Awareness Regarding Plagiarism Amongst Post-Graduates and Faculty Paedodontists: An Online Questionnaire Survey

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Abstract

Good publication practices do not develop by chance, and will become established only if they are actively promoted. The incidence of plagiarism is alarmingly increasing; Researchers must have a thorough understanding of the publication ethics and copyright laws when preparing manuscript and presentations for publication on the Internet or journals. This paper reports the awareness regarding plagiarism amongst post graduates and faculty Paedodontist's for development of honest and scientific research. This was online questionnaire survey. E-mail ID of participants was obtained from ISPPD database. Results of this study showed that 77.3% participants thought that plagiarism occurred in publication only. They are not aware of consequences of copyright infringement. 33.6% agreed that short dead line for assignments as reason to plagiarise. This paper highlights the utmost important challenges and throws some light on awareness about copyright violation/infringement. Since it is the duty of academicians and researchers to keep a check on plagiarism and copyright infringement a thorough knowledge and awareness amongst Paedodontist's and researchers regarding the issue is needed.

Key words

Copyright, Plagiarism, Electronic Mail, Surveys and Questionnaires, Publications, Faculty

Introduction

Plagiarism is usually described as stealing and showing another's work as though it were one's own. Plagiarism relating to education and journalism is used in our field. Academic plagiarism includes: "The use of ideas, concepts, words or structures without adequately acknowledging the source to benefit in an environment where originality is expected".[1] Plagiarism by graduates, teachers, or scholars within academia is deemed to be intellectual dishonesty or intellectual fraud, and perpetrators are subject to academic censorship, up to and including expulsion. Several universities are using plagiarism identification tools to discover possible plagiarism and discourage plagiarizing students.[2]

The guidelines identify five levels of plagiarism that include the uncredited verbatim copying of a complete paper, or the verbatim copying of a major portion (> 50 percent, or 20% and 50%) or verbatim copying by the same author(s) within more than one paper, copying of individual elements (paragraph(s), sentence(s), illustration(s), etc.) resulting in a substantial portion (< 20 percent) of a paper inside. Lastly, it involves the paraphrasing of pages or paragraphs and copying of a substantial part of a text without specific delineation (e.g. quotes or indents).[2]

Self-plagiarism is the publication by the same author of a paper which is substantially identical to a published article, without recognizing the source and without seeking permission from the original copyright holder. There may be superfluous variations between the original and the second article, such as a new title or an updated abstract, but the data set and results remain the same.[3-6] Republication of a paper without permission and/or acknowledgment is a significant violation of publishing ethics because it infringes copyright, because in most cases the copyright of the paper rests with the journal and not with the authors; thus, the authors are not free to republish the paper and it distorts the scientific evidence.[7,8]

Plagiarism is regulated by Section 57 and Section 63 (a) of the Copyright Act, 1957. Pursuant to Article 57 of the Act, grant writers the right (special right) to assert authorship of their work. To detain or seek damages in respect of any alteration, fabrication, mutilation or other act relating to the said work performed prior to the expiry of the term of copyright where such act would be harmful to its honour or reputation Section 63 of the Act provides for

penalties for infringement of rights under this Act. The perpetrator is punishable with imprisonment. The definition can range from six months to three years for the offence. The lawbreaker may have to pay the money i.e. fine which can range from 50,000 rupees to two lakh rupees.

There are various organizations and committees all over the world which are working on curtailing and providing information regarding Publication ethics. One such committee is "Committee on Publication Ethics" (COPE) which works on ethical grounds, which aims to increase the authenticity of the published data. It also notes that in the budding researchers ethical culture needs to be created.[2]

Copyright infringement punishes the respective researcher depending on the laws made by different countries. Usually these cases are settled by direct arbitration, notice and dismissal process, or civil court litigation.[2]

Hence for, Good publishing practices don't grow by accident, and can only be developed if actively promoted. The awareness of plagiarism among postgraduates and faculty paedodontist's for the development of honest and scientific research therefore needs to be assessed. The goal of this study was to evaluate the knowledge among postgraduates and faculty paedodontist's about plagiarism through an online questionnaire survey.

Methodology

The survey was conducted as Cross-sectional design. Email ids of post graduate students and faculty of paediatric dentistry were retrieved from ISPPD office. Post graduate students and faculty of paediatric and preventive dentistry who did not respond to the mail and didn't fill the questionnaire where excluded from the study.

The questionnaire was prepared with the help of experts. Two types of validation were obtained namely concurrent and content validation. The questionnaire was also validated using unpaired t test. Here p-value is 0.405 and hence the answers of respondents and selected experts were almost similar. The overall reliability was about 89% (Cronbach's alpha = 0.887) Thus, statistically it was tested and proved good validity of it.

All the Postgraduate and Faculty members were approached by email to fill a questionnaire sent through www.googleforms.com. Following that, consecutively for three week repeated email were sent to urge them to respond to the electronic questionnaire to obtain the maximum response rate.

The Collected data was entered in Microsoft excel (2007) spreadsheet. Descriptive analysis was computed using excel statistical operations.

