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## **WHAT UNIVERSITY-STUDENTS BELIEVE ABOUT PLAGIARISM**

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### **Abstract**

*Plagiarism among academicians has been a popular issue in Indonesia for the last five years. Some people argue that plagiarism occurs due to pressure of work to get certain level of academic degree. Another opinion claims that it is due to incapability of writing an academic paper. Plagiarism is definitely unacceptable and not tolerated in any context. Writing an academic paper is about producing a masterpiece. An academic writing should be given a high appreciation to boost positive motivation for academicians to write and publish their research papers. A lot of efforts have been conducted by institutions to avoid plagiarism, such as giving academic writing lectures and citation training, and checking papers using plagiarism checker tools. However, plagiarism still has its popularity among academicians including students and lecturers. For this reason, it is interested to study how those academicians perceive*

*plagiarism. We specify the study by subjecting the research for university student. We investigate students' behavior towards plagiarism. Thirty-five students of a private university in Ponorogo, Indonesia are purposively taken as sample of the study and they are interviewed to gain the data. The results of data analysis are discussed with related literatures to draw the conclusions.*

### **Keywords**

Plagiarism, University-Student Behavior, Perception, Academic Dishonesty

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## **1. Introduction**

Let us begin by looking at a well-known fact among students. It is not surprising in Indonesia finding a student borrowing his or her friend's task and copy it a whole. That plagiarism is so culturally-closed to student's academic habit is a fact (Hu & Lei, 2016). Another reality is living in one-click-googling era. Everyone can access whatever information in a second anywhere and anytime with a gadget in hand, so that this makes a students have an easiest way to search information for supporting his or her work (Evering & Moorman, 2012). However, there is a drawback of this effortless accessing information. If one is unable to cite where he or she obtains the data, plagiarism will occur. Studies have showed that having no time to paraphrase is also indicated why plagiarism occurs (Hu & Sun, 2017; Li, 2013; Li & Casanave, 2012).

Recent news have reported that doctoral candidate students are found to plagiarism guilty since their dissertation are similar with ones theses (Sumandoyo & Kresna, 2017). Previous studies also review students' perspective towards plagiarism. These studies found plagiarism is not merely about how to cite but it is about academic consciousness, involving academicians and institution's regulation (Ariani, 2013; Hidayati, 2009; Sinaga, 2005). Two studies also investigated plagiarism prevention using plagiarism detecting tool (Oberreuter & Velásquez, 2013; Seifried, Lenhard, & Spinath, 2015). However, it needs to develop self-awareness to perceive plagiarism. Government has drafted statute concerning ethics of academic writing and its consequences in Regulation of Ministry of National Education Number 10 Year 2010. Indonesian National Education Ministry (Kementarian Pendidikan Nasional Indonesia, 2010) describes that plagiarism is passing another work as own without acknowledging, on purpose or unintentionally and all guidelines of academic writing is ruled by the institutions.

Experts have discussed kinds of plagiarism. One of them, Park (2003) has studied plagiarism's literatures and lessons. His study has found seven aspects, based on plagiarism cases in North America, including plagiarism context, students' understanding and perception, plagiarism cases by the students, plagiarism style, digital plagiarism challenges, and students'

