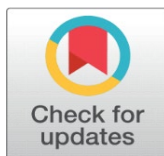
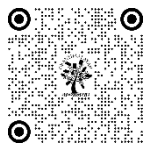


EXPLORING ATTITUDE TOWARDS PLAGIARISM AMONG RESEARCH SCHOLARS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Plagiarism is increasingly prevalent and major issue in scholarly writing, education and scientific world. Scholars are looking for speedy solutions when writing research papers, theses and dissertations. This study explores the impact of faculty and gender on attitude towards plagiarism of research scholars. This study was conducted at the University Level. For this study quantitative approach and survey as the design were adopted. Data was collected with the help of questionnaire developed by Martina Mavrinac, Gordana Brumini, Lidija Bilic-Zulle and Mladen Petroveckki (2010). Two-way ANOVA in this study revealed that faculty of research scholars had a significant impact on attitude towards plagiarism at the university level. However there was no significant impact of gender and interaction of gender and faculty of research scholars on attitude towards plagiarism at the university level. Based on these findings, it is recommended that research scholars should be made aware about plagiarism and ways of avoiding it. University administrators should frame the clear and strict policies for reducing the extent and influence of plagiarism.

Keywords: Plagiarism, Faculty, Gender, Attitude, Factors and Recommendations.

1. INTRODUCTION

Plagiarism is a controversial and growing issue in higher education and research. It is an issue that has concerned countless academic establishments across the globe. According to the American Association of University Professors, "Plagiarism means taking over the ideas, methods or written words of another without acknowledgment and with the intention that they be taken the work of the deceiver". Plagiarism is deception because it fakes the scientific credit. "To do this (plagiarism) overtly demonstrates your brashness. To do it covertly amounts to cowardice. To do it efficiently qualifies as an expertise; since ultimate success of a theft essentially lies in the theft passing undetected" (Sapatnekar, 2004). Plagiarism is morally wrong and academically dishonest. Prevalence of plagiarism is precisely not known however some studies have reported that 30% of students admit using others thoughts or words in projects and assignments without appropriate acknowledgement and 20% of students admit doing so with some portions of text (Jereb et al. 2018; Christensen Hughes and McCabe, 2006; Underwood and Szabo, 2003). Recognizing attitude towards plagiarism will provide an insight whether the research scholar will plagiarize or not and will provide an essential basis for educating researchers about responsible conduct of research and guiding them about ensuring high ethical standards in research and deterring them from plagiarism. Plagiarism is very intricate phenomenon and there is no single

explanation for why students engage in this misconduct. In fact number of researchers have attributed plagiarism to numerous factors including lack of knowledge about academic integrity (Pupovac et al, 2010), imperfect knowledge of the plagiarism and the ways of avoiding it (Howard and Davies, 2009), unfamiliarity with the appropriate manner of citing, quoting, referencing and paraphrasing (Park, 2003). Plagiarism is an academic theft and breach of the code of ethics. "Plagiarism is using other people's work and ideas without giving proper credit to the original source, thus violating the rights of the original author(s) to their intellectual outputs" (The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity). Plagiarism is increasingly widespread in research and education and if it continues the research will lack reliability, originality, uniqueness and will become the replication of previous studies and research scholars would lack research and writing skills. It approves the idea of laziness and disapproves the idea of uniqueness. By considering plagiarism as an ordinary and normal activity the security of scientific knowledge will get affected. Under such conditions no researcher will bother about conducting original, novel and innovative research rather every researcher will use the knowledge produced by the researchers in the past and will destroy all the knowledge. Such irresponsible and irrational behavior will shatter the foundation of scientific advancement and if a nation loses its stable scientific base, it will continue to remain in past accomplishments and will not experience advancement and progress (Behesti, 2011). Plagiarism is an academic misconduct which is appearing as a threat to generation of new knowledge and information therefore efforts should be made to prevent and curb this menace. In fact number of researchers have put forward numerous recommendations for curbing this menace like the educational institutions should organize workshops, seminars and symposiums on article writing, plagiarism & its forms, penalties & the means of avoiding it, use of reference management software's, paraphrasing, summarizing, development of researching and communication skills, and fair publishing to improve student's awareness about academic integrity, honesty, integrity and ethics which are key factors in determining their attitude towards plagiarism (Jereb et al, 2018). Students should be made aware about how technologies can be used to detect and avoid any breach of academic integrity and institutions should focus on how to prevent plagiarism than on how to detect it for betterment of upcoming scientific practice (Jereb et al, 2018). Educational institutions should be mindful and create consciousness about academic ethics, intellectual integrity by creating a climate where academic integrity is valued and should prepare, publish and implement strict academic policies and punishments for the infringement of academic integrity. Both society and educational system should share responsibility in educating students about integrity, morality and ethics through their early stages of education this will help them to enter higher education with certain set of values wherein these set of values needs to be promoted (Jereb et al, 2018). Use of latest plagiarism detection software's should be encouraged within institutions for the management and detection of plagiarism to discourage students from committing this offence. Teachers should train students in internalizing honesty in actions, communication and behavior and should structure such assignments which require high order thinking and writing skills rather than copy and paste of information to avoid plagiarism and push students to generate original and innovative ideas ethically. Universities can encourage students to generate original and innovative ideas by giving rewards and awards to them on the basis of their performance in course work examinations and for publishing high quality work. The focus of students should be shifted from quantity to quality. Students should be taught that reference should be given immediately after using someone else's opinion and there is no problem in quoting, paraphrasing after giving proper citation. Students should be assisted in presenting their own point this could help them to acquire the voice of an author. Within the past two decades, scholars have been conducting researches to determine the attitude towards plagiarism in a global perspective and the goal of this study is to contribute to this debate at University Level.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The basic aim of the study is to explore the impact of faculty, gender and the interaction of gender and faculty on attitude towards plagiarism of research scholars at the University Level. The following three hypotheses guided the study:

