

Development of a Procedure to Avoid Plagiarism in Scholarly Work

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Abstract

Managing scholarly work such as papers, proposals, and other similar documents can pose a challenge to graduate students, new academic professionals as well as experienced researchers. The complexity increases when the scholarly work involves a team of students and faculty members from diverse groups, backgrounds, departments, and institutions. The legal and institutional consequences of non-conformance can be disastrous for a researcher's career, profession, and reputation. A clear understanding of proper citation and fair use of sources became increasingly challenging as reported by finding agencies evidenced by the increase in improper use of citations.

The objective of this work is to develop a systematic process to manage scholarly literature and ensure fair use and proper citations in scholarly writing. The paper will consider three important elements for managing the literature review of prior works: managing literature, fair use, and team writing. A checklist for best practices in writing scholarly work will be presented that can be used to avoid improper and inappropriate use of materials. The checklist will ensure proper procedure is followed. In a collaborative paper or proposal, all authors will review and follow these guidelines. The appropriateness of the use of one's previous work and the limitations will also be discussed.

Introduction:

Scholarly works generally pertain to formal research created by experts within a particular field, intended for an audience of fellow scholars, and often involve a systematic approach to investigation and formal presentation through avenues such as academic journals, conferences, and books. It is a critical aspect of academic life. It's a challenge for graduate students, new academic professionals, and experienced researchers to manage scholarly work like papers, proposals, and other similar documents. To produce high-quality scholarly work, it is essential to follow best practices that are designed to ensure that the research is rigorous, the writing is clear and concise, and the work is presented in a format that is appropriate for the intended audience. University education is anticipated to incorporate both a foundation in research and a focus on fostering a research-oriented mindset. In this approach, educators actively involve students in ongoing knowledge-generation processes while simultaneously equipping them to tackle the evolving challenges they will encounter beyond the realm of academia [1]. Additionally, collaboration is integral to significant scientific endeavors, serving as a fundamental requirement for success. Scientific and professional work, at its core, functions as a key educational tool, and its substance can be conveyed through various formats and methodologies [2].

The current study is a systematic process to manage scholarly work using three different strategies: Managing literature with proper citation, Fair Use, and Team writing. To avoid inappropriate and inconvenient use of materials we will use a checklist for best practices in writing scholarly which will ensure the use of the proper procedure.

Literature Review:

Several studies were conducted using various methods of doing scholarly work in different academic environments and fields. In contemporary times, both research and teaching practices are increasingly dedicated to exploring how students can cultivate knowledge through collaborative efforts [1]. Similarly, the interaction between vernacular and academic knowledge fosters fresh dialogues and distinctive perspectives, leading to transformative shifts in the production of knowledge. The escalating prevalence of the evidence-based practice paradigm has sparked significant debate within educational circles in the last decade, particularly regarding the utility of research. Divergent interpretations of the meaning of evidence-based practice and differing opinions on its origins contribute to the ongoing discourse in this field [3]. Research endeavors within higher education adopt a role of active engagement, a characteristic shared by teaching and learning processes, frequently manifesting through service-learning or community-based learning initiatives [4]. Gloria Rogers, formerly ABET's Managing Director of Professional Services, writes extensively on the topic of assessment. In an article entitled "When is Enough Enough?", she says that data collection activities must be examined in light of good program assessment practice, efficiency, and reasonableness. She says several questions need to be asked, such as, "Is there a clear vision of why specific data are being collected?" She answers, "Without clearly defined outcomes, there can never be enough data because there is no focus" [5]. Demands for more rigorous research on the impact of service learning imply that compelling, quantitative evidence is crucial to convince universities of the pedagogical value of service learning and foster increased acceptance of this approach [4]. Student-instructor interaction encompasses various aspects, such as the instructor delivering information, offering support to students, and providing feedback on their work [6]. Access to education needs to be expanded to accommodate practitioners seeking academic development, not solely in terms of practical skills, but also to embrace research as an integral component of social work as both a profession and a discipline [7]. Over the last decade, there has been a notable surge in criticism directed towards doctoral education, garnering national attention and prompting a reconsideration of whether this form of education aligns adequately in terms of content, structure, and process to effectively prepare scholars and researchers to address the current and future needs of society [8]. In the process of interconnection between fields and contexts, different agents intervene, each with their roles. For instance, [9] the discussion addresses three distinct agents in interaction—the research producers, the research users, and the intermediaries—and underscores the persistence of a gap among them [10]. It has been shown in previous studies that copyright compliance and ethical use of research reports are an integral part of scholarly publishing [11]. This is because copyright violation is assumed to be an unacceptable practice in scholarly communication. Scholarly authors are bestowed with the responsibility of enhancing the visibility of their study and as such adopt different approaches to enhance the visibility of their work. One of these techniques that authors may adopt is the use of self-archiving to further improve their work visibility [12][13]. The fundamental ethical principle for every scientist is intellectual honesty, which should permeate every stage of scientific work—from the formulation of a thesis and the judicious selection of research methodology to the analysis, interpretation of results, and eventual publication. In addition to overarching principles that clearly outline essential conditions for meaningful scholarly involvement, such as a profound understanding of literature and the application of appropriate methodologies, the expression of rigor and excellence in one's work, and the acceptance of responsibility by every

