

Students' Knowledge of Plagiarism: Basis for SPUP Honor Code Framework

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Abstract The prevalence of plagiarism among college students has posed challenges to academic integrity in higher education institutions (HEIs) all over the world. Through mixed methods, this study determined students' level of knowledge of plagiarism along five areas to provide baseline data as basis for an intervention that would promote intellectual honesty. Participants consisted of 283 randomly selected undergraduate students. A validated survey questionnaire was used to gather the data, which were treated using descriptive-inferential statistics and thematic analysis. Results revealed that the participants had very high level of knowledge in terms of the basic concepts about plagiarism, the ways of detecting this form of intellectual theft, and the possible adverse consequences when one was caught plagiarizing. The students, however, had low level of knowledge of the subject in terms of its more technical aspects such as its different forms as well as accurate citation and documentation of sources. Moreover, sex had a significant main effect on students' knowledge of plagiarism in terms of its harmful consequences while department exerted a significant main effect along harmful consequences including citation and documentation. Furthermore, sex and type of senior high school (SHS) graduated from had a significant interaction effect along ways of detecting plagiarism and consequences of intellectual theft. Considering the findings, the researcher forwarded the establishment of the SPUP Honor Code that would provide the necessary structure for managing academic dishonesty especially plagiarism through educative, corrective, and restorative mechanisms towards promoting the principles and values of academic integrity.

Keywords Academic Dishonesty, Academic Integrity, Ethical Scholarship, Intellectual Honesty, Plagiarism

1. Introduction

Plagiarism, a grave academic misconduct that is "both poor scholarship and a breach of academic integrity"[1], is the act of using the words or ideas of others as one's own without properly acknowledging the source[2]. A perennial problem that confronts discourse communities[3], plagiarism has become a prevalent, complex, and major learning issue among college students[4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11]. Its widespread is largely attributed to the use of the internet[4,5,9,12] and it is one of the key topics of debates in the modern scientific world[3,4,13].

This form of academic dishonesty requires sustained attention and vigilance if institutions of learning have to uphold their *raison d'être*. The overarching goal of this study, therefore, is to amplify the constant call for academic integrity in scholarly work among college students who, amidst the deluge of information in the 21st century, are often indifferent to the moral, personal, and professional implications of plagiarism. In other words, this research is an attempt at reinvigorating the principles of ethical scholarship in an age when tremendous information explosion takes place and those in the academe have to model responsible use of information. It also sought to expand the body of literature and research on the subject by exploring variables that have never been considered but are seen to be potential determinants of intellectual dishonesty.

Avoiding plagiarism is important in scholarly work

because writing academic papers must by all means exemplify academic integrity, which is defined as “a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to six fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage. From these values flow principles of behavior that enable academic communities to translate ideals to action”[14]. This concept of “honest and responsible scholarship”[15] guides an institution in fulfilling its role as an agent of societal transformation through its constituents that are imbued with integrity. Thus, preventing plagiarism is necessary because “it is a principle of intellectual honesty that all members of the academic community should acknowledge their debt to the originators of the ideas, words, and data which form the basis for their own work”[16], which means that in any academic paper, “a critical part of the writing process is helping readers place your contribution in context by citing the researchers who influenced you”[17].

Lamentably, the finding that plagiarism occurs at all levels of learning, even among seasoned researchers[18], suggests that not all members of the academic community write their papers with the full measure of their integrity. College students, in particular, wittingly or unwittingly step into the pitfalls of plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty, which have evolved with the changing landscape of higher education[19]. These students “undermine the ethos of academic scholarship while avoiding an essential part of the learning process”[16]. Apart from denying themselves of vital competencies (especially values) that they are supposed to acquire as part of their holistic development, they also unfairly tarnish the name or reputation of their institution that facilitates their growth. Despite plagiarism being widely frowned on in the academe, however, many students render themselves vulnerable; with or without their full awareness of the dangers waiting in store, they invite the fires of hell or seduce the thunders of heaven, so to speak, through their method. This is ironic, as plagiarism is intellectual theft and academic writing is supposed to be a thinking exercise that allows students space for critical and creative thinking. “Taking credit for anyone else’s work is stealing, and it is unacceptable in all academic situations, whether you do it intentionally or by accident”[20].

