

## Attitudes and Behaviors of Female Nursing Students Toward Plagiarism

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### ABSTRACT

Student's academic misconduct breaches the trustworthiness of their knowledge. Academic institutions usually emphasize that any breach of academic honesty would be regarded as a disciplinary matter. This descriptive study focuses on plagiarism as one form of academic misconduct. The purpose is to investigate the attitudes and behaviors of female nursing students toward plagiarism in relation to their level of education, and to study ethics, research, and clinical nursing courses. The study uses a convenience sample of 134 female students from one university (57 junior and 77 senior), and a reliable questionnaire that consists of 7 scenarios on plagiarism for data collection. Results show significant intergroup differences. Of major concern are conformance between honest attitudes and behaviors of junior students, in contrast to conformance in dishonest attitudes and behaviors of senior students, students who study research, and those who study clinical nursing toward: "copying verbatim (word-for-word) from the internet and other published sources and lists them as references"; and toward "helping a friend by writing an assignment for him/her". In conclusion, the study suggests the enhancement of the academic integrity among students, and recommends further research on the ethical responsibility of faculty members and college management toward controlling academic misconduct.

**Keywords:** Plagiarism; Academic Misconduct, Nursing Students.

### Introduction

The literature pointed out to three forms of misconduct, namely: academic, professional, and scientific (Fierz et al., 2014; Juyal, Thawani, & Thaledi, 2015; Pupovac & Fanelli, 2015; Kenny, 2007). The distinction between them is concerned with who may commit each. Misconduct is academic if committed by students before graduation, and professional if committed by practitioners after graduation (Kenny, 2007). However, misconduct is scientific if committed by researchers (Fierz et al., 2014; Juyal, Thawani, & Thaledi, 2015; Pupovac & Fanelli, 2015). These forms of misconduct involve serious offenses which have basis in two ethical theories that offer insight into how misconduct as an action can be addressed. The deontological theory emphasized that moral action is not defined by the consequence even if the consequence is pleasant, for example, it is always wrong to lie even if it saves someone's life. In contrast, the teleological theory supports any action that maximum happiness as a consequence, the choice of means and ends represent the distinction between them (Heubel & Biller-Andorno, 2005; Varden, 2010; Guido, 2016). Therefore, the deontological stressed on the intention of the action (action as a mean) while the teleological stressed on the outcome of the action (action as an end by itself).

Plagiarism is one form of academic misconduct (Bachore, 2014). As defined in Oxford Dictionary, plagiarism is "The practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own". Other definitions given in the literature are largely nuanced by the characteristics of the culture, personality of individuals, the setting (Moss, White, and Lee, 2018), and as argued here, the trajectory of its action, but in all definitions plagiarism is concerned with receiving credit for work which is not one's own. This study draws on deontological theory as basis for conceptualizing plagiarism as an intentional or unintentional wrong action committed by students as means to facilitate their successful completion in course assignments or examinations. It may include submission of any academic work that the student has not produced

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such as copying from others with or without acknowledging the reference.

Settings of the current study included a college of nursing at a health care institution in Saudi Arabia that encompasses both academic (i.e., university) and clinical (i.e., teaching hospital) facilities. The university bylaws emphasize academic, professional and scientific values, such as: honesty, integrity, trustworthiness and accountability. These values are incorporated in the curriculum of all colleges, namely, nursing, medicine, pharmacy, and allied medical sciences. The university has very detailed ethics, policies, and procedures applied to students, faculty, and clinicians.

To control and maintain academic integrity, the college of nursing established specific measures to monitor and correct plagiarism. These measures included, but not limited to, planning and conducting an orientation program for new students on plagiarism; training them on how to use the American Psychological Association citation manual for referencing; organizing workshops to train faculty on how to use anti-plagiarism software (Turnitin) to detect the percentage of similarities between submitted assignments and internet published documents; forming a disciplinary committee to handle any concern in a timely and confidential manner; and setting and announcing guidelines to protect examinations to prevent cheating. For example, students are not allowed to share calculators, or to bring cell phones, and if a student caught cheating during an examination, the student will not be allowed to continue and will leave the examination venue. The invigilator will complete the incident report form and submit it with supporting evidence to the chair of the disciplinary committee for further investigation, and penalties/ disciplinary actions are imposed as deemed appropriate.