member of the research team, other ethical principles are equally crucial. These additional principles contribute to the establishment and preservation of sound scientific practices [2]. The conditions and restrictions imposed by publishers on academic authors' own published work have a substantial impact on key academic activities, including teaching, research, publication, and scholarly exchange with colleagues and collaborators [14].

A literature review is an essential aspect of scholarly work. It involves a critical analysis of the existing literature on the research question. A good literature review should be comprehensive, up-to-date, and focused on the research question. It should also identify any gaps in the literature that the research aims to fill. The argument is the central thesis of the scholarly work. It should be clear, concise, and well-supported by evidence. It should also be structured logically and coherently. According to Shidham, Scientific literature relies on the analysis and discussion of experiments, observations, and experiences, fostering a serious and intellectual exchange of information. This exchange occurs through a variety of platforms [15].

Different types of scholarly work have different formatting guidelines. It is essential to follow the appropriate guidelines to ensure that the work is presented in a format that is appropriate for the intended audience. Likewise, it is important to avoid other issues such as bias and Plagiarism. Plagiarism is an act of using others' expression of ideas or work without proper citation or permission. So, proper citation and referencing are critical aspects of scholarly work. They ensure that the work is credible and that the sources are appropriately acknowledged. It is essential to use the appropriate citation style and to cite all sources accurately. Many existing problems, particularly with self-citations, can be remedied by providing improvements to the process of creating the article and submission process including upholding policies and guidelines to assist editors to evaluate the integrity of the paper accurately [16]. Likewise, enforcing the different formats of citations can be a daunting task, especially for those blissfully unaware or unable to effectively organize and evaluate the format needed. The lack of knowledge about citation formats as well as inadvertent plagiarism can be a cause for misuse of citations [17]. Likewise, proper education is needed to inform others of the proper way to provide citations. A significant amount of research indicates that students are misinformed about the basic principles of citations and thus display a lack of knowledge of the topic instead of willful misconduct [18].

As well as considering the correct forms of citations, it is critical to achieve one of the fundamental functions of citations. Citations not only provide a higher level of academic integrity but credibility as well. Citations acknowledge ideas, thoughts, and writings of others used in the current paper to provide authority for statements made [19].

Research Methods:

Recognizing the imperative to enhance scholarly work skills across all researchers, a study was undertaken utilizing a survey to assess the outcomes. The survey, employing a five-point Likert scale, aimed to gather responses from participants regarding the perceived importance of specific skills or concepts and their satisfaction levels with their proficiency in preparing scholarly works. Demographic information, including gender, years of experience, highest degree attained, occupation, and age, was collected to enable comparisons across diverse backgrounds and

countries. The survey specifically targeted individuals actively involved in research or scholarly pursuits.

The analysis of survey responses focused on the experimental group, aiming to address the following research questions.

- a) There is no significant difference based on the level of proficiency in managing literature with proper citation, fair use, and team writing is similar across individuals with varying years of experience.
- b) There are no significant differences in the ability to manage literature with proper citation, fair use, and team writing between individuals from different countries.
- c) There is no significant difference based on the level of proficiency in managing literature with proper citation, fair use, and team writing is not significantly different among individuals with different levels of education.

