Students' Perception and Experience of Ghost Writing – Study with Reference to Mangalore City

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Abstrak

Pendidikan tinggi di India bersemangat karena mengasumsikan peran magang yang lebih besar dalam membangun bangsa. Karena rasio pendaftaran kurang, Pemerintah melalui Universitas dan perguruan tinggi mempromosikan pendidikan tinggi dan jangkauannya sekarang juga di daerah pedesaan. Jumlah mahasiswa yang semakin banyak menjadi sasaran perguruan tinggi dan fakultas yang bekerja di sana, akibatnya untuk meningkatkan kuantitas, kurang memperhatikan kualitas pendidikan tinggi. Pendidikan tinggi dikaitkan dengan tugas-tugas seperti penulisan tugas, disertasi untuk memenuhi persyaratan gelar tertentu dan ini dinilai untuk meningkatkan kebiasaan penelitian di kalangan mahasiswa dan pada saat yang sama untuk meningkatkan kualitas pendidikan tinggi yang juga berkontribusi untuk pengembangan keterampilan tertentu di kalangan komunitas mahasiswa. Ada instansi dan individu yang terlibat untuk membantu mahasiswa dengan menyediakan jasa penulisan tugas dan disertasi dengan jumlah uang yang ditentukan. Ada penulis akademis (Ghost writer) yang memberikan tugas dan disertasi siap pakai kepada mahasiswa. Dalam tulisan ini dilakukan upaya untuk menemukan persepsi mahasiswa dan sekaligus mempelajari pengalaman mereka tentang ghost writer. Studi ini dikonsentrasikan di kota Mangalore, negara bagian Karnataka, mereka yang mempelajari pendidikan tinggi dan menjalani disertasi sambil membaca gelar master mereka.

Kata kunci: Perguruan Tinggi, Penulis Hantu, Tugas

Abstract

Higher education in India is vibrant as it assumes greater role interns of building the nation. As enrolment ratio is less, Govt through Universities and colleges promote higher education and the reach is now in rural areas too. To enrol more number of the students has become a target for the colleges and faculties' working there, as a result to increase the quantity, less attention is paid towards the quality of higher education. The higher education is associated with the tasks such as assignment writing, dissertations to full fill the requirements of the particular degree and these are graded to improve the research habits among the students and at the same time to enhance the quality of higher education which also contribute for the development of certain skills among student community. There are agencies and individual involved to assist the students by providing the service of writing the assignments and dissertations for certain prescribed amount of money. There are academic writers (Ghost writers) who provide such readymade assignments and dissertations to the students. In this paper attempt is done to find the students perception and at the same time their experiences of ghost writers are studied. The study is concentrated in Mangalore city of Karnataka State students those who perused higher education and undergone dissertation while perusing their master degree.

Keywords: Higher Education, Ghost writers, Assignment

1. INTRODUCTION

The progress of nation is only possible when the students of higher education are dynamic, enterprising, responsible and ethical (Mason, 2020; Suartama et al., 2019; Uzorka & Makeri, 2020). Higher education plays an important role in the overall development and growth of the nation (Darmaji et al., 2019; Noori, 2021; Xiong et al., 2020). It imparts knowledge in different ways of life. Further, it also broadens the cerebral power of the individual within a narrow specialization but also gives a wider perspective of the world around (Cavanagh et al., 2020; O'Connor, 2021). The core mission of higher education is to educate, to undertake research, to train and to provide service to the community. In the

context of globalization, the scope and demand for higher education is increasing day by day. The "Mantra" of present day education system is quality education. The quality in higher education is the biggest need of the hour as country adopted New Education Policy and progressing towards becoming the educational hub of the world (Purvis et al., 2020; Van Woezik et al., 2019). The quality of education depends upon various factors such as environment for teaching and learning, infrastructure, teachers, curriculum, effective feedback and monitoring system etc (Amran et al., 2020; Kebritchi et al., 2017).

In recent years, coinciding with the advancement in telecommunications technologies, there has been a shift in an academic focus. In lieu of the traditional aspects of plagiarism such as cut and paste which is largely detected by text matching software, there is a focus on non-traditional types of plagiarism such as contract cheating and ghost writing. The higher education consists of writing assignments, project and research works and these are requirements for the grade to clear the examination of the masters (Purvis et al., 2020; Van Woezik et al., 2019). Ghost writing and contract cheating constitute serious facets of academic misconduct in higher education. Even though there are plagiarism techniques which are practiced, the gap in knowledge exists (Karnalim, 2019; Khurram, 2019; Vani & Gupta, 2018). Thus it has become a bane to the progress of the academic environment.

