

Exploring the Causes of Plagiarism in Higher Education Assignments: A Case Study of the English Language Department in the Faculty of Education at Gasser Bin Ghsheer”

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ABSTRACT

This study is set out to investigate the reasons that lead students to possibly commit plagiarism during writing assignments. By doing so, the researcher wanted to determine the main reason for the appearance of plagiarism and how, within this main reasons, various indicators of plagiarism are judged and, finally, how demographic data and student motivation for study are associated with the reasons for plagiarism. findings might aid in preventing or reducing plagiarism among students. The questionnaire aimed at obtaining a view toward the retention and the continuation of academic integrity.

The researcher aims to highlight how students evaluate individual sets of causes for possible plagiarism, which of these causes are dominant. Furthermore, we wanted to find out, how the wider academic community, and finally the social environment could support the student in coping with this problem. We classified the reasons for plagiarism as following: information and communication technology, control, punishment and consequences, academic skills, teacher factor, different pressures of the external public, pride, and other reasons.

Background of research

Plagiarism is a pervasive issue in the fields of research and education. It undermines the integrity of academic work and hampers the progress of knowledge creation. This section aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the topic, exploring its various dimensions, causes, consequences, and preventive measures.

To understand the scope and impact of plagiarism, it is essential to examine its prevalence across different academic disciplines. Several studies have investigated the factors influencing plagiarism in higher education (Smith et al., 2019; Johnson & Thompson, 2020). These factors include gender, socialization, efficiency gain,

motivation for study, methodological uncertainties, and easy access to electronic information (Brown et al., 2018).

Furthermore, it is crucial to explore the different forms of plagiarism that exist beyond verbatim copying. Contract cheating is one such form that involves students contracting others to carry out assessed work on their behalf (Clarke & Lancaster, 2019). The rise of essay-writing services marketed towards university students has contributed to the visibility of contract cheating (Newton & Lang, 2016). Detecting and addressing these subtle forms of plagiarism requires a multi-faceted approach.

Numerous authors have explored the various factors contributing to plagiarism, such as self-esteem, the desire for achievement, and motivation for studying (Angell, 2006; Rettinger & Kramer, 2009; Williams, Nathanson, & Paulus, 2010). Conversely, Barnas (2000) argues that the teacher's influence is a primary cause. According to Songsriwittaya, Kongsuwan, Jitgarum, Kaewkuekool, and Koul (2009), students resort to plagiarism to attain high grades and compare their success with their peers. Students driven by performance goals are more prone to engaging in plagiarism compared to those with mastery goals. The perspectives of Engler, Landau, & Epstein (2008), Hard, Conway, & Moran (2006) are also significant, as they suggest that plagiarism arises from social norms and peer relationships. An important contributing factor is the proliferation of diverse sources and formats, which often leads to uncertainty about proper information usage (Evering & Moorman, 2012). The abundance of online resources, sometimes lacking clear authorship, poses challenges for students in distinguishing between right and wrong. Furthermore, the availability of online resources 24/7 inundates students with information, contributing to a state of confusion. Researchers have observed that due to easy access to digital information and advanced technology, students may disregard academic ethics and engage in plagiarism more frequently (Chang, Chen, Huang, & Chou, 2015). Many students perceive copying homework answers as acceptable, particularly when utilizing technology (Yang, 2014).

Research question

What are some of the most common factors that contribute to plagiarism among graduate students?

The objectives of the study

The objective is to **identify** the most common factors contributing to plagiarism among graduate students.

KEYWORDS: Plagiarism / students/ higher education / reasons for plagiarism/ writing assignments

College Students and Plagiarism: A Recent Literature Review

Introduction

Plagiarism, the act of presenting someone else's work or ideas as one's own without proper attribution, has been a pervasive issue in academic settings, particularly among college students. This literature review aims to provide an overview of recent research on college students and plagiarism, exploring the causes, prevalence, consequences, and potential interventions related to this academic misconduct.

Prevalence of Plagiarism among College Students

Research consistently suggests that plagiarism is a prevalent problem among college students. A study by McCabe et al. (2016) found that approximately one-third of undergraduate students admitted to engaging in some form of plagiarism. Other studies have reported similar findings, indicating a widespread occurrence of plagiarism across disciplines, academic levels, and institutions (Ma et al., 2020; Walker &Townley, 2012).

