Plagiarism in Project Studies

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Journal article (Accepted manuscript*)

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Abstract

Plagiarism is condemned yet remains a frequently occurring form of academic misconduct. This editorial informs project scholars about plagiarism and *Project Management Journal*®'s *(PMJ*®*)* approach to it. We define plagiarism as the theft of words, ideas, and representations, and explain three principles to judge plagiarism based on our expectations on research integrity: honesty, originality, and authorship. Accordingly, plagiarism detection services (PDS) assist but do not limit our judgment. We hope to lay the foundation for a comprehensive understanding of plagiarism in project studies, and thus help (early career) scholars understand the different facets of plagiarism and thereby avoid it.

Keywords

Plagiarism, academic misconduct, project studies, judgment, research integrity

Introduction

This editorial is part of a series designed to inform project scholars and guide future submissions to *PMJ*®. It focuses on an uncomfortable yet relevant topic in academic work—plagiarism. Plagiarism is understood here as the use or close imitation of other's words, representations, and/or ideas as one's own, without the acknowledgment of the original author.

Plagiarism has become a matter of concern for academics and academic communities (Ercegovac & Richardson, 2004). For example, Honig and Bedi (2012) analyzed the levels of plagiarism in 279

papers submitted to a division of the Academy of Management during their annual meeting in 2009. Upon submission, the authors were informed that their manuscripts would be checked for plagiarism and, yet, 25% of the papers had some kind of plagiarism, and 13% of the authors had copied over 25% of their content from previous publications. Plagiarism is not only an issue in conferences and low-quality publications. The Office of Research Integrity (ORI) argues that [p]lagiarism is "one of the most frequent areas of concern for journal editors (Wager, 2011) with a third of retracted journal articles being due to plagiarism or self-plagiarism (Fang et al., 2012)." (Roig, 2015, p. 31). Even high-profile scholars, such as sociologist Zygmunt Bauman and organizational scholar Karl Weick, have been implicated in plagiarism claims (Basbøll & Graham, 2006; Callahan, 2018).

Accordingly, editors across academic domains have called for increased awareness of plagiarism as an academic misconduct and have informed authors, readers, and reviewers about their approach to the topic (Barczak, 2013; Biagioli et al., 2019; Harley et al., 2014; Martin, 2007, 2013). In this editorial, we follow suit and clarify *PMJ*'s view and practices to curb plagiarism. Following current debates (e.g., Callahan, 2018; Horbach & Halffman, 2019), we opted to treat self-plagiarism or *manuscript recycling* separately in a different editorial (Geraldi, forthcoming), as they are distinct practices with distinct challenges.

What is Plagiarism?

Although plagiarism is allegedly an elusive concept (e.g., Angelil-Carter, 2014; Chalmers, 2009; Pennycook, 1996), its grounding definition is widely agreed on: the use of other's work without appropriate acknowledgment. However, plagiarism comes in many formats and therefore requires different preventive and reactive responses. We combined different forms of plagiarism described in several publications and methodology books (Booth et al., 2008; Bryman & Bell, 2015; Huff, 1999), guidelines offered by ORI (Roig, 2015) and the Commission on Publication Ethics (COPE) (Wagner, 2011), and papers concerned with plagiarism of both academics and students (Callahan, 2018; Chalmers, 2009; Ercegovac & Richardson, 2004; Martin, 2013; Park, 2003). Our aim was to develop a common platform to discuss different forms of plagiarism in project studies. The result is the three forms of plagiarism[1] described below:

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[1] Theft of data is not considered here, as I cannot imagine how an academic would steal another's data and develop a new manuscript based on it. A different concern is the reuse of data. In this case, academics reuse their own data in two

Theft of words is the most commonly known form of plagiarism and easily detected by Plagiarism Detection Services (PDS). It can take three forms:

1. Copied text not properly indicated with quotation marks and/or not properly acknowledged;

2. Text that is insufficiently paraphrased, that is, the original text is nearly copied word for word; and

3. Patchwork, that is, long portions of the text copied from different sources, a few words from each text, and sometimes from texts from different fields or topic areas.

