

**EDU WORLD 2022****Edu World International Conference Education Facing Contemporary World Issues****STUDY ON THE KNOWLEDGE AND COMPLIANCE WITH  
PLAGIARISM STANDARDS AMONG THE STUDENTS**

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**Abstract**

The ethics and the academic integrity are one of the biggest issues debated over the years in many ways, such as philosophically, historically, pedagogically, socially, and so on. From a pedagogical and didactic point of view, the ethics and the integrity are two important values that are strongly debated in order to determine some changes in the way of life and to model positive social behaviors of people. When carrying out the study, we used the survey method, applying as main tool the questionnaire which included 22 closed questions (with answers already formulated). The questionnaire was applied to a sample of 74 subjects: all of them students at the University of Pitesti, the Faculty of Educational Sciences, Social Sciences and Psychology, from the study programs: Bachelor's degree in Primary and Preschool Pedagogy, Câmpulung branch and Master Early Education and Educational Counseling. The purpose of the questionnaire is to make students aware of the academic and legal consequences of plagiarism. The knowledge of the legislation, of the most useful methods to avoid plagiarism, as well as the plagiarism detection software, stimulates compliance with the ethics of information communication, avoiding this phenomenon in the study and research process.

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## 1. Introduction

Plagiarism is a current problem in the field of higher education, because there is enormous educational content, accessible due to digital resources, which has facilitated the growth of deviations among students (McGrail & McGrail, 2015, p. 86). Plagiarism is a serious violation of the ethical norms of research, namely good conduct in scientific research, and its seriousness stems from the fact that it calls into question both the result of the research and its author. Moreover, plagiarism seriously affects the credibility and prestige of the institution in which the researcher guilty of such an act carries out his/her activity.

Starting with the 2018-2019 academic year, for all university study programs organized in higher education institutions in the national education system, ethics courses and academic integrity are included in the curricula.

Through this subject of study, Ethics and academic integrity, attempts are made to polish characters and make the right moral and immoral choices. It is important that from the earliest ages or periods of life we implement a healthy way of life, both physically and mentally, religiously, etc. All this being thus closely related to the mentality of the society in which we live, depending on its development. With the 21st century, a specific way of life is required, in which individuals in society coordinate their activities and actions according to positive moral-social rules, in order to develop both in themselves and in those around them positive, moral feelings of understanding, compassion, will, generosity, etc.

Reading the three theories underlying immorality, namely deontological theory, utilitarian theory and theory of virtue, based on great philosophers such as Kant, Aristotle, etc., I deduce the following information: The three essential elements on which our existence is based are the following: truth, justice and love. Through truth, the immoral elements are removed, which cause negative behaviors, distorted information on a fact, event, through love the feeling of solidarity, generosity, compassion and understanding is shown, and through justice, man shows courage, being honest both with themselves and with others around them. In other words, the human condition of rational existence is achieved by combining the three elements without which society would not be a solid one, based on free, integral and harmonious characters.

Of the discussions put on the criticism table of scientists in the field of pedagogy, one of the most necessary disputes imposed is plagiarism. Plagiarism is one of the most serious problems underlying the society in which we live.

### 1.1. What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is defined as “the practice of taking someone else’s work or idea and passing them as one’s own” (Raibagkar, 2021, p. 175). Plagiarism and the sanctions applicable for committing this offence are provided, in the Romanian legislation, by the following normative acts: Law no. 206/2004 on good conduct in scientific research, technological development and innovation, Law no. 1/2011 on national education, Law no. 319/2003 on the status of research and development staff and Government Decision no. 681/2011 on the approval of the Code of doctoral studies, amended and supplemented by GD no. 134/2016. Along with the other deviations provided by art. 21 par. (2), (Law no. 206/2004 on

