

Promotion of Academic Integrity and Prevention of Plagiarism in Hei Ugc Regulations 2018 – Implications for Researchers

Arun Ingle

Abstract- UGC released a Notification dated 23rd July, 2018 adopting a set of regulations for promotion of academic integrity and prevention of plagiarism in Higher Educational Institutions. The regulations have been framed with three objectives - to create awareness about responsible conduct of research, thesis, dissertation, promotion of academic integrity and prevention of misconduct including plagiarism in academic writing among student, faculty, researcher and staff, to establish institutional mechanism through education and training to facilitate responsible conduct of research, thesis, dissertation, promotion of academic integrity and deterrence from plagiarism and to develop systems to detect plagiarism and to set up mechanisms to prevent plagiarism and punish a student, faculty, researcher or staff of HEI committing the act of plagiarism. Thus, the focus is on preventing plagiarism. At the same time, regulation 7 of the said notification mention three exclusions from similarity checks, namely, all quoted work reproduced with all necessary permission and/or attribution, all references, bibliography, table of content, preface and acknowledgements and all generic terms, laws, standard symbols and standards equations. This article highlights the need for the researchers to meticulously take care of these three exclusions so that their work is within a reasonable limit of say 10% of similarity index. The article examines these three exclusions in details so as to create a better understanding about the exclusions. A pilot survey was also carried out to test the awareness amongst the academicians about these exclusions and this article presents the results of the survey

Index words –Exclusion, Generic terms, Plagiarism, quoted work, References

I. INTRODUCTION

UGC released a Notification dated 23rd July, 2018 (UGC) [1] adopting a set of regulations for promotion of academic integrity and prevention of plagiarism in Higher Educational Institutions. The regulations have been framed with three objectives - to create awareness about responsible conduct of research, thesis, dissertation, promotion of academic integrity and prevention of misconduct including plagiarism in academic writing among student, faculty, researcher and staff, to establish institutional mechanism through education and training to facilitate responsible conduct of research, thesis, dissertation, promotion of academic integrity and deterrence from plagiarism and to develop systems to detect plagiarism and to set up mechanisms to prevent plagiarism and punish a student, faculty, researcher or staff of HEI committing the act of plagiarism. Thus, the focus is on preventing plagiarism. An important aspect of these regulations is the three exclusions from being considered as similar work.

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These three exclusions are –

- All quoted work reproduced with all necessary permission and/or attribution.
- All references, bibliography, table of content, preface and acknowledgements.
- All generic terms, laws, standard symbols and standards equations.

This article tries to examine these three exclusions in details so as to create a better understanding about the exclusions.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

[2] In her article “Acknowledging, Paraphrasing, and Quoting Sources” has given guidelines for documentation of quotations, information and ideas and common knowledge. The author has expressed a need for reasonable referencing in case of quotations and information and ideas by citing the sources.

Further the author has said that if the researcher has any doubt, the source should be cited. In the case of both general and field-specific common knowledge, if exact words of the reference source are used, quotation marks should be used and credit should be given for the source.

[3] University of Southern California, in its guide “Organizing Your Social Sciences Research Paper: 11. Citing Sources” has stated that whether we summarize, paraphrase, or use direct quotes, if it's not our original idea, the source must be acknowledged.

The possible exception to this rule is information that is considered to be a commonly known fact about which if there is any doubt then the researcher should protect himself or herself from an allegation of plagiarism by providing a supporting citation, or by asking the professor for clarification [4] mentioned in his article “The Value of Originality and Proper Quotation” has quoted the Office of Research Integrity which is a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services-affiliated organization, 26 guidelines for “A guide to ethical writing.” These guidelines state that verbatim quotations require quotation marks and a citation Paraphrase and Summary should present in original authors' original intent and also require a citation.

[5] in his blog post “The Challenge of Repeating Methods While Avoiding Plagiarism” has cited a research study based on inputs from 178 researchers. Their strategy to avoid plagiarism included rewriting the potentially duplicative content in their own (new) words.

It was also found that researchers were much more likely to reuse their own words than someone else's and were also much more likely to attribute the content than not, whether it was verbatim or with rewording.

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When you have used an author's exact words, have you put "quotation marks" around the quotation and named (cited) the original writer? (If you indent your quotation(s), quotation marks are not needed, but the author must still be cited; have you cited your indented quotations?

