

# ASSESSING AWARENESS ABOUT PLAGIARISM AMONG THE RESEARCH SCHOLARS OF RANCHI UNIVERSITY, RANCHI. (JHARKHAND): A STUDY

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**Abstract:** Using someone else's words, ideas, or work without giving due credit is known as plagiarism, and it is an unethical academic practice. The purpose of this study is to evaluate 110 research scholars' attitudes, knowledge, and awareness of plagiarism at Ranchi University in Jharkhand. A bilingual (Hindi and English) questionnaire was used in the study, and Microsoft Excel and SPSS 25 were used to analyze the data. Independent sample t-tests were used to test hypotheses. A lack of organized awareness programs is evident from the results, which show that 63.6% of the respondents had never received any training on plagiarism. Furthermore, 55.5% of the participants showed a late introduction to ethical research practices, having first come across the concept of plagiarism during their coursework. Lack of research skills, publishing pressure, and time constraints were the main causes of plagiarism among research scholars. External pressures and the ease of accessing online content were identified as the main challenges to upholding academic integrity, even though 70% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that plagiarism is unethical. The study emphasizes how urgently institutional policies, awareness campaigns, and structured training programs are needed to promote ethical research practices. To stop academic misconduct, universities and other academic institutions should make plagiarism awareness workshops mandatory and encourage the use of plagiarism detection software. Higher education institutions can guarantee that research scholars follow ethical research practices and enhance the caliber and integrity of academic work by cultivating a culture of academic honesty and allocating sufficient resources.

**Keyword:** : Plagiarism, Awareness, Research scholars, Attitude, Reason, Academic integrity

## 1.0 Introduction

The growing use of technology and digital information resources has increased the prevalence of plagiarism, which has been a major concern in academic settings around the world. Over the past 20 years, plagiarism has increased significantly, and research scholars are among the most impacted groups (Kumar & Kumar, 2024) this increase has been attributed to people using online resources more frequently, which makes it simpler for them to copy and paste content without giving due credit. Furthermore, Tripathi et al., (2015) stress that the expansion of research databases, open-access content, and digital communication platforms has raised access to academic content while also increasing the temptation to plagiarize. Maintaining academic integrity has become extremely difficult due to the ease with which content from online sources can be copied and pasted without giving due credit.

## 1.1 Plagiarism

The Latin term "plagiarius" is the root of the English word plagiarism, which is defined as "to appropriate or copy someone else's writing, art, or other creative work as your own, either fully or partially, without giving credit to the original author or source" "Plagiarism,"(2024). The word "plagiarism" can refer to a variety of crime, and even behaviors that are not immediately obvious as being incorrect: "from careless documentation and proof-reading to outright, premeditated fraud." Few of the words we commonly use in our classes have such different meanings (Bouville, 2008). According to Masic, (2014), plagiarism is also the act of passing off someone else's ideas or work as one's own, frequently involving stealing sentence structures or making minor alterations to language without giving due credit.

Plagiarism is an ethical transgression as well as an academic infraction. It misleads the public and academic communities about who should be given credit for intellectual contributions. Plagiarism is a type of cheating that can harm a person's academic career, professional credibility, and chances for research funding, in addition to affecting grades (Helgesson & Eriksson, 2015). According to Park, (2003), plagiarism is an unethical practice of using someone else's words or ideas and passing them off as one's own without giving them proper credit. According to Partap et al., (2019), plagiarism has been a recurring problem for teachers since it is a sign of dishonesty as well as a failure to interact with academic content in a meaningful way.

In recent years, plagiarism has become much more common, particularly among students. Park, (2003) shows that plagiarism and general student cheating have increased in academic settings, which is indicative of larger problems with academic dishonesty. Because students can readily access and reuse materials without fully understanding the ethical ramifications, the availability of digital resources has helped normalize plagiarism. According to Atai et al., (2019), plagiarism is becoming more and more common in academic circles, but many researchers and students are still ignorant of how serious it is. This ignorance keeps the problem alive and makes it more difficult for educational institutions to deal with it successfully.

