Review Article

Theories of Plagiarism and Their Implications for Detecting Plagiarism in the Context of Higher Education

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Abstract	Article Information
Concern about academic dishonesty is on the rise among students at all levels of education. Plagiarism has been much reduced in academic settings. Nonetheless, technological progress is causing its rate to increase. As a result, progress in one country and overall knowledge are impeded. Consequently, we should look for methods to identify instances of plagiarism in academic settings. When it comes to finding instances of plagiarism, theories of plagiarism are crucial. Because they lay the theoretical foundations for knowing what plagiarism is, how to spot cases of academic dishonesty, and how to avoid and discourage it, they are crucial for finding it at universities. In this paper, we reviewed various theories and their implications for detecting plagiarism, including social desirability theory, rational choice theory, cognitive theory, cultural theory, social learning theory, strain theory, and differential association theory. Colleges and universities can maintain a climate of academic honesty and fairness by incorporating them into course offerings and policymaking. So, this article can be used by universities, businesses, consultants, educators, and students to reduce instances of plagiarism.	 *Corresponding Author: Habtamu Walga Aadaba E-mail: habtamuwalga3@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Academic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, and fabrication, is a significant challenge to the quality of education worldwide. Plagiarism involves using others' work without acknowledgment. The Ethiopian government is working to improve the quality of education nowadays. Academic honesty is part of the scientific enterprise and scientific writing. Good academic writing must be clear, concise, and accurate in what is being reported. However, the author of this paper observed that here is a growing of plagiarism among postgraduate students at Ambo University in conducting their theses or submitting their assignments. In order to minimise plagiarism in higher education, there are notable plagiarism detection theories. Therefore, in this paper, several theories of plagiarism that help detect plagiarism were reviewed.

Implications of Rational Choice Theory for Addressing Plagiarism

Rational choice theory (RCT) is important for understanding why people do what they do (Loughran et al., 2016). RCT proposes that people choose to plagiarise because they believe it will benefit them in some ways. Students may plagiarise to save time and

effort on research and assignments. Another reason is that students may believe that it will result in higher grades than if they had honestly completed tasks. Fear of failure is another reason. Students may plagiarise out of fear of failing an assignment or course. Students may also not fully understand it or source attribution (Loughran et al., 2016).

Rational choice theory suggests that schools should foster a culture of academic integrity and focus on fear of justice and morality to combat students' plagiarism. This includes providing clear information and resources and impacting those who plagiarize. Teachers can reduce it by creating relevant assignments and addressing the root causes of plagiarism (Ray et al., 2020). In short, RCT tells people to plagiarise because they believe it will help them in some way.

The rational choice theory also highlights the importance of clear instructions on plagiarism, developing policies and procedures to prevent it, and providing students with training and support in appropriate writing techniques. Promoting academic honesty and integrity helps to address the root causes of student plagiarism. Clear guidelines, resources, and outcomes can also prevent plagiarism and promote educational justice (Ray et al., 2020).
While Rational Choice Theory has been applied to various fields, including economics and criminology, its implications for addressing plagiarism have faced criticism. For instance, it assumes individuals act rationally. It has been criticized for its limited understanding of complex motivations, neglect of social and contextual factors, and insufficient consideration of moral and ethical dimensions (Sutherland-Smith, 2017). Critics

also argue that this theory overlooks the importance of moral and ethical aspects of plagiarism, such as academic integrity and intellectual property rights. They also argue that the theory assumes perfect information and rationality, but in reality, students may have incomplete information about academic integrity policies and consequences (Weber-Wulff, 2019). They argue that the theory neglects the importance of prevention, education, and fostering a culture of academic integrity (Carroll, 2007).

It is important to note that, while rational choice theory has faced criticism in the context of addressing plagiarism, it can still provide some valuable insights. However, a comprehensive approach to addressing plagiarism should consider these criticisms and integrate other theoretical perspectives and strategies that account for the complex and multifaceted nature of plagiarism.

Implications of Social Learning Theory in Detecting Plagiarism

Social learning theory is a psychological theory that states that people learn by observing the behaviour of others and the consequences of that ehavior. The theory was developed by psychologist Albert Bandura in the 1960s and is widely used in many fields, such as education, crime, and leadership (Webster & Harmon, 2002). This theory proposes that people learn to engage in certain behaviours, such as plagiarism, by observing the behaviour of others. This theory suggests that plagiarism is a learned behaviour, and teachers can identify patterns by reviewing students' works and comparing similarities. They can also monitor peers' behaviour to detect plagiarism. Teachers can act as role

models and promote ethical learning by identifying resources and creating original projects (Hafsa, 2019).

A multifaceted approach, including identifying patterns, observing peer behaviours, modelling positive behaviour, and providing education and experience, can promote academic integrity. Social learning theory suggests that individuals learn from observing others, which can be applied to plagiarism detection. By understanding this process, educators can develop strategies to promote ethical academic practices and discourage plagiarism. By rewarding original work and citation practices, educators can create a positive academic environment. Peer influence can also be leveraged to encourage accountability and discussions on plagiarism and citation practices (Zimmerman, 2000).

