



## Knowledge, Attitudes, and Reasons for Plagiarism Among Graduate English Language Students in Iran

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### Abstract

Plagiarism is a significant concern in academic settings worldwide, with implications for educational integrity and student development. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) educational contexts, understanding plagiarism can be particularly challenging due to linguistic and cultural differences. This study sought to probe Iranian EFL students' perceptions of plagiarism, their knowledge of and attitudes toward it, as well as the reasons for the acts of plagiarism. In so doing, 200 graduate EFL students answered a questionnaire. Descriptive statistics were employed to present the results. The findings demonstrated that the participants lacked awareness and understanding of what constitutes plagiarism. Many students were found to have a low level of knowledge about plagiarism, and they did not recognize certain acts as plagiarism. The results also provided insights into the reasons for plagiarism. Specifically, most of them believed that they might commit plagiarism as a result of the difficulty of some assignments and a poor understanding of plagiarism. The findings suggest a need for comprehensive education and awareness programs to harness students' understanding of academic integrity. This study adds to the literature on academic integrity in diverse educational contexts and highlights the importance of culturally sensitive approaches to teaching ethical academic practices.

**Keywords:** plagiarism, academic writing, EFL students, academic dishonesty, students' perceptions.

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## **Introduction**

Academic dishonesty has been a significant preoccupation in higher education during the last few decades. Plagiarism, as an example of academic dishonesty, has been characterized as deceitful conduct that recompenses plagiarists and lessens the author's intellectual property (Gullifer & Tyson, 2010). Previous studies indicate that plagiarism proliferates and has become a significant concern for educational centers worldwide (Amiri & Razmjoo, 2016; Mohseni et al., 2024; Navidinia et al., 2024; Navidinia & Zarei, 2023; Salehi & Gholampour, 2021). Although it is viewed as an academic crime frequently associated with negative terms and concepts such as deception, cheating, and moral failure (Hu & Lei, 2014), it is nevertheless adopted by university students in carrying out homework, tasks, and research documents. In this regard, Selemani et al. (2018) stated that plagiarism occurs in students' works in both English-speaking and non-English-speaking countries.

Plagiarism is a complicated subject and is closely tied to various complex literacy abilities, including proper referencing and academic reading and writing skills (Mbutho & Hutchings, 2021). According to Yusof (2009), the definition of plagiarism cannot be quickly established. It has been defined differently in diverse cultures and over time (Fakharzadeh & Mokhtari, 2022). However, the majority of definitions share the basic assumption that it is the intentional or unintentional act of writing and copying others' work without appropriately referring to the source of the idea (Pallela & Talari, 2016; Palmquist, 2003; Smith et al., 2007; Yeo, 2007).

Yet, the performance of the academic community has to be based on appropriate, precise, and reliable information since having such information is a prerequisite to conducting research, writing reports, as well as doing studies and examinations (Anaman & Agyei, 2021). Furthermore, strong academic writing necessitates understanding appropriate sources, possessing paraphrasing skills, taking meticulous notes, building robust skills, judiciously utilizing quotes, and properly attributing authors for their concepts and writing (Burton, 2007).

Despite its prevalence, the causes of plagiarism are not still clearly known. It may result from an incapacity to adapt to academic writing patterns or from ignorance of the laws and policies governing plagiarism (Dawson, 2004). Furthermore, students now find it simpler to commit plagiarism as a result of the availability of electronic resources, which may also be a factor contributing to the rise of plagiarism. In some cases, students may commit plagiarism as they are not aware of its importance in academic writing.

Different personal and contextual factors can contribute to students' perceptions of plagiarism (Amida et al., 2022; Atikuzzaman & Ahmed, 2025; Khalaf, 2025). For example, Amida et al. (2022) found that "students who do not understand university plagiarism policy and use eBooks are more likely to plagiarize" (p. 85). Furthermore, Atikuzzaman and Ahmed (2025) studied 720 university students in Bangladesh and found that some demographic variables, including "gender, academic discipline, and English language proficiency significantly influenced students' attitudes toward plagiarism" (p. 1).

Examining the causes and knowledge of plagiarism in EFL settings, especially in the Iranian context, can be informative. An investigation of such kind helps us to implement some principles to improve deeper understanding and develop relevant strategies that are more likely to be effective (Gullifer & Tyson, 2010). Knowing students' views on plagiarism can assist educators in establishing clear guidelines for students (Ashworth et al., 1997). As noted by Gullifer and Tyson (2010), the value of examining students' attitudes toward plagiarism lies in implementing effective techniques that encourage academic integrity on the part of students and impede plagiarism.

