Awareness on Plagiarism: A Study of Library and Information Science Students' at Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, Punjab

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Abstract

The present paper reflects the awareness level of UG and PG students of Library and Information Science about Plagiarism at Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, Punjab. A survey of students by distributing a well structured Questionnaire was conducted with the purpose to assess the knowledge of LIS students about plagiarism and its effects on academics. The study reveals that all the students were aware of the term plagiarism. More than half of students (51.06%) became aware about plagiarism through faculty members in their classroom whereas 23.40 percent knew from discussions with friends. Nearly half of students (42.55%) were aware since last one year. Around three fourth students were of the view that the plagiarism is 'using someone's ideas/words without acknowledging him/her' whereas 63.82% students opined that plagiarism is 'Copying from the internet and not crediting the sources'.

*Keywords***:** Awareness, Plagiarism, Library and Information Science Students, GNDU

Introduction

"The American Heritage Dictionary defines the verb "plagiarize" as "to steal and use the ideas or writings of another as one's own." (Website of American Heritage Dictionary, 2023) The Oxford Dictionary defines plagiarism as "to take and use another person's thoughts, writing, invention, etc. as one's own" (Website of Oxford Learner's Dictionary, 2023). The website of Oxford University, "Presenting work or ideas from another source as your own, with or without consent of the original author, by incorporating it into your work without full acknowledgment. All published and unpublished material, whether in manuscript, printed, or electronic form, is covered under this definition, as is the use of material generated wholly or in part through the use of artificial intelligence (save when the use of AI for assessment has received prior authorization e.g. as a reasonable adjustment for a student's disability). Plagiarism can also include re-using your own work without citation. Under the regulations for examinations, intentional or reckless plagiarism is a disciplinary offense" (Website of University of Oxford, 2023).

"Plagiarism" may be defined as 'an act of employing any idea, concept, word, work, image, etc. in own work or content without citing the original author or creator'. Even using one's own work without citing it in any new work is also considered as an act of plagiarism. In academic environment, plagiarism whether done intentionally or unintentionally is punishable. So, in order to prevent plagiarism and maintain academic integrity, proper citation techniques and acknowledging the origin source is mandatory.

1. **Review of Related Literature**

Uplaonker (2018) showed plagiarism awareness levels of PG and PhD students of University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad. She revealed that 97.18% of PG and 84.31% of PhD scholars were aware of plagiarism. A strong understanding was reflected among the students that the act of directly copying content without proper attribution is unacceptable in academic writing. Oyewole et al. (2018) during his survey of distance learners at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, explored the perceptions and attitudes towards plagiarism. They found 50% students agreed with the statement at highest "copying from the internet" is an act of plagiarism which showed a significant level of awareness among distance learners about the concept of

plagiarism. More than half (53%) students were agreed strongly that "plagiarism is an academic crime," whereas 52.50% agreed strongly that "plagiarism is an act of lack of integrity". A survey conducted by Iloh et al. (2018) at a PG medical college in southeast Nigeria found 100% awareness of plagiarism among all the respondents. But it was also found that despite of this awareness, 23.8% responded that they were adopting plagiarism. A highest number (73.5%) reported that plagiarism was adopted in the work of preparing UG projects. There was felt a need to address the root causes of plagiarism early in students' academic journeys for UG students mainly. Javaeed et al. (2019) in their survey of UG students of medical science at Rawalpindi, Pakistan revealed that 86.19% students were unaware of what plagiarism entails. They found a knowledge gap among medical students regarding the "concept of plagiarism", its various appearances, and its implications in academic and professional settings. Only a small fraction (14.45%) was known to the legal penalties associated with plagiarism. The low awareness of potential legal ramifications indicated that a significant portion of the respondents were not fully aware of the consequences of engaging in academic dishonesty. The plagiarism awareness of PhD scholars at Dharwad, Karnataka University was examined by Savitha & Krishnamurthy (2020) in their paper wherein it was found that the highest number of PhD scholars were aware of plagiarism and had a fair understanding of various plagiarism-related topics, including different types of plagiarism, anti-plagiarism software, the consequences of engaging in plagiarism, etc. Tsekea, Zivanai & Madziko (2021) in their study reflected UG students' attitude toward plagiarism at Bindura University of Science Education They indicated the need for targeted interventions to enhance students' understanding of plagiarism, improve academic writing skills, and promote a culture of academic integrity. By addressing these issues, the university can foster a more ethical academic environment and encourage students to engage in honest and original academic work.

