Attitudes of Greek Undergraduate Students Towards Issues of Fraud and Plagiarism during Their Studies

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Abstract

This research aimed in revealing attitudes of Greek undergraduates' students towards issues of fraud and plagiarism during their studies. That's because there are many cases where students choose to copy from others or to cheat in their exams and it's something that many universities try to overcome and avoid. The sample of our study consisted of 250 people studying in various faculties of Greek universities throughout the country. Their answers were analyzed in a questionnaire using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Students' answers revealed that almost all students at least once in their lifetime have cheated or copied in their homework or in their exams, even though the majority of them knew the effects that plagiarism has in the university community. They state that there are many reasons that have led them there with the most frequent ones being the lack of time, the pressure from the multitude of obligations, the absence of strict controls from the teachers and their desire to succeed.

Keywords: fraud, plagiarism, students' attitudes, cheating, copy, Greek universities

1. Introduction

Nowadays, plagiarism is an issue that concern most of the universities across the world. Universities tend to scrutinize copying and plagiarism, using appropriate software, in order to detect and minimize the cases of this improper practice (Clarke et al., 2023; Uhráková & Podařil, 2005). The development of technological means helps detecting plagiarism in an easy way leading to minimizing this unethical practice. It is important to state that during the pandemic of Covid-19 teachers detected very high rates of plagiarism which led the researchers to further investigate the causes, means and effects of plagiarism and copying (Dávila Morán, 2022; Surahman & Wang, 2022). The results of our research can shed light on students' attitudes towards plagiarism and fraud, on why they choose these unethical practices and how they can be reduced.

2. Literature Review

The terms "plagiarism" and "copying" are very often found in the vocabulary of academic communities and usually concern the academic professors and students, in a global level. It concerns them because academic integrity is significantly affected. Every university community advocates equality, justice, and trust among its members. That's why all the individuals should respect the space of the academic community and its members (Clarke et al., 2023).

According to Akbar (2018), "plagiarism", comes from the Latin word "plagarius" and translates as "kidnapper". It's something with many negative meanings and implications. In particular, the term plagiarism refers to "the direct use of someone else's words or the more general use of their work, without the corresponding reference and reference to the original source" (Surahman & Wang, 2022) and the presentation of this work as his personal creation (Dávila Morán, 2022).

As mentioned by Dávila Morán (2022), there have been defined 10 specific cases by Turnitin, which are widely considered and recognized as plagiarism. These cases are:

1. Using somebody's word as it is and present it as if its his/hers

2. Using texts from different sources and putting them together, presenting the result as their original and personal creation

3. Someone using his/her own earlier work, without mentioning it, "auto-plagiarism."

4. Lack of attribution

5. Lack of sources

6. Incomplete citations of sources

7. Absence of paraphrasing

8. Incorrect use of references

9. Incorrect use of names

10. Incorrect use of punctuation marks

However, it is very important to state that plagiarism, often happens unintentionally by the students. That's because many of them, don't know how to paraphrase correctly, how to cite an article or how to reference (Dávila Morán, 2022). Nevertheless, all around the world, plagiarism is considered illegal, and it occurs different kinds of penalties (Yazici et al., 2023). There are many programs that can examine every text online and offline and conclude whether someone cheated or not. Penalties depend on the legislation of the respective country and on the degree of seriousness of the plagiarism.

Giannopoulou (2021), points out some ways to reduce plagiarism. Firstly, she claims that the first step that an academic teacher should make, is to discuss the reason that led the student to cheat. Then the student should face the consequences. One consequence could be a grade reduction. The professor can choose whether the student will resubmit the assignment or whether the assignment in which the high rate of plagiarism was detected will be completely zeroed out. Also, the teacher could decide that the students should repeat the whole course from the beginning. Lastly, the most severe punishment, is for the student to be expelled from his institution permanently.

On the other hand, McKenna (2022), speaks of "commercialization of knowledge". Instead of universities paying for plagiarism detection software, they should inform students about the correct use of bibliography, sources, and references, so that a sense of honesty is emphasized, and students acquire meaningful knowledge.

Copying is also something that many students tend to do, aside from plagiarism. Yazici et al. (2023), Clarke and Lancaster (2006), came up with the term "contract cheating", referring to students resorting to unethical means, paying people to do their homework for them or take exams for them (online). The above is also confirmed by Clarke et al. (2023), who state that during the pandemic (covid-19), due to of the excessive use of technological means, the escape of students towards plagiarism was much easier and more immediate.

