

Plagiarism: what the literature says?

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Abstract: *Plagiarism or the cases of intellectual theft has increased manifold since last two decades. It is becoming a serious problem day-by-day in academics. The concept is gaining so much attention in India as the number of plagiarism controversies are on rise. The present paper basically deals with the literature related to plagiarism and its related concepts. The literature was reviewed under different sub headings like plagiarism as a case of academic dishonesty, student's attitude towards plagiarism, student's understanding of plagiarism, misconceptions towards plagiarism and initiatives to deal with plagiarism in India and abroad. The purpose of the paper is to provide an overview of research done in the field of plagiarism.*

Keywords: *plagiarism, academic dishonesty, understanding, attitude, misconceptions.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

In academics plagiarism is becoming a serious problem day-by-day. Student plagiarism can be defined as “Representing someone else work as one’s own and includes sham paraphrasing, verbatim plagiarism and purloining (Walker, 2010)”. It is not just a problem of academics but can be found these days in any field. It has increased due to easy access to internet (Underwood and Szabo, 2003; Szabo and Underwood, 2004). Back time it was more difficult to plagiarize because printed sources were available only (Scanlon, 2003) but presently the copy and pasting from internet has increased the plagiarism manifold.

2. OBJECTIVES:

The objective of the paper is to:

- 1) To do review of literature in the area of plagiarism.
- 2) To study the literature from different Prospective of plagiarism.

3. Plagiarism as a Case of Academic Dishonesty:

Literature has provided us with the large number of definitions of academic dishonesty (Tibbetts, 1999; McCabe and Bowers, 1994). These are such as fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, duplication and neglecting support (Akbulut, 2008). “Fabrication is the use of invented, counterfeited, altered or forged information or data” (Akbulut, 2008). “Falsification is manipulating research materials, equipment or processes, or changing or emitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record” (Pimple, 2002).

4. Student’s Attitude towards Plagiarism:

Research yielded mixed findings on student attitude towards plagiarism. In a study by Michael (2000) the student’s attitude towards plagiarism was very defensive they were found to deny doing plagiarism and support it. They used ethical reasoning to justify doing plagiarism (Granitz and Loewy, 2007). Few of them blamed their teachers for getting into doing wrong because of the deadlines they have to fulfil (Locastro and Masuko, 1997).

In a study by Ting (2013) on Malaysian university students towards the seriousness of plagiarism it was found that according to students plagiarism is not a serious academic dishonesty, they think that it do not require any penalty and take it as excusable. Hence, the awareness towards the concept is in dire need. When the relation between seriousness and rates of plagiarism was studied by Maxwell et al. (2008) was studied it was found that rate of plagiarism increased with decrease in perceived seriousness towards plagiarism.

McCabe and Trevino (1996) in a survey on post graduate students found that out of the total, half of the students do not consider fabrication and stealing other people text as wrong. Around 75 Per cent do not think that work submitted done by others as cheating. They consider it as a way of learning.

5. Student’s Understanding of Plagiarism:

If one has to keep himself away from plagiarism, there should be positive correlation between understanding towards plagiarism and its practical applications. According to Maxwell et al. (2008) it was found that students at universities are not taught properly the academic writing skills due to which their awareness towards how to escape away from plagiarism was very low. The teachers need to focus at this issue. Majority of studies reveal that students do

not properly know what is plagiarism, how to do citation and paraphrase. According to Stubbings and Brine (2003), in their survey on undergraduate students at Loughborough university the students were aware that citations are to be provided but do not know how to write the citations.

It was also found that there is a relation between knowledge of students towards citations and paraphrasing; and plagiarism. Soto et al. (2004) tried to find instructional methods which are anti-plagiarism and are best. They found that the students which were involved in plagiarism had tough time doing paraphrasing. Jackson (2006) concludes that students getting it difficult to do paraphrasing and related concepts.

6. Causes of committing Plagiarism:

There are various reasons provided by the literature for to cause plagiarism by the students. The various reasons are lack of time and poor time management, no motivation for producing a quality work, submission deadlines, competition and poor writing skills (Park, 2003).

