

# Awareness of Plagiarism among Student Teachers of Indian Teacher Educational Institutions

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## Abstract

Today, the Internet is a rich source of study materials, and Google Scholar offers free access to a large number of scientific articles. There are excellent research publications available in many more databases. Students have the option of easily copying the material. Reusing, paraphrasing, patchwriting, and ghostwriting without citing the original documents are plagiarism. Plagiarism is increasing in academics, particularly in research. This study aims to study the awareness of plagiarism and to analyze the reasons for plagiarism. The study samples are the student teachers in India. For this study, we used a survey method, and the author prepared a questionnaire to collect data from the student teachers. Study respondents are the student teachers of the Regional Institute of Education Mysore; Purposive sampling was used to select samples. The total number of study respondents is 207. The findings of the study revealed that over 70 per cent of respondents mentioned reasons for plagiarism as lack of relevant literature studying, lack of preparation and time, difficulty checking every piece of work, do not know the manual citation style, lack of knowledge about bibliographic management software and also they stated that getting easily available materials on the internet is also a reason for plagiarism. The study recommends that teachers teach or conduct awareness programs on plagiarism, avoiding plagiarism, citation style, and software.

**Keywords:** Academic research, Plagiarism, Academic integrity, Academic writing, Academic ethics

## Introduction

For many decades, copying others' ideas has been happening worldwide. To avoid the imitation of others' works, most institutions introduced plagiarism rules and regulations (Dey & Sobhan, 2011). Even though some situations are unavoidable, the educational institute provides examples of students copying friends' assignments, exam papers, and unpublished works (Martin & Sloan, 2009). Anti-plagiarism software, such as Turnitin, was developed in the 20th century to manage plagiarism and content similarity. This plagiarism

software's features are finding text similarities, paraphrase detection, improper quotation highlighting, multilingual detection findings, automatic recognition of missing and inaccurate citations, and sentence and grammar corrections. Students who are interested in publishing their articles should correct the plagiarism. It is the responsibility of the higher education institution to alert the students. Teachers must encourage the students to present quality materials (Levin & Pazdernik, 2018).

Nevertheless, most colleges and

institutes have not fully adopted and enforced plagiarism concepts at the graduate and postgraduate levels. Teacher education programs are prevalent in Indian universities. Student teachers are the future teachers. Educational ideas and philosophical, sociological, and psychological underpinnings are taught in teacher education schools (Kutieleh & Adiningrum, 2011). India is a place of multiculturalism and various regional languages. Education in contemporary Indian society is also one of the courses in teacher education. Student teachers should be trained to reflect on their ideas, share their teaching experiences, and suggest incorporating ideas into the curriculum. So it is essential to encourage the students to publish articles. While publishing their articles, they must be careful about plagiarism (Sapatnekar, 2004).

Plagiarism means copying or stealing someone's ideas, inventions, thoughts, and expressions and making them their own. Most plagiarism happens because of not giving the proper citations and acknowledgment to the authors or referred resources. Plagiarism-related words are scientific misconduct, cheating, fabrication and falsification, data manipulation, academic integrity, text recycling, and verbatim (Clarke, 2006).

### **Causes and Consequences of Plagiarism in the Indian Context**

In India, only academics have had a firm understanding of plagiarism during the previous few decades. Students enrolled in Ph.D. programs are required to submit plagiarism reports alongside their theses. Before submitting journal articles, it is required to perform a plagiarism check. (Vij et al., 2020). Due to these pressing needs, researchers are using plagiarism software. However, the need to avoid plagiarism is now realized at all levels (Awasthi, 2019). Teachers

must know the importance of avoiding plagiarism and its adverse effects. Before turning in work, teachers should advise their students to examine them for plagiarism. Teachers must ensure the originality of pupils' work. Students could worry about failing. Teachers should so support students and assist them in avoiding plagiarism (Krishan et al., 2020). Teachers can also be careful in avoiding plagiarism in their teaching notes and other literature. Plagiarism destroys students' reputations and the professional reputation of teachers. The teacher will give some punishment to the student for plagiarism. Teachers should correct students when plagiarizing (Pathak & Malakar, 2016). As it affects the academic reputation of teachers and students, awareness of plagiarism is required for the student teachers as they are the present students and future teachers. Many software tools are now available to detect plagiarism. The use and utilization of this software are needed during their teacher education programs (Rai et al., 2010). Student teachers will be encouraged to use the available materials to detect plagiarism. In bringing these things into practice, we can avoid the consequences of plagiarism which is now considered the biggest flaw in Indian writing.

### **Review of Literature**

Javaid et al. (2020) conducted research with Pakistani University's first-year and final-year electrical engineering students about plagiarism. Their study result shows no significant differences between first-year and final-year undergraduate students. Because of the lack of awareness of university policies, plagiarism rules, and regulations, students continuously commit the same errors. The study findings show that many easily available materials tempt students to plagiarise. The study additionally shows a lack of students' knowledge about plagiarism, and it was suggested that students

need awareness programs, workshops, research method papers at the undergraduate level, and punishment.