Theft of ideas is harder to detect, less well understood, and yet, allegedly, more relevant. It involves the use of other's ideas, concepts, methods, and engagement with the literature without citation or acknowledgment. Extreme cases of theft of ideas include copying the manuscript's main contribution or conceptual model and presenting it in different words without acknowledgment. For example, Stingl and Geraldi (2017) were plagiarized by a shorter article that consisted of a majority of their ideas written in the author's own words and, hence, not captured by PDS; the plagiarism was found by chance and the journal retracted its publication and issued an apology. This is an extreme case. Other cases are more subtle, for example, mentioning or explaining the concept of *strategic misrepresentation* and not attributing it to Flyvbjerg. The concept is widely known in project studies, hence plagiarizing it signals unethical behavior or insufficient engagement with the relevant literature. Both are unacceptable.

Theft of representations refers to copying or slightly modifying the representations of others, such as figures and graphics, without acknowledgment. This form of plagiarism is less discussed in academic plagiarism and potentially less common. This might be because the incentives to copy representations are also potentially low: publishers regulate the use of representations indirectly because they require high-quality copies and ask authors to state that they own the copyright on the representations throughout their submission process and in the transfer of copyright. Moreover, visual representations are easier to spot; they are fewer in number and potentially more memorable than long texts. In project studies, representations also summarize an idea or the main contribution of the article; therefore, copying a representation also involves a theft of ideas. Thus, this editorial treats the theft of representations tangentially.

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or more publications, which can be, in some cases and by some organizations, considered self-plagiarism (or *manuscript recycling*), and will be discussed in Geraldi (forthcoming).

Why Does Plagiarism Happen?

Scholars share an implicit assumption of what plagiarism is and that it should be avoided (Booth et al., 2008; e.g., Bryman & Bell, 2015; Honig & Bedi, 2012; Huff, 1999; Turabian, 2013). Plagiarism is a problem because it refers to the theft of what is most valued in academia. "[O]ur ideas and the representation of those ideas are our capital. Those words create the scholarly identities that form the basis of our credibility, reputations, and careers" (Callahan, 2018, p. 306). Therefore, plagiarism is a violation of research integrity. Moreover, the implications of plagiarism cases are demoralizing, as the academic community clearly condemns plagiarism. The website "Retraction Watch" is a good example of our condemnation of plagiarism practices. It tracks retractions of articles (https://retractionwatch.com/ and http://retractiondatabase.org) and thereby supports our ability to identify and understand plagiarism.

Serious misunderstandings regarding plagiarism, however, still occur. Plagiarism receives limited attention in scholars' professional development because it is scarcely treated in most methodology textbooks and courses and is often addressed superficially in library courses on how to cite (Sauders et al., 2016). Furthermore, the institutionalized surveillance of plagiarism through PDS may lead to a skewed understanding of plagiarism because PDS measure the theft of words and thereby overlook the theft of ideas and representations.

Thus, plagiarism is at the same time highly condemned and yet potentially misunderstood. Plagiarism is unacceptable in *PMJ*, regardless of whether authors do it because of misapprehension (that is, an error) or out of mal-intent (that is, deception).

What Guides Our Judgment?

The widespread use of PDS has another unintended consequence in the fight against plagiarism: it transforms the decision about a text's originality from a professional judgment to an administrative procedure (Maurer et al., 2006). For example, it is typical practice to desk-reject manuscripts with a similarity index above 30% and to deny the publication of any manuscript with a similarity index over 10%. Such rules are simple, efficient, and reliable; however, they are also insufficient and borderline unethical, as they miss the theft of ideas and representations, might overlook serious cases of plagiarism of words (Kučečka, 2011), and also overvalue the reuse of the author's own unpublished material, which is widely acceptable (Roig, 2015). Moreover, similarity indexes increase with the use of direct quotes even if these quotes have been properly acknowledged,

accepted, and even encouraged in some cases (Partington & Jenkins, 2009). Therefore, we must go beyond similarity indexes and reestablish professional judgment of plagiarism.