Therefore, educational institutions would benefit from a better understanding of the factors causing plagiarism to curb its growth. Additionally, it paves the grounds for catering for academic integrity and more valid and reliable academic degrees (Ehrich et al., 2016). Despite this need, little research has explored Iranian students' perceptions, knowledge, and reasons for plagiarism. Therefore, this study seeks to address the existing gap by answering the following research questions:

1. What is Iranian graduate EFL students' knowledge of plagiarism?
2. What are Iranian graduate EFL students' attitudes toward plagiarism?
3. What are Iranian graduate EFL students' reasons for plagiarism?

## **Review of Literature**

### **Students' Knowledge of Plagiarism**

One of the primary objectives of educational institutions is to make sure that individuals are aware of plagiarism and cultivate informed individuals who can make academic and research progress (Hussein, 2022). Nonetheless, empirical studies indicate that students lack sufficient understanding of plagiarism and academic dishonesty (Anaman & Agyei, 2021; Ramzan et al., 2012; Shen & Hu, 2020). In particular, they seem to

consider plagiarism as the verbatim copying of a text from a source (Gullifer & Tyson, 2010) or as copying, pasting, and rewording a phrase (Childers & Bruton, 2015). However, they seem to lack knowledge of the various acts characterized as plagiarism.

For instance, results from postgraduate students in Saudi Arabia revealed that students had a medium-level perception of various forms of plagiarism, while their perceptions of its causes were higher (Hussein, 2022). Similarly, Rodhiya et al. (2020), in a study of graduate students' awareness of and perspectives on plagiarism, found that while plagiarism as a concept was clear and recognizable to students, understanding its various forms was beyond their perception, which could lead to unintended plagiarism. Likewise, Rets and Ilya (2018) as well as Adam (2016) reported that students fell short of identifying plagiarism in their own work as well as that of others. Similar results have been reported by Appiah (2016) where 64.7% of students mistakenly believed that "patchworking", rewriting a text with minor changes in words and grammar, should not be seen as plagiarism.

Evidence from Bašić et al. (2019) also suggested that students were conscious of paraphrasing, quoting, referencing figures and tables, and using the Internet sources (Bašić et al., 2019). Nevertheless, they were not knowledgeable about self-plagiarism, appropriate methods for summarizing information, or the need to cite personal communications and common knowledge. Finally, data from Iranian post-graduate students suggested that passing the course was viewed as more important than learning the material and while plagiarism was regarded as something wrong, it was persistent and common among students (Yarmohammadi & Yasami, 2014).

### **Students' Attitudes Towards Plagiarism**

According to Anaman and Agyei (2021), one would expect that stronger intentions would make it more likely for individuals to carry out actions. However, regarding plagiarism, evidence has been mixed on whether plagiarism intention leads to actual plagiarism, as some students plagiarize intentionally while others do so unintentionally (Anaman & Agyei, 2021). Concerning students' attitudes toward plagiarism, however, the literature provides accounts of students' being more open to and permissive toward plagiarism than what the policies of their institutions allow (Ehrich et al., 2016; Rathore et al., 2015). Along this line, Badea (2017) reported that medical students in Romania generally held positive attitudes toward plagiarism. Positive attitudes justify practices such as self-plagiarism, short deadlines, and paraphrasing (Farooq & Sultana, 2021). Phyo et al. (2023) also documented that students' perceptions included a moderate level of disapproval of plagiarism. The practice of plagiarism is

specially reported when the workload is high (Ehrich et al., 2016). Other reasons that give rise to positive perceptions on the part of students include the challenges they face with effective academic writing and insufficient knowledge of the research and publication ethics (Farooq & Sultana, 2021). Although few studies also report students' negative attitudes toward plagiarism (e.g., Selemani et al., 2018; Tran et al., 2022), there seems to be a tolerant attitude toward plagiarism in some academic contexts.

