

Plagiarism:
How It Works in the Armenian Academic Environment

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Abstract

The initial and main purpose of this capstone research is the undeniable high rate of the popularity and tolerance towards plagiarism with the students of developing countries. Being engaged in copying others', students from the states with non-developed status often faced the problems with the Universities and other academic institutions. The primary focus of the paper was directed to Armenian Universities where students are highly addicted to repeating the ideas of others and adopting them as their own. To meet the target, a number of some surveys and studies were conducted in local Universities where professors and students had their input in creating an objective picture of the situation with plagiarism among the Armenian university students. After discussions and interviews with university professors, a lot of elements regarding the perception of plagiarism came up which will be discussed more precisely in the research section. This research also aimed to discover how the concept of plagiarism is perceived by the university students. Along similar lines, it was necessary to research the perception of plagiarism among the students who study abroad, also to see the parallels and differences between our students and those who study abroad. The reason for this comparison was to see the reasons that bring to plagiarism in different cultures, particularly in developing countries. Beyond any doubt, it was believed that this research could have been a great assist in improving the situation with this phenomenon. The research was matched with success since it found the significant factors that contribute to the problem. So, Armenian student is no longer concerned with the possible punishments, and this makes them use "idea simulation" more and more. Second, Armenian society is not entirely literate in the sense of respecting the rights of other people. Thus, when we have the diagnosis, we can easily give the treatment. When being aware of all the causes that may be "responsible" for the problem, we can exclude the degrading phenomenon from our society and be more a part of a developed environment.

Introduction

Plagiarism is generally defined as academic dishonesty that is performed through “stealing” ideas from others and using as their ones. This act of fraud is not a rare thing to happen but is somewhat popular with students especially. Some young learners tend to copy others and use it in their writings and papers. It should be mentioned, that this phenomenon is no longer appreciated by the scholarly community which is engaged in an unceasing campaign for finding the ways to solve this problem. However, plagiarism is not always done consciously; in many cases, the evidence of takes place due to unawareness and is justified by some reasons which need to be considered.

So, the given issue is slightly fuzzy, making critics’ research more challenging to finish. We face the cases of cheating on a daily base, and the problem is getting more critical. It impacts the reputation not only of a student but the university itself where the act of plagiarism appears.

Thus, as such cheating is not advantageous for the student in term of being criticized and is disparaging for the university in the scope of not sufficient propaganda and control.

Unfortunately, the given issue is met in any academic institution, but the response to it is too diverse. To be more precise, the fact of plagiarism is not always viewed as a negative one but is sometimes taken for granted. The reason for this heterogeneity of opinions is due to the differences in cultures.

It is beyond any doubt, culture shapes our perception of life, including our values, norms, and standards. According to this view, culture is responsible for our behavior in general, and plagiarism is a reflection of our background in particular. Moreover, there are some cultures which motivate and encourage their members repeat others ideas. At first sight, it could have been sounded unrealistic and exaggerated, but in fact, it contains all the actual

description of nowadays academic community. This, of course, is not true about all the cultures; there are some which no longer accept the possibility of cheating; the students here are educated by the internationally recognized standards to perform honesty and are severely punished in case of breaking the rules. So, how does culture make our perceptions about plagiarism? Why some students are reluctant to share their personal opinions in papers, and others are not? To understand this better, it is essential to define the reasons that contribute to plagiarism by different carriers. The main aspects that make the societies adopt plagiarism are the lack of individuality, respect for authors and inadequate knowledge of learners. The first is usually explained as the integral part of a developing society, where pressure and over control at educational institutions deprives the students of the necessary self-confidence; where the learners are inferior enough to express their thoughts. The second-factor doing plagiarism is justified by the upbringing, which leaves no space for the learning generation to put forward the personal claims about things happening around; they are taught to respect the authors and can hardly dare reject authors. As for the third argument resulting in plagiarism in a developing country is not developed educational system in general which makes a learner doubt about his/her ideas since the knowledge they get is not so much reliable.

So overall, plagiarism is not a certain concept for all academic communities; it is not likely to be dodged when appearing in any scientific environment; there are indeed cultures that are inclined to use plagiarism due to their background and understanding of the issue.

Literature review

Data appear to suggest that what turns any student into “an experienced plagiarist” is a lack of proper education. In the present study, the issue under scrutiny is to put forward the view that the approach to plagiarism much depends on the culture one presents. On these grounds, further research in this area seems to validate the point that representatives from different countries do not always share the same position concerning plagiarism. Thus, some authors observed the cases of plagiarism in different cultures and found out that plagiarism is the reflection of students’ background, the attitude being more in favor of copying in developing countries. Moreover, some of the authors discovered that the representatives of the non-developed community are likely to spread their perception of plagiarism in developed countries, making the host society partially “infected” with the idea of “academic stealing.”

The available evidence seems to suggest that the traces of plagiarism can be found in school years when young learners are forced to repeat printed texts word by word. Besides, the topics chosen for paper themes at schools seem to be general and universal subjects that require no individuality on the part of school students, and this later contributes to plagiarism. Thus, traces of this date back to the secondary school. (Sargsyan, 2011) This way of teaching is highly used in some educational systems in developing countries, and the students later do not even guess that it can be a destructive thing in an advanced society. Most of the teachers at schools do not appreciate students’ individuality and force them to learn the materials by heart. The themes are being repeated from year to year discouraging students performing independence in writing. (Sargsyan, 2011)

There is growing support for this claim suggested by Folynek and Cech. They share the opinion that ethics about respecting author’s rights should be taught since early ages.

Thus, in Australian schools, students are informed about the importance of authors' rights and are instructed to follow this rule. If these students ever appear in foreign countries, they never cheat and do their best to stay honest. This is true about other European countries as well, where plagiarism is strictly banned.

If that is the case, what makes plagiarism work in a developing community? First of all, students here are not enough informed about the seriousness of plagiarism. Students, in this way, might learn about plagiarism from their supervisors, friends or Internet. (Sargsyan, 2011) Numbers of researchers have found that interpretations students give to plagiarism depend much on the culture they present. Plagiarism is not defined explicitly by different students. (Introna, Hayes, Blair, & Wood, 2003)

Thus, it is worth mentioning that there is the difference in definition of plagiarism which is formulated by different cultural representatives. Therefore, for Bulgarians, for instance, it is nothing but "stealing," British students would call this "cheating," whereas a Czech representative would name it as "copying the idea without mentioning the authors' references." (Foltynek, & Cech, 2012) To continue illustrating various cultural mentalities, Introna describes Spanish students who find this quite acceptable to do in their homeland; however, they are not shocked for being accused in English academic environment. Whereas, in Burma students find it outrageous to be forbidden to use others' writing, since the idea belongs to society and is no longer an individual notion. Greek representatives have a unique explanation for plagiarism. They are sure that connecting concepts demonstrate an understanding of the material. Thus, copying is about getting the content which should be a target for learning in general.

Besides, in such countries there are no laws forbidding plagiarism and a learner here is not severely punished for "stealing" the ideas. Many leading academicians and administrators are extremely reluctant to take actions against plagiarists. (Wabomba, 2017) Moreover, those

who use others' writings are often evaluated higher than their peers who try to be academically honest. The main cause to be considered in developing "resistance" to the idea of plagiarism refers to the absence of individuality. Ming Hwe Ting explains the overall psychological weakness some representatives of certain cultures have.

Focusing mainly on Chinese students he defines them as non-confident ones who often feel shy about using their ideas. They are pretty sure that there is too much to learn from those who belong to more developed communities such as English, German and others. This "inferiority" complex contributes to taking others' works and plagiarizing them. A Chinese learner would instead copy an English concept being sure in its high assessment and reliability. And what is even more amazing, they will not consider this as a criminal act.