Clement (2001), states the importance of the role that teachers have, as they are the ones who can prevent the reduction of plagiarism and copying among students. That can happen through proper information of the students. Many legal cases are pending in universities around the world, at the expense of students who resorted to plagiarism. This proves how important the issue of copying and plagiarism is. Dávila Morán (2022), speaks of zero tolerance for both plagiarism and copying, as this eliminates student creativity, promotes dishonesty and the use of unethical practices within the academic community. In fact, it is emphasized that teachers have one of the most important roles in eliminating plagiarism, copying and exploitation. This is because, they are the ones who have access to the students' work and can detect any irregularities. However, many professors overlook many unethical behaviors, as detecting plagiarism, looking for the causes and imposing the corresponding penalties requires extra time and effort, which many avoid.

In Greek universities, special emphasis is placed on checking assignments for possible copies and high rates of plagiarism. The members of the academic community inform students of the

importance of the rules and all the procedures they must follow when using the bibliography. All the students need to know the consequences of plagiarism and what the penalties are. The study of Sypsas and Lekka (2015), states that the problem of plagiarism in Greece starts in secondary education. The students don't know how to properly use the resources and the teachers don't offer to help or to educate them. As a result, many students attend universities with incomplete knowledge.

After many cases of plagiarism, fraud and copyright being detected in universities it is stated that both universities and their libraries should publish on their websites guides and rules for avoiding plagiarism. Also, they can publish articles and texts that emphasize students towards the seriousness of the issue and that explain the reasons why it should be avoided and what happens in case plagiarism is detected on a student's paper. Giannopoulou (2021), claims that stricter prevention measures and stricter penalties should been proposed, without exceptions. In case of plagiarism is detected, penalties appropriate to the incident should be imposed, so that the students understand that this is not a simple warning and that they should not take the issue of plagiarism for granted.

The reasons that lead students to plagiarism are various. Some of them are the development of technology (Jambi, Khan, & Siddiqui, 2022), the ignorance, the fear that their work and overall effort is not good enough, the feeling that they're going to fail, the lack of time due to their huge number of responsibilities and the fact that they don't ever get punished for copying and for plagiarism by their teachers. Students know that plagiarism in an unethical practice however they choose fraud over honesty because of all the reasons above. That's why they should be more informed about plagiarism and all the bad effects it has to the university community. Sadly, many of them claim that they are trying to avoid these unethical practices, but they fail as they don't have the appropriate knowledge about the right way to use articles. That's because the most important thing to do to avoid plagiarism is to study about the rules and to follow an ethical path when they are writing (Giannopoulou, 2021; Panigyraki, 2020; Avramidou & Kekkeris, 2022; Koseoglou, 2022; Johansen et al., 2022).

There have been many researchers across the world about plagiarism. Most of them conclude that almost all the students know what plagiarism is and why they should avoid it. Despite that, half of them declare that at least once in their lifetime they have cheated on an exam, they have copied, and they have done use of the plagiarism. Researchers investigating plagiarism rates, concluded that students that have been informed, their plagiarism rates are decreased, while students who have never been informed before are continuing to increase their plagiarism rates. Also, research in Africa showed that most students knew little about Turnitin and its use. However, students who knew, believed that with the use of this software, the students' academic writing is positively enhanced. In fact, those who did not know about the existence of the software stated that they were not even aware of the fact that the university follows a specific policy to avoid plagiarism (Mahmoud, Mahfoud, Ho, & Shatzer, 2020; Alua, Asiedu, & Bumbie-Chi, 2023; Clarke et al., 2023).

A survey conducted in Cairo showed that the general view of students that leads to procrastination concerns those who do not manage their time properly. Coupled with their

desire to get good grades, it is easier for them to use unfair means such as plagiarism and copying. Also, the method where students submit work instead of taking exams, which was used a lot during the pandemic, is something that helped many students pass the courses, but again very high rates of plagiarism were recorded (Click, 2014; Erguvan, 2022).

