

Knowledge and Attitudes of Plagiarism among Libyan EFL MA Students, Faculty of Languages, University of Tripoli

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ABSTRACT

This research study endeavors to explore Libyan EFL Masters' students' knowledge and attitudes towards plagiarism. An electronic survey questionnaire is used for data collection while descriptive statistics of percentages is employed to calculate the obtained data. 30 Libyan EFL Masters' students respond to the survey questions. The study seeks to ascertain students' knowledge of plagiarism, reasons for committing plagiarism, and practical procedures to make students produce and submit plagiarism-free research studies. Results show that respondents have a high-level of awareness towards plagiarism as an unethical act that must be condemned. However, they consider the lack of academic writing skills as the main reason of students' plagiarism. Finally, the study presents some practical procedures to combat plagiarism.

المخلص

هدفت هذه الدراسة البحثية إلى التعرف على موقف طلاب الماجستير الليبيين المتخصصين في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية إتجاه السرقة الأدبية، حيث اعتمدت الدراسة على استخدام استبيان الكتروني في جمع البيانات بينما تم استخدام الإحصاء الوصفي للنسب المئوية في حساب البيانات التي تم الحصول عليها. أجاب 30 طالبًا من طلاب الماجستير على أسئلة الاستبيان ، والتي تركزت على التأكد من معرفة الطلاب بالسرقة الأدبية ، وأسباب ارتكابها ، والإجراءات العملية لجعل الطلاب يقدمون دراسات بحثية خالية من السرقة الأدبية. ولقد أظهرت النتائج أن طلاب الماجستير الليبيين المتخصصين في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية كان لديهم مستوى عالٍ من الوعي إتجاه السرقة الأدبية، وبأنها نشاط غير أخلاقي يجب إدانته، ومع ذلك فقد أكدوا أن الإفتقار إلى مهارات الكتابة الأكاديمية كان السبب الرئيسي وراء لجوء الطلاب إلى السرقة الأدبية. وفي الختام ، قامت الدراسة بعرض بعض الإجراءات العملية التي يمكن من خلالها مكافحة هذه الظاهرة.

Keywords: Plagiarism, Postgraduate, Attitude, Knowledge, Libya

Introduction

Plagiarism is an unethical act, alternatively known as 'academic dishonesty' or 'academic misconduct'. Undoubtedly, it is a widespread phenomenon, due to the multitude of technologies accessible nowadays which make it easy for students to transmit information in dishonest ways. At worst, it threatens the academic community and deforms the scientific work of researchers (Hart & Friesner, 2004). Linguistically, the term "plagiarism" is borrowed from the Latin word "plagiarius" pioneered by Marcus Valerius Martialis, meaning "kidnapper", "robber", "literary thief", or "plunderer" (Maurer et al., 2006, p. 1051). Park (2003, p. 472) interprets plagiarism as "the theft of words or ideas, beyond what would normally be regarded as general knowledge." Carroll (2002) explains plagiarism more specifically as making use of others' written work as one's own to achieve personal aims. Hosny and Fatima (2014, p.748) define plagiarism as "...the students' use of illegal activities, techniques and forms of fraud during their examination or evaluation processes, usually for the purpose of achieving better grades."

Academic dishonesty is presented in various forms including, cheating, collusion and plagiarism (Moon, 2006; Howard, 2000). Cheating denotes to students' intent to breach rules to get better marks in examinations and other types of assessment, or to steal information without authors' consent (Hosny & Fatima, 2014). Collusion is identified as the "inappropriate or unauthorized collaboration by two or more students in the production and submission of [an] assessment task" (Sutherland-Smith, 2013, p.52). Janowski (2002) distinguishes between cheating and plagiarism with

regard to students' intention. While cheating is a deliberate act, plagiarism occurs both deliberately and inadvertently (Devlin & Gray, 2007). That is, plagiarism can be committed without understanding the relevant referencing styles, standards of quoting, or even due to the lack of plagiarism knowledge. Thus, plagiarism is often classified as an unintentional act. Yet, it remains the most predominant practice of misconduct among students of all age categories (Rayn et al., 2009).