Merkel (2021) did qualitative survey research on students' understanding of plagiarism. The study sample is a Norwegian University of Science and Technology undergraduate teacher educator students. The result of the study shows that students have the perception of plagiarism as stealing one or more than one intellectual idea and concept. It is called copying, stealing, and without giving proper citations, using others' work as their own. However, there is poor referencing style, citation management knowledge, and limited awareness of plagiarism rules and regulations. Furthermore, some students think it is the shortest way to success, lack knowledge in managing time, and intentionally commit plagiarism. The study suggests a few points for avoiding plagiarism, such as citations have to be taught and adopted as much as earlier in college days.

Farahian et al. (2021) examined the understanding of plagiarism among English language students. They collected the data from five countries: Canada, China, India, Iran, and Turkey. The result of the study shows that Canadian students have more awareness of plagiarism than Chinese students. The cultural influences show the different understandings between the countries. Furthermore, Asian students mentioned that a lack of awareness of citation manual rules and styles and academic writing skills are prime reasons for plagiarism.

According to Pagaddu (2021), procrastination is another reason men and women commit plagiarism differently. Contrarily, women like to meet deadlines, and as a result, they are less prone to plagiarize than men. Contrarily, men tend to procrastinate

more and submit assignments at the last minute.

Khathayut et al. (2022) investigated 137 Thai undergraduate students about plagiarism and planned behavior. The survey result investigation shows that students lack an understanding of plagiarism; usually, they do patchwriting and ghostwriting. Students' actions contributing to plagiarism include indifference, lack of self-assurance in their writing abilities, ignorance of how to cite sources correctly and why, and a lack of time to turn in a report to the teachers. Furthermore, the result of the study reveals that students did not get support from the university because the university does not organize workshops and awareness programs on plagiarism.

University teachers' roles in managing academic integrity were studied by Gottardello and Karabag (2022) using purposive sampling. The ideal function of a teacher in higher education was highlighted as going beyond simply conveying knowledge in the classroom. The research revealed that academic integrity was covered in the course module and updated last year. Discussion on self-plagiarism, giving out a manual, citations, and other topics were disclosed by professors.

A survey on plagiarism and pre-service teachers' competence in referencing and citation was done by Bautista and Pentang (2022). Descriptive and correlational research methods were used in the study. The findings indicated that while most pre-service teachers have a reasonable understanding of citing and citation, their awareness of plagiarism is only moderate. Additionally, the findings indicated a significant correlation between academic success, understanding of references and citations, and awareness of plagiarism. It is advised that organizations give librarians and educators the tools they need to instruct PSTs in citation and

referencing techniques.

The instructor knowledge on plagiarism issues study was conducted by Hasanah and Dewantara (2022). According to the study's findings, 92.7 per cent of faculty members spend their time teaching students about plagiarism, including its various forms and terminology. However, 63 per cent of faculty members discover plagiarism among the students their instructor oversees in academic writing. Students are first made aware of the risks of plagiarism. Faculty then educates students on how to deal with plagiarism by offering tips and tricks to avoid it. Faculty also forewarns students by threatening sanctions against those who plagiarize. Finally, faculty uses plagiarism detection tools/software to identify plagiarism in students' assignments.

### **Objectives of study**

1. To examine student teachers' awareness of plagiarism
2. To know the attitude towards research writings among Indian student teachers
3. To identify the most critical factor responsible for plagiarism

### **Research Questions**

The following inquiries served as the study's compass:

- i. What causes plagiarism among teacher educator students?
- ii. What expectations and perceptions do student teachers have regarding plagiarism?

### **Methodology**

The research methodology used in this study was a descriptive survey. Primary data were collected from the students of BA B.Ed, BSc B.Ed, MSc.Ed, B.Ed, M.Ed programmes. A questionnaire was prepared and shared in the student's mail for data collection. Purposive sampling was used, and the authors adopted the survey method because it is cost-effective and convenient to collect and analyze the data. The sample comprises a large number of female student teachers. The research was conducted with the permission of the Regional Institute of Education Mysore authorities, and the students were invited to participate in an online survey. Questionnaires were distributed to 500 students, and 207 students responded. The authors surveyed from February to March 2022. The authors analyzed quantitative and qualitative data; the Researcher used descriptive and inferential statistics with quantitative data. The authors use the following demographic variables for statistical data analysis: gender, course, and year of study. For data collection, the author used Google Forms and for data analysis, along with the Excel Worksheet. The responders gave their agreement after being fully informed. The study's objectives and implications were explained to the respondents. The respondents received guarantees about privacy, security, and anonymity. Out of 100 responses, 41.4 per cent were responsive. None of the responders received a prize or cash.

