Grace and Discipline, Remediation and Punishment: Dealing with Graduate Business Students' Plagiarism

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ABSTRACT: We draw on theory, biblical Scripture, and practice in this discussion of professors' and administrators' response to graduate business students' plagiarism. First, we discuss why graduate business students plagiarize, using Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behavior as a framework for relating antecedents to students' intentions to plagiarize. Then we discuss professors' and administrators' typical assumptions and expectations regarding graduate business students' plagiarism and explain why such assumptions and expectations may be incorrect. Thirdly, we conceptually explore the nature and appropriateness of professors' responses to graduate business students' plagiarism. We advocate a response that applies both grace and discipline and offer biblical support for such an approach. Finally, we describe several implications of the foregoing for graduate degree program features, policies, and practices.

INTRODUCTION

When business professors and administrators deal with graduate business students' plagiarism, what might their responses to the misconduct be, and how might those responses be informed by moral precepts, theory, and prior research? Business professors may have some reason to expect a certain incidence of plagiarism among their undergraduate business students but often are dismayed when they encounter any plagiarism done by graduate business students. (Our focus is chiefly on graduate business students at the master degree level, although most of our discussion certainly relates to doctoral students as well.) Academic administrators and faculty alike may have higher expectations of graduate business students' academic integrity. These expectations may render graduate business students' plagiarism all the more salient and disturbing to the faculty member dealing with the problem, thus potentially affecting the institution's response to the plagiarism. We explore the assumptions behind such

expectations in this paper, as well as factors influencing graduate students' plagiarizing. Viewing matters through a Christian perspective, we then relate these assumptions and factors to how faculty and degree program administrators deal with graduate business students' plagiarism. Finally, we discuss some related implications for a variety of degree program features.

WHY GRADUATE BUSINESS STUDENTS PLAGIARIZE

Plagiarism is the failure to attribute words, ideas, data, and the like to their original source, such that the words and ideas are portrayed as the writer's own rather than being rightfully credited to their true source (American Psychological Association, 2010; Armstrong, 1993). Whether transcribing verbatim or paraphrasing someone else's words and ideas, doing so without crediting the source (usually by citation conventions in academic writing) is plagiarism. The definition we are relying on gives no

exception for a notion of unintentional (versus intentional) plagiarism, or accidental (versus deliberate) plagiarism (cf. Park, 2003). If uncredited words or ideas are used, plagiarism has occurred. Much evidence suggests that plagiarism, as well as other forms of cheating, by college students is on the rise in recent years (Park, 2003; Simkin & McLeod, 2010; Smith, Davy, Rosenberg, & Haight, 2009).

Although most past research on college students' plagiarism relied on samples of undergraduate students (Brown, 1995), some studies have included graduate students (e.g., Radunovich, Baugh, & Turner, 2009; Smith et al., 2009). A few have focused specifically on graduate business students (e.g., Brown, 1995; McCabe, Butterfield, & Treviño, 2006). In what appears to be the minority of cases, research has found that graduate students plagiarize less often than undergraduate students (e.g., Rakovski & Levy, 2007) and display a better understanding of what plagiarism is than undergraduate students (Radunovich et al., 2009). Most studies, however, have shown that graduate business students plagiarize at rates similar to undergraduate business students and have similar views of and motivations regarding plagiarism (Brown, 1995; McCabe et al., 2006). This is disheartening because some past research has found undergraduate business students to be more likely to cheat in various ways, including plagiarism, than non-business undergraduates (e.g., Bowers, 1964; Meade, 1992) and to have generally lower ethical values than students in other majors (Harris, 1989).

When we contemplate why graduate business students might plagiarize, we must acknowledge that, in a minority of cases, the plagiarism occurs accidentally due to inattention and sloppiness when creating the written product (Park, 2003). Truly unintentional plagiarism is even rarer, especially among doctoral students, and is typically due to genuine ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism. Such ignorance could be owing to poor prior undergraduate and high-school education or perhaps to cultural differences between how plagiarism is defined in the United States versus some graduate students' lands of origin and prior education in other nations and regions of the world. For instance, what American professors would regard as plagiarism would be, in some non-Western cultures, regarded as simply showing proper respect for the original author's wisdom and authority (Park, 2003).

The majority of plagiarism committed by graduate business students, however, is neither accidental nor unintentional. In the typical case of deliberate, intentional plagiarism, we can readily identify a number of motivations, traits and attitudes, situational conditions, and the like to explain the behavior. Researchers have used Ajzen's

(1991) theory of planned behavior to organize and model such elements, most of them antecedents of behavioral intentions. The theory of planned behavior would suggest that plagiarism will occur to the extent that the student intends to plagiarize and the plagiarism is subject to the student's volitional control. The latter factor includes not only actual behavioral control but also the student's *perception* of how difficult or easy it is to plagiarize successfully (i.e., to plagiarize without getting penalized), much along the lines of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977), or confidence in one's ability to plagiarize under given conditions, practices, and constraints, and given one's personal skill at and past experience with plagiarizing.