Introna views the same problem from a bit different side and stresses more an issue of upbringing than an individual "inferiority." Plagiarism is often associated with copying and is not regarded as anything against the law. It is acceptable for some countries, and even flattering to copy masters. One may be found more modest when repeating the others rather than expressing his ideas. (Introna et al, 2003)

On the other hand, in oriental countries, it is even appreciated to repeat ideas expressed by scholars. Moreover, students here are highly reluctant to change the statement that belongs to some authors. According to their culture, any change in source material can be regarded as disrespect to the author. In their right perspective, the writers are honorable people, so there is no need to challenge their minds.

A Chinese student does not feel guilty for plagiarizing and finds it correct to rewrite the author who is well known and respected. (Syahrani, 2009) Syahrani shares this attitude and points that it is unacceptable for an Asian student to neglect the idea that belongs to someone who has achieved some remarkable level in the science. Thus, according to them, if the

person is educated enough for his words to be printed, then any change of his words can be regarded as disrespect towards him.

Introna is also sure that Asian culture is too traditional to “ignore” the greats and students from oriental countries can hardly offer their version on the same issue. These learners are taught to respect those who have reached a special status when their ideas and thoughts printed. Thus, they truly believe that if the author’s point of view is registered anywhere, then that perspective needs to be repeated. Besides, Asian students are not “courageous” enough to speak up about their own beliefs and are not likely to be self-confident in supporting that. This can be connected with their poor language skills which restrict their self-expressing abilities.

Meanwhile, Trevor opposes English students who are not inclined to use others’ thoughts since they have deep-rooted recognition of the individual rights that we all have. He mentions the fact of the respect for human rights and freedom as the key point in forming a Western perception about cheating, where using the other’s ideas is equivalent to “stealing.” This approach has been formed throughout history, and its evolution is a result of a development of English culture.

However, Moss states that English society was not so reluctant to reject plagiarism in the past. Ancient English nobility did not find this as a destructive aspect. He brings the example of Shakespeare who regularly used the method of “cheating” in his works, and this action of his was taken for granted. By the way, Shakespeare is not alone in his “campaign” aimed at spreading plagiarism. Oscar Wilde and other World known writers are responsible for the popularity of cheating in ancient English society. He even says Oscar Wilde was twice accused of using others’ ideas and expressions to make the fact of plagiarism typical for the old English society. (Moss, 2005) This is not, however, true about modern English academic environment, which is the best illustration of academic honesty and copyright. Plagiarism did

not become a strong issue before 1700. (Hansen, 2003) So, plagiarism is inherent just in a developing society where the norms and rules of respecting individual rights are not finally established.

Plagiarism also exists in the US. The phenomenon of “adopting” others’ ideas in the states is described by Heitman. She mainly focuses on trainees who come to the US from Eastern countries. Sharing the same opinion about the popularity of plagiarism primarily among Chinese and Indian representatives, the author here expresses her concern about the given issue.

Thus, according to her, most of the international trainees come to the US from different cultures where plagiarism is practiced much, and it makes them face the troubles with the U.S. standards. When working in a developed society, such trainees ignore the concept of “stealing” ideas since it is not considered as a crime in their culture. Moreover, it is rather hard for them to avoid plagiarism and because of that they often need to answer for violating copyright. This, however, often can be explained by the low level of English knowledge and can partially justify “cheaters.” Heitman is concerned with the idea that the use of plagiarism in this way can be easily spread among local learners since it has “an infectious attraction” due to its availability and impunity.

It is interesting, indeed, to oppose this to Moten, who in the article *Curbing plagiarism in the Muslim world*, describes academic cheating within the scope of Islamic culture. Thus, according to him Islamism no longer accepts “stealing” ideas, and the cases of plagiarism are treated as criminal ones. The given approach to author’s word derives from their religion, which prohibits Muslims to take anything that belongs to others. The word is also possession and as such should be left intact.

Jonsson and Orlenius, in *Plagiarism in Higher Education*, puts forward an interesting theory on the issue of plagiarism. The main idea here is centered on the fact of the existence

of morality. The author here is pretty sure that morality is the factor that stimulates the extreme need for being honest in every sphere. According to this theory, honesty is reflected through not only telling the truth or using your own possessions, but keeping others' writings intact as well. The key point here, however concerns special age groups within special cultures. Thus, the sense of morality tends to be the least developed in the early ages. By the way, this is true for almost all cultures. The author insists that young learners are never worried much about staying academically honest irrespective of their cultural belonging.

Meanwhile, with getting older an individual undergoes specific moral changes. Respect towards other's academic possession starts to dominate and becomes the main target to follow. Yet, this stage of the individual development is not the same for all cultures. Here when it comes to the different conception of what plagiarism is: western and eastern cultures make their differences at this stage particularly.

Central Research Question/ Methodology

Culture is not only about the location we live in or our skin color. It is a complex of features that shape our mentality and creates our worldview. Being rather influential, culture also impacts our perspective towards plagiarism. This leads to RQ1- how is plagiarism perceived by an Armenian student? This is the main keystone that lies at the heart of this research.

Armenian culture which has adopted plagiarism has some causes for accepting copying others'. That idea leads towards the RQ2- Why are Armenian students reluctant to share their own opinions in papers? An answer to this question will be a basis for the answer to the RQ1. This will explain the national peculiarities and will be a vivid example of supporting the argument for RQ1.

Globalization is known as a process of adopting habits and traditions from foreign countries. Cheating is not appreciated in modern society. The developed community keeps on propagating respect towards rights in general. Author's rights recognition is one type of propaganda and as such needs to be accepted in developing countries as well. So, this gives rise to RQ3- What can be done to improve the situation? An answer to this question will partially solve RQ2 and RQ1.

Plagiarism is a scholastic issue and needs the academic approach to investigate it thoroughly. As for the particular methods that were engaged in the research, both qualitative and quantitative ones were chosen.

Qualitative methods included interviews and observations

First and foremost, for getting the detailed explanation for the popularity of plagiarism in Armenia, it was necessary to have interviews with both students who in their academic life had plagiarized and professors who had noticed that cheating. The interviews were aimed at finding out the level of using plagiarism in Armenian society. Since this is a habit that has its roots in early childhood, then I decided to include not only Universities in my research outline, for that reason target audience also included primary and secondary schools.

For more detailed research, it was needed to have the opinions taken from a number of educational institutions to see how inner culture influences the attitude to plagiarize. Thus, 4 Universities were selected for this purpose: Yerevan State University, Yerevan Brusov State University of Languages and Social Sciences, American University of Armenia, and French University in Armenia. Along similar lines, in order to outreach to a wider audience, special questions were prepared in a survey to see the reasons provoking such behavior.

Besides, secondary schools were observed too in term of using plagiarism. It was decided that having data from different educational institutions could help in getting the parallels, and finding key factors contributing to the academic stealing.

The questions have helped to found out what plagiarism is for the answerer, about the advantages and disadvantages of using others' thoughts, and about possible ways of how to tackle this phenomenon. Besides, I found it highly important to discover through the survey the amount of times students plagiarize on average.

Quantitative methods were based on data collection.

In order to make research more objective, it needed to be backed up by facts and statistics. The questions were arranged in the form of multiple choice answers were aimed at centralizing on the points necessary for the survey. The number of questions was agreed upon to be not more than 10 to keep students focused and not bored while answering. Besides, a low number of questions helped to avoid mechanical and automatic answers on the part of participants.

After data were collected, the results were analyzed and calculated to see what was common and what was different in answers.

65 students and 30 lecturers took part in the survey.

All in all, mixed methodology (qualitative and quantitative) was the most advantageous for the given research since both behavioral and fact analyses were necessary to have the objective outcome of the issue. The whole information has been tabled to describe the objective picture of the cases of plagiarism in Armenia.

