

The EFL Students' Awareness Level of Plagiarism
Case Study: Master Two Students of Linguistics in the Department of English Language
at the University of Ahmed Draia (Adrar). Algeria

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Abstract: Globalism with the internet and the associated copy/paste have led to the rise of plagiarism. Most academic scholars agree that plagiarism is a serious problem of violation of publishing ethics due to the fast growth of this phenomenon. Plagiarism is one of the most frequent and serious kind of misconduct in the research field. This paper sheds light the students' attitudes towards plagiarism, starting by giving a full review of the literature related to this concept, followed by the section of methodology, which relies on the questionnaire submitted to the targeted sample to measure their attitudinal factors (Positive, Negative, and Subjective norms) toward plagiarism, then collecting data, analyzing it, and finally, drawing a general conclusion. This research revealed that our sample showed insufficient level of awareness about the plagiarism. On the other hand, it declared not having enough knowledge concerning this concept and requested to be better informed through specific program.

Keywords: Awareness- Ethics- Knowledge- Plagiarism- Violation.

Résumé. La mondialisation avec Internet et le copier / coller associé ont conduit à la montée du plagiat. La plupart des universitaires pensent que le plagiat est un grave problème de violation de l'éthique de la publication due à la croissance rapide de ce phénomène. Le plagiat est l'un des types de mauvaise conduite les plus fréquents et les plus graves dans le domaine de la recherche. Cet article met en lumière l'attitude des étudiants à l'égard du plagiat, en commençant par une revue complète de la littérature relative à ce concept, suivie par la partie consacrée à la méthodologie, qui repose sur le questionnaire soumis à l'échantillon ciblé pour mesurer leurs facteurs d'attitude (Positifs, Négatifs et subjectifs) vers le plagiat, puis la collecte de données, l'analyse de celles-ci et, enfin, la conclusion générale. Cette recherche a révélé que notre échantillon avait montré un niveau de sensibilisation insuffisant au plagiat. Par contre, il a déclaré ne pas avoir suffisamment de connaissances concernant ce concept et a demandé à être mieux informé par le biais d'un programme spécifique.

Mots-clés : Conscience - Ethique - Connaissance – Plagiat - Violation

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1. Introduction

Plagiarism refers to the unethical activity done by some researchers written intentionally or unintentionally, and may occur in many different forms such stealing ideas, and/or parts of texts (Verbatim Plagiarism). Plagiarism includes in general the act of giving someone else's work to yourself without credit to the author, and credit to the source.

Plagiarism is divided into 4 categories:

- ❖ Casual plagiarism : Lack of awareness of plagiarism
- ❖ Unintentional plagiarism : wide amount of knowledge
- ❖ Intentional plagiarism: coping part or all of the someone 'else work
- ❖ Self-plagiarism: reusing one's own published work.

1.1. Definition American Association of University Professors (1989) defined plagiarism as” Taking over the ideas, methods, or written words of another without acknowledgment and with the intention that they be taken as the work of the deceiver.”

On the other hand, Barnhart, R.K.; Steinmetz, S. (1988) stated, “the word plagiarism comes from the word 'Plagarius' meaning kidnapper, robber, misleader, and literary thief”.

According to Chowdhury, H.A.; Bhattacharyya, D.K. (nd), plagiarism can be defined as an appropriation of ideas, words, process, or results of another person without proper acknowledgment, credit, or citation.

It can appear in a research article or program in following ways:

- Claiming another person's work as your own
- Use of another person's work without giving credit
- Majority of someone 's contribution as your own, whether credit is given or not
- Restructuring the other works and claiming as your own work
- Providing wrong acknowledgment of another works in your work.

