpretation of requests by the lawyers of the faculty may result in additional requests. In order to prevent such situations, it is preferable to ask for information in descriptive manner (e.g. “document that could provide information on the financial plan for the following year”, rather than “asking for the financial plan”, since the answer may be “We do not have a document titled Financial Plan”, and later on it is revealed that the financial plan is part of the document that titled Strategic Plan).

3.1. Focus Groups

3.1.1. Why focus groups?

The financial flows on the faculty and the decisions regarding finances directly influence the students and studying. The students, as a group, clearly feel the consequences of this process through tuition fees, cost of textbooks or administrative costs during studying. In that sense, students should be an object of interest when finances in higher education are to be analyzed.

3.1.2. Sample

In order to receive as much information as possible from the students, some of the following criteria should be taken into consideration:

- what year of studies are they – freshmen (with presumptions and expectations) and older, more experienced ones (with clear specification of their additional costs);
- whether they are state- or self-funded – whether they pay tuition or not;
- whether they live in the University centre or not – whether they have additional living costs or not (whether they reside in state-funded dorms or live in rental apartments);
- whether they work or have a part-time job or they are financially supported by their parents; and
- whether they are regular students or members of the Student Parliament or other student organization.

Depending on the resources, several focus groups could get organized – homogenous and heterogeneous, having into consideration the combinations or priorities of the previously mentioned groups of students.

3.1.3. Questions

The core question would be to what extent do the students perceive the issue of finances as something that affects them and how much they know about it; do they accept it as such, as given, or would they have any complaints. The students do not know enough and do not make a link between the financial management of the faculty and practical problems (e.g. the lack of teaching equipment).

We expected to find out more about the causes of this situation, but also to see how willing students are to participate in the decision-making processes regarding finances, as well as how empowered and capable they are for equal participation. At the same time, we did not expect to find out details about the financial management of the faculty from the students, because this information remains inaccessible to students of most faculties.

The focus group with students served to check these assumptions and seek answers to the following questions: Does the faculty communicate with the students adequately? Does it explain their expenses? and Do the students make organized efforts to find out for what purposes would the

money be spent and in what ways is teaching at the Faculty improved. These answers would help to better understand the role of students in the financial management of the faculty, the ways responsibility is shared and where are the main decisions made, as well as whether the students have access to them. Further on, we expected those focus groups to show the gap between the decision-makers and those who are affected by those decisions the most clearly. The goal of the focus groups was to evaluate:

- to what extent the students are affected by the expenses they have to cover during studying;
- to what extent they are familiar with the financial management on the faculty and how well informed they are about the faculty's finances;
- the meanings that the students associate with finances, and their role in the financial management of the faculty;
- to what extent the students of the faculty are satisfied with their studies;
- how interested they are in student activism and what prevents them in this; and
- if their efforts correspond to the gained knowledge or not.

Examples of questions for students:

1. How much money do you spend on a monthly basis during the semester?
2. Do you know what a financial plan is?
3. Is the financial plan available?
4. Why is the financial plan not uploaded to the website of the faculty?
5. Would you like to know what does the tuition fee cover?
6. Is the tuition fee realistic?
7. Is the quality of teaching suitable to the tuition fee?
8. Are your administrative expenses high?
9. In what way is the fee for additional practical lectures established? Is it realistic?
10. How much money does the faculty invest in a scientific research? What is the quality of it?
11. Where does the money from the additional exam periods go?
12. Would a different budget allocation improve the quality of teaching?
13. If you have such opportunity, would you like to participate in decision-making regarding the budget?
14. Are you interested in student activism?
15. Are you a member of any student organization?

16. What is the main reason for the lack of interest in participation in organizations?
17. Would you like students to have more influence on decision-making of the faculty?
18. Why is it important the students to be consulted?
19. How satisfied are you with the faculty?
20. What are the drawbacks and how can they be changed?
21. Do evaluations affect the quality of teaching? Are the results of evaluations made public?
22. Is the knowledge you get adequate compared to the efforts made?

3.1.4. Positive and negative experiences

The technical aspect of implementation might have been the hardest part. Foremost, the problem was to recruit the participants since the focus group took place during the exam period. When the date of the focus group was set, we had a week to recruit the candidates. First, we got in touch with the participants personally, and then, if they were interested, we took their contact details for further phone arrangement. We tried to make as heterogeneous group as possible regarding the

year of study, average mark, sex, engagement at the faculty and the program they study. During the preparation of the scenario and choosing the sets of questions, the moderators attended a focus group on the same topic with representatives of the Student Parliament of the faculty.

During the conversation, the representative of the Student Parliament dominated the discussion, however, after a few questions directed to the other participants the balance shifted. The participants talked about the topic between themselves, which contributed to the dynamics of the discussion. The questions in the discussion were posed by the representative of the Student Parliament.

3.1.5. Advice and recommendations

Recommendations for future implementation of this instrument:

- The recruitment of the participants should take place three weeks prior to the focus group, participants should be reminded a week ahead, and have them confirm their participation one day in advance;
- The moderators should be familiar with the topics as much as possible (the laws,

the Statute of the Faculty, etc.) and insist on the topic as much as possible.