Research Methodology:

In this study, a total of 73 respondents participated. The majority of participants were from countries other than the USA, with 54 respondents representing various national origins, while 17 respondents were from the USA. The gender distribution showed that 49 respondents identified as male, and 22 respondents identified as female. In terms of age, the largest group of respondents fell within the 26-35 age range, followed by the 55+ age group, the 36-45 age group, and the 18-25 age group. The occupations of the participants varied, with 37 being full-time faculty, 12 graduate students, 10 undergraduate students, 2 part-time faculty, and 7 others. The highest degree obtained by the respondents included 28 doctorates (academic/research), 24 masters, and 17 bachelors. The majority of respondents had 1-5 years of research experience, while others had varying levels of experience ranging from 5-10 years, 10-15 years, 15-20 years, and 20+ years. The study included participants from 36 respondents from the USA and 35 from other countries. It is important to note that some participants did not answer certain demographic questions, leading to variations in the total count for each category.

Table 1: Demographic information

Demographic	Count
Total Respondents	79
National Origin	22 USA, 54 Other Not answered: 3
Gender	51 Male, 26 Female Not answered: 2
Age	26 (26-35), 18 (55+), 16 (36-45), 9 (18-25), 8 (45-55) Not answered: 2
Occupation	42 Full-Time Faculty, 12 Graduate Students, 11 Undergraduate Students, 2 Part-Time Faculty, 7 Others Not answered: 5
Highest Degree	33 Doctorate (Academic/Research), 25 Masters, 17 Bachelors.

	Not answered: 4
Years of experience in research	31 (1-5), 9 (5-10), 6 (10-15), 12 (15-20), 17 (20+) Not answered: 4
Country	41 USA, 36 Other Not answered: 2

Figure 1 presents the responses of individuals to a series of questions related to their familiarity and proficiency with citation styles, use of narratives copied from other sources, use of copyrighted materials, paraphrasing, use of plagiarism check software, familiarity with institutional policies, review of source documents, and team writing practices. The responses are grouped into different categories, including Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. The table provides a count of the number of responses in each category for each question. Overall, the results of the survey indicate that there is a good level of awareness and proficiency in citation styles among the respondents. However, when it comes to using narratives copied from other sources, longer quotes or copyrighted materials, the responses indicate that there is some level of non-compliance with best practices. It is also noted that some respondents have used plagiarism check software to ensure proper citation and are familiar with institutional and funding agency policies for citation and plagiarism. Finally, the results suggest that there is a need for more team collaboration and peer review to ensure proper citation in team projects and documents. Overall, the results suggest a need for continued education and training in proper citation practices to ensure compliance and quality research.

