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Understanding plagiarism: Awareness, attitudes, and implications for research integrity among scholars

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Abstract

Present study is an attempt to identify the attitudes and perceptions of the research scholars towards the awareness on plagiarism for quality research output. Research is a process of conducting enquiry to create new knowledge. In the process of writing research papers and books, authors tend to copy existing content from other subjects without paying due acknowledgement to the original work. This results in violating copyright law and plagiarism. The best way to maintain quality in research is to pay gratification and acknowledge to the original work.

Keywords: Plagiarism, research scholar, attitude, perception, UGC

Introductions

Institution of higher education generates graduates with high skills and fitness to serve up society through integrity, morals and professionalism (Kodikar and Kumara, 2015). Consequently, learners must move to the society as straight forward in crediting and acknowledging the writers for their improvements. Before the advent of internet, plagiarizing something was tedious for the reason that learners would most likely duplicate text by hand from a book, journal, encyclopedia, etc. (Wikipedia, 2015) ^[10]. With the advent of World Wide Web and the Internet as made educational activities trouble-free and speedy (Anderson, 2012) ^[2]. The internet has offered effortless access to a massive amount of information and hence facilitating the entire “copy and paste” tendency. It is very simple to duplicate other's work or part of work and presenting as own without giving proper quote. These days plagiarism is a biggest problem in the academic environment in the world over (Williams, 2002) ^[11]. “Plagiarism refers to make use of someone else's ideas, work, information etc. without giving proper attribution to the author. This issue is known for many years and it has always been a challenge for the teachers at universities and all schools” (Razera, 2011) ^[7]. Today University Grant Commission (U.G.C.) is creating alert of all Universities and academic institutions about plagiarism check and Kuvempu University is using Anti plagiarism software “Urkund” for checking plagiarism in research paper/ thesis.

Review Literature

Kumari and S Lakshmi (2015) ^[3] conducted a study to investigate the awareness on plagiarism among research scholars of Sri Venkateshwara University, Tirupati. The findings of the study indicates that 123 (100%) respondents are aware of the plagiarism, 86 (69.91%) respondents are known the citation style formats, 121 (98.37%) respondents are aware of anti-plagiarism tools, 123 (100%) respondents are aware of the punishments for plagiarism 65 (52.84%) respondents are facing the problems of language skills, 32 (26.61%) respondents are facing the problem of writing skills.

Tripathi and others (2015) ^[9] carried out a study to find out the awareness about plagiarism among research scholars in Hindustan University Chennai. It was found that 65.3% respondents do not know about Plagiarism, 31.3% of the respondents do not aware of self-plagiarism is punishable or not, 21.5% of the respondents are aware of the fact that Copyright infringement and plagiarism. Results shows that majority of respondents are not aware about it and they are publishing their own work second time. The study recommended that need to arrange awareness program regarding plagiarism. Continual efforts to educate research scholars about the ills and consequences of plagiarism are desirable.

Strittmatter and Bratton (2014) ^[8] conducted a study to evaluate the effect of library

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instruction from a broader perspective by examining the pre- and posttest (Instruction) levels of students' perceptions toward plagiarism ethics. This study highlights the potential impact that library plagiarism instruction can have on the ethical perceptions of students in an academic setting. Results indicate that students had higher posttest perceptions of plagiarism ethics than they did prior to library instruction. These results suggest that library instruction was effective and had a meaningful impact on students' perceptions toward plagiarism ethics.

Maina, Maina and Jauro (2014) [4] reported that 90% of students have plagiarized at one time in the past, 68% have included textbooks and other sources in the bibliography of assignments, 63% of the students do not have full awareness of plagiarism, majority of students plagiarize from the Internet (90%), 20% claimed they have never been told about plagiarism and how to avoid it, while 17% have an idea about it. The survey revealed that the highest proportion of students disagree that punishment is fair for Plagiarists, 42% (30% not strongly, while 12% strongly) disagreed, stating that the rules are too strict and thus the punishment would be unfair.

Ahmadi and Sonkar, (2015) [1] jointly conducted a study to investigate and explore the awareness of plagiarism and fair use among the doctoral students. It was found that 98.4% research scholars are aware about copyright, 62% of research scholars knows that copyright is the legal right of the author, 80% of research scholars are aware that both print publication and e-resources are protected under copyright, 88% of researchers are aware about the term plagiarism, 72% of the researchers are aware that plagiarism is an academic dishonesty, 66% of the researchers are aware about fair use. The finding of this study reveals that maximum number of researchers is aware of copyright.

