

Awareness of Plagiarism: A Study

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Abstract:

Plagiarism is a highly complex phenomenon. The situation is multi-dimensional and often complex with no simple cause. One of the factors influencing plagiarism could be that student's do not have a clear understanding of what constitutes plagiarism and how it can be avoided. The purpose of this study is to highlight the seriousness of plagiarism among research scholars in Universities. It also explores the student's level of awareness of plagiarism. A total of 150 questionnaires were randomly distributed and 142 filled up questionnaires were received back with a response rate of 94.66%.

Keywords: Plagiarism, Duplicate text

Introduction:

Unethical issues are quickly increasing and in the future, such issues in gathering information, cooperation between scientists and in publications will get more complicated and more difficult to deal with. The goal of research is to produce knowledge and the aim of producing knowledge is to improve human situation while doing research using unethical or inappropriate means leads to scientific corruption. So, no doubt there is plagiarism in the scientific community although it is against scientific principles. Plagiarism is a controversial issue and it is increasingly widespread among students. Unlimited access to scientific ideas, findings, methods and results is not compatible with the restricting regulations of copyright and this has made for more plagiarism. Plagiarism is one of the most important issues of Universities in recent years.

Plagiarism was a rare phenomenon until 1990, but it has spread across the world in recent years. Plagiarism refers to the stealing words or ideas that are higher than the level of public knowledge. The word plagiarism was derived from the word "plagarius" meaning robber, kidnapper, misleader and literary thief. Plagiarism is an unethical activity in scientific writing. It may occur in different forms: stealing parts of texts and stealing ideas. The rate of plagiarism is different in various areas of research. More and more students and researchers are turning to internet for solutions and shortcuts for writing research papers, assignments and thesis.

Literature Review:

Oyewole, Olawale, Afeez Akinkunmi Rasheed and Ogunsina, Solomon Tosin (2018) examined the awareness, perception and attitude towards plagiarism by distance learning students in University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Descriptive survey research method was adopted. Two- stage random sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 226. Results revealed that most of the respondents had a high level of awareness of the various acts that constitute plagiarism. It also showed that a significant number of the distance learners had a negative attitude towards plagiarism. . It was recommended that the management of the distance learning and the University should develop a plagiarism policy that will be given to all students.

Grgic, Ivana Hebrang (2017) conducted a survey to find out the depth of knowledge about plagiarism among the students of Library and Information Science at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Science, University of Zagreb. The main conclusion of this survey was that ethical issues are not part of education curricula. Students should learn about authorship criteria and they should use plagiarism detection software more often.

Strittmatter, Connie and Bratton, Virginia K (2014) made a study to evaluate the effect of library guidance from a broader perspective by examining the pre- and posttest (instruction) levels of student's perceptions toward plagiarism ethics. The study used multidimensional ethic scale (MES) developed by Reidenbach and Robin which is commonly used in business ethics research. The study found that the MES is a reliable tool to measure changes in ethical perceptions of plagiarism. Results indicated that students had higher posttest perceptions of plagiarism ethics that they did prior to library instruction.

Razera, Diana (2011) in a study examined the awareness, attitudes and perception of plagiarism among students and teachers. It consisted of paper and online surveys as well as semi structured interviews. Results showed that the issue of plagiarism was not entirely clear both for students and teachers. Students and teachers from both groups had the same opinion in many topics but in some other topics their opinion diverged greatly. The results were taken into account to consider the possibility that even though plagiarism was a common issue, there were some differences on what is allowed and not allowed in terms of code and text plagiarism.

Objectives of the study:

- To understand the students opinion on plagiarism
- To know the students awareness on plagiarism
- To examine the citation styles used in their researcher
- To understand the awareness of anti-plagiarism software
- To find out the problems faced by research scholars while presenting the thesis.

Methodology

A well-structured questionnaire was designed to collect primary data. A total of 150 questionnaires were distributed among research scholars of University of Kerala and 142 filled in questionnaires were returned giving overall response rate of 94.66%.

Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1. Gender wise Distribution

Sl No:	Gender	No: of Respondents	Percentage
1	Male	87	61.26 %
2	Female	55	38.73 %

From the above Table, it is evident that 87 (61.2%) are Male respondents and 55 (38.73 %) are Female respondents.

