



ACADEMIC PLAGIARISM : AN INDIAN SCENARIO

Dr. Girdhar Lal Sharma

Principal, J.B. Teachers Training Institute 23 PTP, Sadulshahar, Distt. Sri Ganganagar (Raj.)

ABSTRACT

In the Information technology and digital era, copying someone else's idea has become widespread. It is illegal and unethical, but there seems to be an upward trend in this activity. Students are often unsure of exactly what plagiarism is and how it affects them. Especially these days with the ease of cutting and pasting from the Internet, student plagiarism has become an issue of great concern in academic institutions and it is very important to realize that any accusation of plagiarism will be serious and could be dealt with very severely. Plagiarism essentially is the stealing of others' words, thoughts and ideas and is treated like fraud. Ignorance or carelessness is no excuse. Be aware, that it is not acceptable academic practice under any circumstances to "lift" text and to present it as your own. There are sophisticated web sites and techniques specifically aimed at tracking down all kinds of plagiarism. University of Cape Town (UCT) has now invested in software designed to detect plagiarism in student work and you may be required to submit your work electronically, so that it may be tested in this way. Students found guilty could at best fail their course, or at worst face expulsion from their academic institution. Though plagiarism in some contexts is considered theft or stealing, it does not exist in a legal sense. Some cases may be treated as unfair competition or a violation of the doctrine of moral rights.

This paper is an attempt to explore the concept of academic plagiarism, its meaning, the various causes and reasons for plagiarism are studied, plagiarism detection tools, guidelines to prevent plagiarism are deliberated upon and finally conclusion.

KEYWORDS

Information Technology, Plagiarism Copyright.

Academic Plagiarism

In academics, plagiarism is considered as the greatest moral offense that anybody can commit intentionally or unintentionally. The easy access to online available information through the online books and the libraries is playing an added role in enhancing the plagiarism. These days, it is imperative for the every person sharing or presenting his thoughts and ideas in written forms or speech to get acquainted about plagiarism, reasons for which people indulge in plagiarism, and the ways to prevent and avoid plagiarism. Generally, it is well thought of by most of the people that plagiarism occurs when a person copy another person's work or borrow someone else's original ideas. Although these are not the perfect terms to define plagiarism, yet they costume the seriousness of the serious offense. In fact, it is one of the most wide spread form of corruption which can damage one's reputation and career in the academics.

Following cases which show the plagiarism

1. Plagiarism is a serious problem when it is being practiced by scientists and archaeologists. Former professor of Panjab University in Chandigarh, Vishwajit Gupta, was found to have fabricated research on fossil findings and to have used information and photographs by other researches.

2. In 2008, a U.S. student at the University of Texas, Arlington, sensed something fishy while peer reviewing a paper by Professor Pattium Chiranjeevi. Charnjeevi, who had published more than 70 academic papers in international journals, had been teaching at Sri Venkateswara University in Tirupati. The student found that Chiranjeevi's work had been plagiarized, and further investigation showed that instruments cited in his reports were not even at his disposal.

Review of related literature

Drummond (2011) reported the basic principles and methods that should be used regarding ethical matters in publication of manuscripts. They have summarized the law and the structure of regulations, and introduce the concept of research governance. They have given advice on the format and description

of experiments and ethical considerations of publication such as authorship and originality and problems such as plagiarism and fabrication.

Bouville (2009) are of the opinion that plagiarism is a crime against academics. It deceives readers, hurts plagiarized authors, and gets the plagiarist undeserved benefits. However, even though these arguments do show that copying other people's intellectual contribution is wrong, they do not apply to the copying of words. Copying a few sentences that contain no original idea (e.g. in the introduction) is of marginal importance compared to stealing the ideas of others. The two must be clearly distinguished, and the 'plagiarism' label should not be used for deeds which are very different in nature and importance.

Wager (2007) described various types of publication misconduct and offered guidance to authors, reviewers and journal editors about ways to detect and prevent them. Publication misconduct includes a range of unethical behaviors, such as plagiarism, breach of confidence and in appropriate authorship. The most egegius cases are easy to recognize and widely condemned, but the gradient between normal and unethical behavior is often a gradual one. They appealed that clinicians and researchers should be aware of the full spectrum of publication misconduct and understand that some widely accepted practices may be unethical.

Benos (2005) summarized the major categories of ethical violations encountered during submission, review, and publication of scientific articles. They discussed data fabrication and falsification, plagiarism, redundant and duplicate publication, conflict of interest, authorship, animal and human welfare, and reviewer responsibility. In each section, pertinent historical background and citation of relevant regulations and statutes were provided.