However, at this study setting, students' compliance with honesty, integrity, trustworthiness and accountability as program outcomes is a point of concern because the students encounter challenges due to the use of English language as a foreign medium of instruction (Suliman & Tadross, 2011), and non-compliance with program outcomes may negatively impact their professional honesty in the clinical area after graduation. Therefore, it is important to assess students' attitudes and behaviors toward plagiarism.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the attitudes and behaviors held by nursing students toward plagiarism, and to identify areas of significant differences in attitudes and behaviors in relation to student's level of education, and to studying ethics, research, and clinical nursing courses.

### **Literature Review:**

There is much written about academic misconduct in general and plagiarism in particular across the international academic community. It is viewed as a longstanding issue that is recognized among students from different disciplines in many countries such as the United States of America, United Kingdom, Germany, Russia, Finland, Poland, Australia, Singapore, and the Middle East (Bayaa Martin Saana et al., 2016; Mohammed et al., 2015; Moten, 2014; Kusnoor & Falik, 2013; Blachnio & Weremko, 2011). Its widespread is mainly due to the following reasons: accessibility of electronic media (Wan-Ali, Ismail, & Cheat, 2012), lack of knowledge about available policies and procedures on plagiarism, time constraints, difficulty of the assignment, and foreign language incompetency, such as poor command over the use of English if used as a foreign medium of instruction (Bayaa Martin Saana et al., 2016; Debnath, 2016; Mohammed et al., 2015; Price, 2014).

Disciplinary actions toward plagiarism varies from one country to another. For example, plagiarism is treated less seriously in Germany, Russia, Singapore, and Poland than in the USA (Blachnio & Weremko, 2011).

Attitudes and behaviors are positively correlated (Otieno, Liyayla, & Odongo, 2015). They are the guiding concepts for exploring plagiarism. Attitude about plagiarism refers to student's favorable or unfavorable way of thinking, it is expected to positively or negatively influence the student's behavior toward plagiarism. Researchers have investigated attitudes and behaviors toward plagiarism among students from different educational backgrounds. Ghias et al. (2014) studied attitudes and behaviors of medical students from one private and one public sector medical college of Pakistan towards plagiarism, the results were significantly higher among senior students (in clinical years) as compared to junior students (in basic sciences years). Other studies conducted among medical students at the Christian Medical College, Vellore, India (Varghese & Jacob, 2015) and dentistry students in Australian research-intensive university (Ford & Hughes, 2012)

showed that those who tended to have lenient attitudes toward plagiarism were those who obtained low knowledge scores on plagiarism, or those international students who experience language and cultural difficulty.

In nursing, Arhin (2009) study findings showed that students were able to identify dishonest behaviors in examination situations but hardly identified the same in class room assignments, and laboratory exercises. Theart and Smit (2012) reported that dishonest practices of high concern were in copying others' work without acknowledging references and in falsifying practical records. Other studies on strategies to reduce plagiarism in nursing and other disciplines have not been significantly effective (Lynch et al., 2017; Moss, White, & Lee, 2018). Tippitt et al. (2009) noted that the accountability to create an environment with academic honesty lies on faculty, administrators, and students. They identified and questioned the usefulness of several techniques in developing academic honesty. For example, faculty need to build trustful and respectable relationships with students; administrators need to organize frequent orientation about the importance of academic honesty. However, other techniques such as shuffling test questions; limiting items that students may bring to the exam, such as cell phones and calculators; and carefully invigilate exams convey faculty's distrust of students.

It is worth mentioning that the aforementioned literature is applicable to western countries. Two studies were only located in Saudi Arabia. A study by Abdulghani et al. (2018) on cheating among medical students showed more male students (22.9%) than female students (11.6%) had done or would consider copying from the Internet and other published sources without acknowledging the sources ( $p=0.005$ ). The other study by Hosny and Shameem (2014) on cheating and plagiarism among Saudi female students in the College of Computer and Information Sciences showed that 83.4% of students plagiarized by using electronic sources of information, 32.1% have paraphrased words of others and submitted as own work without acknowledging the reference, 40% have copied word by word without quotations or acknowledgment of the reference, and the rest (11.3%) have copied all or parts of others work without acknowledging the reference.