After a survey carried out at the University of Athens, it was said that the professors are much stricter in the matter of copying than the students. In fact, they believe that they must be objective and fair towards everyone and thus, they provide a basis for the careful control of students' assignments and writings, but also for the penalties that will be imposed in case they are detected (Koletsi-Kounari, Polychronopoulou, Reppa, & Teplitsky, 2011; Au-Yong-Oliveira & Gonçalves, 2017). It is noteworthy that in a survey of medical students in Greece, it was revealed that all students had copied at least once in their lives. In addition, these students stated that the fellow students they met during their studies had also copied at some point. They emphasized, however, that they were led to this unethical outlook as the degree of difficulty of the courses was high and thus their anxiety increased as they had the feeling that they would not be able to cope with the demands of their school (Bazoukis & Dimoliatis, 2011).

As to why students tend to copy, Koseoglou, (2011), lists a variety of reasons. In particular, he emphasizes that many students tend to copy as they enter into a process of comparison with their fellow students and are afraid of feeling inferior in case others do better. In addition, beyond the good grade that the majority of students wish to have, most of them copy as they say they find it difficult to understand the content of the course. In fact, a very common phenomenon that leads students to copy is the pressure they are under from their family. The majority of parents want their child to graduate as quickly as possible and with a good grade. Of course, the financial problems of a family and by extension the student often delay the graduation as it is difficult for the student to receive extracurricular support. So, they end up copying for more guaranteed results.

To sum up, Tzasta, (2018), states that there are 3 categories of students. The first category includes students who do not copy and have no intention of doing so as they realize how unethical it is. In the second category belong students who have high goals, like those in the first category, but use unethical means such as plagiarism and copying to achieve them without feeling guilty. Finally, the third category includes students who copy without remorse or guilt, even though they know the negative effects it brings, but compared to those in the second category, they do not seem to have set high goals.

It is very often observed that students with low averages, students who make excessive use of technological media, and students in science and technology tend to copy more. Of course, although copying and plagiarism are global issues, there are both similarities and differences in the students who make use of the above by country (Bertram Gallant, Binkin, & Donohue, 2015). A survey of American and Japanese students revealed that Japanese students who copy in relation to Americans, do not seem to be affected by the fact that in case someone perceives that they have copied or succeeded by using unethical means they will be socially stigmatized and punished. One similarity between them is that both the Japanese and the

American students who copy do not seem to show a trace of guilt for their unethical practices (Diekhoff, LaBeff, Shinohara, & Yasukawa, 1999). Also, research done on Pakistani medical students showed that they tend to copy on the exam period (Azam & Naeem, 2022), and they often use baseless excuses whenever someone detects their irregularity (Che Ku Kassim & Mohd Sallem, 2023).

It is noteworthy that the methods chosen by professors to examine students during the covid-19 pandemic (multiple-choice exams, assignments, online exams) seem to have increased the rates of copying and plagiarism. In fact, even though the professors had emphasized what are the correct methods of avoiding them, the students seem to have ignored it. This proves that although most students know what are ethical and what are unethical practices, they ignore the rules and try to achieve their goal by any means (Klijn, Mdaghri Alaoui, & Vorsatz, 2022˙ Mekterović, Brkić, & Horvat, 2023).

Both plagiarism and copying between students lead to exploitation (Martin, 2016). This is because, for a student to copy from another fellow student initially means that his success is based on the effort and time spent by someone else and that he did not gain substantial knowledge from it. Thus, it is unfair when someone who has put in personal effort and time of their life to get the same grades as someone else who chooses to copy and not make an honest effort to succeed (Benincasa, 2015). In addition, a very common form of cheating in universities is contract cheating. Many students tend to pay people to do their homework for them for a fee which is considered exploitation and punishable (Manoharan & Speidel, 2020). Of course, they state that it is important to avoid the above that the students are frequently and fully informed about the codes of ethics and about the penalties imposed in case of non-compliance (Akeley Spear, & Miller, 2012).

Research that has been done worldwide has revealed a variety of reasons why students tend to copy and exploit. Many students take advantage of their fellow students because they do not know how to cooperate or because they consider them better (Alwan & Winarso, 2022). Also, after research with special "eye tracking" glasses, it was revealed that many secretly copy and take advantage of their fellow students, since during the exams they were looking for ways to copy from those next to them (Thomas & Jeffers, 2020). For the above reasons and as a means of coping, Al-Rawi, Ali Alheeti, Abdul-Kader, & Al-Ani (2022), propose facial movement detection systems where during the exams they will identify who has copied. Other reasons that promote exploitation among students are the lack of free time and family or personal problems that a student may be facing. Still, many have not found a system that helps them concentrate and read effectively (Ramorola, 2014). Some researchers also consider the small classes with the limited number of seats as a cause of exploitation where they force students to sit very close to each other, making it easier for them to copy (Poole, Copp, & Musch, 2023). The majority of students who copy and exploit, however, appear to do so due to lack of time, boredom, self-doubt, and stress (Reinhardt, Trnka, & Reinhard, 2023). However, the question arises as to if students who cheat cannot respect those around them and follow the rules of ethical conduct, how much will they be able to stand in a society, respect values and honor their fellow citizens? (Atesh, Ward, & Baruah, 2016).

