

## PAPER

**Plagiarism and quotation: perceptions of Brazilian graduate students in pedagogy*****Plágio e citação: percepções de pós-graduandos em educação***Carlos Lopes<sup>a</sup> 

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**ABSTRACT**

This study analyses the understanding of master's and doctoral students in Education about plagiarism, the issue of self-plagiarism and training to master citation rules in order to avoid academic misconduct. As well as dealing with some of the converging aspects in international literature on the concept of plagiarism, the article stresses that the discussion does not end with the definition of its typologies, but also includes issues related to other illicit behaviours, such as fraud, deception (Carrol, 2016) and self-plagiarism (Diniz; Terra, 2014; Phyo *et al.*, 2022). The content analysis method (Bardin, 2011) was used to examine the 17 interviews conducted with postgraduates and the results of 123 questionnaires were explored. In this way, the research integrates the quantitative and qualitative survey dimensions in the analysis process, from a descriptive and exploratory perspective. In conclusion: all postgraduates understand what plagiarism is, but self-plagiarism is a "strange figure" when associated with plagiarism. There is a moral and ethical rule for writing academic texts, which is used on the basis of the belief in standardization, through citation, to avoid plagiarism. However, this rule comes up against limits and deviations.

*Keywords:* Plagiarism. Quotation. Academic Integrity. Graduate Courses.

**RESUMO**

Este estudo analisa a compreensão de mestrandos e doutorandos em Educação sobre o plágio, a questão do autoplágio e a capacitação pelo domínio das normas de citação, com vistas a evitar a má conduta acadêmica. O artigo, além de tratar de alguns dos aspectos convergentes na literatura internacional sobre o conceito de plágio, frisa que a discussão não se encerra com a definição de suas tipologias, comportando também temas ligados a outros comportamentos ilícitos, como a fraude, o ludibrio (Carrol, 2016) e o autoplágio (Diniz; Terra, 2014; Phyo *et al.*, 2022). Foi adotado o método análise de conteúdo (Bardin, 2011) para o exame das 17 entrevistas realizadas com pós-graduandos e ocorreu a exploração do resultado de 123 questionários. Dessa forma, a pesquisa integra a dimensão do levantamento quantitativo ao qualitativo no processo de análise,

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em perspectiva descritiva e exploratória. Em conclusão: todos os pós-graduandos compreendem o que é o plágio, mas o autoplágio é uma “figura estranhada” quando associado ao plágio. Há uma régua moral e ética para a escrita do texto acadêmico, que é utilizada a partir da crença na normalização, pela via da citação, para evitar o plágio. Entretanto, tal régua se defronta com limites e desvios.

*Palavras-chave:* Plágio. Citação. Integridade Acadêmica. Pós-Graduação.

## Introduction

The study<sup>1</sup> aims to analyze the comprehension of graduates in Pedagogy about plagiarism, the recognition of some types of plagiarism, the issue of self-plagiarism and the empowerment by mastery of quotation norms, in order to avoid academic misconduct.

Since 2013, the National Association for Postgraduate Studies and Research in Education (ANPEd) has intensified and promoted various actions and discussions on Ethics and Research in Education, including, among its initiatives, the creation of a Commission in charge of dealing with this issue in the field of the education sector and disseminating information on research ethics through the organization’s website (ANPEd, 2019). The ethical guidelines drawn up by a scientific association such as ANPEd are challenging and can include, among the relevant topics, everything from general principles to “Ethical issues in data dissemination -- Plagiarism and self-plagiarism (self-citation), Data falsification [...]” (Amorim *et al.*, 2019, p. 13). ANPEd (2019, p. 6) also emphasizes in a document that the “issue of research ethics is complex and wide-ranging”. As such, it can be seen that both plagiarism and citation, for example, are just the “tip of the iceberg” when it comes to ethical behaviour in educational research.

Roje *et al.* (2022) emphasize, in an extensive literature review of 236 papers written about the factors that influence the promotion and implementation of actions aimed at the academic integrity against misconduct (plagiarism, forgery, data manipulation), among other points, the importance of education and training in relation to the topic, mentioning the results of the studies conducted by Tagne *et al.* (2020) and Jordan and Gray (2012), respectively: a) the prominence of education for researchers’ knowledge and awareness of good and bad conduct in the production of scientific knowledge and b) the fact that training can increase the levels of trust among researchers regarding research integrity. In consulting the two studies cited by Roje *et al.* (2022), the information related to the demand of young researchers for training in research methodology and academic integrity was verified (Tagne *et al.*, 2020); the necessity

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of investing on curricular innovations in order to address the subject of plagiarism was also verified (Jordan; Gray, 2012).

