

Handbook of Research on Academic Misconduct in Higher Education

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Chapter 8

Ignorance or Intent?

A Case Study of Plagiarism in Higher Education among LIS Students in the Caribbean

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ABSTRACT

Plagiarism among students at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) remains of great concern to faculty and administrators globally, as well as in the English-speaking Caribbean. Although this Cheating Behavior (CB) has been examined in multiple disciplines, few studies have examined it from the viewpoint of Library and Information Science (LIS) students. This is an important lacuna given CB's link to workplace practices and the imminent role of LIS students as information disseminators and protectors of creators' intellectual property rights. Using an explanatory sequential mixed method approach, this small scale case study sought to acquire a better understanding of LIS students' understanding, awareness and knowledge of plagiarism. The views of first and third year undergraduates and postgraduates were analyzed and assessed. The results demonstrated the need for early pedagogical interventions on plagiarism, greater collaboration between faculty and the library, and LIS students' engagement into the Community of Practice (CoP) and profession of librarianship.

INTRODUCTION

In the English-speaking Caribbean, the growing incidence of plagiarism among Higher Education (HE) students (Almeida, 2015; Francis, 2013) signifies a need to understand students' awareness, knowledge and perception of these issues. While an investigation into students' knowledge practices will be important to gauge their full cognizance of plagiarism, Library and Information Science (LIS) students represent a noteworthy group in combatting plagiarism (Gibson & Chester-Fangman, 2011). As graduates and

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imminent information workers within national, regional, and global networks in different library genres, some aspect of their job responsibility will be to educate persons to become information literate. The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL, 2015) Framework envisions information literacy (IL) as an extension and convergence of student learning goals redefined as:

[T]he set of integrated abilities encompassing the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in creating new knowledge and participating ethically in communities of learning.

Much of the disciplinary approach on CBs has focused on students seeking entry to professions such as business, engineering, medicine, and law (e.g., Davy, Kincaid, Smith, & Trawick, 2007; Emmerton, Jiang, & McKauge, 2014; Hansen & Anderson, 2014; Passow, Mayhew, Finelli, Harding, & Carpenter, 2006; Teixeira & Rocha, 2010). This is possibly a consequence of the high-level of expected professional ethics and integrity, and plagiarism's correlation with unethical workplace practices (Graves & Austin, 2008). Strangely, there is little explicit attribution for LIS students. The authors found this a peculiar omission since, not only are LIS graduates expected to display similar professionalism, but they are integral to imparting appropriate intelligence and ethical ethos to curb students' CB. The objectives for this research therefore were to:

1. Explore LIS students' understanding, awareness, and knowledge of plagiarism;
2. Understand LIS students' perception of plagiarism as a form of academic dishonesty; and
3. Investigate whether LIS students considered themselves competent to provide instructions to others on plagiarism during future information literacy sessions.

An understanding of LIS students' perception of plagiarism through explanatory sequential research would allow faculty to better assess the impact of LIS students' learning. An opportunity is also available to explore ways to enhance the department's pedagogical approaches to information literacy by re-examining and re-evaluating its practices regarding plagiarism instruction. This will invariably impact the way LIS students, as university graduates provide instructions to students and citizens in the future.

BACKGROUND

The Library School, the research site, is a small department of The University in Jamaica, an island in the Caribbean Sea. The School offers the only accredited regional training for librarians at the undergraduate and postgraduate level in the English-speaking Caribbean. Graduates serve as librarians or library technicians in public, school, national, and special libraries. Only holders of the postgraduate degree are eligible to work as librarians in an academic library.

While there are no specific courses which teach the vagaries of citing and referencing at the School, IL is taught. Students are referred to and expected to follow the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* while preparing assignments. For persons enrolled in cross-disciplinary courses, the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA) is also followed. Students are also expected to be guided by The University's policies on plagiarism which are posted online. At the commencement of their program, and before paper submissions, students are reminded of these access points.

The University's concise and somewhat generic definition of plagiarism mirrors that of the Macmillan dictionary i.e., 'unacknowledged use of the words, ideas or creations of another'. A measured approach to plagiarism is established in the form of two policies; one is targeted towards undergraduate and the other at postgraduates. Expansion of the policy is provided by specific delineations of what the University considers to be plagiarism. Persons found in breach are penalized. Penalties range from suspension, fines, re-submission, to expulsion or revocation of the degree. Consideration is given for circumstances, seniority, whether the alleged is a first time or multiple offender, and whether the offence is categorized as a level 1 or 2. The levels denote the seriousness of the offence with level 2 being the more serious transgression. In this way, The University approaches instances of academic dishonesty as a multifaceted rather than a single construct (Hensley, Kirkpatrick, & Burgoon, 2013).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Most Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) within the English-speaking Caribbean include policies on plagiarism in student handbooks or on their websites. Outside of anecdotal references, newspaper exposés and concealed institutional reports, there are little known empirical works on or about the Caribbean and plagiarism. This includes the present study; demonstration of students' knowledge, understanding or practice of this aspect of academic dishonesty. Because of this lack of assessment, there exists polarization about whether students plagiarizing stems from ignorance of the rules or constitute intentional acts (Pecorari, 2003). *Are punitive edicts the best institutional response or would educational sessions provide lifelong lessons and instill more desirable conduct?* This study joins the discussion on this important aspect of Academic Integrity (AI).

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is defined by many synonyms such as cheating, stealing, literary theft, the practice of copying and publishing somebody else's work as one's own (Stevenson, 2006), piracy or the appropriating of someone's ideas without giving credit. Although some persons use the terms plagiarism, copyright and piracy interchangeably, their meanings are quite distinct. Plagiarism is an offence against the author of a work where ideas and thoughts are used but credit is not given. Piracy is an offence whereby unauthorized versions of a work are illicitly sold thereby depriving the creator of profit, not credit, while copyright is an offence against the copyright holder of a work i.e., the rights holder could be the author or publisher. Unlike piracy and copyright offences, plagiarism is not illegal; instead it constitutes an academic violation, and is sometimes deemed a 'moral and ethical offense' (Modern Language Association [MLA], 2009, p. 52). Consequently, policing is done by HEIs or research institutions.