In addition to this perceived behavioral control, the theory of planned behavior would hold that the student's intention to plagiarize depends on the student's attitude toward plagiarism and "subjective norm," or perceived social pressure to plagiarize or not to plagiarize (Ajzen, 1991, p. 188). Thus, attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control are the theory's three main antecedents to behavioral intentions. These antecedents may have varying levels of influence on intentions to plagiarize, depending on the situation. A worst-case scenario for our purposes would be a graduate business student who has a positive attitude toward plagiarism, perceives normative support for plagiarizing (or at least no social-normative disapprobation), and feels quite confident of being able to plagiarize without being caught or penalized. The student's positive attitude may stem from past "success" with plagiarizing (i.e., a learned attitude; Whitley, 1998) and a belief that plagiarizing will, for instance, relieve performance pressure or ensure a better grade (Park, 2003). The student's subjective norm may be based on a belief, or even evidence, that peers are also plagiarizing or that peers may not register disapproval if they knew of the student's plagiarism (Gallant & Drinan, 2006; McCabe et al., 2006). The student's sense of behavioral control may stem from a variety of enabling factors, such as the ease of finding material to plagiarize (especially on the Internet; Park, 2003), professors' failure to check for or do anything about plagiarism, or the institution's silence on the issue of academic integrity (McCabe et al., 2006; Simkin & McLeod, 2010). In a case such as this and given the theory of planned behavior, we would predict the student's intention to plagiarize would be strong and the likelihood of plagiarism occurring would thus be high.

Interestingly, Ajzen noted that in some situations — situations involving ethical challenges and dishonest behaviors, for instance — the actor's sense of moral obligation would also influence behavioral intentions and would thus

be a relevant addition to the theory of planned behavior's featured antecedents (Ajzen, 1991; Beck & Ajzen, 1991). Beck and Ajzen (1991) found empirical support for moral obligation's theorized connection to college students' intentions to cheat on an exam and to lie to avoid taking a test or submitting an assignment on time. Gorsuch and Ortberg (1983) likewise found that moral obligation predicted behavioral intentions in moral situations. Thus, we may further elaborate our worst-case scenario above by adding the student feeling no personal responsibility, no moral pressure, to refrain from plagiarizing. The student's low sense of moral obligation might be due to a belief that plagiarism is not a serious infraction of any important moral standard or ethical expectation or could be due simply to the student's general moral character (Park, 2003; Simkin & McLeod, 2010).

The theory of planned behavior gives us a framework for relating a variety of factors to graduate business students' plagiarism and thus understanding more of why the plagiarism occurs. We have already mentioned several personal and situational factors and related them to theoretical antecedents of intentions to plagiarize, factors such as past experience with plagiarism, belief that plagiarizing ensures a better grade, belief that peers also plagiarize, professors' failure to enforce rules against plagiarism, and belief that plagiarism is not immoral. Whitley (1998) reviewed 107 past studies and used the theory of planned behavior in modeling antecedents of college students' cheating. Factors with large effects on cheating included past cheating, favorable attitudes toward cheating, and perception that social norms allow cheating. Factors with medium effects on cheating included little felt moral obligation not to cheat, high academic work load, pressure to get high grades, lack of obligation to an honor code, and poor performance on the task at hand (e.g., academic writing task). Whitley's model of cheating includes all foregoing antecedents described in the theory of planned behavior, including moral obligation; clarifies that risk of getting caught informs perceived behavioral control (cf. Brown, 1995); and includes expected benefit from cheating as a key antecedent of intention to cheat. We see these antecedents in Whitley's findings and model as all potentially relevant to graduate business students' plagiarism.

Why else might graduate business students plagiarize? Brown's (1995) study of graduate business students' cheating cited time pressures and desire for high grades (cf. Park, 2003). We note that many graduate business degree programs require students to maintain a B average or better to avoid academic probation. We also note that graduate business students are typically working adults (McCabe et al., 2006), often full-time employed and juggling obligations at home, at work, and in school. Thus, some graduate business students might be tempted to plagiarize as a way of speeding up a writing assignment, relieving some pressure from competing obligations and, to the extent they believe they cannot earn an A grade without plagiarizing, ensuring they avoid academic probation. As the foregoing theory would suggest, these points implicate the students' attitude toward plagiarism. Brown (1995) also found that many graduate business students felt no one was hurt by their cheating, which suggests that plagiarism may be viewed as benign by some students, a belief that implicates both their attitude toward plagiarism and their sense of moral obligation regarding plagiarism. This also implicates plagiarists' subjective norm regarding plagiarism to the extent they conclude no one is harmed by their cheating because peers voice no objections to it.

Some studies cite business students' and working adults' "bottom-line mentalities" and learned motivation to get things done in any way necessary as antecedents of cheating (e.g., McCabe et al., 2006; Rakovski & Levy, 2007; Simkin & McLeod, 2010). More generally, studies have noted that business students with strongly extrinsic motivations to earn grades, versus intrinsic motivations to learn for learning's sake, are more likely to see cheating as a legitimate means to their desired ends (Smith et al., 2009; cf. Whitley, 1998). We expect these motivational factors to relate to graduate business students' attitudes toward plagiarism and note that some students' tuition reimbursement from their employers is indexed on their grades (McCabe et al., 2006), which only contributes to this issue.