## Data analysis and findings

**Table-1 Socio-Demographic details of Respondent**

<b>Socio-Demographic details of the respondent's</b>			
<b>Variables Frequency</b>		<b>Responses</b>	
		<b>Percentage</b>	
Gender	Female	156	75.4
	Male	51	24.6
Mother Tongue	Hindi	15	7.2
	Kannada	42	20.3
	Malayalam	50	24.2
	Tamil	29	14
	Telugu	54	26.1
	Others	17	8.2
Medium of instruction in higher secondary level	English	195	94.2
	Hindi	0	0
	Kannada	5	2.4
	Malayalam	2	1
	Tamil	1	0.5
	Telugu	3	1.4
	Odia	1	0.5
Residence	Rural	89	43
	Urban	118	57
Age	17-23	143	69.1
	23-27	50	24.1
	27-35	8	3.9
	35-50	6	2.9
Course	BA B.Ed	47	22.7
	BSc B.Ed	68	32.9
	MSc.Ed	46	22.2
	B.Ed	29	14
	M.Ed	17	8.2
Total		207	100

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic details of the respondents. The total number of respondents in this study is 207. Participant gender distribution showed more female respondents, 156 (75.4 per cent), and males, only 51 (24.6 per cent). Further, the table shows the respondents' first language or native language. The results revealed that the majority of the respondents have the native language, Telugu 54 (26.1 per cent), followed by Malayalam 50 (24.2 per cent), Kannada 42 (20.3 per cent), Tamil 29 (14 per cent), Hindi 15 (7.2 per cent), and other languages 17 (8.2 per cent) including Oriya 6, Tulu 4, Konkani 2, Kodava 2, Jasari 1, Bengali 1 and Marathi 1. In addition, mediums of instruction at higher secondary levels are studied. English 195 (94.2 per cent), Kannada 5 (2.4 per cent), Telugu 3 (1.4 per cent), Malayalam 2 (1 per cent), Tamil, and

Odia each 1. 118 (57 per cent) respondents hail from urban and 89 (43 per cent) from rural backgrounds. The ages of the respondents are in the range of 17 - 23 years 143 (69.1 per cent), 23 - 27 years 50 (20.7 per cent), 27 - 35 years 8 (3.9 per cent), and 35 - 50 years (2.9 per cent). Course-wise, more respondents are BSc B.Ed 68 (32.9 per cent), MSc.Ed 46 (22.2 per cent), B.Ed 29 (14 per cent), and M.Ed 17 (8.2 per cent).

**Knowledge and beliefs about plagiarism**

The authors attempted to study the knowledge and beliefs of student teachers about plagiarism and the plagiarism checker. The authors also wanted to check student teachers' awareness of avoiding plagiarism. The details are given below.

**Table-2: Knowledge and beliefs about plagiarism**

Knowledge and beliefs about plagiarism	Yes	No
Do you know what plagiarism means?	186 (89.9%)	21 (10.1%)
Do you have an awareness of avoiding plagiarism	123 (59.4%)	84 (40.6%)
Do you need training on awareness of plagiarism?	133 (64.3%)	74 (35.7%)
Have you used a plagiarism checker?	50 (24.2%)	157 (75.8%)
Do you know bibliographic management software?	18 (8.7%)	189 (91.3%)

Respondents were asked about plagiarism. Table 2 shows that 186 (89.9 per cent) student teachers know about the meaning of plagiarism, 123 (59.4 per cent) know about avoiding plagiarism, 133 (64.3 per cent) respondents expected training on plagiarism, and 157 (75.8 per cent) respondents did not use plagiarism checker.

**Reasons for plagiarism or motivator of plagiarism**

The authors wanted to study the reason behind the occurrence of plagiarism and wanted to check the motivator of plagiarism. The details are given below.

**Table-3: Reasons for plagiarism or motivator of plagiarism**

Reasons for plagiarism or motivator of plagiarism	Yes	No
I do not know citation manual styles (e.g. APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.,)	132 (63.8%)	75 (36.2%)
I do know how to cite the document in text citation	94 (45.4%)	113 (54.6%)
I do not know how to use reference management software (E.g. Mendeley, Zotero, etc.,)	148 (71.5%)	59 (28.5%)
Lack of knowledge of academic writing	140 (67.6%)	67 (32.4%)
Lack of preparation and time	152 (73.4%)	55 (26.6%)
Lack of relevant literature reading	161 (77.8%)	46 (22.2%)
Do you think the internet is a reason for plagiarism?	147 (71%)	60 (29%)
Do you think vast resources are reasons for plagiarism?	105 (50.7%)	102 (49.3%)
Do you have the experience of copying entire text from online without modifying anything?	85 (41.1%)	122 (58.9%)
If one cannot write well in a foreign language (e.g., English), it is justified to copy parts of a similar paper already published in the language.	95 (45.9%)	112 (54.1%)
I could not write a scientific paper without plagiarism	76 (36.7%)	131 (63.3%)
Lack of interest and enthusiasm for publishing quality research works	135 (65.2%)	72 (34.8%)
Difficult to check every piece of work	152 (73.4%)	55 (26.6%)

