

# Awareness, Attitude, and Perception of Postgraduate Students towards Plagiarism: A Case Study of Chaudhary Ranbir Singh University, Jind, Haryana (India)

**Narender Kumar**

Guru Jambheshwar University of Science & Technology - Hisar, Haryana, India

**Anil Kumar**

Chaudhary Ranbir Singh University - Jind, Haryana, India

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## Abstract

**Objective.** To examine the level of awareness, attitude, and perception towards Plagiarism amongst postgraduate students of Chaudhary Ranbir Singh University, Jind- Haryana.

**Method.** A well-structured questionnaire was administered to 150 postgraduate university students. The sample of students was mixed irrespective of disciplines including science, humanities, and social sciences.

**Results.** The present study results show a lack of awareness among postgraduate students about plagiarism and its consequences in India. As of now, it is a cognizable offence and the study results reveal the general attitude prevailing among the Indian postgraduate students about plagiarism.

**Conclusions.** In the present study, we have addressed many important issues. The University Grants Commission, the apex authority of higher education in India, and the individual universities have to come together to develop a mechanism to create awareness among postgraduate students about plagiarism, its consequences, and remedies. This awareness drive has to be periodic in nature and success can be achieved by delivering awareness among the postgraduate students in particular and students of higher education in general.

## Keywords

*Attitude, Awareness, Haryana, Perception, Plagiarism, Postgraduate Students*

## Conciencia, actitud y percepción de los estudiantes de posgrado hacia el plagio: un estudio de caso de la Universidad Chaudhary Ranbir Singh, Jind, Haryana (India)

## Resumen

**Objetivo.** Analizar el nivel de conciencia, actitud y percepción hacia el plagio entre los estudiantes de posgrado de la Universidad Chaudhary Ranbir Singh, Jind-Haryana.

**Método.** Se aplicó un cuestionario bien estructurado a 150 estudiantes de posgrado de la universidad. La muestra de estudiantes fue diversa, abarcando distintas disciplinas, como ciencias, humanidades y ciencias sociales.

**Resultados.** Los resultados de este estudio indican que los estudiantes de posgrado no poseen un alto nivel de conciencia sobre el plagio y sus consecuencias en la India. Incluso hasta ahora, no lo consideran como un elemento punitivo reconocible, como se desprende de manera explícita en los resultados del estudio.

**Conclusiones.** En este estudio, hemos tratado diversas cuestiones relevantes. Para lograrlo, es necesario que la comisión de becas universitarias y las propias universidades desarrollen un mecanismo que fomente la conciencia entre los estudiantes de posgrado sobre el plagio. Asimismo, deberían informarles periódicamente acerca de las consecuencias y posibles soluciones.

## Palabras clave

*Actitud, Conciencia, Haryana, Percepción, Plagio, Estudiantes de Posgrado*

## Conscientização, atitude e percepção de estudantes de pós-graduação em relação ao plágio: um estudo de caso da Universidade Chaudhary Ranbir Singh, Jind, Haryana (Índia)

### Resumo

**Objetivo.** Analisar o nível de consciência, atuação e percepção para o plágio entre os estudantes de pós-graduação da Universidade Chaudhary Ranbir Singh, Jind-Haryana.

**Metodo.** Foi aplicado um questionário estruturado a 150 estudantes de pós-graduação da universidade. Amostra de estudantes era diversa, abandonando disciplinas distintas, como ciências, humanidades e ciências sociais.

**Resultados.** Os resultados deste estudo indicam que os estudantes de pós-graduação não apresentam um alto nível de consciência sobre o plágio e suas consequências na Índia. Inclusive até agora, não o considere como um elemento punitivo reconhecível, como se desprende de maneira explícita nos resultados do estudo.

**Conclusões.** Neste estudo, tratamos diversas questões relevantes. Para lograr isso, é necessário que a comissão de universidades universitárias e as próprias universidades desenvolvam um mecanismo que fomente a consciência entre os estudantes de pós-graduação sobre o plágio. Além disso, você deve informá-los periodicamente sobre as consequências e possíveis soluções.

### Palavras-chave

*Atitude, Consciência, Haryana, Percepção, Plágio, Estudantes de pós-graduação*

## 1 Introduction

In academic societies, plagiarism is considered a crime against academic integrity, and a violation of copyright law, and intellectual property rights. It has been prevalent since the inception of academic societies, not only in India but globally. However, due to the easy accessibility of digital content, cases of plagiarism have become more noticeable, especially in the last two decades.

To understand why students commit plagiarism and to gauge the level of awareness, attitude, and perception among them, the present study was conducted at Chaudhary Ranbir Singh University, Jind, Haryana, India, among postgraduate students. A structured questionnaire was randomly distributed among postgraduate (PG) students, irrespective of their academic streams.

