Plagiarism and Feminist Research Ethics

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Plagiarism (from the Latin "*plagiare*", meaning "to kidnap") is defined as "the appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas and thoughts of another author and representation of them as one's original work" (*The Random House Dictionary of the English Language* - unabridged). Plagiarism is a serious breach of research ethics which, if committed intentionally, is considered as a research misconduct. Plagiarism may result in loss of serious sanctions, including public disclosure, loss of research funding, loss of professional stature and termination of employment. Plagiarism undermines the authenticity of research manuscripts and the journals in which they are published and compromises the integrity of the scientific process and the public regard for science.

Plagiarism violates the literary rights of individuals who are plagiarized and the property rights of copyright holders. Violation of literary or property rights may result in legal action against the individual(s) committing plagiarism. Although plagiarism has existed since the beginning of writing, it seems to be increasing because the World Wide Web (Internet) facilitates finding and copying the work of others. It is possible not only to plagiarize the works of others, but one's own work also falls under the purview of plagiarism through reuse of identical or nearly identical portions of manuscripts without acknowledgement or citation (Hendee, 2007).

The ten distinct forms of plagiarism are listed below:

Cloning, where the student submits work entirely copied from (or written by) someone else, is the most common and most severe, but also often the easiest to detect.

Control-C is similar except that it contains a mix of copied and original material.

Find and Replace is where material is copied but some words or phrases are altered to avoid detection.

Remixing is paraphrasing other material and stitching it together so as to look original.

Recycling is re-using one's own work and presenting it as new.

Hybrid plagiarism mixes cited and uncited material.

Mash up is where several different sources are copied without being cited.

The final three forms do not fit precisely into the traditional definition of plagiarism, but are relatively common forms of academic dishonesty.

404 Error is when an academician cites a non-existent sources.

Aggregating is using properly cited sources in a student's work that adds no additional material.

Re-tweeting is when a work is cited and presented as being paraphrased, but the paraphrase is too similar to the original text (Turnitin, 2012).

Effects of Plagiarism
If the evidence suggests that plagiarism may have occurred, the editor should contact the accused author(s), the author(s) whose work may have been plagiarized and the copyright holder of the original material if she/he is different from the author(s). The correspondence should include the alleged plagiarizing language and a copy of the original and suspected work. If all parties agree that plagiarism (whether intentional or unintentional) has occurred, a written letter of apology should be sent promptly by the offending author(s) to the editor and to the author(s) and copyright holder whose work has been plagiarized. If the offending work has been published, a notice of plagiarism, citing both the plagiarized and the offending articles and containing the exact text that has been plagiarized, should be published in the next available article of the journal in which the offending article was published. The plagiarizing authors must agree that all dissemination to the offending article will to be accompanied by the notice to plagiarism.

An allegation of plagiarism is a serious accusation and should never be taken lightly. On the other hand, self- policing is a major strength of the scientific community, and plagiarism should always be reported when it suspected to have occurred (Hendee, 2007).

Feminism and Research Ethics
Feminist social science research methods have been discussed for years, and there is an ongoing question of whether there is such a thing as a separate feminist methodology. Some argue that methodology is methodology, the approach

cannot be masculine or feminine. (Chafetz, 2004), or that there isn't a -distinctive feminist method of research (Harding, 1987, p.456). M. Margaret Fonow and Judith A. Cook, on the other hand, believe that there is a feminist methodology, which they state- involves the description, explanation, and justification of techniques used in feminist research and is an abstract classification that refers to a variety of methodological stances, conceptual approaches, and research strategies (2005, p.2213).

Recognition of the importance of using women's experiences as resources for social analysis has implications for social structures of education, laboratories, journals, learned societies, funding agencies and thus for social life in general.

Feminist theorists began criticizing positivist experimental approaches in the early 1970s, claiming that they were limited to living lives to a sequence of isolated variables that failed to account for the nuances of social life. Feminists were also among the first academics to call attention to the marginalization of women of color in academic study and to propose research methods to address this issue. (Crenshaw 1993)

Feminists conducting social science research have a tendency to choose methods which enable them to answer the questions they pose in a way that is true to their feminist values (Melinda, 2012).

Two scholars, namely, Carol Gilligan and Nel Nodding, epitomize the challenge of 20th century feminism to modernism's principle based models of moral theory. Although many others have contributed to a relationship-based ethics, Gilligan and Nodding are chiefly responsible for producing what are now recognized as alternative feminist approaches to the European frameworks organizing ethics around such principles as rights, duties, virtues, and consequences (Tong, 1993). Men and women often have different patterns of early experiences in the family, centering on attachment and separation, and hence may view the world differently. Gilligan insists that women's most sophisticated moral decision making is based on the value for relationship, not the value for principle (Preissle, 2007).

Gilligan explains the differences between how men and women make moral decisions and accounts for overlaps in their maturation by relying on psychodynamic (Chodorow, 1978) and psycho- developmental theories (Erikson, 1968; Levinson, 1978) of gender.