1.2. Types of Plagiarism:

- **“Self-Plagiarism:** is defined as a type of plagiarism in which the writer republishes a work in its entirety or reuses portions of a previously written text while authoring a new work”. White Paper (2011, p.1)
- **Types of plagiarism:** Classification by Chowdhury, H.A.; Bhattacharyya, D.K. (n.d, p.4)

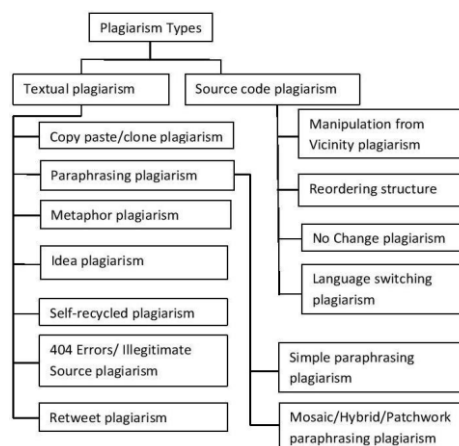


Fig (1): Taxonomy of Plagiarism.

1.3. Factors of Plagiarism:

Macdonald, R. (2000, P.24) revealed that” factors causing plagiarism are low commitments to the learning process and focusing on getting an academic degree, the student life style, family pressures etc. make students try to achieve the best results with the least efforts and in the least time”.