When you put someone else's thoughts and ideas in your own words, have you still named (cited) the original author(s) ?

When you use someone else's words or work, is it clear where such use starts and where it finishes?

Have you included full references for all borrowed images, tables, graphs, maps, and so on?

Print material: Have you included the page number(s) of print material you have used (especially important with exact quotations)?

Internet material: Have you included both the date on which the material was posted and the date of your last visit to the web page or site?

Internet material: Have you included the URL or the DOI? For each citation in the text, is there a full reference in your list of references (works cited/ bibliography) at the end?

Is the citation a direct link to the first word(s) of the reference?

For each reference in the list of references (works cited/bibliography) at the end, is there a citation in the text?

Do(es) the first word(s) of the reference link directly to the citation as used?

[6] International Baccalaureate (IB)community of Switzerland, 2014, "Effective citing and referencing" has given the following checklist for documentation. Documentation checklist as follow,(International Baccalaureate (IB) community of Switzerland)

Thus authors and institutions have recommended ethical standards for quoting of someone's work in research publications. The guidelines show a level of caution as well as most of them state that whenever the researcher is in doubt, it is better to give a reference. Most of the guidelines have categorically advised the researchers to play it safe by identifying the sources of the materials used.

Is your list of references (works cited/bibliography) in alphabetical order, with the last name of the author first?

Permitted Exclusions as per UGC, is as follow

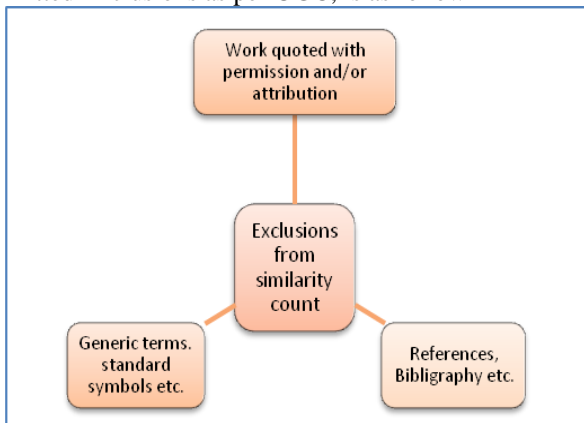


Figure 1 – Three permitted exclusions by UGC from similarity count

All Quoted Work -Practically speaking permissions for quoting existing work are a bit difficult. Hence the guidelines

have stated that as an alternative the quoted work can be attributed. Attribution means clearly identifying the source of the work. Here the researcher needs to clearly mention the name of the author, his or her work, the source material from where the work has been originally stated, its period of publication and other details like name of the publisher, volume of the Journal etc. Borrowing or copying a work without attribution tantamount to plagiarism.

Hence, researchers should try their best to provide a clear and detailed attribution of the quoted work. These days internet and web referencing in the form of blogs, posts etc., has considerably increased. Here the researcher should give the complete web address of the source along with the identification of the authors, if any, and the website that is hosting the material. Further it is a good practice to give the date of posting of the material and that of the access to the website.

References, Bibliography- [7] in her post "Reference List or Bibliography: What's the Difference?" has stated that while a bibliography generally contains all the works cited in a paper, it may also include other works that the author or researcher consulted, even if they are not mentioned in the text. In case of referencing in APA Style, however, each reference cited in text appears in the reference list, and each entry in the reference list is cited in the text. Thus, bibliography is a more broad term and includes the references.

Bibliography is a best way to avoid plagiarism. The entries in both the lists should be arranged in alphabetical order. If available, the photograph of the author can be included in the citation as it makes the citation more human and live.

