Procedures used by Brazilian Universities to Combat Academic Plagiarism

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**Abstract**

This study proposes to analyze a subject relevant to the academic environment, plagiarism. To this end, it was sought in the news portals Folha de São Paulo, G1 and Terra cases of academic plagiarism related to Brazilian universities, where the objective is to analyze how they treat the cases of plagiarism that became public. For the study, four cases that occurred and were widely disseminated by the media related to the following universities were treated: UFAC, UFMG, UFPA and USP. Additionally, it was documented, in terms of normative structure, with the universities fighting the problem of plagiarism, thus, research was conducted on the respective electronic portals of each university in order to verify if there is an internal normative structure to prevent attitudes contrary to the ethical behavior of students, teachers and researchers. Finally, each case of academic plagiarism was presented and discussed. The contribution of the study is to encourage educational institutions to create proposals and actions to combat any type of plagiarism.

**Keywords:** code of ethics; academic plagiarism; Brazilian universities

1. Introduction

The foundations and developments regarding plagiarism, especially academic plagiarism, are not recent. In recent years, information has been massified due to the rapid access to information via the Internet, by means of research tools, which often generates the tendency of the student to copy something without citing the source.

Thus, plagiarism is more than an academic issue, it is cultural, and why not say ethical. Before any approach, it is necessary to define that the action of appropriating or expropriating work, image, citation, or any intellectual right of others assuming as their authorship is known as plagiarism. (FACHINI; DOMINGUES, 2008)
In student life, according to Silva (2008, p.357) "from elementary school to university, we have been living with the practice of copies of other people's textual productions, partially or totally, omitting the source". In the cultural sphere, from the process of development and training of people we are induced to imitate or copy similarities from others.

The ethical problem intensifies with the popularization of the use of research done on the Internet, created the computerized society, where people have been used, or why not say, if appropriate of works protected by copyright without any mention of the source or the author (SILVA, 2008).

According to Fachini and Domingues (2008, p.3) "there is a growing concern in the academic world with the improper use of other people's content without the proper citation and referencing of the true author".

In this sense, the relevance of the study consists of the need to propagate the understanding of academic plagiarism. Thus, the opportunity arose to analyze and understand the following question: how are universities dealing with cases of plagiarism?

The objective of the research proposed here is to analyze how Brazilian universities deal with cases of plagiarism, specifically those disclosed publicly on the news portals Folha de São Paulo, G1 and Terra related to the following higher education institutions: Federal University of Acre (UFAC), Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG), Federal University of Pará (UFPA) and University of São Paulo (USP).

2. Previous Research

In this section will be presented the concepts of plagiarism and fraud, types of plagiarism, copyright law and normative and legal instruments to combat plagiarism adopted by the universities under study.

2.1. Conceptualization and Differentiation between Fraud and Plagiarism

In order to contextualize the problem under study, it is necessary to address the similarities and differences between the terms fraud and plagiarism.

For Ramos (2012) academic fraud is an old act, however, the way contemporary society obtains information through the prisms of speed, digital technologies and globalization can contribute to its trivialization in the current context.

According to Souza (2003 apud Ramos, 2012), the term fraud, in Tax Law, derives from the Latin fraus, frauds, which means deception, bad faith, deceit. The nomenclature serves to characterize the malicious deception or astute action, which is important to record, occurs in bad faith, to allow the concealment of the truth or the evasion of the obligation.

Although the concept appreciates the ethical dimension of the violation manifested by the practice of academic fraud, it still does not have the due scope required by this article, which is basically due to the fact that its species, in some cases, also insert the disrespect to the legislation, which may constitute crime. This is the typical case, for example, of plagiarism, which is a crime against intellectual property (RAMOS, 2012).

In spite of the meaning of plagiarism, in a general way, is understood by people, according to Smith (2012, p.124) "plagiarism is to take the work of others, in whole or in part, attributing the quality of the author in order to publish it and/or disseminate it".

