

## Plagiarism in Research Ethics

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### Abstract

Research is a process that needs rigorous work to make it original and authentic in its respective area. In simple words, research is a study from 'known-to-unknown', which means that one needs to review the existing knowledge to generate new ideas out of it. In this process, scholars knowingly and unknowingly make the mistake of stealing someone else's ideas or views, and this act of stealing is known as "plagiarism". Plagiarism is a major problem for scholars as they just cut-copy-paste the material to finish their thesis on time. So, the present paper explicates the concept of plagiarism in research and how it can be avoided, thus making the thesis more original and authentic.

**Keywords:** Research, Plagiarism, Authentic, Original.

### Introduction

नामूलं लिख्यते किञ्चित्, नानपेक्षितम् उच्यते – मल्लिनाथ

This is a quotation used by classic Sanskrit critic, Mallinath, which states that "I will write nothing without evidence (in support), nor will I speak the untoward).

Plagiarism is not a new concept and most scholars still face this challenge while writing their thesis. We sometimes read in the newspapers about cases of PhDs obtained with the help of stolen materials, and not only scholars, even professors, do commit this sin for getting promotions. Several researchers suffer from this psychological aberration of 'kleptomania' which stands for a compulsive obsession with stealing. Etymologically, it simply means kidnapping. If we have to understand the concept of plagiarism, then we need to go through some definitions of plagiarism to comprehend it in a better manner;

- It involves stealing someone else's work and lying about it afterward. (Sox, 2012)
- Plagiarism is the appropriation of other people's material without giving proper credit. ( The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity)
- To steal and pass off ( the words and ideas of another) as one's own. ( Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

d) An act of academic dishonesty and a breach of ethics. It involves using someone else's work as one's own. It also includes data plagiarism and self-plagiarism. ( UGC Act 1956, Sec 2 k)

So these are some definitions which can give a better understanding of the concept. Plagiarism is a matter of concern for both the researchers and their respective guides because it is declared to be an unacceptable act according to the institutional regulations. This is considered an act of theft because you are stealing some other person's ideas and using them for your advantage as one of your own, without any due acknowledgment of credit and ownership to the original writer. Since research is inherently an innovation, a discovery, and an original contribution to the existing inventory of knowledge and information, the use of any borrowed but unacknowledged material constitutes plagiarism and results in disrepute. This act of stealing and theft is immoral, objectionable, improper, and punishable. Thus, it is essential for students, scholars, and teachers to understand what plagiarism is all about.

### **Types of Plagiarism**

There are a number of types of plagiarisms which are committed knowingly or unknowingly, hence making the writer guilty of academic dishonesty. So, some most common types are mentioned below with précised explanations.

- Source-based Plagiarism- It is the most common type of plagiarism as much of the information is taken from various available sources. When the researcher (intentionally or unintentionally) forgets to cite the sources from where the information or idea is taken. It is mandatory to do proper citations and references to avoid any kind of inconvenience. It happens that the writer or scholar takes help from a number of sources but mentions only one of them, or wrong references are put, or the citations do not match given by the scholar.

- Complete Plagiarism- It is considered as the intellectual theft or stealing. In this, other person's entire idea or information is copied and labeled as your own without giving due credibility.

- Direct Plagiarism- When putting direct lines, specific paragraphs or quotations, taken from any source into your work without acknowledging the author is known as Direct Plagiarism.

- Self Plagiarism- It happens when the writers use data from their published works, thinking that it belongs to them, is also a kind of stealing. The writer reuses one's own ideas or words from previously published texts.

- Paraphrasing Plagiarism- If you don't give the original author full credit, paraphrasing is considered plagiarism. If you paraphrase something too closely to the original material, it counts as plagiarism (even if you cite the source). Quote a sentence or phrase rather than just copying it verbatim.

•**Mosaic Plagiarism-** When the student is taking words or quotes from other sources without using quotation marks, or uses synonyms for the original words (without citing the original author) is said to be guilty of Mosaic Plagiarism.

### **UGC Guidelines**

The objectives of the guidelines are; a) creating awareness about responsible conduct and prevention of misconduct like plagiarism, b) establishing an institutional mechanism for preventing plagiarism and maintaining academic integrity, and c) setting up a system for catching plagiarism and punishing for this theft.

