Plagiarism Awareness and Prevention among Research Scholars of Mahatma Gandhi Central University, Motihari (Bihar): A Study

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Abstract

Plagiarism constitutes a significant concern within the realm of academia, adversely affecting the integrity of research and the reputational standing of scholars. This investigation examines the levels of awareness, prevailing attitudes, and preventative measures pertaining to plagiarism among research scholars at Mahatma Gandhi Central University, located in Motihari, Bihar. Employing a systematically designed questionnaire disseminated to a cohort of 200 research scholars from diverse academic disciplines, a total of 150 valid responses were garnered and subjected to analysis. The findings indicate that although a majority of participants demonstrate awareness of plagiarism and utilize detection tools such as Turnitin, there remain notable deficiencies in formal training and comprehension of specific categories of plagiarism. Institutional initiatives, encompassing compulsory checks and educational workshops, are vital yet necessitate broader implementation for effectiveness. The results underscore the imperative for comprehensive educational programs and more stringent policies to foster ethical research practices.

1. Introduction

In academic circles, plagiarism is viewed as the principal ethical breach that individuals might undertake, whether on purpose or by mistake. The influence of the Internet has facilitated the acquisition of requisite information at any place and at any time, and its function within the academic milieu has culminated in the widespread emergence of plagiarized materials. Generally, it is a widely held belief among the populace that plagiarism transpires when an individual replicates another's work or appropriates another's original concepts. Indeed, it represents one of the most pervasive forms of academic misconduct that can severely impair an individual's

reputation and professional trajectory within the scholarly community (Krishnamurthy & Savitha, 2021). Plagiarism in higher education is a global issue. People are directly or indirectly involved in plagiarism, regardless of their caste, race, creed, sex, or geographic location. Plagiarism is spreading daily for various reasons of social, cultural, technological, psychological, economic, and geographic factors (Faizan & Munshi, 2019).

1.1 What is Plagiarism and its Definition?

"Plagiarism constitutes the unethical appropriation of the language, segments, concepts, and intellectual contributions of others without appropriate citation or recognition. The phenomenon of plagiarism encompasses numerous unique dimensions that differentiate it from various other forms of academic misconduct. Diverse academic and research institutions possess their own interpretations and definitions of plagiarism" (Singh & Joshi, 2021). Plagiarism is etymologically rooted in the Latin word "plagiarius," which translates to "to abduct." It is unequivocally defined as "the appropriation, imitation, or theft of published material, encompassing the language, concepts, and intellectual contributions of another author, and their presentation as one's own original work." Plagiarism occurs when one utilizes another's intellectual output without appropriately acknowledging the source (Abirami & Kavitha, 2019). According to Oxford dictionary "the practice of copying another person's ideas, words or work and pretending that they are your own". Hard, Conway, & Moran (2006) noticed "Presenting, as one's own, the ideas or words of another person or persons for academic evaluation without proper acknowledgement". According to Encyclopedia Britannica "Plagiarism, the act of taking the writings of another person and passing them off as one's own. The fraudulence is closely related to forgery and piracy-practices generally in violation of copyright laws" (Dhammi & Haq, 2016).

1.2 Types of Plagiarism

Verbatim plagiarism: This occurs when an individual presents another person's textual material in an unaltered form under their own identity, failing to provide any public attribution to the original author. The practice of directly copying and pasting content from a published source without appropriate citation constitutes a prevalent manifestation of verbatim plagiarism. It is most frequently observed within the introduction and discussion sections of scholarly manuscripts.

Mosaic plagiarism: Mosaic plagiarism constitutes a form of academic misconduct characterized by the appropriation of phrases, concepts, and excerpts from various sources without the appropriate citations or quotation marks. This phenomenon is also referred to as "patch writing" or "patchwork plagiarism."

Paraphrasing: Paraphrasing plagiarism transpires when an individual represents the intellectual contributions of another as their own, despite the alteration of the verbiage from the published source material.

Self-plagiarism: Self-plagiarism: "The dissemination of one's previously published data is deemed unacceptable as it compromises the integrity of the scientific record." Publications characterized by self-plagiarism fail to advance scientific discourse; they merely inflate the volume of published articles without appropriate justification within the realm of scientific investigation. The authors derive advantages in the form of an augmented tally of published works. Self-

plagiarism encompasses an element of dishonesty, though it does not equate to the act of intellectual theft.

Cyber plagiarism: "The act of replicating or downloading, whether partially or wholly, articles or research papers, along with their associated concepts from online sources, without providing appropriate acknowledgment is considered unethical and constitutes a form of cyber plagiarism.