According to Chaves (1983, p.406 apud SMITH, 2012, p.124) "plagiarism would be the mode of intellectual usurpation most repudiated, not only for its malice, its concealment, by the conscious and intentional bad faith [...] in appropriating itself as if it were his own".

According to Smith (2012, p.134) "plagiarism goes beyond the fine boundary of inspiration and fair use of excerpts from other works to produce new knowledge, to characterize itself as a true usurpation of a work or part of it, and, when found, must be repressed.

Still regarding plagiarism, according to Garschagen (2006), there are at least three types of plagiarism: integral, partial and conceptual. The first concerns the copying of an entire work without
citing the source, the second describes the collage resulting from the selection of paragraphs or phrases of one or several authors without mentioning the works, finally, the third type inserts the sense of use of the essence of the author's work expressed differently from the original.

Fraud and plagiarism have practically the same meaning, especially when they are directly related to the intentionality and consummation of actions. For Barros and Duque (2015, p.3) "all are unethical conducts that bring negativity to social behavior and repudiation of the feeling of impunity in a permissive society".

2.2. Categorisation of Plagiarism

The Institute of Education and Research (Insper) prepared a primer on plagiarism where the objective is to guide "[...] about the institutional vision regarding the practices that characterize academic plagiarism and how this violation can be avoided" (INSPER, 2012, p.3).

Insper prepared the document based on the most common practices of plagiarism found in academia, "from the understanding of codes of conduct and academic integrity made available by various institutions inside and outside Brazil (INSPER, 2012, p.4).

Insper (2012, P.4-8) categorized the types of plagiarism offense into eight classes, namely:
1. Literal or Direct Plagiarism: directly copy a passage of the text without citing a source;
2. Transliteral Plagiarism: paraphrase a passage of the text without citing the source. Paraphrasing a text is sometimes necessary, especially when one wants to reproduce it in a language that is understandable to the audience. It is common to believe that, by exchanging words for synonyms, the idea becomes original, being unnecessary the citation of the source. Writing someone else's idea with your words does not make the idea your own, and it also characterizes plagiarism;
3. Self-plagiarism: a work done by a person or group and serves as a basis - or is copied - and presented as original in more than one situation;
4. Plagiarism of sources: when the writer, to prepare his work, uses a quotation from the author consulted and cites it in his work as if he had the original document in hand. In this case, it is correct to cite the citation, i.e., cite the secondary source (that which is in your possession) using terms such as "apud" or "in accordance with", referring to the primary source. This type of citation should be avoided, and whenever possible the ideal is to access the original document;
5. Internet information: all texts that are published, regardless of the medium in which they are reproduced, should be cited. The fact that a text is on the Internet does not exempt the author from the obligation to cite the source, otherwise it will be characterized plagiarism;
6. To be based on the work of colleagues: when the author uses part or the whole work of a colleague to prepare his own document. It should be emphasized that, if the work of a colleague is published, regardless of the means of communication, the formal rules of citation and reference should be followed. In case of violation, the punishment falls on the one who plagiarized;
7. Works delivered by the student, but carried out by others: It is considered an infraction the purchase and/or delegation to other people or organizations regarding the preparation of works under the student's responsibility;
8. Teachers' class notes: copying the information contained in material that teachers present in class without citing the source, is also considered plagiarism.

Given the above, the systematic study of the theme in question should further strengthen the concern of not performing any type of plagiarism.
2.3. Copyright Law

This part of the theoretical framework aims to contextualize and guide the work in relation to the Brazilian copyright legislation, as a regulatory agent of ethical behavior in the field of copyright. Copyright is regulated by a number of legal norms identified in the Federal Constitution, in the Copyright Law and in international treaties. The specific purpose is clearly to protect the use of creation without the creator's consent.

For De Paulo (2002, p.107) copyright is the "right exercised by the author or his descendants over his works, with respect to the right to use, enjoy and dispose of his literary, artistic or scientific work, as well as to authorize its use or fruition by third parties".

