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Understanding Plagiarism to Better Counter It

Sylvie Deslauriers, PhD¹

¹Accounting Teacher, Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, Accountancy School, Box 500, 3351 des Forges Blvd., Trois-Rivières, Québec, Canada, G9A 5H7.

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Address for Correspondence:

Sylvie Deslauriers, PhD, Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, School of Accountancy, Box 500, 3351 des Forges Blvd., Trois-Rivières, Québec, Canada, G9A 5H7 (Sylvie.Deslauriers@uqtr.ca). Tel: 819-376-5011, ext. 3122.

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Abstract

In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of publications devoted to plagiarism. However, many grey areas remain regarding the factors that compel individuals to commit plagiarism. While cases of unintentional plagiarism can be understood to some extent, identifying what motivate students to deliberately plagiarize remains a complex task. It is essential to gain a better understanding of this phenomenon in order to fight this scourge. The first step is to come up with a definition of plagiarism that takes into account the many forms it can take. We then need to develop more comprehensive academic policies to ensure that students are well informed about the consequences of plagiarism. Although prevention is the area of priority, it is crucial that mechanisms be put in place for detecting and disclosing cases of plagiarism. Finally, a scale of penalties commensurate with the offence committed should be put in place.

Keywords

plagiarism; academic misconduct; academic integrity; academic sanctions; higher education

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1. Introduction

Plagiarism consists of appropriating the work of others, presenting it as one's own, without adequate recognition of the original author. This definition is broad enough to include the appropriation of ideas, methodologies or documents, naturally encompassing the act of copying and pasting text.¹ While it is sufficient to properly reference one's sources to avoid a charge of plagiarism, cases continue to increase.

Given the importance of the topic, the growing interest in the academic community is not surprising. On the one hand, credibility and integrity are fundamental educational concepts under which plagiarism is unacceptable. On the other hand, it seems essential to better understand the phenomenon of plagiarism in order to be able to properly neutralize it. This task is complex because many human and institutional factors can explain the context that would lead an individual to plagiarism. Our line of questioning involves personalizing the act of plagiarism, using a multifactorial approach.

The purpose of this paper is to emphasize the importance of exploring student-plagiarism in order to implement effective prevention, detection and sanction strategies.

2. Why plagiarize?

The existence of plagiarism is a concern for all academic stakeholders. It is easy to imagine that individuals enroll in a learning program by choice, in order to learn and develop their professional and personal knowledge. In this context, plagiarism seems paradoxical, given the fundamental mission of education.

2.1 Nature of the act

Plagiarism can be unintentional, due to a lack of knowledge of its definition or consequences. Some students may think that only copying and pasting text is plagiarism. It is known, however, that appropriating the ideas of others, paraphrasing or summarizing a text without citing the author are also involved. As [Das \(2018\)](#) points out, some students do not know how to properly format their bibliographic references. Others may believe that the references are not necessary when the text remains within the framework of a specific course.

[McKenna \(2022\)](#) mentions that knowing when and why to include references is a challenge. He stresses the need to raise awareness and take advantage of various learning opportunities. With the rise of plagiarism in educational institutions, and with increased prevention and detection measures in place, today's students should be more aware of what plagiarism is and how to avoid it. This article focuses primarily on intentional or deliberate plagiarism, carried out with full awareness of the fact, sometimes with some skill.

2.2 Causes of plagiarism

Early explanations of voluntary plagiarism point to a lack of motivation or ineffective time management, in the hope of achieving good results despite these circumstances. This is mentioned in several writings, including those of [Babalola \(2012\)](#) and [Nabee, Mageto, Pisa \(2020\)](#). It is a kind of laziness or form of efficiency, depending on one's point of view. It is understandable that a full-time student can be burdened by the pressure of time. Like [McKenna \(2022\)](#), we think it's not a simple situation, and that there are many reasons why plagiarism can occur. [Pahlevi, Thamrin, Ahmad, Setiani \(2024\)](#) note that plagiarism can be explained by many factors including a lack of ability in conducting research and in writing coherent and organized documents. From this point of view, plagiarism would serve to overcome certain academic weaknesses. [Bailey \(2017\)](#) also cites students' lack of confidence in their own abilities as a contributing factor.