The major finding of the study is that the majority of respondents were less aware of plagiarism, but they believe it to be a crime in academic and research activities. Analysis of responses revealed that 60.66% (91) of respondents admitted to committing plagiarism when under pressure to submit assignments within stipulated periods. Additionally, respondents exhibited negative attitudes toward certain aspects of plagiarism. Based on the study results, the authors suggest several recommendations to curb and raise awareness among students regarding plagiarism.

Plagiarism has created a chaotic situation in 21st-century education systems worldwide, including India. Syllabi and study contents are easily accessible through the web, regardless of distance, size, or physical format. This accessibility is a result of the emergence of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in academic activities, such as classroom teaching, text publishing, information retrieval, and dissemination.

The government of India initiated the National Mission of Education through Information and Communication Technology (NME-ICT) in 2009, transforming the orientation of education and information-seeking behavior. Despite these advancements, students tend to take materials from the web and use them in assignments without proper citation or acknowledgment, leading to plagiarism in academic and research systems.

Plagiarism, defined as misconduct in research work involving the use of someone's ideas or information without proper credit, has existed for centuries. Higher education institutes are meant to generate new ideas, theories, formulas, and standards, emphasizing commitment, ethics, professionalism, and honesty.

In India, the concept of plagiarism is not fully mature, mainly applied to doctoral theses (Ph.D.) and manuscript similarity checking. Postgraduate students, despite completing dissertation and project report work, often lack

awareness of plagiarism and academic dishonesty. The present study aims to assess their awareness, perception, and attitude towards plagiarism, helping formulate effective policies and promoting plagiarism-free research.

The study also draws attention to the punitive measures defined by the University Grants Commission (UGC), a regulatory body for higher education in India. The results aim to contribute to creating a transparent academic environment, improving global rankings of Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs), and assisting other researchers in understanding plagiarism and academic misconduct.

Louw (2017) utilized a questionnaire method to identify varying perceptions of students and staff in defining plagiarism, revealing that the major cause is a lack of cognition and skills on the part of students. Fanelli (2013) emphasizes the reliability of scientific knowledge through criticism and replication, arguing that misconduct should be referred to as "biased reporting." The present study contributes to the ongoing discourse on plagiarism, academic misconduct, academic integrity, attitude, and perception.

The primary objective is to provide information about the awareness level, attitude towards plagiarism, and perception among postgraduate students. The research aims to assist other researchers in enhancing their knowledge of plagiarism and academic misconduct. Data for the present study was collected from 150 respondents in January 2020.

## 2 Literature review: Definitions of Plagiarism

The term 'Plagiarism' has been defined in various ways by different authors, associations, and regulatory bodies. According to the University Grants Commission (UGC) in India, "plagiarism" is defined as "the practice of taking someone else's work or idea and passing them off as one's own." The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (2017) defines plagiarism as "using other people's work and ideas without giving proper credit to the original source, thus violating the rights of the original author(s) to their intellectual outputs." The Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) in the United Kingdom offers a comprehensive definition, stating that "plagiarism ranges from the unreferenced use of others' published and unpublished ideas, including research grant applications, to submission under 'new' authorship of a complete paper, sometimes in a different language. It may occur at any stage of planning, research, writing, or publication: it applies to print and electronic versions." Additionally, "unacknowledged copying of documents or programs" Joy & Luck (1999) and "the submission of part or all of another person's work as if it were one's own, without the knowledge of the author, and with the intention to deceive" Irving (2004).

These diverse definitions contribute to a nuanced understanding of the term "plagiarism." Before the prevalence of search engines like Google, plagiarism was primarily considered unethical. However, with the advent of information and communication technology, an abundance of information is readily available on the web, perpetuating the practice of cut-copy-paste among students and scholars, as evidenced by numerous studies. Consequently, regulatory bodies and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in India have taken the initiative to clearly define the concept, transforming it from merely unethical to a punitive offense.

The provided definitions serve to elucidate the essence of plagiarism, fostering understanding, creating awareness, and shaping a favorable perception. Consequently, the overarching outcome of these definitions is that any research work conducted by students without proper citation, attribution, and acknowledgment will be deemed plagiarized.

### 2.1 Chaudhary Ranbir Singh University, Jind, Haryana-India

Chaudhary Ranbir Singh University was established in 2014 by the state legislature Act 28 of 2014. It is established with the aim to cater the academic and research needs of the students especially belong to the rural areas. Since inception, the university is been at forefront to provide the latest curriculum (as per the demand of the academic institutions and industries) to its bonafide students. Moreover, the university is offering qualitative research activities in a collaborative mode as signed MoU with various national reputed institutions. To achieve the professional excellence, the university is continuously working on capacity building so that students may participate in the rapidly

changing world and ensure their contribution in an ethical manner. Further, to strengthen the academic repository, the university is offering 16 undergraduates and postgraduates programmes. To impart the qualitative information services, the central library of the university is well equipped with state-of-the-art facilities and resources -print and non print- (Chaudhary Ranbir Singh University Jind, n.d.).