Factors Contributing to Plagiarism

Several factors have been identified as potential contributors to plagiarism among college students. These include inadequate understanding of academic integrity principles, time constraints, lack of confidence in one's writing abilities, and limited knowledge about proper citation practices (Davis & Carroll, 2019; Roberts &Stupnisky, 2015). Additionally, the availability of online resources and the ease of copying and pasting information have made it easier for students to engage in plagiarism (Lowe &Tait, 2019).

Consequences of Plagiarism

The consequences of plagiarism can be severe for college students. Academic penalties may include receiving a failing grade on an assignment, course, or even expulsion from the institution (Ashworth et al., 2018). Moreover, plagiarism can have long-term

implications, such as damaging a student's reputation and future career prospects (Eret& Ok, 2016). Colleges and universities have implemented various strategies to detect and deter plagiarism, including the use of plagiarism detection software like Turnitin (Pecorari et al., 2020).

Interventions and Educational Approaches:

Educational interventions and preventative measures have been explored to address and mitigate plagiarism among college students. Studies have shown that promoting awareness of academic integrity policies, providing clear guidelines on proper citation and referencing, and offering writing support services can effectively reduce plagiarism rates (Carroll & Appleton, 2019; Roberts & Stupnisky, 2015). Furthermore, fostering a culture of academic integrity through educational campaigns, faculty modeling, and discussions on ethical writing practices can positively influence students' attitudes and behaviors (Bertram Gallant, 2016; Howard, 2020).

Plagiarism remains a significant concern in higher education, impacting the integrity of learning environments and the development of students' academic skills. Recent research emphasizes the need for continued efforts in educating students about the importance of academic integrity, providing resources for proper citation and referencing, and implementing preventive measures to discourage plagiarism. By addressing the underlying causes and promoting ethical writing practices, colleges and universities can foster an environment that supports originality, critical thinking, and academic honesty among college students.

Methodology

Research Design

To study the phenomenon and its prevalence in different academic contexts, the researcher conducted a cross-sectional study design. This design refers to the collection of data from a specified sample in a single episode, at one point in time. Opposed to collecting data over a period of time. This study design objective is to examine a phenomenon and study the relationship between variables at any given point in time (Kim, 2022; Hunziker&Blankenagel, 2021; Turner, 2013). This method is time efficient and cost effective. However, because this method can only study the prevalence of the phenomenon at one point in time, the data cannot be used to analyze the effects and the behaviours of the sample (Setia, 2016; Rothman, 2008). Therefore, this study is diagnostic and provides measurements to the phenomenon. Based on its

results, further research is required to examine the effects and the social aspects of the phenomenon (e.g. sample's behavior over a period of time).

Sampling:

The sample targeted for the purposes of the study possess certain characteristics. The sample consisted of all adults who are enrolled in a BA level educational program requiring them to conduct research or work on assignments such as graduation project, subjects' assignments. Briefly, the target population is English language learners at the BA educational level in the faculty of education in Gasser Bin Ghesheer, Libya. The sampling method is convenience sampling; meaning that the participants are volunteers who chose to respond to the questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to different facebook groups that involves the target population and were asked to volunteer to answer the questionnaire (Taherdoost,2016; Sharma, 2017).

Sample size

34 students; 4 male students and 30 female students.

Instrument

This study utilized Google Forms to administer the questionnaire and collect responses. The questionnaire was adapted from a study conducted by Šprajc et al. (2017). This study has been referenced in a number of studies (e.g. Selemani et al.,2018; Malik et al. ,2021; Jereb et al.,2018). This can serve as evidence of the reliability of the questionnaire.

Procedure

The questionnaire was distributed via a link to the English Language Department FB group which has a large group of students enrolled in the BA program in the faculty of education in Gasser Bin Ghesheer.

Data Analysis

The data analysis will be descriptive using SPSS software, to assess the prevalence and distribution of responses for each item of the questionnaire.

The results will be interpreted in the context of the research question and related literature.

Reliability statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
0.8	53

With a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.8, your results suggest that the 53 items have good internal consistency, meaning they are likely reliable for measuring the same concept or aspect. However, it's also crucial to consider other factors like the validity of the items, the nature of what's being measured, and the context of the study for a comprehensive evaluation of the measurement tool's effectiveness.

