



Research Article

# Knowledge Assessment of Students and Faculty Members Regarding Plagiarism

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## I N F O

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**How to cite this article:**

Kaushik A. Knowledge Assessment of Students and Faculty Members Regarding Plagiarism. Int J Nurs Midwif Res. 2024;11(4):12-17.

Date of Submission: 2024-11-10

Date of Acceptance: 2024-12-12

## A B S T R A C T

Encyclopedia Britannica defines plagiarism as “taking another person’s work and passing it off as one’s own”. Plagiarism is unacceptable and punishable. The purpose of the study is to assess the knowledge of students and teachers about plagiarism. The sample of this study consisted of 118 students and teachers from different streams and a qualitative method was adopted. An appropriate questionnaire was prepared to assess the level of awareness about plagiarism. A cross-sectional design descriptive analysis method was used. Most of the sample (72%) had good knowledge about plagiarism, 20% had moderate knowledge and only 8% had poor knowledge about plagiarism.

**Keywords:** Plagiarism, Knowledge, Students, Faculty, Structured knowledge questionnaire

## Introduction

Today in every profession, people write articles, publish their research work and sometimes they even copy others work without citation. In some of the professional programmes it is the requirement to submit research work in group or individually. Students sometimes in order to complete that in time copy others’ ideas, their work and even their findings and publish in their names. This can happen with a faculty as well, intentionally or unintentionally. Image plagiarism, Cyber plagiarism, Self plagiarism, Paraphrasing, Mosaic plagiarism, and Verbatim plagiarism are some of the types of Plagiarism. Plagiarism is Plagiarism whether done intentionally or unintentionally.<sup>1,2</sup>

Plagiarism is a crime, and it is a punishable act. In today’s world, in the competition of having more and more publications, people are copying others work without proper citation thereby contributing to plagiarism. Plagiarism is a long-standing and problematic problem for scientific journals. Identifying biases is important to maintain the integrity of research data.<sup>3</sup> In the past, it was difficult to detect plagiarism and publishers mainly depended on

the editors for the same but now with the availability of different software to detect plagiarism, this work has become easy. Some of them are [www.ithical.com](http://www.ithical.com), [www.plagiarism.org](http://www.plagiarism.org), [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) etc.<sup>4</sup>

Plagiarism is considered academic dishonesty and a crime. Plagiarism is not a crime in itself, but it can lead to a crime. Plagiarism is punished by the institution, not by the law. Professional organizations, schools and publishing companies can suspend, remove or terminate authors.<sup>5</sup>

In older times less sources for plagiarism like magazines, newspaper etc. were available, but now a day’s access to electronic media made it easier to copy others work and use it in your name. This condition is getting worse day by day. Reason can be lack of awareness among people regarding Plagiarism especially students and even faculty. If the faculty is knowledgeable and knows about plagiarism, then they can play crucial part in educating and deterring students from plagiarizing. Therefore, investigator conducted a study in this area.



**Objectives:** The objective of the study was to assess the knowledge of students and faculty members regarding plagiarism.

### Methods

Descriptive survey approach and cross - sectional design was used in the study. Purposive sampling was used, and 118 students and faculty members were selected. An online structured Questionnaire was administered through google docs for the data collection. Section -1 of the tool consisted of demographic items; Section -2 consisted of knowledge items related to Plagiarism. The maximum score for the knowledge element is 19 points and correct answer has one score. More than 80% is a good knowledge, 60 - 79% is average knowledge and less than 60% is poor knowledge.

Data analysis was done by using statistical methods.

### Results

#### Section I

This section has the characteristics of sample in terms of age, Gender, educational status, educational stream, occupation etc.

The following table presents the frequency and percentage distribution of study subject by their demographic characteristics.

#### Section II

This section consists of the finding related to knowledge of students and faculty regarding plagiarism.

**Table I. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Samples by Their Demographic Characteristics**

N=118

S.NO	Sample Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
1.	<b>Age (in years)</b>		
	18-28	74	62.8
	29-38	10	8.4
	39-48	15	12.7
	49-58	17	14.5
	≥ 59	2	1.6
2.	<b>Gender</b>		
	Male	19	16
	Female	99	84
3.	<b>Educational status</b>		
	Diploma	10	8.5
	Bachelor	62	52.5
	Postgraduate	32	27.5
	Others (Ph.D., M.Phil. etc.)	14	11.9
4.	<b>Educational stream</b>		
	Nursing	107	90
	Engineering	3	3
	Business Management	3	3
	Arts and Design	5	4
5.	<b>Occupation</b>		
	Faculty (Management)	3	3
	Faculty (Nursing)	35	30
	Faculty (Engineering)	3	3
	Faculty (Arts & Design)	5	4
	Students	72	60

