

# Plagiarism In Academic Research: Causes, Consequences, And Preventive Strategies

## Abstract

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Plagiarism has become a serious threat to academic integrity nowadays, as in the digital age, where users' easy access to online information increases the risk of copying and presenting others' intellectual work as one's own. This paper explores the meaning, historical background, types, causes, consequences, and preventive strategies of plagiarism in higher education. It gives special attention to both intentional and unintentional plagiarism constitutes to research misconduct. The study discusses major forms such as direct, mosaic, self-plagiarism, outsourced, and secondary source plagiarism, highlighting their ethical implications. It also examines the University Grants Commission (UGC) Regulations, 2018, which establish a structured framework and categorize penalties if misconduct is found on the basis of similarity levels. Key causes include lack of awareness, academic pressure, poor research skills, technological misuse, fear of failure, and institutional gaps. The paper concludes that promoting ethical practices and originality is essential for sustaining research credibility.

**keywords** Plagiarism, Research Ethics, Academic Integrity, Research Misconduct, Higher Education

## 1. Introduction

Plagiarism becomes very common in the digital era, due to easy access to online platform sources of information such as data, ideas and expressions of others' work, which comes under the Intellectual Property Rights Act, where credit is not given to that person's work or without acknowledging their original work, we come under plagiarism conduct. The University Grant Commission (UGC) introduced rules and regulations in 2018. These regulations apply to all higher-level academic institutions for students, teachers, researchers and staff in India.

Researches and researchers' aim is to generate new ideas and knowledge in the development of society by introducing their new ideas instead of stealing other researchers' works under their name, just replacing a few words and structuring others' work. Using data, images, or tables submitted by another person's project or thesis without acknowledging them is unethical and unjustified to the original work. Plagiarism can be intentional or unintentional; in both cases, it will be considered unethical and unacceptable.

In modern education systems, students and researchers often face academic performance pressure, submission deadlines, and their guides' expectations. These mind pressures and insufficient understanding of citation practices lead many researchers to commit plagiarism knowingly or unknowingly. Therefore, understanding the nature, causes, and significance of plagiarism is essential for strong construction of an ethical research culture.

## 2. Meaning and Definition of Plagiarism

41 **Meaning**  
42 Plagiarism is derived from the Latin word *plagiarius*, meaning “kidnapper” or “abductor”.  
43 In academic terms, plagiarism refers to the act of presenting another person’s ideas, work, or  
44 expressions as one’s own idea without proper disclosure of first-person work. It includes  
45 copying text from books, articles, or the internet sources, paraphrasing without citation,  
46 replacing few words and keeping the same structure, reusing one’s own previously published  
47 work without acknowledgment.

## 48 **Definitions**

### 49 **Wilson Mizner**

50 “If you steal from one author it’s plagiarism if you steal from many it’s research”

### 51 **Fishman, T.**

52 “Plagiarism occurs when someone uses the ideas, information, or language of another  
53 without proper acknowledgment.”

### 54 **Roig, M.**

55 “Plagiarism is the appropriation of another person’s ideas, processes, results, or words  
56 without giving appropriate credit.”

## 57 **3. Historical Background of Plagiarism**

58 The word *plagiarism* comes from the Latin word “**plagiarius**”, meaning *kidnapper* or *thief*.  
59 The first recorded case of plagiarism dates back to **80 AD**, when Roman poet **Martial**  
60 accused **Fidentinus** of copying his work.

### 61 **A. Historical Development**

- 62 • Middle Ages: Borrowing ideas was common
- 63
- 64 • Renaissance: Originality gained importance
- 65
- 66 • 1601: Ben Jonson used the term plagiarist
- 67
- 68 • 18th Century: Copyright laws emerged
- 69
- 70 • Modern Era: Strict academic and legal controls
- 71

### 72 **B. Famous Plagiarism Allegations Must Know**

#### 73 a) **Fidentinus**

74 Fidentinus was accused by the Roman poet Martial in the 1st century AD, who  
75 publicly recited Martial’s poems as his poem. This is the first recorded case in literary  
76 history of plagiarism.

#### 77 b) **Leonardo da Vinci**

78 Leonardo da Vinci was accused of borrowing ideas and designs from earlier scholars  
79 and engineers. However, many historians believe that this reflects the common  
80 practice of knowledge sharing during the Renaissance period, rather than an  
81 intentional act of plagiarism.