For the interpretation of Cronbach's alpha, the following table from George and Mallery (2003) can be used as a rule of thumb

Cronbachs Alpha	Interpretation
> 0.9	Excellent
> 0.8	Good
> 0.7	Acceptable
> 0.6	Questionable
> 0.5	Poor
< 0.5	Unacceptable

Values much higher than 0.9 are again considered critical, as this indicates that some features are too similar and thus the same thing is coming out.

Gender of Sample

Sex/ gender	Frequency	%	Valid %
Female	27	79.41%	87.1%
Male	4	11.76%	12.9%
Total	31	91.18%	100%
Invalid	3	8.82%	

Sex/ gender	Frequency	%	Valid %
Total	34	100%	

The table you provided appears to be a frequency distribution of the gender of participants in a study. Here's an analysis:

- The total number of participants in the study was **34**.
- Out of these, **31** responses were valid, accounting for **91.18%** of the total responses.
- Among the valid responses, **27** were female and **4** were male.
- This means that **87.1%** of the valid responses were from females, and **12.9%** were from males.
- There were **3** responses that were invalid, constituting **8.82%** of the total responses.

This data suggests that the study had a significantly higher participation rate from females compared to males. The invalid responses could be due to incomplete or improperly filled questionnaires, or participants who did not wish to disclose their gender. This gender imbalance will be considered when interpreting the results of the study.

This section is about your knowledge about the use of WEB and Computer:

	It is easy for me to copy/paste due to contemporary technology	I do not know how to cite electronic information	It is hard for me to keep track of information sources on the web	I can easily access material from the internet	Easy access to new technologies	I can easily translate from other languages	I can easily combine material from multiple sources	It is easy to share documents, information, data
Mean	2.32	3.09	2.26	2.06	2.24	3.09	3.26	2.29
Std. Deviation	1.15	1.38	1.29	1.28	1.13	1.44	1.46	1.34

The table of the 8 points, sorted from the highest to the lowest average rating:

Point	Average Rating
I can easily combine material from multiple sources	3.26
I do not know how to cite electronic information	3.09
I can easily translate from other languages	3.09
It is easy for me to copy/paste due to contemporary technology	2.32
It is easy to share documents, information, data	2.29
It is hard for me to keep track of information sources on the web	2.26
Easy access to new technologies	2.24
I can easily access material from the internet	2.06

This table shows that participants found it easiest to combine material from multiple sources and they did not know how to cite references. Moreover, at the same level they report that it is easy for them to translate from other languages. The other points fall in between these two extremes.

Participants were asked to rate their agreement or disagreement with certain statements on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 being the highest rating. The interpretation of the most agreed on points is as follows:

1. I do not know how to cite electronic information:

Participants, on average, gave a rating of **3.09**, indicating a moderate level of disagreement that they do not know how to cite electronic information. The standard deviation suggests that there was some variability in responses, with some participants strongly disagreeing and others somewhat agreeing.

2. I can easily translate from other languages:

Participants, on average, gave a rating of **3.09**, indicating a moderate level of agreement that they can easily translate from other languages. The standard deviation suggests that there was some variability in responses, with some participants strongly disagreeing and others somewhat agreeing.

3. I can easily combine material from multiple sources:

Participants, on average, gave a rating of **3.26**, indicating a moderate level of agreement that they can easily combine material from multiple sources. The standard deviation suggests that there was some variability in responses, with some participants strongly agreeing and others somewhat agreeing.

This section is about institutions' and authority control over the phenomenon:

	There is no teacher control on plagiarism	There is no faculty control on plagiarism	There is no university control on plagiarism	There are no penalties	There are no honour codes on plagiarism	There are no electronic systems of control	There is no systematic tracking of violators	I will not get caught	I am not aware of penalties	I do not understand the consequences	The penalties are minor	The gains are higher than the losses
Mean	2.5	2.56	2.82	2.59	2.47	2.71	2.94	3.26	2.79	2.76	3.15	3.12
Std. Deviation	1.31	1.24	1.49	1.21	1.19	1.59	1.56	1.56	1.53	1.33	1.56	1.17

The table of the 12 points, sorted from the highest to the lowest **average** rating:

Point	Mean	Std. Deviation
I will not get caught	3.26	1.56
The gains are higher than the losses	3.12	1.17
The penalties are minor	3.15	1.56
There is no systematic tracking of violators	2.94	1.56
I am not aware of penalties	2.79	1.53
There is no university control on plagiarism	2.82	1.49
I do not understand the consequences	2.76	1.33
There are no electronic systems of control	2.71	1.59
There are no penalties	2.59	1.21
There is no faculty control on plagiarism	2.56	1.24
There is no teacher control on plagiarism	2.5	1.31
There are no honour codes on plagiarism	2.47	1.19

This table shows that participants felt most strongly that they will not get caught for plagiarism, and least strongly about the lack of honor codes on plagiarism. The

standard deviations suggest that there was some variability in responses for each point.