About the quality of education and unethical issues practiced by students, Institutions are concerning issues in Indian higher education. The paper titled Role of ethical values in Indian higher education – challenges ahead discuss about the unethical practices of the students in colleges in academics which states that, "Knowing fully well that these are taking place, sometimes even with their connivance, even then the Apex bodies of Higher education are turning a deaf ear towards these illegal activities of some of the academic players (Bhtia & Arun, 2015). Factors that contribute to the decline in value education which also emphasizes value-based education (Kurniawati et al., 2017; Sulistyarini et al., 2019; Susilawati et al., 2017). The declining of ethical values in higher education system will give rise to unskilled professional and undisciplined students (Bhtia & Arun, 2015; Chandrasekar et al., 2020; Turan & Koç, 2018). This trend needs to be addressed if India has to survive as a nation and acquire its due place in the world. Provides an insight into various forms of ghost writers take. The author delineates the various level of ghost writing or different degrees in which a work can be ghost written. In some cases, a famous writer replaces the actual writer of the paper in the sense, the actual writer is not acknowledged and is the ghost writer. Previous research found that while contract cheating remains problematic, it could steer the educational instructors from their purpose (Walker & Townley, 2012).

Ghost writers are writers for hire. Those who take money but none of the credit for the work they produced (Achmad & Roisah, 2020; Bridge & Healy, 2012). The writer or author is hiring the ghost writer as a freelance writer to produce a copy for a fee. The author or the writer claims all the credit for work produced, including all the original writing produced by the ghost writers (Groves & Mundt, 2021; Johnson & Vilardell, 2012). The fee is paid in advance of completing the job or even after completion of the job as they work for hire. The money value involved in ghost-writing in Russia to understanding the problems of dishonesty in doctoral education and the higher educational system (Osipian, 2012). Even in India there are contract writers who are now reaching the international market thus he discuss the success reach of those in the country (Lancaster, 2019).

At the same time for filling the vacancy university Phd degree is mandate ghost writers are more engaged and advertising intensively in the social media. As youngsters are using social media and they need to deliver the dissertation and assignments to fulfil the requirements of their degree they easily reach them. So the issue is challenging to address the quality of academia of higher education at the juncture of implementation of New Education Policy in India and Filling of University Vacancy. Shifting the horizon of Ghost writers are

now reached to the colleges as they can easily reach the youngsters pursuing the higher education. Thus to know the reach of those ghost writers and the experience of students are need to be covered. In this manner Mangalore city of Karnataka which is well known as "Educational Hub" is taken into account for the study concerned. Thus by taking into account the above discussions on quality of academic writing in higher education and role of ghost writers the following objectives are set. To understand the role of ghost writing/ contract writing higher education. To analyze higher education student's perception towards ghost writers in Mangalore city. To study the higher education student's experience of ghost writing in Mangalore city.

2. METHODS

The study is empirical in nature and thus paper employed survey method to acquire the information regarding student's perception and experience with ghost writing and contract cheating. An anonymous survey was also employed through Google forms and same were shared in various whatsapp groups where students could have access and respond to the survey. The google forms are shared primarily to different faculty of higher education Institutions by social network and emails. The study was on exploring the experience of the students those were expressed in terms of questions and 5 point Likert scale to give the flexibility of expression on the experience. The focus of the study is in Mangalore city,In online survey 67 students responded for the study. The samples were the students who are pursuing Master degree. To provide the theatrical background and strengthen the discussion books and journals are referred. Thus data here consists of primary as well of the secondary data. The technique used to analyze the data is descriptive qualitative and quantitative analysis.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Responses will address statements relating to personal experience. As for the list of statements given, firstly, I have submitted it as my work, which was written for me by another person (ghostwriter / contract writer). Second, I submitted my work, which was written for me by some other students (friends). Third, I know some students who submitted as their own, a work written for them (ghost writer) by someone else (ghost writer / contract writer). Fourth, I know some students who submitted as their own, a work written for them by another student (friend). The results of the analysis are presented in Figure 1.

	a.	b.	c.	d.
Strongly disagree	8	12	1	2
disagree	14	15	2	2
Not sure	0	2	24	4
agree	19	18	20	31
Strongly agree	26	20	20	28

