Detecting and Addressing Plagiarism: Challenges, Methods, and Implications in Academic Research

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Abstract-**Plagiarism is a serious research issue. However, there are differing opinions about what constitutes plagiarism and how to define it. We define "plagiarism" and examine plagiarism normatively in connection to research in this work. We propose that the definition of plagiarism should be "someone using someone else's intellectual product (such as texts, ideas, or results), thereby implying that it is their own" and contend that this is a meaningful and sufficient definition. We go over several situations that make plagiarism more or less serious and the person who plagiarizes more or less responsible. Our normative analysis leads us to propose that plagiarism is unacceptable because it skews scientific credit. Intentional plagiarism also entails dishonesty.**

Index Terms: fabrication, intellectual contribution, plagiarism, scientific misconduct, software (key words)

I.Introduction

Plagiarism can be described as the not-so-subtle art of stealing an already existing work, violating the principles of academic integrity and fairness. Well, there's no denying that we see further by standing on the shoulders of giants, and when it comes to constructing a research prose, we often need to look at the world through their lens. However, in this process, many students and researchers, knowingly or otherwise, resort to plagiarism.

In many instances, plagiarism is intentional, whether through direct copying or paraphrasing. Unfortunately, there are also times when it happens unintentionally. Regardless of the intent, plagiarism goes against the ethos of the scientific world and is considered a severe moral and disciplinary offense.

The good news is that you can avoid plagiarism and even work around it. So, if you're keen on publishing unplagiarized papers and maintaining academic integrity, you've come to the right place.

With this comprehensive ebook on plagiarism, we intend to help you understand what constitutes plagiarism in research, why it happens, plagiarism concepts and types, how you can prevent it, and much more.

II. What is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism is defined as representing a part of or the entirety of someone else's work as your own. Whether published or unpublished, this could be ideas, text verbatim, infographics, etc. It is no different in the academic writing, either. However, it is not considered plagiarism if most of your work is original and the referred part is diligently cited.

The degree of plagiarism can vary from discipline to discipline. Like in mathematics or engineering, there are times when you have to copy and paste entire equations or proofs, which can take a significant chunk of your paper. Again, that is not constituted plagiarism, provided there's an analysis or rebuttal to it.

That said, there are some objective parameters defining plagiarism. Get to know them, and your life as a researcher will be much smoother.

Common types of plagiarism

Plagiarism often creeps into academic works in various forms, from complete plagiarism to accidental plagiarism.
The types of plagiarism varies depending on the two critical aspects — the writer's intention and the degree to which the prose is plagiarized. These aspects help institutions and publishers define plagiarism types more accurately.
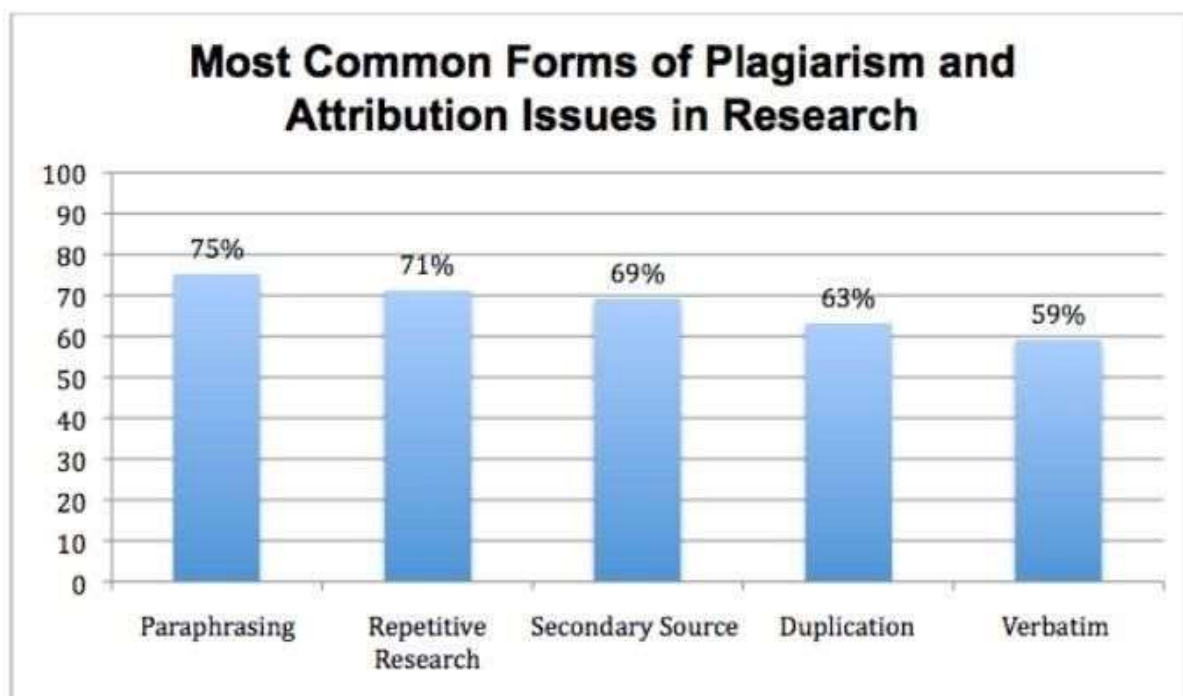
The agreed-upon forms of plagiarism that occur in research writing include:

1. Global or Complete Plagiarism

Global or Complete plagiarism is inarguably the most severe form of plagiarism — It is as good as stealing. It happens when an author blatantly copies somebody else's work in its entirety and passes it on as their own.

Since complete plagiarism is always committed deliberately and disguises the ownership of the work, it is directly recognized under copyright violation and can lead to intellectual property abuse and legal battles. That, along with irredeemable repercussions like a damaged reputation, getting expelled, or losing your job.

2. Verbatim or Direct Plagiarism

Verbatim or direct plagiarism happens when you copy a part of someone else's work, word-to-word, without providing adequate credits or attributions. The ideas, structure, and diction in your work would match the original author's work. Even if you were to change a few words or the position of sentences here and there, the final result remains the same.

The best way to avoid this is to minimize copy-pasting entire paragraphs and use it only when the situation calls for it. And when you do so, use quotation marks and in-text citations, crediting the original source.

3. Source-based Plagiarism

Source-based plagiarism results from an author trying to mislead or disguise the natural source of their work. Say you write a paper, giving enough citations, but when the editor or peer reviewers try to cross-check your references, they find a dead end or incorrect information. Another instance is when you use both primary and secondary data to support your argument but only cite the former with no reference for the latter.

In both cases, the information provided is either irrelevant or misleading. You may have cited it, but it does not support the text completely.

Similarly, another type of plagiarism is called **data manipulation and counterfeiting**. Data Manipulation is creating your own data and results. In contrast, data counterfeiting is skipping or adultering the key findings to suit your expected outcomes.

Using misinformed sources in a research study constitutes grave violations and offenses. Particularly in the medical field, it can lead to legal issues such as wrong data presentation. Its interpretation can lead to false clinical trials, which can have grave consequences.

4. Paraphrasing Plagiarism

Paraphrasing plagiarism is one of the more common types of plagiarism. It refers to when an author copies ideas, thoughts, and inferences, rephrases sentences, and then claims ownership.

Compared to verbatim, paraphrasing plagiarism involves changing words, sentences, semantics or translating texts. The general idea or the topic of the thesis, however, remains the same and as clever as it may seem, it is straightforward to detect.

More often authors commit paraphrasing by reading a few sources and writing them in their own words without due citation. This can lead the reader to believe that the idea was the author's own when it wasn't.

5. Mosaic or Patchwork Plagiarism

One of the more mischievous ways to abstain from writing original work is mosaic plagiarism. Patchwork or mosaic plagiarism occurs when an author stitches together a research paper by lending pieces from multiple sources and weaving them as their creation. Sure, the author can add a few new words and phrases, but the meat of the paper is stolen.

It's common for authors to refer to various sources during the research. But to patch them together and form a new paper from them is wrong.