HYPOTHESIS 1: There is no significant impact of faculty on attitude towards plagiarism of research scholars at university level.

HYPOTHESIS 2: There is no significant impact of gender on attitude towards plagiarism of research scholars at university level.

HYPOTHESIS 3: There is no significant impact of interaction of gender and faculty on attitude towards plagiarism of research scholars at university level.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

SAMPLE

Paper and pencil survey was carried at the University of Kashmir. Research scholars from three faculties of the University took part in the questionnaire survey. Research scholars were verbally informed about the nature of survey and they were assured of anonymity. A sample of 561 research scholars (Table 2) (290 (51.69%) males and 271 (48.30%) females) participated in the study. More than half (59.35%) of the participants were from science faculty, 12.47% were from behavioral science faculty and 28.16% were from social science faculty (Table 1).

Table 1. Distribution of respondents by Faculty

Serial No.	Faculty	Study Population (SP)	Sample Size (SS)	%age Sample Size
1.	Science	667	333	59.35%
2.	Behavioral Science	141	070	12.47%
3.	Social Science	316	158	28.16%
	Total	1124	561	

Table 2. Distribution of respondents by Gender

Serial No.	Faculty	SP (Males)	SS (Males)	%age SS (Males)	SP (Females)	SS (Females)	%age SS (Females)
1.	Science	343	171	30.48%	324	162	28.87%
2.	Behavioral Science	57	28	4.99%	84	42	7.48%
3.	Social Science	181	91	16.22%	135	67	11.94%
	Total	581	290	51.69%	543	271	48.29%

SP = Study Population, SS = Sample Size

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT AND STATISTICAL PROCEDURE

The questionnaire that was used in the study to assess the attitude of research scholars towards plagiarism was the one developed and standardized by Martina Mavrinc, Gordana Brumini, Lidija Bilic-Zulle and Mladen Petroveci (2010) first in Croatian language, and later translated by Martina and others in English language. The information blank capturing questions referring to faculty and gender of respondents as demographic variables was prepared by the investigator herself. All the statistical calculations were performed with the help of SPSS 20. Two-way ANOVA was used to investigate the main effect of independent variables and also the interaction between them. Tuckey's test (post-hoc comparisons) was used to investigate which faculties mean score on attitude towards plagiarism differ significantly.

4. RESULTS

Table 3: Main and interactive effect of gender and faculty of research scholars on attitude towards plagiarism.

