

## Research Article

# Knowledge Assessment of Students and Faculty Members Regarding Plagiarism

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## I N F O

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## A B S T R A C T

**Introduction:** Encyclopedia Britannica defines plagiarism as “taking another person’s work and passing it off as one’s own”. Plagiarism is unacceptable and punishable.

**Objective:** The purpose of the study was to assess the knowledge of students and faculty members about plagiarism. Quantitative approach and exploratory research design was used. The sample of the study consisted of 118 students and faculty members from different streams. A self – structured questionnaire was prepared to assess the level of knowledge about plagiarism. Descriptive statistics was used for analysis.

**Result:** Result showed that 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 many professional programmes it is required to submit research work either in group or individually. Students, sometimes in order to complete the work in time copy others’ ideas, their work and even their findings and publish in their own names. This can be done by 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<sup>1</sup>. Plagiarism is Plagiarism whether done intentionally or unintentionally.

Plagiarism is a crime, and it is a punishable act. In today’s world, due to 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 issue 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 softwares to detect plagiarism, this work has become easy<sup>3</sup>. Some of them are Paperpal, Turnitin, Smodin, QuillBot, Ouriginal (formerly Urkund) and iThenticate 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 days, 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

Quantitative research approach and exploratory research design was used in the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 118 students and faculty members from Jamia Hamdard and Amity university. Samples who were ready to participate and gave consent were included in the study. An online structured questionnaire was administered through google docs for the data collection. Tool consisted of two parts, part I of the tool consisted of demographic items; part II consisted of knowledge items related to plagiarism. Range of score was 0-19. Tool was given to five experts from the field of Nursing, Research and Management to ensure the validity. Reliability of the Tool was worked out by test-retest method and it was 0.84 shows high reliability. Scoring was done as good knowledge (more than 80%), average knowledge score (60-79%) and poor knowledge score (less than 60%). Data analysis was done by using descriptive statistical methods.

### Results

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. 52.5% of participants 2.5% were having bachelorette degree 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 soft wares 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 fig 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

**Table 1. Frequency and percentage distribution of samples by their demographic characteristics**

S.No	Sample Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>n=118</b>			
<b>1. Age (in years)</b>			
1.	18-28	74	62.8
2.	29-38	10	8.4
3.	39-48	15	12.7
4.	49-58	17	14.5
5.	≥ 59	2	1.6
<b>2. Gender</b>			
1.	Male	19	16
2.	Female	99	84
<b>3. Educational Status</b>			
3.	Educational Status		
4.	Diploma	10	8.5
5.	Bachelor	62	52.5
6.	Postgraduate	32	27.5
7.	Others (Ph.D., M.Phil. etc.)	14	11.5
<b>3. Educational stream</b>			
1.	Nursing	107	90
2.	Engineering	3	3

3.	Business Management	3	3
4.	Arts and Design	5	4
<b>4. Occupation</b>			
1.	Faculty (Management)	3	3
2.	Faculty (Nursing)	35	30
3.	Faculty (Engineering)	3	3
4.	Faculty (Arts & Design)	5	4
5.	Students	72	60
<b>5. Are you actively involved in any of these -Conferences / paper presentations / article publications / Review of article?</b>			
1.	Yes	65	54.7
2.	No	53	45.3
<b>6. Have you heard of plagiarism?</b>			
1.	Yes	98	83.1
2.	No	20	16.9
<b>7. Have you been punished due to plagiarism?</b>			
1.	Yes	0	0
2.	No	118	100
<b>8. According to you, a person doing plagiarism must be punished?</b>			
1.	Yes	108	91.5
2.	No	10	8.5

