Plagiarism Governance in Scottish Higher Education Institutions: A Critical Exploration of Nurse Educators' Opinions

Marion M Welsh

University of Strathclyde, Glasgow
School of Education
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

A Thesis presented in part fulfilment for the degree of

Doctor of Education

September 2012

Declaration of Authenticity

This thesis is a result of the author's original research. It has been composed by the author and has not previously been submitted for examination which has led to the award of a degree.

Signed:

Date:

Abstract

The occurrence of plagiarism in Higher Education symbolises a complex and multifaceted phenomenon which presents educators with challenges concerning its comprehension, management and, consequently, its governance. Within Nurse Education this scenario is further influenced by the requirements of professional learning and Fitness to Practise governance established by the Nursing and Midwifery Council. Consequently, Nurse Educators are required to engage with dual processes in the educational setting when plagiarism occurs and appears to challenge the attributes of professional learning regarding the acquisition of knowledge, skills and values. This thesis makes an original contribution to knowledge by exploring and illuminating the opinions of Nurse Educators concerning the governance of plagiarism which, as an area of education practice, has remained uncharted.

Undertaken in two complementary phases, this descriptive study utilised a documentary analysis of the plagiarism policies of Scottish Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) which offer Nurse Education (n = 11) and a pan-Scotland web-based survey which sought Nurse Educators' opinions (n = 187).

The documentary analysis demonstrated HEIs' intention to provide direction for educational practice via policy directives. However, notable were deficits within policies in comprehensively articulating the dimensions of plagiarism, in particular, its unintentional manifestation. From the survey, statistically significant findings verified Nurse Educators' opinions regarding how policy should be contextualised and communicated to explain the nature of plagiarism. Statistically significant findings confirmed the importance of managing plagiarism supported by the transparent alignment between HEI and professional governance processes to enable, support and sustain consistent management in the context of professional learning. Also illuminated within the findings were the discrete role implications for Nurse Educators which present convoluted challenges in addressing both the pedagogical and professionally mediated responsibilities.

The conclusions from this study argue that Nurse Educators endorse governance processes that are pedagogically centred, responsive to professional learning and are proportionally appropriate.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my dad, Robert Dawson.

Acknowledgements

Many people have enabled me to complete this research study and to them I offer my sincere and heartfelt thanks. Of special note are the supervisors who, over the past three years and at different points on this journey, have supported and uniquely guided me: Dr Christine Sinclair, Professor Ray Land, Dr Jan Smith and Professor Donald Christie. Your interest, commitment and kind encouragement were crucial in developing my research skills as well as sustaining my motivation during the challenging times. I am also eternally grateful to Dr David Rowe for stepping in at a late stage to offer clarity and guidance.

I am indebted to my superb colleagues and friends who provided support in so many ways to give me the time and space to complete this piece of work. Finally, to the participants who, although anonymous to me, willingly and generously gave of their time and interest to make this study possible.

Finally, my gratitude also goes to my longsuffering family, particularly my children Lorraine and David, but most especially my husband Kenny, whose unfailing patience and unconditional encouragement during these years of study has simply taken my breath away……I know I could not have done this without you.

Table of Contents

Chapter Four: Communicating the Concept of Plagiarism in Higher Education: Dimensions and Distinctions

Chapter Five: Engaging with the Duality of Plagiarism Governance in Nurse Education

Chapter Six: Plagiarism: Inherent role implications for the Nurse Educator

List of Tables

Table of Figures

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This study explored and illuminated Nurse Educators' opinions of the governance of plagiarism within the Higher Education setting. As an original contribution to knowledge, this addressed a topic within an area of education practice which previously had remained unexplored. From this standpoint, I will demonstrate that plagiarism and its strategic governance within Higher Education remains a multifaceted and nuanced concept in both its understanding and management. Furthermore, it will be argued that plagiarism occurring within the context of Nurse Education, whether in the pre-registration or post-qualifying context, introduces for Nurse Educators a further layer of governance as espoused by the professional body, the Nursing and Midwifery Council (2010a) which adds to the complexities which currently exist.

In presenting these arguments, the insights offered by experts in the field have been drawn upon to indicate that whilst solving the challenges plagiarism presents is inherently difficult, nonetheless academic practice should be policy-focused to support fair, transparent and learning-centred approaches (Carroll, 2005, 2007, 2010; Macdonald & Carroll, 2006). In concurring, this study demonstrates that despite the additional complexities of dual governance which impact on plagiarism management within Nurse Education, Nurse Educators' opinions reflect that within Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), policy processes should demonstrate and promotes an appropriate and proportional response.

In locating this study within educational practice, this introductory Chapter provides the contextual backdrop on plagiarism governance in Higher Education by introducing pertinent topic areas which are considered relevant to this study. Consequently, the context of the study is established by exposing key areas of debate and the contemporary challenges associated with operationalising plagiarism governance within Nurse Education. This concludes with identifying the study's aim and outlining the sub-questions.

1.2 Relevance of Study

My interest to pursue this area of study emerged as a consequence of uncovering and managing plagiarism by post-qualified nurse learners which appeared to

challenge not only the principles of academic scholarship but also the expectations of behaviour in respect of professional learning within the academic setting (Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC), 2008a, 2010a, 2010b). Moreover, as a Nurse Educator with a designated professional leadership role within my institution, I recognised that additional considerations in addressing plagiarism were obvious in the context of Fitness to Practise as part of meeting the dual governance requirements for professionally-based learning in the Higher Education setting.

Bound within the NMC's governance for professional learning, HEIs have been required to establish within the academic setting Fitness to Practise panels (NMC, 2010a) to consider and adjudicate on instances where the conduct, behaviour and attitudes of nurse learners falls short of meeting the standards outlined within *The Code: Standards of conduct, performance and ethics for nurse and midwives* (NMC, 2008a). In this context the NMC have provided specific guidance for HEIs with regard to confirming 'Good health and good character' expectations for nurse learners accessing programmes leading to entry to definitive parts of the professional register (NMC, 2010a). This is applicable to nurse learners seeking professional recognition, primarily in the pre-registration context, but not exclusively, as it includes post-qualifying nurse learners seeking additional professional qualifications and those pursuing continued professional development. However, for this latter group, the governance and guidance processes are less clear, particularly where academic misconduct can also equate with professional misconduct, as the NMC do not differentiate where acts of misconduct occur.

This study involved exploration of the alignment between the academic and professional governance processes and how this should emerge to fairly and equitably manage plagiarism by nurse learners. In considering the symbiosis between policy and practice I was challenged in terms of deconstructing, understanding and reconstructing plagiarism and its strategic governance from the Nurse Educator's perspective. Consequently, an area of educational practice worthy of investigation was identified and resulted in a practice-based research inquiry which sought to explore Nurse Educators' opinions concerning the strategic governance of plagiarism as it applies to Nurse Education.

This appeared a relevant area of critical inquiry which assumed greater importance when it was recognised that a void concerning empirical study of plagiarism within Nurse Education in the UK existed. Whilst the dearth of empirical work in this area

substantiates this study's contribution to new knowledge, it also presented limitations, which although discussed later in Chapter 2, impacted on literature retrieval to support comparison and discussion concerning the findings.

1.3 Background: Nurse Education, Governance and Plagiarism

In the academic setting, the broad nature of governance within HEIs establishes and benchmarks for stakeholders the educational standards that demonstrate quality in terms of scholarly pursuit (Schofield, 2009; Shattock, 2006). As its antecedent, and at a fundamental level, policies stand to inform and prescribe actions with which educators are expected to be cognisant in order to comply (Levinson, Sutton & Winstead, 2009).

Contributing to this governance picture has been the contemporary embedding of Nurse Education within Higher Education which requires Nurse Educators to take account of the governance processes which exist within their respective Higher Education Institutions but also those dictated by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC, 2004, 2006, 2008a, 2008b, 2010a, 2010c) to enable the standards for professional learning to be met. At a strategic level, this is evidenced in the conjoining of governance in the quality processes concerning the approval and re-approval of nursing programmes which lead to professional registration and recognition, involving the university and the Nursing and Midwifery Council. Thereafter, the institutions subsequently approved by the professional body to offer Nurse Education are subject to annual monitoring activities to ensure they are fit for purpose (NMC, 2011a).

Within Nurse Education the specific professional governance requirements are concerned with establishing and maintaining competency for clinical practice through the acquisition of knowledge, skills and values in order to protect the public (NMC, 2008a; 2010c, 2011a). Consequently, Nurse Educators have a key role in confirming, at pre-registration level for initial entry to the register, that nurse learners have acquired these aforementioned attributes commensurate with the professional role. At post-qualified level as part of continued professional development, these professional characteristics still require to be exhibited by learners and, depending on the professional context of the programme being pursued, confirmed by Nurse Educators to the professional body (NMC, 2004, 2006, 2008b, 2011c).

Contributing to these processes has been the recent dictate by the professional body for HEIs which offer Nurse Education to establish within the academic setting Fitness to Practise (FtP) Panels, thus adding a further dimension to the multiple governance processes associated with Nurse Education (NMC 2010a, 2010b, 2011c). Consequently, the dual governance which operates in respect of Nurse Education, academically and professionally, is predicated on establishing and maintaining, through policy articulation, standards and expectations for learning and behaviour.

Against this backdrop, the issue of plagiarism occurring within professional learning has drawn specific comment by the professional body (NMC, 2010a, 2010b) and Nurse Educators in equating with behaviour which falls below that expected by nurse learners in the academic setting. Essentially, plagiarism has been identified as dishonest behaviour which raises concern regarding professional conduct on the basis of failure to demonstrate the Fitness to Practice requirement of 'good character' concerning those who hold the title of Nurse (NMC, 2010a, 2010b); in short, those committing plagiarism are defaulting in meeting the professional aspirations outlined within the professional code of conduct. These aspirations are: trustworthiness, honesty and integrity (NMC, 2008a). Consequently, academic misconduct of this nature requires Nurse Educators to initiate governance processes to investigate and manage this type of infringement, which ultimately may impact on any defaulter's acceptability for entry to, or continuance on, the professional register (NMC, 2010a).

The reverberations of how plagiarism is strategically governed and managed is an issue which has attracted critical comment by Nurse Educators, primarily concerning its impact on establishing and maintaining professionalism (Harper, 2006; Kenny, 2007; Paterson, Taylor & Usick, 2003). Notwithstanding the importance associated with taking cognisance of the professional context, there is however a propensity within the nursing literature to focus on the ethics of plagiarism and consequently a failure to develop a wider appreciation of the educational complexities.

1.4 Defining the Problem: Plagiarism in Higher Education

In exploring the topic of plagiarism within Higher Education it is undeniable that it represents a complex, convoluted and multidimensional concept. Furthermore, for HEIs, it presents a serious challenge in attempting to avoid, minimise and manage the unwanted outcomes at an institutional level (Ballantine & McCourt Larres, 2012; Bennett, 2005; Jones, 2006; Park, 2003). This has been evidenced over the course of

the last two decades where plagiarism by learners has attracted significant concern by the educational community, pivoting on the threats it poses to academic integrity and the development of graduate knowledge, skills and qualities (Harvey & Robson, 2006; de Jager & Brown, 2010; Rosamond, 2002; Simon, Carr, McCulloch, Morgan, Oleson, & Ressel, 2003; Yeo & Chien, 2007).

In considering this threat to academic integrity, plagiarism is noted within the literature as being synonymous with a 'spectrum of behaviours' (Park, 2004, p. 292), which include cheating, deception (Devlin & Gray, 2007), dishonesty (de Jager & Brown, 2010) and the theft of intellectual property (Bennett, 2005). With reference to the latter, this thesis acknowledges plagiarism's behavioural association with the theft of intellectual property and at this juncture wishes to expand on this to establish context and clarity of 'theft of intellectual property' or use of 'literary theft' as part of this study's exploration of plagiarism governance in Nurse Education.

Whilst key concepts associated with defining plagiarism commonly refer to it as the unauthorised use of another individual's work or ideas (Bennett, 2005; Oxford Dictionary, 2012; Rosamond, 2002; Wan, 2011), Park (2003, p. 472) refers to plagiarism as *'literary theft in the context of stealing (by copying) the words or ideas of someone else and passing these off as one's own without crediting the source'*. In this context, Park (2003, p. 472) specifically uses the phrase *'theft of words and ideas'* to expand on the origins of plagiarism and its common comprehension. However, as Fishman (2009) asserts, the historical origins of plagiarism have impacted on contemporary understanding of the concept, which, Park (2004) and Sutherland-Smith (2005) highlight emerged as a consequence of writers in the1500's being deprived of financial income for their original works. Alexander (2010) comments this issue was subsequently resolved to some extent under the 'Statute of Anne' (as cited in Sutherland-Smith, 2005, p. 84), which established in 1709 copyright law in England indicating ownership of literary property by the originators and imposing restrictions concerning its usage by others, with non-compliance equating with the 'kidnapping' of literary works (Sutherland-Smith, 2005, p. 84). In this context, Granitz and Loewy, (2007) and Wan et al. (2012, p. 539) elaborate on plagiarism's contemporary association with theft based on its Latin derivation 'plagiarius' meaning to kidnap, steal or plunder.

However, the interplay between assumptions of theft and contemporary plagiarism, occurring in the HEI setting, introduces concepts which Fishman (2009) suggests are

incompatible with these types of early explanations; that is, plagiarism does not equate with the legality of theft. This is borne out in the context of Scots law (Christie, 2003), which establishes the legal definition of theft, which is based on *'appropriation',* whereby the owner is *'unlawfully deprived of all or some of his rights in relation to property, and that it is put to the thief's personal use. Thus the owner will incur a loss of some sort'* (Christie, 2003, p. 200). Consequently, and despite the origins and complexities associated with understanding plagiarism, any reference to 'theft' or 'literary theft' in the relation to plagiarism in the academic setting does not accord with the legal definition. Subsequently, and for the purpose of ensuring clarity, any reference to these terms in this thesis reflects commonly used metaphors found within the literature, which attempt to convey behaviour associated with plagiarism.

Further exploration also identifies plagiarism as a complex pluralistic concept, which can reflect differing dimensions as either a pedagogical learning deficiency, in the form of unintentional, poor, academic practice, or intent to deceive in order to gain academic credit (Devlin, 2006; Harvey & Robson 2006, de Jager & Brown, 2010). These differing dimensions appear as pressure points in debates which are concerned with the 'intent and extent' continuum on which plagiarism presents (James, McInnes & Devlin, 2002, p. 39 & 41) and thus give rise to how educators view, assess and manage plagiarism based on some learners' failure to understand and comply with conventions of scholarship (Ballantine & McCourt Larres, 2012; de Jager & Brown, 2010). This is further compromised by the realisation that in dealing with the seriousness of plagiarism, these dimensions can initially be obscure and indiscernible. As a result, challenges exist in distinguishing and addressing, as part of a continuum-based approach (James et al, 2002) the realities that plagiarism presents, that is, pedagogically initiating the uninitiated and promoting academic integrity or dealing punitively with those learners whose intention is deception.

1.5 Aetiology of Plagiarism

Given the complex dispositions offered, the reasons why and how learners either erroneously or intentionally plagiarise appears to be influenced by a disparate range of intrinsic and extrinsic factors which, although multifarious, occupy many of the debate forums (Bennett, 2005; Devlin & Gray, 2007; Szabo & Underwood, 2004). Whilst much of the literature concentrates on the complexities associated with intentional plagiarism, Chanock (2008) suggests unintentional plagiarism is equally

complex and requires consideration of the wider issues associated with the inadequate transition for learners moving between secondary and tertiary education which can result in academic skills deficits where they continually struggle to comprehend what it means to plagiarise. Moreover, there are also implications where educators similarly exhibit deficiencies in their understanding of plagiarism, an issue which resonates elsewhere within the educational literature (Boden & Stubbings, 2006; Clarke & Aiello, 2006; Yeo & Chien, 2007) arguably contributing to poor pedagogical preparation of learners.

Plagiarism associated with clear premeditated intent by learners has drawn significant comment within the literature, based on a variety of catalysts. For some learners this is rooted in the study-life-work milieu which places them in discomforting and vulnerable situations where they make the decision to embark on plagiarism in an attempt to establish a balance (Bennett, 2005; Devlin & Gray, 2007; Szabo & Underwood, 2004). However, Devlin and Gray (2007) and McDowell and Brown (2001) suggest a pernicious culture also exists in terms of success-driven competitiveness resulting in intentionally deceitful actions by learners proliferated via a number of manual and technological routes including, purchased/commissioned coursework obtained via an essay bank or ghost writer (Selwyn, 2008; Wicker, 2007). These abstractions accord with earlier work by Szabo and Underwood (2004) which premised that motivation to plagiarise can represent both sides of the same coin, involving learners who are academically weak and vulnerable, due to fear of failing, but also competent learners who tenaciously strive to achieve high level success. This situation can occur despite HEIs' visible commitment to providing pastoral and pedagogical support to enable academic skills development and raise learners' awareness regarding the pitfalls of plagiarism. However, irrespective of pedagogical processes and the punitive deterrents put in place, for some learners the motivations to intentionally commit plagiarism appear to outweigh the risk of being caught and sanctioned (Szabo & Underwood, 2004; Bennett, 2005). Furthermore, this scenario may also be influenced by learners' perceptions of the sanctions associated with intentional plagiarism which, according to Dee and Jacob (2010) are perceived as limited and paltry.

The issues pertaining to unintentional or intentional plagiarism serve to illustrate James et al.'s (2002) argument that as a definable action, plagiarism exists on a continuum where the convolutions are perplexing, particularly where intent to deceive, if proven but devoid of any legal implications, is tantamount to intellectual

theft, fraud, dishonesty, cheating and deception (Bennett, 2005: Falchikov, 2005; de Jager & Brown, 2010; Sikes, 2009; Williams, 2008).

1.6 Intentional Plagiarism: Trend as Social Phenomenon

According to Hall (2005), plagiarism represents both an intellectual concept and social phenomenon, which has seen an exponential increase nationally and internationally within the past two decades, as supported by a range of sources (Breen & Maassen, 2005; Brown, Dickson, Humphreys, McQuillan & Smears, 2008; Emerson, Rees & MacKay, 2005; Heap, Martin & Williams, 2007; Lin & Wen, 2006; McCabe, 2004; Park, 2003; Parker, Lenhart & Moore, 2011). Whilst these studies have provided a valuable insight into the incidence of plagiarism, they also concur that wide patterns of variability exist and as a consequence, estimates have been conservatively offered ranging between 25% - 50% of undergraduates.

Despite the plethora of literature from the UK and beyond, the extent to which incidence can be argued with any degree of confidence is debateable irrespective of contemporary approaches by agencies such as JISC undertaking intelligence gathering (Culwin & Lancaster, 2001; Devlin & Gray, 2007; Lakomy & Price, 2004). The arguments supporting the aforementioned authors' position are twofold: firstly, at a micro level, research designs which explore contemporary trends in plagiarism in Higher Education are often representative of data-gathering techniques based on learners honestly self-reporting their intentional plagiarism activities which appears oxymoronic given the nature of the topic under consideration; secondly, at a macro level, institutions may be unwilling to divulge, within Higher Education's competitive arena, problematic rates of plagiarism. Moreover, it is evident from the literature, that underreporting of plagiarism by educators frequently occurs (Sutherland-Smith, 2005). Consequently, the caveats offered appear warranted as it is evident from the literature and the experts' opinions offered therein (Carroll, 2004) that the true incidence of intentional plagiarism in Higher Education remains undetermined.

1.7 Plagiarism Policy in Higher Education

As ostensibly self-governing independent bodies, HEIs position and articulate their policies to openly reflect and benchmark their standards to demonstrate organisational and academic excellence. Hence the educational literature is replete in maintaining that the governance of plagiarism, expressed through policy, is fair, equitable, consistent and transparent (Carroll, 2009; Rosamond, 2002). Freewood, Macdonald and Ashworth (2003) and Macdonald & Carroll, (2006) also

indicate that the overarching governance of plagiarism in Higher Education, articulated through policy, is not only a conduit to evidence standards and quality of tertiary level education, but also as the blueprint for informing and enhancing educational practice.

Carroll (2004) advocates that institutional plagiarism policies should be ubiquitous in order to visibly promote consistent governance and clarity for both staff and students. More specifically, she implicates that if plagiarism policies are deemed insufficient to enable academic practice, then educators are at risk of being self-governing adjudicators or, at worse, disenfranchised and disengaged. The notion of insufficiency is an interesting one, arguably predicated on a range of diverse variables which appear to influence educators' opinions of policies which dictate the management of plagiarism. Broadly, these relate to educators perceiving the activation of plagiarism policy processes as onerous, compromising their autonomy and from academics within definitive subject areas, failure to take cognisance of additional governance requirements associated with professionally-based learning. Furthermore, the nature of policy insufficiency appears specifically linked with the potential to invoke the inconsistent and inequitable adjudication of plagiarism within and across educational institutions. These themes have for the last decade resonated within the educational literature (Borg, 2008; Dordoy 2002; James, McInnis & Devlin, 2002; de Jager & Brown, 2010; Jones, 2006; Roig, 2001; Tennant, Rowell & Duggan, 2007) with much of the criticism levelled at insufficiency and inconsistency related to how plagiarism policy is articulated by HEIs and how this appears to support and guide educational practice.

In this context, numerous studies provide perspectives concerning the link between plagiarism policy application and educational practice (Flint, Clegg & Macdonald, 2006; de Jager & Brown, 2010), but more specifically suggest that educators hold opinions and attitudes towards plagiarism which subsequently influence the way institutional policies are interpreted, implemented or dismissed. The crux of the argument offered by these authors suggests that it is the educator's position which renders policy to be inconsistently applied. This raises issues concerning the continued professional development of educators aligned with the extent to which HEIs present consistent information and approaches to governing plagiarism which is not open to interpretation or misinterpretation. Whilst accepting that the purpose of institutional governance and policy-making is to affect and direct the actions of educators towards a particular goal (Codd, 1988; Levinson, et al, 2009; Scott, 2000),

the theme of educator dissonance with institutional policy processes within Higher Education is not unique to the topic of plagiarism.

As part of the wider debates on policy-making within Higher Education, Bleiklie and Kogan (2007, p. 477) discuss educator dissonance in the context of contemporary organisational ideologies affecting the concept of governance in Higher Education. In offering a contemporary view, they suggest governance processes have undergone a shift in their power base, from academics acting as a *'republic of scholars'* endowed with professional and collegial freedom to influence strategic decision-making to the formation of institutions with the corporate autonomy to meet strategic expectations of *'major stakeholders'*. Against this backdrop, Bell and Stevenson, (2007) and Schofield (2009) indicate that Higher Education governance has become synonymous with accountability, efficiency and effectiveness and subject to greater internal and external scrutiny concerning its contribution to society, based to a large extent on the revenues received from the public purse. Accordingly, governance in Higher Education appears to have undergone rebranding and strategising to ensure it retains the traditions of academia whilst simultaneously responding to current challenges and opportunities, corporate, global and financial (Bleiklie & Kogan, 2007; Kaazar & Eckle, 2004; Lapworth, 2004; Rebera & Turri, 2009). As a result, the traditional hallowed ground of academic independence and decision-making has been eroded and become dominated by corporate governance, operating hierarchically (Bleiklie & Kogan, 2007).

Earlier work by Codd (1988) adds depth to the concept of power by suggesting academic dissonance is fuelled by the power-coercive nature of policy-making which is indiscriminately used to legitimise the process within Higher Education. This issue of power utilisation is a recurring debate concerning the fragile relationship between educational policy and practice also identified by Malen and Knapp (1997) who suggest that dissonance occurs as a consequence of attempting to satisfy strategic stakeholder demands as opposed to addressing the prevailing conditions faced by educators in the teaching and learning environment.

The issue of educators' apparent dissonance with plagiarism policy is however a prevalent theme which has many strands, for example Hall, (2005), Mainka & Raeburn (2006) and O'Regan (2006) all suggest that it is imperative that HEI policies acknowledge and contextualise the wider sociological and ideological perspectives. The mainstay of their argument alludes to the short-sightedness in

plagiarism policies in failing to articulate the global influences, such as the internet. Moreover, whilst the recurring theme of situating plagiarism as either an intentional ethical/moral infraction or within the ignominy of lacking the necessary academic skills to meet with convention abides, policies appear deficient by only responding to plagiarism as the former, that is in punitive terms and thus failing to give visibility to and politicising the pedagogical imperatives. The argument proffered by the aforementioned authors is that institutional policies demonstrate deficiencies in relation to supporting academic practice by not comprehensively capturing the differing dimensions of plagiarism, which appears a justified criticism.

Whilst debates and subsequent guidance concerning the strategic governance of plagiarism in Higher Education have enabled consideration of appropriate educational practice to optimise the prevention, detection and management of plagiarism in Higher Education (Duggan, 2006; Higher Education Academy (HEA), 2010, 2011; Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), 2010; Quinsee, Baughan & Boylan, 2005; Relph & Randle, 2006; Tennant, Rowell & Duggan, 2007), this has emerged in the context of broad based generic approaches. Consequently, an incomplete picture exists concerning how the strategic governance of plagiarism is contextualised within professionally based programmes of study, particularly within Nurse Education where the duality of strategic governance places additional responsibilities on the Nurse Educator inextricably linked with considering plagiarism in the context of professional learning and probity. Consequently, the following aim and objectives have been constructed to enable exploration within an area of educational practice which to date remains uncharted:

1.8 Research Aim

Aim:

To critically explore Nurse Educators' opinions of the strategic governance of plagiarism in Scottish Higher Education and how this should align within the requirements of professionally-based Nurse Education.

Sub questions:

- What information do Scottish Higher Education Institutions, which offer Nurse Education, provide in relation to plagiarism governance within their policies and does information continuity exist across these institutions?

- To what extent do Nurse Educators either agree or disagree on how plagiarism governance in Higher Education should be presented and explained within policies?

- To what extent do Nurse Educators either agree or disagree on how Plagiarism Governance, involving both Higher Education and the Nursing and Midwifery Council, should be presented?

- To what extent do Nurse Educators either agree or disagree on the role implications concerning the governing of plagiarism within Nurse Education?

- What percentage of Nurse Educators have experience of dealing with occurrences of plagiarism, either informally or formally, within Nurse Education?

1.9 Structure of the Thesis

This chapter provides the contextual backdrop to the study by considering the salient issues concerning plagiarism which are subsequently explored in-depth as part of the literature review within Chapter 2. The nature of the methodological inquiry and subsequent research decision-making is detailed within Chapter 3. Chapters 4 to 6 present the substantive results and the ensuing discussion. Chapter 7 provides the concluding summary and recommendations.

1.10 Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the contextual backdrop to this study which explored Nurse Educators' opinions of plagiarism governance in Higher Education. In this context, key issues associated with the phenomenon of plagiarism were highlighted noting the complexities of dual governance approaches in the context of professional education.

At an organisational level, the strategic governance of plagiarism appears crucial in informing, directing and supporting educational practice in terms of optimising its prevention, detection and management across the Higher Education sector. However, efforts to raise awareness and instigate proactive measures, pedagogically and punitively, have arisen in the context of broad-based approaches and therefore the discussion and debate concerning educational practice has been generically considered. Within Nurse Education, the requirements

of professional governance relative to plagiarism were inconspicuous and therefore represented a legitimate area of inquiry.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This literature review explores the existing corpus of knowledge concerning the strategic governance of plagiarism in Higher Education, and in this context specifically considers its alignment within Nurse Education. The aims for this chapter were to proceed from the contextual overview provided in Chapter 1 and present a specific evaluation of the literature on plagiarism to meet the following outcomes:

- Locate and position plagiarism and its governance within the broader arena of Higher Education by appraising the philosophical, sociological and educational debates.
- Explore the concept of professional governance within Nurse Education and its alignment within the Higher Education setting.
- Evaluate the claims made in the Nursing literature concerning the impact of plagiarism on and for professional practice.

In advancing these aims, a plethora of literature on the topic of plagiarism in Higher Education was uncovered both nationally and internationally, with the latter predominantly from Australia and North America. Although there was evidence of the literature specifically addressing the topic of plagiarism governance, this was disproportionately lower in comparison to that which focused on plagiarism's aetiology, detection and sanction. Noteworthy however was the dearth of empirical studies from Nurse Education sources which resulted in uncovering only one study on the topic of plagiarism.

Nevertheless, literature retrieval and subsequent evaluation did result in the emergence of key and interrelated concepts which provide the structure for this review. Firstly, the 'Challenge of Governing Plagiarism within Higher Education', which explored literature concerned with how educators perceive the context and content of policy to inform, guide and support educational practice. The second key concept to emerge was associated with the complexities of governing plagiarism, relative to its 'Dimensions, Dispositions and Tensions'. In considering the pragmatic application of plagiarism policies, the theme of 'Educational Decision-Making' represented the penultimate area of exploration. Finally, the implications concerning 'Plagiarism Governance within Nurse Education' were considered. These

key concepts, and the associated literature, are discussed sequentially within major sections of this review thereby contributing to establishing the conceptual framework for this study which is discussed at the end of this chapter.

2.2 Challenge of Governing Plagiarism within Higher Education

The Higher Education literature is currently debating the nature of plagiarism and how HEIs should, in recognising the potential threat it presents to tertiary level scholarship, effectively address and minimise its occurrence. These debates have been supported and extended by opinion, research and policy guidance to ameliorate this concern which prevails at both a national and international level (Bennett, 2005; Carroll, 2004; HEA, 2011; Jones, 2006; QAA, 2006). From this standpoint, pragmatic guidance on how HEIs and educators could challenge the complexities of plagiarism to safeguard learning have been extolled to include pedagogical instruction, detection and, where necessary, punitive sanctions (Dordoy, 2002; James, McInnis & Devlin, 2002; McDowell & Brown, 2001; Park, 2003, 2004; Tennant et al, 2007; Warn, 2006). However, underlying much of the debate on plagiarism is the pivotal role Higher Education governance plays in challenging plagiarism through HEIs adopting fair, equitable and transparent management processes, supported and guided by robust policies which are consistently implemented by educators (Carroll, 2007, HEA, 2010, 2011). Furthermore, Carroll (2010) suggests that as part of an holistic approach, policy binds the processes which provide effective plagiarism management within which educators play a crucial role in the context of policy implementation.

However, the debates concerning plagiarism and its strategic governance have arisen from a generic perspective within Higher Education and as a result its contextualisation and implications for professionally-based study, particularly within the healthcare arena, have received noticeably less attention. In Nurse Education, should plagiarism occur and subsequently be confirmed as academic dishonesty this raises dilemmas and additional considerations for Nurse Educators, whose role is to prepare and confirm learners' competency, relative to professional knowledge, skills and values. Consequently, the expectations associated with professional learning introduce two definitive strands of governance that co-exist and operate in unison: one determined by the individual HEI and the other dictated by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (2010a). Therefore the duality of governance becomes a critical consideration for Nurse Educators in managing occurrences of plagiarism.

2.3 Emergence of Plagiarism Governance

In scoping out the governance of plagiarism in Higher Education, clearly evidenced over the two past decades has been the realisation by HEIs that plagiarism constitutes a threat to learning and academic integrity, which has prompted them to become responsive governors (Carroll, 2010, HEA, 2010, 2011; Higher Education Funding Council, 2009; QAA, 2006). This has resulted in HEIs undertaking remedial action via the production of policies and processes which specifically detail how they, as an institution and, by default, educators therein, should fairly and consistently assess, manage and adjudicate on academic plagiarism. This contrasts with previous approaches, which Carroll (2004) and Freewood, Macdonald and Ashworth, (2003) delineate as representing cursory, ad-hoc and ineffectual management, the impact of which was negligible in terms of evidencing appropriate governance.

HEIs have therefore endeavoured to challenge the complexities of plagiarism via pedagogical strategies to support learners' understanding and avoidance, as well as the production of proactive management policies should it occur (HEA, 2010; Tennant & Rowell, 2010). However, in focusing on the latter, these have emerged with the caveat that the policies which detail the governance of plagiarism must be visible and responsive at a local level in order to be operationalised (Carroll, 2010; Gallant & Drinan, 2006; Hart & Friesner, 2004). Despite this placing an emphasis on how policy is articulated and given visibility, it also has direct implications for the role of the educator linked to the purpose of institutional policy, which is instructional, didactic, and delineates the educators' responsibilities concerning how they should act to implement policy (Borg, 2008; Levy & Rakovski, 2006; Quinsee, Baughan, & Boylan, 2006). However, Bell & Stevenson (2007) suggest that when it comes to implementing policy, educators are not passive bystanders; moreover, they are centre-stage actors in the untidy process of assimilation, deconstruction and reconstruction. Kazar and Eckel (2004), in concurring, suggest that within learning cultures, lie tiers of academics who exhibit discretion, which can and does influence policy implementation.

2.3.1 Policy Implementation

The aforementioned comments articulate with policy implementation processes as seminally commented upon by Lipsky (1980) (as cited in Lipsky, 2010) and whose work on 'street-level bureaucracy' sought to analyse the interface between policy, discretion and practice at the coal-face within professional disciplines. This is

reflected within socio-political arguments and, in an updated account, Lipsky (2010) continues to delineate professionals having the discretion to alter policy and dispense decisions as they see fit. However, Lipsky (2010) iterates that decision-making in this context is borne out of the exigencies of the job which impose dilemmas, constraints and can ultimately change the political intention of the strategic policy-makers. Evans & Harris, (2004) continue this debate on discretion, and whilst their commentary, like Lipsky's, centres on Social Work, they allude to the use of discretion being bound within structures driven by modernisation, bureaucratic managerial dominance and risk management. Moreover, there is the implication that approaches to discretionary practice are subject to wide variability, resulting in permutations of policy implementation and governance.

Trowler's (2003) commentary also supports this argument, specifically noting how educators behave as 'ground-level actors' in reshaping policy at its point of implementation. Trowler (2003) goes on to indicate that this activity occurs at different levels within organisations and fits with Saunders' (1986) (cited in Trowler, 2003) notion of the implementation staircase, whereby different constructions of policy occur as the ladder descends, from the strategic to the pragmatic. In the case of plagiarism policy, and by way of a crude worked example, this could be represented as: Senate, as policy-maker, Schools, as the adopters, Departments as the pragmatic coordinators, and finally, educators, as the ground-level interpreters and implementers.

A number of studies on plagiarism have emerged which appear to loosely support Lipsky's and Trowler's view concerning policy implementation (Borg, 2008: Flint, Clegg & Macdonald, 2006; Picard, 2006; Roig, 2001). These studies ascertained that plagiarism governance, and the policies therein, are often reshaped and implemented in accordance with educators' internalised, complex and intractable views, which often run contrary to institutional policy. According to Gallant and Drinan (2006) and Mainka and Raeburn (2006), this signals academic dissonance between the espoused policy and educational practice concerning plagiarism governance.

2.3.2 Variability in Plagiarism Governance

The literature indicates that a number of issues perplex and trouble educators in Higher Education concerning the governance of plagiarism, which appears an important consideration when policy-making serves to visibly benchmark and offer

currency on how it should be managed (HEA, 2011). One area which has drawn specific attention as part of the governance landscape is the comprehension and operationalising of plagiarism via its policy definition. Although ubiquitously defined as the passing off of someone else's work or ideas as one's own (Oxford Dictionary, 2010), definitions of plagiarism do appear to exhibit some variability in the educational setting. Whilst numerous definitions exist, there is consensus in signalling an act that involves using another individual's work or ideas, wholly or partially, and formally presenting this to gain academic credit (Bennett, 2005; Park, 2003, 2004). For example, Carroll (2002, p9), indicates an often quoted definition of plagiarism used by institutions aligns with:

> *'Plagiarism is passing off someone else's work, whether intentionally or unintentionally, as your own for your own benefit'*.

However, Collins & Amodeo (2005, p258) offer a more elaborate definition:

> *'the act of representing someone else's creative or academic work as one's own whether in full or in part. It can be an act of commission, in which one intentionally appropriates the words, pictures, or ideas of another; or it can be an omission, in which one fails to acknowledge/document/give credit to source, creator, or the copyright owner of these words, picture or ideas. Any fabrication (i.e. making up) of materials, quotes, or sources of another's, created in a work of fiction, is also plagiarism'*

These contextual descriptions serve to illustrate that, whilst they vary in comprehensiveness, unmistakably they include reference to the differing dimensions of the plagiarism continuum (James et al. 2002), that is, an unintentional act or the intent to deceive. In a later account Carroll (2007 p13) offers a preferred definition which omits reference to the 'intentional or unintentional' opting for '*Plagiarism is defined as submitting someone else's work as your own'* based on the premise that it is unhelpful for learners to 'conflate definitions with consequences or values...'(p14). Nevertheless, this does pique the curiosity for researchers concerning what should be considered as relevant for inclusion within a definition, not just for learners but also for educators, particularly when debates within the literature, and due diligence on how it is subsequently managed, appear to hinge on discerning the nuances of this term.

The need for HEIs to evidence a definition is raised by East (2009, p. 71) who identifies that, in the genre of undesirable academic behaviours, 'cheating is universally understood' and does not appear to need further delineation, however the same cannot be said for plagiarism which appears to be open to 'different understandings'.

Amongst others who have commented on this issue (Flint et al., 2006; Sutherland-Smith, 2003, 2005), Jones (2006), a Law educator, evidences the variability associated with defining plagiarism via an exploration of Scottish HEIs' assessment regulations. His quantitative study found that whilst there was some consensus concerning the basic precepts, sufficient disparity existed in HEIs documented definitions to suggest that variability exists across the Higher Education sector. Whilst he indicates that legal education is standardised across Scotland to permit professional registration, instances of plagiarism by law students are not similarly subject to standardised scrutiny and due process within and across Scottish HEIs. Consequently, adjudications are based on the variable definitions offered by individual HEIs. The line of reasoning offered is that different explanations and interpretations of plagiarism can spawn inconsistent and inequitable educational practice which may crucially affect learners' career aspirations for admittance to the legal profession.

2.3.3 Operationalising Plagiarism Policies

The issue of how HEIs operationalise their espoused plagiarism policy definition, or indeed a range of definitions, was explored by Flint et al. (2006). As part of their literature review they highlighted that, whilst some HEIs adhere to the organisational definition within all subject areas, in other institutions there is a propensity to amend the institutional definition or develop a new one at a subject level as seen appropriate. In seeking to explore the reality of practice, the authors conducted semi-structured interviews involving educators (n = 18) within their institution and from across different subject areas, such as Art & Design, Humanities and Science. In concurring with prior findings, they also found that a definition of plagiarism could be open to interpretation between different academic subject areas. Moreover, they noted it could also be open to further manipulation by individuals within definitive subject areas.

Flint et al. (2006) found that despite educators being able to verbalise a broad understanding of plagiarism, they held individual and differing constructions of plagiarism by learners. They concluded that the dominant factor in operationalising plagiarism policy was not due to any subject area affiliation, but predicated on educators' own intrapersonal interpretations. In a similar study, Borg (2008) also explored educators' reactions and responses to plagiarism across a range of subject areas. However, noteworthy in this context was the inclusion of professionally based

education, specifically those leading to professional registration. Consequently, the opportunity was taken to explore educators' predispositions, ranging from those involved in education associated with professional recognition and regulation, for example, Law, through to those which hold no such requirements, for example, Fashion Design.

Borg (2008), not unlike Flint et al. (2006), uncovered differences in opinions held between subject areas concerning definitions and perceptions of plagiarism; however he identified that the observed differences emerged as a consequence of how, epistemologically, subject-specific knowledge is generated, presented and applied. For example, Humanities educators perceived plagiarism as a lack of originality when substantial sections of text were plagiarised, whilst others considered the issue of originality less contentious by acknowledging the need for learners to consult with, and meaningfully evaluate, existing literary material. Fashion Design educators discussed the acceptability of '*responsible copying, borrowing and stealing'* (p7) against the backdrop of an industry immersed in the permissible replication of ideas. The variances and divisions exemplified by Borg's work correlates with Becher and Trowler's (2001) seminal work on academic tribes which foregrounds the distinctiveness of the disciplines. Any attempt by institutions to govern plagiarism using generic, transparent, equitable approaches can be challenged by the discrete assumptions held within particular academic subject areas.

The actions of educators superimposing their own constructions of plagiarism upon definitions, and thus affecting the implementation of policy, appears important in relation to educational practice, particularly when there is evidence to support how opinions and attitudes may influence the way institutional policies are subsequently interpreted, enacted or dismissed (East, 2009). The inference being, similar to Jones's (2006) comments, that this renders plagiarism policy to be variably applied and concurs with recent evidence from an institutional audit, conducted in 2010 by the QAA. In this instance, the institution's definition of plagiarism was found to be inaccurate and the definition provided for learners within documentation differed from the institution's own espoused policy (QAA, 2010).

2.3.4 Policy Application and Educator Dissonance

In concurring with earlier findings by Simon et al. (2003), Flint et al. (2006) highlight the potential for educators to also operationalise definitions of plagiarism as a

consequence of being disenfranchised with plagiarism policies that they perceived as inadequate, failing to meet their expectations and undermining their autonomy. Furthermore, the authors indicate that consultation with plagiarism policy is predominantly an afterthought. From an organisational perspective, this suggests the exercising of power to interpret and manage plagiarism emerging from political dissatisfaction.

The concept of power, and its relationship with knowledge and experience, has relevancy to operationalising plagiarism governance and policies situated in practice. Arguably, the premise being offered by Simon et al. (2003) and Flint et al. (2006) is that of academic emancipation, which correlates with the work of Foucault (1977) (as cited in Darbyshire & Fleming, 2008) whose interest lay in exposing the culture of power and the emancipation of individuals within organisations (Bradbury-Jones, Sambrook & Irvine, 2008). Foucault's depiction of the associations between power, knowledge and experience are as a self-perpetuating loop which is dynamic and capable of being either a productive or a repressive force (Gilbert & Powell, 2010; Riley & Manias, 2002).

Seminal work by Erving Goffman (1959) (as cited in Lowe, Purchase & Ellis, 2011) also provides a useful lens with which to consider the apparent dissonance which appears to exist between educators ascribing to plagiarism policy and actual educational practice. According to Lowe et al. (2011), and Manning (2008), Goffman's sociological study of organisations theorised on the interpretation of social communicative interactions and explained these using theatrical analogies and metaphors. Depicting elements drawn from Goffman's dramaturgical model appear relevant in speculating how educators perform as actors within Higher Education. Specifically, this involves the use of space as a stage prop which facilitates impression management (Lowe et al., 2010; Myers & Newman, 2007; Newton, 2002) relating to the interactions which take place on different stage settings: the outward facing 'front stage' settings, which necessitate observable behaviour in complying with the rules and standards; and the less visible 'back stage' where actions and behaviours occur which are contradictory to rules and expectations of the organisation (Tanner & Timmons, 2000). In this guise, Lowe et al. (2010, p. 2) suggests 'Goffmanesque' actors behave sociologically and respond according to the prevailing environment.

The spatial analysis offered by Goffman (1959) (cited in Lowe, Purchase & Ellis, 2011) provides the lens to explore plagiarism governance relative to the 'front' and 'back' stage roles educators adopt, The former are observed at structural level, within such forums as Assessment and Programme Boards and the latter in the classroom where educators perform to comply with policy in their verbal actions that is, espousing the need for learners to adhere to plagiarism policy. However, when faced with the pragmatics of dealing with plagiarism at a micro-management level, as a 'back stage' activity, the pressure to conform is less demanding and as Lowe et al. (2011, p. 2) state, the 'authentic self' emerges. This could translate, as noted within the literature, into the policy 'script' being rewritten with improvisation to meet with the internal conceptions held by the educator regarding plagiarism and its subsequent management, resulting in an overall picture of variable decision-making and policy implementation.

