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Can I copy this? Awareness about Plagiarism among Research Scholars of Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women's University, Vijayapura - A Study

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ABSTRACT

The present study carried out to know the awareness of plagiarism among research scholars of Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women's University, Vijayapura (India). A structured questionnaire was designed and distributed among research scholars to collect their opinion on the topic. This study found that the majority of the scholars 68 (100%) are aware of various kinds of plagiarism and many 44 (64.71%) of them learnt about plagiarism through fellow scholars. This study also investigates that most of the scholars are 47 (69.12%) aware of Urkund, a plagiarism detection software, and 31 (45.59%) of them know about APA (American Psychological Association) reference style. A 48 (70.59%) are copying other works as they felt that hard to find original ideas/thoughts and because of laziness and 47 (69.12%) of them are giving proper citations to avoid the plagiarism.

Keywords: Plagiarism, Research ethics, Academic integrity, Academic misconduct

1. INTRODUCTION

Plagiarism is a critical aspect in academic setup, copying other works without proper acknowledgement is considered as academic misconduct and dishonesty. Word plagiarism has derived from a Latin word "plagiarius" which means "kidnapper". Plagiarism is referring to the use of others works, ideas, information etc. without proper citation to original creators. This is being a significant challenge to research in academic and scientific setups. The Oxford University defined plagiarism as "Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work or ideas as your own, with or without their consent, by incorporating it into your work without full acknowledgement. All published and unpublished material, whether in manuscript, printed or electronic form, is covered under this definition. Plagiarism may be intentional or reckless or unintentional. Under regulations for examinations, intentional or reckless plagiarism is a disciplinary offence".

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has issued the guidelines for academic integrity and prevention of plagiarism in higher educational institutions; the guidelines made in the following four levels. If the similarities found 10%, it is considered in level zero, and there is no penalty for the same. For, similarities found above 10% to 40% categorized under level one in this case student shall be asked to submit a revised script within a stipulated period not exceeding six months. Level two refers similarities above 40% to 60% in such case student shall be debarred from submitting a revised script for one year, and level three is above 60% similarities in such cases student registration for that programme shall be cancelled.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many studies have carried out in various universities to know the awareness and impact of plagiarism among research scholars and their academic works. Studying previous works on the same issues will give insight to understand the gaps and outcomes of the studies. Park (2003) has investigated that the internet, digital resources, poor time management, lack of awareness on plagiarism are the reasons for academic misconduct; hence he has suggested that the institutions should develop frameworks to deal with plagiarism issues that should be checked through robust detection tools and also institutions should introduce penalty systems to avoid the plagiarism in an early stage. The two studies conducted at an international level by Yusof and Binti (2011) among Malaysian students, Malaysia and Ramzan et al. (2012) on plagiarism amongst university students in Pakistan shown that the respondents have basic awareness on plagiarism, but the organizations should frame policies and guidelines to combat plagiarism in institutions. A study conducted by Tripathi et al. (2015) in Hindustan University, Chennai shows the research scholars are aware of plagiarism; however, this study recommends a proper training through awareness programs and workshops to enhance the better understanding among the research scholars. A similar study conducted by Ahmadi and Sonkar (2015) and Pandey, Sharma, and Rawal (2016) also show a similar result that the scholars are aware of plagiarism, but they have a lack of awareness about types of plagiarism, copyright laws, plagiarism policies etc.; hence these studies suggested that the institutions should frame proper guidelines for scholars to understand the various issues of plagiarism. Kumar and Mohindra (2019) have conducted a case study in Panjab University, Chandigarh also found that the research scholars are aware of plagiarism and related issues and many of these scholars learnt plagiarism in masters and doctoral degrees from research guides and fellow scholars, unlike other studies by (Pandey, Sharma, and Rawal, 2016) this study also recommends that clear-cut policies and guidelines are required from the institutions to prevent plagiarism. Another study by Abirami and Kavitha (2019) shown that the majority of the scholars (40.2%) are familiar with plagiarism, and most of the respondents learnt through self-study.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To examine and explore the level of awareness about plagiarism among research scholar's
- To understand the attitudes of the research scholars towards plagiarism
- To know the awareness about various plagiarism detection tools and citation styles used by scholars.