- 82 c) **William Shakespeare**  
83 Shakespeare was frequently accused of borrowing plots, themes, and characters from  
84 earlier works such as Holinshed's Chronicles and classical sources. However, scholars  
85 generally regard this borrowing as a creative adaptation, which was a common and  
86 accepted literary practice during their time.
- 87 d) **James Platt, Jr.**  
88 James Platt Jr. faced accusations of plagiarism in their academic research. Later,  
89 remarkable similarities were found between his work and previous scholars' texts,  
90 which raised notable, serious concerns about academic misconduct.
- 91 e) **Rudyard Kipling**  
92 Rudyard Kipling accusations of plagiarism for his short story entitled "The Village  
93 That Voted the Earth Was Flat," as it was very close to another writer's work, and  
94 further, the matter was later resolved through legal means as plagiarism.
- 95 f) **Helen Keller.**  
96 Helen Keller when she was 11 years old, wrote a short story named "The Frost King,"  
97 about fairies painting autumn leaves. This was similar to Margaret Canby's story  
98 entitled "The Frost Fairies", leading to accusations of plagiarism against Helen Keller,  
99 which scarred Keller and temporarily damaged her reputation. She later mentions that  
100 such similarity was caused by her unconscious mind's memory, it's just an influence,  
101 not thieving.
- 102 g) **Janet Dailey**  
103 Janet Dailey admitted to copying passages from romance novels written by Nora  
104 Roberts. She later gave a public apology, and the incident is remarkably cited as clear  
105 plagiarism.
- 106 h) **Cristiane Serruya**  
107 Cristiane Serruya, a Brazilian author, was accused of plagiarizing. Several content she  
108 copying from other romance writers. Later on, investigations revealed extensive  
109 copying, making it a well-known example of plagiarism in the modern digital age.  
110 These cases show that plagiarism accusations can occur even unintentionally.

#### 111 **4. Types Of Plagiarism**

112  
113 **1. Direct Plagiarism** Direct plagiarism involves copying someone else's work word-for-word  
114 and presenting it as their own work without citation. It is the most common form and can be  
115 easily detectable by teachers and plagiarism tools.

116  
117 **2. Hired Plagiarism** Hired plagiarism occurs when a person pays someone else to write on  
118 their behalf to their thesis, paper, or assignment. Submitting such paid work tagging own  
119 name on it is unethical and a serious academic offense.

120  
121 **3. Borrowed Plagiarism** Borrowed plagiarism happens when work is taken from seniors,  
122 friends, or previous students. Using such earlier academic work without formal credit is  
123 considered plagiarism, even if permission was informal.

124  
125 **4. Self-Plagiarism** Self-plagiarism means reusing your own previously published or  
126 submitted work without proper citation. It's like misrepresents old own work as new and  
127 violates academic and copyright rules.

128  
129 **5. Mosaic (Patchwork) Plagiarism** Mosaic plagiarism involves mixing copied phrases with  
130 original writing without proper citation. Just simply changing and replacing words or

131 structure does not make the work original.

132

133 **6. Collaboration Plagiarism** This type of plagiarism involves collaborating on a project  
134 work but acting like it was done alone by individual. A group of students may effort together  
135 to work on same research for the project and then each write his/her own essay based on the  
136 research, because the work is not entirely one's original and that of the student claiming it,  
137 this is plagiarism.

138

139 **7. Contributing Author Plagiarism.** Similarly, not giving credit to an author or editor who  
140 contributes to the work is considered plagiarism. Ignoring significant contributions is a form  
141 of intellectual theft.

142

143 **8. Aggregated Plagiarism:** An essay or paper doesn't have to be a word-for-word copy of  
144 other researchers' work considered plagiarism. Same rheme-based ideas and the same source  
145 usage are considered under aggregated plagiarism. Rewriting language alone does not make  
146 the content original.

147

148 **9. Outline Plagiarism** Outline Plagiarism refers to using the same structure with new  
149 information, which is considered a form of plagiarism. Also known as "retweet plagiarism," it  
150 involves copying the outline of another person's paper in one's own research. When the thesis  
151 statement and the basic points of each paragraph remain the same, this lack of originality  
152 makes the work plagiarized.

153

154 **10. Bibliography Plagiarism** Bibliography plagiarism means copying references or research  
155 done by someone else's work. Including unused or borrowed sources in their research is also  
156 considered unethical. Even if the written content and thesis of the paper are original, using  
157 another author's bibliography means the researcher's effort is not genuine.