It is therefore understood that, both in Greece and abroad, plagiarism, copying and exploitation are issues that are of considerable concern to universities and efforts are being made to reduce them as much as possible. Research that has been done around the world have shown that the most frequent way of copying is through electronic sources and from fellow students. Lack of reading leads students to exploit and pay many times other people to do their assignments. Of course, the students emphasize that many times clear instructions are not given, resulting in them completely changing the meaning of a text, not paraphrasing correctly, and being led to plagiarism. Thus, software like Turnitin helps students to avoid such unethical practices because many, while they know what the practices are, do not know how to avoid them. So many argue that the consequences of unethical practices should be made known to everyone and that violations of the rules should be punished, as most do it secretly. All students must make proper use of the bibliography and references, not copy, or exploit anyone for their own personal success (Yousaf & Iqbal, 2019; Manar & Shameem, 2014; Merkel, 2019; Festas, Seixas, & Matos, 2022; Waigand, 2019; Adam, Anderson, & Spronken-Smith, 2017; Gullifer, Tyson, & 2014; Newton, 2016; Powell & Singh, 2016; Waltzer, Samuelson, & Dahl, 2022; Nguyen, 2021; Abbasi et al., 2021; Issrani et al., 2021; Nabee, Mageto, & Pisa, 2020).

3. Methodology

3.1 Scope and Aims of the Research

The purpose of this research is to investigate the opinions of students regarding plagiarism and copying in universities during the semester (assignments) and in the examination (before and after covid era). Its purpose, in other words, is to capture in quantitative terms, the extent to which students' resort to ethical, or unethical, practices during their studies, the reasons why they do it, what those reasons are and how this particular reason can be addressed.

More specifically, the objectives of the research are:

1). To understand students' knowledge and attitudes towards plagiarism and copying in exams.

2). To understand the reasons for which they are led to copy.

3). To record the ways and means of copying.

4). To record ways to reduce copying.

5). To detect the inequalities that are created among the students in terms of factionalism.

6). To understand how the pandemic period affected the rates of plagiarism and copying in exams.

3.2 Population and Sampling

The population of the research was made up of university students within the prefecture of Thessaloniki. The sample resulted from random sampling, with the snowball method. The number of answered questionnaires reached the number of 250 participants. As the sample is

larger than 200 persons, it can be assumed that the distribution is normal, and it insures representativeness.

3.3 Research Method and Tool

To analyze the data, quantitative practices (quantitative research) will be used.

Based on the objectives set for the research, it was considered effective to implement quantitative research, with a closed-type questionnaire (scales) as the main tool. After all, the questionnaire is considered as the most appropriate tool for conducting a survey, which wishes to collect and examine many students gathering and analyzing their opinions and then drawing conclusions (Hoinville & Jowell, 1978).

Even though, the use of only one method to conduct research is feared, as it carries the risk of a limitation in methodology (Smith, H., 1975) and a lack in quality of results (Cohen & Manion, 2002), it was considered sufficient to examine students' attitudes quantitatively and not to examine them with qualitative methods.

To collect the data, as a research tool, the questionnaire was used. More specifically, a written questionnaire was sent to a wide range of students, which consisted exclusively of closed-ended questions. These questions were divided into questions concerning demographic and social characteristics of the participants and into 3 scales (Plagiarism, Exploitation, Copying). Scales A and B are composed of 3 subscales and scale C is composed of 2 subscales.

