


## IN TIMES OF PLAGIARISM: A STUDY ON THE IMPORTANCE OF ETHICS IN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

 <https://doi.org/10.56238/sevened2024.041-048>

**José Kleber Felix dos Santos<sup>1</sup>**

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### ABSTRACT

Currently, the practice of plagiarism in academic works by undergraduate and graduate students has been the subject of growing concern and identified by some as a common and commonplace act. Plagiarism in academic works by undergraduate and graduate students has been the object of growing concern and identified by some as a common and commonplace act. Thus, the objective of this work is to analyze a conduct considered punishable in the criminal sphere, including laws that guide institutions to punitive measures. The methodology used was the bibliographic review on plagiarism, considered here a phenomenon with its complexity, which needs to be analyzed in an interdisciplinary way and not only in a legal way. In this question, it is concluded that theorists refer us to the discussion about ethics in research as a positive factor of analysis.

**Keywords:** Ethics in Research. Plagiarism. Integrity in research.

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<sup>1</sup> Columbia College - PY  
Paraguay, Asunción, Republica del Paraguay  
[jkleberfelix@gmail.com](mailto:jkleberfelix@gmail.com)

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Currently, plagiarism has been common among some students at different levels of education, in view of this scenario, the importance of this article is justified, where it involves the breach of academic ethics. Regardless of the area of study and the nature of the research, it is essential to observe the various **ethical principles in the production of knowledge**. The lack of ethics diminishes the scientific value of the researcher, tarnishing his reputation and career, compromising even the institution to which he is linked.

The present work, of a qualitative nature, is entitled "In Times of Plagiarism: A Study on the Importance of Ethics in Scientific Research". The intention of the study was to analyze scientific articles that addressed the theme in question, identify how the theme is questioned in the articles, the concept and meanings of plagiarism and ethics and the damage to the academic world. Thus, the objective of this work was to analyze a conduct considered punishable in the criminal sphere, including the existence of laws that guide institutions for punitive measures

The methodology as an integral part of the research project is configured in the steps through which the researcher must walk to guide the conduct of the investigation. As a method for data collection, exploratory bibliographic research was used in several websites for articles that addressed the theme under study, 10 articles were selected, but the study was chosen only for 02 articles, as they were the ones that dealt directly with the subject of the study.

The selected articles were: Plagiarism: general impressions on ethical issues and the damage to the academic process of Leonardo Ferreira Vilaça, the second article is entitled "Thinking about Academic Plagiarism, Would this be a lack of Ethics in the search for appearance?" The article was written by José Fernando Santos Gramoza.

## 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The practice of plagiarism in the academic environment has been the subject of discussion by several authors, leading to the production of articles that can raise awareness and even inhibit this unethical practice.

Two articles were selected that address the theme. The selected articles were: Plagiarism: general impressions on ethical issues and the damage to the academic progress of Leonardo Ferreira Vilaça, the second article is entitled "Thinking about Academic Plagiarism, Would this be a lack of Ethics in the search for appearance?" The article was written by José Fernando Santos Gramoza.

The article Plagiarism: general impressions on ethical issues and the damage to academic progress written by Leonardo Ferreira Vilaça who holds a Master's degree in Business Law from Faculdade Milton Campos (FDMC). Master's degree in International and Community Law from PUC Minas. Specialist in Civil Procedural Law from the University of Itaúna (UIT). Specialist in Pedagogical Coordination from PUC Minas. Postgraduate student in Public Management at UFLA. Postgraduate student in Business Law at PUC Minas. He contributed quite significantly to the study.

In this article, Vilaça considers that "plagiarism is one of the most rejected practices in the academic environment and is considered a cause of stagnation in the production of innovation and in the degree of technological development of a community or country." In this article, the author addresses the concept of plagiarism defined by the *website* Hr. Idiomas (2017):

Plagiarism from the Greek plagiarism, oblique, crossed, by the Latin *plagium*, theft. The word is at the origin of the word the meaning of deviation, hence the meaning of middleman for the one who, neither producing nor buying the goods, only intermediates the business. Even in ancient Rome, however, those who stole slaves from others or sold free men as slaves committed plagiarism.

Still in the words of Vilaça:

As can be seen, in antiquity, whether in Greece or Rome, the word "plagiarism" received meanings linked to the negative ideas of deviation and theft/robbery, that is, practices that were not illicit, certainly devoid of rectitude or ethics. And certainly, despite the human-cultural evolution and new meaning, in today's times, plagiarism has not lost its weight as an irregular practice – morally inappropriate (especially in the academic sphere) and foreseen as typical conduct, punishable in the civil sphere.