158

159 **11. Secondary Source Plagiarism:** This occurs when secondary sources are used but not  
160 cited properly by the author. The author mentions only primary sources while hiding  
161 secondary ones is misleading. For example, a researcher might correctly cite an interview that  
162 the author conducted with early settlers in their community. But if the author uses  
163 information also from old newspaper articles without listing or citing them as sources of  
164 information, it becomes plagiarism.

165

166 **12. Outsourcing** Outsourcing refers to hiring friends, essay mills, or writers to complete  
167 academic work. Submitting outsourced work as personal effort is academic misconduct.

168

169 **13. Accidental Plagiarism** Accidental plagiarism happens due to poor note-taking or a lack  
170 of citation knowledge. Though unintentional, it still violates academic integrity.

171

172 **14. Self-Plagiarism (Important)** Self-plagiarism is seriously harmful to present own old  
173 work as new. It misleads readers. And such an author stops receiving research grants/funding,  
174 even if they do not acknowledge their own old work. Most publishers prohibit such work  
175 under the same subject publication in their journals due to copyright issues, but the author is  
176 not prohibited. Such Self-plagiarism practice goes to the limit and is unfair to new  
177 researchers who are trying to establish themselves in academic research.

## 178 **5. Causes of Plagiarism**

179 Plagiarism caused by several interconnected factors:

180

181 **1. Lack of Awareness** Many students commit plagiarism because of a lack of knowledge of  
182 proper citation of sources, which they use in their research, such as the use of other authors'  
183 paraphrases, synthesizing information, or correctly citing sources of their own, involves  
184 acknowledgment of prior work, they may unintentionally commit plagiarism.

185

186 **2. Academic Pressure** Many students and researchers plagiarise because of tight paper  
187 submission deadlines, pressure to publish and the competitive environment of academia,  
188 leading them to take shortcuts rather than encourage themselves to write original research  
189 using their own ideas and analysis of data, and other sources as supporting sources only.  
190 Competition leads researchers to copy-paste, which is unethical and goes under plagiarism.

191

192 **3. Poor Research Skills** A common cause is insufficient ability or laziness towards research,  
193 use of paraphrases, integration of information, or incorrectly citing sources. Resulting in  
194 accidental or intentional plagiarism, they think those who catch or notice their copy-paste.  
195 And sometimes there is a fixed mindset of a researcher that creates confusion, regret,  
196 exhaustion due to restless writing and fear of failure. And also inadequate training in  
197 research methodology also increases plagiarism risks.

198

199 **4. Technological Influence:** Easy access to online resources encourages researchers to copy-  
200 paste content in their research. The vast availability of information on the internet makes it  
201 easier to copy material from multiple open sources, sometimes without proper  
202 acknowledgements. Researchers should be aware of the purpose and nature of different  
203 sources with proper citation, such as newspaper articles, specialized publications, websites,  
204 and textbooks under reference in their work. They must also evaluate and analyse the  
205 reliability, credibility, and intended audience while using these sources in their research. And  
206 a check is whether these sources provide high-quality information to readers? Is the  
207 information useful, accurate, and aligned with the basic purpose of the research?

208

209 **5. Fear of failure.** It is a significant factor contributing to plagiarism. Students who lack  
210 confidence while writing research work on their abilities may experience a big fear of  
211 plagiarism to avoid poor academic performance. The basic causes often include lack of  
212 knowledge, limited experience, fear, and uncertainty about results. When individuals doubt  
213 the originality or quality of their own ideas, they may borrow heavily from others to reduce  
214 perceived risk. Therefore, building confidence and academic skills is essential to prevent such  
215 misconduct.

216

217 **6. Institutional Gaps** Many students come from educational backgrounds where proper  
218 citation practices, academic writing skills, and research ethics are not adequately emphasized.  
219 This absence of structured guidance, effective monitoring mechanisms, and awareness  
220 programs further aggravates the unethical academic behaviour of researchers. Thus,  
221 institutions must provide systematic training in research methodology, referencing styles, and  
222 ethical scholarship to the students. Where students should learn when to cite, how to cite, and  
223 why citation is essential in maintaining transparency, credibility, and intellectual honesty in  
224 academic research.