Beyond the confines of academia, plagiarism has far-reaching effects. Plagiarism can have a negative effect on a researcher's credibility, reputation, and future prospects, as (Helgesson & Eriksson, 2015) point out. Students who are found guilty of plagiarism in an academic setting may be subject to harsh sanctions, including expulsion or failing grades. Additionally, retracted papers, harm to an academic institution's reputation, and loss of research funding are all consequences of plagiarism in research. According to Park, (2003), there are ethical as well as academic repercussions that compromise the integrity and confidence of the academic community. The rise of plagiarism, according to Ramzan et al., (2012), threatens academic work and research credibility and diminishes the value of original contributions.

## **2.0 Objective of the study**

1. To find out awareness regarding plagiarism among the students.
2. To know the attitude towards plagiarism among the students.

## **2.1 Hypotheses**

Ho: There is no significance difference awareness of plagiarism between male and female.

## **3.0 Research Methodology**

The purpose of the study was to evaluate research scholars at Ranchi University in Ranchi, Jharkhand, regarding their awareness of plagiarism. A total of 110 completed surveys were collected and analyzed. A bilingual (Hindi and English) questionnaire was developed for the convenience and clarity of the participants. The questionnaire on plagiarism awareness covered a variety of topics, including the reasons for plagiarism and attitudes toward it. Data analysis was done using SPSS 25ver software, which evaluated responses using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation) and inferential tests (Independent sample tests).

## **4.0 Review of Literature**

Plagiarism has become more common and accessible due to the growth of digital resources. According to Mostofa et al.,(2021), more than half of researchers actively use anti-plagiarism tools to evaluate their work, and nearly three-quarters of researchers are aware of them. Nevertheless, there are notable variations depending on personal and demographic traits in spite of this awareness. (Prashar et al., 2023) looked at age, gender, work experience, and religion in India and found that these factors affect students' moral behavior and ethical defenses of unintentional plagiarism. The most frequent academic infraction among nursing students, according to a related study by (Fadlalmola et al., 2022), is plagiarism, which is frequently connected to clinical misconduct. This highlights the necessity for nurse educators to have clear policies regarding training and sanctions. These results imply that in order to effectively combat plagiarism, a combination of educational initiatives and stringent institutional policies is required.

Tripathi et al., (2015) observed that students now find it easier to commit plagiarism due to the broad accessibility of the internet as well as digital resources. According to the study, students and researchers should use the easily accessible free and commercial anti-plagiarism tools before turning in their work. The study highlights how plagiarism detection software helps safeguard authors' copyrights and shield researchers' careers from harm. Academic integrity requires both digital literacy and knowledge of plagiarism detection software, as students depend more and more on online resources. Similarly, Kumar & Kumar, (2024) highlighted how libraries and librarians can help deter plagiarism, especially among students from other countries. Because they

are knowledgeable about citation formats and styles, librarians are a great resource for students who have trouble with correct citation techniques. This highlights the value of giving students access to resources and advice on how to use digital information without plagiarizing. The study found Taif University postgraduate students have a medium understanding of plagiarism forms and causes, but differ based on gender, specialization, and research participation, emphasizing the need for improved scientific integrity (G. Hussein, 2022).