Findings and Analysis

In order to have comprehensive research, the practically gained data and information were needed to be fit with the theoretical part of this research.

So, on the one hand, the information collected through surveys from schools added to the evidence stated in a number of articles concerning learning materials by heart. So, as having observed telling the materials, word-for-word is usually the must at Armenian schools. The only explanation for that was the statement that teachers find this method better to develop accuracy and to improve the vocabulary. So, they do believe that when repeating the exact words from texts, students adopt the academic vocabulary and the way to deliver it. None of the school teachers interviewed found problems or concerns regarding the “teaching by heart” methodology. According to them, school children are young enough to use their ideas at any time; they need to memorize the famous people’s work to develop proficiency in writing later. Thus this was the major approach to plagiarism with Armenian school teachers. Nevertheless, it should be added that this view was mainly held by teachers teaching in primary schools.

In any case, this is actually the period when school students get the first skills for learning and develop the first techniques for finding materials and delivering them. So it happens so that even though later in Universities they might hear about the criminal character of plagiarism, yet this does not worry them much, since the first “impression” on plagiarism got in the youngest learning years appears to be the last one. This theory anyhow is supported by Chinese culture as well; moreover, here teachers have moved even further claiming that it is even mandatory to stay “modest” and avoid putting their thoughts forward.

Along similar lines, professors at the Armenian Universities were more inclined to accept that copying others can no longer be appreciated and they assured that indeed this problem is often discussed with students. Moreover, University students are always required

to perform individuality and stay unique in their learning. The students, however, find it difficult to adopt new rules in learning technique and do not always follow this notification. As they claimed, the long-term habit of learning by heart makes them stay loyal to deep-rooted skills. Besides, as they said, there are no developed methods for controlling plagiarism and in case of violating the rules, punishing the cheaters.

Still, the American University of Armenia has appeared to be the only institution where the issue of plagiarism is of much concern. The professors here give a detailed explanation of all the consequences of academic cheating, offering logical punishments and penalties. The students, in their turn, accepted that plagiarism could definitely be the reason for failing the subject and thus expressed their readiness to be as honest as possible in their writings. Nevertheless, the freshmen students were less inclined to academic purity than those attending higher years. This, indeed, could be explained by the fact of less experience in being punished on the part of newcomers to the American University.

On the other hand, the research supports Foltyněk and Cech, who find that ethic towards author's rights, should be taught at early ages. Thus, in case of Armenian education, this point was not taken into account by the teachers. Armenian system of education does not view plagiarism as disrespect towards the author.

As for the idea of shaping individuality which makes up the basic target for the Western educational system, here again we face the opposite position. Individuality and learning are not the two integral parts of education here. Moreover, teachers find this age too young for students to form individuality. When having interviews with them, it was found out that Armenian teachers are of the opinion that at the very young learning age a student should be as "clean" like a sheet of white paper, so that it could be possible to write any content on that "paper." That is as they explained is the reason that students attending the lessons of a certain teacher perform almost the same, having many common skills and ways of material

delivery. Actually, there is strong need to have an exact culture within the class which should define the teacher's "handwriting."

This was the main strategy given by the teachers in primary classes. "Individuality has minor role at this stage, and plagiarism helps to shorten the way to knowledge and provides predictable result," said Mrs. Balayan, mother language teacher at one of the central secondary schools.

When considering University professors in Armenia, one could see the obvious difference with those from secondary institutions. The interviewed lecturers declared that students have to be unique in their performance since it contributes to their professional growth. They insisted that without having an individual approach to learning materials, students might fail to get a necessary qualification. At the same time, this uniqueness should be within the frame of the provided materials and thus should be based on traditional perceptions. As it might be seen, here again, Armenian student does not always have the opportunity for absolute individualism, and this leads them to unconscious plagiarism. Armenian lecturers do not consider paraphrasing as stealing ideas, and here is the key point that "legalizes" plagiarism at the Armenian higher educational institutions.

Yet, the lecturers from the American University of Armenia stated that it would be really impossible to study and graduate from the University without having the absolute individualism in learning; mentioned attribute, being a required component for any learner. The students of the AUA could not but have their own input in the academic subjects. This is one of the basic requirements to be a student at AUA.

So, actually Armenian educational system is divided into two phases in term of using plagiarism:

- I. The phase of using **Direct Plagiarism** that is a word-for-word repetition of someone else's work, without any personal attribution

- II. The phase of **Mosaic Plagiarism**, when the user paraphrases the main idea with the help of synonymous phrases, keeping the structure intact.

Thus, there comes a question:

How in that case can an average Armenian student pass from one phase to another?

So, when interviewing both students and lecturers at Armenian Universities, it was discovered that the professors actually were not so much concerned about plagiarism with freshmen students, as they need time to fit in with the University standards. Thus, they, in any case, do not press much for using others' thoughts and works, making more stress on using their own sentences and phrases. And, Armenian students do not feel stressed so much since in fact they still use plagiarism which makes the process of learning easy for them.

As for the definition of the term plagiarism explained by Armenians, there is much to consider. Along similar lines with Introna's idea that this much depends on culture, one cannot disagree but admit that in Armenia, this term is no longer defined adequately. The majority of students have no clear idea of what it is. Some of them find this just as copying; others believe it is just repeating.

So, that is definitely a shortcoming of teachers not to inform students about plagiarism. When answering the question concerning students' awareness on the issue of plagiarism, most of the students claimed that they had never been explained the term plagiarism; this was not rejected by teachers either. They were strongly confident that the discussions about plagiarism are a waste of time, and that students should focus on learning more than on "empty" talks on the topics like that.

When adding to Wabomba, it needs to be mentioned that in Armenia as well there is lack of some laws forbidding stealing the ideas. One could find no teacher who could see the

criminal side of it. As a matter of fact, Armenian jurisdiction does not presume any punishment in case of copying the ideas.

The same tendency can be registered in other developing countries like Pakistan, Iran, India, and China. Meanwhile, the United Kingdom has developed the laws which strictly control the use of plagiarism among students. Students here are informed about the possible failure in case of cheating.

Moreover, Armenian “stealers” are the example of highly- evaluated students. This, of course, demotivates those who are inclined to be unique in their self- expression and makes them academically dishonest. Most of the teachers find such students more diligent and hard- working. As to them, such students spend more time on learning the material. The teachers believe that when students use their own ideas, it is easier for them to cover the task. This part correlates with the Wobomba’s research, who claims that plagiarism is the way for some students to succeed in their studies, it saves their time and yet at the same time gives the learners necessary knowledge.

The traces of inferiority complex could be found in Armenian society as well. This is the idea related to Ming Hwe Ting, who also finds that there is lack of confidence in cultures where plagiarism takes place. This fact was registered when observing the students answering the questions. Instead of being honest in answering confidentially, they were trying to copy and discuss the answers.

It is rather characteristic for Armenian students to perform a mass behavior when an individual bears no responsibility for the actions done.

So, an Armenian student would rather prefer to be punished with others than the risk to perform individuality.

When considering students' opinion on plagiarism, they think there is nothing terrible about copying the greats; they "deserve" to be repeated. This idea is common for Introna either who is sure that some cultures even appreciate this phenomenon.

As it is clearly evident, the plagiarism in Armenian educational society has many similarities with Eastern countries representatives. There are almost the same reasons to motivate learners to use the ideas, words of others. When inserting all these facts into the capstone, it has become clear that there is plenty to do in order to inform teachers firstly about the seriousness of cheating, and only then implementing the encouraging methods for students not to cheat.

The given survey aimed to find out not only "empty" facts about the situation in anacademic environment regarding scientific dishonesty, but it targeted to find out the reasons of this overwhelming phenomenon which could definitely contribute to some solutions.