Plagiarism is one of the elements that undermine the academic integrity not only of the researchers but also of Instituições de Educação Superior (IES) and the quality of their scientific production (Batane, 2010). Academic integrity is not something individual and isolated from other connections, as it is a multifaceted phenomenon. Its violation can be something imperceptible (Peixoto *et al.*, 2016), as it was demonstrated by students who are in the final year of an undergraduate course, a stage that precedes the entry of those interested in a master's degree, according to research elaborated by Comas-Forgas and Sureda Negri (2016). The authors studied the students' knowledge about what they assumed to be academic plagiarism in correlation with their knowledge about quotation norms and the occurrence of this practice in college education. According to the results obtained, the students have difficulties in recognizing plagiarism in writing, in the face of which the authors question, its repercussions on professional performance and the continuity of college studies (Comas-Forgas; Sureda-Negri, 2016). The authors concluded that: a) there was no relationship observed between the ability to recognize a plagiarized written production and the perpetration of this conduct; b) knowledge about a quotation and a bibliographic reference does not necessarily inhibit the practice of plagiarism (Comas-Forgas; Sureda-Negri, 2016).

In the graduate context, in a research that involved 53 graduate students, one of them is a PhD student and the other ones are master's students, Selemani, Chawinga e Dube (2018) concluded that, although students had an comprehension about the concept of plagiarism, most of them reported that they had already committed it intentionally and unintentionally, and that this occurred when the lack of recognition of such practice after writing a paraphrase (69.8%), when summarizing (64.1%) and when writing direct quotes (56.6%). They also emphasized, by using the notion of 'danger', the fear that students will overestimate their academic writing by failing to examine their shortcomings and the continuation of the practice of unintentional plagiarism (Selemani; Chawinga; Dube, 2018). The lack of comprehension by students about plagiarism increases the chance of its commission (Selemani; Chawinga; Dube, 2018).

It is not often that what separates the typical situations from the practice of plagiarism manage to be "unambiguous, as it happens when direct or indirect quotations turn out to be incorrect or abusive, even when correctly credited" (Ramos; Morais, 2021, p. 4). According to Ramos and Morais (2021, p. 19), students claim that they plagiarize less as they advance in their education cycles and "reveal deeper knowledge about what constitutes plagiarism and attribute greater value to possessing this knowledge".

In the authors' evaluation, such positive effect derives from the socialization process, but it is insufficient for the recognition of self-plagiarism, as well as to prevent the purchase or appropriation of academic works in an improper manner. Despite this, they recognize that not everyone is equally favored when inserting themselves in the academic culture, so some of them are unaware of the current rules and the intertextual writing, in order to be able to prepare papers without plagiarism (Ramos; Morais, 2021). Ferreira *et al.* (2013), in presenting the results of a survey conducted with 3.497 graduates of the academic master's degree, professional master's degree and PhD degree of the University of São Paulo (USP), concluded that students have elementary knowledge of the

concept of plagiarism (97.3%), but share the notion that the problem of plagiarism exists and has different causes (ethical deviations and difficulties with academic writing, such as the indication of authorship and sources consulted, which can characterize accidental plagiarism, and not by bad faith). In the study, the graduates who said they had had technical guidance were those who felt more able to avoid plagiarism and those who were more aware of the importance of developing institutional actions on the subject. The authors also identified that 97.6% of the survey participants agree that they are properly trained to avoid plagiarism, admitting that they have learned how to write quotations and bibliographic references (Ferreira *et al.*, 2013). A common finding in the studies conducted is that graduate students have the common and elementary comprehension of what plagiarism is, due to different study strategies already conducted by them (Selemani; Chawinga; Dube, 2018; Ferreira *et al.*, 2013; Phyo *et al.*, 2022).

In Graduate Programs and research groups, highlighting plagiarism and self-plagiarism, the perspective of authorship, guidelines and, among other topics, “[...] the development of active discussions on the topic, and training for the identification of proper quotation practices” (Mercado, 2019, p. 101), control rules, preventive measures and continuous training of researchers on academic integrity should be established. Tackling the issue of plagiarism also involves the level of instruction regarding the process of proper quotation in written production (Mercado, 2019). Given this reality, there are IES that have instituted academic integrity programs by developing formative activities with different contents and implementation models with a focus on the issue of plagiarism and instructions on how to cite and reference the sources, besides the information campaigns, tutorials, among other initiatives (Cerdà-Navarro *et al.*, 2022).

The study by Fazilatfar, Elhambakhsh e Allami (2018) examined the effects of anti-plagiarism teaching strategy by the use of quotation – its function and rules – as well as for the recognition of these practices in the academic work. 19 master’s students and 34 undergraduate students participated in the study, with training sessions which lasted for seven sessions of 30 minutes. The students’ quotation samples and writing tasks (before, during, and after six weeks of training) were analyzed according to the American Psychological Association (APA) standard for writing norms, with the conclusion that the students gained confidence and improved their quotation skills.

