

A Critical Exploratory Study Of Plagiarism: The Perceptions And Awareness Of ESL Tertiary Level Student Across Public And Private Sector Universities In Pakistan

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Abstract

Plagiarism is considered an endemic problem among the students across the globe (Razera, 2011). Various studies have confirmed the growing trend of this academic dishonesty among the students at universities (Flint, Clegg, and Mcdonald, 2006; Larkham and Manns, 2002; Roberts and Toombs, 1993). This study is primarily aimed to examine the students' awareness and their perceptions regarding plagiarism at public and private sector universities in Pakistan. Quantitative approach was adopted in this study. The current study sampled (n=160) students at public and private sector universities in Central Sindh Pakistan. The sample was chosen randomly from different departments. Data was collected through close ended questionnaire. The tool of this study was adapted from the published study of Zakaria Abukari (2016). SPSS software was used in data analysis. As regards plagiarism, the results revealed a high-level of awareness among the students at Private Sector Universities. The findings of this study further suggest high frequency of the practices of plagiarism among the students at public sector Universities.

Key words: plagiarism, SBBU, FAST, Public Sector University, Private Sector University

1. Introduction

The term plagiarism has been defined as the act of “taking the work or idea of someone else and pass it off as one’s own” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2009). More precisely, plagiarism is “a form of intellectual theft”. It is an “academic dishonesty” while deliberately deceiving or unintentionally violating the rules of academic writing (Jolly, 1998; Ashworth, Bannister, & Thorne, 1997, p. 200; Wilhoit, 1994).Plagiarism is perceived an immensely growing trend among the students at universities (Flint, Clegg& Mcdonald, 2006; Park, 2003; Larkham and Manns, 2002; Wilhoit, 1994; Roberts and Toombs, 1993). Modern digital technology especially the extensive use of web and wireless devices has provided an easy

access for the students to disseminate knowledge in dishonest and prohibited ways (Mc Murtry, 2001). Different reasons might be cited for this act of academic dishonesty. Regardless of the reasons, nowadays, various softwares are used in detecting the plagiarised content. These technological plagiarism detection tools are used to discourage the attempt to plagiarize others' work (Beasley, 2004). The intellectual capability of an individual to distinguish, interpret and evaluate a given phenomenon is called awareness. It specifically points out to the "knowledge about an object or event, the competencies or skills as well as the methods of operation; it has to do with background knowledge about the object, event or any other phenomenon." (Reinhardt, Mletzko, Sloep and Drachsler, 2015). Merikle (1984) described understanding as the capability of an individual to differentiate between various probable causes; it makes the individual in developing a sound judgment to reach at the high level of performance. An awareness level of the researcher has great impact of on their engagement in the act of plagiarism. It is universally accepted that in every field of life even if it is a thought, an artwork, composition, song, discovery, testing or an educational productivity, the claim of ownership is always preserved and it is immoral to violate this right (McDonald, 2006). In academics, it is called "plagiarism". Generally the writers of "journal articles, books, or software system" want recognition and acknowledgment of their scholarly output in return for their contribution to communities to solve their problems. In order to develop suitable strategies to promote academic honesty, it is obvious that universities can benefit from knowing their students' perception and awareness of plagiarism.

1.1 Problem Statement

After course work, students fulfilling the requisite criteria are recommended by a panel of the concerned intuitions to carry out empirical investigation by probing a research problem of their own interest. However, students have been found suffering from many problems while doing empirical or conceptual enquiries. This problem turns from bad to worse when students after the process of investigating an issue have to write the whole phenomenon of investigation. As writing a research dissertation is a difficult genre to handle, it requires a good command of the content and mechanics of writing as well. Moreover novice researchers find it hard to reduce the graph of plagiarism of the downloaded materials after they have been incorporated in the main content of the study (Flint, Macdonald & Clegg, 2006). This lack of skills increases the plagiarism graph. In public and private sector universities of Sindh Pakistan, numbers of cases of plagiarism have been found. However no study has been conducted to have directly investigated the issue of plagiarism and the students' awareness about it. This study is aimed to find out the perceptions and awareness of plagiarism among the learners of public and private sector universities of Sindh, Pakistan.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

This study aims:

- ❖ To determine whether pupils are aware of plagiarism.
- ❖ To learn more about how students feel about plagiarism.
- ❖ To look at the reasons for plagiarism among pupils.
- ❖ To determine the students' understanding of the institution's plagiarism sanctions.

