

Awareness and Utility of Open-Source Plagiarism Checking Tools Among Social Science Research Scholars of B.R. Ambedkar Bihar University, Muzaffarpur, Bihar: A Survey Study

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Abstract

With the increasing emphasis on academic integrity and ethical research practices, the use of plagiarism detection software has become essential in maintaining the credibility of scholarly work. This study aims to assess the awareness and utility of open-source plagiarism checking tools among social science research scholars at B.R. Ambedkar Bihar University (BRABU), Muzaffarpur, Bihar. Through a quantitative survey of 120 participants, the findings reveal that while a significant portion of researchers are moderately aware of these tools, there remains a considerable gap in comprehensive awareness. The majority of respondents occasionally use these tools, with Grammarly being the most favoured. Notably, 80.82% of participants view these tools positively and very positively regarding their impact on research quality. However, barriers such as technical issues, lack of awareness, and complexity hinder broader adoption. The study highlights the need for improved education and support to enhance the utilization of plagiarism checking tools.

Keywords: BRABU; BRA Bihar University; Free Plagiarism Checking Tools; Plagiarism Checking Software; Plagiarism Detection Tools; Social Science Researchers.

1. Introduction

In the modern era, ethics and integrity in academic research have become paramount because the spread of information due to the development of information technology has made access to vast resources easy, along with this the possibility of plagiarism has also increased, so it has become necessary for research scholars to ensure the originality of their work and strict provisions have also been made by UGC for plagiarism. UGC Research Ethics Regulation 2018 is a regulation that promotes ethical and professional behavior during research in higher education institutions, and it has been attempted to prevent plagiarism and other inappropriate activities and to create guidelines for ethical research behavior of the researcher. Plagiarism, which is defined as the deliberate use of someone else's work in one's own work, although it can be both intentional and unintentional. Avoiding plagiarism is essential for the credibility of research literature and research ethics. To avoid this, the use of plagiarism checking tools has gained popularity among researchers from various disciplines as they can check the originality of their research, especially for unintentional plagiarism. This study focuses on the awareness and usability of open-source plagiarism checking tools among social science

research scholars at B.R. Ambedkar Bihar University, Muzaffarpur, Bihar. In general, the university is abbreviated as BRABU, which stands for Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar Bihar University.

Plagiarism detection has become an essential component of academic integrity, particularly in research environments where originality is paramount. As the digital landscape evolves, so do the tools designed to assist researchers in maintaining ethical writing practices. This study investigates the awareness, usage patterns, and perceived effectiveness of open-source plagiarism checking tools among researchers.

This study focuses on the awareness and utility of open-source plagiarism checking tools among social science research scholars at B.R. Ambedkar Bihar University, Muzaffarpur, Bihar. Open-source tools offer an accessible and cost-effective means for researchers to verify the originality of their work, which is particularly crucial in the context of academic publishing and ethical scholarship. Despite the availability of these tools, varying levels of awareness and adoption among scholars may influence their effectiveness.

Through a comprehensive survey, this research aims to assess the knowledge and utilization of open-source plagiarism checking tools within this specific academic community. By understanding the current landscape, we can identify potential gaps in awareness and usage, thereby fostering a more robust culture of academic integrity. This paper will contribute to the ongoing discourse on plagiarism prevention in the social sciences and highlight the importance of leveraging technology to uphold research standards.

1.1 Some Popular Plagiarism Checker Open Source (Free) Software/Tool:

- (i) **Grammarly:** Grammarly is a widely used plagiarism detection software developed in 2009 by Grammarly Inc., a technology company based in San Francisco, California. It is a writing assistant software that not only checks grammar and spelling errors but also includes a plagiarism detection feature.
- (ii) **PlagScan:** PlagScan is an online plagiarism detection tool developed in 2009 by PlagScan GmbH, a Germany-based company. The software focuses on providing plagiarism detection and prevention services primarily designed for academic institutions and businesses. It allows users to upload documents for analysis against a vast database of sources.
- (iii) **DupliChecker:** DupliChecker is a free online plagiarism checker software developed in 2013. It is easily available online and enables users to check text for originality. This software allows multiple upload formats and provides a straightforward interface, but it is less comprehensive than some paid tools.
- (iv) **Small SEO Tools:** Small SEO Tools' Plagiarism Checker is a leading plagiarism detection service that is widely used in academic institutions. It also has an open-access (free) version available with limited features. It allows users to check documents against its extensive database of academic works and web content. Small SEO Tools' Plagiarism Checker not only identifies potential plagiarism but also provides feedback on the quality of writing, helping students improve their work. However, it is primarily available through subscription.

There are also a number of other open-source plagiarism checking tools, such as Plagiarism Checker by Quetext, Copyscape, and Search Engine Reports. These tools offer different features, such as citation assistance and detailed reports.