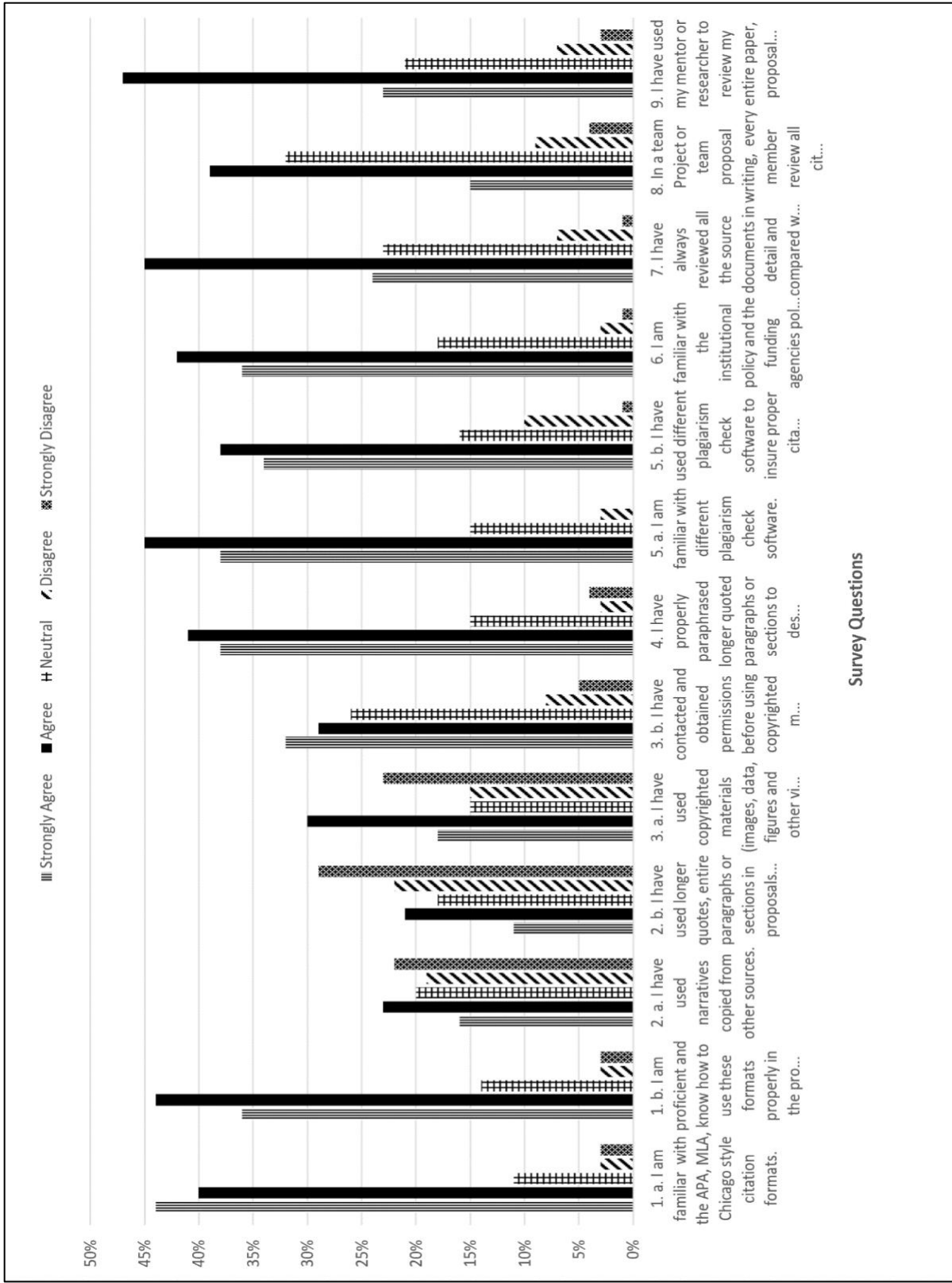


Figure 1: Analysis of Responses of Survey Questions

Result & Discussion:

The present study explored the significance and satisfaction levels associated with managing scholarly work, particularly papers, proposals, and other similar documents. Graduate students, new academic professionals as well as experienced researchers can face complexity while doing these scholarly works. So, the objective of our work is to develop a systematic process to manage scholarly literature and ensure fair use and proper citations in scholarly writing. In this paper, we considered three important elements for managing the literature review of prior works: managing literature, fair use, and team writing. A checklist for best practices in writing scholarly work was presented that can be used to avoid improper and inappropriate use of materials. The checklist will ensure proper procedure is followed. In a collaborative paper or proposal, all authors will review and follow these guidelines. The appropriateness of the use of one's previous work and the limitations was also discussed.

Based on the statistical analyses conducted using the survey responses from individuals with research experience, significant differences were observed between different years of research experience and specific survey questions. The analysis revealed strong significance ($p < 0.05$) for the following questions: Q1.a & Q1.b. These significant differences suggest that years of research experience have an impact on respondents' perceptions of the importance and satisfaction of scholarly works in those areas. However, for the remaining survey questions, no significant differences were found. The effect sizes for the significant questions ranged from 0.344 to 0.339, indicating moderate to large effects.

Table 2 provides detailed information about the p-values, effect sizes, sample sizes, and chi-square values for each question analyzed. It should be noted that the table does not include the actual question statements or the interpretation of the specific findings.

Table 2: Results of the analysis between Years of experience and survey Questions

Criteria	Q1.a	Q1.b	Q2.a	Q2.b	Q3.a	Q3.b	Q4	Q5.a	Q5.b	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
P-Value	0.00541	0.00845	0.695	0.263	0.763	0.0645	0.110	0.129	0.820	0.126	0.754	0.548	0.391
Effect Size	0.344	0.339	0.208	0.258	0.200	0.296	0.282	0.283	0.194	0.278	0.201	0.224	0.242
Sample Size	72	71	73	72	73	72	73	73	72	73	73	73	72
Chi-Square	34.0	32.6	12.7	19.1	11.7	25.3	23.1	17.6	10.8	22.6	11.9	14.7	16.9

Table 3 The findings of the statistical analysis are presented to examine the relationship between the respondents' country and various survey questions regarding the importance and satisfaction of scholarly works. The analysis aimed to identify any significant differences based on country. The results of the analysis indicate that there were no statistically significant differences between respondents from different countries for the majority of the survey questions. The p-values for all the questions (Q1.a, Q1.b, Q2.a, Q2.b, Q3.a, Q3.b, Q4, Q5.a, Q5.b, Q6, Q7, Q8, Q9) were

greater than 0.05, indicating no significant associations between country and respondents' perceptions of these aspects of scholarly works.