All Generic Terms

This is another important exclusion from the similarity count. By generic term we mean those words or phrases that are used to describe some general or vague group or class, rather than some specific thing. For example, European Union (EU) is a generic term used to describe a general association of the European Nations. Laws are quoted at times and they will not be counted as similarity items. For example, when a researcher quotes Section 135 of the Companies Act, 2013 in the context of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) the quotation being a law in nature will not be counted as similarity item. Standard symbols like currency symbols, are also an exclusion from the similarity count. However, it is a good practice All Generic Terms

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Common Knowledge

Note in the regulation 7 of the UGC regulations states that it (similarity) shall exclude a common knowledge [8] or coincidental terms, up to fourteen consecutive words. Common knowledge is knowledge that is known by almost everyone, generally with reference to the community in which the term is used. Common knowledge need not relate to one specific subject, e.g., science or history. For example, Indian economy is a developing economy, is a matter of common knowledge. Coincidental terms are terms that happen to be similar by chance. Practically it would be however, difficult to prove that the coincidence has happened.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Pilot Survey-In addition to content analysis to get a feel of the awareness of the UGC Notification and specifically of the three exclusions, a pilot survey was carried in Ahmednagar District. 100 faculty members from various colleges were sent a small questionnaire that had two sections

- i. General Awareness
- ii. Awareness on the exclusions.

Both the sections had 10 questions each. These two sections were preceded by profile information about the participants in the survey. The responses were sought on a five-point Likertscale agree/disagree types of responses. Specimen of the questionnaire is given at the end of the article. While processing the responses a weight of 2 was applied to both the completely types of responses, that is, completely agree and completely disagree responses.

The aim of the study was to assess the awareness level about the UGC Notification and in particular on the clause of exclusions. The null hypotheses were set for both the objectives as “faculty members are well aware about the Notification in general and the exclusion in specific.” T-test was used to compare the sample mean with that of the hypothesized population mean of 50% agreement level.

Reliability test of the survey instrument was carried out and the Cronbach’s Alpha for the entire questionnaire was 0.986. The alpha was also

Results of the responses and the t-tests are summarized below and it is calculated for the two parts separately and it was 0.977 for section I and 0.964 for section II respectively

Table 1 – Summary of responses to the survey questions and testing of the null

Question	Agree %	Question	Agree %
1.1	16%	2.1	19%
1.2	21%	2.2	21%
1.3	19%	2.3	23%
1.4	25%	2.4	24%
1.5	23%	2.5	22%
1.6	22%	2.6	26%
1.7	25%	2.7	24%
1.8	26%	2.8	16%
1.9	27%	2.9	20%
1.10	22%	2.10	25%
Average	23%	Average	22%
Sample SD	1.13398	Sample SD	1.13982
Ho (Hypothesized)	50%	Ho (Hypothesized Population)	50%

Population Mean)		Mean)	
H1 (Sample Mean)	0.23	H1 (Sample Mean)	0.22
n (Sample size)	100	n (Sample size)	100
t-dist value	-2.41	t-dist value	-2.46
p-value	0.008885	p-value	0.007830

IV. DISCUSSIONS

Three of the respondents were of the Director/Principal category, 8 were Professors, 12 were Associate Professors and remaining 77 were Assistant Professors. 32 colleges were from the Engineering stream, 33 were from the Pharmacy stream and the balance 35 was from the Management stream. 53 respondents were male whereas 47 were female. The average awareness level for both the sections of questions on general awareness and awareness on exclusion was 23% and 22% respectively

When this was compared with the hypothesized population mean of 50%, the p-values suggested rejection of the null hypotheses that the faculty members are well-aware of the Notification in general and the exclusion clause in specific.

V. SUGGESTIONS

University should give priority to sponsoring seminars on the awareness of the UGC Notification considering its significance

Colleges should at their level internally sensitize its faculty members through the IQAC cells

Research centers should organize seminars and explain the details of the notifications and its implications.

Faculty members should read and understand the notification and also discuss it with peers for better understanding

VI. CONCLUSION

The survey shows that the awareness level is quite a dismal level. The University, the colleges and the faculty members should work collectively towards increasing the awareness level about the Notification and the exclusion clause. UGC has decided to take a tough stand against plagiarism in order to maintain integrity standards. However, researchers must be well aware of the exclusions that have been provided in the recent regulations so that their work becomes a properly and reasonably well documented one. If the citations, quotations, attributions, references etc., are properly given the researchers would be saved from unnecessary allegations of plagiarism. The key here is to quote these, right in the first instance itself rather than engaging in a resolution of the similarities shown later on. “Right first time” approach can save a lot of time, energy and efforts for the researcher. Researchers should not look at these exclusions as escape routes. Rather they are expected to be professional in their approach when it comes to use of existing work.



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