Plagiarism: A Comprehensive Guide for Scholars on Detection and Prevention Strategies

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ABSTRACT
Plagiarism entails the misrepresentation of another individual's language, thoughts, or ideas as one's own, constituting a breach of academic integrity and ethical standards across various cultures. Despite variations in definitions among institutions, the overall consensus is that plagiarism violates essential principles of learning and responsibility, often resulting in severe repercussions such as suspension or expulsion. Understanding the implications and consequences of plagiarism is crucial for maintaining fairness and respect in academic and professional settings. Plagiarism can occur in various forms,Consequences of plagiarism range from academic penalties, such as failing grades or expulsion, to legal ramifications, including fines and lawsuits. It can also tarnish one's reputation and career prospects.To avoid plagiarism, it is crucial to understand and apply proper citation practices, acknowledge sources accurately, and engage in original thinking. Educational institutions and organizations emphasize the importance of academic honesty and provide resources to help individuals learn how to attribute sources correctly. Through awareness and adherence to ethical standards, the integrity of academic and creative work can be upheld.By adhering to ethical standards and acknowledging sources, one can maintain academic and creative integrity.Awareness of plagiarism's consequences is important for upholding ethical standards in education and work environments.
Key words: *Plagiarism, manuscript, research, academician, artificial intelligence.*

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I.   INTRODUCTION

Writing a manuscript is an art. Any clinician or an academician, has a hidden desire to publish his/ her work in an indexed journal. Writing has been made mandatory for promotions in certain departments, so the clinicians are more inclined to publish "Presenting work or ideas from another source as your own, with or without consent of the original author, by incorporating it into your work without full acknowledgement.All published and unpublished material, whether in manuscript, printed or electronic form, is covered under this definition, as is the use of material generated wholly or in part through use of artificial intelligence (save when use of artificial intelligence for assessment has received prior authorisation e.g. as a reasonable adjustment for a student's disability). Plagiarism can also include re-using your own work without citation. Under the regulations for examinations, intentional or reckless plagiarism is a disciplinary offence".

Plagiarism is derived from Latin word "plagiarius" which means "kidnapper" who abducts the child. The word plagiarism entered the Oxford English dictionary in 1621. Plagiarism has been defined by the Encyclopedia Britannica as "the act of taking the writings of another person and passing them off as one's own". It is an act of forgery, piracy, and fraud and is stated to be a serious crime of academia.It is also a violation of copyright laws. Honesty in scientific practice and in publication is necessary. The World Association of Medical Editors (WAME) defines plagiarism as "… the use of others' published and unpublished ideas or words (or other intellectual property) without attribution or permission and presenting them as new and original rather than derived from an existing source". In 1999, the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) defined plagiarism as "Plagiarism ranges from the unreferenced use of others' published and unpublished ideas including research grant applications to submission under new authorship of a complex paper, sometimes in a different language. It may occur at any stage of planning, research, writing or publication; it applies to print and electronic versions".

The necessity to acknowledge others' work or ideas applies not only to text, but also to other media, such as computer code, illustrations, graphs etc. It applies equally to published text and data drawn from books and journals, and to unpublished text and data, whether from lectures, theses or other students' essays. You must also attribute text, data, or other resources downloaded from websites.Artificial Intelligence (AI) can only be used within assessments where specific prior authorisation has been given, or when technology that uses AI has been agreed as reasonable adjustment for a student's disability (such as voice recognition software for transcriptions, or spelling and grammar checkers).

The best way of avoiding plagiarism is to learn and employ the principles of good academic practice from the beginning of your university career. Avoiding plagiarism is not simply a matter of making sure your references are all correct, or changing enough words so the examiner will not notice your paraphrase; it is about deploying your academic skills to make your work as good as it can be.

Forms of plagiarism

Verbatim (word for word) quotation without clear acknowledgement: When one submitssomeone else's words verbatim in his/her own name without even acknowledging him publicly. Copy and paste from a published article without referencing is a common form of verbatim plagiarism. Most commonly, it is seen in introduction and discussion part of manuscript. Quotations must always be identified as such by the use of either quotation marks or indentation, and with full referencing of the sources cited. It must always be apparent to the reader which parts are your own independent work and where you have drawn on ideas and language from another source.

Mosaic plagiarism: In this type of plagiarism each word is not copied but it involves mixing one's own words in someone else's ideas and opinions. This is copying and pasting in patchy manner.