2. Review of Literature

Mohindra Kumar (2019) investigated that Panjab University reveals significant revelations regarding scholars' cognizance and perspectives towards the phenomenon of plagiarism. An overwhelming majority of scholars (97.4%) comprehend the notion, predominantly introduced during their advanced educational pursuits—58.6% during their doctoral programs and 30.3% during their master's studies. Notable awareness is concentrated on concerns such as "cut, copy, paste" (mean score: 4.2) and the practice of compensating others for their work (4.1). However, merely 4% of scholars possess individual access to plagiarism-detection software, although 74% acknowledge availability within their departments.

Rashmi et al. (2018) explained that a study population of 160 individuals, comprising 93 academic faculty members and 67 senior residents, attaining a response rate of 84.21%. The findings indicated that 87.1% of faculty and 59.7% of residents acknowledged the obligatory Medical Council of India guidelines as a motivating factor for engaging in research activities. Merely 17.2% of faculty and 8.9% of residents had undergone formal instruction in research ethics, a variable that is associated with a markedly increased tolerance for plagiarism. The mean scores reflecting positive and negative attitudes towards plagiarism were calculated at 30.54 and 24.34, respectively.

Madaan and Chakravarty (2020) The research conducted a survey involving 100 academic scholars, ensuring an equivalent distribution of respondents from Guru Nanak Dev University (GNDU) and Panjab University (PU). The results indicated that 36% of scholars from GNDU identified language barriers as a contributing factor, in contrast to 19% of their counterparts at PU. Time limitations were notably significant for 22% of the GNDU participants and 20% of those from PU. The inadequacy of citation knowledge emerged as a concern for 34% of scholars at GNDU, whereas 21% at PU expressed similar apprehensions. Furthermore, 29% of GNDU scholars concurred that internet resources facilitate time efficiency yet promote instances of plagiarism, while only 14% at PU shared this sentiment.

Kumar and Kumar (2023) examined that disparities in plagiarism awareness among postgraduate students and research scholars at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and Delhi University (DU). The results indicate a high level of awareness, with 99% of participants at JNU and 97% at DU demonstrating familiarity with the concept. Nevertheless, 68% of respondents from DU and 47% from JNU reported difficulties in appropriately utilizing citations. The absence of adequate training emerged as a significant determinant, with 53.1% of respondents recognizing it as a contributing factor to instances of plagiarism. Both institutions exhibited a pronounced inclination towards the utilization of plagiarism detection software, with 76% of JNU respondents and 68% of DU respondents acknowledging awareness of such tools.

Kampa, Padhan and Ahmad (2020) The outcomes of the research indicate that 18 percent, 57.8 percent, and 11.8 percent of the participants exhibit extreme, moderate, and limited awareness, respectively, regarding the definition of plagiarism and its boundaries. A considerable segment of the participants indicates that the act of appropriating material from a publication or manuscript without proper attribution to the source or author is tantamount to plagiarism , and they equate the concept of plagiarism with that of larceny . In addition, it has been established that a rigorous timetable and the readily accessible nature of digital resources serve as contributing factors to this issue.

Shankar (2019) examined the perspectives regarding plagiarism among students, research scholars, and academic staff at Sree Narayana Guru College. Affirmative attitudes encompassed the rationalization of plagiarism in the context of stringent deadlines, linguistic challenges, and instances of self-plagiarism. Conversely, negative viewpoints underscored the detrimental impact of plagiarism on scientific integrity, equating it with theft. Subjective norms indicated that individuals engage in plagiarism under the belief that it is prevalent or deemed necessary in specific circumstances. Faculty members exhibited a higher level of awareness and critique regarding plagiarism compared to their student counterparts. The results emphasize the necessity for awareness initiatives, ethical education, and the enhancement of writing competencies to alleviate instances of plagiarism.

3. Objectives of the Study

1. To measure the level of awareness of plagiarism among researcher Scholars of Mahatma Gandhi Central University.
2. To evaluate the extent of formal training on plagiarism provided research Scholars of Mahatama Gandhi Central University.
3. To find out the common reasons for plagiarism among research scholars of Mahatma Gandhi Central University.
4. To analyze the use of plagiarism detection Software by research Scholars of Mahatma Gandhi Central University.
5. To evaluate the perceived effectiveness of institutional measures designed to reduce instances of plagiarism in Mahatma Gandhi Central University.
6. To investigate the personal strategies adopted by researchers to prevent plagiarism.

