

Effect of Stream and Gender of Research Scholars on Various Dimensions of Attitude towards Plagiarism

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ABSTRACT

Plagiarism is dispensing other's "work or ideas as one's own" without full acknowledgement of its source in order to achieve better grades or some other benefits. It is a kind of fraud wherein the plagiarist stands on the shoulder of others by denying "credit to the original author" whose work they call as their own. This study explores the effect of stream and gender on various dimensions of attitude towards plagiarism of research scholars of university of Kashmir. For this study quantitative research approach was adopted with survey as research method. Data were collected with the help of questionnaire developed by Martina Mavrinc, Gordana Brumini, Lidija Bilic-Zulle and Mladen Petrovecki (2010). Two-way ANOVA in the study revealed that stream of research scholars had a significant effect on positive attitude towards plagiarism and subjective norms towards plagiarism in the surveyed university. However, there was no significant main effect of stream on negative attitude towards plagiarism of research scholars in the surveyed university. Moreover, there was no significant main effect of gender and interaction of gender and stream of research scholars on positive attitude towards plagiarism, negative attitude towards plagiarism and subjective norms towards plagiarism in the surveyed university. Based on these findings, it is recommended that university administrators should be sincere in addressing the issue of plagiarism by framing the strict and rational policies for diminishing the extent and impact of plagiarism. Supervisors should also train their scholars in ethical scientific writing and in ethical use of information.

Keywords: *Plagiarism, stream, gender, positive attitude towards plagiarism, negative attitude towards plagiarism and subjective norms towards plagiarism.*

Plagiarism is considered as a theft of intellectual property, wherein a plagiarist claims the authorship of a piece of writing which belongs to someone else. It breaches the norms of academic ethics, violates the intellectual property rights of the creator of work, ruins the academic credibility of the plagiarist and offends the moral rights of plagiarist's audience. The purpose of higher education is to produce innovative, original and honest thinkers, who can generate new ideas, theories, and formulas through different

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Received: November 28, 2022; Revision Received: December 27, 2022; Accepted: December 31, 2022

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research methods for the benefit of existing and upcoming generations, who can progress this knowledge by granting acknowledgement to the genuine author “where it is due” (Ramzan et al, 2012). But an easy and instant access to huge quantity of information has increased misconduct among higher institutions of research and education (Brimble and Stevenson Clarke, 2005) which acts as an obstacle in the way of publication of original and innovative ideas, threatening scholars scientific output and affecting scientific progress. Ethics and integrity form the base of educational and research community where novel ideas, theories are produced and established, investigations and scholarly tasks are undertaken and publicized for the welfare of humankind with the aspiration of attribution (Ramzan et al, 2012). But plagiarism denies the acknowledgment and credit to the original author. Acknowledging the creator of work from whom researchers have learnt something not only gives commendation to the creator but also assigns credibility to researchers work, creates a record that other students can refer to and build upon and also improves researcher’s proficiency and ability in research (Sankar, 2020). The main aim of education should be providing students with value based education and producing students with great progress in examination and excellent performance in research but without hurting academic ethics and integrity. “Academic integrity involves ensuring that in research, and in teaching and learning, both staff and students act in an honest way. They need to acknowledge the intellectual contributions of others, be open and accountable for their actions, and exhibit fairness and transparency in all aspects of scholarly endeavor” (EAIP, 2013b, as cited in Bretag, 2013). Plagiarism devalues the principles of honesty, fairness, trustfulness, justice, admiration, and accountability which are necessary to academics. It encourages laziness, by offering an easy escape to plagiarists from exhausting tasks thus killing creativeness, originality and innovation. Consequently, students should be encouraged to take on value-based research and carry out legitimate publication (Charan et al, 2020). They should be encouraged to develop good research habits, grasp the principle of source use, learn how to cite properly, master the techniques of academic writing, commitment to the principle of intellectual honesty and protect the integrity of education system. Plagiarism reduces the academic integrity, hampers the acquisition of analytical and critical thinking, obstructs mental stimulation, deteriorates the writing and research skills, encourages dependency on others work without generating any novel and original idea, promotes laziness and discourages innovation among students and researchers. Plagiarism is an academic misconduct with profound consequences for the plagiarized author, plagiarist’s audience, scholarly community and society as well. Plagiarism is the theft of words or ideas beyond whatever is viewed as general knowledge (Park, 2003). However, there are queries about “the point at which an idea passes into general knowledge in a way that no longer requires attribution” (Leatherman, 1999). Genuineness, truthfulness, honesty and integrity are central to education and scientific research. Therefore, it is necessary to improve quality, uphold ethics, avoid plagiarism and aspiration to produce high quality work. Plagiarism gives plagiarist an underserved benefit, hurts the plagiarized author, breaks the association between novel ideas of researcher and the acknowledgement deserved for the generation of those ideas thus endangering the quality and integrity of higher education and research. Plagiarism means “to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one’s own; use (another’s production) without crediting the source; to commit literary theft; present as new and original idea or product derived from an existing source” (Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 2021). Plagiarism is serious and growing issue in research, scientific and academic world. Raising awareness about plagiarism can help in preventing this issue from getting worse. Plagiarism disapproves the idea of originality and uniqueness and approves the idea of laziness. Occurrence of plagiarism is difficult to measure but the analysis of

