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Abstract

Plagiarism is a subject of academic misconduct among teaching and research community in higher educational institutions. Information and communication technology has immensely made easy to access information in digital form or electronic form that can lead to copying words/text from any kind of information sources such as Internet, books, magazines, journals, project reports, publications, white papers etc, without acknowledging the original author/ authors with proper citation. Plagiarism is the act of stealing someone else's work and attempting to pass it off as one's own. In the global academic scenario plagiarism occurs due to lack of knowledge or due to ignorance. In the present study an attempt has been made to study the awareness of plagiarism among research scholars of Karnatak University Dharwad. The findings of the study reveal that most of the research scholars are aware of plagiarism, and they have fair knowledge on various issues of plagiarism such as different types of plagiarism, various anti-plagiarism softwares, consequences indulging in plagiarism etc, some of the factors that influence them to involve in plagiarism are also identified from the study. Most of the respondents have opined about the need to conduct awareness program on plagiarism

Key words: *Plagiarism, Academics, Anti-plagiarism software, Karnatak University, Information Sources.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Research has proven that 'plagiarism' is on the rise in higher education (Gullifer & Tyson, 2010; Obeid & Hill, 2017), which raises serious concerns about the quality of research. Bethany (2016) explains that plagiarism affects students' success, ability to develop academic

writing skills and incurs penalties the moment it is discovered. Therefore, Higher Learning Institutions have adopted various strategies to curb this issue. These include teaching their students about plagiarism and how to avoid it as well as setting up anti-plagiarism policies and measures. However, as stated by Breen and Maassen (2005), "the development of academic misconduct policies has done little to reduce the incidence of plagiarism." As Breen and Maassen go on to explain, many plagiarism incidents result from ignorance and poor skills rather than intentional misconduct. Indeed, many universities focus on tools to detect plagiarism and on punitive measures without considering the reasons behind plagiarism. In the present context there is drastic increase in the percentage of online academic and research publications of academicians and researchers through websites and other platforms. It has become very difficult to find out the originality of research works because many researchers and students tend to cut and paste most of the content in their publications such as research papers/articles, thesis, dissertation, reports, and assignments. So, it is necessary to take steps against plagiarism in every university, institution, college and research organization that detects the plagiarism through anti plagiarism softwares (Singh, 2016).

Plagiarism is ethical as well as moral issue in educational institutions. Plagiarism occurs when a person does not provide a proper acknowledgment or credit to an author and present it as his/ her work. The present study attempts to ascertain the knowledge of research scholars about plagiarism.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Lina and Linas (2014) conducted study to know the students perception of plagiarism in Higher Education Institutions of Lithuania. The results of the study reveal that students under the study are aware about plagiarism, but observation of the study showed that understanding of plagiarism among participating students' is not clear due to lack of proper definition of plagiarism as it is stated. Author suggested that full and clear-cut definition of plagiarism and various types of it with practical examples could help the academic community to develop plagiarism prevention. **Rani and Nagaraju (2014)** investigated the awareness about plagiarism among postgraduate students and found that the majority of the respondents did not understand what plagiarism is. **Paulo and Ana (2014)** conducted a study to investigate teaching staff and secondary school students' perceptions on plagiarism of seven European countries. The findings point out that plagiarism is illegal; attribute plagiarism to the easiness on contents access on Internet but while teachers have given some reasons to students plagiarism such as students' lack of skills, students highlight the pressure