Finally, we note that some graduate business students' writing skills may be too poor to allow them to succeed on writing assignments (Radunovich et al., 2009). Whether these students have always been weak writers, struggle with English as a second language, or have been out of college a number of years and forgotten much about academic writing, poor writing skills may render a given writing assignment quite difficult. Poor writing skills would also contribute to the students' sense of specific subject-matter difficulty and the degree program's general difficulty, both of which may make the work load seem heavier and more time-consuming than it would otherwise seem if the student were a better writer. Perceived difficulty of assignments and subject matter increases pressure to cheat (Brown, 1995). To the extent graduate business students view plagiarism as an effective means of compensating for their own poor writing skills, we would expect the poor writing skills to contribute to a more positive attitude toward plagiarism.

WHAT BUSINESS FACULTY MEMBERS EXPECT AND ASSUME

Academic officers, degree program directors, and business faculty often expect graduate business students to be less likely to plagiarize than undergraduate students. They assume that graduate students, by virtue of their undergraduate student experience, fully understand that plagiarism is wrong, why it is wrong, what the potential penalties for plagiarism are, how to avoid doing it, and so forth. Accordingly, they often expect graduate business students to know better than to plagiarize (Radunovich et al., 2009). Some business professors may expect graduate business students to be more focused on the loftier ideal of acquiring knowledge than on simply earning grades, and thus to be less likely to plagiarize purely for the sake of maximizing a grade on a writing assignment. Finally, Christian business faculty members at faith-based institutions, especially if more experienced in undergraduate education than graduate education, may further assume that the communal norms and faith-building effects engendered by Christian undergraduate curricula and programming are also somehow reflected in the graduate business degree program. Some faculty and administrators may rely on these assumptions and expectations in holding graduate business students to a higher standard of academic integrity than they apply to undergraduate students.

Are such assumptions and expectations valid, or are there reasons to question whether graduate business students should be any less likely to plagiarize than other kinds of students? Certainly the empirical evidence cited above (Brown, 1995; McCabe et al., 2006) suggests that graduate business students can be just as prone to plagiarizing as undergraduate business students, thereby not meeting professors' and administrators' expectations. This, in turn, suggests that perhaps we should question some of our assumptions about graduate business students' plagiarism and acknowledge how the objects of those assumptions might relate to what we know about why the students might plagiarize.

First, do graduate business students necessarily know better than to plagiarize? Do they necessarily know what plagiarism in its various forms is, and do they know how to avoid plagiarizing? There are some factors that suggest graduate business students may not fully know better than to plagiarize. The most obvious is that the undergraduate preparation and prior experience of graduate business students may be highly variable, such that some come to graduate school poorly equipped for academic writing, relatively unfamiliar with source citation and reference con-

ventions, or, in the case of international students, culturally predisposed and even academically trained to do what is otherwise regarded as plagiarism in American graduate schools of business. Note, too, that the longer a graduate business student is out of undergraduate school prior to coming to graduate school, the more likely that student has forgotten various details and rules regarding formal, academic writing. We cited these as antecedents of plagiarism above, and their existence and effects can serve to invalidate professors' and administrators' assumptions that graduate business students, at least early in their graduate education, really know better than to plagiarize.

Some graduate business degree programs do not have rigorous admissions standards or are under financial pressure to admit more students and boost tuition revenue. This may especially be so at institutions that are highly tuition-driven, with relatively little public-source and grant funds. In such contexts, professors and administrators should not expect the graduate business degree program to be largely free of plagiarism issues. Instead, they should expect that a certain percentage of graduate business students may not be equipped for the writing challenges they will face and may be accordingly more likely to plagiarize. This is especially so if, whether because of poor curriculum design or insufficient financial and teaching resources, the graduate business degree program presents no clear orientation to the plagiarism issue or offers no relevant training and education when students first begin the program.

We also question whether business professors and administrators can reasonably assume that graduate business students are more intrinsically focused on the loftier ideal of acquiring knowledge than on the extrinsic goal of simply earning grades, and thus are less likely to plagiarize purely for the sake of maximizing a grade on a writing assignment. We described this motivational issue above in discussing antecedents of plagiarism, and we note that it applies more to master's degree students than doctoral students. Especially when receiving employers' tuition reimbursement that is indexed on the grades they earn and when faced with the typical graduate business school requirement to maintain a B grade average to remain in good academic standing, graduate business students may be quite motivated to worry more about the grade they receive than what they actually learn in any given course. Certainly, a focus on grades for grades' sake versus learning for learning's sake may be what students learned or applied in undergraduate school (Whitley, 1998), so professors probably should not assume that newer graduate students are "academically mature" with respect to how they view grading and the means used to get the grades they want.