It should be noted that research into the causes of plagiarism remains limited. To further explore this topic, the ideal would be to study a sufficient number of actual plagiarism cases in order to draw relevant conclusions. To get closer to it, several studies have looked at the attitudes and perceptions of a targeted group of students towards plagiarism. For example, [Calicdan, Bacaro, Ramo, Licayan \(2021, p. 246\)](#) mention that "It is instrumental in understanding the awareness, attitudes, socio-cultural beliefs, and perceptions among students as it will determine the basis for the intervention program that the institution will be implementing." In their research, [Uzun, Kilis \(2020\)](#) suggest, among

¹ A number of writings discuss the rather broad definition of plagiarism. The following is a non-exhaustive list of sources: [Deslauriers \(2024\)](#), [Pradhan \(2024\)](#), [Rumanovská, Lazíková, Takáč, Stoličná \(2024\)](#) and [Hafsa \(2021\)](#).

other things, that the individual's attitude towards plagiarism and moral sense can predict the intent to commit plagiarism.

Currently, it seems difficult to establish any kind of classification – let alone order of importance – regarding the various factors that may explain the presence of plagiarism. There are many of them, and they interact with each other. In this article, we will discuss what can cause or explain student plagiarism, both from a human perspective and from an institutional perspective.

3. Why plagiarize with full knowledge of the facts? Human factors

Even when knowing that plagiarism is wrong – it is fraud when you think about it – some people deliberately commit the act with impunity. It can then be said that they bear primary and direct responsibility for such an action. Let's look at what might explain plagiarism, in the consideration of human factors.

3.1 Risk assessment

Individuals who know they have plagiarized are at risk of having a professor or colleague find out about it and report them. One does not automatically follow the other. If the “thieves” of words or ideas were sure to be discovered and punished, it is likely that they would not engage in plagiarism! The results of the study by [Rusdi, Hussein, Rahman, Noordin \(2016, p. 67\)](#) among business students indicate that “... students are aware of the unethical act but still they continue to cheat as they believed that the gain is greater.” The individual who assesses the likelihood of severe impacts as being low or tolerable will then accept the risk of plagiarism. This is a sort of benefit assessment (better, faster results) versus the costs (potential consequences). However, let us not forget that there is the real risk, i.e., so-called objective risk, and the perceived risk, i.e., subjective risk, which is influenced by emotions, among other things. In short, any person could justify, minimize or ignore – consciously or unconsciously – the moral or ethical issues associated with plagiarism.

Many would also agree that the definition of plagiarism is a rather broad one (note 2) and that it can be achieved in subtle ways. How do you trace the source of an idea or concept? Who will be able to detect the paraphrasing of a text that was previously edited, perhaps several years ago, or written in another language? Or how do you detect work that was done in private, for another institution, and used elsewhere? According to [Pradhan \(2024\)](#), there are so many sources of information now that it has become difficult to identify the origins of plagiarism, if any. It is true that there is software that can detect similarities between texts. While their deployment requires time and money, they are an effective way to combat plagiarism. It should be noted, however, that the aim is to compare a certain text with those available on the Internet; an area of exploration that is both vast and limited. A number of documents, such as essays and academic work, are simply not publicly available.

Someone who therefore plagiarizes and is skilled in the subtle techniques can be reassured by the idea that the act will be difficult to detect or prove. “Intentional or unintentional, it is never alright to plagiarize.” ([Nabee, Mageto, Pisa, 2020, p. 265](#))

3.2 Minimizing the act

As mentioned above, and noted by numerous scientific papers, plagiarism has grown over the years. Several explanations are regularly put forward by authors, such as the growth of distance education ([Goff, Johnston, Bouboulis, 2020](#)), access to an almost unlimited number of resources via the Internet and, naturally, the development of artificial intelligence. Although plagiarism cannot be excused, some people trivialize it by saying, for example, that all online content is public and accessible to everyone. The abundance of information and the lack of proper references in certain public documents contribute to this thought. In this regard, [Stephens, Young, and Calabrese \(2007\)](#) note that students appear to pay less attention to the appropriate publication of digital sources than conventional sources of information.