Phyo *et al.* (2022), in a study involving 213 master’s and PhD students, concluded that, among the plagiarism practices, the main ones are the lack of proper quotation of research sources and paraphrases without reference to authorship that were motivated by the lack of training and also by technical-normative ignorance about the quotation rules. According to the authors, 92% of the participants answered correctly to the definition of plagiarism previously presented; 72.8% of them said that paraphrasing and citing can prevent plagiarism; and 86.9% of them think that quotations and references also meet this purpose (Phyo *et al.*, 2022). Moreover, the lack of training and knowledge about the rules were the main reasons for the occurrence of plagiarism, according to the response of 80.3% of the students (Phyo *et al.*, 2022). However, the authors clarify that the study was successful in demonstrating the correlation between training on plagiarism and previous training as predictors for the responsible and ethical conduct in research. The importance of further research on the correlation between the characteristics of the training process and attitudes towards plagiarism throughout the academic career were also highlighted (Phyo *et al.*, 2022). Pursuing a doctorate and

publishing papers had the highest scores regarding the knowledge and attitudes towards plagiarism, aspects in which a greater statistical distance between PhD students and master's students were observed (Phyo *et al.*, 2022).

Carrol (2016) makes an important warning about the precaution of avoiding the idea that the conventions of bibliographic referencing are universal as a criterion for the recognition of academic integrity. These conventions are associated with the behavior judged as important in academia, which, in the case of academic cheating and fraud, involves values such as fairness, honesty and transparency (Carrol, 2016). There is the idea, in a complementary sense to that exposed by Carrol (2016), that the training related to the normalization of quotations and references is an important action in the preparation of texts derived from research. But it is insufficient to avoid the practice of plagiarism, since there are a number of aspects involved in such practice (Ferreira *et al.*, 2013). Shi (2008) stated that the quotation is not only the addition of an author's name and date, and its relevance lies in the fact that such practice has a subjectivity component, through which new meanings are generated in interaction with the existing contents.

The teaching-learning situations involved in the production of academic-scientific texts do not always include linguistic, textual and discursive aspects, with a predominantly organizational, structural and technical focus (Bernardino, 2018). Thus, in the use of citation, this practice does not usually cover the particularities of linguistic markers, the position of the speaker in the discourse, the management of voices in textual production, self-authorship and the effects of meaning implied in this operation (Bernardino, 2018). The approach to the subject of citation must go beyond merely normative and instrumental approaches.

It is necessary to change the mentality and expectations that only the short-term, episodic and immediate actions can generate long-term impacts. In this direction, Roje *et al.* (2022) point out that short-term actions are not sufficient to generate long-term impacts, as it requires more concrete and periodic processes to combat misconduct in academic research as well as the construction of solid evidence on the effectiveness of interventions to promote integrity in research at all levels. We add to this approach that rather than keeping the issue restricted to management within institutional policy, the course is the strategic space where the act of addressing and preventing plagiarism with effective strategies should begin (Adkins; Joyner, 2022).

Research on plagiarism lacks qualitative analyses about what has been gathered by quantitative and mixed approaches that explore both attitudes and reasons for plagiarism in academia (Ramos; Morais, 2021; Phyo *et al.*, 2022). Thus, focusing in the design and operationalization of the study presented here, we integrate the dimension of quantitative to qualitative survey in the analysis process through a descriptive and exploratory perspective by examining the theme of plagiarism associated with other topics. The research's context takes place in the specificity of the Brazilian reality and in three postgraduate courses in Pedagogy: academic master's degree, professional master's degree and PhD.

## Research questions, participants and methodological procedures

In the context of the research, we sought to provide answers to the following questions<sup>2</sup>:

- Based on a concept that has been previously explained, do postgraduates understand what plagiarism is in academic writing?
- According to their self-declaration, do graduates have a command of literal quotations and paraphrases in their written production to the point of avoiding plagiarism?
- Can postgraduates tell the difference between plagiarism and self-plagiarism?

The postgraduate students taking part in the research were part of the Postgraduate Programme in Education at the Faculty of Education (FE) of the University of Brasilia. In 2021, the surveyed population consisted of 341 students with the following course distribution: 133 students from the academic master's degree, 118 from the professional master's degree and 90 from the PhD degree. The sample was composed of 123 participants who answered the online questionnaire, whose representativeness corresponds to 36% of the population. Of the 123 respondents to the questionnaire, 17 (13.82%) expressed their intention to participate voluntarily in the interview in a specific field of this instrument. In order to formalize their participation in the study, all of them signed a free and informed consent form.

