



## Academic Integrity in Student Research: A Review of Plagiarism Causes and Practical and Policy Implications

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose of the study:** This review examined academic integrity in student research by synthesizing evidence on the causes of plagiarism, its practical implications, and the policy implications for educational institutions. Specifically, the study explored the factors influencing plagiarism among students and identified institutional and instructional interventions that promote ethical research practices.

**Methodology:** This study employed a literature review using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. A total of 37 studies published between 2000 and 2022 were analyzed to determine the reasons students commit plagiarism in research and the strategies used to prevent academic dishonesty. Relevant articles were retrieved through Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, Semantic Scholar, ERIC, and OpenAlex exported to EndNote for organization, screened for duplicates, and evaluated for relevance prior to thematic analysis.

**Main Findings:** The literature shows that plagiarism in student research is mainly caused by (1) weak research competencies such as poor writing, limited understanding of plagiarism, and incorrect referencing, (2) easy internet access including copy-paste practices and paper mills, (3) negative student attitudes such as peer influence, time pressure, desire for high grades, and low writing confidence, and (4) weak school enforcement and supervision. To address this, teachers and lecturers are encouraged to strengthen instruction in research skills and citation, integrate plagiarism awareness into the curriculum, use plagiarism detection tools, and improve students' technical writing and time management through structured guidance and collaboration. At the institutional level, effective prevention requires clear policies with consistent sanctions for academic dishonesty alongside ethics education and reinforcement of academic integrity to ensure authentic student outputs and reliable assessment outcomes.

**Novelty/Originality of this study:** This study is novel in its PRISMA-based synthesis of 37 studies that integrates the causes, interventions, and institutional policies on plagiarism in student research into a single multi-level framework. It is also original in linking plagiarism to the validity of educational assessment systems, emphasizing its impact on grading accuracy, academic integrity, and institutional accountability.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Academic plagiarism is one of the most serious forms of research misconduct (a cardinal sin) [1], with significant ramifications for both academia and the wider society [2]. Its prevalence has increased in contemporary educational settings, possibly due to the widespread accessibility of electronic information [3] and weak or inconsistent enforcement of sanctions [4]. Plagiarism refers to the use of another individual's intellectual output—such as writings, ideas, or findings—without proper attribution, thereby presenting it as one's own work [5]. It is widely regarded as a major academic transgression associated with deception, cheating, intellectual dishonesty, and moral failure [6].

While plagiarism prevention strategies and detection tools are widely advocated in academic institutions [7], the proliferation of web-based copy-and-paste technologies has further intensified the problem [4], including the emergence of websites offering pre-written academic outputs. In addition, a considerable number of student-researchers commit unintentional plagiarism due to insufficient research competence, limited exposure to academic writing conventions, and weak understanding of proper citation practices [4], [8].

Previous literature has examined plagiarism from different perspectives; however, these studies remain fragmented and context-specific. For instance, Kumar et al. [9] conducted a systematic review on plagiarism in scientific writing but limited their scope to dentistry and medical fields. Similarly, Berlinck explored academic plagiarism in the European context without clearly specifying the methodological approach used in the review [10]. Gokmenoglu [11] also highlighted that although plagiarism is recognized as a legal and ethical issue in Turkey, there is limited empirical investigation into the perspectives and causes of plagiarism among graduate students and faculty members.

Further, Husain et al. [12] reported a lack of consistency in defining plagiarism and in identifying effective prevention strategies across studies. Awasthi [13] identified multiple factors contributing to student plagiarism but emphasized the need for stronger institutional strategies, particularly technology-based and best-practice interventions. In addition, existing literature on plagiarism detection largely focuses on computational approaches aimed at identifying lexical, syntactic, and semantic similarity, rather than addressing its educational and pedagogical dimensions [14].

Despite these contributions, a critical gap remains in the literature regarding the relationship between plagiarism and key educational processes, particularly its implications for assessment validity, learning evaluation, and educational accountability. This gap limits a deeper understanding of plagiarism not only as an ethical issue but also as a threat to the integrity and credibility of educational assessment systems. To address these gaps, this study synthesizes existing empirical literature on plagiarism in student research, focusing on its causes as well as its practical and policy implications. The PRISMA approach was employed, with only empirically grounded studies included in the review. Given the persistence and complexity of the issue, the findings are expected to inform policy development in educational institutions and strengthen mechanisms for safeguarding academic integrity, particularly in assessment and evaluation systems.

Despite the growing body of literature on academic plagiarism, a critical gap remains in the lack of an integrated synthesis that connects its underlying causes with practical and policy implications across different educational levels and contexts, particularly in relation to assessment validity and academic accountability in developing educational systems. This study is novel in its use of a PRISMA-guided systematic review to consolidate fragmented empirical evidence and bridge behavioral, pedagogical, and technological perspectives on student plagiarism. Given the rapid expansion of digital tools, artificial intelligence, and unrestricted access to online academic content, there is an urgent need to re-examine how plagiarism manifests and is addressed in contemporary student research. Thus, this study aims to systematically synthesize existing literature on the causes, practical implications, and policy implications of plagiarism in student research and to derive implications for strengthening academic integrity, assessment practices, and educational policy.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) criteria for systematic review reporting were followed in this study [15], [16]. Because the issue is under-researched, a qualitative literature review was deemed appropriate for investigation. The following research questions served as the review's aim:

1. What evidence in the literature is there for the causes of committing plagiarism in student research?
2. What evidence in the literature supports practical implications for teachers and lecturers in improving academic writing and research practices to prevent plagiarism?
3. What evidence in the literature supports institutional policy implications for preventing plagiarism in student research?