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attitude towards plagiarism can provide an insight about it. Positive attitude towards plagiarism reveals approval and commendation of such behavior, negative attitude towards plagiarism reveals disapproval and condemnation of such behavior and subjective norms towards plagiarism reveals common thinking about occurrence of plagiarism and the acceptance of such behavior in scientific and academic communities (Mavrinac et al. 2010). Within the past two decades, scholars have been conducting researches to determine the attitude towards plagiarism in a global perspective and the goal of this study is to contribute to this debate at University of Kashmir.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ryan et al (2009) conducted a study on pharmacy student's perception of plagiarism and reported misunderstanding about plagiarism among respondents and what is contemplated as undesirable in academic setting was considered as desirable by respondents. Shirazi et al (2010) conducted a study on medical students and faculty member's perception of plagiarism and claimed ignorance about plagiarism as a main cause for conducting plagiarism. Pupovac et al (2010) conducted a study on pharmacy and medical biochemistry student's attitude towards plagiarism and observed moderate attitude towards plagiarism among respondents. Alleyne et al (2010) conducted a study on undergraduate student's perceptions of ethical problems and ethical intentions and reported gender, religious commitments and academic majors influence ethical intentions and opinions. Females and religiously committed students and students belonging to accounting and management studies were possessing higher ethical intentions. Kjellstrom et al (2010) examined research ethics in dissertations of nursing students and found research ethics were inadequately covered, ethical concerns were omitted and reasoning on ethical values was insufficiently covered in most of dissertations. El-Dessouky et al (2011) conducted a study on dental faculty's attitude towards research ethics committees and research ethics and claimed that respondents held positive attitude towards research ethics committees and approved research ethics education but lack knowledge about research ethics. Ghajarzadeh et al (2012) conducted a study on medical faculty member's attitude towards plagiarism and showed lack of awareness about plagiarism among respondents. Voiculescu (2013) conducted a study on Romanian medical student's attitude towards plagiarism and revealed positive attitude towards plagiarism among respondents. Murtaza et al (2013) conducted a study on university student's behavior towards plagiarism and reported that plagiarism was considered unacceptable by respondents. Gomez et al (2014) conducted a study on dental postgraduate students and faculty member's attitude towards plagiarism and reported that respondents possess moderate attitude towards plagiarism. Singh and Guram (2015) conducted a study on dental professional's knowledge and attitude towards plagiarism and claimed most of the respondents were aware of plagiarism and have committed plagiarism at least once. Kithi, et al (2015) conducted a study on healthcare postgraduate students and faculty member's attitude towards plagiarism and found moderate attitude towards plagiarism among respondents. Rathore et al (2015) conducted a study on faculty members and medical student's attitude towards plagiarism and found positive attitude towards plagiarism among respondents. Doss et al (2016) conducted a survey on domestic and international student's attitude towards plagiarism found neutral attitude towards plagiarism among respondents. Ehrich et al (2016) conducted a study on Chinese and Australian university student's attitude towards plagiarism and revealed that respondents possess severe negative attitude towards plagiarism. Kattan et al (2017) conducted a study on resident postgraduate student's attitude towards plagiarism and found positive attitude towards plagiarism among respondents. Oyewole et al (2018) conducted a study on attitude of

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distance learning students towards plagiarism and reported high level of awareness and negative perception towards plagiarism among respondents. Parmar and Parmar (2019) conducted a study among medical postgraduate students and faculty member's attitude towards plagiarism and reported lack of awareness and moderate attitude towards plagiarism among respondents. Alimorad (2020) conducted a study on role of gender and educational level of Iranian EFL graduate students reasons for committing plagiarism and observed no significant influence of educational level, gender and their interaction on perceived reasons for committing plagiarism. Issrani et al (2021) conducted a study on Saudi student's attitude towards plagiarism and showed that males possess more awareness about plagiarism and were disfavoring plagiarism more than their female counter parts and medical students possess more awareness about plagiarism than dental students. Ali (2021) conducted a study on faculty members attitude towards plagiarism in Egypt and claimed moderate attitude towards plagiarism among respondents and respondents from basic and applied sciences possess stronger attitude towards plagiarism than social science, education and arts respondents.

