

Perpetrators

by A Thomas

FILE	AJOBE_4_APRIL_FINAL_2017.DOC (160.5K)	WORD COUNT	7651
TIME SUBMITTED	04-APR-2017 03:25PM	CHARACTER COUNT	44172
SUBMISSION ID	794159795		

Faculty reluctance to report student plagiarism

Abstract

Internationally, student plagiarism is on the rise despite measures introduced by universities to detect its occurrence and to institute actions to prevent and address this practice. One of the reasons that contributes to this problem is the reluctance of faculty to report student plagiarism. Through the medium of a disguised South African case study, this paper advances reasons to explain this oversight. Such reasons include psychological discomfort, opportunity costs, administrative bureaucracy and a prevailing culture of managerialism. Recommendations are furnished to faculty alerting them to practices of which they must be aware when intending to report student plagiarism. Recommendations are also proposed to university leaders and administrators with regard for the need to support faculty who report student plagiarism.

Key words: Academic ethics, case study, managerialism, workplace bullying

Introduction

The incidence of student plagiarism continues to rise (Hsiao, 2015) and, while universities have adopted measures to identify and address plagiarism, faculty remain reluctant to report such cases once they are detected (Thomas & de Bruin, 2012). Luke and Kearins (2012, p. 881) note the “silence and complicity” inherent in the way academic institutions treat plagiarism, leading Samier (2008) to suggest that moral passivity perpetuates the problem. Plagiarism transgresses the fundamental value of integrity of the academy (Lewis *et al.*, 2011). Students who intentionally plagiarise have lost their respect for the institution and have violated a core psychological contract between themselves and the university based on the critical underpinning of authentic learning (England, 2008). The literature is replete with statements that prevail upon faculty to address student plagiarism, but relatively little has been published about the need for faculty and universities to be held accountable for not addressing this practice (Parameswaran, 2007).

While faculty may be complicit in perpetuating the problem of plagiarism by failing to detect or report instances of such practice, the reasons for not doing so are more complex when issues around institutional culture and the growing corporatisation of universities are considered. As such, universities become environments in which competitiveness and power imbalances between faculty and administrators lay the breeding ground for practices that unintentionally promote individual and departmental blame in the eyes of the ‘corporate’ hierarchy.

The objectives of this paper are twofold: First, to give insight into to the question: Why do faculty avoid reporting student plagiarism? Second, to highlight issues for both individual and institutional reflection when faculty consider reporting plagiarism and when leaders and administrators deliberate, within the context of the broader organisational culture, the support

that should be afforded for this action. An understanding of why faculty may be reluctant to report student plagiarism is enriched through the qualitative voice, ⁵ in the form of a case study, of the personal experience of a professor who did so.

Literature review

Student plagiarism

One form of academic dishonesty is plagiarism or the intentional or unintentional act of gaining personal benefit from appropriating someone else's work or ideas as one's own (Carroll, 2002). For work to be regarded as plagiarised it must be available to others, it must be derived from the prior work of someone else, the manner in which the work is presented must explicitly or implicitly imply originality, and the original author and location of the original material must be obfuscated (Clarke, 2006). The term 'plagiarism' is an all-encompassing one that includes a variety of transgressions such as poor referencing and paraphrasing, copying paragraphs or entire works and may include recycling past work, colluding with others or purchasing material over the Internet (Evans, 2006).

Minor plagiarism, perhaps unintentional, includes the citing of a source yet omitting quotation marks for direct quotation of words as well as the citation of page numbers (Colquitt, 2012). Major plagiarism includes the unintentional or intentional lack of acknowledgment of sources (Price & Price, 2005) or the buying or copying of entire documents without acknowledgment (Park, 2003). Under the ambit of either minor or major plagiarism attempts at "patchwriting" (Howard, 1995, p. 788) or "close copying" (Wager, 2014, p. 41) where grammatical changes and synonyms are inserted into copied text or where the paraphrasing too closely resembles the original text, are also considered to be plagiarism.

Internationally, plagiarism, specifically perpetrated by business students, is increasing (Simha *et al.*, 2012), with business students being regarded as the most dishonest group amongst student groups (McCabe *et al.*, 2006; Sutton *et al.*, 2014; Marques, 2016). Pfeffer (2007) notes how business schools have failed to define themselves in ways that focus on teaching students how to make money, with a resultant devaluing of values relating to honesty, integrity and idealism. Similarly, Stewart (2010, p. 244) proposes that business education has become “big business”.

Cultural misunderstandings and language challenges, manifesting in students attempting to emulate the ‘good’ writing of scholars (Guo, 2011), are contributing factors to student plagiarism, with the suggestion that education, religion and culture may play a role in perceptions regarding its seriousness (Lewis *et al.*, 2011). When students are required to formulate arguments and express thoughts in a language other than the mother tongue, plagiarism may increase (Fazel & Kowkabi, 2013) and Duff (2010) notes that such students suffer from a lack of writer-identity and doubts about their communication skills. In developing countries such as South Africa, historical schooling systems, generally, do not equip students for academic writing at university level (Ellery, 2008). In this regard, Jabulani (2014), studying the essays of post-graduate South African students identified problems of attribution by the students who tried to emulate the original authors.

The increase in student plagiarism can be attributed, largely, to the ease of Internet access to information (Szabo and Underwood, 2012) with over 300 Web sites selling student papers or providing them free of charge (Happel & Jennings, 2008). Eret and Ok (2014) established that reasons for student Internet plagiarism include time constraints, high workloads, and difficulty of assignments.