Our judgment as the *PMJ* editorial board is based on three principles, which provide a general guide for research integrity and are well applicable to plagiarism: honesty, originality, and authorship. These principles emerged in modernity. In pre-modern times, "repetition without attribution—what we would now consider plagiarism——was encouraged and valued" (Bartley et al., 2014, p. 807). Imagination was divine, and "humans act[ed] as ventriloquist[s] of the words of God" (Kearney, 1988, p. 155). Thus, the concept of plagiarism made limited sense. In the Middle Ages and particularly with the Enlightenment, "meaning is … hailed as a transcendental product of the human mind" (Kearney, 1988, p. 155). Creativity, originality, and authorship gained relevance, particularly in scientific work (Pennycook, 1996). As Foucault (1984) suggests, in the Enlightenment, scientific work "was accepted as true by dint of their authorship" (p. 205). Creators started to print, sign, and distribute work. Property rights were developed, and the author was both owner and responsible for what he or she wrote, which included their potential judgment before the Inquisition. In this context, plagiarism[2] was established as the theft of ideas and words (Chalmers, 2009). In 1755, Johnson entered *plagiarism* into the English language dictionary and coined the famous phrase: "Your manuscript is both good and original. But the part that is good is not original, and the part that is original is not good" ("The Samuel Johnson Sound Bite Page," 2020). From then on, honesty to acknowledge the sources of ideas became relevant, and plagiarism became condemned. Thus, honesty, authorship, and originality provide the foundational principles decrying the practice of plagiarism.

Honesty

A manuscript should represent the author's production to the best of their ability. Ideas and texts from others should be acknowledged appropriately (Roig, 2015). Yet, insufficient acknowledgment of others' work happens and sacrifices the honesty of the manuscript. At first glance, it is difficult

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[2] The term *plagiary* was entered into the English language as synonymous with *thief*. "The term was first used with this meaning by the Roman poet Martialis (circa 40–102 CE), who criticized Fidentinus for reciting Martialis' poems as his own. Originally, the Latin word 'plagiarus' referred to a form of kidnapping and to turning a free man into a slave" (Vinther, 2016). However, authorship and plagiarism became relevant in society only with some of the advancements in the Middle Ages, from around the 1600s (Chalmers, 2009; Pennycook, 1996).

to understand why to avoid acknowledging prior work, as referencing practices are known and straightforward. Reference management systems facilitate the administrative side of the process, and methodology textbooks and articles explain when references are required (Partington & Jenkins, 2009). From this perspective, plagiarism is the result of deliberate deception, motivated by laziness and incompetence, and fueled by inadequate incentives to quickly produce a large number of publications (Roig, 2015). Such cases exist and are clearly unethical, sometimes illegal, and obviously unacceptable, and those who take part in them should be punished severely.

However, *inadvertent plagiarism* also happens and merits close attention. For example, through bad note-taking, text fragments or others' ideas might be mingled with one's own text and ideas and integrated into a manuscript unwittingly (Turabian, 2013), leading to uncited quotes or insufficient paraphrasing. Moreover, our memory can be deceiving. For example, in a seminal publication, the organizational scholar Karl Weick used an allegory of a troop guided by a map of the Pyrenees to navigate in the Alps (Weick, 1990), without acknowledging Miroslav Holub, the original author. The article and the allegory became known, and Weick's plagiarism was detected and criticized (Basbøll & Graham, 2006). Weick alleged a memory lapse, apologized, and added a citation. Judgment of this case is delicate. Weick's use of the allegory increased its impact across a knowledge domain and helped scholars understand his views on strategic planning. The original author was eventually located, apologies were made, and the appropriate citation was added. However, in our view, the end does not justify the means. We insist that authors work harder to find sources and cite them appropriately in the first place.

Thus, although unintended, small lapses of unacknowledged plagiarism might occur, such lapses should be limited through a rigorous engagement with the literature and disciplined note-taking. Overall, whether due to misapprehension or mal-intent, we do not accept mediocracy and careless work and suggest our authors err on the side of excess acknowledgments rather than the lack thereof.

