

## The 4PA of plagiarism: A psycho-academic profile of plagiarists

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### Abstract

Plagiarism is considered to be a serious transgression in the academic world. Due to the perception that plagiarism is rampant among both students and professors, the Indonesian government has established policies to prevent plagiarism in academia. Varieties of sanctions, ranging from score reduction to the revocation of granted academic titles have been applied to those who are caught committing this serious academic offense. However, the severity of the sanctions seems unable to put an end to plagiarism. Because severe sanctions seem unable to eradicate or even alleviate plagiarism, it might be assumed that the tendency towards plagiarism is a personal trait. Regardless of the presence or absence of opportunities and the severity of the potential sanctions, some individuals seem to be prone to plagiarism. In this study, five variables were used as predictors of plagiarism: procrastination, performance, personality, perfectionism, and achievement motivation. They were chosen to represent personal inclination, ability, and value, which separately have been reported to be correlated with plagiarism (Williams, Nathanson, & Paulhus, 2010). This study tries to combine those variables and has named it the 4PA of plagiarism.

This study used a sample of 362 undergraduate psychology students. The data were collected during the students' final exam, using seven scales. Plagiarism was measured using the Academic Practices Survey (APS) (Roig & DeTommaso, 1995) and the Personal Experiences with Plagiarism Scale (PEPS) (Bouman, 2009). Procrastination was measured using the Aitken Procrastination Inventory (API) (Aitken, 1982) and the Procrastination Assessment Scale – Student (PASS) (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984). Academic score performance was taken from the faculty's academic archives (subjects' GPAs and scores in Introduction to Psychology). Personality was measured using the International Personality Item Pool (IPIP) (<http://ipip.ori.org/>). Perfectionism was measured using the Almost Perfect Scale (APS-SO) (Slaney, Rice, Mobley, Trippi, & Ashby, 2001). Achievement motivation was measured using the Achievement Motivation Inventory (AMI) (Schuler, Thornton, Frintrup, & Mueller-Hanson, 2004).

Both plagiarism scales (APS and PEPS) produced similar results ( $r=.419$ ). Four of the five predictors have significant correlations with plagiarism. The highest correlations were found between plagiarism and the frequency of procrastination/PASS ( $r_{APS} \& r_{PEPS} = .270 = .202$ ) and habitual procrastination/API ( $r_{APS} = .217 \& r_{PEPS} = .173$ ). Plagiarists tend to have low conscientiousness (IPIP;  $r_{APS} = -.212 \& r_{PEPS} = -.178$ ). A small but significant correlation was found between plagiarism and perfectionism (APS-SO;  $r_{APS} = -.143 \& r_{PEPS} = -.124$ ). Plagiarists tend to have low achievement

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