1.4. What to do if you suspect plagiarism?

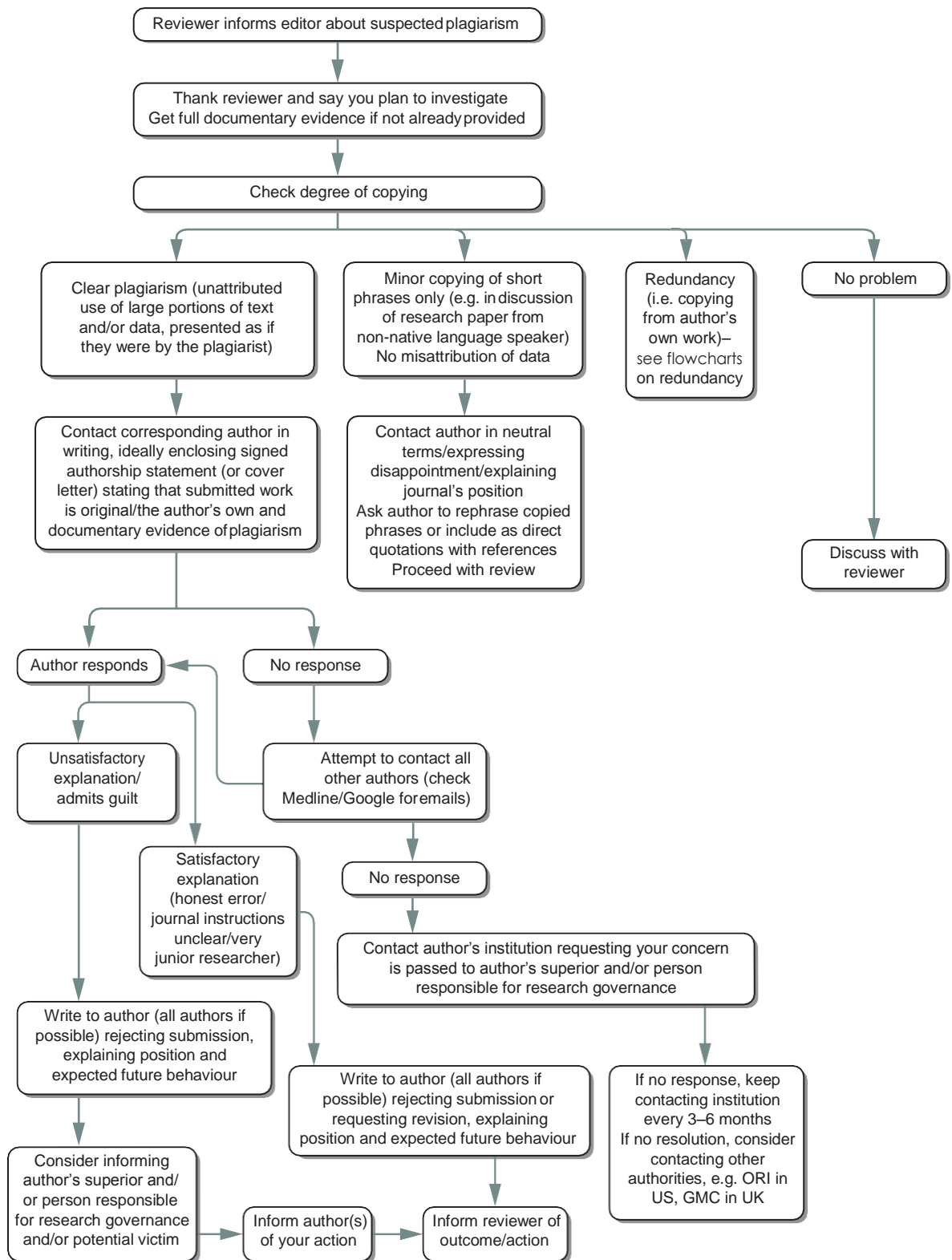


Fig (2): Procedures towards a suspected plagiarism in a
submitted manuscript by: Committee on Publication Ethics (C.O.P.E)

2. Method and Tools.

This paper consists of developing and measuring the psychometrics properties of our sample's attitudes towards the plagiarism. Therefore, it stands up on the full description and the identification of the sample, the research settings, the procedures to collect data, and the data collection tool. It aims at studying the scores achieved by the students participating to our survey, their analysis and then the interpretation of the results gained.

2.1. The Participants

The instrument of study represented by the questionnaire has been submitted to the sample selected for our research and which consists of 22 Master two students of Linguistics in the department of English language at the University of Ahmed Draia (Adrar) in south west of Algeria, during November of the academic year (2019/2020).

The sample was given some information related to the tool of measure and its aims, particularly the voluntary of participation and their possible withdraw at any time and for any reason.

These students have been engaged freely to answer our statements and then to share their own ideas about the concept of plagiarism and in the same time to pick up some information they ignore about the phenomenon of plagiarism studied by this paper of research

On the other side, it has been mentioned in the questionnaire that the students' participation is strictly anonymous.

2.2. The Instrument

A questionnaire (Adapted Version) has been ordered and which comprises 29 statements clustered into three dimensions such:

- Positive Attitudes with 12 Items from **Q.01 to Q.12**
- Negative Attitudes with 07 Items from **Q.13 to Q.19**
- Subjective Norms with 20 Items from **Q.20 to Q.29**

These statements were on a 5 point-Likert scale, graded as follows:

Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree, which have been used in the questionnaire in order to measure the degree of students' attitudes towards plagiarism. However, they have been given successively the alternative numbers **1.2.3.4.5.** After that, SPSS program (Version 20) was run to analyze the data.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Reliability Analysis

The reliability analysis of our instrument of measure is determined by the application of Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which provides with the psychometrics properties of each of the 29 items mentioned earlier in our tool of measure.

For this reason, SPSS Program (Version 20, New York. App) reliability analysis was conducted and calculated in order to check the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire.

Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient has been run first separately for each of the three dimensions of the questionnaire, which are positive attitudes, negative attitudes and subjective norms and then for the total questionnaire to check the validity of each factor.

Note: Cronbach's Alpha values equal or above **0.60** are considered reliable

Therefore, Cronbach's Alpha for each dimension is as follows:

- **Positive Attitudes:**

Cronbach's Alpha= 0.872

Table (1): Positive Attitudes

Case Processing Summary

	N	%
Valid	23	100.0
Cases Excluded ^a	0	.0
Total	23	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.872	12

- **Negative Attitudes:**

Cronbach's21 Alpha=0.9

Table (2): Negative Attitudes

Case Processing Summary

	N	%
Valid	23	100.0
Cases Excluded ^a	0	.0
Total	23	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.921	7