academic integrity against plagiarism. Stealing material, submitting a paper written by relatives, copying section and paraphrasing without citing authors are categorized as plagiarism (Park, 2003) . In the same way, Ahmad, Mansourizadeh, & Ai (Ahmad, Mansourizadeh, & Ai, 2012) claim copying-pasting, word-switching, taking idea, and expressing similar characteristics are subjected to plagiarism. Walker in (Kier, 2014) believe having 5-9 similarities is pointed to plagiarism. In addition, according to Walker, changing with the synonym, reversing a sentence to its opposite, either adding or deleting words from the original one without paraphrasing and citing the authors are also under classification of plagiarism. Likewise, taking idea literally using a quotation mark but no acknowledgement and having same organization writing style without credit also can be a plagiarism guilty (Anney & Mosha, 2015). Anney & Mosha (2015) put one's name on someone else work without authorization is definitely a kind of plagiarism. Besides this, buying paper or having another work and claim it as his or her own work can be a plagiarism. It can be suspected to plagiarism because it may have almost a whole-similarity with the original one (Witherspoon, Maldonado, & Lacey, 2010). Moreover, cheating, submitting false data and citing unmatched referenced with material cited are claimed by Academic Senate for California Community Colleges & Educational Resources Information Center (U.S.) (Academic Senate for California Community Colleges & Educational Resources Information Center (U.S.), 2007) as plagiarism behavior. In summary, plagiarism is a dishonesty academic behavior by taking either literal or similar characteristics of text, changing it with its synonym or reversing to both passive and active sentence with inappropriate citation or no credits to authors.

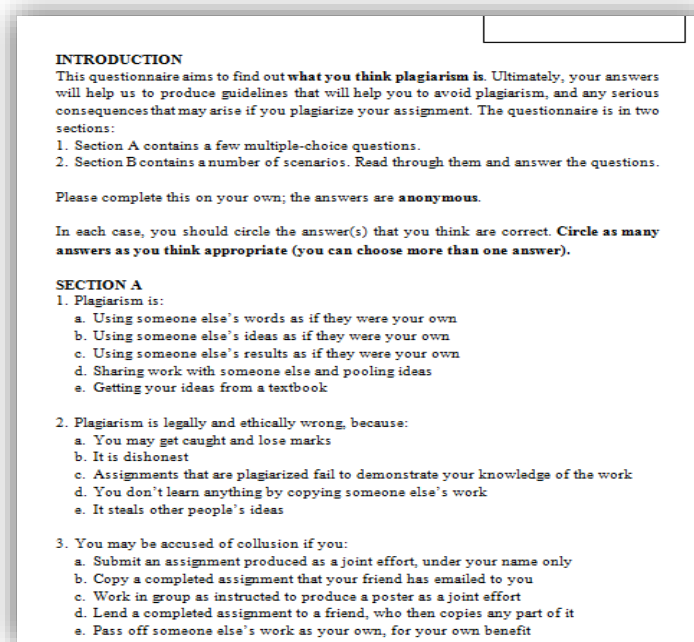
Following plagiarism phenomenon, many researchers conducted studies to develop students' skills avoiding plagiarism. Vardi (2012) examines the prevalence of plagiarism and the development of citation skills in student writing when the teaching focuses instead on developing critical writing abilities through the skillful selection, use and acknowledgement of sources. Developing students' literacy to construct appropriate paraphrase is also important to do (Voelker, Love, & Pentina, 2012). Not only students, but also strong punishments from the institution and best approaches from lecturers are significant for preventing plagiarism (Marshall, Taylor, Hothersall, & Pérez-Martín, 2011). No many studies have been conducted in Indonesia to describe how students' perceive plagiarism. Therefore, the study describes what university-students believe about plagiarism in a private university in Indonesia in the following research questions:

1. How do students perceive plagiarism?

2. How are students' responses towards plagiarism cases?

## 2. Methods

The study is done qualitatively by using semi-open questionnaire to gain the data. Thirty-five students of a private university in Ponorogo, Indonesia are purposively taken from seven study programs as sample of the study. They are mix-gender and in 21-22 ages. They have taken academic writing course subject and have been given a general stadium of literacy and journal citation from Universitas Muhammadiyah Ponorogo library. Data collection is done in 2 weeks. The data is analyzed by using semi-open questionnaire developed by (Dawson, Overfield, Dawson, & Overfield, 2006). The questionnaire consists of two sections. First section examines how students perceive plagiarism. It I described in three questions. The following figure is the first section of the questionnaire.



**INTRODUCTION**  
This questionnaire aims to find out what you think plagiarism is. Ultimately, your answers will help us to produce guidelines that will help you to avoid plagiarism, and any serious consequences that may arise if you plagiarize your assignment. The questionnaire is in two sections:  
1. Section A contains a few multiple-choice questions.  
2. Section B contains a number of scenarios. Read through them and answer the questions.