The present study was motivated by the lack of studies in the area of plagiarism among Saudi nursing students. Specifically, it aimed at answering the following research questions:

1. What are the attitudes and behaviors of nursing students towards plagiarism?
2. Is there a statistical difference between the attitudes and behaviors of nursing students toward plagiarism in relation to their level of education, and to studying ethics, research, and clinical nursing courses?

## **Methods**

### *Design, Population, and Sample*

This is a descriptive study. The total population included 100 junior female nursing students of first year who were in their level 1 and 2, and 85 senior female nursing students in their fourth year who were in their level 7 and 8. The study employed a non-probability convenience sampling technique. All students were invited to participate since their total number was not large. Only 134 students completed the questionnaire, hence representing the total sample size (see Table 1).

### *Instruments*

The questionnaire used was originally developed by Rennie and Crosby (2001), and adapted by Ghias et al. (2014). It consisted of 15 scenarios of a hypothetical students who was engaged in plagiarism (7 scenarios), lying (5 scenarios) and cheating and stealing (3 scenarios). Participants' attitudes and behaviors on each scenario were measured as follows: For attitudes, they were asked if the hypothetical student was wrong; and for behaviors, they were asked if they have ever done or would consider doing what is described in the scenario. Participants had the option to respond with "Yes" or "No" or "Not sure (Ghias et al., 2014). The reliability of the tool was not reported by the developers.

In this study, Ghias et al (2014) seven scenarios on plagiarism were used without any modifications. The reliability/stability of the 7 scenarios on plagiarism was tested on 25 students using test-retest with two-week interval in between; the Pearson correlation coefficients for the seven scenarios were between 0.69 and 0.82.

### *Ethical Approval and Data Collection*

The study protocol was reviewed by the College Research Committee, to ensure compliance with appropriate research ethical conduct, and approval was obtained. Participation in the study was voluntary and anonymous.

Data were collected after coordinating days, dates, time and place of data collection with course instructors, and were collected from students at the end of their classes. At time of data collection, the researchers distributed an invitation letter with detailed information about the study, and a consent form to those who expressed willingness to participate. Then the questionnaires were handed to students who signed the consent. Instant (oral) translation to Arabic language was provided by a professional bilingual translator across all sessions of data collection. Completed questionnaires were collected by the researchers on the same day.

#### *Data Analysis*

Data were analyzed using SPSS-20. Descriptive analysis (frequencies and percentages for discrete variables, mean scores and standard deviation for continuous variables) and inferential statistics (Chi-square and Creamer) were used. Statistical significance was pre-set at  $P=0.05$ .

## **Results**

### *Participants*

A total of 185 participants were recruited to this study, and 134 completed questionnaires were received, giving an overall response rate of 72%. The participants were all females since this is a female college, 77 were senior students (57.5%), and 57 were junior students (42.5%). As shown in Table 1, the majority were single (90.3%), and the mean age and mean GPA were 21.37 years, 3.48 out of 5 respectively. Among the courses taken, the majority had nursing ethics (93.3%), research (56.7%), and clinical courses (68.7%).

**Table 1.** Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N=134)

<b>Variable</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>Mean <math>\pm</math> SD</b>
Level of Educational (seniority)		
Junior	57 (42.5)	
Senior	77 (57.5)	
Social status:		
Single	121 (90.3)	
Married	12 (9)	
Others	1 (7)	
Age	134	21.37 $\pm$ 1.81
GPA	134	3.48 $\pm$ .53
Studied Nursing Ethics		
Yes	125 (93.3)	
No	9 (6.7)	
Studied Nursing Research		
Yes	76 (56.7)	
No	58 (43.3)	
Studied Clinical Nursing Courses		
Yes	92 (68.7)	
No	42 (31.3)	

### *Plagiarism*

Initial inspection of overall participants' self-reported attitudes and behaviors on each situation on plagiarism answered research question 1. The findings as presented in Table 2 showed two patterns of consistent attitudes and behaviors in participants' responses:

- Correct identification of dishonest attitudes (the hypothetical student was wrong) and behaviors (they have not done or would consider doing the same) in five plagiarism situations namely: situation 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7 as follows:

- Situation 2, the majority (76.9%) recognized copying from the internet and other published sources (textbooks,

papers) without acknowledging the sources as wrong, and 64.2% have not done or would consider doing the same.