New, additional questions in the next focus groups regarding financial matters could be:

1. The relation between the textbook price and quality?
2. What should a textbook be like? What should it offer?
3. Are the expenses too high?
4. What is covered by the tuition fee?
5. How is the money from tuition fees spent?

3.1.6. Examples of the results

An average student is not aware of the amount of money he/she pays to the faculty during the semester. The students think that the money gained from charging administrative expenses is spent adequately, but they do not understand why some of the practical lectures at some institutes have and others do not have to be paid for.

Additional practical lectures that have to be paid for are considered to be aimed at students that do not attend lectures regularly, but they were aware of cases when professors set the prices randomly. Regarding this, they think that the students should not pay for

the lectures that are included in the tuition fee. They did not find it odd when the management of the faculty explained that the money from paying to take exams is going to the assistants at those exams.

All of the participants agreed that the faculty building could look better and that more should be done on its maintenance. Anyhow, they do not link that with the finances or responsibility of the professors; they tended to interpret that as a general situation in the society and as an “impersonal force behind all that”. In that sense, other students’ attitudes regarding the finances can be analyzed.

According to them, the tuition fee is inadequate, and they think it should be lower; but when they compared it to the fees on the Faculties of Social Sciences, they found it justified because the equipment and chemical reagents are expensive. They would like to see a tuition fee specification.

They had never seen a financial report of the faculty, because it is not published on the website or information board. The students have showed interest for the report, because they would like to know why the

building leaks when it rains, if there is money, , the reason for lack of quality equipment and waiting to work on some machines.

They think that they do not get adequate quality education for the money they invested, and that is the problem with all of the faculties. Interestingly, they thought that the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities would be more prone to corruption, financial irresponsibility and manipulations than the other faculties.

Some other tones could be heard in this part, and there was a founded suspicion that the faculty is not doing enough to improve the studies, knowledge and expertise of the students. Nevertheless, this issue was not pursued by the group, and we soon moved to the other topic under the initiative from the student parliament representative. The administrative costs were mentioned in terms of justifying the work of the faculty. That is, if these costs were high or significantly higher than necessary, a student should not mind that, because the faculty needs to fight competition and students should contribute to that.

4.1. Interview with the Dean

4.1.1. Why interview with the Dean?

The Dean is the highest management organ at the faculty, who holds financial authority under the Law on Higher Education. In accordance with his/her authority, the Dean is familiar with: the financial plan for the following year, financial reports for the previous year, rate of tuition fees and administrative costs, as well as the policies in charging various services in terms of their own income. Having this into consideration, the Dean is the most adequate person to talk to about the financial flows of a higher education institution and the interview is supposed to offer concrete information on the relationship with the Ministry of Education, that is financing faculties in accordance with the laws and regulations. On the other hand, independently of the founder - the State, the Dean can give a framework and basic principles of alternative financing that a higher education institution can have through additional income such as scientific and research projects, commercial services, etc.

4.1.2. Sample

An interview and meeting with the monitoring team member(s) are proposed in the request itself, while the details are set during the telephone calls when confirming the arrival of the request, on inquiring when the documents are going to be available and if the monitoring team members should receive the requested documents by mail or in person, etc.

4.1.3. Questions

In order to get complete and precise information, a good preparation should take place, so the interviewer has to know the regulations and analysis of the requested documents. Here is our list of those questions.

Examples of questions:

1. How is the tuition fee at the faculty set? Is it too high or too low? Would you make a specification for that money, the way it is spent?
2. Do you have or get enough resources?
3. In what ways do you maintain the quality of studies if your resources are insufficient?
4. If a tuition fee is generally higher than the amount collected from the state and students, why don't you inform the public about the real amount of tuition fees?
5. What do you think of the enrolment policy? Is it adequate?
6. What if the faculty enrolls a bigger number of self-financing students under higher, commercial fees, then the fees determined by the Ministry of Education for students, which are covered by the budget - do you think it would increase the resources of the faculties and therefore contribute towards a higher quality of education at the faculty?
7. If you agree to pay higher fees for self-financed students in order to increase the quality of education, do you think the Ministry would accept that?
8. How much money does the faculty gain from projects and services?
9. Do the students, or the student club, receive funds gained by renting the faculty premises?
10. What is the situation with the student club? Doesn't it belong to the faculty?
11. Is the Student Parliament authorised to take the club over?
12. How much does the faculty invest in the students, that is, the Student Parliament?
13. What do you think about the participation of the student representatives?

14. Are the student representatives involved in creation of the budget that is presented to the Ministry of Education?
15. According to the students, they have never seen the results of any evaluation. What are these results? In what ways do you use them?
16. What is going on with the dissemination of information that is important to the faculty?
17. Why don't the faculties publish the final financial reports, when they are supposed to do that in accordance with the Law on Access to Information of a Public Character?
18. Is there any control of the final financial reports?

4.1.4. Positive and negative experiences

Unfortunately, as previously mentioned, we went to the interview without analysis of the financial documents, since it was a one-time offer to have a meeting and obtain the requested documents. It is recommended to receive the requested documents, analyze them and then conduct the interview with those findings and additional questions.