However, in the context of plagiarism, the irony is that institutional governance exists to avoid opportunities for misconception and inequitable management to emerge (HEA, 2011). Nevertheless, the predisposition for plagiarism policy and its governance to be open to interpretation suggests a mutually propagating situation, spawning variable practice by educators and institutions. As a related issue, variable practice concerning penalties for plagiarism across and within HEIs had been similarly noted as problematic by the former Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education, Baroness Deech, who subsequently commissioned research (Tennant & Duggan 2008; Tennant et al, 2007) which confirmed wide disparity, resulting in the recommendation that the process for awarding penalties required overhauling.

From this, further research by Tennant and Rowell (2010) emerged concerning a national benchmarking penalty tariff which HEIs could consider using. Participants who informed the development of the tariff were considered a representative sample (n = 104) being drawn from HEIs across the UK. They identified issues which they deemed as essential for informing decision-making: a previous history (i.e. first or repeated offence), proportionality of plagiarised work and the level of academic study (i.e. neophyte or in advanced year of study). This framework signals reductionism with little capacity for personal mitigating circumstances being included. Whilst these measurable factors have already received visibility within the literature, Tennant and Rowell's (2010) study interestingly noted that, where HEIs had no evidence to confirm pedagogical approaches to inform learners about plagiarism had been undertaken, then *'justification for punishment is weak'*,

moreover they suggest this should be a '*precondition of a plagiarism and detection policy*' (Tennant & Rowell, 2010, p. 11).

Whilst a benchmarking tariff offers a reference point for HEIs in managing plagiarism, it does however exhibit a number of weaknesses, some of which receive commentary, others less so, but in the main this relates to the lack of consideration of plagiarism occurring within professionally-based education and what implications regarding penalties lie therein. This omission is however acknowledged and recommends that further work in this area includes the '*…relative importance of studying professional qualifications*' (Tennant & Rowell, 2010, p. 12).

In offering an interim summary, the importance now attached to governing plagiarism is apparent, supported by strategic guidance which, as part of the cascade effect, is now emerging as policy directives with which educators must engage to ensure academic integrity underpins learning and scholarship. However, the potential for plagiarism policies to be open to interpretation, or referring to them as an afterthought, arguably presents key issues for HEIs in considering the organisational mechanisms which enable and support consistent educational practice and governance at an institutional level. Consequently, the interplay of key variables appears evident, linked to the articulation of policies, and that in some instances, educators' personal interpretations and understandings of plagiarism can affect their implementation. From the literature, this has resulted in criticism concerning plagiarism policy being unfit for purpose and/or being inconsistently applied with unsettling implications for educators. The concern expressed within the literature regarding the dispositions held by educators provides the focus for the following section.

2.4 Plagiarism: Predispositions, Dimensions and Tensions

In pursuing further the argument concerning educators' predispositions towards plagiarism and its implementation, it is evident from the literature (Bennett, 2005: Falchikov, 2005; de Jager & Brown, 2010; Sikes, 2009) that conceptual understandings, either explicit or implicit, are often negatively skewed. Examples of this are offered by Corbin and Carter (2007, p. 53) who unreservedly associate plagiarism with '*theft of literary property*' and a conscious intention to defraud and deceive and Pence (2012, p.12) who states '*Plagiarism is a form of cheating*'. In a similar vein, Williams (2008) also reports on educators adopting equally uncompromising views, aligning plagiarism with intellectual sloth, immorality and

illegality. Arguably, this type of commentary affiliates with the origins of plagiarism which, according to Sutherland-Smith (2005, p. 84), and as previously mentioned in Chapter 1 were, legalistic, copyright-linked and intrinsically bound up in the '*violation of moral property rights*' concerning the ownership of literary work.

2.4.1 Assessing the Dimensions of Plagiarism

It is therefore unsurprising, given the above comments, that plagiarism in the academic context accords with fraudulent wrongdoing and cheating. However, numerous sources have contested that this represents hyperbole and a knee-jerk reaction towards plagiarism in terms of accepting its superficial manifestation and that not all occurrences should necessarily be regarded as cheating (Carroll, 2010; Foster, 2007; Park, 2003; Sergiou, 2004). Consequently, assessment of plagiarism should take account of its continuum-based dimensions as pedagogical problem, manifesting as unintentional/poor academic practice, or as an intentionally deceptive act to gain an unfair advantage (Carroll, 2007, 2009, 2010; James et al. 2002).

East (2009) notes the tendency for some educators to demonstrate a prejudicial attitude towards plagiarism, irrespective of how it behaviourally presents which she suggests is a consequence of how it is articulated within HEI policies, that is, cheating. The propensity for policy to adopt only one perspective underscores the seriousness with which plagiarism is broadly regarded (Emerson et al, 2005; Gilmore, Strickland, Timmerman, Maher & Feldon, 2010; de Jager & Brown, 2010; Sutherland-Smith, 2005; Yeo & Chein, 2007), and how educators subsequently regard it in punitive terms. Moreover, it would also appear plagiarism, as a word, is synonymous with wilful intent. Abasi and Graves (2008, p. 221) succinctly capture this dominant ideology by stating:

> '*The underlying assumption is that plagiarised source materials are evidence of intention to defraud*'.

Nevertheless, comment is now emerging within some HEIs policies regarding the differing dimensions of plagiarism and how this should be managed; for example, a recent institutional audit (QAA, 2010, p. 11) commended one institution's policy for recognising the distinctions between '*poor academic practices*' and '*committing plagiarism*'. From this it would appear that the language surrounding the nature of plagiarism and its differential behaviours have become important issues.

This issue of plagiarism's differing dimensions has been specifically explored with two studies utilising different methodological approaches. de Jager and Brown (2010) conducted an anonymous web-based survey to explore educators' (*n* = 191) perception of plagiarism as either academic incompetence or intentional cheating. The findings confirmed that, whilst 74% of participants had dealt with instances of plagiarism, in the majority of cases this reflected poor academic practice and therefore the protagonists were innocent of intentional plagiarism. Their questionnaire, although quantitative in nature, permitted participants to offer additional qualitative commentary thereby providing an opportunity to explain and add depth to their responses. This demonstrates de Jager and Brown's (2010) approach to ameliorating some of the known deficiencies associated with quantitative survey tools (Robson, 2011). de Jager and Brown (2010) acknowledged limitations in relation to a low response rate of 24% but interestingly commented that educators are poor on-line survey responders, and having consulted similar web-based studies where the average response rate was 26%, argue their response rate fell within acceptable parameters.

These findings broadly concur with earlier work by Sutherland-Smith (2005) who conducted a qualitative study (*n* = 11) to explore educators' understanding and managing of plagiarism. Using thematic analysis techniques, which were fully documented to evidence rigour, the majority of participants supported the view that only intentional occurrences should be categorised as plagiarism. However, not all participants thought similarly and this view was challenged by two educators who stated that all plagiarism is intentional, as learners are made aware at the commencement of studies of the institutional policies. Moreover, they contended that unintentional plagiarism is a misnomer and intent, per se, is difficult to prove. This type of commentary, by two educationalists, is interesting as it places all plagiarism in a punishment context and rejects the developmental and pedagogical premise, a stance which Carroll (2010) and McGowan (2005) would appear to contest, indicating that finding the key solutions to address plagiarism lie within pedagogical processes.

Overall, the findings from Sutherland-Smith (2005) and de Jager and Brown's (2010) studies suggested that the majority of participants support policies which accommodate clear distinctions between those who exhibit deliberate intent to plagiarise and those who simply lacked the appropriate understanding of academic conventions. Consequently, the more circumspect commentators, such as Carroll

(2010), identify that whilst deceptive practices do exist and require the full weight of academic sanction, intentional plagiarism represents a small percentage of the overall picture and the vast majority of plagiarism is attributable to poor academic practice. Whilst the pedagogical perspectives influencing the assessment of plagiarism are gaining momentum and appearing within the literature and the conference forums, Carroll (2010) contests that the perceived deceit quotient overtly dominates and overshadows addressing the pedagogical imperatives.

2.4.2 Educational Decision-Making

Whilst key debates have emerged regarding how plagiarism should be assessed in terms of its differing dimensions, hypothetically, this would suggest the management thereafter would appear relatively straightforward with learners stratified according to how plagiarism presents: for example, deploying pedagogical instruction where poor academic practice occurs and sanction for intent. However, when plagiarism behaviour reflects intent to gain an unfair advantage, this moves the governance beyond simple stratification and remedial treatment. Hereafter, governance resonates with evidencing the intent and untangling what many consider to be a serious, emotive and ethical problem of deceptive academic conduct which equates with cheating (Bennett, 2005: Falchikov, 2005; Sikes, 2009; Valentine, 2006; Williams, 2008). For the educator this involves decision-making concerning the governance of proving academic dishonesty, which for some appears to be an inhospitable environment and one which educators may choose to avoid (de Jaeger & Brown, 2009).

Unquestionably, there would be few educators who would not support the premise that HEIs have a key responsibility of upholding the principles of academic integrity and dealing effectively with misconduct. Applying this in the context of plagiarism governance infers decision-making which accords with the institution's plagiarism policy to ensure consistent governance (Badge & Scott, 2008; Carroll & Seymour 2006; HEA. 2010, 2011). However, the literature indicates that dealing with academic misconduct according to the manifesto is not a forgone conclusion and a number of studies (Pincus & Schmelkin, 2003; Sutherland-Smith, 2005; Yeo & Chien, 2009) have confirmed that educators, in some instances, are unwilling to, investigate, initiate and implement policy.

Coulter, Lim and Wanorie, (2007) surveyed educators to explore what issues affected decision-making concerning policy implementation for suspected academic

dishonesty. The findings, in common with other studies (Simon et al., 2003; Sutherland-Smith, 2005) indicated that, whilst the need to effectively address and manage academic dishonesty is uncontested, instigating formal investigative processes may be rejected based on the enormity of the task and/or misgivings concerning just and equitable adjudication at a strategic level. Despite Coulter et al.'s (2007) study being small scale and exhibiting a low response rate of 30.3% (n = 73), it illuminated educators' predisposition and tensions which reject the policy imperatives to ameliorate what they perceived as inequitable management by peers and scepticism of governance processes; specifically that 67.1% would address academic dishonesty by immediately moving to a position which results in penalising with a failing grade.

The issue of using punitive assessment grading is one which Carroll (2007, 2010) questions, indicating investigative procedures and judgement should occur in advance of assessment penalties being determined. Yeo and Chien's (2009) study, which also explored plagiarism decision-making, recommends that to ensure appropriate and consistent decision-making the procedure should not occur in isolation and should be a collaborative and collegiate activity. However, utilising assessment grading as a panacea to cure the ills of plagiarism is not unique and concurs with findings by de Jager and Brown (2010) where participants, in commenting on the management of intentional plagiarism, identified that their decision-making actions existed on a continuum from awarding zero grade to instigating a formal investigation. Notably, only 30% of participants indicated they had instituted the latter, which despite the espoused level of governance that now exists within HEIs, indicates policy directives appear subject to variable implementation.

Sutherland-Smith (2005) also picks up the theme of educators exercising variable decision-making concerning policy implementation, and the dichotomy they face concerning whether to invoke formal reporting processes. In this qualitative study, only two of the eleven participants expressed confidence in using formal university processes to address plagiarism. Similar to Coulter et al.'s (2007) findings, the participants had no confidence in strategic governance based on previous experiences of uncovering and investing significant time and effort in gathering evidence regarding intentional plagiarism, for this to be dismissed and the offender receiving little or no sanction. Another variable affecting educators' decision-making capacity in Sutherland-Smith's (2005) study was that learners resorted to

countering accusations of plagiarism by casting aspersions on the teaching practice of the educator involved. The participants commented that this led to concerns about damage to their reputation, which was aggravated by a lack of senior managerial support. Overall, findings confirmed that attempts to deal with plagiarism culminated in the governance processes being assessed as nebulous.

2.4.3 Educator Roles and Responsibilities

Against the backdrop of policy implementation and decision-making, debate exists concerning what role the educator plays in the plagiarism governance process. Emerson et al. (2005) and Sutherland-Smith (2010) suggest that educators, on finding plagiarism, are responsible for determining intent or not, and deciding the remedial or punitive outcomes. Whilst this may reflect an international cross-cultural perspective, Anyanwu (2004) and Biggam (2011) argue that the educator's prime role in decision-making does not involve judgment at this level, but should be consistent with identifying, evidencing and initiating formal investigation by following due process and procedure.

Moreover, Anyanwu's (2004) research, based on case-study methodology, suggests that the educator's role relative to uncovering plagiarism should have discrete boundaries. Flint et al. (2006) and Borg (2008) concur, suggesting that professionally based education represents another extraneous variable which must be factored in, based on the demands placed on professional programmes of learning by relevant Professional Statutory Bodies, which can exert an influence on educators' decision-making.

2.4.4 Academic Integrity: Developing the Ethical Learner

Adding to the tensions associated with plagiarism management, the sub-theme of developing the ethical learner emerges, which Nilsen (2005) purports as promoting behaviour which accords with acting honestly in the acquisition of knowledge through responsible and trustworthy means, in other words, academic integrity. This issue of promoting ethical learning is evidenced within a number of studies and opinion pieces where there is a clear indication that, incumbent within the educator's role, is the requirement to nurture the moral development of learners (Coulter et al., 2007; Sikes, 2009). The underlying premise assumes that educators will espouse and protect the principles of academic integrity and, in parallel, HEIs will foster and promote an ethical learning culture (Carpenter, Harding, Finelli, Montgomery & Passow, 2004). Moreover, Brimble and Stevenson-Clarke (2005, 2006)

postulate that Higher Education has a social responsibility to produce graduates who are knowledgeable doers, work-ready and importantly, morally uncompromised. At a strategic level, these authors also argue that academic dishonesty disables an institution's capacity to accurately assess academic performance.

At a pragmatic level, the literature notes this implicates educators as being accountable for the moral as well as the pedagogical development of learners (Gaberson, 1997; Tippitt, Kline, Tilghman, Chamberlain & Meagher, 2009). However, the simplicity attached to these sentiments within the literature detracts from the complexities associated with educators attempting to influence learners' morals in the context of reasoning and decision-making. As a discipline, ethics deals with the underpinning philosophies, principles and theories concerning the moral choices and decisions people make within social systems (Barry & Ohland; 2009; Olshansky, 2007). Succinctly, ethics pivot on the principles of beneficence, non-malfeasance, respect for justice and promoting autonomy which are set against different theoretical perspectives, which in turn offer viewpoints concerning goal achievement, predicting outcomes and decision-making (Jones, Phelps & Bigley, 2007; Rainbow, 2002).

Whilst the study of ethics represents a vast and complex arena, the major theories which predominate consider the conduct of individuals, specifically, utilitarian theory, a sub-theory of consequentialism and deontology (Granitz & Loewy, 2007; Jones et al., 2007). Utilitarianism offers that in specific situations, the consequence of actions should be judged by their utility in terms of their benefits and serving the greater good. Deontology is altruistically motivated and judges the choices and the contributions made by individuals on the basis of selflessness and obligatory acts of duty and good will. These exemplars are indicative of maxims concerning moral rights and wrongs within societal structures, where there exists commonly shared understandings and expectations of behaviour and values founded on rules, standards and codes of conduct (Fledderman, 2008; Shaw & Barry, 2007).

Although the strengths and limitations of ethical theories have been debated, critiqued and defended, general consensus accepts that in the main, ethical theories afford decision-making which aims to endorse the aforementioned ethical principles. However, Granitz and Loewy (2007) and Jones et al. (2007) delineate contrasting theories, such as Machiavellianism or egoism theory, also a sub-theory of

consequentialism (Hursthouse, 2001) which concurs with actions that are self-centred and serve self-interest in order to satisfy personal welfare needs.

Notwithstanding the brevity of the discussion on moral philosophy, the line of reasoning concerning intentional plagiarism is that, in applying the ethical yardstick, this constitutes a moral choice related to a pre-emptive wilful act to gain a personal advantage. In terms of ethical reasoning, this would appear to gravitate towards egoism theory, whereby the leaner, according to Granitz and Loewy (2007), applies defensive or self-aggrandising Machiavellian-type arguments to rationalise an act. This compares unfavourably with unintentional plagiarism where, through poor academic practice, there has been no moral impediment, as the act does not represent a wilful self-seeking choice. Granitz and Loewy's (2007, p. 295) study of ethical reasoning to interpret intentional plagiarism found no justifiable theories to support and therefore concluded that this remains a '*morally reprehensible act*'.

Wheeler and Anderson's (2010) commentary adds to this moral debate on plagiarism, suggesting that the development of the ethical learner is arguably a challenging mandate. Their evaluation suggests that establishing moral character may be negatively skewed by social determinants which threaten academic integrity vis-à-vis the modernity and culture of the digital age which has engendered prodigiously easy access to information and its transportation. Carpenter et al. (2004) and Smith and Ridgway (2008) concur and are amongst many who argue societal influences such as these have developed within individuals a semblance of indifference concerning knowledge transfer. Sikes (2009) concurs, indicating this equates with a shift in the moral character of learner populations. However, if, as Sikes (2009) indicates, the moral shortcoming of attempting to justify intentional plagiarism is widely acknowledged by learners as an activity which is part of their social norm, this may demonstrate a situation where moral 'wrongs' have become personally 'right'. This appears representative of an amalgam of Festinger's (1957) cognitive dissonance theory (as cited in Fontenot, Hawkins & Weiss, 2010) and results-based consequentialism (Sinnott-Armstrong, 2011), thus suggesting intentional plagiarism equating with 'knowledge transportation' as opposed to 'knowledge transformation'.

Whilst the aforementioned scenario concerning speedy information download and transfer may be common practice within many contemporary socio-cultural settings, this remains anathema within education, challenging, as Carroll (2010) notes, the

conventions of constructivist learning as espoused by Piaget (1965) and Vygotsky (1978) (as cited in Carroll, 2010). Carroll (2010) has also indicated this approach being akin to learners attempting to find rather than make an argument. Nevertheless, whilst the ethical debates may continue, the important issue is arguably that educators should promote as part of pedagogical approaches, ethical reasoning and moral decision-making regarding academic integrity.

2.4.5 Verifying the Ethical Learner

Whilst the prevailing argument indicates that developing the ethical learner should be embraced by educators, this is arguably implicit in that there is no formal responsibility associated with confirming this attainment by learners. However, this runs counter to professionally–based learning where educators are required to explicitly confirm, to the prevailing Professional Statutory Body, the good character of learners to enable their admittance to professional registers.

This situation places unique demands on professionally–based educators, to verify the moral character of learners in pursuing studies in, for example law, medicine, nursing, social work and occupational therapy (General Social Care Council, 2010; Health Professions Council; 2008; NMC, 2010a). This is indicative of additional governance superimposed upon that which currently prevails within HEIs. When these aspects coalesce in the context of plagiarism and Nurse Education, this raises issues concerning aligning governance approaches, probity, professional gate keeping and the implications for the Nurse Educator's role.

2.5 Plagiarism Governance within Nurse Education

The nature of nursing is determined by legal statute (Nursing and Midwifery Order, 2001) and consequently regulated to verify those admitted to the profession have met, and will continue to meet, the educational demands and the standards of probity, these being honesty, trustworthiness, integrity and respect (NMC Code of standards, conduct, performance and ethics, 2008a).

Consequently, the coalescing of knowledge and skills acquisition with unimpeachable behaviour are mandatory requirements (Semple, Kenkre & Achilles, 2004; Tippitt et al., 2009). Moreover, as the primary role of the NMC is to protect the public, any infringement concerning learners' conduct, behaviour or attitude may cast doubt over entry to, or continuance on, the professional register. Hence the role of the Nurse Educator, who must comply with an additional layer of professional

governance which verifies the conduct, attitudes and behaviour of learners (NMC, 2010a) assumes prominence.

To assist HEIs, the regulating body provides broad guidance concerning professional governance to monitor learners' 'Good health and good character' (NMC, 2010a). This policy explicitly locates these issues within the context of Fitness to Practise, which has been articulated as:

> '*…having the skills, knowledge, good health and good character to do your job safely and effectively'* (p. 5).

Moreover, to ensure consistency in applying these Fitness to Practise requirements, the NMC (2008b) issued a diktat that, from 2009, HEIs that provide Nurse Education must establish local academic Fitness to Practise (FtP) panel (NMC, 2010a) and consider instances where the conduct, behaviour and attitudes of learners demonstrates a deficit in meeting the probity aspirations, as contained within the Code of Conduct (NMC, 2008a).

2.5.1 Plagiarism and Professionalism

Against this professional governance backdrop, plagiarism and its negative implications on 'good character' have been clearly identified amongst the list of aberrant behaviours which give rise to concern by the regulator (NMC, 2010a). However, what has been omitted from the professional literature is any attempt to offer clarity in using the umbrella of plagiarism to differentiate between poor academic practice and an intentional act. Nevertheless, in articulating plagiarism under the auspice of 'good character' and making no reference to pedagogical issues, the assumption is that the NMC are referring to the latter, confirmation of which is evidenced in cases of plagiarism which have been referred to them.

The seriousness with which the NMC views intentional plagiarism is tangible and in demonstrating their position, acts of plagiarism have received the full weight of professional governance and sanction. Over the past five years, several cases of intentional plagiarism, by post-qualified learners, have been referred by HEIs to the NMC's Conduct and Competence Panel. As a result, registered nurses have been suspended from the professional register for bringing the profession into disrepute by demonstrating serious misjudgement and, consequently, impairing their Fitness to Practise (NMC, 2006, 2010c). The legal test applied by the NMC was 'dishonesty in theft' (R v Ghosh ([1982] QB 1052) which details two criteria under which guilt is

established: objectively, that deceit is obvious as judged by the common standards of an honest man; and subjectively, that the accused person committed the act knowingly.

Whilst, as noted above, the NMC's Conduct and Competence Panel have the authority to admonish and issue suspension orders, this only applies to a learner who is already a registrant. However, an HEI's Fitness to Practise panel has operational powers which are dependent on the registration status of the learner, and thus variable. In the context of pre-registration it can investigate, assess and adjudicate on major plagiarism and sanction using a range of penalties, which include dismissal from the programme, thereby acting as gate keeper for initial registration. However, in the post-qualified context, whilst it has similar powers to administer academic sanctions, it has no jurisdiction in assessing the learner's Fitness to Practise. It does however have discretion to refer, or not, a registrant to the NMC Conduct and Competence Panel should they consider this behaviour raises concerns about their Fitness to Practise.

2.5.2 Professional Governance for Nurse Education

Whilst the example above indicates a process, managing plagiarism in the academic setting is both variable and challenging. Firstly, the NMC make no distinctions concerning the environment where misconduct occurs, that is, inappropriate actions can be classified as unprofessional whether occurring in the academic or clinical setting. Thus nurse learners who commit intentional plagiarism may find themselves guilty of having breached both academic and professional misconduct regulations.

Whilst the NMC Code of professional conduct, standards and ethics provides the benchmark for professional behaviour (NMC, 2008a), guidance is also provided for learners and institutions on behaviours which are deemed inconsistent with professional standing, including plagiarism (NMC, 2010a). However, any subsequent guidance on how infringements should be managed is less obvious and is captured under generic Fitness to Practise guidance. Another limitation apparent is that the professional policies relevant to the HEI setting (NMC, 2010a) essentially focus on pre-registration learners, with little reference to how due process operates, or is applied, for post-qualified learners. David and Lee-Woolfe (2010, p. 6) suggest that whilst the precepts of Fitness to Practise apply equally to pre-registration and post-qualified nurses learners, they indicate:

'Pre-registration learners cannot be held to the same standard as a registered professional'

With a lack of specific commentary from the NMC concerning plagiarism management, save that implied within the code of conduct, academic misconduct in the post-qualifying context remains an ambiguous matter. Adding to the milieu, Parrish (2004, p. 4) indicates that '*disciplinary proceedings are a matter for universities',* but from the remarks offered it is unclear if this only relates to pre-registration learners, but as can be seen from the adjudications above, (section 2.5.1) this is not always the case, particularly when these straddle issues of professionalism. Whilst Parrish's comments pre-date the mandate for HEIs to establish Fitness to Practise panel, anecdotal evidence confirms lack of clarity concerning due process prevails. Consequently, the current situation may therefore leave Nurse Educators, in some instances, confounded by the nature of plagiarism governance relative to 'good character' and Fitness to Practise (NMC, 2010a). Moreover, issues surrounding how an HEI's and NMC governance processes interface and operate, assumes importance for Nurse Educators.

2.6 Plagiarism: Nurse Educators' Opinions

Having established that Nurse Education, irrespective of its different contexts (NMC, 2004, 2006, 2008a, 2008b, 2010a, 2010c), pivots on developing learners who are clinically proficient and exhibit professional integrity, the inferences associated with plagiarism raises significant issues. For Nurse Educators, this is reflected within two broad but interlinked themes: suboptimal learning and challenges to professionalism (Bavier, 2009; Bellack 2004; David & Lee-Woolfe, 2010; Fontana, 2009; Harper, 2006; Paterson, Taylor & Usick, 2003; Tippitt et al., 2009).

2.6.1 Suboptimal Learning for Professional Practice

Kenny (2007) offers an opinion concerning plagiarism resulting in suboptimal learning and, as a consequence, the learner's theoretical knowledge and critical thinking skills remain underdeveloped with the potential to impair professional practice. Bavier (2009) concurs, but more pointedly asserts, within her opinion piece, that impaired learning may result in poor healthcare and as such, affect morbidity and mortality outcomes of patients whose care is dependent on competent and knowledgeable professionals who can apply theory to practice. The line of reasoning offered by Bavier (2009) and Kenny (2007) equates with malfeasance and although not unique, their comments do appear rational when considering the

relationship between ethical practice and knowledge embedded within Fitness to Practise requirements (Semple et al., 2004). Whilst this may be an immediate consideration for learners seeking initial registration, it also includes the long-term vis-à-vis learners' transferable skills which, if underdeveloped across the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of learning as identified by Bloom, (1956), (as cited in Krathwohl, 2002) may be unable to sustain the NMC's requirements regarding continued professional development which, within the UK, requires annual revalidation (NMC, 2010c).

Whilst Bavier (2009) suggests suboptimal learning may affect the outcomes of clinical practice, an additional obvious concern would be the practitioner's ability to engage in the process of critical reflection, in and on practice (Schon, 1987, as cited in Kinsella, 2010). With the constant drive to ensure best practice in the clinical area, reflection, whether informal or formally guided, is a professional requisite (NMC, 2008a). Johns (2011, p. 173) discusses this in the context of the *'learning milieu'*, where reflection provides the opportunity to explore the tensions which can exist for nurses regarding what constitutes actual clinical practice and what might be best practice. Whilst not obvious from Johns' (2011) commentary, active reflection is arguably located within constructivist learning theories of Dewey (1931) (as cited in Gordon, 2009), Piaget (1965) and Vygotsky, (1978) (as cited in Carroll, 2010) suggesting a process which supports learning driven by the amalgamation of prior knowledge and current experience. Moreover, in linking with Knowles' theory of Adult Learning (1979) (as cited in Brandon & All, 2010), this implicates the early initiation of constructivist pedagogy as the building-block for active and often self-directed learning (Biggs & Tang, 2011) as the neophyte learner moves from what Benner (2000) terms the novice to the expert practitioner.

Whilst the comments offered by the aforementioned commentators suggest a credible line of theoretical reasoning, Murphy's (1997) summation of the characteristics required for constructivist learning clearly implicate the learner's acquisition of prior knowledge, values and beliefs. When this is considered against the backdrop of plagiarism, a breach may result in the process of reflection due to knowledge deficits through the sub-optimal construction of learning. The premise being offered here concurs with comments by Carroll (2010), Kennedy (2010) and Pittam, Elander, Lusher, Fox and Payne (2009), in that plagiarism is essentially about how it affects learning and learning skills and not, as has been debated, about textual originality and/or deficient referencing skills.

2.6.2 Plagiarism and Professionalism

Whilst the aforementioned sentiments on plagiarism resonate with Wheeler and Anderson's (2010) literature review findings regarding educators being steadfast in their concerns about sub-optimal learning, Nurse Educators do not concur with their supplementary comments concerning the ambivalence educators are purported to display towards the morality of plagiarism. Indeed the moralistic overtones represented by Nurse Educators aligned to professional probity are particularly strong, inferring that plagiarism is unprofessional conduct (Brown, Dickson, Humphries, McQuillan & Smears, 2008; Harper, 2006; Kenny, 2007; Paterson et al., 2003; McCrink, 2010). Investigated and applied through the lens of nursing practice, the morality argument is consistent with the probity expectations of professional ethics (Fornari, 2004; Hall & Ritchie, 2009; Johanson, 2010; NMC, 2008a), which Barry and Ohland (2009, p. 377) illuminate as, '*addressing professional ethics in the context of the vocation'* and signal that behaviour and professional identity are sustained by a '*..strong deference to the use and application of codes of professional conduct'*.

This debate highlights the imperatives of ethics and morals within professionally-based education; consequently, educators adopt a staunch perspective regarding the application of ethics in the context of plagiarism. Corbin and Carter, (2007, p. 54) give visibility to this dogma by vehemently purporting that '*plagiarism is a matter of morals'* and readily link this act with professional misconduct and stipulate this type of moral infringement is unbecoming of one seeking to be recognised within a profession. From a pedagogical context they do however capitulate that educators have a role in engendering within the learner the development of personal integrity as a forerunner for professional practice.

2.6.3 Fact or Fallacy: Plagiarism as a Precursor for Future Malpractice

Notwithstanding the discussions offered within the opinion pieces above concerning the moral standing of learners, parallel discussions within the nursing literature also suggest that plagiarism is a precursor for future unprofessional clinical practice (Brown, 2002; Fontana, 2009; Harper, 2006; Langone, 2007; Paterson et al., 2003; Pence, 2012). The fervour with which Nurse Educators hold this view ensures this issue receives noteworthy attention for example, Tanner (2004) suggests it would not be a quantum leap between cheating on an exam paper to failing to report involvement in a medical error. McCrink's (2010) opinion piece advances this by unequivocally stating that there is a correlation between academic misconduct and professional malpractice offering examples of how this may translate as medicines

mismanagement, breaching confidentially, poor record keeping and theft of material property.

Despite being based on secondary sources, the crux of the argument offered by these authors concerning a causal relationship between academic misconduct and unprofessional practice suggest the former constitutes a learned behaviour. Noonis and Swift (2001), Carpenter et al. (2004) and Coulter et al. (2007) offer similar views, arguing this against the backdrop of high profile cases of employee malpractice. Their work draws upon Beck and Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour (1991) to establish a trajectory of unethical behaviour from the academic setting into the workplace. However, these examples and the correlations established, occurred within the business sector and not healthcare. Moreover, critical examination of the nursing literature concerning the causal connectivity between plagiarism and subsequent unprofessional conduct shows a lack of empirical evidence to support the warrants made. The argument proffered appear based on unsubstantiated opinion, as evidenced by Semple et al, (2004), or secondary referencing to studies which are dated, uncorroborated and/or lack specificity to plagiarism or do not pertain to nursing.

Within the nursing literature, Hilbert's studies (1985, 1987) represent the key sources cited to evidence a positive correlation between plagiarism and propensity for future professional misconduct. However, these USA based studies were conducted on the basis of a broad range of behaviours associated with *'academic fraud'* and not plagiarism per se (Hilbert, 1987, p. 39). Further limitations were also noted, for example, the 1985 study was conducted on a relatively small student population (*n* = 101) with no recorded response rate. The survey questionnaire asked final year pre-registration nurse learners within one university to self-report on their academic and clinical dishonest actions using a tool which was *'assumed to be valid'* (p. 231) but omitted details on how this assumption was made. Of the eleven questions posed on academic dishonesty, only 3 were specifically linked to intentional plagiarism for which the outcomes drew very low or zero percentage findings. However, the overall findings, based on cumulative calculations for all types of dishonest behaviours, demonstrated a significant correlation between academic and clinical misconduct by this cohort. Similar significant findings, using the same tool, emerged in Hilbert's (1987) later study, which had an increased sample (*n* = 210) and was deployed across 4 HEIs, but again lacked commentary on the response rate. The author concluded that if nurse learners cheat in the classroom setting then their

clinical practice should also come under scrutiny. However, this study did not investigate academic dishonesty as a predictive variable for future unprofessional practice but one happening simultaneously. Perhaps this is why the author hypothesised that the situational variable of the academic setting did not appear to be the determining factor and that behaviour of this nature might be due to inherent personality traits.

In considering the arguments regarding a positive correlation between plagiarism and future professional misconduct resulting in suboptimal care outcomes, convincing evidence has yet to be established. Baxter and Bolbin's (2006) study, although focused on academic integrity appears to concur with this position by citing a lack of current evidence to substantiate the claims made. Scrutiny of the nursing literature over the intervening years since Baxter and Bolbin's (2006) comments would suggest the situation remains unchanged and therefore the argument remains tenuous, speculative and unconvincing.

Within other healthcare disciplines, the same concerns regarding plagiarism and subsequent malpractice prevail but similar discerning critique suggests the evidence here, too, remains elusive (Savin-Baden, 2005). Arguably, whether this could be empirically investigated remains highly dubious, as it would necessitate exploring recorded instances of unprofessional practice and, retrospectively, act of earlier plagiarism, which appears to be a methodological, professional and ethical minefield. Whilst some Nurse Educators appear firmly convinced by the arguments concerning a correlation between plagiarism and future professional misconduct, the evidence presented thus far is unconvincing. More credible however are the arguments that identify the potential for plagiarism to result in suboptimal learning and the impact intentional plagiarism can have on professional probity.

2.6.4 Professional Learning: Held to a Higher Standard

A consistent theme within the nursing literature pertains to nurse learners being held to a higher standard in comparison to non-professional counterparts (Bavier, 2009; Tippitt et al., 2009) based on a curriculum which has at its core, as previously established, ethical practice as an expectation of the professional learner. Consequently, these standards are non-negotiable.

In an earlier piece, Gaberson (1997, p. 14) raised concerns about plagiarism linked to the expectations of professionally-based education. She lobbied for a learning

culture which promoted professional values and the ability for learners to discern appropriate academic behaviour, in terms of *'The pursuit of knowledge, understanding and truth in an honest manner'* from its antithesis, *'The intentional participation in deceptive practices'*. These expressions continue to define the probity demarcations of intentional plagiarism which, in being part of a self-regulating profession, align with what the NMC (2010a, p. 6), indicate as decision-making with 'good character' expectations, that is, *'The moral understanding of what is right and what is important'*.

However, Tippitt et al. (2009) suggest educators perhaps wrongly assume that nurse learners are cognisant with the concept of integrity. They suggest that whilst learners may be accustomed to the demands of professional probity, as enshrined within the code of conduct, integrity *per se* is a multifarious concept, which is open to manipulation. From this standpoint, Tippitt et al. (2009) indicate that Nurse Educators have obligations in making expectations of academic integrity obvious to learners and support previous arguments concerning developing the ethical learner (Baxter & Bolbin, 2006; Gaberson, 1997).

2.7 Role Implications for the Nurse Educator

Gaberson (1997) and Tippitt et al. (2009) concur that professional nursing practice is associated with expectations concerning not only the acquisition of knowledge and skills, but also probity and in this context Nurse Education is the vehicle and the Nurse Educator, the driver. Consequently, the literature depicts, implicitly and explicitly, that the Nurse Educator's role is consistent with professional responsibilities, many of which are associated with being the guardians of ethical care delivery, particularly where academic dishonesty is implicated (Bavier, 2009; Baxter & Bolbin, 2006).

This theme is picked up in Fontana's (2009) qualitative study which although not specifically focusing on plagiarism, sought to explore the lived experience of American Nurse Educators in managing academic dishonesty. The study's philosophical stance was uncommonly evidenced and located within critical theory and emancipatory theory which, according to Morrow and Torres (2002) embeds the findings within education and educational practice. Whilst the philosophical underpinning received detailed exposition, the nature of academic dishonesty and what this might constitute was not elaborated upon, nevertheless, there was reference made to plagiarism.

Using a convenience sample of female Nurse Educators (*n* = 12), Fontana's (2009) study uncovered distinctive themes which reflected participants' experiences of academic dishonesty relative to responsibility, risk and relationships. With reference to the former, participants strongly identified that their responsibility lay within the bounds of a professional gate keeping role which was determined and explained in terms of their identity as nurses. Noteworthy was the comment from one participant, who stated she was, '*a nurse who just happens to teach nursing*' (Fontana, 2009 p134). Fontana's (2009) findings on educators expressing identity based on their professional roots correlate with comments by Savin-Baden (2005) who indicates that understanding and managing plagiarism is affected by the educators' respect of professional values and their pedagogy. Concurring with the findings of Castle, (2000), and Jenkins and Zetter (2003), Savin-Baden (2005) advocates that educators act according to the custom and practice peculiarities of their profession and that pedagogically, teaching is also similarly influenced, in terms of what, and how, learning occurs. This concurs with earlier remarks offered by Borg (2008) and, at a philosophical level, with Becher's (1989) work (as cited in Becher & Trowler, 2001) concerning academic tribalism explained through differences in discipline-based culture and knowledge generation.

Against this backdrop, participants in Fontana's (2009) study associated challenging academic dishonesty in the classroom with responsibilities to preserve professional ethics and counteract any potential for poor patient care outcomes. Nevertheless, these comments were not offered in respect of sub-optimal learning, but on the position that academic dishonesty equates with future unprofessional clinical practice. Despite Fontana (2009) commenting that professional gate keeping was a role which participants positively embraced, participants later admitted that dealing with academic dishonesty was a burdensome and emotive process. Moreover, they alluded to this being risk prone in relation to confronting learners, which may involve verbal or physical attacks as well as legal retributions. On another level, they implied this may also present a risk to educators' reputations in the form of negative evaluations and to the HEI in terms of adverse publicity.

Concurring with similar findings previously identified within the broader Higher Education literature, Fontana's (2009) study also identified that formally progressing instances of academic dishonesty damaged the relationship between educator and learner. This drew poignant verbatim commentary explaining the deleterious effects of governance in confronting academic dishonesty which could also

escalate to affect relationships between colleagues. Fontana (2009) further revealed that participants felt psychologically assaulted by the experience, leading some to indicate this would negatively influence future decision-making regarding confronting academic dishonesty and formal reporting. Although not specifically noted by Fontana (2009), her comments are representative of the conflict educators experienced but do however appear paradoxical when these same educators previously claimed dominion for themselves concerning their professional gate keeping role.

The only study uncovered within the nursing literature which specifically focused on plagiarism was undertaken by Canadian Nurse Educators, Paterson et al. (2003) who explored Nurse Educators' (n = 8) and learners' (n = 12) understandings and reactions. This small, qualitative study paid fastidious attention in appropriately detailing how rigour was addressed (Robson, 2011); outlining the approaches, including the identification of negative/disconfirming cases, member-checking, audit trail and reflexive commentary to address researcher bias concerning methodological decision-making processes. Data collection involved in-depth individual interviews using a semi-structured schedule within which the authors adopted Miles and Huberman's (1994) framework for concept mapping which permitted the examination of cross-group comparisons relative to describing, ordering and explaining cross-case findings.

The Nurse Educator participants confirmed that their construction of plagiarism was influenced not only by professional values and prior experiences, but also by its consequences. The participants expressed discomfort in assuming the dual role of educator and plagiarism detective. This perception was seen to affect their decision-making relative to plagiarism governance when it was uncovered. They also expressed dissatisfaction with formal governance and policy process which were seen to be overtly punitive particularly when plagiarism was unintentional. Overall, the findings from this study correlate with the findings from other studies considered as part of this review (Borg, 2008; Flint et al., 2006; Fontana, 2009) that is, issues which perplex Nurse Educators in governing plagiarism are not dissimilar to those of their colleagues within other subject areas.

Whilst the similarities between Paterson et al. (2003) and Fontana (2009) have exposed similar issues found within the broader educational literature, for example, managing dishonesty being described by educators as being an onerous task, the

Nurse Education literature does appear to offer unique variables concerning role responsibility and professional gate keeping.

2.8 Limitations of the Literature

Whilst relevant empirical studies on the topic of plagiarism were retrieved from the Higher Education literature, the Nurse Education literature was found to be limited in calibre, focus and quantity. Also evident was that the majority of the nursing literature originated from the United States of America (USA), where plagiarism is presented as being omnipotent (Granitz & Loewy, 2007), disproportionately high (Lin & Wen, 2007) and a significant concern in Nurse Education (Brown, 2002; Fontana, 2009; McCabe, 2004, McCrink, 2008). With reference to the latter, this contrasts with the UK picture, which due to a dearth of literature, makes any direct comparisons to support or refute this position difficult to establish.

2.9 Conceptual Framework

In locating this study within educational practice, a conceptual framework was constructed to represent the current vision of plagiarism governance in Higher Education and its alignment with the requirements of Nurse Education to establish the parameters of the study and guide this research inquiry.

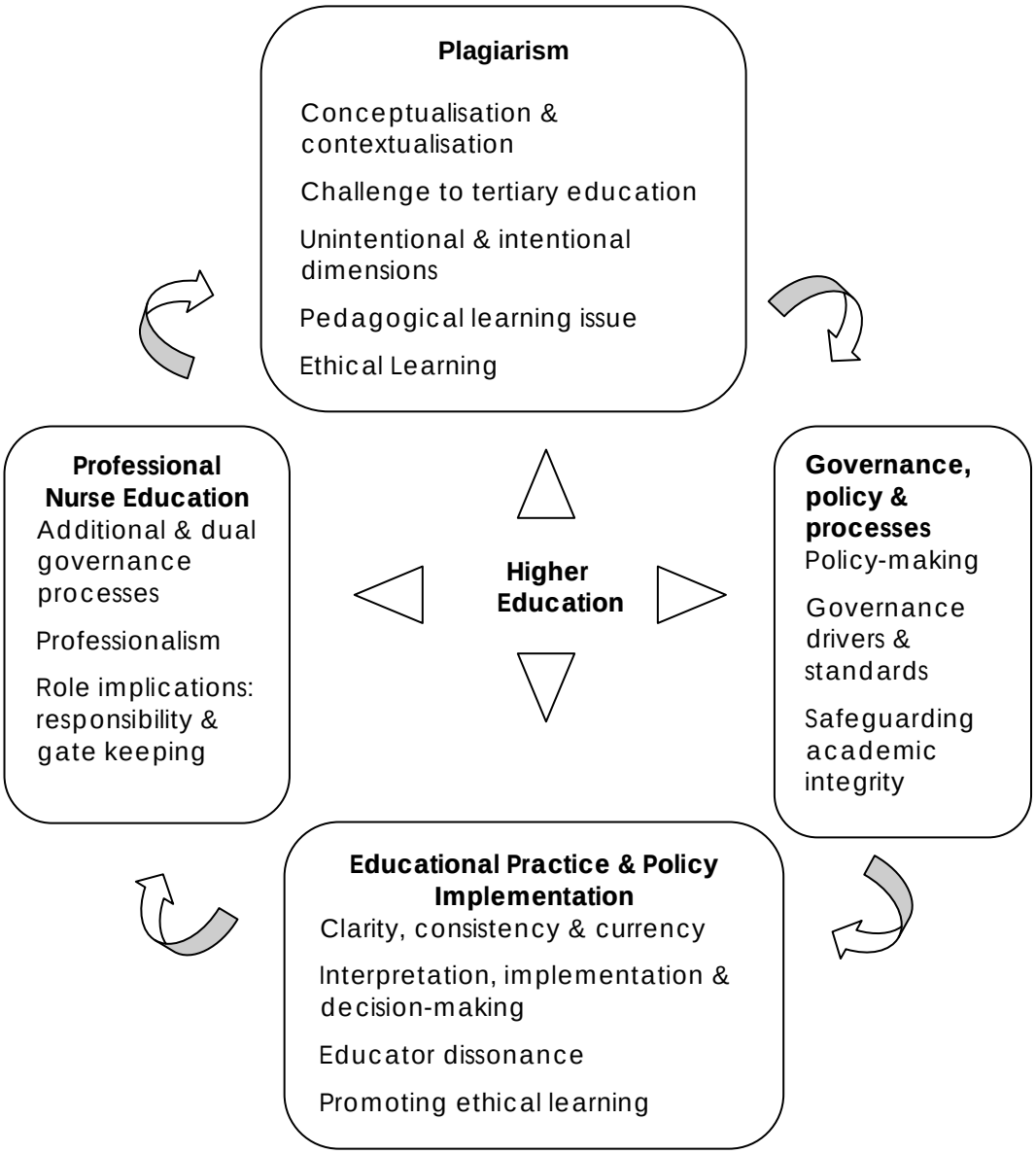
Leshem and Trafford (2007) and Punch (2009) indicate the conceptual framework provides the research blueprint based on a critical appraisal of appropriate literature from a range of disciplines. Smyth (2004, p. 2) concurs, suggesting the conceptual framework is a broad set of ideas drawn from relevant sources, has the propensity to inform and direct the research design and act as:

> '*Reference points for discussion of the literature, methodology and analysis of data*'.