Hussein (2022) studied plagiarism awareness of PG students at 'Taif University' and found that postgraduate students possess a moderate comprehension of various manifestations of the study underscores the necessity of fostering a culture of scientific integrity among postgraduate scholars, facilitating their grasp of scientific plagiarism, encompassing its manifestations, underlying reasons, and potential repercussions. Kumar and Kumar (2023) in their paper found 99% of JNU users aware of plagiarism, while 97% awareness was marked among DU users. In both universities, 53.10% admitted for their lack or insufficient knowledge

as prime reason for engaging in plagiarism. 24% of JNU users and 68% of DU users were familiar with plagiarism tools. Nketsiah, Imoro & Barfi (2023) found that irrespective of academic levels, students of 30 PG students of UCC at the 'University of Cape Coast, West Africa' had similar attitudes and understanding of plagiarism. The students who were more aware of plagiarism were more likely to use Turnitin as a tool to ensure originality in their work and to incorporate it into their academic writing processes.

2. Objectives of the Study

The study has been conducted with the following specific objectives:

- To know the awareness of UG and PG students of GNDU on Plagiarism;
- To Identify the source and period of awareness on plagiarism;
- To analyze students' understanding with plagiarism;
- To find out the reasons for applying plagiarism;
- To explore the insight of students regarding reduction of plagiarism.

3. Research Methodology

A survey of BLIS and MLIS students was conducted at Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritser- a reputed university of Punjab state. A well structured questionnaire for the study was prepared consisting of 12 questions related to personal information of student and plagiarism related familiarity. These questionnaires were personally distributed among 50 students out of which 47 questionnaires (35 BLIS and 12 MLIS) were received back. These questionnaires were then coded and inserted into excel sheet for further calculation and analysis. The analysed data has been presented in the tables for further interpretations.

4. Scope of the Study

The survey study was made to identify awareness level regarding plagiarism among graduate and postgraduate students of only Bachelor and Master students of "Department of Library and Information Sciences at Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, Punjab".

5. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The analyzed data has been presented in the following tables and discussions have been made on the basis of interpretations:

6.1 Plagiarism Awareness among Students: The first and foremost factor of any type of survey study is to know whether the respondent of the survey is aware regarding the issue which we are going discuss with him in detail and his opinion on the same. It was found while analyzing the complete data through the filled up questionnaires that all the UG and PG students of Department of Library and Information Science were aware about Plagiarism.

Table1

Awareness about plagiarism

Awareness of plagiarism	Respondents	%
Yes	47	100
No	00	00

6.2 Awareness Source about Plagiarism: Sources of awareness about plagiarism among library science students have been discussed with the help of table 2. It is apparent from the table that more than half of the students (51.06%) came to know about plagiarism from their teachers in the classroom while around one fourth of them (23.40%) became aware during discussions with their friends. Only 12.27 percent students came to know through college seminars and same portion of students (12.27 %) through social media.

Table 2

Sources of awareness about plagiarism

Sources	Respondents	%
Through teachers in the classroom	24	51.06
During discussions with friends	11	23.40
During college seminars	06	12.77
Social media	06	12.77
Total	47	100

6.3 Time Span of Awareness about Plagiarism: Table 3 reflects the time span of awareness about plagiarism among students. It was found from the data received that 42.55 percent were aware of plagiarism for last one year while 38.30 percent for last 2-3 years. There were 14.89 percent students who became aware of plagiarism first time while filling up the questionnaire. Only a small fragment of students (4.26 %) were found aware about plagiarism for last 4-5 years.

Table 3

Period of awareness about plagiarism

Time Span	Respondents	%
Through this questionnaire	07	14.89
During the last one year	20	42.55
Two / three years	18	38.30
Four/ five years	02	04.26
More than five years	00	0
Total	47	100

6.4 Attendance in Awareness Programme on Plagiarism: Table 4 shows that the majority of students (89.36%) did not attend any plagiarism awareness program while only 10.64 percent students responded that they had attended awareness programs on plagiarism. The finding suggests that a number of awareness programmes for students must be organized on plagiarism.