Thus, the survey included questionnaires which contained questions related to professors to point out their vision of the problem. As a result, it was found out that the majority of lecturers in Armenian Institutions are of the opinion that students who are used to copy the others' ideas tend to perform the same in other spheres of their lives too.

To be more precise, about 73% of professors shared this opinion, 30% of them expressing strong agreement. It is highly important that just 10% of lecturers disagreed with this position, and there was no single one who could disagree strongly.

So, it is beyond any doubt that actually students tend to be more inclined to their habits and that the skills developed by them at their early ages motivate for the same performance. This means that the global changes actually have to be done in secondary schools where the students get their first techniques and learning habits.

Trying to present the detailed analysis, it was necessary to see if professors find any psychological motivation for students to cheat. At this point, it turned out that professors again admitted that the given problem is a result of a “procrastination” which led to plagiarism.

63% of all interviewed professors agreed upon this idea. There was the least percentage of the negative answers to this question: just 7% of all interviewed disagreed with this statement. Nevertheless, there were some participants who remained neutral to this issue and actually gave neither positive nor negative answers. The percentage of such responses did not exceed 30%.

So, this was about the existing situation in Armenian academic society. Yet, the aim of this study was not only to generalize beyond the data that the society does have this issue but to see whether any measures are taken to solve the situation or at least to prevent further spreading of it.

On the basis of the evidence currently available, it is reported that 50% of the lectures engaged in the survey did not see any efforts on the part of the government to objectively eliminate plagiarism. What is even more interesting is the fact that here almost the rest 50% of interviewees (to be more precise 40%) expressed neutrality to this question. And just 10% of the interviewed professors found that some kind of treatment, in any case, takes place. Moreover, some of the interviewees expressed the idea that the existing situation could be solved when engaging more young teachers who were taught to carry less exam-oriented education. Modern teaching presumes more stress on the individual learning, and the matter of quantity matters less; whereas teachers of the old generation, even being more experienced are used to appreciate the amount of work done, and that amount directly corresponds to “quality.”

Besides, it was offered to include more writing tasks which presume students' individual viewpoints on the subject discussed. As to some of the teachers, Armenian educational system has limited experience in such tasks which contribute to the development of individuality and thus could somehow reduce the level of plagiarism. Others just added that this could be the result of their indifference towards the problem which might be the core reason for the spreading of plagiarism with the young generation.

Further evidence supporting the idea of the development of plagiarism in Armenian educational institutions brings to the increase of cheating among learners. These results provide confirmatory evidence that students perform growing tendency for copying the others:

-53% of lecturers agreed

-20% disagreed

-27% remained neutral

The preceding discussion implied students who were enrolled in the Institutions of Armenia. The overwhelming majority of interviewed students were females, to be more precise 87.7% of all participants. The given activity of females was more due to the initial readiness of girls to have participation in the survey, yet boys were not so much interested in any kind of research. So, the issue of plagiarism was not a key point for males to stay away from the interview.

Along parallel lines, the vast majority of interviewees did not consider gender as the main factor for cheating. The evidence has come to prove that 72.3% of students thought that way. Only 20% claimed that males tend to cheat more. This has its logical explanation based on the cultural peculiarities. In Armenian society, it is believed that girls should study more and better than boys. Throughout centuries an Armenian lady has been presumed to get

higher education to be able to raise children, whereas, for an Armenian young man learning has been believed to be the secondary issue to consider. So, this cultural issue has made a girl more study-conscious, and it has encouraged her to find more ways of getting the highest scores. Armenian society finds it necessary for girls to study with honors, and it is rather tolerant to boys in that term.

The data gathered in the study suggest that 92.2% of learners were not aware of the term plagiarism in general. As for the main motivation to cheat, students considered that handling the task. Namely 58.5% of all participants confirmed this position.

Getting higher score was the next motivation for over 27% of students.

As a rebuttal to this point, it should be claimed that 63% of students did not take cheating as a positive tool in learning. Thus this could be the best argument in favor of the data reporting that about 45% of students are ready to speak up in case their own works are being copied by others. And almost the same percentage of learners (39% respectively) was ready to find out the reasons for it.

It is still noticeable that 43% of professors nevertheless explain the consequences of plagiarism to students before giving the task, and just a bit more than 15% fail the grade when copying.

As for plagiarism being a socio-cultural issue, students perform different positions. Here, the participants of the study shared the actually equal percentage of the answers “Yes” and “No”: 40% and 36.4% respectively. It turned out that Armenian students are ready to plagiarize in different cases none being a dominant one.

When being asked about the possible justification of cases of plagiarism, 50% of students did not really think that more than 10% of plagiarism used in papers should be ignored. The learners engaged in the given study put forward the belief that plagiarism indeed

is a serious issue and certain measures have to be taken to control and prevent this phenomenon in our society.

The further analysis will show the objective situation in Armenian secondary educational institutions. As being discussed above, here the issue of plagiarism was not of much importance due to the traditional approach and poor developed individual strategies. So, the majority of school students engaged in the survey had no idea what plagiarism was. 64% of all participants gave negative answer to this question. Yet, 27% thought it is copying, and only 9% were sure plagiarism is cheating.

The next question aimed at finding out if the students had ever been explained about the seriousness of plagiarism just confirmed the unawareness of the students about the given issue. Here 61% of the students were totally unaware of this term, so school teachers actually did not find it necessary to give even the basic information about plagiarism. It turned out that indeed 26% of students once were explained the given term and only 13% had occasionally been told about academic cheating.

The survey showed that in Armenian schools, teachers did not worry much about struggling with cases of plagiarism. This is confirmed by the numbers given below:

70%- teachers do not perform any kind of struggle against plagiarism

17%- teachers lower the score

8%- teachers warn about the seriousness of plagiarism

5%- teachers give penalty to cheaters

It is interesting to mention that almost half of all interviewed school students were indifferent to the problem of plagiarism.

45% respectively said that they had no special attitude towards the cases of cheating. This number is rather threatening since it may deepen academic dishonesty with young learners. Which is even more surprising, students having positive and negative attitude to plagiarism shared almost the same data: 24% found copying as a positive phenomenon, whereas 22% frankly thought that stealing others' ideas is a negative conception. But, for objectivity, it should be added that 9% strongly believed that copying others is unacceptable.

Taking all the facts and numbers above into account, there might be no doubt that Armenian school students do not hesitate much before rewriting others. This is once more certified by the numbers calculated as a result of the survey:

0-20% of plagiarism in writing- 7% of students

20-50% of plagiarism- 16% of students

50-70% of plagiarism- 58% of students

70-100% of plagiarism- 21% of students

As it is seen from the survey, more than half of all the participants involved in the research admitted that copying others was a part of their learning process.

Consequently, when having copied, the student is likely to appear in the situation when they need to explain their cheating. So, according to the research done, an Armenian student would rather say sorry in such circumstance. 69% of students would try to express their regret on the issue of cheating; 18% of students would do nothing, and 13% would do their best to persuade the teacher that it was not actually the case of cheating.

Surely, it could be predicted that giving this data the students would not suffer much when being caught as cheaters. Respectively, Armenian young learners did not think it would be too much shame for them and only 19% of all interviewed answered that it would cause

their shame. Again the percentage for indifferent students was not a low one and came up to 30%. Those who felt that cheating could cause a little stress made up 31% of all interviewed. And just 20% of students answered that when being blamed for cheating they would definitely feel scared for not passing the test.

It could be concluded from the survey that actually the policy held in secondary school's forms students' inclination to use others' ideas in their writing. Students here are lack of their individuality, and that is reflected in their answers, where here we have more extreme numbers and the students gave almost the same answers to the questions.

Whereas in higher educational institutions the students were more or less aware of the fact of plagiarism, yet the control is not an absolute one, and much should be done to improve the situation.