## 225 **6. Consequences of Plagiarism under UGC Regulations**

226

227 Plagiarism is considered a serious form of research misconduct under UGC (University

228 Grants Commission) regulations. Since it falls under unethical academic practices, it attracts  
229 strict disciplinary action. The consequences include:

2301. **Rejection of Academic Work**

231 If plagiarism is detected in researcher's work in their thesis, dissertation, research paper, or  
232 project report, the work may be considered as plagiarism and it will be rejected. The scholar  
233 may be asked to revise their work and resubmit it after removing plagiarized content from  
234 their research.

2352. **Academic Penalties**

236 Depending on the manuscripts submitted by a range of levels (similarity index percentage),  
237 penalties may include:

238a) Deduction of marks

239b) Cancellation of registration

240c) Restriction on submitting a thesis for a specified period

241d) Suspension from the academic program

2423. **Loss of Degree or Withdrawal of Publication**

243 If plagiarism is found in scholars work after the award of a degree or publication of research,  
244 then the university may:

245a) Withdraw the degree

246b) Remove the published paper

247c) Cancel research recognition

2484. **Termination of Employment**

249 In cases involving faculty members or researchers, proven plagiarism can lead to:

250a) Suspension

251b) Termination of employee service

252c) Restriction from supervising students

2535. **Loss of Credibility and Reputation**

254 Plagiarism damages a scholar's academic reputation and also their professional credibility. It  
255 reduces trust in scholars by the research community and may affect researchers' future  
256 funding opportunities from the community.

2576. **Institutional and Legal Action**

258 If plagiarism involves intentional fraud or misuse of funds given by the community to the  
259 researcher, it may attract:

260a) Institutional inquiry

261b) Funding withdrawal

262c) Legal consequences in severe cases

263

264 Table Below Shows Penalty in Percentage for Students Faculty/Researchers for Academic

S.no.	Levels	Percentages	Narration-
1	Level 0	Up to 10%	No penalty
2	Level 1	10^- 40%	The <i>manuscript must be withdrawn.</i>
3	Level 2	40% - 60%	Manuscript withdrawn; increment denied; supervision barred (2 years).
4	Level 3	Above 60%	Manuscript withdrawn; two increments denied; supervision barred (3 years).

265 Research Publications

266

267 **7. Basic Mistakes to Avoid Plagiarism**

268 • Cite while writing avoid copy-paste

269 • Use quotations carefully

270 • Ask permission when required

271 • Credit images and visuals

272 **9. Importance of Ethics of Plagiarism**

273 • Ethical guidelines ensure safety, fairness, and accountability.

274 • Researchers are accountable to society and the public.

- 275 • Ethics protects human rights and animal welfare.
- 276 • Research impacts society at both micro and macro levels.
- 277 • Ethics builds trust, credibility, and integrity in research.

## 278 **8. Objectives of Research Ethics**

279

- 280• To protect the rights and interests of all human participants whether in writing paper or data  
281 collection involved in research whether old or new.
- 282• To ensure that research does not harm individual persons, groups, or society as a whole.
- 283• To evaluate research projects for ethical soundness, including risk management on subjects,  
284 confidentiality and informed to authors before use of data, text, pictures etc with their  
285 consent.
- 286• To promote ethical standards of research & intellectual property use across all disciplines  
287 such as social sciences, health sciences, medicine, journalism, education, and politics.
- 288• To encourage researchers to voluntarily follow ethical principles of plagiarism as part of  
289 professional and academic discipline.
- 290

## 291 **9. Preventive Strategies of Plagiarism**

292 Plagiarism reduces academic integrity and research credibility and also plagiarism  
293 preventing combined efforts from students, researchers, and institutions. The following  
294 strategies are widely recommended, are as follows:

295

### 296 **1. Awareness and Education on Academic Integrity**

297 of knowledge of citation styles and academic writing by organising workshops and  
298 orientation programmes and training this helps students in understanding plagiarism causes  
299 and how to avoid such mistakes

300

### 301 **2. Proper Citation and Referencing**

302 Researchers must acknowledge all sources using standard citation styles in their academia  
303 such as APA, MLA, Chicago, etc., to make sure proper credit goes to original authors.

304

### 305 **3. Use of Plagiarism Detection Software**

306 Researchers must review their work before submitting their manuscripts for publication  
307 should be checked through plagiarism detection tools to identify similarity issues.