Establishing the conceptual framework for this study represented the dimensions and complexities of governing plagiarism in Higher Education and Nurse Education, which involved an exploration of the interplay between abstract concepts to form a concrete framework. The literature review, combined with practice and reflection as a Nurse Educator, enabled the construction of this framework and provided the lens with which to investigate plagiarism governance and structure subsequent arguments. Succinctly, the framework determined the areas worthy of investigation, the catalyst for how this might be achieved and conceptually how to interpret the outcomes to offer conclusions (Trafford & Lesham, 2008).

Consequently, the framework for this study as outlined in Figure 2.1 was constructed on the basis of wanting to explore the relationship which should exist between the dual governance processes affecting strategic plagiarism management in the context of Nurse Education in order to illuminate an area of education practice previously unexplored. This however was a challenging and complex area of exploration, and was undertaken in the clear acknowledgement that approaches to governing plagiarism are contingent on the organisational culture and the processes established by individual HEIs.

Fig 2.1: Conceptual Framework: Plagiarism Governance in Higher Education



Consequently, this framework integrated concepts concerned with how plagiarism governance was portrayed, how it was seen to support the educational role and how this translated in the context of supporting the Nurse Educator.

2.10 Summary

The Higher Education literature confirms that plagiarism is a complex issue which, in Higher Education's standards-conscious climate, has become a watchword for concern within individual HEIs and by educators. Underlying this situation is awareness that its governance in Higher Education, through unambiguous,

transparent and responsive policies, is critical to guiding, supporting and importantly influencing how educators perceive and respond to managing the challenges of plagiarism.

Despite this, the literature suggests that educators' opinions on plagiarism and policy application vary. The reasons for this are multifarious but primarily resonate with criticisms regarding how plagiarism is articulated within policies at strategic level and/or educators developing intrapersonal constructions of plagiarism which render policy susceptible to fragmented application and inconsistent educational practice within and across subject areas. Adding to this educational mêlée is the visibility and cognisance with the dimensions of plagiarism, that is, unintentional poor academic practice or an intentionally deceptive act. Comprehension and discernment of these dimensions is now beginning to challenge the hyperbole which has fuelled the debates on labelling all acts of plagiarism as cheating and intentional plagiarism as a contagion. It is therefore unsurprising that contemporary literature emanating from the QAA and HEA exhibits a clarion call for Higher Education policies on plagiarism to reflect currency, clarity and offer unambiguous institutional approaches to define and manage plagiarism appropriately.

Whilst the challenges of plagiarism management are arguably germane to educators, within professionally-based learning, in this instance Nurse Education, there are additional governance considerations espoused by the Nursing and Midwifery Council who have mandated that prescriptive governance processes, under the banner of Fitness to Practise, must be adhered to within the Higher Education setting. The global functionality of this governance is to consider, where relevant, the 'good character' of professional learners in relation to their conduct, attitudes and behaviour and in this context, raises complex professional issues for Nurse Educators concerning plagiarism, specifically when this is an intentional act. Consequently, role implications exist for Nurse Educators because intentional plagiarism has been designated as unprofessional conduct and, therefore, places Nurse Educators centre stage in dealing with the duality of the governance processes which operate within the Higher Education setting.

However, attempting to uncover the reality of plagiarism, its governance, and its alignment within educational practice within Nurse Education, remains complex against the backdrop of no empirical UK studies being available. Consequently, an incomplete picture has emerged concerning the plagiarism governance issues

within Nurse Education, arguably prohibiting wider discussion, debate and knowledge construction. This study therefore seeks to exploit the current knowledge gap and make an original contribution to knowledge by exploring Nurse Educators' opinions of plagiarism and its governance within Scottish HEIs.

Having reviewed the literature as it related to illuminating the nuances of plagiarism governance, and having developed an appropriate conceptual framework, my own position as a Nurse Educator is that a proportional response is required based on applying governance which is discerning, fair, equitable and based on an appreciation of the dimensions of plagiarism.

Chapter Three: Research Inquiry

3.1 Introduction

This chapter reflects and explains research decision-making processes relative to the philosophical, methodological and practical methods deployed to probe Nurse Educators' opinions of the strategic governance of plagiarism in Scottish Higher Education. The research aim and associated sub-questions, as outlined below, provide the context for this discussion, which reflects an area of educational practice that appears unexplored.

Aim:

To critically explore Nurse Educators' opinions of the strategic governance of plagiarism in Scottish Higher Education and how this should align within the requirements of professionally-based Nurse Education.

Sub questions:

- What information do Scottish Higher Education Institutions, which offer Nurse Education, provide in relation to plagiarism governance within their policies and does information continuity exist across these institutions?
- To what extent do Nurse Educators either agree or disagree on how plagiarism governance in Higher Education should be explained within policies?
- To what extent do Nurse Educators either agree or disagree on how the alignment of Plagiarism Governance, involving both Higher Education and the Nursing and Midwifery Council, should be presented?
- To what extent do Nurse Educators either agree or disagree on the role implications concerning the governing of plagiarism within Nurse Education?
- What percentage of Nurse Educators have experience of dealing with occurrences of plagiarism, either informally or formally, within Nurse Education?

3.2 Study Overview and Design

The aim of this study was to explore Nurse Educators' opinions of plagiarism governance in Higher Education. Data collection was undertaken over a 9 month period during 2010-2011. Using survey research, a bespoke questionnaire gathered qualitative data via a Likert-type scale, which enabled the counting of response categories to specifically answer the research questions. Consequently, quantitative techniques were adopted to illuminate an area of educational practice that has thus far remained uncharted and therefore make an original contribution to new knowledge. The survey tool also enabled participants to provide additional free-text qualitative commentary.

This was undertaken in two sequential Phases. In Phase 1, an analysis of the information content of pre-existing plagiarism policy documents was carried out within and across the eleven Scottish Higher Education Institutions that offer Nurse Education. This entailed scoping policy documents and auditing the explicit inclusion of information on plagiarism that, from an organisational perspective, explained how this should be governed. This activity provided the policy backdrop to investigating the strategic governance of plagiarism in Scottish Higher Education and contributed to the construction of the data collection tool, subsequently used in the next Phase of the study. Phase 2 was a web-based survey and represented the major part of investigation that gathered the responses of Nurse Educators' opinions on plagiarism governance using pre-determined trigger statements based on a Likert-type measurement scale. As an adjunct, the self-completed survey tool included the opportunity for participants to simultaneously provide, should they so desire, free-text comments in the form of 'open-ended' responses. In this context, this study utilised mixed data sources to contribute to the findings.

3.3 Research Inquiry and Engagement

The nature of social science research offers perspectives and alternatives on how to uncover knowledge (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Newby, 2010; Robson, 2011). Social enquiry is however critically influenced at a conscious level by philosophical assumptions held by researchers about reality, knowledge and truth (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998; Blaikie, 2003, 2007; Crotty, 2003; Kelly & Long, 2000). These assumptions can be expressed ontologically, indicating the researcher's philosophical view of what constitutes reality and how it exists. This influences their epistemological stance regarding how knowledge is derived, constructed and valued which in turn governs

their relationship with the research process. Whilst this represents brevity in terms of presenting an overview, Newby (2010) and Robson (2011) concur that research philosophy is nevertheless complex and reflects ideologies associated with positivism and interpretivism which, from a social science perspective, steer the researcher to consider how people are studied in natural settings.

The literature positions positivism as applying established laws and rules in the context of experimentation and hypothesis testing, throughout which the researcher remains neutral and detached (Dow, 2001; Newby, 2010; Trochim, 2006). In directly observing phenomena to describe and measure what is occurring, positivism aims to scientifically predict reality by adopting a reductionist approach regarding cause and effect, offering the opportunity for deductive reasoning based on envisioning reality as singular, objective and tangible (Dodd, 2008). Punch (2009, p. 18) further argues that positivism is associated with sourcing *'objective accounts of the world….to develop nomothetic knowledge'*. Positivism therefore asserts that an objective social reality exists and awaits discovery because the world in which it occurs is both orderly and consistent. From this philosophical stance, Trochim (2006) implicates positivism as embracing scientific empiricism and rejecting knowledge derived from psychological perceptions.

Conversely, the interpretive paradigm seeks to construct socially embedded knowledge in a creative and meaningful way using culturally bound discourses. Consequently, interpretivism accepts that exploration of a phenomenon can result in multiple realities which are subjective, value-laden and explored within an inductive environment within which the researcher interacts (Crotty, 2003: Cohen et al., 2007; Dodd, 2008; Robson, 2011). Newby (2010) highlights the distinctiveness of inductive research, which is associated with individuals' behaviour, values, and life experiences, and has affinity with narrative data and how this is gathered and analysed.

3.3.1 Philosophical Stance

Giddings (2006), extending original work by Smyth (2004), suggests that novice researchers' understandings of the process they embark upon are often influenced by their prior social, cultural and political affiliations. In approaching this study, and in acknowledging Giddings's (2006) commentary, I was aware of being influenced by my previous experiences as a healthcare professional, with its propensity to embrace both the science and the art of nursing. This is often represented in nursing practice

as the fusion of scientifically derived evidence to enable evidence based clinical decision-making (Kinn & Curzio, 2005) and the artistry of nursing. In other words, that which appreciates that caring demands consideration of patients' subjective realities, within which practice-based dilemmas and problems cannot always be answered through experimental study, such as Randomised Controlled Trials. Malhotra Bentz and Shapiro (1998, p. 82), in recognising issues which impact on the researcher, suggest that *'Inquiry within the social sciences takes place at the intersection of disciplines, cultures of inquiry, theories, methods and techniques'*.

Combining prior clinical experiences, my current role as an educator and now active social science researcher, unquestionably influenced the approach represented within this study. In order to explore the opinions of Nurse Educators, this study was qualitative in its approach and purpose, however, in order to answer the aforementioned research questions, the study utilised a quantitative design and techniques to gather, transform and analyse data, which did not exist in a pre-existing numerical format.

Muijs (2011) indicates this type of blurring between qualitative and quantitative research paradigms reflects versatility and flexibility regarding research inquiry, which are often necessary as part of investigating complex, social phenomena. Whilst distinctions between different research paradigms are evident in the literature, Malhotra Bentz and Shapiro (1998) suggest this is representative of an artificial divide and a complementary overlap actually exists. Hence, whilst this study was qualitative in its approach, the rationale to incorporate a quantitative design was driven by the research questions, which sought to investigate the complexities of plagiarism governance from the perspective and population of Nurse Educators. By way of clarifying and contrasting, an overtly quantitative study may have involved investigation of the frequency of occurrences of plagiarism within discrete professionally-based programmes in Nurse Education.

Within Phase 1 of the study, HEIs' policies on plagiarism were assessed to offer quantitative commentary regarding the inclusion, or not, of information on plagiarism pertinent to its governance. In Phase 2, the opinions of Nurse Educators were sought regarding the nature and duality of plagiarism governance in Nurse Education. In this context I was aware of attempting to uncover information about the characteristics of this population based on exploration of a complex and sensitive topic area. Moreover, as the opinions being sought could involve

participants demonstrating their perspectives and understanding of plagiarism governance in a personal, professional and/or organisational context, this suggested that I should deploy techniques which would not only provide the opportunity to do so honestly and openly, but also anonymously. The rationale to adopt this position was further strengthened by my own position in conducting insider research, that is, I did not wish to influence, as far as practicable, the research process.

Using survey research as the main component of this study on plagiarism governance enabled inquiry to address the research questions focused on the population of Nurse Educators. Malhotra Bentz and Shapiro (1998, p. 62) establish and, fitting with the practice-based nature of this study, indicate the utility of survey research lies in enabling the researcher to 'explore or help' the population. Consequently, a survey was used to establish what Nurse Educators might consider as best practice in how policies address the complexities of governing plagiarism in Nurse Education.

3.4 Designing the Mixed-Data Study

The main focus of activity in this study was the use of a web-based questionnaire which sought to elicit from Nurse Educators their opinions on plagiarism governance. In utilising a survey research tool, trigger statements and a Likert-type rating scale were employed to permit the collection of numerical data and subject this to statistical testing and analysis. As a complementary adjunct to using closed-ended statements, the questionnaire also incorporated the capacity to gather from participants open-ended supplementary qualitative data as free-form text comments. This text was voluntarily offered and therefore not universally elicited from each participant, emerging, as Spencer and Ritchie (1994) note, to offer further illumination in researching policy perspectives. In this context, the comments offered by participants, which in some instances, did not always correspond with the specific focus of the questionnaire allowed differing and interesting perspectives to emerge.

The rationale to incorporate the opportunity for participants to provide 'free-text' comments within the survey was borne out of recognising some of the limitations of survey research, which directs and limits participants to select a pre-ordained response within a self-completed questionnaire, could be seen as restrictive. Robson (2011) concurs and indicates that providing the scope to permit qualitative responses is a valuable adjunct to a survey to enhance the findings, which in this instance, would permit polyvocality to occur and represent reality. The only

instructional direction given to participants concerning the qualitative element, was simply detailed as the opportunity to offer '*additional comments*' following their selection of the Likert-type response category.

This is a model of mixed-data gathering within surveys that has been adopted in other studies to permit participants to provide free-form text responses, written in their own words, to emerge in order to contribute to the findings (Bazeley, 1999; Jackson & Trochim, 2002). Specifically, Vitale, Armenakis & Feild (2008, p87) argue for synthesis of different research traditions to emerge in the context of a 'single survey instrument' to support research pragmatism. The sentiment of pragmatism fits with my stance as a researcher where I have used multiple forms of data to address a complex issue, which according to Arnon and Reichel (2009) and Cresswell and Plano Clark (2007) influentially shapes how the study evolves using different data sources.

Deciding to provide the opportunity for participants to provide qualitative commentary within a survey research tool could be seen as affiliating with mixed-methods research, which Tashakkori and Creswell (2007, p 4) specify is:

> '*Research in which the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods within a single study or programme of inquiry*'.

However, this study does not fit the traditional approaches of mixed-methods research, which classically offers distinctive perspectives involving specific inquiry methods associated with the collection of quantitative and qualitative data as discrete activities that is, combining a survey with interviews or focus groups. Bazeley (1999) indicates this type of approach is indicative of paradigm fusion which can assist in evaluating and interpreting the quantitative outcomes. Moreover, Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) advance this to indicate that, at a philosophical level, mixed-methods is fundamentally associated with pragmatism. In support, Kinn and Curzio (2005) argue that pragmatism should be the catalyst for eclectic mixed-methods frameworks which can be operationalised to answer different types of research questions, and in doing so compensate for the limitations of using a single paradigm.

Moran-Ellis, Alexander, Cronin, Dickinson, Fielding, and Thomas (2006) suggests that, as an approach with an established track record, mixed-methods research offers a '*cross-paradigmatic*' eclecticism in utilising two or more methods which exhibit different theoretical assumptions. From this perspective mixed-methods research has

been hailed as emancipatory in optimising opportunities within social research to explore particularly complex phenomena (Kinn & Curzio, 2005). Argued as the third approach to research (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2011; Newby, 2010; Wheeldon, 2010), mixed-methods inquiry challenges the longstanding philosophical debates concerning the adherence to one particular research doctrine, normally interpretivism or positivism, and the supremacy that one has over the other.

However, this amalgam of methodological approaches has not occurred without generating controversy, with Giddings (2006) arguing mixed-methods research is still at the neophyte stage of developing its philosophical and theoretical base. Moreover, implications abound concerning the incongruity of fusing both qualitative and quantitative approaches and misgivings concerning the hegemony of positivism therein (Giddings, 2006; Newby, 2010). Against this backdrop, Newby (2010) suggests that at this juncture, uncertainty exists in accepting mixed-methods research as a distinctive methodology, yet despite the reservation, postulates for creative approaches to emerge in order to respond flexibly to complex research problems.

3.5 Enabling Lines of Inquiry

In acknowledging my preference to adopt a pragmatic stance I did however utilise a quantitative design to support of inquiry of plagiarism governance to answer the research questions. Fundamentally, this decision was driven by my awareness of the complexities of strategically governing plagiarism in Nurse Education coupled with the dearth of knowledge on the subject area.

In defending this position, I considered that a quantitative design contained within a descriptive study offered the most appropriate method to illuminate the phenomenon and permit data to be gathered uninfluenced by my presence as a Nurse Educator conducting research within my own peer group, the latter issue discussed more fully in Section 3.9.2. Consequently, this exploratory descriptive study was devised to investigate the range and extent of Nurse Educators' opinions on plagiarism governance. Moreover, as the research questions indicated a population based approach, this necessitated using a fixed, structured and impartial design, involving a quantitative survey and measurement with no attempt to establish causality for relationships which may be observed between variables (Dancey & Reidy, 2007; Rudestam & Newton, 2007; Salkind, 2008).

Although the design of the study was quantitative, the opportunity to provide qualitative data within the survey questionnaire was seen as an adjunct, which resulted in 51% (n = 87) of participants offering substantial and detailed free-form text comments. Consequently, the inclusion of qualitative comments was incorporated to further illuminate the findings within this exploratory study.

Whilst the web-based survey represented the major area of investigation, this was preceded by an analysis of Scottish HEIs' policy documents on plagiarism undertaken to assess and quantitatively comment on the information content of the information provided. Designated as Phase 1, specifically, this involved scrutiny of the type of information contained within pre-existing plagiarism policy documents which, in governing plagiarism, exist to guide and support academic practice. In addition to providing the contextual backdrop, this process also informed the construction of the web-based survey questionnaire regarding specific aspects of plagiarism governance that should be included for exploration with Nurse Educators.

3.6 Analysis of Documents: Audit of HEI Plagiarism Policy

The research question explored within Phase 1 of the study was 'What information do Scottish Higher Education Institutions which offer Nurse Education provide in relation to plagiarism governance within their policies and does information continuity exist across these institutions?' The question provided the platform to scope policies, audit the information provided and assess the continuity of such information across the eleven Scottish HEIs which offer Nurse Education. The approach adopted in this Phase was congruent with the nature of exploratory study which was to uncover patterns, inconsistencies and not endeavouring to offer a hypothesis associated with the governance of HEIs plagiarism policies. Excluded from this activity were materials which HEIs had prepared specifically for teaching learners on how to avoid plagiarism on the basis of these being written for an audience whose needs in this context related to pedagogical instruction as opposed to operational policy directives.

The analysis focused on scrutinising HEI pre-existing policy documents to assess their explicit inclusion of commentary on plagiarism which, from an organisational perspective, communicated how this should be governed. It was accepted that the plagiarism policy documents scrutinised were constructed to convey strategic governance in the form of information and instructional guidance (Bleiklie & Kogan, 2007; Kennedy, 2003; Schofield, 2004; Shattock, 2006). Furthermore, as written

delineations of how plagiarism should be managed within each of the Scottish HEIs, this represented the outward facing 'front stage' setting referred to by Goffman (1959) (as cited in Lowe, Purchase & Ellis, 2011) which in the HEI context, conveys the requirement of educators, as 'actors', to comply with university-approved regulations.

With a dearth of information available to specifically guide this process and subsequent analysis, consultation with the literature was undertaken to develop a conceptual framework to audit plagiarism policies. This was achieved by drawing upon themes within the literature which specifically articulated the relationship which should exist between policy and educational practice and the policy drivers which promote quality and standards in Higher Education (QAA, 2006). Synthesis of these sources enabled the construction of a framework and the subsequent development of an audit tool to gather data from three different perspectives:

- Context and content: if and how plagiarism was explained within policies in relation to commentary which provided definitions of plagiarism; contextualised the seriousness/impact on learning; identified typologies of learner behaviour.

- Academic engagement: if and how management of plagiarism was explained in relation to delineating approaches and processes for dealing with minor and major infringements.

- Professional engagement: if and how the policy appeared to guide academic practice for educators affiliated to professional programmes of learning.

3.6.1 Developing the Audit Tool

An audit tool, which incorporated and expanded on the aforementioned framework, was constructed to gather data (Appendix 1) and thereafter subjected to testing in the context of a small pilot study. This involved scrutiny of plagiarism policy documentation drawn from six HEIs offering Nurse Education. To avoid contaminating the main study, these policies were drawn from HEIs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. This provided the opportunity to evaluate if the audit tool had included major concepts related to plagiarism governance, and if these could be quantitatively captured to enable the development of frequency scores.

The outcome of the documentary pilot verified that within HEIs, strategic plagiarism policies appeared to be strewn across a range of sources and in different formats such as assessment regulations, codes of conduct, quality handbooks and bespoke productions. Importantly, the pilot identified these locations as exemplars, thereby supporting the construction of the audit tool, which had already included these as avenues for exploration. However, one modification undertaken was extending the list of possible sources to include departments of Nurse Education as plagiarism policies may be located within departmental documents to specifically link plagiarism with Fitness to Practise requirements (NMC, 2010a).

Whilst the suitability of the audit tool was critically considered at the time of its construction, since completing this Phase of the study (August 2010), the Higher Education Academy (2011) has recently published guidance for HEIs on formulating policies to support the governance of plagiarism. This document, entitled 'Policy Works', encourages institutions to promote clarity and transparency on a range of crucial issues, including, the usage and inclusion of definitions, detailed procedures for managing plagiarism, including indicative penalties and finally, systems and processes which enable audit trails. In guiding HEIs to consider consistent approaches to formulating, implementing and monitoring plagiarism policies to promote consistency, notable similarity between the guidance provided by the HEA and the audit tool constructed for the purpose of this study supports its appropriateness.

3.6.2 Conducting the Documentary Audit and Analysis

Approaches to exploring the research question, 'What information do Scottish Higher Education Institutions, which offer Nurse Education, provide in relation to plagiarism governance within their policies and does information continuity exist across these institutions', centred on using data which was regarded as a secondary source, which although not produced for the purposes of research, provided the opportunity for unobtrusive review and analysis (Wellington, 2000).

Following the pilot, plagiarism policies from all eleven Scottish HEIs offering Nurse Education were searched for as part of a census approach to sampling to reduce the potential for bias and sampling errors (Robson 2011). Accessing relevant documents was achieved via websites which, being in the public domain, were freely available to peruse. This required meticulous searching, including cross-referencing to Nursing departments and programmes of Nurse Education to ensure

the search for plagiarism policies had been exhaustive. Whilst this resulted in obtaining what appeared to be relevant plagiarism policy documentation from all 11 institutions, the search and retrieval process may have been impeded by electronic firewalls and consequently, the retrieval of policies may have been incomplete.

The specific goals associated with Phase 1 of the study were, firstly, to gain an insight into the information content of HEIs plagiarism policy and, if there were consistent approaches across Scottish HEIs which offer nurse education, thereby examine trends and patterns. Secondly, to provide a preliminary scoping study to inform the development of the survey questionnaire (Phase 2 of the study). However, with a lack of existing guidance concerning plagiarism policy audit and analysis, the approach adopted in this analysis, which supported this part of the study, was undertaken by drawing three key categories which had emerged from themes emerging from the literature review and specifically linked to the governance of plagiarism in Higher Education:

- Context and content: a category emerging from the literature which was linked with noting if and how HEIs evidenced and explained 'plagiarism' within their policies. This being, the provision of definition (East, 2009); the importance/seriousness of avoiding plagiarism (Sutherland Smith, 2003, 2005); visibility given to the importance of academic convention (Sikes, 2009); identified inappropriate and different types of learner behaviour associated with plagiarism (Bennett, 2005).

- Academic engagement: a category emerging from the literature which was linked to noting if HEIs provided policy information on managing plagiarism in relation to transparent managing of plagiarism as part of a continuum-based approach (James et al. 2002; Tennant & Duggan, 2007, 2008) i.e. differentiating between minor and major occurrences and the discrete processes for dealing with these types of infringements.

- Professional Engagement: a category emerging from the literature which was linked to noting what support structures exist to support academic practice in order to meet/cross reference to the governance expectations of professional programmes of study in nursing, in this instance, Fitness to Practise (NMC, 2010a).

The process of auditing and analysing these pre-existing plagiarism policy documents was manually undertaken and entailed line by line reading to explore inclusion of particular information. This was to establish content as frequency counts and not linguistic meaning. Consequently, the audit and quantitative analysis involved searching for and recording the inclusion of key words and phrases on plagiarism governance, which mapped with the aforementioned categories. The search for occurrences of key information was recorded using the audit tool constructed for this purpose. Thereafter statistical guidance was sought concerning the appropriate presentation of this data, which, in this instance, was the production of descriptive frequencies. Whilst data obtained from documents is susceptible to different kinds of analysis (Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 2005; Robson, 2011), the exploration undertaken in this study was indicative of analysing pre-existing plagiarism policy documents to ascertain their information content to illuminate the topic and subsequently, inform Phase 2 of the study.

3.7 Web-Based Survey of Nurse Educators' Opinions

The substantive part of the study (Phase 2) aimed to quantitatively survey and capture Nurse Educators' opinions on a range of pertinent issues related to plagiarism governance. In this context the survey aimed to explore, present and thereby illuminate perspectives of the phenomenon under investigation and, aligned with the nature of descriptive research, permit the unknown to be known and analysed (Anderson, 1998; Wellington, 2000). This was achieved by deploying a web-based survey to capture, describe and report data numerically to identify patterns and trends through exploration of descriptive and inferential statistics (Dancey & Reidy, 2007; Dillman, 2007; Muijs, 2011).

Deploying the web-based survey facilitated very low cost, rapid dissemination across a wide geographical area (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009; May, 2011; Robson, 2011) and additionally provided anonymity for respondents regarding a sensitive topic such as plagairism. In support, Kapalowitz, Hadlock and Levine (2004), Gonzales-Benales and Adam (2007) and Meho (2006) argue that web-based surveys represent a contemporary, highly effective and acceptable medium for gathering and measuring data. Uniquely, the data can be digitally transferred onto appropriate software to enable statistical analysis (Denscombe, 2008; Fink, 2006; Solomon, 2001).

Other factors which required consideration as a method of data collection were linked with the adequacy of participants' literacy skills, the task and ability to ensure

comprehension of the questions. Whilst these appeared less of an issue relative to the cohort being educators, due consideration was given to ensuring comprehension, particularly in seeking feedback on a complex topic. Despite the advantages attributed to the ubiquitous survey method, acknowledged limitations do exist, and predominate around low response rates to postal surveys (Robson, 2011).

3.7.1 Study Population

The target population comprised Nurse Educators who occupied an active teaching role in pre-registration and/or post-qualifying Nurse Education. The issue of being an 'active educator' was deemed an important characteristic, in terms of inclusion criteria, to address the questions posed within the survey. This also acknowledged that many Nurse Educators occupy roles within research or strategic management which negate direct contact with learners. Also relevant was defining the umbrella terms 'Nurse Education' and 'Nurse Educator', vis-à-vis those who teach within any of the domains of pre and/or post-registration Nursing/Midwifery, Community Specialist Practitioner /Specialist Community Public Health Nursing and any and all forms of free-standing CPD nurse and/or midwife study occurring in Higher Education.

3.7.2 Sampling

An early decision in planning this research involved consideration of sampling approaches, with preliminary scoping suggesting a population which equated to 517 Nurse Educators. This was based on detailed scrutiny of professional biographical details on publicly available web pages and email addresses provided by one participating HEI, relative to the aforementioned inclusion criteria. Given this number of potential participants, and the advantages of deploying a web-based survey which could be expeditiously and cost effectively deployed to gather data, it appeared rational to consider inviting this population, in its entirety, to participate. Consequently, a census approach was adopted within which each potential participant had an equal opportunity to participate in the study, thus offsetting potential issues of sampling bias or error (May, 2011; Robson, 2011). However, it was not envisaged that the entire population would participate; therefore the census approach in this study reflected non-systematic probability sampling.

3.7.3 Recruitment of Participants

Whilst potential participants could self-select their inclusion in the study, this was predicated on the number of HEIs who provided Management Access Approval to permit contact with Nurse Educators. Pleasingly, 10 out of 11 HEIs granted access to invite Nurse Educators from Schools of Nursing in Scotland to participate. Whilst more detailed commentary on gaining Management Access Approval is subsumed under Section 3.11.4, the only HEI which did not provide Management Access Approval did so via failure to respond to three written requests, consequently, I had no organisational mandate to access Nurse Educators within this institution (n = 47). Against the backdrop of academia's *raison d'être* in valuing research and scholarship (Schofield, 2009), the reason why this HEI chose not to respond to communications remains unknown.

Robson (2011) suggests that internet surveys are appropriate when confidence in the population list can be confirmed. With a sample frame which now reflected 470 potential participants, an initial trigger email was dispatched to each potential participant within the population list, carefully scripted to indicate this study was seeking their opinions on a range of issues related to the governance of plagiarism in Higher Education (Appendix 2). It was clearly stated that the opinions being solicited were in response to pre-prepared statements and therefore not based on their experience of dealing with plagiarism, their knowledge of the topic or discrete information concerning their own institution's governance approaches.

Potential participants were also advised that Management Access Approval to initially contact them had been granted by their institution and ethical approval to conduct this study had been granted by the University of Strathclyde. It was further indicated that, although they had received this invitation directly to their email address, return of the questionnaire would be web-based and therefore anonymous. Moreover, participation was optional, being free to decline the invitation or withdraw at any point. This trigger-email was accompanied by the Participant Information Sheet (Appendix 3), which detailed these issues in more depth. A web-based link was provided within the trigger email to 'SurveyMonkey©' in order to activate participation.

Reponses to the trigger email resulted in a small number of individuals (n = 8) immediately responding to indicate they were not Nurse Educators, being Physiotherapists or Social Workers whose names had been included as part of

departments' 'health educators' contact list. Also received were 31 emails which bounced-back stating the message was 'undeliverable', which following rechecking the accuracy of the email addresses, were re-sent but again resulted in the same outcome. This suggested issues with the currency of the listings pertaining to 'academic contacts' on HEI webpages indicating these individuals may no longer work within these instituions. These names were removed from the population list which reduced the sample frame to 431 potential participants.

3.7.4 Constructing the Questionnaire

The literature advocates the requirement to establish rigour by sourcing, if possible, an existing valid and reliable questionnaire relative to the phenomenon under investigation (Newby, 2010). A detailed search revealed no existence of a questionnaire based on previous empirical study of plagiarism governance in Higher Education. I was required to create and develop a bespoke questionnaire to gather data concerning an unexplored area of educational practice. The construction process took cognisance of guidance associated with mapping the questionnaire with the study's aim and sub-questions, the inclusion of constructs to be investigated, determining the measurement scale and pragmatic consideration of comprehensibility, layout and staging of the questions (Cohen et al., 2007; Dillman, 2007; Malhotra, 2008).

3.7.4.1 Constructing the Questionnaire Statements

The questionnaire was constructed by drawing on prevalent themes from literature on plagiarism and findings from the documentary analysis (Phase 1) to form an initial bank of statements. Central to this process was the questionnaire coherently presenting positively, negatively and neutrally framed statements in a format with which participants could respond in accordance with the Likert-type categories provided. Care was taken to avoid including statements which might cause confusion by screening for double negatives, and by using vocabulary with which it was anticipated participants would be familiar, vis-à-vis academic and professional vernacular. Another key consideration was unwittingly biasing the statements and thereby influencing the response, which according to Newby (2010) can occur in situations involving Likert-type scales where participants have difficulty in providing definitive answers. The counter to this scenario was, as discussed in detail below, providing a comprehensive range of response categories. Moreover, to offset challenges associated with not being present to verbally instruct and explain the

context and self-completion of the questionnaire to participants (Robson, 2011) terms of reference were established and explained within the instrument, such as plagiarism management, minor and major plagiarism. Whilst plagiarism has been denoted as a complex issue, each statement was prepared to represent a one-dimensional issue, in as short a textual format as possible. Developing this bank of statements represented a lengthy process; thereafter further refinement was undertaken involving rewriting and several drafts before a decision was made on a final group of 36 statements.

In this study participants were asked to respond to predetermined statements within the questionnaire concerning plagiarism governance, articulated across three domains derived from the literature review: *'Content and context of Plagiarism Policy in Higher Education', 'Interfacing Higher Education and Professional Governance'* and finally, *'Implications for the role of the Nurse Educator'*. These domains were developed to offer clarity within the questionnaire, but specifically linked with the conceptual framework, which Robson (2011, p. 250) emphasises must exist to avoid the questionnaire *'degenerating into a fishing trip'*. Final presentation and layout of statements were carefully considered, including the addition of dialogue boxes so participants could, if they wished, add qualitative commentary.

3.7.4.2 Measurement Rating Scale

As the data would require statistical analysis and manipulation, a categorical response scale was required to establish the categories and values which would be assigned to data outcomes to enable measurement. Nagel (1931) (as cited in Barbato, Farne & Genta, 2008; Maranell, 2009) indicates that *'measurement is the correlation of numbers with entities which are not numbers'*. The use of a categorical rating scale reflects the work of Likert (1931) (as cited in Cohen et al. 2007; Newby 2010), which has an established track record and is frequently utilised in survey design to measure the intensity, sensitivity and differentiation of opinion, views and attitudes. For the purpose of this study, the data was treated as ordinal, which assumes that the distance between the categories established within the scale was not equidistant (Barbato et al., 2008; Blaikie, 2003).

In adopting a Likert-type rating scale, a number of theoretical issues concerning scale construction prevailed. First was the number of response categories required to produce precision within participant responses. Whilst there is some debate, broad consensus is representative of using 5 or 7 response categories, which avoids

constraint by using too few and the inability to discriminate by having too many (Malhotra, 2008; Page-Bucci, 2003). Against this backdrop Cohen et al. (2007 p. 326) go on to advise that there is the need to '*exhaust the range of possible responses'*. Second was balancing the measurement scale, that is, the number of favourable and unfavourable response categories. Malhotra (2008) indicates that a balanced measurement scale is required to secure objectivity, in other words, an equal number of favourable and unfavourable choices are needed. This however raises the third issue, the inclusion of a neutral mid-point which, if incorporated, can influence the response process and thus becomes an important consideration. The decision to include a midpoint is based on the assumption that a cohort may exhibit neutrality, in which case an odd number of categories should prevail, thus fitting with Likert's original scale of being balanced with an odd number of categories. Nevertheless, caution also exists in this context as including a mid-point can also induce responses indicative of central tendency bias. In a similar vein, the inclusion, or not, of a neutral mid-point would influence whether the scale reflected choices which were forced or non-forced.

Taking account of the underpinning principles, an early decision in constructing the questionnaire was that the design would avoid coercing participants into making a forced choice response. Consequently, a neutral midpoint of Neither/Nor was included to permit participants who did not hold, or wish to offer, a definitive opinion the opportunity to respond and have, as part of this in-depth exploration, this position noted. Similarly, in acknowledging the complexities of plagiarism, the opportunity for participants to honestly respond was also deemed important, thus the category of 'Unsure' was also added to identify situations where participants were unable to give a definitive response to statements due to their uncertainty as opposed to having no opinion in either direction (i.e. Neither/Nor). Consequently, the rating scale appeared on the data collection tool as:

'O Strongly Disagree O Disagree O Neither/Nor O Agree O Strongly Agree O Unsure'

This scale of response categories and the construction of the statements could not however negate the potential for blank responses or non-completion, noted by Newby (2010) as common.

3.8 Establishing Validity and Reliability

Key issues within research processes resonate with evaluating the relative worth of knowledge generation, predicated on the underpinning level of rigour (Rolfe, 2006). Establishing this within the quantitative tradition has become synonymous with ubiquitous application of the terms validity and reliability**.**

Validity is associated with accuracy within quantitative research, and is applied in a number of contexts. For example, in relation to the data collection tool, it refers to the extent to which the tool accurately measures what it is intended to measure and as such confirms the meaningful and practical value of that tool (Robson, 2011). The validity of a tool is normally established in relation to face, content, criterion and construct validity (Robson, 2011). Meadows (2003) suggest that face validity is the least scientific of these base principles, purporting its value in terms of general appropriateness. Content validity establishes that the content of the tool is sufficiently comprehensive and accurately represents the phenomenon under enquiry (Wisker, 2007). Criterion validity is linked to predictive outcomes of future events and as this was not a feature of this study, this aspect was not included for consideration. Construct validity appears difficult to ascertain (Meadows, 2003) as it relates to the extensive use of the questionnaire and how its functional attributes link to criterion and content validity. Face and content validity of the questionnaire were ascertained during the piloting process. On a broader level, internal validity questions whether the explanations and conclusions offered by the study can be accepted (Cohen et al., 2007). External validity refers to whether or not the conclusions of the study can be generalised to the population or different contexts (Meadows, 2003; Wisker, 2007).

Reliability is bounded within measures of consistency and repeatability and can be considered from varying perspectives (Cohen et al., 2007). Moreover different typologies of consistency exist predicated on the nature of the study, which in this context relates to establishing the internal consistency of the data collection tool which Salkind (2008, p. 106) explains as '*when you want to know whether the items on a test are consistent with one another in that they represent one, and only one, dimension, construct, or area of interest'*. Establishing internal consistency is conducted using mathematical computation, such as a 'Cronbach's Alpha' which measures the items on a questionnaire, then compares the outcomes with every other item and averages the results producing a correlation coefficient (Giliem & Giliem, 2003; Munro, 2005). The coefficient ranges from 0.00 - +1.00 and the higher

the value, the greater confidence the researcher has in consistency between the items (Blaikie, 2003; Salkind, 2008). Statistical advice concerning reliability of the tool indicated a Cronbach's Alpha should be undertaken to measure the internal consistency of the questionnaire as a group of items investigating plagiarism governance.

Following augmentations, made as a result of the pilot study (discussed below in Section 3.8.1), the reliability of the tool was assessed by performing a Cronbach's Alpha on the statements contained within the questionnaire. Conducting the Cronbach's Alpha resulted in a coefficient score of .788, which is regarded as good for social science research (George & Mallery, 2003). Reliability also pervades such issues as the researcher's consistency in the approach to gathering data from each participant and importantly in handling/coding the data (Gomm, 2000; Robson, 2011). Consequently coding and data entry was subject to rechecking for accuracy, as this had been manually undertaken. Reliability was also promoted by attempting to develop a tool which was simple, clearly presented, non-ambiguous, straightforward and easy to complete.

3.8.1 Survey Pilot Study

A survey pilot study was undertaken to identify weaknesses, discrepancies, and unforeseen problems (Robson, 2011) with the survey questionnaire which could be evaluated and rectified accordingly prior to deploying the study. Moreover, this pilot also contributed to assessing areas of validity, namely face and content, and the reliability of the questionnaire (Oppenheim, 2000). The survey questionnaire was pilot-tested with 8 professionally-based healthcare educators (lecturers/Senior lecturers) active in teaching across healthcare professions including Podiatry, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Radiography and Social Work. Initially inviting 12 educators from associated healthcare disciplines out with nursing to participate in the pilot were deemed appropriate for two reasons. Firstly, these groupings have similar professional governance requirements, that is, a mandate for learners to demonstrate 'good character' and Fitness to Practise. Secondly, as the main study had utilised a population-based census approach to sampling Nurse Educators in Scotland, this afforded the opportunity not to contaminate the larger study.

An invitational letter to seek assistance in testing out the questionnaire was sent to prospective pilot participants, who were randomly selected from the researcher's institution via the internal telephone directory. Participants were informed of the

study aim and sub-questions and provided with a copy of the Participant Information Sheet. The aim of piloting the data collection tool was multifaceted to establish the readability and comprehensibility, estimate how long it took to complete, comment on statements which should be omitted or statements which should be included in relation to the topic, and if the Participant Information Sheet was understandable and informative.

Eight participants, who noted they found the topic challenging and complex to consider, completed the pilot study. Specific feedback elicited that the language within 2 of the statements was perceived to contain double negatives. Suggestions were also made to simplify the volume of text in some instances to enable speedier reading, but did not in any instance suggest omissions or removal of statements. The issue of completion time drew mixed results, ranging between 20-40 minutes. Adaptations to the questionnaire were completed in accordance with the feedback offered by participants from the pilot study.

In addition to the pilot participants, the questionnaire was also subject to detailed scrutiny by four senior academics who were invited to specifically comment on the face and content validity of the questionnaire. Occupying leadership roles which included, Associate Dean of Quality, Head of Learning Teaching and Quality, Director Professional Doctorate Programme and Senior Lecturer, these senior academics were recognised as expert sources with extensive experience in the strategic and operational governance of plagiarism across a range of professional disciplines (Nursing, Engineering and Occupational Therapy). They were however ineligible to participate in the main study due to different professional affiliations or no longer occupying an active teaching role in Nurse Education.

To assist these senior academics with the task of commenting on content and face validity of the questionnaire, they were provided with a written explanation of the context of the study and the conceptual definition of plagiarism:

> *'Plagiarism is passing off someone else's work, whether intentionally or unintentionally, as your own for your own benefit'*
>
> (Carroll, 2002, p9)

This was the preferred definition within this study, being the definition commonly adopted within several of the Higher Education Academy subject centres concerning professionally based education.

Specifically, experts were asked if, in their opinion the statements detailed within each section of the questionnaire relating to plagiarism governance accurately and comprehensive explore the phenomenon within Nurse Education. The opportunity was provided for comment concerning omissions or further suggestions for augmentation. General feedback concerning the trigger-statements contained within the questionnaire resulted in a positive response. However, the panel of experts did make suggestions to enhance the clarity of expression, sequencing and simplifying complex sentence structure, not unlike that offered by the pilot cohort. This challenged me to consider the relevance of some statements and the appropriateness of how these were being articulated. Consequently, some statements were reworked and two questions were removed, resulting in the final version of the questionnaire containing 34 statements (Appendix 4). The final version was subject to further scrutiny by one member of the expert group (Head of Learning, Teaching and Quality) who concurred with the modifications made. Thus it was determined that the questionnaire was, in terms of face and content validity, appropriate for the intended purpose. This was captured with commentary offered by one of the experts as:

> *'a tool which would enable establishing insight into exploring challenging aspects of what might be considered good practice in a thorough manner'*.

3.9 Data Collection: Deploying the Survey

The advent of technology to support deployment of web-based surveys presents a viable and alternative mode of data collection. Whilst using technology presents the same advantages associated with traditional survey usage, it does provide, as in this study, the capacity to rapidly and efficiently collect 'free-*style responses'* (Newby, 2010, p. 330) in a usable electronic format thereby reducing opportunities for transcription errors to occur. Nonetheless, as Jones et al. (2008) confirm, web-based approaches present a different set of challenges in terms of technical expertise, but the perceived benefits are worthy of due consideration, particularly as the Web has gained momentum as a form of rapid communication. Being part of a cross-sectional study that is undertaken across a specific time frame (Brynner, 2006) to explore a contemporary issue, the survey was deployed on May 1st 2011 using SurveyMonkey® and, in an attempt to optimise responses, an electronic reminder was sent to all potential participants 2 weeks later.