Student motivation also comes into play in the way graduate business students view some of the courses in the curriculum. Cheating is more likely in courses that do not particularly interest, or seem important to, the student (Park, 2003). Most master-level graduate business degree programs cover a variety of business functions and disciplines in their curricula, so the chances are high that graduate students will take at least one or two courses they find uninteresting or not particularly relevant to their chosen discipline or career area. The less important or interesting the course is to the student, the more likely that student is to plagiarize in a writing assignment for that course (Smith et al., 2009). Overall, this and the foregoing suggest that business faculty and administrators should not assume that all, or perhaps even most, business graduate students are intrinsically motivated in a way that reduces the chances of plagiarism.

Finally, some Christian business professors and administrators at faith-based institutions become accustomed to the communal norms and faith-building effects engendered by Christian undergraduate curricula and programming and assume these norms and effects will generalize to the graduate business degree program. Thus, they may expect graduate business students to hold negative attitudes toward plagiarism in the same way that many of the institution's undergraduates have been taught to disapprove of plagiarism, especially to the extent that some of the graduate students earned their undergraduate degree from the same institution.

Most of the graduate business students likely come from other institutions, however, and graduate business degree programs sometimes feature less faith-learning integration and less faith-related programming, such as chapel sessions and in-class devotionals (Ripley, Garzon, Hall, Mangis, & Murphy, 2009), than in the undergraduate programs. The graduate business students may not have attended faith-based undergraduate institutions and may not be practicing Christians. Also, graduate business students typically attend graduate school only part-time, do not typically live on campus, and may even be taking their graduate courses at an alternative site or online at growth-focused Christian institutions that have implemented various adaptive educational initiatives (such as online graduate degree programs and satellite teaching sites; Wiese, Armstrong, & Erickson, 2006). Thus, they may experience very little connection to the faith-based environment on campus (i.e., little environmental attachment that research has shown to be related to faith-learning integration; Ripley et al., 2009), and do not acquire the institution's typical view on plagiarism. In such cases and in lieu of any programmatic or pedagogic efforts to the contrary, professors and administrators cannot reasonably expect graduate business students to be less likely to plagiarize, even at faith-based institutions.

HOW FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATORS RESPOND

Business professors must respond when they find that graduate students have plagiarized, and their responses are usually guided by official policies of the institution, degree program, or both. Official policies regarding plagiarism are typically stern in tone, prescribing penalties that can range from failure of an assignment, to failure of a course, to expulsion (the more severe penalties are usually reserved for repeat plagiarists' second or third offense). Thus, we note the punishment orientation of such policies. Punishment is the presentation of negative consequences to the actor in response to undesirable behavior, the intended effect of which is to stop the actor's misbehavior (Ball, Treviño, & Sims, 1994). Punishment in business organizations typically entails the manager's application of negative consequences such as formal disciplinary reprimands and warnings, suspension from work without pay, and dismissal (Treviño, 1992). Punishment in graduate business degree programs is little different, following a similar progression of increasingly negative consequences. Typical policies on academic dishonesty allow for negative consequences for plagiarism, presumably with the intent of stopping the misconduct. Because plagiarism is regarded as a kind of literary theft in many cases (Iyer & Eastman, 2006; Park, 2003), policies at Christian colleges, universities, and seminaries will often cite the eighth commandment ("Thou shalt not steal;" Exodus 20:15) as a biblical basis for prohibiting it. Thus, official academic policies are typically quite clear in condemning plagiarism and prescribing penalties for it.

In actual practice, however, business professors may struggle with whether to apply discipline and punishment to the graduate business student or to extend grace and remediation to the student. As suggested in the prior section, professors may find their initial assumptions about and expectations of the plagiarist to be invalid, such that what might have been an appropriate response at first glance no longer seems so fitting. Also, professors may view their response options as existing on a single, bipolar continuum ranging from grace on one end to discipline on the other. The grace end of the response continuum is the lighter, friendlier end, reflecting forgiveness, second chances, leniency, remediation, "a teachable moment," and

the like. The discipline end of the response continuum is the darker, colder end, reflecting judgment, policy enforcement, zero tolerance, punishment, "time to set an example," and the like. The problem with this one-dimensional approach to responding to plagiarism is that it necessarily invokes one desirable aspect of the response at the expense, or to the exclusion, of the other.

Alternatively, professors can reject the one-dimensional, either-or approach, and instead view their response to plagiarism as necessarily two-dimensional. Conceptually, one dimension would range from less grace to more grace, and the other dimension would range from minimal discipline to severe discipline. We see more practical value in this two-dimensional approach that jointly and simultaneously applies both grace and discipline to a plagiarism incident (see Figure 1). This notion of addressing wrongs with both grace and discipline is not unique to us, and readers can see similar resolution of the two responses in literature on restorative justice and reconciliation ethics (e.g., O'Neill, 2002; Worthington, 1999). In popular parlance, the Christian business academician can view this approach as "hating the sin, but loving the sinner." Applying discipline and punishing the misconduct is hating the sin, and extending grace and attempting to reform the plagiarist is loving the sinner.

