

Plagiarism Decisions among Indonesian EFL Students: A Grounded Theory Approach

Heri Mudra

herimudra@iainkerinci.ac.id

Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kerinci

Article History:

Received: 30 December 2025

Accepted: 11 May 2026

Corresponding Author:

herimudra@iainkerinci.ac.id

Keywords:

plagiarism decision; EFL students; academic writing; grounded theory

Abstract Plagiarism decisions among student writers are strongly influenced by their beliefs and writing practices in academic contexts. Some students do not intend to engage in plagiarism, whereas others may internalise such dishonest practices as a strategy for completing written assignments. Based on this background, the present study explores both plagiarism statuses and the factors that shape EFL students' plagiarism-related decisions. Seventy-three undergraduate students majoring in English participated in a grounded theory study. Qualitative data were collected through individual semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The findings indicate that EFL students can be categorised into five plagiarism statuses: never plagiarisers, experimenters, sudden plagiarisers, active plagiarisers, and former plagiarisers. Their decisions are influenced by a combination of personal (e.g., writing perfection, curiosity, enjoyment, burnout), academic (e.g., multiple tasks, course competition, error avoidance), and technological factors (e.g., free online access, unlimited resources). The study develops a grounded theory model that explains how these interrelated factors shape students' plagiarism decisions. Overall, the findings provide both

theoretical and practical insights into how plagiarism emerges in higher education contexts. It is recommended that educators and stakeholders reconsider how plagiarism is conceptualised and addressed, in order to prevent students from internalising academic dishonesty in their writing practices.

INTRODUCTION

Plagiarism in academic English writing remains a persistent global concern, particularly in higher education contexts where academic integrity is central to scholarly practice (Hafsa, 2021). Recent reports suggest that a substantial proportion of students engage in dishonest writing practices; for instance, secondary analyses of survey-based datasets indicate that up to approximately 60% of students admit to some form of cheating in written assignments, with a smaller subset (around 30%) reporting the use of generative AI tools without disclosure (An et al., 2025; Sozon et al., 2024; Lindner, 2024). However, such figures should be interpreted cautiously, as they are largely derived from self-reported data, vary across institutional and cultural contexts, and may not be generalisable to specific populations such as Indonesian EFL learners.

Violations of academic integrity manifest in diverse forms (Tran et al., 2023), and prior research consistently shows that English as a foreign language (EFL) students may engage in plagiarism despite increased institutional regulation and stricter penalties (Çelik & Razi, 2023). While these studies highlight the prevalence and consequences of plagiarism, they often treat plagiarism as an outcome rather than a decision process. Consequently, the cognitive and moral mechanisms underlying how students arrive at plagiarism-related choices remain underexplored.

A substantial body of research has examined plagiarism from multiple perspectives, including its causes and impacts (Abbasi et al., 2020; Fatima et al., 2020), students' perceptions and attitudes (Özbek Güven et al., 2024; Bowen & Nanni, 2021), prevention strategies (Du, 2022), and sociocultural influences. These studies provide valuable insights into *why* plagiarism occurs. However, they offer limited explanation of *how* students dynamically evaluate alternatives, justify their actions, and ultimately decide whether to plagiarise in specific situations.

This limitation points to a critical gap: plagiarism has rarely been conceptualised through a decision-making framework. Drawing on decision-making theory and moral cognition perspectives (e.g., moral disengagement, cost–benefit reasoning, and bounded rationality), plagiarism can be understood as the result of a situated evaluation process in which students weigh competing factors such as perceived academic pressure, self-efficacy, ethical beliefs, and available technological affordances. For instance, prior research has identified lack of understanding of plagiarism as a key factor (Hu & Lei, 2016), yet it remains unclear how such incomplete knowledge is cognitively processed and translated into actual behavioural choices.

In other words, existing scholarship has identified *determinants* of plagiarism but has not sufficiently theorised the micro-level decision trajectories through which these determinants interact over time. Specifically, little is known about: (1) how EFL students interpret situational constraints (e.g., deadlines, task difficulty) during writing; (2) how they morally justify or rationalise plagiarism, and (3) how these cognitive and affective processes evolve into different behavioural pathways (e.g., experimentation, occasional plagiarism, or habitual engagement).

Addressing this gap is particularly important in the Indonesian EFL context, where linguistic challenges, cultural understandings of authorship, and increasing exposure to digital writing tools may shape distinct decision-making patterns. Therefore, this study adopts a grounded theory approach to model plagiarism as a process of situated decision-making, aiming to uncover how Indonesian EFL students construct, negotiate, and enact their plagiarism-related choices. By doing

so, the study contributes not only to plagiarism research but also to broader discussions of academic integrity through the lens of decision-making and moral cognition.

While this study adopts a grounded theory approach, the emergent model can be theoretically interpreted through established frameworks of decision-making and moral cognition. In particular, the Moral Disengagement Theory (Bandura, 1999) provides useful lenses to explain how EFL students translate beliefs, pressures, and justifications into plagiarism-related actions. Accordingly, the study addresses the following research questions:

RQ1: How do Indonesian EFL students decide to engage with plagiarism?

RQ2: What factors and rationales influence Indonesian EFL students' plagiarism decisions?

Theoretical Framework

Moral Disengagement Theory, proposed by Bandura (1999), explains the cognitive mechanisms through which individuals justify or rationalise unethical behaviour while maintaining a positive self-concept. According to this social-cognitive framework, moral standards do not automatically regulate behaviour; rather, individuals can selectively deactivate these standards to permit actions that would otherwise be self-condemning. Moral disengagement operates through a set of psychosocial mechanisms that restructure harmful conduct into something acceptable, minimise personal responsibility, or distort the consequences of actions. This perspective is grounded in social cognitive theory, which emphasises the interaction between personal factors, behaviour, and environmental influences in shaping human action (Bandura, 1986, 1999).

Bandura (1999) identifies several key mechanisms of moral disengagement that function at different points in the self-regulatory process. These include moral justification, where harmful behaviour is reframed as serving a worthy purpose; euphemistic labelling, which sanitises unethical acts through neutral or positive language; and advantageous comparison, where one's behaviour is contrasted with

more severe actions to make it appear trivial. Additionally, mechanisms such as displacement and diffusion of responsibility allow individuals to attribute their actions to authority figures or group norms, thereby reducing personal accountability. Further processes involve distortion or minimisation of consequences, where the harm caused is downplayed, and dehumanisation or attribution of blame, where victims are seen as deserving the outcome. These mechanisms collectively weaken moral self-sanctions, enabling individuals to engage in unethical practices without experiencing guilt or self-censure (Bandura, 1999; Detert, Treviño, & Sweitzer, 2008).

Empirical research has widely applied Moral Disengagement Theory to contexts such as academic dishonesty, organisational misconduct, and digital behaviour, demonstrating its explanatory power across domains. In educational settings, studies show that students who exhibit higher levels of moral disengagement are more likely to justify and engage in plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic misconduct (Fida et al., 2015; Newman, Duff, & Baumeister, 2014). Moral disengagement has also been linked to the influence of peer norms and perceived pressures, suggesting that unethical behaviour is often socially constructed and cognitively rationalised rather than purely impulsive. Importantly, the theory highlights that interventions targeting ethical awareness, accountability, and moral self-regulation can reduce disengagement and promote integrity-based decision-making (Bandura, 1999; Fida et al., 2015).

