

Research Ethics and Plagiarism in Today's World

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Abstract: *The word, Plagiarism is defined in different ways by different people however, the most appropriate definition is 'Plagiarism can be defined as; to steal¹ and pass off (the ideas or words of others) as one's own'. There is no harm in calling it as literary theft. Plagiarism can be the use of other's production without crediting the source. There is an aim behind the production of knowledge and that is improving the human situation and discovering the relevant facts. Using unethical means in research leads to violation of this goal.*

Plagiarism is a serious odd against publishing ethics; this fact is even believed by many scholars actively involved in academics. Recently many campaigns have taken over to regulate the growth of plagiarism in the world, as plagiarism has become a problem. Nowadays the publishing houses are concerned about the increasing plagiarism problem in all types of publications. The reports are giving evidence of the increment of plagiarism time and again in different countries, fields, educational levels and various fields.

The aim of this study is to discuss various concepts which are related to plagiarism, aspects related to it, the process and stages involved in plagiarism investigation, and steps taken to tackle plagiarism (in India specifically).

Keywords: Concepts, Literary Theft, Plagiarism Impact, Publishing Ethics, Types of Plagiarism

Introduction

Plagiarism is a threat to not just the academic world but also to their own and innovative ideas that people have. This is a serious problem or to put it in better words 'it is misconduct to the academics'. It is a matter of concern as it takes a lot of efforts to produce one original piece of writing and it may take a few seconds to copy it all. With the technological advancements has not just made the availability of the content online easy but it also has increased the temptation of copying it. Doing this they have the ease to label the copied piece of work as their own work. Plagiarism among young students is a major problem these days; this should be a major concern among many academic institutions. In fact, the field of research is not left behind. Plagiarism is spreading its wide paws in every sphere.

How Does Plagiarism Impact on Students and Researchers

Student's progress has to be continuously monitored to achieve this target they are given various assessments. In today's world where Google knows almost everything; they need to read the text and understand it has been an outdated concept (why bother when everything is just a click away). Therefore, students go for the short cut and take help of the World Wide Web to let them come out of the crisis of early submission. This is when they get into the lucrative trap of plagiarism. There are some institutions who pay attention to the fact that the students have original ideas in completing the assessment given to them or they have copied it from somewhere. Strict regulation should be taken into consideration to stop this from spreading deep inside the system. Negligence can lead to absolute destruction.

There can be various reasons why students fell into the trap of cheating while writing an assignment like they may not be confident enough about themselves whether they are able to write a better answer or not.

¹Merriam Webster Online Dictionary

Time is another factor which can make them vulnerable to cheating. Peer pressure is one of the causes as they know their classmates write better and they can't, this will further affect their scoring. The other strong reason is when students know that some of them do copy, they are not even punished or it reflects on their scoring. Hence, this boosts their confidence and they start their journey of plagiarism. If this is not controlled now, it will turn up huge security issues in all the fields and will result in the destruction of the social realms as well. This may further result in an absolute demolished state of research; people will never have innovation and new ideologies as they will keep on copying or in other words re-copying. There will be no originality left in the near future.

The advancements in the field of technology that we have witnessed have also affected the students and researches in terms of plagiarism. The amazing and life-saving tools like cut, copy and paste has made our lives easy and on the other hand, they also have added a lot to the cause (Plagiarism). The new inventions are made with a good intention always it is the innate quality of the humans to find the easiest way to cheat every time. We, humans, are quite successful at the art of cheating as well. Plagiarism is not a new term it has been part of the history ever since the humans started researching, writing and educating. The only difference is before the year 1990 it was not at the level that it has reached now. The academic community is feeling the burden of it. In the past, there were strict rules and reviews of the research writings. In today's world peer-reviewing is a major scarcity as the number of researches has increased. There is a high demand for experts for peer-reviewing and the reality is that there are a limited number of experts; hence, this becomes the reason for the degradation of the quality of researches.

Types of Plagiarism

As it is a well-known fact that plagiarism is a serious violation to be of any kind. However, some students, researchers and professionals as well are unaware of the different types of plagiarism. They lack the knowledge on how these types of plagiarism can lead to violation of ethical conduct of research. The types of plagiarism are:

Self-Plagiarism: This type of plagiarism can be considered as a smart work by the researcher or the student. Here the student/researcher produces an advance copy of previously submitted work. They make slight changes and produce it for submission elsewhere. There have been many research papers presented elsewhere and printed as well but the content is a mixture of old and new. This makes the content look slightly different (but it is still the same).

Accidental Plagiarism: Here the researcher neglects the proper citation, sources or references of the text incorporated from the concerned author. It even can be the unintentional use of similar words, sentence attribution and group of words without attribution.

Direct Plagiarism: This is the most common and widely used by the students who are beginners in writing assessments with the help of internet (they feel all is required and are less confident of their linguistic capabilities). This is absolutely unethical with respect to academic authenticity standards. This even leads to disciplinary action towards the person (action for such an attempt is all supported).

Mosaic Plagiarism: Here the writer borrows the phrases from the source, but without using quotation marks to it, use of synonym for the language referred by the original author, whereas the meaning and the structure remain almost the same. Patch Writing² is the term which can be used for this type of Plagiarism.

Stages and Process of Plagiarism Detection

² Retrived From: <http://library.nitrkl.ac.in/events/elpes2/day2/5/prameeta.pdf>

There are mainly four stages from where the content has to pass through successfully then only it is certified plagiarism free. These steps are followed with the help of Internet. The first step is **Collection Stage**, here the content is collected at one place (content is collected without any stratification) and then sent to **Detection Stage**. In the detection stage the actual work begins. This stage is responsible to find the similarities in the content which is submitted in the stage 1. After this there is **Confirmation Stage**, here experts handle the process. They carefully analyze the similarities which are reported and have resemblance in terms of data. The confirmation stage is also known as **False Hit**³. As this can happen as the authors might have quoted from similar cited sources. Then the last and final step is **Investigation Stage**. Here the final step is carried out where the data is thoroughly checked many times and after passing all the four then only there are chance to stand tall and high.

There are two major processes which need to be followed first is **Manual Detection** and second is **Automatic Detection**. In Manual Detection as the name suggest human beings are the only doers in this part. Then there is computer assisted detection. This is indeed typically required a lot of time and efforts and the person who is checking should be an expert. These days there are some free softwares and some paid for the purpose of Plagiarism test. Both have their own pros and cons, however the availability of such techniques are really helpful for students and researchers. As they can get their writings checked themselves on time and can benefit from this.

FREE SOFTWARES	COMMERCIAL SOFTWARES
Viper	Turnitin
DupliChecker	iThenticate
Copyscape	Writecheck
PlagiarismDetect	Plagscan

Table 1: Free and Commercial Plagiarism Detection Softwares

Conclusion

The immense growth of plagiarism is a matter of huge concern with everyone in the world. The easy accessibility of internet has helped us in many ways to increase our knowledge. As it is rightly said we do not value things which are handy and this is what is happening with this proximity as well we end up misusing it (we involve in plagiarizing rather than developing new ideas). It is true that everyone is well versed with the end consequences but still we can't help the evil to get on to us. Therefore, saving ourselves from this ethical misconduct is a major challenge.

We require strong laws against Plagiarism as well as this takes away not just some one's work but also a part of her/his creative and innovative thinking capacity and the time (which is precious as it will never return).

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³ Plagiarism Issues For Higher Education by Thomas Lancaster

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