Results

Total of 450 dental evaluators were contacted out of which final 220 complete responses were considered for data analysis as shown in figure 1.
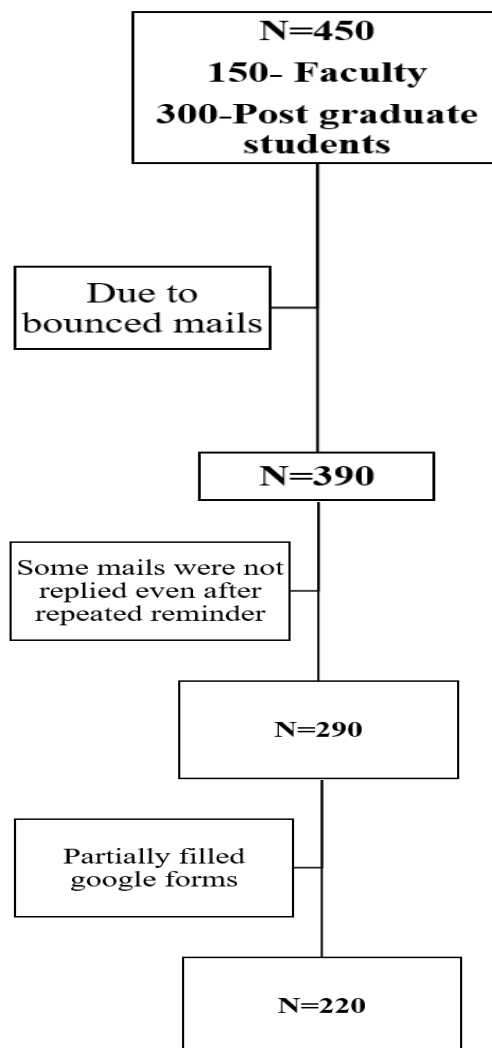

Figure 1: CONSORT flow diagram

Table1 illustrates all the items of questionnaire tool with Yes/ No/Don't Know type of responses. These questions were purely based on knowledge of the participants regarding

plagiarism. Here, participants were asked about if they are confident enough to reference their work or about policies at institutional level.

Sr. no	Questions/Items	Yes N (%)	No N (%)	Sometime/Don't know/ some Idea N (%)
1.	Are you confident with referencing your work?	172 (78.2)	14 (6.3)	34 (15.5)
2.	Do you use words or sentences from articles or books when writing essays without using quotation marks?	54 (24.5)	106 (48.2)	60 (27.3)
3.	Does your institution have a plagiarism policy?	98 (44.5)	58 (26.4)	64 (29.1)
4.	Do you know what plagiarism detection system are being used in scientific community?	92 (41.8)	64 (29.1)	64 (29.1)
5.	Have you/anyone you know ever had been detected for plagiarism?	86 (39.1)	72 (32.7)	42 (19.1)
6.	Self-plagiarism is punishable as plagiarism.	64 (29.1)	38 (17.3)	118 (23.6)
7.	Are you aware of UGC guidelines?	48 (21.8)	108 (49.1)	64 (29.1)

Table1: Questionnaire tool with Yes/ No/Don't Know type of responses.

Table 2 illustrates that all the items of questionnaire tool with responses from strongly disagree to Strongly Agree. These questions illustrate the feelings of participants regarding authenticity of the plagiarism.

Sr. no	Questions/ Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1.	Sometimes I'm tempted to plagiarise, because everyone else is doing it (students,	92 (41.8)	58 (26.4)	38 (17.3)	28 (12.7)	4 (1.8)

	researchers).					
2.	Short deadlines tempt me to plagiarize a bit.	60 (27.3)	56 (25.5)	30 (13.6)	68 (30.9)	6 (2.7)
3.	Plagiarized parts of a paper may be ignored if the paper is of great scientific value.	60 (27.3)	64 (29.1)	42 (19.1)	40 (18.2)	14 (6.4)
4.	The names of the authors who plagiarize should be disclosed to the scientific community.	26 (11.8)	32 (14.5)	62 (28.2)	76 (34.5)	24 (10.9)
5.	Young researchers who are just learning the ropes should receive milder punishment for plagiarism.	16 (7.3)	38 (17.3)	36 (16.4)	110 (50.0)	20 (9.0)
6.	Sometimes I copy a sentence or two just to get inspiration for further writing.	28 (12.7)	46 (20.9)	36 (16.4)	102 (46.4)	8 (3.6)
7.	When I don't know what to write, I translate a part of a paper from a foreign language.	48 (21.8)	80 (36.4)	36 (16.4)	50 (22.7)	6 (2.7)
8.	It is justified to use previous descriptions of a method, because the method itself remains the same.	8 (3.6)	36 (16.4)	54 (24.5)	108 (49.1)	14 (6.4)
9.	Plagiarists do not belong to the scientific community.	30 (13.6)	80 (36.4)	70 (31.8)	32 (14.5)	8 (7.3)
10.	I could not write a scientific paper without plagiarizing.	66 (30.0)	92 (41.9)	32 (14.5)	30 (13.6)	0 (0.0)
11.	It is not so bad to plagiarise.	68 (30.9)	78 (35.5)	44 (20)	26 (11.8)	4 (3.6)

