

# Plagiarism in research: a 'must curb' menace

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## ARTICLE DETAILS

### Article History

Published Online: 28 February 2018

### Keywords

Plagiarism, HEIs, Reasons, Tools, Implications

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## ABSTRACT

In the past few decades, technology is developing rapidly and the ways of accessing information are becoming easier and expeditious. In today's times information is generated in no times and spreads simultaneously. This creates the manipulation of information thus creating the culture of copy and paste or plagiarism. HEIs are greatly concerned and making every effort to make learning and research ethical and original. This paper is an attempt to highlight the implication of plagiarism on research, HEIs and its stakeholders. It identifies various types of plagiarism, reasons behind plagiarism and its adverse consequences. The paper also throws some light on the ways to avoid and curb plagiarism.

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## 1. Introduction

Rapid development in IT has facilitated the practice of copying and pasting. At the same time, detecting incidents of plagiarism has become easier with the aid of software. The situation is complex as many students believe that copying and pasting is more like sharing. They don't consider it as an academic ill practice. (Walker, 2009) Plagiarism is and should be an unforgivable offense as it hampers research and leads to adverse consequences. The main purpose of academics is to enhance the existing knowledge, encourage the generation of new ideas for the welfare of society. HEIs are the places where this purpose is fulfilled. Another aim is to create a talented, innovative, intelligent progressive minded human resource. Another priority is to give due credit to the original author and protecting his ownership. (Ramzan et.al. 2012) Although a major menace of the current times, many factors lead to plagiarism which can be unintentional at times. Easy and quick access to information, intense competition, peer, family and social pressures, language barriers, time constraints, monotonous topics etc. are the factors which make a research scholar plagiarise. These factors have to be overcome so that academic integrity can be brought and promoted in learning and research. Efforts are being made to curb this menace by almost every institution of higher education. All the stakeholders in higher education should make a joint effort to control and curb this ill practice.

## 2. Rationale

Internet has completely altered the way of learning and research. It is extensively used for getting and disseminating information. It provides made up way outs for anything related to academics. Past many years have revolved around generation and dissemination of knowledge and taking up research work extensively. HEIs are established to facilitate the process of acquisition of knowledge. Another purpose is to apply and update the existing knowledge and that too ethical. Giving attribution to the original creator is also another

purpose of these institutions. (Ahmadi and Sonkar, 2015).Plagiarism hurdles the meaning and purpose of research. There is a dire need to understand the importance of ethics in academics and to promote original research. When we talk of academic ethics students are targeted. However, all the stakeholders of higher education should also bring ethics in their teaching and research. (Elliott *et. al.* 2013)

## 3. Implication of plagiarism on research and HEIs

Plagiarism has an adverse effect on research and ultimately society also. Progress in IT has eased and expedited the access to information. At the same time another problem of cheating from the net has also come up which has changed the mindset of the students. (Ukpebor and Ogbebor, 2013) Plagiarism defies the very purpose of making learning and research ethical. Mainly research is undertaken to generate new ideas and to find the 'why' of a problem and the solutions to solve it. The research undertaken merely by using 'copy and paste' strategy will lead to stagnation and duplication. There will be very less growth and development and the society will lag behind academically. So by all means, plagiarism must be checked and removed at grassroot level.

## 4. Definitions

Plagiarism has become a major academic offense. It has taken varied forms- from copying a single word to the whole article without attributing the original writer. It hampers and ultimately stops the ability of the students/researchers to visualize, analyze and come with fresh ideas which they call their own. The word plagiarism has been described differently. Some of the definitions are mentioned below:

Cambridge Dictionary defines plagiarism as "the process or practice of using another person's ideas or work and pretending that it is your own"

Collins dictionary defines plagiarism as “Plagiarism is the practice of using or copying someone else's idea or work and pretending that you thought of it or created it”

CopyLeaks plagiarism detection tool defines plagiarism as “The word plagiarism has come from the Latin word ‘plagiarius,’ which means to kidnap. As the plagiarism definition suggests, when someone uses the work of another artist without properly citing the source or giving credit, then that will be an instance of plagiarism. Plagiarism is a punishable offense, and it is a form of intellectual theft”

“Plagiarism is presenting someone else’s work or ideas as your own, with or without their consent, by incorporating it into your work without full acknowledgement. All published and unpublished material, whether in manuscript, printed or electronic form, is covered under this definition. Plagiarism may be intentional or reckless, or unintentional. Under the regulations for examinations, intentional or reckless plagiarism is a disciplinary offence.” (Oxford University)

Merriam-Webster dictionary explains plagiarism in transitive verb and intransitive verb.

*Transitive verb:* “to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own: use (another's production) without crediting the source”

*Intransitive verb:* “to commit literary theft: present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source.”