There are multiple types of plagiarism. Plagiarism can be either intentional or unintentional. Intentional plagiarism is a deliberate act which means committing plagiarism with full knowledge of what plagiarism is and how it can be avoided (Mahmood et al., 2011). In contrast, unintentional plagiarism is committed owing to the deficiency of skills on how to avoid plagiarism, i.e., having no or less knowledge on how to refer to the original author(s) (Maurer et al., 2006). Other types of plagiarism comprise self-plagiarism and accidental plagiarism. Self-plagiarism is the rewriting or the republishing of someone's assignment or paper without referring to the original source (Dellavalle et al., 2007; Beasley, 2006). On the other hand, accidental plagiarism or casual plagiarism occurs when there is an insufficient understanding of referencing style (Maurer et al., 2006). Williams (2002) considers textual-plagiarism a serious offence because it infringes on someone else's intellectual property. Textual-Plagiarism can be represented by different methods (Quin, 2011). These include either "copy-paste" which means verbatim copying of words from another source without using quotation marks and acknowledging the reference,

paraphrasing which is changing grammar or the order of words and sentences of someone else's text without the use of proper documentation, copying figures, diagrams and drawings without mentioning the reference, the use of someone else's theory or method without giving a credit to that person, the use of information that is not common knowledge without including the reference, providing wrong or incomplete information about the reference, or citing a secondary source as a primary source (Mahmood et al., 2011; Mauer et al., 2006). Moreover, plagiarism includes stealing someone else's textual work, using others' work as one's own, copying portions of someone else's work without acknowledgement, downloading or buying a paper and offering it as one's own, borrowing ideas, sentences or phrases and claiming them as one's own (Clabough & Rozychi, 2001). Also, ghost writing which refers to hiring more expert writers to get the work done and submit it on time (Bennett et al., 2011).

There are several reasons leading students to plagiarize. One compelling reason for any plagiaristic behavior is the inadequate understanding of plagiarism, its effects and how to minimize it. Many students are not familiar with the correct ways of citation or referencing when writing a project paper or thesis, or they are unclear about how to quote and paraphrase (Bahadori et al., 2012). Moreover, low awareness on perceiving plagiarism as a serious violation leads to plagiarism. This is due to the loose regulations, lack of penalties and serious punishments when handling plagiarism cases as well as the paucity of lectures and workshops on the tarnishing effects of plagiarism (Hikmatun, 2018). To

some students, the advantages of plagiarizing outweigh the disadvantages, particularly if they think there is little or no chance of getting caught and there is little or no punishment if they are caught red -handed (Park, 2003). This is aggravated with lecturers' acceptance of cases of plagiarized work which will encourage students to commit more plagiaristic acts in the long term (Hikmatun, 2018).

The pressure to obtain better grades is also another reason for committing plagiarism. This stems either from students who desire to score higher grades (Whiteman & Gordon, 2001), or some parents who are always involve in their children' academic achievement and expect them to pass with flying colors. Wilkinson' research study (2009) affirms that the intention for obtaining high grades reaches 73% of the total reasons leading to plagiarism. Another major reason relates to the substantial usage of the Internet in educational contexts (Sorea & Repanovicim, 2020). Accessibility to digital information resources through iPods, mobile phone or laptops facilitates students' commitment of plagiaristic acts (Feday, 2017; Park 2003; Ma et al., 2007) simply by copying and pasting information and claiming them as their own (Hikmatun, 2018). Since it is a public source of information, some students perceive the use of the Internet as an academically acceptable tool in doing online assignments (Eccles et al., 2006). Culwin and Lancaster (2001) add that students find it stress-free to copy other people's work from the Internet, modifying it and presenting it as their own.