good conduct in scientific research, technological development and innovation, 2004) namely auto-plagiarism (letter b), the inclusion in the list of authors of persons who have not significantly contributed to the elaboration of a scientific paper or the exclusion of persons who have significantly contributed to the discovery of the results/elaboration of the paper, etc. (letter c), the inclusion of a person in the list of authors of a scientific paper without their consent (letter d), the publication or unauthorized dissemination by the authors of new results, methods, etc. that have not been previously published (letter e) and the introduction of false information in grant applications or habilitation dossiers, advancing dossiers for teaching or research positions (letter f), plagiarism constitutes a serious violation of the rules regarding “good conduct in the activity of communication, publication, dissemination and scientific popularization, including in the applications for funding submitted within the competitions of projects organized from public funds” (art. 2, letter b) (Law no. 206/2004 on good conduct in scientific research, technological development and innovation, 2004). Although aspects regarding the sanctioning of plagiarism are found in several normative acts, the legal definition of plagiarism appears only in the content of art. 5 par. (1) letter d) (Law no. 206/2004 on good conduct in scientific research, technological development and innovation, 2004). According to this law, plagiarism is:

... the exposure in a written work or an oral communication, including in electronic format, of texts, expressions, ideas, demonstrations, data, hypotheses, theories, results or scientific methods extracted from written works, including in electronic format, of other authors, without mentioning this and without reference to the original sources (Ștefan, 2018, p. 146).

Art. 4 par. (1) letter e) auto-plagiarism is defined as “the exposure in a written work or an oral communication, including in electronic format, of texts, expressions, demonstrations, data, hypotheses, theories, results or scientific methods extracted from written works, including in electronic format, of the same or the same authors, without mentioning this and without reference to the original sources (s.n.)” (Law no. 206/2004 on good conduct in scientific research, technological development and innovation, 2004).

According to art. 103 par. 1 (Code of Ethics of the University of Pitești, anul 2019) plagiarism, or the presentation of someone else's work as one's own, can range from complete plagiarism, the most egregious act of fraud, to accidental plagiarism. It comprise several features: (a) incorrect citation by omission of specific quotation signs (quotations, letters in specific format, such as italics, specifically marked quoted text, etc.) of the original work (any production such as written text, oral presentation, video discourse, web source, etc.) and the lack of references of all consulted sources in the list of references; (b) imprecise details on the source consulted or the quotation; (c) plagiarizing of someone else's work or ideas without providing the name of the author(s); (d) reproducing and presenting, partially or completely, intentionally or unintentionally, the activity or the material made by another author or by several authors as being of their own person, in any format, wither written or oral; (e) paraphrasing the sentences and assuming them as one's own; (f) the interplay between the illegally compiled fragments of the papers and their own productions; (g) retaking a great volume of a content, from a different work, so that it constitutes the majority of the text, regardless if the reference is provided; (h) self-plagiarism, i.e.

when an author reuses a significant amount of their previously published work without acknowledging the source, having changed its title and registration number differently.

According to art. 115 par. 3 (Code of Ethics of the University of Pitești, anul 2019), the legal consequences that may be issued by the Committee responsible of the Ethics within the University to faculty or students for violating university rules can range from: a. notice of possible occurrence; b. suspension; c. different penalties provided in accordance with the gravity and seriousness of the type of plagiarism.

## **1.2. Types of plagiarism (Article 103, par.6 of the Code of Ethics of the University of Pitești)**

However, not all types of plagiarism are the same. When analysing whether something is an act of plagiarism, determining whether it was intentional or unintentional plagiarism plays an important role. Therefore, knowledge about plagiarism is a key component of education in colleges and universities. This refers to the severity of both intentional and unintentional plagiarism. According to article 103, par. 6 (Code of Ethics of the University of Pitești, anul 2019), types of plagiarism are:

### a) Sources not cited:

- Plagiarism where the author takes the content created by someone else and submits it under their own name;

- The author plagiarises extensive amount of the original content without using quotation marks or attribution;

- The author has the intention to mask the fraud of copying of another's written work by one's layering his research with other people's phrases and texts, but preserving the vast majority of the content, although they kept the essential from the primary source, they only changed the way of presenting some phrases. This type of plagiarism is also called mosaic plagiarism;

- Plagiarism with paraphrasing involves using someone else's text with some minor changes in sentences and applying it as your own. Even if the words are different, the original idea remains the same, and this is plagiarism.