Related literature and contemporary studies reviewed in connection to the five constructs or areas considered in this study show mixed findings on students’ basic concepts about plagiarism. Some report confident understanding[21] and improved perception of plagiarism[8] while others present vague and confused student notions of the subject [9,22,23]. Further investigation, therefore, is necessary to clarify these findings. On the forms of plagiarism, patchwork plagiarism, or putting together bits and pieces of information from different sources, was found to be the most common type among undergraduates[24]. Research

also shows that students have weak grasp of what constitutes plagiarism[9,25] which may put them at risk[26], supporting the common observation that students unintentionally violate academic integrity protocols because of their poor understanding of acts that qualify as plagiarism.

Studies have also reported the wide range of undesirable effects of intellectual theft[10,22]. This “deadliest of academic sins”[27] could result in mild consequences such as warning, rewriting of dishonest papers[28], reprimand, and zero point for the plagiarized output, and/or in grave penalties such as a failing grade for the entire course, suspension, or even expulsion[27,29]. A renowned Philippine university, for instance, withdrew a PhD degree from a graduate and removed an instructor from service because of this academic crime[30]. “The consequences of plagiarism for students may be devastating, since their failure to learn and use appropriate study skills will affect both their university experience and their subsequent career”[31]. Awareness of the consequences of plagiarism was also found to be a determinant of perception of this subject[32].

As regards ways of detecting intellectual theft, there has recently been a dramatic increase in the use of text-matching software such as Turnitin[11,33]. However, even with the presence of these software that are supposed to be deterrents, students were still found to be unstoppable in their violation of ethical standards; the electronic tools did not reduce the occurrence of plagiarism among students and no correlation existed between awareness of such software and intellectual dishonesty as students were found to repeatedly plagiarize in their papers[34]. On the contrary, online text-matching applications were found to facilitate learning when combined with other online resources that discourage intellectual theft[35].

On citation and documentation, research has discovered that although students had clear concept or understanding of plagiarism, they were found to perform poorly on referencing tests; confidence in one’s understanding of plagiarism was also found to positively correlate with referencing performance[21]. The lack of sufficient skills for citing and documenting different types of sources using a particular referencing style could be attributed to inadequate knowledge of what constitutes plagiarism.

Other similar studies have explored certain student variables as possible determinants of knowledge on or attitude towards plagiarism. For instance, gender was found to affect attitude towards intellectual theft[36], and that this form of academic dishonesty was more common among male students[37]. Apart from gender, department and length of computer use were reported to influence internet plagiarism while time constraints, workload, and difficulty of tasks were the primary reasons for intellectual stealing[4], including “lack of time, busy schedules, and weak academic writing skills”[38]. For department as a

determinant of plagiarism, students from business, engineering, and information technology were found to have higher inclination towards plagiarism[39]. Regarding nationality as a factor for intellectual dishonesty, studies provide mixed findings. For instance, the observation that undergraduate students lacked adequate knowledge on plagiarism irrespective of their nationality or ethnic background[40] contrasts with the report that international students had “a lower awareness of academic integrity and academic integrity policy, and lower confidence in how to avoid academic integrity breaches”[41] and with the discovery that plagiarism is influenced by cultural factors that educators need to be aware of when responding to acts of plagiarism among cross-border students[42]. Related studies also reveal that plagiarism was more common among students who use English as an Additional Language (EAL)[18,43].

Moreover, research has shown that attitude influences self-control and academic dishonesty[44], and that employees who had plagiarized as students also committed work-related dishonesty[45]. Furthermore, students who plagiarized were found to regard their unethical conduct as normal part of their life in school, and teacher, student, environmental, and administrative factors were reported to cause dishonest behaviors; these factors imply ethical problems that include “varying perceptions on the morality of unfair academic manners and the relative importance of deceit over success”[46].

With the persisting prevalence of plagiarism among college students, studies have articulated and underscored the crucial role of the institution in fostering academic integrity. However, despite the increasing awareness of the pervasiveness of plagiarism, detection and punishment have been the typical response of educational institutions[6]. Academes nevertheless can adopt policies that encourage ethical scholarship and develop strategies that prevent intellectual dishonesty[10,47]; they can also establish an institutional framework that “places a strong emphasis on prevention and education, backed up by robust and transparent procedures for detecting and punishing plagiarism”[48]. For instance, establishing integrity policies such as honor codes has been the move taken by certain higher education institutions to deal with academic integrity violations[49] and to “hold students responsible for academic honesty”[50]. Honor codes have been found to meaningfully influence students’ behaviors[51,52]