- **Subjective Norms:**

Cronbach's Alpha=0.900

Table (3) : Subjective Norms

Case Processing Summary

	N	%
Valid	24	100.0
Cases Excluded ^a	0	.0
Total	24	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.900	10

- **Cronbach's Alpha (Three Dimensions)=0.722**

Table (4): Three Factors

Case Processing Summary

	N	%
Valid	22	78.6
Cases Excluded ^a	6	21.4
Total	28	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.722	29

The number of factors determined applied for our study comprises three addressing different aspects of attitudes towards plagiarism, which are as follows:

- ✓ First factor reflected approval of plagiarism and named "Positive Attitudes towards Plagiarism".
- ✓ Second factor reflected clear disapproval of fraudulent scientific community, and named "Negative Attitudes towards Plagiarism".
- ✓ Third factor reflected students' normative beliefs about plagiarism, and named "Subjective Norms towards Plagiarism".

The reliability analysis identified by using SPSS program showed that Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were positive in the three dimensions of the questionnaire, which are as follows:

- Positive Attitudes = **0.872**
- Negative Attitudes = **0.921**
- Subjective Norms = **0.900**

On the other side, the general reliability analysis of the questionnaire is revealed by the positivity of Cronbach's Alpha. (Cronbach's Alpha= **0.722**)

The questionnaire used as a tool of collecting data for measuring the attitudes towards plagiarism confirmed through its three factors its psychometric characteristics, which are: Good internal consistency, and good structure validity.

3.2. Students' Scores

Table (5): Students' scores

Attitudinal Factors	Mean	Reference Range	Scores	
Positive Attitudes	(36 +/- 7)	Low= 12-28	18=	81.81%
		Moderate= 29-45	04=	18.19%
		High= 46-60	00=	00.00%
			Total=22=	100.00%
Negative Attitudes	(26 +/- 4)	Low= 7-16	00=	00.00%
		Moderate= 17-26	22=	100.00%
		High= 27-35	00=	00.00%
			Total=22=	100.00%
Subjective Norms	(32 +/- 6)	Low= 10-23	07=	31.81%
		Moderate= 24-37	15=	68.19%
		High= 38-50	00=	00.00%
			Total=22=	100.00%