## 2.2 Plagiarism at the university

Oyewole, Rasheed, and Ogunsina (2018) conducted a paper titled "Awareness, perception, and attitude towards plagiarism by distance learners within the University of Ibadan, Nigeria," wherein they analyzed the awareness, perception, and attitude towards plagiarism among distance learning students at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. The study's findings highlighted that the majority of distance learners (89.6%) held a negative perception of plagiarism, considering it akin to a crime. Additionally, 90% of the respondents emphasized that they diligently acknowledged their sources of information. The study recommended that universities should formulate a plagiarism policy for both researchers and students.

Ramzan et al. (2011) explored the awareness of plagiarism among university students in Pakistan in their paper. The research underscored the seriousness of plagiarism among Pakistani students, revealing a low level of awareness regarding plagiarism and university plagiarism policies. A significant number of respondents (228) admitted a lack of understanding of what plagiarism entails, although they acknowledged its wrongfulness. The study suggested that experiences might contribute to minimizing plagiarism.

Kumar & Rakesh (2019) delved into the awareness and attitude towards plagiarism among research scholars at Panjab University Chandigarh. Utilizing a five-point Likert scale, the study revealed that "cut, copy, and paste of text" ranked highest in awareness (Mean + SD value of  $4.2 \pm 1.28$ ), followed by an understanding that "collusion is helping someone else to plagiarize" ( $3.42 \pm 1.33$ ).

Kumar et al. (2019) discussed the dynamics of plagiarism in higher education and research, emphasizing the need for Higher Educational Institutions to redouble efforts in providing frameworks to address academic dishonesty. The study proposed campaigns to orient scholars, motivating self-reported views on plagiarism as a reliable measure of reality.

Jereb et al. (2018) investigated factors influencing plagiarism in higher education, comparing German and Slovene students. The findings revealed that easy access to information in the technology era, particularly through the internet, played a crucial role in driving plagiarism. The majority of students believed that the internet and new technologies strongly influenced plagiarism.

Hosny and Fatima (2014) explored the attitude of female students towards cheating and plagiarism in a Saudi Arabian university. The study highlighted common instances of plagiarism and cheating among female students, despite their acknowledgment that such practices are unethical and go against religious values.

Deshpande et al. (2020) conducted a study titled "Awareness Regarding Plagiarism Amongst Post-Graduates and Faculty Paedodontists: An Online Questionnaire Survey." The research carried out through online methods, revealed that 77.3% of respondents believed plagiarism occurred only in research publications and showed a lack of awareness regarding the consequences of copyright infringement.

Sambo (2021) analyzed the awareness and perception of plagiarism among postgraduate Library and Information Science students in South–East University Libraries, Nigeria. The study, based on questionnaire responses from 246 postgraduate students, highlighted an average level of plagiarism, the use of reading materials without referencing, and a lack of seriousness towards plagiarism. The study recommended that Nigerian universities invest in plagiarism detection software for effective protection of intellectual property.

Kumar et al. (2022) assessed the knowledge, attitude, and practice of plagiarism among postgraduate and undergraduate medical students. The findings indicated that female students at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences, Islamabad, had slightly better knowledge, with only 16% of students claiming no knowledge of plagiarism. The study concluded that knowledge about plagiarism among medical students was not up to the mark.

The literature review provides valuable insights, revealing gaps in existing research. Previous studies guide the path for further research, particularly with specific research variables. The present research aims to report on the attitude, awareness, and perception among postgraduate students in Social Sciences and Humanities. Notably, the focus on these disciplines is crucial, as these students, though traditionally less involved in research, are now mandated to understand plagiarism before embarking on research activities after their master's degrees. As per the Encyclopedia of Britannica, plagiarism is defined as "fraudulence, forgery, piracy practices" in violation of copyright law.

### 3 Metodology

A well-structured questionnaire was designed to collect the data from the postgraduate (PG) students. A total of 200 questionnaires were randomly distributed among PG students in January 2020 and in response to 200 questionnaires, 150 filled questionnaires were received back. The data were analyzed with the help of Excel and presented in the form of tables, figures, and graphs using percentages (%).

#### 3.1 Aim of the study

The basic aim of this study is to know the awareness, attitude, and perception of postgraduate Students towards plagiarism in the context of writing the assignment, research report/project.

#### 3.2 Description of the Instrument

To assess the perception, awareness, and attitude of students towards plagiarism a self-made questionnaire was used. This questionnaire was prepared by the investigator with the help of related literature, supervisors, and experts. This questionnaire comprises three sections A, B and C. Section A consisted of eight questions related to perception towards plagiarism. Each question has four options Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. Further, in Section B, ten questions were written to assess the awareness level towards plagiarism. In this section, every question has two options i.e. "Yes" or "No". Section C questions were inserted to assess the attitude towards plagiarism. This section contains fifteen questions and each question has five options to answer. These options are Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Strongly Disagree, and Disagree.

#### 3.3 Instructions for Administration

1. No time limit is fixed for completing the test. However, usually, an individual takes nearly 30 to 40 minutes to complete the questionnaire.
2. It should be emphasized that there is no right or wrong response to the statements. They are designed to study individual's reactions to different facets.
3. It should be pointed out that each item has to be responded to in the form of a symbol of right (✓) in the blank space given below or in front of options and that no statement should be left out.
4. The aim of the test was clear to each respondent.