Students' attitudes toward plagiarism are significantly influenced by their perceptions of it as academic dishonesty, according to research by (Aashiya & Sonkar, 2015), 88% of doctoral students recognized plagiarism as academic dishonesty. This high level of awareness is important in forming attitudes toward plagiarism, indicating that students are more likely to refrain from plagiarism when they are aware of its seriousness. A significant component of honoring copyrighted work is fair use, which 66% of students knew about, according to the study. However, every respondent at Sri Venkateshwara University in Tirupati who participated in (Lakshmi & Prasantha, 2015) study acknowledged plagiarism and its consequences, reinforcing the idea that it is an unethical practice. Over half of the respondents mentioned language skills as a problem, indicating that citation and language proficiency issues were present despite their awareness. This emphasizes the necessity of all-encompassing academic support that goes beyond awareness-raising initiatives to address particular obstacles like writing and language skills. Several studies emphasize the need for clearer policies and stronger institutional frameworks to combat plagiarism. Kumar & Kumar, (2024) conducted a survey among postgraduate students at Chaudhary Ranbir Singh University, Jind-Haryana, which revealed that students were largely unaware of the consequences of plagiarism. This highlights the need for greater collaboration between the University Grants Commission and universities to raise awareness and implement recurring campaigns aimed at addressing plagiarism. It suggests that while awareness of plagiarism exists, students may not fully grasp the consequences or the institution's policies surrounding it. According to the survey conducted by A.N. et al. (2020), 77.3% of postgraduate students and faculty thought that plagiarism was more likely to happen in published works than in assignments, and 33.6% of them linked plagiarism to rushed assignment deadlines. The study suggests how crucial awareness and comprehension are for researchers and academics in order to stop plagiarism and copyright violations. It suggests that both teachers and students require explicit instructions on plagiarism and how to prevent it. One of the most important parts of avoiding plagiarism is knowing how to properly credit sources. According to Ray, (2015), a lot of students have trouble with referencing formats and citation styles, which can lead to inadvertent plagiarism. (Zimerman, 2012) also highlighted how important librarians are in instructing students on how to utilize citation tools and adhere to proper citation styles. According to the study, incorporating citation instruction into academic support services may greatly lower the number of plagiarism cases. There is also a gap in students' knowledge of what information literacy means, as (Brar et al., n.d.) discovered that university students in northern India frequently confused information literacy with digital literacy. According to the study, information literacy should be understood more broadly to encompass not only digital skills but also critical thinking and appropriate citation practices. This indicates that the way students perceive plagiarism may be impacted by their overall comprehension of information literacy. According to studies on demographic variations in plagiarism awareness, attitudes regarding plagiarism can be influenced by gender and other individual characteristics. Jereb et al., (2018) discovered that women had a more negative attitude toward plagiarism, indicating that awareness of plagiarism differed by gender. This implies that students' perceptions and actions regarding plagiarism may be influenced by their gender, highlighting the significance of gender-sensitive teaching strategies in academic integrity instruction.

## 5.0 Data Analysis

**Table 1 Gender wise Distribution**

S. No.	Gender	Frequency	Median	Mean± Standard deviation
1	Male	51(46.4%)	2.00	1.54±.501
2	Female	59(53.6%)		

Table 1 shows the standard deviation of 0.501 indicates low variability in the gender composition, and the median value of 2.00 suggests a balanced representation in the dataset, highlighting a nearly equal distribution of male and female respondents. The gender distribution of respondents reveals a slight majority of females (53.6%) compared to males (46.4%).

**Table 2 Age of the respondents.**

S. No	Age	Frequency & Percentage	Degree of freedom (d f)	Mean± Standard	Median
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				Deviation	
1	20-25	16 (14.5%)	109	2.23±.686	2
2	26-30	53 (48.2%)			
3	31-35	41 (37.3%)			
4	36-40	NIL			
5	40 and above	NIL			

There are five categories showing the respondents' age distribution in (table 2), and none of them are older than 36. The largest age group is 26–30 years old, with 53 respondents (48.2%), followed by 31–35 years old with 41 respondents (37.3%). The 20–25 age range is responsible for There were no respondents who were 36 years of age or older, and the respondents' age distribution is shown in five categories. With 53 respondents (48.2%), the 26–30 age group is the most represented, followed by the 31–35 age group with 41 respondents (37.3%). The age group of 20–25 years comprises 16 (14.5%) of the respondents. A total sample size of 110 and degrees of freedom (df = 109) validate a condensed dataset, and the median age (median = 2.00) is within the 26–30 age range. There is comparatively little variation in ages within the sample, as indicated by the standard deviation of 0.686.