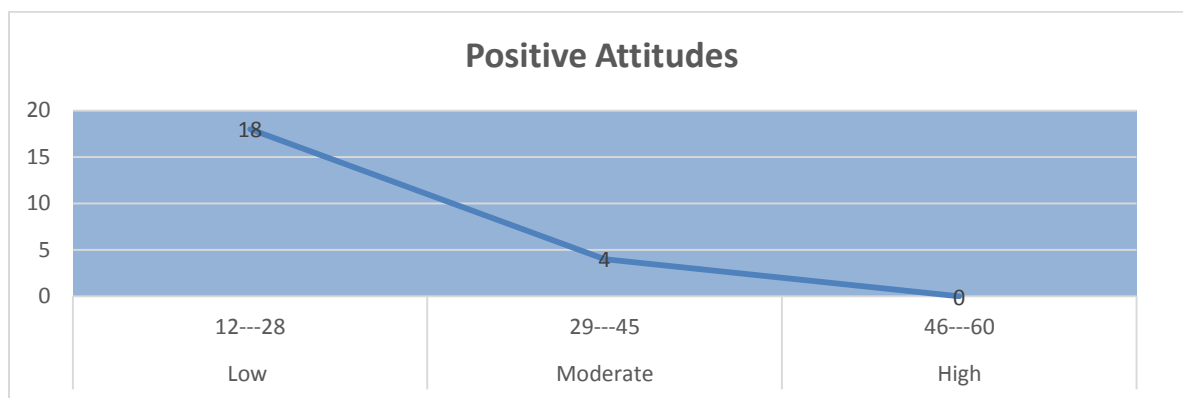


Fig (3): Positive Attitudes results

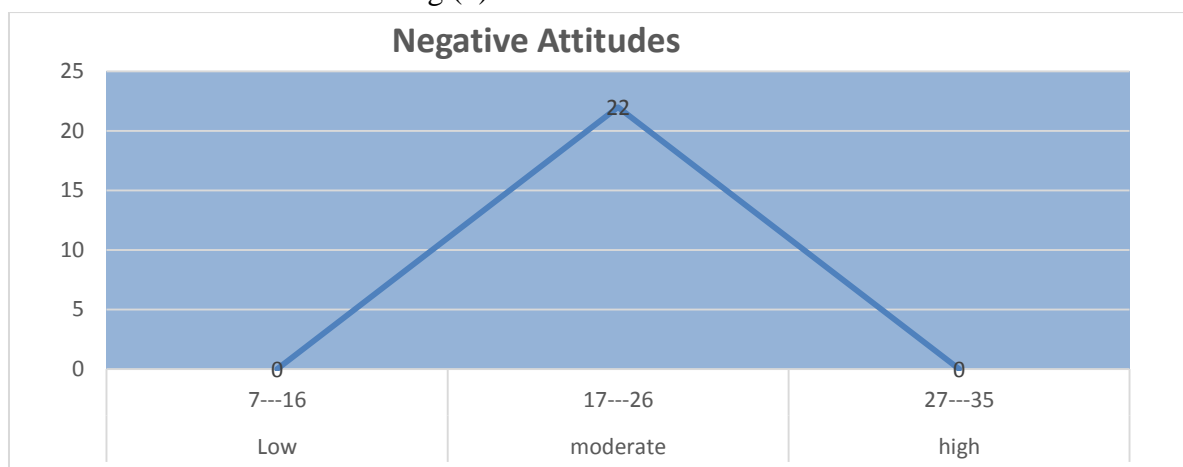


Fig (4): Negative Attitudes results

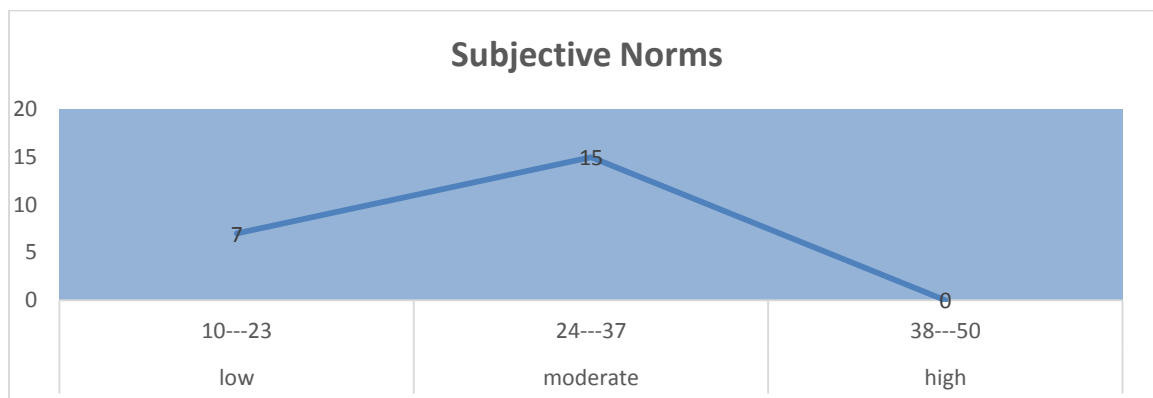


Fig (5): Subjective Norms results

The resulted obtained from this study have revealed that the sample investigated show moderate attitudes towards most of the factors explored.

Hence, the mean scores gained revealed that students are moderate towards negative and subjective attitudes (22 students=100% for negative attitudes, and 15 students=68.19% for subjective norms), but show low attitudes with positive attitudes towards plagiarism (18 students=81.81%, and 04students=18.19%). Table:

The majority of the results obtained from our survey (three attitude factors) indicated that our population lacks of clear attitudes, knowledge and awareness about plagiarism, which may affect their competency in accomplishing a scientific methodology work.