Please complete this on your own; the answers are anonymous.

In each case, you should circle the answer(s) that you think are correct. Circle as many answers as you think appropriate (you can choose more than one answer).

**SECTION A**

1. Plagiarism is:

- Using someone else's words as if they were your own
- Using someone else's ideas as if they were your own
- Using someone else's results as if they were your own
- Sharing work with someone else and pooling ideas
- Getting your ideas from a textbook

2. Plagiarism is legally and ethically wrong, because:

- You may get caught and lose marks
- It is dishonest
- Assignments that are plagiarized fail to demonstrate your knowledge of the work
- You don't learn anything by copying someone else's work
- It steals other people's ideas

3. You may be accused of collusion if you:

- Submit an assignment produced as a joint effort, under your name only
- Copy a completed assignment that your friend has emailed to you
- Work in group as instructed to produce a poster as a joint effort
- Lend a completed assignment to a friend, who then copies any part of it
- Pass off someone else's work as your own, for your own benefit

**Figure 1:** Section a of Semi-Open Questionnaire

The next section is about how students respond towards plagiarism case scenarios. However, in this study we adapt the situation of case scenarios to fit with students' competency. We change the cases into the simpler ones. We adapt case scenarios from studies conducted by Mukundan, (Mukundan, 2014) and Jones, (Jones, 2014). Figure 2 describes the sample of case scenarios in section B. There are six case scenarios in this questionnaire. The questionnaire is

written in six pages. The participants only write their faculty in a text box given in the questionnaire. We give an hour for them to fill the questionnaire.

**SECTION B**

**1. Case Scenario 1: Using Information from Textbook**

The following paragraph is taken from 'Why We Must Reeducate Teachers on the Way We Teach Writing' by (Mukundan, 2014).

*'Among the four main language skills, second and foreign language learners alike tend to consider writing as a highly demanding task. Writing is a goal-oriented task the effective mastery of which is dependent upon an appropriate combination of affective, cognitive, metacognitive, social, and physical conditions. It seems to be a more sophisticated skill in comparison with the other three main language skills. With the complexity of the skill in mind, strategic management of all the resources involved seems to be inevitable in order for the language learner to write effectively, efficiently, and without an impediment'.*

There were three students make an essay based on the above paragraph. The following paragraphs were written by those three students; student A, B, and C.

**Student A:** Based on second and foreign language learners' point of view, it is stated that writing is a highly demanding task. It needs a combination of some conditions such as affective, cognitive, metacognitive, social and physical conditions. Comparing with other three main language skills, writing is more challenging and it is necessary to have strategic management of all the resources to produce an effective and efficient essay without any struggle.

**Student B:** Mukundan (2014) stated that writing is more difficult than other English skills because it depends on the combination of affective, cognitive, metacognitive, social, and physical conditions. To have an effective and efficient writing without an impediment, one should have a strategic management of all the resources. These are the perspectives from second and foreign language learners.

Activate Window

**Figure 2: Case Scenario 1 in Section B**

**3. Case scenario 3: Copying from the internet**

Students were asked to submit an essay entitled 'Methods of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)'. All the essays were subjected to electronic detection of plagiarism, based on detection of key phrases. The following incidents of plagiarism were detected:

**Student G:**

The essay was found to be downloaded entirely from a single website that was not referenced. The student had listed 12 other references including books, journals, and internet sources.

**Student H:**

This essay was found to be downloaded entirely from 3 internet sources all of which were referenced.

**Student I:**

This essay listed 12 references from books, journals, and internet sources. Electronic detection of plagiarism revealed that the internet sources listed had been used appropriately.

**Figure 3: Case Scenario 2 in Section B**

**3. Case scenario 3: Copying from the internet**

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**Student H:**

This essay was found to be downloaded entirely from 3 internet sources all of which were referenced.