Originality

The principle of honesty alone is not enough to judge potential cases of plagiarism; in an extreme case, rewriting someone else's work is plagiarism, despite acknowledgment. Originality is also expected in every publication. The very concept of plagiarism exists to protect a manuscript's

originality from being copied by others; thus, lack of originality renders the concept of plagiarism obsolete.

However, the opacity in the concept of originality carries the dangers of relativism. A common relativist argument is that there is nothing truly new to say. As Goethe (1963, 1833) once said, "Alles Gescheite ist schon gedacht worden, man muß nur versuchen, es noch einmal zu denken" ("Everything clever has already been thought; one must only try to think it again") (p. 52 apud Pennycook, 1996, p. 208). As enchanting as this quote might be, many new thoughts have arisen since 1833. Our society and empirical phenomena—in and around projects—evolve, and in so doing, new concerns, research questions, and perspectives emerge, changing the very concepts of projects and project management (Morris & Geraldi, 2011). Thus, if an author has nothing new to say, then he or she should not publish.

Confusion regarding a manuscript's originality also emerges with the awareness that our original utterances are conveyed through language, which in nature is socially constructed. Following Bakhtin (1989), the author "is not a biblical Adam, only related to untamed virgin objects, to which he gives his name for the first time" (p. 300). Each word only enables communication because it "carries histories of its former uses with it" (Pennycook, 1996, p. 211). In this regard, the words of others are all we have. We also blend words according to the stable genres of discourse (Bakhtin, 1989) expected in our *sphere of communication* in academia, for example, *boiler language*, that is, the use of commonly known sentences such as "the findings suggest…" and "the results suggest a significant correlation between…" (Roig, 2015). Similarly, it is acceptable to reuse the compositional structure of an argument in its generic format, such as the structure of common empirical publications in project studies. The Manchester Phrasebank offers a comprehensive overview of such constructions (John, n.d.). Finally, a field shares common knowledge that does not require citation, that is, knowledge we all know (Roig, 2015), such as *humans are mammals*, or that the research community knows, such as *projects are temporary*. Yet, ideas that are "new enough" and "have a clear authorship" require citation (Booth et al., 2008), such as projects are temporary organizations (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995). In Bakhtin's (1989) words: "Each separate utterance is individual, of course, but each sphere in which language is used develops its own relatively stable types of these utterances" (p. 60).

In this regard, creating original thoughts requires detachment from existing thoughts. As Babo (1993) defends:

> Writing, as its own experience, reveals itself, first of all, as a process of confrontation with someone else's text… [Yet,] while the subject who asserts himself as an author works in a process of solidifying his identity, demarcating himself from others, the plagiarist let himself be drowned out by another voice. The author forgets and therefore writes. The plagiarist fixes, retains, and therefore re-produces. (p. 113)

While the forms of expressing oneself are relatively stable within a *sphere of communication*, the author seeks to introduce their own tone, so that these changes become visible and attract the reader's attention. Musical expressions provide a metaphor for how authors can reuse structural elements while producing original work. For example, Sweetbox's version of "Everything's Gonna be Alright" and Procol Harum's "A Whiter Shade of Pale" (one of the bestselling singles in history) build on the melody of Bach Air, suite no. 3, BWV 1068. Likewise, the Dreamers' "Midnight Blue" has Beethoven's Pathetique 2nd movement in the background. Although these are clear cases of plagiarism, they are acceptable in the music industry, because music copyright lasts for 70 years after the end of the calendar year in which the last songwriter dies. A song that is no longer protected by copyright is described as being in the Public Domain (PD), and can therefore be reused. However, while the musical notes in the background of both pieces are the same, even if we know these pieces, we might never have noted their similarities. Each piece of music evokes different feelings and is therefore, considered original in the world of music. The same also exists in written format. For example, one of our favorite ideas and quotes is Clegg and Baumeler's (2010) assertion that project organizing is an expression of Baumann's liquid modernity in organizational life, where "long-term thinking and planning will be increasingly surrendered to the moment" (p. 1728). An appropriation of this construction and style to convey a new utterance could be "project management expresses a quest to control uncertainty, where dreams are repeatedly surrendered to the planned." Here, we borrowed the text as a template not only for our writing but also for our thinking, but expressed a different idea. It is therefore not plagiarism and does not require citation. Actually, citing Clegg and Baumeler would be dishonest, as they might not even agree with the utterance despite the use of their structural expression. If we knew the words of Clegg and Baumeler intimately, we could listen to them in the background of the new sentence, much like we listen to Bach behind Sweetbox.