In this article, the author addresses the National Cancer Institute José Alencar Gomes da Silva (INCA), which through its Education Coordination produced in 2012 a booklet widely disseminated on the internet and also made available by the Distance Learning Department of the Federal University of Lavras (UFLA) in its Distance Learning Graduate courses, entitled "Academic Plagiarism: Knowing to Fight" (2017). As a theme mentioned in the aforementioned booklet, plagiarism is provided for as a crime by the current criminal legislation, that is, a violation of the "Copyright" of others, (article 184 and its paragraphs), which in itself already demonstrates that this practice is ethically reprehensible by society and by its respective legal system". In addition, the national legislation provides for punishment in the civil sphere for the offender, practicing such conduct, guaranteeing the right to compensation for the "despoiled" of his intellectual property (authorial).

Another theme embroidered in the booklet cited by the author concerns the CNPQ, plagiarism and ethics in academic research, in this regard he states that plagiarism has

several peculiarities, as can be observed, although there are two characteristics from which it cannot be deviated: it is the practice of a fraudulent act and the mere repetition of something already existing, not constituting any type of technological evolution for any field of science – it is a delay in the production of human knowledge, with social, economic, cultural and political consequences.

According to Vilaça, the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development – CNPQ, a public body classified as an agency linked to the Ministry of Science, Technology, Innovation and Communication, concerned with the increase in the incidence of plagiarism and fraud in the scientific environment and with the need to guide good conduct in this area, which avoid or mitigate the harm of "excessive copying", in 2011 it established a Commission with the mission, among others, of producing specific reports on the "integrity" of research in Brazil.

Also according to the author, this report defines modalities of fraud and misconduct in publications (among them, plagiarism and self-plagiarism). The author considers the report fruitful in its good observations and contributions to national research and respective future technological development, however it stands out for creating ethical parameters regarding fraud in research, recommending to the CNPQ two lines of action:

- a) Preventive and pedagogical actions – in view of the importance of good guidance in the field of research and production of knowledge, the CNPQ must define good practices for everyone, especially young people, and those that are not considered acceptable, it must encourage the offer of disciplines with ethical content and research integrity in graduate and undergraduate courses and qualify/guide professors, due to their importance as academic advisors (CNPq, 2017).
- b) Actions to discourage misconduct (including punishments): institution of a permanent committee by the CNPq Deliberative Council, made up of highly respectable members from different areas of knowledge, with competences to examine situations in which well-founded doubts arise as to the integrity of the research carried out/published (not encouraging false or unfounded complaints), to decide preliminarily whether there is grounds that justify a specific investigation, to be carried out by an expert in the area appointed ad hoc, to propose or not to the Executive Board of CNPq the appropriate developments, and, finally, to evaluate the quality of the available material on ethics and research integrity, to be published on the pages of CNPq (CNPq, 2017).

For the author, the greatest contribution of the aforementioned report is the creation of a set of the main and most appropriate ethical postures (guidelines), with regard to citations, indications of a source of consultation, respect for research and the production of knowledge of others, here in Brazil – moral rules guiding the legal framework constituted from then on and inspired by conducts previously disciplined, namely:

1. The author must always give credit to all sources that directly support his work.
2. Any citation *in verbis* by another author must be placed in quotation marks.
3. When summarizing someone else's text, the author must try to reproduce the exact meaning of the ideas or facts presented by the original author, who must be cited.
4. When in doubt a concept or fact is common knowledge, one should not fail to make the appropriate citations.
5. When a manuscript is submitted for publication containing information, conclusions, or data that has already been significantly disseminated (e.g., presented at a conference, disseminated on the internet). The author must clearly indicate to the editors and readers the existence of prior disclosure in the information.
6. If the results of a single complex study can be presented as a cohesive whole, it is not considered ethical for them to be fragmented into individual manuscripts.
7. To avoid any characterization of self-plagiarism, the use of previous texts and works by the author himself must be marked, with the appropriate references and citations.
8. The author must ensure the correctness of each citation and that each citation in the bibliography corresponds to a citation in the text of the manuscript. The author should also give credit to the authors who first reported the observation or idea being presented.
9. When describing the work of others, the author should not rely on secondary abstracts of that work, which can lead to a flawed description of the work cited. Whenever possible, consult the original literature.
10. If an author needs to cite a secondary source (e.g., a review) to describe the content of a primary source (e.g., an empirical article in a journal), he or she should ensure that it is correct and always indicate the original source of the information being reported.
11. The intentional inclusion of references of questionable relevance for the purpose of manipulating impact factors or increasing the probability of acceptance of the manuscript is ethically unacceptable.