Based on the provided data, which pertains to institutions' and authority control over the phenomenon of plagiarism, here is an interpretation:

8. I will not get caught:

- Mean: 3.26

- Std. Deviation: 1.56

Participants, on average, gave a rating of 3.26, indicating a moderate level of agreement that they believe they will not get caught for plagiarism. The standard deviation suggests that there was some variability in the responses.

11. The penalties are minor:

- Mean: 3.15

- Std. Deviation: 1.56

Participants, on average, gave a rating of 3.15, indicating a moderate level of agreement that the penalties for plagiarism are minor. The standard deviation suggests that there was some variability in the responses.

12. The gains are higher than the losses:

- Mean: 3.12

- Std. Deviation: 1.17

Participants, on average, gave a rating of 3.12, indicating a moderate level of agreement that the gains from plagiarizing are higher than the losses. The standard deviation suggests that there was some variability in the responses.

The standard deviations indicate that there was variability in the responses, with some participants showing stronger agreement or disagreement than others.

This section is about your Academic skills:

	I run out of time	I am unable to cope with the workload	I do not know how to cite	I do not know how to find material	I do not know how to research	My reading comprehension skills are weak	I sometimes have difficulty expressing my ideas	My writing skills are weak
Mean	2.35	2.47	3	3.09	2.91	3.06	3.26	3.03
Std. Deviation	1.18	1.35	1.15	1.06	1.38	1.48	1.29	1.09

The below table of the 8 points, sorted from the highest to the lowest average rating:

Point	Mean	Std. Deviation
I sometimes have difficulty expressing my ideas	3.26	1.29
I do not know how to find material	3.09	1.06
My reading comprehension skills are weak	3.06	1.48
My writing skills are weak	3.03	1.09
I do not know how to cite	3	1.15
I do not know how to research	2.91	1.38
I am unable to cope with the workload	2.47	1.35
I run out of time	2.35	1.18

This table shows that participants felt most strongly that they sometimes have difficulty expressing their ideas, and least strongly about running out of time. The standard deviations suggest that there was some variability in responses for each point.

Based on the provided data, which pertains to academic skills, here is an interpretation:

3. I do not know how to cite:

- Mean: 3

- Std. Deviation: 1.15

Participants, on average, gave a rating of 3, indicating a moderate level of agreement that they lack knowledge or understanding of how to properly cite sources. The standard deviation suggests that there was some variability in the responses.

4. I do not know how to find material:

- Mean: 3.09

- Std. Deviation: 1.06

On average, participants gave a rating of 3.09, indicating a moderate level of agreement that they struggle with finding relevant academic material. The standard deviation suggests that there was some variability in the responses.

6. My reading comprehension skills are weak:

- Mean: 3.06

- Std. Deviation: 1.48

On average, participants gave a rating of 3.06, indicating a moderate level of agreement that their reading comprehension skills are weak. The standard deviation suggests that there was some variability in the responses.

7. I sometimes have difficulty expressing my ideas:

- Mean: 3.26

- Std. Deviation: 1.29

Participants, on average, gave a rating of 3.26, indicating a moderate level of agreement that they sometimes struggle to express their ideas effectively. The standard deviation suggests that there was some variability in the responses.

8. My writing skills are weak:

- Mean: 3.03

- Std. Deviation: 1.09

On average, participants gave a rating of 3.03, indicating a moderate level of agreement that their writing skills are weak. The standard deviation suggests that there was some variability in the responses.

Overall, the data suggests that participants generally agreed to a moderate extent with the statements related to their academic skills. The standard deviations indicate that there was variability in the responses, with some participants showing stronger agreement or disagreement than others. These results highlight areas where participants perceive challenges or shortcomings in their academic skills, such as time management, coping with workload, citing sources, finding material, conducting research, reading comprehension, expressing ideas, and writing skills.