- Auto-plagiarism, also known as self-plagiarism or duplication, occurs when an author reuses a significant amount of their previously published work without acknowledging the source. Thus, this type of plagiarism is more likely to apply to published researchers rather than to university students.

### b) Sources cited but yet plagiarism:

- Plagiarism based on source can occur due to various types of sources. For example, when a researcher cites a source that is incorrect or non-existent, this is a misleading citation.

- Plagiarism also occurs when a researcher uses a secondary source of data or information but only cites the primary source of information. Both of these types lead to an increase in the number of links. This in turn increases the number of links to links.

- Another type of plagiarism is data fabrication and falsification is also a form of plagiarism. Data fabrication is the fabrication of data and research results, while data falsification involves altering or excluding data in order to create a false impression. The consequences of this type of plagiarism can be severe, especially when it comes to medical research, as it can negatively influence clinical decisions.

While no degree of plagiarism is acceptable, it can range from complete plagiarism, the most egregious act of fraud, to accidental plagiarism.

1) Accidental plagiarism:

- Incorrect and unintentional use of someone's content, quotes, out of ignorance and without intention, especially by students from the beginning years;

- Excessive use of others work, cited correctly, but not enough presentation of the authors own ideas and work, therefore not bringing added value to the scientific community.

- Inaccurate authorship or misattribution of authorship that can occur in two ways. In one form, a person contributes to the manuscript, but does not receive mention of their name in return. The second form is the opposite: a person receives a mention of his name without participating in work. This type of plagiarism, whatever it may be, is a violation of the research code of conduct. It is also possible to commit this form of plagiarism during the editing stage, when someone makes significant changes to the manuscript. In this case, it is recommended that contributors be acknowledged at the time of publication, even if they are not listed as authors.

d) Serious types of plagiarism:

- Frequent use of minor types of copying;

- Complete or total plagiarism is the most serious form of plagiarism, where a researcher takes a manuscript or study created by someone else and submits it under their own name.

- The types of copying and not mentioning the sources present in a significant proportion in the paper, or partially throughout the paper and claim to have the role of bringing originality and key elements for the paper.

Plagiarism programs used in higher education include: SemPlag Platform, Turnitin, Plagiarisma, Anti-plagiarism System, Plagiarism Detection, Viper Plagiarism Scanner, Plagiarism Detector, Plagiarism Checker.

## 2. Problem Statement

Due to the development of the society in which we live, and due to the changes from all points of view, especially in terms of the media, and the circulation of information, we often forget or cling to convenience and omit the use of libraries in the sense of information, the search for direct materials that bring us concrete information and not lost due to their usage from hand to hand. Thus, appears this "trend", means, way, by which convenience makes its mark and we use information, sometimes erroneous, worn, eroded, sometimes said correctly in itself, but said by other scientists, etc. This continuous and cyclical circulation, mixes the information in our heads, and we no longer manage to sift, associate or classify it, and we tend to use it as ideas, information, concepts or maybe own hypotheses, the effect then being that we intentionally or unintentionally fail. An important thing is that this can happen voluntarily or involuntarily. Voluntarily happens when the copying action is done deliberately, consciously, sometimes trying to hide certain elements by changing the meaning or order of the elements in the phrase, sentence, but the advantage is that due to special programs, this can be verified simply by entering the text in that program, and it will detect whether the text is plagiarized or not. Involuntarily, plagiarism can be achieved when you read or quantitatively inform yourself a lot, and there is no period

of time for storing information, processing and analyzing it, in order to issue judgments, views, opinions, advantages or disadvantages on a fact or a problem. The information so freshly collected can put you in difficulty, because studying and issuing your own reasoning on it can already be issued by someone else, structured similarly or maybe only nuanced in another way. The study of plagiarism and the promotion of a code of ethics for students is essential for the training of professionals who comply with the norms of ethics and professional deontology.