To ensure that the review was systematic, I followed the processes proposed by Moher et al. and represented diagrammatically in Figure 1 (identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion) [15]. The strategic search terms were as follows: *Plagiarism in Student Research*, *Cheating in Student Research*, *Plagiarized*  
Ind. Jou. Edu. Rsc, Vol. 7, No. 3, June 2026: 199 - 214

*Student Research, Plagiarizing School Research, and Detecting Plagiarism in Student Research.* Further, Boolean operators were also utilized to expand the range of the search results.

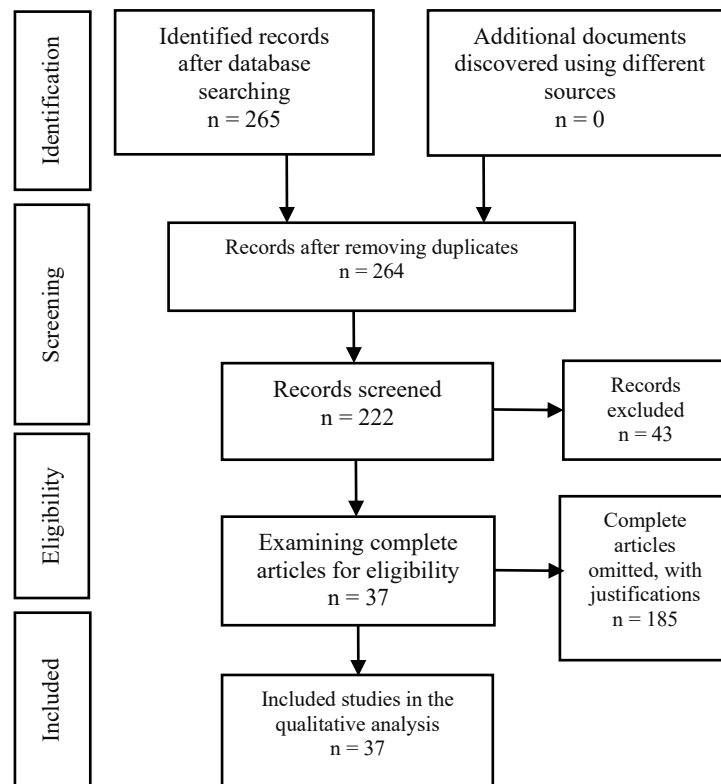


Figure 1. PRISMA flow diagram

**2.1 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

Studies were included based on the following operational criteria: (1) they explicitly examined variables, factors, or phenomena related to plagiarism in student research within formal educational settings; (2) they investigated the causes or contributing factors of plagiarism among students; and (3) they presented interventions, strategies, or policy-based solutions aimed at preventing or reducing plagiarism in student research outputs. Eligible studies covered empirical investigations (qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods) as well as evidence syntheses such as meta-analyses.

To ensure transparency and replicability, a structured screening process was applied using predefined eligibility parameters. Studies published prior to 2000 were excluded to maintain contemporary relevance, along with those published in non-English languages due to accessibility constraints. Articles that could not be retrieved in full text through the selected databases—Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, Semantic Scholar, ERIC, and OpenAlex—were also excluded. In addition, studies were removed if they addressed academic dishonesty in general but did not specifically focus on plagiarism in student research contexts or did not align with the defined inclusion criteria. Table 1 summarizes the inclusion and exclusion criteria applied in the review.

Table 1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria of the Study

Eligibility Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Time Frame/ Years	2000 to 2022	Below 2000; 2023
Language	English	Other Languages
Methodology/ Design	Quantitative, Qualitative, Mixed Methods Research, & Meta-Analysis	
Electronic Databases	Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, Semantic Scholar, ERIC, and OpenAlex	Other Sources/ Inaccessible Studies
Publication Status	Published in Journals	Unpublished Articles/ Materials

## 2.2 Search Strategy

One electronic databases, *Scopus*, *Web of Science*, *Google Scholar*, *Semantic Scholar*, *ERIC*, and *OpenAlex*, were searched until February 2023. The time span of the articles included was from 2000 to 2022. To locate additional articles, the reference lists of the included studies and relevant reviews were rigorously checked. After exporting all research articles to *EndNote*, duplicate results were deleted. *CFG* independently screened the titles and abstracts, and irrelevant research articles were deleted. After retrieving full-text versions of the selected articles, *CFG* applied inclusion and exclusion criteria. Disputes were dealt with and resolved.

## 2.3 Data Extraction

The following information was obtained from the selected studies: (a) publication information (author, year of publication, and country), (b) study design, (c) participant characteristics/ sampling, (d) study aim/ objectives/ purpose/ research focus, (e) findings and discussion, (f) conclusion, and (g) recommendations/ implications/ limitations. Data was acquired extensively in order to provide a thorough review. Rereading the entire text helped to settle disagreements.

## 2.4 Risk of Bias (Quality) Assessment

Each included study was critically appraised using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT, 2018 version) to ensure a consistent and systematic assessment of methodological quality across qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods designs.

For qualitative studies, appraisal focused on the clarity of the research question, appropriateness of the qualitative approach, adequacy of data collection methods, relevance of the data analysis process, and coherence between findings and interpretations. For quantitative studies, the assessment examined the sampling strategy, representativeness of the sample, measurement validity and reliability, risk of nonresponse bias, and appropriateness of statistical analysis. For mixed-methods studies, the integration of qualitative and quantitative components was evaluated in terms of design rationale, integration of data, interpretation of combined results, and consistency between study components. Systematic reviews were appraised based on the clarity of research objectives, comprehensiveness of search strategy, rigor of study selection, quality of included studies, and validity of synthesized findings.

Each study was independently evaluated, and any discrepancies in scoring or judgment were resolved through discussion with an external reviewer to ensure consistency and reduce reviewer bias. Studies were excluded if the full text was not accessible, if they did not directly address plagiarism in student research, if they failed to meet the study objectives, or if they lacked sufficient methodological detail to allow proper appraisal using the MMAT criteria.