Paraphrasing: Paraphrasing the work of others by altering a few words and changing their order, or by closely following the structure of their argument, is plagiarism if you do not give due acknowledgement to the author whose work you are using.A passing reference to the original author in your own text may not be enough; you must ensure that you do not create the misleading impression that the paraphrased wording or the sequence of ideas are entirely your own. It is better to write a brief summary of the author's overall argument in your own words, indicating that you are doing so, than to paraphrase particular sections of his or her writing. This will ensure you have a genuine grasp of the argument and will avoid the difficulty of paraphrasing without plagiarising. You must also properly attribute all material you derive from lectures.

Collusion: This can involve unauthorised collaboration between students, failure to attribute assistance received, or failure to follow precisely regulations on group work projects. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are entirely clear about the extent of collaboration permitted, and which parts of the work must be your own.

Inaccurate citation: It is important to cite correctly, according to the conventions of your discipline. As well as listing your sources (i.e. in a bibliography), you must indicate, using a footnote or an in-text reference, where a quoted passage comes from. Additionally, you should not include anything in your references or bibliography that you have not actually consulted. If you cannot gain access to a primary source, you must make it clear in your citation that your knowledge of the work has been derived from a secondary text (for example, Bradshaw, D. Title of Book, discussed in Wilson, E., Title of Book (London, 2004), p. 189).

Failure to acknowledge assistance: You must clearly acknowledge all assistance which has contributed to the production of your work, such as advice from fellow students, laboratory technicians, and other external sources. This need not apply to the assistance provided by your tutor or supervisor, or to ordinary proofreading, but it is necessary to acknowledge other guidance which leads to substantive changes of content or approach.

Use of material written by professional agencies or other persons: You should neither make use of professional agencies in the production of your work nor submit material which has been written for you even with the consent of the person who has written it. It is vital to your intellectual training and development that you should undertake the research process unaided. Under Statute XI on University Discipline, all members of the University are prohibited from providing material that could be submitted in an examination by students at this University or elsewhere.

Self-plagiarism: "Publication of one's own data that have already been published is not acceptable since it distorts scientific record". Self-plagiarized publications do not contribute to scientific work; they just increase the number of papers published without justification in scientific research. The authors get benefit in the form of increased number of published papers. Self plagiarism involves dishonesty but not intellectual theft.

Roig gave classification of self-plagiarism and divided it into four types: (i) Duplicate (redundant) publication, (ii) Augmented publication, (iii) Segmented publication, and (iv) Text recycling.

▪ *Duplicate publication:* When an author submits identical or almost identical manuscript (same data, results, and discussion) to two different journals, it is considered as duplicate (redundant) publication.As per COPE guidelines, this is an offense and editor can take an action as per the COPE flowchart.

▪   *Augmented publication:* If the author adds additional data to his/her previously published work and changes title, modifies aim of the study, and recalculates results, it amounts to augmented publication. Plagiarism detection software usually does not pick it because it is not same by verbatim. This self - plagiarism is as such technical plagiarism and is not considered with same strictnessas plagiarism. The editor may consider it for publication in the following three situations: If author refers to his/her previous work; if 'methods' cannot be written in any other form; and if author clearly states that new manuscript contains data from previous publication.

▪   *Segmented publication:* Also called "Salami-Sliced" publication. In this case, two or more papers are derived from the same experimental/research/ original work. Salami-sliced papers are difficult to detect and usually are pointed out by reviewers or readers. The decision regarding such manuscript is again on editor's shoulder. The author must be asked to refer to his/her previously published work and explain reasonably the connection of the segmented paper to his/her previously published work.

▪   *Text recycling:* If the author uses large portions of his/her own already published text in his/her new manuscript, it is called text recycling. It can be detected by plagiarism software. It can be handled as per the COPE guidelines.

Auto-plagiarism: You must not submit work for assessment that you have already submitted (partially or in full), either for your current course or for another qualification of this, or any other, university, unless this is specifically provided for in the special regulations for your course. Where earlier work by you is citable, i.e. it has already been published, you must reference it clearly. Identical pieces of work submitted concurrently will also be considered to be auto-plagiarism.

Cyber plagiarism: Copying or downloading in part or in their entirety articles or research papers and ideas from the internet and not giving proper attribution is unethical and falls in the range of cyber plagiarism.