It is also possible that some people rationalize their act of plagiarism by trying to justify it. In this regard, [Compton, Pfau \(2008, p. 114\)](#) state: “Perhaps more importantly, our results offer support for two-sided plagiarism messages, whereby students are not only informed why they should not plagiarize but also guided through refutations of arguments for why they should.” Indeed, it seems easy to invoke all kinds of reasons, saying “that plagiarism is not that serious” for example. When fault is at stake, whether it is imminent or already committed, the discomfort of the situation tends to interfere with objectivity. This biased reasoning can lead to an underestimation of the seriousness

of the act, or a denial of any negative consequences. In this state of mind, the obliteration of responsibility contributes to the act.

3.3 Call for compassion

Studies on acts of plagiarism detected but not publicly punished are rare. However, there is no doubt that professors are regularly confronted with plagiarism throughout their careers. They are on the front lines in detecting it directly through the analysis of submitted work or in receiving complaints from an aggrieved student. The professor's first instinct will likely be to meet with offending students in order to confront them and obtain explanations. Many cases of plagiarism are therefore resolved in private. As mentioned by Khoi, Atefi, "Being aware of their own negligence regarding the clarification of the concept of plagiarism and preparing the students to create original works, the professors seemed to be lenient when it came to accepting excuses for committing intertextual transgression." (2019, p. 3236)

For compassionate reasons, the professor may also choose to give a student a second chance. Without wanting to minimize the fault, it is possible that extenuating circumstances may explain the act of plagiarism. A student may, for example, be unable to hand in an assignment before the deadline as a result of uncontrollable events such as an accident. The professor might then give students "a chance" to redeem themselves.²

4. Why plagiarize with full knowledge of the facts? Institutional factors

We could think that the student is the sole person responsible for the act of plagiarism. On the face of it, yes, since he/she is the one carrying out the action. However, there is a need to go beyond this appearance in order to better identify factors that promote the circumstances of plagiarism (Hafsa, 2021). We can therefore also refer to secondary or indirect responsibility. Institutional factors, such as unclear academic policies or disproportionate expectations in the work requested, may contribute to plagiarism, among other things.

4.1 Definition of plagiarism

According to Rumanovská, Lazíková, Takáč, Stoličná (2024, p.2) "... there is no common definition accepted worldwide that includes all forms of plagiarism." This lack of consensus complicates institutional efforts to address plagiarism, due to differing interpretations of offending behaviour. For example, some institutions may tolerate paraphrasing while others view it as a more serious violation. Such differences make it difficult to establish universal standards and harmonized policies. While everyone agrees that "copy and paste" is plagiarism, making a determination in other circumstances is not as easy. At what point does the use of fundamental elements, known to all members of a given discipline, require an accurate referencing of ideas or concepts attributable to others? It is sometimes difficult to determine where plagiarism starts. The broad, vague and sometimes changing definition of plagiarism can thus encourage its practice. Is it plagiarism to ask ChatGPT to reword a text, or to revise it to determine if key concepts are missing? The ways of committing plagiarism change over time, and the definition of plagiarism has to be constantly renewed (Cerdà-Navarro, Comas, 2023).

A charge of plagiarism finds its conclusion in the evidence that accompanies it. However, we live in an environment where the evidence must be relatively strong to justify the guilt of the accused. Generally speaking, the belief that people are "innocent until proven guilty" prevails. Although irrefutable evidence is not always required, it must be thorough because of the often-severe consequences for the person in question. However, under certain circumstances, the subjectivity or complexity of establishing such evidence may explain why some plagiarism complaints are not accepted or even filed. The opinion of one person or another regarding the thoroughness of the evidence or the degree of fault may also vary. In short, the difficulty of confirming plagiarism with certainty may hinder the recognition of a situation of plagiarism.

4.2 Policies and penalties

The academic world is being called upon to take action against the rise of academic plagiarism. Several universities have established or are in the process of implementing training and awareness programs with the student

²Mbutho, Hutchings (2021), Comas-Forgas, Sureda-Negre (2010), Husain, Al-Shaibani, Mahfoodh (2017) and Hafsa (2021) provide a summary table of the various reasons or factors for plagiarism.

community. However, there is still work to be done within several institutions that do not have written documents on the subject or that operate using regulations or codes of honour regarding organizational ethics in general. Inappropriate policies, which are open to interpretation, can allow students to ignore the regulations by circumventing them. In their study, Dewantara, Hasanah (2021) found that the absence of rules and punishment contributes to plagiarism.