## 2.5 Data Analysis

The data analysis followed a systematic thematic analysis procedure that was conducted in clearly defined stages. First, all extracted data from the selected studies were repeatedly read to ensure familiarization with the content. Second, open coding was performed by identifying and labeling meaningful segments of text related to causes of plagiarism, with each relevant idea assigned an initial code. Third, these codes were reviewed and compared through constant comparison, allowing similar codes to be grouped and merged. Fourth, axial coding was undertaken to establish relationships among codes, which led to the formation of broader categories reflecting shared meanings. Finally, selective coding was used to refine and consolidate these categories into overarching themes, which were validated through iterative checking against the original data to ensure coherence, consistency, and alignment with the research questions.

## 2.6 Data Synthesis

Demographic data was collected in terms of study year, locale, and research focus/topic area, beginning with the final listing of the literatures. Thematic analysis was used to highlight the significant findings with a complete view on the review's goals in order to synthesize the data on the evaluated articles based on the research questions.

## 2.7 Summary of the Reviewed Research Articles

The included reviewed articles on plagiarism in student research are presented to offer an overview of the studies involved. I included information on the author(s), the date of publication, the nation where the study was done, the educational level of the study's implementation, the sample size, and the study's focus area. The papers chosen were mainly distributed evenly over the years of the research search limit, which varied from 2000 to 2022. The vast bulk of the references (24) were published between 2010 and 2020.

Table 2 also shows the 37 evaluated articles, which were based on 15 countries (one not named and the other from European Union countries). Three studies (8.11%) were from high school, eight studies (21.62%) were from post-graduate education, and the majority (64.86%) were from tertiary level/ higher education. Also, *Ind. Jou. Edu. Rsc*, Vol. 7, No. 3, June 2026: 199 - 214

two studies (5.40% of the total) were not recognized in terms of educational level. The largest providers of analyzed papers were the United States of America (21.62%), Indonesia (16.22%), and the Philippines (13.51%). The remaining countries each provide one to two research articles.

Table 2. Distribution of the Reviewed Research Articles by Country and Educational Level

Place of Publication/ Study	Educational Level				Total
	High School	Higher Education	Post-graduate Education	Not Identified	
Australia		1			1
Bangladesh		1			1
Bosnia & Herzegovina				1	1
Canada		1			1
Finland		2			2
European Union Countries		1			1
India		1	1		2
Indonesia		4	2		6
Iran		1			1
Japan	1				1
Nigeria		2			2
Pakistan		1			1
Philippines	1	3	1		5
Russia			1		1
Sweden		1	1		2
United States of America	1	5	2		8
Not Identified				1	1
Total	3	24	8	2	37

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The reviewed studies span multiple countries (e.g., Indonesia, United States, Nigeria, Philippines, Finland, Sweden, India) and educational levels from high school to post-graduate education, with sample sizes ranging from small qualitative thesis analyses to large-scale institutional surveys. Across these contexts, the literature consistently examined plagiarism in terms of students' perceptions, causes, prevalence, and prevention strategies, including the use of detection tools (e.g., Turnitin, Grammarly) and institutional policies. Comparative patterns show that while developed countries (e.g., United States, European Union, Finland) tend to emphasize policy frameworks, digital tools, and systematic academic integrity systems, developing contexts (e.g., Indonesia, Nigeria, Philippines, Pakistan) more frequently focus on student awareness, behavioral causes, and instructional gaps.

Table 3. Summary of the Reviewed Articles

Study ID	Author/s, Year	Country	Educational Level	Sample Size	Research Focus
[17]	Oyewole & Abioye (2016)	Nigeria	Higher Education	N/A	Focused to exploring the application of a complete method to avoid plagiarism in thesis writing in library schools
[18]	Helgesson & Eriksson (2015)	N/A	N/A	N/A	Simplified the normative issues around plagiarism
[19]	Ramadhana (2016a)	Indonesia	Post-graduate Education	7	Elaborated on how students perceive online plagiarism detection systems, plagiarism, plagiarism avoidance, and plagiarism avoidance
[20]	Sulaiman (2015)	Indonesia	Higher Education	53 (theses) and 27 (lecturers)	The numerous types of theses in student plagiarism were investigated, as well as the factors that inspire students to engage in plagiarism.
[21]	Maina et al. (2014)	Nigeria	Higher Education	200	Students' comprehension of plagiarism and involvement in it, as well as their judgments of plagiarist punishment,