Regarding the profile of the questionnaire respondents, 75.6% (93) are women and 24.4% (30) are men; 5.7% (7) are between 20 and 25 years, 11.4% (14) are between 26 and 30 years, 17.9% (22) are between 31 and 35 years, 17.9% (22) are between 36 and 40 years, 18.7% (23) are between 41 and 45 years, 15.4% (19) are between 46-50 years, 7.3% (9) are between 51 and 55 years, and 5.7% (7) are over 55 years; 35.8% (44) are professional master's students, 33.3% (41) are academic master's students, and 30.9% (38) are PhD candidates. Of these 123 post-graduate students, in a convenience sample, 17 of them participated in the interviews, among which 4 of them were PhD students; 6 of them were master's students of the professional course and 7 of them belonged to the academic course. 11 women (64.70%) and 6 men (35.30%) were interviewed.

For data and information analysis of the research, the thematic-categorical content analysis technique (Bardin, 2011), associating category, subcategories and context units was used. The results of six questions are exposed as of five categories: 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'undecided', 'agree' and 'strongly agree'. The other result is presented from dichotomous options: 'yes' or 'no'. The reflection in the article takes as a reference the global results in each question.

From the interviews, by means of the use of a qualitative analysis approach, we extracted the manifest meanings, exposed as categories, subcategories and presence (frequency), as well as the respective units of context (Bardin, 2011), which were integrated with the quantitative data.

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<sup>2</sup> This paper presents the results of a broader research project which includes several thematic axes. Therefore, due to the extent of the quantitative and qualitative data, we will limit ourselves to dealing with only one of the axes of the research..

## Results

### *Understanding the concept of plagiarism, the use of citations and avoiding plagiarism*

In the questionnaire, from a question in which the concept of plagiarism was previously announced, the graduate students marked their level of agreement with the statement made, as shown in first table. In another question, postgraduates were asked about their level of information on what plagiarism is.

**Table 1:** Postgraduate students' understanding of plagiarism

Question	Answer	Professional Master's Degree	Academic Master's Degree	PhD	Total
Q.1 "Copying literally (word by word) a paragraph from a text without making any identification of the source consulted and presenting it as if it were mine is plagiarism" (Ferreira <i>et al.</i> , 2013, p. 62).	Totally disagree	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%
	Disagree	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%
	Undecided	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%
	Agree	20,5%	22,0%	13,2%	18,7%
	Totally agreed	79,5%	78,0%	86,8%	81,3%
	Total	44	41	38	123

**Fonte:** Data from the research.

Regarding question 1, the aggregate percentage for the agreement indicator (agree and totally agree) with the definition of plagiarism presented reached 100 %.

Through an interview, graduate students were asked to define 'plagiarism' in their own words.

One Master's student presented more detailed aspects in their definition by saying that plagiarism is:

appropriation of a text from another person or institution, [...] without the proper referencing [...] not necessarily the *ipsis litteris* text, but the appropriation of ideas, arguments in an academic publication, without you referencing who was the author of this set of ideas. [...] a paraphrase may also constitute a type of plagiarism, if it is a paraphrase that was not referenced, it is only a literal copy (Sol, 34 years, AM).

100% of them defined plagiarism in terms of shared common sense and not discrepant from the results of the questionnaire.

The high percentage of identification of the concept is in line with the findings of other studies in terms of appropriation of the general concept of plagiarism. (Ferreira *et al.*; 2013; Selemani; Chawinga; Dube, 2018).

The concept of plagiarism presents points of convergence in the international literature, as the discussion does not end with the definition of its typologies, also comprising themes linked to

other illicit behaviors, such as fraud, deceiving (Carrol, 2016) and self-plagiarism (Diniz; Terra, 2014; Phyo *et al.*, 2022). As plagiarism manifests itself in different situations – songs, books, dissertations, newspaper articles and other examples –, being universally treated in the academic, artistic and literary fields (Roig, 2015), it is possible to state that graduate students’ generic knowledge of the term is also due to this type of diffusion.

The participants in the survey were asked to self-declare in a questionnaire whether they knew how to apply the rules of verbatim quotation, paraphrasing in their texts and not committing plagiarism by correctly executing these rules, the result of which is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Self-declaration by master's and doctoral students on knowing how to apply the rules on citation and not committing plagiarism.

Question	Answer	Professional Master's Degree	Academic Master's Degree	PhD	Total
Q.2 I know how to apply ABNT rules in the elaboration of direct quotations (verbatim quotations) in my academic texts.	Totally disagree	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%
	Disagree	4,5%	2,4%	0,0%	2,4%
	Undecided	15,9%	7,3%	5,3%	9,8%
	Agree	52,3%	53,7%	36,8%	48,0%
	Totally agree	27,3%	36,6%	57,9%	39,8%
	Total	44	41	38	123
Q.3 I know how to apply ABNT rules in the elaboration of indirect quotations (paraphrase/summary of the author's ideas) in my academic texts.	Totally disagree	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%
	Disagree	6,8%	2,4%	0,0%	3,3%
	Undecided	13,6%	19,5%	5,3%	13,0%
	Agree	50,0%	56,1%	42,1%	49,6%
	Totally agree	29,5%	22,0%	52,6%	34,1%
	Total	44	41	38	123
Q.4 To avoid committing plagiarism, just follow the ABNT norms on the use of quotations (Ferreira; Persike, 2014).	Totally disagree	9,1%	7,3%	10,5%	8,9%
	Disagree	29,5%	24,4%	26,3%	26,8%
	Undecided	18,2%	22,0%	10,5%	17,1%
	Agree	36,4%	29,3%	21,1%	29,3%
	Totally agree	6,8%	17,1%	31,6%	17,9%
	Total	44	41	38	123