#### 3.4 Interpretation of Responses

While interpreting the responses of Section A and Section C i.e. "strongly agree" and "agree" responses have merged into "Agree" and similarly "strongly disagree" and "disagree" responses have merged into "Disagree" as presented in Table I.

**Table I: Interpretations of Responses**

Section	Response	Interpretation
Section A	Agree	Positive Perception
	Disagree	Negative Perception
Section B	Yes	High Level of Awareness
	No	Negligible Level of Awareness
Section C	Agree	Positive Attitude
	Undecided	Neutral Attitude
	Disagree	Negative Attitude

### 3.5 Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the level of awareness among PG students on various issues of Plagiarism.
2. To know the attitude of students towards plagiarism.
3. To study the perception among students towards plagiarism.

### 3.6 Research Questions

- a. What is the level of awareness among PG students at Chaudhary Ranbir Singh University, Jind (Haryana)?
- b. What is the attitude of PG students towards Plagiarism at Chaudhary Ranbir Singh University, Jind (Haryana)?
- c. What is the perception of PG students towards Plagiarism at Chaudhary Ranbir Singh University, Jind (Haryana)?

## 4 Results of the Study

### 4.1 Section A: The awareness of Plagiarism among PG students

Table II defines the awareness level of plagiarism among postgraduate (PG) students, comprising a total of 150 students at the PG level. A significant portion, 56.67 percent of students, demonstrated a lack of awareness that presenting someone else's work as their own constitutes plagiarism, while only 43.33 percent were cognizant of this fact. Therefore, a majority of students (56.67 percent) were unaware, emphasizing the importance of acquainting them with proper writing patterns to minimize plagiarism as presented in Table II.

Furthermore, a considerable number of students (61.33 percent) were not aware that reproducing words or ideas from others' written material without giving credit is considered plagiarism. When asked if they had encountered the term "plagiarism" before the questionnaire, 82 percent of students were familiar with the word, whereas 18 percent had not heard of it as described in Table II.



A substantial percentage of students (78.67 percent and 98 percent) were not aware that providing incorrect information about the source of a quotation or copying the sentence structure of a source without proper attribution both constitute plagiarism. A significant majority (94.67 percent) were also unaware that copying a majority of work from a source is considered plagiarism.

The study delved into students' awareness of the University Grants Commission's (UGC) insistence on using anti-plagiarism software for checking plagiarism in postgraduate theses and Higher Research Degree levels such as M.Phil. and Ph.D. A high percentage, 88.67 percent, were unaware of this information.

Consequences of plagiarism were also examined, revealing that 90.67 percent of students were unaware that being caught in plagiarism could lead to punishment. Over 98.67 percent were uninformed that plagiarism could potentially harm one's career. Additionally, students demonstrated a lack of awareness that self-plagiarism, losing one's job due to plagiarism (98 percent), and facing imprisonment for plagiarism (98.67 percent) were punishable offenses.

Despite the general lack of awareness about plagiarism as a crime, a significant proportion (72.67 percent) of students were aware that Turnitin is a tool/software used to measure plagiarism as illustrated in Table II. The study also analyzed students' understanding of statements such as self-plagiarism, direct plagiarism, and unintentional plagiarism being forms of plagiarism, revealing that a high percentage (90 percent, 90 percent, and 91.33 percent, respectively) were unaware of these concepts.

In summary, Table II highlights a significant level of unawareness among students regarding plagiarism, indicating a potential cause for engagement in plagiarism. While students are familiar with plagiarism detection software, there is a noticeable lack of awareness about the various types of plagiarism and the associated punishments. Proper education and awareness about plagiarism concepts could effectively mitigate plagiarism among students.

**Table II: Awareness of Plagiarism among PG studentsStatement**

Questions	Aware	Not Aware
If you write others work as your own, then it is Plagiarism	65 (43.33%)	85 (56.67%)
Writing words or ideas from other's written matter without giving credit to him/her is plagiarism	58 (38.67%)	92 (61.33%)
Have you heard the word Plagiarism before this questionnaire	123 (82%)	27 (18%)
Writing wrong information about the source of a quotation is plagiarism	32 (21.33%)	118 (78.67%)
Writing the words differently but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit to that source is plagiarism	03 (2%)	147 (98%)
If the majority of your work is copied from a source, whether you give credit or not to that source is plagiarism	08 (5.33%)	142 (94.67%)
The UGC insists that universities use antiplagiarism software for checking plagiarism in theses at Post Graduate and Higher Research Degree Levels like M.Phil.& Ph.D.	17 (11.33%)	133 (88.67%)
Analyze the statements regarding the Consequences of plagiarism		
1. If anyone is caught in plagiarism, he/she will be punished	14 (9.33%)	136 (90.67%)
2. Plagiarism can spoil the career of anyone	02 (1.33%)	148 (98.67%)
3. Self-plagiarism is also punishable	13 (8.66%)	137 (91.33%)
4. A person can lose his/her job due to indulging in plagiarism	3 (2%)	147 (98%)
5. A person can be sent to jail for indulging in plagiarism	2 (1.33%)	148 (98.67%)
Turnitin is the tool/Software to measure plagiarism.	109 (72.67%)	41 (27.33%)
Analyse and answer each statement regarding the type of plagiarism		
1. Self-plagiarism is a plagiarism	15 (10%)	135 (90%)
2. Direct plagiarism is a plagiarism	15 (10%)	135 (90%)
3. Unintentional plagiarism is a plagiarism	13 (8.66%)	137 (91.33%)