[22]	Muluk et al. (2021)	Indonesia	Higher Education	30 (theses) and 10 (alumni)	were investigated. The attitudes of English as a Foreign Language students about plagiarism, the variables that inspire students to plagiarize when writing their undergraduate theses, and their tactics for preventing plagiarism were all documented.
[23]	Rahman et al. (2022)	Indonesia	Higher Education	7 (theses)	Examined the extent to which plagiarism happens college students' thesis
[24]	Elmunsyah et al. (2018)	Indonesia	Vocational High School	N/A	Developed and tested plagiarism detection program for scientific writing
[25]	Burke (2004)	United States of America	Higher Education	N/A	Explored the problems of librarians on plagiarism as well as its measures to prevent it
[26]	LoCastro & Masuko (2002)	Japan	High School	2 (theses) and 30 (articles)	Conducted an ethnographic study on plagiarism, focusing on written articles
[27]	Ma et al. (2007)	United States of America	High School	51	Addressed the subject of digital cheating and plagiarism
[28]	Gibson et al. (2006)	United States of America	Higher Education	34	Investigated the reasons why college students cheat, utilizing both student respondents' perspectives and the faculty writers' observations
[29]	Baker et al. (2008)	United States of America	Post-graduate Education	27	When graduate students had access to Turnitin, the levels of plagiarism in their term papers were compared.
[30]	Madray (2007)	United States of America	Higher Education	101	Explored the students' opinions of plagiarism in connection to their ability to write research papers
[31]	Dey & Sobhan (2006)	Bangladesh	Higher Education	N/A	Determined the most common ways of plagiarism employed in HEIs and their impact on educational quality
[32]	Scanlon & Neumann (2002)	United States of America	Higher Education	664	Gathered data on online plagiarism from a diverse group of students from HEIs
[33]	Goosney & Duda (2009)	Canada	Higher Education	N/A	Analyzed why students plagiarize and concentrated on developing preventative strategies in student knowledge of plagiarism as well as organized activities that limit cheating possibilities
[34]	Larsson & Hansson (2012)	Sweden	Higher Education	N/A	Examined the current state of the SciPro process and procedures for integrating plagiarism tools, including policy on the subject for future antiplagiarism system, support, and process design improvements.
[35]	Breen & Maassen (2005)	Australia	Higher Education	13	Investigated student opinions on plagiarism and its prevention and designed learning aids to teach students how to avoid plagiarism in their work
[36]	Krishan et al. (2017)	India	Post-graduate Education	N/A	Studied the rising concern about plagiarism by providing information on plagiarism regulations/ guidelines in India, as well as additional ways for

					combating student plagiarism at the Master's level
[37]	Moore (2014)	Finland	Higher Education	91 (theses)	Shed light on the thesis reference habits of Finnish higher education graduates
[38]	Masic (2014)	Bosnia and Herzegovina	N/A	N/A	Documented the rules for valid scientific research
[39]	Vieyra et al. (2013)	United States of America	Post-graduate Education	115	Reported on the patterns of plagiarized research studies and motives of plagiarism in graduate schools
[40]	Larsson & Hansson (2013)	Sweden	Post-graduate Education	22 (theses)	Evaluated the present stage of the SciPro process in terms of plagiarism prevention during the thesis writing process
[41]	Glendinning (2014)	European Union	Higher Education	5000	Detailed institutional plagiarism policies and methods to promote more effective quality, standards, and academic integrity assurance.
[42]	Moore (2013)	Finland	Higher Education	91 (theses)	Confirmed the validity of reference in electronically published theses of graduates from Finnish universities
[4]	Gilmore et al. (2010)	United States of America	Higher Education	113	The influence of involvement in inquiry-based education on graduate students' research skill development was investigated.
[43]	Farahian et al. (2020)	Iran	Higher Education	291	Inspected Iranian university instructors' viewpoints on the reasons of plagiarism students' theses
[44]	Saeed et al. (2011)	Pakistan	Higher Education	N/A	Discussed why and how plagiarism occurs in educational institutions.
[45]	Ramadhana (2016b)	Indonesia	Post-graduate Education	N/A	The benefits of plagiarism detection software were discussed, as well as students' reactions to it.
[7]	Nisha et al. (2015)	India	Higher Education	N/A	Offered an overview of plagiarism, types/forms of plagiarism, and techniques used by Indian academics to limit the prevalence of plagiarism
[46]	Abalkina & Libman (2020)	Russia	Post-graduate Education	N/A	Determined whether evidence of academic plagiarism for a high-ranking politician reveals anything about the quality of this person's public service
[47]	Roman (2018)	Philippines	Higher Education	61	The goal of this project was to increase academic integrity and honesty by using plagiarism detection software to reduce the frequency of plagiarism among teacher education students.
[48]	Retuya & Castro (2020)	Philippines	High School	33 (theses)	By submitting their research articles to the Tunitin.com software, we investigated the reading patterns of special scientific program-student researchers.
[49]	Macatangay (2015)	Philippines	Higher Education	N/A	Determined the relationship between college students' comprehension and prevalence of plagiarism, perceived severity and prevalence of plagiarism, and understanding and perceived seriousness of plagiarism.
[50]	Bonifacio	Philippines	Higher	328	Using Grammarly, we determined the

	(2020)		Education		most common kinds of plagiarism as well as the fraction of plagiarism perpetrated by undergraduate students.
[51]	Santiago et al. (2017)	Philippines	Post-graduate Education	N/A	Aimed to contribute to the protection of intellectual property rights by spreading information about plagiarism

This section presents the findings of the systematic review of 37 research articles focused on plagiarism in student research. The results are divided into three sections: the causes of committing plagiarism, the practical implications for improving students' academic writing and research practices to prevent plagiarism, and the policy implications for preventing plagiarism in student research.

### 3.1 Causes for Committing Plagiarism in Student Research

With the literatures reviewed, it is evident that many students plagiarize their studies due to poor proficiency in doing research, internet facility accessibility, attitude towards research, and school-related factors (Table 4).

#### 3.1.1 Poor Proficiency in Doing Research

Students have problems with their competencies in doing research. It was found that they have inadequate research skills, comprehension gap on the basics of plagiarism, sloppy referencing, and cultural language barrier.

**Inadequate Research Skills.** Plagiarism is often used by students who lack the research skills needed to complete a project [18], particularly when citing studies [50], [23], [45]. Some students merely regurgitate the findings or results of previous studies without properly crediting them [4]. They also struggle with technical writing [35], [26], [30], [20] due to a lack of creativity [43], which manifests in difficulties producing thoughts, ideas, and concepts [51].

This aligns with the conclusion that a lack of knowledge and abilities contributes to research challenges [13]. Students may unknowingly plagiarize when faced with problems because of insufficient technical writing skills. In Indonesia, efforts to strengthen academic skills, such as research competencies, have been implemented through the Research Skills Development Framework, which emphasizes data collection, interpretation, understanding, and application across multiple contexts.