Mosaic plagiarism can be difficult to detect, so authors, too confident in themselves, often resort to it. However, these days, there are plenty of online tools like Turnitin, Enago, and EasyBib that identify patchwork and correctly point to the sources from which you have borrowed.

6. Ghost writing

Outside of the academic world, ghost writing is entirely acceptable. Leaders do it, politicians do it, and artists do it. In academia, however, ghost writing is a breach of conduct that tarnishes the integrity of a student or a researcher.

Ghost writing is the act of using an unacknowledged person's assistance to complete a paper. This happens in two ways — when an author has their paper's foundation laid out but pays someone else to write, edit, and proofread. The other is when they pay someone to write the whole article from scratch.

In either case, it's utterly unacceptable since the whole point of a paper is to exhibit an author's original thoughts presented by them. Ghost writing, thus, raises a serious question about the academic capabilities of an author.

7. Self-plagiarism

This may surprise many, but rehashing previous works, even if they are your own, is also considered plagiarism. The biggest reason why self-plagiarism is a fallacy is because you're trying to claim credit for something that you have already received credit for.

Authors often borrow their past data or experiment results, use them in their current work, and present them as brand new. Some may even plagiarize old published works' ideas, cues, or phrases.

The degree to which self-plagiarism is still under debate depends on the volume of work that has been copied. Additionally, many academic and non-academic journals have devised a fixed ratio on what percentage of self-plagiarism is acceptable. Unless you have made a proper declaration through citations and quotation marks about old data usage, it will fall under the scope of self-plagiarism.

8. Accidental Plagiarism

Apart from the intentional forms of plagiarism, there's also accidental plagiarism. As the name suggests, it happens inadvertently. Unwitting paraphrasing, missing in-text or end-of-text citations, or not using quotation blocks falls under the same criteria.

While writing your academic papers, you have to stay cautious to avoid accidental plagiarism. The best way to do this is by going through your article thoroughly. Proofread as if your life depended on it, and check whether you've given citations where required.

Why is it important to avoid research plagiarism?

As a scholar, you must be aware that the sole purpose of any article or academic writing is to present an original idea to its readers. When the prose is plagiarized, it removes any credibility from the author, discredits the source, and leaves the reader misinformed which goes against the ethos of academic institutions.

Here are the few reasons why you should avoid research plagiarism:

Critical analysis is important

While writing research papers, an author must dive deep into finding various sources, like scholarly articles, especially peer-reviewed ones. You are expected to examine the sources keenly to understand the gaps in the chosen topic and formulate your research questions.

Crafting critical questions related to the field of study is essential as it displays your understanding and the analysis you employed to decipher the problems in the chosen topic. When you do this, your chances of being published improve, and it's also good for your long-term career growth.

Streamlined scholarly communication

An extended form of scholarly communication is established when you respond and craft your academic work based on what others have previously done in a particular domain. By appropriately using others' work, i.e., through citations, you acknowledge the tasks done before you and how they helped shape your work. Moreover, citations expand the doorway for readers to learn more about a topic from the beginning to the current state. Plagiarism prevents this.

Credibility in originality

Originality is invaluable in the research community. From your thesis topic and fresh methodology to new data, conclusion, and tone of writing, the more original your paper is, the more people are intrigued by it. And as long as your paper is backed by credible sources, it further solidifies your academic integrity. Plagiarism can hinder these.

How does plagiarism happen?

Even though plagiarism is a cardinal sin and plagiarized academic writing is consistently rejected, it still happens. So the question is, what makes people resort to plagiarism?

Some of the reasons why authors choose the plagiarism include:

1. **Lack of knowledge about plagiarism**
2. **Accidentally copying a work**
3. **Forgetting to cite a source**
4. **Desire to excel among peers**
5. **A false belief that no one will catch them**
6. **No interest in academic work and just taking that as an assignment**
7. **Using shortcuts in the form of self-plagiarism**
8. **Fear of failing**

Whatever the reason an author may have, plagiarism can never be justified. It is seen as an unfair advantage and disrespect to those who have put in the blood, sweat, and tears into doing their due diligence. Additionally, remember that readers, universities, or publishers are only interested in your genuine ideas, and your evaluation, as an author, is done based on that.