Plagiarism differs from theft although it is considered 'intellectual theft' (MLA, 2009). Moulton (2001) rationalized 'if words and ideas were merely property' then there would be nothing wrong with purchasing papers from commercial paper mills. As scholarship evolves, the concept of plagiarism has taken on multiple constructs (Valentine, 2006) depending as it does on 'context, circumstances, audience, expectation and genre of the written work' (Senthell & King, 2012, p. 57). Within literacy practices, Valentine (2006) contended plagiarism also involves 'social relationships, attitudes, and values as much as it involves texts and rules of citation'. It can also be 'context/institution/course dependent' (Hrabak et al. 2004 cited in Teixeira & Rocha, 2010, p. 90). The definition of plagiarism therefore is not so clear

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cut. Consequently, the ambiguity of what constitutes plagiarism and how it could be avoided could be cause for confusion and uncertainty among students. This uncertainty, according to Owunmanne, Rustagi, and Dada (2010), is a primary contributor to the continuation of students' cheating behavior, despite the provision of institutional policies.

The paramount goal of most HEIs is admirably high-levels of AI by its students and faculty. Unattractive nuisances such as plagiarism, housed under the wider umbrella of AI defined as, 'a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to six fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage' (International Centre for Academic Integrity, 2015), quickly derail such ambitions. Further acts such as buying papers through paper mills, downloading assignments, not citing and referencing, intentional or unintentional attempts to mask the original source, copying from self or others, protecting cheaters etc. contribute to academic dishonesty. This behavior also encompasses acts by faculty which contribute to disheveling these values and include behaviors such as plagiarizing (Nilsson, Eklof, & Ottosson, 2009), re-administering old tests (e.g., Barnett & Dalton, 1981), corruption, nepotism and collusion (e.g., Orkodashvili, 2014), ghost authorship and dual publishing (McCuen, 2008), or requesting sex or other favors for grades (e.g., Mensch & Lloyd, 1998).

In HE the impact of academic dishonesty goes beyond what occurs in the classroom. It also affects perception of the integrity of individuals and HEIs (Bretag, 2013; Hensley et al., 2013). It becomes of particular concern when the malfeasance continues unabated, ignored by faculty and administrators (e.g., Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2002). HEIs that turn a blind or indifferent eye to students' CB erode the confidence non-cheating students may have in academia (McCabe, 2005; Wasley, 2006).

Research on academic dishonesty is not a new theme in academia, having been addressed in some depth by William J. Bower in his seminal quantitative survey of faculty and students in the US in the 1960s (Bowers, 1964). The issues in the 21st century i.e., the popularity of online resources for scholarly works, and the ubiquitous nature of Internet resources have merely intensified an age-old problem. Although persons blame the Internet for the increasing claims of students' bout with plagiarism, studies produced inconclusive results. Selwyn (2008), for example, found no excessively high incidences of plagiarism as a result of online usage when compared to 'traditional' paper-based plagiarism. In addition, Trushell and Byrne (2013) found little correlation with students' age, cheating behavior and use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

Studies have confirmed that students are sometimes confused about *what* plagiarism involves (e.g., Ashworth et al., 1997; Gullifer & Tyson, 2014). Some contend the behavior stems from students' apparent challenge to master the skills of academic writing (Pecorari, 2003; Sutherland-Smith, 2008) especially if writing in a second language (Teeter, 2014). Still others attribute poor time management and research skills, laziness, and the influx of digital natives to the behavior (McCabe, Treviño, & Butterfield, 2001; Trushell & Byrne, 2013) as well as gender (Bowers, 1964; Hensley et al., 2010; McCabe, Treviño, & Butterfield, 2001), course enrolment (Hensley et al., 2013), and nationality (Hu & Lei, 2012; Sarkodie-Mensah, 2010).

Some studies also attempted to link poor AI to a country's culture. Nigeria, for example, has a less than stellar reputation on the world stage as it relates to plagiarism. Adebayo's (2011) survey of 150 social sciences undergraduates at a Nigerian university argued the altruistic ethic of care within Nigerian culture as a causation factor. He contended this altruism appears 'repugnant to educational assessment purposes and goals' (p.147). In another Nigerian study, Ukpebor and Ogbekor (2013) applied a multi-method approach to understand students' and faculty's awareness of plagiarism, and attitudes towards and perception of plagiarism in the context of writing and assignments. In their review, they posit teaching the

mechanics of good writing was insufficient as were schools' claim of having educated about plagiarism by simply pointing to the rules in handbooks. Further displays of cultural noises against plagiarism include works by authors who argued the fallacy of applying Western standards to cross-cultural endeavors (e.g., Matalene, 1985; Sherman, 1992; Pennycook, 1996), and correlating memorization as a method of study with plagiarism (Teeter, 2014).

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Researchers have attempted to distinguish unintentional from intentional plagiarism as a way perhaps of rationalizing albeit not justifying cheating behavior. McCuen (2008) for example, argued the need for guidelines and education with more in depth understanding about the process and attitudes which would prompt students to plagiarize. His recommendation stemmed from a belief that '[m]ost acts of plagiarism are likely acts of ignorance rather than intended acts of deception or fraud' (p. 152). Greenwood, Walkem, and Shearer's (2014) cross-sectional survey of Australian nurses found unintentional errors were created because of diverse referencing styles and different and inconsistent expectations of faculty. Respondents complained some lecturers were 'strict and some are more lenient' (p. 451) or students were held to higher standards at the postgraduate versus undergraduate level.

Gourley and Deane (2012) believed that 'a proportion of plagiarism is committed via confusion over how to integrate and reference source materials into academic writing, lack of guidance, or previous experience of a different educational culture' (p. 19). Using somewhat similar constructs, Adiningrum and Kutieleh (2011) posited the consideration of 'cultural values and previous educational experiences' (p. A-96), but from a *macro* perspective as it related to program development and policy formulation. If mitigation against unintentional plagiarism is undertaken from a holistic standpoint there will be need for 'a shared responsibility among the students, staff and institution' (Selwyn, 2008, p. 477). To this list, Greenwood et al. (2014) added 'publishers' (p. 452) as they saw difficult referencing conventions to also be an issue.