2. Review of Literature

Tanti, Suman and Patel (2022) comparatively checked the awareness of plagiarism among the students and research scholars of DU and JNU. The study found that the majority of users are aware of anti-plagiarism software in both university libraries. It also revealed that the major reasons for plagiarism are a lack of willingness to study and a copy-paste culture. Research conducted by Khurshid et al. (2021) highlights the necessity for academic institutions to integrate plagiarism checking tools into their research workflows. Their findings indicate that while many scholars are aware of the existence of these tools, a significant gap remains in their actual utilization. This discrepancy underscores the need for targeted training and support to maximize the benefits of these resources. According to Harkins and Petrocchi (2020), the rise of online information has increased the incidence of plagiarism, prompting researchers to seek reliable methods to ensure originality. This has led to the development and widespread adoption of plagiarism detection tools. According to Fong et al. (2019), institutional policies and peer attitudes significantly impact researchers' willingness to utilize these resources. Therefore, understanding the specific context of B.R. Ambedkar Bihar University is crucial to evaluating the awareness and utility of open-source plagiarism checking tools among its scholars. Open-source plagiarism checking tools have emerged as valuable resources for researchers. These tools, which are freely accessible, allow scholars to verify the authenticity of their work without incurring costs associated with proprietary software. Plagiarism is a persistent issue in academia, prompting various studies to assess students' awareness and understanding of this critical topic.

Basic et al. (2018) found that while students generally exhibit positive attitudes toward academic honesty, their practical knowledge of referencing rules is lacking, highlighting a disconnect between theoretical understanding and real-world application. McCabe and Treviño (2017) suggested that the availability of such tools may enhance awareness of plagiarism and promote ethical writing practices among students and researchers alike. Al-Shaibani et al. (2016) further illustrated this complexity in a case study at a Malaysian research university, revealing that even experienced students often struggle to clearly define and recognize different forms of plagiarism, such as complete, direct, unintentional, and self-plagiarism. Ramzan et al. (2012) echoed these concerns in their study of graduate and postgraduate students in Pakistan, where a significant number admitted to intentionally plagiarizing, underscoring the urgent need for educational institutions to enhance their plagiarism awareness programs. Similarly, Yusof and Masrom (2011) noted that despite the implementation of referencing and citation guidelines in Malaysian institutions, many students still grapple with understanding plagiarism, suggesting a critical need for improved educational initiatives. Collectively, these studies emphasize the necessity for comprehensive training to bridge the gap between awareness and application in order to reduce instances of plagiarism in academic writing.

3. Objectives

The primary objectives of this study are:

- (i) To assess the level of awareness about open-source plagiarism checking tools among social science research scholars at B.R. Ambedkar Bihar University, Muzaffarpur.

- (ii) To study the use of open-source plagiarism checking tools by research scholars in their research work.
- (iii) To identify any barriers or challenges faced by scholars in adopting these tools effectively.
- (iv) To assess the perceived impact of using plagiarism checking tools on the quality and integrity of research outputs among social science scholars.

4. Research Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was developed to study the awareness and utility of open-source plagiarism tools. A structured questionnaire was prepared to collect quantitative data, which included both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The target population comprised social science research scholars of B.R. Ambedkar Bihar University, and 120 research scholars were selected using a stratified random sampling method to select the participants, ensuring representation from various disciplines and departments.

5. Analysis and Interpretation

5.1 Gender Distribution of Respondents

The sample comprised 135 Research Scholars, of whom 120 respondents completed and returned the questionnaire. The response rate was 88.89%, with 53.33% being male and 46.67% female respondents (Figure 1).

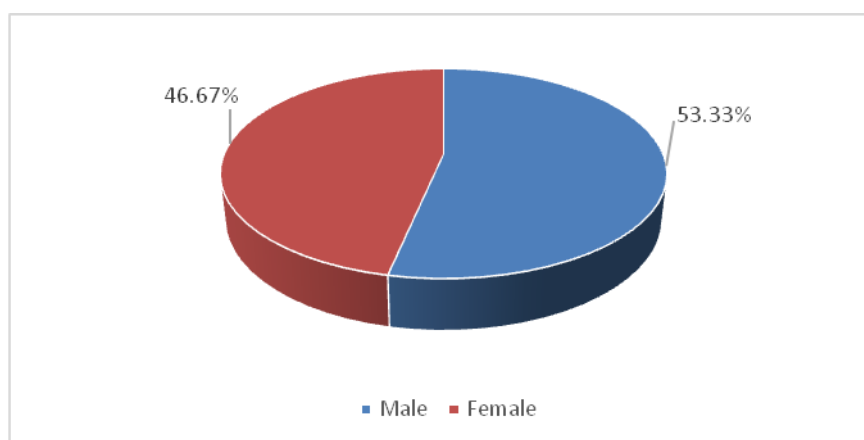


Fig.1: Gender distribution of Respondents

5.2 Awareness of Open-Source Plagiarism Checking Tools

Table - 1: Awareness of Open-Source Plagiarism Checking Tools

Awareness Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Highly Aware	16	13.33
Moderately Aware	49	40.83
Slightly Aware	38	31.67
Not Aware	17	14.17
Total	120	100.00

The data reveals varying levels of awareness among respondents. While only 13.33% reported being "Highly Aware," a significant portion, 40.83%, identified as "Moderately Aware and 31.67% are "Slightly Aware". This indicates a general familiarity with such tools, though a notable 14.17% remain entirely "Not Aware". This suggests that awareness campaigns could further enhance the understanding of these tools.