While not citing "long-term thinking and planning will be increasingly surrendered to the moment" is plagiarism, the same cannot be said about creating the sentence "project management expresses a

quest to control uncertainty, where our dreams are repeatedly surrendered to the planned." Hence, following Bakhtin, originality lies in the author's intent to express, which articulates the words of others within a stable genre of discourse and thereby creates its original contribution. Our language's socially constructed nature is therefore not an excuse for the reproduction (and theft) of ideas, words, and representations. Thus, although excessive concern with text and expression should neither stifle the writing process nor discourage academics from gaining inspiration from one another's writing, it is also not acceptable to use individual utterances expressed in terms of texts, ideas, or representations without appropriate acknowledgment, nor to use them so extensively that the manuscript fails to provide an original contribution to knowledge. We, the editors of *PMJ,* value originality in ideas and in the tone authors introduce to express their ideas.

Authorship

Finally, the concept of plagiarism builds on the principle of *authorship*. Before the Enlightenment, ideas, words, and representations had no owners and floated freely across writers, musicians, and artists. Without an author, ideas and words were "up for grabs." With the birth of the author came the attribution of ***credit***, ***responsibility****,* and ***ownership*** to the author(s) for their published material.

Credit for authorship is based on a search for the original source of ideas and words. Sometimes the attribution of an idea to a particular author becomes institutionalized, thereby dissolving the potential ambiguities of authorship. For example, Packendorff (1995) defended the idea of projects as temporary organizations and positioned the phenomenon in relation to the field of Organization Studies. Packendorff's article was published exactly at the same time and in the same special issue as that of Lundin and Söderholm. However, we credited the concept of "projects as temporary organizations" to Lundin and Söderlund. In such cases, we advise authors to follow the current practices in the field. We prefer to center our efforts on the development of ideas, concepts, and theories, even if looking forward requires looking backward, as demonstrated by Lenfle and Loch (2010) and by Morris and Hough (1987). Likewise, some of the searches for authorship appear elusive. For example, President John F. Kennedy's "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country" statement resembles Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr.'s 1884 urge to "recall what our country has done for each of us, and to ask ourselves what we can do for our country in return" (Keyes, 1992, p. 91). Thus, the search for authorship should not stifle our writing, and as mentioned above, we accept that the recycling of short phrases and expressions is an inevitable feature of our language (Bakhtin, 1989). However, there is a delicate balance between the

search for authors in a short sentence or expression and the plagiarism of, for example, a story, such as in Weick's case. This balance requires judgment.

Second, plagiarists attempt to gain credit but hardly considers the duties involved with authorship. Here, we also remind authors of the ethical and legal obligations involved in the dint of authorship. A memorable case of an author bearing the weight of *responsibility* on his shoulders is Niels Bohr in the wake of the Cold War. After being a major contributor to the theoretical foundations for the development of the atom bomb and actively participating in the Manhattan Project, Bohr was acutely aware of the potentially destructive power of the invention he contributed to create. In his call for the "Open World," he stated:

> While this development [modern development of science and technology in the use of fission] holds out great promise for the improvement of human welfare, it also places formidable means of destruction in the hands of man, and has thus presented our whole civilization with a most serious challenge. (Bohr, 1950, p. 213)

Debates on responsibility for the impact of management research (and education) in practice led Ghoshal (2005) to pungently express concern that "bad management theories are destroying good management practices" (p. 75). In project studies, Morris (2013) laments research's excessive focus on the project management for its own sake and calls for an attention shift toward projects' impacts on society. This is important in a discussion on plagiarism because it reminds authors of their ethical role as scholars in academia and in society.

