Prof. Dr. Abd A'la, M.Ag, Rector of UINSA Surabaya.

Few years back, when I hosted "Modern Islamic Thoughts" course in one of the doctoral degree in an Islamic higher institution, I assigned the students to make a presentation paper about a topic that suited their educational background.

From one of the students, a topic on Fazlur Rahman's educational concept was proposed. I happen to be quite familiar with this topic and on this Pakistani Muslim intellectual because my doctoral dissertation also discussed this controversial icon. So I reminded him that studies related to this academic has been conducted many times. I was worried that he will run out of new things to be discussed from this point of view, so I suggested him to find other scholar or other educational thoughts to write about. Yet, he insisted on the topic and persisted with his work.

When the paper was submitted and I started to mark my students' assignment, I was shocked because not only did he unable to explain and explore Fazlur Rahman's thoughts, but also his writing was mostly taken from a book about Fazlur Rahman's thoughts. When I confronted him about the situation, he blamed me for not reminding and letting him know about plagiarism before hand.

Let's take another case. About three weeks ago, I tried to use an application called Viper – a free anti plagiarism tool. As a trial, I used one of my paper which was posted some time ago on the front page of UIN Sunan Ampel official website to be scanned. The article discussed the scientific paradigm of integrated twin tower, which copyright belongs to our university. Again, I was shocked by the result of the scanning because some unknown individuals have taken some of the paragraphs in my essay and posted it on their university website. This situation disadvantaged us as the inventor and owner of the concept.

War against Plagiarism

Plagiarism has become one common thing to do in our society. Some of the people who plagiarize might not even think that it is considered to be a "sin" in academic life. They see it as the "tip of the iceberg" - an action with little effect or even no effect at all, while other scholars see plagiarism as a big mass of solid ice which can destroy the work of some and disrespect others.

For this tragic situation, we – scholars and academics of UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya – have no other choice than to fight against this phenomenon. Plagiarism, an act of taking other people's words, sentences, paragraphs or ideas without giving any credit to the owner, is a degrading crime lower than stealing people's belongings.

In my opinion, plagiarism is equal to corruption. "Conventional burglar" - to some extent - usually steal things because they do not have other source of income to feed the family or because they have to do it "or else". However, plagiarist "steal" words and sentences with a full sense of right and wrong and he or she are most probably aware that the conduct is illegal. He plagiarize probably because he wanted short cuts and thus – in my consideration – a plagiarist is similar to a corruptor.

Not only that, taking other people's work and claiming it as his/hers, is also considered to be an act of intellectual-look-alike. He ignores the rules and gives little or even no credit to the owner of the idea, proudly declares that the piece is his. Plagiarism is an arrogant deed which disrespects other academics. It not only a disgrace but even more degrading the actor himself and the world of science.

In the context of UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, plagiarism is against the academic values, spirituality, and moral conduct of the University. In UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, the value of competitiveness should be held on to by every member of the faculty as well as Islamic spirituality values qualities of a religious character should be intrinsically embedded in the academic life of the faculty.