1.3 Research Questions

Data for this study was pursued on the basis of the following research questions:

- ❖ To what extent the students at tertiary levels of education are aware about plagiarism in Pakistan?
- ❖ What are the students' perceptions about plagiarism at tertiary level of education?
- ❖ What are the causes of plagiarism among the students in Pakistan?
- ❖ Are the students aware of the institution's plagiarism policies?

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is significant due to certain factors like no study has been conducted to have explored the students' awareness regarding plagiarism at tertiary level of education in Pakistan. The significance of this study lies in the fact that it makes a comparative analysis of the students' perceptions regarding plagiarism among public and private sectors universities in central Sindh Pakistan. Moreover, useful insights of this study might help all higher educational institutions, particularly the Higher Education Commission Pakistan to formulate strategies to curb the practice of plagiarism among students in the context of central Sindh Pakistan.

2. Review of the Related Literature

Plagiarism comes from the Latin term "plagiary or plagium," which literally means "to hijack" (Karami & Danaei, 2016). Plagiarism is synonymous with a variety of words such as imitation, adaptation, repetition, and originality, as well as misappropriation, faulty citation, copyright infringement, literary theft, cheating, cribbing, and stealing (Marsh, 2007). There is no one-size-fits-all definition of plagiarism, as different groups of people from various academic levels, disciplines, and countries may hold opposing viewpoints (Rezanejad and Rezaei, 2013). Plagiarism, on the other hand, has been defined as a deliberate attempt to persuade readers to believe a dishonest demonstration of someone else's ideas, words, and labour. Academic plagiarism comes when other people's thoughts and words are not honoured by providing the original author proper credit (Remenyi, 2015). In that sense, a writer do not recognise the original author as a genuine source and when no quotation marks and accurate references are utilised rather it is presented as the author's own academic work (Hexham, 1999). (Hexham, 1999). Plagiarism is commonly regarded as a form of academic dishonesty. It is regarded as a deceptive behaviour that reduces the original author's intellectual property and rewards plagiarists for their effort (Gullifer & Tyson, 2010). It refers to expressing someone else's language, thoughts, ideas, or comments as one's own legitimate work while without endorsing the source (Marriam-Webster Dictionary, 2014). The growing trend of plagiarism among students has been attributed to a variety of factors, according to several research. These include, but are not limited to, task completion (poor time management), perceived failure to complete tasks (poor time management), and perceived failure to complete tasks (poor time management) (Anderman, Griesinger, and Westerfield 1998; Anderman and Midgley 1997; Calabrese and Cochran 1990; Caruana, Ramaseshan, and Ewing 2000; Davis, Grover, and Becker 1992; Kibler 1993; Love and Simmons 1998; Newstead, Franklyn-Stokes,

and Armstead 1996; Park 2003; Perry et al. 1990; Roig and Caso 2005; Sheard, Carbone, and Dick 2003; Whitley 1998). Fewer studies have also explored the students' perceptions and the reasons why they plagiarise (Ashworth, Bannister, and Thorne 1997; Devlin and Gray 2007; Marsden, Carroll, and Neill 2005). It has been found that an awareness of the institutional policy reduces the risk of engaging in plagiarism (Jordan, 2001; Carroll, 2005a; Burke, 1997). Although plagiarism has been a problem since the invention of the printing press, however a new trend of plagiarism ushered in with the advent of internet, that has made the illegal use of others' ideas accessible (Francis, 2015).