**Student I:**

This essay listed 12 references from books, journals, and internet sources. Electronic detection of plagiarism revealed that the internet sources listed had been used appropriately.

**Figure 4: Case Scenario 3 in Section B**

**4. Case scenario 4: Lending work to another student**

*The deadline for submitting a report of teaching English for Young Learner practical program is Monday 9<sup>th</sup> May. You have completed your report by the 7<sup>th</sup>. Your friend, who partnered you in practical program, calls round on Sunday evening- he has just remembered the deadline and is panicking because he has lost the results. You agree to lend him your report. Without your knowing, your friend copies the whole report and hands it in the following day. The lecturer notices that the two pieces of work are identical; he speaks to both of you about it. Your friend denies copying your work.*

**Questions:** Please circle any statements which you think are correct

- Your friend is guilty of plagiarism
- You are guilty of plagiarism
- Copying the work was reasonable, since you had both worked together in practical program
- Your friend will be subjected to a disciplinary procedure
- You will be subjected to a disciplinary procedure

**5. Case scenario 5: Referencing figures**

Student J has produced an essay of current issues in English language teaching. She has read the appropriate literature and written the essay, giving references to the literature where it is necessary. She has obtained a picture, with written title and legend from an internet website and has downloaded it entirely into her essay.

**Question:** In which of the following cases would this student be guilty of plagiarism?

- She has cited the web reference in the reference list at the end of the essay
- She has cited the web reference on the figure itself and in the reference list
- She has cited the web reference in both pieces and has re-written the legend
- She has made no reference to where she obtained the figure

**6. Case scenario 6: Preparing examination answers with another student**

A group of students have been given an essay entitled, 'The 2013 English Curriculum: The Paradigm, Interpretation, and Implementation' written by Helena Augustian. They have been told to study their essay, and that they will write the essay under examination conditions during a lecture period. Two students, K and L, have decided to work together to study different aspects of the subject. They get together to share what they have found. They then sit down and write an essay together which they memorize. The essays that they

**Figure 5: Case Scenario 4, 5, 6 in Section B**

### 3. Discussion

The results are based on open-ended and case scenarios questionnaire. From section A data recapitulation, it can be seen that students believe that plagiarism is claiming other's work as their own. Plagiarism is also perceived as illegal and ethically wrong in academic environment. One may be accused of collusion if one passes others' work for personal benefits. These results, what students believe about plagiarism have in line with the theories of plagiarism that plagiarism is a dishonesty academic behavior (Ahmad et al., 2012; Kier, 2014; Park, 2003; Vie, 2013). The following is data recapitulation from questionnaire result.

5	<b>Section A</b>			
6	A/Q	1	2	3
7	A	25	18	8
8	B	15	20	8
9	C	21	4	6
10	D	7	7	7
11	E	4	18	22
12				

**Figure 6:** Section a Data Recapitulation

In section B, the students are given six case scenarios of suspected plagiarism. These scenarios are closely related to students' daily tasks and academic activities. From these cases, it is expected to know how the students act or respond towards plagiarism. First case is how to use information from textbook. There are 32 answers highly signify that student [A] in case [1], according to respondents, is suspected doing plagiarism. Various reasons are given such as no resources and no author or publication year. This brings us to the conclusion that the students have realized how citation, when using information from textbook, should be referenced appropriately to avoid plagiarism (Li, 2013).

12			
13	<b>Section B</b>		
14	Case 1	YES	NO
15	student A	32	3
16	student B	7	3
17	student C		3
18			

**Figure 7:** Section B Data Recapitulation: Case Scenario 1

REASON							
no resources (23), no author (3), no author and year of publication (3), stating same words (7), each of them is different (3)							
each of them is different (3)							
each of them is different (3), too many similar words, no citation (2), feeling (1)							

**Figure 8:** *Students' Reasons in Case Scenario 1*

Second scenario case discusses how to paraphrase accurately from a textbook. It is significantly proved, based on questionnaire result case [2], student [D] is chosen as the example of plagiarism among student [E] and student [F]. Having no resources is the most given-reason. Other reasons are about words similarity and feeling. It is given additional evidence that the students understand that acknowledging resources is highly important to prevent plagiarism. However, they need to identify that plagiarism also can be detected by word similarity. Therefore, they should learn much how to differentiate between paraphrase and summary. The result is in line with Shi (Shi, 2012) that the students find paraphrasing is quite complex since they have lack of competency in understanding and paraphrasing texts.