It is of high importance to mention that the research done has faced number of mismatches in the answers:

- I. The school students who were actually unaware of the term "plagiarism" in any case said that the word had been explained to them before.
- II. Most of them have a very negative attitude to cheating, in any case, saw no feasible reason to call it "a crime".

This discrepancy of answers was met mainly at secondary schools, so this is one more proof in favor of the idea that school's students in Armenia tend to be academically dishonest; they prefer to cheat and be "safe."

When comparing Armenian students with western ones, there is an obvious difference in the mentality which makes an Armenian one more dependent on the society. Students in Armenia are more conscious about working for "public", they do their best not to disappoint

their parents and not to let them down; whereas in western countries student's individuality is highly developed, and there is more concern to match their own standards rather than meeting the requirements.

The highly developed family Institute in Armenia and in Eastern countries leads to the lack of independence which finds its reflection in learning too.

All in all, both teachers and students agreed upon the idea that plagiarism is not the issue that has been much cared about in Armenian educational environment. Yet, most of the participants of the given research work shared the opinion that the modern educational standards require more honest approach to learning. It has been found out that there are no ways and methods to protect authors' rights legally, and as a solution to the existing problem of stealing ideas, it has been offered to legalize punishments for academic plagiarism.

Conclusion

To conclude, plagiarism is rather popular in modern society. Nevertheless, it has various interpretations depending on the culture in which it appears and worldview its users have. When being a part of a developing community, plagiarism is often taken for granted and is used freely; whereas, a developed society neglects its notion and bans its use as much as it is possible. It goes without saying that this is a result of lack of adequate policies and regulations.

To deal with plagiarism, it is necessary to have special campaigns that will be aimed at informing students about the seriousness of plagiarism, its types, and consequences. Moreover, students need to be aware of measures and punishments they are supposed to bear in case of “stealing” ideas. One more peculiar fact about learners from developing regions is that they are practically nonchalant about recognizing author’s rights and this makes them “inadequate” towards cheating. Moreover, they do not even worry about the degree of depravity they perform while copying others’ works. In rare cases, this happens due to lack of proper knowledge and low intelligence. Some students are not academically ready to express their thoughts and cannot but “turn for help” to other sources. Nevertheless, when we are equipped with necessary knowledge about the causes and consequences, we can definitely change the situation for better. It is mandatory to start a campaign against plagiarism at Institutions to encourage students to be more confident in expressing the ideas that are unique since they belong to them only.

Thus, being now keen on excluding plagiarism from our academic environment, we have to watch the future development of consciousness of Armenian scholar representatives to view the upcoming questions:

- How can we be pledged to quit “stealing ideas?”
- How to be motivated to stay unique and original?
- Can we meet the standards of modern academic World if we keep on repeating others?

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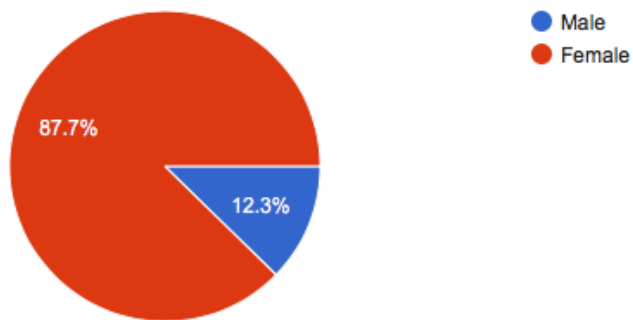
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Questionnaire (students)

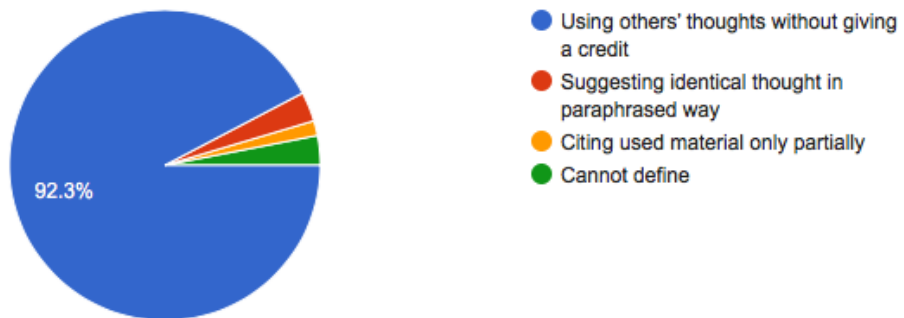
Your gender

65 responses



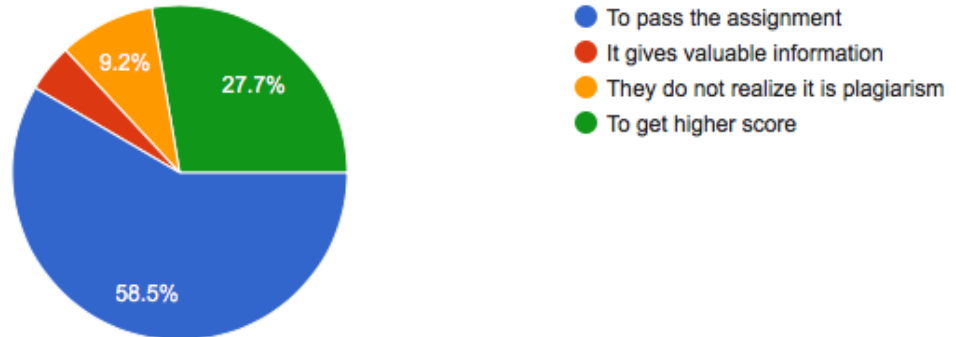
What is plagiarism?

65 responses



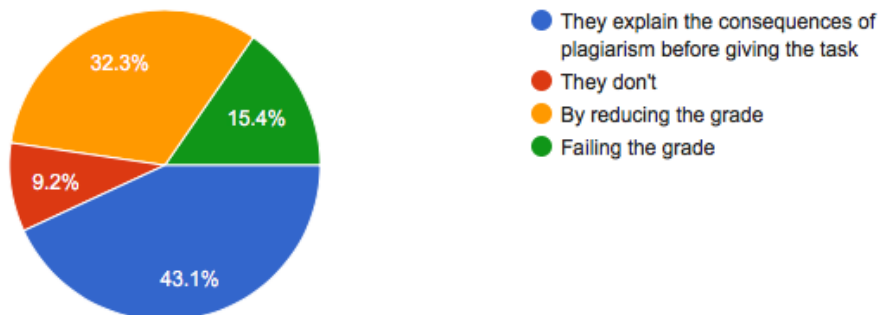
Why do you think students plagiarize?

65 responses



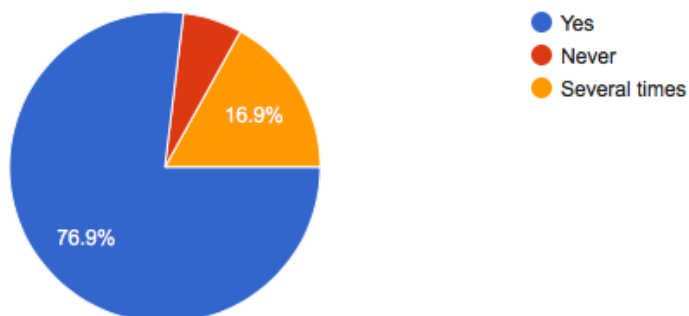
How do professors prevent students from plagiarizing?