Plagiarism has particularly increased with the rapid growth of online education during the COVID-19 pandemic and the closure of many educational institutions all over the world (Clarke et al., 2022) that have brought massive changes in the educational sectors (Sonajo, 2022). As a result, students have relied on the Internet to submit homework and fulfil their academic tasks and ultimately end up committing online plagiarism (i.e. electronic cheating) (Lilian & Chukwuere, 2020). In addition, inadequacy of language proficiency and poor academic writing skills mostly of students whose English language is not their first language is a common factor for why students tend to plagiarize (Singh, 2017). These students have more risks in getting in some types of plagiarism than native English-speaking students. Moreover, time management is another motivation that leads students to commit plagiarism (Bahadori et al., 2012). The pressure on students' time, including active social life and family commitments, as well as time constraints and short deadlines which students are given to finish their assignments provide strong incentives for students to commit plagiarism (Sheard et al., 2003; Hosny & Fatima 2014).

Berry et al. (2006) differentiate between demographic and situational factors which contribute to plagiarism. *Demographic factors* include gender, class, educational background (i.e., whether undergraduate or postgraduate) and involvement in extracurricular activities such as athletics and other external work commitment. *Situational factors* cover the fear of failure and heavy course loads that some students find boring

or difficult. Moreover, Hannabuss (2001, p.311) introduces a combination of social, legal, intellectual, professional, and moral issues can lead students to plagiarize. He states that, "...matters of reputation, acceptance, shame, economic loss, self-esteem and indignation within an offenders educational and home community" could be the cause for why students engage in academic malpractice. Finally, cultural issues are specially considered in the problem of plagiarism (Bahadori et al., 2012). Plagiarism seems to be perceived differently in various cultures. In some cultures, plagiarism is encouraged and consider it an acceptable thing to do. In these cultures, plagiarism can be a type of imitation that is used as a language learning tool (Howard, 1999).

Due to the above reasons, plagiarism has become one of the main violations to the academic community all over the world (Ibegbulam & Eze, 2015) that endorses academic integrity policies built on five vital values of honesty, trust, objectivity, respect, and accountability (Fishman, 2014). Park (2003) indicates in his study that 40% to 90% of students have engaged in some kind of dishonesty at their higher education institutions. However, plagiarism awareness programs have educated both students and lecturers about the meaning of plagiarism (Maurer et al., 2006). Thus, this study aims to explore the views of postgraduate students on plagiarism with regard to how much degree of knowledge they have on plagiarism, the reasons that lead them to commit plagiarism, and what procedures that can be used to mitigate it. The research questions of the study are as follows:

1. How much knowledge do Libyan EFL Master's students have about plagiarism?
2. What are the reasons that make Libyan EFL Master's students commit plagiarism?
3. What are the practical strategies that can be applied to make Libyan EFL Master's students avoid plagiarism?

Literature Review

There is plenty of available literature on plagiarism. Internationally, there has been continuous research into plagiarism issues. Rodhiya et al. (2022) revealed that 66% of graduate students of the Universitas Negeri Malang in Indonesia displayed a neutral attitude towards plagiarism. That is, the students realized that plagiarism is an improper activity, but they still engaged in plagiaristic acts. In Rwanda, Clarke et al. (2022) evaluated students' attitude towards plagiarism in both public and private universities. Overall, study results showed that university students had a high level of knowledge of plagiarism. Particularly, Master degree students had more skills and abilities to recognize any plagiaristic writing compared to Bachelor degree students, and this had no relation whatsoever to whether students were enrolled in a public or private university. Chala (2021) looked into the perception of undergraduate students in an Ethiopian university towards academic dishonesty. Results pointed out that students committed some types of cheating activities although they knew the seriousness of this act. Results also found that there were discrepancies about the seriousness of academic dishonesty among students with regard to the field of study. Students of business and