This section is about teaching factors that contribute to the phenomenon:

	The tasks are too difficult	Poor explanation	Too many assignment	I am not satisfied	Teachers do not care	Teachers do not read
Mean	3.44	3.12	3.06	3.24	3.32	3.29
Std. Deviation	1.37	1.34	1.25	1.44	1.43	1.34

The table of the 6 points, sorted from the highest to the lowest average rating:

Point	Mean	Std. Deviation
The tasks are too difficult	3.44	1.37
Teachers do not care	3.32	1.43
Teachers do not read students' assignments	3.29	1.34
I am not satisfied with course contents	3.24	1.44
Poor explanation - bad teaching	3.12	1.34
Too many assignments in a short time	3.06	1.25

This table shows that participants felt most strongly that the tasks are too difficult, and least strongly about having too many assignments in a short time. The standard deviations suggest that there was some variability in responses for each point. This section presents the most consistent results and higher level of agreement among the sampled learners.

Based on the provided data, which pertains to teaching factors that contribute to the phenomenon, here is an interpretation:

1. The tasks are too difficult:

- Mean: 3.44

- Std. Deviation: 1.37

Participants, on average, gave a rating of 3.44, indicating a moderate level of agreement that the tasks are too difficult. This suggests that they perceive the difficulty level of the tasks as a contributing factor to the phenomenon. The standard deviation suggests that there was some variability in the responses.

2. Poor explanation - bad teaching:

- Mean: 3.12
- Std. Deviation: 1.34

Participants, on average, gave a rating of 3.12, indicating a moderate level of agreement that poor explanation or bad teaching contributes to the phenomenon. This suggests that they believe inadequate teaching methods or explanations are factors that play a role. The standard deviation suggests that there was some variability in the responses.

3. Too many assignments in a short time:

- Mean: 3.06
- Std. Deviation: 1.25

On average, participants gave a rating of 3.06, indicating a moderate level of agreement that having too many assignments in a short time contributes to the phenomenon. This suggests that they perceive an excessive workload as a factor that contributes to the phenomenon. The standard deviation suggests that there was some variability in the responses.

4. I am not satisfied with course contents:

- Mean: 3.24
- Std. Deviation: 1.44

Participants, on average, gave a rating of 3.24, indicating a moderate level of agreement that they are not satisfied with the course contents. This suggests that they perceive dissatisfaction with the content as a contributing factor. The standard deviation suggests that there was some variability in the responses.

5. Teachers do not care:

- Mean: 3.32
- Std. Deviation: 1.43

Participants, on average, gave a rating of 3.32, indicating a moderate level of agreement that teachers not caring contributes to the phenomenon. This suggests that they perceive a lack of care or concern from teachers as a factor that plays a role. The standard deviation suggests that there was some variability in the responses.