### 3. Research Questions

This study aimed to answer the following research questions:

- i. What types of plagiarism are known by students?
- ii. How aware are students of the long-term effects of plagiarism?
- iii. What are the most common types of plagiarism used by students?

### 4. Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to define plagiarism in the academic community and to explore students' perceptions of ethics and good conduct in scientific research.

### 5. Research Methods

A questionnaire was developed with the aim to identify the knowledge of the students from the bachelor and master programs of the consequences that plagiarism can have from an academic and legal point of view. The questionnaire included 22 closed-ended questions, and the subjects answered anonymously, in order to increase the degree of honest answers. The questionnaire was applied online to students of the Faculty of Sciences of Education, Social Sciences and Psychology within the Programs of study Early Education, Educational Counselling and Pedagogy of Primary and Pre-school Education, Câmpulung Branch. The response rate of the students was 72%, which proves the interest of the students in the issues of ethics and plagiarism.

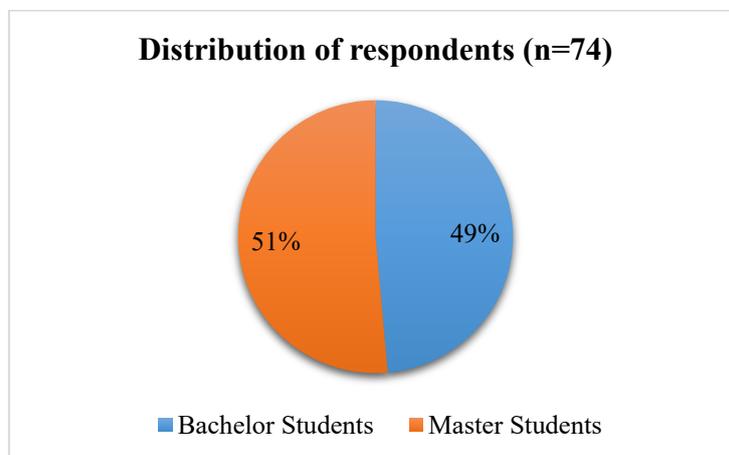


Figure 1. Distribution of student sample based on program study

In the research sample, 61.1% are students at the first faculty, 38.9% at the second faculty, and 89.5% are students at the first master program and 10.5% at the second master (Figure 1). More than half of the students surveyed at the master's degree (68.4%) work in education, and in terms of bachelor students, only 25% work in education.

## 6. Findings

In order to answer the questions of the research, we interpreted the answers obtained from the application of the Questionnaire regarding the knowledge of the consequences that plagiarism can have from an academic and legal point of view. The students showed interest in the subject of plagiarism, especially because in their activity they have to support and write scientific papers (bachelor and dissertation thesis), having a high response rate (72%). During their bachelor and master programs, students are required to write scientific papers, a challenging process, because of its increased risk of failure (Dumitru, 2021), and pushing students to plagiarize. From the results obtained, to the research question (RQ1): (What are the types of plagiarism known by the students?), the subjects from the bachelor program distinguished the following types of plagiarism: "Copy-paste" (69.4%), "Paraphrasing" (16.7%) and "Copy-mix-paste" (38.9%) (Table 1). Instead, the students from the master degrees have identified the following types of plagiarism: "Copy-paste" (82.2%), "Paraphrasing" (23.7%) and "Copy-mix-paste" (44.7%).