However, it is worth noting that small effect sizes were observed for some of the questions, ranging from 0.0597 to 0.351. This suggests that while there were no significant differences, there might be some minor variations in respondents' perceptions based on their country of origin. The sample size, chi-square values, and detailed statistics for each question can be found in Table 3. It is important to interpret these results in conjunction with the specific survey question statements to gain a comprehensive understanding of the findings.

Table 3: Results of the analysis between Country and survey Questions

Criteria	Q1.a	Q1.b	Q2.a	Q2.b	Q3.a	Q3.b	Q4	Q5.a	Q5.b	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
P-Value	0.185	0.0642	0.874	0.614	0.992	0.828	0.895	0.713	0.343	0.525	0.109	0.294	0.506
Effect Size	0.291	0.351	0.129	0.191	0.0597	0.143	0.122	0.136	0.248	0.208	0.320	0.258	0.213
Sample Size	73	72	74	73	74	73	74	74	73	74	74	74	73
Chi-Square	6.20	8.88	1.22	2.67	0.264	1.49	1.10	1.37	4.50	3.20	7.56	4.94	3.32

Table 4 displays the results of the statistical analysis examining the relationship between levels of education and various survey questions regarding the importance and satisfaction of scholarly works. The analysis aimed to identify any significant differences based on respondents' educational backgrounds. The results indicate that there were no statistically significant differences between respondents with different levels of education for most of the survey questions. The p-values for Q1.a, Q1.b, Q2.a, Q2.b, Q3.a, Q3.b, Q4, Q5.a, Q5.b, Q6, Q7, Q8, and Q9 were greater than 0.05, suggesting no significant associations between educational level and respondents' perceptions of these aspects of scholarly works.

Furthermore, small effect sizes ranging from 0.224 to 0.326 were observed for the significant question (Q2.b) and some other questions. This indicates that while there may not be significant differences, there might be minor variations in respondents' perceptions based on their level of education.

The sample size, chi-square values, and detailed statistics for each question can be found in Table 4. It is important to interpret these results in conjunction with the specific survey question statements to gain a comprehensive understanding of the findings.

Table 4: Results of the analysis between Levels of Education and survey Questions

Criteria	Q1.a	Q1.b	Q2.a	Q2.b	Q3.a	Q3.b	Q4	Q5.a	Q5.b	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
P-Value	0.524	0.233	0.269	0.057 2	0.174	0.121	0.332	0.292	0.307	0.481	0.167	0.299	0.0771
Effect Size	0.224	0.274	0.263	0.326	0.283	0.300	0.252	0.225	0.258	0.229	0.285	0.257	0.316
Sample Size	71	70	72	71	72	71	72	72	71	72	72	72	71
Chi-Square	7.12	10.5	9.94	15.1	11.5	12.7	9.12	7.32	9.44	7.52	11.7	9.54	14.2

The statistical analysis of the relationship between various factors and survey questions on the importance and satisfaction of scholarly works are presented in Tables 2, 3, and 4. Table 2 indicates significant differences based on years of research experience for four survey questions. Table 3 shows no significant differences based on country, although small effect sizes suggest minor variations. Table 4 indicates no significant differences based on levels of education, except for one survey question where there was a significant association.

Figure 2 shows the respondents' feedback on different areas of scholarly works. During the next phase of the project, more information will be provided about the importance of Scholarly work and encourage more respondents to participate in the study. The study will be extended to students and faculty from different countries and regions in the future and also, we will try to have a workshop related to this field to have a better result and understanding.