Table 4

Attendance in plagiarism awareness programs

Awareness Program Attended	Respondents	%
Yes	05	10.64
No	42	89.36

6.5 Students' outlook on acts of plagiarism: The table shows that more than three fourth of students (76.60%) students considered plagiarism is 'using someone's ideas/words without

acknowledging him/her' followed by 63.83 percent with a view point that plagiarism is 'copying from the internet and not crediting the source'. More than half population (57.45%) considered it as 'submitting a paper that has been cut and pasted in small part or full from a website' while another half (51.06%) opined it as 'Translating a document from another language and submitting as your own'. More than 45 percent students were in view that 'submitting an assignment /paper with passage copied from print /internet without acknowledgment or citation' is plagiarism and the same fragment said it is 'Copying and Pasting a section from the webpage and make small changes.' More than 42 percent considered it as 'Paraphrasing someone else's words with no in-text citation but giving the source in the reference list' is plagiarism while around one fourth of students (25.53%) opined it as 'copying words without putting quotation marks but provide references and not in-text citations'. Another one fourth of students group (25.53%) was in view that it is 'copying words without quotation putting marks but provide references and in-text citations'.

Table 5

Students' outlook on acts of plagiarism

Statements on plagiarism	Respondents (N=47)	%
Using someone's ideas/words without acknowledging him/her.	36	76.60
Submitting a paper that has been cut and pasted in small part or full from a website	27	57.45
Copying from the internet and not crediting the source.	30	63.83
Copying and Pasting a section from the webpage and make small changes.	22	46.81
Translating a document from another language and submitting it as your own	24	51.06
Submitting an assignment /paper with a passage copied from print /internet without acknowledgment or citation.	22	46.81
Copy word without quotation mark but provide references and no in-text citations.	12	25.53
Paraphrasing someone else's words with no in-text citation but	20	42.55

giving the source in the reference list		
Copy word without quotation mark but provide references and in-text citations	12	25.53

6.6 Students' Viewpoint on Reasons to Plagiarize: Above table shows that 65.95 percent students plagiarized because of a 'lack of writing skill' followed by 57.45 percent students because of 'lack of knowledge about plagiarism. A little less than half population each (48.94%) used plagiarized content due to 'external pressure to succeed' and 'lack of time' while 31.91 percent due to academic pressure. 21.28 percent students plagiarized because they had fear to get less score in assignments whereas only 8.51 percent plagiarized in absence of administration policy on punishment for plagiarism.

Table 6

View point of students for reasons to plagiarize

Reasons for plagiarism	Respondents (N=47)	%
Lack of knowledge about plagiarism	27	57.45
Lack of time	23	48.94
Fear of scoring less in assignments	10	21.28
Due to academics pressure	15	31.91
No administration policy on punishment for plagiarism	04	8.51
Lack of writing skills	31	65.96
External pressure to succeed	23	48.94

6.7 Students' Suggestions for Reducing Plagiarism: The table shows that majority of students (91.48%) opined that plagiarism may be reduced by conducting awareness programs on plagiarism followed by 46.80 percent by implementing university policy on plagiarism. Only 42.55 percent students were in view that students should be informed that their academic work will be checked for plagiarism

Table 7

Suggestions by students to reduce plagiarism

Suggestions	Respondents (N=47)	%
Conducting awareness programs on plagiarism.	43	91.48
Implement University policy on plagiarism.	22	46.80
Students should be informed that their work will be checked for Plagiarism.	20	42.55

6. Conclusion

The study aims to evaluate the awareness level of UG and PG students of the Department of Library and Information Science regarding plagiarism at Guru Nanak Dev University (GNDU), Amritsar, Punjab, Also the study put emphasis on the significance of promoting awareness and educating students about plagiarism and avoiding plagiarism in academic scenario to maintain academic integrity. It also recommends the implementation of some policies on plagiarism to foster a culture of originality and proper acknowledgment to original source.

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