However, as students progress through the stages of academic achievement, it is expected that they understand the nature of plagiarism, and assimilate and accept the rules relating to the attribution of authorship and ideas (Cabral-Cardosa, 2004).

Increasing awareness of the potential for plagiarism through electronic access, along with greater mindfulness of the laws that govern copyright and intellectual ownership of material, has resulted in a focus on text similarity detection mechanisms and interventions (Drinan & Bertram-Gallant, 2008) and ways of dealing with it (Kisamore *et al.*, 2007). Some of these processes include the institution of plagiarism policies (Gullifer & Tyson, 2014), the signing of honour codes (Hall, 2011), class instruction about referencing and citation including information on a range of penalties for transgressions (Voelker *et al.*, 2012), practice assignments and writing skills programmes (Löfström 2011), formative feedback through tutorial interventions (Volkov *et al.*, 2011), assistance with study planning (Löfström & Kupila, 2013) and active classroom discussion of academic integrity and misconduct (Baetz *et al.*, 2011).

Faculty reluctance to report student academic dishonesty

Universities should educate the whole person to shape the next generation of leaders (Osiero, 2012), with faculty playing an integral role in developing student moral literacy (Zdenek & Schochor, 2007). Palmer and Zajonc (2010) warn about the danger of equipping students with knowledge that gives them power in the world if they have not been equipped in acquiring self-knowledge that is internalised to direct their own behaviour.

Hard *et al.* (2006) note the prevalence of inaction among faculty in preventing student academic misconduct or in doing anything about it once they detect it. Kelley and Bonner (2005) report, too, that faculty rarely address student academic dishonesty in a formal manner

¹ and Schmelkin *et al.* (2008) note the apparent lack of enthusiasm by faculty to act on this assault on academic values.

In a South African study, Thomas and de Bruin (2012) explored the barriers to faculty addressing student academic dishonesty such as plagiarism. While the majority of the sample of 450 academics acknowledged the seriousness of student academic dishonesty, ¹ a non-negligible proportion appeared not to be concerned about this problem or was ambivalent about its seriousness. Significant reasons for inaction related to the personal emotional discomfort that action precipitated, the opportunity costs associated with reporting and taking disciplinary action against perpetrators, and the lack of efficient procedures to progress action after its detection.

In another South African study, De Jager and Brown (2010) found that faculty regarded plagiarism as being serious but that there was a lack of agreement about its definition and that faculty favoured dealing with the issue themselves rather than progressing it through the university structures due to the work involved in dealing with disciplinary cases. In addition, there appeared to be inconsistency, university-wide, in the disciplinary action effected.

Similarly, studies elsewhere have found that faculty report student academic dishonesty in various and inconsistent ways (Burrus *et al.*, 2011) and are reluctant to report plagiarism due to the difficulty in compiling evidence of proof of cheating and the amount of time required to do so (Coalter *et al.*, 2007). Elliott *et al.* (2013) highlight the existence of faculty cheating in the forms of self-plagiarism, data fabrication and data manipulation, and the addition of their names or those of colleagues to publications in spite of minimal intellectual contribution. In a study of 371 articles published in 19 South African management journals in 2011, Thomas and de Bruin (2015) report that 48.5% of the articles contained similarity of

15% or more to other published works. These authors note the negative impact of such practices on the academic culture and environment within which students study.

Parameswaran (2007, p. 263) advances that student dishonesty “is a privileged crime because blame and punishment often seek out only one criminal. Faculty who are indifferent to or aid student dishonesty are rarely indicted”. Indeed, she proposes that those who permit dishonesty to occur in their classrooms are morally responsible for the cheating actions of students and that such unwillingness to act on the problem resides in the belief that “doing undesirable actions are worse than allowing them [to happen]” (Parameswaran, 2007, p. 265).

While faculty should be accountable for detecting and addressing student plagiarism, there is an indication of a broader underlying institutional problem surrounding this issue. For example, in a survey of deans of 50 prominent international business schools, 95% denied that student ⁴ academic dishonesty is a serious problem in their schools (Brown *et al.*, 2010).

Managerialism in universities

Lazzeretti and Tavoletti (2006) provide an insight into the denial of student dishonesty when they describe how, increasingly, universities now approximate corporate institutions, adopting ideals typical of business. In this process, values are sacrificed to a culture of results, a phenomenon commonly described as managerialism. Serrano-Velarde (2010) notes how the power has shifted in universities from that of professorial authority to one of managerial authority, with pressure placed on the generation of research and teaching outputs according to a market understanding of the measurements of efficiency and performance.

As a background to contextualising the later presentation and discussion of a case study relating to student plagiarism, background is provided on the South African educational landscape and the environment it sets for issues such as plagiarism to go unreported.

The National Plan for Higher Education was introduced to achieve both equity and efficiency in South African higher education to address the legacy of apartheid (Kotecha, 2007). This plan resulted government pressure on universities to grant access to students, previously disadvantaged by the apartheid system (Kotecha, 2007), within the context of a generally poor economic environment (Hall & Symes, 2005). Simultaneously, managerialism emerged and the skilling of faculty in financial acumen and human resources protocols with the “unthinking assimilation” into universities of practices from the corporate world (Habib, 2011, p. 6).