308 **Examples:** Grammarly, Turnitin, Copyscape, Quetext, Dupli Checker and Small SEO  
309 Plagiarism Checker, etc

310

### 311 **4. Development of Research and Writing Skills**

312 Students should develop skills in paraphrasing, summarizing, note-taking, and synthesizing  
313 information on their own, which reduces dependency on copying other text. Effective  
314 summarizing demonstrates research understanding of the source material.

### 315 **5. Time Management and Academic Planning**

316 Providing sufficient time for assignments to students and academic mentoring by their  
317 guides reduces pressure of scholars which often leads to plagiarism can be controlled. Many  
318 cases of plagiarism occur due to deadline pressure by proper planning, early research, notes  
319 and drafting of research outline reduce the temptation of copy- paste.

320

### 321 **6. Institutional Policies and Strict Enforcement**

322 Universities need clear and practical anti-plagiarism policies so that students and researchers  
323 understand what is acceptable and what is not. In India, the UGC introduced the *Promotion*  
324 *of Academic Integrity and Prevention of Plagiarism in Higher Educational Institutions*  
325 *Regulations, 2018* to deal with academic misconduct in a systematic way. These rules  
326 explain how similarity will be checked and what kind of penalties will apply at different  
327 levels.

328

### 329 **7. Promoting Research Ethics Culture**

330 Creating a culture of honesty, originality, and ethical scholarship which encourages  
331 responsible research behavior in researchers. In such culture mentors and supervisors play a  
332 crucial role in guiding students.

333

## 334 **10. Discussion**

335 The findings of this study indicate that plagiarism is not just an act of copying data. Images  
336 and text from others, but it is a complex issue influenced by multiple academic,  
337 psychological, and institutional factors faced by researchers. In this digital age, the  
338 availability of vast online resources has made it easy access to researchers to access  
339 information sources, but it has also increased the temptation to copy-paste content without  
340 proper acknowledgment of the original author. Many students and researchers commit  
341 plagiarism due to insufficient knowledge of citation practices they follow in their research, a  
342 lack of training in research methodology and poor paraphrasing skills. Academic pressure and  
343 fear of failure often contribute to unethical plagiarism practices. The demand for publication,  
344 competitive academic environments among scholars, and tight deadlines sometimes push  
345 researchers toward shortcuts in their work. In some cases, plagiarism is intentional, or in the  
346 other hand, it would be by ignorance or accidental errors. However, under academic  
347 regulations, both forms are considered unethical. The UGC (Promotion of Academic Integrity  
348 and Prevention of Plagiarism in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2018, provide a  
349 systematic mechanism to address plagiarism in India. The graded penalty system on students  
350 and faculty/members on the basis of similarity percentage ensures fairness and transparency  
351 in academic work among researchers. These regulations not only punish misconducting  
352 researchers but also aim to promote awareness and preventive measures within institutions.  
353 The study also highlights the importance of developing a strong ethical culture in academic  
354 institutions. Preventive strategies such as awareness programs, use of plagiarism detection  
355 software in research, proper citation practices like APA, MLA, Chicago, etc, academic  
356 mentoring by guides, and research skill development are essential to reduce research  
357 misconduct among scholars. Ultimately, preventing plagiarism is not only about strict  
358 enforcement of penalties on scholars but also about nurturing responsible scholars who value  
359 originality and intellectual honesty in academia.

360

## 361 **11. Conclusion**

362 Plagiarism remains one of the most serious challenges to academic integrity and research  
363 credibility in higher education. In the digital age, easy access to information from open  
364 sources has made it simpler, but it has also increased the responsibility to maintain originality  
365 in own research. Plagiarism arises due to a lack of research methodology awareness,  
366 academic time management pressure, poor research practices, unawareness of citation styles  
367 and writing skills, misuse of technology, and gaps in institutional systems towards plagiarism.  
368 However, regulations alone are not enough to eliminate the problem of theft of the  
369 intellectual property of original authors. A lasting solution requires collective efforts from  
370 students, researchers, faculty members, and institutions to promote a strong culture of ethical  
371 research in their organisation. By increasing awareness, improving research training,

372 encouraging originality in own ideas, creativity through proper note-making and  
373 implementing strict but fair policies can significantly reduce plagiarism among researchers.  
374 Ultimately, academic honesty is the base of foundation of any credible research, and  
375 preserving it is an essential step for the successful progress of education as well as society as  
376 a whole.

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