Table 4. Themes on Reasons for Committing Plagiarism in Student Research

Theme on the Causes for Committing Plagiarism in Student Research	Characteristic	Study ID	Number of Studies
Poor Proficiency in Doing Research	Inadequate Research Skills	[18] [19] [20] [21] [22] [23] [26] [30] [35] [4] [43] [50] [51]	13
	Comprehension Gap on the Basics of Plagiarism	[19] [21] [23] [26] [27] [31] [51]	7
	Sloppy Referencing	[17] [19] [23] [26] [30] [31] [35] [37] [39] [42] [4] [47] [49] [50]	14
	Cultural Language Barrier	[20] [26]	2
Internet Facility Accessibility	Online-Based Patching	[19] [22] [27] [28] [31] [33] [43] [47] [51]	9
	Banking on Web-Based Paper Mills	[32] [33] [43] [46]	4
	Absence of Plagiarism Detection Software	[17] [21]	2
Attitude Towards Research	Influenced by Peer Culture	[27] [28] [31] [32] [36] [47] [51]	7

	Ineffective Time Management	[21] [26] [28] [31] [33] [47] [50]	7
	Desire for Good Academic Rating	[21] [27] [28] [33] [36] [47] [51]	7
	Low Self-Esteem in Writing	[17] [28] [43] [46]	4
School-Related Factors	Absence of Disciplinary Actions for Academic Dishonesty	[27] [32] [35] [41] [43] [50] [51]	7
	Failure of Teachers to Supervise Students	[21] [26] [27] [33] [41] [43] [44]	7

Comprehension Gap on the Basics of Plagiarism. Students who plagiarize are often still learning what plagiarism is. Some have never heard of plagiarism [21], [26], [45], particularly in paraphrasing [23]. Students may be less aware of plagiarism [27] because it was not taught to them [31], [51]. This is consistent with studies showing differences in plagiarism awareness and academic misconduct [13]. Due to inexperience with plagiarism prevention strategies, students may plagiarize [49].

Sloppy Referencing. The majority of students plagiarize research because they do not know how to quote and paraphrase statements properly [31], [4], [17], [23], [45]. Students apply theories and frameworks but often fail to redefine key terms or credit their sources. Some provide a bibliography but omit authors in the in-text citations [26]. One reason is that students do not know how to properly cite internet and journal sources [30]. They also regard technical editing as demanding due to its intricacy [35]. Inconsistencies in references and in-text citations include undetailed citations, confusing references, quotations without quotation marks, unrecognized major sources, and misquoting [42], [37]. Copying without reference is considered the most common form of plagiarism [50], [4].

The difficulty of precise referencing means that some instances of plagiarism are inadvertent. Students reported that knowing when to cite a statement, finding, or article was their most challenging aspect of academic writing. Additionally, a lack of clear writing norms in class led to ambiguity about citation use.

Cultural Language Barrier. Students' plagiarism practices are significantly influenced by their educational and cultural contexts [20]. Several students may not be native English speakers, which can result in less guidance on avoiding plagiarism [26].

### 3.1.2 Internet Facility Accessibility

Plagiarized research manuscripts are increasingly common due to the availability of internet resources. Patchworking in written outputs occurs because of various online applications. Some students even purchase finished research manuscripts from web-based paper mills, often facilitated by the absence of detection software.

Online-Based Patching. When authors take ideas or points of view from the original source without crediting it, the result is jumbled output known as patchwork or mosaic plagiarism [45]. The ease of access to sources can lead to careless writing or plagiarism [45]. Several websites enable plagiarism [31], [33], [27], [22] due to the simplicity of acquiring internet-based papers, research, and other materials [22], [28]. Copying and pasting information from one document to another is straightforward [33].

Banking on Web-Based Paper Mills. Students now have the ability to purchase research online and present it as their own [33], [32]. Some use ghostwriters to produce research outputs [43], but these ghost studies have, in some cases, been judged nonplagiarized [46].

Absence of Plagiarism Detection Software. Plagiarism would have been readily detected if Turnitin or similar tools were available. In their absence, students may confidently plagiarize [43], [17]. Teachers struggle to detect plagiarism without these tools [21]. With access to plagiarism detection software, monitoring student research writeups would be easier [43]. Due to the high cost of similarity checks, publishers in developing countries are often unable to screen all submissions, leading to errors in introduction and discussion sections. Intelligent algorithms are being developed to detect plagiarism, including paraphrase, manipulation, cross-language plagiarism, and erroneous copying of references and images. While automated detection technologies do not undermine trust, routine large-scale monitoring is unsustainable; only major occurrences should be investigated to protect academic integrity.

### 3.1.3 Attitude Towards Research

A prevailing concern regarding student plagiarism is their attitude toward research. Plagiarism can be influenced by peer culture, ineffective time management, the desire for good academic performance, and low self-esteem in writing.

Influenced by Peer Culture. Students plagiarize because they observe their peers doing the same [27], [51] and wish to fit in [28]. Poor time management may also lead them to copy their friends' work [31].

Ineffective Time Management. Poor time management or a lack of time to work on research papers contributes to plagiarism [26], [21]. Students may be too busy [28] or face personal challenges [50], prompting them to plagiarize to meet deadlines [31], [33]. Copying and pasting without proper attribution affects the overall quality of the research [33].

Desire for Good Academic Rating. Students often plagiarize to achieve academic success [28], [36], [21]. Fear of failing or receiving low marks motivates them to submit plagiarized work [21], [27], [33], [51]. In some cases, plagiarism is a strategy to cope with stress associated with achieving high grades [50].