Objectives of the Study

The basic objective of the study is to explore the effect of stream, gender and the interaction of stream and gender on various dimensions of attitude towards plagiarism of research scholars of the University of Kashmir. The following three hypotheses guided the study:

- **Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant effect of stream, gender and the interaction of stream and gender on positive attitude towards plagiarism of research scholars at the surveyed university.
- **Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant effect of stream, gender and the interaction of stream and gender on negative attitude towards plagiarism of research scholars at the surveyed university.
- **Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant effect of stream, gender and the interaction of stream and gender on subjective norms towards plagiarism of research scholars at the surveyed university.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For this study quantitative research approach was adopted with survey as research method. Research scholars from three streams of University of Kashmir were used as respondents in the study. A stratified proportionate random sampling technique was adopted to select the sample at the surveyed university. The study population from the three streams at the surveyed university was 1124 research scholars, while proportional sampling of 50% of study population was used to determine the total sample size of 561 research scholars as respondents in the study.

Data was collected for the study with the help of questionnaire developed and standardized by Martina Mavrinac, Gordana Brumini, Lidija Bilic-Zulle and Mladen Petrovecki (2010). The information blank was prepared by the investigator herself to capture questions on stream and gender of respondents as demographic variables. The data was analyzed with the help of SPSS.

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Table 1. Distribution of respondents by stream

Serial No.	Stream	Study Population	Sample Size
1	Science	667	333
2	Social Science	316	158
3	Behavioral Science	141	070
	Total	1124	561

Table 2. Distribution of respondents by Gender

Serial No.	Stream	Study Population	Sample Size	Study Population	Sample Size
		(Males)	(Males)	(Females)	(Females)
1.	Science	343	171	324	162
2.	Social Science	181	91	135	67
3.	Behavioral Science	57	28	84	42
	Total	581	290	543	271

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographics of Respondents

In view of the objectives of the study, the respondents were asked to indicate their stream and gender as their demographic variables in the survey. The results of the study in Table 1 indicate that (59.35%) respondents were from the faculty of science, (28.16%) were from faculty of social science and (12.47%) were from faculty of behavioral science. In terms of gender Table 2, it was found that (51.69%) of the respondents in the study were males and (48.30%) were females.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant effect of stream, gender and the interaction of stream and gender on positive attitude towards plagiarism of research scholars at the surveyed university.

The hypothesis 1 for the study was tested using Two-way ANOVA (Table 3). The results revealed that there was significant main effect of stream on positive attitude towards plagiarism and no significant main effect of gender and interaction of stream and gender on positive attitude towards plagiarism of research scholars at the surveyed university. In order to know which streams mean score on positive attitude toward plagiarism differ significantly, the data was analyzed using (post-hoc comparisons) Tuckey HSD test (Table 4).

Table 3: Two-way ANOVA for Effect of Stream, Gender and their interaction on Positive Attitude towards Plagiarism of Research Scholars.

Source of variance	SS	df	MSS	F-Value	Sig
Stream	3.106	2	1.553	4.331*	.014
Gender	.136	1	.136	.378	.539
Stream * Gender	.728	2	.364	1.014	.363
Total	4933.396	561			

* Significant at .05 level

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Table 4: A Post-Hoc Comparison of Social Science, Behavioural Science and Science research scholars on Positive Attitude towards Plagiarism.

Mean	S.D	N	(I) Stream	(J) Stream	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
2.801	.572	158	Social Science	Behavioural Science	-.058	.776
				Science	-.161*	.016
2.860	.692	70	Behavioural Science	Social Science	.058	.776
				Science	-.102	.395
2.962	.590	333	Science	Social Science	.161*	.016
				Behavioural Science	.102	.395

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

The finding of the survey in Table 4 was that only the mean score of science and social science research scholars differ significantly and science research scholars had stronger positive attitude towards plagiarism than social science research scholars in the surveyed university. Thus, the hypothesis 1 is partially accepted. The finding of the survey affirms recent research findings by (Zhang et al. 2017; Bilic-Zulle et al. 2005) and contradicts with (Qaisar et al. 2016; Faiezah 2009). Zhang et al. (2017) reported higher rates of cheating among natural science students as compared to social science students. Bilic-Zulle et al. (2005) reported male and female students did not differ significantly with regards to plagiarism rate. Qaisar et al. (2016) reported no significant difference in students of different disciplines on positive attitude towards plagiarism. Faiezah (2009) reported more plagiarism rate among male students as compared to female students.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant effect of stream, gender and the interaction of stream and gender on negative attitude towards plagiarism of research scholars at the surveyed university.

The hypothesis 2 for the study was tested using Two-way ANOVA (Table 5). The results revealed that there was no significant main effect of stream, main effect of gender and interaction of stream and gender on negative attitude towards plagiarism of research scholars at the surveyed university. Thus hypothesis 2 is accepted.

Table 5: Two-way ANOVA for Effect of Stream, Gender and their interaction on Negative Attitude towards Plagiarism of Research Scholars.