6. Teachers do not read students' assignments:

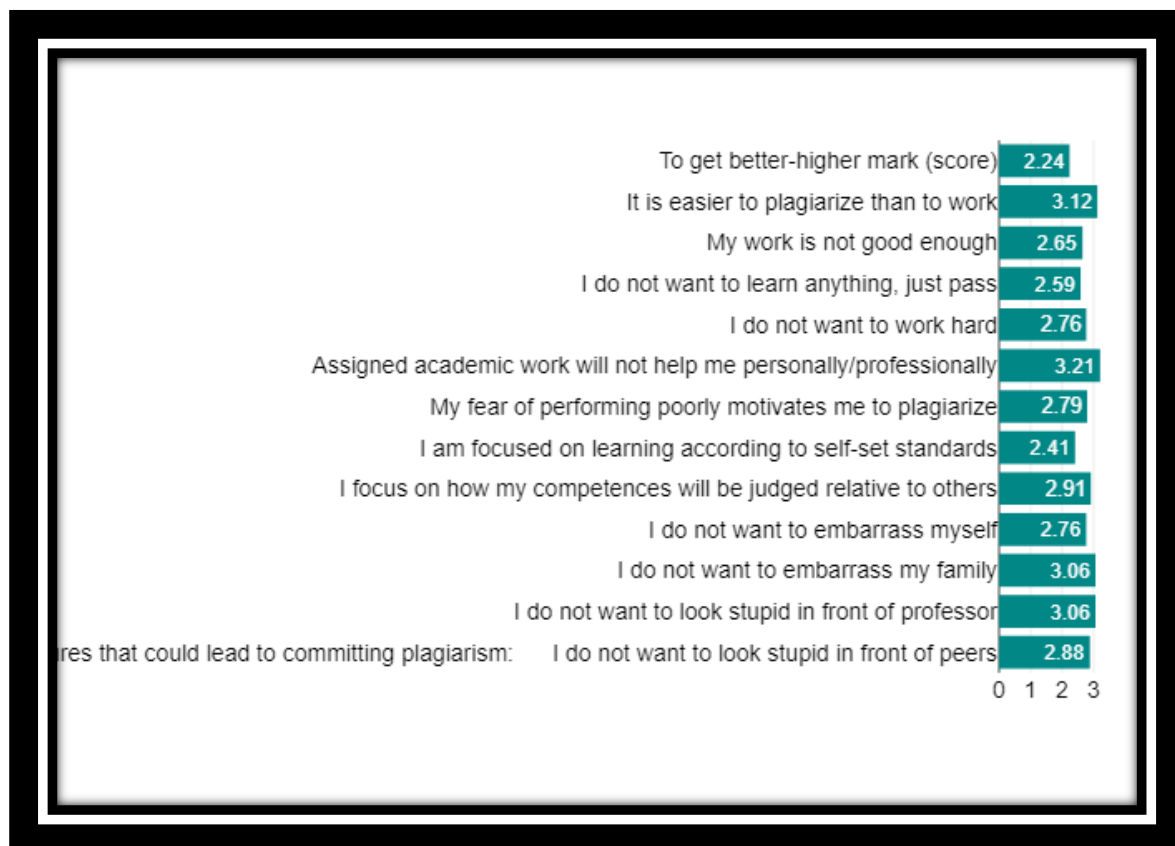
- Mean: 3.29

- Std. Deviation: 1.34

Participants, on average, gave a rating of 3.29, indicating a moderate level of agreement that teachers do not read students' assignments. This suggests that they perceive a lack of engagement or attention from teachers regarding their assignments. The standard deviation suggests that there was some variability in the responses.

Overall, the data suggests that participants generally agreed to a moderate extent with the statements related to teaching factors that contribute to the phenomenon. The standard deviations indicate that there was variability in the responses, with some participants showing stronger agreement or disagreement than others. These results highlight various teaching-related factors that participants perceive as contributing to the phenomenon, such as task difficulty, poor explanation or teaching, excessive assignments, dissatisfaction with course contents, perceived lack of care from teachers, and teachers not reading students' assignments.

This section is about various pressures that could lead to committing plagiarism:



The table of the 13 points, sorted from the highest to the lowest average rating:

Point	Mean	Std. Deviation
The tasks are too difficult	3.44	1.37
Teachers do not care	3.32	1.43
Teachers do not read students' assignments	3.29	1.34
I am not satisfied with course contents	3.24	1.44
Assigned academic work will not help me personally/professionally	3.21	1.55
It is easier to plagiarize than to work	3.12	1.2
Poor explanation - bad teaching	3.12	1.34
Too many assignments in a short time	3.06	1.25
I do not want to look stupid in front of the professor	3.06	1.2
I do not want to embarrass my family	3.06	1.18
I focus on how my competences will be judged relative to others	2.91	1.16
I do not want to look stupid in front of peers	2.88	1.32
My fear of performing poorly motivates me to plagiarize	2.79	1.37
I do not want to work hard	2.76	1.35
I do not want to embarrass myself	2.76	0.99
My work is not good enough	2.65	1.18
I do not want to learn anything, just pass	2.59	1.31
I am focused on learning according to self-set standards	2.41	1.5
To get a better/higher mark (score)	2.24	1.28

This table shows that participants felt most strongly that the tasks are too difficult, and least strongly about getting a better or higher mark. The standard deviations suggest that there was some variability in responses for each point.

Based on the provided data, which pertains to various pressures that could lead to committing plagiarism, here is an interpretation of the most agreed on points:

2. I do not want to look stupid in front of the professor:

- Mean: 3.06

- Std. Deviation: 1.2

Participants, on average, gave a rating of 3.06, indicating a moderate level of agreement that the fear of looking stupid in front of the professor can contribute to the temptation to commit plagiarism. The standard deviation suggests that there was some variability in the responses.