Why do students plagiarized?

The main cause of plagiarism is that in this era of specialization getting admission in reputable institution of learning

especially higher learning is getting difficult and tough. The students once admitted are under constant and great pressure from parents, peer and even their own teachers to get excellent grades so that they can compete for jobs in the fields of their choice. The easy access to the internet and the know-how of its use has spread plagiarism to alarming levels. Copying and pasting has gained popularity for it is the easy way out. Even the most articulate of teachers are perplexed as how to control this growing trend. For instance sometimes the work of a student or person may not be identical to the original to be considered plagiarized but it is so similar to the source that it has obviously been copied.

Reasons for Plagiarizing

1. Lack of interest: The academicians apprehend that the deadline to complete the assignments or paper writing involves time and hard work. Hence, they are unwilling to work harder and honestly. Therefore, they indulge in copying the content to complete their papers leading to plagiarism.

2. Lack of Time: To save the precious time, academicians including students and teachers adopt easy way of finding and manipulating data on internet as compared to production of original analysis and interpretation.

3. Stress and Competition: To gain academic achievements, to improve the professional profiles, academicians have a strong pressure from the family, peers to compete amongst themselves. This stress, fear of failure and lack of confidence leads them to do plagiarism.

4. Incapability: Academicians, both students as well as faculty, may feel embarrassed to seek help when they are incapable to accomplish a particular task. With the intention to avoid the embarrassment of taking assistance from peers or other friend professionals, they depend upon seeking assistance from online sources. Moreover, they believe that the quality of online available material is always better as compared to their own work. Thus, plagiarism occurs.

5. No Fear of Punishment: Since several people indulge in the act of plagiarism and there is no severe punishment penalties accorded to the plagiarists, so they think that the benefits of plagiarism are much more than being caught. In such cases, lack of fear of punishment also leads to plagiarism.

How can you determine if a submission has been plagiarized?

First off, don't assume that the student had criminal intentions. Despite the fact that you may have covered the topic in detail in class, some students can be very confused about the protocols for documentation. In addition, because copyright rules for cyberspace have only been addressed lately, it can seem as though it's an environment where "anything goes." Because of this perception, some students sincerely believe that copying and pasting passages from an online article is o.k. Also, students can easily get disorganized and inadvertently leave out a parenthetical citation. Following are some points:

1. Interview the student about the topic and research
2. Find the article online.
3. Announce to the class that you have noticed instances of plagiarism in several submissions.
4. Ask the student if he had helped composing the paper.

Guidelines for Avoiding Plagiarism

Following are the guidelines for avoiding Plagiarism:

1. Use your own words and ideas: Practice is essential to learning. Each time you choose your words, order your thoughts, and convey your ideas, you can improve your writing.
2. Give credit for copied, adapted, or paraphrased materials: If you copy and use another's exact words, you must use quotation marks and cite the source. If you adapt a chart or paraphrase a sentence, you must still cite your

source. Paraphrasing is restating the author's ideas, information, and meaning in your own words.

3. Avoid using others work with minor "cosmetic" change: Examples: using less for fewer reversing the order of a sentence, changing terms in a computer code, or altering a spreadsheet layout. If the work is essentially the same as your source, give credit.
4. There are no "freebies": Always cite words, information and ideas that you use if they are new to you. No matter where you find it- even in on the internet or in an encyclopedia-you cite it.
5. When in doubt, cite: better to be safe than not give credit when you should.

Plagiarism Detection Tools

There are various plagiarism checker software's to keep a check on plagiarism that work as a detector tool for the said purpose. Some detectors tools are also available online which can be downloaded free of cost. Some websites offer free trial only after being registered with the said website. The academicians use these detector tools to detect the plagiarism as well as teach their students how to cite sources. Below mentioned are the website detectors used for plagiarism:

1. Plagiarism.org
2. CopyScape.com
3. Doccop.com
4. Plagiarismdetect.com
5. Scanmyessay.com
6. Duplichecker.com

Conclusion

Plagiarism has a depressing effect on the academic community in several ways. Plagiarism is something that the academicians should stay away from as it can demolish their career also. Sadly, many people while writing do not comprehend that copying someone's else's ideas leads to plagiarizing. Therefore, academicians should teach their students about disadvantages and penalties associated with the act of plagiarism and steps to avoid it. Several different for pay and free plagiarism detection software packages are available online for the purpose of detecting plagiarism which are being used by academic institutions around the globe. Internet is the most effectual instrument in detecting plagiarism. These simple guidelines can help you in generating your own original ideas and content, thus preventing you from plagiarizing.

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