6.	<b>Are you actively involved in any of these -conferences/ paper presentations/ article publications/ review of articles?</b>		
	Yes	65	54.7
	No	53	45.3
7.	<b>Have you heard of plagiarism?</b>		
	Yes	98	83.1
	No	20	16.9
8.	<b>Have you been punished due to plagiarism?</b>		
	Yes	0	0
	No	118	100
9.	<b>According to you, a person doing plagiarism must be punished?</b>		
	a) Yes	108	91.5
	b) No	10	8.5

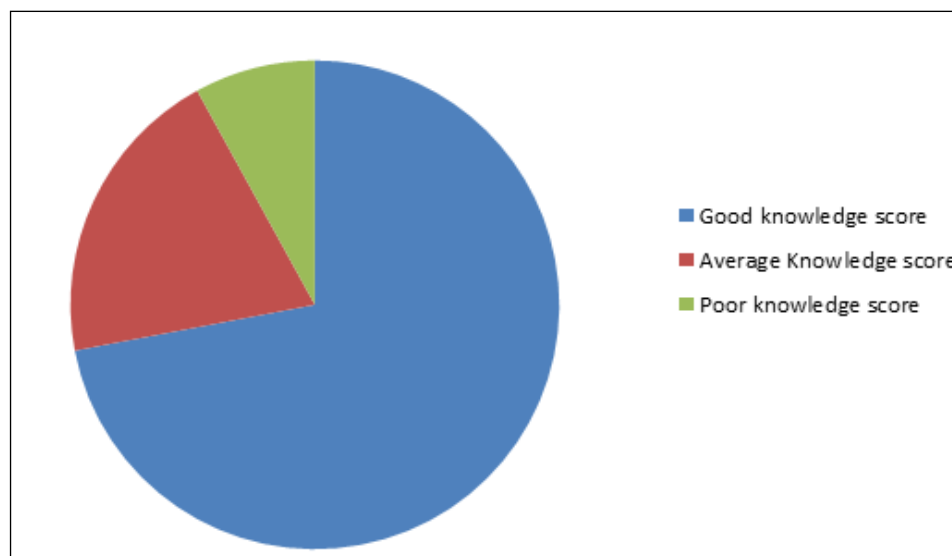
**Table 2. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Knowledge Scores of Samples**

N=118

1	<b>What is plagiarism?</b>		
	Using someone's idea or writing them as your own (ü)	103	87
	Ask a friend to write for you	2	7
	Translate other people's ideas into own words	13	6
2	<b>Which of the following can be done to avoid plagiarism?</b>		
	Share other people's information and cite the source of that information (ü)	93	78
	Not citing the sources		
	Relying on others' words	7	6
3	<b>Borrowing someone else's ideas or words without proper documentation is known as:</b>		
	Paraphrasing	32	27.1
	Plagiarism (ü)	69	58.5
	Editing	17	14.4
4	<b>What are the consequences of Plagiarism?</b>		
	You can be sued	8	6.8
	You can be behind bars and have to pay fine	11	9.3
	Termination	5	4.2
	Demotion	2	1.7
	All of these (ü)	92	78
5	<b>What is the meaning of the word 'Cite'?</b>		
	To see something at a distance	14	11.9
	It is same as vision	8	6.8
	To give credit for resources used for writing (ü)	96	81.4
6	<b>What is a source?</b>		
	A backup plan	3	2.5
	Something you can make up	9	7.6
	Resources used to find information (ü)	106	89.8

	<b>Why is it important to cite sources?</b>		
7	To give credit to all who deserve it (ü)	97	82.2
	To take all the credit yourself	9	7.6
	Not important at all	12	10.2
	<b>Even if you cite the source, examples that are too close to the original text may still be considered plagiarism because:</b>		
8	By changing words or their order, you change the author's real meaning. (ü)	55	46.6
	Without giving the author, a complete and correct text, you give the author a text that he did not write.	31	26.3
	You failed to convey the accuracy of the original text with direct quotes	32	27.1
	<b>You have a friend who checks your files frequently and then you discuss together how it can be improved. Is this plagiarism?</b>		
9	Yes, no help to be taken with writing.	15	12.7
	Can receive help from your friends as long as your speech is general and does not contain detailed content or editorial changes (ü)	103	87.3
	<b>Turnitin / Urkund / Grammarly are software used for:</b>		
10	Preserving a database of all papers of students	16	13.6
	Detecting Plagiarism in all papers (ü)	82	69.5
	Tracking cumulative grades of all students in all semesters	9	7.6
	Summative evaluation of research scholars	11	9.3
	<b>The advantages of citation and the correct style are:</b>		
11	You provide documentary evidence or expert evidence to support your argument.	16	13.6
	You avoid charges of plagiarism.	13	11
	You maintain academic integrity	7	5.9
	All of the above. (ü)	82	69.5
	<b>Copying information or content from someone else's work without citing it is considered plagiarism in all of the following cases:</b>		
12	Writing the information in your own words (ü)	56	47.5
	Use information gathered by the author through independent research.	34	28.8
	Reproduce the figures and tables included in the author's work in the article.	27	22.9
	Usage of exact words of the author	1	0.8
	<b>Which of the following should not be done to avoid plagiarism?</b>		
13	Cite sources	16	13.6
	Write in your own words	15	12.7
	Use plagiarism-checking tools	11	9.3
	Copying and pasting other people's works without specifying the original author. (ü)	76	64.4
	<b>Plagiarism is plagiarism whether it is done intentionally or not.</b>		
14	Yes (ü)	86	72.9
	No	3	2.5
	Don't Know	29	24.6