- To identify and recommend the steps for researchers to combat plagiarism.

4. ABOUT INSTITUTION

Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women's University was established in 2003 in Vijayapura (formerly Bijapur) as Karnataka State Women's University in the state of Karnataka to provide a quality education for women's to make them self-reliant in the society. It is the only dedicated Women's University in the state, established under 2(f) and 12(B) of the UGC Act. It is accredited 'B' grade by NAAC, and also a recipient of three Stars in NIRF rankings. A 137 women's colleges of the states are affiliated to the university. The university offers various UG and PG programs with doctoral degree programs. Presently university is offering doctoral degrees in the areas of Kannada, English, Economics, Women Studies, Sociology, Social Work, Journalism & Mass Communication, Library & Information Science, Bio-Informatics, Electronics, Computer Science, Pharmaceutical Chemistry, Management (MBA), M. Com, Education and Physical Education.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Based on the existing literature on the same topic, a structured questionnaire was designed and distributed to collect the required data for the study. A total of 100 questionnaires were randomly distributed among scholars in the various departments. After eliminating two incomplete questionnaires, we have finally taken filled 68 (68%). The collected data were analysed, tabulated, interpreted and presented to provide a concise result of the present study.

6. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Based on the existing literature on the same topic, a structured questionnaire was designed and distributed to collect the required data for the study. A total of 100 questionnaires were randomly distributed among scholars in the various departments. After eliminating two incomplete questionnaires, we have finally taken filled 68 (68%). The collected data were analysed, tabulated, interpreted and presented to provide a concise result of the present study.

Awareness about plagiarism

Table-1 shows that all the 68 (100%) respondents of this survey are aware of plagiarism.

Table-1 Research scholar's awareness of plagiarism

Sl. No.	Awareness on Plagiarism	No. of Respondents (n=68)	Percentage
1	Yes	68	100%
2	No	0	0%

Source of Acquaintance

The Table-2 indicates the source of an acquaintance of information on plagiarism; the multiple options were allowed for scholars to choose their source of acquaintance on plagiarism. Table-2 depicts that the majority of the scholars 38 (55.88%) learnt about plagiarism through regulations released by the university, followed by 33 (48.52%) through the regulations setup

by the University Grants Commission (UGC), 29 (42.64%) are from fellow scholars, 21 (30.88%) through their research supervisors, and 17 (25%) is by reading and consulting the available resources on the topic. Interestingly the majority of the scholars are aware of plagiarism through university regulations; hence the previous studies conducted by Ahmadi and Sonkar (2015) and Pandey, Sharma, and Rawal (2016) have also suggested that the institutions should set a framework to make awareness about plagiarism among the scholars.

Table-2: Source of acquaintance

Sl. No.	Source of Acquaintance	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Through other research scholars	29	42.64
2	Through the university regulations	38	55.88
3	Through regulations of UGC	33	48.52
4	Through the research supervisor	21	30.88
5	Through self-reading	17	25

Level of Awareness

Another similar question on the level of awareness on various types of plagiarism was asked. Table-3 reveals that a good number of scholars 44 (64.71%) opined that they are aware of self and complete plagiarism whereas 42 (61.76%) opined aware of copy and paste is plagiarism, while 41 (60.29%) known about word switch.

Table-3 Awareness on types of plagiarism

Sl. No.	Awareness of Types of Plagiarism	Yes	No
1	Self-Plagiarism	44 (64.71%)	24 (35.29%)
2	Copy and Paste	42 (61.76%)	26 (38.24%)
3	Complete Plagiarism	44 (64.71%)	24 (35.29%)
4	Word Switch	41 (60.29%)	27 (39.71%)

Awareness about Plagiarism Software's/Tools

The plagiarism tools will help the researchers to avoid possible academic misconduct by checking their works by using this software. Table-4 depicts that a majority of the scholars 47 (69.12%) aware of Urkund, followed by 46 (67.65%) Turnitin, 38 (55.88%) Viper, and 31 (45.59%) iThenticate. A majority of scholars are familiar with Urkund plagiarism detection software as INFLIBNET is offering this tool for universities.