**Fonte:** Data from the research.

The postgraduates, both in terms of knowing how to apply the rules for verbatim citation (Q2) and paraphrasing (Q3), showed a level of agreement above 80 per cent, with 87.8 per cent and



83.7 per cent respectively. In question 4, the result for agreement was 47.2 per cent, compared to 35.7 per cent who disagreed and 17.1 per cent who were undecided.

In the qualitative approach of the research, the interviewee was asked the following question: *Does the act of learning how to cite guarantee that plagiarism will not be committed in an academic text?* According to the survey carried out in the qualitative approach, while 7 graduate students (41.16%) present the technical-normative process as a guarantee to confront plagiarism, 10 of them (58.84%) take the opposite position. In the group of 7 graduate students, which was made up of 2 master’s students of the professional course, 3 of them who belonged to the academic course and 2 PhD students, during the content analysis, the following subcategories were identified: a) learning how to do (appropriation through use) (4), b) instruction/teaching (1) and c) respect for the author (1).

We highlighted three context units with representative speech of the subcategories ‘learning how to do’ (appropriation through use), ‘instruction/teaching’ and ‘respect’ to demonstrate the meanings of the graduate students’ positioning.

**Table 3:** Subcategories and context units of quotation as a guarantee of non-plagiarism

Subcategories	Units of context (representative speeches)
Learning How to Do (making use of it through usage)	<p><i>“The best way you can use the idea, starting from someone else’s idea, is by learning how to do the quotation according to ABNT or APA norms, I believe that is the way to refrain from committing plagiarism [emphases added]” (Nashira, 41, Pm).<sup>3</sup></i></p> <p><i>“From the moment that I have appropriated more of the sources and how to cite, right? Look, this source is direct, this one is indirect – [...] Could it be that what is in the book was quoted by this author or was it quoted by another one? How am I going to quote it? I think that <i>information contributes more than the punitive process</i>. When we <i>begin to see</i>: “ah, and this quote here?” [...] “That wasn’t me who said that, it was someone who had more in-depth studies”. So, I <i>really</i> think that the <i>information...</i> when it comes, we <i>make use of it</i> [...] [emphases added]” (Sirius, 41, Am).</i></p>
Instruction/teaching	<i>“The quotation instruction and the concept [of plagiarism] help a lot to avoid it [emphases added]” (Soraya, 26, Pm).</i>
Respect	<i>“It is important [...] [for] you to know who the author is and respect them and state: ‘this idea is from this author, I have to quote him’ [emphases added]” (Óriun, 49, PhD).</i>

**Fonte:** Data from the research.

From the thought of quotation as a solution to plagiarism, two ideas-force were unveiled in the interviews and are closely associated with each other. One idea-force, in the general sense of the belief of graduate students, is the importance of ‘teaching’, which is associated and manifested in the form of ‘instruction’ for the writing of verbatim quotations and paraphrases. Another key idea is that of ‘learning how to do’, represented by the appropriation of the ability to avoid plagiarism

<sup>3</sup> Fictitious name, age, degree and course level (Am – academic master’s degree, Pm – professional master’s degree and doctorate – PhD)..

through the systematic and correct use of quotation rules. In conclusion, in the table above, the strength of the systematic process of learning how to quote, the gradualism and the recognition of the instances of normalization of writing is evident.

The quotation is not a guarantee for the full resolution of the incidence of plagiarism in the writing of the academic text. From this statement, expressed in the position of 10 (58.84%) of the graduate students, including 4 of the professional master's, 4 of the academic master's and 3 of PhD studies, 7 subcategories were present: a) morality and ethical; b) interpretation; c) percentage of copied words; d) exercise and feedback; e) neglect; f) laziness; g) proportion (with the sense of something 'minor' compared to other aspects involved in writing). The subcategories 'morality and ethics' and 'interpretation' stood out, reaching 4 and 2 references, respectively. The interviews revealed that the manuals for the standardization of academic writing are subverted by differentiated order deviations, for example, aspects related to morality, ethics, and interpretation.

Below, in Table 4, the two subcategories that emerged from the content of the graduate student interviews ("morals and ethics" and "interpretation") and their respective context units are highlighted by the criterion of highest incidence, in order to emphasize the disagreement that learning to use citation guarantees that plagiarism will not be practiced.