12. When it is necessary to use information from other sources, the author should write in such a way that it is clear to readers which ideas are his or her own and which come from the sources consulted.
13. The author has an ethical responsibility to report evidence that contradicts his or her point of view, whenever it exists. Moreover, the evidence used in support of their positions must be methodically sound. When it is necessary to resort to studies that present methodological, statistical or backward deficiencies, such defects should be clearly pointed out to the readers.
14. The author has an ethical obligation to report all aspects of the study that may be important for the independent reproducibility of his research.
15. Any alteration of the initial results obtained, such as the elimination of discrepancies or the use of alternative statistical methods, should be clearly described along with a rational rationale for employing such procedures.
16. The inclusion of authors in the manuscript should be discussed before starting the collaboration and should be based on already established guidelines, such as those of the International *Committee of Medical Journal Editors*.
17. Only people who have lent significant contributions to the work deserve authorship in a manuscript. Significant contribution is understood as conducting experiments, participating in the elaboration of experimental planning, analysis of results, or elaboration of the body of the manuscript. Borrowing equipment, obtaining funding, or general supervision alone does not warrant the inclusion of new authors, who should be objects of gratitude.
18. Collaboration between teachers and students must follow the same criteria. Supervisors should take care not to include students with little or no contribution or exclude those who actually participated in the work. Phantom authorship in Science is ethically unacceptable.
19. All authors of a work are responsible for the veracity and suitability of the work, with the first author and the corresponding author being fully responsible, and the other authors responsible for their individual contributions.
20. Authors should be able to describe, when requested, their personal contribution to the work.
21. All research work must be conducted within ethical standards in its execution, whether with animals or with human beings (CNPq, 2017).

The second article that brought contributions to the study is entitled "Thinking about Academic Plagiarism, Would this be a lack of Ethics in the search for appearance?" The article was written by José Fernando Santos Gramoza, graduated in Philosophy from the Federal University of Sergipe. He worked as an intern at NEPHEM/UFS (Center for Studies and Research in Philosophy of History and Modernity), having later joined the group as a researcher of the PIBIC-CNPq/UFS program, in the History of Modern Philosophy research line. In the group, he studied philosophers John Locke and Immanuel Kant in two different research projects. It studies the following topics: Scientific Methodology; John Locke and Politics; Tolerance and Education; Immanuel Kant and Education. Modern Philosophy and Modernity. Education. Laicization of the State. He is also interested in Methodology and Scientific Posture and in issues related to social problems in Brazil, and is currently part of the Study and Research Group on History, Society and Education in the State of Sergipe.

In his article Gramoza brings the reflection of the thought of anthropologist Hippolyte Adolphe Taine, which he states as being essential to understand man. The environment, the race and the historical moment are the imperative points to understand man. For the author, with this reflective line we think that humanity has been losing the sense of the relations between itself and nature, and the justification presented here will be that this happened through the use that it gave to modernity and the way it used its benefits, such as technological ones.

According to Gramoza (2019), the misuse of the benefits and procedures used and developed in this modern era converged to the lack of ethics – which occurs, we think, in a non-reflective way, because we do not understand what this could generate, such as disbelief in the seriousness in the preparation of academic works – of which plagiarism is also a cause, but not the biggest one.

Gramoza takes the concept of plagiarism contained in the Aurélio Dictionary of Portuguese Language "Action that derives its etymology from the Greek term *plagiarism*, and means, 'cheater', 'oblique', plagiarism has as meaning of its verb in the infinitive, plagiarizing, signing or presenting as one's own (artistic or scientific work of another); imitate (work of others). The author understands that as imitation and copying, such an unethical manifestation is perpetrated in the name of seeking the appearance of possessing scientific knowledge without at least following the path of scientificity.

The article presents studies on the Ancient Age, Middle Ages, the Renaissance and modernity. According to the author, modernity has brought, over time, numerous discoveries to humanity, which came from the scientific and industrial revolutions, which profoundly marked the West. These many processes, which have accumulated benefits such as

electricity, machines, basic sanitation, telephone and internet, among many other improvements, have contributed a lot to the emancipation of the human person.