While the initial objective of institutional policies and regulations is to prevent plagiarism, it must be understood that there is also a need to anticipate what will happen when a complaint is filed. Currently, few do so in a clear and structured manner. The consequences of identifying an act of plagiarism therefore must still be assessed on the basis of specific punitive measures. As stated above, the magnitude of the potential penalty, if plagiarism is discovered and proven, can influence the risk tolerance of the plagiarizing individual. Following the analysis of questionnaires completed by students, Rumanovská, Lazíková, Takáč, Stoličná (2024, p.12) mention that "...despite the students being aware that they are committing plagiarism, they are likely to engage in this practice, as there is a high probability that there will be no consequences."

Finally, it should be noted that it is difficult for an educational institution to apply disciplinary punishments. Institutions create and implement academic policies and regulations, essentially based on ethics and morality. They do not necessarily have the force of law like the Copyright Act does, for example. It would therefore be possible for a student charged with plagiarism to invoke the illegality of a punishment (fail mark for a course, expulsion from school) or to even challenge it in court. Any legal action would be cumbersome and costly for both parties, minimizing the possibility of occurrence. We must therefore be aware of the limits of what educational institutions can do.

4.3 Role of the educator

In the academic world, there is no doubt that the educator plays a key role. Chen, Chou (2016) raise the idea that the professor has a certain level of responsibility in the fight against plagiarism. The professor's behaviour acts as a model. In fact, a professor's attitude towards plagiarism, whether positive or negative, or even neutral, could influence their students' perception of plagiarism (Husain, Al-Shaibani, Mahfoodh, 2017). Professors known for their inflexibility in dealing with plagiarism will likely encounter fewer cases of fraudulent behaviour in their classes. However, a professor who sees plagiarism as a secondary issue to the point of not paying attention to it can fuel the context – perhaps unconsciously – of academic dishonesty.

Under certain circumstances, the nature and extent of the work required by a professor may contribute to an increase in plagiarism (Comas-Forgas, Sureda-Negre, 2010). For example, research projects without specific guidelines, essays to be delivered in very short timeframes or article summaries without guidance on citing sources are often reported as conducive to plagiarism. Some types of work may even exceed the abilities of students, prompting them to look for quick and sometimes fraudulent solutions. As mentioned by Bailey (2017), "... it could be the fault of the person who assigned the writing. Overloading authors or students to the point that, even with perfect time management, there's little to no way they can complete the task ethically." It could also be seen that the way in which work is evaluated might have some influence.

4.4 Barriers to reporting

On the surface, reporting a case of plagiarism is a laudable act, a noble gesture. And it is, because we cannot in good academic conscience act as though nothing is wrong when it presents himself. In fact, it must be understood that the path of the person who does the reporting is not easy, and that this requires courage. The other party will very often deny – sometimes with intensity – his/her actions (Comas-Forgas, Sureda-Negre, 2010) and defend his/her position. On a personal level, fear of reprisal or ostracization may deter some individuals from reporting plagiarism. On the procedural side, whistle-blowers are often required to provide substantial and solid evidence in an inadequate or complex academic process that requires time. Lack of institutional support can reinforce the sense of isolation felt by those who choose to speak out. In a study conducted within the Chinese context, Wang (2023) mentions that professor-complainants face several negative emotional challenges. Based on the above, a professor may be tempted to turn a blind eye to a case of plagiarism or may attempt to resolve the situation privately (informally) without any real known consequences. The inconveniences of the reporting process can therefore indirectly contribute to an increase in plagiarism. When it is not reported – or punished – this unfortunately reinforces the idea that plagiarism is an activity with no serious consequences.