In summary, these studies have broadened the researcher’s perspectives on the extent to which investigations on plagiarism have been advanced by researchers. These explorations further confirmed the researcher’s assumption that academic integrity breach through intellectual theft is a persisting issue driven by personal, social, and technological factors – an issue that has evolved along with higher education itself. Researchers

in response have considered various contexts and variables to forward comprehensive propositions towards combating this perennial problem. In retrospect, this body of related literature and contemporary research reviewed by the researcher revealed that no studies have explored type of senior high school (SHS) graduated from as a potential determinant of knowledge on plagiarism. This is a variable of particular interest since public and private (sectarian or non-sectarian) SHS in the Philippines have perceptible differences in certain aspects. Besides, SHS is a relatively young basic education program as part of the new K to 12 curriculum that was first implemented all over the country in 2013, and it offers such subjects as English for Academic and Professional Purposes (EAPP) and Practical Research 1 and 2 that are supposed to provide students with a strong foundation on intellectual honesty. It would then be interesting to confirm the role of the SHS program in building ethical scholarship among students and in preparing them for the more challenging academic pursuit in college. Also, this study determined the level of students’ knowledge on plagiarism along five areas, namely, a) basic concepts about plagiarism, b) forms of plagiarism, c) ways of detecting plagiarism, d) consequences of plagiarism, and e) citation and documentation, which in such fusion have not been considered by previous studies to investigate students’ knowledge on intellectual theft.

Moreover, research on student plagiarism has never been conducted at the researcher’s own university, and this situation illustrates the observation that “there has been little empirical investigation regarding what students actually know about plagiarism”[53]. Furthermore, the incidents of student plagiarism at the undergraduate and graduate levels of the author’s institution (as evidenced by results of Turnitin analysis) also served as a strong impetus for this study. Put together, these were the gaps or areas of inquiry that the researcher sought to fill. In pursuing these research opportunities, the researcher generally aimed to determine students’ level of knowledge of plagiarism along the areas identified, and building on this primary objective the researcher formulated relevant research questions.

The results of this study would bridge the research gaps mentioned previously; by filling these niches, the study would contribute to advancing the frontiers of knowledge in the field. The findings would give the researcher a strong basis to develop and forward the establishment of his university’s honor code, the SPUP Honor Code, which would serve as the foundation for a fortified and more clearly-defined academic integrity policy that would delineate – through educative, corrective, and restorative measures – the boundary between academic integrity and academic dishonesty. Such code, therefore, would further cultivate the culture of ethical scholarship at the researcher’s university and serve as a seminal model (as far as academic integrity frameworks are concerned) to other neighboring universities in the researcher’s city and region.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

1. What is the profile of the participants in terms of:
 - 1.1 Sex,
 - 1.2 Age,
 - 1.3 Type of Senior High School (SHS), and
 - 1.4 Department?
2. What is the participants' level of knowledge of plagiarism along the following areas?
 - 2.1 Basic Concepts About Plagiarism
 - 2.2 Forms of Plagiarism
 - 2.3 Ways of Detecting Plagiarism
 - 2.4 Consequences of Plagiarism
 - 2.5 Citation and Documentation
3. Is there a significant main effect of profile variables on participants' level of knowledge of plagiarism along the five areas?
4. Is there a significant interaction effect between profile variables on participants' level of knowledge of plagiarism along the five areas?
5. What activities do the participants suggest to expand their knowledge of plagiarism?
6. What form of intervention can be proposed to raise the participants' level of knowledge of plagiarism?

1.2. Research Hypotheses

The researcher tested the following hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level:

1. There is no significant main effect of profile variables on participants' level of knowledge of plagiarism along the five areas.
2. There is no significant interaction effect between profile variables on participants' level of knowledge of plagiarism along the five areas.

1.3. Limitations of the Study

This research primarily aimed to determine undergraduate students' level of knowledge of plagiarism along the five areas identified. Part of its limitations was involving only first-year students during the academic year 2018-2019 since no second-year and third-year students were enrolled in the said school year. Philippine higher education had no first-year enrollees for two consecutive academic years (2016-2017 and 2017-2018), during which periods the supposed freshmen and sophomores were still in grades 11 and 12 of the newly implemented senior high school (SHS) program after the country transitioned to K to 12 curriculum in 2013. The participants in this study, therefore, were the first batch of SHS graduates. In addition, fourth-year students were not included in the study since they were in their industry-immersion courses in the semester when this study was conducted. Hence, involving

students from other year levels in exploring knowledge of plagiarism is a potential area of inquiry seen by the researcher for a similar study in the future.