12.	I keep plagiarising because I haven't been caught yet.	108 (49.1)	72 (32.7)	26 (11.8)	10 (4.5)	4 (3.6)
13.	I required more information and knowledge regarding plagiarism and publication ethics	10 (4.5)	8 (7.3)	8 (7.3)	116 (52.7)	78 (35.5)

Table 2: Questionnaire tool with responses from strongly disagree to Strongly Agree

Table 3 illustrates that all the items of questionnaire tool with multiple responses. This table records the opinions of the Subjects related to the help post graduates can take from, percentage of plagiarism or the punishment given on doing plagiarism

Sr. No	Questions/ Items	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
1.	When can you be accused of plagiarism?		
	Assignment	14	6.4
	Dissertation	28	12.7
	Exam	6	2.7
	Publication	170	77.3
	Project	2	1.8
2.	Who would you ask for help about plagiarism or referencing?		
	Faculty	148	66.3
	English Language Centre	8	3.6
	Friend	16	7.3
	Advice Service	38	17.3
	Lawyer	10	4.5
3.	What do you think the consequences for a first offence of plagiarism could be?		
	Expulsion	18	8.2

	Warning	82	37.3
	Retake	44	20
	Monetary compensation	8	3.6
	Legal action/punishment	68	30.1
4.	How much percentage of plagiarism is acceptable?		
	10%	124	56.4
	20%	68	30.1
	30%	26	11.8
	50%	2	0.9

Table 3: Questionnaire tool with multiple responses

Discussion

The present study assessed the level of awareness and reason for plagiarism regarding plagiarism among post graduate students and faculty of pediatric dentistry throughout India. Plagiarism is also referred as Fraud. Passing off of another's work as one's own or Duplicating one's own previous work without reference to prior publication.

In the present study, 78.2% of participants were not confident about referencing their own work, which shows us that teaching about plagiarism is important for ethical scientific writing. 49.1% were aware of UGC guidelines, as all post graduates and faculty does scientific writing, hence they should all be well aware of the guidelines that needs to be followed. Faculty or educators should take an initiative to introduce about UGC guidelines to post graduates students. 23.6 % of the participants weren't sure about Self-plagiarism is punishable as plagiarism. The results of a research conducted by Ford PJ, Hughes C in 2012[9] were in accordance with the result of present study. They state that the majority of participants reported that the guidelines for dealing with plagiarism were inadequate.

Awareness about self-plagiarism is equally important as plagiarism. As, Self-plagiarism is re-using your own findings in your several different research except few circumstances, such as review articles, anthologies, collections, or translations into another language. Citation of an individual can be used, but similar findings are not acceptable. Due to contempt of journal caused to self-plagiarism, they have an authority to uphold the further publications of the author.

52.75% and 35% participants strongly agree and agree that they require more information and knowledge regarding plagiarism and publication ethics. 66.3% Participants also believe that the knowledge or difficulty that they come across during plagiarism can be helped by faculty. The similar findings were demonstrated by a researcher where it was stated that students benefited significantly from their instruction.[10] Hence, Researcher must be well aware about plagiarism, ethics and copyright infringement. Scientific writing must have clear expression, conciseness, accuracy, and honesty, then only we can state it as good scientific writing. Few authors suggest that positive influence towards plagiarism in higher education contexts.[11, 12]

48.2% used words or sentences from articles or books while writing essays without using quotation marks, they are not well aware about the consequence which will further take place. The results of the survey done regarding the challenge for dental schools states that there is need to identify effective strategies to prevent cheating opportunities and to enforce effective knowledge for the same.[13] Citing, acknowledging or quoting someone's work as required by law is not appropriate, if   someone uses words, phrases, phrases or ideas, or paraphrases the work of another person, it is important to name the source of information in your work. An ethical author, always acknowledges other people's contributions to his / her work. Any wording taken from another source must be contained in quotation marks and accompanied by a quotation indicating its origin. As we summarize the work of others we use our own terms in a condensed version of the original to condense and express efforts of others.

As researcher it's our moral duty to understand the penalties caused due to plagiarism, there are various Acts created by government for plagiarism and copyright infringement as discussed earlier in the present paper. In this study, 37.3% participants believed that warning was the punishment for plagiarizing.

As, the results of this study states, lot of participants weren't aware about the plagiarism checker which are usually easily available by institutes. Hence, for readers to understand we have further discussed about various tools available on web they are: Dupli Checker, Copyleaks, PaperRaterPlagiarisma, Plagiarism Checker, Plagium PlagScan, PlagTracker, Quetext and Viper. Some of these softwares are paid or at free of cost.

This research paper has evaluated post graduates and faculty on the basis of their knowledge, attitude and their daily practices of plagiarism. This paper suggests how to create more awareness about plagiarism by faculty in post graduates. Also few lectures can be

conducted to make them aware about it. They should also acknowledge post graduates about copyright infringement and self-plagiarism.

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