65 responses



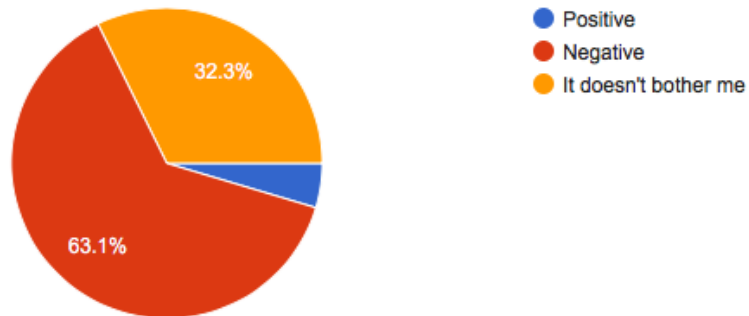
Has anyone explained you what plagiarism is?

65 responses



What is your attitude towards plagiarism?

65 responses



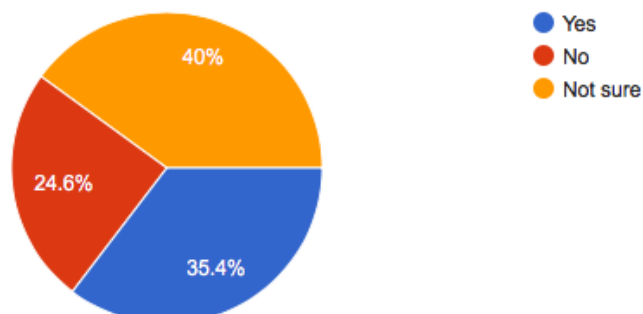
Your actions after finding out somebody completely/partially used your work as their own.

65 responses



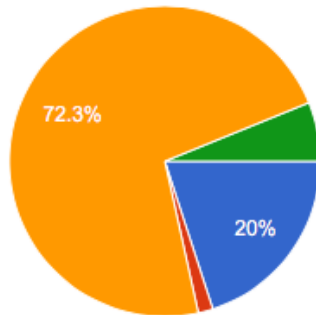
Do you think plagiarism is a socio-cultural issue?

65 responses



Who is inclined to plagiarize more; males/females?

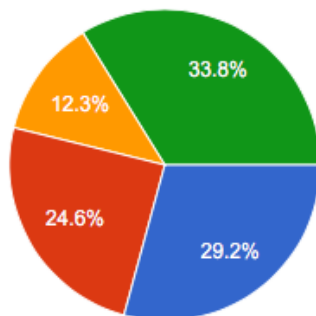
65 responses



- Males
- Females
- Plagiarism doesn't depend on gender
- It is hard to define

In what case would you plagiarize?

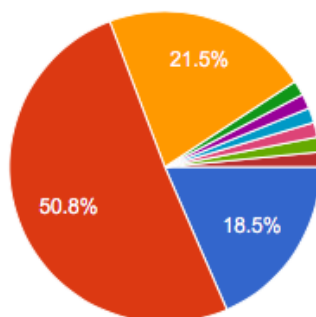
65 responses



- In case of overloaded schedule
- Lack of sufficient knowledge
- If I'm sure I won't get caught
- Under no condition

In what cases plagiarism may be justified?

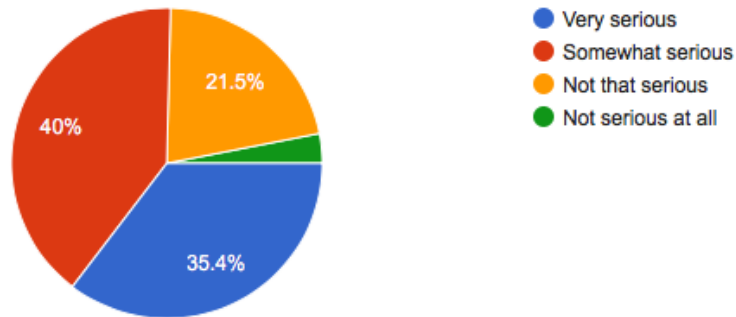
65 responses



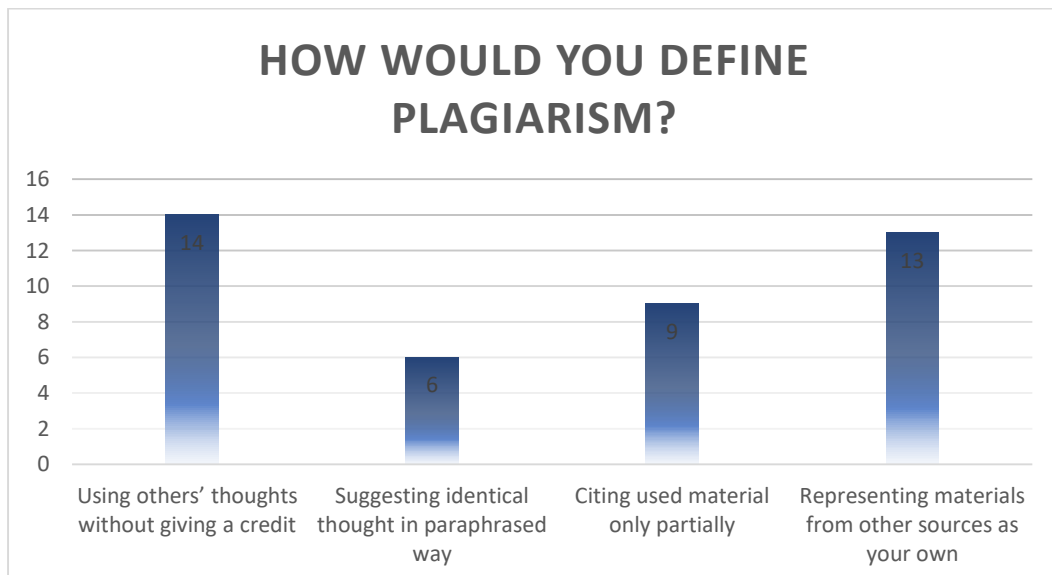
- When the rules of citation are not explained properly
- When plagiarism doesn't exceed 10%
- Under no condition
- when it is not explained also if the i...
- When it is just done to get a grade...
- Both the 1st and 2nd options.
- both 1st and 2nd cases
- if you're just completing an assignm...
- When used as facts

In your opinion is plagiarism a serious issue among Armenian students?

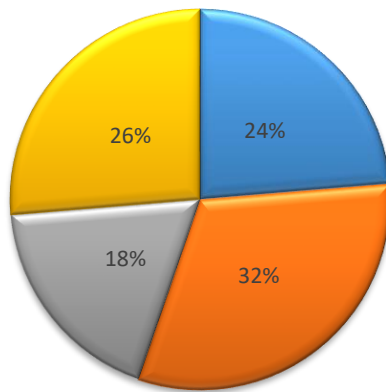
65 responses



Questionnaire (professors)

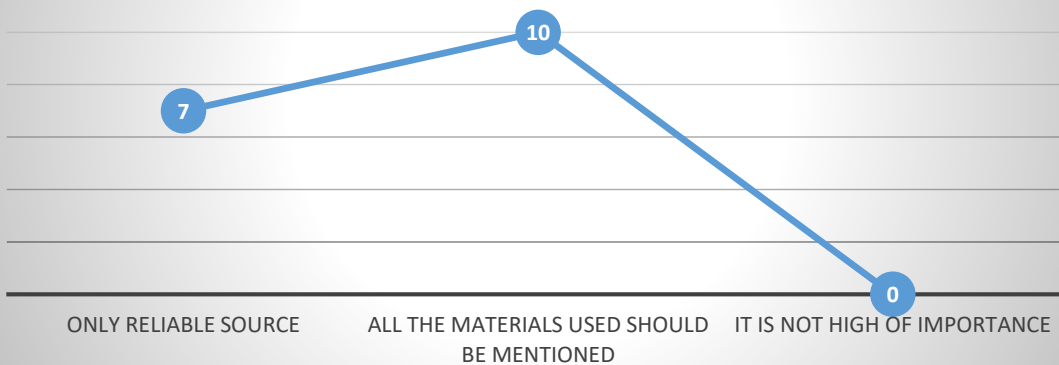


What case would you view as plagiarism?