The roots of plagiarism are linked with the school system where students to get good grades copy material from books and websites. They develop a habit of copying in this way (Logue, 2004; Sisti, 2007). In a study by Eckstein (2003) plagiarism is found to be caused because of subjective and objective factors. Subjective factors like ambitions and competition among people and their ignorance of what is right and what is wrong, attitude and circumstances faced by the people and trend of fraud. Objective factors like societal and family expectations, peer pressure and other external sources. A study by Devlin and Gray (2007) showed that due to lack of subject knowledge students copy and paste exactly from the sources to get good job in the future. In most of the universities students take admission without having interest in a particular course. Hence, just to get the degree they plagiarize their submissions.

7. Misconceptions towards Plagiarism:

In a study by Jackson (2006) on undergraduate students in their understanding towards plagiarism. It was found that students find it difficult to grasp the concept of paraphrasing. They think that just paraphrasing without citation can prevent them from plagiarism. In other study on the same level of students it was found that students think that plagiarism takes place only when we copy from text. They do not consider taking ideas and paraphrasing it as plagiarism. But the reality is that it is also a plagiarism if you take ideas and represent them as your own without giving proper attribution to the person. Paraphrasing also needs citations (Walsh, 2013). While avoiding plagiarism we also think that only printed sources needs to be cited and referenced but it is not true in plagiarism the medium do not matter but the idea matters. Hence, whether the source is printed or not, if you are getting the idea even from the personal conversations you need to cite it. Except personal conversations all the other things need to be given in proper format as end-text citations (Durham College, 2016).

When students were taught about plagiarism, they started to think that every fact needs to be cited. Yes, plagiarism says that every fact needs to be cited but there is some knowledge called as “common knowledge” which do not need to be cited. For example, the newton laws of motion, they are a part of common knowledge. But if the person is not sure whether the information he has taken is common knowledge or not he needs to cite the source from where the information has been taken (Plagiarism, 2014b).

In a study done by Ahmad, Mansourizadeh and Ai (2012) on group of post graduate students of Malaysian university found that students consider it only when long sentences are copied as verbatim as plagiarism but not short sentences. This was consistent with the study of Dawson and Overfield (2006). It implies that students need to be studied thoroughly towards the concept of plagiarism. Currie (1998) found that the students think that converting from one language to another is also not a plagiarism. They are not able to make a distinction between the other people ideas and other people words.

8. Initiatives to deal with Plagiarism cases in India and Abroad:

Recently UGC has published its gazette for Promotion of academic integrity and prevention of plagiarism in higher educational institutions (2018) which has proposed proper institutional mechanism to deal with plagiarism. It proposes for the formation of DAIP (Departmental Academic Integrity panel) and IAIP (Institutional Academic Integrity panel) in each university which will take into the matter of plagiarism cases. The penalties are based on the similarity levels i.e 0 to10, 10-40, 40-60 and more than 60 Percent. 0-10 per cent similarity level is no penalty level whereas more than 10 percent similarity leads a person in danger. This is the case of India. Let us see how other countries are dealing with the problem.

The universities of other countries have well formulated honor codes. Let us take the Stanford University of US. There they have formed an academic misconduct policy (Honor code) which is in implementation since 1921. It can be called a collection of copyright and fair use resources (Stanford copyright, 2006). The penalty for first time offence is one-quarter suspension from the university and 40 hours of community service. “No pass” or “No credit” is issued by the faculty for the course in which the violation occurred. The standard penalty they impose for doing multiple

violations is a three-quarter suspension and 40 or more hours of community service. In Yale University, penalties for plagiarism include reprimands, probations and suspensions.

In UK, the collective measures include online guides and tutorials for all the students which help these students to grasp academic writing skills. In Cambridge University, if examiners suspect plagiarism they make recommendations and proctors, university advocates and court decide the penalty in line with examiners recommendations (Cambridge, 2006). In Oxford University, the plagiarism cases are deal through a court of summary jurisdiction (Oxford gazette, 2005).

In developing countries like Pakistan, they also have guidelines and zero tolerance policy issued by the higher education commission (HEC Press, 2006). This all happened because of the recent high profile plagiarism cases of Pakistan.

9. CONCLUSION:

Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty which is not just prevalent in developing countries but also in developed countries like UK and USA. One reason of its high prevalence is the existence of misconceptions in the minds of research scholars which is need to be focussed. Student's understanding towards the concept of plagiarism is not up to the level due to which they do not have serious attitude towards plagiarism. more researches in this field can make the picture more clear.

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