Table-4 Awareness on plagiarism detection tools

Sl. No.	Software/Tools	Yes	No
1	Turnitin	46 (67.65%)	22 (32.35%)
2	Urkund	47 (69.12%)	21 (30.88%)

3	Viper	38 (55.88%)	30 (44.12%)
4	iThenticate	31 (45.59%)	37 (54.41%)
5	Plagscan	18 (26.47%)	50 (73.53%)
6	Duplichecker	15 (22.06%)	53 (77.94%)

Reference Styles

The proper reference styles are essential to cite a consulted source for research. In order to know scholars habit about citing sources, this question was asked to the respondents. Table-5 shows 31 (45.59% of the scholars are using APA (American Psychological Association) whereas 17 (25%) of them are using Chicago style and 15 (22.06%) are citing by using MLA (Modern Language Association), and 5 (7.35%) of them are using IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers).

Table-5 Awareness on reference styles

Sl. No.	Reference Styles	No. of respondents (n=68)	Percentage of Respondents
1	APA (American Psychological Association)	31	45.59
2	Chicago Style	17	25
3	IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers)	5	7.35
4	MLA (Modern Language Association)	15	22.06

Consequences of Plagiarism

Copying other works without proper citations is an offence; hence the question was asked on consequences of plagiarism. Table-6 reveals that many researchers are aware of various kinds of plagiarism. A good number of respondents 48 (70.59%) opined that they strongly agree with plagiarism can ruin the career, while surprisingly 47 (69.12%) not aware about a person can lose their jobs due to plagiarism. The 44 (64.71%) are aware of using their work or self-plagiarism, and a person can also dismiss for the same.

Table-6: Awareness about the consequences of plagiarism

Sl. No	Statements	True	False
1	Copying own work/self-plagiarism is a punishable offence	44 (64.71%)	24 (35.29%)
2	If anyone found for plagiarism, they may punish	41 (60.29%)	27 (39.71%)
3	A person can dismiss for plagiarism.	44 (64.71%)	24 (35.29%)
4	Plagiarism can ruin a career	48 (70.59%)	20 (29.41%)

5	If someone found for plagiarism, they can lose their jobs.	21 (30.88%)	47 (69.12%)
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Attitude towards Plagiarism

The attitude of research scholars towards plagiarism is as shown in Table 7. Majority of the scholars 11 (16.17%) strongly opined that "I shall copy directly from source due to academic pressure". In comparison, 7 (10.29%) of them are strongly agreed for "I shall copy research methodology as it is almost same" and "We may not be able to complete research without copying others work". 27 (39.71%) strongly disagree with "My fellow scholars will copy from sources, so, I shall also do the same" while 25 (36.78%) are also strongly disagreed for "Supervisors will not check for plagiarism."

Table-7: Attitude towards plagiarism

Sl. No	Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	Fellow scholars will copy from sources, so, I shall also do the same.	5 (7.35%)	3 (4.41%)	11 (16.17%)	22 (32.36%)	27 (39.71%)
2	I shall copy directly from the source due to academic pressure.	11 (16.17%)	14 (20.60%)	11 (16.17%)	17 (25%)	15 (22.06%)
3	Plagiarism can be justified due to involve in non-academic works	4 (5.88%)	9 (13.23%)	13 (19.12%)	23 (33.82%)	19 (27.95%)
4	I shall copy research methodology as it is almost same	7 (10.29%)	19 (27.95%)	11 (16.17%)	12 (17.64%)	19 (27.95%)
5	We may not be able to complete research without copying others work	7 (10.30%)	17 (25%)	21 (30.88%)	17 (25%)	6 (8.82%)
6	Supervisors will not check for plagiarism	3 (4.41%)	11 (16.17%)	11 (16.17%)	18 (26.47%)	25 (36.78%)
7	Copy and paste is easy	5 (7.35%)	17 (25%)	20 (29.41%)	14 (20.60%)	12 (17.64%)

Reasons to Reproduce the Work of others

Many reasons are associated with reproducing other works. Table-8 depicts that the majority of 48(70.59%) respondents opined that they are reproducing others works because they felt that they are hard to find original ideas/thoughts and laziness, while 41 (60.29%) scholar's recorder that they are getting lack of time for research, and 40 (58.82%) have language barriers in writing original papers