**Table 4:** Subcategories and context units of the citation as non-guarantee for the practice of plagiarism

Subcategories	Units of context (representative speeches)
Morality and ethics	<p>"Plagiarism also <i>involves a moral condition, a moral choice, the person can master all the rules by A plus B of how to quote correctly, but prefers not to.</i> [...] it is because they have a <i>deviation of character</i> [emphases added]" (Sol, 34, Am).</p> <p>"<i>It doesn't guarantee it, because the norms are like a guideline telling you 'look, these are the parameters, they should be followed', but what guarantees it is your conscience, you... your ethics, you saying 'no, I'm not going to copy' or 'I'm going to copy', right? [...]</i> that <i>comes from the person</i> [emphases added]." (Bellatrix, 32, Pm).</p> <p>"Working the whole issue of <i>collectivity, ethics, making use of knowledge [...]</i> there is behind the writing process a complete <i>human formation ... of collectivity, emancipation, political awareness of what we do</i> [emphases added]" (Alya, 50, Am).</p>
Interpretation	<p>"It goes through the question of our reinterpretation, of how I interpret the information that I accessed, and how I will use that <i>to build my thought [...]</i> depending on our trajectory, <i>we are not used to reframe</i> and reinterpret this information [emphases added]" (Nair, 28, Ma).</p>
Percentage of words copied	<p>"I used to think so... the teacher gave us an example of a work that reached such a <i>high percentage of quotations</i> within the work that it was <i>characterized as plagiarism.</i> That was news to me ... <i>if you quote a lot and do not have an authorial writing, it can also be characterized as plagiarism</i> [emphases added]" (Arturo, 25, Pm).</p>

**Fonte:** Data from the research.

In the scope of 'morality and ethics', two explanations are positioned for the fact that quotation does not prevent plagiarism: i) the character of the person and their power to elect plagiarism as a choice of their own or not; and ii) the notion of collective morality and ethics in which the subject

is implicated: In the first emphases, the conclusion is that the quotation does not control individual choices in relation to practicing plagiarism or not, since it is something that inhabits the character of the subject.

In the first emphases, the conclusion is that quotation does not control individual choices regarding whether or not to practice plagiarism, being something that inhabits the character of the subject. A PhD student exposed a representation of this type of conduct in a figurative way: “you learn everything, but, when the time comes, you’re going to pass traffic lights, you’re going to increase the speed, you’re going to, in short, take a turn in a place where you shouldn’t take it” (Pollux, 43, PhD). This account by Pollux (43, PhD) also brings us back to the study by Peters, Boies e Beauchemin-Roy (2022). The authors conducted a pilot study with two high school and two university students to examine the writing of an essay using quotations, throughout which the participants were individually filmed throughout the writing process. Even though they were aware of the filming performed, they committed plagiarism. The students were familiar with the type of text indicated for writing and understood that they had to use sources to justify their positions.

In the second emphases, the conclusion lies in the emptiness of collective morality and ethics in the institutional space, through training, interaction, construction and collective awareness as procedural responses to avoid deviations. Therefore, aspects that are beyond the technical standardization of writing are inscribed in the following example: “working the whole issue of *collectivity, ethics, making use of knowledge* [...] there is behind the writing process a complete *human formation* [...] of collectivity, emancipation, political awareness of what we do [emphases added]” (Alya, 50, Am).

Another emerging subcategory related to the fact that the quotation does not prevent plagiarism was that of ‘interpretation’. The elaboration of the paraphrase requires interpretation, as it is not restricted to replacing words with synonyms in a sentence, when mentioning the ideas of one or more authors. Grasping the meaning of the author’s idea and objectifying it in authorial writing is one of the challenges of autonomous and creative construction of one’s own thought, because some students, in their school trajectories, also marked by the culture of reproduction, reinforce plagiarism or surrender to it. Hence the emergence of the subcategory of ‘interpretation’ as an aspect of difficulty or problem in textual production by the student, which may have consequences in committing plagiarism. It is worth emphasizing that making only a simple change of one or another word, a verb or quotation is also subject to discussion, as the assessment of what constitutes an appropriate indirect quotation varies from individual to individual and across college subjects (Roig, 2001 *apud* Roig, 2015).

It follows that writing paraphrases is not restricted to substituting one word for another (Shi, 2008), and that technical-scientific normalization does not account for the interpretive process, which is characteristic of the subject when writing indirect quotations from the autonomous and creative.

The overall result in this group of positions is that the moral and ethical ruler, which serves as a measure and gives a sense of security for writing the standardized text from textbooks, is subverted by deviations of various origins. The different beliefs regarding the power of quotation to avoid plagiarism are evident in the data.