Pant and Negi (2015) [5] carried out a study to identify the cause and awareness of the scholarly community in institutes of higher education toward the issue of academic dishonesty. The study used questionnaire based survey method for data collection, distributed to research scholars pertaining to the faculty of science and social science of Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University Lucknow. The results show that the learners are aware of the issue of plagiarism and academic dishonesty and recommends mission mode action for awareness of students and faculty towards the issue of fair use and plagiarism. It has also been emphasized for all Indian universities to design a proper mechanism and honor code for all academic outputs to be channelized through review and anti-plagiarism system.

Veena G (2019) carried out a study is to examine the research scholars' perception and attitude towards plagiarism. The research methodology of this study is survey method was conducted using a well-structured questionnaire. The findings of the study shows that 40 (66.66%) respondents are aware of the plagiarism during course work, 35 (58.34%) of respondents were aware of their institution's policies on plagiarism, 48 (80.00%) of respondents are agreed on the opinion that paraphrasing the ideas of others without documentation. 37 (61.66%) of respondents are facing the problems of lack of language skills, 18 (30.00%) respondents are facing the problem of lack of writing skills, The study recommended that The

Universities and libraries can organize various orientation programmes, workshops, ect, for research scholars as well as for other graduate and post graduate students in order to increase their plagiarism awareness.

Objectives

- To ascertain the level of awareness among research scholars regarding plagiarism.
- To ascertain their level of familiarity with the concept of plagiarism?
- To examine the current awareness of plagiarism among the Research Scholars
- Make recommendations as to how higher education institutions can improve Research Scholars awareness on plagiarism.

Scope and Limitations

The scope of the study focuses on the Understanding Plagiarism: Awareness, Attitudes, and Implications for Research Integrity among Scholars. The study restricted to Kuvempu University Research Scholars.

Methodology

A good research design provides a detailed outline of how to carry out investigation; how to collect data, what instruments to be used and how the data can be analyzed. In this study a well-structured questionnaire is used to assess the attitudes, opinion and the perceptions of the respondents towards the Plagiarism awareness. To accomplish the above objectives of the study, a well-structured questionnaire distributed among 110 research scholars in Kuvempu University, total number of 85 filled in questionnaire received. The collected data were classified, analyzed and tabulated by using statistical methods. The present study is limited to research scholar of Kuvempu University main campus.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Gender

Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Male	53	62.36%
Female	32	37.64%
Total	85	100.00%

The table 1 shows that out of 85 respondents, 53 (62.36%) of respondents were male and 32 (37.64%) were female.

Table 2: Awareness on plagiarism

Awareness	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes during course work	55	64.71%
Yes during Post graduation	14	16.47%
I studied it voluntarily for my studies	16	18.82%
Total	85	100.00%

Table 2 depicts that 55 (64.71%) respondents are aware of the plagiarism during course work, while 16 (18.82%) of respondents studied it voluntarily for their studies and 14 (16.47%) are aware of the plagiarism during Post graduation.

Table 3: Current level of understanding of plagiarism

Level	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Very Strong	9	10.58%
Strong	35	41.18%
Fair	27	31.76%
Weak	8	9.41%
Very Weak	6	7.07%
Total	85	100.00%

Table 3 indicates that 35 (41.18%) of respondents are strongly understand the term plagiarism, followed by 27 (31.76%) are fairly, and only 06 (7.07%) are very weakly understand the term plagiarism.

Table 4: Opinions on plagiarism

Opinions	Agree	Disagree
Changing the words around in a quote and then using them without documentation	62 (72.94%)	23 (27.06%)
Using information that you consider common knowledge without citation	30 (35.29%)	55 (64.71%)
Taking ideas from several of one person's writings and citing it every time, not just once	17 (20.00%)	68 (80.00%)
Using information found on a Web site. Citing the source is not necessary	61 (71.76%)	24 (28.24%)
Paraphrasing the ideas of others without documentation	68 (80.00%)	17 (20.00%)
Total	85	100.00%