**Table 2. Frequency and percentage distribution of responses of samples on each item related to plagiarism**

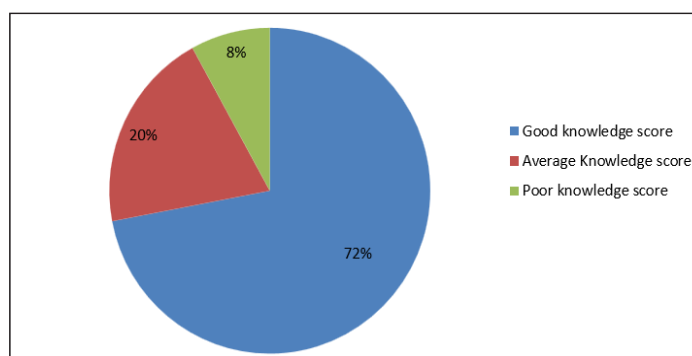
<b>n=118</b>				
S.No	Question	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	What is Plagiarism?	Using someone's idea or writing as your own	103	87
		Ask a friend to write for you	2	7
		Translate other people's ideas into own words	13	6
2	Which of the following can be done to avoid plagiarism?	Share information and cite source	93	78
		Not citing sources	7	6
		Relying on others' words	6	5
		Using pictures/tables from Google	12	11
3	Borrowing someone else's ideas or words without proper documentation is known as	Paraphrasing	32	27.1
		Plagiarism	69	58.5
		Editing	17	14.4
4	What are the consequences of Plagiarism?	You can be sued	8	6.8
		Behind bars and fine	11	9.3
		Termination	5	4.2
		Demotion	2	1.7
		All of these	92	78
5	Meaning of the word Cite	To see something at a distance	14	11.9
		Same as vision	8	6.8
		Give credit for resources used	96	81.4

6	What is a source?	A backup plan	3	2.5
		Something you can make up	9	7.6
		Resources used to find information	106	89.8
7	Why is it important to cite sources?	Give credit to all who deserve it	97	82.2
		Take all the credit yourself	9	7.6
		Not important at all	12	10.2
8	Even if you cite the source, examples too close to original text may be plagiarism because	Changing words changes meaning	55	46.6
		Incomplete attribution	31	26.3
		Failed to use direct quotes accurately	32	27.1
9	Friend checks your file frequently. Is this plagiarism?	Yes	15	12.7
		Help allowed if no detailed editorial changes	103	87.3
10	Turnitin/Urkund/Grammarly are used for	Preserving database	16	13.6
		Detecting plagiarism	82	69.5
		Tracking grades	9	7.6
		Summative evaluation	11	9.3
11	Advantages of citation	Documentary/expert evidence	16	13.6
		Avoid plagiarism charges	13	11
		Maintain academic integrity	7	5.9
		All of the above	82	69.5
12	Copying information without citing is plagiarism in	Writing in own words	56	47.5
		Independent research information	34	28.8
		Reproduce figures/tables	27	22.9
		Exact words of author	1	0.8
13	Which should not be done to avoid plagiarism?	Cite sources	16	13.6
		Write in your own words	15	12.7
		Use plagiarism tools	11	9.3
		Copy-paste without author credit	76	64.4
14	Plagiarism is plagiarism whether intentional or not	Yes	86	72.9
		No	3	2.5
		Don't Know	29	24.6
15	Use other people's images without permission	Yes	8	6.8
		No	94	79.7
		Don't Know	16	13.6
16	UGC has issued guidelines related to plagiarism	Yes	69	58.5
		No	4	3.4
		Don't Know	45	38.1
17	Plagiarism is a type of research misconduct	Yes	73	61.9
		No	8	6.8
		Don't Know	37	31.4
18	Software is available to check plagiarism	Yes	86	72.9
		No	3	2.5
		Don't Know	29	24.6

19	Plagiarism is cheating	Yes	103	87.3
		No	4	3.4
		Don't Know	11	9.3

**Table 3.** Frequency and percentage distribution of knowledge scores of samples regarding plagiarism

S.No	Knowledge Scores	frequency	percentage (%)
1.	Good Knowledge (>80%)	85	72
2.	Average Knowledge (60% -79%)	24	20
3.	Poor Knowledge (<60%)	9	08



**Figure 1.** A pie chart showing percentage distribution of knowledge scores of samples according to their level of knowledge

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 knew the definition of plagiarism. As per their findings, 35% participants admitted that 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 Pooja et al<sup>8</sup>, it was found 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.

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