The trigger email used in the study directed participants to a generic link using SurveyMonkey® as a platform to participate and respond using a web-based

approach. In establishing this access portal as a generic link, the potential did exist for participants to undertake the study on repeated occasions but due to anonymity being protected, if this had occurred it was undetectable. However, it is assumed that Nurse Educators completed this questionnaire only on one occasion.

3.9.1 Response Rate

Whilst it was difficult to anticipate the number of responses which might be received, the decision to utilise a census approach was also undertaken to optimise the response rate, which as Robson (2011) indicates, is often a limitation of the survey approach. The response rate in this study was 44% (n = 187) which exceeds what might have been expected based on examination of other empirical studies which utilised web-based surveys in educational contexts and demonstrated variable response rates ranging from 21% to 36.3% (de Jager & Brown, 2010; Sax, Gilmartin & Bryant, 2003; Sheehan, 2001). Consequently, the response rate in this study increases the confidence in the findings.

According to Robson (2011), there is no consensus on what constitutes an appropriate survey response rate. This is also reflected in commentary on response rates for web-based surveys (Dillman, 2007; Kapalowitz et al., 2004; Shih & Fan, 2008), which argue that decisions about what constitutes an appropriate response rate are contingent on cohorts' characteristics, access to hardware, the field of inquiry in which the study occurs and the level of control by the researcher. Consequently, what might be acceptable in one case may not be in another. These authors also acknowledge that response rates using web-based forums, in comparison to traditional paper-based approaches, are generally lower.

Despite the impressive response rate provided by Nurse Educators, who arguably recognised the importance of plagiarism governance as a contemporary issue and wanted to participate, this does not negate a comment concerning non-responder bias which might have occurred as a consequence of 56% of target population, who for reasons unknown, did not elect to participate. Sax et al. (2003) suggest the potential of non-responders bias can occur when those who did not respond may hold a different opinion to those who did.

Sax et al. (2008, p. 411) elaborate further on the issue of non-responses and differentiate into the total non-response, as indicated above and partial non-response where questionnaires actually received were partially completed. In this

study, a small number of the received questionnaires were partially completed (*n* = 14), that is, to varying degrees, started but then stopped. Scrutiny of these questionnaires demonstrated none had completed the final section which is interesting given that it was concerned with Nurse Educators' roles and responsibilities in contributing to the governance of plagiarism. Speculatively, non-completion may have been associated with discomfort educators often report in dealing with and managing occurrences (Paterson et al., 2003).

Completed questionnaires were therefore determined to be those that had attempted to complete all three sections, irrespective of the fact some of these contained occasional blank responses to individual items. I decided that these 14 incomplete questionnaires were deemed spoiled based on two issues, firstly, this number represented a small percentage (3.2%) of the overall response rate which was, as noted, higher than anticipated; and secondly, the awkwardness associated with attempting to accommodate the varying levels to which these responses could usefully contribute to the findings. The reasons why some Nurse Educators only partially completed and submitted responses is unknown, but I could speculate this might have been due to the exigencies of work, discomfort with topic, difficulties with comprehending the nature of the questions, or acquaintance with me as peer Nurse Educator. With reference to the latter, it appears appropriate at this juncture to consider the influence of conducting insider research and positionality.

3.9.2 Conducting Insider Research in Higher Education

In undertaking this study, the methods used necessitated reflexively considering the challenges of conducting research within my own area of practice, and how this position may introduce elements of bias which might adversely influence the research process (Wellington, 2000). Nightingale and Cromby (1999, p. 228) discuss this in the context of:

> *'Having an awareness of the researcher's contribution to the construction of meanings throughout the research process, and an acknowledgment of the impossibility of remaining 'outside of' one's subject matter while conducting research. Reflexivity then, urges us to explore the ways in which a researcher's involvement with a particular study influences, acts upon and informs such research'*

Mercer (2007), drawing on the work of Merton (1972), conceptually discusses the insider as being a demographic native of the group under exploration and as such possesses privileged insight and knowledge of that culture. However, this proximity

can result in being insularly ignorant and therefore possess the capacity to make unwitting errors. In contrast, being an outsider delineates non-membership which, according to the doctrinal view point adopted brings to the research non-prejudicial objectivity or intellectual and emotional incapacity to comprehend the nuances. Despite the prevailing dichotomy, Mercer (2007) adopts the pose offered earlier by Hammersley (1993) in citing that no clear advantage exists in occupying either of these roles, both having strengths and limitations which are bound up in the context in which the research occurs.

Wellington (2000, p. 44), in probing insider research conducted by educationalists posits that positionality relative to the *'values knowledge, biases, motivations and prejudices'* held should be reflexively examined. In considering and reflecting upon my position in conducting insider research, I was aware that motivation to explore plagiarism governance was borne out of the discomfort I felt as a Nurse Educator in dealing with plagiarism appropriately and fairly in the context of professionally-based education. Consequently, the discomfort I experienced was not associated with remedial pedagogical instruction for learners, but the wider and strategic management of plagiarism. Clearly, my position, as an educator who was also a nurse, was challenging me to consider my dual position in promoting integrity. That is, being self-aware of the prejudices and biases which exist regarding plagiarism, both in the literature and anecdotally, resulted in a conscious effort to guard against these thoughts infiltrating this study of plagiarism. Insider status has enabled cognisance with the uniqueness and complexities associated with plagiarism within professionally-based education.

3.10 Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted having decided that the statements contained within the instruments were individual items each inviting a categorical response at the ordinal level measurement. Therefore the responses provided by participants, once numerically coded, were not summated to provide a total in terms of an arithmetic score. Numerically coding the quantitative data was consistent with the following scoring procedure: Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Neither/Nor = 3, Agree = 4, Strongly Agree = 5 and Unsure = 0.

The 6 response categories contained within the measurement scale focused on exploring a comprehensive range of responses with precision and descriptively presenting the findings. The data was analysed to present the frequency and

percentage responses for each of the 6 Likert-type categories contained within the measurement scale. Furthermore, this would also permit in-depth analysis, namely, undertaking inferential testing to make predictions about the characteristics of the population of Nurse Educators from the sample's characteristics. Using the Chi-squared analysis (χ^2) Goodness of Fit test, the percentage differences between the expected and observed frequency of responses were compared. The Goodness of Fit test is based on assumptions about the population and uses mathematical modelling based on accepting the null hypothesis, which predicts that 'no difference' will exist (Field, 2009; Kinnear & Gray, 2006; Munro, 2005).

Using the following formula (as cited in Field, 2009), responses for each of the statements was tested to determine if the statement variables were equally attractive to participants (i.e. 50% reject and 50% endorse) and therefore fit with the expectation that the observed and expected responses did not differ significantly and exhibit uniformity in their theoretical distribution:

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(\text{Observed Value} - \text{Expected Value})^2}{(\text{Expected Value})}$$

The rationale to adopt the null hypothesis as the default position for inferential testing was based on the fact that no previous quantitative work had been specifically undertaken in this area such as a national study, to inform how responses may be represented within populations. The Chi-squared Goodness of Fit test was individually tested on statements 4-33 within the questionnaire. The level of significance was set as $\alpha = 0.05$. The quantitative data was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS Version 19).

3.10.1 Inferential Statistical Testing: Data Preparation and Reduction

Prior to performing the Chi-squared Goodness of Fit test, data preparation was undertaken to enable appropriate statistical manipulation. This was based on acknowledging that whilst the 6 item measurement scale provided the opportunity to demonstrate precision in gathering responses and enable descriptive analysis as previously discussed (Section 3.7.4.2) this approach had implications for conducting inferential testing. Specifically, testing all 6 categories inferentially would not provide the level of statistical sensitivity required to answer several of the research questions which were predicated on ascertaining the extent to which participants demonstrated consensus in either rejecting or accepting each of the statements.

Consequently, data would require to be transformed to enable inferential statistical manipulation based on comparison of only two categories which had provided definitive responses, that of Disagree and Agree. This entailed a two-step process, firstly, combining percentage responses for Strongly Disagree and Disagree categories and likewise Agree and Strongly Agree. Secondly, disaggregating from the data set the Neither/Nor and Unsure responses. Additionally, a minimal number of blank responses to statements were also disaggregated from the data set as part of the preparation process. This approach to transforming data has been used within several studies (Puhl & Luedicke, 2012; Sullivan, Khondkaryan, Dos Santos & Peters, 2011) to permit comprehension of consensus opinions to emerge and enable more detailed inferential statistical analysis to be undertaken using Chi-squared analysis to test for statistical significance.

3.10.2 Analysis of Qualitative Data

The analysis of free-form text commentary was, as previously noted, provided as an adjunct to give participants wider scope in offering opinions. At a descriptive level, this involved conducting a basic thematic analysis. An early decision was to conduct this qualitative analysis manually, as the preference was, as Ryan (2006) suggests, remaining physically connected with the process and outcomes of assigning categories and codes which emerged.

Given how the qualitative data emerged, that is as free-text comments offered by some participants, which were not gathered in the context of a face-to-face interview, the approach adopted to analyse this data aligned with guidance provided by Braun and Clarke (2006) concerning semantic thematic analysis. Braun & Clarke, (2006) explain this as an approach to analysis which considers how participants describe a phenomenon through the use of their own words or phrases. Robson (2011) reports this as capturing the realism in describing the content of the participants' commentary.

Whilst a number of diverse frameworks for qualitative analysis exist, a general consensus within the research literature is that, unlike quantitative methodology, the process is non-prescriptive and should fit with the nature of the design (Cohen et al., 2007; Ryan, 2006). Consequently, Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework assisted to guide a process of analysis which represented and consisted of becoming familiar with the raw data in the format in which it was generated, that is, free text comments written by the participants. This involved reading and rereading on

multiple occasions all 681 individual comments looking for words and phrases frequently used as descriptions by participants of plagiarism governance. This enabled familiarity with the qualitative data to gain insight and consider and categories which were forming as common, recurrent and appeared important in the context of a study on plagiarism governance. This activity reflected 1st level coding which established 108 initial categories. These were then manually grouped together to form initial categories, and from which a larger group of 42 sub-categories was established as part of 2nd level coding before finally assigning these categories to one of 6 key themes: Contextual Communication; Pedagogical Guidance; Governing and Managing Fairly; Complex Decision-Making; Ethical and Moral Challenges; and Professionalism in Academic settings. An example of this process is contained in Appendix 5.

3.11 Ethical Approval

This study adhered to the stipulations as contained within the Code of Practice on Investigations on Human Beings (University of Strathclyde, 2009). Consequently, ethical approval was sought and obtained from my Departmental Ethics Committee. The ethical considerations provide the framework for considering key principles as they relate to Consent, Confidentiality, Anonymity, Non-malfeasance and Beneficence (BERA, 2011).

3.11.1 Informed Consent

Potential participants from 10 HEIs were invited to participate voluntarily via an invitational email (Appendix 2), which delineated informed consent and the right to participate without penalty or prejudice. This was accompanied by a Participant Information Sheet detailing the aims of the study (Appendix 3). The central tenets of informed consent must, by definition, include consideration of the positive or negative consequences of participation, which were highlighted within the Participant Information Sheet. The approach to gaining informed consent aligned with respect for autonomy and thus the capacity to independently decide and act without coercion and express self-determination concerning whether to participate or not in the study (Cohen et al., 2007).

Whilst the principles of gaining informed consent for an on-line survey do not differ from the requirements for any other form of research (Andrews, Nonnecke & Preece, 2003; Archer, 2003; Hewson, 2003; Meho, 2006), these authors concur that web-based approaches can raise other ethical challenges, specifically how consent

could be confirmed. This required me to consider how consent might be flexibly obtained, predicated on the level of ethical risk perceived. In the context of this exploratory study, the target cohort was not considered vulnerable and the anonymised data opinion-orientated and related to strategic policy perspectives concerning the governace of plagiarism. It was therefore perceived that this presented a low risk, ethically. Consquently, the questionnaire was constructed to clearly indicate to participants that proceeding with the study would confirm their consent. Nevertheless, participants were advised, via the Participant Information Sheet, that they would be able to withdraw from the study at any point by simply closing the browser page.

3.11.2 Confidentiality and Anonymity

The ethical precept which underpins confidentiality is the protection of identities from public disclosure and that data generated is used only for its designated purpose (Robson, 2011). Applying the principle of confidentiality ensured that anonymity was respected within the confines of this study as returned questionnaires were web-based, as opposed to email based, therefore it was not possible to identify who has returned the on-line self-completed questionnaire or from which institution. This was despite the requirement to establish initial contact with potential participants, using freely available names and email addresses sourced from HEI web pages under 'staff directory' or 'staff contacts'.

3.11.3 Non-malfeasance and Beneficence

The principle of non-malfeasance has a clear resonance with causing no harm and beneficence is understood as the requirement to benefit as a consequence of taking part (Cohen et al., 2007). Whilst the latter precept may be less discernable for participants, the aspirations associated with this study aim to benefit educational practice. As previously mentioned, participants were provided with a Participant Information Sheet to inform their decision to consent. The Participant Information Sheet accompanied the invitational email which was sent to potential participants and provided details of how to access the on-line web based anonymous questionnaire.

3.11.4 Management Access Approval

Notwithstanding application of the above principles satisfying the nature of research governance dictated that Management Access Approval was sought from the eleven Scottish Universities (Deans/Heads of School) which offer Nurse Education to gain negotiated access to contact potential Nurse Educator participants who were employed therein. Despite Nurse Educators' email addresses being within the public domain and accessible via HEIs web pages, this was undertaken to demonstrate due diligence and professional propriety. In concurring with Woods and Roberts (2003) gaining this type of access to participants was not considered a trivial matter or forgone conclusion, hence a request letter was sent by registered post (Appendix 6). This resulted in a number of requests from the majority of Deans/Head of Department (*n* = 8) asking for verification of ethical approval, which was promptly provided.

However, 2 institutions requested copies of the original documentation prepared for ethical approval (i.e. Ethics Proposal, Ethical Approval Confirmation, Survey Questionnaire, Participant Information Sheet), which they then processed via their own HEI's ethics committee. Based on the email feedback received from these institutions, the documentation was requested to facilitate ethical approval from these institutions and subsequently inform their decision-making regarding Management Access Approval. This apparently duplicate process, which resulted in no formal communication or documentation to evidence that subsequent approval processes has taken place, raised interesting questions regarding the nature of the access approval process when ethical approval had already been granted by my host institution. In relation to this study, the experiences of dealing with a number of institutions exhibiting different approaches resulted in inconsistencies and in some instances vague rationales as to why a decision related to Management Access Approval was based on further ethical scrutiny. Consequently, this resulted in a delay of 3 weeks in deploying the survey based on the requirement to ensure the conditions for deployment of the trigger email were uniformly and simultaneously administered to the entire cohort.

3.12 Summary

The aim of this study was to explore Nurse Educators' opinions of plagiarism governance. In this exploratory study, the intention was to accurately capture numerical data to explore the phenomenon under investigation, reflecting a quantitative tradition whose philosophical derivations reside within the positivist paradigm.

However, this study also invited participants to provide supplementary qualitative commentary in the context of free-text responses. Whilst the decision to permit the inclusion of qualitative data was made at the methodological level, and gathered in the context of participants self-completing a questionnaire, this occurred as a simultaneous event as part of deploying the survey instrument so this should be seen as a mixed-data, but not mixed-method study. Whilst quantitative and qualitative data were analysed separately, they were amalgamated in the context of presenting the results chapters to provide coherence.

Taking cognisance of the questions posed in this study, an exploratory descriptive approach was justified in addressing an underexplored area to generate new knowledge regarding plagiarism governance, where currently none existed. This was undertaken using a fixed and systematic approach to report, explain and generalise numerical findings. Moreover, the research design was categorised as cross-sectional, being undertaken as a single event over a short time frame of 9 months.

To contextually understand the topic, the study design comprised of an initial scoping and analysis of HEI's policies on plagiarism which was followed by deploying a web-based survey. The target population was identified as Nurse Educators with active teaching roles from within and across Scottish HEIs. Ethical approval was provided by the University of Strathclyde and negotiated access to contact Nurse Educators was obtained from Deans/Heads of School within 10 out of 11 HEIs offering Nurse Education in Scotland. Relevant data from HEIs' plagiarism policies was extracted from the 11 HEIs using a bespoke audit tool and from the survey data from participants via a self-completed web-based questionnaire which resulted in a response rate of 44% (n = 187). The data generated was then statistically analysed using appropriate tests and software.

This chapter has detailed the rationale behind the study and its conduct. In the following three chapters the results are analysed and discussed drawing on all the data available, which the represents the interrelated domains presented

as follows: Chapter 4, *Communicating the Concept of Plagiarism in Higher Education;* Chapter 5, *Engaging with the Duality of Plagiarism Governance in Higher Education;* and finally Chapter 6, *Plagiarism the role implications for the Nurse Educator*.

Chapter Four: Communicating the Concept of Plagiarism in Higher Education: Dimensions and Distinctions

4.1 Introduction: the Results Chapters

This investigation focused on exploring Nurse Educators' opinions of the strategic governance of plagiarism within Higher Education and the inherent implications for Nurse Education. As detailed in Chapter 3, this exploratory study adopted quantitative approaches to answer the research questions, which was undertaken in two Phases: initially a documentary analysis of Scottish HEIs' plagiarism governance policies followed by a web-based survey. The survey also provided the opportunity for participants to offer additional free-text qualitative comments.

In this Chapter, the construct of *Communicating the Concept of Plagiarism in Higher Education* is presented and discussed, drawing on data sets from Phases 1 and 2 of the study. Key findings are presented, analysed and discussed in relation to how the context and content of strategic plagiarism governance is illuminated in terms of its distinctions and dimensions.

In offering an original contribution to knowledge concerning the governance of plagiarism, efforts were made, within this and the following two results chapters, to offer a critical comparison with the existing literature. However, as identified in Chapters 1 and 2, this was challenging due to the limitations associated with availability of relevant literature on plagiarism within Nurse Education. Consequently, literature from the broader topic of academic dishonesty, within which plagiarism is subsumed and given limited and or implicit reference, was utilised to support the discussion. Furthermore, it was noted that the research approaches adopted within this literature mainly reflected the qualitative paradigm signalling further limitations concerning the ability to offer critical comparisons between what was found in this study and the existing knowledge base.

4.2 Sample Demographics

Of the 173 participants who completed the web-based survey, and confirmed an active teaching role, **Table 4.1** illustrates that the most prevalent group were those occupying the academic rank of lecturer (78% *n* = 135). Those educators holding more senior academic ranks of Senior Lecturer (18.5% *n* = 32) and Head of Department /Dean / Professor (3.5% *n* = 6) were proportionally less prominent. The

number of years teaching within Higher Education was provided by 98% (*n* = 169) of participants, with the highest responses occurring within the 5-10 years category.

Table 4.1 Academic rank and length of service of respondents

Rank	Frequency	Percentage
Lecturer	135	78.0
Senior Lecturer	32	18.5
Head of Department/Dean/Professor	6	3.5
Years Teaching	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
< 5	18	10.4
5-10	59	34.1
11-20	37	21.7
16-20	50	28.9
21-25	5	2.9

4.3. Plagiarism Governance: Distinctions and Dimensions

The centrality of the research question, 'What information do Scottish Higher Education Institutions which offer Nurse Education provide in relation to plagiarism governance within their policies and does information continuity exist across these institutions?' provided the opportunity to explore and benchmark the approaches HEIs adopt in articulating plagiarism governance. Within Phase 1 of the study, this question permitted exploration from three differing perspectives, the first of which contributes to findings within this Chapter, the latter two being considered within the following Chapter:

- Context and content of plagiarism policies: if and how information was provided to define plagiarism, identify different types of behaviour associated with plagiarism.

- Academic engagement: if information was provided on managing plagiarism in relation to delineating processes for dealing with minor and major infringements.

- Professional engagement: if the information contained within plagiarism policies provided guidance or made reference to governance requirements for professionally based programmes.

The formats in which HEIs provide information concerning their governance of plagiarism are outlined in **Table 4.2.** Analysis demonstrates plagiarism policy documentation was located across an array of sources, but consistently within Assessment Regulations and to a lesser extent within Codes of Conduct/Discipline and bespoke documents. The search for policy documentation on plagiarism had involved cross-checking potential web locations within the HEIs and also included the search for bespoke documentation which might exist within Schools / Departments of Nursing. In this context, analysis revealed that whilst 8 out of 11 Scottish HEIs had produced bespoke policy guidance on plagiarism, none had done so from a professional perspective, that is, at School or Department level. This offers a contrast with the findings from the pilot study which evidenced specific plagiarism guidance had been produced by Nursing Departments within institutions which linked and delineated the professional governance requirement, which is Fitness to Practise (NMC, 2010a).

Table 4.2 HEIs' Plagiarism Policies: Location and Format

Format and Location	Frequency
HEIs using bespoke plagiarism policy document	8
HEIs locating plagiarism policy within Assessment Regulations	11
HEIs locating plagiarism policy within separate Code of conduct/discipline	8
HEIs including plagiarism policy within School of Nursing documents	0
HEIs locating plagiarism policy within Quality Handbook	3
HEIs locating plagiarism within types of documents other than those listed above	3

Overall, HEIs appear to adopt a consistent approach to locating policies pertaining to plagiarism governance, suggesting information can is not widely dispersed despite some additional collocation within a range of documents.

4.3.1 Policy Approaches: Defining and Illuminating Plagiarism

Whilst there is no prescriptive approach as to what should be included within policies (QAA, 2011), key themes from the literature were utilised as a framework to review

how the governance of plagiarism was defined and illuminated by HEIs. Consequently, the documentary analysis entailed an exploration of the inclusion and description of definitions; inclusion of the dimensions of plagiarism, which acknowledges this may involve unintentional or intentional acts; acknowledgement which links the avoidance of plagiarism with promoting learning; the expectations of Higher Education associated with meeting academic standards of integrity; and finally, how learner behaviour is expressed. These findings are evidenced in **Table 4.3**

Table 4.3 HEI Policy Definition of Plagiarism

Definition	Frequency
HEIs using the base definition 'Passing off someone else's work as your own'	11
HEIs including commentary to convey plagiarism can involve an attempt to gain an unfair advantage	1
HEIs including comment to convey plagiarism can involve collusion	1
HEIs including comments to convey plagiarism can involve self-plagiarism	1
HEIs indicating plagiarism can involve copying from books, journal, web, commissioning from essay mill/ghost writer	2
HEIs specifying where plagiarism can occur - e.g. essays, projects, dissertations	7

As indicated above, the 11 Scottish HEIs offering Nurse Education evidenced consensus in adopting, as a base definition, plagiarism being *'Passing off someone else's work as your own'*. This definition appears drawn from dictionary sources (e.g. Oxford Dictionary, 2010) and was identified within the policies scrutinised as generically applicable within the institutions, that is, there was no indication of, or reference to, local adaptations at a School/Faculty level. Nevertheless, whilst this definition appeared to be ubiquitous, it was noted that a few HEIs had expanded upon this generic definition to include and explain the wider remit of plagiarism such as collusion, commissioning and self-plagiarism. Seven out of the eleven HEIs also provided examples where plagiarism could occur in relation to formal assessment (e.g. coursework essays, exams, presentations).

Whilst the use of the aforementioned definition of plagiarism appears representative of consistency, comparative analysis of HEIs' definitions indicated some variances, for example, the addition of the phrase *'substantial and intentional'* [Institution E]. Whilst 'intentionality' is comprehended as a contemplative behavioural action, the use of 'substantial' lacked any detailed or contextual explanation. Furthermore, the

apparent fusion of these terms as a part of an explanatory phrase within a policy is also problematic in recognising that proportionality and intentionality can be mutually exclusive entities. When articulated in this fashion, the lack of clarity arguably raises difficulties in managing plagiarism based on this type of description. Moreover, from a governance perspective, this presents an obscure picture.

This issue of communicative uncertainty is further exposed within another definition, which although cautioning against the use of unacknowledged sources, includes the codicil '*…apart from minor and infrequent references'* [Institution C] again obscuring the explanation. Whilst the issue of extending policy definitions to aid understanding and contextualise the concept in the Higher Education setting is a current driver (QAA, 2011), a paradox appears obvious with the inclusion of unexplained abstractions, which may introduce further ambiguities. These findings concur with results from Jones' (2006) study on how HEIs define plagiarism, which, in utilising documents from ten out of the same eleven HEIs in this study, suggests that the situation concerning communicative ambiguity may remain unchanged.

Also noted from the documentary analysis was that, in defining plagiarism, only 2 HEIs provide substantive examples to explain how plagiarism may manifest, such as copying from books, journals, web sources, commissioning from essay mill/ghost writer. With contemporary drivers in Higher Education promoting continuous enhancement via policy review processes (HEA, 2011), this area merits consideration by HEIs as it would appear to demonstrate information deficits in policy content.

The complexities of plagiarism, and its manifestations within Higher Education, have in recent years given way to illuminating its wider dimensions, which under this umbrella term (Carroll, 2002) may include, unintentional plagiarism involving poor academic skills or intentional premeditated acts of deception to gain an unfair advantage. The differing dimensions associated with plagiarism have become a crucial part of the contemporary debate concerning how to assess and manage plagiarism effectively and fairly (Badge & Scott, 2008; Crisp, 2007; Pickard, 2006). Consequently, the necessity for HEIs to demonstrate these dimensions within contemporary plagiarism policy has become an important issue and entwined with implications that plagiarism may result in diminished knowledge acquisition (Carroll, 2010) and the subversion of academic integrity (HEA, 2010; QAA, 2011).

Against this backdrop, **Table 4.4** indicates that few HEIs have made inroads to delineate the dimensions of plagiarism within their policies, with less than half

commenting on its differing dimensions, potential impact on learning and expectations concerning its avoidance.

Table 4.4 HEIs' Policy Dimensions, Expectations and Outcomes

Dimension and Expectations	Frequency
HEIs including additional comment indicating plagiarism can involve an intentional or unintentional act	3
HEIs linking the avoidance of plagiarism with promoting learning, knowledge, skills (graduate qualities)	1
HEIs linking the avoidance of plagiarism with promoting and maintaining academic values, standards and integrity	4

The ability to offer comparative analysis with existing empirical work related to documentary analysis is thwarted by a lack of scholarly work in this area. However, it appears obvious from the documentary analysis that the complex dimensions of plagiarism are not being communicated within policies to reflect and accurately depict its currency or contextualisation in Higher Education.

4.3.2 Nurse Educators' Opinions: Defining and Illuminating Plagiarism

Drawing on the findings from the documentary analysis and key themes identified within the literature review, Nurse Educators' opinions on plagiarism governance were sought. These findings are quantitatively presented within the following tables, which display descriptive and inferential statistics. To promote clarity, the bolding of results is provided within these tables to indicate the most popular response category and the overall consensus opinion held by participants.

The descriptive findings presented in **Table 4.5** identify the frequency and percentage of responses for each of the Likert-type categories. As indicated**,** whilst participants responded within all 6 categories, the most popular frequencies recorded by participants accorded with them either agreeing or strongly agreeing with each of the statements.

Table 4.5 Opinions: Defining and Illuminating Plagiarism

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Neither/ Nor		Unsure	
	f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
4. 'Plagiarism is passing off someone else's work as your own' conveys a contemporary understanding in the context of Higher Education	2	1.2	29	16.8	**93**	**53.8**	36	20.8	11	6.4	2	1.2
5. An HEI's definition of plagiarism should include the phrase 'whether intentionally or unintentionally',	5	2.9	10	5.8	**81**	**46.8**	66	38.2	8	4.6	3	1.7
7. An HEIs definition should provide examples such as direct copying, close paraphrasing collusion self-plagiarism etc.	3	1.7	1	0.6	45	26.0	**121**	**69.9**	2	1.2	1	0.6
8. HEIs should adopt a standard definition of plagiarism and this should be universally applied within all academic disciplines	1	0.6	11	6.4	59	34.3	**86**	**50.0**	11	6.4	4	2.3
9. Poor academic practice, e.g. ignorant /careless /inaccurate referencing, poor paraphrasing, should not be defined as plagiarism	2	1.2	54	31.8	**73**	**42.9**	14	8.2	16	9.4	11	6.5
11. An HEI's definition should state that learning may be compromised as a result of plagiarising the work of others, either intentionally or unintentionally	1	0.6	17	10.0	**72**	**42.4**	56	32.9	17	10.0	7	4.1
12. An HEI's definition of plagiarism should not be open to individual interpretation based on an educator's prior conceptions	3	1.8	12	7.0	68	39.8	**79**	**46.2**	7	4.1	2	1.2

Notes: f = frequency; % = percentage of total responses

Following on from this descriptive work, in-depth analysis was undertaken to, firstly ascertain the consensus opinion which either rejected or endorsed each of the statements; and secondly, to inferentially test the preferences of participants in either rejecting or endorsing the statements contained within the questionnaire. These findings are presented in **Table 4.6.**

In undertaking inferential testing, the Chi-squared Goodness of Fit test, denoted as χ^2 as outlined below in **Table 4.6,** was applied using the following formula:

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(\text{Observed Value} - \text{Expected Value})^2}{(\text{Expected Value})}$$

This test is based on confirming the null hypothesis, which is a statement about equivalence in that there is no relationship between variables being studied (Munro, 2005; Salkind, 2008; Newby, 2010). Applied in this context, this test hypothesises that no difference will exist between response levels and therefore there will be an equal number of participants who will disagree and agree with each of the statements contained within the questionnaire. Using the above formula, this test compared the difference between the number of expected responses with the actual number of responses for the Disagree and Agree variables. As no previous quantitative work appeared to have been undertaken specific to plagiarism governance, the level of significance was set as $\alpha = 0.05$. None of the cells had an expected cell count of less than 5.

As discussed in section 3.10.1 undertaking inferential testing required data preparation which involved combining the Strongly Disagree and Disagree responses in order to compare these with combined Strongly Agree and Agree responses. Further, responses indicating the Neither/Nor and Unsure were removed from the data set.

Table 4.6 Consensus and Chi-squared Analysis: Defining and Illuminating Plagiarism

Statement	Total responses	Reject *f*	Reject %	Endorse *f*	Endorse %	χ^2
4. Plagiarism is passing off someone else's work as your own' conveys a contemporary understanding	160	31	19.4	**129**	**80.6**	60.2*
5. An HEI's definition of plagiarism should include the phrase 'whether intentionally or unintentionally'	162	15	9.3	**147**	**90.7**	107.56*
7. An HEIs definition should provide examples such as direct copying, close paraphrasing collusion self-plagiarism etc.	170	4	2.4	**166**	**97.6**	154.37*
8. HEIs should adopt a standard definition of plagiarism and this should be universally applied within all academic disciplines	157	12	7.6	**145**	**92.4**	112.66*
9. Poor academic practice e.g. non-attribution to source, poor paraphrasing should not be defined as plagiarism	143	56	39.2	**87**	**60.8**	6.72*
11. An HEI's definition should state that learning may be compromised as a result of plagiarising the work of others, either intentionally or unintentionally	146	18	12.3	**128**	**87.7**	82.87*
12. An HEI's definition of plagiarism should not be open to individual interpretation based on an educator's prior conceptions	162	15	9.3	**147**	**90.7**	107.55*

Notes: f = frequency; % = percentage of total responses; * p <.05

Notably, the above findings identify responses with high percentage values, with six out of the seven statements attracting endorsement responses of 80% and higher. For example, statements 5 and 11, which sought opinions concerning the inclusion of qualifying phraseology to capture the dimensions of plagiarism, i.e. 'intentionally or unintentionally' and 'compromising learning' resulted in agreement by 90.7% (n = 147) and 87.7% (n = 128) of participants respectively. Thus participants would appear to support definition augmentation which seeks to convey a comprehensive and explicit approach to explaining plagiarism within policy documentation. In probing this issue, participants were asked if *'Poor academic practice e.g. non-attribution to source, poor paraphrasing should not be defined as plagiarism'* (statement 9). Whilst endorsed, this was the only statement which recorded, comparatively, a sub 80% frequency response (60.8% n = 87).

In relation to defining plagiarism within HEI policies, all 7 statements as detailed above in **Table 4.6,** reached statistical significance; therefore the null hypothesis was

rejected, as the likelihood of these observations occurring by chance within the population was less than 5%. Thus it can be concluded there was a significant level of agreement among respondents within each of the statements provided. The implications of these findings provide evidence of how plagiarism policy should be defined and expanded. In practical terms this suggests that policies require addressing the deficits which were identified within the documentary analysis to promote clarity, explicitness and comprehensiveness.

Whilst direct comparison of these outcomes with similarly focused literature is prohibited by a dearth of relevant quantitative studies, other relevant sources have emphasised the need for greater clarity concerning plagiarism, indicating this is an issue which receives wide support (Gallant & Drinan, 2006; Hart & Friesner, 2004). More recently the QAA's (2011) guidance on *Understanding Assessment: its role in safeguarding academic standards and quality in Higher Education* produced for early career educators, advocated the need for policy to reflect the dimensions of plagiarism.

In extending this argument in another direction, participants also endorsed statements in support of HEIs adopting a *'standard definition with universal application within all academic disciplines'* and that espoused definitions *'should not be open to individual interpretation based on an educator's prior conceptions'*. The opinions expressed by Nurse Educator participants appear resolute. However, as previously noted, an alternative picture can prevail in that some educators gravitate towards superimposing their own interpretations on established definitions. Whilst direct comparison between the findings from this study on plagiarism governance with prior work (Borg, 2008; East, 2009; Flint et al., 2006; Simon et al., 2003) is limited by these studies adopting different methodological approaches and methods, in terms of policy implementation, and applying the lens offered by Goffman (1959) (as cited in Lowe, Purchase & Ellis, 2011) regarding 'front stage' actions, these findings would appear to offer contrasting evidence.

4.4 Delineating Plagiarism: Qualitative Comments

Whilst there was quantitative consensus which endorsed the aforementioned statements outlined in the survey tool, some participants offered additional qualitative free-text comments. As outlined in Chapter 3, comments were categorised, coded and assigned to a dominant theme depending on the words

and phrases used and collapsed to represent the theme of *contextual communication:*

> *'While this definition* 'passing off someone else's work as your own - i.e. words, thoughts, ideas' *may appear logical it is too black and white…context is everything'*
>
> *'Not clear enough'*
>
> *'This definition does not include students who use their own work in assignments where they may be cut and paste sections from earlier essays. It does not include ideas- students struggle to understand what plagiarism is and are quite naive with regards to it'*
>
> *'too general for the complexities of the situations we have to deal with'*
>
> *'The definition may not be clear to students or to academic staff and therefore may cause confusion for students in ensuring the avoidance of plagiarism and thus, for academic staff it may then be difficult to apply'*

The comments offered by some participants reflected both disagreement and agreement with statement 4 within the questionnaire, and appears to suggest that policies which utilise the base definition of 'passing off someone else's work as your own - i.e. words, thoughts, ideas', can be superficial in their attempt to communicate the concept.

The recurrence of words/phrases associated with *clarity*, *explicitness* and *comprehensiveness* was obvious within the thematic scrutiny of free-text comments. These findings resonate with themes within the literature where educators identify deficiencies in the way in which plagiarism governance is articulated (Borg, 2008). Consequently, it was unsurprising that some comments expressed the need for communication of the concept to exhibit precision to support the functionality of governance. Recent guidance from the HEA (2011) suggests likewise, endorsing the use of clear terminology and pragmatic exemplars.

Also evident under the theme of *contextual communication* was a plethora of comments reflecting the differing dimensions of plagiarism:

> *'Not all poor academic practice is plagiarism. However, poor academic practice by learners can lead to plagiarism and reflects the nature and extent of lack of attention to academic conventions'*

'All plagiarism is poor academic practice but there needs to be a dividing line between what is 'unintentional poor academic practice' and what is 'plagiarism'

'Inclusion of 'unintentionally' can be used as a learning opportunity, but not punitive'

'I agree in principle however it can be difficult to differentiate. This would be understandable at level 7, but not at any higher level, where students should have developed their academic practice'

'There should be real plagiarism [intentional] and poor scholarship [unintentional] these are the real distinctions to be made. All this is made more difficult with the blithe use of Turnitin and the like and cut off % levels of plagiarism or poor scholarship leading to letters going out from committees with offensive labels such as 'cheating, plagiarism and poor scholarship'. Once these letters are out the damage is done whatever the outcome'

With a total of 41 individual 'free-text' comments attributed to this statement, some participants were clearly motivated to express their thoughts. Notably, some appeared divided on how representative plagiarism is as an umbrella term for both unintentional and intentional acts. Whilst scrutiny of the literature would suggest a similar response (de Jager & Brown, 2010), the QAA, as indicated in Chapter 2, appears to have deviated to a position where plagiarism is only synonymous with wilful intent (QAA, 2010). However, more striking within participants' commentary was that delineating and making distinctions regarding the differing dimensions of plagiarism resonated with supporting equitable management and in this sense comments concurred with studies which have explored the association between policy and practice (Badge & Scott, 2008; Pickard, 2006).

4.5 Distinctions in Illuminating Plagiarism: Learner Behaviour

Pursuing the issue of how HEIs contextualised plagiarism within their policies also involved scrutiny of, if and how they expressed learner behaviour. Analysis aimed to expose the use of behavioural terminology; how this might be expressed to take account of and portray the different dimensions of plagiarism. In this context, it was anticipated behavioural terms linked to unintentional plagiarism, if noted, would align with phraseology akin to unwitting non-attribution to source, ignorance, poor academic skills or misunderstanding academic convention in paraphrasing or citation would have emerged. Conversely, where intentional plagiarism was delineated, this would affiliate with behaviours purported as cheating, deceit, dishonesty, misappropriation and intellectual theft (i.e. non legal context) (Park, 2003; Fishman, 2009). Findings from documentary analysis are presented in **Table 4.7.**

Table 4.7 HEIs' Delineation of Learner Behaviour linked to Plagiarism

Behaviour	Frequency
HEIs offering comment(s) within their policies of plagiarism equating with a defined type of behaviour	7
HEIs omitting comment(s) on behaviour typology	4
HEIs referring to plagiarism as behaviour associated with cheating i.e. act dishonestly to gain an unfair advantage by ignoring rules, negligence, malpractice, misconduct	5
HEIs referring to plagiarism as behaviour associated with deceit i.e. as misrepresentation/ committing an act which is untrue/concealed/dishonest	5
HEIs referring to plagiarism as behaviour associated with intellectual theft (non legal context) i.e. the of taking of property (words, thoughts, ideas) without proper acknowledgment	0
HEIs referring to plagiarism as behaviour which can be unintentional (i.e. ignorance/lack of academic skills - poor paraphrasing, referencing	0

Whilst not all the HEIs demonstrated expressions of learner behaviours associated with plagiarism, seven institutions did make explicit reference to behavioural descriptions. This manifested as single references to, or combinations of, 'cheating' (n = 5) and 'deceit' (n = 5) in the context of academic dishonesty. Consequently, there are no obvious attempts by any of the HEIs to represent plagiarism other than behaviour associated with dishonesty. This appears an interesting homogenisation, particularly when 3 institutions included reference to the unintentional dimension within their definition of plagiarism. The stance of limiting behavioural expressions to intentional acts arguably isolates plagiarism as a one dimensional concept, in that it is associated with a contemplative intent to cheat, deceive and act dishonestly. With no attempt to express unintentional behaviour, for example, as ignorant or imperceptive, institutional approaches appear centred on expressing infringements reprehensibly which thereafter align with punitive policy management (Ellery, 2008; Pittam et al, 2009; McWilliam, 2004).

Notably, and contrasting with the typicality of how intentional plagiarism is commentated upon within the Higher Education literature, none of the HEIs made a direct reference to plagiarism equating with 'intellectual theft'. Despite the non legal context, the omission of this phrase is interesting given numerous occurrences within the literature of equating plagiarism with literary theft.

However, an issue for consideration by Nurse Educators is that, whilst Scottish HEIs have not associated plagiarism with 'literary theft' in the metaphorical sense, if proven, major cases of plagiarism involving post-qualified nurse learners can be

referred by an HEI for further consideration and adjudication to the NMC, whose assessments, as previously identified, have included adjudication based on the legal test of 'Dishonesty in Theft' (i.e., R v Ghosh ([1982] QB 1052). At face value, this appears a confusing situation, and represents a dichotomy between the approaches and criteria of these two bodies in deciding the outcome of individual cases. There appears to be a lack of consistency with the HEIs Fitness to Practise panels referring cases to the NMC, with the former not treating the occurrence as 'theft', but the latter's subsequent adjudication being based on 'Dishonesty in Theft'. From both organisational and professional perspectives, the application of this type of case to test cases of plagiarism by qualified practitioners, as part of the spectrum of governance, is an area worthy of further investigation and clarification.

4.5.1 Nurse Educator Responses: Delineating Plagiarism Behaviour

In exploring the behavioural contextualisation of plagiarism with participants, a line of inquiry was established using key terms extrapolated from the literature and the documentary analysis concerning how this should be portrayed. Furthermore, whilst HEIs' policies, as indicated, did not attempt to differentiate unintentional or intentional behaviour, the opportunity was taken to ascertain participants' opinions of whether this should be morally contextualised. **Table 4.8** presents the frequency and percentage of responses within each of the 6 categories outlined in Likert-type scale. In terms of representing the most popular responses, there was agreement with statements 6 and 10 and disagreement for statement 13.

Table 4.8 Opinions: Delineating Learner Behaviour

Statements	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Neither/ Nor		Unsure	
	f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
6. Whilst defining plagiarism may include reference to an intentional or unintentional act, not all instances of plagiarism should be regarded as cheating	1	0.6	20	11.6	**100**	**58.1**	41	23.8	7	4.1	3	1.7
10. HEIs should use terms such as theft, fraud, cheating and rule breaking, within their plagiarism policies to categorise this type of intentional academic misconduct	2	1.2	35	20.3	**71**	**41.3**	26	15.1	13	7.6	25	14.5
13. HEIs should avoid moralising commentary such as 'dishonesty', 'deception' and 'misappropriation' within their plagiarism policies	6	3.5	**59**	**34.1**	57	32.9	16	9.2	22	12.7	13	7.5

In-depth analyses to determine consensus opinion and inferentially test the preferences of this cohort using the Chi-squared Goodness of Fit test (χ^2) are presented below in **Table 4.9.**

Table 4.9 Consensus and Chi-squared analysis: Learner Behaviours

Statement	*Total Response*	Reject *f*	Reject %	Endorse *f*	Endorse %	χ^2
6. Whilst defining plagiarism may include reference to an intentional or unintentional act, not all instances of plagiarism should be regarded as cheating	162	21	13.0	**141**	**87.0**	88.88*
10. HEIs should use terms such as theft, fraud, cheating and rule breaking, within their plagiarism policies to categorise this type of intentional academic misconduct	134	37	27.6	**97**	**72.4**	26.86*
13. HEIs should avoid moralising commentary such as 'dishonesty', 'deception' and 'misappropriation' within their plagiarism policies	138	65	47.1	**73**	**52.9**	.46

*Notes: f = frequency; % = percentage of total responses; * p <.05*

Analysis indicated endorsement of all 3 statements and the Chi-squared testing established statistically significant findings for statements 6 and 10. With significantly more respondents agreeing rather than disagreeing with these statements, the implication of these non-random findings are that whilst academic misconduct requires to be behaviourally categorised, this requires evaluation and discernment within policies to convey clarity of understanding.