Moral Disengagement and the Normalisation of Plagiarism

A growing body of research suggests that plagiarism among EFL students is not merely a result of linguistic difficulty but also a morally mediated process. Drawing on Moral Disengagement Theory (Bandura, 1999), students may cognitively justify plagiarism by reframing it as necessary, harmless, or even beneficial. For instance, copying textual material to “reduce writing burden” or to meet academic expectations can be interpreted as a form of moral justification, while the widespread perception that “many students plagiarise” reflects diffusion of responsibility. Prior studies indicate that such rationalisations are particularly salient

in contexts where students face linguistic limitations or unfamiliar academic conventions (Hu & Lei, 2016; Bowen & Nanni, 2021).

However, there is a notable inconsistency in the literature. While some studies frame plagiarism as unintentional, driven by misunderstanding of citation norms or cultural differences (Lei & Pramoolsook, 2020; Wheeler, 2009), others suggest that students are aware of the ethical implications yet still engage in plagiarism due to perceived necessity or advantage. This tension indicates that plagiarism cannot be fully explained as either ignorance or deliberate misconduct; rather, it involves a dynamic process of moral negotiation. Yet, few studies explicitly examine how these justifications emerge and evolve during actual decision-making moments, leaving a gap in understanding the cognitive pathways that enable disengagement.

Self-Regulation, Writing Competence, and Cognitive Constraints

Another central construct in the literature is self-regulation, particularly in relation to EFL students' ability to manage complex academic writing tasks. Academic writing in a second language requires high levels of cognitive control, including idea generation, syntactic structuring, and adherence to disciplinary conventions (Dong et al., 2023; Teng & Ying, 2023). When students lack sufficient proficiency, they may experience reduced self-efficacy and heightened anxiety, which in turn weakens their capacity to regulate their own learning processes. Under such conditions, plagiarism becomes a compensatory strategy to cope with perceived inadequacy (Koul et al., 2009).

Despite general agreement that low proficiency and limited writing skills contribute to plagiarism, prior findings remain inconclusive regarding the role of self-regulation. Some studies suggest that improved instruction and training in citation practices can significantly reduce plagiarism (Merkel, 2021; Dewi & Muslim, 2024), implying that the issue is largely pedagogical. In contrast, other research indicates that even well-informed students may still plagiarise under pressure, suggesting that knowledge alone does not guarantee ethical behaviour. This inconsistency points to a deeper issue: self-regulation is not only a matter of

skill acquisition but also involves decision-making under constraint, where students must balance effort, time, and expected outcomes. Existing research has not sufficiently explored how these regulatory processes interact with situational pressures at the moment of decision.

Institutional and Academic Pressure as Contextual Drivers

Institutional and academic pressures constitute a third major theme influencing plagiarism behaviour. EFL students often operate within highly demanding academic environments characterised by tight deadlines, heavy workloads, and high expectations for linguistic accuracy and performance. These pressures are compounded by the additional cognitive load of writing in a foreign language, leading many students to perceive plagiarism as a practical and efficient solution (Hu & Lei, 2016).

At the same time, the literature presents conflicting perspectives on the effectiveness of institutional interventions. On one hand, stricter policies, plagiarism detection tools, and formal training programs are believed to deter academic dishonesty (Du, 2022; Canzonetta, 2021). On the other hand, evidence suggests that such measures may not fully address the underlying causes of plagiarism, particularly when students continue to experience high levels of stress, limited access to resources, or insufficient writing support. This reveals a critical tension between compliance-based approaches (rules and penalties) and developmental approaches (skill-building and support).

Moreover, technological advancements—especially the availability of online resources and generative AI—further complicate this landscape by lowering the effort required to plagiarise, thereby reshaping students' perceptions of control and opportunity. Yet, prior studies tend to examine these factors in isolation rather than as part of an integrated decision-making system.

METHOD

Research Design and Context

This study was undertaken in terms of grounded theory, which comprises steps to inductively construct a theory about a phenomenon based on qualitative data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). It commences with a specific study focus, such as plagiarism decisions among EFL students and endeavours to determine pertinent information. Undertaking a grounded theory approach allows students to express beliefs and experiences, leading to linguistic and pedagogical constructions that appear through in-depth investigations. In addition, grounded theory enables this current study to perceive and explore EFL students' plagiarism decisions from their insights. Community insights are more useful to increase the understanding of individuals and habits than integrating some concepts that are not specifically designed for a particular category (Airhihenbuwa & Liburd, 2006), particularly in relation to a framework designed regarding a group of individuals might not properly help with the similar purpose for another group of individuals. It is noticed that grounded theory is relevant for this study as it began from an absence of basic assumptions about plagiarism decisions among EFL students, indicating psychologically distinctive findings to be revealed.

Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (FGD) were two interrelated methods employed throughout the data collection stage. Interviews with each individual are appropriate to explore ample, accurate data and provide flexibility pertinent to examining personalised experiences of decisive processes regarding plagiarism. Concurrently, FGD helps to provide interchange information that discloses both the resemblances and contrasts among individuals and provides multifaceted data regarding experiences and insights (Freeman, 2006). In this case, the first method used to collect individuals' narratives of plagiarism decisions refers to semi-structured interviews. Meanwhile, FGD was assembled by plagiarism categories or preferences to verify all results which help to collect various targeted data through a detailed investigation of attainable insights, beliefs, and thoughts.

Participants

Following the procedures of purposive sampling techniques, 73 undergraduate students majoring in English from public and private universities in Indonesia were recruited as the participants in this qualitative study. The researcher employed several methods during participants' recruitment, including online invitations, direct meetings, and fliers. Through a snowball sampling process (Johnson, 2014) integrated into the last step of each interview, the researcher demanded each participant to recommend a name as a potential participant. As a follow-up, the participant candidate was expected to communicate with the researcher online or offline and attend a fifteen-minute session, allowing the researcher to inspect their demographic identities, such as writing complexity, gender, age, grade, and plagiarism status. In addition, the participants and researcher determined the proper schedule for the semi-structured interviews.

The selection process of the participants refers to their academic writing task complexity (i.e., easy, middle, and high difficulty levels), gender (i.e., male and female), age (i.e., undergraduate students should be above 18 years old), grade (i.e., above semester 5), and plagiarism statuses (i.e., never, sudden, or active plagiariser). As for the statuses, the researcher used a questionnaire and interviewed to divide the participants into some categories. Such pre-research stages were paramount to ensure that each participant was categorised based on their beliefs, experiences, or practices regarding plagiarism during academic writing contexts. Moreover, the rationale for determining the statuses involved individuals with multifaceted plagiarism statuses and task complexity levels in receiving an overarching illustration of every distinctive category of plagiarism decisions and how they proceeded. Several responses were obtained during the recruitment stage even though snowball sampling dominated the participant selection process, indicating a broader scope of plagiarism experiences (e.g., complete, patchwork, direct, and accidental plagiarism). Moreover, 73 out of 79 EFL students signed an informed consent form confirming their voluntary interview participation. Six EFL students

disagreed with the participation, and they decided not to resubmit the consent form or not to have it signed.

Data Collection

Two methods were applied in collecting qualitative data: individual semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions.