Moreover, their tendency to plagiarize without being conscious might obstruct the development of respectable scientific community.

On the other hand, the lack of knowledge of academic integrity is followed by a lack of competence in methodology practice recognized from the attitudes justifying plagiarism.

The limitation of the study relies on small number used to accomplish this work, which is represented by 22 master two students of linguistics at the department of English language at the University of Ahmed Draia (Adrar) in the south west of Algeria and which is not sufficient enough to provide with a final conclusion about the students' attitudes towards plagiarism. However, it may give an opportunity for further research and exploration.

4. Conclusion

The current study investigates the students 'attitudes towards plagiarism. This theme was chosen duo to the importance of the expansion of this phenomenon among the research community in different disciplines, and aims to reveal its different aspects.

In order to achieve the aim mentioned above, a humble study was conducted starting by a general literature review related to the concept of plagiarism, followed by a chapter of methodology comprising the data collection tools that relies on a questionnaire submitted to our targeted sample and which revealed that most of the participants to our survey are moderate in their attitudes towards plagiarism.

This paper shows that plagiarism has complexes causes that lead to more investigations in order to improve its better understanding.

On the other hand, if enormous efforts are not undertaken through education policy, the research methodology may not expect to have high quality of scientists and researchers.

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Appendix:

Questionnaire

Please kindly, take the time to fill in the following questionnaire and place your check marks on each scale. Your answers will be treated anonymously and will not be published for any reasons and at any time. Remember, this is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers. The “right” answer is the one that is true for you. Be sure to make only one check mark on each scale.

(1: Strongly Disagree, 2: Disagree, 3: Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4: Agree, 5: Strongly Agree).

Thank you

Full Name:

No	Statements describing positive attitude	1	2	3	4	5
01	Sometimes one cannot avoid using other people's words without citing the source, because there are only so many ways to describe something.					
02	When I do not know what to write, I translate a part of a paper from a foreign language.					
03	Self-plagiarism is not punishable because it is not harmful (one cannot steal from oneself).					
04	Short deadlines give me the right to plagiarize a bit.					
05	Self-plagiarism should not be punishable as plagiarism.					
06	It is justified to use one's own previously published work without providing citation in order to complete the current work.					
07	Young researchers who are just learning the ropes should receive milder punishment for plagiarism.					
08	It is justified to use previous descriptions of a method, because the method itself remains the same.					
09	If one cannot write well in a foreign language (e.g., English), it is justified to copy parts of a similar paper already published in that language.					
10	If a colleague of mine allows me to copy from her/his paper, I am NOT doing anything bad, because I have his/her permission.					
11	Plagiarized parts of a paper may be ignored if the paper is of great scientific value.					

12	Could not write a scientific paper without plagiarizing.					
	Statements describing negative attitude					
13	Plagiarists do not belong in the scientific community.					
14	Plagiarism impoverishes the investigative spirit.					
15	In times of moral and ethical decline, it is important to discuss issues like plagiarism and self-plagiarism.					
16	Since plagiarism is taking other people's words rather than tangible assets; it should NOT be considered as a serious offense.					
17	Plagiarizing is as bad as stealing an exam.					
18	A plagiarized paper does no harm science.					
19	The names of the authors who plagiarize should be disclosed to the scientific community.					
	Subjective norms toward plagiarism					
20	Plagiarism is not a big deal.					
21	Sometimes, it is necessary to plagiarize.					
22	Sometimes I copy a sentence or two just to become inspired for further writing.					
23	I keep plagiarizing because I have not been caught yet.					
24	Sometimes I am tempted to plagiarize, because everyone else is doing it (students, researchers, physicians).					
25	Authors say they do NOT plagiarize, when in fact they do.					
26	Those who say they have never plagiarized are lying.					
27	I work (study) in a plagiarism-free environment.					
28	Plagiarism is justified if I currently have more important obligations or tasks to do.					
29	I do not feel guilty for copying verbatim a sentence or two from my previous papers.					