In comparing the findings between **Table 4.8** and **Table 4.9**, responses to statement 13 appeared to exhibit some notable features. Firstly, despite the most popular response category on the Likert-type scale being recorded as Disagree (34.1% *n* = 59) within **Table 4.8**, indicating moralising commentary should be included, this changed when categorical opinions were aggregated; an interesting occurrence, given statement 10 provided a similarly focused statement about the usage of behavioural terms. Secondly, the consensus opinion by Nurse Educators that moralising commentary should be avoided within HEIs' plagiarism policies would appear to offer a contrast with the nursing literature on plagiarism, which overwhelmingly grandstands on the theme of morality.

4.5.2 Delineating Plagiarism Behaviour: Qualitative comments

Illuminating and defining plagiarist behaviour also drew several free-text comments by participants, which reflected issues linking plagiarism to learners' intentionality and their academic level of study. Within this commentary there was direct reference to plagiarism, professional nursing practice and its affiliation with professional probity. These comments are further discussed contextually within Chapter 6. The theme of *ethical and moral challenges* emerged from these free-text comments:

> *'The word cheating may be useful, but the other words (theft and fraud) have such negative connotations that are not useful'*
>
> *'Cheating certainly implies intent, especially in order to gain advantage, however unintentional plagiarism may occur with no intent to cheat'*
>
> *'Theft seems rather a strong word but would agree inclusion of terms such as fraud, academic dishonesty'*
>
> *'These are derogatory words, which will make people evaluate themselves negatively, when they may have unintentionally carried out an act. I think we should show students more respect than this. It's all about context and student intention'.*
>
> *'These words to me convey bullying, harassment and disrespect'*

'On the one hand this terminology may more clearly express the seriousness of the act on the other hand if unproven it could leave the innocent party feeling they have a slur on their character'

'Not sure but terminology like this makes me uncomfortable as an educator'

Despite the educational literature presenting, under the auspices of academic misconduct, behavioural depictions of plagiarism as abstractions of cheating, the non legal context of literary theft and deceit (Bennett, 2005; Falchikov, 2005; Williams, 2008; Sikes, 2009; Szabo & Underwood, 2004; Wicker, 2007), participants who offered supplementary comments appeared averse to the use of certain words, particularly with the non legal context of 'theft' and 'fraud'. Noticeably, participants expressed concern regarding the negative impact the usage of these words may have on the learner and discomfort for educators, the latter point concurring with findings from Paterson et al.'s (2003) study. The aforementioned comments identify with the finding from the literature (de Jager & Brown, 2010; Sutherland-Smith, 2005, 2010) concerning the dichotomous position educators face in coping with the dimensions of plagiarism by learners and the tensions, emotional and otherwise, it produces. The crux of commentary reflects the moral distinctions, which is ultimately required at some point in the management process, to distinguish between an unintentional or deliberate act of deception.

4.6 Educators' Pedagogical Responsibilities

The focus of this study centred on quantitatively gathering the opinions of Nurse Educators concerning the strategic governance of plagiarism and its implications within Nurse Education. However, the voices of Nurse Educators, via their qualitative free-text comments within early sections of the instrument, introduced the sub-theme of educators' pedagogical responsibilities. This appeared distinct from professional role implications associated with plagiarism which was solicited and is discussed in detail in Chapter 6. Specifically, these free-text comments contributed to the theme of *Pedagogical Guidance*. Succinctly, the verbatim comments supported the need for educators to extend any policy articulation directly to the classroom setting:

'However some further explanation and support guidance as what this means to students is still required to clarify issues for them'

'Students can be confused in relation to the important differences between using direct quotes from texts within their work to support key arguments without referencing these appropriately and attempting to pass of excerpts from texts as their own work'

'Despite sessions of academic support, the process of developing academic writing is largely hidden, or rather, trial and error for students, hence the importance of formative work to ensure strengths and weaknesses can be detected and recommendations put in place to address these.'

'The importance of academic writing and standards and its relationship to plagiarism need to be linked. It is an important aspect of education for learners'

'many students misunderstand the nature of plagiarism and as such accusing the student of cheating before the facts are ascertained can be damaging to the student'

Although not explicitly contextualised as responsibility, Ellery (2009) and the QAA (2011) state that educators should actively and pragmatically embed, through direct practice and feedback, pedagogical guidance and support to avoid plagiarism within curricula. This suggests that it is insufficient for educators to simply point learners towards policy and instructional documentation and assume by osmosis that institutional conventions are understood and academic skills are honed.

Emergent commentary also indicated that educators require being cognisant with facilitating the enculturation of discrete cohorts of learners, particularly those whose transition into Higher Education occurs as part of current drivers linked to internationalisation and widening participation.

'Widening participation and internationalisation mean that previous academic expectations experienced by students (sharing group work and writing shared assignments) can impact on them in a UK HEI'

'Foreign students tend to find this concept difficult to understand and our own country (home) students don't understand about referencing work used'

Juwah, Lal and Beloucif (2006) and Neville (2010) imply that interpretive differences place international learners in an educationally vulnerable position and that creative pedagogies are required to promote inclusion and enculturation as part of transition processes. Gilmore, Strickland, Timmerman, Maher, and Feldon (2010) concur and emphasise the challenges of enculturation, uniquely within postgraduate study and by international learners, whose propensity to fall foul of plagiarism was found to be statistically significant in comparison to those with English as a first language. Ellery (2009) conducted a similar study involving postgraduate multi-national students (n = 151), to investigate if there was a relationship between plagiarism and ethnicity, gender and language. The pedagogical intervention

involved pre-emptive tutorials to offset previously noted high rates of plagiarism prior to learners submitting course work. Despite the intervention, analysis determined that 26% of the cohort's essays exhibited plagiarism, with higher rates observed within ethnic cohorts, such as Indian and Black South African learners. However, Chi-squared analyses determined that the percentage differences across the various groupings were not statistically significant. Questionably, Ellery (2009) uses this random happenstance finding to signal that ethnically diverse cohorts are more at risk.

4.7 Summary

This chapter presented the findings and discussions which arose from data which was gathered and associated with the construct of *Communicating the Concept of Plagiarism in Higher Education*. This utilised data sets drawn from segments of the documentary analysis of HEIs' policies and a survey of Nurse Educators' opinions on plagiarism governance, involving quantitative data and, as supplementary data, unrestricted free-text comments from open-ended qualitative responses.

Key findings from the documentary analysis indicated that, whilst HEIs provided policy information relevant to the governance of plagiarism, deficits were evident within and across the policy documents of the eleven HEIs whose documents were included in this study. Of particular note was that few HEIs give visibility to the differing dimensions of plagiarism, occurring as Carroll (2002) elicits, as either an unintentional or an intentional act. In this context, approaches by some institutions about what policy brings to explaining plagiarism appear superficial. Predominantly this refers to articulating and providing more detail as part of defining and describing the wider remits of plagiarism as it relates to the Higher Education setting.

These findings contributed to exploring the opinions of Nurse Educators on how plagiarism policy should be detailed. Whilst data analysis observed a range of opinions, located within a 6 item Likert-type scale, definitive opinions provided consensus endorsement of statements which specifically sought to promote clarity, explicitness and comprehensiveness of plagiarism policy.

Statistically significant Chi-squared analysis testing indicated a greater level of endorsement for statement 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11 and 12, which were associated with better defining the concept. Additional free-text comments offered by some participants

appeared to support the quantitative findings suggesting plagiarism policy requires being communicatively explicit.

Communicating and conceptualising the concept of plagiarism also involved eliciting how plagiarism was behaviourally expressed within policy, with the majority of HEIs opting to acknowledge plagiarism as a form of cheating and/or deceit. There was no reference to describing behaviours that reflected plagiarism in an unintentional context, which appears an omission. Noteworthy was avoidance of the term 'intellectual theft' (i.e. non legal context) by all eleven HEIs. Nevertheless, cases of plagiarism referred to the NMC at the request of HEIs indicate that assessment of such is predicated on the legal test for 'Dishonesty in Theft'. Consequently, this raises key issues regarding the policy articulation of plagiarism and governance between Higher Education Academic Fitness to Practise panels and the NMC.

Whilst Nurse Educators quantitatively confirmed agreement on the usage of behavioural terms to label academic misconduct, they were in fact not supportive of HEIs using moralising commentary within policies on plagiarism. This is an interesting outcome given the probity imperatives within Nurse Education related to plagiarism (NMC, 2010a, 2010b) and opinion pieces within the professional literature, within which the questionable moral standing of learners who plagiarise dominates. Statistically significant Chi-squared analysis test indicated a greater level of endorsement in behaviour related statements 6 and 10, which advocated that not all instances of plagiarism constitute cheating but where plagiarism did represent misconduct, policy should express this type of behaviour by using terms such as theft (i.e. intellectual and non legal context), fraud, cheating and rule breaking.

Qualitative commentary exposed that the term 'cheating', used to categorise intentional misconduct of this nature, was favoured, which maps with the documentary analysis findings, less favoured was the non-legal use of the phrase 'intellectual theft'. Nevertheless, the complexities within this commentary were obvious and were identified in Nurse Educators' opinions in attempting to juxtapose the negative labels of plagiarism behaviour with a multitude of interrelated issues. These were broadly identified as inappropriate terms for learners who had fallen between the academic cracks of learner transition, and enculturation. Recognisable and noteworthy was the discomfort felt by educators in the usage of some types of behavioural labelling.

In acknowledgement of the subject matter and its complexities, the polyvocality of Nurse Educators concerning responsibilities associated with the pedagogical preparation of learners to avoid plagiarism could not be ignored. The free-text comments identified the importance of proactive pedagogies to offset the difficulties learners have in comprehending plagiarism and developing skills to avoid it.

Findings emerging from the survey data were, in the majority of cases, broadly consistent with themes and sub-themes found within the educational literature. Whilst this provided the capacity to offer a critical discussion, there were some limitations, namely, a dearth of scholarly work specific to plagiarism governance and quantitative studies which inhibited the ability to directly compare and contrast findings.

Chapter Five: Engaging with the Duality of Plagiarism Governance in Nurse Education

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and considers the findings associated with the conceptual domain of *Engaging with the duality of plagiarism governance in Higher Education*. These findings represent data which explored the pragmatism of plagiarism governance by seeking Nurse Educators' opinions on the strategic processes which should exist to ensure alignment between the requirements of a Higher Education Institution (HEI) and a Professional Statutory Body (PSB). In the context of this study, the latter refers to the requirement placed on HEIs who offer Nurse Education by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC, 2010a) regarding Fitness to Practise (FtP). This exploration specifically sought Nurse Educators' opinions concerning how the professional context should be reflected within HEI policy regarding managing major occurrences. For the purpose of this study and in accordance with the literature, major plagiarism is normally associated with clear intent to deceive, repeated infringements and occurring at progressed level of academic study.

Relevant literature has been incorporated to provide and support a critical discussion of the findings. However, as previously noted, little empirical literature on the topic of plagiarism governance was uncovered and, with direct reference to this chapter, no prior empirical work has emerged which has explored how organisational and professional governance co-exists within Nurse Education. Consequently, the sources are severely restricted and, in the main, are limited to policy guidance from Higher Education and the NMC.

5.2 Engaging with Policy

Current best practice, as espoused by the HEA (2010, 2011) and QAA (2011), indicates that HEIs should ensure plagiarism policies adopt an approach which promotes visibility, transparency and consistency regarding educational practice. In pursuing and extending this line of inquiry, the documentary analysis identified the reactive approaches adopted by HEIs in articulating their processes for managing minor and major occurrences of plagiarism. From the perspective of Nurse Educators, this exploration was extended to reflect how the duality of plagiarism management should be captured within Higher Education policies to align with the

NMC requirements, specifically those pertaining to Fitness to Practise processes (NMC, 2010a).

In considering how Scottish HEIs currently articulate processing occurrences of plagiarism within their policies, **Table 5.1** presents the findings from the documentary analysis phase of the study.

Table 5.1 HEIs' Policy Processes for Managing Plagiarism

Policy Management	Frequency
HEIs contextualising the serious nature of plagiarism within any format of policy documentation	8
HEIs classifying/defining minor infringement and how strategically processed	9
HEIs who classify/define major plagiarism and how strategically processed	9
HEIs supporting academic decision making i.e. minor cases referred to management at departmental level	8
HEIs promoting consistent academic practice via recording/ tracking/ auditing of plagiarism cases	7
HEIs giving visibility to Sanctions/Penalty Tariff within plagiarism policies	4
HEIs cross-referring to HEI's FtP/other processes (e.g. Guidance for educational institutions NMC 2010a)	2

Analysis indicated that nine out of eleven Scottish HEIs provided guidance on what they considered to be minor and major instances of plagiarism, and accordingly, how these should be processed according to the nature of the misdemeanour. There was, however, less evidencing of formal systems to record cases with only four institutions illuminating the type of sanctions they may consider imposing. The most noticeable issue was in relation to HEI policies cross-referencing to the governance requirements of professional learning, as embedded within Fitness to Practise (NMC, 2010a) with only two institutions giving this visibility.

Overall, the observations determined that the majority of HEIs communicated key information concerning minor and major infringements, thereby outlining for educators its assessment and management. This approach concurs with commentary by Badge and Scott (2008), Carroll and Seymour (2006) and Yeo and Chien (2009) who postulate robust policy to ensure consistent governance. However, this was not a universal occurrence and therefore, across the sector, deficiencies within HEIs' plagiarism policies appear evident which challenge the position of providing appropriate information and mechanisms to promote visible, transparent

and equitable management. Whilst literature to permit direct quantitative comparison of these findings is unavailable, the analysis concerning the policy deficits has some affinity with the debates within the literature. These identify complex decision-making and attempts by educators to conduct the management of plagiarism fairly, but implicate policy directives as the key protagonist concerning variability with the potential to spawn inequity (Bermingham et al., 2009; Crisp, 2007; Jones, 2006; Pickard, 2006).

Nevertheless, empirical work by Borg (2008) and Flint et al. (2006) implies that despite plagiarism policies iterating process management criteria, complex situations prevail concerning educators' interpretations of the concept and/or learners' mitigating circumstances influencing how policy is subsequently invoked. Contributing to this milieu is that policies adopt overtly quantitative measures and thus make little concession, if any, for the personal circumstances of the learner to be taken into consideration. This is evidenced within recent guidance on a national benchmarking tariff for HEIs to consider implementing (Tennant & Rowell, 2010), which although laudable in promoting consistent practice, could be perceived as restrictive. Arguably, this lack of acknowledgement could account for the discord expressed by educators and paradoxically contribute to interpretive management and variable decision-making therein. As previously discussed, the conceptual lenses offered by Goffman (1959) (as cited in Lowe, Purchase & Ellis, 2011), Lipsky (2010) and Trowler (2003) contribute to understanding how policy translates in to practice and becomes reshaped, altered and implemented in ways which do not fit with the original political intention and articulation. In the context of plagiarism this could be occurring due to a failure to holistically assess and manage the infringement.

The findings presented in **Table 5.1** concerning HEIs' processes for managing plagiarism indicate a propensity for institutions to articulate plagiarism policies in pejorative and punitive terms, thus omitted were clear references to the pedagogical actions which should also be considered in managing plagiarism, with these remaining vaguely implicit in the context of minor infringements. Similarly, this picture was replicated regarding the use of text matching software which, despite nine HEIs identifying they subscribe to, only seven indicated they authorise usage to include supporting the pedagogical development of learners' academic skills by permitting draft submissions. Furthermore, only six HEIs appear to have a definitive policy in place to support its software deployment and usage.

Despite the level of information provided to support academic engagement in the strategic governance of plagiarism, only 2 HEIs visibly aligned their policies with PSB requirements for Nurse Education in terms of Fitness to Practise (NMC, 2010a). Whilst there is no attempt to argue against the fact that individual HEIs are self-governing, autonomous policy makers (Universities Scotland, 2011), for the remaining HEIs, the lack of acknowledgment and/or cross-referencing with Fitness to Practise requirements appears an important omission.

5.3 Aligning the Process of Strategically Governing Plagiarism

In shifting the focus to consider Nurse Educators' opinions on the professional imperatives of strategically governing plagiarism, key themes from the literature and pertinent findings from the documentary analysis were integrated within statements 14-23 of the survey instrument. In acknowledging the complexities associated with key concepts within these statements, the survey instrument provided terms of reference for participants:

- *Plagiarism Management* referred to strategic policies which detailed the institutional process for dealing with plagiarism and the anticipated actions of Educators.

- *Minor plagiarism* referred to normally equating with a single occurrence at an early point in the learner's journey, for example 1st year level study and consideration of the proportionality of the volume of work thought to be plagiarised.

- *Major plagiarism* normally referred to a situation where evidence supported a clear intent to gain an unfair advantage, repeated occurrence, high proportion of plagiarised work, progressed level of study.

In exploring opinions which strategically aligned HEI policy approaches with the nature of professional governance within Nurse Education, **Table 5.2** presents the descriptive findings across the 6 Likert-type categories. As before, results in bold text within the following tables indicate the most popular response category and the overall consensus opinion held by participants.

Table 5.2 Consensus and Chi-squared analysis: Policy Alignment

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Neither/ Nor		Unsure	
	f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
14. HEIs should not need to cross-refer their strategic policies on plagiarism, such as assessment regulations, code of conduct, with professional governance requirements, i.e. FtP processes	19	11.0	**80**	**46.5**	36	20.9	13	7.6	16	9.3	8	4.6
16. Schools of Nursing/Departments should not augment an HEI's plagiarism policy to reflect a nurse education context	7	4.1	**65**	**38.0**	55	32.2	17	9.9	16	9.4	11	6.4
17. Whether occurring in the pre or post-registration context, minor breaches of plagiarism should be formally managed at a departmental level	2	1.2	20	11.6	**100**	**58.1**	41	23.8	8	4.7	1	0.6
18. In upholding cases of major plagiarism by post-registration students, an HEI's FtP Panel should always refer these cases to the NMC	5	2.9	**57**	**33.1**	45	26.2	22	12.8	23	13.4	20	11.6
22. Informal plagiarism management, i.e. that which avoids invoking departmental or FtP processes, limits approaches to maintaining academic and professional integrity	10	5.8	52	30.4	**67**	**39.2**	15	8.8	12	7.0	15	8.8

Notes: f = frequency; % = percentage of total responses

Analysis of **Table 5.2** indicates the most favourable responses were remitted to either Disagree or Agree categories. Overall responses for these statements appeared less polarised in that there was only one instance where a high-range percentage was recorded, unlike those responses received for statements 4-13 (Chapter 4). Other notable features were the frequency responses where participants were Unsure or did not have a definitive opinion and expressed Neither/Nor. For example, in relation to statement 18 where a quarter of the cohort (24.9%) registered combined total

responses within these indeterminate categories. In this section, two negatively skewed statements (14 & 16) were incorporated to avoid bias responding within the Agree category.

As before, further in-depth analysis was undertaken by consolidating the Strongly Disagree/Disagree and Strongly Agree/Agree categories to establish the consensus opinions for each of the statements and to explore participants' opinion preferences by using the Chi-squared Goodness of Fit test. These findings are presented in **Table 5.3** noting that several of the statements contained within this section were negatively presented. Consequently, although statement 14 attracted a greater percentage of overall responses which rejected its premise (69% *n* = 99), this evidenced support for HEIs to cross-refer their strategic policies on plagiarism with or to the professional governance associated with Fitness to Practise. Statement 16 did however draw an equal number of responses in each of the consolidated categories. Responses to the remaining 3 statements also concurred with the premise of the statement.

Table 5.3 Chi-squared analysis: Plagiarism Policy Alignment

Statement	Total Responses	Reject		Endorse		χ^2
		f	%	*f*	%	
14. HEIs should not need to cross-refer their strategic policies on plagiarism, such as assessment regulations, code of conduct, with professional governance requirements, i.e. FtP processes	148	**99**	**66.9**	49	33.1	16.89*
16. Schools of Nursing/Departments should not augment an HEI's plagiarism policy to reflect a nurse education context	144	**72**	**50.0**	**72**	**50.0**	0.00
17. Whether occurring in the pre or post-registration context, minor breaches of plagiarism should be formally managed at a departmental level	163	22	13.5	**141**	**86.5**	86.87*
18. In upholding cases of major plagiarism by post-registration students, an HEI's FtP Panel should always refer these cases to the NMC	129	62	48.1	**67**	**51.9**	0.19
22. Informal plagiarism management, i.e. that which avoids invoking departmental or FtP processes, limits approaches to maintaining academic and professional integrity	144	62	43.1	**82**	**56.9**	2.77

Notes: *f* = frequency; % = percentage of total responses; * $p < .05$

In testing the preference of Nurse Educators to Agree or Disagree with the statements, Chi-squared analysis Goodness of Fit testing demonstrated statistical significance concerning the percentage differences between the expected and observed level of responses for statements 14 and 17. With a greater percentage of responses rejecting the statement that '*HEIs should not need to cross-refer their strategic policies on plagiarism, such as assessment regulations, code of conduct, with professional governance requirements, i.e. FtP processes'* (no. 14), the alternative hypothesis is supported evidencing that HEI policies require to articulate/cross-reference with professional governance processes. As previously noted, with few HEIs having adopted this action within their policy guidance, this signals the need for a symbiotic relationship to exist between the different governance processes.

With a greater percentage of responses in agreement with statement 17, '*Whether occurring in the pre or post-registration context, minor breaches of plagiarism should be formally managed at a departmental level'* this suggests that irrespective of the status of the nurse learner (pre-registered or post-qualified), the autonomy and decision-making at department level for minor instances would be endorsed. This outcome accords with the directives currently found within the majority of policies scrutinised.

5.4 Aligning Plagiarism Policy Processes: Qualitative Responses

Despite the vast majority of HEIs in this study detailing within their policies criteria on which to assess, stratify and process occurrences of plagiarism, numerous complexities were identified in the additional free-text comments supplied by some of the participants. In this context, although not specifically sought, examples were given of how plagiarism management was undertaken within their HEI, offering insight into the variance which may be in operation. However, it is also acknowledged that as these were 'open ended' comments, limitations exist, essentially that there was no opportunity to engage with participants to probe and clarify the opinions offered.

With Higher Education's requirement to establish Fitness to Practise panels at a local level as mandatory forums to consider the 'Good health and good character' of nurse learners and registrants (NMC ,2010a), the legislative requirements of a self-regulated profession (Nursing and Midwifery Order, 2001), were visible within the free-

text comments on plagiarism which affiliated with the theme of *Governing and Managing Fairly*:

> *'Where there has been a definite attempt to deceive this should be linked to FtP policy'*
>
> *'I think it is crucial that there is cross-reference again to make the issue of plagiarism on a professional level as transparent as possible'*
>
> *'Cross-referral is important for professional standards to be established and maintained'*
>
> *'The policy processes should cover both education and professional governance'*

Observable in the comments was the clear indication that HEIs and professional policy should be intertwined to communicate the seriousness of plagiarism and establish professional probity for healthcare students.

A flurry of additional comments (*n* = 39) were triggered by statement 18 which stated *'In upholding cases of major plagiarism by post-registration students, an HEI's FtP Panel should always refer these cases to the NMC'*. This resulted in participants taking the opportunity to comment on whether referral was an appropriate course of action, which resulted in divergent opinions surfacing:

> *'How can it be any other way?'*
>
> *'The responsibility should lie with the HEI's FtP committee'*

Participants, in acknowledging that the premise of the statement centred on major plagiarism by post-qualified learners, clearly indicated that the learner's circumstances and characteristics were an important consideration, and hence not always indicative of an automatic referral. A recurrent example of this related to learners' transition into Higher Education signalling that decision-making is both complex and context specific:

> *'It depends on the circumstances. I'm not convinced that this would be a good use of public resources'*
>
> *'Depends on the context - need for professional judgment to be exercised but there should be a consistent approach'*
>
> *'I think again it depends on intent and circumstance. Within our HEI the Fitness to Practise panel would make this decision and I think this is correct'*

'That could be too heavy-handed. Some post-registration students have been out of education for a while, and may just be getting used to academic life again'

'Again the context of the misconduct is important but these are not 'black and white' situations'

Also communicated were the variable processes for managing major plagiarism in operation within some HEIs, namely using university processes as opposed to the HEI's FtP panel:

'Plagiarism is not dealt with in our school by FtP panel. It is dealt within University systems'

In drawing together these threads, it appears HEIs invoke different disciplinary forums to manage plagiarism. This however raises questions regarding the differences which can avail therein. For example, whilst an HEI's FtP has prescribed membership involving educators and partners/employers from service (e.g. NHS) also mandatory is a co-opted representative such as a nurse/midwife from the same part of the professional register as the learner (NMC, 2010a). Conversely, a Senate Disciplinary Committee may have a distinctly different composition, determined by the HEI and not necessarily indicative of professional and service representation. This feature was evident in the random scrutiny of the web pages from one of the HEIs [Institution J] which indicated membership was non-specific academics. The implication in managing major plagiarism in this forum is that it adopts an academic focus as opposed to an academic and professional one, as it would if mediated via the FtP panel.

However, the nature of different forums, and who participates in them, also gave rise to commentary, particularly for the post-qualified learner, where the issues specifically pertaining to the employer (NHS/other) were raised:

'If this goes to FfP then yes….. but again it depends why and how etc., a student would be asked to withdraw if serious, especially if employer was funding as it is also a breach of trust'

However, more specific comments indicated employers taking full responsibility in dealing with plagiarism by post-qualifying learners, with pre-registration cohorts being dealt with via an HEI's Fitness to Practise panel:

'FtP panels only concern pre-registration students, employers deal with Registered Nurses/Midwives; disciplinary action for plagiarism applies to both'

This scenario illuminates the discrete processes HEIs attached to dealing with different types of nurse learners, that is, those pursuing initial registration and those qualified and in employment, NHS or private. Whilst the involvement of employers in the plagiarism management was not identified by any of the HEIs within the documentary analysis component of the study, it does not appear a unique occurrence. Within the pilot study, this was similarly noted within an HEI's School of Nursing plagiarism guidelines which unreservedly separated plagiarism into an academic offence and a professional offence. This HEI's policy signalled that pre-registration learners may be referred to the HEIs FtP committee, or if post-qualifying, to their employers, for what they term, similar to the comment offered above, disciplinary action.

When mapped to specific commentary offered to me by the NMC's Professional Officer regarding the management of plagiarism in Nurse Education, this made for an interesting comparison:

> *'We do not separate issues of academic and professional misconduct as both may arise in the course of any programme for which we set standards'*
> (Professional Officer, NMC May 2011)

Notwithstanding the fact that HEIs have organisational autonomy (Universities Scotland, 2011), the NMC indicates that HEI's Fitness to Practise panel have jurisdiction when academic misconduct is suspected regarding both pre-registration and qualified nurse learners. Sole jurisdiction for employers of post-qualified nurses conducting FtP investigations appears to consider matters related to clinical practice which, depending on the circumstances, may involve onward referral to the NMC (NMC, 2010c). Nevertheless, when cases are being considered by an HEI's Fitness to Practise panel, service partners, that is, representatives of the employing authority are required to be part of the membership (NMC, 2010a).

Evaluating the stance of employers dealing with occurrences of major plagiarism by post-qualifying learners does appear challenging. Specifically, any actions in this direction would necessitate the sharing of confidential and personal information and whilst the NMC has issued *Operational guidance for the sharing of fitness to practise information* (NMC, 2009), this position statement pertains to information which is held by the Council, as noted in a recent response received from the Fitness to Practise Directorate:

'The adoption of the new publication and disclosure policy by Council deals solely with Fitness to Practise information held by the NMC. This is made clear in the introduction and contents (though not, I accept, in a literal reading of the title). Any FtP information held by AEIs [Approved Educational Institutions] and/or local University FtP Panels must surely be covered by their own disclosure policies not by the Council policy which only covers information published or disclosed by us'.

(Fitness to Practise Directorate, NMC May 2011)

It is then somewhat confusing, for the NMC's professional officer also states:

'For post qualifying students the outcome would normally be communicated to the person's employer, who may wish to conduct their own separate inquiry' (Professional Officer, NMC May 2011)

Although employers/service partners have a responsibility to cooperate with the NMC Post Registration Education and Practice Standard (NMC, 2011c) and support post-qualified nurses to attain a minimum of 35 hours of study within a three year period, the free flow of FtP information between organisations is, as identified, not assumed. This was verified by the Head of Information Compliance Service within one of the HEIs in this study [Institution J] who indicated that under the confines of the Data Protection Act (1998) and the Freedom of Information Act (2000), the HEI would be prohibited from this undertaking unless learners were informed, in writing at the commencement of their studies, that the HEI would, in certain circumstances, provide information regarding their performance to their employer.

The arguments surrounding employer involvement and/or sharing of information, hinge on protecting the public through the maintenance of clinical competence and professional behaviour (NMC, 2008a, 2011a). However, employer involvement concerning FtP also appears driven by their support in terms of funding and/or release from clinical practice, as indicated in the NMC's comment:

'The infrastructure you put in place locally to manage [FtP] may depend on contracting arrangements with your purchasers'

(Professional Advisor, NMC, 2011)

However, this position does not take of account of or apply to those post-qualifying learners who self-fund further study or who are not currently in employment, situations not uncommon in Scotland which, unlike the NHS in England and Wales, does not participate in the commissioning of educational courses of study from HEIs.

Whilst the indication of involvement of employers within this study has been introduced via Nurse Educators' comments, this is not a universal approach which

appears substantiated by the documentary analysis findings. This did not elicit any information concerning the involvement of employers as part of strategic governance of plagiarism or any other form of academic misconduct for those learners currently employed. Whether this approach to governance is locally detailed by NHS partners is out with the scope of the study. However, this does suggest an area for further inquiry concerning service partner's views on how they would hypothetically manage and process academic misconduct, such as, major plagiarism.

5.5 Major Plagiarism: Referral to the NMC

Of equal interest were comments triggered by the statement (no. 18) on the referral of all instances of major plagiarism to the NMC:

> *'Would agree, but appropriate policy/pathway would need to be agreed with NMC'*

Although policy information and guidance on referral to the NMC already exists in the document *'Good health and good character: Guidance for approved education institutions'* (NMC, 2010a) and indicates this is an option for consideration by HEIs, this comment suggests the current process for referral is undetermined. It is however, unsurprising how this type of comment emerged, as the NMC have a tendency to present information broadly and obscurely, arguably supported by their propensity for not distinguishing between plagiaristic misconduct and any other form of misconduct and that all fall under the same universal process of managing unprofessional behaviour. Moreover, with a predominant focus on pre-registration learners, there is a dearth of reference to how due process should operate in respect of post-qualified learners leaving questionable gaps by the professional policy-makers.

5.6 Implications for Professional Practice

Some participants also took the opportunity in considering the referral of all instances of major plagiarism to the NMC (statement 18) to focus on the learner in terms of the impact they perceive plagiarism may have on spawning professional malpractice. Whilst noted as a ubiquitous theme within the professional literature, Nurse Educators' opinions on this topic were not solicited within this study, hence no related statement was included within the survey questionnaire.

'It depends on whether it involves creating a dangerous health care professional. If not, forget it…deal with it on campus'

'Depends on what the issue is, however it could be argued that to be dishonest in terms of work, could also have an impact in Practise in its widest sense'

In deference to literature which associates plagiarism with suboptimal learning (Carroll, 2010; Kennedy, 2011; Pittam et al., 2009), the typicality of these comments concurs with much of the opinion-based literature on plagiarism (Brown, 2002; Fontana, 2009; Harper, 2006; Kenny, 2007; Langone, 2007). This suggests an area for further investigation concerning why some Nurse Educators, without evidence to prove otherwise, adhere to the belief that plagiarism is a precursor for future unprofessional clinical practice.

5.7 Establishing the Professional Context of Managing Plagiarism

Having considered the duality of governing plagiarism within Higher Education, and how this should be aligned to meet NMC requirements, this section presents findings on establishing the professional context of plagiarism management within Nurse Education, narrowing this to specifically consider major infringements by nurse learners. **Table 5.4** presents the descriptive findings in response to the statements designated to have an association with the above concepts involving the 6 Likert-type categories.

Table 5.4 Opinions: Professional Context of Managing Plagiarism

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Neither/ Nor		Unsure	
	f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
15. In the context of post-registration education, major plagiarism constitutes a more serious professional issue in comparison to pre-registration nurse education	11	6.4	**81**	**46.8**	46	26.9	17	9.9	13	7.6	3	1.8
19. The necessity to have different forums to manage major plagiarism for discrete student populations demonstrates appropriate governance for professional based education	5	2.9	31	18.0	**97**	**56.4**	11	6.4	15	8.7	13	7.6
20. Major plagiarism in nurse education, whether occurring at pre or post-registration level, warrants consideration of sanctions which include professional as well as academic	1	0.6	19	11.0	**96**	**55.8**	29	16.9	11	6.4	16	9.3
21. In the context of plagiarism, nurse education programmes/study should make it explicit that learners will be subject to higher expectations concerning the 'good character' requirements	7	4.1	18	10.5	**71**	**41.3**	58	33.7	10	5.8	8	4.7
23. The necessity for HEIs to deal with major plagiarism via Fitness to Practise provides evidence of the serious relationship between academic integrity, professional values and good character	2	1.2	19	11.0	**99**	**57.2**	39	22.5	7	4.0	7	4.0

Notes: f = frequency; % = percentage of total responses

Analysis of **Table 5.4** demonstrated the most popular response frequencies occurring within the Disagree and Agree categories. However, the percentage responses received appeared less polarised in comparison to the results provided in Chapter 4. Low percentage responses were observed for those who did not hold a definitive opinion, that is, responses attributed to Neither/Nor and Unsure.

In pursuing more in-depth analysis, **Table 5.5** presents findings following consolidating the Strongly Disagree/Disagree and Strongly Agree/Agree categories to establish the consensus outcomes regarding Nurse Educators' opinions of managing plagiarism in a professional context. This table also presents results of Chi-squared analysis Goodness of Fit testing (χ^2).

Table 5.5 Consensus Opinions and Chi-squared Analysis: Professional Context of Managing Plagiarism

		Reject		Endorse		
Statement	*Total Responses*	*F*	*%*	*f*	*%*	χ^2
15. In the context of post-registration education, major plagiarism constitutes a more serious professional issue in comparison to pre-registration nurse education	155	**92**	**59.4**	63	40.6	5.42*
19. The necessity to have different forums to manage major plagiarism for discrete student populations (i.e. non-professional via university processes and professional via FtP) demonstrates appropriate governance for professional based education	144	36	25.0	**108**	**75.0**	36.00*
20. Major plagiarism in nurse education, whether occurring at pre or post-registration level, warrants consideration of sanctions which include professional as well as academic	145	20	13.8	**125**	**86.2**	76.03*
21. In the context of plagiarism, nurse education programmes/study should make it explicit that learners will be subject to higher expectations concerning the 'good character' requirements	154	25	16.2	**129**	**83.8**	70.23*
23. The necessity for HEIs to deal with major plagiarism via Fitness to Practise provides evidence of the serious relationship between academic integrity, professional values and good character	159	21	13.2	**138**	**86.8**	86.09*

Notes: *f* = frequency; *%* = percentage of total responses; * $p < .05$

Chi-squared Goodness of Fit testing was statistical significant in all 5 statements which explored how major plagiarism should be reflected in a professional context. These non-random findings evidenced a greater percentage of opinion which rejected, '*In the context of post-registration education, major plagiarism constitutes a more serious professional issue in comparison to pre-registration nurse education'* (statement 15). According to Nurse Educators' opinions, this confirms that major plagiarism has equal standing as a serious professional issue whether occurring in

either the pre-registration or post-qualifying context. Whilst David and Lee-Woolfe (2010, p. 27) confirm, albeit as part of a narrow discussion on Fitness to Practise, that these principles apply equally to pre-registration and post-qualified learners, they do however stipulate that the former '*cannot be held to the same standards*' based on the premise of having pre-registration learner status and therefore '*entitled to feedback guidance and educational advice*'. Nevertheless, the establishment of a local HEI FtP panel does provide a forum for major plagiarism to be considered in a professional context.

The reason why Nurse Educators may hold the opinion that plagiarism holds equivalent status in terms of seriousness across pre-registration and post-qualifying cohorts is unknown and indicates an area for further investigation. However, the lack of support for a distinction to be applied between pre-registration and post-qualifying nurse learners is an interesting development, particularly when distinctions exist in how these respective groups of learners may be subsequently managed, vis-à-vis the option to refer post-qualifying nurse learners to the NMC when pre-registration learners are not. In the wake of the Shipman inquiry, this latter issue was raised in the Department of Health's (2007) White Paper, *Trust, Assurance and Safety: regulation of the professions,* which deliberated whether potential healthcare registrants should have a greater liaison with their future professional regulator (Unsworth, 2011). Subsequent evaluation by the Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence (2010a) rejected the notion of pre-qualifying learners pre-registering with their healthcare regulator in favour of management via local HEI Fitness to Practise panels.

Whilst participants, in responding to statement 15, suggested that distinctions were not merited in this context, the alternative viewpoints were evident in relation to statements 19-21 and 23 whereby distinctions were deemed necessary to establish the professional expectations concerning the avoidance of plagiarism, and that enabling the avoidance of major occurrences required a distinctive forum to take account of the Fitness to Practise mandate. This line of inquiry resulted in findings which demonstrated a greater percentage of positive responses to these statements and subsequently endorsed the necessity for governance processes to exhibit affinity and visibly co-exist within Higher Education regarding the processing of major plagiarism.

5.8 Qualitative commentary: The Professional Context of Plagiarism

Whilst the quantitative findings petitioned for no distinction to apply regarding the seriousness with which major plagiarism is regarded between pre and post-qualifying learners, the qualitative comments offered some additional insights captured within a theme associated with *Governing and Managing Fairly:*

> *'Major Plagiarism is equally dishonest and unacceptable, whenever it occurs'*
>
> *'The same regulations should apply otherwise we are in danger of giving out mixed messages'*
>
> *'Only in as much that qualified staff should be more professionally aware & are therefore more accountable'*
>
> *'It is equally as serious in terms of professional behaviour. Student nurses must accept they are entering a profession and should embrace all that entails'*
>
> *'Back to intent …. 'major plagiarism' suggests a judgement has been made on the circumstances, then this is worrying in both contexts. The only advantage of pre-registration perspective is the HEI can prevent the plagiarising student from registering, and thus protect the public, however the post-registration student is registered and already practicing and if intent is determined, then this would raise significant professional concerns.*

These comments indicate that, irrespective of the registration status of learners, major plagiarism constitutes a serious professional issue. However, where the distinctions concerning registration status do come into play, as noted within the final comment, this implicates HEIs in professional gate keeping, concurring with commentary by Unsworth (2011). Whilst there is an absence of literature to enable comparative evaluation regarding major plagiarism and registration status, there are sources which illuminate the Nurse Educators' role as gate keepers which will be addressed in Chapter 6.

5.8.1 Bespoke Transition

Based on findings from the quantitative exploration, further inquiry has been recommended to explore the causal relationship for opinions held by Nurse Educators regarding major plagiarism. In light of this, the additional qualitative comments offered by participants at this stage offer potential lines of inquiry:

> *'Even post-registration nurses may need induction to the skills of academic scholarship. It should be about the experience of the learner in academic role'*
>
> *'Some post-registration nurses have not undertaken any education for years and are not familiar with educational processes'*

> *'It may still be the students first time undertaking robust academic work. However the student's academic status (under or post-grad) should be taken into account'*

Apparent in these comments are salient points which capture Nurse Educators' voices in support of bespoke pedagogical transition, which does not presuppose that, as qualified learners, they understand the expectations of Higher Education regarding academic integrity. The underlying premise being that this group of learners may be representative of having undertaken Nurse Education prior to Project 2000 and therefore only have experience of the apprentice style of training which was located within the NHS setting (Roxburgh et al., 2008). Against this backdrop, Boelen and Kenny's (2009) quantitative study commented on the difficulties nurse learners often face in returning to study and embracing an active learner-centred approach and thus making the transitional processes into Higher Education via mechanisms which have been constructed to meet the demands of the typical university population, in this case, school leavers who enter as full-time undergraduates. Conversely, adult learners, particularly post-qualified nurses may be in full or part time employment and therefore their transition into Higher Education is peripheral.

O'Donnell and Tobbell's (2007) qualitative study also elucidated these types of concerns, raising salient points regarding adult learners' transition, integration and socialisation to the Higher Education environment, and importantly, their potential to experience discomfort in learning. This discomfort (Devlin & Gray, 2007; Szabo & Underwood, 2004) has been implicated as a variable concerning intentional plagiaristic actions in an attempt to overcome the challenges being experienced. Boelen and Kenny (2009) and Tippitt et al. (2009) both suggest that in comparison to the stresses and strains perceived by neophyte learners, experienced professionals returning to study, now located within Higher Education, exhibit a heightened sense of anxiety fuelled by concerns that, to avoid professional embarrassment, failure is not an option they wish to consider.

Whilst Boelen and Kenny (2009) offered a practical interpretation of their findings, O'Donnell and Tobbell (2007) emphasised the importance of understanding the development of the adult learner's preparedness, acceptance and formation of identity in Higher Education. In an attempt to understand the issues associated with tertiary transition, O'Donnell and Tobbell utilised Lave and Wenger's (1991) theoretical Communities of Practice (CoP) framework which proposed that this

mechanism can support and induce the development of knowledge and attitudes associated with a particular profession. Hildreth and Kimble (2004) implicate the ubiquity of this widely applied social and collaborative learning concept that has linkage with constructivist learning theories, such as Vygotsky (1978) (as cited in Carroll (2010). However, its application is andragogical and therefore aligns with Knowles' (1979) theory of adult learning (as cited in Brandon & All, 2010) and is context specific in that it relates to adults operating within practice orientated professional settings.

Later work by Wenger and Snyder (2000) and Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002) implicate a CoP as engendering inclusivity as part of being bound by the ideologies and stewardship of a specific grouping as it occurs in a socially constructed world. This is captured by Wenger (1998), commenting on the functionality and shared domains of a CoP, defining this as:

> *'..a group of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis'.*

The concepts of situated learning and peripheral participation, as expressed by the above authors, have implications for Nurse Educators in their role in supporting transition into Higher Education for pre-registration learners and experienced professionals returning to study. However, nursing's CoP arguably equates with the double-edged sword of not only learning the rules of engagement for Higher Education (O'Donnell & Tobbell, 2007) but also in joining and/or reacquainting with the probity associated with a professional discipline in a learning context; this speculatively leading to propositions previously offered, as noted within the literature (Bavier, 2009) of nurse learners being held to higher standard.

5.8.2 Held to a Higher Standard

In probing opinions of nurse learners being held to a higher expectation (statement 21) in an educational context, additional comments indicated:

> *'Not higher expectations, but maybe more dire consequences'*

> *'Higher seems an inappropriate word here. They have expectations which are set for their profession. Other professions such as teaching or law will have theirs too'*

'I believe the same policies should apply to all students. Plagiarism is just as dishonest and ethically unacceptable in a history or chemistry degree as it is in a nursing degree'

'Making explicit that the nature of professional study has different expectations as determined by professional bodies as opposed to higher expectations'

'Every student should be subject to the highest expectation'

Interesting amongst these comments was the rejection by some participants of *'higher expectation'* in preference for '*different expectations'* which Currer and Atherton (2008), from a social work perspective, translate as being subject to closer scrutiny. From this perspective, the Fitness to Practise mechanisms come to the fore, using the Code of conduct, standards and ethics (NMC, 2008a) as the barometer with which to assess professional registration which starts with applying for, and becoming part of, a profession which requires competently demonstrating the interplay between knowledge, skills and values (Lane, 2010; NMC, 2008a, 2010a; Unsworth, 2011).