Individual semi-structured interviews

Fifty-five EFL undergraduate students engaged in semi-structured interviews. Among them were 9 never plagiarisers (6 females, 3 males), 27 conditional plagiarisers (15 females, 12 males), and 19 regular or active plagiarisers (12 females, 7 males). Interviews started with a general question, “What is in your mind if I say ‘plagiarism’?” followed by semi-structured questions regarding specific plagiarism decisions. Following EFL students’ plagiarism statuses, interview guidelines varied. Never plagiarisers were required to determine their decision not to plagiarise and their insights on plagiarism and unconscious academic dishonesty. Sudden plagiarisers were required to answer questions about their decisions and reasons for not engaging with overall plagiarism attitudes. Regular or active plagiarisers were required to reveal their occupying decisions.

The researcher organised every session of the semi-structured interviews. As for the start of every interview, the greeting was the first phrase the researcher expressed to each participant as they entered the interview spot. It was followed by small talk or phatic communication that created friendliness and a natural atmosphere for the interviews. Having asked the participants about language preferences, more than 85.5 % ($n=47$) agreed to use Indonesian to communicate during the interviews. Participants’ first language, or L1, helped increase the clarity of topics being discussed and prevent any misinterpretation of meaning. The following step was negotiating participants’ agreements through informed consent. The participants who decided to attend the interviews directly provided a signed form indicating their readiness to participate in the qualitative data collection voluntarily. Each consent form provided information regarding the study objective,

participation statement, data collection method, time allocation, anonymity, and data withdrawal. The researcher used a high-quality audio recorder and field notes to collect interview data. Each interview lasted for about 50-75 minutes. The participants were allowed to arrange specific interview times and locations, stating that the researcher struggled to enhance their comfortable participation. In addition, the researcher used a member-checking technique to clarify participants' unclear utterances or unknown contexts based on interview results. During the member-checking stage, the participants came up with clear explanations, meaningful utterances, additional comments, or direct confirmation.

It is noticed that grounded theory study is undertaken through both simultaneous procedure and in-depth investigation (Elliott & Lazenbatt, 2005). This basis caused the researcher to informally scrutinise the interview result of each meeting during the data collection process with university writing teachers, journal editors or reviewers. The researcher reviewed the recordings of every interview and the lists of field notes, summarised the interview results, the discussion with external experts, and the researcher's self-explanation regarding the interview process and issue. Some existing questions were edited if needed, and other elaborated questions addressed the beginning main results of recent interviewees. For instance, as a revision for the question "What is your belief about unconscious academic dishonesty?" another question was addressed for further interviewees, "Many believe that unconscious academic dishonesty has more negative impact than intentional dishonesty, what is your belief?" Consequently, such a stage motivated the researcher to select other interviewees to enhance the theoretical attainment of the results (Elliott & Lazenbatt, 2005). Semi-structured interviews for each participant were finished as data saturation was acquired.

Focused Group Discussion (FGD)

The second data collection method is focused group discussion (FGD) among 18 undergraduate EFL students. FGD consisted of six never plagiarisers (i.e., group 1), six sudden plagiarisers (i.e., group 2), and six active plagiarisers (i.e., group 3). These groups represented a larger part of the undergraduate EFL students

due to the lower number of never, conditional, or regular plagiarisers. Each FGD was undertaken at an academic centre. Since every FGD lasted for about 1.5-2 hours, the participants were required to complete a three-session meeting, including introduction (i.e., 15-20 minutes), discussion (i.e., 1-1.5 hours), and feedback (i.e., 15-20 minutes). Each session was interrelated, stating that being absent in one of the sessions resulted in a lack of overall understanding of the discussion.

The procedures of FGD and semi-structured interviews were indistinguishable. After greeting the participants, the researcher introduced discussion goals, steps, and rules. Each participant was allowed to have small talk with others during the first session. In the discussion session, the researcher acted as a moderator and asked questions similar to those in the individual interviews. Yet, FGD employed several other questions that function as cross-validation regarding participants' agreement towards the themes unveiled through earlier semi-structured interviews. Some important memos were generated to record the process and interaction during FGD. The researcher moderated every FGD using Indonesian to communicate. In addition, an audio recorder was utilised to store data before analysis.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted following the systematic procedures of grounded theory as outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1990), with the aim of inductively generating a process-oriented model of EFL students' plagiarism decision-making. NVivo 14 (QSR International, 2023) was employed to facilitate data organisation, coding, and retrieval, while preserving analytical flexibility through iterative manual interpretation. The dataset—comprising interview transcripts, FGD recordings, and field notes—was first subjected to data immersion, involving repeated reading (seven cycles) and listening (five cycles) to ensure familiarity with both explicit meanings and paralinguistic nuances.

The analysis proceeded through three interrelated coding stages. First, open coding was conducted by segmenting the data into discrete meaning units and assigning initial codes that reflected participants' expressions, beliefs, and

experiences regarding plagiarism decisions. This stage emphasised inductive sensitivity, allowing categories to emerge directly from the data rather than from pre-existing theoretical assumptions. Second, axial coding was applied to examine relationships among codes by grouping them into higher-order categories (e.g., personal, academic, and technological rationales) and identifying conditions, interactions, and consequences associated with different plagiarism decisions. Constant comparative analysis was employed throughout this stage to refine categories across participants and contexts. Third, selective coding was undertaken to integrate and synthesise the categories into a coherent explanatory framework, resulting in a grounded model that captures the trajectory of plagiarism decisions (e.g., experimentation, sudden engagement, active plagiarism, and cessation). Analytical memos were continuously written across all stages to document conceptual insights, emerging patterns, and theoretical linkages, thereby supporting the abstraction of a process-oriented theory.

To enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, multiple validation strategies were employed. Investigator triangulation was achieved through collaboration with an additional coder who shared disciplinary knowledge, allowing for cross-validation of coding decisions and thematic interpretations until consensus was reached. Methodological triangulation was ensured by integrating data from semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, enabling comparison between individual narratives and collective perspectives. Member checking was conducted during and after interviews to clarify meanings, validate interpretations, and confirm the accuracy of participants' accounts. In addition, peer debriefing with academic writing experts (e.g., teachers, journal editors, reviewers) was used to critically examine emerging themes and refine analytical interpretations. The iterative nature of data collection and analysis—where insights from earlier stages informed subsequent interviews—also supported theoretical sampling and saturation, ensuring that the emerging model was sufficiently robust and comprehensive.

Grounded theory was selected as the most appropriate methodology for this study because plagiarism is conceptualised not as a static behaviour but as a dynamic decision-making process shaped by evolving cognitive, emotional, and contextual factors. Unlike approaches that test predefined variables, grounded theory allows for the exploration of how decisions unfold over time, capturing shifts in intention, justification, and action across different situations. The method's emphasis on constant comparison, process tracing, and theory generation enables the identification of decision trajectories rather than isolated determinants. This is particularly important in the context of EFL students, whose plagiarism practices may vary depending on linguistic competence, academic pressure, and technological access. By inductively constructing a model grounded in participants' lived experiences, this study provides a nuanced understanding of how students interpret constraints, negotiate moral considerations, and ultimately decide whether to engage in plagiarism.

The Rigor in Grounded Theory Approach

In this qualitative study, the rigor directed the researcher to provide several prominent elements, including persistent comparative analysis and simultaneous collection of interviews and FGD data, memoing, conceptual sampling, and integrated, continuous reviews that encourage comprehensive process throughout the grounded-theory study (Glaser, 1998; Elliott & Lazenbatt, 2005). Repeated data analysis and data collection were undertaken simultaneously as the strategy enabled the researcher to review study results or modify questions for further interviews and FGD. As grounded theory focuses on developing a new conceptual theory based on qualitative field data, the researcher invited several participants to be interviewed regarding the analysed data and emerging themes. Some memos containing emerging initial results from all stages of the study were employed as basic units of the newly developed theories.