We find support for the two-dimensional response to plagiarism in the Bible and offer this support as an alternative to typical academic treatments of the topic that never mention God or the Bible, even while incorporating ethics and morality in the discussion (e.g., Armstrong, 1993; McCabe et al., 2006; Rosenberg, 2011). On the one hand, the Bible assures professors of a proper place for discipline that, although painful and embarrassing for the plagiarist

at the time of its administration, can yield better understanding and a revised motivation that enable the student to succeed later in the degree program (Hebrews 12:11). On the other hand, the Bible teaches professors to be kind and merciful, forgiving the plagiarist and thereby modeling the forgiveness professors themselves receive from God in Christ (Ephesians 4:32). The professor administering the discipline described in Hebrews 12:11 is necessarily enforcing policy, showing a limit to tolerating plagiarism, and even punishing to the extent the discipline entails negative consequences to the plagiarist. The professor forgiving the plagiarist and treating the plagiarist kindly is setting the stage for remediation and giving the student a basis for hoping for better future circumstances. We see no contradiction in relying on both biblical teachings when dealing with graduate business students' plagiarism because we do not see discipline and grace as mutually exclusive things.

The kind of discipline prescribed in Hebrews 12:11 is particularly worthwhile because, in clarifying that the plagiarist can learn from being disciplined, it offers a link to the kind of remediation that can logically be viewed as part of extending grace to the plagiarist. Condemned offenders do not receive a chance to learn from their mistake, a reason to hope for better future circumstances. But forgiven offenders, recipients of grace, are worthy of reforming and equipping for future success. Punishing the plagiarist serves to uphold the institution's standards for academic integrity, yes, but it also serves to reinforce the forgiveness given the plagiarist to the extent the punishment motivates the plagiarist to seize the opportunity for future success that comes with being forgiven. This may be especially possible under policies that allow for lesser punishments for first and second offenses, as the plagiarist is not likely to ignore the fact that merely failing an assignment or failing

Figure 1: Different Approaches to Responding to Plagiarism

| The Two-Dimensional, Joint Response Approach | The One-Dimensional, Either-Or Response Approach |
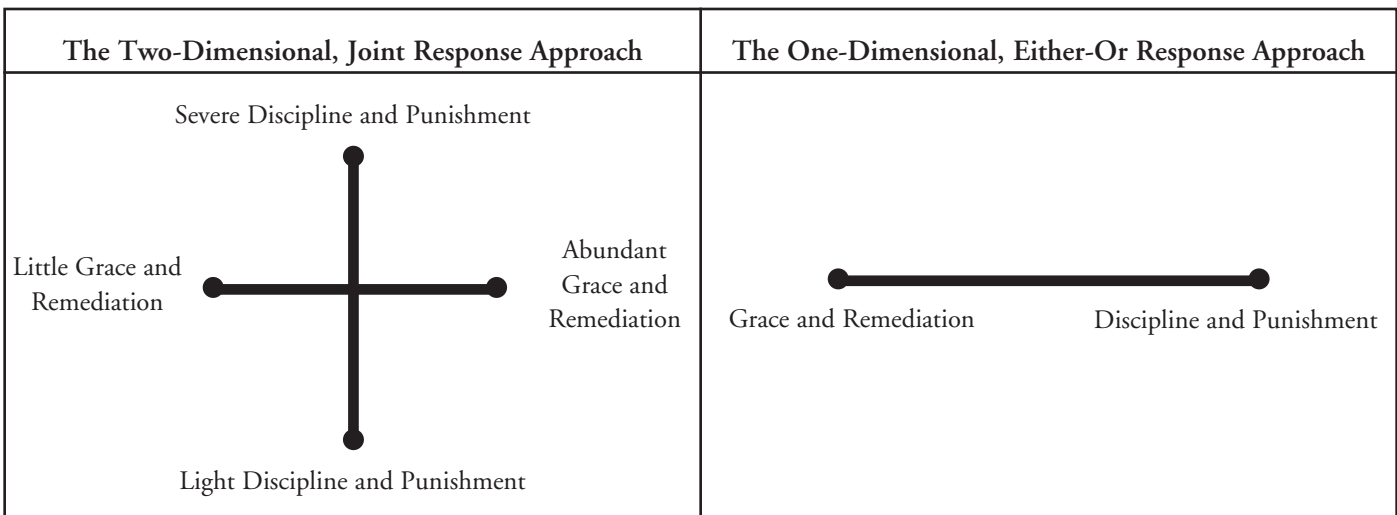
a course, while painful and embarrassing, is not as severe and final as expulsion.

Simkin and McLeod (2010) suggest that professors' failure to prosecute students who cheat can create "a more forgiving, and perhaps permissive," (p. 443) environment for cheating. Given only friendly forgiveness for plagiarism, graduate business students may somehow misconstrue the professor's intention and conclude that the institution's official policy against plagiarism does not apply to them. Combining the friendly forgiveness from the grace response dimension with appropriate punishment from the discipline response dimension, however, can send the signal that whereas the institution values the plagiarist as a person and believes the person should be forgiven, the institution also will not tolerate plagiarism. This is akin to the gentle imposition of accountability that Galatians 6:1 teaches is appropriate for addressing the transgression of plagiarism. Thus, the discipline can help set the context in which remediation flowing from grace may be done more effectively.