**Table 3 Awareness about Plagiarism**  
D f= Degree of freedom, SD=Standard Deviation

Gender	Yes	No	Independent Simple T- Test	Mean± SD
Male	44	7	F=5.302, D f=108, P value= .264	1.14±.348
Female	46	13		1.22±.418
Total	90	20		

Table 3 shows an independent sample t-test was used to analyze the gender-based data on students' awareness of plagiarism in order to ascertain whether male and female students' awareness differed significantly. Out of 110 respondents, 90 students (81.8%) said they knew what plagiarism was, while 20 students (18.2%) didn't. Of the male students, 7 (13.7%) were not aware, while 44 (86.3%) were. Similarly, 13 (22.1%) female students reported not being aware, compared to 46 (77.9%) who were. The average score for males and females regarding plagiarism awareness was (1.14 ± 0.348) and (1.22 ± 0.418), respectively. The gender differences in plagiarism awareness scores were compared using an independent sample t-test. A degree of freedom (Df) = 108, a p-value of 0.264, and an F-value of 5.302 were the outcomes. According to the results, there is no statistically significant difference in the awareness of plagiarism between male and female students because the p-value is higher than the significance level of 0.05.

Ho	There is no significance difference awareness of plagiarism between male and female.	Accepted
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**Table 4 Learned about plagiarism for the first time.**

S. No.	Degree	Frequency	Mean ± SD
1	During Course Work	61 (55.5) %	1.60±.744
2	During Bachler Degree	17 (15.5) %	
3	During Master's Degree	32 (29.1) %	

Table 4 shows the majority of students, 61 (55.5%), said they learned about plagiarism in their coursework, which suggests that formal academic programs are essential for increasing awareness. However, 32 students (29.1%) reported experiencing plagiarism for the first time while pursuing their master's degree, indicating that greater education frequently introduces stricter standards for academic integrity. However, only 17 students (15.5%) learned about plagiarism while pursuing their bachelor's degree, suggesting a possible lack of ethical writing instruction in early academic settings. The overall mean score of 1.60 ± 0.744 confirms the need for early and regular teaching on academic honesty and proper citation, indicating variability in the timing of

plagiarism awareness.

**Table 5 Participated any training Session about plagiarism.**

S. No.	Answers	Frequency	Mean $\pm$ SD
1	Yes	40 (36.4) %	1.64 $\pm$ .483
2	No	70 (63.6) %	

Table 5 shows the information provided focuses on whether or not participants went to a plagiarism training session. 36.4% (40 people) of the total participants said they had taken part in the training, whereas the remaining 63.6% (70 people) said they had not.

The mean score for those who attended the training session is 1.64, with a standard deviation of 0.483. This indicates that they had a somewhat positive opinion of the training session's impact or outcome, although there was not much variation in their answers. While the SD demonstrates that the responses are reasonably consistent, the mean suggests a tendency toward agreement or a positive opinion of the training.

**Table 6 Reason of Plagiarism**

**S.A- Strongly Agree, A-Agree, N-Neutral, D-Disagree, S.D-Strongly Agree.  
SD-Standard Deviation.**

S. No.	Reason of Plagiarism	S. A	A.	N.	D.	S.D.	Median	Mean $\pm$ SD
1	Easy of technology and copy/Paste	33 (30.0) %	47 (42.7) %	21 (19.1) %	5 (4.5) %	4 (3.6) %	2	2.09 $\pm$ 1.000
2	Publication Pressure	36 (32.7) %	50 (45.5) %	18 (16.4) %	4 (3.6) %	2 (1.8) %	2	1.96 $\pm$ .898
3	Lack of Time	37 (33.6) %	51 (46.4) %	17 (15.5) %	3 (2.7) %	2 (1.8) %	2	1.93 $\pm$ .875
4	Insufficient Research Skills	35 (31.8) %	48 (43.6) %	18 (16.4) %	6 (5.5) %	3 (2.7) %	2	2.04 $\pm$ .976
5	Lack of Interest in the Subject Area	38 (34.5) %	44 (40.0) %	18 (16.4) %	7 (6.4) %	3 (2.7) %	2	2.03 $\pm$ 1.009
6	Lack of understanding of plagiarism	31 (28.2) %	49 (44.5) %	23 (20.9) %	3 (2.7) %	4 (3.6) %	2	.209 $\pm$ .963