Figure 1. Analysis Results

From the figure 1 is clear that 45 students have submitted the work which is been written by someone else (Ghost writers), whereas 22 out of 67 students submitted their own work without taking such assistance. Furthermore 38 students have submitted the work, which was written by their friends. It is clear indicator that there is a practice of ghost writing or contract writing in higher education students of Mangalore city. At the same time the strength of 40 and 59 represents student's opinion about others those who have taken the assistance.
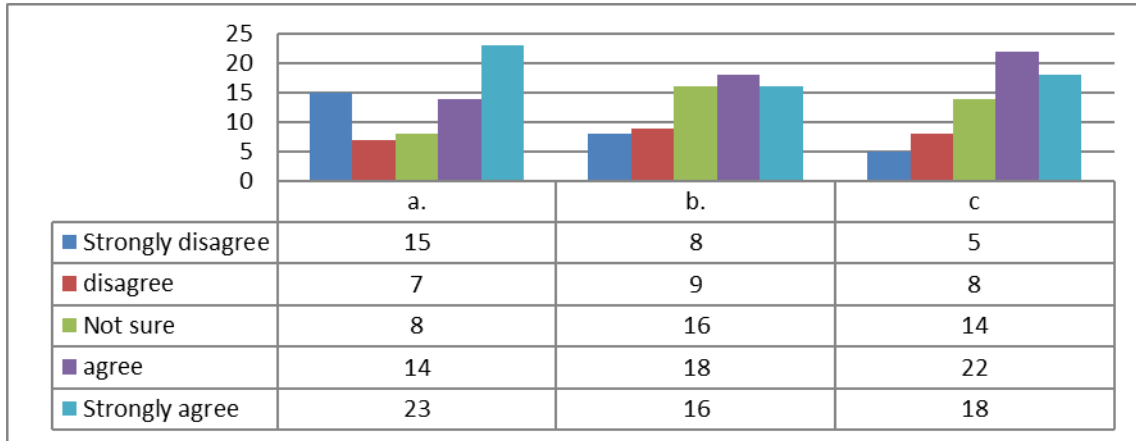

	a.	b.	c
■ Strongly disagree	15	8	5
■ disagree	7	9	8
■ Not sure	8	16	14
■ agree	14	18	22
■ Strongly agree	23	16	18

Figure 2. Student Experience About Ghost Writer's Job Satisfaction Level

By looking at Figure 2, can summarize about students experience about satisfaction level of ghost writers work. Sometimes there will be miss match between what is desired and what is delivered. Large number of students are satisfied about the contract writer's task. Thus there will be word of mouth, which may pass on from one student to other and thus it may create an unhealthy environment in education system. Those who paid for these ghost writers are also expressed their level of satisfaction as these services were affordable and students pocket friendly. It is also good to find the students who have not availed and are not engaged in these services.
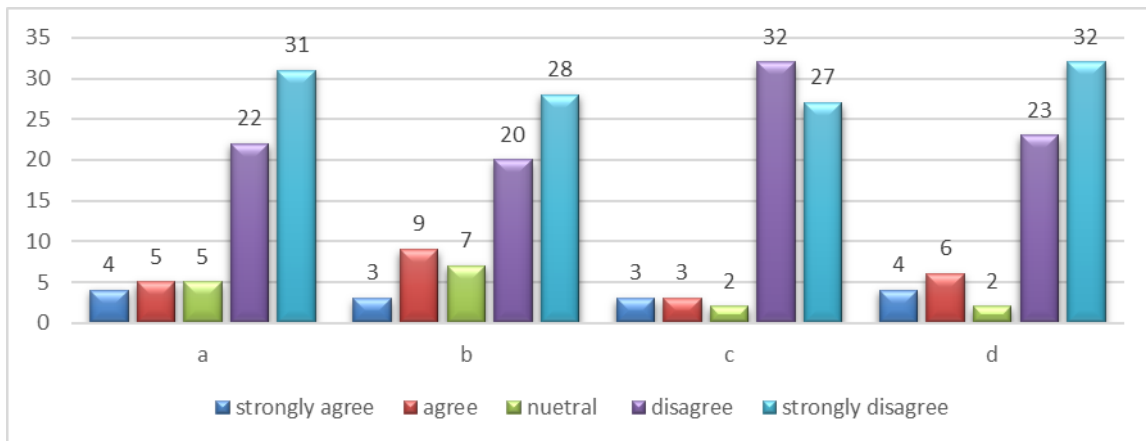

Figure 3. Previous Student Experiences with Ghost Writing and Contract Cheating

By looking at Figure 3, it is clear that there is minimal detection of the act. Where we can find 53 out of 67 expressed that they have never been caught, when they submitted such work as their own. Similarly even though it is written by some other students but still the detections are very few. And there are only few such experiences they heard about the students who caught in such act. Thus it will also give strength to the students to involve in