	Case 2	YES	NO
19			
20	student D	32	3
21	student E	5	3
22	student F		3

**Figure 9:** *Section B Data Recapitulation: Case Scenario 2*

REASON							
no resources (29), each of them is different (3), it is similar, no citation (2), feeling (1)							
each of them is different (3), the words are similar (5)							
each of them is different (3)							

**Figure 10:** *Students Reason in Case Scenario 2*

Third scenario case is about copying from the internet. As discussed in the early introduction that copying from internet is a well-known fact among students. In this case



scenario, it is indicated, based on 18 answers, student [G] is found to be guilty of plagiarism since he did not reference a website where he cited information. In addition, 14 answers subject student [H] to be an example of plagiarism. This shows downloading entirely should not be done to avoid plagiarism, although the resources are referenced. However, question [3] in case [3], most students have no idea of listing sources appropriately. They did not realize of cite and paraphrase the information to prevent plagiarism.

24	Case 3.1	YES	NO
25	student G	18	10
26	student H	14	10
27	student I	3	10
28			

**Figure 11: Section B Data Recapitulation: Case Scenario 3**

STUDENT G			
not referenced (14), write 12 references (2), has cited references (6),			
each of them is different (3), not appropriate (1), it is downloaded entirely (3), no idea (1)			

**Figure 12: Reasons Why Students Choose Student G**

STUDENT H			
no references (4), some are not referenced (1), plagiarize from the internet (1),			
has cited references (6), each of them is different (3), not appropriate (1), it is downloaded entirely (6), no idea (1), feeling (1)			

**Figure 13: Reasons Why Students Choose Student H**

STUDENT I			
essay has been used from internet sources (1), essay has been used appropriately (2)			
has cited references (6), each of them is different (3), no idea (1)			

**Figure 14: Reasons Why Students Choose Student I**

<b>CASE 3.3</b>							
used appropriately (6), no idea (13), blank (7), copied fully in her essay (1),							
the words of essay was same from the internet (2), put reference (5)							

**Figure 15:** Section B Data Recapitulation: Case Scenario 3.3

Another students' academic behavior is lending work to another student. Given case scenario [4] of borrowing one's work and copying it, the students highly notice that plagiarism can be resulted from this situation. This case describes a deadly implication of forgetting homework. They sometimes only submit what material they have lent without further thinking. There are 27 answers think second party is guilty of plagiarism since he denies copying work he has lent. In addition, this situation can subject both parties in to disciplinary measures.

Case scenario [5] describes a situation where student [J] makes no reference where she obtains the figures from an internet website. It is usually found students insert pictures or figures from the internet without citing the sources where they download those pictures. In fact, based on 26 responses of case scenario [5], students realize that making no reference to figures from internet is categorized as plagiarism. In line with this result, interview result of question [4] adds that students are not seriously recognizing how important citing references of any matter of information from websites. This result is also similar as a study of how Canadian students understand plagiarism by Kier (Kier, 2014). Nevertheless, it is acceptable to put evidences such as figures or legends from internet as long as it puts the original authors as an acknowledgment for their masterpieces.

