Ethical Implications of Student Plagiarism in Myanmar

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ABSTRACT

This study presents efforts to establish evidence for the construct validity of scores on the ethical issue related to student plagiarism in Myanmar universities. Student plagiarism in colleges and universities has become a controversial issue in recent years. The case considered as the most commonly used immoral and unethical activities, are selected for evaluation, and the participants select these activities according questionnaire. Recognizing the difficulty in defining plagiarism while still acknowledging the practical importance of doing so, this system finds the common element about student plagiarism to be the lack of appropriate attribution to the original source.

KEYWORDS: ethics, plagiarism, questionnaire, completion rate, academic, intellectual property

1. INTRODUCTION

The total population in Myanmar was estimated at 54.3 million people in 2019, based on the latest United Nations estimates. The educational system of Myanmar is operated by the government Ministry of Education. Universities and professional institutes from upper Myanmar and lower Myanmar are run by two separate entities, the Department of Higher Education, whose office head quarters are in Yangon and Mandalay respectively.

The higher education law that was recently released is being criticized by students and teachers for not giving universities the autonomy they require to increase efficiency and competitiveness, although some improvements are under the way.

However, the continued lack of autonomy lead to the deterioration of Myanmar's university, as they were constrained by rules and regulations overseen by the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education.

There are nearly 160 universities, degree colleges and colleges under the Ministry of Education, each of which are drafting charter. This charter includes university policy for student plagiarism and how to combat it. To specify what plagiarism is. There are several activities that are referred to the notion: substantial copy paste, intentional paraphrasing, use of one's ideas representing them as your own ones, avoidance of crediting source. All these actions are immoral and can be considered to be a violation of ethical rules, plagiarism is one of the main ethical issues.

On the other hand, some cases that can't be called unethical, self-plagiarism or accidental one, these issues can be hardly called intentional. This notion that despite being extremely controversial are not considered to be plagiarized; they are self-plagiarism, patch writing, paraphrasing, allusion, collaborative writing. All these issues can't be evaluated only as completely right or completely wrong ones, so our relation to them is the only right answer for us personally. This paper is organized as follows: theory background is presented in section 2. In this section, briefly describe unethical behavior and student plagiarism. Related work is presented in section 3. Section 4 presented about data collection of our research. Analyzing the results of questionnaire is presented in section 4. The paper is concluded in section 5.

2. Theory Background

Every society forms a set of rules that establishes the boundaries of generally accepted behavior. These rules are often expressed in statements about how people should behave, and the individual rules fit together to form the moral code by which society lives. Unfortunately, the different rules often have contradictions, and people are sometimes uncertain about which rule to follow. [1]

Ethics is a set of beliefs about right and wrong behavior within the society. Ethical behavior conforms to generally accepted norms, many of which are almost universal.

Intellectual property is a term used to describe works of the mind- such as art, books, films, formulas, inventions, music, and processes, - that are distinct and owned or created by a single person or group. Intellectual property is protected through copyright, patent, and trade secret laws.

2.1. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the act of stealing someone's ideas or words and passing them off as one's own. The explosion of electronic content and the growth of the Web have made it easy to cut and paste paragraphs into term papers and other documents without proper citation or quotation marks.

Despite codes of ethics in place that clearly define plagiarism and prescribe penalties ranging from no credit on a paper to expulsion, many students still do not understand what constitutes plagiarism. Some students believe that all electronic content is in the public domain, while other

students knowingly commit plagiarism either because they feel pressure to achieve a high GPA or because they are too lazy or pressed for time to do original work.

Plagiarism is:
➢ knowingly passing someone else's work off as your own
➢ unknowingly passing someone else's work off as your own
➢ not properly citing source material
➢ not properly giving credit to someone when you've used their words in your work
➢ not properly citing your own work if you've used it in a different context

Being found guilty of plagiarism, whether intentionally or unintentionally, has a lasting effect and might even impact a student's ability to graduate with their chosen degree. The better post-secondary institutions seldom believe in second chances when it comes to students being accused of plagiarism. [8]

The consequences of plagiarism include:
➢ A failing mark
➢ Academic probation
➢ A mark on a permanent record
➢ Expulsion

3. Related work
In 2017, "the ethical and social issues of information technology: A case study" is presented by E.Sargolzaei and M. Nikbakht. In this study, they considered the most commonly used immoral activities, are selected for evaluation, and the participants ranked these activities according to the method presented in questionnaire. These activities are examined and analyzed descriptively by SPSS program, reliability of the questionnaire is measured by Cronbach's alpha coefficient. [3]

Measuring students' perceptions of plagiarism: modification and rasch validation of a plagiarism attitude scale was presented by Steven J.Howard et.al. They modified an existing plagiarism scale, established its psychometric properties using traditional and modern survey evaluation approaches, and examined results of well functioning items. Their results indicated that traditional and modern psychometric approaches differed in their recommendations. [5]