Plagiarism, it is said, is a dishonest act comparable to kidnapping, punishable by several years in jail or perhaps the death penalty. Plagiarism, according to the scholar, can include quoting, paraphrasing, or copying someone's creative endeavours in any discipline without citing and crediting the original source (Francis, 2015). Plagiarism is ostensibly an unseen threat to the growth of true global scholarship (Idiegbeyan-ose, Nkiko, & Osinulu, 2016). Plagiarism has become more common in higher education institutions around the world as technology has advanced (Lester and Diekhoff, 2002). Plagiarism's bad trend, on the other hand, has serious effects. Anyone who is found to have plagiarised will have their image tarnished. Students who are accused of plagiarism are frequently disqualified. Teachers are suspended, dismissed, or, in certain cases, sued in court, depending on the severity of the infraction. This is validated by the institution's ethical committee. With this in mind, numerous countermeasures have been implemented to stem the tide of plagiarism. These include plagiarism detection tools like Turnitin and websites like Turnitin (<http://www.turnitin.com/>). It allows teachers, students and other professional bodies to check any suspected document against an online data bank of millions of papers, and thereby ascertain if the writer or the researcher has unquestionably plagiarised other' original idea(s) or its the creative expressions of the writer himself. Other strategies include raising awareness of plagiarism as a penalised offence, which may help to reduce plagiarism (2013). Anyone who understands the seriousness of a crime will think twice before committing one (Gullifer and Tyson, 2010). Similarly, the institution's anti-plagiarism regulations will allow students and teachers to disassociate themselves from the act of plagiarising. Extensions in deadlines may help students manage their time to avoid plagiarism rather than finding the quickest way to meet the deadlines set by research supervisors (Cleary, 2017). Students and researchers in Pakistan are aided by various incentives such as scholarships, grants, contributions, and remuneration for conducting and publishing research (Higher Education Commission of Pakistan 2010). Despite the instructions established by the HEC to deal with the issue of plagiarism, incidences of plagiarism are on the rise in a number of Pakistani institutions (Shirazi et al). (2010). This study aims to investigate university students' opinions and awareness of plagiarism at public and private universities in central Sindh, Pakistan.

3. Methodology

This exploratory study is quantitative in nature. According to Oyedele (2003), every inquiry is pursued on the basis of a research design that needs to be specified by the researcher. The current study adopts a survey research design used to describe trends in a large population of individuals (Creswell, 2012: P-21).

3.1 Participants

A representative sample constituting mixed gender of (n=160) students with further bifurcation of forty (n=40) from each discipline were chosen through convenient sampling technique (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). The participants of this study were tertiary level student majoring in BS English, BBA, Computer Science, and Electronic Engineering.

3.2 Instruments

In survey research design, variety of tools for collection of data exists. This study used close ended questionnaire in data collection. The Questionnaire was adapted from previous studies (Zakaria, 2016). A self analysis of the tool was carried out to examine whether reach item equally measure what it was planned to measure. This was followed by jury validation, experts in the field that examined the tool. Last, pilot validation of the tool was achieved by administering the tool to participants who were not part of the actual empirical study.

3.3 Procedure

The current research is a quantitative case study that used a survey research method. The researcher created a questionnaire with 19 elements for data collection. Several components were initially taken from prior studies. The number of items was reduced to 19 after the items were analysed using the validity approach. The tool's reliability was determined by looking at consistency among replies in a pilot study. Finally, SPSS was used to evaluate the data collected using the likert-scale.

4. Data Analysis

To achieve better insights and understanding of the research problem, the collected data must be analyzed (Panneerselvam, 2011). Data for this study were analyzed through SPSS software. The primary topics expressed in the research questions guided the analysis and presentation. (Howitt & Cramer, 2008).

Table 1: Demographic of Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	92	60.5
Female	58	39.5
Age		
20-25 years	134	90.1
25-30 years	16	9.9
University		
Public sector	78	52
Private sector	72	48
Degree		
BS(English)	52	34.3
BBA	35	23.1

CS	44	30.1
EE	19	12.6

Male respondents accounted for 60.5 percent of the total, while female respondents accounted for 39.5 percent. According to the age distribution, 90.1 percent of respondents were between the ages of 20 and 25, while 9.9 percent were between the ages of 25 and 30. According to the collected data, 52 percent of the respondents attended a public institution and 48 percent attended a private university. It was found from the analysis of collected data that 34.3% of respondents were pursuing BS English, 23.1% respondents were from BBA, 30.1% respondents were enrolled in Computer Science and 12.9% respondents were pursuing electronic engineering.