- Situation 3, the majority (76.1%) recognized copying from assignments submitted earlier by senior peers as wrong, and 67.2% have not done or would consider doing the same.
- Situation 5, the majority (71.6%) recognized lending own work to a friend to copy as wrong, and 60.4% have not done or would consider doing the same.
- Situation 6, the majority (89.6%) recognized copying a friend’s work without telling him”, as wrong, and 84.3% have not done or would consider doing the same.
- Situation 7, more students (47.8%) recognized re-submission of the same report for another part of the course as wrong, and 54.5% have not done or would consider doing the same.

-Incorrect identification of dishonest attitudes and/or behaviors in situations 1 and 4 as follows:

- Situation 1, the majority (a total of 53%) did not recognize copying verbatim (word-by-word) from different sources with appropriate documentation of references as wrong (41.8%) and others were not sure if such an action was wrong (11.2%). A similar percent (53%) showed that participants have done or would consider doing the same.
- Situation 4, the majority of participants (53.7%) did not recognize helping a friend by writing an assignment for him/her as wrong, and 53.0% have done or would consider doing the same.

**Table 2.** Summary of Attitudes and Behaviors of Overall Participants toward Plagiarism (N=134)

Scenarios and responses	Attitude		Behavior	
	Student* is wrong		Have done or would consider doing the same	
	n	%*	n	%*
<b>Situation 1:</b> For an assignment, a student copies verbatim (word-for-word) from the internet and other published sources (textbooks, papers) and lists them as references				
Yes	63	47	71	53
No	56	42	47	35
Not Sure	15	11	16	12
<b>Situation 2:</b> For an assignment, a student copies from the internet and other published sources (textbooks, papers) without acknowledging the sources				
Yes	103	77	27	20
No	16	12	86	64
Not Sure	15	11	21	16
<b>Situation 3:</b> For an assignment, a student copies from assignments submitted earlier by senior peers				
Yes	102	76	22	17
No	14	11	90	67
Not Sure	18	13	22	16
<b>Situation 4:</b> A student helps a friend by writing an assignment for him/her				
Yes	48	36	71	53
No	72	54	48	36
Not Sure	14	10	15	11
<b>Situation 5:</b> A student lends his work to a friend to copy				
Yes	96	72	29	22
No	21	16	81	60
Not Sure	17	12	24	18
<b>Situation 6:</b> A student copies a friend’s work without telling him				
Yes	120	90	12	9
No	7	5	113	84
Not Sure	7	5	9	7

Scenarios and responses	Attitude		Behavior	
	Student* is wrong		Have done or would consider doing the same	
	n	%*	n	%*
<b>Situation 7:</b> A student re-submits the same report for another part of the course				
Yes	64	48	38	28
No	45	33	73	55
Not Sure	25	19	23	17

\* Hypothetical student

%\* were rounded to the nearest number if equal to/or exceed .5

#### Background variables:

In answering research question 2, the frequency and percentage in addition to chi-square analysis of participants' self-reported attitudes and behaviors were calculated in relation to the following background variables:

#### Level of Education: Junior versus Senior Nursing Students

Findings with statistical significance are included in Table 3. Only situations 1, 3, and 4 showed significant differences between participants' attitudes and /or behaviors as follows:

- Situation 1, significance in favor of junior students was noted in their attitudes and behaviors. More junior students were able to identify dishonest attitude (59.6%) and behavior (50.8%) than senior students (37.6% for attitudes, and 23.3% for behaviors) ( $X^2=12.28$ ,  $p=.002$ ; and  $X^2=15.52$ ,  $p=.000$  respectively).
- Situation 3, Significance in favor of junior students was noted only in their behaviors. More junior students (77.1%) were able to identify dishonest behavior than senior students (59.7%) ( $X^2=6.84$ ,  $p=.033$ ).
- Situation 4, significance in favor of junior students was noted in their attitudes and behaviors. More junior students were able to identify dishonest attitude (52.6%) and behavior (50.8%) than senior students (23.3% for attitudes, and 24.6% for behaviors) ( $X^2= 14.56$ ,  $p=.001$ , and  $X^2=18.42$ ,  $p=.000$  respectively).