Beyond invoking a somewhat legalistic notion of obeying the eighth commandment and not stealing (Exodus 20:15), the Christian business faculty member may further remediate by appealing from a Christian worldview to the graduate students' pride of workmanship. In so doing, the professor may note that students' desire to avoid sullying their academic work with plagiarism can come from a desire to regard their academic efforts as part of the work God has given them to do at this juncture in their lives. Thus, students can and should honor that commission by submitting their best work in the manner of offering their best to God (Leviticus 22:19-20) and not submitting second-rate work blemished with plagiarism.

The Christian business professor can also caution graduate students against somehow trivializing plagiarism, or otherwise rationalizing that plagiarism is relatively harmless in the big scheme of things or justifiable in light of all the presumably larger demands requiring the students' more thoughtful, honest attention. Basing this caution on the biblical notion that even "small" lies are, in fact, serious matters for a Christian (Luke 16:10), the professor may legitimately insist that plagiarism may not be so minor a thing as students might first assume and that even a small amount of plagiarism may be breaking faith with God.

IMPLICATIONS FOR DEGREE PROGRAM FEATURES AND PRACTICES

Administrators must acknowledge that various features of, and practices in, the graduate business degree program may affect the incidence of graduate business students' plagiarism. Also, failure to enact both grace and discipline

through policies and practices can compromise some graduate degree programs with respect to plagiarism, as all too often evidenced by simultaneous existence of published policies that expressly prohibit plagiarism and faculty conduct that tacitly tolerates plagiarism. Some professors deal with this contradiction by simply not assigning term papers or any writing requirement that is very academic, thereby avoiding any potential plagiarism issue. This hardly satisfies academic standards, however, and does an injustice to both the students and the involved professor (Rosenberg, 2011). Thus, an initial step in assessing how the degree program's practices and policies should address graduate students' plagiarism should be an honest, open discussion about plagiarism between faculty, who may cynically believe administrators care only about the degree program's revenue-generating capacity, and administrators, who may just as cynically assume that faculty members have little appreciation for the practical realities of funding, scheduling, and staffing the graduate degree program. The practical aspect of this discussion should include honest acknowledgment of the various reasons a professor or administrator might be disinclined to address a plagiarism incident, and resolve that against that person's ethical obligation to act (Rosenberg, 2011). It should also include an effort to include explicit considerations of both grace and discipline in the degree program's formal policy on plagiarism.

Some researchers have suggested that, like many students, faculty members and administrators themselves may not know what constitutes plagiarism, or at least may have surprisingly different views of what plagiarism is (Pincus & Schmelkin, 2003; Roig, 2001). Certainly we see this in occasional scandals wherein an academic officer or professor's doctoral dissertation or published work has been found to contain blatantly plagiarized material, and yet the plagiarist, investigating committee, university board, and other observers (including students) have varying interpretations of the misconduct (e.g., Bartlett, 2007). This kind of confusion may be more likely in graduate business degree programs employing a high proportion of adjunct instructors with relatively less experience in dealing with students' plagiarism, so ensuring a clear understanding of plagiarism among all parties should be a part of the discussion among faculty members (both regular and adjunct) and administrators that we are prescribing.

Faculty and administrators can rely on what we know about plagiarism's causes as they develop the degree program's features and apply practices and policies in executing the degree program. Our application of the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991) suggests that degree program policies and practices should, if at all possible,

address graduate business students' low moral obligation, positive attitude toward plagiarism, weak subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control in order to lessen their intentions to plagiarize. Other antecedents that degree program features, practices, and policies could address include perceived low severity of penalties, poor writing skills, conflicting time demands, and motivation. We briefly discuss these measures below, and summarize them in Table 1.

To address moral obligation, the degree program director should ensure a formal, written honor code exists, is published in the graduate student handbook, and is explicitly reviewed with all new graduate students (McCabe et al., 2006; Whitley, 1998). Besides articulating the student's personal obligation not to cheat, the honor code should impose a duty on all students to report others' plagiarism, or at the very least to voice their disapproval to the plagiarist. Although students are typically loath to report other students' cheating, the inclusion of such a duty in the honor code matches traditional practice, and some research shows honor codes reduce cheating (McCabe et al., 2006). The duty to react to fellow students' plagiarism can increase the perceived social pressure not to plagiarize, thereby clarifying the subjective norm in addition to clarifying each individual student's moral obligation. Creating a subjective norm of academic integrity in this manner is consistent with the Christian communal activity of exhorting one another (Hebrews 10:25), and the program director may justifiably rely on this in expecting graduate business students to help in "keeping one another honest."