economics schools demonstrated a less ethical attitude towards academic dishonesty than students of social sciences and humanities, and natural and computational sciences schools. As a witness in this study, the researcher ascribed the high prevalence of cheating in business and economics schools “.... to the less probability of getting caught and severity or absence of punishment” (ibid, p.12). Issrani et al. (2021) gauged the awareness of students towards plagiarism at the College of Medicine and Dentistry, Jouf University. Results exhibited that most students had an adequate understanding of plagiarism in terms of copying words or ideas and quoting references. However, the study revealed that male students were more alert about the harmful effects of plagiarism compared to female students. Nagi and Varughese (2021) revealed that most Thai students who committed plagiarism justified their actions by alluding to time insufficiency, busy schedules, and weak English proficiency, which forced them to take others' ideas without attributing sources of information. Similarly, Phanlapa et al. (2020) also found that Thai students displayed low awareness of plagiarism since they copied and pasted information from different websites without referencing or paraphrasing. The study also concluded that Thai students plagiarized both intentionally and unintentionally due to not having confidence in their academic writing skills. Oyewole and Abioye (2018) examined the awareness of plagiarism acts and policies by postgraduate students in the University of Ibadan in Nigeria. Results claimed that the majority of students were highly knowledgeable in how to avoid various acts of plagiarism thanks to the

extensive lectures and workshops students received on how to work intellectually without plagiarism from the faculty teaching staff.

On other hand, Selemani et al. (2018) reported that post-graduate students at Mzuzu university in Malawi although had a conceptual understanding of plagiarism, the majority of them still committed plagiarism intentionally and unintentionally, mainly because of the pressure for getting good grades, poor time management, the lack of good academic writing, improper acknowledgement of references, and misuse of paraphrasing and quotation marks. Madaan and Chakravarty (2017) explored the awareness and understanding of postgraduate students in New Delhi towards plagiarism. The study unveiled that students had basic knowledge about plagiarism and that they resorted to online sources in order to save time and effort. Although they knew that copying and pasting is an unethical act, they still copied and pasted others' work without citation or referencing. Thus, the authors recommended training courses to teach students the tools and methods on how to cite original sources using correct formats.

Kokkinaki et al. (2015) revealed that the concept of plagiarism was vague among Cypriot University students from both undergraduate and postgraduate students. Also, they observed that accessibility to online-resources and scientific publications led students to plagiarize. Finally, the authors called for the clear introduction of the concept of plagiarism and the use of anti-plagiarism policies. Hosny and Fatima (2014) focused on assessing perceptions on plagiarism among female students of College of Computer and Information Sciences (CCIS) at King Saud University,

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Results showed that although most students believed that plagiarism was immoral and against religious values, they resorted to plagiarism through online resources. The study researchers encouraged raising students' awareness towards plagiarism, providing them with proper training courses to improve their academic writing skills and the procedures on how to prevent any plagiaristic act. Krokosz and Putvinskis (2013) analyzed the knowledge and understanding of the types, forms and reasons for plagiarism by Brazilian students. According to the results, lack of time, the desire to obtain good grades, insufficient understanding about how to paraphrase as well as difficulties with academic writing accounted for students' plagiarism. The study researchers indicated that not all forms of plagiarism are common to students and thus strategies and serious measures need to be developed for avoiding plagiarism in Brazilian universities. Ramzan et al. (2012) assessed the awareness level of plagiarism among graduate and postgraduate students in Pakistan. Findings of the study revealed that students used online resources to complete assignments in order to obtain higher grades. The study also revealed that the majority of students understood the meaning of plagiarism, but were not aware of anti-plagiarism policies at their university. Thus, researchers recommended that courses and workshops should be designed in a way that increases students' awareness about plagiarism.

Locally, some previous studies ascribed plagiarism to the Internet availability and accessibility. There had been some studies

examining the awareness of students towards plagiarism in Libya. Tumi (2017) looked into the perceptions of the undergraduate accounting students at the Azzaytouna University towards the factors leading to plagiarism. The study revealed number of factors facilitating plagiarism represented in the absence of awareness, pressure, and Internet accessibility. The researcher encouraged educators to develop ways in order to detect any plagiaristic activities. Another study was provided by Abukhattala (2017) investigated whether plagiarism and culture were related. The study revealed that plagiarism was culturally approved though it was immoral and academically unacceptable. Some participants in the study emphasized that they acknowledged the authors whenever they quoted or paraphrased, but they confessed that some of their colleagues violated academic integrity. Study participants associated academic dishonesty with students' lack of understanding of plagiarism and deficiency in English.