### **Reasons for Students' Acts of Plagiarism**

Prior research documents a multitude of reasons for students' engagement with the act of plagiarism. However, it has been predominantly demonstrated in the literature that insufficient familiarity with academic writing conventions, inadequate skills in academic writing, a lack of knowledge about what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it, insufficient English proficiency, laziness and lack of motivation, a lack of effective time management skills, pressure for remarkable achievement scores, poor referencing skills, limited training, poor understanding of rules associated with plagiarism, and the abundance of online information can be considered as the main antecedents of plagiarism among students (Anaman & Agyei, 2021; Ayton et al., 2022; Chien, 2016; Idiegbeyan-Ose et al., 2018; Lilian & Chukwuere, 2020; Pallela & Talari, 2016; Phyo et al., 2023; Selemani et al., 2018; Tran et al., 2022; Wilkinson, 2009).

Evidence from the Iranian context reveals similar findings, too. Time constraints, limited understanding of the requirements of the assigned tasks, disinterest in the topics, lack of ideas to write about, an inclination to achieve higher grades, and not respecting the course or the instructor were highlighted as the main reasons for plagiarism (Yarmohammadi & Yasami, 2014). Also, the ease of plagiarism was reported as the most prominent motive for participants' acts of plagiarism in Rezanejad and Rezaei's (2013) study. Additionally, Riasati and Rahimi (2013) referred to inadequate knowledge of plagiarism, weak research / writing skills, insufficient language competence, lack of topic knowledge, task type, convenience, pressures, and the high cost of studying as the reasons for plagiarism among Iranian students.

In another study, Salehi and Gholampour (2021) examined Iranian students' perception of cheating. The participants enrolled in General English courses at three different Iranian universities. The findings indicated that cheating was common among students, and the majority of them did not have a negative attitude toward it. The most common reasons for cheating were "not being ready for the exams", "uselessness of the materials", "getting a better score", "bulkiness of the materials", "difficulty of the exams", and "not

having time for studying” (p. 5). In another study with Iranian Medical students, Bahrami et al. (2015) found that a considerable percentage of participants (45%) experienced cheating, and therefore, they called for more attention to be paid to cheating in academia.

In the Iranian context, while students’ perception of plagiarism has been investigated in other disciplines such as Medical Sciences and Civil and Mechanical Engineering (Bahrami et al., 2015; Salehi & Gholampour, 2021), studies examining Iranian EFL students’ perceptions of plagiarism are lacking. Therefore, the current study sets out to investigate students’ knowledge of, attitudes toward, and reasons for plagiarism in the Iranian EFL context. Considering the cross-cultural differences in students’ perceptions of plagiarism (Navidinia et al., 2024) the results would thus check into if and how students’ perceptions of plagiarism are different in various contexts and also across disciplines.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

The current study adopted a descriptive quantitative approach to survey Iranian EFL graduate students’ knowledge of, attitudes towards, and reasons for committing plagiarism.

### **Participants**

The participants of the present study included 200 graduate Iranian EFL students who were selected using the convenience sampling method as the most widespread type of sampling in EFL studies (Cheng & Dornyei, 2007). The choice of participants was based on two factors, including educational level (M. A. degree) and consent and availability to take part in the study. Forty-two percent of the participants were males, and 58% were females. The age range of the participants was 22 to 49 years old, with a mean of 33.

### **Instrumentation**

This study used a questionnaire to address the research questions. The questionnaire has been developed and validated by Anaman and Agyei (2021). Since the participants of this study possessed adequate proficiency in English, the original English version of the questionnaire was employed to collect information from the participants. The questionnaire tapped students’ knowledge of plagiarism, their attitudes towards plagiarism, and the reasons for this act, which directly addressed our research questions.

The questionnaire consisted of 4 sections. The first section required participants to provide demographic information, including age, gender, and

field of study, without the necessity of providing their names to ensure the confidentiality of the data. The second part included twelve items that probed respondents' knowledge of the acts constituting plagiarism. This part probed students' awareness of the instances of plagiarism and the different ways that students may commit plagiarism. The third part comprised sixteen items concerning participants' attitudes toward plagiarism. Finally, section four consisted of fourteen items to determine the reasons why students plagiarized. Items were rated on a five-point Likert scale including Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree (1 = Strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = neutral, 4 = disagree, 5 = strongly disagree). The internal consistency of the scale was computed by applying Cronbach's alpha formula, which was at an acceptable level ( $\alpha = .90$ ) in this study.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

The data collection procedure was carried out during the fall and spring semesters of the academic year 2022–2023. Before administering the survey, the participants' consent for participation in the study was granted. They were assured of the anonymity and confidentiality of their data. In addition, they were assured that their data would be solely used for research purposes.