Professors should combine classroom discussion of the honor code with review of the institution's official policy on plagiarism, explaining their own moral and ethical obligation to act when detecting violations of either. In so doing, professors are taking and modeling a principled stand and acknowledging in their duty to act on plagia-

rism the additional Christian, moral obligation they have (James 3:1). They are also serving as the kind of "moral anchor" that research has shown to reduce student cheating (Simkin & McLeod, 2010, p. 450). Calmly stating their resolve to act on plagiarism and offering a biblical basis for this may be daunting for some professors, especially if the majority of their graduate business students do not hold a Christian worldview or the professor is teaching at a non-Christian institution (Bostwick & Lowhorn, 2012). Avoiding the discussion so as to avoid some discomfort is not beneficial to the students, however, so professors must eschew timidity and instead be confident and bold enough in their conviction, as 2 Timothy 1:7 and Joshua 1:9 encourage, to state their position on plagiarism. Additionally, some of the same points professors might make in attempting to remediate plagiarism can be used in this discussion of moral obligations. Exhorting students to produce their best written work that is unblemished with plagiarism in accordance with Leviticus 22:19-20, and to avoid rationalizing away plagiarism as some small, unimportant misdeed in opposition to Luke 16:10, is worthwhile in any discussion of plagiarism.

These efforts, taken together, can serve to strengthen graduate business students' sense of moral obligation and subjective norm with respect to plagiarism. The subjective norm is strongest when socially reinforced, which may challenge professors teaching in online, distance-learning settings, where the relative lack of social presence and the potential for social isolation can weaken some students' sense of being communally bound to the honor code (Moller, 1998; Weiss, 2000). Professors teaching online must be especially vigilant about keeping graduate business students connected with one another, if only asynchronously through online discussion forums, and mutually aware of both the honor code and the rules regarding

Table 1: Some Plagiarism Antecedents' Implications for Graduate Business Degree Program Features and Practices

Plagiarism Antecedent	Prescribed Program Feature or Practice
Low moral obligation	Honor code reviews, professor's express resolve to act, biblical basis cited
Positive attitude from prior cheating	Class discussion about plagiarism, professor's express resolve to act, persuasion
Weak subjective/class norm	Honor code reviews, efforts to overcome online programs' relative social isolation
Perceived behavioral control	Standard use of plagiarism detection methods (e.g., turnitin.com subscription)
Perceived low severity of penalties	Firm, consistent, and immediate action in accordance with institution's published policy
Poor academic writing skills, background	Entry/admissions standards (e.g., GMAT score criteria, especially for verbal part)
Culture, rusty academic writing skills	Graduate writing course or review in curriculum, tutorial assistance
Conflicting time demands	Flexible scheduling and deadlines, monitoring for signs of student struggling to keep up
Bottom-line mentality, grades orientation	Class discussion about plagiarism, student perspective (learning vs. grades), ethics
Disinterest in some courses	Proper program overview in admissions/recruiting, assignments to illustrate relevance

plagiarism. This will also help optimize use of the distance-learning format, which otherwise offers flexibility across time and space that many graduate students need when they are juggling work, school, and family demands (Sun, Tsai, Finger, Chen, & Yeh, 2008). Reducing some of the time conflicts can remove a factor that influences some students to plagiarize. Professors can further ease time pressures by being as flexible as possible with deadlines in written assignments, and also by intervening sooner than later when detecting any signs of the student struggling to keep up (e.g., late submissions of homework or papers, or sloppy or skimpy work that signals a "rush job" was done).

The in-class discussions we are prescribing also allow the professor a chance to address students' attitudes toward plagiarism as well as their motivations that might lead to plagiarizing. Openly discussing why plagiarism is unethical and morally wrong, stating that past "success" with plagiarizing does not justify continuing to do it, and telling students of the institution's track record of penalizing plagiarism may temper how positively students view plagiarism. The latter is relevant because, just as students may have learned a positive attitude from past plagiarizing, they are capable of vicariously learning (Bandura, 1986), through hearing of the institution's penalizing actions taken against plagiarists, that perhaps plagiarism is not such a good thing after all. The professor can also discuss "academic maturity" with the graduate students and stimulate discussion among students about varying perspectives on earning grades versus learning for learning's sake, cautioning all the while that a focus merely on earning grades and "getting a ticket punched" can make plagiarism seem temptingly expedient.

These discussions aimed at influencing attitudes, moral obligation, and subjective norm regarding plagiarism represent persuasive appeals that go beyond merely publishing an honor code or plagiarism policy. This is important as written codes and policies cannot, in and of themselves, suffice to ensure academic integrity; for they cannot do more than symbolize the institution's aims for academic integrity (Gallant & Drinan, 2006). We have dealt with cases of graduate business students who have plagiarized (in the worst case, multiple times with multiple warnings until finally expelled) despite having signed written academic honesty pledges, received a graduate student handbook containing the institution's plagiarism policy, and been admonished not to plagiarize in every course syllabus. Clearly, something more is required. Thus, we advocate in-class persuasion attempts in recognition of research on persuasion's effects on attitude change (e.g., Petty, 1995; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

As Petty and Cacioppo's (1981) elaboration likelihood model of attitude change would suggest, professors stand a better chance of modifying graduate business students' attitudes toward plagiarism if they can get the students to focus on the persuasion, to effortfully and critically evaluate it, and to think about it in more than just a superficial way. Certainly the issue of plagiarism and the penalties for it will be personally relevant to graduate business students who want to graduate, and personal relevance of the issue in any persuasive appeal typically increases the chance of thoughtful, reflective reception of the message (Petty, 1995). Persuasion invoking moral obligation and biblical justification, when received through the lens of the graduate student's faith, may be sufficient to shape a more negative attitude toward plagiarism. Their Christian worldview can make the professor's persuasive message more compelling and generate reasoning, prayerful reflection, and cognition that would not occur in a non-Christian student hearing the same persuasive appeal.