**Table 3.** Results of Significant Chi-square Analysis for Responses of Junior and Senior Nursing Students on Plagiarism (N=134)

Scenario	Junior Students (n=57)			Senior Students (n=77)			$X^2$	df	P*	Crea-mers
	Yes n %*	No n %*	Not Sure n %*	Yes n %*	No n %*	Not sure n %*				
Q1. A	34 60	14 25	9 15	29 37	42 55	6 8	12.28	2	.002	.30
B	19 33	29 51	9 16	52 67	18 23	7 9	15.52	2	.000	.34
Q3. B	4 07	44 77	9 16	18 23	46 60	13 17	6.84	2	.033	.22
Q4. A	30 53	20 35	7 12	18 23	52 67	7 9	14.56	2	.001	.33
B	18 32	29 51	10 17	53 69	19 25	5 6	18.42	2	.000	.37

A= Attitude (the hypothetical student was wrong)

B= Behavior (the participant have done or would consider doing the same)

P\*= values are significant

%\* were rounded to the nearest number if equal to or exceed .5

#### Nursing Ethics:

As shown in table 4, significance in favor of students who studied ethics was noted only in their behavior in situation 2. The majority (61.2%) **have not** done or would consider copying from the internet and other published sources (textbooks, papers) without acknowledging the sources. ( $\chi^2= 8.100$  and  $P= .017$ ).

#### Nursing Research:

As shown in table 5, significance in favor of students who studied research was noted in their attitude and behavior in two situation as follows:

- Situation 1, More students (29.9%) were not able to recognize copying verbatim (word-for-word) from the internet and other published sources (textbooks, papers) and listing them as references as wrong, and 37.3% have done or would consider doing the same ( $X^2=8.76$ ,  $p=.012$ ; and  $X^2=11.61$ ,  $p=.003$  respectively).
- Situation 4, More students (38.1) were not able to recognize helping a friend by writing an assignment for him/her as wrong, and 38.8% have done or would consider doing the same ( $X^2=13.32$ ,  $p=.001$ ; and  $X^2=16.97$ ,  $p=.000$  respectively).

**Table 4.** Results of Significant Chi-square Analysis for Responses of Students who Studied Ethics and those who did not on Plagiarism (N=134)

Scenario	Studied Ethics (n= 125)			Didn't Study Ethics (n=9)			$X^2$	df	P*	Crea-mers
	Yes n %*	No n %*	Not Sure n %*	Yes n %*	No n %*	Not Sure n %*				
Q2. B	22 16.4	82 61.2	21 15.7	5 3.7	4 3.0	0 0.0	8.10	2	.017	.24

**Table 5.** Results of Significant Chi-square Analysis for Responses of Students who Studied Research and those who did not on Plagiarism (N=134)

Scenario	Studied Research (n=76)			Didn't Study Research (n=58)			$X^2$	df	P*	Crea-mers
	Yes n %*	No n %*	Not Sure n %*	Yes n %*	No n %*	Not Sure n %*				
Q1. A	30 22.4	40 29.9	6 4.5	33 24.6	16 11.9	9 6.7	8.76	2	.012	.25
B	50 37.3	19 14.2	7 5.2	21 15.7	28 20.9	9 6.7	11.6	2	.003	.29
Q4. A	18 13.4	51 38.1	7 5.2	30 22.4	21 15.7	7 5.2	13.3	2	.001	.31
B	52 38.8	19 14.2	5 3.7	19 14.2	29 21.6	10 7.5	16.9	2	.000	.35

*Clinical Nursing*

As shown in table 6, significance in favor of students who studied clinical nursing courses was noted in their attitude and/or behavior in three situation as follows:

- Situation 1, More students (33.6%) were not able to recognize copying verbatim (word-for-word) from the internet and other published sources and listing them as references as wrong, and 43.3% have done or would consider doing the same ( $X^2=6.53$ ,  $p=.038$ ; and  $X^2=12.96$ ,  $p=.002$  respectively).
- Situation 4, More students (41.8%) were not able to recognize helping a friend by writing an assignment for him/her as wrong, and 43.3% have done or would consider doing the same ( $X^2=6.02$ ,  $p=.049$ ; and  $X^2=13.70$ ,  $p=.001$  respectively).
- Situation 6, the majority (62.7%) recognized copying a friend's work without telling him/her as wrong ( $\chi^2=6.274$ ,  $P=.043$ ).