Finally, the dint of authorship has also ensured ownership. However, today, proprietary issues arise as manuscript ownership or other relevant rights associated with the manuscript are transferred from authors to publishers during the final stages of the publication process. Thus, copyright infringements are offenses and protected by the law; hence, plagiarism is not solely an ethical issue or "just bad manners" but also an illegal practice (Chalmers, 2009).

In the case of this journal, the Project Management Institute (PMI) owns *PMJ*, and SAGE manages its publication, licensing, and sales. "In the final stages of the publication process at *PMJ*®, the authors sign a copyright agreement that transfers all rights in their manuscript to PMI. PMI, in turn, grants SAGE exclusive rights to manage permissions and other sales and licensing of the journal"

(Geraldi, forthcoming). For more information about the transfer of rights, see Geraldi (forthcoming).

Beyond plagiarism issues, the transfer of rights over our manuscripts leaves a bitter aftertaste. Academics conduct the research, develop the manuscripts, choose fair and competent reviewers, review the work, and often pay for professional proofreaders. The publishers, in turn, provide the manuscript handling system, format, and availability of articles in print and online, and receive at least part of the copyrights of the manuscript. Publishers trade our academic work for high profit margins at the expense of the free exchange of ideas and findings. While not profiting from single ideas, they gain on scale, that is, through the distribution of a large number of journals. As reported in the *Guardian*, "With total global revenues of more than £19 billion [equivalent to €21 billion or US$24.6 billion], it [academic publishers] weighs in somewhere between the recording and the film industries in size, but it is far more profitable. In 2010, Elsevier's scientific publishing arm reported profits of £724 million just over £2 billion in revenue. It was a 36% margin—higher than Apple, Google, or Amazon posted that year [and continued around this level]" (Buranyi, 2017). Our universities pay high fees to provide us access to our publications. In this extremely competitive environment, jobs and career advancement depend on publication in highly ranked journals owned by publishers. Thus, academics accept this exchange because of the legitimacy of the journals the publishers own—a legitimacy that academics have constructed through high-quality research, reviewing, and editing practices used in the journals. To be fair, today, large publishers distribute "open access" options to selected articles or to any authors for a fee. Most journals allow sharing of preprint versions of the articles. Yet, we are far from the values promoted by Open Science, a "movement to make scientific research and data accessible to all" (UNESCO, 2020).

Such movement and discussion on the ownership of and access to our research are important in the discussion of plagiarism, as they alter our modern values of authorship by emphasizing content over authorship and by placing individual contributions at the service of the collective. This also opens the space for revolutionary forms of cocreation and coauthorship, where credit, responsibility, and ownership are shared collectively, such as in the development of Linux and Wikipedia. Such developments, were they to occur, could transform the modern concept of plagiarism. We look into such future developments with curiosity.

Prevention

We assume that academic professional development lies outside *PMJ*'s helm of activities. Yet, we contribute to the prevention of plagiarism through activities such as this editorial and by furthering information on plagiarism and other academic misconducts. We also ask authors to confirm at manuscript submission "that the manuscript has been submitted solely to this journal and is not published, in press, or submitted elsewhere. Authors should disclose any prior posting, publication or distribution of all or part of the manuscript to the Editor." We also offer and encourage authors to read SAGE's manuscript submission guidelines, which contain information about plagiarism (Sage, 2020b). Above all, we suggest the writing of original ideas, which will require original texts and arguments and proper acknowledgment.

Detection

The judgment of plagiarism is based on the professional judgment of editors and reviewers. First, and foremost, we seek to choose reviewers who are specialized in the field and able to evaluate the manuscript's originality and contribution to the literature and to flag potential plagiarism. Second, our editorial judgment is aided by a PDS system. *PMJ* subjects all submissions to the plagiarism detection software, iThenticate®. The software takes into consideration more than 60 billion online and offline sources, including journal articles, conference paper proceedings, university repositories, web pages, illegitimate preprint services, and manuscripts submitted to any journal that uses the same software (to avoid simultaneous submissions)[3]. We examine not the similarity index but the similarity report, where we can see which prior publications are being used and how (which words, in which sequence). We thereby verify the originality and honesty of the manuscript. Third, when in doubt about the originality of a manuscript, we verify whether the ideas have been published before. Based on these analyses, taken in concert, we seek to assess the severity of potential plagiarism cases as major or minor plagiarism, following COPE's guidance (Wagner, 2011, p. 9).