*On the difference between plagiarism and self-plagiarism*

Table 5 below shows the results of postgraduate students' knowledge of the difference between plagiarism and self-plagiarism.

**Table 5:** Knowledge of the difference between plagiarism and self-plagiarism

Question	Answer	Professional Master's Degree	Academic Master's Degree	PhD	Total
Q.5 Do you know the difference between plagiarism and self-plagiarism?	No	36,4%	43,9%	15,8%	32,5%
	Yes	63,6%	56,1%	84,2%	67,5%
	Total	44	41	38	123
Q.6 "A student handed in a paper in which more than half of the content was transcribed from a scientific paper previously done by him. In the new version, only a few items were modified, such as date, name of the discipline, introduction and conclusion. It was not clarified, at any time, that the content of the work was practically the same as that of another work done by the same student. In your opinion, did plagiarism occur in the student's work?" (Ferreira <i>et al.</i> , 2013, p.32-33)	Totally disagree	4,5%	0,0%	0,0%	1,6%
	Disagree	6,8%	14,6%	0,0%	7,3%
	Undecided	31,8%	19,5%	13,2%	22,0%
	Agree	31,8%	34,1%	26,3%	30,9%
	Totally agreed	25,0%	31,7%	60,5%	38,2%
	Total	44	41	38	123

**Fonte:** Data from the research.

In question 5, more than a half of the postgraduates (67.5 per cent) knew the difference between plagiarism and self-plagiarism. In question 6, the agreement rate reached 69.1% in response to the situation implicitly elaborated as self-plagiarism constituting plagiarism. As a record for further studies, although the 'undecided' category was not dominant overall in question 6, this finding should not be overlooked.

In the qualitative phase of the research, it was asked again if the master's and PhD students knew the difference between plagiarism and self-plagiarism. And, if the answer was affirmative, how did they differentiate plagiarism from self-plagiarism. Of the 17 interviewees, 15 of them presented (88.2%), without questioning, differentiating elements between plagiarism and self-plagiarism. In turn, 2 of the master's students (11.76%), one from the professional course and the other from the academic course, did not know how to define the difference, giving transparency to aspects of

discussion in the academic literature about the relationship between self-plagiarism as plagiarism. In the case of those who defined the difference between plagiarism and self-plagiarism, we highlight one of the answers as representative of the set of positions:

*Now I know. Plagiarism happens when there is a transcription without identifying the author, so that's why plagiarism is this undue appropriation of the text of other authors. And self-plagiarism happens when there is the insertion, in a new text, of something written by the author without a proper identification, without naming it properly. So, it is very common, as far as I've noticed, this self-plagiarism. [...] it would be the reuse of texts from other college subjects, from other times, without the proper identification of the author himself [emphases added] (Talitha, 47, Mp).*

The meaning of the phrase “now I know”, in relation to the difference between plagiarism and self-plagiarism, explanatorily suggests the time and space of training in the master's and doctorate, since the differences between these concepts and the practices that shape one and the other are potentially more present in graduate studies than in undergraduate courses. Other interviews give indications that corroborate such explanation, when graduate students begin their speeches as follows: “Not very clear” (Arturo, 25, AM); “These concepts, so, I am still under construction” (Antares, 54, AM); “I did not have this knowledge” (Lua, 26, AM); and “I learned self-plagiarism in classes with the professor [at PhD]” (Adhara, 40, PhD). The master's student who could not define the difference, on the other hand, said, “I must have self-plagiarized several times already” (Electra, 27, Am). Nevertheless, the relationship between the concepts of plagiarism and self-plagiarism, when announced in the content of the interviews, is exposed as something in the process of assimilation.

The master student in question demonstrated difficulties in defining plagiarism and self-plagiarism:

*So, I had never heard about self-plagiarism, but I find it kind of strange, like, a self-plagiarism? because if it is something that you wrote yourself, right, there is no way you can plagiarize yourself, I don't know what to put in cool terms, you need to reference the year you wrote that, but I think there is no such thing as self-plagiarism [emphases added] (Electra, 27, Am).*

In the study by Phyo *et al.* (2022), there is survey data in which graduate students (master's and PhD students in medical and related fields) disapproved of self-plagiarism, but only 35.2% disagreed with the statement that there should be no punishment, since it is neither harmful nor can one steal from oneself. Like the stranger who needs to become familiar (Velho, 1980), self-plagiarism should be studied, researched, understood and clarified so that it is not practiced as an ethical infraction.

The topic of self-plagiarism has emerged in the literature and in discussions in academia, and even in groups of a new generation of graduate students, aged between 27 and 47, the concept was known and appropriated more recently, in the 2000s, as evidenced in the extracts in which participants stated that they had never heard of the subject or, at the time of the interview, that they had learned about it recently, during graduate classes. Therefore, the formation of the new generation of master's and PhD students in Pedagogy became the privileged moment to delve into the issue of self-plagiarism and its implications in the context of academic integrity.