**Table 6.** Results of Significant Chi-square Analysis for Responses of Students who Studied Ethics and those who did not on Plagiarism (N=134)

Scenario	Studied Clinical Nursing Courses (n=92)			Didn't Study Clinical Nursing Courses (n= 42)			$X^2$	df	P*	Crea-mers
	Yes n %*	No n %*	Not Sure n %*	Yes n %*	No n %*	Not Sure n %*				
Q1. A	39 29.1	45 33.6	8 6.0	24 17.9	11 8.2	7 5.2	6.53	2	.038	.22
B	58 43.3	27 20.1	7 5.2	13 9.7	20 14.9	9 6.7	12.9	2	.002	.31
Q4. A	28 20.9	56 41.8	8 6.0	20 14.9	16 11.9	6 4.5	6.02	2	.049	.21
B	58 43.3	28 20.9	6 4.5	13 9.7	20 14.9	9 6.7	13.7	2	.001	.32
Q6. A	84 62.7	6 4.5	2 1.5	36 26.9	1 0.7	5 3.7	6.27	2	.043	.21

## Discussion

At this study setting, the four year program encompasses research and ethics as two separate formal courses. The majority of the students (93.3%) had taken ethics because it is taught in the first year, while only 56.7% had taken research because it is taught in the third year, and 68.7% had taken clinical nursing, which take place in the hospital on real patients, because it is integrated longitudinally in eight nursing courses distributed over the last three years of the program. First-year nursing students starts their training, through simulation, in the college labs.

This study demonstrated that the majority of nursing students have consistently identified dishonest attitudes and behaviors in most plagiarism situations (i.e., scenarios 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7). This finding on conformance between honest attitudes and behaviors is most likely attributed to participants' religious values. For example, "copying without acknowledging the sources" (scenario # 2) is in other words stealing others intellectual properties. Stealing is reinforced as wrong action in Islamic religious values, therefore it influences their attitudes and behaviors. In general, the finding may suggest a potential for a promising compliance with academic integrity and program outcomes (i.e., honesty, integrity, trustworthiness and accountability).

However, significant differences in the self-reported attitudes and behaviors were noted between junior and senior nursing students in three scenarios (# 1, 3, and 4); between students who studied and who did not study: ethics in scenario # 2, research in two scenarios (1 and 4), and clinical nursing in three scenarios (1, 4, and 6). Copying from the internet and listing sources as references (scenario # 1) was the most predominant among all statistically significant findings. Only junior students were able to correctly recognize wrong attitudes (59.6%) and behaviors (50.8%) in this scenario. However, senior students (37.6%), and those who studied research (29.9%), and clinical courses (33.6%) demonstrated incorrect/dishonest attitudes, and behaviors (23.3%, 37.3%, and 43.3% respectively).

Helping a friend by writing an assignment for him/her (scenario # 4) was the next predominant among statistically significant findings. Similarly, junior students were able to identify wrong attitudes and behaviors, however, students who studied research and clinical nursing courses demonstrated contradicting (i.e., dishonest) attitudes and behaviors. Luckily, significance in attitudes of students who studied clinical courses showed copying others work without telling them (scenario # 6) as wrong.

It is worth mentioning that those who studied research and clinical nursing are mainly senior students. Therefore, it is obvious that senior students demonstrated consistently wrong attitudes and behaviors toward copying from the internet and listing sources as references, and helping a friend by writing him/her an assignment. Senior students' way of reasoning shows lack of understanding to the attitudes and behaviors which constitute plagiarism, most likely because they feel more pressure, than junior students, in obtaining high grades since they are engaged in advanced theoretical courses such as research, and clinical nursing. They may think that these practices are not offensive as far as copying others work is accompanied by proper documentation of references, and that writing an assignment for a friend is, perhaps, a matter of help. Nevertheless, these findings are similar to those of Ghias et al. (2014) where plagiarism was significantly higher among medical senior students as compared to junior students.