## 5. Types

Enago academy explains 8 types of plagiarism which are as follows:

- Complete plagiarism: It is the most alarming forms of plagiarism where somebody takes an article or anything authored by someone else and claims it to be his very own. It is at par with academic offence or theft.
- Sourced based plagiarism: When a student researcher cites a false or nonexistent reference or uses a secondary source but cites a primary source plagiarism takes place manipulating or omitting data also leads to plagiarism. This form can have adverse effects especially in medical field where wrong decisions takes can affect public health.
- Direct or verbatim plagiarism: When an author copies each and every word of the text of another author, verbatim plagiarism takes place.
- Auto plagiarism: A researcher taking some portion from his own previously published work and adds in his current publication, auto plagiarism takes place. This is common amongst university researcher. Many journals have specified on the percentage of author’s own work.
- Paraphrasing plagiarism: Making some changes in words with back idea remaining same also leads to plagiarism.

- Inaccurate authorship: This happens when an individual does not get credit for contributing to a work or vice-versa.
  - Mosaic plagiarism: When someone else’s phrases are interlaid, it is called mosaic plagiarism.
  - Accidental Plagiarism: Sometimes plagiarism can be intentional or out of ignorance and neglect.
- “Plagiarism Spectrum of Turnitin” explains 10 types of plagiarism on the basis of severity in the decreasing order.
- Clone: Turnitin has considered it as the most severe as it involves verbatim copying of someone else’s work and claim it as their own.
  - Mashup: When text is borrowed from various sources without attribution.
  - Ctrl-C: : This occurs when important parts are taken from a one source without making any changes.
  - Remix: When text from different sources is taken and paraphrased.
  - Recycle: When a researcher uses the content from his/her very own previously published work and does not cite it.
  - Retweet: In this, although attribution is there but content from original source is liberally taken.
  - Find-replace: When the major words and phrases are changed but the essence of the original content is sustained.
  - RSS Feed: When all the borrowed sources are acknowledged but nothing is taken from original content.
  - 404 Error: This occurs when such sources are cited which do not exist or giving false information about their origin.
  - Hybrid: Citing the author with copied text but not citing it.

## 6. Reasons behind Plagiarism

IT has enabled the ease to access the information. This has also promoted copying and pasting. A big factor is that this ill practice can be detected and checked electronically especially when the content is available in an open access environment. This was not possible in the days of print mode. (Ocholla and Ocholla, 2016)

There are many factors which lead to plagiarism. For some students’ plagiarism is an exciting act as they think that copying someone’s work and claiming as their own is a big achievement for them. They think that they have got good skills of altering others work. Lack of planning on how to prepare an assignment or how to proceed with the research work is also one of the contributing factors behind plagiarism. Sheer ignorance of the concept of plagiarism on the part of researcher also makes them plagiarize unintentionally. Lack of knowledge on the proper way of paraphrasing also lead to plagiarism. Students/research scholars are also not clear about

their expectation of performance. They have vague idea about whether to analyze or to discuss. This should be clearly stated to them so that they can come up to the expected level. Different cultures have different notions about personal and shared ideas. This lack of understanding also leads to plagiarism.

### 7. Consequences:

Plagiarism, being a major academic ill practice has adverse consequences on the career of students and research scholars and also for the society. Plagiarized work harms the career prospects of the students. They may have to face penalty which can be to the extent of suspension from the course. Sometimes they may have to face legal action if there is a large severity of plagiarism. Moreover the culture of copy and paste will prevent them from acquiring and upgrading their writing skills. This can bring a bad name to their academic career. It can also extend the duration of their course program resulting in undue mental stress to them. Above all, duplicacy in research will also come which can make progress come to a standstill. Society as a whole may have to face bad consequences because of plagiarism.

### 8. How to avoid plagiarism

Stakeholders refer to those persons or institutions who have deeper engagement in an activity to the extent of being affected by it. Faculty members, library professionals and research scholars constitute stakeholders in any HEI. The priority is not only to detect plagiarism but also to spread awareness on its causes and consequences. (Ocholla and Ocholla, 2016) It is essential for every HEI to formulate and implement a well-defined plagiarism policy. This will apprise the stakeholders of the menace of plagiarism, its causes, consequences and the ways to prevent it. With this there will be a proper procedure to detect the instances of plagiarism. This policy is associated with code of conduct for students and proper academic norms. (Ocholla and Ocholla, 2016) Every institution should have a proper plan of action to deal with plagiarism. A well-defined policy is one of the main components of it. The policy should bring forth the adverse results of plagiarism on the quality of research and the reputation of the researcher. Uniformity and equality should be the hallmark of this policy. Faculty should be encouraged to take up extra roles to guide their students and researchers so that they can develop good writing skills. (Elliott *et. al.* 2013) First and foremost, priority of a research scholar is to publish an un-plagiarized work. For this, it is essential to make a well-defined format of writing a paper. This involves consultation with your guides, faculty members and peer groups. They should select appropriate and good quality writings for studying and analyzing. Make proper citations if any part from someone else's work is to be incorporated in your work. Develop your own thinking on the topic. It is mandatory

