Why Plagiarism Is A Serious Offense In Academics?

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The word Plagiarism is derived from the Latin word *Plagiarus,* which refers to the word “kidnapper.” The act of plagiarizing in the academic field is defined as “the act of taking the writings of another person and passing them off as one’s own” (Encyclopedia Britannica). It is considered a serious ethical offence in the academic field because the use of others’ intellectual property without recognition and acceptance of deriving the original work or idea from an existing source is an act of forgery and fraud. The act of paraphrasing others’ published or unpublished work without proper citations is also an act of piracy. It is also against copyright law from an academic point of view. When an individual steals someone else’s work, whether it is published or unpublished, and passes these words off as their own, the individual (student) essentially counterfeits the stolen words to defraud the instructor. In all of these instances, plagiarism is an act of piracy because it tries to appropriate the value of the original work for the thief (one who plagiarizes) without putting in the hard work. Thus, the act of plagiarism is nothing but an act of theft because writers commit it just for a much more valuable grade in their respective subjects, which subsequently devalues the original work.

Moreover, copying in the modern era is seen as stealing from the real owner of his authorship as an individual endeavour. Today, academic institutions attempt to devise the rule of “prohibition against plagiarism.” This initiative is to emphasize the significance of being original in the academic field. Failing to follow this rule in the academic arena is essentially the act of stealing and forgery. The reason is that the writer is using someone else’s work without crediting the real author to get something of great value, which is academic credit, which is a fraud in itself. In other words, the owner of the work should be credited for originating personal viewpoints. As Mignon Fogarty in her podcast (2017) expresses her viewpoint regarding the act of plagiarism as an academic offense “Not including citations is a quick route to plagiarism.” Therefore, the writers needed to give credit for the unique ideas that they borrowed by referring to the individual and the texts from which the writers learned those ideas. Simply put, plagiarism is a kind of deception among future policymakers, i.e. students. The act of plagiarizing or copying is a major academic offence because it is a hurdle in the field of academic development and growth as it reduces and restricts the opportunity for uniqueness.

Question no. 02: What is something that you did

not know about plagiarism that you have now learned, and why does it matter?

One of the most important aspects of plagiarism that I did not know about before is paraphrasing, where students unwarily attempt to cross the border of integrity in the academic field. Paraphrasing without crediting the real author of the work is the most common type of plagiarism that students neglect while writing their academic research papers. The students paraphrase facts and figures from outside research sources without attribution. Therefore, they take the unethical shortcut of copying and pasting others' words with certain changes in their writing. It becomes an act of forgery or theft when a writer, without explaining the publication and author of the source in reference or works cited section, copies another author's personal and unique viewpoints. Students often commit to paraphrasing unknowingly or unintentionally and sometimes intentionally while deriving sources for their research work from online publications, journals, and libraries. In a nutshell, paraphrasing involves the act of changing some words in the document and leaving the rest of the original work intact without citing the verbatim phrase of the original writer. The difference between Plagiarism and Paraphrasing is that plagiarism, in terms of copying, is a word-to-word copy of the original text, whereas paraphrasing is when a student makes significant changes that lie in the closeness of the copied text to the original one.

What I have inferred about plagiarism is that the legitimate idea to incorporate others' words and ideas into our written work is through citation or by quoting someone's "verbatim" in order "to acknowledge the people" whose words and ideas have been incorporated into our written document (Fogarty, 2017). Frankly, I considered paraphrasing legitimate as I used to rewrite the ideas of other authors in my writing without crediting the author and publication. However, now I have the idea of academic integrity that rewriting a text that is so close to the original wording without citing the author is a misleading attempt. Doing it intentionally compromises the honesty and ethics of the individual who does that in the academic field and should be penalized. The one thing that should be kept in mind while paraphrasing is that it is often more desirable, and nothing is wrong if a writer paraphrases someone else's research content. However, the problem lies in his not citing the idea from the original author of the work and pretending to be the originator of that existing idea, which is the practice of plagiarism. In conclusion, a writer should paraphrase the original wording to express the meaning of something written by the original author by using different words and phrases and acknowledging that the idea comes from a specific source in order to achieve greater clarity.

Question no. 03: What do you think is an appropriate punishment for plagiarism and why?

Plagiarism around the world is considered a civil law violation, and the most common punishment for plagiarizing already existing written work is either a reduced mark or a zero mark on the assignment.

It is a violation of essential intellectual property rights and discourages the learning ability and own thinking of an individual who relies on other people's work without any effort, so it is considered a crime. Students may plagiarize their assignments for many reasons, ranging from a lack of understanding of the research topic to a lack of information about how to cite a specific source according to the set rules. However, whatever the reasons may be, plagiarism, by all means, is essentially a violation of the basic principles of academic discourse. Many teachers universally think that the academic dishonesty of plagiarism is most often treated as a soft crime and, therefore, might not undergo any punishments (Song-Turner, 2008). This behaviour reinforces stealing other people's work and claiming it as their own, which should be discouraged in any academic or research environment. Severe punishments such as banning the degree of the guilty student, heavy fines, and imprisonment should be considered on account of plagiarism, in my opinion.

Minimally, plagiarized written work receives a grade of zero, and students are often instructed to submit their assignments again, reducing their fear of punishment for violating academic integrity. So, in my opinion, if a student is found guilty of plagiarism, he must be punished with heavy academic fines of anywhere between $100 to $10,000 and even more. In some severe cases, such as research work publications where plagiarism must be considered a misdemeanour, a guilty student should be subjected to imprisonment for at least one year in jail. It is not only the responsibility of one university to implement such punishments but also the combined responsibility of the institution, teaching staff, management, instructors, and students to create a healthy academic culture that makes plagiarism practice unacceptable. To prevent plagiarism and inappropriate copying of existing work, educational institutions should promote educative developmental processes through teaching ethics and skills to prevent unethical "plagiarized accidents" and intellectual dishonesty (Song-Turner, 2008).

Works Cited

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