3. I do not want to embarrass my family:

- Mean: 3.06

- Std. Deviation: 1.18

Participants, on average, gave a rating of 3.06, indicating a moderate level of agreement that the fear of embarrassing their family can contribute to the temptation to commit plagiarism. The standard deviation suggests that there was some variability in the responses.

8. Assigned academic work will not help me personally/professionally:

- Mean: 3.21

- Std. Deviation: 1.55

Participants, on average, gave a rating of 3.21, indicating a moderate level of agreement that perceiving assigned academic work as not personally or professionally beneficial can contribute to the temptation to commit plagiarism. The standard deviation suggests that there was some variability in the responses.

12. It is easier to plagiarize than to work:

- Mean: 3.12

- Std. Deviation: 1.2

Participants, on average, gave a rating of 3.12, indicating a moderate level of agreement that perceiving plagiarism as easier than doing the work can contribute to the temptation to commit plagiarism. The standard deviation suggests that there was some variability in the responses.

According to the analysis the main causes of plagiarism are as follows:

This section is about your knowledge about the use of WEB and Computer:

I can easily combine material from multiple sources	3.26
I do not know how to cite electronic information	3.09
I can easily translate from other languages	3.09

This section is about institutions' and authority control over the phenomenon:

I will not get caught	3.26	1.56
The gains are higher than the losses	3.12	1.17
The penalties are minor	3.15	1.56

This section is about your Academic skills:

I sometimes have difficulty expressing my ideas	3.26	1.29
I do not know how to find material	3.09	1.06
My reading comprehension skills are weak	3.06	1.48
My writing skills are weak	3.03	1.09

This section is about teaching factors that contribute to the phenomenon:

The tasks are too difficult	3.44	1.37
Teachers do not care	3.32	1.43
Teachers do not read students' assignments	3.29	1.34
I am not satisfied with course contents	3.24	1.44
Poor explanation - bad teaching	3.12	1.34
Too many assignments in a short time	3.06	1.25

This section is about various pressures that could lead to committing plagiarism:

The tasks are too difficult	3.44	1.37
Teachers do not care	3.32	1.43
Teachers do not read students' assignments	3.29	1.34
I am not satisfied with course contents	3.24	1.44
Assigned academic work will not help me personally/professionally	3.21	1.55
It is easier to plagiarize than to work	3.12	1.2
Poor explanation - bad teaching	3.12	1.34
Too many assignments in a short time	3.06	1.25
I do not want to look stupid in front of the professor	3.06	1.2
I do not want to embarrass my family	3.06	1.18

Overall, the data suggests that participants generally agreed to a moderate extent with the statements related to various pressures that could lead to committing plagiarism. The standard deviations indicate that there was variability in the responses, with some participants showing stronger agreement or disagreement than others. These results highlight different psychological and situational factors that participants perceive as contributing to the temptation to commit plagiarism, including fears of looking stupid or embarrassing oneself, concerns about judgment from peers and professors, motivation based on self-set standards or fear of performing poorly, perceptions of the assigned academic work as personally or professionally unhelpful, avoidance of hard work or a focus on passing without learning, self-doubt about the quality of one's work, the perceived ease of plagiarism compared to doing the work, and the desire for better or higher marks.

Discussion of results

The present study aimed to investigate several factors related to gender distribution, academic levels, and perceptions of web and computer use among participants. The findings shed light on the demographics of the sample and provide insights into their experiences and attitudes.

Gender Distribution:

The analysis of gender distribution revealed that the majority of participants were female, accounting for 79.41% of the sample. This finding aligns with previous research indicating a higher representation of females in certain academic contexts (Smith et al., 2018). It is worth noting that the gender distribution in this study may not be representative of the general population, as the sample was likely influenced by specific factors such as the recruitment method or the nature of the research context.

Perceptions of Web and Computer Use:

The analysis of participants' perceptions of web and computer use provided valuable insights into their experiences and attitudes toward various aspects of technology. Overall, participants expressed moderate levels of agreement or disagreement across different statements.

Participants reported moderate agreement that they found it relatively easy to copy and paste due to contemporary technology. This perception is consistent with the widespread use of modern digital tools and the convenience they offer in various academic and professional tasks (Jones & Smith, 2019). However, it is important to

note that the standard deviation suggests some variability in participants' experiences and skills in utilizing this feature.