to get good grades, laziness and poor management as well as the expectation that won't be caught. For preventing plagiarism, authors suggested to teachers to enhance students' skills. **Prashantha Kumari and Lakshmi (2015)** have conducted survey on plagiarism awareness among research scholars at Sri Venkateswara Univerisity. The study reveals that most of the respondents are aware about plagiarism but still there is a need of awareness program to enhance knowledge about plagiarism. The study also highlights various aspects of plagiarism such as awareness on plagiarism among research scholars, type of reference style used, problems faced by research scholars while writing their own ideas on the thesis etc. suggestions are made on the basis of opinion given by respondents of the study. **Idiegbeyan-ose and others (2016)** explored postgraduate student's awareness and perception about plagiarism in selected Universities in Ogun State Nigeria. Results indicate that some factors which have influenced the respondents to involve in plagiarism and lead them to dissatisfaction such as their level of awareness on concept, training sessions which helps to improve their understanding of plagiarism, stress to complete their academic activities and lack of knowledge in writing skills. The study also revealed a significant positive relationship at r = 0.294 and p < 0.05 implying that as awareness increases, the positive perception of plagiarism would also improve. However, it revealed a significant difference in perception of plagiarism at f (2,327) = 25,000 and p < 0.05 implying that what postgraduate students perceived as plagiarism differ across the types of institution. **Jereb Eva et al (2017)** have carried out study at the University of Maribor in Slovenia. The analysis showed that female respondents have negative approach towards plagiarism as compared to male respondents. In this study the researcher has attempted to trace out the respondents awareness on plagiarism and there he has categorized three parts; first one 'students who are aware of plagiarism but do not judge it wrong or academic misconduct', secondly 'students who are not aware of plagiarism', and third part 'students who are aware of plagiarism but continue to plagiarise despite knowing it to be wrong'. The study also revealed some differences between male and female in their perception towards plagiarism which may be the result of specific personal characteristics of men and women, not only in the field of education but later also in the field of working life and life in society in general. **Željana Bašić1 et al (2019)** have conducted cross- sectional study on UG and PG students attitude on plagiarism at the University of Split. Results indicated the student's attitude towards plagiarism and it is observed that respondents unintentionally do plagiarize due to lack of proper knowledge. It is also found from the study that students are not familiar with referencing rules and not able to provide acknowledgement to the original authors.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

a) To study the respondents awareness on plagiarism

b) To know the information sources used by respondents for writing a research thesis

c) To ascertain the awareness about the consequences of plagiarism among respondents

d) To explore the main factors which leads respondents towards plagiarism while writing a thesis/ research paper.

4. SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study is confined only the research scholars of the Karnatak University, Dharwad Main campus

5. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

5.1. Data collection tool

For the present study, survey method was adopted and a structured questionnaire was prepared and distributed among the respondents.

5.2. Selection of sample

The total strength of the research scholars in Karnatak University is 452 (www.ugc.ac.in). To derive the sample size of the respondents a simple random sampling technique was used. Around 250 questionnaires were distributed among the research scholars i.e. 55% of the total target population. Among 250 respondents, 230 respondents have responded with a response rate of 50.88%.

6. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

6.1. Gender wise distribution

Table 1 shows the gender wise distribution of respondents. The study sample consists of 135 (58.7%) male and 95 (41.3%) female research scholars.

Table 1: Gender-wise distribution.

Gender	Frequency	Percent %
Male	135	58.7%
Female	95	41.3%
Total	230	100.0%

6.2. Age-wise Distribution of respondents

The study found that majority of the respondents i.e., 113 (49.1%) belongs to the age group of '26-30', followed by 52 (22.6%) of them belongs to age group of 31-35, 40 (17.4%) respondents belongs to the age group of 20-25, only 25 (10.9%) respondents belongs to the age group of 36 and above.

Table 2: Age-distribution.

Age	Frequency	Percent %
20-25	40	17.4%
26-30	113	49.1%
31-35	52	22.6%
36 above	25	10.9%
Total	230	100.0%

6.3. Discipline-wise distribution of the respondents

Table 3 shows the department-wise distribution of respondents. It is evident from the table that majority of i.e. 111 (48.3%) respondents belongs to Science discipline, while 87 (37.8%) of respondents are from Social science, 21 (9.1%) from Languages/Humanities and 11 (4.8%) from Management.

Table 3: Discipline-wise distribution of respondents.

Departments	Frequency	Percent %
Science	111	48.3%
Social Science	87	37.8%
Languages and Humanities	21	9.1%
Management sciences	11	4.8%
Total	230	100.0%

6.4. Places of Information access

Table 4 shows the places of information access among research scholars. It is found that most of the research scholars i.e., 93 (40.4%) access information through 'Internet', while 66 (28.7%) of the respondents access information from 'Department', 53 (23%) of them access from 'Library', only 18 (7.8%) of the respondents access information from 'other sources'. It is clear from the study that Internet is the most common gateway to access information by the research scholars.

Table 4: Location to access Information.

Place	Frequency	Percent %
Department	66	28.7%
Main Library	53	23.0%
Internet	93	40.4%
Others	18	7.8%
Total	230	100.0%

6.5.Information sources used to write research paper/thesis.