Critics of social learning theory argue that it overemphasises observational learning, neglects internal mental processes, and overlooks biological factors. They also argue that the theory has limited predictive power for complex behaviours, overlooks contextual factors, and underestimates individual agency. They state that the theory overlooks the importance of situational and cultural factors in understanding human behaviour and that individuals can actively shape their own learning experiences and behaviours through self-reflection, goal-setting, and self-regulation (Hergenhahn & Olson, 2017).

Generally, it is important to note that while the Social Learning Theory has received criticism, it has also been influential in many areas of psychology and education, especially to detect plagiarism in higher education. Researchers have to build upon social learning theory and integrate it with other theories to create a more comprehensive understanding of plagiarism and its detection.

Implications of Cognitive Theory for Detecting Plagiarism

Cognitive theory suggests that plagiarism may be the result of cognitive processes, such as memory errors or difficulty generating original ideas. This theory is a psychological theory that focuses on how people see, act, and use information to make decisions, solve problems, and learn new things. The theory suggests that mental processes such as listening, thinking, memory, and thinking play an important role in shaping human behaviour (Bandura, 1997). It also highlights the impact of cognitive development on learning and decision-making, particularly in education, where plagiarism may arise from cognitive errors. (Bandura, 1997; Singhal et al., 2004).

The implications of cognitive theory for detecting plagiarism include activities such as identifying cognitive problems, providing writing support, using plagiarism detection software, and developing critical thinking skills. By understanding the intellectual challenges students face, teachers can provide support to help them overcome these challenges and avoid committing plagiarism (Bandura, 1997).

Another implication is that providing students with support in the writing process can help reduce plagiarism. For example, teachers can provide resources and support to help students develop original ideas and gather information accurately. In addition to this, plagiarism detection software can be used to analyse the nature of the matching text, which can help identify plagiarism. By determining the nature of it, teachers and

colleges can investigate further to determine whether there is plagiarism and take appropriate action. Finally, developing critical thinking skills can help students avoid academic misbehavior. By encouraging students to review and analyse materials, teachers can help students develop their own ideas and opinions, thereby reducing the likelihood of plagiarism (Singhal et al., 2004). Generally, in order to minimise the impact of plagiarism on the advancement of knowledge, it is important to provide support to students, use software to detect plagiarism, and encourage positive thinking to prevent plagiarism and promote academic integrity.

Implications of Cultural Theory for Detecting Plagiarism

Cultural theory suggests that plagiarism can be influenced by culture and beliefs about writing and authenticity. It emphasises the importance of understanding the culture in which people live and work, as these beliefs can vary between societies and affect behaviour in subtle and complex ways (Woolfolk., 2010). Teachers and colleges need to understand the cultural practices and practices of leadership to prevent plagiarism. For example, borrowing the work of others is considered an act of respect in some cultures, while in others it is seen as a form of theft. The other way is that teachers and schools can also provide cultural awareness training to help students understand the culture and norms associated with writing. This helps to prevent plagiarism that can result from cultural misunderstandings. Teachers and colleges can promote the integrity of education by providing clear information about the causes and consequences of taking

someone's work without acknowledgement. Additionally, encouraging students to develop their own ideas and thoughts will help reduce the need to resort to violence. In short, the impact of cultural theory in detecting plagiarism often highlights the importance of understanding the cultural and social aspects of it, providing education, promoting fair education, supporting the ability to prevent it, and promoting a culture of fair education.

Implications of Social Desirability Theory for Detecting Plagiarism

Many educators consider the erosion of ethics in our self-centred society as the reason why learners are increasingly cheating (Klein, 2011). This theory suggests that individuals may conform to social norms to gain approval or avoid disapproval. This can be used to detect plagiarism by understanding motivations and identifying suspicious patterns. Plagiarism detection systems can use this understanding to identify writing styles, language use, and referencing patterns that deviate from the norm. The theory also emphasises the importance of considering the social and cultural context in which behaviours occur. By integrating social desirability considerations into analysis, educators can identify inconsistencies between claimed work and actual performance, raising suspicions of potential plagiarism (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Overall, the implications of Social Desirability Theory for detecting plagiarism highlight the importance of using objective measures, providing anonymous reporting mechanisms, educating students, and creating a culture of academic integrity to prevent plagiarism and promote honest and ethical academic practices.

Self-control Theory and its Implications for Detecting Plagiarism

Low self-control in students leads to easy plagiarism, despite learning to detect it. This theory, as explained by Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990), highlights the importance of self-control in criminal behaviour. Self-control theory has also been associated with reducing plagiarism. Some of the main implications are explained here. Self-control theory suggests that students will plagiarise because they have no desire to resist temptation, even if they know it is wrong (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990). Anti-plagiarism training should help to develop self-control. Teachers and colleges must help students develop good behaviour and academic integrity. Once this becomes a habit, it is easy to manage. Repeated practice and feedback help build habits. Understanding the factors that cause students to plagiarise can help develop strategies to prevent or overcome them. For example, staying up late, pressure from friends, lack of time, and understanding difficult concepts can cause plagiarism.