**Table 1.** Types of plagiarism, known by bachelor and master students

Types of plagiarism	Students from the Bachelor Program (n=36) (%)	Students from the Master Program (n=38) (%)
Copy-paste	69.4	84.2
Paraphrasing	16.7	23.7
Copy-mix-paste	38.9	44.7

In order to answer the research question (RQ2): *How aware are students of the long-term effects of plagiarism?*, we analysed the subjects' answers to item 21, and the results we obtained indicate that most students claim to be familiar with the penalties that can be issued by the Ethics Committee of the University in case of plagiarism (over 60%) (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Sanctions known by bachelor and master students

Sanctions	Students from the Bachelor Program (n=36) (%)	Students from the Master Program (n=38) (%)
Yes	61.1	60.5
No	38.9	39.5
I don't know any sanctions	0	0

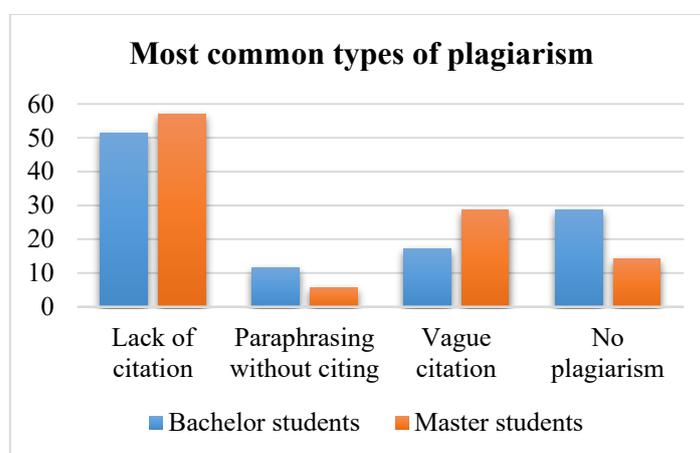
Regarding the knowledge of *Law no. 206/2004 on good conduct in scientific research, technological development and innovation*, we analyzed the answers of the subjects to item 10, and the results we obtained indicate that 44.4% of the students from PIPP and 55.3% from the master program know the law to a large extent (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Law no. 206/2004 known by the students from the bachelor and master programs

Law no.204/2004	Students from the Bachelor Program (n=36) (%)	Students from the Master Program (n=38) (%)
To a large extent	44.4	55.3
To a little extent	50.0	28.9
Not at all	5.6	15.8

Also, from the results obtained in item 14, it results that the subjects (over 60%), both from the bachelor's and from the dissertation thesis, have occasionally practiced plagiarism.

Regarding the types of plagiarism reported by students to be used (RQ3): What are the most common types of plagiarism used by students? we analyzed the subjects' responses to item 15, and from the results obtained, most of the students (over 50%) plagiarized by "Lack of citation" (Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** Distribution of student sample based on most common types of plagiarism reported

The present digital age affected tremendously the way knowledge is delivered and the way students learn and interact with the information (Foloștină & Dumitru Tăbăcaru, 2022), affecting at the same the way plagiarism is evolving from simply copy pasting to more complex ways of plagiarising through the use of technological tools paraphrasing, by translating, by manipulating sources etc. The plagiarism has to be studied also in the light of extensive digitalization, as "virtual space can contribute to a wider network for working and learning collaboratively for innovations in pedagogies and for professional development" (Dumitru Tăbăcaru & Bucuroiu, 2021, p.144), which will make it even more difficult to delimitate the contribution of a certain person in the collective development of information online.

## 7. Conclusions

Avoiding plagiarism in the process of study and scientific research depends on knowing and respecting the legislative framework that condemns plagiarism and urges to avoid this phenomenon.

We can say that, regarding the knowledge of *Law no. 206/2004 on good conduct in scientific research, technological development and innovation*, over 44% of the PIPP students and over 55% of the students at master program are largely familiar with the mentioned law.

In connection with the importance of the subject *Ethics and academic integrity*, over 80% of the students considered it very important.

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