Table 2. Awareness of Plagiarism

Sl No:	Awareness on Plagiarism	No: of Respondents	Percentage
1	Yes	142	100 %
2	No	-	-

Table 2 shows that 142 (100%) of respondents are aware of Plagiarism.

Table 3. Opinions on Plagiarism

Sl No:	Statements	Agree	Disagree
1	Cutting and pasting the paragraph	-	142 (100%)
2	Composing a new paragraph by taking words from original source and putting them together with words of your own	69 (48.59%)	73 (51.40%)

3	Paraphrasing without attribution	10 (7.04%)	46 (32.39%)
4	Quoting the Paragraph by placing it in block format with the source cited in text and in the bibliography	128 (90.14%)	14 (9.85%)

Table 3 shows that 142 (100%) respondents disagreed on the opinion for cutting and pasting the paragraph. 69 (48.59%) respondents agreed for composing a new paragraph by taking words from original source and putting them together with words of your own and 128 (90.14%) respondents agreed that quoting the paragraph by placing it in block format with the source cited in text and in the bibliography.

Table 4. Use of Citation Styles

SI No:	Citation Style	No: of Respondents	Percentage
1	APA style	83	58.45%
2	MLA style	51	35.91%
3	Chicago style	8	5.63%

Table 4 indicate that 83 (58.45%) respondents are using APA citation style, 51 (35.91%) are using MLA style and 8 (5.63%) are using Chicago style.

Table 5. Sources through which Citation style known

SI No:	Sources	No: of Respondents	Percentage
1	Guides/ Research Supervisors	121	85.21%
2	Co- Research Scholars	14	9.85%
3	Internet	5	3.52%
4	Friends	2	1.40%

Table 5 shows that 121 (85.21%) respondents indicates that they learned about citation styles through their Research Supervisors/Guides and 14 (9.85%) respondents indicated that they learned about it through co-research scholars.

Table 6. Awareness of Anti-Plagiarism Software Tools

SI No:	Awareness	No: of Respondents	Percentage
1	Yes	139	97.88%
2	No	3	2.11%

Table 6 denotes that 139 (97.88%) respondents are familiar with anti- plagiarism tools whereas 3 (2.11%) respondents are not aware of the anti plagiarism tools.

Table 7. Problems faced while presenting the Thesis

SI No:	Problems	No: of Respondents	Percentage
1	Lack of Language skills	79	55.63%
2	Lack of Writing skills	51	35.91%
3	Lack of Motivation	8	5.63%
4	Lack of Time	4	2.81%

Table 7 shows that 79 (55.63%) respondents are facing the problem of language skills, whereas 51 (35.91%) respondents are facing the problem of writing skills.

Findings

Major findings are as follows

- 87 (61.26%) are male respondents and 55 (38.73%) are female respondents.
- Majority of the respondents are aware of Plagiarism.
- Majority of the respondents disagreed with the opinion for cutting and pasting the paragraph and 128 (90.14%) respondents agreed with quoting the paragraph by placing it in block format with the source cited in text and in the bibliography.
- Majority of respondents are using APA Citation style.
- 121 (85.21%) respondents indicated that they learned about citation styles through their guides.
- Majority of the respondents are aware of anti-plagiarism tools.
- 79 (55.63%) respondents are facing the problem of language skills and 51 (35.91%) respondents are facing the problem of writing skills.

Conclusion

Plagiarism is a great time issue of concern and it is very much common everywhere. Higher education is experiencing heightened reported cases of plagiarism all over the world. UGC has recommended Universities across the country to use anti-plagiarism software to detect copied material. It has recommended an anti-plagiarism software called 'Turnitin' to check intentional or non-intentional plagiarism in research. UGC has formulated guidelines for research scholars that they should submit a soft copy of their Thesis to INFLIBNET for open access through ETDs (Electronic Thesis and Dissertations) over the Internet to avoid duplication of research work. Every research scholar should publish two paper in reputed Indian Journals during the course of his/her doctoral research to make

certain that a portion of thesis available in open access and if there is any duplication, it may observed.

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