5.3 Use of Open-Source Plagiarism Tools

Table - 2: Usage of Open-Source Plagiarism Tools

Usage Levels	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Regularly used	23	19.17
Sometimes used	78	65.0
Never used	19	15.83
Total	120	100.0

Usage patterns demonstrate that 65% of researchers "Sometimes" use plagiarism tools, while only 19.17% use them "Regularly". The 15.83% who "Never" use these tools indicate potential areas for outreach. The data suggests that while many researchers recognize the importance of these tools, consistent usage may be hindered by various factors.

5.4 Popular Open-Source Plagiarism Checking Tools

Table - 3: Open-Source Plagiarism Checking Tools

Tool Used	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Grammarly	64	53.34
Plagscan	14	11.66
DupliChecker	57	47.50
Small SEO Tools	40	33.33
Others	33	27.50

Note: Due to the multiple choice percentage exceeds more than 100.

Among various tools, Grammarly emerges as the most utilized, with 53.34% of respondents indicating they use it. DupliChecker follows at 47.50%, while other tools like Small SEO Tools and Plagscan have lower usage rates (33.33% and 11.66%, respectively). The high usage of Grammarly suggests it is a preferred choice, potentially due to its user-friendly interface and comprehensive features.

5.5 Utilization of Open-Source Plagiarism Checking Tools

Table - 4: Impact of Plagiarism Checking Tools on Research Quality

Impact Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very Positive	32	26.66
Positive	65	54.16
Neutral	21	17.5
Negative	02	1.7
Total	120	100.0

The perceived impact of these tools is overwhelmingly positive, with 54.16% of respondents reporting a "Positive" and 26.66% of respondents reporting a "Very Positive" effect on research quality. Only 1.7% noted a negative impact, indicating strong confidence in the effectiveness of these tools to enhance academic integrity. This positive perception underscores the importance of integrating plagiarism checking into the research process.

5.6 Barriers to Using Plagiarism Checking Tools

Table - 5: Barriers to Using Plagiarism Checking Tools

Barrier	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lack of Awareness	45	37.5
Technical Issues	38	31.67
Complexity of Use	31	25.83
No perceived need	06	5.0
Total	120	100.0

Barriers to usage were identified, with "Lack of Awareness" cited by 37.5% of respondents as a significant concern. Additionally, 31.67% noted a "Technical Issues," and 25.83% mentioned "Complexity of Use." Only 5.0% of participants feel there is no perceived need for these tools. This indicates that improving technical support and simplifying usage could enhance adoption rates.

6. Major Findings

- (i) Among the 120 respondents, only 13.33% reported being "Highly Aware" of open-source plagiarism checking tools, while 40.83% were "Moderately Aware" and 31.67% "Slightly Aware." A significant 14.17% were "Not Aware" at all, indicating a need for improved awareness initiatives.
- (ii) 65% of researchers indicated they "Sometimes" use plagiarism checking tools, with only 19.17% using them "Regularly." This suggests that while awareness exists, consistent usage is limited.
- (iii) Grammarly is the most commonly used tool, with 53.34% of researchers utilizing it. DupliChecker follows at 47.50%. Other tools, such as Small SEO Tools and Plagscan, have lower adoption rates.
- (iv) A substantial 54.16% and 26.66% of respondents view the impact of plagiarism checking tools as "Positive" and "Very Positive," respectively, reflecting strong confidence in their role in enhancing academic integrity and research quality.
- (v) Key barriers identified include "Technical Issues" (31.67%), "Lack of Awareness" (37.5%), and "Complexity of Use" (25.83%). Only 5.0% of respondents felt there was no perceived need for these tools.

7. Suggestions

- (i) Implement targeted awareness campaigns to educate researchers about the benefits and functionalities of plagiarism checking tools, particularly focusing on those who are "Not Aware."
- (ii) Provide training sessions and resources to help researchers understand how to effectively use these tools, addressing the technical issues and complexity that hinder usage.

- (iii) Encourage tool developers to enhance user interfaces and simplify the features of plagiarism checking tools, making them more accessible to a broader range of users.
- (iv) Foster a culture of regular use through institutional policies or incentives that promote the consistent application of plagiarism checking tools in research practices.

8. Conclusion

With the increasing emphasis on academic integrity and ethical research practices, the use of plagiarism detection software has become essential in maintaining the credibility of scholarly work. The study highlights a general awareness of open-source plagiarism checking tools among researchers, though many remain only moderately or slightly aware. The positive perception of these tools' impact on research quality underscores their potential to enhance academic integrity. However, barriers such as technical issues and complexity hinder consistent usage. By addressing these challenges through awareness initiatives, training, and user-friendly improvements, the adoption and effective use of plagiarism checking tools can be significantly enhanced, leading to improved research outcomes and integrity.

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