Table 2. Awareness about plagiarism

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
University	150	1.48	.501
Gender	150	1.41	.493
Age	150	1.11	.308
Please list the degree in which you are seeking	150	2.22	1.029
Do you know of the copyright laws?	150	1.37	.485
Have you ever heard the term "plagiarism"?	150	1.20	.398
Where did you hear the term "plagiarism" from?	150	1.71	.908
Did you get a talk about plagiarism during your new student orientation?	150	1.63	.485
Plagiarism is something I'm familiar with.	150	1.52	.689
Plagiarism, in my opinion, is unethical.	150	1.84	.831
Plagiarism is defined as copying from a book without acknowledging the source.	150	1.76	.705

Plagiarism is defined as the act of copying chunks of content from internet sources without acknowledgment.	150	1.88	.697
Submitting assignments without references comes under plagiarism	150	2.01	.786
Poor writing skills	150	2.22	1.118
Lack of referencing skills	150	2.16	1.073
Poor methods of teaching and learning	150	2.15	1.196
Assignment is difficult	150	2.40	1.303
Pressure to get good grades	150	1.99	1.243
Laziness and lack of time management	150	2.07	1.227
Do you know the university's plagiarism policy?	150	1.52	.501
Has any student been punished of any plagiarism offence?	150	1.50	.502
If yes, how often do plagiarists 'students get punished?	150	2.86	1.010
Is faculty enforcing plagiarism policy effectively?	150	1.45	.499
Valid N (list wise)	150		

Table 3. Frequency & percentage of Item One

Do you know of the copyright laws?

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	95	63.3
	No	55	36.7
	Total	150	100.0

As shown in Table 3, majority of the respondents (63.3%) were aware of plagiarism. When they were asked, whether they know the copyright laws or not; only (36.7%) expressed ignorance. These findings are consistent with prior research (Isiakpona, 2012), which found that the majority (n=170) of undergraduates at a public sector university in Nigeria were aware of copyright rules. Isiakpona (2012) also claims that, despite high levels of student understanding of copyright rules, just 0.5 percent of students were found to have committed plagiarism (in other words, he discovered a negative link between student awareness of copyright laws and adherence to copyright laws).

Table 4. Frequency & percentage of Item Two

Have you ever heard the term "plagiarism"?

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Yes	122	81.3
No	28	18.7
Total	150	100.0

As seen in Table 4, 81.3 percent of respondents said they had heard the term plagiarism previously, while 18.7% said they had not. This finding supports the findings of Sing and Guram (2014), who found that the majority (85%) of participants (Dental Professionals in North India) were aware of plagiarism.

Table 5. Frequency & percentage of Item Three

Where did you first hear the term "plagiarism"?

	Frequency	Percent
Valid From teachers	89	59.3
From colleagues	14	9.3
Through learning and reading	47	31.3
Total	150	100.0

As displayed in the Table 5, most of the respondents (n=89) (59.3%) out of (n=150) respondents revealed that they learn about plagiarism from their teachers, 9.3% specified that they learn about plagiarism from their colleagues and 31.3% responded that they learn about plagiarism through learning and reading.

Table 6. Frequency & percentage of Item Four

Did you get a talk about plagiarism during your new student orientation?

	Frequency	Percent
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Valid	Yes	57	38.0
	No	93	62.0
	Total	150	100.0

As shown in Table 6, The collected data revealed that 62% of the respondents indicated that during their orientation they did not receive any talk on plagiarism; and 38% responded that they did receive the talk.

3.2.Perception of plagiarism

Table 7. Frequency & percentage of Item Five

I understand the meaning of plagiarism

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	86	57.3
	Agree	51	34.0
	Disagree	11	7.3
	Strongly disagree	2	1.3
	Total	150	100.0

From Table 7, (57.3%) were found strongly agree and (34.0%) revealed that they understand the meaning of plagiarism. On the other hand (7.3%) disagreed and (1.3%) were found strongly disagree while revealing that they understand the meaning of plagiarism.

Table 8. Frequency & percentage of Item Six

I understand plagiarism to be wrong

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	57	38.0
	Agree	64	42.7
	Disagree	21	14.0
	Strongly disagree	7	4.7
	Total	149	99.3
	Total	150	100.0

From Table 8,38.0% respondents strongly agreed and 42.7% were of the view that plagiarism to be wrong. On the other hand 14.0% were disagree and4.7 were strongly disagree to the statement that they consider plagiarism to be wrong.

Table 9. Frequency & percentage of Item Seven

Copying from a book without crediting the source constitutes plagiarism.

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Strongly agree	57	38.0
Agree	71	47.3
Disagree	21	14.0
Strongly disagree	1	.7
Total	150	100.0

As displayed in the Table 9, to know the participants' views (n=160) whether they consider Copying from book without assigning due credit to the source constitutes plagiarism or not, 38% were strongly agree, 85.3% were agree 14.0% disagreed and 7% was strongly disagree to this question. This backs up Russikoff et al(2003) .'s findings, according to which 87 percent of respondents believed that copying word for word from a book or journal is plagiarism.