Conversely, there are students who deliberately attempt to cheat, demonstrated by studies such as Sentleng and King (2012) who found that 71.9% of their South African students knowingly used the Internet to plagiarize assignments. The literature however appears sparse as it relates to intent since plagiarism, by its very definition, means intent to cheat (Gourley & Deane, 2012). Discussions seem cordoned off into two camps; the honest student and the dishonest student (Nilsson et al., 2009; Valentine, 2006). The focus then becomes to ascertain causality, motivation and prediction.

In a provocative approach, Valentine (2006) attempted to align the student's cultural identity of self as important in the quandary of a student's intent to cheat. She claimed students 'need to be taught the significance of citation for their identity as honest students' (Valentine, 2006, p. 105), and not simply the procedures for citing to avoid plagiarism. She suggested instead:

Teaching plagiarism and citation as literacy practices would also allow for shifting between different contexts. For example, through discussions of plagiarism and practice with citation, students and teachers may better recognize the arbitrary nature of many rules of citation, and they may better understand how these 'rules' change and are modified from discipline to discipline and from genre to genre. And, ultimately, recognizing the need for the practice of identity performances and discourse acquisition—particularly as they are so influential in how we read each other—may help to create spaces in the university where

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outsiders can more easily become insiders without fear of punishment and without leaving behind identities that aren't aligned with values and understandings of higher education. (Valentine, 2006 p. 107)

Library and Information Students Correlate with Cheating

Saunders et al.'s (2015) quantitative research investigated the IL skills of LIS students in 18 countries. While plagiarism was not the primary focus, they found LIS students reported 'concern with determining what constitutes plagiarism and knowing when to cite sources' (p. 94). Their study questioned LIS students' ability to move beyond the general population in their ability to add value to their patrons' seeking and searching as professionals. Similarly, Campello and Abreu's (2005) research on Brazilian LIS students found them ill-equipped to 'perform the kind of research tasks for which they will be expected to act as mediators for others in the process of learning from information' (p. 49). As it relates to plagiarism being an ethical dilemma, Farnese, Tramontano, Fida, and Paciella (2011) made reference to moral disengagement. This uncertainty may result in unintentional behaviors, as student and prospective information worker. This is of some concern since cheating behavior as a deliberate act goes beyond the walls of academia. In the last decades, partly due to increased media coverage, public interest, and global advocacy for transparency in governance, large corporations and individuals have been shamed and held to account for unethical CB in the workplace.

Crittenden, Hanna, and Peterson (2009) posit students who cheat at college had a stronger tendency to cheat in the workplace. Similarly, Coughlin's (2013) study demonstrated a high correlation between cheating students and dishonest ethics and workplace practices. Even earlier, the Graves and Austin (2008) quantitative survey found students' CB at school was a valid predictor of deviant behaviors in the workplace. McCabe's (2005) contention then that HEIs must seek a deeper understanding of why students plagiarize is of valid concern. His insinuation that implementation of punitive procedures does not provide the building blocks for a desired community displaying high construct of AI (p. 29) is echoed by many researchers. In some jurisdictions, the focus has already shifted from punitive and passive responses to the development of a robust culture of AI (e.g., Bretag & Mahmud, 2015).

Creating awareness about copyright, fair dealings, and plagiarism is often the responsibilities of librarians in most HEIs. Information ethics, as it is referred, form an important part of any IL instruction program (e.g., Ariew & Runyon, 2008). In fact, almost everything librarians do have some ethical implications (e.g., Budd, 2006). It is important then to understand the assumptions of LIS students as they represent the successive continuum of librarians who would be tackling students' CB.

METHOD AND METHODOLOGY

This case study used an explanatory sequential mixed method approach (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006), a popular design in educational research, to understand LIS students' awareness, knowledge and perception of plagiarism. The study consisted of two sequential strands: a quantitative survey followed by a qualitative focus group strand. The objective was to explore the issues quantitatively and gain a deeper insight while ensuring the meta-inferences made were valid and well justified (Greene & Caracelli, 1997), and facilitated expansion (Bryman, 2006; Creswell & Clark, 2011). Although the questionnaire made for a highly structured instrument it did not facilitate the discovery of any new hypotheses (Axinn & Pearce, 2006). A focus group was convened to explore issues that were raised from the quantitative

data. Weare (2013), in support of the use of focus groups, further stated these ‘are used to gather data to understand the attitudes, beliefs, concerns, behaviors, and preferences of particular groups of people’ (p. 47). He also noted the appropriateness of the technique as ‘especially suitable for the study of student behaviors in higher education’ (Weare, 2013, p. 47).

Data Instrument Design: Quantitative

The questionnaire was designed based on the literature surrounding plagiarism and contained 37 closed questions and one open question. It was divided into five sections. Demographic data such as student registration status, age, gender, habitation and employment made up the first section. The second section entitled ‘Awareness of Plagiarism’ sought to collect data on students’ understanding of The University’s plagiarism policy, penalties for breaches and the terminologies surrounding plagiarism and cheating behaviors. The third section entitled ‘Information Seeking Behavior’ sought to garner information on LIS students’ research skills. The fourth section titled ‘Knowledge of Plagiarism’, sought to test students’ identification of plagiarism practices. The concluding section ‘Perception of Plagiarism’ sought to understand students’ assessment and competency of plagiarism. The data was analyzed manually.

Seven questions were prepared for the focus group. Students were encouraged to raise additional questions which were related to the study’s theme. Data collected from the focus group was analyzed using Creswell’s data analysis spiral developed in 2007 (Kodish & Gittelsohn, 2011). The four steps in analyzing qualitative data were followed in this research and included:

1. Managing data;
2. Reading and memorizing;
3. Describing, classifying and interpreting; and
4. Representing and visualizing.

Themes were generated as part of the steps outlined by Creswell (2012) who defined these as ‘broad units of information that consisted of several codes aggregated to form a common idea’ (p. 186). Data coding was completed using MAXQDA i.e., software that facilitates the coding of qualitative data into assigned categories.