With the advent of so-called 'plagiarism detection' software such as Edu Tie, PlagiServe, Moss, and Turnitin, the task was made easier. Warn (2006) used TOAST plagiarism software in a detailed analysis of eight scripts containing plagiarism out of a sample of 74 (10.8%). He found rates of verbatim plagiarism ranging from 3.2 % to 15.6% of the submitted text. Ledwith and Risquez (2008) used Turnitin's peer evaluation module to assess two consecutive student assignments. They found that incidences of plagiarism showed a statistically significant drop from the first to the second assignment, and that students rated their peers significantly lower when using Turnitin, compared to assessments submitted and corrected on paper. Valuable as these studies are, however, they remain something of a reality, while limitations of scope prevent them from providing the wide-ranging empirical data sets required to address the issue in full. [7]

4. Data Collection
In this study investigating university students' attitudes toward plagiarism often adopt surveys as their main data collection instrument. Plagiarism is measured in terms of students' attitudes toward plagiarism and perceived stressors that exacerbate plagiarist behaviors.

However, students' differing definitions of plagiarism and lack of precision in measurement may result in survey items measuring very different constructs. In the simplest case, a student with an accurate conception of what constitutes plagiarism may have very different opinions of the seriousness of plagiarism relative to a student with misconceptions of plagiarism.

To illustrate the point, in explaining plagiarism findings that run counter to public perceptions, McCabe(2005) remarked " a partial explanation may be that there is some confusion in the minds of students, and faculty, as to exactly what question is seeking".[5]

All data collected in this survey will be held anonymously and securely. No personal data will be retained with the survey results.

The questionnaire is designed so that all unethical cases can be considered in terms of student performance. Questionnaire items are divided into two sections. In first section, the survey will provide answers to the following questions:

University Plagiarism Policy
1. Are you aware of an Academic plagiarism policy?
➢ Yes
➢ No

2. Have you read it?
➢ Yes
➢ No

3. Do you understand it?
➢ Yes
➢ No

4. Do you usually ask for help if you are having difficulty writing assignment?
➢ Yes
➢ No

5. Are you confident with referencing your work?
➢ Yes
➢ No

6. Do you use words or sentences from books without using citation?
➢ Yes
➢ No

7. Are you asking for help about plagiarism?
➢ Yes
➢ No

8. Do you think plagiarism is not seen as wrong?
➢ Yes
➢ No

9. Do you think teachers are not able to control plagiarism?
➢ Yes
➢ No

10. Are copying colleges answer in exam?
➢ Yes
➢ No

In second section, what leads students to decide to plagiarise?
➢ Students think the lecturer will not care
➢ Students run out of time
➢ Students don't want to learn anything, just pass the assignment
➢ Students don't understand how to cite and reference
➢ Students are lazy
The student can select one or more check list.

5. Analyzing the results of Questionnaires

Students may plagiarize for many reasons, ranging from laziness to sloppiness to a lack of understanding about the reason for citations, but teachers can employ a series of strategies to prevent problems while also teaching students good scholarly practices.[3]

The questionnaires were completed and submitted for analysis in excel.

For first section, we calculate:

A. Completion Rate

Take the total number of surveys completed and divide it by the total number of completed and partially completed.

Completion Rate = Total no.of.completed / Total no.of.completed + partially completed

Table 1 Are you aware of an Academic plagiarism policy?

Answer choices	percentage	Respondent
Yes	45%	223
No	55%	277
Total	100%	500

Table 1 show that 45% say that they are aware of an Academic plagiarism policy and 55% say they are not aware of.

The percentage are just that the percent of people who gave a particular answer. Put another way, the percentages represent the number of people who gave each answer as a proportion of number of people who answer the questions. So, 45% of our survey respondents (223 of the 500 surveyed) aware of an Academic plagiarism policy. We can conclude that most of our students are not aware of academic policy, so, they unintentionally made plagiarism.

Table 2 Do you use words or sentences from books without using citation?

Answer choices	percentage	Respondent
Yes	84%	421
No	16%	79
Total	100%	500

Table 2 shows that 84% say that they used words or sentences from books without using citation and 16% say they don't used. Most of the students use words or sentences from term paper or books, but they don't cite properly. So, teachers and instructors need to explain how to cite references and the importance of citation.

Table 3 is copying colleges answer in exam?

Answer choices	percentage	Respondent
Yes	18%	90
No	82%	410
Total	100%	500

Table 3 shows that 18% say that they are copying colleges answer in exam and 82% say they are not copying. Most of the student knows they should not copy in exam, so they don't it. Only a little percentage of student copy the exam for many reasons.