5.8.3 Duality of Contemporary Plagiarism Governance

However, the contemporary professional governance processes associated with FtP, which are intended to operate in parallel with Higher Education governance, are not without their critics:

'The idea of multiple forms [of governance] is overly bureaucratic'

'Different forums may be better to ensure NMC related issues are handled appropriately'

'This would muddy the water and probably reflect different standards'

'Should be dealt with as a purely academic issue unless the person tries to publish'

'My understanding is that there is no choice - it is a professional requirement…as I understand it this is the NMC position'

Of particular note was the diverse commentary concerning the pragmatic processing of major plagiarism for different student populations via different forums i.e. the non-professional utilising university processes and professional learners via FtP. Whilst it is acknowledged that HEIs are self-governing, this however does not exist in a vacuum, particularly when the professional governance determines who gains entry to nurse education and subsequently, the professional register (Unsworth, 2011).

The context of major plagiarism is the catalyst to consider the good character of the learner, necessitating investigation and processing via Fitness to Practise (NMC, 2010a). Consequently, comments concerning the duality and/or appropriateness of different forums based on segregating student populations in order to process are interesting on a range of levels, from being overtly '*bureaucratic'* to accurately confirming, in the final comment, the NMC's requirements in the Higher Education setting. Nevertheless, what is also noticeable is the level of uncertainty and tension in the comments such as '*..muddy the waters'* and '*Different forums may be better'*.

Whilst dual governance processes clearly exist, notable is the comment from one participant that both processes should be invoked:

> '*All should go through university disciplinary procedures first then FtP'*

In seeking clarity, a response was solicited from the NMC concerning what advice they would offer Approved Educational Institutions regarding the appropriate forum in which to progress major plagiarism by a nurse learner, for which the following was received:

> *'The most appropriate forum to initially investigate such matters may well depend on the nature of the misdemeanour and would be for the university to determine. Some universities tend to use academic panels as a filter before taking issues forward, as appropriate, to an FTP panel, whilst others use just an FTP panel'* (NMC Professional Officer, March 2011)

This response appears broad and with the options indicated for HEIs to pursue, suggests a lack of clarity concerning major plagiarism. However, this was subsequently qualified with the following:

> *'If a serious issue is being considered we would expect the outcome to be determined by the university FTP panel….it is for the university to justify how this is done but it must demonstrate its ability to act quickly to protect the public'* (NMC Professional Officer, March 2011)

Interpretation of these comments, triggered by a direct question to the NMC on processing major plagiarism, is somewhat difficult to discern in definitive terms. From the professional educator perspective, this appears less than satisfactory and somewhat indicative of double jeopardy, with implications that an occurrence of major plagiarism by a nurse learner is at risk of being assessed and mediated by a range of organisations with different agendas. Consequently, PSB guidance, like many of the issues surrounding plagiarism policy, maybe open to interpretation and

application fuelling the existing concerns raised within the literature (Badge & Scott, 2008; Carroll & Seymour, 2006; Yeo & Chien, 2009) concerning poor communication and iniquitous management. However, in scrutinising HEI policy documents, the use of two distinct forums within the same institution to manage instances of major plagiarism, firstly through university processes and thereafter through an HEI's FtP panel was not evident.

5.8.4 Fitness to Practise Processes: Appropriateness and Functionality

In advancing the argument, participants offered commentary concerning the appropriateness and functionality of local HEI Fitness to Practise panels to oversee major plagiarism in Nurse Education:

> *'Did not know that it was a necessity for FtP to consider cases of "major" plagiarism'*
>
> *'It is bureaucracy gone mad'*
>
> *'Depends on the definition of major plagiarism ……which at present does not appear to be universally agreed'*
>
> *'Only if FtP panels function correctly across all institutions and within institutions'*
>
> *'It is part of the good character aspect that is required'*

The above comments express a range of opinions concerning the appropriateness and functionality of HEI FtP forums. However, any evaluation in this context is thwarted by two issues, firstly, that HEI FtP forums are relatively new processes and consequently are still in their infancy; secondly, and not unrelated to the first point, a dearth of empirical work exists which Unsworth (2011) attributes to the inherent methodological difficulties associated with accessing confidential information associated with FtP sittings.

Whilst these issues appear relevant considerations for Nurse Educators, the strategic operationalisation of the NMC's Fitness to Practise processes have received, over the past few years, detailed criticism from the Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence (CHRE, 2010b, 2011, 2012). Their surveillance of the NMC has consistently highlighted serious concerns regarding inconsistent management and lack of transparency related to Fitness to Practise. In recognising the need to ameliorate these deficiencies as a priority issue, the NMC have, as from March 2012, suspended all major reviews of nursing programmes to concentrate on improving the

operationalisation of FtP process. Notwithstanding these actions by the NMC, the CHRE has sought third-party feedback from a range of stakeholders to review the NMC's progress concerning FtP processes (CHRE, 2011), however this has not included representation from Higher Education which appears conspicuous given the NMC's position in providing governance guidance on FtP to Approved Educational Institutions (NMC, 2010a).

5.9 Summary

This chapter has explored the duality of plagiarism governance within Higher Education linked to the professional requirements of Nurse Education. In drawing upon the various quantitative and qualitative data sources, it is evident that aligning and establishing the context of plagiarism governance is a complex issue.

Scrutiny via the documentary analysis suggests that HEI policies appear to exhibit both strengths and limitations in this area, but do provide visible processes for managing minor and major occurrences of plagiarism to support educational practice. However, complexities concerning how this translates in the context of NMC's strategic policy requirements appear obscure and adopts what is arguably a tentative stance which does not contribute to equitable approaches to managing plagiarism in a professional context. These features appear to filter through in the quantitative survey data, which determined 2 out of 5 statements (Table 5.3) offering evidence of statistically significant outcomes regarding how this alignment should be made manifest in order to respond to processing of plagiarism in Nurse Education. Nonetheless, Nurse Educators' opinions gave visibility to the important issue concerning guiding and supporting educational practice, in the context of professionally based programmes that are required to be robust.

Also evidenced were comments by Nurse Educators which demonstrated that as part of a theme associated with *Governing and Managing Fairly*, different approaches, processes and mechanisms to manage, particularly, major plagiarism, involved different forums and stakeholders. Evident within the commentary was the tension regarding these processes, often predicated on complex decision-making. Evaluation would suggest the need for transparent communication about the positionality concerning the duality of plagiarism governance processes which need to co-exist in Higher Education.

A number of statistically significant findings were established concerning Nurse Educators' opinions of how major plagiarism should be managed to convey the professional context (Table 5.5). One interesting finding was that, in terms of professional benchmarking, Nurse Educators consider major plagiarism to be an equally serious offence, irrespective of a learner's registration status.

The additional qualitative comments provided appreciation of the subjective dispositions and tensions which have been constantly associated with managing plagiarism. Whilst these identified variability in opinions and approaches, the level of polyvocality in support of recognising the importance of supporting the pedagogical transition of post-qualified learners who have not previously been exposed to the rudiments of Higher Education was strongly emphasised.

These findings would suggest that aligning the duality of governance approaches is required to guide and support education practice. Where major plagiarism by a professional learner occurs, the response should be fair and proportional based on decision making which is context specific.

Chapter Six: Plagiarism: Inherent role implications for the Nurse Educator

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the remainder of the findings associated with this study which are discussed within the domain of *Plagiarism and the role implications for the Nurse Educator*. Specifically, discrete analysis of this data reflects Nurse Educators' opinions concerning what role implications should exist with regard to supporting learning for professional practice (pre-registration and post-qualifying continued professional development) and the subsequent role challenges for the professional educator.

Comparison of these findings with existing literature was limited to considering the nursing literature which focuses broadly on the topic of academic integrity, within which reference to plagiarism is superficial and/or implicit.

6.2 Supporting learning and promoting professionalism

Contemporary nursing practice is indicative of a complex role which involves mastery of the art and science of caring, which is underpinned by the ideology of professionalism (Lane, 2010; NMC, 2008a, 2010a, 2010b; Peplau, 1988; QAA, 2009; Semple et al., 2004). As the linchpin, professionalism is representative of a multidimensional concept which is described and debated in a variety of ways depending on the perspective from which it emerges and the traits attributed to it (Adams, 2010). For example, Scott (2008) and Wynd (2003) suggest, for nursing, professionalism has emerged in a disciplinary context fostered by patient-focused, egalitarian, values-based care delivery. They advocate, supported by Starc (2009), that professionalism has emerged within nursing via the demise of its historical subservience and allegiance to medicine and now reflects practitioners with advanced knowledge and levels of practice drawn from a legitimate research base which is subsequently associated with high level decision-making and greater autonomy.

These characteristics were also evidenced in Akhtar-Danesh, Baumann, Kolotylo, Lawlor, Tomkins and Lee's (2011) study of pre-registration learners and Nurse Educators and Wynd's (2003) study, involving registered nurses. Both studies established that those belonging to a profession, and exhibiting professionalism, are behaviourally altruistic, self-governing and consequently concordant with the standards and ethical requirement established by their professional organisations. In

being more forthright, Semple et al. (2004) lock professionalism into professing and becoming guardians of values, namely honesty and integrity.

From the literature, the concept of professionalism represents competency in practice formed as a consequence of the tripartite relationship between knowledge, skills, and values (Clauser, Margolis, Holtman, Katsurfrakis & Hawkins, 2010: Lane, 2010). Whilst neither the NMC's educational standards (2004; 2010c) nor the QAA's Scottish Subject Benchmark Statement: Nursing (2009) define professionalism as part of their terms of reference, assessment of these attributes is clearly articulated within these sources and therefore has clear implications for the role of the Nurse Educator.

The concept of professionalism, and its assessment, is universally infused within the nursing literature on academic dishonesty, within which plagiarism, when mentioned, is subsumed. Whilst this literature, in some instances, does include reference to the impact academic dishonesty may have on learners accruing knowledge and understanding, the propensity is to focus the discussion on how this challenges professional integrity. For example, in the context of advancing nursing knowledge, Parse (1999, p. 187) determines that professional integrity is '*the consistent adherence to a set of ethical principles'* and is impeached by fabricating empirical work, publication reproductions and plagiarism. Similarly there is Vogelsang's (1997, p. 422) curt commentary on plagiarism as:

> *'..being a concern to the entire nursing community because it is not consistent with ethical standards'*.

However, as an educational counter to the numerous comments regarding plagiarism which are permeated with ethical overtones, Briggs (2003, p. 22) suggests that:

> *'The problem with the moralistic attitude underpinning policies of plagiarism is that such moralism is so institutionalised - and so easily offended – that we are prone to forget the very straightforward and obvious idea that plagiarism constitutes a learning and communication problem too'*

In pursuing these lines of inquiry associated with professionalism and plagiarism, **Table 6.1** outlines statements which reflect a range of variables associated with role implications for supporting learning and promoting professionalism within Nurse Education in relation to plagiarism.

Analysis demonstrated that the greatest proportion of participants Agreed with the positively framed statements (no's 24, 26, 27) and Disagreed with the negatively framed statements (no's 25, 33). Notably, were the low percentages (less than 10% for each statement) recorded by participants who indicated they did not hold a definitive opinion and similarly, by those who indicated they were unsure.

Table 6.1 Opinions: Professionalism and Plagiarism

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Neither/ Nor		Unsure	
	f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
24. The Nurse Educator's primary role in plagiarism management should be to address pedagogical deficits in referencing, paraphrasing and writing skills	4	2.3	38	22.1	**89**	**51.7**	25	14.5	12	7.0	4	2.3
25. Nurse Educators should not expect having to make explicit to learners (pre and post-registration level), the negative relationship which exists between plagiarism and professional values	19	11.0	**105**	**61.0**	22	12.8	13	7.6	10	5.8	3	1.7
26. Nurse Educators should make explicit to learners that plagiarism, whether intentional or unintentional, may prevent them constructing knowledge for professional practice.	2	1.2	7	4.1	**100**	**58.1**	47	27.3	11	6.4	5	2.9
27. In the context of major plagiarism, Nurse Educators should expect to act as professional gatekeepers in confirming/disconfirming 'good character' as part of an HEI's FtP processes	6	3.5	12	6.9	**92**	**53.2**	35	20.2	15	8.7	13	7.5
33. The Nurse Educator's role concerning plagiarism management has no relevance to the preparation of practitioners who will be, or are, trusted with caring and safeguarding the public	49	28.5	**89**	**51.7**	13	7.6	8	4.7	8	4.7	5	2.9

Notes: f = frequency; % = percentage of total responses

In-depth analysis of these results, as provided below in **Table 6.2** identifies findings which established consensus opinion for each of the above statements. Analysis identified that these consolidated responses represented strongly polarised opinions

in support, or rejection, of the premise of the statements offered with high percentage responses of between 73.1% and 94.2%. Chi-squared Goodness of Fit testing (χ^2) confirmed statistically significant results for all five statements indicating that, where statements were either endorsed or rejected, the percentage differences observed between these categorical responses was not occurring by chance.

Table 6.2 Consensus Opinions and Chi-squared Analysis: Professionalism in the Academic Setting

Statement	Total Responses	Reject		Endorse		χ^2
		f	%	*f*	%	
24. The Nurse Educator's primary role in plagiarism management should be to address pedagogical deficits in referencing, paraphrasing and writing skills	156	42	26.9	**114**	**73.1**	33.23*
25. Nurse Educators should not expect having to make explicit to learners (pre and post-registration level), the negative relationship which exists between plagiarism and professional values	159	**124**	**78.0**	35	22.0	49.81*
26. Nurse Educators should make explicit to learners that plagiarism, whether intentional or unintentional, may prevent them constructing knowledge for professional practice.	156	9	5.8	**147**	**94.2**	122.07*
27. In the context of major plagiarism, Nurse Educators should expect to act as professional gatekeepers in confirming/disconfirming 'good character' as part of an HEI's FtP processes	145	18	12.4	**127**	**87.6**	81.93*
33. The Nurse Educator's role concerning plagiarism management has no relevance to the preparation of practitioners who will be, or are, trusted with caring and safeguarding the public	159	**138**	**86.8**	21	13.2	86.09*

Notes: *f* = frequency; % = percentage of total responses; * $p < .05$

Notwithstanding the interest generated in confirming that participants' preferences in either Disagreeing or Agreeing were statistically significant, the positivity demonstrated by participants regarding learning and the concept of professionalism was not wholly unexpected, given the hybrid role Nurse Educators occupy relative to professional nursing practice and teaching within Higher Education (Adams, 2009; Haigh & Johnson, 2007). However, what was less predictable was the introduction of plagiarism, as the variable under consideration

and whether this would reflect opinions which were educationally, and/or, professionally dominated.

6.2.1 The Nurse Educator's Primary Role

In an attempt to avoid skewing responses in favour of twinning learning and professionalism, the initial statement, *'The Nurse Educator's primary role in plagiarism management should be to address pedagogical deficits in referencing, paraphrasing and writing skills',* was intentionally introduced to explore what the primary role might reflect in managing plagiarism. This appeared a relevant area of exploration based on Fontana's (2009) qualitative study which, although was a study which focused broadly on academic dishonesty, identified the Nurse Educator's primary role as a professional gate keeper based on learners' capacity to demonstrate ethical behaviour.

Consequently, the above noted statement did not avoid direct reference to professional values; nor did it, from an organisation standpoint, make reference to adhering to an HEI's strategic policy, which arguably might also have been a consideration regarding role implications. In allowing participants to reject or confirm, solely on the basis of pedagogy, the findings established 73.1% (*n* = 114) of opinions in favour of the academic precedent. These findings therefore appear to contrast with the empirical nursing literature by Fontana (2009) and moreover, concur with both Briggs (2003) and Carroll's (2010) explicit categorisation of plagiarism which fundamentally places dealing with it in a learning context.

6.2.2 Professional Gate Keeping Role

Current educational practice acknowledges that Nurse Educators fulfil a gate keeping role in confirming nurse learners' suitability for entry to the professional register following a period of educational preparation, under the 'Good Health, good character' directive (Gazza, 2009; NMC, 2010a; Unsworth, 2010). However, the issue of a professional gate keeping role was explored within this study as it appears not to have been previously explored in relation to plagiarism. Consequently, statement 27 asked 'In *the context of major plagiarism, Nurse Educators should expect to act as professional gate keepers in confirming/disconfirming 'good character' as part of an HEI's FtP processes'*.

As noted, the context of this inquiry focused attention on major plagiarism accepting that, in accordance with the documentary analysis of HEI's policies,

minor occurrences of plagiarism would receive remedial instruction and/or pedagogical management. This statement also emphasised that the gate keeping role should occur in accordance with an HEI's Fitness to Practise processes and therefore is not an activity undertaken in isolated circumstances. Results demonstrated a high percentage of affirmative responses (87.6% *n* = 127) in comparison with those who expressed the alternative opinion (12.4% *n* = 18). Whilst these findings may broadly concur with the qualitative findings by Fontana (2009), albeit relative to academic dishonesty, in the context of major plagiarism these non-random findings highlighted above in **Table 6.2** appear unique.

6.2.3 High Stakes Responsibility

In pursuing opinions on variables associated with the concepts of responsibility and plagiarism, a negatively framed statement (no. 25) 'Nurse *Educators should not expect having to make explicit to learners (pre and post-registration level), the negative relationship which exists between plagiarism and professional values'* drew responses in favour of rejection by the vast majority of participants (78% *n* = 124). Gaberson (1997) concurs in suggesting that a level of dialogue is required with nurse learners, however, this appears to conflict with other opinions which are suggestive that learners enter the campus gates equipped with professional values, as indicated by Semple et al. (2004, p. 273) who indicate *'it would be reasonable to expect that such an ethical discipline [nursing] would attract and select students who value these qualities'*. Nevertheless, they go on to confirm, in more realistic terms, that these characteristics must be confirmed at the point of registration that is, having completed the requisite educational programme of preparation, hence returning to the gate keeping concept.

In continuing to explore role implications which might be associated with high stakes responsibility, the statement *'The Nurse Educator's role concerning plagiarism management has no relevance to the preparation of practitioners who will be, or are, trusted with caring and safeguarding the public'* was deployed. The majority of participants rejected this statement (86.8% *n* = 133) suggesting role implications do exist beyond the campus boundaries. The reason why participants held this opinion has yet to be determined but speculatively may relate to the professional and ethical framework represented by the NMC Code (NMC, 2008a) and/or educational theory of constructivist learning (Knowles, 1980, as cited in Brandon & All, 2010), but clearly is an area worthy of further consideration.

6.2.4 Constructing Knowledge for Professional Practice

As forerunner to the previous statement, the thread of constructivist learning was introduced in the shape of statement 26, which enquired if '*Nurse Educators should make explicit to learners that plagiarism, whether intentional or unintentional, may prevent them constructing knowledge for professional practice'*. Responses clearly affirmed support for an explicit role (94.2% *n* = 147). Attempting to interpret this finding, through the educational lens afforded by Knowles (1980) (as cited in Brandon & All, 2010), would suggest that with reflective practice and continued development being key requisites for professional practice (NMC, 2008a) and organisations promoting learning as part of their culture (Ward & McCormack, 2000), the potential for suboptimal learning to occur in this context should be made explicit. However, as previously identified, whilst the issue of suboptimal learning occurring as a result of plagiarism with inadequate preparation for professional practice has received attention within opinion pieces (Bavier, 2009; Kennedy, 2011; Kenny, 2007), it nonetheless appears overshadowed by the debates predicated on amoral professionalism exhibited by nurse learners who plagiarise.

Nevertheless, Tippitt et al. (2009) and Walton's (2010) commentaries strike a pragmatic chord in emphasising that, whilst all learners should be held to the highest academic standards, the expectations are higher for nurse learners predicated on the seriousness of the outcomes. The crux of their argument is that if plagiarism, particularly intentional, results in knowledge deficits which impede competent and safe care for patients, irrespective of whether this occurs as part of routine or critical care, a breach of the professional trust endowed upon nurses by the public will exist. Whilst this still relates to the nature of professionalism, the argument pivots on learning and appears more convincing than those narrow arguments which fixate on moral impeachments and appear indiscriminately applied.

These findings support Nurse Educators' acceptance of role implications concerning plagiarism in order to prepare and continue to support learning for professional practice. This appears to exist irrespective of the obvious fact that addressing and managing plagiarism within professionally-based education is associated with additional and specific responsibilities.

6.3 Supplementary Qualitative Free-text Comments

In relation to the statements outlined, some participants took the opportunity to offer additional qualitative comments. With specific reference to the primary role Nurse Educators should establish regarding plagiarism management, none alluded to professional gate keeping as being paramount. They did, however, commonly offer comments under the emergent theme of *Professionalism in Academic settings,* which consistently indicated that the professional context must also feature as part of the educational role:

> *'Certainly the students need to have clarity about what defines plagiarism, but the Nurse Educator's role is wider than this. It also includes nurturing the ethical and professional aspect of life'.*
>
> *'Although I agree it should be our primary role, we probably also have a role in ensuring future vigilance with intentional acts of plagiarism as this may be in indicator of other professional concerns'*
>
> *'It is also to ensure professional standards are upheld/reinforced'*
>
> *'It is an important role of the nurse educator to assist the learner to make sense of these difficult concepts, highlighting how they interface and the implications for their professional practice and personal integrity of intentional academic misconduct'*
>
> *'Nurse Educators should address both the relationship to professional values and strategies to avoid plagiarism'*

It was apparent within the comments offered that it is the general disposition of Nurse Educators to adopt a balanced approach which embraces the educational and professional elements. These are clearly opinions that are not generally reflected in the nursing literature.

This is expressed further with regard to the responsibilities perceived by Nurse Educators:

> *'I have responsibilities to create a professional and instil and remind them of the breadth/meaning of that term'*
>
> *'Many would not make the link between academic misconduct and good character and therefore, to capture all students, early within their programme and spell this out, is probably a sound idea'*
>
> *'However, it may be necessary to do so, in order to ensure students understand the link between professional learning and professional practice. Think this goes back to transparency. In the event of identified plagiarism, students should not then be surprised if serious action results which involves NMC'.*

'I think it is always useful to remind nurses how academic work impacts upon them professionally.

From the above comments, the fusion of professional and educational identities of the Nurse Educator signalled responsibilities in communicating the expectations of professional learning relative to plagiarism. In picking up this baton, McLean (2011) centres his discussion on highlighting the necessity for Nurse Educators to establish, via a values-based curriculum, professionalism under the auspices of 'good character' requirements. Whilst McLean (2011) notes that Nurse Educators cannot bestow good character upon learners, he nevertheless determines, not dissimilar to the responses offered above, that Nurse Educators have a key responsibility in promoting probity.

Whilst the theme of responsibility within the comments offered was a prevalent one, comments affiliated to the statement on professional gate keeping (statement 27), in the context of major plagiarism, again elicited complexities of categorising and strategically managing plagiarism. These opinions emerge from a range of perspectives, none of which appears definitive, and which are laced with tensions, educationally and professionally:

'What is major plagiarism?.... Is it buying an essay or stealing one. Obviously an issue of character or desperation. If desperation we need to provide guidance. There are a lot worse things a person can do in life'

'This is tricky. If an instance of plagiarism has been dealt with according to the HEI's policy, the proceedings of the hearing (or whatever) are likely to be confidential. If the student has then been allowed to continue with the programme, presumably the HEI has concluded that the student is fit to proceed and should not be further penalized. In such a case, it seems unfair for the student's future to be dogged forever by that mistake'

'This is an important on-going debate, especially regarding a liberal education in a business model institution. That is, there are fiscal considerations with failing students'

'It is difficult if you have very little contact with the individual student to be able to make this decision i.e. have a large number of students'

'I hadn't thought of this before, but it makes sense as we know our students and we have processes in place for FtP, however the good character forms that require to be signed each year by students are a self-declaration so we would need to overrule this'

In asking educators to offer an opinion on the relevance of their role in the preparation of nurse learners beyond the campus, and hence for clinical practice (statement 33), the following was offered:

'I think that the nurse educator's role has everything to do with this. As detailed above they are professional gatekeepers and as such have a duty to ensure that qualifying practitioners are of good standing therefore it can be questioned that if an individual is not willing to adhere to policy for academic attainment, would they be willing to avoid disclosure of issues that arise when practising with patients e.g. minor drug errors etc.'

'A difficult question to answer: in my HEI all the cases of plagiarism I have dealt with have been unintentional. I think a distinction needs to be drawn between intentional and unintentional: the intentional plagiarist is dishonest, and therefore their professionalism can be questioned'

'If it isn't managed effectively, students will think 'they can get away with it'….. What message does that send to student practitioners? That a professional course does not have direct relevance or links to the profession?'

'If they can't replicate academic material in a trustworthy manner, can they be trusted to care for the public?'

'We need to manage it and deal with issues, but not get it out of perspective'

Participants indicated a range of perspectives which they associated with the educational role centring on learners demonstrating professional values, potential for future malpractice as a consequence of plagiarism and the ability to discern and assess the dimensions of plagiarism. Semple et al. (2004) indicate as gateways to professions, HEIs have a duty of care to ensure those pursuing membership not only have 'Good health and good character', but are also safe and effective practitioners. None of the comments identified the relevance of the Nurse Educator's role in the context of suboptimal learning and its potential impact.

Whilst the word 'responsibility' was never introduced as a concept within any of the statements in the survey tool, this theme has emerged from the data and links with findings from qualitative studies of Nurse Educators' involvement in dealing with academic dishonesty and plagiarism (Fontana, 2009; Paterson et al., 2003).

6.4 Role Challenges for the Nurse Educator

In taking forward the concept of responsibility associated with plagiarism and the role implications for the Nurse Educator, this section represents the study's exploration of the inherent role challenges. A number of studies (de Jaeger & Brown, 2009; Sutherland-Smith, 2005) have indicated that, in addressing the thorny issue of plagiarism, educators face an array of complex challenges. Moreover, focusing on the only study uncovered which explicitly explored plagiarism within Nurse

Education, Paterson et al. (2003) qualitatively identified discomfort as a key challenge experienced by Canadian Nurse Educators in policing and managing plagiarism. Furthermore, the dichotomy this spawned in adopting diverse roles, that is, teacher, detective and sometimes judge and jury, was seen to affect decision-making relative to the strategic governance of plagiarism.

Table 6.3 presents findings associated with exploring if Scottish Nurse Educators held similarly distinctive opinions regarding the pragmatic challenges of addressing plagiarism relative to role implications. Analysis indicated the most popular responses, based on the premise of the statement, occurred with the Disagree, Agree and Strongly Agree categories. With the exception of statement 30, very low percentage responses were recorded by those who did not hold a definitive opinion, that is, percentage frequencies of less than 6% for each statement and similarly those who were unsure, with percentage frequencies of 4.7 % or less.

Table 6.3 Opinions: Role Challenges

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Neither/ Nor		Unsure	
	f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
28. Uncovering occurrences of suspected plagiarism (minor or major), the Nurse Educator's role is to provide the evidence and 'refer on' all cases	3	1.8	15	8.9	**107**	**63.3**	30	17.8	8	4.7	6	3.6
29. In managing suspected minor or major plagiarism, the Nurse Educator's role does not involve determining the level of intent and/or the type of penalties which may occur if proven	6	3.5	48	28.1	**75**	**43.9**	24	14.0	10	5.8	8	4.7
30. Nurse Educators should not expect a role which includes informing post-registered learners that an HEI's procedures for dealing with major plagiarism could include referral to the NMC	12	7.0	**90**	**52.6**	33	19.3	7	4.1	20	11.7	9	5.3
31. The Nurse Educator's role involves ensuring pre-registration learners are familiar with plagiarism investigation processes	1	0.6	6	3.5	**92**	**53.8**	67	39.2	4	2.3	1	0.6
32. Nurse Educators should not be deterred in managing plagiarism by the prospect of learners returning negative evaluations/damaging the student-teacher relationship	1	0.6	3	1.8	79	46.2	**82**	**48.0**	4	2.3	2	1.2

Notes: f = frequency; % = percentage of total responses

In-depth analysis, as outlined below in **Table 6.4** demonstrates the consensus opinions obtained from consolidating the Strongly Disagree/Disagree and Strongly Agree/Agree for each of the statements.

Table 6.4 Consensus Opinions and Chi-squared Analysis: Nurse Educators' Role Challenges

Statement	Total Responses	Reject		Endorse		χ^2
		f	%	*f*	%	
28. Uncovering occurrences of suspected plagiarism (minor or major), the Nurse Educator's role is to provide the evidence and 'refer on' all cases	155	18	11.6	**137**	**88.4**	91.36*
29. In managing suspected minor or major plagiarism, the Nurse Educator's role does not involve determining the level of intent and/or the type of penalties which may occur if proven	153	54	35.3	**99**	**64.7**	13.25*
30. Nurse Educators should not expect a role which includes informing post-registered learners that an HEI's procedures for dealing with major plagiarism could include referral to the NMC	142	**102**	**71.8**	40	28.2	27.07*
31. The Nurse Educator's role involves ensuring pre-registration learners are familiar with plagiarism investigation processes	166	7	4.2	**159**	**95.8**	139.18*
32. Nurse Educators should not be deterred in managing plagiarism by the prospect of learners returning negative evaluations/damaging the student-teacher relationship	165	4	2.4	**161**	**97.6**	149.38*

Notes: *f* = frequency; *%* = percentage of total responses; * $p < .05$

Analysis again demonstrates strongly polarised opinions amongst Nurse Educators who either rejected or endorsed the premise of the statements offered, with percentages ranging between 64.7% and 97.6%. Chi-squared Goodness of Fit testing (χ^2) was statistically significant finding in relation to all 5 statements.

6.4.1 Boundaries of Autonomy and Decision-making

The above statements detail pragmatic role implications, all of which were action and/or decision-making orientated. In statements 28 & 29, the boundaries associated with actions were explored with Nurse Educators, vis-à-vis evidence gathering, onward referral, reserving judgment and the predictive outcomes. These demarcations found favour with participants and the statements were endorsed with agreement frequencies of 88.4% (n = 137) and 64.7% (n = 99), respectively. In

this respect, these outcomes concur with commentary by Anyanwu (2004) and Biggam (2011), who contend this approach allows for consistent, transparent, auditable and equitable management, be this remedial or punitive. The findings from Anyanwu's (2004, p. 182) case study highlight the need for boundaries and consultative processes to exist in order to promote consistency based on a finding which, from her study, begged the question '*how can one lecturer view the work and decide that the plagiarism was deliberate, and yet another decide than it was a result of a misunderstanding?'*

Nurse Educators' endorsement of these statements would however appear to contrast with findings within other studies, specifically when this involves decision-making and autonomy concerning plagiarism, as noted within the broader plagiarism literature (Flint et al., 2006; Simon et al., 2003). Paterson et al.'s (2003) study also highlighted some interesting facets in this area, in that Nurse Educators did not discuss occurrences of plagiarism with peers to avoid compromising their decision-making autonomy. Whilst opinions on decision-making capacity and autonomy were not specifically sought in relation to this study, clearly this represents an area for further investigation.

6.4.2 Engagement with Learners

Having established that strategic governance pivots on meeting a range of stakeholder needs (Bleiklie & Kogan 2007; Schofield, 2009; Shattock, 2006), arguably plagiarism management necessitates direct engagement with learners to outline and clarify the same. Also established, in the context of professional Nurse Education, was that this involves the duality of governance, espoused through the discrete approach adopted by the HEI and professional body requirement, in this instance Fitness to Practise.

The necessity for Nurse Educators to engage across these domains was established within the findings of Chapters 4 and 5. Consequently, statements 30-31 sought opinions on a range of actions which have direct role implications in explaining the functionality of the HEI's Fitness to Practise panel and potential referral to the NMC for post-qualified learners. In setting these actions apart from role implications, which are pedagogically driven in relation to assist learners in understanding plagiarism, and how to avoid it, these statements demarcate detailing and explaining to learners a negative issue which, anecdotally, can result in marked discomfort for the Nurse Educator. However, the findings from this study suggests that Nurse Educators

concur that activity should occur in relation to assisting nurse learners in becoming familiar with the investigative processes which might be invoked, including how this translates across dealing with learners who are pre-qualifying and those who are already registrants.

6.4.3 Educator-Learner Relationships

In progressing the issue of key challenges associated with addressing plagiarism, statement 32, '*Nurse Educators should not be deterred in managing plagiarism by the prospect of learners returning negative evaluations/damaging the student-teacher relationship'* was one of two statements within the entire survey questionnaire to attract the top percentage response of 97.6% (*n* = 161). Based on this response, this finding would appear to suggest that strategic governance of plagiarism in Nurse Education should be unaffected by the potential negative outcomes which may ensue.

Comparison with the existing literature would appear to offer contrasting opinions. For example, Fontana (2009) suggests that managing plagiarism caused irreparable damage to the educator-learner's relationship and adversely influenced the decision to formally manage a future occurrence. This is supported by empirical work by Pincus and Schmelkin (2003), Sutherland-Smith (2005) and Yeo and Chien, (2009) who elicited similar findings regarding educators' reluctance to instigate the governance of plagiarism. Nevertheless, the limitations of the literature were associated with the fact that Fontana's study focused broadly on academic dishonesty, and whilst the other sources reflected discussion of plagiarism, the context was non-specific in terms of academic subject or disciplines.

6.4.4 Additional Qualitative Responses

It was evident from the qualitative responses additionally supplied by some participants in relation to statements 28-32 that there was propensity for commentary to continue to gravitate towards the processes of managing plagiarism within Nurse Education as opposed to considering the challenges associated with role implications. This clearly identified commentary subsumed within the theme of *Complex Decision-Making*. For example, in response to statement 28, '*Uncovering occurrences of suspected plagiarism (minor or major), the Nurse Educator's role is to provide the evidence and 'refer on' all cases'* educators suggested:

'Some element of discretion should remain with teaching staff…..for consistency 1 person should co ordinate this'

'Many cases are desperate students who just need attention and help…..minor unintentional plagiarism doesn't need to invoke such processes'

The premise of this first statement centred on providing a consistent and fair approach which, from the documentary analysis findings, indicated that irrespective of whether this entailed a minor or major occurrence of plagiarism, due process should be followed to demonstrate transparent decision-making. However, the comments offered by some participants suggested non-engagement with formal processes, particularly for minor infringements, may be preferable. Nevertheless, this approach appears to offer little evidence of providing an audit trail of events and actions taken by educators, which could arguably obscure serial offences. This may have some similarity with Paterson et al.'s (2003) study where it was identified that Nurse Educators who deal informally with plagiarism rarely documented these events within student files.

Another comment referred to consulting with the learner and then discussing with peers in order to determine a way forward:

'I would want to talk to the individual first; I would also consult with others in the team as to know what is best to do'

Despite the limitations of not being able to probe this comment to ascertain if this approach is due to perceived shortcomings of policy or something more intrinsic, it interestingly suggests practising democracy rather than following due process. This supposition is offered in light of the documentary analysis findings which quantitatively verified, to a greater or lesser extent, that all eleven Scottish HEIs clearly provide guidance on the process of managing plagiarism which did not include this approach. Moreover, interpretation suggests the opportunity for variable outcomes to emerge as a consequence of what appears, at face value, informal adjudication, thus fuelling the theme of inconsistent educational practices, as identified within Sutherland-Smith's (2005) study.

Whilst differences in opinions abound many of the additional free-text comments clearly identified that an objective, consistent stance in managing plagiarism should prevail:

'as a registered nurse, the nurse educator has a professional responsibility to identify and minimise risk (NMC 2008). Referring on for formal consideration allows appropriate investigation, judgement and action to take place which can only be in the best interests of the student, the university and also professional practice'

'I think this enables consistency and fairness'

From this perspective, the opinions commonly offered concur with expert opinion and current drivers (Carroll, 2007; HEA, 2010; QAA, 2011) which petition for fair, consistent judgments. Furthermore, the issue of objective management elicited from comments pertaining to statement 29 *'In managing suspected minor or major plagiarism, the Nurse Educator's role does not involve determining the level of intent and/or the type of penalties which may occur if proven'* further support this:

'The FTP committee is the correct forum for a dispassionate assessment of the evidence of a particular case and the level of response required'

'I think we are best placed to be involved in exploration of the issue'

'Again, that depends on the level of the incident and whether it might be just a simple misunderstanding…..otherwise I agree with this statement'

'The nurse educator may be in a better position to determine the level of intent; however type of penalties should not be left to one party in any case'

'That cannot be the responsibility of an individual that is the responsibility of the panel'

'I'm not sure - on one hand a decision should be made on the individuals circumstances, while on the other it may be useful for an outside party to make the decision in an impartial way'

'That is for the panel to decide'

The vast majority of comments relative to this statement were in favour of objective management and supports the quantitative data concerning role demarcation.

An interesting range of comments emerged regarding statement 30 *'Nurse Educators should not expect a role which includes informing post-registered learners that an HEI's procedures for dealing with major plagiarism could include referral to the NMC'*. Despite the statement directing participants to specifically consider their role, this again spa*wned* commentary on the different processes that may operate in managing occurrences of plagiarism, particularly for the post-qualified nurse learner:

'RNs referred to their employer'

This process has been determined by an HEI, and is by no means universal, but the role implications in communicating the investigative processes still apply. However, what is not known in this context is whether this comment is predicated on visible local arrangements between an HEI and its service partners.

Interestingly, it was also obvious from comments from some Nurse Educators that, if information on investigative processes were documented, this would be sufficient:

> *'It should be in the programme document not down to individuals'*
>
> *'As an individual I would not expect to do that but the School/Department should ensure that this is clearly communicated'*

One participant also felt this was a responsibility out with the HEI which fell within the remit of the professional body:

> *'I agree, this should come from the NMC'*

Arguably the difficulties with this 'hands-off' approach by Nurse Educators lies in being confident that learners have actually engaged with and understood these written communications.

Conversely, other Nurse Educators again identified with the requirements of transition and induction into Nurse Education, previously identified within Chapter 5 (Section 5.4):

> *'Post-registration students should be informed at the outset the penalties which could result from plagiarism. Many students are returning to education after some time and systems and processes have advanced. For example, the establishment of FtP and plagiarism software'*
>
> *'Students need some explanation of the rules'*
>
> *'Prevention is better than cure!.....think it would be important for the nurse educator to be involved in ensuring plagiarism prevention through effective student support'*

The latter selection of comments would concur with commentary by David and Lee-Woolfe (2010) who indicate that different standards for managing Fitness to Practise operate in relation to those learners who are qualified and those who are not, and by default, the processes therein.

These comments identified implications for the role, based on the challenges and complexities of plagiarism which make it less than straightforward to deal with within professionally-based education. Indeed, it is evident from what emerged that

different opinions, approaches and dichotomies prevail, which contribute to the distinctions, dispositions and tensions which the topic of plagiarism generates.

6.5 How Many Nurse Educators have Dealt with Plagiarism

As identified within the literature on plagiarism, attempting to accurately gauge the incidence of plagiarism within Higher Education has, for several methodological and pragmatic reasons, been problematic and therefore remains epidemiologically elusive. Moreover, the picture within Nurse Education is more severely limited, with the only offering uncovered, out with the hyperbole within the American literature, provided by McCabe's (2007) study. Although orientated on academic dishonesty by nurse learners and therefore not specific to plagiarism, the behaviour inventory used by McCabe (2009) included acts identifiable as plagiaristic. Yet these acts were so diffusely spread across a range of behaviours that quantification on plagiarism *per se* was not provided or estimable by the reader.

Within the context of this study, exploring the existing empirical work concerning the incidence of plagiarism within Nurse Education was to inform decision-making regarding the study's design. Essentially, was there sufficient evidence in the literature concerning incidence levels to suggest that many Nurse Educators may have direct experience of dealing with plagiarism and thus indicate a possible inclusion criterion? However, the dearth of studies within Nurse Education regarding plagiarism made this consideration nebulous. However, whilst there was no attempt in this study to ascertain current trends concerning plagiarism, based on the feedback from participants drawn from Scottish HEIs, the opportunity to include a question to establish what pattern existed regarding the percentage of participants who had dealt with plagiarism appeared prudent. Consequently, the final question contained in the survey questionnaire asked: *'As a Nurse Educator have you ever had the occasion to deal with cases of plagiarism either informally or formally?'*

This dichotomous question took account of the current state of the literature which accepted Carroll's (2007) explanation of plagiarism as an umbrella term for unintentional and intentional acts and the processes for managing it may be multifarious. The sequencing of this question was also given careful consideration, being introduced as the final question (no. 34) so as not to unduly influence responses across the entire range of statements (no's 4-33).

Of the 166 Nurse Educators who responded to this question, the vast majority declared they had experience of dealing with plagiarism (92.2% n = 153) with only a

small percentage indicating they had not (7.8% *n* = 13). Given the aforementioned limitations concerning little active commentary within the nursing literature, which currently signals an empirical void and therefore suggestive of torpor, these findings were surprising.

In reflecting on the influences of a large percentage of educators having dealt with plagiarism, this may have serendipitously added validity to the findings. That is, participants' opinions concerning the strategic governance of plagiarism within Nurse Education, in the vast majority of cases, were provided in a pragmatic context by Nurse Educators with direct experience of the complexities.

Whilst the premise of this question was to explore the number of participants who had dealt with plagiarism, in terms of precision, and appreciation of the complexities and nuances of plagiarism explored within this thesis, it would have been of interest to know the frequency of minor occurrence, and similarly the volume of major infringements. Clearly this indicates an area of inquiry meriting further scrutiny.

6.6 Summary

This final findings chapter has explored, in the context of plagiarism, the role implications for the Nurse Educator. Within this domain this has included discrete analysis with regard to supporting learning for professional practice and the inherent role challenges for the professional educator.

Against the backdrop of plagiarism, supporting learning for professional practice elicited quantitative responses from Nurses Educators that were found to be statistically significant in relation to trigger statements which were associated with role implications. The non-random findings suggest that Nurse Educators endorsed role implications which determined that the primary concern in managing plagiarism should be pedagogical. Whilst direct comparison, as previously identified, was contextually and methodologically hindered, the position identified in this study did not concur with findings within the nursing literature, which appear dominated by professional probity perspectives, namely ethical gate keeping. Supplementary qualitative findings did however suggest that these wider perspectives, which take account of the duality of the Nurse Educator's identity, straddling both the education and professional domains, are difficult to disaggregate in considering primary management of plagiarism and suggests the need for a balanced approach.

The nuances of professional gate keeping were quantitatively endorsed in respect of plagiarism and whilst this finding had some loose affiliation with empirical work within the literature, it appears unique in its application to occurrence of major plagiarism. Supplementary comments did however express tensions and different dispositions, signalling the difficulties and complexities therein.

Undeniably, underscoring much of this discussion was the responsibility which should exist for Nurse Educators in executing role implications in the context of high stakes education focused on constructing learning to support safe and effective contemporary healthcare delivery. This included accepting responsibilities which transcend the educational environment and influenced the delivery of patient care. However, what was also evident was the propensity for Nurse Educators, in their qualitative responses, which were voluntary, to associate plagiarism with the potential to induce professional malpractice. As a counter argument, a quote from Patterson et al.'s (2003, p. 152) study offers some contextualising from the learner's perspective:

> *'Just because I forget to put quotes around someone's words doesn't mean I won't report a medication error I made'*

The pragmatic challenges plagiarism induces upon the Nurse Educator's role were also highlighted in this chapter and demonstrated statistically significant outcomes in relation to all five trigger statements (28-32). Despite the challenges outlined, the findings from this study did not concur with findings within the literature.

Consequently, opinions supported clear implications for the role to promote fairness and transparency and are undeterred by concerns regarding the potential to adversely affect the educator-learner relationship. The supplementary comments offered differing perspectives, reflecting dispositions and tensions associated with complex decision-making, but generally supported a proactive approach to the identified challenges of plagiarism within professionally based education which are complex and nuanced.

Chapter 7: Conclusion to the Study

7.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to explore Nurse Educators' opinions of plagiarism governance. In this concluding Chapter, commentary is presented on the extent to the research questions were answered and the contribution this thesis established. This is followed by recommendations for future practice and for further research in this area. The Chapter concludes by commenting on the study's limitations before offering some final comments on the insights gained.