Moreover, a few of the participants were foreign students. The researcher, however, did not include nationality as part of the profile variables to determine whether it is a determinant of knowledge of intellectual theft lest the very low number affects the normal distribution of participants which may have significant statistical implications. Though a limitation for this study, involving more international students as participants is another potential research niche worth pursuing in future related studies in the university.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Research Design

Using both quantitative and qualitative approaches, the study determined the participants' knowledge of plagiarism. The quantitative approach through the descriptive and inferential methods delved on the participants' profile and answers to the fifty (50) plagiarism-related statements and referencing items in the survey questionnaire which measured their level of knowledge along five areas. The qualitative approach, on the other hand, explored through thematic analysis the participants' suggestions to help them expand their knowledge on plagiarism.

2.2. Participants of the Study

Undergraduate students of St. Paul University Philippines (SPUP) at Tuguegarao City, Cagayan, during the second semester of academic year 2018-2019 participated in the study. They were from the University's five schools, namely, School of Arts, Sciences and Teacher Education (SASTE), School of Information Technology and Engineering (SITE), School of Business, Accountancy and Hospitality Management (SBAHM), School of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences (SNAHS), and School of Medicine (SOM). A total of 283 students participated in the study. The participants were selected through simple random sampling using fishbowl technique, in which the names of students from each department were put in a fishbowl and the target participants were drawn randomly. Results of the descriptive analysis of the participants' profile (Table 1) show that the largest number of the students are females, 19 years old, graduates of private (sectarian) senior high schools (SHS), and taking up nursing and allied health sciences courses.

Table 1. Summary of Participants' Profile

Profile		Frequency (N = 283)	Percentage
Sex	Male	88	31.1
	Female	195	68.9
Age	18	110	38.9
	19	138	48.8
	20	15	5.3
	21 and above	20	7.1
Type of Senior High School (SHS)	Public	67	23.7
	Private (Sectarian)	191	67.5
	Private (Non-Sectarian)	25	8.8
School/Department	SASTE	44	15.5
	SITE	30	10.6
	SBAHM	68	24.0
	SNAHS	122	43.1
	SOM	19	6.7

2.3. Instrumentation

A self-made survey questionnaire (based on related literature and studies reviewed) was used as the data-gathering instrument for the study. The Knowledge of Plagiarism Questionnaire lists fifty (50) plagiarism-related statements and referencing items which are answerable with Yes or No, have predetermined correct answers, and are organized into five (5) constructs or categories, which include: a) basic concepts about plagiarism, b) forms of plagiarism, c) ways of detecting plagiarism, d) consequences of plagiarism, and e) citation and documentation.

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, the researcher consulted with 10 institutional experts (5 research experts and 5 plagiarism experts) who rated the items as to their relevance to the research subject and thrust. The content validity index (CVI) was used as the inclusion criterion for the items that were included in the questionnaire. Of the fifty (50) questionnaire items, thirty-six (36) items obtained an item-level CVI (I-CVI) of 1.00, ten (10) items had an I-CVI of 0.90, and four (4) items got an I-CVI of 0.80. A criterion of 0.80 as the lower limit of acceptability (that is, 80 percent of the validators rated an item as either relevant or very relevant) was used for I-CVI. Therefore, all of the 50 items in the questionnaire are valid, with a scale-level CVI/average (S-CVI/Ave) of 0.96, which indicates that the instrument in general is highly valid.

After the validation, the researcher pilot-tested the questionnaire among forty (40) first-year students in one of the classes that he handled. Data from the pilot test or mock survey were used in the tool-reliability test. The reliability analysis yielded an overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.988, which indicates that the survey questionnaire is very highly reliable. Specifically, the instrument has the following Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each of the five areas considered in the study: 0.994 for area A (basic concepts about plagiarism), 0.907 for

area B (forms of plagiarism), 0.998 for C (ways of detecting plagiarism), 0.992 for D (consequences of plagiarism), and 0.965 for area E (citation and documentation). These coefficients indicate that the instrument has very high reliability along the five constructs or areas.

The comments of the mock participants during the pilot test were also considered in assessing the face validity of the survey questionnaire. The majority of those interviewed stated that the questionnaire was very long with its original 70 items, which made it tiring to answer. Others mentioned that many of the items had long sentences and contained unfamiliar terms that mostly referred to the names of plagiarism forms. They also cited the small font size of the letters and inconsistent line spacing that caused them unease while answering the questionnaire.

Generally, the feedback articulated the length, clarity, and format issues encountered by the participants. Accordingly, the researcher reduced the original 70 items to 50 items, transformed the long sentences into short ones, translated the difficult words into their simple versions, increased the font size of the text (from the original 9.5 points to 11.5 points Times New Roman), and fixed the line spacing for a better layout.