Methods

This study collected data using a survey questionnaire, which was distributed online through Google Form to assess the knowledge and attitudes of Libyan EFL Master's students towards plagiarism. The questionnaire was adapted from the previous studies of Issrani et.al (2021), Ehrich et al. (2015), Ibegbulam & Eze (2015), and Mavrincac et al. (2010). 50 Libyan EFL Master's students registered as full-time students during the academic year of 2021-2022 at the Post-graduate Study Center at the Faculty of Languages, University of Tripoli, Libya. They were kindly

requested to take part in the study. However, only 30 Libyan EFL Master's students responded to the questionnaire. The participants were 90% female and 10% male and their ages ranged from 25 to 40 years. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first section contained demographic information such as the age and gender of participants while the second part consisted of 15 statements. Participants rated how much they agreed or disagreed with each statement on a five-point Likert scale of *Strongly Agree*, *Agree*, *Neutral*, *Disagree*, and *Strongly Disagree*. The statements covered three areas: (1) plagiarism knowledge, (2) plagiarism reasons, and (3) plagiarism avoidance strategies. Descriptive statistics of percentages was run to analyze the obtained data.

Analysis and Discussion

The analysis of post-graduate students' responses to the electronic survey were exhibited in cross-tabulation charts. They compared students' levels of agreement and disagreement with statements listed under three main indicators of *plagiarism knowledge*, *plagiarism reasons*, and *plagiarism avoidance strategies*. Then, the findings were discussed and interpreted in line with other previous studies to elicit an overall idea about Libyan EFL MA students' knowledge and attitudes towards plagiarism.

Table (1) Percentages of Plagiarism Knowledge

Statements	Agree Strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
I do not have enough information about plagiarism	0%	23.3%	13.3%	40%	23%
I realize that quoting a text without crediting its source is plagiarism.	40%	43.3%	10%	7.4%	6.7%
I perceive that paraphrasing someone else's words without crediting the reference is plagiarism.	33.3%	43.3%	3.3%	16.7%	3.3%
I consider downloading projects or papers from the Internet and using them as my own as an act of plagiarism.	60%	30%	0%	3.3%	6.7%
I know that hiring others to assist in the writing of assignments and research projects is an act of plagiarism.	40%	33.3%	13.3%	6.7%	7.4%

Table (1) presented students' responses to the questions regarding what they knew about sources of academic dishonesty. The highest respondent percentages for statement (1) were in *disagree* and *strongly disagree*, 40% and 23%. Libyan EFL Master's students reported being familiar with the meaning of the term 'plagiarism'. This finding was in line with the study finding of Ramzan et al. (2012) which uncovered that most university students in Pakistan were aware of plagiarism and its harmful effects, but

they intentionally kept doing it. The highest respondent percentages for statement (2) were in *strongly agree* and *agree*, 40% and 34.3%. This finding denoted that Libyan EFL Master's students were fully aware that quoting texts without citing sources was an academic offence. This finding disagreed with the study finding of MacLennan (2018) which contended that the majority of students had inadequate understanding and awareness of how to accurately cite original sources. The highest respondent percentages for statement (3) were in *strongly agree* and *agree*, 33.3% and 43.3%. This ascertained that Libyan EFL Master's students were conscious that paraphrasing other researchers' words without crediting references was a plagiarism act. The findings of the present study conformed to the findings of Chirikov et al. (2019) that copying others' phrases and words and paraphrasing other authors' work without crediting references were forms of plagiarism. The highest respondent percentages for statement (4) were in *strongly agree* and *agree*, 60% and 30%. This clarified that the participants counted downloading online sources without crediting websites an act of academic dishonesty. This finding was in line with the study finding of Abbas et al. (2021) and Feday (2017) that considered downloading content from the Internet and using it as one's own without crediting accurate references an act of plagiarism. The highest respondent percentages for statement (5) were in *strongly agree* and *agree*, 40% and 33.3%. This proved that Libyan EFL Master's students perceived that ghost writing is a plagiaristic act. This finding agreed with the study findings of Bretag et al. (2011); Bennett et al. (2011) which classified

hiring others to write assignments and downloading assignments from the Internet as types of plagiaristic acts that breached academic integrity.