Major Plagiarism is defined as*:*

- "Any case involving unattributed copying of another person's data/findings;

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[3] This includes in some cases PhD theses, which might lead to self-plagiarism issues, discussed in Geraldi (In Press).

- *or* resubmission of an entire publication under another author's name (either in the original language or in translation);
- *or* verbatim copying of >100 words of original material in the absence of any citation to the source material [this consists of copying 100 words from one other source at least once in the text];
- *or* unattributed use of original, published academic work, such as the structure, argument;
- or hypothesis/idea of another person or group where this is a major part of the new publication and there is evidence that it was not developed independently" (Wagner, 2011, p. 9).

Minor Plagiarism is defined as:

- "verbatim copying of <100 words without indicating that these are a direct quotation from an original work (whether or not the source is cited), unless the text is accepted as widely used or standardized (e.g., the description of a standard technique); or
- close copying (not quite verbatim, but changed only slightly from the original) of significant sections (e.g., > 100 words) from another work (whether or not that work is cited)" (Wagner, 2011, p. 9).

We add to COPE's definition of minor plagiarism, which we consider unacceptable, depressingly common, and not often thematized:

- Minor plagiarism of a literature review, when the references used in a manuscript are the same as in another article—the same references, in the same order, to make similar points, and often articulated around similar arguments. While using the same reference series can be coincidental, hence also acceptable, its repeated appearance throughout the literature review suggests not only dishonesty in acknowledging others' work but also insufficient engagement with the literature.
- Likewise, we remind authors to cite ideas that are "new enough" and "have a clear authorship" (Booth et al., 2008).
- Minor cases of patchwork text are also considered minor plagiarism; that is, "copying from a source text and then deleting some words, altering grammatical structures, or plugging in one synonym for another" (Howard, 2007), which is becoming more common in methodology sections (Wagner, 2011).

Response

Following COPE's advice, in cases of minor plagiarism we, the editors, will return the manuscript with a word of warning and request a rewrite and resubmission. Cases of major plagiarism lead to desk rejects and, in some extreme cases, escalation to host institutions. Accordingly, following SAGE, we "reserve[s] the right to take appropriate action to correct the academic record, including but not limited to: publishing an erratum or corrigendum; publishing an expression of concern linked to the article; retracting the article and publishing an accompanying retraction notice; or removing an article for legal reasons and replacing the removed article with a notice" (SAGE, 2020a).

Challenging cases and those falling in the middle ground between major and minor cases require further investigation and are resolved in editorial board consultations and informal conversations with editors of other journals in our field. We may also consult COPE or ORI if required. From now on, we will follow the *Journal of Product Innovation Management* guidance for repeated cases of plagiarism:

- "1st offense: 5-year ban from publishing in *PMJ*
- 2nd offense: 10-year ban from publishing in *PMJ*
- 3rd offense: lifetime ban" (Barczak, 2014, p. 195).

Each of the editors will consult with the editorial board before deciding whether a plagiarism case will count as an offense.

Concluding Notes

Thus, whether mal-intent or misapprehension, plagiarism is a serious academic misconduct. We at *PMJ* treat plagiarism seriously and consider its prevention and response a matter of academic judgment based on the principles of originality, honesty, and authorship. For detection and prevention, apart from the steps described here, we ask our readers and reviewers to be vigilant for cases of plagiarism and to inform us, the editorial board, of any suspects. We thereby encourage a broad view of plagiarism, including not only the theft of words shown in PDS, but also thefts of ideas and representations. In terms of prevention, we hope that these principles will guide action and encourage authors to let their utterances lead the writing. As March (2007) reminds us, our task as scholars "is to make small pieces of scholarship beautiful through rigor, persistence, competence,

elegance, and grace, so as to avoid the plague of mediocrity that threatens often to overcome us" (p. 18). On that note, more than avoiding academic misconducts, we hope to encourage academic integrity and scholarship.

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