5. What type of people plagiarize?

There has been little research to determine whether there is a typical profile of the individual who plagiarizes. It is all too easy to think that they are bad people who lack professionalism or moral values. They are “born” fraudsters, or lazy people who are not invested in their academic work. However, that would be a narrow and unrealistic view of the situation, one that would bypass or avoid recognizing any ability to counter this scourge. History has shown that some cheating has been done by unsuspected people, even well-known educators and researchers.³

5.1 Gender

The female or male perspective on plagiarism might be different. In their study on business students, [Doss, Henley, Becker, McElreath, Lackey, Jones, He, Li, Lin \(2016\)](#) found that males appear more likely to view plagiarism as a necessary evil and less willing to perceive plagiarism as an illegal act. Although the objective of their study was to compare the views of both groups, the results suggest that males may be more likely to plagiarize.

5.2 Cultural aspect

As previously stated, individuals who have difficulty expressing themselves through writing may be more likely to use someone else’s work. The use of English as a second language, for example, can further complicate specialized academic writing. According to [Couturier \(2021\)](#), “Multiple studies of plagiarism among foreign students show that the strategies used when writing in a second language are different from those used in their first language, and that students are prone to plagiarize when they’re writing in a language, they don’t feel comfortable with.” In other words, language barriers could encourage plagiarism among international students. Reusing or paraphrasing existing sentences can make the task easier.

According to [Doss, Henley, Becker, McElreath, Lackey, Jones, He, Li, Lin \(2016, p. 42\)](#), it is possible that cultural factors could influence the perception of inappropriate plagiarism. They add that: “For instance, among the international students, some may not have understood fully the enquiry because their culture permits and encourages the repeating of the thoughts, works, and ideologies of others, and expects them to occur societally.” From that point of view, it could be argued that the very definition of plagiarism might vary from one cultural region to another. For some groups of people, teamwork and information sharing could be valued more. From this perspective, plagiarism would be more tolerable, if not acceptable under certain circumstances.

5.3 Field of study

It is plausible that some fields of study are more prone to plagiarism than others ([Nabee, Mageto, Pisa, 2020](#)). The nature of the work requested, and the evaluation methods vary considerably from one discipline to another. It seems that opportunities for plagiarism, defined as the appropriation of the words of others without citing the author, occur more for written assignments than in supervised exams. Similarly, more qualitative disciplines, focused more on interpretation, could be seen as providing a more conducive environment for plagiarism than more quantitative disciplines, which are based more on objective measures. [Chen, Chou \(2016\)](#) note that: “Furthermore, significant disciplinary differences were shown to contribute to students’ plagiarism perception; the results reveal that most students with an Arts or Communication major held a relatively adverse thinking toward plagiarism.” Although their study focused on the perception of plagiarism rather than its direct causes, the field of study appears to be an explanatory factor.

In addition, part-time or full-time study, the external reputation of the degree being sought, and regular classroom attendance may also make a difference.

5.4 Individuality

The elements advanced so far relate to differentiating factors from one group to another. There is no doubt that multiple individual characteristics can also contribute to the creation of a plagiarism situation. How will a student react to a friend asking for help with “individual” work? Some will simply lend their work out of friendship or loyalty. It could also be argued, for example, that financial difficulties, dysfunctional family situations, internal or external

³Deslauriers (2024) presents a more in-depth analysis of the circumstances surrounding academic and scientific plagiarism between professors.

pressures for success, or other types of circumstances might have an impact. Can age or practical experience play a role? Maybe. Each individual is different in his/her personality and values. Furthermore, no one knows how a person will react to an exceptional situation or emergency. The opportunity that presents itself can, by itself, be an incentive to plagiarize, if only for that one time!

It is undeniable that the causes of plagiarism are multiple and varied (Pradhan, 2024). There are many reasons for this behaviour, whether it is at the individual, social, cultural or demographic level. To date, research has focused on only one or very few explanatory factors at a time. However, more in-depth analyses will eventually need to be conducted, taking into account a plurality of causes.

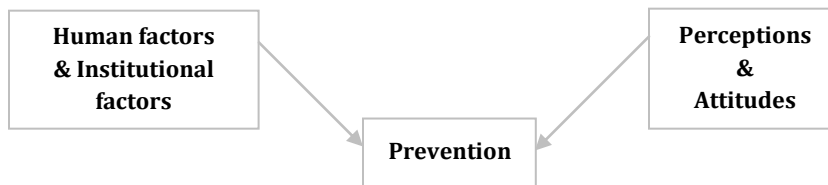
6. How can plagiarism be neutralized?