Furthermore, there are a variety of strategies employed by the researcher to determine detailed, comprehensive data elucidation, including (a) the researcher reviewed the accuracy level of data understanding through member checking with

the participants; (b) the results of semi-structured interviews were aligned with FGD process by inviting the participants to explain their insights regarding overall themes resulted from the preceding interviews; and (c) other related elements of the study were involved during both data collection and analysis process, indicating that academic writing teachers in universities, journal editors, reviewers, or proofreaders (e.g., linguistic professors) were paramount to be invited in the discussion of interview or FGD data and study results respectively.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

FINDINGS

The results are organised by revealing challenges, emotional images, and some strategies addressed to the earlier barriers.

The Types of Plagiarisers

Based on a preliminary survey, the study divided plagiarism statuses into three general types, including never, frequent, and active plagiarisers. Nevertheless, more than half (53%) of “never plagiarisers” (i.e., never having plagiarised academic texts) had experienced plagiarism in their academic writing, while participants’ plagiarism decisions show different types if compared to those of never plagiarisers. Consequently, the plagiarism decision of such “experimenters” was divided from never plagiarisers who did not commit plagiarism. Moreover, analyses disclosed that not all plagiarism was similar. Participants openly divided “sudden plagiarism” and “regular plagiarism” (i.e., active plagiarism), and their comparable decision processes varied. Five plagiariser categories were then recognised, including 5 never plagiarisers, 9 experimenters, 8 sudden plagiarisers, 14 active plagiarisers, and 15 former plagiarisers.

The analysis continued to the decision process when each plagiarism category was determined. The five types of plagiarisers established a variety of plagiarism decisions. The decisions were revealed through a trajectory that begins with no plagiariser resolving to experiment, for those who did not stop plagiarism led to either sudden plagiarisers or active plagiarisers depending on their plagiarism

opportunities. Active plagiarisers also had to decide whether to stop or not. When they stopped plagiarising some academic texts, they turned to former plagiarisers who abstain or plagiarise frequently to become sudden plagiarisers. The trajectory regarding the plagiarism determination process is conveyed through Figure 1.

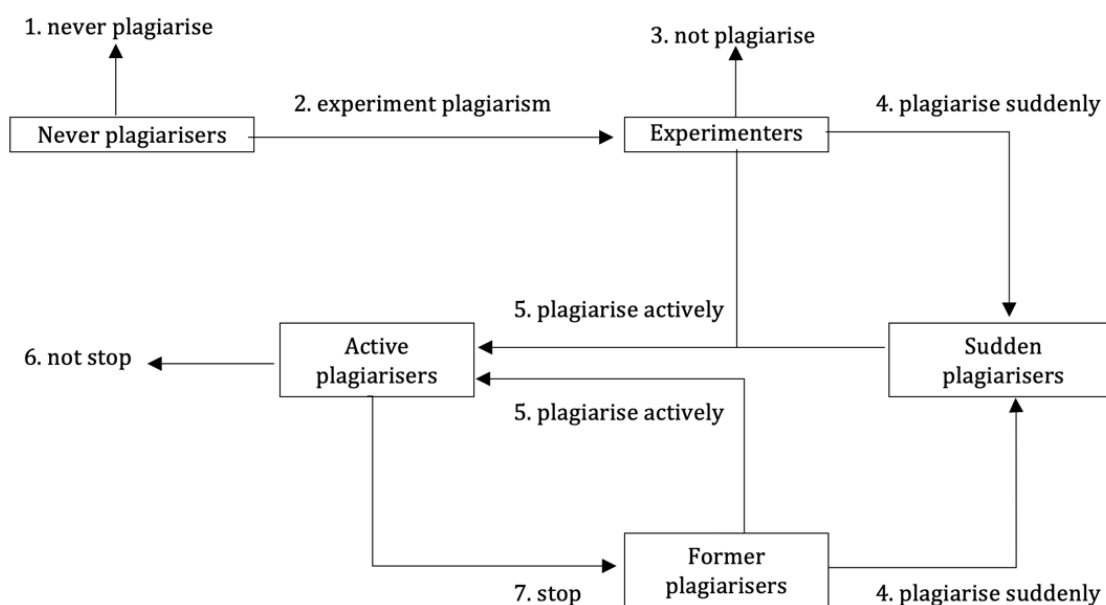


Figure 1. The Trajectory of EFL Students' Plagiarism Decisions

Figure 1 discloses that each type of plagiarism began with the decision to experiment with dishonest practices. Many EFL students did not rely on plagiarism as their experience during the experimentation was unpleasant. Some believed that plagiarism causes academic betrayal for those who did not plagiarise, while others considered it a source of lacking confidence. Unfortunately, many experimenters decided to be sudden plagiarisers; the students plagiarised only for a matter of urgency or under academic writing pressure. Most of a sudden, plagiarisers did not judge them as plagiarisers. Still, they were assigned as “never plagiarisers” (i.e., not plagiarise without any experimentation) or “former plagiariser” (i.e., stop plagiarising, but frequently engage in burdening circumstances).

Table 1. The Rationales regarding plagiarism decisions

Categories of Decisions	Personal rationales	Academic Rationales	Technological Rationales
1. Never plagiarise	“Being afraid of teachers’ penalty” “Never believed in plagiarism”	Reliance on teachers’ support: “Availability of national and international writing resources,” “Receiving total helps on writing tasks” Anti-plagiarism norms: “True writers do not plagiarise,” “A bad habit forever”	A lack of technological knowledge
2. Experiment plagiarism	Burnout Curiosity Writing perfection To be called as a fine student-writer	Academic burden To compete others To avoid errors To grab teachers’ attention	Accessibility: “Easier access on online resources”
3. Not plagiarise after experimentation	Problematic experimentation: “felt unpleasant,” “betray classmates” No prospect: “will not increase confidence”	Course failure: “Marked with an E,” “ Loss of Trust: “Reducing teachers’ trust in all tasks”	Automatic plagiarism detector
4. Plagiarise suddenly after experimentation or stopping	“Reducing writing stress” “Helpful to avoid burden”	Writing difficulties: “cannot produce own sentences,” “need years to write perfectly”	Advancement of technology
5. Plagiarise actively after experimentation	“A better option” Advantages	“Many students engage with plagiarism”	Addiction to automatic written contents

	“Addicted to fake self-development”		(e.g., generative AI)
6. Not stop	Prospective results Enjoy with plagiarism Negative impacts of stopping “Never felt guilty”	“Many students engage with plagiarism”	Easy access and addiction to online contents
7. Stop	Overreliance Lack of cognitive development Negative transformation	Awareness of dishonest practices Implementation of stricter rules	Comprehensive plagiarism detection Partial or closed access to newer resources

Deciding to Plagiarise Suddenly

Table 1 reveals the seven plagiarism-related decisions responded to by undergraduate EFL students with different plagiarism statuses and their stated rationales for the decision-making. Such decisions describe plagiarism experimentation, plagiarising suddenly, plagiarising actively, continuing plagiarising and not stopping, and deciding to stop. Four of seven complicated decisions (i.e., plagiarising suddenly, plagiarising actively, not stopping, or stopping) are explained thoroughly.