In more detail, the subscales of the first scale (A. Plagiarism) are as follows:

A1. Ethic of plagiarism (5-point Likert scale in the form of 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree) (7 questions)

A2. Will for plagiarism (5-point Likert scale in the form of 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree) (6 questions)

A3. Plagiarism during the pandemic period (5-point Likert scale in the form of 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree) (5 questions)

Continuing, the subscales of the second scale (B. Exploitation), are:

B1. Morality (5-point Likert scale in the form of 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree) (6 questions)

B 2. Exploitation disposition (5-point Likert scale in the form of 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree) (5 questions)

B3. Control (5-point Likert scale in the form of 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree) (6 questions)

Finally, the subscales of the third scale (C. Copy), are the following:

C1. Control (5-point Likert scale in the form of 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 =

neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree) (5 questions)

C2. Copy during the pandemic period. (5-point Likert scale in the form of 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree) (6 questions)

The following practice was followed to validate the questionnaire:

Initially, the research tool (questionnaire) was created, according to the theoretical framework of the research and the research data.

Once the creation of the questionnaire was completed, it was sampled by a small sample of students and corrections followed.

Before the data collection began, the face validity test followed, in order to validate the data. More specifically, for the validation of the questionnaire, the following practice was followed:

(a) The research tool was designed in full alignment with the literature and, as already mentioned, in correspondence with the research problem and the individual research questions.

(b) This was followed by critical readings by potential subjects of the sample (5 people), which helped the researcher to make relevant clarifications and corrections.

(c) An additional 10 colleagues/potential sample subjects were asked to rate each questionnaire question/statement on a scale of 1 (absolutely negative) to 5 (absolutely positive) for clarity of wording, and its relevance and adequacy in relation to the purpose and objectives of the research.

For this reason, they were calculated (Zamanzadeh, et. al., 2014): (a) the usefulness of the statements (CVR), (b) the relevance of the statements (I-CVIs and S-CVI), (c) the clarity of declarations (I-CVIs). Finally, the Cohen (1960) index was calculated based on the following equation:

$$k = \frac{(I - CVI - Pc)}{1 - Pc}$$

The kappa index was calculated using the following equation:

$$Pc = \frac{N!}{A! \, (N - a)!} \; x \; 0.5N$$

The kappa statistic value is .0,77.

Completing the above procedures, the questionnaire began to be sent through social media platforms to receive the data.

After the required data was collected, it was checked and analyzed.

It must be pointed out that all the conditions and procedures defined by scientific and

research ethics will be respectfully followed.

3.4 Analysis of the Data

The data of the present research were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics v.28, using descriptive and inductive statistics. In order to examine the demographic data and their effect on the results of the survey, as well as the data collection questions, in the form of a Likert scale, in the degree of disagreement-agreement expressed by the participants who were asked to answer the questionnaire, a t-test was used for the binomial variables and analysis of variance (Anova) test for variables that take more than two values.

3.5 Moral and Ethical Issues of the Study

Every scientific community supports and promotes responsibility, ethical awareness, and respect towards the conduct of research, and the procedures followed (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Considering the above, during the investigation, but also wider procedures followed to conduct and complete this research, all participants were fully informed about the purpose and objectives of the research. Participants responded voluntarily, were randomly selected, anonymous and no one was forced to participate. In addition, they were not asked during the questionnaire to be exposed to stressful situations and in no case was the question of violating their personal data and their personal life in general (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Each participant had the option and the right to withdraw from the questionnaire at any time they wished. The data collected were used only for the preparation of the present quantitative research. To recap, all the practices followed, at every stage of the research process, are characterized by ethics.

3.6 The Sample

The 250 students of the research were distributed regarding their gender, age, the year and the field of their studies, their place of origin and residence, the educational level of their parents, and their economic independence. Table 1 shows the characteristics of the sample.

Table 1. Demographic and social characteristics of the sample

Gender	f	%
Male	31	13,5
Female	199	86,5
Age	**f**	**%**
18-20	60	26,1
21-22	104	45,2
23 and over	66	28,7

Year of studies	f	%
1-2	50	21,7
3-4	133	57,8
5 and over	47	20,4
Place of origin	**f**	**%**
Greece	216	93,9
Other	14	6,1
Residence	**f**	**%**
Urban area	116	50,4
Rural area	69	30,0
Suburban area	45	19,6
Field of studies	**f**	**%**
Social sciences	143	62,2
Humanities	53	23,0
Science	28	12,2
Arts	6	2,6
Mother's education	**f**	**%**
Has not completed Primary Education	7	3,0
Primary Education graduate	15	6,5
Secondary education graduate	71	30,9
Tertiary graduate	141	49,6
Postgraduate	23	10,0
Father's education	**f**	**%**
Has not completed Primary Education	7	3,0
Primary Education graduate	28	12,2
Secondary education graduate	86	37,4
Tertiary graduate	90	39,1
Postgraduate	19	8,3

Economic Independence	f	%
Yes	58	25,2
No	172	74,8

4. Results

Table 2 shows Cronbach's alpha test for each scale. As we can see from Table 3, the mean of the scale A2 is below 3.5, showing a not especially strong but meaningful degree of disagreement. The mean of the rest scales, show a division between participants' statements.