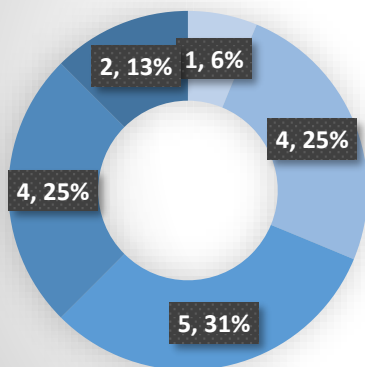


■ Using the same words only ■ Using ideas and words ■ Paraphrasing ■ Using ideas only

What kind of reference should writing contain?

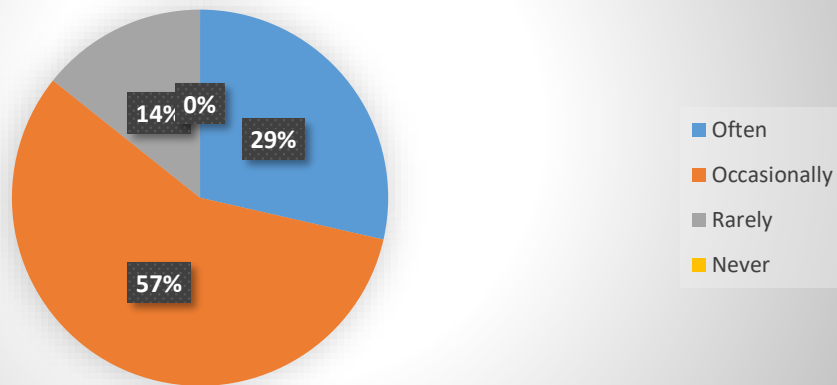


What percentage of similarity is acceptable in assignments?

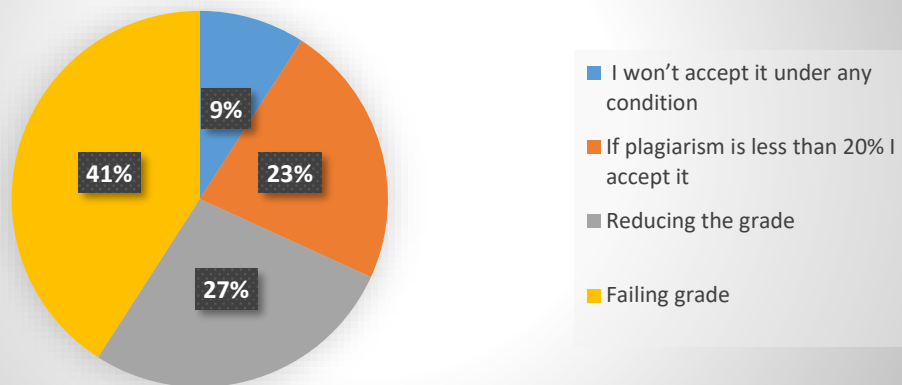


■ Up to 15
 ■ Up to 25
 ■ Percentage doesn't matter as long as it's justifiable
 ■ It depends on paper
 ■ None

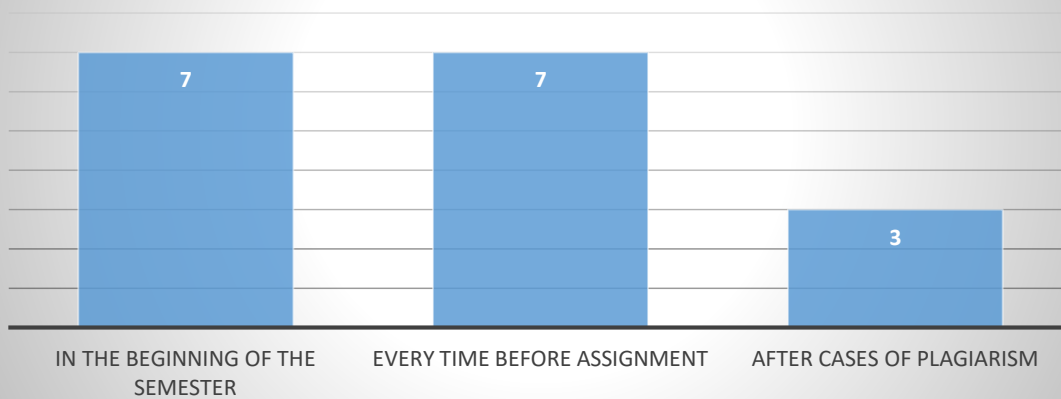
How often do you find plagiarism in students' assignments?



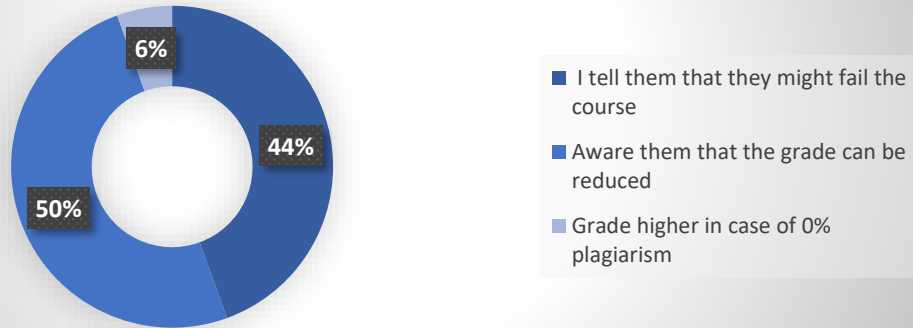
Actions when you find plagiarism in assignments?



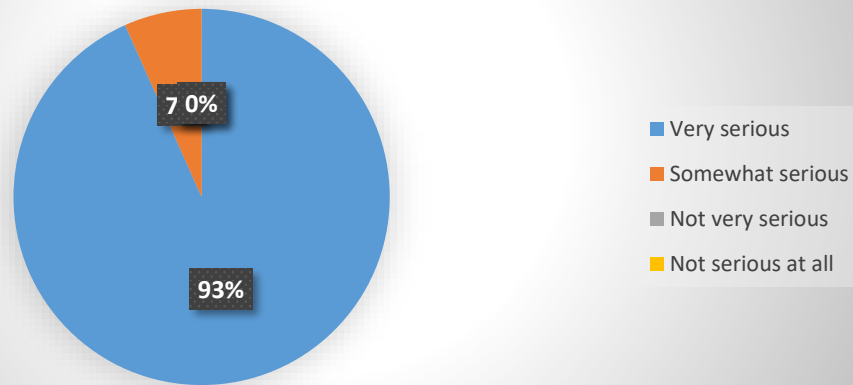
Have you ever explained the concept of plagiarism to students?



How do you motivate students not to plagiarize?



Do you think plagiarism is a serious issue among Armenian students?