It has been noticed that sudden plagiarism could be an intervening stage or final plagiarism decision before either former plagiarisers or experimenters become active plagiarisers. Many of the sudden plagiarisers stated that they rejected any active plagiarism as they maintained worldly beliefs about the risks of plagiarism. They admitted that they did not intend to plagiarise actively due to comprehensive impacts on academic integrity and deliberately attempted to control their plagiarism. Still, they were inclined to receive a negative impact of sudden plagiarism. A sudden plagiariser differentiated sudden plagiarism to overreliance on technology, “it’s like playing an online game; it is worse for students’ learning development, but it does not harm them if they deal with the game frequently.”

As for the primary rationales of the sudden plagiarism decision, as revealed in Table 1, the rationale of plagiarising suddenly to prevent an academic writing burden was exceptionally fascinating. Some sudden plagiarisers reported that, since they “received complicated writing tasks to be submitted sooner,” they decided to copy some texts from online resources to help them “reduce writing stress or burnout.” Such stress has become a problem for many EFL students when they cannot “produce their sentences,” under submission time pressure. Other students believed they needed several years to understand how to write academic texts properly based on international writing conventions. Consequently, their rationales were to easily manage writing tasks, submit tasks before the deadlines, and lack understanding of specific writing rules.

Initial open coding identified recurring expressions such as “reduce writing stress,” “many students plagiarise,” and “I cannot produce my own sentences.” These were grouped into first-order codes (e.g., stress reduction, social normalization, linguistic difficulty). Through axial coding, these were clustered into higher-order categories: personal rationales, academic pressures, and technological affordances. Finally, selective coding integrated these into a process model of plagiarism decision-making. For example, one participant stated: “I copy some texts... to reduce writing stress” (P13).



Figure 2. From raw data to conceptual categories

Dealing with Active Plagiarism

Fourteen participants plagiarised actively (i.e., active plagiarisers) after experimentation. Unlike sudden plagiarism, active plagiarism was not an intended decision but an upshot of moderate stages that led to a “need” many believe to “help reduce writing difficulties.” The moderate process normally required an extended period, commenced with experimental plagiarism, and increased to active attempts.

Unlike experimenters, active plagiarisers' experiences continued after the first experimentation. Many liked the experimentation and kept dealing with plagiarism. Yet, other participants did not enjoy "copy and paste without attribution" while writing academic texts. They plagiarised due to logical academic rationales (e.g., most students plagiarise in academic writing tasks). Finally, they acknowledged how to plagiarise, got addicted, and started actively plagiarising. Participants' decision process resulted from first experimentation to sudden plagiarism and ended up in active plagiarism. Other participants admitted that they quit plagiarism after experimentation, but this led to plagiarisers sometimes later as their "academic writing was not developed for years." They agreed that plagiarising academic texts had become a "positive option" for beginner academic writers like them. It is because they learned "how to write grammatical, structured sentences based on academic writing rules."

Meanwhile, higher access to online resources was another main rationale for active plagiarisers. Many participants believed that easy internet access enriched their "theories and practices regarding academic writing." However, such access led them to overreliance on the availability of resources to write texts, and they became "addicted to every information provided online." As this process involved participants' engagement to be active plagiarisers, others "did not realise that they could be a plagiariser." They began acknowledging copy and paste, considering that they "could stop from plagiarism anytime they wish." Surprisingly, plagiarising moderately led to a "need." Seemingly, as noticed in a memo during the study,

Most plagiarisers raised the "need" without relying on awareness of its negative impacts. When they noticed it had gone too far due to their addiction to automatic writing content, their decision was valid if they determined to stop plagiarism. (P5)

Plagiarism Actively and Not Stopping

Participants reported that they acknowledged the negative impacts of plagiarism in English academic writing but still chose not to stop. Many rationales revealed that active plagiarism is needed as the rationale for committing plagiarism.

When participants pointed out that “many students engage in plagiarism” as a rationale to allow themselves to be addicted to academic dishonesty. The findings showed that not all active plagiarisers were addicted to plagiarism, but those who attempted to stop found it difficult to avoid the dishonest practices due to the need. An active plagiariser stated,

Whenever I have a writing task to be submitted, I suddenly copy and paste content from online articles. I disconnected Wi-Fi to empower my cognitive ability in writing an academic text. Still, it was useless as I decided to use some copy of the text to complete writing tasks. For now, I am certain that I cannot push myself to stop due to the need and the addiction. (P13)

In addition to the rationales, active plagiarisers revealed several other rationales for not stopping: enjoyment of plagiarism, negative impacts of stopping, and “never felt faulty.” First, although plagiarism is a negative attitude to use others’ works without attribution, it is becoming favorable for those who do not stop. One of the participants’ main rationales for continuing as active plagiarisers was enjoyment. It helped participants to “relieve stress upon complicated writing tasks.” They encountered enjoyable feelings that led them to “positive writing habit,” finally, they acknowledged academic writing as “an interesting challenge, not burden.” Second, not stopping has some rationales for many participants. They were likely instructed by how previous writers presented their coherent and cohesive texts. Using their content allows the participants to engage fully with real academic writing. Conversely, stopping plagiarism “...did not help them understand qualified writing examples.” Third, one of the negative rationales for not stopping is that participants did not feel guilty about engaging themselves in academic dishonesty. Such a feeling did not come suddenly, but it was a gradual process, starting from experimenting, stopping, experiencing, and not stopping. One of the participants admitted,

I stopped many times on many occasions, but still, I could have done better in writing a good English text. When I returned with it [plagiarism], I began learning prominent knowledge about writing, such as writer’s style, grammatical sentence, structure, and context. I do not know what others say about me, but I want to learn in this way. I may want to stop when I am done in the future. (P2)

Choosing to Stop

A total of 15 participants who decided to stop academic dishonesty revealed their rationales, including personal, academic, and technological rationales. The participants were aware of their “overreliance on both online writing resources and automatic contents in generative AI tools.” Some participants believed they could not develop cognitive writing competence when “engaging with accessible, copiable, and trusted texts in online resources.” Similarly, one participant stated,

I have been experimenting with plagiarism during a writing course. Once I became involved in it, I cleared up most academic writing problems. Unfortunately, attending writing courses for three semesters did not result in any positive writing skills due to overreliance on dishonest practices. It is better for me to learn how to modify the structure of words in a sentence because it may be helpful. (P11)

It is noticed that other participants encountered negative writing transformation resulting from not stopping plagiarism. They expected to achieve a “significant transformation of writing development” after studying many related courses. Moreover, choosing to stop it was in line with the “implementation of stricter rules for those who committed on the dishonest practices.” Such rules are considered important to prevent plagiarism when accomplishing academic writing tasks.