Table 10. Frequency & percentage of Item Eight

Plagiarism is defined as the act of copying chunks of content from internet sources without acknowledgment.

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Strongly agree	44	29.3
Agree	79	52.7
Disagree	26	17.3
Strongly disagree	1	.7
Total	150	100.0

From Table 10, 29.3% respondents were strongly agree, 52.7% were agree, 17.3 were disagree and 7% were strongly disagree when they were asked whether copying portions of text from electronic sources without acknowledging the source comes under plagiarism.

Table 11. Frequency & percentage of Item Nine

Submitting assignments without references comes under plagiarism

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Strongly agree	40	26.7
Agree	69	46.0
Disagree	39	26.0
Strongly disagree	1	.7

Total	150	100.0
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From Table 11, 26.7% respondents were strongly agree, 46.0% were agree, 26.0% were disagree and 7% were strongly disagree when they were asked whether submitting assignments without references comes under plagiarism or not.

Table 12. Frequency & percentage of Item Ten
Poor writing skills

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	43	28.7
Agree	63	42.0
Undecided	22	14.7
Valid Disagree	14	9.3
Strongly disagree	8	5.3
Total	150	100.0

As shown in Table 12 , 28.7% out of 100% respondents were strongly agree, 42.0% % were agree,14.7 were not clear whether they consider poor writing skills as one of the motivation behind plagiarizing . On the other hand, 9.3% were disagreeing and 5.3% strongly disagreed.

Table 13. Frequency & percentage of Item Eleven
Lack of referencing skills

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	39	26.0
Agree	79	52.7
Undecided	9	6.0
Valid Disagree	16	10.7
Strongly disagree	7	4.7
Total	150	100.0

As displayed in Table 13, (26.0%) respondents were strongly agree, (52.7%) were agree, (6.0%) were not clear, (10.7%) were disagree and (4.7%) were strongly agree when they were asked whether lack of referencing skill is one of the motivation behind plagiarizing. These findings are consistent with those of Kayaoglu et al. (2015), who found that two-thirds of their respondents (63 percent) believed that not knowing how to cite is a source of academic theft.

Table 14. Frequency & percentage of Item Twelve
Poor methods of teaching and learning

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Strongly agree	53	35.3

Agree	59	39.3
Undecided	11	7.3
Disagree	18	12.0
Strongly disagree	9	6.0
Total	150	100.0

As shown in Table 14, (35.3%) respondents were strongly agree, (39.3%) were agree, (7.3%) were indecisive, (12.0%) were disagree and (6.0%) were strongly disagree when they were asked whether poor teaching and learning methods is one of the motivation behind plagiarizing. This study's findings contrast those of Sentleng and King (2012), who found that 8% of respondents felt that inadequate teaching and learning methods lead to plagiarism. Sentleng and King (2012) found that 92 percent of respondents disagreed with the current study's assertion.

**Table 15. Frequency & percentage of Item Thirteen
Assignment is difficult**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	49	32.7
Agree	42	28.0
Undecided	17	11.3
Valid Disagree	31	20.7
Strongly disagree	10	6.7
Total	149	99.3
Missing System	1	.7
Total	150	100.0

As shown in Table 15, (32.7%) respondents were strongly agree, (28.0%) were agree, (11.3%) were still in doubt, (20.7%) were disagree and (6.7%) were strongly disagree when they were asked whether difficult assignment given by the teachers is one of the reasons behind plagiarizing.

**Table 16. Frequency & percentage of Item Fourteen
Pressure to get good grades**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	71	47.3
Valid Agree	46	30.7
Undecided	9	6.0
Disagree	13	8.7

Strongly disagree	11	7.3
Total	150	100.0

As shown in Table 16 , (47.3%) respondents were strongly agree , (30.7%) were agree,(6.0%) were still in doubt, (8.7%) were disagree and (7.3%) were strongly disagree when they were asked whether pressure to score good marks is one of the reasons behind plagiarizing.