Consequences of plagiarism

We have reiterated enough that plagiarism is objectionable and has consequences. But what exactly are the consequences? Well, that depends on who the author is and the type of plagiarism.

For minor offenses like accidental plagiarism or missing citations, a slap on the wrist in the form of feedback from the editor or peers is the norm. For major cases, let's take a look:

For students

- ***Poor grades***

Even if you are a first-timer, your professor may choose to fail you, which can have a detrimental effect on your scores.

- ***Failing a course***

It is not rare for professors to fail Ph.D. and graduate students when caught plagiarizing. Not only does this hurt your academics, but it also extends the duration of your study by a year.

- ***Disciplinary action***

Every university or academic institution has strict policies and regulations regarding plagiarism. If caught, an author may have to face the academic review committee to decide their future. The results seen in general cases range from poor grades, failure for a year, or being banished from any academic or research-related work.

- ***Expulsion from the university***

A university may resort to expulsion only in the worst of cases, like copyright violation or Intellectual Property theft.

- ***Tarnished academic reputation***

This just might be the most consequential of all scenarios. It takes a lifetime to build a great impression but a few seconds to tarnish it. Many academics lose their peers' trust and find it hard to recover. Moreover, background checks for future jobs or fellowships become a nightmare.

For universities

- ***Reputation***

A university is built on reputation. Letting plagiarism slide is the quickest way to tarnish its reputation. This leads to lesser interest from top talent and publishers and trouble finding grant money.

- ***Money***

Prospective students turning away from a university means losing out on tuition money. This further drives experienced faculty away. And the cycle continues.

For researchers

- ***Legal battles***

Since it falls under copyright infringement, researchers may face legal battles if their academic work is believed to be plagiarized. There is no shortage of case studies, like those of Doris Kearns Goodwin or Mark Chabedi, where authors, without permission, used another person's work and claimed it to be their own. In all these instances, they faced legal issues that led to fines, barred from writing and research, and sometimes, imprisonment even.

- ***Professional reputation***

Publishers and journals will not engage authors with a past of plagiarism to produce content under their brand name. Also, if the author is a professor or a fellow, it can lead to contract termination.

How to avoid plagiarism in research?

The simplest way to avoid plagiarism would be to put in the work. Do original research, collect new data, and derive new conclusions. If you use references, keep track of each and every single one and cite them in your paper.

To ensure that your academic writing or research paper is unique and free from any type of plagiarism, incorporate the following tips:

- ***Pay adequate attention to your references***

Writing a paper requires extraordinary research. So, it's understandable when researchers sometimes lose track of their references. This often leads to accidental plagiarism.

So, instead of falling into this trap, maintain lists or take notes of your reference while doing your research. This will help you when you're writing your citations.

- *Find credible sources*

Always refer to credible sources, whether a paper, a conference proceeding or an infographic. These will present unbiased evidence and accurate experimentation results with facts backing the evidence presented by your paper.

- *Proper use of paraphrasing, quotations, and citations*

It's borderline impossible to avoid using direct references in your paper, especially if you're providing a critical analysis or a rebuttal to an already existing article. So, to avoid getting prosecuted, use quotation marks when using a text verbatim.

In case you're paraphrasing, use citations so that everyone knows that it's not your idea. Credit the original author and a secondary source, if any. Publishers usually have guidelines about how to cite. There are many different styles like APA, MLA, Chicago, etc. Be on top of what your publisher demands.

Usually, it is observed that readers or the audience have a greater inclination towards paraphrasing than the quotes, especially if it is bulky sections. The reason is obvious: paraphrasing displays your understanding of the original work's meaning and interpretation, uniquely suiting the current state of affairs.