Technologically, those who stopped were desperate as they could not find exact sources for their writing task online. Online resources are dynamic but sometimes restricted due to regulations from publishers. Relying on such resources leads some participants to problematic online surfing. Yet, others who are open to academic integrity chose other strategies. One of the participants admitted,

Not all websites provide free or easier access to important sources. For my writing topic, I could not find valid references from some international high-impact journals. When I referred to a blog, I could not, again, collect relevant references. I do not rely on particular references anymore, but I benefit from various information. I rely on proper paraphrasing techniques that are safer and “healthier” for my academic writing development. (P7)

DISCUSSION

The findings can be meaningfully interpreted through moral disengagement theory (Bandura, 1999). Participants who justified plagiarism as a way to “reduce writing stress” or who claimed that “many students engage in plagiarism” reflect mechanisms such as moral justification and diffusion of responsibility. These cognitive strategies allow students to neutralise ethical concerns and maintain a positive self-concept despite engaging in academic dishonesty. Notably, active plagiarisers’ reported lack of guilt and enjoyment of plagiarism indicates a deeper level of moral disengagement, where internal moral sanctions are weakened or deactivated. In addition, the findings align with cognitive load theory, particularly in explaining sudden plagiarism. EFL students often experience high intrinsic and extraneous cognitive load due to linguistic limitations, task complexity, and time constraints. Under such conditions, plagiarism emerges as a cognitive shortcut that reduces processing demands. Students’ claims that they “cannot produce their own sentences” or require “years to write perfectly” indicate overload in working memory, prompting reliance on copying strategies as an adaptive—though unethical—response.

The concept of agency further clarifies variations in students’ trajectories. While some participants actively chose to stop plagiarism after recognising its negative impact on cognitive development, others continued due to perceived necessity or addiction. This suggests that agency is bounded rather than absolute, shaped by competing pressures such as institutional expectations, technological affordances, and personal beliefs. Importantly, the transition from active plagiariser to former plagiariser demonstrates that agency can be reconstructed over time, particularly when students develop awareness of long-term consequences.

Plagiarism decisions among EFL undergraduate students remain critical regarding their statuses and rationales behind academic dishonesty. Although the EFL students are generally grouped into never plagiariser, plagiariser, and former plagiariser, they also comprise detailed statuses for plagiariser, such as experimenter, sudden, and active plagiariser. Both never and former plagiarisers

only consist of one type as their statuses refer to static decisions, indicating that they choose not to experience and leave plagiarism. This section divides students' rationales into personal, academic, and technological rationales. Interestingly, there are a variety of detailed rationales that lead them to a specific decision.

The present study confirms prior findings that plagiarism among EFL students is influenced by linguistic challenges, academic pressure, and access to digital resources (Hu & Lei, 2016; Çelik & Razi, 2023). However, it extends this literature by showing how these factors are not isolated determinants but are integrated within a decision-making trajectory. Rather than treating plagiarism as a direct outcome of low proficiency or poor understanding, this study demonstrates that students actively evaluate, justify, and negotiate their choices across different contexts.

At the same time, the findings challenge the common dichotomy between intentional and unintentional plagiarism. While previous research often frames plagiarism as either a result of ignorance or deliberate misconduct, the current results suggest a more nuanced continuum. For example, “sudden plagiarisers” are aware of academic norms yet engage in plagiarism under pressure, indicating that awareness does not necessarily prevent unethical behaviour. This challenges the assumption that improving knowledge alone is sufficient to reduce plagiarism. Furthermore, the study contributes to emerging discussions on technology-mediated plagiarism, particularly the role of generative AI. While prior studies highlight the risks of easy access to online resources, the present findings show that technology not only facilitates plagiarism but also reshapes students' perceptions of learning, leading to dependency and the normalisation of copying as a legitimate strategy.

Never plagiarisers, for example, have no belief in plagiarism and higher anxiety about writing teachers' punishment. Such students make a good start by allowing their cognitive ability to help write academic English texts (Stevani & Saragi, 2025). Cognition may transform writers' academic writing development as they rely heavily on self-ability rather than automatic tools, such as generative AI. Teachers' penalties for plagiarism may become a motivation for students to avoid

academic dishonesty. When the students are equipped with assistance with academic writing practices, their intention to conduct plagiarism leads to gradual disappearance (Çelik & Razi, 2023; Du, 2022; Sun & Yang, 2015).

Nevertheless, former plagiarisers do not share overall similar rationales like never plagiarisers. Lack of cognitive development or transformation negatively impacts plagiarism as students are provided with free, automatic resources. Still, they must be equipped with challenges to deal with academic writing problems (Reforsado & Raymundo, 2025), such as paraphrasing ideas. In line with that, Vessal and Habibzadeh (2007) mention that teachers' stricter rules on students' plagiarism may also prevent them from any "copy and paste" technique when writing academic texts. In many cases, students have higher anxiety about getting lower scores or failure in a course due to its negative impact on their achievement (Chen, Liu, & Liu, 2024). Moreover, former plagiarisers need more free writing resources (e.g., closed article access) in reputable international journals, which reduces their expectation to rely heavily on such content (Mudra, 2025).

EFL students who experiment with plagiarism continue with their convincing rationales. Writing burnout is the most influencing factor that leads to dishonest practices. Multiple tasks burden EFL students to succeed in academic writing as teachers' expectations are mostly higher (Hu & Lei, 2016). Many students refer to writing perfection, which must be achieved during a related course. Such perfection can result in lower or zero writing errors resulting from systematic writing organisation, syntactical sentences, and meaningful context. These elements positively impact students' writing presentations, transforming them into competent writers.

Plagiarism experimenters tend to be more ambitious than other plagiarisers. One of the logical rationales is that they encounter a first experience in plagiarism and benefit from academic dishonesty to solve academic writing barriers (Anson, 2022; Ouellette, 2008). Free online resources become their primary materials for writing any given writing task (Pusey & Butler, 2024). In the meantime, sudden plagiarisers refer to those who frequently commit plagiarism. This plagiariser is

more than just utilising available resources to write academic English texts. Relieving writing stress, burden, and lack of writing ability (e.g., problems in constructing grammatical sentences) serves as their rationale to plagiarise suddenly.

Meanwhile, addiction emerges as the keyword for why undergraduate EFL students actively engage in plagiarism. Active plagiarisers' addiction includes unlimited content from generative AI and fake writing development. Generative AI provides unlimited, free content for those interested in writing academic texts (Wang, 2024). Easy access and prompt-based responses allow active plagiarisers to adopt the contents as writing materials fully. Online resources also allow them to freely surf, read, and download published articles from national and international journals. Conversely, active plagiarisers believe that writing products is another form of their self-development in academic writing. Yet, the direct advantages of available writing resources lead to proper options for active plagiarisers. This rationale finally creates those who continue as extensive plagiarisers. Enjoyment and lack of guilt are stronger reasons for their statuses, even though they know plagiarism's negative impacts on academic writing.

Despite these contributions, the findings should be interpreted with caution. First, the study is based on a qualitative sample of 73 Indonesian EFL undergraduate students, which limits the generalisability of the results to other educational contexts. Cultural norms, institutional policies, and language proficiency levels may differ significantly across settings. Second, the reliance on self-reported data may introduce biases, including social desirability or selective recall, particularly when discussing ethically sensitive behaviours such as plagiarism. Third, while grounded theory allows for rich, process-oriented insights, the findings represent interpretive constructions rather than causal relationships. In addition, the categorisation of plagiarism statuses (e.g., experimenter, sudden, active) should not be viewed as fixed or universally applicable, but rather as context-dependent analytical tools derived from this specific dataset. Future research employing longitudinal or mixed-method designs may help validate and refine these categories across broader populations.