**Table 17. Frequency & percentage of Item Fifteen
Laziness and lack of time management**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	58	38.7
Agree	60	40.0
Undecided	8	5.3
Valid Disagree	11	7.3
Strongly disagree	12	8.0
Total	149	99.3
Total	150	100.0

As shown in Table 17, (38.7%) respondents were strongly agree, (40.0%) were agree,(5.3%) were uncertain, (7.3%) were disagree and (8.0%) ere strongly disagree when they were asked whether lack of time management and laziness is one of the reasons behind plagiarizing.

**Table 18. Frequency & percentage of Item Sixteen
Do you know the university's plagiarism policy?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	74	49.3	49.3	49.3
No	76	50.7	50.7	100.0
Total	150	100.0	100.0	

As shown in Table 18, (49.3%) respondents were aware of the plagiarism policy of university and (50.7%) showed ignorance. It is clear that the bulk of the learners were unaware. This contradicts the findings of (Ramzan et al., 2012), who reported that 149 (42.6 percent) of students from four randomly selected Pakistani universities were aware of their university's plagiarism policy.

Table 18. Frequency & percentage of Item Seventeen

Is there a student who has been disciplined for plagiarising?

	Frequency	Percent
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	Yes	73	48.7
Valid	No	76	50.7
	Total	150	100.0

According to Table 18, (48.7%) respondents showed awareness; (50.7%) showed ignorance when they were asked whether they know any student in their university has been punished of any plagiarism offence.

Table 19. Frequency & percentage of Item Eighteen
If so, how frequently are plagiarists' students punished?

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Very often	15	10.0
	Often	43	28.7
	Once a while	40	26.7
	Never	50	33.3
	Total	148	98.7
Missing	System	2	1.3
	Total	150	100.0

From Table 19, (10.0%) responded that students get punished 'very often', (28.7%) responded 'often', (26.7%) responded 'once a while', and (33.3%) responded 'never' when they were asked how often the students were being punished. The findings back up those of Ramzan et al. (2012), who discovered that despite being found to have plagiarised, 45 (29%) of students from four Pakistani universities were never charged with intellectual theft.

Table 20. Frequency & percentage of Item Nineteen
Is faculty enforcing plagiarism policy effectively?

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	68	44.4
	No	82	53.6
	Total	150	98.0
Missing	System	3	2.0
	Total	153	100.0

From Table 20, (44.4%) responded 'yes' and (53.6%) responded 'No' when they were asked whether faculty enforcing policy of plagiarism effectively or not.

Table 21. Comparison of plagiarism' perceptions and awareness at public and private sector universities

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Do you know of the copyright laws?	Public sector	79	1.35	.481
	Private sector	73	1.40	.493
	Total	152	1.38	.486
Have you ever heard the term "plagiarism"?	Public sector	79	1.29	.457
	Private sector	73	1.10	.296
	Total	152	1.20	.399
Where did you hear the term "plagiarism" from?	Public sector	79	1.72	.905
	Private sector	73	1.71	.920
	Total	152	1.72	.909
Did you get a talk about plagiarism during your new student orientation?	Public sector	79	1.72	.451
	Private sector	73	1.53	.502
	Total	152	1.63	.484
Plagiarism is something I'm familiar with.	Public sector	79	1.66	.783
	Private sector	73	1.38	.543
	Total	152	1.53	.690
Plagiarism, in my opinion, is unethical.	Public sector	78	1.90	.877
	Private sector	73	1.79	.781
	Total	151	1.85	.831
Plagiarism is defined as copying from a book without acknowledging the source.	Public sector	79	1.78	.710
	Private sector	73	1.75	.703
	Total	152	1.77	.704
Plagiarism is defined as the act of copying chunks of content from internet sources without acknowledgment.	Public sector	79	1.90	.778
	Private sector	73	1.88	.600
	Total	152	1.89	.696
Submitting assignments without references comes under plagiarism	Public sector	79	1.94	.757
	Private sector	73	2.11	.809
	Total	152	2.02	.785
Poor writing skills	Public sector	79	2.15	1.099
	Private sector	73	2.30	1.139
	Total	152	2.22	1.117
Lack of referencing skills	Public sector	79	2.28	1.250
	Private sector	73	2.05	.832
	Total	152	2.17	1.072
Poor methods of teaching and learning	Public sector	79	2.20	1.285
	Private sector	73	2.11	1.100
	Total	152	2.16	1.197
Assignment is difficult	Public sector	78	2.41	1.381
	Private sector	73	2.41	1.223