Table 3 identifies reasons for plagiarism: 63.8 per cent lack knowledge of citation manual styles (e.g., APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.,). Likewise, 71.5 per cent lack familiarity with using reference management software (E.g., Mendeley, Zotero, etc.,); 67.6 per cent lack knowledge of academic writing, 73.4 per cent lack preparation and time, 77.8 per cent lack relevant literature reading, 71 per cent of respondents thinks the internet is a reason for plagiarism, 50.7 per cent

thinks vast resources are reasons for plagiarism, 65.2 per cent lack of interest and enthusiasm for publishing quality research works and 73.4 per cent challenging to check every piece of work.

### **Who can control plagiarism?**

Next, the authors studied how to control the occurrence of plagiarism. They wanted to study who is responsible for controlling plagiarism.

**Table-4: Who can control plagiarism?**

Limiting plagiarism	Respondents	Percentage
Author	74	35.8
Editor	22	10.6
Reviewer	25	12.1
Plagiarism software	83	40.1
Do not know	3	1.4

From Table 4, which explains who can control plagiarism, 40.1 per cent of respondents tell plagiarism software, and 35.8 per cent tell self-control.

**Table-5: How can we control plagiarism?**

How can we control plagiarism?	Respondents	Percentage
Collecting fine	63	30.5
Degree withdrawal	48	23.2
Do not know	3	1.4
Other	53	25.6

It is evident from the table-5 that most respondents mentioned collecting fines 63 (30.5 per cent), is a way of punishing plagiarism followed by other reasons such as withdrawal of their work 48 (23.2 per cent) and the others do not know about it.

### Effects of plagiarism

The authors wanted to get student teachers' ideas about plagiarism and raised some questions to answer this.

**Table-6: Plagiarism concept makes you stressed or relaxed**

plagiarism concept is	Respondents	Percentage
Stress	116	56
Stress-free	72	34.8
Do not know	19	9.2

Table 6 reveals that most student teachers feel stress due to plagiarism. 116 (56 per cent) feel stress, but 72 (34.8 per cent) are stress-free, and 19 (9.2 per cent) do not know.

**Table-7: Are you expecting a plagiarism-free tool?**

Are you expecting a plagiarism-free tool?	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	161	77.8
No	46	22.2



Table 7 shows the expectation of plagiarism detection tools. 161 (77.8 per cent) expected it free, and the rest of 46

(22.2 per cent) did not expect it free of cost.

**Table-8: If yes, means from where?**

If yes, means from where?	Respondents	Percentage (n=207)
OSS online platform	54	26.1
Government	71	34.3
Institute or University	91	44
Library	68	32.9
Do not know	42	20.3

Table 8 shows that the students expect the plagiarism tool available in universities 91 (44 per cent) followed by the Government agencies 71 (34.3 per cent), library 68 (3.9 per cent), Open source software online platforms 54 (26.1 per cent), and do not know 42 (20.3 per cent)

cent to 71 per cent of student teachers are aware of it. Many of them pointed out that the lack of preparation time and related literature is the primary reason for plagiarism. The respondents viewed that only authors can hold the responsibility and collecting fines from the authors will control plagiarism. Many of them expect plagiarism-free tools from the government that may be available in libraries.

**Discussion**

From the present study, it is evident that plagiarism must be avoided as it affects the reputation of academic writings and research works. Most of the participants in this survey are female, and their medium of instruction at the school level is English. They are well-versed in English. The medium of instruction of their present teacher education program is also English. As a foreign language, it has its limitations. Most of them hail from urban areas, and most belong to the 18-23 age group. They have studied various teacher education programs such as B.Ed., B.Sc., B.Ed., B.Sc.,Ed., M.Ed, and M.Sc.,Ed. Out of 207 participants, the majority (181) know about plagiarism, but only a few (50) have used plagiarism checkers. Understanding citation manual style and reference management software is necessary for student teachers. 63 per

**Conclusion**

Plagiarism will give stress to both authors as well as publishers. It affects the reputation of any academic work. Many plagiarism detection tools are now available. The Department of Higher Education at the state and central levels should take the initiative to detect plagiarism in the works of academic writers, researchers, teachers, and students. People preparing their assignments and research works are visiting libraries for reference, literature review, and collection of materials for the conceptual framework. So high-quality plagiarism checkers should be made available in libraries. Awareness of plagiarism is essential for student teachers as they will guide future generations.

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