2.4. Data-Gathering Procedure

Before conducting the study, the researcher secured through a request letter the approval of the Vice President for Academics, the Director for Research and Publications, and the deans of the different schools. For ethical consideration, the researcher explained to the participants the objectives of the study as well as anonymity or confidentiality matters through the Letter to the Participant embedded in the survey instrument. The researcher also obtained the participants' informed consent through the Declaration of Informed Consent section of the questionnaire. The researcher personally administered the questionnaires to the participants on the schedules previously arranged with the deans. The researcher himself collected the answered questionnaires, noting a 100%-return rate on the floated survey tool. Afterward, the researcher collated the data using Excel and Word. The quantitative data were imported into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 for statistical treatment, while the qualitative data were subjected to qualitative content analysis (i.e., thematic analysis) using Word where similar responses were clustered into themes through a table or matrix. Finally, the results of the data analysis were summarized, interpreted, and discussed in a written report.

2.5. Data Analysis

In analyzing the data, the researcher used the following tools: *Frequency and percentage* were used to describe the profile of the participants. *Mean score* was used to determine the participants' level of knowledge of

plagiarism along such areas as a) basic concepts about plagiarism, b) forms of plagiarism, c) ways of detecting plagiarism, d) consequences of plagiarism, and e) citation and documentation. *Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA)* was used to test for significant main and interaction effects of profile variables on participants' level of knowledge of plagiarism along the five areas identified. *Thematic analysis* was conducted to examine and cluster into themes the different activities suggested by the participants to help them expand their knowledge of plagiarism; for this qualitative content analysis, the researcher thoroughly examined the participants' open responses sentence by sentence to infer on and capture the main ideas conveyed; answers were collated through a matrix in which similar or related suggestions were organized in columns under appropriate headings or themes.

3. Results

3.1. Participants' Level of Knowledge of Plagiarism along the Five Areas

Table 2. Students' Level of Knowledge of Plagiarism in the Five Areas Identified

Area	N	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
A. Basic Concepts About Plagiarism	283	5.14	Very High
B. Forms of Plagiarism	283	2.32	Low
C. Ways of Detecting Plagiarism	283	3.23	Very High
D. Consequences of Plagiarism	283	4.74	Very High
E. Citation and Documentation	283	6.70	Low

Results of the descriptive analysis of the participants' scores (Table 2) show that the participants have very high level of knowledge of plagiarism in terms of Basic Concepts About Plagiarism (A), Ways of Detecting Plagiarism (C), and Consequences of Plagiarism (D). Conversely, they have low level of knowledge of plagiarism in terms of Forms of Plagiarism (B) and Citation and Documentation (E). The data indicate that the students do not have adequate familiarity with the

more technical aspects of intellectual dishonesty, that is, its different forms or manifestations as well as how to avoid it through proper citation and documentation of different types of sources using a prescribed referencing system.

3.2. Significant Main Effect of Profile Variables on Level of Knowledge of Plagiarism Along the Five Areas

This study hypothesized that there is no significant main effect of profile variables on participants' level of knowledge of plagiarism along the five areas identified. Results of the multivariate test (Table 3) show that age and type of senior high school (SHS) graduated from have a probability value of 0.847 and 0.882, respectively, which is higher than 0.05 alpha level; thus, the null hypothesis is accepted. On the other hand, sex and department obtained a probability value of 0.014 and 0.001, respectively, which is lower than 0.05 level of significance; hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. The data suggest that among the four participants' profile variables considered in this study, only age and department have statistically significant main effects on students' level of knowledge of plagiarism.

Table 3. Main Effect of Profile Variables on Participants' Level of Knowledge of Plagiarism Along the Five Areas

Factor	Wilks' Lambda	F-ratio	P-value	Interpretation
Sex	.937	2.938	0.014	Significant
Age	.958	.634	0.847	Not Significant
Type of SHS	.977	.511	0.882	Not Significant
Department	.811	2.355	0.001	Significant

Looking at the significant main effect exerted by sex on level of knowledge of intellectual theft, data (Table 4) reveal that this variable influences knowledge along Consequences of Plagiarism (D) only but not along the other four areas, as shown by the probability value of 0.008 that is lower than 0.05 alpha level. The mean scores indicate that although both sexes have very high level of knowledge along this area, female students (\bar{x} =4.92) are significantly more knowledgeable than male students (\bar{x} =4.56) in terms of the undesirable consequences of intellectual stealing.