	Total	151	2.41	1.303
Pressure to get good grades	Public sector	79	2.22	1.374
	Private sector	73	1.77	1.048
	Total	152	2.00	1.245
Laziness and lack of time management	Public sector	78	2.17	1.333
	Private sector	73	1.97	1.105
	Total	151	2.07	1.228
Do you know the university's plagiarism policy?	Public sector	79	1.67	.473
	Private sector	73	1.36	.482
	Total	152	1.52	.501
Is there a student who has been disciplined for plagiarising?	Public sector	78	1.62	.490
	Private sector	73	1.37	.486
	Total	151	1.50	.502
If so, how frequently are plagiarists' students punished?	Public sector	77	3.01	1.070
	Private sector	72	2.71	.926
	Total	149	2.87	1.011
Is faculty enforcing plagiarism policy effectively?	Public sector	76	1.53	.503
	Private sector	73	1.38	.490
	Total	149	1.46	.500

Table 22.

Sr. No	Variables	Public Sector (Mean)	Private Sector (Mean)
1.	Awareness of plagiarism	6.08	5.74
2.	Perception of plagiarism	9.18	8.91
3.	Motivations behind plagiarizing	13.4	12.6
4.	Knowledge of penalties for plagiarists	7.83	6.82

Table 21 shows that with the mean score of (6.08), the awareness of plagiarism among Public sector university students was greater than the mean score of private sector (5.74) university students. The average mean score of variable 'perception of plagiarism' in public sector university was greater (9.18) than the mean (8.91) of private sector university. The average mean score of variable 'Motivations behind plagiarizing' plagiarism' in public sector university was greater (13.4) than the mean (12.6) of private sector university. Like wise, the average mean score of variable 'Knowledge of penalties for plagiarists' in public sector university was greater (7.83) than the mean (6.82) of private sector university.

5. Discussions

Plagiarism is considered unethical while in some cases it may be illegal. Therefore, plagiarizing others' work cannot be justified. Regarding awareness about copyright laws, majority of the respondents (63.3%) were aware; only (36.7%) expressed ignorance. As regards

awareness regarding the term plagiarism, a good number (81.3%) of respondents responded positively that they heard the term plagiarism before while (18.7%) were unaware about it. This result supports the findings of Sing and Guram's research (2014). Concerning an understanding about the meaning of plagiarism, (57.3%) were found strongly agree and (34.0%) revealed that they understand the meaning of plagiarism. On the other hand (7.3%) disagreed and (1.3%) were found strongly disagree while revealing that they understand the meaning of plagiarism. As regards copying from a book without crediting the source constitutes plagiarism or not, 29.3% respondents were strongly agree, 52.7% were agree, 17.3 were disagree and 7% were strongly disagree. When asked if they thought copying chunks of material from electronic sources without acknowledging the source was acceptable, they said no. Concerning the students' awareness about the university's plagiarism policy, (49.3%) respondents were aware of the plagiarism policy of university and (50.7%) showed ignorance. It is clear that the bulk of the students were unaware. This contradicts the findings of (Ramzan et al., 2012), who reported that 149 (42.6 percent) of students from four randomly selected Pakistani universities were aware of their university's plagiarism policy. When it came to the introduction of a plagiarism policy, 44.4 percent said yes and 53.6 percent said no. "If plagiarism is not prohibited, the free exchange of ideas in the profession will inevitably come to a stop," Hoover (2006) contends. Hoover proposed that a profession can reduce or prevent plagiarism by publicising the names of plagiarists after they have been notified and given an opportunity to explain their actions; developing a professional website supervised by a board of a few national-status editors to monitor the policy regarding how to monitor or publicise plagiarism; and developing a professional website supervised by a board of a few national-status editors to monitor the policy regarding how to monitor or publicise plagiarism.

6. Conclusion

This study concludes that students at public sector universities were more aware about plagiarism compared to students at private sector universities in Sindh Pakistan. Despite awareness, majority of the students in private sector universities were involved in plagiarism. Teachers need to understand the causes of plagiarism. This study found that students while attempting to meet the deadlines set by teachers led them to have no choice but to plagiarize. The growing trend of plagiarism may be reduced if teachers help students in understanding the guilt of plagiarism, when they are guided to write in good faith to acknowledge others' work. Moreover, all institutions have clearly defined policies that define academic dishonesty a punishable act. An awareness regarding penalties may reduce the chances of plagiarism.

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