As in the UK, the US and Australia, South Africa has witnessed a rapid rise in student numbers, but also government retreat from funding and the related pressure on universities to fund their activities themselves (Stewart, 2007). To meet this challenge, Wood (2010, p. 227) suggests that South African universities have transformed themselves into “corporatised institutions ... and wealth-generating enterprises”. Weinberg (2007) notes that, in the quest to generate income, they encourage and advance commercialisation of education, embark upon applied contract research and develop stronger links with external stakeholders who have power to influence the academic project. Market-driven ideas of competition, cost reduction and profit maximisation result in universities corporatising their organisational culture and the work they do (Vally, 2007).

Internationally, Ryan and Guthrie (2009) note the pressure placed on faculty and academic departments to perform in terms of measurable outcomes, along with related rewards and punishments. They alert the academic community to the growing concept in universities of the student being a “valued customer or client” (Ryan & Guthrie, 2009, p. 324), a view that may contribute to the erosion of academic values when tough decisions need to be taken with regard to the behaviour of such a student. In addition, fear of student litigation and the impact of such on institutional reputation, may also contribute to inaction when dealing with student

plagiarists (Thompson, 2006). Samier (2008, p. 3) suggests that faculty inaction in dealing with student academic dishonesty is a result of accountability being defined with reference to internal political and bureaucratic university authority “instead of higher order moral principle”. The move to managerialism is far removed from the concept of what a university should be: “communities of scholars researching and teaching in collegial ways; [where] those running universities [are] academic leaders rather than managers or chief executives”² (Deem 1998, p. 47).

In line with **the** above thoughts, Zabrodska and Kveton (2013) note how an institutional culture characterised by intensified workloads, funding pressures, excessive competitiveness, and power imbalances between managers and faculty tends to create the environment in which bullying flourishes.

Bullying in academic institutions is reported to be high (Giorgi *et al.*, 2011). It is a form of indirect workplace aggression that involves isolating the target and frustrating the target’s attainment of key objectives as well as undermining his or her professional standing, authority and competence (Keashly & Neuman, 2010). Slander or personal rumours, aimed at devaluing work, constitute workplace bullying (Herscovis, 2011) and can include verbal abuse, systematic degradation and humiliation, professional obstruction and harassment, all directed at hurting, frustrating and ultimately defeating the target (Vickers, 2002). Bullying can include indirect acts of withholding resources needed to work effectively thus subtly masking the true underlying bullying that accompanies these acts (Cox & Goodman, 2005). Workplace bullies encourage others to see the target as a troublemaker and a problem (Vickers, 2002). For workplace behaviour to be regarded as bullying, the target must perceive such behaviour to be “unfair, humiliating, undermining, threatening, [and] difficult to defend against ...” (Djurkovic *et al.*, 2008, p. 405) and the behaviour must recur over an extended period of time (Vartia, 2001).

The literature review provided a context for understanding the dynamics operating in the case that follows.

Process

Case studies are used to advance an understanding of plagiarism and academic dishonesty in disguised form (Luke & Kearins, 2012) or undisguised form (Lewis *et al.*, 2011). Lewis *et al.* (2011) advocate case studies to be one of the most influential methodologies to explore plagiarism as an avenue of academic enquiry. Central to the case study is a message contained in the narrative account that is more expressive than accounts from quantitative research (Jones, 2011). Pollock and Bono (2013, p. 629) note that scholars have two jobs – exploring answers to interesting questions and “telling the story” by, amongst other things, giving it a human face without sacrificing the important theoretical foundation upon which it is built. In this way, a deeply personal issue is explored within an unambiguous social context (Jones, 2011). Personal connection is the focus of such communication (Frank, 2000) thereby conveying a wider social story that is lodged in public concerns (Sparkes, 2002). In addition, an attempt is made to “give a voice to the world of meaning that might have been unheard” (Muncey, 2005, p. 3) upon which readers may draw to better understand their own experiences (Babbie & Mouton, 2009). In this regard, the narrative provided in this paper should resonate with faculty who have been or who may be required to take an ethical stance on student plagiarism.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) note that authenticity of qualitative study endeavours to promote fairness in representation, greater understanding of social situations and the perspectives of others, and action to change. While attempts have been made to honour these ideals, a limitation inherent in any work of this nature is that of unwitting subjectivity which, perhaps, can never entirely be avoided.

While this case is based on an experience of a professor at a South African university, identifying details of the person, others involved, and the institution itself have been disguised for ethical reasons. In its camouflaged form, the case encapsulates events that can occur, as a whole or in parts, at many universities internationally.

The case protagonist kept records of student assignments and of all correspondence including e-mails and communications between faculty/administration/students and communication he had with colleagues about this matter. In addition, shortly after the on-set of the process, he kept records of the issues as they arose as well as his response to and reflection on them.

Case study

Background to the case

Professor X continues the journey of making sense of experiences that gathered momentum after the morning he encountered the work of the first of six student plagiarists in the class he taught at that time. That day he stood at the intersection of two paths, the routes of each unknown. The one would demand an effort to stay on a course where the outcome was uncertain; the other was to follow a gentle exodus with a known and safe destination. There would be no external shame in choosing to follow the latter path. He had detected plagiarism and reported it, arguably fulfilling his academic duty; the rest was up to the discretion of the University. Professor X chose the former journey not fully appreciating the terrain that lay ahead. He was later to realise that this choice would involve encountering, first-hand, the consequences of taking a stand on student plagiarism within an environment in which he automatically expected support for addressing this offence.