4.1.5. Advice and recommendations

The recommendation is to organise an interview after the analysis of the financial documents and to record the conversation using a dictation machine.

The questions that should be additionally asked and topics to be explored are:

- the issue of renting the premises of the faculties;
- the principles upon which the salaries and remunerations are determined; as well as
- the student fees and taxes (specifications, rationalisations, the purpose of their spending, etc.).

4.1.6. Examples of the results

Firstly, the financial plans are made every year based on the expected resources from the State and their own income. These plans are sent to the University, which forwards them to the Ministry of Education, and then the Ministry prepare a budget proposal, which is finally sent to the Government. The Faculty sends to the Ministry of Education the number of budget-financed students, as well as the number of employees and the organizational structure. Based on these data, the

faculty receives money from the State. "Since this amount is not sufficient for the teaching process, the faculty adds certain amount. The tuition fee is determined by summing this two figures and dividing it with the number of students". According to the financial plan of the Ministry, the faculty always receives less than needed. This is the reason the faculty makes a budget rebalance of what was planned.

Regarding the enrolment policy, there are regulations and quotas, and faculty, for several years now, have the same number of enrolled students. Occasionally, the situation is reconsidered. The criteria for the process of accreditation include equipment, staff, facilities, number of students, "but there are no resources for everything, we rather work as much as we can cover". The Dean thinks that the faculty fosters high-quality. "We could admit more students, but we will not" – hence the faculty would not enrol bigger number of students charging them commercial, higher fee than the one covered by the Ministry of Education, which would increase the income that could be used for increasing the quality of the faculty. The faculty decided to find some middle value of the tuition fee for the self-financed

(fee-paying) students. When asked: "If you decide to charge commercial, higher fees for self-financed students in order to improve the quality, do you think that the Ministry of Education would accept that?", the Dean replied: "The more you earn, the less you are given!". "It is very difficult to make realistic calculations of costs per student... Such a calculation could be done for the PhD studies, but for the regular ones it is not realistic." "The public knows how the tuition fees functions." The tuition fee is low, but it cannot be higher, because the students cannot pay more. The realistic tuition fee is very high. "If the State does not pay for that tuition, it is not fair for the children to cover it either."

The Dean says that other countries assign 3% of their GDP for science. "Our country allocates only 0,34% of the state budget. That is why we do not have any significant scientific achievements. Everyone tries to accomplish as much as they can. And, everyone knows how it is supposed to be, but it is not realistic. Since our country cannot assign enough money, we cannot stop working and do nothing." 30% of the students graduate in the final term and the average duration of studies is 8 years. The Dean says she

does not know what it indicates, but claims that they have some continuity of education, no matter what. The State gives 60% of the budget of the faculty, 30% of the budget the Faculty comes from charging the self-financed students and the Ministry of Science gives 10% for a specific project (there are 10 of them). Due to these projects the faculty covers the maintenance expenses, as well as the expenses for laboratory equipment and instruments. “Out of the funds received by the Ministry of Education, 95% is spent for the salaries and only 4% for material expenses, which is a modest amount.” “If the State gave enough money for teaching and maintenance, the additional resources would be used for equipping the faculty: the classrooms would look better, we would have enough computers, the laboratories would have better equipment, the students would have a better insurance and they would have better scientific results.” The Dean considers the quality of teaching to be satisfactory. “Certainly, if we had more money, everything would have been easier. In that case, the students could attend congresses and various educational events, and won’t pay from their own pockets”.



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the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are employed in the public sector has increased from 10.5 million to 12.5 million, and the number of people in the public sector who are employed in health care has increased from 2.5 million to 3.5 million (Department of Health 2000).

There are a number of reasons for the increase in the number of people employed in the public sector. One reason is that the public sector has become a more important part of the economy. Another reason is that the public sector has become a more attractive place to work. A third reason is that the public sector has become a more important part of society.

The increase in the number of people employed in the public sector has led to a number of changes in the way that the public sector is organized. One change is that the public sector has become more decentralized. Another change is that the public sector has become more customer-oriented. A third change is that the public sector has become more accountable.

The changes in the way that the public sector is organized have led to a number of challenges for the public sector. One challenge is that the public sector has become more complex. Another challenge is that the public sector has become more expensive. A third challenge is that the public sector has become more difficult to manage.

The challenges that the public sector faces are a result of the changes in the way that the public sector is organized. The public sector must find ways to address these challenges if it is to continue to provide the services that society needs.

One way to address these challenges is to reform the public sector. The public sector must be reorganized so that it is more efficient and more effective. The public sector must also be reorganized so that it is more accountable and more customer-oriented.

There are a number of ways to reform the public sector. One way is to privatize the public sector. Another way is to decentralize the public sector. A third way is to reorganize the public sector so that it is more customer-oriented.

The public sector must be reformed if it is to continue to provide the services that society needs. The public sector must be reorganized so that it is more efficient and more effective. The public sector must also be reorganized so that it is more accountable and more customer-oriented.