## Research limits

A first limit of the research was the fact that the number of interviewees of the PhD course did not come closer to that of the master's course. The second, external to the research, was the impact of Covid-19<sup>4</sup>, due to illness, death of family members or people close to the graduate students, among others, generating effects on the number of questionnaires and interviews conducted. In any case, the data collected and analyzed leave a contribution to the theme presented in this paper and are expressive for further research. We present the discussion and conclusions below.

## Conclusion

The general concept of plagiarism shows its broad knowledge by the graduate students of the three courses (professional master, academic master and PhD), collected both through questionnaire and interview. A general understanding of the concept of plagiarism is easy to grasp.

As new situations are constituted as configurators of plagiarism, the concept is being expanded by different institutions, such as the example presented by Roig (2015) about the misappropriation of ideas of research projects and articles, identified during the peer review process. In this case, the concept of plagiarism is expanded beyond the appropriate common sense, including new terms, ideas or situations.

Regarding the domain of quotation norms (Table 3), the examination of the dominant categories and percentages allows us to conclude that the vast majority of graduate students self-declare their ability to use literal quotations (87,8%) and paraphrases, already incorporating the strength of technical-scientific standardization as a requirement in academic writing.

However, for the answer that in order to avoid committing plagiarism it is enough to follow the rules of citation, the indicator of agreement for this statement represented 47.2% compared to 35.7% in disagreement, showing the distance between knowing how to apply rules for standardizing writing – with data above 80% – and not practicing plagiarism.

In terms of conclusion, exploring the qualitative aspects of the study, we abstracted two ideas-force regarding the relationship between the use of quotation to avoid plagiarism. The first idea-force, which is also a belief, focuses on the technical-normative solution for the correct use of quotation in texts as a key to solve the issue of plagiarism in academic writing. Such idea-force is instituted by the sense of security, given in the limits of the moral and ethical ruler for the author or writer of a text to revere, to bow to their own transparency in the writing of scientific communication. Scientific communication meets the regulated portions of writing through the normalization of quotations, which are legitimized, recognized and circulated by the scientific community through different academic texts (articles, essay, theses and dissertations). Finally, the belief of normalized writing as a guarantee against plagiarism is consecrated mainly in the school institution, as the

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<sup>4</sup> COVID-19 is a pandemic disease caused by the coronavirus. The first case in Brazil was recorded in February 2020, and the declaration of community transmission in the country occurred in March of the same year (Agência Brasil, 2021).

space of teaching and learning scientific communication through the appropriation of its technical-normative standards.

A second key idea is that the positioning of the quotation as a guarantee against the issue of plagiarism is focused on the weight of morality and ethics – individual and collective – that influence such practice. And, moreover, there is that symbol of a certain school process that accustoms the students to the practice of reproduction instead to the culture of interpretation, a subcategory emerging in the content of the interviews.

About the relationship between plagiarism and self-plagiarism, 67.5% of the graduate students answered ‘yes’ when asked if they knew the difference between these concepts.

In the qualitative approach of the research, the content of the interviews showed expressions of strangeness with regard to the term self-plagiarism and their knowledge of the term. Even those postgraduates who differentiated between plagiarism and self-plagiarism did so with reference to their time in postgraduate education.

After all, how many of us, in the twentieth century or even in the early twenty-first, had knowledge about the concept of self-plagiarism in undergraduate and graduate studies? Hence the meaning of the discovery of the term self-plagiarism by a new generation of postgraduates when they referred to a past and current time. Plagiarism and self-plagiarism – even when the latter figures as a type of the former – can and should be understood and situated in the processes of study and research, with a focus on academic integrity. In conclusion, self-plagiarism is a “strange figure” when associated with plagiarism.

There is a moral and ethical ruler for the writing of the academic text, which is used from the belief in normalization, through quotation, to avoid plagiarism. However, such ruler has its limits and deviations. On the one hand, there are aspects of morality and ethics present in the process of academic writing, within collective spaces, which define or should define the issue, but, on the other hand, there is a concrete subject who acts and makes subjective and objective choices in the face of the institutionalities of writing.

Systematic anticipatory, educational and pedagogical actions should be taken in order to prevent plagiarism with a focus on academic integrity in educational research, whether or not there are signs of deviation in the production of scientific communication.

Finally, the variable ‘quotation’ does not control the other, that of ‘plagiarism’. In addition, as Comas-Forgas and Sureda-Negre (2016, p.622) rightly state and suggest: “knowledge of what is and is not plagiarism and of quotation rules is not enough to tackle the problem, although it certainly helps”.

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**Author 1** Conception and design of the research; analysis and interpretation of data; writing and critical review of the final text.

**Author 2** Bibliography; critical review of the final text.

**Author 3** Construction and processing of quantitative data; critical reader.

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