Table 2. Cronbach's alpha test for each scale

Scale's Code	Name of the scale	Cronbach's Alpha
A1	Ethic of plagiarism	,776
A2	Will for plagiarism	,734
A3	Plagiarism during the pandemic period	,727
B1	Morality	,826
B2	Exploitation disposition	,758
B3	Control (for exploitation)	,770
C1	Control (for copying)	,733
C2	Copy during the pandemic period	,726

Table 3. Means of the scales

Scale's Code	Name of the scale	Mean	S. D
A1	Ethic of plagiarism	4,1354	,63646
A2	Will for plagiarism	3,3333	,74700
A3	Plagiarism during the pandemic period	3,6104	,74557
B1	Morality	4,2033	,73381
B2	Exploitation disposition	3,9600	,72721
B3	Control (for exploitation)	4,0800	,61789
C1	Control (for copying)	4,1744	,59501
C2	Copy during the pandemic period	3,9500	,66359

Table 4. Highest means of the A1 scale

Scale's Code	Statement	Mean	S. D
A.1.1	I know plagiarism is a bad practice.	4,37	,842
A.1.2	Plagiarism is not acceptable in the academic community.	4,45	,806
A.1.3	Plagiarism has negative consequences for academic ethics.	4,42	,834

Table 5. Lowest means of the A2 scale

Scale's Code	Statement	Mean	S. D
A.2.2	Plagiarism reduces the chances of mistakes.	2,73	1,164
A.2.5	Students are led to plagiarism, due to the short deadline for submitting their assignments.	3,32	1,166
A.2.6	Students are often led to plagiarism because there is not much control and therefore fear of penalties.	3,18	1,211

Table 6. Highest means of the A3 scale

Scale's Code	Statement	Mean	S. D
A.3.2	During the pandemic period, the excessive use of technology has positively enhanced plagiarism in the academic community.	3,70	1,031
A.3.4	I believe that, during the pandemic period, the rates of plagiarism in students work have increased.	3,66	1,006
A.3.5	During the pandemic period, students' anxiety about their efficiency decreased, as they rested thinking that everything is easier through the internet.	3,73	1,121

Table 7. Highest means of the B1 scale

Scale's Code	Statement	Mean	S. D
B.1.1	I consider using someone else's work to be an unethical practice.	4,34	,949
B.1.4	I think it is unfair that someone succeeds in his/her academic course, with the effort of another.	4,46	,855
B.1.5	I find it unethical to delegate my tasks to someone else.	4,22	1,051

Table 8. Highest means of the B2 scale

Scale's Code	Statement	Mean	S. D
B.2.1	I think exploitation is not a good practice.	4,50	,724
B.2.3	The absence of control by professors gives students the opportunity to copy.	3,80	1,095
B.2.5	I believe that using someone else's work is considered exploitation.	4,11	1,038

Table 9. Highest means of the B3 scale

Scale's Code	Statement	Mean	S. D
B.3.3	The control of students' work must be objective.	4,50	,713
B.3.5	Teachers must follow the same process of checking assignments.	4,40	,787
B.3.6	Professors need to consider cases of high plagiarism rates very carefully, taking every parameter into account.	4,30	,741

Table 10. Highest means of the C1 scale

Scale's Code	Statement	Mean	S. D
C.1.3	Copy checking must be objective.	4,40	,718
C.1.4	Professors must check with the same criteria, all students' work.	4,49	,793
C.1.5	Students must be informed from the beginning of their studies about the effects of copying.	4,52	,756

Table 11. Highest means of the C2 scale

Scale's Code	Statement	Mean	S. D
C.2.1	During the pandemic period, copying increased, favoring students who were not studying.	4,20	,940
C.2.4	During the pandemic, copying between students was easier.	4,23	,936
C.2.6	During the pandemic, technology has been a positive contributor to replication.	4,15	,935

Consolidated, the statements with the highest degree of agreement, as the Table 4, Table 6,