The prohibition of plagiarism is regulated by Law No. 9,610 of 1998 (Copyright Law - LDA-98). The Law does not define plagiarism nor does it specify the term, but it does protect the author's moral rights over his work:

Art. 24. It's the author's moral rights:
   I. to claim, at any time, the authorship of the work;
   II. to have his name, pseudonym or conventional sign indicated or announced, as being the author's, in the use of his work;
   III. to conserve the unpublished work;
   IV. to ensure the integrity of the work, opposing any changes or the practice of acts that, in any way, may harm it or affect it, as author, in its reputation or honor;
   V. to modify the work, before or after its use;
   VI. to remove from circulation the work or to suspend any form of use already authorized, when the circulation or use implies an affront to its reputation and image;
   VII. to have access to a unique and rare copy of the work, when it is legitimately in the possession of another, for the purpose of, through a photographic or similar process, or audiovisual, preserving its memory, so as to cause the least possible inconvenience to its holder, which, in any case, will be indemnified for any damage or loss caused to it (Brazil, 1998).

According to LDA-98 the author cannot transfer or waive his moral rights: "Art. 27. The moral rights of the author are inalienable and inalienable" (BRAZIL, 1998).

According to Duque (2012, p.13) "the knowledge and effective applicability of the LDA should initially be based on ethics and responsibility for the two-way commitment between pedagogical mediator and student and sedimented in the correct pedagogical intervention in the hatchery of academic works".

3. Methodology

This chapter describes the methodological procedures that will enable the problem situation, already presented in the introduction, to be answered. Thus, the chapter is divided into three parts: the first consists of the description of the method, the second in data collection, and the last one details the treatment of the data.

3.1. Method

Regarding the objectives, the research is characterized as descriptive. Prodanov and Freitas (2013, p.52) consider descriptive research:

[...] when the researcher only records and describes the facts observed without interfering in them. It aims to describe the characteristics of a certain population or phenomenon or the establishment of relations between variables. It involves the use of standardized data collection techniques: questionnaire and systematic observation. It generally takes the form of a survey.
Descriptive research "observes, records, analyzes and orders data, without manipulating it, that is, without interference from the researcher. It seeks to discover the frequency with which a fact occurs, its nature, its characteristics, causes, relationships with other facts" (PRODANOV; FREITAS, 2013, p.52).

As for the procedures, the research is characterized as documental, because throughout the study we will resort to more diversified and dispersed sources, without analytical treatment, such as digital newspapers, journals, official documents, academic articles, among others (FONSECA, 2002).

3.2. Data Collection

The database is formed by official and formal documents obtained through researches carried out in the news portals Folha de São Paulo, G1 and Terra related to the Brazilian higher education institutions that have widely disclosed in the aforementioned media their cases of academic plagiarism.

Through research, the results were categorized according to nine types of plagiarism, namely: speech, music, monograph (in this context is inserted undergraduate, graduate, master and doctorate), image, book, program script, film script, film and fraud. In the tabulation of the research, it should also be mentioned that in some cases it was not possible to categorize the type of plagiarism, this time, the unidentified classification was adopted.

Four cases of academic plagiarism directly related to the theme of the article were found in the data collection. These were widely disseminated by the media, linked to the following higher education institutions: Federal University of Acre (UFAC), Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG), Federal University of Pará (UFPA) and University of São Paulo (USP).

3.3. Data Processing

The treatment of the research of plagiarism cases took place in order to empirically analyze the information obtained through publication in the media mentioned throughout the study. The categorization object of study is the monograph, however, only the cases that occurred in Brazilian universities were considered, due to the search in the news portals presenting occurrences from foreign universities.

After due verification of the cases of academic plagiarism disclosed by the universities under study, contact was made via e-mail in order to verify if there is any normative device adopted by them to prevent the practice of academic plagiarism.