Table 6 shows the analysis identifies important factors that lead to student plagiarism. Relatively low mean scores (2.09 $\pm$ 1.000, 1.96 $\pm$ 0.898, and 1.93 $\pm$ 0.875, respectively) indicate strong agreement with the most frequently mentioned reasons, which include lack of time (80% agreeing), publication pressure (78.2% agree), and ease of technology and copy-paste practices (72.7% agreeing). With mean scores of 2.04 $\pm$ 0.976 and 2.03 $\pm$ 1.009, respectively, insufficient research skills (75.4% agreeing) and lack of interest in the subject (74.5% agreeing) also play important roles. 72.7% of respondents (mean = 2.09 $\pm$ 0.963) admitted to not understanding plagiarism. These findings underline the need for better student training and support systems by emphasizing that the main causes of plagiarism are outside pressures, time constraints, and a lack of skills.

**Table 7 Awareness level of the students towards plagiarism**

**S.A- Strongly Agree, A-Agree, N-Neutral, D-Disagree, S.D-Strongly Agree.**



**SD-Standard Deviation.**

S. No.	Item	S. A	A	N	D	S. D	Mean ± SD
1	I know what is plagiarism.	20 (18.2%)	32 (29.1%)	33 (30.0%)	22 (20.0%)	3 (2.7%)	2.60± 1.085
2	Plagiarism is defined as using an author's words or images without giving due credit.	30 (27.3%)	29 (26.4%)	33 (30.0%)	16 (14.5%)	2 (1.8%)	2.37± 1.091
3	I am aware that plagiarism is wrong.	31 (28.2%)	29 (26.4%)	36 (32.7%)	12 (10.9%)	2 (1.8%)	2.32± 1.057
4	Pupils who plagiarize are successfully caught by our faculty.	32 (29.1%)	48 (43.6%)	20 (18.2%)	8 (7.3%)	2 (1.8%)	2.09 ±.963
5	A student will be punished if they break the plagiarism policy	41 (37.3%)	49 (44.5%)	18 (16.4%)	2 (1.8%)	0	1.83 ±.765

Table 7 shows how conscious students are of plagiarism. Even though 47.3% of respondents agree or strongly agree that they understand what plagiarism is, 30% are neutral, suggesting that they need more clarification (mean = 2.60±1.085). Similarly, 30% of respondents are neutral (mean = 2.37±1.091), while 53.7% agree or strongly agree that plagiarism is the use of another person's work without giving credit. 54.6% of respondents acknowledge that plagiarism is wrong, while 32.7% are neutral (mean = 2.32±1.057) in terms of ethics. The majority of students (72.7%) think that teachers are able to catch plagiarism, which is reflected in their lower mean score of 2.09±0.963. The lowest mean score was 1.83±0.765, indicating that a significant majority (81.8%) agree or strongly agree that students who violate plagiarism policies face consequences. Overall, students show that they are aware of plagiarism, but there are still gaps in their comprehension and clarity, which emphasizes the necessity of formal instruction and training on the subject.

**Table 8 Attitudes towards plagiarism**

**S.A- Strongly Agree, A-Agree, N-Neutral, D-Disagree, S.D-Strongly Agree.**

**SD-Standard Deviation.**

S. No.	Attitude towards plagiarism	S. A	A.	N.	D.	S.D.	Median	Mean ± SD
1	Easy access to online content encourages plagiarism.	28 (25.5) %	46 (41.8) %	16 (14.5) %	13 (11.8) %	6 (5.5) %	2	2.50± 2.445
2	Lack of proficiency in academic writing results in plagiarism.	33 (30.0) %	51 (46.4) %	17 (15.5) %	6 (5.5) %	3 (2.7) %	2	2.05±.962
3	I was under pressure to submit my thesis by the deadline.	32 (29.1) %	48 (43.6) %	17 (15.5) %	8 (7.3) %	5% (4.5) %	2	2.15±1.065
4	It is impossible to write a thesis	33 (30.0)	46 (41.8)	16 (14.5)	8 (7.3)	7 (6.4)	2	2.18±1.135

	without using other people's words.	%	%	%	%	%		
5	It takes a lot of time to conduct authentic research, which forces me to plagiarize.	32 (29.1) %	48 (43.6) %	16 (14.5) %	9 (8.2) %	5 (4.5) %	2	2.15± 1.077
6	Plagiarism is not acceptable to me as an academic.	30 (27.3) %	47 (42.7) %	14 (12.7) %	6 (5.5) %	13 (11.8) %	2	2.32± 1.263