Source: Author's Computations (2020)

## 4.2 Section B: The perception towards Plagiarism among PG students

Table III provides insights into the details regarding the perception of plagiarism among postgraduate (PG) students. The perception towards plagiarism is based on seven main statements: "Plagiarism is a crime in academics," "Plagiarism is an act of lack of honesty and integrity," "Plagiarism is an act done because of laziness," "There is nothing wrong in doing plagiarism," "Plagiarism shows your smartness," "Everyone is doing plagiarism, so it is not wrong," and "Plagiarism does not affect the morals." The results of the table are based on a four-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree."

The output reveals that a significant majority, 78 percent of PG students, agree that "Plagiarism is a crime in academics." This indicates that most students consider plagiarism a crime in the academic context and believe it can be addressed with knowledge and experience. In the statement "Plagiarism is an act of lack of honesty and integrity," 55 percent of students, a substantial portion, agree with this perspective. Furthermore, 58 percent of students agree that plagiarism is an act done out of laziness.

However, a considerable number of students (62 percent and 56.66 percent) disagree with the statements asserting that there is nothing wrong in doing plagiarism and that plagiarism shows smartness as illustrated in Table III. Similarly, a significant share of students (56.66 percent) also disagrees with the idea that everyone is doing plagiarism, so it is not wrong. Lastly, 75.33 percent of students disagree with the notion that plagiarism does not affect morals.

In summary, the table concludes that PG students perceive plagiarism as an act of crime. The majority of students engage in plagiarism due to laziness and the perception that it demonstrates smartness. Based on these results, it is suggested that students should actively avoid plagiarism to enhance their moral understanding, emphasizing that plagiarism is not an act of integrity and honesty.

**Table III: Perception towards Plagiarism among PG students**

Sr. No.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Plagiarism is a crime in academics	37 (25%)	78 (52%)	35 (23%)	0
2	Plagiarism is an act of lack of honesty and integrity	40 (27%)	83 (55%)	27 (18%)	0
3	Plagiarism is an act done because of Laziness	14 (9.33%)	87 (58%)	48 (32%)	1 (0.67%)
4	There is nothing wrong with plagiarism	0	4 (2.67%)	93(62%)	53 (35.33%)
5	Plagiarism shows your smartness	0	7 (4.66%)	85 (56.66%)	58 (38.67%)
6	Everyone is doing plagiarism, so it is not wrong	0	18 (12%)	85 (56.66%)	47 (31.33)
7	Plagiarism does not affect the morals	2 (1.33%)	3 (2%)	113 (75.33%)	32 (21.34%)

**Source: Author's Computations (2020)**

## 4.3 Section C: Attitude towards Plagiarism among PG students

The attitude towards plagiarism among postgraduate (PG) students has been assessed and presented in Table IV, utilizing a measurement scale that includes strongly agree, agree, undecided, strongly disagree, and disagree. The results indicate that a substantial majority, 92 percent of students and research scholars, agreed that they engage in copying others' work. Additionally, a significant portion (75.33 percent) of students acknowledged that plagiarism becomes a necessity due to work pressure, suggesting that time constraints influence their inclination towards plagiarism as prescribed in Table IV. Furthermore, a noteworthy percentage of students (59.33 percent and 64.66 percent) agreed that plagiarism is deemed necessary when facing deadlines for assignments, papers, or theses.



Moreover, they justified plagiarism if some portions of the paper are borrowed from a quality journal article with scientific value.

Conversely, a considerable ratio (65.33 percent) of students disagreed with the idea that plagiarism is necessary for engaging in important work, with only 5 percent of students supporting this viewpoint. About 44.66 percent of students found it justifiable to copy the methodology from other theses, citing the similarity of methodologies, while 39.33 percent remained undecided on this matter. In contrast, 65.33 percent of students agreed that if someone plagiarizes their own data, it should not be punishable as it is deemed non-harmful, whereas 25.33 percent disagreed with this statement (see Table IV for more details).

A majority of students (76 percent and 75.33 percent) disagreed with the assertion that writing a thesis without copying others' work is impossible, and nobody checks and detects copied material. However, a small percentage (12.66 percent and 1.33 percent) of students agreed with these statements. A significant portion of students (68 percent) expressed the opinion that copying and pasting from the internet is easier than composing their own sentences. Additionally, a considerable number of students (64.67 percent) strongly agreed that new students or researchers should receive leniency in punishment regarding plagiarism.