B. Cross-tabulating and filtering results

Table 4 Summarization of University Plagiarism Policy

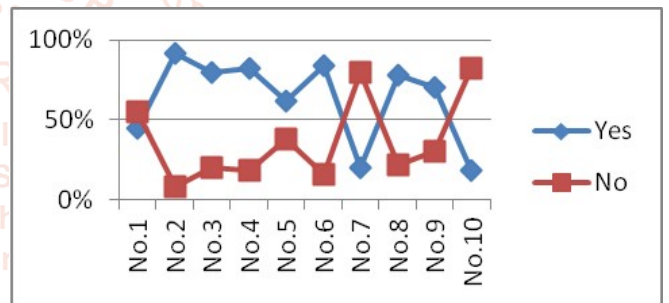| Questions	Yes		No		Total
No.1	223	45%	277	55%	500
No.2	460	92%	40	8%	500
No.3	400	80%	100	20%	500
No.4	410	82%	90	18%	500
No.5	312	62%	188	38%	500
No.6	421	84%	79	16%	500
No.7	101	20%	399	80%	500
No.8	390	78%	110	22%	500
No.9	352	70%	148	30%	500
No.10	90	18%	410	82%	500

Figure1. Questionnaire based university plagiarism policy

From this table, we can filter the summarized result. Using a filter is another useful tool for modeling data. Filtering means narrowing our focus to one particular sub-question, and filtering out another. So instead of comparing sub-question to one another, here we're just looking at how one sub-question answer will be. This method is one thing to be way of as slice and dice our results.

What we can do
➢ Let students know the consequences of plagiarizing. Students are less likely to plagiarize deliberately if they perceive the cost of getting caught as too high.
➢ Explicitly discuss with students why the assignment is important in the context of the class and of their learning. Tell them what transferable skills and knowledge they will gain from doing this assignment.
➢ Help students see how they already have expertise in many areas, such as movie reviews, their favorite music, sports, or leisure activity, and equate learning academic jargon with the learning they have already done to master these other topics. [4]
➢ Show students examples of student papers with uncited summaries and paraphrases and require them to identify and correct the problem.
➢ Teach students to put their source material out of sight when they write their summaries so they are not tempted by the lovely words of the author.

➢ Explicitly discuss with students the goals of their research.
➢ Discuss and ensure that students understand the reasons for citing sources. [6]

For second section,
In this section, students ticked (one or more) on the check list related about "what leads students to decide to plagiarise?" question. Most of the students (411) choice second question, "Students run out of time". The students (336) choice the fourth question, "Students don't understand how to cite and reference".

Table 5 Tick list percentages leads to decide to plagiarise

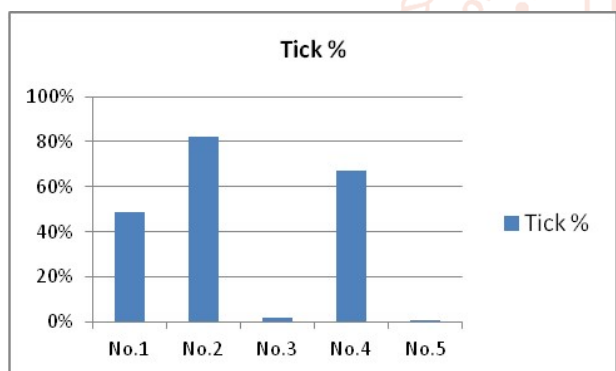| Question	No. of ticked respondents	percentage
1. Students think the lecturer will not care	245	49%
2. Students run out of time	411	82%
3. Students don't want to learn anything, just pass the assignment	12	2%
4. Students don't understand how to cite and reference	336	67%
5. Students are lazy	8	1%
Total	1012	40%

Figure 2 Tick list percentages leads to decide to plagiarise

From Table 5 we can conclude that question number (2) was ticked by most of the students (82%) and question number (4) was ticked by 67% of the students. The third most is question number (1) 49% of students.

The following list shows some of the actions that schools can take to combat student plagiarism:
➢ Help students understand what constitutes plagiarism and why they need to cite sources properly.
➢ Show students how to document Web pages and materials from online databases.
➢ Schedule major writing assignments so that portions are due over the course of the term, thus reducing the likelihood that students will get into a time crunch and be tempted to plagiarize to meet the deadline.
➢ Make clear to students that instructors are aware of Internet paper mills.
➢ Ensure that instructors both educate students about plagiarism detection services and make students aware that they know how to use these services.
➢ Incorporate detection software and services into a comprehensive anti-plagiarism program [1]

6. Conclusion
One form of academic misconduct that has received significant attention is plagiarism. Although there is no universally accepted definition of plagiarism, it is generally agreed that it entails using the ideas, words, or words of another without appropriate acknowledgement of their source. Definitions of plagiarism are also increasingly self-plagiarism as a form of academic misconduct, in an effort to deter resubmission of student's previous works.

The current study provides a number of important advances to the field of plagiarism research. This study provides extensive evidence of the validity and reliability of this plagiarism measure.

This study addressed some of the big questions about the frequency, nature and extent of student plagiarism. No claim is made at this stage for the generalisability of the findings, given the obvious worldwide differences in tertiary strategies, curricula and study climates, not to mention national cultures. It is hoped, however, that the findings will provide researchers with some comparable, empirical data, which may assist with future research of this type in other systems.

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