- *Review and recheck your work multiple times*

Before submitting the final, you must subject your work to scrutiny. Multiple times at that. The more you do it, the less your chances of falling under accidental plagiarism. To ensure that your final work does not constitute any types of plagiarism, ensure that:

- There are no misplaced or missed citations
- The paraphrased text does not closely resemble the original text
- You don't have any wrongful references
- You're not missing quotation marks or failing to provide the author's credentials after quotation marks
- You use a plagiarism checker
  ### Use Online Tools

After receiving your article, most universities, publishers, and other institutions will run it through plagiarism checkers, including AI detectors, to detect all types of plagiarism. These plagiarism checkers function based on drawing similarities between your article and previously published works present in their database. If found similar, your paper is deemed plagiarized.

You can always save yourself from embarrassment by staying a step ahead. Use a plagiarism checker before you submit your paper. Using plagiarism checker tools, you can quickly identify if you have committed plagiarism. Then, no one except you will know about it, and you will have a chance to correct yourself.

Best Plagiarism Checkers

Plagiarism checkers are an incredibly convenient tool for improving academic writing. Therefore, here are some of the best plagiarism checkers for academic writing.

Turnitin's iThenticate

This is one of the best plagiarism checker for your academic paper and a good fit for academic writers, researchers, and scholars. Turnitin's iThenticare claims to cross-check your paper against 99 billion+ current and archived web pages, 1.8 billion student papers, and best-in-class scholarly content from top publishers in every major discipline and dozens of languages.

Grammarly

Grammarly serves as a one-stop solution for better writing. Through Grammarly, you can make your paper have fewer grammatical errors, better clarity, and, yes, be plagiarism-free.

Grammarly's plagiarism checker compares your paper to billions of web pages and existing papers online. It points out all the sentences which need a citation, giving you the original source as well. On top of this, Grammarly also rates your document for an originality score.

ProWritingAid

ProWritingAid is another AI writing assistant that offers a plethora of tools to better your document. One of its paid services include a ProWritingAid Plagiarism Checker that helps authors find out how much of their work is plagiarized.

Once you scan your document, the plagiarism checker gives you details like the percentage of non-original text, how much of that is quoted, and how much is not. It will also give you links so you can cite them as required.

EasyBib Plagiarism Checker

EasyBib Plagiarism Checker compares your writing sample with billions of available sources online to detect plagiarism at every level. You'll be notified which phrases are too similar to current research and literature, prompting a possible rewrite or additional citation.

Moreover, you'll get feedback on your paper's inconsistencies, such as changes in text, formatting, or style. These small details could suggest possible plagiarism within your assignment.

Plagiarism CheckerX

Working on the same principle of scanning and matching against various sources, the critical aspect of Plagiarism CheckerX is that you can download and use it whenever you wish. It is slightly faster than others and never stores your data, so you can stay assured of any data loss.

Compilatio Magister

Compilatio Magister is a plagiarism checker designed explicitly for teaching professionals. It lets you access turnkey educational resources, check for plagiarism against thousands of documents, and seek reliable and accurate analysis reports.

Quick Wrap Up

In the world of academia, the spectre of plagiarism lurks but fear not, for armed with awareness and right plagiarism checkers, you have the power to conquer this foe.

Even though plenty of students or researchers believe they can get away with it, it's never the case. You owe it to yourself and everyone who has invested time and resources in you to publish original, plagiarism-free research work every time.

Throughout this eBook, we have explored the depths of plagiarism, unraveling its consequences and the importance of originality. Many universities have specific classes and workshops discussing plagiarism to create ample awareness of the subject. Thus, you should continue to be honourable in this regard and write papers from the heart.

Conclusions

We propose that "using someone else's intellectual product (such as texts, ideas, or results), thereby implying that it is their own" is the proper definition of plagiarism. This could be done purposefully or accidentally. This is both adequately accurate and reasonably consistent with how the term is used in everyday speech. Its simplicity and ease of comprehension make it arguably dependable. We propose that our discussion lends credence to the idea that the definition is both extremely significant for normative reasons and conceptually useful. Our normative analysis leads us to the conclusion that plagiarism is unacceptable since it entails the unjust gain of scientific credit. Intentional plagiarism also entails dishonesty. Fabrication is also inferred when data or findings are plagiarized.

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