Interestingly, a majority of students (76.66 percent) disagreed with the notion that plagiarism is not a very serious offense, while 50.66 percent of students agreed that copying from a colleague's paper, with permission, is not ethically wrong as depicted by results in table IV. Finally, a substantial proportion of students (80.66 percent and 84.66 percent) agreed that the names of writers who engage in plagiarism should not be disclosed to the academic community, and they acknowledged the difficulty in avoiding the use of other people's words without proper citation. In summary, the attitude towards plagiarism among PG students varies across different aspects, reflecting diverse perspectives on the ethical implications of plagiarism in academic work

**Table IV: Attitude towards Plagiarism among PG students**

Sr. No.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
1	Most of students and research scholars copy other's work; I am also following the same	0	138	8	0	4
2	Plagiarism is a need due to work pressure	1	7	6	23	113
3	Plagiarism is necessary if there is a deadline to submit an assignment/paper/thesis	2	89	24	13	22
4	Plagiarism is justified if some portion of the paper is plagiarized from a quality journal article since it has scientific value	3	97	33	7	10
5	Plagiarism is necessary due to engaging in important work	1	5	6	98	40
6	Copying methodology from other theses is justifiable because the methodology always remains the same	2	67	59	12	10
7	If anyone plagiarises one's own data, it is not punishable because it is not Harmful	3	98	3	8	38
8	Without copying other's work nobody can write a thesis	0	19	0	17	114
9	No one checks and detects the copied material	0	2	8	27	113
10	Copying and pasting from the Internet is easier than writing your own sentences	2	102	15	3	28

11	New coming students or researchers should receive a relaxation for punishment regarding plagiarism	97	45	6	0	2
12	Plagiarism is not a very bad act	0	2	13	20	115
13	If any of my colleagues permit me to copy from his/her paper. I am not doing anything wrong	0	76	13	6	55
14	The name of the writer who plagiarizes in his/her paper or thesis should not be disclosed to the academic community	2	121	10	5	12
15	Sometimes it is difficult to avoid using other people's words without citing them	2	127	11	2	8

Source: Author's Computations (2020)

Thus, the findings depict that the subjective norms and the extent of pressure on the students from their professors have a direct impact on their decision whether to indulge or not to indulge in the unethical practices of plagiarism.

## 5 Discussion

The current investigation has identified several variables significantly associated with plagiarism activity among postgraduate students at the university. These variables align with factors previously identified by Love and Simmons (1998) and Scanlon and Neumann (2002), including "pressure, institution, personal attitudes, lack of awareness, lack of competence, and the availability of internet facilities." The study focused on three factors: awareness, attitude, and perception, providing detailed findings in each area.

**Awareness:** Regarding awareness, postgraduate students have heard about plagiarism, but lack substantial knowledge on the subject. A significant percentage of respondents were unaware of the value of authentic information (78.67%), the need to cite the original author when copying material (98%), and whether copying from a source, even with credit, constitutes plagiarism (94.67%). Surprisingly, more than 90% of respondents were unaware of the consequences of plagiarism, including career damage, self-plagiarism being punishable, job loss, and potential imprisonment. However, a positive sign was that 72.67% of respondents were aware of Turnitin as a tool to measure plagiarism. Unfortunately, more than 90% were unaware of various forms of plagiarism, such as self-plagiarism, direct plagiarism, and unintentional plagiarism. This lack of awareness is concerning, as previous studies have highlighted confusion among students regarding plagiarism.

**Perception:** In terms of perception, a majority of respondents expressed that plagiarism is detrimental to academics and research, impacting the institution's reputation. A significant number agreed that plagiarism is an academic crime (75%), reflects a lack of honesty and integrity (82%), affects morals (96.67%), and is a result of laziness (67.33%). This positive perception aligns with previous studies conducted in different regions, emphasizing the negative connotations associated with plagiarism.

**Attitude:** Regarding attitude, the study found that respondents perceived plagiarism as prevalent in academia, with 60.66% admitting to committing plagiarism when facing deadlines. Despite this, many respondents refused to engage in certain aspects of plagiarism. For instance, 92% agreed that they followed their peer colleagues in making final decisions for research activities. Additionally, nearly 69% found it easy and skillful to copy and paste text from the internet. The findings suggest that subjective norms and pressure from professors play a crucial role in students' decisions regarding unethical practices like plagiarism.