The final assessment for Master's students undertaking a business degree in the course taught by Professor X comprised the submission of an examination-equivalent assignment. Students

were aware that their work would be processed through the software similarity-detection programme, Turnitin™, and received extensive instruction on how to avoid plagiarism. In addition, it could be expected that post-graduate students would, at this stage, have become acquainted with the writing norms of academia and to have an understanding of how knowledge is produced. The students who plagiarised were all post-graduate students and were senior staff members in their own organisations. The plagiarism included appropriation of the assignments of other students, the incorporation of material from published articles, the buying of parts of the assignment from an Internet site that sells customised essays, all practices that cannot be construed as constituting simple mistakes or referencing errors and could be deemed to be acts of major plagiarism (Park, 2003). Professor X was not dealing here with immature students in terms of their ages, their company positions or their level of study.

Over the year preceding the plagiarism transgressions, the Faculty Ethics Committee, of which Professor X was the Chair, developed a process to delineate the route to be followed should academic dishonesty be detected in the work of post-graduate students. Accordingly, when Professor X identified plagiarism in student work, he followed this process. The final unanimous decision by members of the ethics committee (from which Professor X recused himself) was to recommend to the Dean of the faculty that these cases be lodged with the Academic Integrity Unit (AIU) for disciplinary processing. So far, all had proceeded according to the rules of the game. What subsequently ensued, however, gave meaning to the concept of the “dark side” of academia that ²Blase and Blase (2004, p. 254) note to include harassment and aggression.

While it can be expected that the students would be unhappy with any decision to take action, it soon became apparent that the course administrators and some faculty, too, were unhappy with this action, despite being involved in the deliberations along the way. Their overt and

covert siding with the student perpetrators was blatant. Attempts were made by a senior faculty member to quiz students about the instruction received from Professor X; faculty were called upon to provide character references for the students, one actually appearing at the subsequent disciplinary hearings; an administrator refused to provide Professor X with essential documents relating to the cases. However, it is difficult, overtly, to defend or condone student plagiarism as such. Accordingly, subtle nuances in the argument were introduced: Professor X had not been compassionate enough in the way in which he had dealt with this issue and students should have been informed of the intended reporting of their suspected plagiarism prior to the actual reporting of such and afforded an opportunity to rectify their errors (both acts that run counter to the University examinations policy). An administrator then warned Professor X that he would be responsible for the potential suicide threatened by one of the students. Ultimately, he received an e-mail message from the course co-ordinator stating that he had brought the department and the programme into disrepute through the manner in which he had dealt with these offences and that his behaviour would have a serious impact on the desire of future students to enrol in the programme. Over the next six-months, a battlefield was born; perceptions had shifted. The perpetrators had now become the victims.

The hearings and beyond

Some four months after the reporting of the cases, the AIU convened disciplinary hearings. The Dean of the faculty demonstrated visible support for the process by attending all of the hearings. Overall, the student defences constituted gross falsifications, for example, denial of the plagiarism or accusations of poor tuition, perhaps to be expected of those who find themselves in such a situation and who, already, have evidenced a lack of integrity.

All students were expelled for a period of five years. However, after the emotional turmoil of the hearings, all went silent. These students continued to attend classes and to write examinations, having received only verbal communication about the verdicts from the AIU. Over the period commencing at the time of the first reporting of the cases to the AIU to the finalisation of this matter, Professor X sent or forwarded some 161 e-mail messages in connection with these cases. The content of the messages related to clarification regarding the receipt of documentary evidence (that had either not been acknowledged or had been incompletely forwarded to the students), confirmation that missing documents had been found, requests for information about the time of the hearings and confirmation of venues (absent in messages), clarification relating to the appeal process, corrections of inaccurate information, and complaints of general tardiness in settling this matter. In total, overall administrative time involving members of the faculty administration, the Dean, and Professor X in dealing with and following up these cases approximated 200 hours of which some 140 hours related to the time of Professor X alone.

Tackling these cases and simultaneously dealing with administrative officials who appeared to be out of their depth in finalising these matters added to personal costs in both emotion and time. Professor X was working amongst many faculty who were hostile and opposed to the disciplinary action taken, with the majority blending into the background as bystanders, anxious to avoid any negative fall-out by association. The collegial encouragement that he received came from outside the department from other University colleagues who, themselves, were conscious of the problem of student plagiarism.

The involvement of Professor X in various senior ethics structures of the University resulted in the cases achieving a high and undeniable profile within the top structures. The plagiarism policy was subsequently refined and the disciplinary process restructured, ensuring that senior academics provide input into the determination of student punishment and that young

academics are supported when they report student plagiarism. In addition, discussion was triggered at an institutional level, about strategies to educate staff and students on the issue of plagiarism so that this problem could be addressed holistically. Professor X relocated to another department in the University.

Insights

While the personal consequences to Professor X of reporting and dealing with student plagiarism are important, of greater importance, for the purpose of this paper, is that of understanding the reaction by departmental faculty and administrators to this event which, in similar circumstances, could serve to deter faculty from reporting student plagiarism. Three distinct processes had operated simultaneously, each of which can afford insights into why faculty do not report student plagiarism.