It is also noteworthy that, in addition to sending a message by e-mail, there was a search for information regarding the ethics and behavior manuals directly on the respective pages of each university related to the proposed study.

The objective is to know, in terms of legal structure, whether universities are ready to treat cases of plagiarism and how the reported cases have been remedied.

4. Analysis and Discussion of Results

Throughout this part of the article, the four cases under study will be presented. Seeking to contextualize and mention the facts that occurred around the decisions taken by universities.

4.1. Regulatory Devices that Universities use to Prevent Plagiarism

In this subsection of the analysis and discussion of the results, the aim is to map and describe how much the universities that have identified cases of plagiarism have codes of ethics or any type of material, whose purpose is to combat previously in a legal and normative way any type of plagiarism.

The following chart lists which universities, have formal and official documents relating to the following aspects: bylaws and by-laws, code of ethics, ethics committee, normative resolution. It is noteworthy that for the compilation of information, there was intense research on the respective
institutional portals of each university, as well as the sending of messages by e-mail to the ethics committees in order to question the existence of any regulatory instrument to combat plagiarism.

The universities that are part of the theoretical framework are exactly the four that are being analyzed in this research: UFAC, UFMG, UFPA and USP.

Table 1: Standards adopted by each university

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Rules and regulations</th>
<th>Code of ethics</th>
<th>Ethics Committee</th>
<th>Normative Resolution</th>
<th>Addresses the theme of plagiarism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UFAC</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UFMG</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Under development</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UFPA</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USP</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N° 4.871 de 22/10/2011</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the table above, it can be verified that only USP directly deals with plagiarism with a clearly defined policy and disseminated among all faculty and students. In the other universities, both the internal regulations and the statute did not mention the central theme of the proposed research.

4.2. UFAC

Another way to plagiarize in academia is to exactly make identical copies of contest and entrance exam questions. The University Council of UFAC decided to fully annul the selection process of 2008 for entry into undergraduate courses of 17,800 (seventeen thousand eight hundred) graduates in six (6) municipalities of the state of Acre after denouncing plagiarism involving issues of examinations of disciplines: geography, history and Portuguese.

According to the news portals used as a source of research, at the time the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office (MPF), by means of a letter, recommended the rectory to annul the evidence. According to the agency, 15 (fifteen) out of 85 (eighty-five) items of the objective stage were identical transcripts of questions applied in vestibulars of other educational institutions, or even questions that were included in manuals of preclass courses.

Table 2: Comparative table between total questions and plagiarized questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Number of questions</th>
<th>Plagiarized issues</th>
<th>Percentage of plagiarism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total objective questions</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the table above, it can be seen that 53% of the questions in the geography test were plagiarized, while 60% of the history test, 10% of the Portuguese test, and among the total of objective questions 18% represent questions copied.

Plagiarism identified in the vestibular selection process was so widespread that even the proposed theme for writing had already been used by the University Foundation for Vestibular (Fuvest), according to the MPF.

For this year's vestibular selection process, 1,790 places (one thousand seven hundred and ninety) were opened for 41 (forty-one) undergraduate courses. The process was not cancelled, only the test, since the UFAC applied the new tests in February 2009.


4.3. UFMG

The University Council of UFMG decided to annul the defense of doctoral thesis of a certain doctoral student, consequently cancelling her doctoral degree in Literary Studies by the Faculty of Letters, obtained in 2004.

The decision was taken through disciplinary proceedings brought against the doctoral candidate for clear practice of plagiarism. The complaint came directly from the author of the plagiarized work.

No matter how much plagiarism occurred in 2004, it was in 2010 that the investigation to investigate the case took place. The commission of inquiry formed by professors of the Faculty of Letters made the first notes before transferring to the University Council, then the case was analyzed by the Congregation and the Graduate Chamber of the Faculty of Letters and by the Council for Teaching, Research and Extension (Cepe).

