

“The centre cannot hold”, issues of self-plagiarism in Pakistan*Ghazala Irfan Tabbasum**Govt. Postgraduate College for Women Rawalpindi, Pakistan***Type:** Full paper**Section:** Misconduct and challenges in higher education**Abstract:**

Higher Education Commission (HEC) was established in 2002 with an aim towards policy making and setting quality standards in line with international standards for higher education institutions in Pakistan. It has rendered commendable services to develop the research culture within Pakistan and a professionally skilled intellectual task force in various fields of human interest. It has also generated fierce competition among universities for higher HEC ranking. Universities compete for HEC funding for organizing international conferences, workshops and seminars on regular basis. Similarly, educationists, scholars and teachers remain engaged in doing and presenting/publishing their research. In this fiercely competitive environment quality of research and ethical practices by researchers, have both been compromised. As research culture and related concerns are relatively new in the Pakistani context, no significant documentation/study/book exists on plagiarism. This study is original in its argument that there is a complete lack of coordination, and no shared and mutually accessible data of research presented on different forums exists. This results in the practice of self-plagiarism, i.e. same research by a researcher is being presented or published at multiple forums as new, in complete disregard to HEC's rule against self-plagiarism. This paper investigates perceptions and practices of self-plagiarism within the framework of HEC's policy of plagiarism. Using triangulation as research method, structured interviews of five academics serving at different universities in Pakistan and a questionnaire administered to fifty participants, a purposive sample of researchers enrolled in universities, have been employed to collect data. Analysis of data shows that phenomenon of self-plagiarism exists though perceptions and practices vary within research scholars. The study also evidences almost 100% support in favour of establishing a Central Coordinating Unit (CCU) under HEC which should collect, organize and share databank of research work being presented on different forums and published in research journals to curb the hitherto free practice of self-plagiarism. It also raises concerns if similar phenomenon exists on an international level and how does international community address it.

Keywords: HEC, human resource development in education, self –plagiarism.