Low Self-Esteem in Writing. Lack of confidence in academic writing skills leads students to plagiarize [43]. Many hesitate to conduct original research [17] due to concerns over the quality of their work [46], [28]. Low motivation further contributes to academic dishonesty [43]. Plagiarism in some contexts is caused by factors including lack of skills, pressure, personality traits, and insufficient oversight. To reduce plagiarism, educators can enhance students' knowledge and abilities, increase self-efficacy, and raise awareness of proper research practices [46], [43]. Establishing a supportive research environment can boost self-esteem and reduce the impulse to plagiarize [50].

### 3.1.4 School-Related Factors

Some reasons students plagiarize in research are related to school-related issues, particularly the absence of disciplinary action for academic dishonesty and insufficient supervision by teachers.

Absence of Disciplinary Actions for Academic Dishonesty. The lack of consequences for digital cheating has contributed to increased student research plagiarism [50], [43], [27]. Schools have not adequately addressed academic dishonesty [32], and norms have not been properly established [35], [41]. This highlights the importance of institutional policy formulation and the need for policy reform [43]. Faculty members can detect plagiarism by carefully examining students' work, identifying discrepancies and citation issues, and providing guidance on plagiarism prevention. However, many teachers do not use detection methods such as text-matching software, relying instead on manual review of term papers [17].

Failure of Teachers to Supervise Students. Teachers often fail to check for plagiarism or discipline students found guilty [21]. Students are not given sufficient time to prepare and are not adequately instructed on the consequences of plagiarism [26]. Faculty often assume that students are unaware of institutional plagiarism policies [33]. Workload constraints prevent teachers from monitoring students and providing feedback on assignments [44]. There is minimal research oversight in some institutions, which encourages plagiarism [46], [43]. For example, a study of Iranian university instructors found that the absence of departmental monitoring and the large number of theses assigned to each teacher may contribute to academic dishonesty [43].

Beyond these identified causes, plagiarism has broader implications for the validity of educational assessment and evaluation systems. When students submit unoriginal work, the authenticity of learning evidence is compromised, leading to distorted measurement of competencies and inaccurate academic performance indicators. This, in turn, weakens educational accountability as grades and evaluation results no longer reliably reflect students' true knowledge and skills.

### 3.2 Practical Implications for Teachers and Lecturers in Student Research Supervision in Improving Academic Writing and Research Practices to Prevent Plagiarism

Following a thorough review of the literature, it is evident that preventing plagiarism in student research requires targeted improvements in curriculum and instructional practices. Teachers and lecturers play a crucial role in this process by explicitly teaching proper citation and referencing techniques and integrating these skills into research-related coursework. In addition, the establishment and consistent implementation of clear, school-based plagiarism policies are essential to guide both students and supervisors in maintaining academic integrity. Most importantly, the use of technology-based plagiarism detection tools is strongly recommended as a supportive mechanism to reinforce ethical writing practices. Table 5 presents the identified themes—Leveraging the Power of Technology, Improving Curriculum and Instruction, and Stressing Proper Attribution—along with their corresponding characteristics in addressing plagiarism in student research.

Table 5. Themes on the Practical Implications for Teachers and Lecturers in Student Research Supervision in Improving Academic Writing and Research Practices to Prevent Plagiarism

Theme on the Strategies to Avoid Plagiarism in Student Research	Characteristic	Study ID	Number of Studies
Leveraging the Power of Technology	Making Use of Anti-Plagiarism Software	[19] [20] [21] [24] [25] [27] [28] [29] [31] [34] [36] [38] [40] [41] [44] [45] [7] [47] [49] [50] [51]	21
	Teaching How to Access Online Journals	[17] [25]	2
Improving Curriculum & Instruction	Teaching Research Competencies	[21] [30] [31] [33] [35] [4] [48] [49]	8
	Standardizing Academic Tasks	[26] [31] [33] [36] [41] [42] [44] [50] [51]	9
	Upskilling Teachers	[26] [31] [35] [39] [40] [41] [4] [43]	8
	Collaborating with Other Experts	[30] [33] [36] [40] [4] [43]	6
	Building on Technical Writing Skills	[35] [45]	2
	Creating a Timeline	[28] [31] [33] [35]	4
Stressing Proper Attribution	Competence-Building in Citation Rules and Technical Writing	[17] [19] [20] [22] [26] [27] [30] [31] [33] [35] [36] [37] [38] [4] [45]	15
	Knowledge-Development on the Rudiments of Plagiarism	[20] [22] [27] [28] [30] [31] [33] [36] [40] [41] [4] [7]	12

### 3.2.1 Leveraging the Power of Technology

Technology has been effective in detecting plagiarism. Its utilization can significantly reduce student plagiarism in research. Specifically, using anti-plagiarism software and teaching students how to access online journals are strategies that can help students avoid plagiarism.

**Making Use of Anti-Plagiarism Software.** To prevent plagiarism, much of the literature recommends using plagiarism detection software [31], [24], [41], [28], [36], [34], [21], [38], [45], [51], [20]. Turnitin is a popular option for detecting plagiarism [29], [25], [34], [7], [27]. Students also use Grammarly to identify plagiarism [50]. However, access to free detection software is often limited when submitting reports [36]. Proper application of these tools can assist teachers in promoting academic integrity [49].

**Teaching How to Access Online Journals.** Another contributor to plagiarism is limited access to online journals. Teachers should instruct students on how to access free journals online to avoid copying from unverified websites [17]. Librarians and teachers should also guide students in using online databases, ideally integrating this instruction into classroom activities [25].

### 3.2.2 Improving Curriculum & Instruction

Strengthening the incorporation of research competencies in the curriculum can boost learners' ability to prevent plagiarism. Expert faculty may help develop students' writing abilities by teaching research competencies, standardizing academic tasks, upskilling teachers, collaborating with other experts, building technical writing skills, and creating a timeline.