Institution Research Approval

Ethics approval was granted by the institution’s Ethics Review Board. Participation for both phases of the research was voluntary. Potential risks for lecturer coercion was limited in the first phase by diversifying the distribution of the questionnaires to the other researcher on the project. In the second phase, the focus group was conducted after the release of examination grades in the first semester. Participants were required to each sign a consent form and were guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity. The questionnaires were distributed and collected in a two-week period. At no point were students asked whether they had plagiarized or committed acts of academic dishonesty. Students were also advised they could withdraw at any point of the research without negative consequences.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Strand I: Quantitative Results

A semi-structured questionnaire was administered to 30 LIS students. They represented an almost equal distribution of Year 1 (30%), Year 3 (40%) and postgraduate students (30%). Twelve (n=12 or 40%) students were full-time, while the remaining were part-time (60%).

Participants were predominantly female (77%). This was typical of the female to male ratio of students enrolled in the department. The ages of the respondents ranged between 18 and above 46-years, with the majority of respondents (36%) being in the 18 to 25 age group. Sixteen students (53%) were employed full-time; all but one of the participants lived off campus.

Students' Awareness of Plagiarism

All participants indicated they were aware of the university's plagiarism policy, however, only 67% indicated that they had actually read the policy. Thirty per cent had never read the policy while another student (3%) indicated having 'somewhat' read it. Ninety-seven per cent (97%) of the participants indicated they were aware of a penalty for plagiarism while one student (3%) was unaware. Gullifer and Tyson (2014) noted the definition of what constitutes plagiarism is often embedded within an institution's policy. Ukpebor and Ogbemor (2013) observed these few words sometimes served as an institution's sum expenditure of the education on plagiarism. In spite of this, Gullifer and Tyson (2014) claimed 'the consequence of not reading the policy may contribute to widespread ignorance of what behaviors constitute plagiarism' (p. 1204).

Table 1. Demographic data on participants

Variables	Year 1 (%)	Year 3 (%)	Postgraduates (%)
Gender			
Males	13	7	3
Females	17	33	27
Total	30	40	30
Age			
18-25	10	23	3
26-32	10	0	10
33-40	10	0	7
41-45	3	7	10
46+ years	3	0	0
No Response	0	3	0
Enrolment Status			
Part-time	23	10	27
Full-time	7	30	3

Seventy-three per cent (73%) of the respondents indicated they had heard the term ‘academic integrity’ with 27% responding in the negative. However, the term ‘self-plagiarism’ seemed to be a lesser known phrasing with one person opting not to respond and only 50% indicating awareness. This seemed a reasonable response since ‘self-plagiarism’ is normally fraudulent behavior committed by published authors. In addition, the practice of writing a paper and making up references to support it is considered a behavior more frequently associated with faculty than students (Dey & Sobhan, 2006). In this regard, Gibson and Chester-Fangman (2011) found librarians could assist faculty by disseminating information on AI and plagiarism. Additionally, both faculty and students must attempt to understand why committing plagiarism should not even be considered an option (McCuen, 2008).

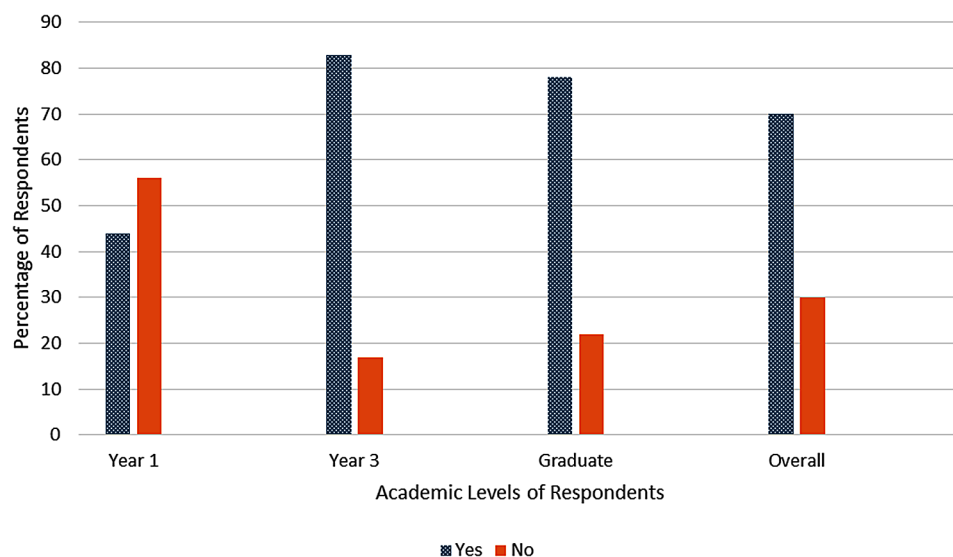
Overall, 70% of the students indicated they were aware that unpublished material could be plagiarized. Further analysis of the data was done, as there were obvious differences between the responses at different levels as shown in Figure 1.

When comparing data by groups, the third year undergraduates appeared most knowledgeable as 83% responded in the affirmative. First-year students were the least aware of this infraction as only 44% indicated they were aware that unpublished materials could be plagiarized. This could stem from the fact that ‘unpublished’ material invariably fell under the category of grey literature. This problematic genre of scholarly sources often lacks proper bibliographic data and so ‘young’ researchers may be lulled into the misapprehension that unclear ownership equals no rights holder to the work. Another reason could be that first-year students have had limited exposure to library school education. Graduate students on the other hand while new to the department would have already acquired a first degree and so should be familiar with the research process and correct use of information sources.

Information Seeking Behavior

This question sought to understand LIS students’ information seeking behavior. According to Campello and Abreu (2005), LIS students must themselves be able to master the research process as future knowl-

Figure 1. Awareness of plagiarism of unpublished materials



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edge workers. Accordingly, Table 2 indicated the resources LIS students used in their research and the number of them who cited these sources.