4. Scope and Research Methodology of the Study

The scope of this Research includes assessment of plagiarism awareness and preventative strategies among research scholars at Mahatma Gandhi Central University, Motihari, Bihar.

A survey methodology was employed in the present investigation for the acquisition of data through a structured questionnaire instrument, which facilitated the collection of primary data from the research Scholars at Mahatma Gandhi Central University, Motihari. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed among the Ph.D. scholars within the Schools of Humanities (Languages), Social Sciences, International Studies, and Sciences. From the 200 distributed questionnaires, the researcher obtained 150 completed responses from the participants. This

sample signifies a response rate of 75% derived from the 200 questionnaires that were disseminated. Random Sampling has been used for collecting the data from the respondents. The data gathered via the questionnaires. Data has been analyzed by the MS excel and SPSS Software.

5. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Demographic description of the respondents

Table - 1: Demographic description of the respondents

Gender wise participation of respondents		
Gender	Frequency	Percent
Female	62	41.33
Male	88	58.67
Age wise participation of respondents		
Age	Frequency	Percent
20-25	5	3.33
26-30	82	54.67
31-35	51	34.0
36-40	11	7.33
40 Above	1	0.67

Table 1 shows that 41.33% are female respondents and 58.67% are male respondents. Therefore, majority of respondents are male. It is also indicated in table 1 that majority of the participants belong to the age category of 26-30 years (54.67%), in addition to a notable proportion aged 31-35 years (34.0%), the respondents of Age group of 36-40 are 7.33% and 3.33% belong to 20-25 age group. There was a single respondent belong to 40 above age group.

Awareness about plagiarism

Table - 2: Awareness about plagiarism

Awareness	Frequency	Percent
No	3	2.0
Yes	147	98.0
Total	150	100.0

Table 2 shows that the 98.0% respondents belongs to the Research Scholars group are aware about plagiarism. It shows that respondents are very much aware and know the consequences of plagiarism.

Attended formal training

Table - 3: Attended formal training or instruction on plagiarism

Attended Formal Training	Frequency	Percent
No	30	20.0
Yes	120	80.0
Total	150	100.0

Table 3 reflects that a substantial 80% of academic professionals indicate that they have undergone formal instruction regarding the concept of plagiarism, thereby implying the existence of institutional initiatives aimed at educational enhancement. Nonetheless, a significant 20% continue to be devoid of access to these educational programs, thereby underscoring the potential for further advancement in this area.

Knowingly or unknowingly committed plagiarism

Table - 4: knowingly or unknowingly committed plagiarism

Plagiarism	Frequency	Percent
Committed	3	2.0
Maybe	23	15.33
No	107	71.33
Yes	17	11.33
Total	150	100.0

A considerable percentage of participants (71.33%) refute the allegation of having engaged in plagiarism, whereas a subset acknowledges having done so inadvertently (15.33%) or deliberately (11.33%). These responses illuminate the differing degrees of comprehension and self-awareness among the respondents.

Used of plagiarism detection tools to check research work

Table - 5: Used plagiarism detection tools to check research work

Tools used	Frequency	Percent
No	24	16.0
Yes	126	84.0
Total	150	100.0

Table 5 describes that 84.0% research scholars have used plagiarism detection software for checking their research manuscripts whereas 16.0% research scholars have not used plagiarism detection software.

Mostly used Tools/software for checking plagiarism

Table - 6: Mostly used tools/software for checking plagiarism

Mostly used tool/ software	Number	Percent
Turnitin	100	37.46
Drillbit	69	25.84
Grammarly	58	21.72
Copyleaks	18	6.74
Duplichecker	7	2.62
Plagtracker	15	5.62
Total	267	100.0

Note: Due to the multiple options percentage exceeds 100.

Widely utilized instruments encompass Turnitin (37.46%), Drillbit (25.84%), and Grammarly (21.72%), whereas the uptake of instruments such as Copyleaks, Blackboard, and Plagtracker remains comparatively low.

Major acts considered for plagiarism

Table - 7: Major acts considered for plagiarism

Major acts of plagiarism	Number	Percent
Copying text without citation	138	21.39
Paraphrasing without credit	125	19.38
Using someone else's ideas without acknowledgment	130	20.16
Submitting the same work to multiple courses	130	20.16
Using a previous work of your own without citation (self-plagiarism)	122	18.91
Total	645	100.00

Note: Due to the multiple options percentage exceeds 100.

Frequent manifestations of plagiarism are characterized by the Copying text without citation (21.39%), the rephrasing of content without Paraphrasing without credit (19.38%), and Using someone else's ideas without acknowledgment (20.16%). Additional recognized forms of academic misconduct comprise self-plagiarism (18.91%) and the submission of identical work across multiple academic courses (20.16%).