The upbringing of students in such conditions leads to resistance (Hirschi, 2004; Pratt et al., 2006). When faced with the choice of whether or not to plagiarise, taking some time to weigh the pros and cons can help them make the right choice. Students can delay gratification, divide large tasks into smaller projects, avoid excuses, think about the future before the benefits of justice, etc. They can learn many self-management skills. Additionally, rapid feedback and early detection of plagiarism can help students understand the consequences of their actions and develop self-control for the future. Then harsh punishments reinforce it. In summary,

self-control theory emphasises the importance of shaping emotions, forming attitudes, form-seeking, intelligence, feedback, and punishment. All of this together can empower students to make honest learning a habit, not an automatic behaviour (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990).

Implications of Strain Theory for Detecting Plagiarism

Strain theory suggests that pressure and tension/stress increase one's criminal acts. Students may commit academic dishonesty because they may lack a college or university's facilities, overload, or lack of time to submit their work. It was found that frustration, depression, and fear are factors that lead students to exhibit deviant behaviour in academia. Strain's theory also has some good insights for reducing plagiarism. This theory has some implications for addressing plagiarism. For instance, by providing a source of support for students, Having a teacher, mentor, friends, and support can help students cope with stress. Empowerment can make them feel that their needs and concerns are legitimately addressed. By reducing opportunities, teachers can minimise the occurrence of plagiarism. For example, short-term time constraints, small tasks, alternative assessments, etc. It can reduce the stress that causes distraction. By providing justified rewards, plagiarism can also be minimized. While punishment has a limited role, providing rewards and positive reinforcement when students demonstrate integrity in the face of strain can strengthen such behavior. In summary, strain theory suggests that focusing on addressing causes of frustration, providing strong support systems, reducing motivating

opportunities and pressures, providing guidance on coping mechanisms, building resilience, and providing justified rewards can minimise plagiarism. An integrated approach considering these implications can help students cope with strains in ethical ways rather than resorting to plagiarism.

Implications of Differential Association Theory in Detecting Plagiarism

According to the Differential Association Theory, the most important contexts for learning about criminal behaviour include friends and family, but different settings such as schools, communities, and the media can also be other contexts. There are two main differences between integration and interaction behavior. Interactional behaviour refers to direct and indirect interactions and connections with people involved in crime, whereas integration behaviour in the context of detecting plagiarism refers to the strategies, practices, and measures taken to seamlessly incorporate plagiarism detection into the research or academic workflow (Renzetti, 2008). Plagiarism detection can be applied to Differential Association Theory in that it proposes that plagiarism is learned through interactions with others in social groups, especially peers and mentors (Jeffrey et al., 2015). Differential association theory highlights the importance of shaping ethical culture, managing peer influences, socialising integrity values, setting clear rules, providing guidance and support, and recognising positive shaping forces in detecting plagiarism. The theory also highlights the importance of developing and promoting an academic integrity culture where ethical values regarding citation practices, original work, etc. are widely shared and upheld (Renzetti, 2008). The other implication can be addressed by addressing peer influence. Negative peer pressure and plagiaristic attitudes and strategies should be counteracted. Positive peer support for integrity should be encouraged. Peer mentoring can also help promote high standards (Jeffrey et al., 2015).

Socialise ethical values by discussing why values enhance internalization. The academic environment, including formal and hidden curricula, should socialise students into accepting integrity, values, and rules. Opportunities to apply values in practice also strengthen them. In a similar way, by setting clear rules and policies, concerned bodies may minimise the occurrence of plagiarism. While culture is important, clear rules, policies, and consequences regarding plagiarism are also necessary to discourage such deviant behaviour (Jeffrey et al., 2015). Strong support systems are important, according to the Differential Association Theory. The availability of mentors, counsellors, and teacher guidance enhances students' ability to make ethical choices in the face of difficulties from others. In another way, positive shaping influences, including mentors demonstrating integrity and values, should also be fostered. Moreover, guidelines for advising and supporting students in this regard can help shape conducive learning environments. Finally, by considering situational factors, the theory of differential association can be applied to minimise plagiarism. The theory suggests that considering situational factors surrounding social interactions can shape ethical learning. Factors like group dynamics, norms, leadership, changes in relationships over time, etc. may also need to be addressed (Renzetti, 2008).

CONCLUSIONS

Plagiarism is one of the major challenges to the quality of education at different levels across the world, with the advancement of modern technology. The quality of education is the great concern of the world these days, especially in higher education. Therefore, in order to minimize the occurrence of plagiarism, something needs to be done. Therefore, the author of this paper believes that one of the ways to minimise plagiarism is by teaching theories of it and their implications. Therefore, theories such as rational choice theory, social learning theory, cognitive theory, cultural theory, social desirability theory, self-control theory, strain theory, and differential association theory were explained with their important implications in detecting plagiarism. These theories and their implications may help higher institutions, organisations, consultants, teachers, and students use this paper to minimise the occurrence of plagiarism.

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