Table 4 demonstrates that 68 (80.00%) of respondents are agreed on the opinion that paraphrasing the ideas of others without documentation while 62 (72.94%) respondents agreed that Changing the words around in a quote and then using them without documentation, 68 (80.00%) respondents are disagreed on the opinion that taking ideas from several of one person's writings and citing it every time, not just once, 61 (71.76%) respondents are agreed that using information found on a Web site. Citing the source is not necessary

Table 5: Reasons to plagiarize

Reasons	No. of Respondents	Percentage
They don't have time to take notes and use their own words to explain their ideas.	5	05.88%
They are not interested in the assignment; therefore, they don't want to waste time doing the work.	1	1.17%
It is easy to copy and paste from the internet	11	12.94%
Their English is not good enough to express their ideas.	35	41.19%
The original sources (articles, books, and other information) are too difficult to understand, so they copy the words.	17	20.00%
They don't consider plagiarism to be wrong.	16	18.82%
Total	85	100.00%

Looking now at the reasons for which research scholars plagiarize as mentioned in above table, the most popular answer 35 (41.19%) of respondents stated that their English is not good enough to express their ideas, followed by 17 (20.00%) are found difficult to understand the original sources, so they copy words and 16 (18.82%) respondents don't consider plagiarism to be wrong, 11 (12.94%) are it is easy to copy and paste from the internet and only 01 (1.17%) they are not interested in the assignment; therefore, they don't want to waste time doing the work. These outcomes recommend that although research scholars understand that plagiarism is wrong, and recognize how to quote and reference properly and suggests that the knowledge that plagiarism can be noticed can be very successful in avoiding plagiarism. As a result regulating academic institutional policies and procedures with measures that are clearly aimed to the foremost powerful forces of plagiarism.

Table 6: Awareness of plagiarism policies

Opinion	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	48	56.47%
No	15	17.65%
Not Sure	22	25.88%
Total	85	100.00%

The above table illustrates that only 48 (56.47%) of respondents were aware of their institution's policies on plagiarism, while 22 (25.88%) were not sure and 15(17.65%) were not aware of formal policies on plagiarism.

Table 7: Awareness on penalties for plagiarizing by UGC and 2017 UGC regulation about plagiarism

Opinion	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	79	92.94%
No	6	7.06%

Total	85	100.00%
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The above table illustrates that a significant portion of respondents - 79, or 92.94 percent - are aware of the penalties for plagiarism and the 2017 UGC regulation regarding plagiarism. In contrast, only 6 respondents, or

7.06% of the sample, indicated that they were unaware of the 2017 UGC regulations regarding plagiarism and penalties.

Table 8: Problems faced while presenting the thesis in their own ideas

Problems	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Lack of language skills	52	61.19
Lack of interest on study/topic	03	3.52%
Lack of time	04	4.8%
Lack of writing skill	26	30.58%
Total	85	100.00%

The aforementioned table shows that 52 (61.19%) of the respondents are having difficulty with their language skills, 26 (30.58%) are having trouble with their writing skills, 04 (4.8%) are having trouble with their time, and 03 (3.52%) are not interested in the subject matter they are studying.

Table 9: Is Plagiarism wrong?

Opinion	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Highly	59	69.41%
Moderately	16	18.82%
Slightly	10	11.77%
Total	85	100.00%

Table 9 presents data regarding: Is plagiarism considered wrong? The table shows that 59 respondents (69.41%) believe that plagiarism is extremely wrong, followed by 16 respondents (18.82%) who believe that plagiarism is somewhat wrong, and 10 respondents (11.77%) who believe that plagiarism is slightly wrong.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Plagiarism is a major problem today and is widespread across society. It can be the result of ignorance regarding plagiarism. According to the study, teaching staff should be aware of all forms of plagiarism before teaching research scholars about it. They should also communicate openly about plagiarism, disseminate institutional policies and guidelines, and develop coordinated tactics to reduce student plagiarism. Teachers have the ability to help research scholars integrate the ideas of others and provide precise citations for sources used in their own work, while also helping them understand what plagiarism is. The study also recommended additional strategies for raising the doctorate students' awareness of plagiarism, such as training sessions, awareness campaigns, seminars, workshops, and so on. To raise awareness of plagiarism, universities and libraries can host a range of orientation programs, workshops, and other events for graduate and postgraduate students, research scholars, and other students.

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