Measures adopted to prevent plagiarism

Table - 8: Measures adopted to prevent plagiarism

Measures to prevent plagiarism	Number	Percent
Workshops/seminars	116	24.79
Written guidelines	123	26.28
Mandatory plagiarism check before submission	130	27.78
Counseling and support services	99	21.15
Total	468	100.00

Note: Due to the multiple options percentage exceeds 100.

Institutions of higher education address the issue of plagiarism by implementing workshops and seminars (24.79%), developing written protocols (26.28%), enforcing obligatory plagiarism assessments prior to submission (27.78%), and providing counseling and support services (21.15%).

Strategies used personally to avoid plagiarism in research work

Table - 9: Strategies used personally to avoid plagiarism in research work

Strategies to avoid plagiarism	Number	Percent
Proper Citation and Referencing	137	26.40
Paraphrasing with Credit	128	24.66

Using Plagiarism Detection Tools	136	26.20
Seeking Guidance from Mentors	118	22.74
Total	519	100.00

Note: Due to the multiple options percentage exceeds 100.

Academics routinely employ techniques such as accurate citation and referencing (26.40%), paraphrasing with appropriate attribution (24.66%), utilizing plagiarism detection mechanisms (26.20%), and soliciting advice from mentors (22.74%). These methodologies exemplify a judicious dependence on individual effort alongside technological support.

6. Major Finding and Discussions

➢ The predominant demographic of respondents (54.67%) is situated within the age range of 26 to 30 years, with a slightly higher proportion of males (58.67%) in comparison to females (41.33%).

➢ The vast majority of participants, comprising 98%, exhibit an awareness of plagiarism, with 80% having undergone formal educational training; however, 20% continue to lack access to such educational programs.

➢ Despite a high level of awareness regarding plagiarism, 16% of respondents reported never having utilized plagiarism detection tools, highlighting potential deficiencies in practical application.

➢ Notably, 15.33% of respondents acknowledged unknowingly committing acts of plagiarism, while 11.33% admitted to willfully engaging in such practices.

➢ A significant 84% utilize plagiarism detection software, with Turnitin (37.46%), Grammarly (21.72%), and Drillbit (25.84%) emerging as the predominant tools.

➢ The most frequently identified manifestations of plagiarism include copying without proper citation (21.39%), paraphrasing without appropriate attribution (19.38%), and utilizing another individual's ideas without due acknowledgment (20.16%). While self-plagiarism (18.91%) and the submission of identical work across multiple courses (20.16%) are less frequently recognized, they remain pertinent issues within academic integrity discussions.

➢ Strategies to mitigate plagiarism predominantly involve proper citation and referencing (26.40%) and paraphrasing with adequate credit (24.66%). A further 26.20% of academics employ plagiarism detection tools, while 22.74% pursue mentorship for additional guidance. Institutional measures aimed at preventing plagiarism are most commonly represented by mandatory plagiarism checks (27.78%), comprehensive written guidelines (26.68%), and educational workshops (24.79%).

7. Conclusion

Plagiarism constitutes a significant concern within the realm of academic research, indicative of both ethical misconduct and inadvertent mistakes stemming from a lack of comprehensive knowledge. This investigation elucidates the intricacies involved in tackling plagiarism among academic researchers and underscores the interrelationship between awareness, institutional initiatives, and personal accountability. The results highlight the necessity for ongoing education and training aimed at enhancing researchers' comprehension of plagiarism in its various

manifestations, encompassing complex matters such as self-plagiarism. Although numerous researchers exhibit proactive initiatives to uphold academic integrity, obstacles such as insufficient writing proficiency, time limitations, and a deficiency of formal instruction continue to exist. Addressing these challenges demands a collaborative endeavor involving both individual scholars and academic institutions. Institutional strategies, including obligatory checks, educational workshops, and documented policies, have demonstrated effectiveness; however, these measures must be perpetually refined to remain responsive to the dynamic challenges faced in academia. Promoting the adoption of plagiarism detection technologies and cultivating an environment of mentorship alongside ethical research practices are equally paramount. Ultimately, the fight against plagiarism necessitates a holistic strategy that amalgamates education, policy implementation, and technological resources. This approach not only ensures adherence to regulations but also fosters a profound commitment to ethical scholarly standards. By prioritizing awareness, training, and institutional backing, universities can equip researchers to produce original, credible, and influential contributions to the field of research.

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