contract writing activities. Whereas the detection of ghost writing and contract writing are very few.
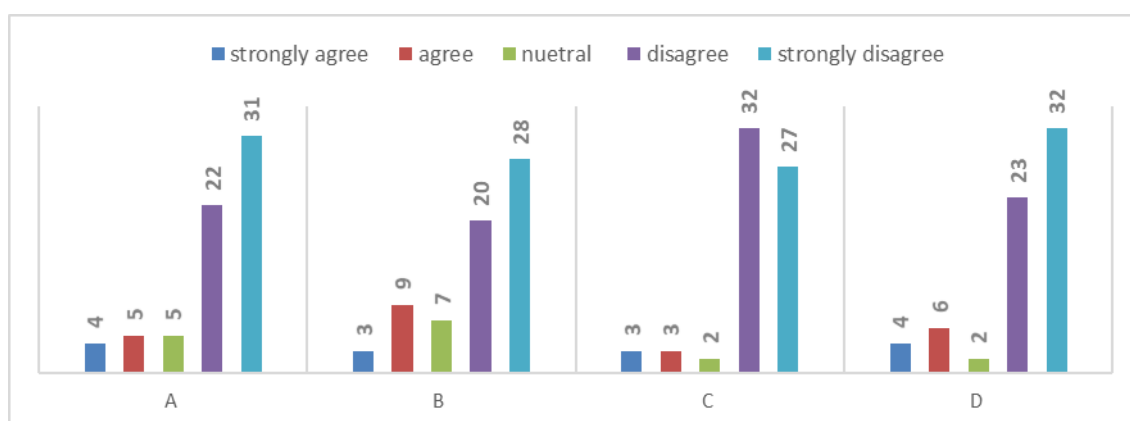
Figure 4. Experience with Ghost Writing

From the Figure 4, it can be noted that once the cases are detected by the responsible authority the very duty is penalise them so that such act will not occur again and again. Thus the above questions were raised to understand the action taken on ghost writing/ contract writing activities. Again by the above graph and data it is clear that only few cases where these works are penalised by the authorities which are on average less than 6 in all the four mentioned cases but in almost all the cases such as 53, 48, 59 and 55 out of 67 made. It very clear that case of penalising such act is very low. Thus the institution and individual also need to be strong to penalise such act.

Today we practice plagiarism test only for the theses which are produced at universities, there is need for every library of the college to be equipped with test software's where prior to the submission of assignments and projects must be tested for plagiarism. The works such as assignments and projects must be submitted in soft copy only (green practices in the institutions). It will also make students familiar with certain skills such as typing, and thinking ability. At present there is practice of viva voce once the thesis or other projects are submitted by students at the colleges or universities. The written test must be conducted particularly in writing so that student knowledge can be assessed along with the presentation. While penalising such act, it should be model for others so that they won't practice such in the future. Because it may not be possible to curb contract writers or ghost writers so on the other hand the system must be strong that students never get into such deal.

Discussion

The students are practising contract writing in terms of writing assignments or dissertations where most students say that they know that their friends have taken the help when submitting it for academic grades. The findings of previous studies also stated that many students still had problems writing scientific papers (Aisiah & Firza, 2019; Rahmiati, 2013; Stapa et al., 2014). Most of the students are happy with the works written by ghostwriters, and they feel that these services are available at affordable prices, and they are delighted. It indicates a false signal that students can transmit from one person to another, and thus the quality of education and the value of the degree they receive is worthless (Bretag, 2013; Curtis & Clare, 2017). Writing scientific papers is mandatory for students (Emilia, 2016; Nursidiq, 2016; Starfield & Paltridge, 2019; Yatmikasari, 2017). When these works are submitted by the students it is found that the rate of detection of such act is very rare, we could find only few cases where the valuators/ concerned authorities detected the same. Thus

indicate there is loophole which prevails in the education system where these assignments or projects are not subjected to any kind of test or poor viva voce conducted and thus students fall into safe zone, even though they practiced such act. The penalties are the lesson to others not to follow such practices (Curasi, 2013; Jereb et al., 2017).

Today due to various influences and practises the education centres itself depleting with the essence of morals and values (Darnell et al., 2019; Putra & Ibrahim, 2020; Tambak et al., 2020; Wijaya & Gruber, 2018). Universities that need to develop students' perspectives by engaging in research-based learning, students contribute to the enrichment of knowledge (Espinoza-Figueroa et al., 2021; Krath et al., 2021). The higher education which needs to develop the perspectives of students by involving in research based learning where they contribute towards enrichment of knowledge. But unfortunately there are practices such as contract writing and ghost writing which is curbing the potential of students. It is from the both sides as there are poor viva voce are conducted from the faculty members, or even some time the faculty member may also encourage such act thus This is the right time where nationwide discussions are taking place on new educational policy, if we strengthen the system by penalising such act done by the students then it will have impact on curbing such act. The modern time has gifted technology which can also be used as a tool (plagiarism) for even small act such as assignment writing by the students. If you can't bend the sapling, will it bend when the sapling becomes full grown tree? Thus, if we make students research oriented along with morals and values at the early stage, the level of education results will be fruitful.

4. CONCLUSION

From the time of Nalanda, India has received more prominence towards the higher education system as we had great Acharya parampara in those days. Strengthened the morale among the students of that time. India is a country where we worship the education, and such high thoughts are associated with our values. While looking into the findings, it is clear that students are happy for such an unethical act and ready to pay. It is challenging for the country's morality as these enter the stream of higher education as faculty members or in the corporate world. There are regular reports on unethical practices.

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