The study recommends proactive awareness programs and policies to prevent plagiarism. This aligns with existing literature emphasizing the importance of sensitization seminars and awareness programs in higher educational institutes to promote academic integrity and ethics. Proactive policies, as suggested by Culwin and Lancaster (2001),

involve standard plagiarism prevention measures. Singh (2019) further emphasizes the role of HEIs in conducting seminars and incorporating responsible conduct of research and publication ethics as compulsory coursework for master's and research scholars. The findings underscore the need for continuous efforts to enhance awareness and prevent plagiarism among postgraduate students

## 6 Conclusions

The contemporary inquiry is executed with the explicit aims of scrutinizing the depth of cognizance within the postgraduate (PG) student cohort regarding multifarious facets of plagiarism, ascertaining their attitudes towards this intellectual transgression, and delving into their perceptual frameworks surrounding the phenomenon. It would not be an ostentatious claim to characterize plagiarism as an unethical comportment whereby a researcher, perhaps bereft of the moral compunction requisite for proper scholarly decorum, purloins and replicates the intellectual oeuvre of other erudite minds without affording due credit to the original progenitor of such intellectual fecundity. This manner of conduct invariably inflates the morale of the researchers and impels them toward a trajectory of malfeasance, particularly salient as an alarming 98 percent of respondents exhibited a conspicuous lack of awareness vis-à-vis the inclusion of replicated sentence structures sans acknowledgment within the ambit of plagiarism.

Furthermore, the present inquiry discerned a conspicuous lacuna, with over 90 percent of respondents manifestly oblivious to the repercussions attendant upon transgressing the boundaries of plagiarism. In light of such findings, a formidable 138 respondents evinced a discernible aversion towards plagiarism, subscribing to the notion that a preponderance of their academic brethren surreptitiously appropriates the intellectual output of others, an ignominious practice they reluctantly acknowledge emulating. The concomitant ethical degradation, consequent to such surreptitious academic kleptomania, precipitates a deleterious impact on the caliber of research endeavors within both national and international milieus.

To combat this egregious academic malaise, the University Grants Commission (UGC) in India promulgated a comprehensive policy on plagiarism, enshrined in the Gazette of India 2018. A study scrutinizing this policy underscored its efficacy, thereby establishing plagiarism as statutorily regulated within the nation. The anticipation is that the stringent punitive measures accompanying instances of plagiarism will usher in a veritable renaissance in research quality, fostering an environment conducive to originality in the academic domain while concurrently upholding the standards of higher education (Singh, 2019).

Strikingly, the current study brings to the fore a rather disconcerting revelation that a staggering 90 percent of respondents fail to acknowledge self-plagiarism as a form of academic transgression as depicted in Table II, ostensibly ignorant of extant guidelines published by the UGC in 2020 delineating this malfeasance. Additionally, a considerable 88.67 percent of respondents remain blissfully unaware of the UGC's insistence on the utilization of anti-plagiarism software across universities, especially at the postgraduate and advanced degree echelons such as M.Phil. and Ph.D. The deployment of anti-plagiarism software assumes paramount importance, serving as a bulwark against the encroachment of intellectual property rights. Anti-plagiarism software, adept at discerning the nuances of textual similarity, also operates as a sentinel against subpar writing and insufficient paraphrasing, as illuminated by the work of Hayes, Whitley, and Introna (2006).

Echoing these sentiments, the work of Sambo (2021) advocates for the procurement of plagiarism detection software, including but not limited to Turnitin, Copycat, and EVE, by Nigerian Universities to efficaciously fortify the bastions of intellectual property protection. In consonance with UGC regulations, the onus lies upon Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) to furnish unhindered access to anti-plagiarism software for the faculty, scholars, and students, thereby facilitating the scrutiny of similarity indices before the ultimate submission or forwarding of academic endeavors. Consequently, the present investigation concludes that HEIs should embark on proactive initiatives to orchestrate awareness programs, inculcating an understanding of plagiarism at the nascent stages of academic endeavors. Such foresighted measures are poised to inoculate students against the seduction of plagiarism during the pursuit of advanced academic degrees, ultimately fostering an environment conducive to the cultivation of research devoid of intellectual transgressions.

A study conducted by Singh (2019) elucidated that HEIs have been enjoined to institute technology-based mechanisms, leveraging appropriate software to ensure that documents such as theses, dissertations, publications, or any such scholarly submissions remain bereft of plagiarism at the time of their submission. This mechanism ought to be universally accessible to all stakeholders, including students, researchers, and staff. In the Indian context, HEIs should underscore their commitment to addressing plagiarism concerns through periodic issuance of guidelines. It is paramount to underscore that heightened awareness serves as a potent catalyst in reshaping perceptions and attitudes towards plagiarism, thereby efficaciously curbing and controlling its insidious infiltration into the realm of academic and research activities.

## 7 Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were developed:

1. Higher Educational Institutes need to develop a curriculum and the same may be implemented from the school level so that whosoever shall pursue the higher education, may be more aware of the unethical practices.
2. There is an urgent need to provide access to anti-plagiarism software to every HEIs by central purchasing. Further, to bring uniformity in similarity-checking tools, the University Grants Commission must develop at the national level and provide access to every HEIs in India.
3. Every HEIs shall develop a policy on plagiarism and it is to be placed on the website of the institution.