**Teaching Research Competencies.** Research should be integrated into the educational curriculum [49], [33], [21]. It should be taught early, covering information literacy, research skills, citation style, and plagiarism [30], [35]. Some lessons should emphasize plagiarism [35], and training programs may also be included [50], [36]. This implies that curriculum design should allow adequate time for research [48]. Teachers should instruct students on annotation and citation norms to help them produce original ideas [49].

**Standardizing Academic Tasks.** Clear standards for research outputs, especially theses, are needed [41], [36], [26], [37], [51]. Clear instructions should be provided in research manuscripts [31], [33], and a research

writing handbook or plagiarism intervention program may be implemented [44], [50]. Teachers should monitor students' compliance and provide guidance on proper plagiarism limits [33].

**Upskilling Teachers.** Training programs for teachers managing research are essential [4], [41], [50], [26], particularly for using online detection tools [34]. Teachers must understand how to guide students in avoiding plagiarism [28] by explaining research stages [31]. Tutorial sessions can be offered [35], especially for non-native English speakers [39]. Feedback from professors and peers is important for detecting and correcting plagiarism [39], [31].

**Collaborating with Other Experts.** Collaboration can help students become skilled information consumers, reducing plagiarism [30]. Other teachers and librarians may assist in research guidance and proper citation [4]. Monitoring, training, and evaluation of research outcomes are needed [50], [36]. Frequent communication between teachers and librarians ensures the application of comprehensive plagiarism prevention strategies [41].

**Building on Technical Writing Skills.** Teachers should emphasize drafting to avoid plagiarism [35] and enhance students' academic writing skills to develop original thoughts [45]. European studies show that students are instructed on scholarly writing and anti-plagiarism issues [2], [6]. Students should be reminded that academic writing is more than a technical exercise [2].

**Creating a Timeline.** Students should follow a timetable to improve time management [35], [33]. Teachers should routinely check progress and assist students with task management [28], [31]. Time, effort, and resource management is essential to prevent plagiarism [32], [14]. Tools like checklists dividing writing into phases can help students who procrastinate [14].

### 3.2.3 Stressing Proper Attribution

To avoid plagiarism, correct attribution is a prerequisite skill that should be taught before conducting research. Strategies include competence-building in citation rules and technical writing, as well as knowledge-development on the fundamentals of plagiarism.

**Competence-Building in Citation Rules and Technical Writing.** Teachers must instruct students on proper in-text citation and referencing to minimize plagiarism [35], [34], [50], [26], [26]. Students must understand how to cite sources accurately [31], [33] and develop technical writing skills, including paraphrasing, quoting, and summarizing [36], [50], [26], [35]. Teachers can reinforce this through writing norms, workshops, and focused technical writing exercises [30]. Additional writing tasks prior to research work help students practice academic writing conventions [33], [37], while tutorials and peer mentorship can further improve skills [35].

A comprehensive approach to teaching citation should include text comprehension, note-taking, paraphrasing, summarizing, quoting, synthesis, and practice in a supportive learning environment [50]. Students and teachers must clearly understand plagiarism and develop academic writing competencies to translate sources into their own words while properly citing [36].

**Knowledge-Development on the Rudiments of Plagiarism.** Students' understanding of academic dishonesty and plagiarism should be enhanced [31], [41], [30]. Addressing plagiarism directly reduces ignorance and helps students recognize its implications [28], [33]. Topics should cover awareness of plagiarism [35] and its different forms [50]. Students should be informed about the consequences of plagiarism, including compromised integrity, academic dishonesty, and research malpractice [34], [4]. Publishing ethics and research integrity should also be emphasized to cultivate intellectual awareness and responsible scholarly conduct [36], [34], [34].

Beyond these instructional and technological strategies, strengthening supervision practices also reinforces the validity and credibility of student assessment outcomes. When teachers actively integrate plagiarism prevention into supervision, they ensure that submitted outputs genuinely reflect students' competencies, thereby improving the accuracy of grading and evaluation results. This enhances institutional accountability because assessment decisions are based on authentic academic work rather than duplicated or manipulated content.

## 3.3 Institutional Policy Implications for Preventing Plagiarism in Student Research

### 3.3.1 Institutionalizing School-Based Mandates

Measures within institutions are essential to prevent plagiarism. In the absence of such safeguards, students are more likely to plagiarize. Literature suggests strategies such as imposing stringent punishment and inculcating ethics in research.

Table 6. Themes on the Institutional Policy Implications for Preventing Plagiarism in Student Research

Theme on the Strategies to Avoid Plagiarism in Student Research	Characteristic	Study ID	Number of Studies
Institutionalizing School-Based Mandates	Imposing Stringent Punishment	[21] [25] [27] [31] [33] [38] [40] [41] [44] [7] [49] [51]	12
	Inculcating Ethics in Research	[19] [20] [27] [28] [33] [34] [36] [51]	8

**Imposing Stringent Punishment.** Students continue to plagiarize when strict regulations and consequences are not enforced [50]. Strong institutional policies are necessary to maintain academic integrity [31]. Clear consequences must be established by academic integrity offices or research ethics committees [4], [34], [50]. Faculty members are responsible for reporting plagiarism and ensuring that students are aware of the policies [33], [31], [4]. Providing students with a guidebook outlining these policies is recommended [35]. Monitoring and addressing academic misconduct, especially patterns of plagiarism, can support the development of more robust institutional policies [34], [36], [26]. Teachers should also be effective in educating students about plagiarism, and higher education institutions should ensure fair and consistent sanctions [50]. Academic contracts may be used to clearly communicate potential consequences to students [26].