### **Why Plagiarism Occurs?**

This is something which needs to be taken into consideration because the future of research scholars remains at stake due to the act of stealing and borrowing. In our childhood days, we were taught something through the concept of copycatting, where we used to copy the exact words or phrases, join-the-dot art, coloring inside the picture, etc. No one taught us something out of the box, which must have hindered the intellectuality of the students, And the same thing is happening right now at the doctoral research stage. Internet is the easiest medium to access the available information and just copy and paste the material.

- ❖ **Lack of Awareness-** This is the most common reason for occurrence of plagiarism as students are not aware of this concept. It is necessary to teach them about this misconduct and help them out by making them aware about this idea of plagiarism. And this should be done before the start of research work.
- ❖ **Lack of Self Confidence-** Most of the times, it happens that we as students, completely do not rely on our own thoughts, ideas, and information. Lack of self confidence overpowers the knowledge of the students which later on, results in the theft of ideas.
- ❖ **Lack of Writing Skills-** This factor is mainly important because teachers just focus on the set concept and believe that their job gets over, once they vomit out the information without considering the fact that whether the students got that idea or not. When students won't understand the concept, then how they will be able to write the things and this lack of awareness from teachers' part results in lack of writing and learning skills in the students.
- ❖ **To Influence Others-** Researchers commit this theft of stealing unknowingly in case of impressing others because of competitive attitude. They should keep this in mind that research is not an easy task which can be achieved by easy means and hence, should be done to enhance one's existing knowledge and information, rather than impressing others.

- ❖ **Cut-Paste Culture-** One of the most common way to steal some idea is cut-copy-paste culture where researchers make excessive use of this culture and thus resulting in plagiarised content.
- ❖ **Lack of Reference/Citation Skills-** The prominent part of any thesis is to know how to cite the sources according MLA style sheet. Researchers should be given proper classes for this and practical approach should be implemented to avoid any kind of plagiarism.
- ❖ **Availability of Ready Materials and Shortage of Time-** As we all know that there is fixed period to undertake a research and completing that. In the starting period, researchers just neglect the work and relax and then there occurs a problem of shortage of time. In that condition, they prefer to go for available material on social platforms. Because as they are left with limited time, and burden of completing the research compels them to access to Google.

As there are other factors also which result in occurrence of plagiarism such as, competitive attitude, lack of research methods skills, fear of failure, colleagues' pressure, etc. The above mentioned are some reasons which force the scholars to steal or copy some other person's ideas intentionally or unintentionally.

### **Points to Remember while Writing**

This is a kind of problem which needs to be looked into as it is the most crucial point in someone's research field. There are a number of ways to stop this intellectual theft. It's very normal that while writing a thesis, one might commit this act of plagiarism because it's not possible that one might have high intellectuality where one does not need any sources for collecting data. So, unintentionally it occurs in any work, but according to UGC norms, less than 10% of plagiarised work is acceptable.

- **Be Honest-** The most important of a scholar is being honest towards his/her work. It means that if one person is taking up the other's ideas, then proper acknowledgment should be given to the original writer for making your work more authentic, as you are the best judge or evaluator of your work.
- **Proper Citation-** Any work can become plagiarised free with proper citations of the sources. One ought to give credit to the ones from where he/she has borrowed the information.
- **Self- Evaluation/Proof-Reading-** The prominent thing to be done before thesis submission is to go through that for twice to remove any kind of plagiarism. As you yourself are the best examiner of your work.
- **Online Software-** As we are aware that social platform is full of such softwares which can catch any form of plagiarism. It is mandatory that your work is to be checked by University system. There are numerous softwares, such as, Turnitin, Urkund, iThenticate etc.

- Start Early- When writing a paper, allow yourself enough time. When you are in a hurry, it is easy to overlook something important.
- Paraphrase- When you reword a sentence without losing meaning, you can use paraphrasing. You must write it in your own words and cannot simply replace one word with another.
- Consult Your Instructor- The situations occur when you are not able to find answers to your questions, then at that moment you try to surf on the internet, resulting in a plagiarised work. Rather choosing other option, you should always consult your guide/instructor/ teacher. They would be pleased to answer your queries.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, it is critical to remember that plagiarism, which is regarded as intellectual theft, is a problem for each individual's morale. Therefore, to ensure that the work is more real and original, avoiding plagiarism is the most crucial responsibility for every writer. Always give full credit by using appropriate citations and references. Scholars now have a wealth of resources at their fingertips because to the Internet, which also acts as a kind of intellectual dishonesty temptation. Lenburg (2007, p.g 519) lists two benefits of this practice of honesty: (1) it demonstrates the breadth of evidence you found to support your research, and (2) it gives your article more authority by mentioning credible sources.

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