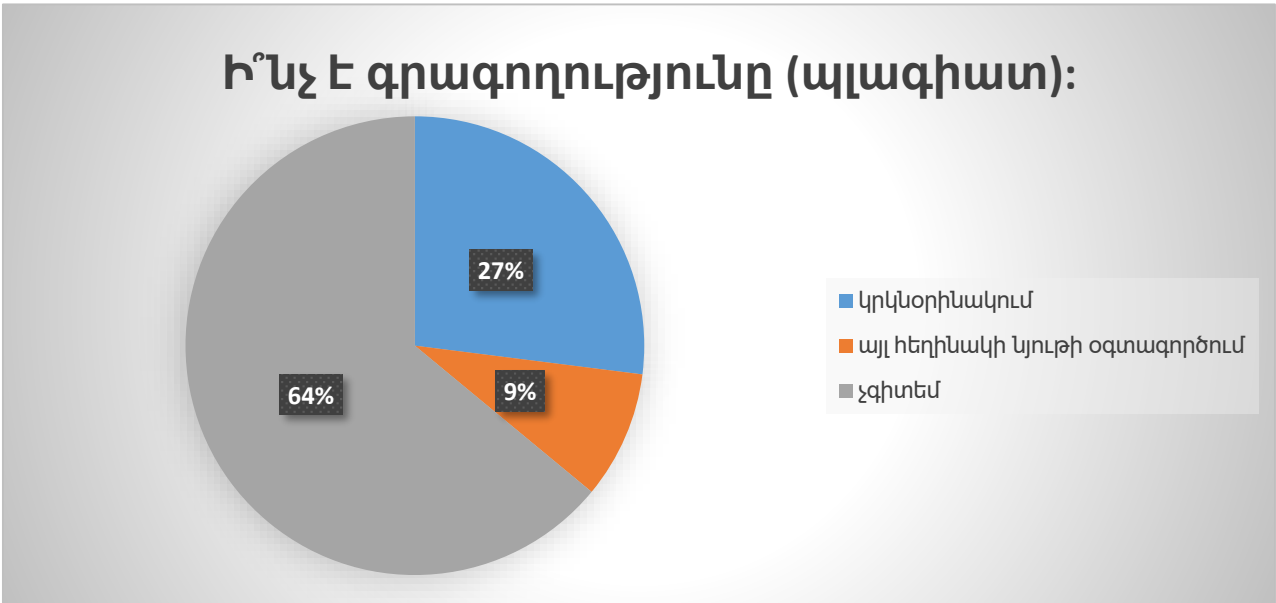
What factors contribute to the existence of this issue?



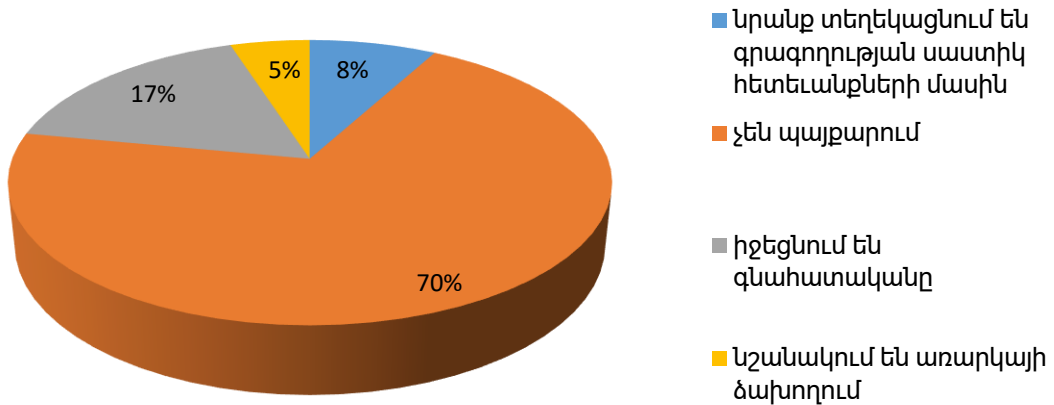
Other comments

Survey Questions: Section Other	Comments
Question 1	
Question 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It depends on the kind of paraphrasing.
Question 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type of source may depend on research purpose type. • Sources should be reliable & all should be referred.
Question 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doesn't matter if proper citation/reference made. • First of all, there should be a system which adequately counts similarity percentage. • Depends on the <u>individual</u> paper. • Up to 5%
Question 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quite often, unfortunately • 5-10 cases per month
Question 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It depends on the character of plagiarism, and on the student's intention. • Report the case. • Giving chance to do other work (with minimum grade). • Reporting to the office of the Dean and letting the students know.
Question 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes • Never • Discuss the causes, not only before the assignment.
Question 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moral talk: plagiarism is theft. • Give F for the assignment, report in im.aua.am especially if it's not the 1st case. • Appeal to their pride, i.e. explain that they'd not like when their ideas get stolen. • Explain academic behavior/ integrity. • Explain the benefits of being able to formulate their thoughts appropriately and referring to authors. • Against University policy, unacceptable.
Question 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Question 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School education that often <u>encourages plagiarism</u>; also lack of negative attitude towards it in the society. • Not being sure of their own way of writing/structure, grammar, word choice. • Pressured by peer • Often students think that helping a friend is not plagiarism. • Seen as "normal" not necessarily at AUA, but throughout high school • Cultural issue, wanting to succeed at any course and willingness of friend to help

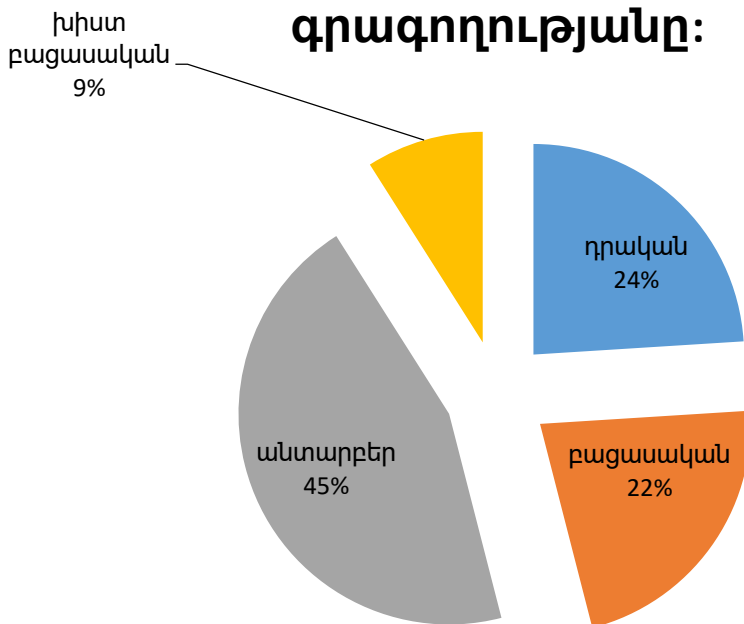
Questionnaire (pupils)



Ինչպե՞ս են ուսուցիչները պայքարում գրագողության դեմ:

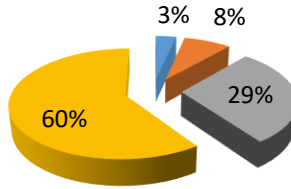


Ինչպես ե՞ք վերաբերվում գրագողությանը:

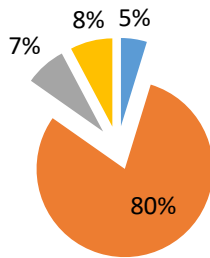


Քանի՞ տոկոսն է կազմում գրագողությունը ձեր աշխատանքում:

■ 0-20% ■ 20-50% ■ 50-70% ■ 70-100%

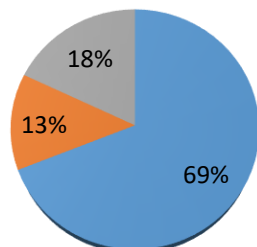


Ի՞նչ են զգում աշակերտները, երբ նրանց ներկայացում է գրագողության մեղադրանք:



- ամոթանք
- վախենում են ձախողել առարկան
- ոչինչ չեն զգում
- լարվածություն

Ի՞նչ քայլեր են ձեռնարկում աշակերտները, երբ նրանց մեղադրում են գրագողության մեջ:



- նրանք ներողություն են խնդրում եւ հավաստիացնում, որ նման դեպք չի կրկնվի
- Փորձում են ապացուցել, որ դա գրագողություն չէ