Women, according to Gilligan, begin their moral development interviews by asking more questions about the details of a decision, especially probing for the human relationships involved. As they reason through their choices and the justifications for these choices, they focus on relationships among people and not just the rules, norms, or laws that might operate in a given situation. Although aware of fairness as one priority in an ethical dilemma, women more commonly than men, privilege the value of caring. Among women, relationships are more likely to be conceptualized as connected networks or webs of reciprocities than as rule-governed hierarchies of authority and obedience among separate individuals (Preissle, 2007). Gilligan concludes that balancing rights and duties is a challenge for all adults, male and female, but men and women's ideals of care and fairness can never be achieved fully for everyone in any particular decision, but that care, responsibility, fairness, and rights all enter the mix when autonomous choices are to be made (ibid).

Gilligan's works were more directly approached by Nel Nodding in her formulations of caring beginning with *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* 1984 and 2013. Nodding begins by observing that contemporary ethics has been dominated by choices over the right normative principle, whether rights, justice, consequences, or something else, and by a focus on logical reasoning believed to contribute to making decisions based on the right principle. The feminine approach to ethics that Nodding endorses is rooted in the relationship of caring and being cared for. She emphasizes that "Relations, not individuals, are ontologically basic" to ethical decision (p. xiii). When caring must be prescribed as an obligation or duty, then the relation is with social expectations and not the other, not the *thou,* and what Nodding calls natural caring is diverted into something like the virtue principle: people behave in a caring manner because that is the *right* thing to do (Preissle, 2007).

Nodding labels her endeavor a "practical ethics" conceptualized from what she believes women commonly do when faced with ethical dilemmas. Although they may consider principles and reasons through logical decisions, women also consider the feelings involved and the relationships among the people in the situation. The caring relationship involves the *one-caring* and the *cared-for* in an interaction to which both contribute, but often asymmetrically.

Men as well as women develop the capacity to care, but Nodding views caring as the predominant response of women to ethical decisions. She then takes the human commitment to care as a framework for an *ethical ideal* that guides

decision making. The ethical ideal is an image people have of themselves as the one-caring, whose priority is to maintain relationship "guided in what we do by three considerations: how we feel, what the other expects of us, and what the situational relationship requires of us" (p. 46).

Caring is what Nodding calls a "constrained ideal", riddled with the guilt aroused from the necessity of selecting among competing priorities and from facing the conflicts inherent to everyday living, but sustained by the joy of positive feelings from and intense engagement with another.

Thus, both Nodding and Gilligan shift the focus of ethics from principles and argumentation to relationships and exploration of particulars. Neither gives up principles and arguments because consideration of both is necessary for deciding what is in the best interest of those in relationship and for weighing the conditions and particulars that contribute to competing priorities (Preissle, 2007).

Nodding and Gilligan together offer a feminist ethics based in relationship that challenges the principled ethics of rights, justice, consequences, and such. Feminist researchers from a variety of disciplines have tried to assure that their studies serve women's purposes by including participants in the formulation, planning, conduct, and analysis of work. Some scholars may formulate this as a kind of feminist participatory action research (PAR), but other consider it integral to the feminism they practice (Tolman & Brydon-Miller, 2001), Fine (1992).

Importance of Research Ethics
There are several reasons why it is important to adhere to ethical norms in research.

First, norms promote the aims of research, such as knowledge, truth, and avoidance of error. For example, prohibitions against fabricating, falsifying, or misrepresenting research data promote the truth and minimize error.

Second, since research often involves a great deal of cooperation and coordination among many different people in different disciplines and institutions, ethical standards promote the values that are essential to collaborative work, such as trust, accountability, mutual respect and fairness. For example, many ethical norms in research, such as guidelines for authorship, copyright and patenting policies, data sharing policies and confidentiality rules in peer review are designed to protect intellectual property interests while

encouraging collaboration. Most researchers want to receive credit for their contributions and do not want to have their ideas stolen or disclosed prematurely.

Third, many of the ethical norms help to ensure that researchers can be held accountable to the public. For instance, policies on research misconduct, conflicts of interests, the human protections and animal care and use are necessary in order to make sure that researchers who are funded by public money can be held accountable to the public.

Fourth, ethical norms in research also help to build public support for research. People are more likely to fund a research project if they can trust the quality and integrity of research.

Finally, many of the norms of research promote a variety of other important moral and social values, such as social responsibility, human rights, animal welfare, compliance with the law, and public health and safety. Ethical lapses in research can significantly harm human and animal subjects, students, and the public. For example, a researcher who fabricates data in a clinical trial may harm or even kill patients, and a researcher who fails to abide by regulations and guidelines relating to radiation or biological safety may jeopardize his health and safety or the health and safety of staff and students (Resnik, 2015).

Conclusion

For a good and valued feminist research ethical principles and methodologies are to be followed and plagiarism avoided. Thus a nation, a state and society can develop towards sustainable gender development by getting the fruits of good and ethical research without plagiarism. The academic research endeavor is built on a foundation of trust. Researchers trust that the results reported by others are sound. Society trusts that the results of research reflect an honest attempt by scientists and other researchers and that they describe the world precisely and without unfairness. But this trust will endure only if the scientific society devotes itself to exemplifying and transmitting the values associated with ethical research conduct.

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