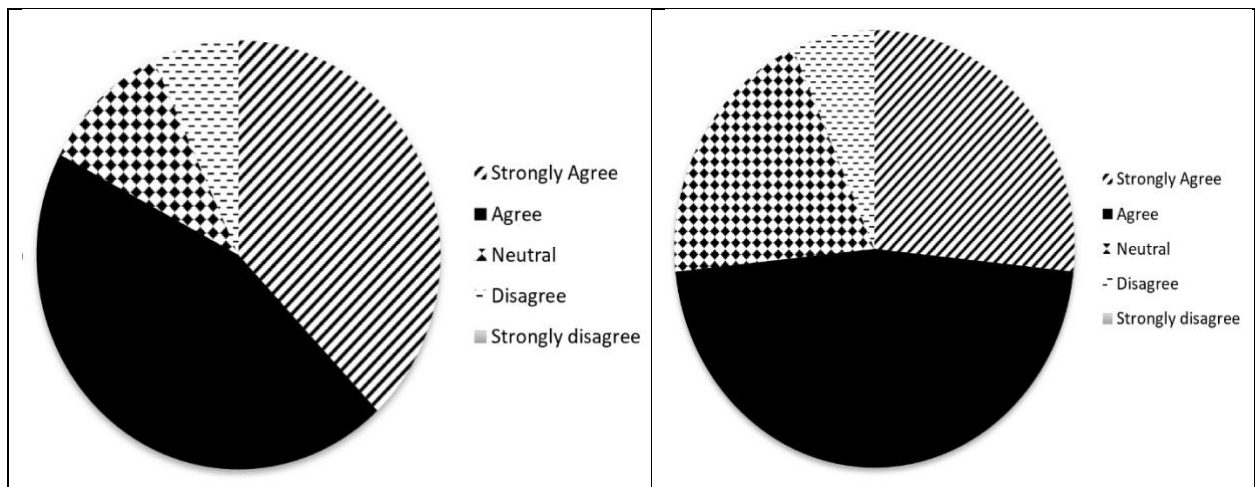


Figure 2 Relationships between Years of Experience and Familiarity with different citation formats (i.e. APA, MLA)

Conclusion:

Preparing scholarly work requires adherence to best practices that are designed to ensure that the work is of high quality. These practices include defining the research question, conducting a thorough literature review, developing a clear and concise argument, using appropriate research methods, following appropriate formatting guidelines, using proper citation and referencing, and revising and editing. By following these best practices, scholars can produce high-quality work that is credible, valid, and reliable.

To assess students'/Faculty's/any other researchers' perception of the need for professional Practices for Preparing Scholarly work, a study was conducted among the University of Michigan-Flint and outside students/faculty/others. A survey was conducted to assess their perceptions of importance and satisfaction in these three areas of Scholarly work: proper citation, Fair Use, and Team writing. Statistical analysis results of the survey data showed four strong significant relations between groups of people based on years of experience. However, the data shows a significant relationship between levels of education and survey questions related to fair use, but that might not be fully correct due to a lack of input.

The authors used a plagiarism check software Turnitin that showed approximately 90% unique, managed using proper citations. All authors also reviewed the paper for completeness and accuracy. It was observed that international graduate students lack knowledge with proper citation and consequences of plagiarism in the scholarly works. The future work is to use the instrument to train undergraduate and graduate students to develop competencies about how to develop scholarly works without any issues related to plagiarism.

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APPENDIX: Checklist for Best Practices in Writing Scholarly Work

Q #	Description	Questions
1.	Were citations properly used for ALL previous work used in the paper or proposal. Check for appropriate citation format (i.e. APA, MLA, Chicago style, etc.)	1. a. Are you familiar with the APA, MLA, Chicago style citation format? 1. b. Do you know how to use these formats properly?
2.	Were quotation marks used for copying narratives from other works properly with source document citation. (Do not use longer quotes, entire paragraph or section)	2. a. Have you ever used narratives copied from other sources? 2. b. Did you use longer quotes, entire paragraph or section?
3.	Were permissions obtained for copyrighted materials (i.e. images, data, figure and other visual materials) used from other source documents	3. a. Did you use copyrighted materials (images, data, figures and other visual material) from other source documents? 3. b. If you used copyrighted materials, did you obtain permissions?
4.	Did you paraphrase longer quotes, paragraphs or sections properly to describe the original work in your own words?	4. Did you paraphrase longer quotes paragraph or sections to describe the original work?
5	Did you use a plagiarism check software such as “ithenticate” to ensure that the document has proper citations	5. a. Are you familiar with any plagiarism check software? 5. b. Have you ever used plagiarism check software to insure proper citation?
6	Did you review the institutional policy and funding agencies policy for improper citation and plagiarism?	6. Are you familiar with the institutional policy and the funding agencies policies for proper citation and plagiarism?
7	Did you review all the source documents in detail and compared with the scholarly work being prepared to ensure proper citations?	7. Did you always review all the source documents in detail and compared with the scholarly work?
8.	In a team work, did every member of the team review all the citations and source documents to ensure proper citations?	8. In a team Project or proposal writing, did every member review all citation and source documents?
9	Did you use another colleague, mentor or researchers to review the entire document for proper citations in addition to self-checking	9. Have you used your mentor or researcher to review your entire document in addition to self-checking for proper citation?

10. If you have any question or concerns about plagiarism or proper citation, please share your experience with us.