### 7.1 Theoretical contribution of the study

The theoretical contribution of the present study encompasses the importance of awareness, perception, and attitude in plagiarism. These theoretical perspectives provide valuable insights into the factors that contribute to the understanding of the basics of plagiarism and offer a framework for addressing the existing and forthcoming challenges in curbing and controlling plagiarism.

### 7.2 Social contribution of the study

Research is being carried out in different parts of the world to offer the solutions to a problem whether related to civic or research society. Likewise, the social contributions of the present study provide valuable insights into the factors that are responsible for committing plagiarism and offer a seamless framework for addressing these responsible factors and help in conducting fair research.

### 7.3 Research Limitations

Every research has its limitations. The present research is confined to a university and only postgraduate students were involved in the process.

### 7.4 Future area for further study

As we know research scholars and the teaching fraternity play a substantial role in controlling the cheating and plagiarism activities in any research institutes. Due to the limited resources, this study is confined only to

postgraduate students and teachers of this university. A similar study may be conducted to investigate the awareness, attitude, and perception level of the research scholars of more than two academic conventional universities.

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## Appendix

### Awareness, Attitude, and Perception of Post Graduate Students Towards Plagiarism: A Case Study of Chaudhary Ranbir Singh University, Jind, Haryana (India)

#### Questionnaire

Dear Sir/Madam/Students

Give your response to the question or the situation. It would be highly appreciated if you would spare time to provide us with the information on the following questions. The information provided will be used for academic and/or research purposes only and the respondent's identity will be kept confidential.

Name of Student/ scholar/ Teacher: .....

Course: .....,

Gender: Male / Female

Name of Institute: .....

Department: .....

#### SECTION- A (P): Tick (√) which you feel appropriate

Sr. No.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Plagiarism is a crime in academics				
2	Plagiarism is an act of lack of honesty and integrity				
3	Plagiarism is done by those who are lack of character				
4	Plagiarism is an act done because of Laziness				
5	There is nothing wrong with plagiarism				
6	Plagiarism shows your smartness				
7	Everyone is doing plagiarism, so it is not wrong				
8	Plagiarism does not affect the morals				

#### SECTION- B (AW): Tick (√) which you feel appropriate

Sr. No.	Statement	Yes (Y)	No (N)
1	If you write others' work as your own then it is Plagiarism	Y	N



2	Writing words or ideas from others' written matter without giving credit to him/her is plagiarism	Y	N
3	Have you heard the word Plagiarism before this questionnaire	Y	N
4	Writing wrong information about the source of a quotation is plagiarism	Y	N
5	Writing the words differently but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit to that source is plagiarism	Y	N
6	If the majority of your work is copied from a source, whether you give credit or not to that source is plagiarism	N	N
7	The UGC insists that universities use antiplagiarism software for checking plagiarism in theses at Post Graduate and Higher Research Degree Levels like M.Phil. & Ph.D.	Y	N
8.	Analyze the statements regarding the Consequences of plagiarism  (a) If anyone is caught in plagiarism, he/she will be punished (b) Plagiarism can spoil the career of anyone (c) Self-plagiarism is also punishable (d) A person can lose his/her job due to indulging in plagiarism (e) A person can be sent to jail for indulging in plagiarism	True True True True True	False False False False False
9	Turnitin is the tool/Software to measure plagiarism.	Yes	No
10	Analyse and answer each statement regarding the type of plagiarism  (a) Self-plagiarism is a plagiarism (b) Direct plagiarism is a plagiarism (c) Unintentional plagiarism is a plagiarism	True True True	False False False

**SECTION-C (AT): Tick (✓) which you feel appropriate**

Sr. No.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
1	Most of students and research scholars copy other's work; I am also following the same					
2	Plagiarism is a need due to work pressure					
3	Plagiarism is necessary if there is a deadline to submit a paper/thesis					
4	Plagiarism is justified if some portion of the paper is plagiarized from a quality journal article since it has scientific value					
5	Plagiarism is necessary due to engaging in important work					
6	Copying methodology from other theses is justifiable because the methodology always remains the same					
7	If anyone plagiarises one's own data, it is not punishable because it is not Harmful					
8	Without copying other's work nobody can write a thesis					
9	No one checks and detects the copied material					
10	Copying and pasting from the Internet is easier than writing your own sentences					
11	New coming students or researchers should receive a relaxation for punishment regarding plagiarism					
12	Plagiarism is not a very bad act					

13	If any of my colleagues permit me to copy from his/her paper. I am not doing anything wrong					
14	The name of the writer who his/her paper or thesis should not be disclosed to the academic community					
15	Sometimes it is difficult to avoid using other people's words without citing them					

## Author's data

### Narender Kumar

Deputy Librarian, Guru Jambheshwar University of Science & Technology - Hisar, Haryana, India

[nkcju2014@gmail.com](mailto:nkcju2014@gmail.com)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7168-0662>

### Anil Kumar

Assistant Librarian, Chaudhary Ranbir Singh University - Jind, Haryana, India

[anil.lis87@gmail.com](mailto:anil.lis87@gmail.com)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0827-7883>

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