Print resources from the library were still the most popular source of information for students, as all students indicated they utilized these, however only 93% cited them. The library's database was the second most used source. Ironically, while 83% reported they used this resource, 87% indicated that they cited it. This variance appeared to be an error on the part of the respondents. Google (80%) and Google Scholar (77%) were the third and fourth most popular sources of information, respectively. Overall, the data demonstrated a disparity between students' use of sources and their instances of citing, indicating possible cheating behaviors among LIS students. The disparity between those who used Google (80%) and cited this Internet source (67%) suggest students plagiarized from Google more than from other frequently used sources.

Saunders et al. (2015) noted LIS students were less likely to use social networking sites among others as confirmed by the 10% in this study. The fluid and inconsistent citation formats of social media and its ease to trace could be factors in students' willingness and ability to cite, although usage was low compared to some other resources. The gaps would also seem to indicate that LIS students were underutilizing the features of the library's databases, such as the citation helper. Google Scholar provides similar assistance. While most of the databases include a disclaimer, students were advised to check their library where the basic information for citing was made available.

LIS Students' Information Seeking Behaviors

Participants' knowledge of citing sources was demonstrated in Table 3.

Students were most competent citing and referencing books as 93% reported that they knew how to do so. However, this contrasted with the low numbers (40%) who reported they were able to reference and cite book chapters. It could be that when students used only a chapter from the book they cited the entire book and not just the chapter. Seventy-seven per cent (77%) indicated that they were able to cite online electronic books, whereas 70% of the students said they were able to cite website and journal articles. Only 57% reported that they were able to cite newspaper articles. The low ability to cite newspaper articles could arise from the fact that in Jamaica, print newspapers were still commonly used for research and students have other options for finding needed information. Newspaper paywalls hinder

Table 2. Information sources used and cited

Sources	Use (%)	Cite (%)
Library (Print Resources)	100	93
Library Database	83	87
Google	80	67
Google Scholar	77	70
Other Internet Sources (Bing, Yahoo etc.)	37	30
Media (Newspaper, Radio etc.)	20	17
Friends, Peers	13	10
Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Blogs etc.)	10	10

Table 3. Students' knowledge of citing and referencing

Source	Percentage of Respondents
Printed Book	93%
Online/Electronic Book	77%
Website	73%
Journal Article	73%
Newspaper Article	57%
Book Chapter	40%

access especially when access was sporadic for technical reasons or non-payment. Too, electronic articles were sometimes unavailable when they were sought too long after their published date.

Smedley, Crawford, and Cloete (2015) noted that ‘most students compiled their reference list of books and journal articles correctly with only minor formatting issues’ (p. 173), however, many students did not correctly manage to identify the format required for ‘a previously published selection in an edited collection’ (p. 173). The participants in this research also reported challenges citing the book chapter. The ability to access book chapters via the database could pose some challenges for students since they are sometimes unable to distinguish between the formats. Some articles and book chapters are similar in form and length, especially when converted into pdf. Additionally, the articles/book chapters etc. lodged in their OURVLE accounts do not often include cover sheets which provide proper bibliographic information to aid students in their citing and referencing as is the practice in some universities.

Knowledge of Plagiarism

In an attempt to determine students’ knowledge of plagiarism, statements were provided and students were required to make the distinction between what constituted plagiarism and what did not. This question was important as LIS students’ knowledge of plagiarism would affect not only their own work but also information they provided as future knowledge workers. Table 4 details the responses of their knowledge about certain aspects of plagiarism.

While the statements that generated responses in the 80% and 70% categories were positive signs that LIS students knew what constituted plagiarism; the numbers who responded they were ‘not sure’ was of concern. Especial focus was their ambivalence as it related to collaborative work (40%). This could stem from the propensity for the LIS students to engage in collaborative efforts, and this was a teaching strategy commonly utilized by faculty. As the Sutton, Taylor, and Johnston (2014) study showed, students did not believe sharing information on individual assignments was unethical. Accordingly, students may have been a bit cautious in their avoidance to self-report on this practice. As it relates to what was perceived as common knowledge (43%), Parks (2003) noted the fluidity of words and ideas over time which makes it difficult to trace the originator of the idea. The citing of what constitutes common knowledge was unfortunately discipline specific and contestable for its subjectivity. This seemed to indicate that students were knowledgeable about some aspects of plagiarism, but ignorant in areas that require them to critically assess a practice to determine if it was in fact plagiarism.

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Table 4. Students' responses to statements to determine knowledge of plagiarism

Plagiarism Is...	Yes (%)	No (%)	Not Sure (%)	No Response
Changing a few words of a paragraph and including the paragraph in your work without citing it.	83	10	7	0
Stealing/theft/fraud.	73	13	10	3
Capturing someone's idea and presenting it as your own.	87	7	2	3
Using a translated work without citing it.	83	7	7	3
Not citing song lyrics.	63	10	20	7
Purchasing a completed essay online.	80	3	10	7
Summarizing text and citing the author.	17	77	7	0
Not citing information that is common knowledge.	20	33	43	3
Reusing portions of work from an assignment submitted last semester without citing it.	77	7	10	7
Collaborating with peers to research a topic and author papers independently.	37	20	40	3
Omitting quotation marks in direct quotes but including citation.	53	20	23	3
Using a photograph taken by your friend and not giving credit.	50	13	33	3
Writing a paper then making up citations to support it.	63	10	20	7

Note: Some figures have been rounded off and may not add up to precisely 100%.

Some researchers contend definitions of plagiarism are often 'context/institution/course dependent' (Hrabak et al. 2004 cited in Teixeira & Rocha, 2010) because of the ambivalence of the term. Accordingly, students' failure to consult with the institution's policy may contribute to their poor knowledge of plagiarism. It is insufficient, given the seriousness and prevalence of the misconduct to be guided solely by personal beliefs on the topic. Students had varying perceptions of plagiarism as reflected by their responses which are displayed in Table 5.

Students were equally of the view that 'plagiarism can be accidental' and 'it can be a result of not knowing how to correctly cite information' (87%). Fifty-seven per cent (57%) were not confident the LIS program equipped them to adequately instruct others on plagiarism. This was validated by their perception that they did not 'know enough about plagiarism' (73%), and so there was high uncertainty in their knowledge and skillset about plagiarism (47%).