A question was asked to respondents that which are the sources used by them for the research work and it is noticed that, majority 72 (31.3%) respondents refer 'Periodicals/ Journals', while 49 (21.3%) respondents refer 'Electronic resources', followed by 37 (16.1%) respondents use 'Thesis and Dissertations', 24 (10.4%) respondents use 'News papers', 19 (8.3%) of them use 'other sources'. It is observed that Periodicals are the main sources, which are considered as Primary sources in their research activities.

Table 5: Information source used.

Information sources	Frequency	Percent %
Periodicals/ Journals	72	31.3%
Text Books	14	6.1%
Electronic resources	49	21.3%
Thesis / Dissertations	37	16.1%
Newspapers	24	10.4%
Proceedings	15	6.5%
Other	19	8.3%
Total	230	100.0%

6.6.Awareness of Plagiarism

The study revealed that all of the respondents i.e. 230 (100%) are aware about Plagiarism.

Table 6: Awareness of Plagiarism among respondents

	Yes		No	
Awareness about plagiarism	230	100%	-	-
Total	**230 (100%)**			

6.7. Sources of Awareness of Plagiarism

Table 7 indicates the sources through which respondents came to know about plagiarism. It is found from the study that, 76 (33%) respondents mentioned 'Research Guide' as the key source to get knowledge about plagiarism, while 57 (24.8%) respondents mentioned 'workshop/ Seminars/ Conferences', followed by 46 (20%) respondents stated 'Co-researcher', 28 (12.2%) respondents stated 'Library', only 23 (10%) of them mentioned 'Friend' as the source to be aware about Plagiarism. It is observed from the analysis that Guide is the main resource to get knowledge on plagiarism as compared to other sources.

Table 7: Source of awareness of Plagiarism.

Places	Frequency	Percent %
Library	28	12.2%
Research Guide	76	33.0%
Co-researcher	46	20.0%
Workshop/seminar/conference	57	24.8%
Friend	23	10.0%
Total	230	100.0%

6.8. Types of Plagiarism

Table 8 shows the respondents knowledge on various types of plagiarism. It is found that majority of the respondents i.e. 99 (43%) are aware about 'Unintentional plagiarism', while 59 (25.7%) respondents are conscious about 'Self-plagiarism', followed by 46 (20%) respondents have knowledge on 'Complete Plagiarism', only 26 (11.3%) respondents aware of 'Direct plagiarism'.

Table 8: Knowledge on Types of Plagiarism.

Types of plagiarism	Frequency	Percent %
Self-Plagiarism	59	25.7%
Unintentional plagiarism	99	43.0%
Direct plagiarism	26	11.3%
Complete plagiarism	46	20.0%
Total	230	100.0%

6.9. Awareness of Anti-plagiarism software

Table 9 exhibits the respondent's awareness on anti-plagiarism software. A highest percentage i.e., 186 (80.9%) respondents have knowledge on 'Anti-plagiarism software',

while 44 (19.1%) respondents are not aware of anti-plagiarism software. It implies knowledge of anti-plagiarism software among respondents is good enough to avoid plagiarism in their publications and research works.

Table 9: Awareness of anti-plagiarism software.

	Frequency	Percent %
Yes	186	80.9%
No	44	19.1%
Total	230	100.0%

6.10. Awareness on Consequences of Plagiarism

The table 10 indicates the awareness of respondents on the consequence of plagiarism. Most of the respondents 216 (93.9%) express that 'it can spoil the career of anyone', while 214 (93%) of them feel 'it can result in one's work being destroyed', followed by 203 (88.3%) respondents stated 'it can get you expelled from your research', 179 (77.8%) respondents stated 'it can result in legal action; fines and penalties etc'.

Table 10: Awareness about consequences of plagiarism.

Consequences	True		False	
Can get you expelled from research	203	88.3%	27	11.7%
Can spoil the career of anyone	216	93.9%	14	6.1%
Can result in your work being destroyed	214	93.0%	16	7.0%
Can result in legal action; fines and penalties etc.	179	77.8%	51	22.2%

6.11. Factors influencing the respondents while writing/ presenting the thesis leading to plagiarism

Table 11 shows the factors influencing the research scholars while writing thesis or research paper leading to plagiarism. Most of the respondents i.e., 97 (42.2%) have strongly agree that 'Lack of time' is the major problem, followed by 80 (34.8%) of the respondents have strongly agree that 'Lack of writing skills', 125 (54.3%) respondents agreed that 'Lack of motivation', 94 (40.9%) of them agreed 'Lack of language skills' is the major reason for plagiarism.

