



THE OMBUDSMAN FOR ACADEMIC ETHICS AND PROCEDURES OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

DECISION

REGARDING THE DISSERTATION OF V. G. “INFLUENCE OF AGE AND SPORTS TRAINING ON THE MUSCLE FATIGUE AND SPRINGINESS OF BASKETBALL PLAYERS”

23 October 2015 No SP-22

Vilnius

The Ombudsman for Academic Ethics and Procedures of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter - the Ombudsman), <...> having examined the request of V. G. (hereinafter - the applicant) in the Office of Ombudsman for Academic Ethics and Procedures of the Republic of Lithuania to investigate whether the V. G. dissertation “Influence of Age and Sports Training on the Muscle Fatigue and Springiness of the Basketball Players” can be recognized as the plagiarism of G. M. dissertation “Influence of Age and Training on Properties of Leg Muscle Contraction and Relaxation”, on the basis of the investigation initiated on 5 June 2015 concerning the possible violation of academic ethics in V. G. dissertation “Influence of Age and Sports Training on the Muscle Fatigue and Springiness of the Basketball Players” and considering the material submitted by Lithuanian Sports University (hereinafter - LSU), **determined that:**

The Office of Ombudsman applied to the Rector of Lithuanian Sports University Habil. Dr. Albert Skurvydas on 26 May 2015 (Letter No S-257), asking to submit the copies of V. G. dissertation “Influence of Age and Sports Training on the Muscle Fatigue and Springiness of the Basketball Players” and G.M. dissertation “Influence of Age and Training on Properties of Leg Muscle Contraction and Relaxation”, and to notify the Office of the Ombudsman of the actions taken at Lithuanian Sports University in order to find out the possible case of plagiarism in the said V. G. dissertation.

In its letter No 01-09-334 of 28 May 2015, LSU indicated that LSU Senate constituted a commission on 27 May 2015, which will provide answers to the questions asked by the Ombudsman.

LSU submitted the conclusions of the Work Group formed based on the Order No ISAK 4b/M of the LSU Rector on the expert assessment of Dr. V.G. and Dr. G. M. theses by the letter No 01-09-384 of 12 June 2015 “Relating to expert assessment of Dr. [V. G.] and Dr. [G. M.] dissertations” (the information in angle brackets is ours).

In the said letter, LSU states that “a group of experts evaluated Dr. [V. G.] dissertation “Influence of Age and Sports Training on the Muscle Fatigue and Spring of the Basketball Players” (01 B) defended in 1999 (supervisor Dr. Janas Jaščaninas), and Dr. [G. M.] dissertation “Influence of Age and Training on Properties of Leg Muscle Contraction and Relaxation” (01 B) defended in 1998 (supervisor Dr. Albertas Skurvydas). The group of experts found that “Dr. [V. G.] and Dr. [G.

M.] dissertations raise different research objectives. <...> Different research goals are raised in both theses, accordingly. Research hypotheses set are different as well. Both dissertations use different research methods, except of the methodology for the determination of spring properties. Results in both dissertations are original. <...> Interpretation of results and conclusions in both dissertations are different.” (The information in angle brackets is ours).

The above-mentioned letter also indicates the “coincident fragments of theses observed” by the group of experts <...>

After the determination of coincidence of the said dissertations, the group of experts concluded that “The dissertation of Dr. [V. G.] is original. The coincidences of specified dissertations with Dr. [G. M.] dissertation are inessential and do not affect the novelty, originality and practical significance of the research work” (the information in angle brackets is ours).

The Ombudsman, following the position that the presence of substantial coincidences or novelty, originality and practical significance of research work are not required for the determination of the plagiarism, appealed to LSU asking to clarify the coincidences determined by the group of experts, providing the links to the coincidences determined in V.G. dissertation, literary sources used and an explanation of the reasons for the above-mentioned coincidences.

LSU submitted the adjustment of coincidence and similarity in the texts of the said Dr. V.G. and Dr. G. M. dissertations in the conclusions of 12 June 2015 by the letter No 01-09-645 of 19 October 2015 “Relating to the adjustment of coincidences of Dr. [V. G.] and Dr. [G. M.] dissertations” (the information in angle brackets is ours).

“Similarities and coinciding fragments of the text determined by the group of experts:

Similar fragments of descriptions of survey subsection 1.2 “Muscle fatigue” of Dr. [G.M.] and survey subsection 1.4 “Muscle fatigue” of Dr. [V.G.] were determined. The research object chosen in dissertations, where the theoretical analysis includes a description of muscle fatigue, determines the similarities in these texts. However, describing the muscle fatigue, text similarities found in both dissertations are related only to the description of muscle fatigue causes, mechanisms and fatigue type, which are based on similar sources. Similarly, muscle fatigue mechanisms and types are also described in newer research and methodological works analysing the muscle fatigue, where the authors quote the 1994 publication of Fitts. By the way, Wikipedia also provides an analogous description. Therefore, the similarities observed in the text cannot be regarded as plagiarism.

Description of the methodology of springiness properties of Dr. [V. G.] and Dr. [G. M.] also coincide <...>.

The group of experts found that these coincidences are determined by used standard methodologies described based on similar sources. Namely, the formulas and their descriptions used in both dissertations are presented in cited sources. The differences of values in the formula, which is used to calculate the duration of the flight to the jump height, are determined by the rounding down the free fall acceleration value, i.e. the exact value is indicated in the work of Dr. [V. G.], and the rounded down – in the work of Dr. [G. M.].

The number of subjects of weightlifters and non-exercising persons in different age groups (13-16 years) indicated in the works of Dr. [V. G.] and Dr. [G. M.] also coincides. The height averages of 13-16 year old weightlifters and non-exercising persons are likely to coincide. These coincidences are possibly because both dissertations were developed around the same time (Dr. [V.G.] 1990-1999, Dr. [G. M.] 1993-1998) and some of the same groups of subjects were

explored (weightlifters and non-exercising persons). However, different parameters were fixed and analysed in both dissertations, different experiments were carried out and different conclusions were presented.

The absolute values of jump to a height of 13 and 16-year-old weightlifters, cyclists and non-exercising persons provided in Dr. [G.V.] and Dr. [G.M.] are potentially the same. The same groups of subjects used possibly determined the coincidence of the initial data. This is also explained by the collective scientific article by Dr. [V. G.] and Dr. [G. M.] published in 1995.

The group of experts did not find more similarities and coincidence in Dr. [V. G.] and Dr. [G. M.] dissertations.

Conclusion. Revised coincidences of Dr. [V. G.] dissertation with Dr. [G. M.] dissertation are inessential and do not affect the novelty, originality and practical significance of research work.” (The information in angle brackets is ours).

It should be noted that the Ombudsman did not evaluate the influence of coincidences found in Dr. V. G. dissertation on the practical significance.

After the comparative analysis of the said dissertations in the Office of the Ombudsman, assessment of their (dissertations) textual coincidences, the appropriateness of their (coincidence) presentation and considering the conclusions presented by the group of experts and their adjustment, it should be stated that no violations of academic ethics were determined in Dr. V.G. dissertation “Influence of Age and Sports Training on the Muscle Fatigue and Springiness of the Basketball Players”.

The Ombudsman, in accordance with the sub-paragraph 1, paragraph 12 of Article 18 of the Law on High Education and Research of the Republic of Lithuania, **decided as follows:**

To inform the Lithuanian Sports University and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Ombudsman’s decision.