The data were collected in two ways: some students were approached face to face in their classes and were asked to complete the questionnaire. Also, the Internet link to the questionnaire, which was designed in Google Forms, was sent to some other students through social media platforms such as Telegram and WhatsApp. The obtained data was subjected to descriptive statistics using SPSS.

## **Results**

### **Students' Knowledge of Plagiarism**

To answer the first research question examining students' knowledge of plagiarism, questionnaire responses were analysed using descriptive statistics. In this part, students were asked to identify whether various behaviours constituted plagiarism or not. The results in this part are shown in Table 1.

As indicated in the table, the participants lacked sufficient knowledge about what constitutes plagiarism. The majority (67% including those who disagree and strongly disagree) did not recognize that copying verbatim from books or journals without acknowledgment and copying word-for-word from others' research works without quotation marks (59.5%) are acts of plagiarism. Also, few students (28.5%) considered fabricating or altering data or statistics as plagiarism. Furthermore, a



considerable proportion of the respondents (49%) were unaware that paying someone to write assignments or papers was considered as plagiarism. Additionally, nearly half of the participants did not recognize that summarizing texts without acknowledging the original source is an example of plagiarism. Finally, only a small percentage (18.5%) realized that copying the content from the Internet without referencing the original provider constitutes an example of plagiarism.

**Table 1**

*Descriptive Statistics of Students' Knowledge of Plagiarism*

Items	SA	A	N	D	SD
1. Copying verbatim from other people's research works without using quotation marks	17.00	6.5	17.00	27.00	32.5
2. Copying word for word from a book or journal without acknowledgment	14.5	6.5	12.00	40.5	26.5
3. Submitting a work as a group while it is written by an individual	12.5	8.5	32.00	22.00	25.00
4. Not including references in one's work	14.00	9.5	19.5	29.5	27.5
5. Paying other people to write assignments or term papers	10.0	18.5	22.5	18.5	30.5
6. Inventing or altering data or statistics in one's work	11.50	17.00	16.00	35.00	20.50
7. Writing an assignment for a colleague	4.5	26.5	26.00	22.00	21.00
8. Inventing references or bibliography	15	13	23	13	36
9. Submitting an assignment written by someone in part or whole	7	20	12	34	27
10. Summarizing a text without acknowledging the source	6	24	21.5	22.5	26
11. Paraphrasing a text without acknowledging the source	5.5	16	25.5	14	39
12. Copying and pasting from the Internet without citing the original source	11.5	7	26.5	18	37

### Students' Attitudes Toward Plagiarism

The second research question concerned Iranian EFL students' attitudes toward plagiarism. To answer this question, students' responses to the questionnaire were subject to descriptive statistics. Table 2 depicts the results.

As shown in the Table, only 32.26 % of the participants agreed and strongly agreed with acts of plagiarism. This percentage was calculated by adding the percentage of responses for strongly agree and agree from all 17 items and dividing the result by 17. This indicates that 67.74 % of them did not hold negative attitudes toward plagiarism.

Furthermore, as Table 2 illustrates, more than half of the students



(54.5%) believed that the parts of a paper containing plagiarism can be dismissed if the paper itself holds remarkable scientific value. In addition, the majority of them (84.5%) believed that papers including plagiarized content have a detrimental effect on science. However, a small percentage of the participants (32.5%) believed that self-plagiarism should be subject to punishment as it poses little threat, and some of the participants (21.5%) mentioned that they were unable to write a paper without plagiarizing.