Table (2) Percentages of Plagiarism Reasons

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I keep plagiarizing because I have never been caught.	6.7%	3.4%	10.7%	31%	48.3%
I feel tempted to plagiarize because most students do it.	0%	3.3%	14.8%	50%	33.3%
I do not feel guilty for copying sentences from someone else's assignment or research project.	0%	10%	23.3%	53.3%	13.3%
I plagiarize to get high marks and meet short deadlines.	0%	3.3%	13.3%	43.3%	40%
I plagiarize because I am not good at academic writing skills.	43.4%	40%	3.3%	6.7%	7.4%

Table (2) identified the reasons that made students plagiarize. The highest respondent percentages for statement (1) were in *disagree* and *strongly disagree*, 31% and 48.3 %. Most Libyan EFL Master's students disapproved that they committed plagiarism because they had never been caught. This finding was in disagreement with the study finding of Park (2003) which emphasized that not punishing plagiarizers encouraged other students to plagiarize. The highest respondent percentages for statement (2) were in *disagree* and *strongly disagree*, 50% and 33.3%. This study

finding negated that Libyan EFL Master's students committed plagiarism because it was a common practice in their university. This finding was in disagreement with the study finding of Bahadori et al. (2012) that affirmed that some students legitimized plagiarism as they could obtain information on the Internet easily. The highest percentage for statement (3) was in *disagree*, 53.3%. This indicated that Libyan EFL Master's students in this study did feel culpable for copying others' assignments and research projects, and that this act was unjustifiable. This agreed with the study finding of Ryan et al. (2009) which considered duplicating other students' work as a grave type of academic misbehavior. The highest respondent percentages for statement (4) were in *disagree* and *strongly disagree*, 43.3% and 40%. This signified that Libyan EFL Master's students plagiarized not because of their desire to obtain high grades and meet short deadlines. This finding disagreed with the study finding of Wilkinson (2009) which affirmed that most students plagiarized to obtain high grades. It also was inconsistent with the study finding of Dordoy (2002) which attributed students' plagiarism to time mismanagement. Also, this finding contradicted the study finding of Mamza & Ahaz (2018) which reported that students' focus on academic degrees made them resort to plagiarism. The highest respondent percentages for statement (5) were in *strongly agree* and *agree*, 43.4% and 40%. Libyan EFL Master's students admitted finding themselves forced to plagiarize due to being deficient in academic writing skills. This finding was in accordance with the study findings of De Lima et al. (2022); Bahadori et al. (2012) that stressed that plagiarism

was more common among EFL students than ESL students due to the lack of proficiency and paraphrasing skills which made students stick to original words without crediting sources.

Table (3) Percentages of Plagiarism Avoidance Strategies

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Introductory lectures on Plagiarism should be given at freshmen orientation programs	55.6%	44.4%	0%	0%	0%
Plagiarism should be discussed at different levels from undergraduate to postgraduate levels.	51.9%	44.4%	3.7%	0%	0%
Lecturers should decrease students' overload to enable them to do more in-depth research.	14.3%	33.3%	44.4%	8%	0%
Information about plagiarism should be posted on university notice boards and websites.	25.9%	48.1%	22%	4%	0%
The university should introduce detection plagiarism tools and mandate students to submit online.	28.6%	68%	3.4%	0%	0%