Gramoza (2019), considers that we should think about what this "Era" has become, which was said to be superimposed on myths, obscurantism, but enlightened, in an uninterrupted process of progress, towards human perfectibility. This same "Age" has become cold and calculating, irrational, individualistic, hostage to capital and technologies, to which all the rules of human life dictate, whether economic or sexual, the latter in the relationship with the individual or with the environment.

In his analysis of contemporaneity, he states that people who use the internet, in order to obtain some knowledge and information, must in the name of ethics – be it understood as a science of human conduct that, based on man's rational capacity, aims to achieve happiness from standards of good and evil, data of the correct relationship with the other and with nature – to act with attention and criticality in the face of the information conveyed there, because not all of them, logically, are at the service of scientific research.

Thus, he considers that the internet represents a public means of navigation, where countless information of the most diverse types circulate, even without much security, with regard to its reliability. As a principle, it is necessary that this technology be used in the name of good and correct conduct among humanity, in order to discover more and more knowledge and benefits for its improvement, in an ethical, fair and collective way, not as a value judgment, but as what must be done for a work to be accepted as the result of scientific research.

For the author, it is not possible to think that all those who make use of these technologies were ethical, such tools would be used in favor of knowledge, but hardly of improper reproduction?

Gramoza (2019) draws attention to plagiarism as a criminal act by stating that this criminal action is foreseen and subject to criminal sanctions. Thus, it is previously established both in the Copyright Law, which states its Article 28, which: "The author has the exclusive right to use, enjoy and dispose of the literary, artistic or scientific work". And in Article 29 that: "The use of the work, by any modality, depends on the author's prior and express authorization". As for the sanction in the Penal Code, it states in its Article 184 that: "violating copyright and those related to it [...] Penalty of detention, from 3 (three) months to 1 (one) year, or fine." It may increase to 2 (two) to 4 (four) years, and a fine", if the violation consists of "total or partial reproduction, with the intention of profit [...], by any means or process, of intellectual work, [...], without the express authorization of the author.



For Gramoza (2019), plagiarism is always a misappropriation, whether at any scale of knowledge and is subject to criminal sanction. Such an act is a kind of theft or theft of work and knowledge of others. The author also states that it is extremely important to make due reference to the knowledge used in scientific research, not to praise or to please those who published the idea or research, but to be fair and correct with those who committed themselves and gave their time on the arduous path that is the search for knowledge. It is also necessary, unlike seeming to possess it, to go in search of knowledge in fact. To this end, it is important to remember that such acquisition is continuous and time-consuming and that it does not need to be sought for any other issue than itself, so that its fruits are as collective as possible, which when it is materialized, can be used to improve and reduce the problems of humanity, as well as for a better and more dignified life.

The methodology as an integral part of the research project is configured in the steps through which the researcher must walk to guide the conduct of the investigation. Thus, a qualitative research, according to Minayo (2010 *apud* MARTINS; RAMOS, 2013, p. 10):

It seeks very specific and detailed issues, worrying about a level of reality that cannot be measured and quantified. The author also adds that it acts based on meanings, reasons, desires, beliefs, values, attitudes and other subjective characteristics of the human being that cannot be limited to numerical variables.

Thus, the works should include the record of the voices or writings of the research agents, collected through participant observation and semi-structured interviews, the researcher's reflection, a complex and interpretative description of the problem, their contribution to science being understood as a call for change.

### 3 CONCLUSION

Thus, plagiarism and other types of academic fraud are the object of current institutional concerns related to teaching and research in Brazil. The term ethics in scientific research should always be on the agenda for research research, despite the limitations when it comes to new research technologies, especially in the twenty-first century, when there are works addressing topics such as artificial intelligence. In this way, the Brazilian government agencies are concerned with the maintenance of ethics and plagiarism, CNPq invests in the quality of the works that are published. In this way, Vilaça and Gramoza analyze the importance of the role of CNPq, so that ethics is always present, minimizing possible plagiarism in scientific works.

The study also emphasizes the importance of ethics for society and for academia, because by exercising ethics through the convergence between authors in relation to ethics in research, referring to the seriousness and responsibility that the researcher has in a

scientific work, and also passes us the negativity of plagiarism as illicit, subject to punishment in the civil and criminal sphere.

Scientific research has an unparalleled relevance for the development of humanity, its results can be used to improve and reduce humanity's problems, as well as for a better and more dignified life for the entire planet. Plagiarism has been extremely new to scientific research, as it has contributed nothing to the discovery of science, it is recommended that plagiarism be treated as ethical and punitive issues. Establishing measures that can guide beginner students in academic scientific production is of fundamental importance to minimize such practice.

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