In the first instance, there was an unconcealed attack from the students who were caught plagiarising. Second, there was an unexpected lack of departmental support for an action that Professor X assumed would be of deep concern to those who teach the future leaders of the country. Third, linked to a lack of support, a considerable amount of administrative ineptitude occurred resulting in those involved in this matter expending substantial effort on unnecessary work at the expense of engaging in legitimate academic pursuits.

The aggression and attacks from the plagiarists were to be expected and such behaviour was overt and undisguised. That they are leaders in their own organisations makes their behaviour even more alarming, particularly considering the ³ link between student dishonesty and later dishonesty in the workplace (Laduke, 2013). Thompson (2006) notes that her student plagiarists showed no remorse but looked her in the eye, protesting their innocence; they were simply angry that their plagiarism had been detected. She further suggests that this anger often sways administrators.

However, the second and third processes noted above were unexpected and subtle, and insidiously had the potential to undermine the actions of Professor X to both the students and the broader University community. They warrant greater exploration.

During the months from when the plagiarism was reported and disciplinary action was effected, it is suggested that the prevailing view in the department, although not clearly expressed, was that of denial of the problem; that to acknowledge student plagiarism was to admit some weakness in the programme to the leadership of the University. However, academic protocol does not permit such views to be overtly expressed (Samier, 2008), so the emphasis, imperceptibly, shifted from the students to the manner in which they had been treated (“it’s not the issue of plagiarism that we have a problem with; it’s how Professor X is dealing with it”; “we’re beginning to look bad compared to other departments in the University”; “this event is singling us out”; “it looks as if we are the only department in which this happens”). Thus, the prevailing view was one of how this event and the disciplinary action that followed would appear to the University leadership, with a corporate environment model being the reference point. In this respect, faculty and departments are expected to perform in terms of results (Lazzeretti & Tavoletti, 2006) with a drive to retain students, as customers, superseding the support afforded to a faculty member in taking action against students and their practices that erode academic values (Ryan & Guthrie, 2009).

The first insight offered is that dealing directly with this issue demanded steadfastness and conviction in the face of denial of the primary problem by faculty and administrators and a lack of overt and covert support for dealing with it. Parameswaran (2007) suggests that faculty may intentionally deny or minimise wrongdoing by students to protect the status quo. Psychological discomfort is inevitable and is to be expected when dealing with issues of this nature. However, the events perpetuated by the denial of a serious ethical transgression compound, in great measure, this psychological discomfort.

The second insight relates to the hostility experienced by Professor X for pursuing and reporting student plagiarism, evidenced by certain senior faculty and administrators openly siding with the perpetrators, a move that was apparent to both staff and students. The attempts to deter Professor X from his action meet the criteria of workplace bullying tactics and, as such, constitute a form of workplace abuse (Giorgi *et al.*, 2011). Vickers (2002) notes the damaging consequences of workplace bullying towards individuals, including the psychological and emotional damage that can spill over into job dissatisfaction, poor productivity and a decrease in psychological commitment. Djurkovic *et al.* (2008) suggest that experiencing such reactions from others increases the likelihood that the person will leave the organisation.

Similar to the present case, Luke and Kearins (2012) report the lack of support afforded to a professor from her own university when she reported the plagiarism of her work in a doctoral thesis, a journal article and a conference paper. She discovered that the only assistance that the University provided, in the form of legal representation and counselling in matters of plagiarism, was to students who had been accused of plagiarism.

Accordingly, the second insight relates to an appreciation of the importance of leadership support when tackling an issue of this nature as evident, in this case, through the involvement of the Dean of the Faculty and through the course of action against plagiarism that the University subsequently adopted, signalling such top leadership support. These actions served to strengthen the resolve of Professor X in pursuing the cases of plagiarism to their conclusion and went some way in mitigating the psychological effects of the workplace bullying that he experienced. In his seminal work, *Leading change: Why transformation efforts fail*, John Kotter (1995) advocates the need to garner the backing of a powerful group when attempting any change effort, a suggestion that could well apply when tackling ethical problems at universities.

The third insight relates to the tardy University administrative processes that hampered the timely finalisation of the enquiries. While such processes were not directed at Professor X as such, they served to compound an already fraught situation and serve as a reminder that the reporting of student transgressions should be backed up by strong administrative systems and procedures that expedite the unpleasant process.

Upon reflection of this case, it becomes easier to understand why many faculty avoid reporting student academic dishonesty (De Jager & Brown, 2010; Thomas & de Bruin, 2012): the psychological cost is high to the individual and the opportunity costs at the expense of research generation, important for academic promotion, are also considerable, especially when coupled with the obfuscation in procedural clarity.

Recommendations

This case study endeavoured to give a voice to answering the question of why faculty resist dealing with student plagiarism, drawing out individual and institutional issues to reflect upon when faculty do decide to report student plagiarism.

The first recommendation is directed at individual faculty members who may wish to take action when they detect student plagiarism. It is essential not to assume that automatic support will be forthcoming. Accordingly, it is important to establish, at the outset, whether clear and objective processes exist to deal with student plagiarism as well as to ensure that there is senior leadership backing for the actions to be taken.

The second recommendation is directed at university administrators and leaders. Those who expose and report student plagiarism need to be supported. Senior leadership backing mollifies, to some extent, the psychological discomfort and personal costs inevitably associated with reporting plagiarism (Djurkovic *et al.*, 2008). In addition, bureaucratic 'red

tape' must be minimised during the course of the disciplinary process. If such support and action is present, the barriers that contribute to the avoidance of reporting student academic dishonesty, as noted by Thomas and de Bruin (2012), viz. psychological discomfort, opportunity costs at the expense of other academic work, and lack of procedural clarity, may be minimised.