<b>It is OK to use other people's images (or video clips) without, written permission from the author/publisher.</b>			
15	Yes	8	6.8
	No (ü)	94	79.7
	Don't know	16	13.6
<b>UGC has issued guidelines related to plagiarism.</b>			
16	Yes (ü)	69	58.5
	No	4	3.4
	Don't know	45	38.1
<b>Plagiarism is a type of research misconduct.</b>			
17	Yes (ü)	73	61.9
	No	8	6.8
	Don't know	37	31.4
<b>Software is available to check plagiarism.</b>			
18	Yes (ü)	86	72.9
	No	3	2.5
	Don't know	29	24.6
<b>Plagiarism is cheating.</b>			
19	Yes (ü)	103	87.3
	No	4	3.4
	Don't Know	11	9.3



**Figure 1. Percentage Distribution of Knowledge Scores of Samples according to their Level of Knowledge**

As shown in Table 1, the study had 118 samples, consisting of 46 faculty members and 72 students. Maximum (63%) were in the age group of 18-28 years followed by 17 (49-58 years). Majority (84%) were female. Educational status of 52.5% of participants was bachelor and 90% were from Nursing profession. 60% participants were students while 40% were faculty members. 54.7% participants were actively involved in paper presentation, article publication

etc. Majority (83%) participants heard of plagiarism and no participant was ever punished for plagiarism. Majority (91.5%) agreed that a person doing plagiarism should be punished.

As shown in Table 2, out of 118 subjects, majority (87.3%) gave correct answer of the question regarding plagiarism. Most (78.8%) participants answered that paraphrasing and citing the source is to be done to avoid plagiarism. Most

(69.5%) participants were aware of softwares used for detecting plagiarism. 69.5% knew about the consequences of plagiarism. 38 % participants were not aware of UGC guidelines related to plagiarism, few (6 %) mentioned that plagiarism is not a type of research misconduct, 29 out of 118 were not knowing that soft wares are available for checking plagiarism, 11 mentioned that they didn't know whether plagiarism is cheating or not.

As shown in Figure 1, it is evident that most of the participants (72%) had good knowledge about plagiarism, 20% had average knowledge and 8% had poor knowledge about plagiarism.

### Discussion

As per a study done by Shirazi, Jafarey and Moazam where knowledge and perceptions regarding plagiarism was conducted on 4th year medical students and teachers of Private and public medical colleges in Karachi and it was found out that there is a lack of knowledge regarding plagiarism among medical students and faculty members<sup>6</sup> whereas in the current study the result showed that 72% of the participants had good knowledge about plagiarism. In another online survey which was designed and delivered through Google Forms to the participants, it was found out that 89.1% of them know the meaning of the term plagiarism which is in line with the findings of the current study where 87.3% participants know the definition of plagiarism. As per their findings, 35% participants admitted they had been involved in plagiarism which are in contrast with the findings of the present study where none was involved in the act of plagiarism.<sup>7</sup>

According to a study done by Yadav,<sup>8</sup> it was found out that most of the participants knew about plagiarism which is in line with the findings of the current study where 72% participants were aware of plagiarism. In their study about 70% of the students had plagiarized to some extent in the past whereas as per the current study, none was involved in plagiarism.

### Conclusion

This study was an attempt to assess knowledge of faculty and students regarding plagiarism and result of the study showed that participants had good knowledge about Plagiarism. But the problem will be solved only when more and more people become aware about plagiarism. Unfortunately, people know about it but, still they commit the crime of plagiarism. Teachers have the responsibility of teaching their students about the consequences of plagiarism so that at an early step, they understand the importance of original work.

**Source of Funding:** None

**Conflict of Interest:** None

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