Table 4. Main Effect of Sex on the Participants' Knowledge of Plagiarism along the Five Areas

Dependent Variable	Factor		F-ratio	P-value	Interpretation
	Sex	Mean			
Basic Concepts About Plagiarism	Male	4.87	2.356	0.126	Not Significant
	Female	5.16			
Forms of Plagiarism	Male	2.18	1.640	0.202	Not Significant
	Female	2.36			
Ways of Detecting Plagiarism	Male	3.18	.247	0.620	Not Significant
	Female	3.24			
Consequences of Plagiarism	Male	4.56	7.067	0.008	Significant
	Female	4.92			
Citation and Documentation	Male	5.78	1.919	0.167	Not Significant
	Female	6.71			

Table 5. Main Effect of Department on the Participants' Knowledge of Plagiarism along the Five Areas

Dependent Variable	Factor		F-ratio	P-value	Interpretation
	Department	Mean			
Basic Concepts About Plagiarism	SASTE	4.93	1.354	0.251	Not Significant
	SITE	5.29			
	SBAHM	4.77			
	SNAHS	5.13			
	SOM	4.96			
Forms of Plagiarism	SASTE	1.99	.977	0.421	Not Significant
	SITE	2.15			
	SBAHM	2.49			
	SNAHS	2.60			
	SOM	1.80			
Ways of Detecting Plagiarism	SASTE	3.53	2.413	0.050	Not Significant
	SITE	3.20			
	SBAHM	3.30			
	SNAHS	2.96			
	SOM	3.17			
Consequences of Plagiarism	SASTE	4.98	3.247	0.013	Significant
	SITE	4.98			
	SBAHM	3.70			
	SNAHS	5.00			
	SOM	5.44			
Citation and Documentation	SASTE	4.38	5.088	0.001	Significant
	SITE	7.16			
	SBAHM	6.86			
	SNAHS	6.96			
	SOM	5.31			

As regards the statistically significant main effect that the variable department has on level of knowledge of plagiarism, results (Table 5) show that this variable affects knowledge along Consequences of Plagiarism (D) and Citation and Documentation (E) only, which have a probability value of 0.013 and 0.001, respectively, which is higher than 0.05 alpha level. Department does not have a

significant main effect on knowledge along areas A, B, and C. Looking at the mean scores along area D, all departments except School of Business and Hospitality Management (SBAHM) have very high level of knowledge. SBAHM's mean score (\bar{x} =3.70) significantly differs from those of School of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences (SNAHS, \bar{x} =5.00) and School of Medicine

(SOM, \bar{x} =5.44). Generally, SNAHS and SOM students have notably higher level of knowledge of plagiarism along area D.

Moreover, considering the mean scores along area E, students of School of Arts, Sciences and Teacher Education (SASTE, \bar{x} =4.38) and SOM (\bar{x} =5.31) have very low level of knowledge while students of School of Information Technology and Engineering (SITE, \bar{x} =7.16), SBAHM (\bar{x} =6.86), and SNAHS (\bar{x} =6.96) have low level of knowledge. A notably significant difference exists between the mean scores of SASTE and SBAHM, SASTE and SNAHS, and SASTE and SITE, as well as between those of SOM and SBAHM, SOM and SNAHS, and SOM and SITE. This implies that students of SBAHM, SNAHS, and SITE have substantially higher level of knowledge of plagiarism along area E.

3.3. Significant Interaction Effect between Profile Variables on Level of Knowledge of Plagiarism along the Five Areas

This study also hypothesized that there is no significant interaction effect between profile variables on participants' level of knowledge of plagiarism along the five areas identified. Results of the multivariate test (Table 6) reveal that among the combined profile variables, only sex and type of SHS graduated from have a statistically significant interaction effect on the students level of knowledge of plagiarism as shown by the probability value of 0.013 that is lower than 0.05 level of significance; therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

When the statistically significant interaction effect between sex and type of SHS is further examined, data

(Table 7) indicate that these variables have a significant joint effect on Ways of Detecting Plagiarism (C) and Consequences of Plagiarism (D) only, as shown by the probability value of 0.032 and 0.043, respectively, which is higher than 0.05 alpha level; the null hypothesis, therefore, is rejected. The variables, however, have no significant interaction effect on areas A, B, and E. Looking at the mean scores along area C, participants from the third and fifth groups have high level of knowledge while those from the first, second, fourth, and sixth groups have very high level of knowledge. The mean scores of the third group composed of male students who are graduates of private (non-sectarian) senior high schools (\bar{x} =2.83) and of the fifth group consisting of female students from private (sectarian) SHS (\bar{x} =2.98) significantly differ from that of the sixth group comprising female students from private (non-sectarian) SHS (\bar{x} =3.53). The data suggest that female students from private (non-sectarian) SHS are notably more knowledgeable along area C.