It is easy to see the increase in the literature from various sources, private and public, proposing different ways or strategies for countering plagiarism.⁴Academic stakeholders are helping each other to eradicate this scourge – as utopian a prospect as that may be – which tarnishes the academic and scientific image. Like Martins (2023), we believe that the responsibility for neutralizing plagiarism must be shared among the various academic stakeholders. Since plagiarism is certainly a complex phenomenon, the mobilization of resources is necessary. We believe there are three periods of influence or interaction in neutralizing plagiarism. If we take a step back, we see that the prevention aspect draws more attention from researchers. Detection draws less attention and sanction even less so.



6.1 Prevention

Many researchers and academics favour prevention over punishment in the case of plagiarism. This is fundamentally justified by the intrinsic role of educators – individuals and institutions – which incidentally consists of educating students. It is easy to understand the role of accompanying students in their learning when it comes to correcting their understanding of a concept or mistakes, for example. From this perspective, educating the student about plagiarism is a necessity (McKenna, 2022). Promoting intellectual integrity is also. “As well as ensuring appropriate consequences for plagiarists, several universities are beginning to formalise the inclusion of learning and teaching strategies in anti-plagiarism related policy and practice, as well as paying closer attention to the communication of unambiguous definitions of plagiarism.” (Devlin, 2006). In addition to reflecting the fundamental mission of educational institutions, a preventive approach helps maintain the institution’s reputation.



Prevention measures should essentially be introduced at two levels: by professors and educational institutions. On the one hand, clear and sensible educational strategies should be given preference, which is to say work requirements that are reasonable in complexity and length, commensurate with the students’ abilities. When it comes to research or testing projects, the presence of adequate or original references could be part of the guidelines. On the other hand, a definition with examples of what plagiarism is, specific policies and regulations, and educational training programs introduced sooner rather than later must be part of the solution. When properly developed, institutional academic policies discourage plagiarism (Nabee, Mageto, Pisa, 2020). For a better quality of intervention, student groups that appear more prone to plagiarism should be targeted.

All in all, putting out a strong and common message regarding the non-tolerance of plagiarism is essential.

⁴ Non-exhaustive sources presenting various means or strategies to counteract plagiarism: Rumanovská, Lazfková, Takáč, Stoličná (2024), Martins (2023), Scofield (2022), Calicdan, Bacaro, Ramo, Licayan (2021), Krishnamurthy, Savitha (2021), Nabee, Mageto, Pisa (2020), Husain, Al-Shaibani, Mahfoodh (2017), Comas-Forgas, Sureda-Negre (2010), Compton, Pfau (2008), Stephens, Young, Calabrese (2007) and Devlin (2006).

6.2 Detection

Although the deployment of prevention strategies is a step in the right direction, we must recognize that prevention is not enough. The study by [Calicdan, Bacaro, Ramo, Licayan](#) concludes that: “Therefore, as the basis for an intervention program, ethical standards of writing and the tools or technology to detect plagiarized output of the students are crucial elements towards the institution's academic standards.” (2021, p. 44). The presence of detection tools such as Turnitin would thus be an integral part of the process. Again, given the availability of resources, some situations could be more targeted such as research reports, open qualitative analyses or theses.



The participation and commitment of professors is essential at the detection stage, as they have a prominent place in identifying student plagiarism. Without their cooperation, very few cases would be identified or revealed. [Šprajc, Marko, Jerebic, Trivan, Jereb](#) (2017, p. 42) mention that “Our perspective is that professors are those who greatly contribute to the right set of skills and abilities of students in the conditions of plagiarism.” To do this, professors need to be aware of their institution’s policies and receive organizational support in the application of detection measures and the analysis of their results. Under certain circumstances, professors must use professional judgment in assessing the presence and extent of plagiarism. They need confidential help to validate their findings.

Professors who detect a case of plagiarism should know what to do next, namely, how to go about reporting it. Should they meet with the student first? What administrative level do they contact? How do they complete and file the complaint? As mentioned above, not all universities have an organized and easy process for reporting and monitoring plagiarism. However, it becomes imperative that teachers be supported throughout the process.