According to the information linked to the news portals, the committee mentioned in its opinion, after extensive analysis and fact-finding, that there was plagiarism in the doctoral thesis, proven by several excerpts copied in full or subtly amended, thus the Council decided to withdraw the title.

It should be noted that in the document generated by the Commission, the doctoral candidate did not contest any exclusionary justification against the act of plagiarising authorial property. To everyone's surprise, she expressly affirms the copy made without citing the source.

4.4. UFPA

A certain entomologist from UFPA was accused of academic plagiarism. Among some of his publications, he had a scientific article canceled by Neotropical Entomology magazine, for having copied integral parts of works already published, as well as a book on entomology canceled by Springer, international publisher of scientific works.

According to the media, this researcher is a repeat offender when the subject is academic plagiarism, since his name is linked to frauds of scientific nature since when he held his post-doctoral fellowship at Unesp (Universidade Estadual Paulista). Among some accusations, those mentioned above have been proven. These were the motivating agent to lead him to the dismissal of the Brazilian Society of Entomology and Fiocruz (Oswaldo Cruz Foundation), where he had a scholarship cut in 2008.

4.5. USP

In 2011, the rectory of USP disconnected a teacher of exclusive dedication, with experience of more than 15 years of career, from its technical staff for plagiarism. According to the university's understanding, he led (main author) the research work that plagiarized from other researchers.

Also within the punishment, a researcher had her doctor's degree revoked, because according to the investigation, it was found that she was responsible for the contested parties.

In the process that lasted more than a year, it was verified that the research team of the Faculdade de Ciências Farmacêuticas de Ribeirão Preto (Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences of Ribeirão Preto) copied images from 2003 and 2006 works without crediting them to the authors, from UFRJ (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro).

The study comprised ten scientists who investigated whether a particular substance isolated from the jaraca was useful against the dengue virus and was published by the journal Biochemical Pharmacology. The case occurred in 2009 and, according to the professor, the error was of one of the students who exchanged the images, but without any kind of malice.

Chronologically, the case was developed in four moments: in 2003, the first publication by the UFRJ group on the eventual application of a substance extracted from the Amazonian sacaca plant for the control of leishmaniasis occurred. In the second moment, in 2008, the USP group published a study that investigated whether a substance isolated from the jaraca was useful against dengue. The third moment occurred when UFRJ researchers denounced that part of their work was included in that of
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USP without proper reference or citation. In the same year, the rectory of USP decided to set up an inquiry to verify the case. Finally, in the last chronological act, USP decides to disconnect the research leader and revoke the title of the researcher responsible for the wrongly published images.

It should also be noted that the last case of dismissal at USP due to plagiarism was in 1995, involving a professor at the Institute of Psychology. In recent years, at least two other complaints have arisen, in the institutes of physics and law, however, both did not cause dismissal.

5. Summary and Concluding Remarks
This article focused on the question of research in renowned and respected news portals, where the objective was to bring cases of academic plagiarism experienced by large Brazilian universities, with the question: how are universities dealing with cases of plagiarism? According to Matos (2017, p.40): 
"the standard [...] gives the auditor the discretion on how to report critical audit matters in his report, enabling the inclusion or not of information that may be relevant to the user of the accounting information".

Among the four universities cited, only USP presented a solid program to combat academic plagiarism. Therefore, it is understood that in Brazil the debates on the practice of academic plagiarism are still embryonic, although there are contributions on the subject (Krokoscz, 2011).

Universities cannot remain oblivious to the reality that plagiarism is an old theme and its practice is increasing considerably, mainly due to the technological avenue. Plagiarism is of particular concern in the academic field, where written production is an important demand (Krokoscz, 2011, p.764).

In view of the facts mentioned, it is understood that over time there will be a real need to create proposals to combat plagiarism in the academic environment by educational institutions, or who knows the strengthening of policies related to the subject, as well as the maintenance of content and academic practices to combat this problem.

References