In fact, non-Christian graduate students may regard such appeal content as merely emotional, whereas their positive attitude toward plagiarism may have strong cognitive and behavioral aspects (i.e., they believe plagiarism is efficacious, and their past plagiarizing both signals the behavior's acceptability to them and forms their intent to plagiarize in the future). This is why we advocate also telling students of the institution's track record of penalizing plagiarism, not for the sake of coercing, but for the sake of countering the cognitive and behavioral dimensions of the student's positive attitude toward plagiarism (Petty, 1995). The persuasive appeal thus offers information that challenges a belief that plagiarism is useful and renders any intention to plagiarize in the future ill-advised.

Efforts to promote negative attitudes toward plagiarism, a strong norm against plagiarizing, and moral obligation not to plagiarize may not always work, so the degree program director and professors must also address students' perceptions of behavioral control and severity of penalties. Graduate business students intent on plagiarizing are more likely to follow through on their intentions if they believe the risk of getting caught is low (Brown, 1995; Whitley, 1998) or the penalty for getting caught will be minor (McCabe et al., 2006; Simkin & McLeod, 2010). Thus, professors should regularly use plagiarism detection methods (e.g., the turnitin.com tool or Google search) when they suspect plagiarism and clearly tell graduate business students that such methods are in routine use. Upon detecting plagiarism, administrators and professors must firmly, consistently, and immediately apply both the disciplinary punishment and graceful remediation provided

for in the degree program's official policy on plagiarism. These measures will reduce perceived behavioral control and convince plagiarists that their misconduct can incur consequences ranging from assignment failure to expulsion, depending on the situation.

Degree program directors must work with senior administrative officers and the institution's admissions office to determine if admissions standards should be adjusted to deny admission to applicants whose writing skills are so weak as to create pressure to plagiarize. Certainly the program could rely on Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) verbal test scores or applicant writing samples rigorously assessed by the program director in screening applicants. Academic administrators and admissions officers must consider whether recruiting and admitting unqualified applicants, whether due to a laudable desire to extend educational opportunity or a desire to boost tuition revenue, is simply positioning the applicant for ultimate failure and may be, therefore, ethically suspect. If administrators insist on admitting unqualified students, the degree program must apply resources to a curriculum enhancement that remediates the students' writing deficiencies. A remedial graduate writing course offered at the start of the degree program's course sequence could address topics such as academic writing standards; review of organization, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and style; avoiding plagiarism; finding and properly using and citing research references; and awareness of national-cultural differences in what constitutes plagiarism. Resources permitting, the graduate degree program could also provide some tutorial assistance to graduate business students who have especially weak writing skills or an initial problem with plagiarism.

Admissions and recruiting practices can also address the motivational issue of some students being so disinterested in some graduate courses as to deem plagiarism useful for getting through the courses as effortlessly as possible (Park, 2003). Applicants must know before ever being admitted precisely what courses the degree program's curriculum includes. Applicants with fairly narrow or specialized interests can be steered away from MBA programs with their typical coverage across multiple business functions and toward MS programs with somewhat narrower breadth and depth of coverage or perhaps specialty certification programs. Even with conscientious screening occurring at the admissions stage, however, professors will still encounter graduate business students who dislike certain courses. In such cases, a customized, pedagogical solution may be in order. The professor can address the issue with the student immediately upon detecting any disengagement or disin-

terest, find out exactly why the student deems the course irrelevant or worthless, and then probe for ways to adapt the course content and assignments to the student's interests and actual job situation, such that the student perceives more relevance in the course and more reason not to get sloppy or impatient and resort to plagiarism.

In conclusion, we note that understanding graduate business students' plagiarism requires a realistic evaluation of assumptions we may make regarding those students' abilities and motivations involved in the issue. We also have to appreciate the misconduct's complexity. The multifactorial nature of students' intentions to plagiarize reflects simultaneous influences of, among other things, motivations, personal traits, skills and abilities, situational constraints and enablers, attitudes, social norms, moral obligation, and past events, and all they hold for both learning and expectations. Accordingly, addressing the problem necessarily implicates practice, pedagogy, and policy in a variety of ways, as we have reviewed. Most directly, we see professors are challenged to deal affirmatively and actively with graduate business students' plagiarism with a mix of grace and discipline, applying both remediation and punishment as needed to stop the misconduct and to motivate better behavior in the future. Given the issue's complexity, Christian business faculty and administrators are well advised to approach the problem of graduate students' plagiarism prayerfully, both individually and as a community of concerned professionals, and seek God's wisdom and guidance so as best to support one another and their students.

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