Strand II: Qualitative Results

One focus group discussion was conducted with seven purposely selected students, who responded to the survey conducted in Strand I. The group comprised two 1st-Year, three 3rd-Year and two postgraduates inclusive of two students who joined via Skype. Interviews were conducted by the researchers. The interview protocol was grounded in the content of the survey instrument and consisted of seven questions. The discussion lasted one hour and 45 minutes and was recorded and later transcribed verbatim.

Table 5. Students' perception of plagiarism

Statement/Question	Yes (%)	No (%)	Not Sure (%)	No Response (%)
Too much fuss is made about plagiarism.	30	53	10	7
Plagiarism can be accidental.	87	7	3	3
Do you believe you know enough about plagiarism?	10	73	13	3
Plagiarism can be a result of not knowing how to correctly cite information.	87	3	3	7
Do you think your program of study helps you to adequately instruct others about plagiarism?	57	30	10	3
Do you think you possess the knowledge and skills necessary to instruct others about plagiarism?	30	20	47	3
Writing in text citation is more difficult than writing the paper.	43	37	20	0
It is acceptable to employ someone you know plagiarized to acquire a university degree.	3	60	27	10

Questions posed to the focus group sought to clarify some of responses gathered by the quantitative strand and expand on the subject of plagiarism awareness, knowledge and perception.

Accordingly, the questions asked during the focus group discussions were:

1. What do you understand by the University's policy on plagiarism?
2. Why do you think students plagiarize?
3. Could you give some examples of accidental plagiarism?
4. Could you give some examples of intentional plagiarism?
5. Whose responsibility do you think it is to educate university students about plagiarism?
6. Do you think it is a reasonable expectation that graduates of library school should provide guidance and instruction about plagiarism?
7. In what ways could you become more competent to impart information on plagiarism to others?

In attempting to understand what students understood by the University's policy on plagiarism, the researchers uncovered a critical error. Students had erroneously mistaken the institution's plagiarism policy to be the pledge sheet. The pledge sheet, an attempt by the university to keep students honest and possibly to be held accountable for CB, was a type-written statement which students sign and attach to the front of assignments prior to submission, affirming they had not plagiarized. Gullifer and Tyson's (2014) Australian study revealed a similar error suggesting students' less than active engagement with their institution's student charter.

Seven key themes emerged from the focus group discussion although the need for plagiarism education was the overarching conclusion.

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Theme 1: Plagiarism Education

Participants admitted to lacking sufficient knowledge about plagiarism and other cheating behaviors. There was the impression that the misconduct was unique to HE. Accordingly, dishonest practices which occurred in everyday life appeared to be acceptable based on the perpetrator. So, the common man who sold bootleg CDs and DVDs was not seen as a wrongdoer, unlike the island's cable operators who were penalized for stealing satellite signals. There was some disbelief, for instance, that students who cheated in school would inevitably cheat in the workplace. Scholars such as Gullifer and Tyson (2014) contend it is insufficient that students are taught the rules of citing and referencing. Students must be taught to embrace the philosophy of AI if they are to become more honest and ethical researchers.

Theme 2: Responsibility to Teach about Plagiarism

Four groups were identified as possible agents to provide instructions about plagiarism. These included lecturers, librarians, a combination of these two and 'The University'. It was unclear why the respondents saw the university as a separate entity and did not associate lecturers and librarians as perhaps, agents of the university. Further probing resulted in the following response:

The university has accreditation for all the courses here. The students should be responsible for their education in terms of not plagiarizing. But because the university has a reputation to stand, even if the students know yes or no... they have to keep their reputation up. They ensure that the students are qualified and fit and know what to do...

The sentiment demonstrates students' non-inclusive feelings as a part of the institutional structure. One participant thought:

[T]he lecturers should be the last resort for that. And the library is supposed to be the primary people.

Most felt that education on plagiarism should be done in IL sessions conducted by the library. One participant opined concern not just how this information was passed on, but the need for 'quality time' for students to grasp the 'complexity' of the topic. Another participant expressed the divergent belief that students had the responsibility to acquire their own information about plagiarism through self-directed learning:

We know what plagiarism is about...we ought to educate ourselves about it because the institution is a facilitator. We have to take it on ourselves as librarians to learn.

Another student supported this position - *Most of what I learnt about plagiarism is what I learnt on my own.*

Respondents felt that instructions on plagiarism should have been provided in high school. Since this was not done, they felt it should be provided at the beginning of their program at the university. Students were also concerned lecturers often assumed that they were knowledgeable about plagiarism, but that this was an 'incorrect approach'. They argued students came from differing backgrounds and these assumptions may be wrong.

When asked if it was a reasonable expectation for LIS graduates to provide instructions on plagiarism, responses were varied. Some respondents objected while others approved. One student gave an extensive explanation, addressing what she found relevant such as the demands of the field of study, the need to educate others and the expectation of library users:

I think it's a reasonable expectation being that we are supposed to be knowledge professionals. We are supposed to provide information as well as educate persons ... yes, I think that is a reasonable expectation. I think a lot of students look up to us for information and they may expect us to know everything, so I think it's a reasonable expectation being that we are supposed to be knowledge professionals.

Despite this perception, other respondents were still hesitant to commit themselves as being responsible to instruct others on plagiarism. This hinged on their own abilities to provide guidance and instructions in plagiarism. Respondents believed that even though they did not currently possess the requisite knowledge they could learn. It was expressed as follows:

Because we are taught the skills of finding information... so even if you don't know it for yourself you know how to find the information and how to use it properly, evaluate it properly and all of that. So once you have those skills you good.

Another respondent, not sure of how to answer, asked herself the question and then answered in this way:

Oh boy! Should we teach it? You see if you don't understand it...and I think that's what happened to most of us. So we hear from our friends, 'cause when we hear from the lecturer it goes through one ear and comes through the other.

While ability was questioned, there was reflection on the rationale behind ignorance. This was a pleasing observation.

Theme 3: Causes of Unintentional Plagiarism

Proper citation to avoid plagiarism was another pressing concern. Quite a bit of the session was utilized answering questions posed by the participants about cases of plagiarism. For example:

For instance, if I'm citing something from the book... at the end of that paragraph right, I am supposed to cite which page?