The third recommendation is given in the light of the fact that demographics of South African students comprises primarily of students whose mother tongue is not English. While at post-graduate levels it is expected that students should understand issues of plagiarism, it nevertheless is pro-active to ensure that students are able to obtain needed support if they struggle with academic literacy. This may include programmes targeted at writing skills (Löfström, 2011) as well as those focused in instilling broader academic ethics in students (Dzuranin *et al.*, 2013; Marques, 2016).

The final recommendation is directed to the top leadership of universities. Student moral development does not exist in isolation; it is part of a chain of events within which the university, as a role model, is one important component (Williams & Dewett, 2005).
2 O'Connell (1998, p. 168) notes that "our task in universities is not only to teach ethics and values for the marketplace but to model these values ourselves as we fulfil our own moral responsibility as educators in the universities where our students begin the [business] ethics journey in the first place".

If not embedded in the firm foundation of the ethos and academic culture of a university, many of the practices, often unthinkingly transferred from the corporate environment, can result in expediency when dealing with dilemmas, such as a response to detected plagiarism. Faculty and administrators may fear casting a department or programme in a poor light with the institutional hierarchy (Ryan & Guthrie, 2009). Such behaviour can be expected to

proliferate within academic environments where, increasingly, financial rewards are allocated for the throughput of student numbers within the required periods of time, where departments are regarded as 'stable' when no overt problems have been highlighted to 'top management' and where the attraction of student numbers to the programme is paramount (Stewart, 2007). Taking tough action on student plagiarism has the potential to impact these processes.

It is critical for universities to reflect on practices that may subtly erode the essence of university culture characterised by Deem's (1998, p. 47) "communities of scholars". In this regard, further research should include reflection by universities on their institutional moral responsibility (Rossouw, 2004) and should embrace interrogating internal practices such as the ones described in this account. The development of a strong academic community promotes faculty commitment to the values that universities often espouse as being sacred - ² honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility (Keohane, 1999) and, arguably, ones that support ethical practices within both the student body and the staff of the institution. Within this reflection, the insidious practices that have unthinkingly been incorporated from business into universities need to be identified and surfaced for discussion in the light of the obligations of universities to shape the development of future leaders (Osiemo, 2012).

Conclusion

This paper contributes to an understanding of why faculty avoid dealing with the growing international problem of student plagiarism. When interrogating why faculty avoid addressing this problem, the case illustrates that such action can incur heavy personal costs. The awareness of the personal and institutional issues raised in this paper may alert those in leadership, teaching and administrative positions at universities to factors to be considered if student plagiarism is to be addressed.

References

- Baetz, M., Zivcakova, L., Wood, E., Nosko, A., De Pasquale, D. and Archer, K. 2011. Encouraging active classroom discussion of academic integrity and misconduct in higher education business contexts. *Journal of Academic Ethics*, 9(3): 217-234.
- Babbie, E., and Mouton, J. 2009. *The practice of social research*. Ninth edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Blase, J. and Blase, J. 2004. The dark side of school leadership: Implications for administrator preparation. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 3(4): 245-273.
- Brown, B.S., Weible, R.J. and Olmosk K.E. 2010. Business school deans on student academic honesty: A survey. *College Student Journal*, 44(2): 299-308.
- Burrus, R.T., Graham, J.E. and Walker, M. 2011. Are my colleagues soft on (academic) crime? *Journal of Economic and Economic Education Research*, 12(3): 55-64.
- Cabral-Cardoso, C. 2004. Ethical misconduct in the business school: A case of plagiarism that turned bitter. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 49: 75-89.
- Carroll, J. 2002. *A handbook for deterring plagiarism in higher education*. Oxford: Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development.
- Clarke, R. 2006. Plagiarism by academics: More complex than it seems. *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*, 7(2): 91-121.
- Coalter, T., Lim, C.L. and Wanorie, T. 2007. Factors that influence faculty actions: A study on faculty responses to academic dishonesty. *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 1(1): Article 12.

- Colquitt, J.A. 2012. From the editors: Plagiarism policies and screening at AMJ. *Academy of Management Journal*, 55(4): 749–751.
- Cox, E., and Goodman, J. 2005. Belittled: The state of play on bullying. *Australian University Review*, 48(1): 28-34.
- Deem, R. 1998. 'New managerialism' and higher education: The management of performances and cultures in universities in the United Kingdom. *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 8(1): 47-70.
- De Jager, K. and Brown, C. 2010. The tangled web: Investigating academics' views of plagiarism at the University of Cape Town. *Studies in Higher Education* 35(5): 513-528.
- Djurkovic, N., McCormack, D. and Casimir, G. 2008. Workplace bullying and intention to leave: The moderating effect of perceived organisational support. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 18(4): 405-422.
- Drinan, P. and Bertram Gallant, T. 2008. Plagiarism and academic integrity systems. *Journal of Library Administration* 47(3-4): 125-140.
- Duff, P.A. 2010. Language socialization into academic discourse communities. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 30: 169–192.
- Dzurainin, A.C., Toppe Shortridge, R. and Smith, P.A. 2013. Building ethical leaders: A way to integrate and assess ethics education. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 115: 101-114.
- Ellery, K. 2008. An investigation into electronic-source plagiarism in a first-year essay assignment. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 33(6): 607-617.
- Elliott, T.L., Marquis, L.M. and Neal, C.S. 2013. Business ethics perspectives: Faculty plagiarism and fraud. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 112: 91-99.