Moreover, significant findings showed that junior students have not done or would consider copying from assignments submitted earlier by senior peers (scenario # 3), and those who studied ethics have not done or would consider copying others work without acknowledging the sources (scenario 2). This finding represent an important difference with that of Hosny and Shameem (2014), who reported that copying others work without acknowledging the sources was a common problem among female Saudi students. Nevertheless, in this study, junior students were not inclined to plagiarize, perhaps, because they had recently taken a course on ethics since ethics is taught in the first year and they were still in their first year. Therefore, studying ethics is associated with honesty of attitudes and behaviors among junior students. Senior students had taken ethics too, but earlier during their first year, this implied that senior students should be frequently reminded with the code of academic honesty. The management of the college may need to reconsider teaching ethics as a separate course, rather, ethics should be integrated longitudinally in all courses of the program.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

This study demonstrated significant differences in the self-reported attitudes and behaviors toward plagiarism between junior and senior nursing students, and between students who studied ethics, research, and clinical courses and those who did not. Of major concern were conformance between honest attitudes and behaviors of junior students, in contrast to conformance in dishonest attitudes and behaviors of students who studied research, and those who studied clinical nursing toward copying verbatim (word-for-word) from the internet and other published sources and lists them as references; and toward helping a friend by writing an assignment for him/her.

Studying ethics showed association with academic honesty in attitudes and behaviors of junior students. It is essential to reinforce it throughout the years of education to urge all students (junior and senior) to internalize academic honesty in their attitudes and behaviors, and hence, to protect: Academically honest students from unfair competition with those students who tend to plagiarize to obtain higher scores in their exams/course assignments; patients from unsafe/incompetent students who tend to plagiarize in their clinical nursing courses; and reputation of the academic institution from underestimating the quality of education it provides.

This study focused on shared attitudes and behaviors of the students, further studies should be conducted using qualitative and quantitative research to explore the rationale behind the selected attitudes and behaviors. Other aspects should also be studied, it may include: the ethical responsibility of faculty members in controlling plagiarism in their courses; and of management in controlling academic, professional, and scientific forms of misconduct.

### **Limitations**

This study has limitations. The study population is homogeneous, representing one college of female nursing students, and the generalizability of the results is limited by the use of a small size, non-probability, and convenience sample.

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## اتجاهات وسلوكيات طالبات التمريض حول الانتحال الأدبي

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### ملخص

يؤدي سوء السلوك الأكاديمي لدى الطلبة إلى خرق موثوقية معرفتهم. وتعدّ المؤسسات الأكاديمية أن أي خرق للأمانة الأكاديمية بمثابة مسألة تأديبية. هدفت هذه الدراسة الوصفية إلى فحص اتجاهات وسلوكيات طالبات التمريض حول الانتحال الأدبي (السرقة الأدبية)، وتأثير المستوى التعليمي لدى طالبات السنوات المتقدمة وطالبات السنوات المبتدئة، بالإضافة إلى دراستهن للمواد المتعلقة بأخلاقيات المهنة، والبحث العلمي، والتمريض الكلينيكي على اتجاهاتهن وسلوكياتهن. تكونت عينة الدراسة من عينة متيسرة تضمنت 134 طالبة (57 مبتدئة و 77 متقدمة)، واستمارة حققت شرط الثبات لجمع المعلومات اشتملت على 7 مواقف انتحال أدبي. أظهرت نتائج الدراسة وجود فروقات ذات دلالة إحصائية بين المشاركات، من أهم النتائج وجود توافق دال على النزاهة الأكاديمية بين اتجاهات وسلوكيات طالبات السنوات المبتدئة، و توافق دال على خرق النزاهة الأكاديمية بين طالبات السنوات المتقدمة، وممن درسن مادة البحث العلمي، والمواد الكلينيكية بما يتعلق "بالنسخ الحرفي من الإنترنت ومن المصادر الأخرى للمعلومات المنشورة مع بيان قائمة المراجع"؛ بالإضافة إلى "مساعدة صديق/صديقة في كتابة واجب دراسي". وخرجت الدراسة بتوصيات تتعلق بتعزيز مفهوم النزاهة الأكاديمية لدى الطلبة، وبالتوصية بإجراء المزيد من الأبحاث عن المسؤولية الأخلاقية لدى أعضاء الهيئة التدريسية وإدارة الكلية تجاه ضبط سوء السلوك الأكاديمي.

**الكلمات الدالة:** الانتحال الأدبي، سوء السلوك الأكاديمي، طالبات التمريض.

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