Table 7, Table 8, Table 9, Table 10, Table 11 indicate, are:

For scale A1 (Ethic of plagiarism):

A.1.1   I know plagiarism is a bad practice (4,37/5)

A.1.2   Plagiarism is not acceptable in the academic community (4,45/5)

A.1.3   Plagiarism has negative consequences for academic ethics (4,42/5)

Respectively, for scale A3 (Plagiarism during the pandemic period):

A.3.2   During the pandemic period, the excessive use of technology has positively enhanced plagiarism in the academic community (3,70/5)

A.3.4   I believe that, during the pandemic period, the rates of plagiarism in students work have increased (3,66/5)

A.3.5   During the pandemic period, students' anxiety about their efficiency decreased, as they rested thinking that everything is easier through the internet (3,73/5)

Regarding, scale B1 (Morality):

B.1.1   I consider using someone else's work to be an unethical practice (4,34/5)

B.1.4   I think it is unfair that someone succeeds in his/her academic course, with the effort of another (4,46/5)

B.1.5   I find it unethical to delegate my tasks to someone else (4,22/5)

About scale B2 (Exploitation disposition):

B.2.1   I think exploitation is not a good practice (4,50/5)

B.2.3   The absence of control by professors gives students the opportunity to copy (3,80/5)

B.2.5   I believe that using someone else's work is considered exploitation (4,11/5)

For scale B3 (Control (for exploitation)):

B.3.3   The control of students' work must be objective (4,50/5)

B.3.5   Teachers must follow the same process of checking assignments (4,40/5)

B.3.6   Professors need to consider cases of high plagiarism rates very carefully, taking every parameter into account (4,30/5)

 Regarding C1 (Control (for copying)):

C.1.3   Copy checking must be objective (4,40/5)

C.1.4   Professors must check with the same criteria, all students' work (4,49/5)

C.1.5   Students must be informed from the beginning of their studies about the effects of copying (4,52/5)

Lastly C2 (Copy during the pandemic period):

C.2.1   During the pandemic period, copying increased, favoring students who were not studying (4,20/5)

C.2.4 During the pandemic, copying between students was easier (4,23/5)

C.2.6   During the pandemic, technology has been a positive contributor to replication (4,15/5)

As for scale A2 (Will for plagiarism), the statements with the highest degree of disagreement, as the Table 5 indicates, are:

A.2.2 Plagiarism reduces the chances of mistakes (2,73/5)

A.2.5   Students are led to plagiarism, due to the short deadline for submitting their assignments (3,32/5)

A.2.6   Students are often led to plagiarism because there is not much control and therefore fear of penalties (3,18/5)

In order to examine the effect of demographic factors as well as information gathering questions on the degree of agreement expressed by the subjects of the sample, a t-test was used for the binomial variables and a variance test (Anova) was used for the variables that received more than one value.

According to the results of the controls, gender, age, year of study, place of origin, place of residence during most of the participants' life, mother's level of education and the existence or not of financial independence, do not seem to differentiate the responses of the sample subjects. On the contrary, the scientific field of study, as well as the father's level of education, seem to influence the answers to the above statements.

More in detail, the Anova test with Bonferroni Post-Hoc Test showed a statistically significant difference in the A2 scale, "Disposition to sidestep", between the subjects coming from the scientific field of social sciences and those coming from the scientific field of arts. People who are part of the field of social sciences, seem to declare a lower average than those who study Arts (F= 7.399, df= 3, sig.= <.001). Correspondingly, the rest of the scientific fields show a difference in relation to art. More specifically, both the humanities and the positive sciences present an equally low average as the scientific field of arts studies.

Regarding father's level of education, the Anova test with Bonferroni Post-Hoc Test, showed a statistically significant difference in scale C2, "Copying during the pandemic period", between the participants who answered "Primary graduate" and those who answered "Secondary Education Graduate", "Tertiary Graduate" and "Master/PhD Degree Holder". More specifically, those who chose "Primary Graduate", seem to have a lower average than those who chose the answers below. In other words, there are fewer of those who copied during the pandemic and their father is a graduate of primary education (F= 5.236, df= 4, sig.= <.001).