**Table 2**

*Descriptive Statistics of Students' Attitude Toward Plagiarism*

Items	SA	A	N	D	SD
1. Sometimes one cannot avoid using other people's words without citing the source, because there are only so many ways to describe something.	--	20.00	47.50	29.00	3.50
2. It is justified to use previous descriptions of a method, because the method itself remains the same.	--	28.00	43.00	26.00	3.00
3. Self-plagiarism is not punishable because it is not harmful.	7.00	25.5	32.5	19.5	15.5
4. Plagiarized parts of a paper may be ignored if the paper is of great scientific value.	--	12.5	33.00	31.5	23.00
5. Self-plagiarism should not be punishable in the same way as plagiarism is.	9.5	42.5	16.5	16.5	15.0
6. Young researchers who are just learning the ropes should receive milder punishment for plagiarism.	3.5	30.0	10.5	34.0	22.0
7. 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.	3.5	17.5	24.5	30.5	24
8. I could not write a scientific paper without plagiarizing.	--	21.5	7.5	36.5	34.5
9. Short deadlines give me the right to plagiarize a bit.	6.00	37.5	14.5	14.00	28.00
10. When I do not know what to write, I translate a part of a paper from a foreign language.	4.00	24.00	40.5	20	11.5
11. It is justified to use one's own previously published work without providing citation in order to complete the current work.	8.00	12.00	35.00	29.50	15.50
12. If a colleague of mine allows me to copy from her/his paper, I'm NOT doing anything bad, because I have his/her permission.	.5	23	28	33	15.5
13. Plagiarists do not belong to the scientific community.	22	16	31.5	26.5	4.00
14. The names of the authors who plagiarize should be disclosed to the scientific community.	17.0	26.0	26.0	31.0	--
15. In times of moral and ethical decline, it is important to discuss issues like plagiarism and self-plagiarism.	31.00	37.5	25.0	3.0	3.5
16. Plagiarism impoverishes the investigative spirit.	22	34	32.5	6.0	5.5
17. A plagiarized paper does not harm science.	--	7.0	8.5	41.0	43.5

**Reasons for Acts of Plagiarism**

To address Iranian graduate students' reasons for plagiarism which

was the concern of the third research question, the participants' agreement or disagreement with each statement was analyzed. Table 3 presents the results.

**Table 3**

*Descriptive Statistics of Reasons for Acts of Plagiarism*

Items	SA	A	N	D	SD
1. Difficulty in paraphrasing or summarizing	2.5	53.00	20.00	24.50	--
2. Nobody checks cheating and those who do it never get caught.	6.00	11.5	28.50	33.5	20.5
3. It appears most lecturers I know ignore cheating.	4.00	7.5	34.5	38.00	16.00
4. Laziness and lack of time management	24.5	44.00	8.5	14.0	9.00
5. Some of the assignments are difficult.	9.00	55.00	20.50	12.0	3.50
6. It is easy to download assignment from the Internet free of charge.	9.0	31.5	33.5	16.5	10.0
7. It is easy to plagiarize a paper without my lecturer knowing about it.	4.0	34.0	26.5	26.5	9.0
8. Do not know how to cite the sources.	3.5	14.5	15.5	48	18.5
9. Pressure to succeed	12.5	39.00	25.00	13.50	10.00
10. Most lecturers never complain about it.	5.00	27.00	26.00	28.50	13.50
11. Those who cheat get better grades.	7.00	19.50	37.00	23.50	13.00
12. Everybody is doing it.	--	22.50	22.50	26.00	29.00
13. Poor understanding of plagiarism	21.00	37.00	21.50	16.00	4.50
14. Plagiarism is not a big deal.	3.50	3.50	16.50	22.50	54.00

As indicated in Table 3, the most common reasons cited include laziness and lack of time management (68%), difficulty of assignments (64%), poor understanding of plagiarism (58 %), problems in paraphrasing or summarizing (55.5%), and pressure to succeed (51.5 %).

### Discussion

This study aimed to identify the knowledge of, attitudes toward, and reasons for the act of plagiarism among EFL students in Iran. The findings indicated that EFL graduate students in Iran had limited knowledge about plagiarism, with only a small percentage recognizing acts such as copying verbatim without quotation marks or copying from a book or journal without acknowledgment as plagiarism. Additionally, a low percentage of students identified behaviours like submitting group work as an individual's work and not including references as forms of plagiarism. Congruent with the findings of this study, Clarke et al. (2023) reported that a significant percentage of students in Rwanda were unaware that hiring someone to write parts of their papers constituted plagiarism. Anaman and Agyei (2021) also noted that only a small percentage of graduate students in the context of Ghana considered paraphrasing and summarizing without

proper acknowledgment as plagiarism. This corroborates what we found in this study showing that 48% of the students were unaware that making summaries of a text without acknowledging the original source is considered plagiarism.

Overall, prior research by Gullifer and Tyson (2010), Chien (2016), and Childers and Bruton (2015) indicates that students have a basic grasp of plagiarism. However, these studies show that this general understanding does not always translate into a nuanced comprehension of plagiarism. As a result, students fail to recognize the full scope and complexity of plagiarism.