**Inculcating Ethics in Research.** Students should be reminded of ethical research procedures when writing [33], [36], [26]. Including research ethics in courses can help prevent plagiarism [36], [35]. Positive student–instructor relationships foster a strong foundation for ethical conduct [36]. Cultural acceptance and good communication are also essential to reinforce values of justice, honesty, and integrity in research [31], [50]. Additionally, to prevent academic dishonesty, students should be educated on proper citation, Internet ethics, copyright laws, and enrolled in courses addressing plagiarism and research ethics [26], [50]. Zero-tolerance policies and consistent enforcement of penalties are recommended to reinforce ethical research practices [26].

Beyond the enforcement of institutional mandates, plagiarism prevention policies also contribute to strengthening the validity and trustworthiness of academic assessment systems. Clear sanctions and ethics-driven guidelines ensure that student outputs are authentic, thereby improving the accuracy of grading, certification, and overall evaluation of learning outcomes. This promotes institutional accountability as academic results become more reflective of actual student competence rather than misconduct-influenced performance.

### 3.4 Strengths and Limitations

This study is among the few that systematically examines plagiarism in student research. The findings provide comprehensive and essential insights for policymakers and research administrators in academic institutions seeking to design and implement effective anti-plagiarism initiatives and policies. Despite extensive efforts to retrieve relevant literature, the search was limited to Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, Semantic Scholar, ERIC, and OpenAlex, as these were the most accessible and widely available databases among comparable academic search engines.

This study is not without limitations. During the analysis phase, it was observed that some sections of the reviewed publications did not fully support the objectives of this review due to insufficient or incomplete data relevant to the study focus. Although the selected studies were generally aligned with the topic, they did not always directly address all aspects required for a more comprehensive synthesis. In addition, there were instances where potentially relevant articles in databases may have been overlooked due to the predetermined search timeframe and inclusion criteria.

For future researchers who may build on this review, it is recommended to refine and expand search strategies by using broader keywords, extended timeframes, and additional databases to capture a wider range of relevant literature. This may help ensure a more exhaustive and comprehensive synthesis of studies related to plagiarism in student research.

## 4. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to systematically analyze 37 research articles on the causes of plagiarism in student research and the corresponding preventive measures using the PRISMA model. While reviewing the literature, it was observed that several studies lacked clear and transparent alignment with their stated objectives; thus, relevant findings were further examined across different sections of the articles to construct a more accurate synthesis of evidence on plagiarism causes and interventions.

The reviewed literature shows that plagiarism in student research is primarily driven by four interrelated factors: poor proficiency in conducting research, internet facility accessibility, attitudes toward research, and school-related conditions. Under research proficiency, students often lack adequate skills in academic writing, citation, and referencing, compounded by limited understanding of plagiarism and challenges such as language

barriers. These deficiencies lead to unintentional or careless plagiarism, including improper paraphrasing, sloppy referencing, and failure to attribute sources correctly. In addition, easy access to online materials and paper mills, along with the absence of effective plagiarism detection tools in some contexts, further enables copying, patchwriting, and even purchased research outputs. These conditions create an environment where plagiarism becomes both a skill-based and opportunity-driven issue.

Beyond technical limitations, students' attitudes and institutional environments also significantly contribute to plagiarism. Peer influence, poor time management, pressure to achieve high grades, and low self-confidence in writing encourage students to copy rather than produce original work. At the institutional level, weak supervision, lack of consistent disciplinary actions, and insufficient teacher monitoring further normalize academic dishonesty. These findings highlight that plagiarism is not only an individual student issue but also a systemic concern influenced by educational practices, institutional policies, and the availability of technological and academic support structures.

Practical implications for teachers and lecturers in student research supervision emphasize that effective plagiarism prevention depends on the integration of technology, strengthened curriculum and instruction, and consistent supervision to develop students' academic writing and research competencies. These combined strategies enhance the authenticity of student outputs and improve the validity and reliability of academic assessment outcomes. At the policy level, institutionalizing strict but fair plagiarism regulations alongside ethics-based research policies is essential to ensure consistent enforcement of academic integrity standards. These measures strengthen the credibility of assessment systems by ensuring that student performance accurately reflects authentic learning and scholarly competence.

This review article summarized prior studies' principal findings and proposed several themes and directions for further investigation. It also examined research identifying factors that contribute to plagiarism, highlighting aspects that educational institutions may address in developing strategies to reduce or eliminate academic dishonesty. Considering the focus of this review, future research may further explore the role of anti-plagiarism detection software in student research activities. In addition, studies employing mixed-methods designs are recommended to enable a more in-depth and comprehensive understanding of students' perceptions and behaviors regarding different forms of plagiarism. Although this review identified a limited number of studies focusing on plagiarism detection in Filipino contexts, further empirical research is needed to provide policymakers and academic leaders with more robust and context-specific evidence on why students engage in plagiarism. Such future investigations, if rigorously designed, can generate valuable inputs for improving institutional responses and academic integrity initiatives.

The findings of this systematic review contribute significant insights into the multidimensional nature of plagiarism in student research, emphasizing its roots in individual competencies, attitudinal factors, and institutional conditions. These results are highly relevant to the development and enhancement of evaluation systems in education, particularly in strengthening assessment validity, promoting research integrity, and ensuring that student outputs genuinely reflect learning outcomes. The study also provides evidence-based direction for educational policy formulation, especially in designing more responsive academic integrity frameworks that integrate curriculum development, instructional strategies, technological tools, and institutional enforcement mechanisms.

In conclusion, this study underscores the importance of strengthening both pedagogical and policy-level interventions to effectively address plagiarism in student research. It is recommended that future research further examine the effectiveness of specific institutional interventions, particularly the implementation of plagiarism detection systems and ethics-based instructional models, across diverse educational contexts. Expanding the scope of research in this area will further support the development of more comprehensive, culturally responsive, and evidence-based strategies for promoting academic honesty in higher education.

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