Source of variance	SS	df	MSS	F-value	Sig
Stream	.206	2	.103	.605	.546
Gender	.021	1	.021	.124	.725
Stream * Gender	1.013	2	.507	2.975	.052
Total	5908.041	561			

The finding of the survey affirms recent research findings by (Qaisar et al. 2016) and contradicts with (Menon et al. 2019; Zhang et al. 2017). Qaisar et al. (2016) reported no significant effect of stream and gender on negative attitude towards plagiarism of undergraduate students. Menon et al. (2019) reported that medical students showed more negative attitude towards plagiarism as compared to non-medical students. Zhang et al. (2017) reported female students have stronger moral attitude than male students.

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Hypothesis 3: There is no significant effect of stream, gender and the interaction of stream and gender on subjective norms towards plagiarism of research scholars at the surveyed university.

The hypothesis 3 for the study was tested using Two-way ANOVA (Table 6). The results revealed that there was significant main effect of stream on subjective norms towards plagiarism and no significant main effect of gender and interaction of stream and gender on subjective norms towards plagiarism of research scholars at the surveyed university. In order to know which streams mean score on subjective norms toward plagiarism differ significantly, the data was analyzed using (post-hoc comparisons) Tuckey HSD test (Table 7).

Table 6: Two-way ANOVA for Effect of Stream, Gender and their interaction on Subjective Norms towards Plagiarism of Research Scholars.

Source of variance	SS	df	MSS	F-value	Sig
Stream	2.953	2	1.476	5.062*	.007
Gender	.052	1	.052	.177	.674
Stream * Gender	.328	2	.164	.563	.570
Total	4311.040	561			

*Significant at .05 level

Table 7: A Post-Hoc Comparison of Social Science, Behavioural Science and Science research scholars on Subjective norms towards Plagiarism.

Mean	SD	N	(I) Stream	(J) Stream	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
2.615	.500	158	Social Science	Behavioural Science	-.041	.856
				Science	-.166*	.004
2.656	.666	70	Behavioural Science	Social Science	.041	.856
				Science	-.125	.184
2.781	.528	333	Science	Social Science	.166*	.004
				Behavioural Science	.125	.184

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

The finding of the survey in Table 7 was that only the mean scores of science and social science research scholars differ significantly and science research scholars had stronger subjective norms towards plagiarism than social science research scholars. Thus, the hypothesis 3 is partially accepted. The finding of the survey partially agrees and partially disagrees with research finding by Qaisar et al. (2016). Qaiser et al. 2016 reported no significant influence of gender on subjective norms towards plagiarism of undergraduate students and reported no significant influence of discipline on subjective norms towards plagiarism of undergraduate students.

CONCLUSIONS

Plagiarism is a theft of intellectual property, wherein a plagiarist claims the authorship of a piece of writing which belongs to someone else. It breaches the norms of academic ethics, violates the intellectual property rights of the creator of work, ruins the academic credibility of the plagiarist and offends the moral rights of plagiarist’s audience. Plagiarism is an

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academic misconduct which is appearing as a threat to generation of new knowledge and information therefore efforts should be made to prevent and curb this menace. Occurrence of plagiarism is difficult to measure but the analysis of attitude towards plagiarism can provide an insight about it. Hence, the present study explored the effect of stream and gender on various dimensions of attitude towards plagiarism of the research scholars at the University of Kashmir. However, findings of the study revealed that there was no significant effect of interaction of gender and stream of research scholars on positive attitude towards plagiarism, negative attitude towards plagiarism and subjective norms towards plagiarism at the surveyed university. A similar finding was obtained in terms of gender; in other words, the positive attitude towards plagiarism, negative attitude towards plagiarism and subjective norms towards plagiarism were gender neutral at the surveyed university. On the other hand, stream of research scholars had a significant effect on positive attitude towards plagiarism and subjective norms towards plagiarism but no effect of stream was observed on negative attitude towards plagiarism of research scholars at the surveyed university. Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that university administrators should be sincere in addressing the issue of plagiarism by framing the strict and rational policies for diminishing the extent and impact of plagiarism. Supervisors should also train their scholars in ethical scientific writing and ethical use of information. An important step in reducing the incidence of plagiarism is making sure that the scholars and students have enough knowledge about plagiarism its types, consequences, effects and ways of dodging it. Plagiarism in universities can be curbed by increasing awareness and teaching about ethical standards and principles through seminars and interactive workshops.

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Acknowledgement

The author appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and publication of this article.

How to cite this article: Ashiq, M. & Mattoo, M. I. (2022). Effect of Stream and Gender of Research Scholars on Various Dimensions of Attitude towards Plagiarism. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 10(4), 1941-1950. DIP:18.01.185.20221004, DOI:10.25215/1004.185