As a conclusive result of this grounded study, Figure 3 categorises a model regarding factors or rationales that influence undergraduate EFL students' plagiarism decisions in academic writing. Personal, academic, and technological rationales emerge as general concepts that yield various reasonable decisions towards plagiarism, including experimenting plagiarism, plagiarising suddenly after experimentation or stopping, plagiarising actively after experimentation, and not stopping. In this case, never plagiarise, not plagiarise after experimentation, and stop are included in positive attitudes not described in the model. However, these decisions are inseparable from other plagiarism decisions as one status (e.g., stop) is initialised with another previous level (e.g., not stop).

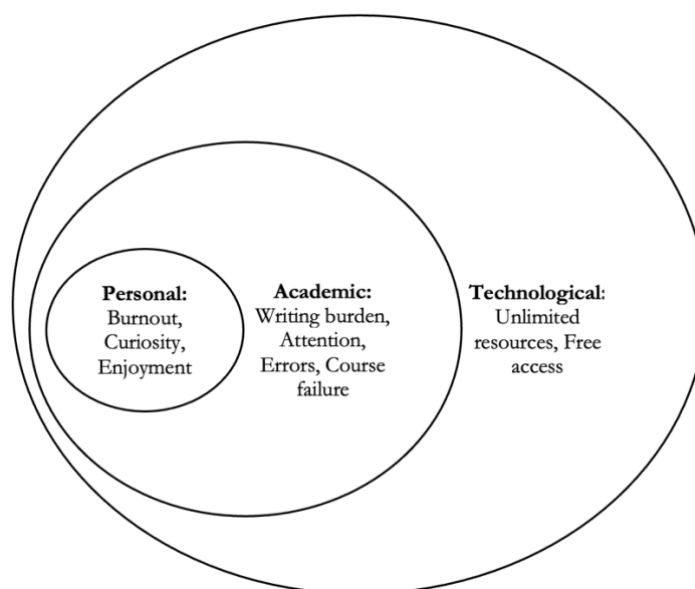


Figure 3. A Model of EFL Students' Plagiarism Decisions under Multiple Factors and Rationales

CONCLUSIONS

Each decision is recognised from its particular rationale that is resulted from insights or experiences. Different students have different beliefs and practices towards plagiarism. This basic concept constructs several decisions, such as not plagiarising, plagiarising suddenly, or plagiarising actively. The constructed model of EFL students' plagiarism decisions sheds light on integrated and interrelated factors and rationales (i.e., personal, academic, and technological) representing both

beliefs and practices towards plagiarism in academic writing. Although the model is contextually dependent on the study setting, its result remains normative. This is because plagiarism is a global issue in many educational contexts, such as undergraduate, postgraduate, doctoral, or academic workplaces (i.e., schools and universities). Various negative impacts significantly emerge when plagiarism is involved in an academic practice. This challenge requires integrated support from both stakeholders and university teachers to control academic dishonesty. The model can be a pertinent resource in identifying related factors and solving plagiarism issues in academic settings.

The findings offer several implications for EFL pedagogy and academic integrity policies. First, interventions should move beyond rule enforcement and focus on reducing cognitive load in academic writing. This can be achieved through scaffolded instruction, genre-based teaching, and incremental writing tasks that support students' linguistic development. Second, educators should explicitly address moral reasoning and ethical decision-making, rather than assuming that knowledge of plagiarism rules is sufficient. Classroom discussions, reflective activities, and case-based learning can help students recognise and challenge their own rationalisations.

Third, institutions should adopt a balanced approach between support and enforcement. While plagiarism detection tools and stricter regulations remain important, they should be complemented with accessible writing support services, such as academic writing centres and guided paraphrasing practice. Fourth, given the increasing role of technology, universities should develop clear guidelines on the ethical use of generative AI, emphasising transparency, attribution, and responsible engagement rather than outright prohibition. Finally, fostering students' sense of agency is critical. Providing opportunities for revision, feedback, and skill development can empower students to rely on their own abilities rather than external sources, thereby reducing dependence on plagiarism over time.

REFERENCES

- Abbasi, P., Yoosefi-Lebni, J., Jalali, A., Ziapour, A., & Nouri, P. (2020). Causes of the plagiarism: A grounded theory study. *Nursing Ethics*, 28(2), 282–296. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0969733020945753>
- Airhihenbuwa, C. O., & Liburd, L. (2006). Eliminating health disparities in the African American population: the interface of culture, gender, and power. *Health education & behavior: the official publication of the Society for Public Health Education*, 33(4), 488–501. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1090198106287731>
- Alzahrani, S., & Aljuaid, H. (2022). Identifying cross-lingual plagiarism using rich semantic features and deep neural networks: A study on Arabic-English plagiarism cases. *Journal of King Saud University - Computer and Information Sciences*, 34(4), 1110–1123. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jksuci.2020.04.009>
- An, Y., Yu, J. H., & James, S. (2025). Investigating the higher education institutions' guidelines and policies regarding the use of generative AI in teaching, learning, research, and administration. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, 22(1), 10. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-025-00507-3>
- Anson, D. W. J. (2022). Personas of plagiarism: The construction of the 'plagiarist' in Australian university subreddits. *Linguistics and Education*, 69, 101050. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2022.101050>
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Prentice-Hall.
- Bandura, A. (1999). Moral disengagement in the perpetration of inhumanities. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 3(3), 193–209. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327957pspr0303_3
- Bikowski, D., & Gui, M. (2018). The influence of culture and educational context on Chinese students' understandings of source use practices and plagiarism. *System*, 74, 194–205. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2018.03.017>
- Bowen, N. E. J. A., & Nanni, A. (2021). Piracy, playing the system, or poor policies? Perspectives on plagiarism in Thailand. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 51, 100992. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2021.100992>
- Canzonetta, J. (2021). Repurposing plagiarism detection services for responsible pedagogical application and (In)Formative assessment of source attribution practices. *Assessing Writing*, 50, 100563. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asw.2021.100563>

- Çelik, Ö., & Razi, S. (2023). From transgressors to authors: promoting EFL writing through academic integrity integrated instruction. *System*, 117, 103101. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2023.103101>
- Chen, D., Liu, W., & Liu, X. (2024). What drives college students to use AI for L2 learning? Modeling the roles of self-efficacy, anxiety, and attitude based on an extended technology acceptance model. *Acta Psychologica*, 249, 104442. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2024.104442>
- Crichton, S., & Childs, E. (2005). Clipping and coding audio files: A research method to enable participant voice. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 4(3), Article 3. Retrieved from http://www.ualberta.ca/~iiqm/backissues/4_3/html/crichton.htm
- Detert, J. R., Treviño, L. K., & Sweitzer, V. L. (2008). Moral disengagement in ethical decision making: A study of antecedents and outcomes. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93(2), 374–391. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.93.2.374>
- Dewi, M., & Muslim, A. B. (2024). Integrated Skills Approach in Teaching EFL Writing and Speaking as Productive Skills: A Case Study in Indonesian Context. *LET: Linguistics, Literature and English Teaching Journal*, 14(1), 161–181. <https://doi.org/10.18592/let.v14i1.12334>
- Dong, J., Wang, H., & Buckingham, L. (2023). Mapping out the disciplinary variation of syntactic complexity in student academic writing. *System*, 113, 102974. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2022.102974>
- Du, Y. (2022). Adopting critical-pragmatic pedagogy to address plagiarism in a Chinese context: An action research. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 57, 101112. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2022.101112>
- Elliott, N., & Lazenbatt, A. (2005). How to recognise a 'quality' grounded theory research study. *The Australian Journal of Advanced Nursing: A Quarterly Publication of the Royal Australian Nursing Federation*, 22(3), 48–52.
- Fatima, A., Sunguh, K. K., Abbas, A., Mannan, A., & Hosseini, S. (2020). Impact of pressure, self-efficacy, and self-competency on students' plagiarism in higher education. *Accountability in Research*, 27(1), 32–48. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08989621.2019.1699070>
- Fida, R., Tramontano, C., Paciello, M., Guglielmetti, C., & Barbaranelli, C. (2015). Understanding the interplay among regulatory self-efficacy, moral disengagement, and academic cheating behaviour. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 107(3), 871–884. <https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000027>
- Giuliano, T. A. (2022). A 3-Pronged Approach for Teaching Psychology Students to Understand and Avoid Plagiarism. *Teaching of Psychology*, 00986283221116882. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00986283221116882>

