



Plagiarism: Is There a Solution? – A Case Study

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Abstract

As the world is increasingly becoming more digitalized, plagiarism is getting harder to settle. In the literature, a wide variety of causes have been proposed, such as easy access of the Internet, a desire to get higher marks, poor time management and lack of knowledge and/or training. But could a deep investigation of the students' perceptions of their practice give us a clearer picture? This instrumental case study sought to zoom into the attitude of one HE student in Egypt in an attempt to gain an insight into the problem. The goal of the study is to develop a full understanding of the researched case, with an aim to identify the real reasons why students plagiarize. Adopting a grounded theory approach, a semi-structured interview was conducted with one graduate student, who is thought to be an excellent choice for the research purposes as she represents an extreme case of a HE student, who has a full understanding of plagiarism, realizes it is unethical, and believes the practice should be penalized, yet regularly plagiarizes and consistently gets high grades. The use of one individual for instrumental case studies was recognized by a number of researchers as an acceptable practice. Although this study is in no way trying to generalize findings, nor is it claiming that the chosen subject is representative of the HE student population in Egypt; it is still contending that it can infer logical findings that help provide a better understanding of the researched topic. Based on the data analysis, a Plagiarism Hypothesis Model is proposed to attempt to explain HE students' behaviour and perception regarding plagiarism. Effects of plagiarism on learning and on students' perception of teacher have also been identified. Conclusions and implications of this study will be shared with the audience.