- England, R. 2008. Plato among the plagiarists: The plagiarist as perpetrator and victim. *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council – Online archive*. <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/nhcjournals/71>. [Accessed on 29 May 2015].
- Eret, E. and Ok, A. 2014. Internet plagiarism in higher education: Tendencies, triggering factors and reasons among teacher candidates. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 39(8): 1002-1016.
- Evans, R. 2006. Evaluating an electronic plagiarism detection service. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 7(1): 87-99.
- Fazel, I. & Kowkabi, N. 2013. Students' source misuse in language classrooms: Sharing experiences. *TESL Canada Journal*, 31(1): 86–95.
- Frank, A.W. 2000. The standpoint of storyteller. *Qualitative Health Research*, 10(3): 354-365.
- Giorgi, G., Arenas, A. and Leon-Perez, J.M. 2011. An operative measure of workplace bullying: The negative acts questionnaire across Italian companies. *Industrial Health*, 49: 686-695.
- Gullifer, J.M. and Tyson, G.A. 2014. Who has read the policy on plagiarism? Unpacking students' understanding of plagiarism. *Studies in Higher Education*, 39(7): 1202-1218.
- Guo, X. 2011. Understanding student plagiarism: An empirical study in accounting education. *Accounting Education: An International Journal*, 20(1): 17-37.
- Habib, A. 2011. Managing higher education institutions in contemporary South Africa. *CODESRIA Bulletin*, 3/4: 5-9.

Hall, M. and Symes, A. 2005. South African higher education in the first decade of democracy: From co-operative governance to conditional autonomy. *Studies in Higher Education*, 30(2): 199-212.

Hall, S.E. 2011. Is it happening? How to avoid the deleterious effects of plagiarism and cheating in your courses. *Business Communication Quarterly*, 74(2): 179-182.

Happel, S.K. and Jennings, M.M. 2008. An economic analysis of academic dishonesty and its deterrence in higher education. *Journal of Legal Studies Education*, 25(2): 183-214.

Hard, S.F., Conway, J.M. and Moran, A. C. 2006. Faculty and college student beliefs about the frequency of student academic misconduct. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 77: 1058-1080.

Hershcovis, M.S. 2011. Incivility, social undermining, bullying ... oh my!: A call to reconcile constructs within workplace aggression research. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 32: 499-519.

Howard, R.M. 1995. Plagiarisms, academic death penalty. *College English*, 57(7): 788–806.

Hsiao, C-H. 2015. Impact of ethical and affective variables on cheating: Comparison of undergraduate students with and without jobs. *Higher Education*, 69: 55-77.

Jabulani, S. 2014. An analysis of the language of attribution in university students' academic essays. *South African Journal of Education*, 34(3):1–10.

Jones, R.L. 2011. Leaving. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 17: 631-638.

Keashly, L. and Neuman, J.H. 2010. Faculty experiences with bullying in higher education. *Administrative Theory & Praxis*, 32(1): 48-70.

- Kelley, K.B. and Bonner, K. 2005. Digital text, distance education and academic dishonesty: Faculty and administrator perceptions and responses. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, 9(1): 43-52.
- Keohane, N.O. 1999. *The fundamental values of academic integrity*. Durham, NC: Duke University, Center for Academic Integrity.
- Kisamore, J.L., Stone, T.H. and Jawajar I.M. 2007. Academic integrity: the relationship between individual and situational factors on misconduct contemplations. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 75: 381-394.
- Kotecha, P. 2007. Developing contradictions: Diversity and the future of the South African university. *Journal of Higher Education in Africa*, 5(1): 9-16.
- Kotter, J. 1995. Leading change: Why transformation efforts fail. *Harvard Business Review*, 73(2): 59-67.
- Laduke, R.D. 2013. Academic dishonesty today, unethical practices tomorrow? *Journal of Professional Nursing*, 29(6): 402-406.
- Lazzeretti, L. and Tavoletti, E. 2006. Governance shifts in higher education: A cross-national comparison. *European Educational Research Journal*, 5(1): 18-37.
- Lewis, B.R., Duchac, J.E. and Beets, S.D. 2011. An academic publisher's response to plagiarism. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 102: 489-506.
- Lincoln, Y.S. and Guba, E.G. 1985. *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Löfström, E. 2011. Does plagiarism mean anything? Lol: Students' conceptions of writing and citing. *Journal of Academic Ethics*, 9(4): 257-275.

Löfström, E. and Kupila, P. 2013. The instructional challenges of student plagiarism. *Journal of Academic Ethics*, 11(3): 231-242.

Luke, B. and Kearins, K. 2012. Attribution of words versus attribution of responsibilities: Academic plagiarism and university practice. *Organization*, 19: 881-889.

Marques, J. 2016. Shaping morally responsible leaders: Infusing civic engagement into business ethics courses. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 135: 270-291.

McCabe, D.L., Butterfield, K.D. and Treviño, L.K. 2006. Academic dishonesty in graduate business programs: Prevalence, causes, and proposed action. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 5(3): 294-305.

Muncey, T. 2005. Doing autoethnography. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 4(1): 1-12.