to acknowledge the originator of the content. Proper ways of paraphrasing should be followed. Read thoroughly the plagiarism policy of your respective institution. (plagiarism.org) Librarians and faculty must collaborate together to prevent this ill practice at the grass root level. They should design assignments in such a way that it stimulates logical and analytical thinking so that the students/researcher can come up with new ideas. Another way of preventing plagiarism is to make note of every consulted document so that proper bibliography can be made. (Walker, 2009) Detecting and curbing plagiarism is a time-consuming task. It can be controlled either by stern measures or by moderate measures. Mid way measures such as creating and promoting awareness about it should be the priority. The aim is to reduce the factors causing it and improve the referencing/citing skills of the students and researchers so that plagiarism can be prevented proactively before reaching at the level of penalizing. (Volkov *et. al.*, 2011) Plagiarism detection tools have become essential component in the ongoing academic scenario in which plagiarism has become an alarming menace. By detecting the unattributed copied text, they help in upgrading the quality of research and ultimately the writing skills of researchers. This was not the case in the past when print source was the major mode of writing and expressing. Development in IT has brought changes in the way academics are pursued by the students. E classrooms and a host of other e tools offered to the students can enhance their intellectual skills. The mission of education is acquisition and dissemination of knowledge in an ethical way by keeping at bay bad practices like plagiarism. The authorities must apprise the students and research scholars about it. (Sprajc *et. al.* 2017)

### 9. Benefits of using plagiarism detection tool:

- Better results: These software give accurate results thus leading the way for good grades for research scholars and also saving their time and effort.
- Transparency: These tools enable the research scholars to trace the origin of any article. This avoids duplicacy and also overcome times constraints.
- Upgraded quality: By checking similarity, they provide a report of the similar content and also puts a check on the large number of citations, if any in the paper.
- Mental satisfaction: Usage of anti-plagiarism software prevents unintentional lapses. This gives a proper research paper, which is the aim of any scholar, besides putting him at ease and also enhancing his position.
- Improved writing: This software enables us to find unquoted portions in a paper. With this we can trace the origin of the quoted portions and attribute them. This is overall beneficial for the research scholars.

Duplichecker	<a href="https://www.duplichecker.com/">https://www.duplichecker.com/</a>
Plagium	<a href="https://www.plagium.com/en/plagiarismchecker">https://www.plagium.com/en/plagiarismchecker</a>
Plagscan plagiarism checker	<a href="https://www.plagscan.com/plagiarism-check/">https://www.plagscan.com/plagiarism-check/</a>
Copyleaks plagiarism detector	<a href="https://copyleaks.com/">https://copyleaks.com/</a>
Quetext	<a href="https://www.quetext.com/">https://www.quetext.com/</a>
Paperrater	<a href="https://www.paperrater.com/">https://www.paperrater.com/</a>
Plagiarisma	<a href="http://plagiarisma.net/">http://plagiarisma.net/</a>
PlagTracker	<a href="https://www.plagtracker.com/">https://www.plagtracker.com/</a>
Plagiarismhunt	<a href="https://plagiarismhunt.com/">https://plagiarismhunt.com/</a>
Unicheck	<a href="https://unicheck.com/">https://unicheck.com/</a>
Plagamme	<a href="https://www.plagamme.com/">https://www.plagamme.com/</a>
Grammarly	<a href="https://www.grammarly.com/">https://www.grammarly.com/</a>
Urkund	<a href="https://www.urdund.com/">https://www.urdund.com/</a>
Turnitin	<a href="https://www.turnitin.com/">https://www.turnitin.com/</a>
Check for plagiarism	<a href="https://www.checkforplagiarism.net/">https://www.checkforplagiarism.net/</a>

## 10. Conclusion:

Plagiarism has become an alarming ill practice and is unethical too. It does not recognize the efforts put in by the originator of the content. It also puts the progress in research to its stand still. Hence every effort should be made to keep away from it and give due attribution to the original author and original work. (Oxford University) An atmosphere must be created by all the stakeholders to promote and practice high morals, values in their study and research. Awareness must be created to apprise them about the meaning, nature, causes and after effects of plagiarism. There should be a proper policy incorporating all these aspects. They must be acquainted with proper ways of paraphrasing, citing and software like endnote and re-works. Assignments should be such to encourage

logical thinking. (Ramzan et al 2012). It should be the aim of every student and research scholars to enhance their respective academic skills, develop their vision and make their mind set progressive. For this they come to HEIs. Mere copy and paste will badly affect the research growth. It should be their mission to form their own independent thinking by analysing the work of others. (Oxford University) These institutions must subscribe to plagiarism detection tools and it should be made accessible to the research scholars, faculty members and library professionals in each institution. Everyone in the domain of higher education should be morally bound to make their respective work ethical and original. There should be a well-defined policy to curb this ill practice at national level which all the HEIs would follow in letter and spirit.

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