

# SOME FEATURES ABOUT THE ISSUE OF FALSIFIED EDUCATION

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The phenomenon of falsification is becoming more and more interesting and relevant. This phenomenon is related to all educational areas. Such important areas as quality of education, management and funding of education, recognition of qualifications etc. are often susceptible to falsification.

Recently, careful attention is paid to the questions of education quality. The systems of quality management are created, services are certified etc. However, along the process of modernization the degradation of education is taking place. Falsification hints are accepted as evidences of degrading education. At present, the problem occurs due to actual insufficient data on the conception of the degradation of education and the actuality of the latter phenomenon in the Lithuanian education system.

In order to define the conception of the falsification phenomenon, first of all, the semantic meaning of the word 'falsification' must be worked out. The dictionary of philosophy (2002) interprets falsification (*Latin* *falsus* - fictional, deceitful + *fecare* - make) as substantiation of falsity contained in a proposition, evaluation or theory. To falsify means to show something groundless. The dictionary of the Lithuanian language (1969) describes falsification as distortion, making something wrong, unreal, illegal (the falsifier - the person who is engaged in falsification). The Dictionary of International Words (2001) falsification explains as conscious distortion, illegal change (*lat.* *Falsifico* – *falsify, manipulate*). The concept of falsification in the education system frequently covers such elements as data falsification, corruption, plagiarism etc. and is a widespread phenomenon under conditions of global education and economy. Even the most prestigious foreign universities often face the appearance of the latter phenomenon. It worth mentioning that Massachusetts Institute of Technology's dean of admissions has resigned after admitting she 'misrepresented' her academic credentials on her resume (Education News, 2007).

The phenomenon of falsification is a complex and multiple subject. It is not new in the education system; however, recently, its expression alters. The foreign scientists actively examine the problems of falsified education (Black, 1962; Rocco Vanasco, 1999). J. Hallak and M. Poisson (2007) maintain that education is an endangered resource, because often quality is low, efficiency weak, relevance questionable and wastage significant, while aims and goals are frequently unclear. E. Katiliūtė (2003) highlighted the main issues arising in the common space of secondary and higher school: shadow education expresses itself in a shadow combination between comprehensive school and the system of national exams and include private tutoring, expression of unequal possibilities in the system of national exams and different procedures for entering higher schools. Also, we can find different data about such phenomenon, for example, according Wall Street Journal 34% of all application forms contain misrepresentations about the applicants' experience, education, and ability to perform essential job functions or according ADP Hiring Index 49% of employment, education and or credential reference checks reveal discrepancies in the applicant's information (The Importance of Verifying Education, 2007).

In 2002, Open Society Fund Lithuania and the Centre for Education Policy at Vilnius University carried out research on private tutoring. Although the impact of private tutoring on the education system can be hardly evaluated, the latter topic has not been properly investigated. However, the numbers received to summarize the results of the above mentioned research are very impressive as in 2001, the school-leavers' parents spent approximately 25 000 000 litas on preparing their children for the final exams of secondary education. A comparison of shadow education price and 'Student Basket' which is amount of money donated by the Government for learning purposes reveals that the average expenses of a single school-leaver for attending private classes reaches a half of this amount.

Corruption is another negative phenomenon that occurs in the education system. Corruption is obviously a common problem at national level. The international organization 'Transparency International' fighting against corruption has presented the data that in this case, the situation is getting worse in Lithuania. The organization underlines that corruption in higher schools is in the third place and follows road police and medical institutions. In December, 2003, the investigation *The Phenomenon of Corruption in Lithuanian Higher Schools* conducted by The National Union of Student Representations of Lithuania mainly disclosed a similar situation. Stereotyped thinking, lack of competencies etc. are the major determinant factors of corruption. However, competence cannot be either bought or sold. One can buy 'a paper' i.e. certificate, diploma but not competence. Competence is not on sale, it must be acquired individually (Lamanauskas, 2000). The other factors are also important: a common Government's position on this issue, a social teacher's status in society and inadequate teachers' remunerations for work they do. A preliminary assessment indicates that corruption is the most common element of falsified education. Corruption 'damaging education' – announces BBC News (2007). Bribery and corruption damage universities and schools across the world, according to a report for the UN's education wing, UNESCO. Recently, IIEP (International Institute for Educational Planning) Summer School (Paris, 6-15 June 2007) *Transparency, accountability and anti-corruption measures in education* has taken place.

Quality distortion is another field of falsified education. L. Jovaiša (1993) emphasizes that quality is the entirety of characteristics and marks the essence of objects. The question of education quality should be considered in various aspects including elite and massive, formal and non-formal, national and private, democratic and liberal (Lamanauskas, 2004). Education quality is discussed under the law of the Republic of Lithuania (Lietuvos Respublikos ..., 2003-06-28): an education provider is responsible for education quality whereas the Government must ensure the development of an education curricula and its quality. Nevertheless, legally a learner must receive high quality education. It can be maintained that the question of education quality is solved *de jure*. Yet, consecutive research of education condition can show if laws are followed in practice.

From the teachers' point of view, the conception of falsification can be expressed through distortions in national education policy and bureaucracy. The main factors determining the falsified education are corruption in Government institutions, opaque competition between educational establishments, falsified documentation and ineffective teachers and executives' attestation. The main factors determining the insufficient quality of education are the wrong use of money, inconsistent educational curricula, complexity of educational content, ineffective evaluation system and too many students at school and in the classroom etc. (Lamanauskas, Aleknaitė, 2008).

Free market economy is rapidly gaining ground and the globalization processes become speedier. A similar context widely accepts the importance of education and teaching. A number of countries in our region face typical deteriorative tendencies which increase the relevancy of education quality of all ages including children, youth and adults and the need for life-long learning. The crucial points are an acknowledgement of falsification examples in education and the ability to find appropriate ways to decrease its negative impact.

Obviously, the problem field of falsified education is rather wide. So, there is the need for open and thorough debate on this issue. Openness and transparency are two crucial keys in this problem solving. Thus, while proceeding with changes in education, publicity and discussions involving the whole society in this process are necessary. On the other hand, education structures are not flexible enough and fail to conform to fragmental changes. Coherent motivated reorganization based on scientific research is needed.

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