6.3 Sanction

Sometimes disciplinary action must be taken, simply because the fault is clear and serious, or worse, is repetitive despite warnings. “It will take more than innovative message strategies to fight plagiarism; there must be appropriate actions and policies behind the rhetoric.” (Compton, Pfau, 2008, p. 116). Institutional policies and regulations should establish the form and extent of the penalties to be incurred by the plagiarizing student. The academic community is in agreement that plagiarism is an unacceptable offence, hence the zero-tolerance advocated by several individuals, organizations or institutions. However, we must be aware of the negative impacts – personal and professional – of expulsion or suspension from an educational institution or the giving of a fail mark in a course. The latter should not be applied to all cases, only to more extreme circumstances.



In the study by [Campanhã, Medeiros, Dos Santos, Tito, Curcio, Belo, Pereira, Haas](#) (2024), the students propose essentially asking the offending person to redo and resubmit the assigned work or giving him/her a warning. In fact, few studies have looked at any variability in punishments. More flexible reprimands could therefore be considered, fines that would take into account the fault committed ([Das, 2018](#)). Indeed, in their literature review, [Mbutho, Hutchings](#) (2021) found that opinions vary considerably when it comes to punishing a student for plagiarism.

In practice, it is sometimes difficult to determine with certainty the presence of plagiarism. Without wanting to be complacent, we must understand that mitigating facts may exist. In line with what has been mentioned above, the student accused may – rightly or wrongly – plead ignorance or argue the vagueness of institutional policies or

academic instructions (Couturier, 2021). Or he/she can swear that he/she will never do it again! We should avoid advocating intellectual thoroughness without taking into account all the facts of the situation.

Each complaint of academic plagiarism should be reviewed by an independent committee, including an expert in the discipline in question. The quality of the evidence and the arguments of the parties should be taken into account, and then objectively considered. In any case, there should be a clear process of reporting and analysis known to all academic parties. A clear institutional position on whether, and under what circumstances, the committee's record of decision becomes public should also be developed. For someone accused of plagiarism, the repercussions on their reputation and career can be serious, not to mention the social and personal impacts. We must therefore ensure a thorough and fair process. In addition, since recidivism is one of the aspects to consider when punishing an act of plagiarism, there should be a central registry of reported cases of plagiarism for future reference.

7. Conclusion

Plagiarism, in all its forms, has no place in the academic world dedicated to learning knowledge and disseminating it. It also has no place from a moral point of view because what belongs to someone else does not belong to us. An honest consideration of the foregoing should at its root interrupt any temptation to plagiarize. In fact, in an ideal world, students should not even consider it!

Examining the motivations and causes of plagiarism is essential to effectively addressing it. A balanced approach between prevention, detection and sanction is necessary to protect academic integrity. First, understanding the motivations pushing a student to plagiarize helps in designing a targeted prevention program. Second, having better foresight of the various ways of plagiarizing allows for the development of effective detection methods. Prevent, detect and raise awareness! Third, without necessarily advocating the punitive aspect, it seems necessary to develop a scale of punishments commensurate with the transgression committed.

In short, mobilizing all academic stakeholders (students, teachers, institutions) is essential to combating the scourge of plagiarism. Institutions must urgently harmonize their policies and propose modern educational solutions adapted to the new digital challenges. Inaction is not an option. The credibility of academia is at stake!

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Author Biography

Dr. Sylvie Deslauriers is a highly respected professor and researcher in accounting, renowned for her excellence in teaching, publications, and educational innovation. Holding a Ph.D. in Administration and multiple accounting designations (MSc, FCPA, CMA), she has been a dedicated educator for over three decades. She has received numerous prestigious awards, including the Canadian Rosen Outstanding Educator Award and teaching excellence awards from both her Canadian CPA and CMA associations and her university, recognizing her significant contributions to accounting education. Her expertise spans case resolution, professional exam evaluation, and graduate student mentorship. She has authored widely used textbooks and research publications, demonstrating her commitment to advancing accounting education. In recent years, she has developed a keen interest in ethics, particularly in academic plagiarism. Reinforcing her dedication to fostering professional integrity, she continues to shape the future of accounting education with a strong sense of responsibility and innovation.

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