Table 11: Factors influencing the respondents while writing/ presenting the thesis leading to plagiarism

Problems	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

Lack of language skills	0	0.0%	67	29.1%	30	13.0 %	94	40.9%	39	17.0%
Lack of motivation	0	0.0%	38	16.5%	29	12.6 %	125	54.3%	38	16.5%
Lack of interest on study	13	5.7%	118	51.3%	24	10.4 %	39	17.0%	36	15.7%
Lack of time	0	0.0%	25	10.9%	29	12.6 %	79	34.3%	97	42.2%
Due to laziness	31	13.5%	89	38.7%	86	37.4 %	24	10.4%	0	0.0%
Lack of writing skills	0	0.0%	17	7.4%	51	22.2 %	82	35.7%	80	34.8%

6.12. Need of Awareness Program

Table 12 shows need for user awareness programs among respondents. From the table it is evident that majority 209 (90.9%) of the respondents stated they need user awareness programs such as workshops, user orientation, seminars, special lectures on Plagiarism, while a less number i.e. 21 (9.1%) of them felt not necessary.

Table 12: Need of User Awareness program.

Frequency	No. of respondents	Percent
Yes	209	90.9%
No	21	9.1%
Total	230	100.0

7. MAJOR FINDINGS

1. The study shows that out of 230 respondents 135 (58.7%) are male and 95 (41.3%) are female research scholars.

2. Highest percentage of the respondents i.e., 93 (40.4%) access information through 'Internet', while 66 (28.7%) of the respondents access information from 'Department'. It is observed that Internet has become a main gateway to access information compared to others.

3. The majority 72 (31.3%) of the respondents refer 'Periodicals/ Journals', while 49 (21.3%) respondents refer 'Electronic resources'. Although a good number of respondents prefer to use thesis and dissertations, news papers, text books and other

sources. But periodicals/journals are the highly used information sources as compared to other information sources.

4. Study revealed that all of the respondents i.e. 230 (100 %) are aware about Plagiarism

5. The majority of the respondents i.e. 76 (33%) expressed 'Research Guide' as the key source to get knowledge about plagiarism, while 57 (24.8%) respondents mentioned 'workshop/ Seminars/ Conferences'. Although Library, co-researchers, and other sources also helps them to acquire knowledge on plagiarism

6. A good number of the respondents i.e. 99 (43%) are aware about 'Unintentional plagiarism', while 59 (25.7%) respondents conscious about 'Self-plagiarism', followed by 46 (20%) respondents have knowledge on 'Complete Plagiarism'.

7. A highest percentage i.e., 186 (80.9%) of the respondents have knowledge on 'Anti-plagiarism software', while 44 (19.1%) respondents are not aware of anti-plagiarism software.

8. A highest number of the respondents i.e. 216 (93.9%) have awareness about consequences of plagiarism such as 'plagiarism can spoil the career of anyone', while 214 (93%) of them have mentioned 'it can result in your work being destroyed', A good number of respondents are aware about other consequences of the plagiarism such as it can get you expelled from your research', and also it can result in legal action; fines and penalties etc'.

9. Most of the respondents i.e., 42.2% have strongly agreed that 'Lack of time' is the major factor leading to plagiarism, followed by 34.8% of the respondents have strongly agreed that 'Lack of writing skills', 54.3% of the respondents agreed that 'Lack of motivation', 40.9% of them agreed 'Lack of language skills' leading to plagiarism.

8. SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

To maintain academic integrity in higher education institutions such as universities, it is necessary to avoid plagiarism among academic community. Plagiarism is an ethical issue which deals with proper acknowledgement towards original author. Now a days plagiarism is increasing due to lack of awareness and understanding of concept. The present study reveals that all respondents are aware about plagiarism but it is observed that still there is no proper understanding of concept. It is observed from the study that though the respondents are aware about consequences of plagiarism, types of plagiarism, various anti-plagiarism softwares but

respondents expressed that some of the factors influencing them towards plagiarism while writing a thesis/ research paper. Such factors are due to lack of language skills, writing skills and other reasons are leading them to involve in plagiarism. So it is suggested that concerned authority should motivate them to avoid plagiarism by conducting user awareness programs, communication skill development programs etc. It helps respondents to enhance their knowledge on plagiarism and promote them to maintain academic and research integrity.

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