One student, wanting to know if citations could be used for more than one assignments asked:

So, citation that you would use in the first assignment...you would just use those in the second assignment?

In trying to gain a better understanding of how to avoid self-plagiarism students asked several questions. One student expressed her question in this manner:

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Another question, can you cite yourself even though you're not an expert in the field? For instance, you did a research paper before and you have to do an assignment where some information from that paper would be helpful in the other assignment.

In an environment where lecture notes were posted online especially for the benefit of the graduate students who pursue their degrees in that mode, students may find it expedient to use information from this source in their assignments. One student's comment, which was really a way of seeking clarification, demonstrated her uncertainty as to how to treat with this. She expressed it in this manner, and her choice of words conveyed her confusion.

For instance, you're doing an assignment and you're sourcing information from lecture notes...I'm wondering... I'm baffling through whether I should use the lecturer's name for the citation or I should use lecture notes.

One participant summed up the issues quite succinctly: '*Why is it so complicated?*' reflecting the view of McCuen (2008) who identified class notes and handouts as problematic material for students to cite.

Theme 4: Why Students Plagiarized

Participants presented several reasons they believed students plagiarized. Much of what was articulated was supported in the literature on plagiarism and student cheating behaviors. They cited the primary reasons as ignorance of what constituted plagiarism and their inability to correctly cite information. One participant noted that students who plagiarized were 'just lazy' but another disagreed reasoning:

I don't think its only laziness alone. I think some persons are not aware or knowledgeable about plagiarism though. They do not understand plagiarism. It should be taught in high school for us to get the practice.

One participant claimed plagiarism may be a result of how students were educated within the secondary setting:

Miss I think also, if they could get to understand the importance of it... because coming from the high school they are taught that everything they do is background reading. And so if they think all there is for me to personally understand it and regurgitate it then I don't need to cite my sources.

Theme 5: Plagiarism Prevention

The value of Turnitin, the plagiarism software which the university subscribed to was praised by some of the participants who identified it as a useful tool in helping them to address matters of plagiarism before submission of assignments. They reported its use was not required by all lecturers. One participant maintained:

Turnitin ...it helped me to understand where you going and if you are on the right path cause when you submit your work, it in turn tells you how much... like it will say 15 you are not supposed to have more

than 15%. So, if it is that you turn it in and there is a problem then you know what to fix and how to approach it. But if you don't have things like this you go overboard sometimes.

So they gave us chances to submit it and based on the percentage they say okay you need to fix these areas ... keep bringing it down, keep bringing it down, and then they give us three chances to submit it and check it before we actually put it in.

The statements showed a heavy reliance on the text-matching software, demonstrating perhaps, lack of confidence in their own writing. They were concerned though, that there was no standard about the percentage of accepted similarity match required by lecturers. Participants claimed faculty indicated acceptable similarity figures ranged from 15% to 35%. Not all participants reported they were required to use Turnitin. One participant who was not required to use Turnitin felt lecturers needed to assist with the prevention of plagiarism. She described it this way:

I think sometimes we could do our work first, present it and the lecturers see that this is a problem. I think they should have a session to say ...well most persons fall down in this area and this area needs to be adjusted, you understand? So then you will know where I went wrong this time, and this was the issue, so you know you won't make this mistake again because you are aware.

Theme 6: Views on Unintentional Plagiarism

Participants were quite candid about having unintentionally plagiarized. Instead of giving examples of unintentional plagiarism, some chose to self-report on personal experiences:

You know my first assignment I did not know. When I wrote it I took piece from here, piece from there.

The participant identified this behavior as 'mash up'; one of the 10 types of plagiarism. Turnitin identified this as the seventh most severe type of plagiarism. Pecorari (2003) identified this style of writing as patchwriting.

One thing I see happening... that I found something and I say that don't sound like me, and then I read it again and I'm like where did I get that from? And I read it again and I'm like oh ooh no not mine.

Statements like these demonstrate instances of poor note-taking. Information sessions conducted by the library stressed the importance of good note-taking. *In instances where students refuse to take note, should their product then be classified as unintentional plagiarism?* It also demonstrates ignorance of the citing and writing in the discipline which provided a recipe for plagiarism.

Theme 7: Writing Ability

Participants believed if they had better writing skills they would be able to avoid plagiarism. Some participants were not confident in their ability to write well. They identified difficulty in paraphrasing and summarizing. One participant thought:

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Most of the information that you are looking for is already there and they express their thoughts so well, I mean they [authors] articulate so well, so let me just use their version since I can't say it a better way.

Another participant agreed and added:

Most of the information you are looking for is already there expressed in their own thoughts so well.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This landmark research proved quite instructive in gaining insight into LIS students' understanding, awareness and knowledge of plagiarism. As educators, the responses dispelled many of the assumptions about students' cheating behaviors and the roles and responsibilities of LIS professionals. Some of the misconceptions arose from the lack of research into students' information seeking behavior which could inform policy and educational strategies for the appropriate intervention. This research attempted to close this gap.

The study also revealed students' lack of instruction on plagiarism at the high school level. Accordingly, they were baffled when expected to write and cite correctly on arrival at university. For mature students, who had an even wider educational time span, writing and citing were equally mystifying. Therefore, some merit should be given to students' insistence that writing in academia should be taught at entry-level programs and reinforced in all courses. More support from lecturers on writing and reduction was expected with less dependence on the citation software, Turnitin. Lecturers' ambivalence about what constituted an acceptable grade by Turnitin proved confusing to students. This was especially so when they took cross-disciplinary courses where writing and citing conventions may be different. Faculty must be cognizant that Turnitin and similar text-matching software were not by themselves sufficient to curb students' cheating behavior. More importantly they cannot rectify poor writing. A concerted approach was needed to address these anomalies in the system and faculty need to rise to the occasion to provide appropriate and timely guidance.