Image plagiarism: Using an image or video without receiving proper permission or providing appropriate citation is plagiarism. Images can be tampered on support findings, promote a specific technique over another to strengthen the correctness of poorly visualized findings, remove the defects of an image and to misrepresent an image from what it really is?

Unintentional plagiarism: Not all cases of plagiarism arise from a deliberate intention to cheat. Sometimes students may omit to take down citation details when taking notes, or they may be genuinely ignorant of referencing conventions. However, these excuses offer no sure protection against a charge of plagiarism. Even in cases where the plagiarism is found to have been neither intentional nor reckless, there may still be an academic penalty for poor practice.

Common causes of plagiarism
Understanding the underlying causes of plagiarism is crucial because it allows us to address the root issues and develop strategies to prevent it. Plagiarism doesn't always stem from a malicious intent to deceive; often, it can be the result of various factors that writers face. Let's explore some common causes of plagiarism:

➤   Time constraints: One of the leading causes of plagiarism is the pressure of deadlines. Students and writers often find themselves overwhelmed with multiple assignments, leaving them with limited time to conduct thorough research and compose original work. In such situations, the temptation to plagiarize can be strong.

➤   Lack of research skills: Inadequate research skills can lead to plagiarism. When individuals struggle to find relevant sources or understand complex topics, they may resort to copying from existing material rather than synthesizing information properly.

➤   Fear of failure:The fear of failure can push students and writers to take shortcuts. They worry that their own ideas or writing won't meet expectations, so they turn to plagiarism as a way to secure better grades or approval.

➤   Ignorance of proper citation:Some individuals genuinely don't understand the importance of proper citation or how to do it correctly. They may not be aware of the various citation styles, or they might not know how to attribute sources effectively.

➤   Poor time management:Procrastination and poor time management can lead to last-minute rushes to complete assignments. In such situations, students may be more inclined to cut corners, including copying and pasting content.

➤   Cultural differences:International students, in particular, may face challenges in understanding the expectations of academic writing in a new culture. Differences in citation practices and academic conventions can contribute to unintentional plagiarism.

➤   Technological ease:With the internet at our fingertips, it's easier than ever to copy and paste content from various sources. The convenience of online access can tempt individuals to plagiarize without thinking about the consequences.

Why does plagiarism matter?

Plagiarism is a breach of academic integrity. It is a principle of intellectual honesty that all members of the academic community should acknowledge their debt to the originators of the ideas, words, and data which form the basis for their own work. Passing off another's work as your own is not only poor scholarship, but also means that you have failed to complete the learning process. Plagiarism is unethical and can have serious consequences for your future career; it also undermines the standards of your institution and of the degrees it issues.

How to Detect plagiarism?

It is generally difficult to detect plagiarism, but information technology has made available few websites which can detect/catch plagiarism. Few of them are www.ithentical.com, www.turnitin.com, www.plagiarism.org, etc.Besides this, learned and watchful reviewers and readers can detect it due to his/her familiarity with published material in his/her area of interest.

Why should you avoid plagiarism?

Practice the ethical writing honestly. Keep honesty in all scientific writings. Crediting all the original sources. When you fail to cite your sources or when you cite them inadequately, you commit plagiarism, an offense that is taken extremely seriously in academic world and is a misconduct. Some simple dos and don'ts are outlined below.

Dos and don'ts of plagiarism

✓ Attribute references.
✓ Describe all sources of information.
✓ Give acknowledgment.
✓ Provide footnotes.
✓ Use quotation marks wherever required.
✓ For extensive quotations, obtain permission from the publisher/copyright holder of original work.
✓ Widely known scientific and historical facts-generally counted as common knowledge and does not require citation.
✓ Avoid self-plagiarism by taking permission from publisher/copyright holder of previous article

In the following situation, permission is required to use published work from publisher to avoid plagiarism.

• Directly quoting significant portion of a published work. How much text may be used without approaching publisher for permission is not specified. The best approach is whenever in doubt, ask for permission.
• Reproducing a table.
• Reproducing a figure/image.