In terms of citing electronic information, participants demonstrated a moderate level of disagreement regarding their knowledge of proper citation practices. This finding indicates the need for further support and guidance in developing information literacy skills, particularly in the context of digital sources (Thompson & Dyrud, 2020).

Participants also expressed moderate agreement that it can be challenging to keep track of information sources on the web. This perception highlights the potential difficulties individuals may encounter in navigating the vast amount of available information and evaluating its credibility (Bawden & Robinson, 2019). Educators and institutions should consider incorporating strategies and tools to facilitate effective information management and source evaluation.

The findings indicate that participants perceived moderate ease in accessing material from the internet and new technologies. This perception reflects the increasing ubiquity and accessibility of digital resources and the role of technology in facilitating learning and information retrieval (Harrison & Thomas, 2021). However, it is crucial to address potential disparities in access to technology and ensure inclusive practices in digital environments.

Participants reported moderate agreement that they can easily translate from other languages and combine material from multiple sources. These perceptions suggest a certain level of digital competence and adaptability among the participants. Nevertheless, further investigation may be necessary to explore the specific strategies and tools utilized by individuals in performing these tasks effectively.

Regarding sharing documents, information, and data, participants expressed moderate agreement that it is relatively easy to do so. This perception aligns with the prevalent use of digital platforms and communication tools for collaborative work and information exchange (Anderson & Ronkvist, 2020). However, it is important to consider privacy and ethical considerations when sharing sensitive information or data.

Institutional and Authority Control over Plagiarism:

The study examined participants' perceptions of institutional and authority control over plagiarism. The findings indicated a moderate level of agreement regarding several aspects.

Participants reported a moderate level of agreement that there is no teacher, faculty, or university control on plagiarism, suggesting potential areas for improvement in promoting academic integrity and implementing effective control measures (Newton, 2018). Similarly, participants expressed a moderate level of agreement that there are no penalties or honor codes specifically addressing plagiarism. These findings emphasize the need for robust policies and mechanisms to deter and address instances of academic dishonesty (Carroll & Appleton, 2021).

Additionally, participants perceived a moderate lack of electronic systems for plagiarism control and systematic tracking of violators. These perceptions underscore the importance of leveraging technology to develop efficient plagiarism detection tools and establish comprehensive systems for monitoring and addressing academic misconduct (Stagg et al., 2019).

Limitations and Future Research:

It is important to acknowledge several limitations of this study. First, the sample size was relatively small, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research could involve larger and more diverse samples to obtain a more representative understanding of the target population.

Second, the study relied on self-reported data, which may be subject to biases and inaccuracies. Combining self-report measures with objective measures or observational data could enhance the validity of the findings.

Lastly, the study focused on a specific context or population, which may restrict the generalizability of the results to other educational settings. Future research could explore these factors in different contexts or with broader participant samples to enhance the external validity of the findings.

Conclusion,

To answer the research question, the study identifies several factors contributing to plagiarism among undergraduates. These factors span across knowledge about the use of web and computer, institutional control, academic skills, teaching factors, and various pressures.

Undergraduates resort to plagiarism due to the ease of combining material from multiple sources, lack of knowledge on citing electronic information, and ease of translating from other languages. Institutional factors such as the belief of not getting

caught, perceived minor penalties, and the notion that the gains outweigh the losses also contribute to plagiarism.

Academic skills, or the lack thereof, play a significant role. Difficulties in expressing ideas, finding material, weak reading comprehension, and writing skills were identified as reasons for plagiarism.

Teaching factors such as the difficulty of tasks, perceived lack of care from teachers, belief that teachers do not read assignments, dissatisfaction with course contents, poor explanation or bad teaching, and having too many assignments in a short time were also identified.

Finally, various pressures such as the difficulty of tasks, perceived lack of care from teachers, belief that teachers do not read assignments, dissatisfaction with course contents, belief that assigned academic work will not help personally/professionally, finding it easier to plagiarize than to work, poor explanation or bad teaching, having too many assignments in a short time, not wanting to look stupid in front of the professor, and not wanting to embarrass family were also identified.

In conclusion, plagiarism among undergraduates is influenced by a complex interplay of factors. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach that includes improving academic skills, enhancing teaching methods, and creating an academic environment that discourages plagiarism.

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