The findings from the second research question in this study showed that 32.5% of students believed that since self-plagiarism does not cause serious harm, it should not be penalized. This aligns with previous work by Clarke et al. (2023), maintaining that according to approximately half of the respondents in their study, self-plagiarism was not unethical and should not be subject to the same punishments as plagiarizing others. Furthermore, these attitudes mirror earlier results from Mavrinac et al. (2010), where 62% of Croatian students condoned self-plagiarism.

Several studies have found that there are many reasons for students' plagiarism. They may not understand what plagiarism is or how to cite the sources. They may also be motivated to plagiarize to improve their academic standing or because they do not possess the necessary skills for academic writing (Anderson & Steneck, 2011; Dawson & Overfield, 2006; Warn, 2007). Similar insights into the causes of student plagiarism were revealed in the findings of this study. More specifically, over 64% of the participant students believed they may plagiarize because of the challenging nature of the tasks.

Furthermore, more than half of the respondents pointed out that the causes of plagiarism were lack of knowledge and pressure to succeed. These findings are consistent with those of Anaman and Agyei (2021), who found that weak academic writing skills including the inability to acknowledge sources and the difficulty for certain students to summarize or paraphrase were the primary causes of plagiarism for the majority of respondents. Others committed plagiarism as a result of their own indolence and poor time management. The inability to understand plagiarism, the ease with which one might download the works of others, and the pressure to succeed came next.

In the present study, 18% of the participants were not aware of how to cite the sources they used which is in line with Wilkinson (2009) indicating that plagiarism can stem from poor reading comprehension, weak academic writing skills, and unfamiliarity with citation protocols.

Moreover, the results of this study revealed “lack of time management” and “pressure to succeed” as reasons for committing plagiarism, which support the findings of Memon and Mavrinac (2020). Their work demonstrated that insufficient time and peer pressure are common motivations for plagiarizing.

### **Conclusion**

The findings of the present study point to the limited understanding of plagiarism among graduate EFL students in Iran. This points to the inadequacy of current efforts to deter plagiarism and emphasizes the demand for early and comprehensive instruction in academic literacy and ethics. The results underscore the importance of providing precise definitions of plagiarism, clear guidelines, and consistent penalties within academic institutions. Both educators and students require training on these policies and their consequences.

Plagiarism poses a serious threat to higher education, prompting extensive research and mitigation attempts. However, this study and the literature reveal that students have misconceptions about plagiarism that lead to unintentional dishonest behaviors. Therefore, students need to be equipped with a thorough knowledge of what comprises plagiarism and how not to fall into it. To prevent misconceptions about plagiarism in graduate studies, greater emphasis should be placed on addressing this issue at the undergraduate level, too.

The study has some implications for different stakeholders in education. Policy makers and higher education institutions need to establish and enforce strict plagiarism policies with appropriate penalties and clearly inform students of the guidelines. Furthermore, as many students have misconceptions about what constitutes plagiarism, educational training courses should be held for students to familiarize them more with this concept. In addition, considering the importance of citation patterns in academic writing (Esfandiari & Saleh, 2024), higher education institutions should integrate instruction on academic writing to instill the significance of integrity in research, improve plagiarism prevention, and expand quality publication opportunities. Equipping students with the required knowledge and skills of plagiarism avoidance is imperative to uphold academic integrity and scholarly standards. Moreover, as having high expectations that are beyond students’ ability can result in the violation of academic integrity, it is important that educational institutions and instructors have reasonable expectations from the students.

This study has some limitations. One is self-selection bias from the voluntary participation recruitment. Students who opted to participate may

have greater academic motivation than those who declined, especially among the cohort invited for the online questionnaire. Furthermore, the inability to access all potential participants constrains the study. The self-selected sample could limit generalizability of the findings to the broader student population.

Despite the limitations, the study provides new perspectives on Iranian EFL students' plagiarism knowledge, attitudes, and motivations. However, this represents just an initial step, and further in-depth research is needed. For instance, the study did not explore gender differences, an under-examined area regarding plagiarism inclinations. Future studies can address the potential gender influence on plagiarism. Additionally, this study utilized a survey questionnaire to collect data from a relatively large-sized sample. While advantageous for breadth, qualitative methods like focus groups could provide richer analysis of students' perceptions and reasons for plagiarism. Therefore, future research should use qualitative techniques to delve deeper into the issue and to obtain a more vivid picture of students' plagiarism acts.

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