Source of Variance	SS	df	MSS	F	Sig.
Faculty	1.936	2	.968	5.267	.005
Gender	.038	1	.038	.208	.648
Faculty * Gender	.031	2	.016	.085	.918
Total	4873.889	561			
Corrected Total	103.957	560			

a. R Squared = .019 (Adjusted R Squared = .010), SS = Sum of Squares, MSS = Mean Sum of Squares

Table 4: A Post-Hoc Comparison of the faculties of research scholars on Attitude towards Plagiarism

Mean	Std. Deviation	N	(I) Faculty	(J) Faculty	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
2.8383	.38982	158	Social Science	Behavioural Science	-.019	.063	1.000
				Science	-.126*	.042	.008
2.8626	.55671	70	Behavioural Science	Social Science	.019	.063	1.000
				Science	-.107	.057	.191
2.9640	.41360	333	Science	Social Science	.126*	.042	.008
				Behavioural Science	.107	.057	.191

*The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

5. DISCUSSION

Two-way ANOVA (Table 3) was used to study the impact of Gender, Faculty and Interaction of Gender and Faculty of research scholars. The results revealed that there was significant impact of Faculty on attitude towards plagiarism of research scholars. In order to know which faculties mean score on attitude towards plagiarism differ significantly, the data was analyzed using (post-hoc comparisons) Tuckey's HSD test (Table 4). This result arises from the fact that science research scholars have displayed less worry about using previous descriptions of a method and have reported that sometimes they feel more tempted to plagiarize. They have agreed that self-plagiarism is not harmful and plagiarism is not a big deal and the plagiarized portions of paper may be brushed aside if the paper is of significant scientific advantage. Science research scholars have acknowledged that sometimes they copy few sentences in order to become motivated for more writing and they are not ashamed of copying few sentences from their previous papers. The finding of the study in Table 4 shows that science research scholars possess stronger attitude towards plagiarism as compared to social science research scholars. The finding of this study is consistent with (Ali, 2021; Issrani et al. 2021; Menon et al. 2019; Nwoye et al. 2019; Zhang et al. 2017) and contradicts with (Chandrasegaran, 2000; Qaisar et al. 2016). The results revealed that there was no significant impact of Gender (Table 3) on attitude towards plagiarism of research scholars. The finding of this study is consistent with (Alimorad, 2020; Bokosmaty et al. 2019; Qaisar et al. 2016; Ellery, 2008; Bilic-Zulle et al. 2005) and contradicts with (Issrani et al. 2021; Nwoye et al. 2019; Zhang et al. 2017; Walcott, 2016; Faiezah (2009)). The results revealed that there was no significant impact of interaction of faculty and gender (Table 3) on attitude towards plagiarism of research scholars.

6. CONCLUSIONS

It can be concluded that plagiarism is growing and is gradually becoming an element of educational and research culture, hence it is necessary for educational organizations to establish coordinated framework for fighting this nuisance and increase awareness by educating, informing and teaching students about plagiarism and rules related to it. Research scholar's awareness of academic integrity, research ethics, originality and honesty plays an important part in determining their attitude towards plagiarism. Thus it is imperative for the educational system to educate students about integrity, ethics, and morality from the very beginning of their educational career. When students enter universities they already possess a certain set of values wherein the teachers have to uphold the level of honesty in such a manner that will acknowledge the regulated area. It is also important for the general academic setting to work on the factors that promote this nuisance and employ strategies which can curb this menace to combat this practice. Without focusing too much on the detection and punitive measures focus should be given to reasons behind this type of behavior and it should be stopped from initially occurring because if it occurs once, and is left uncorrected it will continue throughout the researcher's career.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Universities should incorporate such subjects in the coursework (Pre-Ph.D. exam) wherein researchers could be educated about plagiarism and research ethics. University policy makers and administrators have to show sincerity in addressing the problem of plagiarism by raising awareness about its possible consequences and by adopting strict policies against plagiarism. This awareness would help the students and researchers to steer away from the act of plagiarism, as it would have horrible and extensive repercussions on their reputation. Adoption of the clear and strict policies against this act will necessarily shape students behaviour and help them in acknowledging plagiarism as an immoral act. If plagiarism would be considered as an ordinary activity it will impact the security of research based knowledge and spoil the foundation of scientific progress. Awareness about plagiarism among researchers will also lead to healthier admiration and better approval for the new and original work and thus improving the quality and progress of research as well. Universities' should conduct workshops to educate and guide their scholars in using the information ethically and legally and train them in scientific ethical writing and make them understand that trust and honesty are the essential elements of research ethics and plagiarism shakes these ethics and builds an environment of mistrust that snags scientific progress.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author declared no conflict of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and publication of this article.

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