

# RESEARCH



## WHAT, WHY AND HOW?

*A Treatise from Researchers to Researchers*



PM Kasi

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## **PLAGIARISM**

## What is Plagiarism?

*Farhad Shokraneh, Salman Fasih Khan*

*"If you steal from one author it is plagiarism; if you steal from many it is research."*

***Wilson Mizner***

There is no absolute definition for plagiarism. Wikipedia quotes from *Random House Compact Unabridged Dictionary*, 1995 that:

*Plagiarism is the "Use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work." <sup>1</sup>*

Here the author copies someone else's findings, thoughts or ideas and them as his own original work. Therefore the citation and mentioning the bibliographic information of the original work could help authors to disclaim complaints aimed to criticize the thought or impute plagiarism.

Similarly, in a joint statement issued by the Singapore Medical Journal and the Medical Journal of Malaysia, Peh and Arokiasamy quote that:

*"The World Association of Medical Editors (WAME) defines plagiarism as the **use of others' published and unpublished ideas or words** (or other intellectual property) **without attribution or permission**, and presenting them as new and original rather than derived from an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.*

*To put it simply, this crime refers to **stealing someone else's work or ideas, and passing it off as one's own**. For a researcher, this form of scientific misconduct represents fraud of the worst order.”<sup>7</sup>*

Nowadays, plagiarism in academic environment has turned into a problem that challenges the scientific honesty. Unfortunately the practice is found to be rampant and wittingly or unwittingly is a global phenomenon. Recently, editors of many journals have identified cases of overt plagiarism in works submitted to their journals; some of which even made their way through the entire review process to get published in respectable journals. Optimistically we want to imply that this phenomenon originates from unawareness of writers; however, in some cases there is no way to rationalize the reasons of plagiarism. He who uses others thoughts and represents them as his/her own breaks the intellectual properties law and should be punished by the country's rules or by the academic society in general.

## **What are the Types of Plagiarism?**

To classify plagiarism, we need to be experts in peer-reviewing of papers and have to have widespread study. We could categorize plagiarism by type of materials, type of authors etc. The main types often discussed include:

### **1. Self-Plagiarism:**

Sometimes authors use their own writings in two or several works without citing the original work or referring to notes that in chronic phases leads to multiple publications (duplication) in different resources.

### **2. Manipulated Plagiarism:**

In this case the author uses another author's thoughts, information, opinions or data and then manipulates them and publishes the work as his own. Identifying this sort of plagiarism is not easy for common reviewers.

### **3. Ideal Plagiarism:**

In this case, the author robs the paper or data from private or personal properties of another author before the original work was published. The main author could not prove the plagiarism claim because there was no time to record the writing and plagiary considered as the owner of work.

### **4. Authors-Fight Plagiarism:**

Often teamwork and co-authorship face the problems of, for example:

What the order of authors should be in the publication?

Who should be the corresponding author?

Who should be the first author? Etc.

What might happen is that some authors may be annoyed by the order of authors' names or want to be the corresponding author of a particular paper. If the complain or issue is not resolved, this may lead to envy and revenge. What may happen is that the author seeking revenge may send the same copy of the paper to another journal, in which the acceptance and publishing process is quicker. When the copied paper gets published, this envious author alerts the first journal that a duplicate publication has occurred. In some journals this problem is solved to an extent by inserting a separate part of paper titled "Authors Contribution".

#### **5. Translated Plagiarism:**

This is an easy way to translate a good work to another language and publish it as original work. Capturing this plagiarist is difficult except for up-to-date reviewers. <sup>2</sup>

#### **6. Whole Work Plagiarism:**

This amateur type is discovered in students' class works specially. They clear the name of authors' names and replace own names.

#### **7. Unintentional Plagiarism:**

Unawareness about citations value and/or forgetting citations are examples for this type. The author's goal is not to break the intellectual properties law and the mistake is not deliberate.

#### **8. Grammatical and Structural Plagiarism:**

In countries where English is a second language, some of authors have phobia in English writing. They fear from errors occurs in structure and grammar of sentences and may copy the identical phrases from similar work to their works and



replace some words or data. For common sentences like "thesis statement" there are a few problems but in methodology, results and discussion sections, it is possible that Plagiarism detecting software can detect the work as copied and plagiarized.

### **9. Juice Plagiarism:**

Copying the main ideas and parts of paper and mixing them with new parts so the work seems as new writing is juice plagiarism. This type is the most difficult type of plagiarism to detect by human or machine factors. <sup>3</sup>

### **What is the difference between a Pirate and a Plagiarist?**

These two words usually are used in the same meaning but there are some minute differences. A pirate does robbery of inventions like machines or softwares without permission. While the term Plagiarist is used mainly in the context of scientific writings and considers the use of writings without citing or authors' permission.

### **What are the different Plagiarism Detection Tools?**

Plagiaristic trends in academic societies have lead scientists to design plagiarism detection tools and softwares. Although it might seem expensive, but it is worth spending; considering the cost of a plagiarism offense against an author or journal. Some of these are listed in the following table 15:

**Table 15: Plagiarism Detecting Tools and Softwares**

eTBLAST	<a href="http://invention.swmed.edu/etblast/index.shtml">http://invention.swmed.edu/etblast/index.shtml</a>
Déjà vu	<a href="http://spore.swmed.edu/dejavu/">http://spore.swmed.edu/dejavu/</a>
CheckforPlagiarism.Net	<a href="http://www.checkforplagiarism.net/">http://www.checkforplagiarism.net/</a>
Turnitin	<a href="http://turnitin.com/">http://turnitin.com/</a>

*Anecdote: Even in writing of this book on research, we employed 'CheckforPlagiarism.Net' software to prevent plagiarism and to our surprise there was indeed plagiarism (intentional or accidental) in the some of the works submitted by some researchers from around the world. But as is the rule for plagiarism, ignorance is no excuse. Some of the works totally had to be abandoned and some authors denied contribution because in some cases, it was totally unacceptable and were mere copy paste jobs. Finding this was very disappointing. But we are happy that this fault was corrected before the publication of the book rather than finding it afterwards.*

*We would encourage all authors and especially editors of journals to employ these tools to prevent any plagiarism from happening. We are deeply indebted to the developers of this tool as it saved us a lot of trouble and more importantly from the misdeed of not properly attributing the true author and the true source.*

*Note: In most cases, as pointed out by one of the developers of these softwares, the tools and softwares in a way do not directly detect 'plagiarism'. According to Katie Povesjil, vice president of marketing for Turnitin,*

*"We find **text that matches sources** in our databases, and we highlight those matches and identify possible source of the matches. Whether those*

*matches constitute plagiarism **must be discerned by human judgment**. While our software cannot substitute for human judgment, our software can provide information and context to assist or amplify human judgment.”<sup>6</sup>*

So ultimately, the author/editor has to decide but it really does help in ‘amplifying human judgment’ and catches even very minor offenses of plagiarism that otherwise would have easily been missed.

### **How to avoid Plagiarism as a researcher?**

Research ethics advises authors to avoid plagiarism. **Citing** the used references in scientific works is the best way of preventing plagiarism. There are some guidelines on the internet that helps authors to observe ethical writing tips. In the next section we will examine all the different reasons to cite as well as the difference citing styles.

### **Tasks for the Researcher:**

- ✓ Know what is plagiarism? Ignorance is no excuse.
- ✓ Understand what constitutes plagiarism and know its different types.
- ✓ Learn more about plagiarism detection tools and see how they can help you as an author/editor.

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