How to deal with plagiarism

Plagiarism is considered academic dishonesty and breach of ethics. Plagiarism is not in itself a crime but can constitute copyright infringement. In academia, it is a serious ethical offense. Plagiarism is not punished by law but rather by institutions. Professional associations, educational institutions, and publishing companies can pose penalties, suspensions, and even expulsions of authors. As per the COPE guidelines, "If editors suspect misconduct by authors, reviewer's editorial staff or other editors then they have a duty to take action. This duty extends to both published and unpublished papers. Editors first see a response from those accused. If the editors are not satisfied with the response, they should ask the employers of the authors, reviewers, or editors or some other appropriate body to investigate and take appropriate action".

If the editor is satisfied that the act of plagiarism has taken place, minimum he should do is "reject" the manuscript if it is in different stage of editorial process and "retract" if it is already published. To conclude, we must increase awareness about plagiarism and ethical issues among our scientists and authors. We must be honest in our work and should not violate copyrightlaw. There should be serious steps against authors, which should bring disrespect to author and even loss of his academic position.

Prevention strategies: Preventing plagiarism requires a combination of education, awareness, and practical strategies. Here are some effective prevention strategies to help you maintain academic integrity:

Time management and planning: Start early: Begin your assignments well in advance to avoid the last-minute rush.

Create a schedule: Break down your tasks into manageable chunks and allocate time for research, writing, and revision.

Develop strong research skills: Learn how to find credible sources: Familiarize yourself with academic databases, libraries, and search engines.

Take effective notes: Keep detailed records of your sources, including publication dates and page numbers.

Understand citation styles: Familiarize yourself with the citation style required by your institution (e.g., APA, MLA, Chicago).Use citation guides and templates to ensure accuracy.

Proper paraphrasing and summarizing: When using someone else's ideas, practice paraphrasing and summarizing effectively.Always provide proper citations when paraphrasing.

Use plagiarism detection tools: Utilize plagiarism detection software like Turnitin or Grammarly to check your work for potential issues.Review the reports generated by these tools to identify areas that need improvement.

Seek guidance and feedback: Don't hesitate to ask your professors or instructors for clarification on citation or academic writing guidelines.Seek peer review and feedback on your drafts to catch any unintentional plagiarism

Learn from examples: Study well-crafted academic papers to understand how citations and references are properly integrated.Use reputable style guides and manuals as references for citation.

Promote academic integrity education: Encourage educational institutions to offer workshops and resources on academic integrity.Engage in discussions about plagiarism and its consequences with peers and colleagues.

By implementing these prevention strategies and addressing the common causes of plagiarism, you can significantly reduce the risk of unintentional or deliberate plagiarism in your academic and professional work. Remember that maintaining academic integrity not only benefits you but also contributes to the credibility and trustworthiness of the academic community as a whole.

II.   CONCLUSION

In our exploration of plagiarism, we've unearthed a critical issue that not only threatens the credibility of academic work but also challenges the very essence of education itself.Plagiarism is not a mere transgression; it's a breach of trust, an ethical violation, and a reflection of a broader societal struggle with integrity. Our journey through the types, consequences, and prevention of plagiarism has underscored the urgency of addressing this issue head-on.Plagiarism's manifestations are diverse, from blatant acts of copying to subtler forms of appropriation. The consequences are far-reaching, affecting not only individuals but also the institutions and communities to which they belong. It erodes trust, undermines fairness, and tarnishes the reputation of those who engage in it.Preventing plagiarism demands more than just a set of rules and tools. It requires a cultural shift that prioritizes originality, critical thinking, and ethical conduct. While education plays a central role in promoting academic integrity, it cannot operate in isolation. It necessitates the active involvement of students, educators, researchers, and institutions alike.

Academic integrity, the cornerstone of our educational systems, is at risk. It demands our unwavering commitment. Students must recognize their responsibility to uphold ethical standards in their work. Educators must not only impart knowledge but also instil a deep sense of ethics. Institutions must foster an environment where integrity thrives, backed by clear expectations, robust support systems, and consequences that deter misconduct. Yet, the battle against plagiarism extends beyond the classroom. It's a societal challenge that implicates a culture obsessed with convenience, shortcuts, and the relentless pursuit of success at any cost. As such, addressing plagiarism requires a multifaceted approach that encompasses not just education but also the broader societal values that shape our behaviours.Discover Academia Writing, where we provide ethical research and writing services that uphold academic integrity. Explore our offerings to support your educational and research journey while maintaining honesty and ethical standards.

Conflict of interest
The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

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