On the other hand, along area D, the mean scores indicate that all groups of participants have very high level of knowledge except the third group which has high level of knowledge. The mean scores of the first group composed of male students from public SHS (\bar{x} =4.57) and of the third group consisting of male students from private (non-sectarian) SHS (\bar{x} =4.31) significantly differ from that of the sixth group comprising female students from private (non-sectarian) SHS (\bar{x} =5.41). This finding indicates that female students from private (non-sectarian) SHS have substantially higher level of knowledge along area D.

Table 6. Joint Effect of Profile Variables on Participants' Level of Knowledge on Plagiarism Along the Five Areas

Factor	Wilks' Lambda	F-ratio	P-value	Interpretation
Sex * Age	.930	1.077	0.375	Not Significant
Sex * Type of SHS	.903	2.276	0.013	Significant
Sex * Department	.894	1.249	0.207	Not Significant
Age * Type of SHS	.926	.677	0.883	Not Significant
Age * Department	.840	.972	0.521	Not Significant
Type of SHS * Department	.850	1.034	0.415	Not Significant
Sex * Age * Type of SHS	.922	1.193	0.272	Not Significant
Sex * Age * Department	.894	.996	0.469	Not Significant
Sex * Type of SHS * Department	.901	1.156	0.287	Not Significant
Age * Type of SHS * Department	.932	.778	0.742	Not Significant
Sex * Age * Type of SHS * Department	.981	.832	0.528	Not Significant

Table 7. Joint Effect of Sex and Type of SHS on Participants' Level of Knowledge of Plagiarism along the Five Areas

Dependent Variable Area	Factor		F-ratio	P-value	Interpretation
	Sex * Type of SHS	Mean			
Basic Concepts About Plagiarism	Male * Public	4.78	.437	0.646	Not Significant
	Male * Private (sectarian)	5.00			
	Male * Private (non-sectarian)	4.72			
	Female * Public	4.95			
	Female * Private (sectarian)	5.09			
	Female * Private (non-sectarian)	5.64			
Forms of Plagiarism	Male * Public	2.46	1.414	0.245	Not Significant
	Male * Private (sectarian)	2.00			
	Male * Private (non-sectarian)	2.14			
	Female * Public	2.51			
	Female * Private (sectarian)	1.85			
	Female * Private (non-sectarian)	3.14			
Ways of Detecting Plagiarism	Male * Public	3.24	3.492	0.032	Significant
	Male * Private (sectarian)	3.31			
	Male * Private (non-sectarian)	2.83			
	Female * Public	3.38			
	Female * Private (sectarian)	2.98			
	Female * Private (non-sectarian)	3.53			
Consequences of Plagiarism	Male * Public	4.57	3.193	0.043	Significant
	Male * Private (sectarian)	4.73			
	Male * Private (non-sectarian)	4.31			
	Female * Public	4.89			
	Female * Private (sectarian)	4.69			
	Female * Private (non-sectarian)	5.41			
Citation and Documentation	Male * Public	6.55	2.474	0.087	Not Significant
	Male * Private (sectarian)	5.90			
	Male * Private (non-sectarian)	4.36			
	Female * Public	6.24			
	Female * Private (sectarian)	6.71			
	Female * Private (non-sectarian)	7.51			

3.4. Activities to Expand Students' Knowledge on Plagiarism

As regards the activities that the participants suggested to help them increase their knowledge of plagiarism, three major themes emerged, namely: seminar-workshops and training, citation and documentation exercises, and classroom discussions.

For seminar-workshops and training, one of the participants said, "[There should be a conduct of] workshops that will put us on the spot of writing/citing/documenting different articles for us to be trained to avoid plagiarism." Others expressed the necessity for such workshops that will "orient students about plagiarism," "explain the different types of plagiarism," "teach students how to properly write citations," "discuss the consequences or punishments when students are caught plagiarizing," "discuss on how plagiarism can affect our society or school," "emphasize the importance of citation," "increase the level of awareness of students."

As regards citation and documentation exercises, a participant said, "A lot of students like me, don't know how to put a right quotation, so this activity will help us to practice," while another mentioned that the "conduct [of] hands-on writing activities [will] test the writing skills of participants and check/correct if there is plagiarism." Other responses were phrased differently but expressed the same idea.