5. Discussion

The majority of research has proven that plagiarism, copying and wider exploitation among students is recognized and considered by a percentage of individuals as an unethical practice and something that should be avoided and not happen. (Waltzer, DeBernardi, & Dahl, 2023˙ Davis et al., 1992˙ Jensen et al., 2002˙ Stephens, 2018˙ Yousaf & Iqbal, 2019˙ Issrani et al., 2021). This is because the trust that exists between students and university professors is lost when they detect plagiarism, something that also affects their wider relationship and interaction (Longfield, 2022˙ Gullifer & Tyson, 2014˙ Nabee, Mageto, & Pisa, 2020). After all, this is also confirmed by the present research, in which the largest sample of the population that participated, absolutely agreed that plagiarism harms the academic community and brings negative consequences to academic ethics, which both professors must observe and respect, as well as the students.

What is inferred is that the causes that lead to plagiarism vary. Initially, one of the most basic reasons is the lack of time of the students as they have many obligations and a large amount of work to cope with the demands of the faculty. Even the procrastination many times possessed by them increases their anxiety and thus they resort to unethical practices to ensure their success (Mukasa, Stokes, & Mukona, 2023). The present research, however, through its results, revealed that it is not clear enough why students are led to plagiarism, as the majority of the sample neither agrees nor strongly disagrees with the fact that the pressure of time and the lack of it, leads them to these unethical practices. In addition, the findings of this research show that most students do not have the academic maturity and experience to avoid plagiarism. Insufficient knowledge, the absence of adequate understanding of the concept of plagiarism (Nguyen, 2021) and the absence of practice and by extension experience, lead to wrong practices, such as plagiarism (Newton, 2016; Mukasa, Stokes, & Mukona, 2023).

One more reason is considered to be the rapid development of technological means which gives students the possibility to copy. Many universities around the world choose to use technological means to communicate and inform their students. However, many students use technology unethically and end up taking advantage of the advantages offered by using the internet. They use unethical practices such as plagiarism, copying and exploiting fellow students and foreigners, by asking them to produce their own papers by paying them (Désiron & Petko, 2023). The above is also confirmed by the present research, in which absolute agreement was found in the fact that the excessive use of technological means, especially during the pandemic, increased the rates of plagiarism and copying among students.

Copying, not succeeding after putting in personal effort, using someone else's work as is with or without their consent and generally resorting to such practices is not only unethical but also unfair both to their fellow students and to the teachers (Fowler et al., 2022). In fact, the flexibility that exists from some professors, the lack of penalties and strict controls reduces students' fear and strengthens their intention to copy (Abbasi et al., 2021), because they state that, although an unethical practice, it is a very easy and immediate solution, which helps them stay consistent with their obligations to the school (Garg & Goel, 2022). For this reason, there should be frequent thorough and objective checks on the students' work and their

writings in the exams and the appropriate penalties should be imposed where necessary so that the students realize how serious the issue is and use morals and honest practices (Alsabhan, 2023).

Although the surveys have proven that the majority of students know what copying is and what its negative effects are, both the others and the present survey showed that all students, although they knew from the beginning of their studies why they should avoid copying, have copied at least once and in fact most stated that they know other fellow students who have done so (Manar et al., 2022; Waltzer, Samuelson, & Dahl, 2022). Students argue that a good solution to avoid plagiarism is to carry out objective checks, as in the case of exploitation, for students to take responsibility for their actions, for clear instructions to be given by professors (Merkel, 2019) and to make good checks on their writings and assignments (Anosova & Gavrilova, 2022).

During the pandemic, professors and students had to adapt to new data such as online courses, assignments, the replacement of exams with assignments (in some courses) and online exams. According to the findings, the rates of plagiarism, copying and exploitation increased during the pandemic, as for most students, the use of technological means helped them to prepare their work easier, faster and more efficiently. Cooperation between students was easier, as was cheating in exams (Al-Maqbali & Hussain, 2022). Of course, the present research contradicts the research findings of Jenkins et al. (2022), as the results of their research support that the main reason that increased the causes of copying and plagiarism during the pandemic, are the pressure and stress of the students. On the contrary, the present research discovered that opinions differ on whether or not the stress of students increased during the pandemic.

In conclusion, it can be seen from all the above that plagiarism, copying and exploitation are practices that should be avoided by every student in every academic community. The reasons that lead students to tend to resort to this kind of unethical practices seem to vary. However, there are several solutions which, if both professors and students follow, will achieve the reduction of the increased percentages of the above practices and at the same time, academic integrity, ethics, and justice will be ensured. Students will begin to resort to honest practices and schools will not be forced to impose penalties, which may disrupt a student's course of study.

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