7.2 Key Findings

Approaches to answering the research questions were based on gathering mainly quantitative data in two discrete phases, which were then amalgamated to illuminate the findings. Qualitative data, additionally provided by just over half of the participants, was also integrated to contribute to exploring the topic. The findings in this study were presented, analysed and discussed in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

7.2.1 Responsive Policy

The complexity of governing plagiarism in Higher Education has argued for responsive policies. The documentary analysis phase of this study responded to the initial question, which asked:

> *'What information do Scottish Higher Education Institutions, which offer Nurse Education, provide in relation to plagiarism governance within their policies and does information continuity exist across these institutions?*

All the HEIs located and articulated their governance of plagiarism within their assessment regulations, with many additionally co-locating within codes of student conduct/discipline. Within these policies, appropriate governance-type information was found, such as, definition, management of 'minor' and 'major' breaches and typical sanctions. However, this was not consistent in terms of being provided by some and not all HEIs. Discernable was that the information which was provided was often superficial, reflecting limited explanations of a concept which has been shown to need delineating (HEA, 2010, 2011; QAA, 2010). Frequently identified was

representation of plagiarism as one-dimensional, that is, intentional and to be managed within a punitive framework. Overall, there was a profound lack of responsiveness by policies to acknowledge and identify the different 'intent' and 'extent' dimensions of the plagiarism continuum (James et al. 2002, p. 39 & 41) which appears problematic from a policy perspective.

Variations were also evident in how plagiarism policies expressed learner behaviour, whereby commentary, if present, equated with cheating, dishonesty and misconduct. Omitted in this context were references to behaviour which might align with an unintentional act, again failing to respond in representing the differing dimensions of the plagiarism continuum. There were no metaphorical references to behaviour representing intellectual theft (non legal context).

Relative to policies articulating the additional governance processes in the context of professional learning, vis-à-vis, Fitness to Practise requirements, only two HEIs included this reference to this requirement. This signals deficiencies within institutions and across the sector in acknowledging the governance requirements of professional learning, suggesting the need for a review of policy practices.

7.2.2 Nurse Educators' Opinions on Plagiarism Governance Policy

Nurse Educators' opinions reflected how plagiarism policies should be presented and explained in the context of Nurse Education. These opinions reflected interpretation of plagiarism and operationalising governance policy and thus responded to answering the second question posed:

> *To what extent do Nurse Educators either agree or disagree on how plagiarism governance in Higher Education should be presented and explained within policies?*

Unsurprisingly, and concurring with prior studies, consensus emerged in line with policies promoting sufficient detail and clarity. Participants confirmed this should include the adoption of definitions aligning with plagiarism's differing dimensions, that is, 'intentionally or unintentionally', to reflect its ability to manifest as part of a continuum. Qualitative comments concurred, not only to promote understanding by learners and educators alike, but also to contribute to equitable management, an issue which has been seen to challenge its governance.

Establishing misconduct in the academic setting is contingent on evidencing behaviour in this context. Revealing how policy should articulate learner behaviour relative to plagiarism participants confirmed 'cheating', 'rule breaking', 'theft' (literary, non legal context) and 'fraud' as acceptable. However, there was disagreement on the use of moralising words akin to 'deceitfulness', 'dishonesty' and 'deception'. Additional qualitative comments also highlighted some participants' tensions and discomfort regarding terminology which they considered, irrespective of the plagiarism context, offensive. Participants described these approaches as derogatory, and uniquely, as 'bullying' and 'harassment', offensive to both the learner and the educator. Whilst unable to probe these comments, linkage with justice and respect, as part of nurses' ethical creed, appeared apparent. A common sub-theme to emerge from this was guarding against assumptions about learners proficiencies in plagiarism avoidance. From this the sense of responsibility felt by participants was tangible.

Progressing exploration of Nurse Educators' opinions to consider the interface of Higher Education and professional governance mechanisms elicited responses to question 3:

> *To what extent do Nurse Educators either agree or disagree on how Plagiarism Governance, involving both Higher Education and the Nursing and Midwifery Council, should be presented?*

Highlighted in responses was the central concept of professionalism as part of governance approaches in dealing with plagiarism, capturing both the academic and probity requirements of Nurse Education. In pragmatic terms, this is located in Fitness to Practise processes, having application irrespective of the learner's registration status (i.e. registration or post-qualifying). Contrary to the current position, participants indicated HEIs should make specific reference to the existence of Fitness to Practise processes within their assessment regulations. Moreover, this endorsed the position to deal with professional learners differently in matters of misconduct in the academic setting, confirming Fitness to Practise as the appropriate forum. Conversely, minor plagiarism should be remitted for management at departmental level and having affinity with Relman's (1989) comment (as cited in Semple et al., 2004) that minor plagiarism does not equate with misconduct.

A key finding was participants endorsing Fitness to Practise as an appropriate and responsive platform and mechanism to address major plagiarism in Nurse Education,

voicing support for structured processes to address the sensitivities of plagiarism in complex decision making and avoids the capacity for this to happen unilaterally. Qualitative comments, whilst broadly supportive, denoted dispositions and tensions with Fitness to Practise and the context within which it operates. Whilst comments of 'overly bureaucratic' featured, specifically, it was the level of dubiety expressed by participants regarding Fitness to Practise's ability to equitably and transparently manage major plagiarism by post-qualified learners. Evident was differential opinions relating to the position of NHS employers to be informed and to sanction in this context and using multiple systems of governance within the HEI setting to filter and manage plagiarism. Also evident were challenges in complex decision-making regarding subsequent referral to the professional body, centring on what some participants believed was a correlation between plagiarism and potential professional future malpractice.

The conclusions drawn indicate Fitness to Practise does provide Nurse Educators a supportive and responsive framework to enable plagiarism management within professional education. Nevertheless, Fitness to Practise processes also appear, for some participants, obscure in managing post-qualified nurse learners, an issue the NMC appears unable to definitively comment on, spawning uncertainty. With different understanding of how Fitness to Practise should operate in this context, a national review of current practice appears rational.

Retaining the line of exploration regarding professionalism and plagiarism, but shifting the focus to consider role implications, provided the invited responses to the penultimate question:

> *To what extent do Nurse Educators either agree or disagree on the role implications concerning the governing of plagiarism within Nurse Education?*

From this, numerous complex and explicit role implications were confirmed. Amongst key findings was the management of plagiarism being primarily pedagogical as opposed to professional focused. Strongly featured were the pedagogical responsibilities of the Nurse Educators, with qualitative comments linking this with imperatives to pragmatically and actively engage with learners to eliminate the potential for suboptimal learning and knowledge construction for professional practice. Not withstanding the pedagogical precedent, professionalism related to knowledge and its application remained obvious. In this context, and in contrast to other work (Fontana, 2009; Paterson et al., 2003), participants were unworried by the

impact on the role, that being the prospect of negativity concerning the learner-educator relationship and evaluation feedback regarding the learning experience. Further evidence of this lay with educators confirming that their role has implications beyond the campus perimeter, succinctly, on the quality of patient care. This offers that role implications, mirroring plagiarism governance, are multilayered.

The conclusions drawn from this thesis demonstrate the connectivity between pedagogical and professional perspectives which Fitness to Practise processes in the context of plagiarism governance are capable of responding to in Nurse Education. From an applied policy perspective this appears unique against the backdrop of current commentary on plagiarism governance.

Against a dearth of scholarly work concerning plagiarism in Nurse Education, including any commentary on the frequency with which this occurs, the final question in this study sought to establish:

> *What percentage of Nurse Educators have experience of dealing with occurrences of plagiarism, either informally or formally, within Nurse Education?*

Whilst not all participants chose to respond, the vast majority confirmed direct experience of dealing with occurrences of plagiarism, either informally or formally. The assumption is that occurrences of plagiarism are frequent, but evidence to confirm, refute or debate remain invisible, perhaps aligning with comment by Bermingham et al. (2009) that educators are reluctant to discuss it.

7.3 Establishing the Contribution

In revealing the opinions of Nurse Educators concerning plagiarism governance, the aim of this study has been met. Whilst some of the findings corresponded with and/or extend the work of others interested in this field of inquiry, uniquely locating this study in Nurse Education provided the platform for important findings to emerge.

The initial contribution this thesis offers is represented in revealing policy deficiencies and unresponsiveness to professional learning apparent in Scottish HEIs plagiarism policies, where there is failure to reference Fitness to Practise processes in the context of plagiarism governance. Whist this study acknowledges it did not examine Fitness to Practise documentation generated by each of the HEIs, it did examine key strategic policies, in which it would reasonably be expected, that as part of

contemporary and dual governance requirements by professional bodies, there would have been reference. Participants in this study uniquely verified and confirmed this requirement, recognising visible inclusion in strategic policy to direct and reflect appropriate approaches to respond to academic and professional governance of learners. Whilst this was a key finding from the documentary analysis, exploration of plagiarism policies has been previously explored from a professional perspective (Jones, 2006, Bermingham et al., 2009) and noted, not unlike this study, information deficits. However, this did not extend beyond focusing on definitions. The contribution made by this thesis, extended this exploration to include governance linked to professional body requirements and professionalism to establish their relevancy in the overarching framework of plagiarism governance in the Higher Education setting.

The substantive contribution of this thesis was made in the conclusions found in revealing plagiarism governance perspectives located in Fitness to Practise approaches and processes. This demonstrated Fitness to Practise as a responsive plagiarism governance framework to support both academic and professional challenges, which in the context of Nurse Education are sensitive and not easily disaggregated. Whilst participants acknowledged additional roles and responsibilities concerning plagiarism governance, uniquely, they did not indicate dissatisfaction with the ethos or direction afforded by Fitness to Practise as a governance process operating in the Higher Education arena. Nevertheless, this thesis also revealed obvious complexities and challenges in participants' search for clarity in managing plagiarism in different cohorts of nurse learners, specifically, post-qualified. Consequently, this thesis contributes to knowledge on plagiarism governance mechanism for educational and professional practice.

7.4 Recommendations for Future Practice

The implications from this study centre on governing plagiarism in the context of professional learning. As this study focused on policy articulation, key findings from this thesis have informed the following recommendations:

- At a policy making level, administrators and educators from professionally based disciplines should work in close partnership to ensure both the inclusion, currency and visibility of professional body governance processes which need to be factored in as part of constructing and reviewing policies;

- Specifically, in the updating and preparing of assessment regulations, which for many institutions to a greater or lesser extent occurs on an annual basis, these should include specific reference to Fitness to Practise processes;

- Module leaders to engage with learners, importantly including post-qualified cohorts, to explicitly communicate the approach to governing plagiarism in the HEI setting involves a different forum for professional learners in accordance with Fitness to Practise precepts and processes;

- HEI quality enhancement forums to engage in discussions on governance of plagiarism in professional programmes; specifically, to debate what role employers play in the governance process, out with that which is accommodated within Fitness to Practise panels;

- Continued Professional Development opportunities should exist for Nurse Educators to engage in regular discussion on plagiarism governance, particularly relevant for academics new to the role; and

- Opportunity should be taken for Nurse Educators to engage with the NMC regarding any future review of 'Good health and good character' documentation prepared for HEI consumption. Specifically, to establish clarity regarding management in the academic setting of post-qualified learners relative to Fitness to Practise considerations.

7.5 Study Limitations

Whilst this research undertaken lays claim to contributing to new knowledge, a number of limitations may have impacted on this study, emergent and imposed. Emergent limitations were linked with conducting the documentary analysis and recognising that, in conducting the search for plagiarism policies from HEI web pages, comprehensive retrieval may have been impeded by electronic firewalls and consequently may have been incomplete. Although policy documents from all 11 HEIs were sourced, an alternative approach would have been to survey HEIs' quality departments targeting individuals, whose role involves organisation governance. However, this may have resulted in only some HEIs participating. Another emergent limitation was the lack of nursing literature on the topic of plagiarism and its governance in the Higher Education setting. Although this strengthened the rationale to conduct the study it did severely limit the ability to offer a focused and critical comparison of these findings with prior work.

Limitations which were imposed occurred in relation to constructing the questionnaire. Based on the findings from the pilot study, there was a necessity for the questionnaire to be succinct in its ability to convey the issue under investigation and elicit a response within a time-frame which participants would not perceive as onerous. Recognising this as an early limitation affecting the study's method, efforts were made to ensure the content and comprehensibility of the survey questionnaire were not compromised. However, subsequent reflection suggests the part of the tool probing Nurse Educators' opinions of the behavioural manifestations associated with plagiarism (statement 12), suggested this could have been more precise, that is providing separate statements on the behavioural typologies such as literary theft (non-legal context), fraud, cheating and rule breaking. Whilst this would have extended the length of time required for participants to complete the questionnaire, this would have been specifically warranted, in relation to 'literary theft', which, although it appears in many dictionary references, and commonly referred to in the literature, was interestingly not used within any of the HEI's policies. This would have been an interesting and relevant dimension to explore based on the NMC's assessment of major plagiarism which uses 'Dishonesty in Theft' to adjudicate on plagiarism cases referred to them, as noted in section 2.5.1.

7.6 Recommendations for Future Research

Whilst the aim of this study focused on exploring Nurse Educators' opinions of plagiarism governance, the conclusions drawn indicate that occurrences of plagiarism cause considerable and additional challenges, academically and professionally. Whether occurrences of plagiarism by nurse learners implicate pedagogical and/or punitive courses of action, for Nurse Educators there is a need for the dual governance processes to be operationally supportive and enabling by employing policies which are responsive and promote a proportional response to this challenging issue. From this stance, this suggests undertaking further research in this area following discrete and diverse lines of inquiry to consider a number of emerging issues:

- Conduct a qualitative exploration of Nurse Educators' experience of implementing plagiarism policies;
- A qualitative exploration of Nurse Educators' beliefs that plagiarism is a precursor for future unprofessional clinical practice is warranted;

- Further study of Nurses Educators' decision-making and autonomy regarding plagiarism management be undertaken;

- Greater exploration of the relationship between HEIs and NHS employers with regard to their involvement in plagiarism management in the post-qualifying nurse learner context; and

- A comparative study of plagiarism governance involving educators from other professionally-based subject areas which also require adhering to Fitness to Practise requirements in the Higher Education setting.

7.7 Concluding Comments

In this thesis, I endeavoured to research a complex topic which presents contemporary challenges and dilemmas for Nurse Educators. However, engaging with this topic and its consideration within Nurse Education has been immensely challenging as a researcher to meet the aim of the study and answer the research questions.

Pragmatically, this necessitated creativity and sustainability concerning the research process, approaches, parameters and designs to enable deployment of a pan-Scotland project. In this respect, the insights gained have contributed to advancing my skills as a researcher and my knowledge of plagiarism. Overall this has contributed to a personal journey which has challenged, deconstructed and reconstructed my perceptions on plagiarism and its governance in professional learning. As a result, new perspectives emerged regarding my understanding and conceptualisation of both academic practice and conducting practitioner research.

In demonstrating connectivity with the limited work on this topic in Nurse Education, this study adds to the existing knowledge base. Reflecting on the concerns which plagiarism currently commands in Higher Education, it is hoped these findings will be of interest to those working within Nurse Education and professional practice, and also to those with governance and education roles within the wider Higher Education arena.

References

Abasi, A.R., & Graves, B. (2008). Academic literacy and plagiarism: conversations with international graduate students and disciplinary professors. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, *7,* 221-232.

Adams, R. (2010). Exploring dual professional identities, the role of the nurse tutor in higher education in the UK: role complexity and tensions. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, *67*(4), 884-492.

Akhtar-Danesh, N., Baumann, A., Kolotylo, C., Lawlor, Y., Tomkins, C., & Lee, R. (2011). Perceptions of professionalism amongst faculty and nursing students. *Western Journal of Nursing Research, 20*(10), 1-24.

Alexander, I. (2010). Inspiration or infringement: the plagiarisit in court. In L. Bently, J. Davis & C. Ginsburg *Copyright and Piracy: An Interdisciplinary Critique*(pp. 3-16. Cambridge: Cambridge Univerity Press.

Anderson, G. (1998). *Fundamentals of Educational Research* (2nd Ed). London: Routledge.

Andrews, D., Nonnecke, B., & Preece, J. (2003). Electronic survey methodology: a case study in reaching hard-to-involve Internet users. *International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction, 16*(2), 185-210.

Anyanwu, R. (2004). Lessons on plagiarism: Issues for teachers and learners. *International Education Journal*, *4*(4), 178-187.

Archer, T. M. (2003). Web-based surveys. *Journal of Extension*, *42*(4). Retrieved December 14, 2009, from http://www.joe.org/joe/2003august/tt6.php

Arnon, S., & Reichel, N. (2009). Closed and open-ended question tools in a telephone survey about "The Good Teacher". *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, *3*(2), 172-196.

Badge, J., & Scott, J. (2008). Plagiarism polices, looking for intra institutional consistency. Retrieved April 19, 2009, from http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/events/conference/2008/Jo_Badge.doc.

Ballantine, J., & McCourt Larres, P. (2012). Perceptions of authorial identity in academic writing among accounting undergraduate students: implications for unintentional plagiarism. *Accounting Education: an international journal, 23*(3), 289-306.

Barbato, G., Farne, S., & Gento, G. (2008). Management of subjective evaluations represented by ordinal scales. Retrieved September 3, 2011, from http://www.imeko.org/publications/tc1-tc7-2008/IMEKO-TC1-TC7-2008-010.pdf

Barrett, R., & Cox. A.L. (2005). 'At least they're learning something: the hazy line between collaboration and collusion. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, *30*(2), 107-122.

Barry, B.E., & Ohland, M.W. (2009). Applied ethics in engineering, health, business, and law professions: a comparison. *Journal of Engineering*, *98,* 377-388.

Bavier, A. R. (2009). Holding students accountable when integrity is challenged. *Nursing Education Perspectives*, *30*(1), 5.

Baxter, P.E., & Boblin, S.L. (2007). The moral development of baccalaureate nursing students: understanding unethical behaviour in classroom and clinical settings. *Journal of Nursing Education, 45*(1), 20-27.

Bazeley, P. (1999). The bricoleur with a computer: piecing together qualitative and quantitative Data. *Qualitative Health Research*, *9*(2), 279-287.

Becher, T., & Trowler, P.R. (2001). Academic tribes and territories: intellectual enquiry and the culture of disciplines (2nd Ed). OUP: Buckingham.

Beck, L., & Ajzen, I. (1991). Predicting dishonest actions using the theory of planned behaviour. *Journal of Research in Personality,* 25, 285-301.

Bell, L., & Stevenson, H. (2007). Education Policy: Processes, themes and Impact. London: Routledge.

Bellack, J.P. (2004). Why plagiarism matters. *Journal of Nursing Education, 43*(12), 527-528.

Benner, P. (2000). From Novice to Expert (Commemorative Edition). Prentice Hall: London.

Bennett, R. (2005). Factors associated with student plagiarism in a post – 1992 university. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, *30*(2), 137-162.

Bermingham, V., Watson, S., & Jones, M. (2009). Plagiarism in UK law schools: is there a postcode lottery? *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education, 35*(1), 1-14.

Biggam, J. (2011). Succeeding with your masters dissertation: a step-by-step guide (2nd Ed). Maidenhead: OUP.

Biggs, J. & Tang, C. (2011). *Teaching for Quality Learning in Higher Education: what the student does* (3rd Ed). Maidenhead: OUP.

Blaikie, N. (2003). *Analyzing Quantitative Data*. London: Sage.

Blaikie, N. (2007). *Approaches to Social Enquiry* (2nd Ed). Cambridge: Policy Press.

Bleiklie, I., & Kogan, M. (2007). Organisation and governance in universities. *Higher Education Policy*, *20*, 477-493.

Boden, D. & Stubbings, R. (2006). Re-writing the script: supporting academic integrity the library way. Retrieved May 3, 2009, http://www.jiscpas.ac.uk/conference2006/documents/papers/2006papers04.pdf

Boelen, M.G., & Kenny, A. (2009). Supporting enrolled nurse conversion – The impact of a compulsory bridging programme. *Nurse Education Today, 29*, 533-537.

Borg. E. (2008). Local plagiarisms. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, *334*(4), 415-426.

Bradbury-Jones, C., Sambrook, S., & Irvine, F. (2008). Power and empowerment in nursing: a fourth theoretical approach. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 62*(2), 258-266.

Brandon, A.F. & All, A.C. (2010). Constructivism theory analysis and application to the curricula. *Nursing Education Perspectives, 31*(2), 89-92.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77-101.

Breen, L., & Maassen, M. (2005). Reducing the incidence of plagiarism in an undergraduate course: the role of education. Issues in educational research. Retrieved April 4, 2009, from http://www.iier.org.au/iier15/breen.html

Briggs, R. (2003). Shameless! *Australian Universities Review, 46*(1), 19-23.

Brimble, M., & Stevenson-Clarke, P. (2005). Perceptions of the prevalence and seriousness of academic dishonesty in Australian universities. The *Accounting, Accountability and Performance, 12*(1), 32-63.

Brimble, M., & Stevenson-Clarke, P. (2006). Managing academic dishonesty in Australian universities: implications for teaching, learning and scholarship. *The Australian Educational Researcher*, *32*(3), 19-44.

British Educational Research Association (BERA). *Revised guidelines for educational research 2011*. Retrieved December 3, 2011, from http://www.bera.ac.uk/publications/ethical-guidelines

Brown, D. (2002). Cheating must be okay – everybody does it! *Nurse Educator*, *27*(1), 6-8.

Brown, C.A., Dickson R., Humphreys, A., McQuillan, V., & Smears, E. (2008). Promoting academic writing/referencing skills: outcomes of an undergraduate e-learning pilot project. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, *39*(1), 140-156.

Brynner, J. (2006). Cross-sectional survey. In V. Jupp (Ed) *The Sage Dictionary of Social Research Methods* (p53). London: Sage.

Carpenter, D.D., Harding, T.S., Finelli, C.J. & Passow, H.J. (2004). Does academic dishonesty related to unethical behavior in professional practice: an exploratory study. *Science and Engineering Ethics*, *10*(2), 311-324.

Carroll, J. (2002). *A Handbook for Deterring Plagiarism*. Oxford: OCSLD.

Carroll, J. (2004). Institutional issues in deterring, detecting and dealing with student plagiarism. Retrieved April 3, 2010, from http://www.jisc.ac.uk/media/documents/publications/plagiarismfullreport.pdf

Carroll, J. (2005). *Deterring, Detecting and Dealing with Student Plagiarism: Briefing Paper*. Higher Education Academy JISC.

Carroll, J. (2007). *A Handbook for Deterring Plagiarism* (2nd Ed). Oxford: OCSLD.

Carroll, J. (2009). 'A Can of worms' ASKe Conference Paper 4th June 2009. Retrieved April 20, 2010, from http://www.brookes.ac.uk/aske/documents/Plagiarism09_CarrollJ_handout.pdf

Carroll, J. (2010). Plagiarism a threat to learning: an educational response. In G. Joughin, *Assessment, Learning and Judgement in Higher Education*. Wollongong: Springer.

Carroll, J., & Appleton, J. (2001). *Plagiarism a Good Practice Guide*. Oxford: Oxford Brooks University.

Carroll, J., & Seymour, D. (2006). The effect of a penalty tariff on consistent decision making in cases of student plagiarism ASKe Conference Paper June 2006. Retrieved April 20, 2009, from http://www.jiscpas.ac.uk/2006papers.php.

Castle, A. (2000). Radiography: the nature of knowledge and academic tribe. *Radiography*, *6,* 261-268.

Chanock, K. (2008). When students reference plagiarised material – what can we learn (and what can we do) about the understanding of attribution? *International Journal for Educational Integrity*, *4*, 3-16.

Christie, S. (2003). *Introduction to Scots Criminal Law*. Harlow: Pearson Education.

Clarke, J., & Aiello, M. (2006). Codes contacts and consequences – the role of positive agreement in combating academic misconduct. Retrieved April 23, 2009, from

http://www.jiscpas.ac.uk/conference2006/documents/papers/2006papers04.pdf

Clauser, B.E., Margolis, M.J., Holtman, M.C., Katsufrakis, P.J., & Hawkins, R.E. (2010). Validity considerations the assessment of professionalism. *Advances in Health Science Education,* Retrieved December 4, 2011, from http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10459-010-9219-6

Codd, J.A. (1988). The construction and deconstruction of policy documents. *Journal of Educational Policy*, *3*, 235-247.

Code of Practice on Investigations on Human Beings (University of Strathclyde (5th Ed). Retrieved December 4, 2009, from http://www.strath.ac.uk/media/committees/ethics/Code_of_Practice_Oct_2009.pdf

Cohen, L., Manion. L., & Morrison K. (2007). *Research Methods in Education (6th Ed)*. London: Routledge.

Collins, M.E., & Amodeo, M. (2005). Responding to plagiarism in schools of social work: considerations and recommendations. *Journal of Social Work Education*, *40*(3), 527-543.

Corbin, L., & Carter, J. (2007). Is plagiarism indicative of prospective legal malpractice. HeinOnline 17 Educ. Rev. 53. Retrieved June 27, 2011, from http://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?collection=journals&handle=hein.journals/legedr17&div=6&id=&page=

Coulter, T., Lim, C.L., & Wanorie, T. (2007). Factors that influence faculty actions: a study on faculty responses to academic dishonesty. *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, 1*(1), 1-19.

Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence. (2010a). *Student fitness to practise: should the regulators receive every outcome?* CHRE: London.

Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence. (2010b). *Fitness to practise audit report: Audit of health professional regulatory bodies' initial decisions.* CHRE: London.

Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence. (2011). *NMC progress review: a review of the NMC's fitness to practise directorate's progress since 2008.* CHRE: London.

Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence. (2012). *Strategic Review of the Nursing and Midwifery Council: Interim Report*. CHRE: London.

Cresswell, J.W., & Plano Clark, V.L. (2007). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. London: Sage.

Crisp, G.T. (2007). Staff attitudes to dealing with plagiarism issues: perspectives from one Australian university. *International Journal for Educational Integrity*, *3*(1), 3-15.

Crotty, M. (2003). *The foundations of social research*. London: Sage.

Culwin, F., & Lancaster, T. (2001). Plagiarism, prevention, deterrence and detection. Retrieved March 27, 2008, from http://heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/id426

Currer, C., & Atherton, K. (2008). Suitable to remain a student social worker: decision-making in relation to termination of training. *Social Work Education*, *27*(3), 279-292.

Dancey, C.P., & Reidy, R. (2007). *Statistics Without Maths for Psychology* (4th Ed). Harlow: Prentice Hall.

Darbyshire, C., & Fleming, V. (2008). Mobilising Foucault: history subjectivity and autonomous learners in nurse education. *Nursing Inquiry, 15*(4), 263-269.

Data Protection Act (1998). London: HMSO.

David, T.J., & Lee-Woolfe, E. (2010). Fitness to practise for student nurses: principles, standards and procedures. *Nursing Times*, *106*, 23-26.

Dee, T.S., & Jacob, B.A. (2010). Rational ignorance in education: a field experiment in student plagiarism. Working Paper No. 15672, Retrieved January 16, 2010, from http://www.nber.org/papers/w15672

Denscombe, M. (2008). *The Good Research Guide for small scale social research projects* (3rd Ed). Maidenhead: OUP.

Department of Health. (2007). *White Paper. Trust, Assurance and Safety: regulation of the professions.* HMSO. Retrieved December 12, 2011, from http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh_065947.pdf

Devlin, M. (2006). Policy, preparation and prevention: proactive minimisation of student plagiarism. *Journal of Higher Education and Policy Management, 28*(1), 45-58.

Devlin, M., & Gray, K. (2007). In their own words: a qualitative study of the reason Australian university students plagiarize. *Higher Education Research and Development*, *26*(2), 181-198.

Dillman, D.A. (2007). *Mail and Internet Surveys: the Tailored Design Method* (2nd Ed). New Jersey: Wiley.

Dodd, T. (2008). Quantitative and qualitative research data and their relevance to policy and practice. *Nurse Researcher, 15*(4), 7-14.

Dordoy, A. (2002). *Cheating and plagiarism: student and staff perceptions at Northumbria.* Retrieved March 3, 2009, from http://online.northumbria.ac.uk/faculties/art/information_studies/Imri/Jiscpas/site/pubsstudent.asp

Dow, S. (2001). Modernism and postmodernism: didactical analysis. In S. Cullenberg, J. Amariglio, & D.F. Ruccio *Postmodernism, economics and knowledge*, 61-76. Routledge: London.

Duggan, F. (2006). Plagiarism: prevention, practice and policy. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, *31*(2), 151-154.

East, J. (2009). Judging plagiarism: a problem of morality and convention. *Higher Education*, *59*, 69-83.

Ellery, K. (2008). Undergraduate plagiarism: a pedagogical perspective. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, *33*(5), 501-516.

Emerson, L., Rees, M.T., & MacKay, B. (2005). Scaffolding academic integrity: creating a learning context for teaching referencing skills. *Journal of University and Teaching Practice, 2*(3), 12-24.

Evans, T., & Harris, J. (2004). Street-level bureaucracy, social work and the (exaggerated) death of discretion. *British Journal of Social Work, 34*, 871-895.

Falchikov, N. (2005). *Improving assessment through student involvement*: *practical solutions for aiding learning in higher and further education*. London: Routledge Farmer.

Field, A. (2009). *Discovering statistics using SPSS* (3d Ed). London: Sage.

Fink, A. (2006). *How to conduct surveys: a step-by-step Guide*. London: Sage.

Fishman, T. (2009). 'We know it when we see it' is not good enough: towards a standard definition of plagiarism that transcends theft, fraud, and copyright. 4th Asia Pacific conference on Academic Integrity. University of Wollongong NSW Australia Retrieved September 10 2012, from http://ro.uow.edu.au/apcei/09/papers/37/

Fledderman, C.B. (2008). *Engineering ethics* (3rd Ed). New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Flint, A., Clegg, S., & Macdonald, R. (2006). Exploring staff perceptions of student plagiarism. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, *30*(2), 145-156.

Fontana, J.S. (2009). Nursing faculty experience of student academic dishonesty. *Journal of Nursing Education, 48*(4), 181-185.

Fontenot, H.B., Hawkins, J.W. & Weiss, J.A. (2010). Cognitive dissonance experienced by nurse practitioner faculty. *Journal of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners, 24*, 506-513.

Fornari, A. (2004). Promoting professionalism through ethical behaviours in the academic settings. *Journal of American Dietetic Association*, *104*(3), 347-349.

Foster, R. (2007). Avoiding unintentional plagiarism. *Paediatric Nursing*. *12*(1), 1-2.

Fraenkel, J.R., & Wallen, N.E. (2009). *How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education* (7th Ed). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Freedom of Information Act. (2000) HMSO.

Freewood, M., Macdonald, R., & Ashworth, P. (2003). Why simply policing plagiarism is not the answer. In C. Rust (Ed) *Improving Student Learning Theory and Practice – 10 years on*. Oxford: OCSLD.

Gaberson, K.B. (1979). Academic dishonesty amongst nursing students. *Nursing Forum*, *32*(3), 14-20.

Gallant, T.B., & Drinan, P. (2006). Organisational theory and student cheating: explanation, responses and strategies. *Journal of Higher Education, 77*(5), 839-860.

Gazza, E.A. (2009). The experience of being a full-time nursing faculty member in a baccalaureate nursing education program. *Journal of Professional Nursing, 25*(4), 218-226.

General Social Care Council. (2010). *Codes of Practice for Social Care Workers*. London: General Social Care Council.

George, D., & Mallery, P. (2003). Cronbach's alpha rule of thumb. *SPSS for windows step by step: a simple guide and reference 11.0 update* (4th Ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Giddings, L.S. (2006). Mixed-methods research: positivism dressed in drag? *Journal of Nursing Research*, *11*(3), 195-203.

Gilbert, T., & Powell, J.L. (2010). Power and social work in the United Kingdom. *Journal of Social Work, 10*(1), 3-22.

Giliem, J.A., & Giliem, R.R. (2003). Calculating, interpreting, and reporting Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for Likert-type scales. *Midwest Research to Practice Conference in Adult Continuing, ad Community Education*. Retrieved May17, 2011, from https://scholarworks.iupui.edu/bitstream/handle/1805/344/Gliem%20&%20Gliem.pdf?sequence=1

Gilmore, J., & Strickland, D., Timmerman, B., Maher, M., & Feldon, D. (2010). Weeds in the flower garden: an exploration of plagiarism in graduate students' research proposals and its connection to enculturation, ESL, and contextual factors. *International Journal for Educational Integrity*, *6*(1), 13-28.

Gomm, R. (2000). Making sense of surveys. In: R. Gomm & C. Davis *Using Evidence in Health and Social Care*. 27-45, London: Sage.

Gonzales-Benales, D., & Adam, M.R. (2007). Web survey design and implementations: best practices for empirical research. Retrieved December 12, 2010, from http://www.iseing.org/emcis/EMCIS2007/emcis07cd/EMCIS07-PDFs/676.pdf.

Gordon, M. (2009). Towards a pragmatic discourse of constructivism: reflections on lessons from practice. Educational Studies, *A Journal of the American Educational Association, 45*(1), 39-58.

Granitz, N., & Loewy, D. (2007). Applying ethical theories interpreting and responding to student plagiarism. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *72*, 293-306.

Haigh, C., & Johnson, M. (2007). Attitudes and values of nurse educators: an international survey. The Berkley Electronic Press. Retrieved August 4, 2010, from http://www.bepress.com/ijnes/vol14/iss1/art14

Hall, J. (2005). Plagiarism across the curriculum: how academic communities can meet the challenge of the undocumented writer. *Across the Disciplines*, *2*. Retrieved January 13, 2011, from http://wac.colostate.edu/atd/articles/hall2005.cfm

Hall, C., & Ritchie, D. (2009). *What is Nursing: Exploring Theory and Practice*. Exeter: Learning Matters Ltd.

Hamersley, M. (1993). On the teacher as researcher. *Educational Action Research, 1*(3), 425-445.

Harper, M. G. (2006). High tech cheating. *Nurse Education Today*, *26*, 672-679.

Hart, M., & Friesner, T. (2004). Plagiarism and poor academic practice – a threat to the extension of e-Learning in higher education. *Electronic Journal on e-learning, 2*(1). 89-96.

Harvey, J., & Robson, S. (2006). The accidental plagiarist: an institutional approach to distinguishing between a deliberate attempt to deceive and poor academic practice. Retrieved April 23, 2009, from (http://www.jiscpas.ac.uk/conference2006/documents/abstracts/JackeyHarvey_SimonRobson.pdf

Health Professions Council, (2008). *Standards of conduct, performance and ethics*. Health Professions Council: London.

Heap, N.W., Martin, I., & Williams, J.P. (2007). Issues of quality assurance in the management of plagiarism in blended learning environments. Retrieved April 4, 2009, from http://oro.open.ac.uk/7123/01/HeapMartinWilliams-IssuesOfQualityAssuranceInTheManagementOfPlagiarismInBlendedLearningEnvironments.pdf

Hewson, C. (2003). Conducting research on the internet. *The Psychologist*, *16* (6), 290-293.

Higher Education Academy JISC Academic Integrity Service. (2010). *Supporting academic integrity: Approaches and resources for higher education*. York: Higher Education Academy.

Higher Education Academy JISC Academic Integrity Service. (2011). *Policy Works: Recommendations for review policy to manage unacceptable practice in higher education*. York: Higher Education Academy.

Hilbert, G.A. (1985). Involvement of nursing students in unethical classroom and clinical behaviors. *Journal of Professional Nursing*, *1*(4), 230-234.

Hilbert, G.A. (1987). Acacemic fraud: prevalence, practices, and reasons. *Journal of Professional Nursing, 3*(1), 39-45.

Hildreth, P., & Kimble, C. (2004). Knowledge networks: Innovations through communities of practice. Idea Group Publishing: London.

Hursthouse, R. (2001). *On Virtue Ethics*. Oxford: OUP.

Jackson, K.M., & Trochim, W.M.K. (2002). Concept mapping as an alternative approach for the analysis of open-ended survey responses. *Organizational Research Methods*, *5*(4), 307-336.

de Jager, K., & Brown, C. (2010). The tangled web: investigating view of plagiarism at the University of Cape Town. *Studies in Higher Education*, *35*(5), 513-528.

James. R., McInnis, C., & Devlin, M. (2002). Assessing learning in Australian universities: ideas strategies and resources for quality in assessment. Retrieved April 6, 2009, from http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/assessinglearning/docs/PlagMain.pdf

Jenkins, A., & Zetter, R. (2003). *Linking Research and Teaching in Departments*. LTSN Generic Centre.

Johanson, L.S. (2010). Academic Honesty: a nursing imperative. *JNC*, *27*(3), 267-271.

Johns, C. (2011). *Guided Reflection: a narrative approach to advancing professional practice*(2nd Ed*)*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Jones, M. (2006). Plagiarism proceedings in Higher Education – Quality Assured. Retrieved April 2, 2010 from http://www.jiscpas.ac.uk/conference2006/documents/papers/2006papers12.pdf.

Jones, T.M., Phelps, W., & Bigley, G.A. (2007). Ethical theory and stakeholder-related decisions: the role of stakeholder culture. *Academy of Management Review, 32*(1), 137-156.

Jones, S., Murphy, F., Edwards, M., & James, J. (2008). Doing things differently: advantages and disadvantages of web questionnaires. *Nurse Researcher*, *15*(4), 15-26.

Juwah, C., Lal, D., & Beloucif. A. (2006). Overcoming the cultural issues associated with plagiarism for International students. Retrieved November 24, 2011, from http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/bmaf/documents/projects/TRDG_projects/trdg_0506/Juwah_trdg2006_finalreport_webversion.pdf

Kaazar, A., & Eckle, P.D. (2004). Meeting today's governance challenges. *Journal of Higher Education*, *75*(4), 371-398.

Kapalowitz, M.D., Hadlock, T.D., & Levine, R. (2004). A comparison of web and mail survey response rates. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, *68*(1), 94-101.

Kelly, B., & Long, A. (2000). Quality or quantity. *Nurse Researcher*, *7*(4), 53-67.

Kennedy, D. (2011). Sherlock Holmes and the case of the plagiarised paper. *Nurse Education Today, 3*(5), 525-530.

Kennedy, K.J. (2003). Higher education governance as a key policy Issue in the 21st Century. *Educational Research for Policy and Practice*, *2*, 55-70.

Kenny, D. (2007). Student plagiarism and professional practice. *Nurse Education Today*, *27,* 14-18.

Kinn, S., & Curzio, J. (2005). Integrating qualitative and quantitative research methods. *Journal of Nursing Research*, *10*(3), 317-336.

Kinnear, P.R. & Gray, C.D. (2006). SPSS 14 Made Simple. Sussex: Psychology Press.

Kinsella, E.A. (2010). The art of reflective practice in health and social care: reflections on the legacy of Donald Schon. *Reflective Practice, 11*(4), 565-575.

Krathwohl, D.R. (2002). A revision of Bloom's taxonomy: an overview. *Theory into Practice, 41*(4), 212-218.

Lakomy, J. & Price, R.L. (2004). Finding the true incidence rate for plagiarism. *International Education Journal*, 6(4,) 421-429.

Lancaster University. Anti Plagiarism Advice. Retrieved July 20, 2011 from http://www.lancs.ac.uk/celt/celtweb/anti_plag_students_advice

Lane, I.F. (2010). Professional competencies in health sciences education: from multiple intelligences to the clinic floor. *Advanced Health Science Education, 15,* 129-146.

Langone, M. (2007). Promoting Integrity amongst nursing students. *Journal of Nursing Education*, *46*(1), 45-48.

Lapworth, S. (2004). Arresting the decline in shared governance: towards a flexible model for academic participation. *Higher Education Quarterly*, *58*(4), 299-314.

Lave, J., & Wenger, E.C. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Leech, N.L., & Onwuegbuzie, A.J. (2011). Mixed research in counselling: trends in the literature. *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development*, *44*(3), 169-180.

Leshem, S., & Trafford, V. (2007), Overlooking the conceptual framework. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, *44*(1), 93-105.

Levinson, B.A.U., Sutton, M., & Winstead, T. (2009). Educational policy as a practice of power: theoretical tools, ethnographic methods, democratic options. *Educational Policy, 23*(6), 767-795.

Levy, E.S., & Rakovski, C.C. (2006). Academic dishonesty: a zero tolerance professor and student registration choices. *Research in Higher Education, 47*(6), 735-754.

Lin, C.H.S. & Wen, L.Y.M. (2006). Academic dishonesty in higher education – nationwide study in Taiwan. *Higher Education*, *54*, 85-97.

Lipsky, M. (2010). *Street-Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services*. Russell Sage Foundation: New York.

Lowe, S., Purchase, S., & Ellis, N. (2011). The drama of interaction within business networks. Industrial Marketing Management [In Press]. Retrieved September 8, 2011, from http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0019850111000757

Macdonald, R., & Carroll, J. (2006). Plagiarism-a complex issue requiring a holistic institutional approach. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, *3*(2), 233-245.

Mainka, C., & Raeburn, S. (2006) Investigating staff perceptions of academic misconduct: First results in one school. Retrieved April 23, 2009, from

http://www.jiscpas.ac.uk/conference2006/documents/abstracts/ScottRaeburn_ChristinaMainka.pdf

Malen, B., & Knapp, M. (1997). Rethinking the multiple perspectives approach to education policy analysis: implications for policy-practice connections. *Journal of Educational Policy*, *12*(5), 419-445.

Malhotra, N.K. (2008). *Questionnaire Design and Scale Development*. Retrieved August 2, 2011, from www.terry.aga.edu/lrgrover/chapter-5.pdf

Maholtra Bentz, V., & Shapiro, J.J. (1998). *Mindful Inquiry in Social Research*. London: Sage.

Manning, P.K. (2008). Goffman on organisations. *Organisation Studies*, *29*(5), 677-699.

Maranell, G.M. (2009). *Scaling: a Sourcebook for Behavioural Scientists*. Transaction: New Jersey.

May, T. (2011). *Doing Social Research: Issues, Methods and Processes* (4th Ed). London: McGraw Hill OUP.

McCabe, D.L. (2004). Promoting academic integrity: A US/Canadian perspective. In H. Marsden, M. Hicks, & A. Bundy (Eds.), *Educational integrity: Plagiarism and other perplexities. Proceedings of the first Australasian Educational Integrity Conference* (3-11). Adelaide, South Australia: University of South Australia.

McCabe, D.L. (2009). Academic dishonesty in nursing schools: an empirical investigation. *Journal of Nursing Education, 48*(11), 614-623.

McCrink, A. (2010). Ethical nursing practice: why it should concern us all. *Nursing for Women's Health*, *14*(6), 443-446.

McDowell, L., & Brown, S. (2001). Assessing student: cheating and plagiarism. Retrieved March 25, 2008, from http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/id430_cheating_and_plagiarism

McGowan, U. (2005). Academic integrity: an awareness and development issue for students and staff. *Journal of University and Teaching Practice 2*(3a). Retrieved August 4, 2011, from http://ro.uow.edu.au/jutlp/vol2/iss3/6/

McLean, C. (2011). The yellow brick road: a values based curriculum model. *Nurse Education in Practice, 12*(3), 159-163.

McWilliam, E. (2004). Changing the academic subject. *Studies in Higher Education*, *29*(2), 151-163.

Meadows, K.A. (2003). So you want to do research: questionnaire design. *British Journal of Community Nursing*, *8*(12), 562-570.

Meho, L.I. (2006). Email Interviewing in qualitative research: a methodological discussion. *Journal of the American society for information science and technology, 57*(10), *1284-1295*.

Mercer, J. (2007). The challenges of Insider research in educational institutions: wielding a double-edged sword and resolving delicate dilemmas. *Oxford Review of Education*, *33*(1), 1-17.

