

Wednesday late morning session Track C, Wednesday, Sep 24 2025, 11:30-13:00

Location: Seminar 5

Session: Reports from different countries

Chair: Michaela Lenčesová

OR-54

Perceptions of Ethical Breaches and Consequences: Results from the National Lithuanian Survey in Academia

Rima Sinickė

Office of the Ombudsperson for Academic Ethics and Procedures, Lithuania

This presentation highlights the results of a Lithuania national applied survey conducted among academia (lecturers, researchers, administration, doctoral students) from universities, applied universities, and research institutes.

Method and organization of the survey. A quantitative method – an online survey – was chosen to collect the data. The survey was conducted online between December 2024 – February 2025. A total of 725 respondents participated in the survey. This study does not rely on prior theoretical research or literature, as the findings are derived directly from the survey. This presentation covers analysis of twelve questions out of forty-eight, specifically focusing on aspects of how people from academia perceive different ethical breaches and their possible consequences.

Results. Respondents were presented with seven statements (“A researcher falsifies data and publishes them in a journal”, “A higher-status individual (e.g., a professor, supervisor) demands to be included as an author in a student’s publication despite not contributing”, “A colleague is added as an author despite not contributing to the publication”, “A student cheats during an exam”, “A researcher conducts a study without the necessary bioethics committee approval”, “A researcher publishes multiple papers from the same study data”), which they had to evaluate on a scale from “not a problem” to “serious violation”. For example, 68% of respondents considered the demand by a higher-status person to be included as an author without contribution a serious violation and 67% considered as a serious violation a student cheating during exams, while “gifted authorship” was chosen as a serious violation by 50% of respondents. The least ethically problematic issue was publishing research data in multiple different publications, which 44% of respondents considered a minor ethical violation (half of them regarded it as “entirely insignificant”).

Respondents were also given five hypothetical scenarios and asked how each situation should be handled. For example, in one scenario, they had to decide what actions an institution should take if a researcher was found to have falsified study data and published them in a scientific journal. Response options ranged from ‘dismissal’ to ‘internal investigation without escalation’.

Conclusions: The study shows that the academic community takes data falsification, unfair authorship, and cheating in exams seriously. Most respondents believe that researchers who falsify data should face disciplinary actions or even lose their jobs, while unfair authorship should be discussed and addressed within the institution. Opinions on bribery during exams vary—small gifts are seen as less serious, but giving money gets a much stricter reaction. Respondents’ opinions vary on how strict the punishments should be and how to address different academic ethics breaches.