Table 8 shows the digital accessibility is a key factor in unethical academic practices, as evidenced by the significant 67.3% (Strongly Agree + Agree) of respondents who agreed that easy access to online content promotes plagiarism. Additionally, 76.4% of participants concurred that plagiarism is a result of poor academic writing skills, suggesting that insufficient research writing instruction may result in inadvertent misconduct. The comparatively low standard deviation of this statement ( $SD = 0.962$ ) indicates that respondents were strongly in agreement with it. Furthermore, 72.7% of the academics acknowledged feeling pressured to finish their thesis by the due date, which may have contributed to plagiarism. Regarding academic writing and citation standards, a similar proportion (71.8%) thought that it was impossible to write a thesis without using other people's words. Another significant factor was time constraints, as 72.7% of respondents agreed that doing authentic research takes a lot of time and frequently results in plagiarism. This emphasizes how important time management and research planning abilities are. The majority of scholars, 70.0%, believe plagiarism is unacceptable in academia, indicating a strong awareness of ethical research practices. However, 11.8% disagree, indicating a potential gap in ethical training. The mean values range from 2.05 to 2.50, indicating agreement.

## 9.0 Result & Discussion

A nearly equal gender distribution was found in the 110 respondents' survey, with 46.4% of them being men (51 people) and a slightly higher percentage of women (53.6%). Most respondents (48.2%) were between the ages of 26 and 30, with 37.3% falling into the 31–35 age range. Remarkably, none of the participants were in the 36–40 or 40+ age groups, and only 14.5% were in the 20–25 age group, suggesting that the majority of participants were in their late 20s and early 30s. A smaller percentage (15.5%) learned about plagiarism at the master's level, while 29.1% became aware of it during undergraduate studies. The majority of respondents (55.5%) first came across the concept during their coursework. A significant lack of structured awareness programs was highlighted by the fact that 63.6% of respondents had never attended any plagiarism training, indicating a substantial formal education gap on plagiarism despite this exposure. The majority of respondents also agreed that a number of important factors, such as lack of interest, pressure to publish, time constraints, poor research skills, and general ignorance of plagiarism regulations, contribute to plagiarism. Academic integrity in modern education is complicated, as evidenced by the fact that although 42.7% of respondents agreed and 27.3% strongly agreed that plagiarism is unacceptable in academic settings, many also attributed their position to outside pressures, a lack of research skills, and the ease of access to online resources.

## 10.0 Conclusion.

This survey identifies a number of important variables that affect student plagiarism. The majority of responders were between the ages of 26 and 30, although the gender distribution was fairly balanced, with slightly more women than men. Academic experiences are the main source of awareness, as evidenced by the large percentage of respondents who first came across plagiarism while completing their coursework. A troubling 63.6% of students, however, reported having never taken part in any training on plagiarism, indicating a glaring lack of organized instruction on the subject. In addition to personal factors like lack of interest and poor research skills, many respondents cited external pressures like time constraints and publication demands as major contributors to plagiarism. While most people agreed that plagiarism is not acceptable in academic settings, they also blamed these behaviors on a combination of a lack of skills and the ease with which online content can be accessed. This suggests that improved academic assistance, instruction, and awareness are required to lessen plagiarism in learning environments.

## 11.0 Suggestion

- **Enhance Training and Awareness:** Universities and other educational institutions should make academic integrity and plagiarism awareness training sessions mandatory for all students, particularly those who are just starting their academic careers, as a sizable portion of respondents (63.6%) have not taken part in such programs.
- **Improved Research Skills Development:** A lot of students mentioned that they didn't have enough research skills. By giving them access to resources like research skills workshops or academic writing assistance, students may be better able to conduct and properly cite their research.

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