- Glaser, B. (1998). *Doing Grounded Theory: Issues and Discussions*. Sociology Press.
- Hafsa, N-E. (2021). Plagiarism: A global phenomenon. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 12(3), 53-59. <https://doi.org/10.7176/JEP/12-3-08>
- Hu, G., & Lei, J. (2016). Plagiarism in English academic writing: A comparison of Chinese university teachers' and students' understandings and stances. *System*, 56, 107–118. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2015.12.003>
- Johnson, T.P. (2014). Snowball Sampling: Introduction. In Wiley *StatsRef: Statistics Reference Online* (eds N. Balakrishnan, T. Colton, B. Everitt, W. Piegorisch, F. Ruggeri and J.L. Teugels). <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118445112.stat05720>
- Khathayut, P., Walker-Gleaves, C., & Humble, S. (2022). Using the theory of planned behaviour to understand Thai students' conceptions of plagiarism within their undergraduate programmes in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 47(2), 394–411. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2020.1750584>
- Koul, R., Clariana, R. B., Jitgarun, K., & Songsriwittaya, A. (2009). The influence of achievement goal orientation on plagiarism. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 19(4), 506–512. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2009.05.005>
- Lei, Z., & Pramoolsook, I. (2020). Written Feedback Focus on Bachelor's Thesis Writing: A Case Study of Supervisors' Beliefs and Practices at a Chinese University. *Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences Studies*, 20(3), 816–846. <https://doi.org/10.14456/hasss.2020.33>
- Li, Y., Ge, M., & Chen, Q. (2024). How English academic writing textbooks written by Chinese EFL teachers address the issue of plagiarism. *Journal for Academic Purposes*, 69, 101388. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2024.101388>
- Lindner, J. (2024, 17 July 2024). *Alarming Plagiarism Statistics: Widespread Cheating Among College Students Revealed*. Gitnux report 2024. <https://gitnux.org/plagiarism-statistics/>
- Lingán-Huamán, S. K., Dominguez-Lara, S., & Carranza Esteban, R. F. (2024). Gender-based differences in the impact of Dark Triad traits on academic dishonesty: The mediating role of moral disengagement in college students. *Heliyon*, 10(1), e23322. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e23322>
- Merkel, W. (2021). Collage of confusion: An analysis of one university's multiple plagiarism policies. *System*, 96, 102399. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2020.102399>

- Mudra, H. (2025). Pathways to Near-Zero Plagiarism Level in English Research Article Writing: A Photovoice Autophenomenographic Insight. *LET: Linguistics, Literature and English Teaching Journal*, 15(1), 114–138. <https://doi.org/10.18592/let.v15i1.16163>
- Newman, M. L., Duff, K. J., & Baumeister, R. F. (2014). A new look at defensive projection: Thought suppression, accessibility, and biased person perception. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 40(10), 1249–1261. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167214542444>
- NVivo Qualitative Data Analysis Software. (2023). QSR International Pty Ltd. (Version 14).
- Ouellette, M. A. (2008). Weaving strands of writer identity: Self as author and the NNES “plagiarist.” *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 17(4), 255–273. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2008.05.002>
- Özbek Güven, G., Inceoğlu, F., Yilmaz, Ş., & Ince, F. (2024). Evaluation of Turkish Academic and Student Attitudes on Plagiarism: Validity and Reliability of the Plagiarism Attitudes Scale. *Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics*, 19(1–2), 58–70. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15562646241231597>
- Pan, J., & Lei, J. (2024). Profiling Chinese university students’ understandings of plagiarism through Q methodology. *Ethics & Behavior*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10508422.2024.2389541>
- Pinchai, P. (2025). The impact of multi-level anonymity in asynchronous online peer feedback for EFL writing in higher education. *Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences Studies*, 25(2), 271–279. <https://doi.org/10.69598/hass.25.2.273433>
- Pusey, K., & Butler, Y. G. (2024). Exploring the interaction among writing fluency, writing processes, and external resource access in second language writing assessment. *Computers and Composition*, 74, 102888. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compcom.2024.102888>
- Reforsado, M., Raymundo, J.L. (2025). Written Discourse Performance of Senior High School Students: Designing Genre-Based Instructional Materials. *Research and Innovation in Applied Linguistics [RIAL]*, 3(1), 69-92. <https://doi.org/10.31963/rial.v3i1.5070>
- Sozon, M., Mohammad Alkharabsheh, O. H., Fong, P. W., & Chuan, S. B. (2024). Cheating and plagiarism in higher education institutions (HEIs): A literature review. *F1000Research*, 13, 788. <https://doi.org/10.12688/f1000research.147140.2>
- Stevani, M., & Saragi, A.A. (2025). Reconstructing Narrative Coherence in EFL Writing: A Cognitive-Rhetorical Framework for Event Causality Mapping, Referential Consistency, and Affective Trajectory Control. *LET:*

Linguistics, Literature and English Teaching Journal, 15(2).
<https://doi.org/10.18592/let.v15i2.17779>

- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research*. Sage.
- Sun, Y.-C., & Yang, F.-Y. (2015). Uncovering published authors' text-borrowing practices: Paraphrasing strategies, sources, and self-plagiarism. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 20, 224–236.
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2015.05.003>
- Teng, M. F., & Ying, Z. (2023). Assessing self-regulated writing strategies, self-efficacy, task complexity, and performance in English academic writing. *Assessing Writing*, 57, 100728.
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asw.2023.100728>
- Tran, M. N., Marshall, S., & Hogg, L. (2023). Chapter 8 - Development of doctoral student perceptions of plagiarism and academic integrity: the roles of agency and aspirational identity. In U. G. Singh, C. S. Nair, & R. B. T.-A. Q. and I. in the N. H. E. D. E. Watson (Eds.), *Chandos Information Professional Series* (pp. 143–162). Chandos Publishing.
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-323-95423-5.00006-5>
- Uzun, A. M., & Kilis, S. (2020). Investigating antecedents of plagiarism using extended theory of planned behavior. *Computers & Education*, 144, 103700. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2019.103700>
- Vessal, K., & Habibzadeh, F. (2007). Rules of the game of scientific writing: fair play and plagiarism. *The Lancet*, 369(9562), 641.
[https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(07\)60307-9](https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(07)60307-9)
- Wang, Y. (2024). Cognitive and sociocultural dynamics of self-regulated use of machine translation and generative AI tools in academic EFL writing. *System*, 126, 103505.
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2024.103505>
- Wheeler, G. (2009). Plagiarism in the Japanese universities: Truly a cultural matter? *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 18(1), 17–29.
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2008.09.004>