While LIS students' responses demonstrated an awareness of plagiarism, there was not much evidence of self-directed learning. Students seemed to be comfortable with rote-learning instead of attempting to become critical thinkers. Critical thinkers would accept more responsibility for knowledge acquisition and not be comfortable being mollycoddled. Aspersions of laziness and poor time management were submitted as possible causes for plagiarism as well as poor note-taking. While students generally believed plagiarism was wrong, some were skeptical and not in agreement with the penalties it attracted. Rescission of university degrees was considered a harsh possibly 'over the top response' for plagiarism. They believed that universities had a responsibility to detect plagiarism before the situation escalated to this level. At the same time, they did not believe they had a responsibility to seek assistance to avoid cheating behaviors. In this regard Nilsson et al.'s (2009) study at a Swedish university is instructive. Students identified themselves as learners, as victims, and as the repentant informer but it was important they also began to position themselves as part of the Community of Practice (CoP), which they would eventually join.

Most of the participants believed plagiarism can be accidental. They cited the main causes to be inability to cite correctly and lack of knowledge about plagiarism. Some actually related instances when they plagiarized because they did not understand the citing convention. They were also of the view that

understanding plagiarism was difficult even when they read the style manuals so they needed assistance. They believed this could be achieved through workshops and seminars conducted within the department. Greater emphasis by the university library and their professional associations would also be welcomed.

LIS students were challenged to identify themselves as future information professionals with the responsibility to instruct others about plagiarism. This positioning was more evident with the undergraduates than postgraduate students. Part of this problem could be attributed to their lack of work experience or their disconnect with the library and information community. Students were not heavily recruited into the local arm of the library and information association and so they may see the attainment of the degree as a prerequisite for a job rather than a career.

Students' discussion revealed that the defining criteria between intentional and unintentional plagiarism was knowledge. Therefore, if students knew what they were doing was wrong and they still engaged in the practice, then they should be penalized. However, in cases where they did not know then they believe it should be treated differently. The problem in academia has always been to adjudge intent. Students were generally knowledgeable about plagiarism, but there were gaps in their knowledge. The intensity of the gap was indicative of their student status. None of the students felt competent to teach others about plagiarism. Tracy and Searing's (2014) study found similar sentiments among LIS students at the University of Illinois Library School in the assumption of librarian duties.

The majority of participants were of the view that students should be taught about plagiarism in high school, and that this would alleviate many of the issues that emerged in HE. However, they also believed the university and lecturers had a responsibility for educating on plagiarism. The university was seen as an important player with the most to lose for not maintaining high AI standards. Accordingly, the onus was on the university to pay attention to the behavior. While students acknowledged the visibility of the university library as a place to acquire assistance on how to avoid plagiarism, they felt the sessions as currently offered addressed plagiarism too briefly. They also felt the library's orientation session could be re-scheduled to a more convenient period since it competed negatively with other pressing student matters during orientation.

Students expressed the need for adoption of proactive measures to help combat plagiarism. However, they failed to mention the need to be taught good writing skills so as to avoid patchwriting which invariably leads to unintentional plagiarism (Pecorari, 2003). On the contrary, when it was suggested, they agreed that writing instructions would be important in developing their writing skills. This would help them to overcome some of the challenges they had in expressing themselves 'in their own words' as it would hone their expressive skills enabling them to summarize, paraphrase and better articulate their thoughts and ideas.

FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

There needs to be further research into LIS students' perception of their roles as information professionals. More research also needs to be conducted on LIS students' cheating behavior with strategies to curb this misconduct. Urgent research also needs to be conducted in the teaching of information literacy within the primary and secondary school system. This is important since studies have firmly aligned CB with poor work place ethics. While primary and secondary schooling are mandatory, HE is not. Therefore, a wider majority of school leavers would have entered the workplace believing their CB was acceptable. Additional work is needed on CB in other disciplines as well as capturing the views of faculty on

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this aspect of academic misconduct. As a postcolonial developing country the cultural positioning of the people should also be researched in an attempt to ascertain whether this has an impact of students' perception of plagiarism.

CONCLUSION

There was an urgent need for targeted educational intervention (Smedley et al., 2015) for LIS students when they enter the program. This should be done as early as possible with one of its primary goal being to assist students to develop better writing skills and to become information literate. Both undergraduate and postgraduate levels should be provided with this opportunity. McCabe (2005) contended 'it takes a village' and so partnerships between LIS faculty and the academic library could eventually encompass the entire campus. In the interim, both the library school and the university library should endeavor to provide cognitive and interpersonal support to LIS students. This would provide them with an opportunity to interact with knowledge professionals who represented the product that their training programs aspired to develop. Within this intervention there should be a concerted emphasis on AI. All students, in particular LIS students because of their ethical responsibilities, should be primed 'to ingest the aura' of professionalism ingrained within persons with high AI.

This study attempted to understand LIS students' knowledge, awareness and perception of plagiarism. Some interesting insights in LIS students' cognitive approach to plagiarism and general cheating behaviors were acquired. While the authors recognize there were some limitations of the survey, such as its generalizability, the research is significant in that it offers the first empirical insight into Caribbean students' views on plagiarism and cheating behaviors in HE. It also confirmed that the lecturer's initial suspicion which prompted this research, that LIS students may be committing unintentional plagiarism because of ignorance of the conventions and rules of academia. Academic honesty needs to be a holistic approach as it relates to teaching students about plagiarism and other aspects of AI (Greenwood et al., 2014; Selwyn, 2008). Plagiarism is just one of the misconduct under this heading. Accordingly, HEIs must aim at educating and advocating honesty for life rather than course completion and grade attainment.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Academic Integrity (AI): The International Centre for Academic Integrity (2015) defines AI as ‘a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to six fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage’.

Caribbean Common Market (CARICOM): A regional organization—comprising 15 member states, five associate members and nine states with observer status—that aims to promote the economic welfare of its members.

English-Speaking Caribbean: The English-speaking Caribbean consists of those postcolonial territories where English is the official language: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, Puerto Rico, Saba, St. Eustatius, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Maarten, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, and Turks and Caicos.

Plagiarism: The intentional or unintentional act of using another person’s academic or artistic work or ideas without giving due credit to the creator.

Self-Plagiarism: The subsequent use of one’s previously published/unpublished work without citing it as such.

Unpublished Materials: Materials in print or digital form that has not been produced for mass distribution, marketed or distributed to the general public, although these may be cited and shared through informal networks.