The last case scenario comes to how the students prepare examination answers with another student. In this illustration, plagiarism is found when two students have identical essay during examination. As many as 13 responses claim that plagiarism occurred where two parties in the case memorize the essay and do not understand the main point. Therefore, the essay results become identical. Comparing to opinion [d], 12 responses state that writing essay together become the reason why plagiarism prevailed. They may have a tendency to have the same idea unconsciously since they work on essay together. On balance, the students have expected that memorizing and working on essay together may result to plagiarism. Supported by interview result of question [4], students are not confident with their capability to write. They are looking

for ideas so that they decide to work together. This result is in accordance with a study of students' source misuse in language classrooms by Fazel & Kowkabi (Fazel & Kowkabi, 2013). The study has indicated that students have lack of confidence since they have less socialization and supports to build their capacity in academic writing.

35							
36		A	B	C	D	E	BLANK
37	Case 4	27	4	3	10	4	1
38	Case 5	4	3	2	26		1
39	Case 6	4	4	12	13	8	
40							

Figure 16: Section B Data Recapitulation: Case Scenario 4, 5, and 6

#### 4. Conclusions

Section A consists of three questions related to plagiarism definition, the reasons why plagiarism is wrong, and why someone is accused of plagiarism. For plagiarism context, students believe that plagiarism is *[a] using someone else's words as if they were your own*. For plagiarism reasons, students believe that plagiarism is legally and ethically wrong because *[b] it is dishonest*. Moreover, they believe one may be accused of collusion if he or she *[c] passes off someone else's work as his or hers own, for personal benefit*.

In section B, case scenario 1, Student A's act is believed by 32 respondents as example of plagiarism. Having no resources is the most reason-chosen for this case. It can be concluded that students have realized that paraphrasing idea from someone else needs citing resources, or if it is not, thus it is claimed as plagiarism. In case scenario 2, Student D's written language is circled by 32 respondents as example of plagiarism. In addition, 29 respondents feel that no resources are the reason why plagiarism of student D occurs. From this scenario, it supports the result of case scenario 1 that students can identify how and why plagiarism exists. Meanwhile, in case scenario 3, student G is also suspected as plagiarism because it is not referenced. However, based on question 3.3, 13 respondents have no idea of what is meant by *used appropriately* done by student I in case scenario 3. Other cases, 27 students believe that lending work to another student and copying the whole without citing references is a kind of plagiarism. Moreover, in case scenario 5, 26 students see that having no citation for downloading figures from internet as a

guilty of plagiarism. In the last case scenario, students think that memorizing the essay resulted to identical sentences and phrases is also the reason why plagiarism happens.

In the discussion section, it is clearly showed that the results of the recent study are in line with the previous research findings (Ahmad et al., 2012; Fazel & Kowkabi, 2013; Hussin & Ismail, 2013; Kier, 2014; Park, 2003; Shahabuddin, 2009). The results of the study also profoundly present a deeper outcome from a previous study conducted by the researcher (Nimasari, 2018). Nimasari (2018) studied 15 participants from a study program in the same setting of the recent research. Larger population has been taken and it has given homogeneous implication.

Finding some results, the study draws a conclusion. Overall, it can be concluded that students believe that plagiarism is viewed by the students as an academic dishonesty. Based on case scenario results, they do realize why and how plagiarism occurs, such as not referring and writing identical or similar phrases. The students also see plagiarism can be avoided by citing the references but they having less understanding of how citing references appropriately.

Due to the nature of research question, this study focused on qualitative methodology by using open-ended questionnaire. The investigation conducted in this research did not provide statistically significant results. Although the results of the study showed a rigorous and comprehensive perception of the research subjects, in addition, the results are limited by the size of study population. It is possible to take a larger population size from different institution or level of education and utilize a quantitative research method in order to obtain full-scale facts and information towards plagiarism among the university students.

Further study needs to analyze why plagiarism is still having its popularity while what students believe about plagiarism are in line with the theories of plagiarism. It is also possible to examine other factors, apart from the students' perception about plagiarism, that may describe types of students' plagiarism occurred and best practices to raise students' awareness towards plagiarism. Another research in relation to gender and attitude in plagiarism could also compare the different academic misconduct attitudes between women and men in a different context of education and pedagogical solution to answer these issues.

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