Table (3) dealt with some practical strategies that could deter students from committing academic dishonesty. The highest respondent percentages for statement (1) were in *strongly agree* and *agree*, 55.6% and 44.4%. Most Libyan EFL Master's students pointed out that issues related to plagiarism must be discussed in orientation programs. This finding was in line with the study finding of Mamza & Ahaz (2018) that claimed that neglecting to inform students about plagiarism at university orientation programs was the main reason that drove them to commit academic dishonesty. The highest respondent percentages for statement (2) were in *strongly agree*

and *agree*, 51.9% and 44.4%. This study finding stressed that Libyan EFL Master's students found it necessary to debate plagiarism at undergraduate to postgraduate levels. This finding corresponded with the views of Miron et al. (2021) which clarified that educators should take responsibilities about giving more extensive discussions on plagiarism dangers and providing students with academic integrity policies in their universities. The highest respondent percentage for statement (3) was in neutral, 44.4%. Libyan EFL Master's students remained unbiased about whether lecturers should increase or decrease students' overload to make it possible for them to avoid plagiarism and conduct comprehensive research. This resonated with the views of Freiburger et al. (2017) and Smith et al. (2013) that academic pressure could add to the possibility of plagiarism incidences. However, it was at odds with the study finding of Ehrich et al. (2015) that argued that it was likely for students to believe that plagiarism was an unethical value, yet considered it permissible if student workloads were exceptionally high. The highest respondent percentages for statement (4) were in strongly *agree* and *agree*, 25.9% and 48.1%. Libyan EFL Master's students believed that information about plagiarism should be posted on university notice boards and websites. This finding was consistent with the study findings of Vaccino-Salvadore & Hall Buck (2021); Polio & Shi (2012) which confirmed that the gravity of plagiarism obligated university staff to clearly discuss plagiarism in classrooms and via different media to help students work in a secure environment and submit plagiarism-free research studies. The highest respondent percentages for statement (5)

were in *strongly agree* and *agree*, 28.6% and 68%. Libyan EFL Master's students blamed their university for not employing detection tools. This finding concurred with the study findings of Arbabisarjou et al. (2015) which warned that plagiarism rates were on the increase, owing to universities overlooking of checking students' submitted projects online. Also, the lack of strict regulations on plagiarizers in academic programs tended to tempt more students to plagiarize (Hikmatun, 2018).

Conclusion

Plagiaristic behavior is becoming more and more problematic, leading to undesired consequences in all educational levels. Such an act often begins as an unintentional kind of plagiarism that endangers academic honesty of student learning and ends up as an intentional form of plagiarism that tarnishes the credibility and quality control of higher education programs and the degrees and certificates that are granted (Ehrich et al., 2015). This research study explores Libyan EFL Master's students' attitudes towards plagiarism with regard to knowledge of plagiarism and its sources, reasons that could attract students to plagiarize, and rigorous procedures that universities should implement to track whether the submitted work has evidence of plagiarism or not and discourage students from committing academic dishonesty. As evidenced by this study, most Libyan EFL Master's students have a negative attitude about plagiarism. In addition, they tend to have a good understanding of plagiarism sources. They point out that being deficient in academic writing skills is the main reason behind their resort to plagiarism.

If this is the case, arguably better outcomes can be attained through raising undergraduates' and postgraduates' awareness of what academic dishonesty is and how it harms students' learning life and the teaching institutions these students graduate from (Power, 2009). Practically, this can be done via enforcing deterrent academic policies and mandating students to attend workshops on academic misconduct. Namira et al. (2021) highlight that academic writing proficiency entails students to write academically with proper citations to keep away from plagiarism and minimize the rate of plagiaristic cases. Similarly, universities in Libya should establish plagiarism-checker offices equipped with highly qualified staff and anti-plagiarism software systems and services like Turnitin, SafeAssign, SNITCH, Cross-Check, AntiPlag (Hill et al., 2021; Pàmies et al., 2020) to monitor plagiarism rates in students' assignments and Master's theses before final submissions in order to secure good ranking among international universities. The survey questionnaire employed in this study is insufficient to measure students' familiarity with academic dishonesty. Therefore, this assertion needs the support of further empirical studies that make use of software reports in order to get accurate tracks of plagiarism rates in higher institutions in Libya.

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