O'Connell, D.M. 1998. From universities to the marketplace: The business ethics journey. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 17: 1617-1622.

Osiemo, L.B. 2012. Developing responsible leaders: The university at the service of the person. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 108: 131-143.

Palmer, P. and Zajonc, A. 2010. *The heart of higher education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Parameswaran, A. 2007. Student dishonesty and faculty responsibility. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 12(2): 263-274.

Park, C. 2003. In other (people's) words: Plagiarism by university students—literature and lessons. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 28(5): 471-488.

Pfeffer, J. 2007. What's right and still wrong with business schools? *BizEd*, January/February: 42-49.

Pollock, T.G. and Bono, J.E. 2013. Being Scheherazade: The importance of storytelling in academic writing. *Academy of Management Journal*, 56: 629-634.

Price, J. & Price, R. 2005. Finding the true incidence rate of plagiarism. *International Education Journal*, 6(4): 421-429.

Rossouw, D. 2004. *Building business ethics as an academic field*. Pretoria: Business Ethics Network Africa.

Ryan, S. and Guthrie, J. 2009. Collegial entrepreneurialism: Australian graduate schools of business. *Public Management Review*, 11(3): 317-344.

Samier, E. 2008. The problem of passive evil in educational administration: Moral implications of doing nothing. *International Studies in Educational Administration*, 36(1): 2-21.

Schmelkin, L., Pedhazur, G., Kim, S., Karin, J., Pincus, H.S. and Silva, R. 2008. A multinational scaling of college students' perceptions of academic honesty. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 79: 587-607.

Serrano-Velarde, K. 2010. A fish out of water? Management consultants in academia. *Minerva*, 48(2): 125-144.

Simha, A., Armstrong, J.P. and Albert, J.F. 2012. Who leads and who lags? A comparison of cheating attitudes and behaviors among leadership and business students. *Journal of Education for Business*, 87: 316-324.

- Sparkes, A.C. 2002. *Telling tales in sport and physical activity: A qualitative journey*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Stewart, D.W. 2010. The purpose of university education. *The Psychologist-Manager Journal*, 13: 244-250.
- Stewart, P. 2007. Re-envisioning the academic profession in the shadow of corporate managerialism. *Journal of Higher Education in Africa*, 5(1): 131-147.
- Sutton, A., Taylor, D. and Johnston, C. 2014. A model for exploring student understandings of plagiarism. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 38(1): 129-146.
- Szabo, A. and Underwood, J. 2012. Cybercheats: Is information and communication technology fuelling academic dishonesty? *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 5(2): 180-199.
- Thomas, A. and de Bruin, G.P. 2012. Student academic dishonesty: What do academics think and do, and what are the barriers to action? *African Journal of Business Ethics*, 6(1): 13-24.
- Thomas, A. and de Bruin, G.P. 2015. Plagiarism in South African management journals, *South African Journal of Science*, 111(1/2): Art#2014-0017.
- Thompson, C.C. 2006. Unintended lessons: Plagiarism and the university. *Teachers College Record*, 108(12): 439-449.
- Vally, S. 2007. Higher education in South Africa: Market mill or public good? *Journal of Higher Education in Africa*, 5(1): 17-28.
- Vartia, M. 2001. Consequences of workplace bullying with respect to the well-being of its targets and the observers of bullying. *Scandinavian Journal of Work Environment and Health*, 27(1): 63-69.

- Vickers, M.H. 2002. Bullying as unacknowledged organizational evil: A researcher's story. *Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal*, 13(4): 205-217.
- Voelker, T.A., Love, L.G. and Petina, I. 2012. Plagiarism: What don't they know? *Journal of Education for Business*, 87(1): 36-41.
- Volkov, A., Volkov, M. and Tedford, P. 2011. Plagiarism: Protective prevention instead of reactive punishment. *e-Journal of Business Education and Scholarship of Teaching*, 5(2): 22-35.
- Wager, E. 2014. Defining and responding to plagiarism. *Learned Publishing*, 27(1): 33-42.
- Weinberg, G.S. 2007. Vying for legitimacy: Academic vs. corporate culture. *Journal of Higher Education in Africa*, 5(1): 61-77.
- Williams, S.D. and Dewett, T. 2005. Yes, you can teach business ethics: A review and research agenda. *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies*, 12(2): 109-120.
- Wood, F. 2010. Occult innovations in higher education: Corporate magic and the mysteries of managerialism. *Prometheus*, 28(3): 227-244.
- Zabrodska, K and Kveton, P. 2013. Prevalence and forms of workplace bullying among university employees. *Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal*, 25: 89-108.
- Zdenek, B. and Schochor, D. 2007. Developing moral literacy in the classroom. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 45: 514-531.

Perpetrators

ORIGINALITY REPORT

%**2**

SIMILARITY INDEX

%**2**

INTERNET SOURCES

%**1**

PUBLICATIONS

%**0**

STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1

www.ajobe.org

Internet Source

%**1**

2

www.uj.ac.za

Internet Source

%**1**

3

www.koersjournal.org.za

Internet Source

<%**1**

4

conferinta.management.ase.ro

Internet Source

<%**1**

5

eprints.mdx.ac.uk

Internet Source

<%**1**

EXCLUDE QUOTES ON

EXCLUDE MATCHES < 10 WORDS

EXCLUDE BIBLIOGRAPHY ON