Table-8: Reasons to reproduce the work of others

Sl. No.	Reasons for Reproduce	Yes	No
1	Research writing is difficult for me	38 (55.88%)	30 (44.12%)
2	Lack of time	41(60.29%)	27 (39.71%)
3	Laziness	48 (70.59%)	20 (29.41%)
4	Language barriers	40 (58.82%)	28(41.18%)
5	Hard to find original ideas/thoughts	48 (70.59%)	20(29.41%)
6	Due to non-availability of interest in selected topics	43(63.24%)	25(36.76%)
7	Due to extra non-academic workloads	34 (50%)	34(50%)

Avoid of Plagiarism

Table-9 reveals that the majority of the scholars 47 (69.12%) will provide a citation for the consulted source of information, whereas 44 (64.71%) will check for plagiarism, and 40 (58.82%) them converts the original information into own words while writing.

Table-9: Avoid of Plagiarism

Sl. No.	Steps to avoid plagiarism	Yes	No
1	I will give proper citation	47(69.12%)	21(30.88%)
2	I will modify in my own words	40(58.82%)	28(41.18%)
3	Check for plagiarism	44(64.71%)	24(35.29%)

Increase of Knowledge about Plagiarism

Gaining a proper knowledge about plagiarism is an essential task for the scholars to avoid possible plagiarism in their research activity. Table-10 discloses that the majority of the scholars 44 (64.71%) responded that they would increase their knowledge by discussing with peers and fellow scholars, followed by 41 (60.29%) through attending through by attending talks, workshops, and seminars, hence, the universities should organise regular workshops and talks on plagiarism.

Table-10 Increase of knowledge about plagiarism

Sl. No.	Methods to use to increase your knowledge of plagiarism	Yes	No
1	Through attending talks/seminars/ /workshops	41 (60.29%)	27(39.71%)
2	Through discussions with peers	44(64.71%)	24(35.29%)
3	Through self-study	39(57.36%)	29(42.64%)

7. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the present study is to understand the awareness of the plagiarism among research scholars of Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women's University, Vijayapura (India). The findings of the study reveal that the majority of respondents 68 (100%) are aware of plagiarism. Many of the scholars 38 (55.88%) learnt about plagiarism through the university regulations. Hence proper and clear-cut rules are more important in a university set up to convey rules among the scholars.

This study further found that the majority of the researchers' 47 (69.12%) are familiar with Urkund, a plagiarism detection software's, therefore universities should conduct hands-on training on this tool to make effective use of the software. Furthermore, 31 (45.59%) are aware of the APA (American Psychological Association) reference style to cite the consulted sources for their research works.

A 48 (70.59%) scholars have admitted that they are reproducing others work because they felt that hard to find original ideas/thoughts and laziness, while 40 (58.82%) opined they would reproduce someone's work due to language barriers as many of them are coming from non-English backgrounds.

As the majority of the scholars, 48 (70.59%) are aware that plagiarism can ruin a career; hence the majority of the scholars 47 (69.12%) are opined that they will give a proper citation, while 44 (64.71%) of them check for plagiarism through detection software. Although, researchers are aware of plagiarism, but most of them 41 (60.29%) felt that they would like to increase their knowledge on plagiarism through attending talks/seminars/workshops; hence universities should conduct such training programs on various aspects of plagiarism and research ethics.

8. CONCLUSION

Plagiarism has become a critical issue higher learning organisations in almost all disciplines. Hence, combating plagiarism is the need of the hour to avoid academic misconduct and help the scholars to produce original, and quality contents through their research work for the benefit of the society.

In the present study, the overall findings reveal that the scholars are aware of various kinds of plagiarism through university policies, peers and research supervisors, however, a clear-cut policy on the various types of plagiarism is required for them to obey the same. The universities can be given extra importance on the plagiarism by providing them extra readings, and arranging regular hands-on training on various areas such as citations styles, plagiarism

detections tools, English grammar, reference management tools, etc. to make them more aware on plagiarism and to avoid academic misconducts on the higher education.

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