Miles, M.B. & Huberman, M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis: An expanded Sourcebook* (2nd Ed). London: Sage.

Moran-Ellis, J., Alexander, V.D., Cronin, A., Dickinson, M., Fielding, J., & Thomas, H. (2006). Triangulation and integration: processes, claims and implications. *Qualitative Research*, *6*(1), 45-59.

Morrow, R.A., & Torres, C.A. (2002). Reading Freire and Habermas: critical pedagogy and transformative social change. New York: Teachers College Press.

Munro, B.H. (2005). *Statistical Methods for Health Care Research* (5th Ed. Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.

Murphy, E. (1997). Constructivism: From Philosophy to Practice. Retrieved 23rd July 2009 from http://eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED444966.pdf

Muijs, D. (2011). *Doing Quantitative Research in Education with SPSS* (2nd Ed). London: Sage.

Myers, M.D., & Newman, M. (2007). The qualitative interview in IS research: examining the craft. *Information and Organisation, 17,* 2-26.

Neville, C. (2010). The Complete Guide to Referencing and Avoiding Plagiarism (2nd Ed). Maidenhead: OUP.

Newby, P. (2010). *Research Methods for Education*. London: Pearson.

Newton, J. (2002). Views from below: academics coping with quality. *Quality in Higher Education, 8*(2), 39-61.

Nightingale, D., & Cromby, J. (1999). *Social Constructionist Psychology*. Buckingham: OUP.

Noonis, S., & Swift, C. (2001). An examination of the relationship between academic dishonesty and workplace dishonesty: a multi-campus investigation. *Journal of Education for Business, 77*(2), 69-77.

Nursing and Midwifery Order (2001). *Statutory Instrument 2002 No 253*. London: Crown Office.

Nursing and Midwifery Council (2004). *Standards of proficiency for specialist community public health nurses*. London: NMC.

Nursing and Midwifery Council (2006). *Standards of proficiency for nurse and midwife prescribers*. London: NMC.

Nursing and Midwifery Council (2008a). The code: standards, conduct, performance and ethics. London: NMC.

Nursing and Midwifery Council (2008b). *Standards to support learning and assessment in practice*. London: NMC.

Nursing and Midwifery Council (2009). *Operational guidance for the sharing fitness to practise information*. London: NMC.

Nursing and Midwifery Council (2010a). *Good health and good character: guidance for educational institutions*. London: NMC.

Nursing and Midwifery Council (2010b). *Guidance on professional conduct for nursing and midwifery students*. London: NMC.

Nursing and Midwifery Council (2010c). *Standards for pre-registration nursing education*. London: NMC.

Nursing and Midwifery Council (2011a). *Quality Assurance Handbook*. London: NMC.

Nursing and Midwifery Council (2011b). Conduct and Competence Panel Hearings. Retrieved August 7, 2011, from http://www.nmc-uk.org/Hearings/Hearings-and-outcomes/

Nursing and Midwifery Council (2011c). The PREP Handbook. London: NMC.

O'Donnell, V.L. & Tobbell, J. (2007). The transition of adult students to higher education legitimate peripheral participation in a community of practice. *Adult Education Quarterly*, *57*(4), 312-328.

Olshansky, E. (2007). Do the right thing. *Journal of Professional Nursing, 23*(4), 185-186.

Oppenheim, A.N. (2000). *Questionnaire Design*. London: Continuum Publishing.

O' Regan, K. (2006). Policing–or, at least, policying – plagiarism at one Australian university. *Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice, 3*(2), 113-122.

Oxford Dictionary. 2010. OUP. Retrieved January 17, 2012, from http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/plagiarism

Page-Bucci, H. (2003). The value of Likert scales in measuring attitudes of online learners. Retrieved December 17, 2010, from http://www.hkadesigns.co.uk/websites/msc/reme/likert.htm

Parish, C. (2004). Student essays for sale on internet auction sites. *Nursing Standard, 8*(19), 4.

Park, C. (2003). In other (people's) words: plagiarism by university students – literature and lessons. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, *28*(5), 471-488.

Park, C. (2004). Rebels without a cause: towards an institutional framework for dealing with plagiarism by students. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, *28*(3), 292-306.

Parker, K., Renhart, A., & Moore, K. (2011). The digital revolution and higher education. Pew Research Centre. Retrieved December 12, 2011, from http://eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED524306.pdf

Parse, R.R. (1999). Integrity in the advancement of nursing knowledge [Editorial]. *Nursing Science Quarterly, 12*(3), 187.

Paterson, B., Taylor, L., & Usick, B. (2003). The construction of plagiarism in a school of nursing. *Learning in Health and Social Care*, *2*(3), 147-158.

Pence, P. (2012). Plagiarism: using a collaborative approach in an on-line allied health professions course. *Nurse Educator, 37*(1), 12-16.

Peplau, H.E. (1988). The art and science of nursing: similarities, differences and relations. *Nursing Science Quarterly*, *1*(8), 8-15.

Pickard, J. (2006). Staff and student attitudes to plagiarism at university college Northampton. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, *31*(2), 251-232.

Pittam, G., Elander, J., Lusher, J., Fox, P. & Payne, N. (2009). Student beliefs and attitudes about authorial identity in academic writing. *Studies in Higher Education*, *34*(2), 153-170.

Pincus, H.S., & Schemelkin, L.P. (2003). Faculty perceptions of academic dishonesty: a multidimensional scaling analysis. *The Journal of Higher Education, 74*(2), 197-209.

Puhl, R.M., & Luedicke, J. (2012). Weight-based victimisation amongst adolescents in the school setting: emotional reactions and coping behaviours. *Journal of Youth Adolescence*, *41*, 27-40.

Punch, K.F. (2009). *Introduction to research Methods in Education*. London: Sage.

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. (2006*). Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education. Section 6: Assessment of students*. Mansfield: QAA.

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. (2009*). Scottish subject benchmark statement: Nursing*. Mansfield: QAA.

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. (2010*)*.Institutional Audit: University of Ulster. Gloucester: QAA

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. (2011*). Understanding Assessment: its role in safeguarding academic standards and quality in Higher Education: Guidance* for early career staff. Gloucester: QAA.

Quinsee, S., Baughan, P., & Boylan, E. (2006). Lessons Learnt from Running a Plagiarism Awareness Campaign', *2nd International Plagiarism Conference*. The Sage, Gateshead 19-21 June. Newcastle: Northumbria University Press. Retrieved 23rd April 23, 2009, from http://www.jiscpas.ac.uk/documents/papers/2006Papers18.pdf

R v Ghosh ([1982] QB 1052). Retrieved August 14, 2011, from http://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWCA/Crim/1982/2.html

Rainbow, C. (2002). Descriptions of ethical theories and principles. Department of Biology, Davidson College; Davidson NC. Retrieved January 20, 2011, from http://www.bio.davidson.edu/people/kabernd/Indep/carainbow/Theories.htm

Rebera, G., & Turri, M. (2009). An analysis of the Italian experience. In J. Hussman *International Perspectives on the Governances of Higher Education*. Routledge: Oxon, 13-33.

Relph, A., & Randle, K. (2006). Using assessment on the front-line in the battle against plagiarism. Retrieved April 21, 2009, from http://www.jiscpas.ac.uk/conference2006/documents/papers/2006papers12.pdf

Riffe, D., Lacy, S., & Fico, F.G. (2005). *Analyzing Media Messages* (2nd Ed). LEA: New Jersey.

Riley, R., & Manias, E. (2002). Foucault could have been an operating room nurse. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 23*(4), 316-324.

Robson, C. (2011). *Real World Research* (3rd Ed) Oxford: Blackwell Science.

Roig, M. (2001). Plagiarism and paraphrasing criteria of college and university professors. *Ethics and Behaviour, 11*(3), 307-323.

Rolfe, G. (2006). Validity, trustworthiness and rigour: quality and the idea of qualitative research. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, *53*(3), 304-310.

Rosamond, B. (2002). Plagiarisms, academic norms and the governance of the profession. *Politics*, *22*(3), p167-164.

Roxburgh, M., Watson, R., Holland, K., Johnson, M., Lauder, W., & Topping, K. (2008). *Nurse Education Today*, *28,* 881-889.

Rudestam, K.E., & Newton, R.R. (2007). *Surviving your Dissertation: A Comprehensive Guide to Content and Process (3rd Edition)*. London: Sage.

Ryan, A.B. (2006). Methodology: analysing qualitative data and writing up your findings. *Researching and Writing your thesis: a guide for postgraduate students*. Mace: Maynooth Adult and Community Education, 92-108. Retrieved January 16, 2011, from http://eprints.nuim.ie/871/

Salkind, N.J. (2008). *Statistics for People Who (Think They) Hate Statistics* (3rd Ed). London: Sage.

Santoro, N. & Snead, S.L. (2012). 'I'm not really an academic': a career from industry to academe. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*. Retrieved January 7, 2012, from http://dx/doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2011.645457

Savin-Baden, M. (2005). Why collaborate when you can cheat? understanding plagiarism in occupational therapy education. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, *68*(1), 11-16.

Sax, L.J., Gilmartin, S.K., & Bryant, A.N. (2003). Assessing response rates and non-response bias in web and paper surveys. *Research in Higher Education*, *44*(4), 409-432.

Schofield, A. (2009). *What is an effective and high performing governing body in Higher Education*. London: Leadership Foundation for Higher Education.

Scott, D. (2000). *Reading Educational Research and Policy: key issues in Learning and Teaching*. London: Routledge-Falmer.

Scott, S.D. (2008). 'New professionalism' – shifting relationships between nursing education and nursing practice. *Nurse Education Today*, *28*, 240-245.

Selwyn, N. (2008). 'Not necessarily a bad thing…': as study of online plagiarism amongst undergraduate students. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, *28*(5), 1-17.

Semple, M., Kenkre, J., & Achilles, J. (2004). Student fraud: The need for clear regulations for dismissal or transfer form healthcare training programmes for students who are not of good character. *NT Research*, *9*(4), 272-280.

Sergiou, K. (2004). Why do students plagiarise? Retrieved April 4, 2009, from http://www.jiscpas.ac.uk/documents/abstracts/2004Abstract22.pdf

Shattock, M. (2006). *Managing Good Governance in Higher Education*. London: OUP.

Shaw, W.H. & Barry, V. (2007). *Moral issues in Business* (10th Ed). Belmont: Thomson Wordsworth.

Sheehan, K. (2001). E-mail survey response rates: a review. *The Journal of Computer-mediated Communications 13*(1). Retrieved April 4, 2011, from http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol6/issue2/sheehan.html

Shih, T.H., & Fan, X. (2008). Comparing response rates from mail and web survey: w meta-analysis. *Field Methods*, *20*(3), 249-271.

Sikes, P. (2009). Will the real author come forward: questions of ethics, plagiarism theft and collusion in academic research writing. *International Journal of Research and Method in Education*, *32*(1), 13-24.

Simon, C.A., Carr, J.R., McCulloch, S.M., Morgan, S.J., Oleson, T., & Ressel, M. (2003). The other side of academic dishonesty: the relationship between faculty scepticism, gender and strategies for managing student academic dishonesty cases. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, *28*(2), 193-207.

Sinnott-Armstrong, W. (2011). Consequentialism. *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, 2006*. Retrieved October 24, 2011, from http://plato.stanford.edu/cgi-bin/encyclopedia/archinfo.cgi?entry=consequentialism

Smith, H., & Ridgeway, J. (2008). Why students cheat in their own words as well as those of others. Retrieved July 8, 2011, from

http://www.plagiarismadvice.org/images/stories/old_site/media/2008papers/P40%20Smith%20Ridgway.pdf

Smyth, R. (2004). Exploring the usefulness of a conceptual framework as a research tool: A researcher's reflections. *Issues in Educational Research, 14*(2). Retrieved May 4, 2011, from http://www.iier.org.au/iier14/smyth.html

Solomon, D.J. (2001). Conducting web based surveys. *Research and Evaluation 7*(19). Retrieved December 4, 2009, from http:PAREonline.net/getvn.asp?v=7&n=17

Spencer, J., & Ritchie, L. (1994). Qualitative analysis for applied policy research. In A. Bryman & R. G. Burgess (Eds.) *Qualitative Data Analysis* (pp. 173-194). London: Routledge.

Starc, A. (2009) Nursing professionalism in Slovenia: knowledge, power, and ethics. *Nursing Science Quarterly*, *22*(4), 371-374.

Stefani, L., & Carroll, J. (2001). *A Briefing on Plagiarism*. LTSN Generic Centre.

Sullivan, T.P., Khondkaryan, E., Dos Santos, N.P., & Peters, E.N. (2011). Applying experience sample methods to partner violence research. *Violence Against Women*, *17*(2), 251-266.

Sutherland-Smith, W. (2003). Hiding in the shadows: risks and dilemmas of student plagiarism in academic writing. Australian Association for Research in Education. Retrieved December 12, 2010, http://dro.deakin.edu.au/view/DU:30005189

Sutherland-Smith, W. (2005). Pandora's box: academic perspective of student plagiarism in writing. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 4*, 83-95.

Sutherland-Smith, W. (2010). Retribution, deterrence and reform: the dilemmas of plagiarism management in universities. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, 12*(1), 5-16.

Szabo, A., & Underwood, J. (2004). Cybercheats: is the information and communication technology fuelling academic dishonesty? *Active Learning in Higher Education, 5*(2), 180-199. Retrieved April 6, 2010, from

http://www.plagiarism.org/learning_center/did_you_know.html

Tanner, C.A. (2004). Moral decline or pragmatic decision making?: cheating and plagiarism in perspective. *Journal of Nursing Education, 43*(7), 291-292.

Tanner, J., & Timmons, S. (2000). Backstage in the theatre. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 32*(4), 975-980.

Tashakkori, A., & Cresswell, (2007). The new era of mixed methods. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, *1*(1), 3-7.

Teddlie, C., & Tashakkori, A. (2009). *Foundations of Mixed Methods Research: integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches in the Social and Behavioural Sciences*. London: Sage.

Tennant, P., & Duggan, F. (2008). *Academic misconduct benchmarking research project: part II the recorded incidence of student plagiarism and the penalties applied.* Academy JISC Academic Integrity Service.

Tennant, R., & Rowell, G. (2010). Benchmark Plagiarism Tariff. Retrieved July 4, 2011, from http://www.plagiarismadvice.org/BTariff.pdf

Tennant, P., Rowell, G., & Duggan, F. (2007). *Amber project: Academic Misconduct Benchmarking research project: Part 1*. JISC Plagiarism Advisory Service.

Tippitt, M.P.A., Kline, N., Tilghman, J.R., Chamberlain, J., & Meagher, B. (2009). Creating environments that foster academic integrity. *Nursing Education Perspectives*, *30*(4), 239-244.

Trafford, V. & Leshem, S. (2008). *Stepping Stones to Achieving your Doctorate*. Maidenhead: OUP

Trochim, W.M.K. (2006). *Research Methods Knowledge Base*. Retrieved 4th August 2011 from http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/

Trowler, P. (2003). *Educational Policy* (2nd Ed). London: Routledge.

Unsworth, J. (2011). Student professional suitability: Lessons from how the regulator handles fitness to practise. *Nurse Education Today, 31*, 466-471.

Universities Scotland. (2011). Review of Higher Education Governance. Universities Scotland. Retrieved December 11, 2011, from http://www.universities-scotland.ac.uk/uploads/US_GovResponse_FINALWEB031011.pdf

Valentine, K. (2006). Plagiarism as literary practice: recognizing and rethinking ethical binaries. *College Composition and Communication, 58*(1). 89-109. Retrieved February 6, 2011, from http://college.holycross.edu/academics/writers_workshop/pdfs/plagiarism.pdf

Vitale, D.C., Armenakis, A.A., & Feild, H.S. (2008). Integrating qualitative and quantitative methods for organizational diagnosis: possible priming effects? *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 2(1), 87-105.

Vogelsang, J. (1997). Plagiarism - an act of stealing. *Journal of PeriAnaestesia Nursing, 12*(6), 422-425.

Walton, N. (2010). Plagiarism amongst nursing students. Retrieved July 7, 2010, from http://nursingethicsblog.com/2010/11/21/plagiarism-among-nursing-students/

Wan, R., Nordin, S., Habib, M.B. & Ghazili, Z.B. (2011). Plagiarism among undergraduate students in an engineering based university: an exploratory analysis. *European Journal of Social Sciences, 25*(4), 537-549.

Ward, C., & McCormack, B. (2000). Creating an adult learning culture through practice development. *Nurse Education Today, 20*(4), 259-266.

Warn, J. (2006). Plagiarism software: no magic bullet! *Higher Education Research and Development*, *25*(2), 195-208.

Wellington, J. (2000). *Educational Research: Contemporary Issues and Practical Approaches*. London: Sage.

Wenger, E.C. (1998). *Communities of Practice*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Wenger, E.C., & Snyder, W.M. (2000). The Organizational Frontier. *Harvard Business Review*. January-February 2000, 139-149.

Wenger, E.C., McDermott, R. & Snyder, W.M. (2002). *Cultivating Communities of Practice: A Guide to Managing Knowledge*. Cambridge USA: Harvard Business School Press.

Wheeldon, J. (2010). Mapping mixed methods research: methods, measures and meaning. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, *4*(2), 87-102.

Wheeler, D., & Anderson, D. (2010). Dealing with plagiarism in a complex society education. *Business and Society: Contemporary Middle Eastern Issues*, *3*(3), 166-177.

Wicker, P. (2007). Plagiarism: understanding and management. *Journal of Perioperative Practice*, *17*(8), 372-383.

Williams, B. T. (2008). Trust, betrayal, and authorship: plagiarism and how we perceive students. *Journal of adolescent and Adult Literacy*, *51*(4) 350-354.

Wisker, G. (2007). *The Postgraduate Research Handbook (2nd Ed)*. London: Palgrave.

Woods, L., & Roberts, P. (2003). Requesting access for research purposes: issues and guidelines. *Nurse Researcher*, *10*(3), 38-47.

Wynd, C.A. (2003). Current factors contributing to professionalism in nursing. *Journal of Professional Nursing, 19*(5), 251-261.

Yeo, S., & Chien, R. (2007). Evaluation of process and proforma for making consistent decision and the seriousness of plagiarism incidents. *Quality in Higher Education, 13*(2), 187-204.

Appendix 1: Documentary Analysis Tool

Scottish HEIs Offering Nurse Education	Identifier Code
The University of Aberdeen	
University of Abertay Dundee	
University of Dundee	
The University of Edinburgh	
Glasgow Caledonian University	
University of Glasgow	
Edinburgh Napier University	
Queen Margaret University	
University of Stirling	
University of West of Scotland	
Robert Gordon University	

Format		No = 1 Yes = 2
Q1	Specific Plagiarism Policy Document	
Q2	Assessment Regulations	
Q3	Code of student conduct/discipline	
Q4	School of Nursing document	
Q5	Quality Handbook	
Q6	Other Document:	

Q7 Contextualises the avoidance of Plagiarism in any policy documentation linked to promoting academic values (e.g. learning, scholarship, pursuit of knowledge, conforming and convention to rules associated with academic integrity)	Code
Not evidenced	1
Evidenced	2

Q8 Contextualises the nature of Plagiarism in any policy documentation (e.g. disallowed, an academic irregularity, unacceptable, unfair practice, serious academic offence)	Code
Not evidenced	1
Evidenced	2

Q9 Contextualises avoidance of Plagiarism specifically linked to the development of graduate qualities / learning (i.e. negative impact on development of a body of knowledge; problem solver, effective communicator, ethical and social responsible – Medlin et al 2010)	**Code**
Not evidenced	1
Evidenced	2

Q10 Definition Offered	**Code**
Not evidenced	1
Evidenced - Generic for HEI	2
Evidenced but refers to departmental definitions	3
Alludes to broad principles only, no definitive definition offered	4

How Plagiarism Defined in Policy	**No = 1 Yes = 2**
Q11 Passing off someone else's work as your own (i.e. words, thoughts, ideas)	
Q12 Includes intentionally or unintentionally	
Q13 Includes to gain an unfair advantage	
Q14 Includes collusion	
Q15 Includes Self plagiarism	
Q16 includes other articulations:	

Q17 Specifies where and how plagiarism might occur coursework, essays, projects, dissertations, field work, from past present students, books, journal, web, essay mill)	**Code**
Not evidenced	1
Evidenced	2

Q18 Offers comment on behaviour associated with Plagiarism	**Code**
Not classified: offers no comment/description on types behaviours associated with plagiarism	1
Classified: offers comment/description on the type of behaviours associated with plagiarism	2

Comments on type of behaviour associated with Plagiarism	No = 1 Yes = 2
Q19 Cheating: act dishonestly to gain an unfair advantage by ignoring rules, negligence, malpractice, misconduct	
Q20 Intellectual theft (i.e. no legal context): taking of property (words, thoughts, ideas) without the proper acknowledgment i.e. poor paraphrasing, referencing	
Q21 Deceit: misrepresentation, commits an act which is untrue/concealed/dishonest	

Q22 Classifies Minor Plagiarism	Code
Not classified	1
Classified	2

Q23 How Minor Plagiarism Processed	Code
Not evidenced	1
Evidenced	2

Q24 Classifies Major Plagiarism	Code
Not classified	1
Classified	2

Q25 How Major Plagiarism Processed	Code
Not evidenced	1
Evidenced	2

Q26 HEIs Plagiarism Policy specifically cross-refers to HEIs FtP processes for Nurse Learners (NMC 2010)	Code
Not evidenced	1
Evidenced	2

Q27 Supporting Departmental Academic decision-making: Evidence of Minor cases referred/handled at departmental level	Code
No	1
Yes	2

Q28 Visibility given to Sanctions/Penalty Tariff	Code
Not evidenced	1
Evidenced	2

Q29 Evidence of tracking/ auditing system being in operation	Code
Not evidenced	1
Evidenced	2

Q30 Evidence of use of or option to use Turnitin or equivalent as tool for text matching	Code
Not evidenced	1
Evidenced	2

Q31 Identifies use or option for learners to use Turnitin or equivalent for 'text matching' check to support /promote good Academic Practice	Code
No	1
Yes	2

Q32 Definitive policy on use of or option to use Turnitin or equivalent	Code
No	1
Yes	2

Q33 Opportunities identified for staff to engage in CPD/resources re plagiarism	Code
Not evidenced	1
Evidenced	2

Appendix 2: Invitational Trigger Email to Prospective Participants

---

Dear [insert name]

I am writing to ask if you would kindly consider participating in an on-line educational research survey which is seeking Nurse/Midwife Educator's views on plagiarism governance.

As a nurse educator, I am interested in exploring the association between higher education governance and the professional governance of plagiarism in the context of Nurse Education. As the study is opinion based, an in-depth knowledge of plagiarism or specific information regarding your own institution's policies is not required.

Ethical approval has been granted by the University of Strathclyde and your Dean/Head of Department has approved access permission. Although I have contacted you via your email address, return of the questionnaire is web-based and is therefore anonymous. Participation is optional and you are free to decline this invitation or withdraw at any point.

I hope you will consider taking part and contribute to advancing knowledge within a relevant area of educational practice which has not previously been explored. I enclose a detailed information sheet to help you decide if you want to participate.

Completing the survey takes about **15 minutes**. To access the questionnaire, please click

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Plagiarism_Governance_Survey_2011

I would be very grateful if you could return this on-line within **10 days** of receipt.

Kind regards

Marion M Welsh, Doctoral Candidate
Department of Education and Professional Studies
University of Strathclyde, Glasgow.

Appendix 3: Participant Information Sheet

Dear Colleague

As a nurse educator, I am writing to invite you to participate in a web-based study which is seeking Nurse Educators' opinions concerning the governance of plagiarism in Higher Education. This aim of which is to explore what relationship should exist between higher education policy, professional governance and the implications for educational practice. The study is opinion based, so does not focus on exploring knowledge of plagiarism or information related to your own institution's policy approaches.

You have been invited to participate in this on-line survey, along with Nurse/Midwife Educators working within HEIs across Scotland which offer nurse education. For the purpose of this study 'Nurse Education' is being used as an umbrella term to include: Pre-registration Nursing and Midwifery:

- Pre & Post-registration Nursing/Midwifery
- Community Specialist Practitioner/Specialist Community Public Health Nursing
- All forms of CPD nurse/midwife study occurring in Higher Education.

Participation in the study
Taking part involves the completion of a short web-based questionnaire. This is accessed by clicking on:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Plagiarism_Governance_Survey_2011

This automatically takes you to the survey questionnaire which comprises of 3 sections, each of which commences with a short statement accompanied by 10 short questions. The questionnaire takes approximately **15 minutes** to complete. I would be very grateful if you could return the completed questionnaire by clicking the 'submit' button within **10 days** of receipt.

Ethics and Access Permission
Ethical Permission to conduct this study has been granted by the University of Strathclyde. Permission to contact you via email has been granted by your Dean/Head of School. However, this does not assume that there is an expectation that you will be required to participate.

Anonymity, Data Handling and Storage
Although the invitation to participate directly via your email address, return of the questionnaire is completely anonymous, so neither you, nor your institution, will be identifiable. Your anonymity is therefore assured and only the reseracher will have access to the data. The handling and storage of data will strictly adhere to the Data Protection Act (1998) and as such data will be securely held on a password potected computer within a in locked facility. Data will be securely stored for a period of 5 years, thereafter, all data will be confidentially destroyed.

Benefits, Disadvantages and Risk of Participation
In taking part in this study there are no direct benefits to you. However, it is anticipated that your participation will contribute to advancing knowledge in a relevant area of educational practice which has not previously been explored. There are no anticipated disadvantages or risks associated with participating in this study.

Context and funding for this study
This study is being undertaken in part fulfilment of the award of Doctor of Education which is being supervised by the Department of Educational and Professional Studies, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow. There are no funding implications associated with this study.

Study outcomes
The outcome of this study will be reported within a Doctoral Thesis. Participants may contact the researcher to obtain an executive summary on completion of the study in November 2012.

Consent to participate in the study
Participation in this study is voluntary so you are are free to decline this invitation. Return of the on-line survey questionnaire is indicative confirming your consent to participate and acknowledges that:

- You have been provided with information concerning the study
- You are free to take part or withdraw at any point
- All responses are anonymous and cannot identify you
- Data collection and handling will adhere to the Data Protection Act (1998).

However, should you later choose to withdraw from the study you can do so at any point by simply clicking 'clear survey' button or closing the browser page.

Further Information
If you need any further information about this study, please feel free to contact:

Doctoral Candidate: Marion M Welsh, marion.welsh@strath.ac.uk
Tel. 0141 331 8373.

Doctoral Supervisor: Dr. Christine Sinclair, Lecturer, Centre for Academic Practice and Learning Enhancement, Graham Hills Building, 50 George Street, Glasgow, Christine.Sinclair@strath.ac.uk Tel. 0141 548 4062

Thank you for taking the time to read this information

Appendix 4: Survey Questionnaire

Plagiarsim Governance in Nurse/Midwife Education survey April 2011

Plagiarism Governance in Nurse/Midwife Education: A critical exploration of Educators' views concerning the relationship between professional governance and educational practice. Thank you accessing this educational survey

This questionnaire is divided into 3 short sections, each of which has an introductory statement followed by 10 short sub-statements. You are invited to respond to each of the sub-statements by clicking one button which best represents your view. The opportunity to make additional free text comment is available, however this is optional. By proceeding you are confirming your consent to participate.

Explanatory notes

Nurse Education refers to:

Pre & Post-registration Nursing/Midwifery Education

Community Specialist Practitioner/Specialist Community Public Health Nursing

All forms of free-standing CPD nurse/midwife study occurring in Higher Education.

Nurse Educator: those who teach within any of the above domains.

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs): in this study refers to Scottish HEIs who offer all or any combination of what has been detailed as Nurse Education.

Plagiarism Management: strategic policies which define plagiarism, detail the institutional process of dealing with it and the anticipated actions of Educators should it arise. Does not include instructional/pedagogical materials produced for the student population.

Minor plagiarism normally refers to: single occurrence, 1st year level study and volume of work thought to be plagiarised.

Major plagiarism normally refers to: clear intent, repeated occurrence, high proportion of plagiarised work, progressed level of study.

1. Do you currently have an active teaching role as Nurse Educator?

O Yes
O No

2. Please indicate your current teaching role as a Nurse Educator

O Nurse Educator Lecturer/ Teaching Fellow/ University Teacher

O Nurse Educator Senior Lecturer/Senior Teaching fellow

O Nurse Educator Head of Department/School/Dean/Professor

O Other (non-eligible participants i.e. non-nurse educators)

3. Please indicate the length of time (in years) practising as a Nurse Educator:

SECTION 1: Context and Content of Plagiarism Policy in Higher Education

HEIs communicate plagiarism management via policies, such as assessment regulations, codes of conduct or bespoke documentation. To what extent do you agree/disagree that in making plagiarism policy explicit…….

4. The default definition provided by the majority of HEIs, i.e. 'Plagiarism is passing off someone else's work as your own' conveys a contemporary understanding in the context of Higher Education.

O Strongly Disagree O Disagree O Neither/Nor O Agree O Strongly Agree O Unsure

Additional Comment (optional):

5. An HEI's definition of plagiarism should include the phrase 'whether intentionally or unintentionally', to capture the intent to gain an unfair advantage and poor academic practice (i.e. ignorance/carelessness).

O Strongly Disagree O Disagree O Neither/Nor O Agree O Strongly Agree O Unsure

Additional Comment (optional):

6. Whilst defining plagiarism may include reference to an intentional or unintentional act, not all instances of plagiarism should be regarded as cheating.

O Strongly Disagree O Disagree O Neither/Nor O Agree O Strongly Agree O Unsure

Additional Comment (optional):

7. An HEI's definition should include examples of what constitutes plagiarism, e.g. 'direct copying' 'close paraphrasing' 'collusion' 'self-plagiarism' and 'ghost writers' and 'commission via essay bank services'.

O Strongly Disagree O Disagree O Neither/Nor O Agree O Strongly Agree O Unsure

Additional Comment (optional):

8. HEIs should adopt a standard definition of plagiarism and this should be universally applied within all academic disciplines.

O Strongly Disagree O Disagree O Neither/Nor O Agree O Strongly Agree O Unsure

Additional Comment (optional):

9. Poor academic practice, e.g. ignorant or careless non-attribution to source, inaccurate referencing, poor paraphrasing, should not be defined as plagiarism.

O Strongly Disagree O Disagree O Neither/Nor O Agree O Strongly Agree O Unsure

Additional Comment (optional):

10. HEIs should use terms such as theft, fraud, cheating and rule breaking, within their plagiarism policies to categorise this type of intentional academic misconduct.

O Strongly Disagree O Disagree O Neither/Nor O Agree O Strongly Agree O Unsure

Additional Comment (optional):

11. An HEI's definition should state that learning may be compromised as a result of plagiarising the work of others, either intentionally or unintentionally.

O Strongly Disagree O Disagree O Neither/Nor O Agree O Strongly Agree O Unsure

Additional Comment (optional):

12. An HEI's definition of plagiarism should not be open to individual interpretation based on an educator's prior conceptions.

O Strongly Disagree O Disagree O Neither/Nor O Agree O Strongly Agree O Unsure

Additional Comment (optional):

13. HEIs should avoid moralising commentary such as 'dishonesty', 'deception' and 'misappropriation' within their plagiarism policies.

O Strongly Disagree O Disagree O Neither/Nor O Agree O Strongly Agree O Unsure

Additional Comment (optional):

SECTION 2: Interfacing Higher Education and Professional Governance

Under NMC guidance, HEIs have established Fitness To Practise (FtP) processes to ensure the consistent application of 'good health and good character' requirements. To what extent do you agree/disagree that in considering the interface between Higher Education governance and Professional governance....

14. HEIs should not need to cross-refer their strategic polices on plagiarism, such as assessment regulations, code of conduct, with professional governance requirements, i.e. FtP processes.

O Strongly Disagree O Disagree O Neither/Nor O Agree O Strongly Agree O Unsure

Additional Comment (optional):

15. In the context of post-registration education, major plagiarism constitutes a more serious professional issue in comparison to pre-registration nurse education.

O Strongly Disagree O Disagree O Neither/Nor O Agree O Strongly Agree O Unsure

Additional Comment (optional):

16. Schools of Nursing/Departments should avoid augmenting the HEI's plagiarism policy in order to articulate a professional context.

O Strongly Disagree O Disagree O Neither/Nor O Agree O Strongly Agree O Unsure

Additional Comment (optional):

17. Whether occurring in the pre or post-registration context, minor breaches of plagiarism should be formally managed at a departmental level.

O Strongly Disagree O Disagree O Neither/Nor O Agree O Strongly Agree O Unsure

Additional Comment (optional):

18. In upholding cases of major plagiarism by post-registration students, an HEI's FtP Panel should always refer these cases to the NMC.

O Strongly Disagree O Disagree O Neither/Nor O Agree O Strongly Agree O Unsure

Additional Comment (optional):

19. The necessity to have different forums to manage major plagiarism for discrete student populations, (i.e. non-professional via university processes and professional via FtP), demonstrates variable, but appropriate governance for professional based education.

O Strongly Disagree O Disagree O Neither/Nor O Agree O Strongly Agree O Unsure

Additional Comment (optional):

20. Major plagiarism in nurse education, whether occurring at pre or post-registration level, warrants consideration of sanctions which include professional as well as academic.

O Strongly Disagree O Disagree O Neither/Nor O Agree O Strongly Agree O Unsure

Additional Comment (optional):

21. In the context of plagiarism, nurse education programmes/study should make it explicit that learners will be subject to higher expectations concerning the 'good character' requirements.

O Strongly Disagree O Disagree O Neither/Nor O Agree O Strongly Agree O Unsure

Additional Comment (optional):

22. Informal plagiarism management, i.e. that which avoids invoking departmental or FtP processes, limits approaches to maintaining academic and professional integrity.

O Strongly Disagree O Disagree O Neither/Nor O Agree O Strongly Agree O Unsure

Additional Comment (optional):

23. The necessity for HEIs to deal with major plagiarism via Fitness to Practise provides evidence of the serious relationship between academic integrity, professional values and good character.

O Strongly Disagree O Disagree O Neither/Nor O Agree O Strongly Agree O Unsure

Additional Comment (optional):

SECTION 3: Implications for the Role of the Nurse Educator

Concerning plagiarism management and the implications for the Nurse Educator's role, to what extent do you agree/disagree…..

24. The Nurse Educator's primary role in plagiarism management should be to address pedagogical deficits in referencing, paraphrasing and writing skills.

O Strongly Disagree O Disagree O Neither/Nor O Agree O Strongly Agree O Unsure

Additional Comment (optional):

25. Nurse Educators should not expect having to make explicit to learners (pre and post-registration level), the negative relationship which exists between plagiarism and professional values.

O Strongly Disagree O Disagree O Neither/Nor O Agree O Strongly Agree O Unsure

Additional Comment (optional):

26. Nurse Educators should expect having to make explicit to learners that plagiarism, whether intentional or unintentional, may prevent them constructing knowledge to demonstrate competency related to professional practice.

O Strongly Disagree O Disagree O Neither/Nor O Agree O Strongly Agree O Unsure

Additional Comment (optional):

27. In the context of major plagiarism, Nurse Educators should expect to act as professional gatekeepers in confirming/disconfirming 'good character' as part of an HEI's FtP processes.

O Strongly Disagree O Disagree O Neither/Nor O Agree O Strongly Agree O Unsure

Additional Comment (optional):

28. In uncovering occurrences of suspected plagiarism (minor or major), the Nurse Educator's role is to provide the evidence and 'refer on' all cases for formal consideration at either departmental level or via FtP processes.

O Strongly Disagree O Disagree O Neither/Nor O Agree O Strongly Agree O Unsure

Additional Comment (optional):

29. In managing suspected minor or major plagiarism, the Nurse Educator's role does not involve determining the level of intent and/or the type of penalties which may occur if proven.

O Strongly Disagree O Disagree O Neither/Nor O Agree O Strongly Agree O Unsure

Additional Comment (optional):

30. Nurse Educators should not expect a role which includes informing post-qualified learners that an HEI's procedures for dealing with major plagiarism could include referral to the NMC.

O Strongly Disagree O Disagree O Neither/Nor O Agree O Strongly Agree O Unsure

Additional Comment (optional):

31. The Nurse Educator's role involves ensuring pre-registration learners are familiar with plagiarism investigation processes which, depending on the seriousness, may involve the discontinuation of studies.

O Strongly Disagree O Disagree O Neither/Nor O Agree O Strongly Agree O Unsure

Additional Comment (optional):

32. Nurse Educators should not be deterred in managing plagiarism by the prospect of learners returning negative evaluations, damaging the student-teacher relationship or, worst case, a legal challenge.

O Strongly Disagree O Disagree O Neither/Nor O Agree O Strongly Agree O Unsure

Additional Comment (optional):

33. The Nurse Educator's role concerning plagiarism management has no relevance to the preparation of practitioners who will be, or are, trusted with caring and safeguarding the public.

O Strongly Disagree O Disagree O Neither/Nor O Agree O Strongly Agree O Unsure

Additional Comment (optional):

34. As a Nurse Educator have you ever had the occasion to deal with a case of plagiarism, either formally or informally?

O Yes

O No

Thank you for your time. Please now click 'Done'.

Done

Appendix 5: Examples of Coding and Categorising Free-text Comments

Theme 1: Pedagogical Guidance
Explanations; Instruction; Expectations; Learner Support; Potential for Misunderstanding; Learner Transition & Development

Theme 2: Contextual Communication
Clarity; Comprehensiveness; Confusion; Currency; Constraints; Conceptuality; Explicitness

Theme 3: Governing and Managing Fairly
Policy application; Consistent Practice; Bureaucratic Processes; Hierarchy dominance; Punitive sanctions; Responsiveness; Stress inducing

Theme 4: Complex Decision Making
Complex concept; Necessity for bespoke decision-making; implications; Taking account of cohort characteristics

Theme 5: Professionalism in Academic settings
Professionalism; Professional learning; Additional Governance; Policy Visibility; Responsibility; Dichotomy; Gate Keeping & Strategic Learners

Theme 6: Ethical and Moral Challenges
Ethical and moral understanding; Conduct requirements; explicitness; support and development; Organisational ethics; student responsibility; Legality of policy; Employment considerations, Seriousness; Anxiety; and Responsible Learner

Ref	Participant comment	Initial code	Sub-theme	Theme
Q4/1	*However some further **explanation** and **support guidance** as what this **means**[plagiarism] to students **is still required** to **clarify issues for them***	Instruction for learners	Pedagogy guidance	Responsibility Pedagogical (1)
Q4/2	*The definition **may give the impression** that it is referring to an entire piece of work. **Detailed information** on plagiarism makes it clear that the **definition needs to be much wider that it appears***	Lack of clarity	Information and guidance	Contextual Communication (2)
Q22/1	*The philosophy of Higher*	Organisational	Ethical	Legal and Ethical

	Education should be about choosing the ***ethical way*** *of life.* ***Education then supports the best way*** *to exist with other human beings-in this case patients. The* ***HEIs need to capture*** *the poor practice-along with our partners in the NHS-highlight it, and* ***encourage the students to learn*** *from it.*	ethics	development	challenges(3)
Q8/6	*The universal 'application' aspect of this* ***may be tricky****.* ***Don't think it is as black and white*** *as that. Think each case would need to be* ***reviewed on an individual basis*** *to judge intent.*	Bespoke application of policy	Policy application decision making	Complex decision making (4)
Q9/9	*All plagiarism is poor academic practice but there needs* ***to be a dividing line between what is unintentional poor academic practice*** *and* ***what is plagiarism****. There will be some instances where there is minor poor practice (which fits into the definition of plagiarism) but which* ***warrants a less harsh punishment****.*	Pejorative Management	Management and governance challenges	Governing and Managing Fairly (5)
Q15/1	***Back to intent****, however if the term 'major plagiarism'* ***suggests a*** **judgement has been**	Circumstantial Professional concerns	Professionalism	Professionalism in Academic settings(6)

	made on the circumstances, then this is worrying in both contexts. **The only advantage of pre-registration perspective is the HEI can prevent the plagiarising student from registering**, and thus protect the public, **however the post-reg student is registered and already practicing** and if **intent is determined, then this would raise significant professional concerns.**	

Appendix 6: Management Access Approval Permission Letter

Dear [insert name]

Re: Educational Research Study – Management Access Permission

I am writing to ask if you would kindly consider granting me permission to contact, via email, members of academic staff who are Nurse Educators currently teach within pre-registration and/or post qualifying nurse education to invite their participation in a research study I am conducting.

The aim of my study is to explore Nurse Educators' opinions concerning the governance of plagiarism and how this should, from both the Higher Education and professional context, support educational practice. Therefore, it does not seek specific commentary regarding your institution's discrete governance or policy approaches.

The study is inviting Nurse Educators from Scottish Universities which offer Nurse Education to participate. Participants will be invited to complete a short web-based questionnaire. Although potential participants will initially be contacted via email, using contact details available within the public domain, return of the web-based questionnaire is anonymous. Consequently, neither they nor the Higher Education Institution will be identifiable. It is anticipated that this web-based survey would be deployed in April 2011.

This study is being conducted in part fulfilment of the Doctor of Education which is being supervised by, and has received ethical approval from, the Department of Education and Professional Studies at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow. I would be happy to forward to you confirmation of the committees' approval to undertake this study. My supervisor is Dr Christine Sinclair (Tel. No. 0141 548 4062 Christine.Sinclair@strath.ac.uk).

In order to contribute to advancing knowedge in an area of educational practice which has not previously been explored, I do hope you will look favourably on this request. I therefore look forward to hearing from you in the near future, via either of the correspondence addresses supplied. If you wish further information please do not hesitate to contact me on 0141 331 8373.

Yours sincerely,
Marion M Welsh, EdD Doctoral Candidate, Department of Education and Professional Studies, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow.

Appendix 7: Glossary of Terms

Academic integrity	Knowledge acquisition gained by adhering to honest, fair, and respectful learning activities
Academic dishonesty	Deceptive acts which are intentional and breach the values and standards expected in pursuit of knowledge
Nurse Education	Education provided within the Higher Education setting which involves: • Pre-registration, post-qualifying Nursing and or Midwifery; • Community Specialist Practitioner/Specialist Community Public Health Nursing. • All forms of free-standing education associated with Continued Professional Development.
Nurse educator	Qualified Nurse who teaches within any of the above domains associated with Nurse Education.
Plagiarism	Plagiarism is passing off someone else's work, whether intentionally or unintentionally, as your own for your own benefit **Unintentional plagiarism** – poor and or unwitting academic skills concerning the crediting of materials to source **Intentional Plagiarism** – premeditated act(s) by a learner which is associated with knowingly incorporating the work of another in their scholarly work in the pretence of passing this off as ones own in order to gain an unfair academic advantage. **Minor Plagiarism** normally a single occurrence, 1st year level study and consideration of volume of work thought to be plagiarised **Major Plagiarism** normally clear intent, repeated occurrence, high proportion of plagiarised work, progressed level of study
Plagiarism Policy	Written guidance produced by a Higher Education Institution which inform, direct educators to adopt particular set of actions in specific circumstances
Plagiarism Governance	The way in which Higher Education Institution organise and operationalise their approach to

	addressing plagiarism to benchmark educational standards and thereby meet with the expectations of internal and external stakeholders.
Plagiarism Management:	Application of strategic policies which define the processes which detail the institutional process for dealing occurrences of plagiarism by learners.
Pre-registration learner	Nurse Learner undertaking study leading to 1st level registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC, 2001c).
Post-qualifying learner	Nurse/midwife learner who is a registrant and whose name is currently recorded on the professional register (Nursing and Midwifery Order 2001).