On the other hand, the students' open answers also illustrate the need to intensify classroom discussions on plagiarism. Such discussions, according to them, would "group students after teaching them how to write/make papers," "prevent plagiarism in their future researches," "discuss ways to properly cite references," "eliminate plagiarism and use the referencing tools," "gauge the knowledge of students about plagiarism," "include plagiarism as a separate topic/subject in the classroom," "provide a platform for students to share their knowledge on plagiarism," "explain the do's and don'ts of plagiarism."

3.5. Proposed Intervention

As a form of intervention towards raising students' awareness of plagiarism, related literature and studies reviewed support the adoption of an honor code, which is "a set of standards that establish the expectations for academic integrity" [54]. The researcher, therefore, proposes the establishment of the SPUP Honor Code, a framework that would serve as the basis for ethical scholarship, that is, for a stronger academic integrity policy in the University. The SPUP Honor Code is envisioned to be a non-punitive approach to handling plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. It aims to provide the necessary structure for investigating and preventing breaches of ethical standards in ways that

are educative, corrective, and restorative thereby further upholding the principles and values of academic integrity.

4. Discussion

The alarming observation that plagiarism has become an increasingly rampant, complicated, and pressing problem that besets higher education institutions[36,55,56] and the desire to further cultivate the culture of academic integrity among college students served as the impetus for this study, including the gaps that the researcher identified and sought to fill.

As its contribution to ongoing conversations on academic integrity, specifically on plagiarism as a major breach of ethical scholarship, this study found that the set of participants considered had very high level of knowledge of plagiarism in terms of the rudimentary ideas or notions related to the subject (area A), supporting the findings that students have confident familiarity[21] and raised awareness of plagiarism[8] and opposing the report that they have unclear and confused perceptions of the subject[9,22,23]. They, however, scored low in terms of the different forms (area B). This suggests that the students could not identify well a specific form of plagiarism and distinguish it from the other forms, thus validating the report that students have insufficient awareness of what qualifies as plagiarism[9,25] which could expose them to undesirable consequences[26]. This inability to differentiate between the various forms of intellectual theft confirms the observation that "young students and novice researchers lack the skills to identify and avoid plagiarism and thus end up in committing it"[57]. As regards Ways of Detecting Plagiarism (C), the participants had very high level of knowledge, which may be attributed to the dramatic increase in the use of text-matching software such as Turnitin[11,33]. On the Consequences of Plagiarism (D), the participants had very high level of knowledge on the adverse effects such as sanctions or penalties. This finding confirms the report that awareness of the consequences of plagiarism is a determinant of perception of the subject[30]. As to Citation and Documentation (E), the participants scored low, which supports the discovery that "undergraduate students face difficulties in citing references in their academic work and that they are inconsistent in the way they cite"[58] and that although students had clear concept or understanding of plagiarism, they were found to perform poorly on referencing tests[21].

The participants' very high level of knowledge on plagiarism in terms of areas A, C, and D means that they were very adequately aware of what plagiarism means, how it is discovered, including the unfavorable consequences involved. On the other hand, their low level of understanding of intellectual theft in terms of areas B and E suggests that they lack adequate awareness of the

different forms of plagiarism as well as of how to accurately cite and document different types of sources using a prescribed referencing style. The low mean scores along areas B and E also indicate that these students have weak foundation on honest and responsible scholarship during their senior high school (SHS) where the rudimentary concepts, methods, and ethics of academic writing (especially research) are taught. It further implies that SHS teachers could do better in raising students' awareness of plagiarism particularly along these areas because such effort significantly prepares these students for the academic rigor of college.

As regards the significant main effect of profile variables on participants' level of knowledge of plagiarism along the five areas identified, age and department have statistically significant main effects on students' knowledge; thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. Specifically, sex as a determinant of knowledge along Consequences of Plagiarism (D) means that female students are significantly more knowledgeable than male students in terms of the undesirable effects of intellectual stealing. This finding supports the observation that sex influences students' tendencies[4] and attitudes[36] towards intellectual theft and confirms the report that plagiarism is more common among male students[37] especially when they are not fully aware of the risks or dangers related to the violation of ethical standards.

Department also exerts a statistically significant main effect on the participants' level of knowledge of plagiarism, particularly along Consequences of Plagiarism (D) and Citation and Documentation (E). For area D, although all of the departments have high to very high level of knowledge, SNAHS and SOM students have substantially stronger grasp of plagiarism along this aspect. This result is worthy of note especially on the part of medical students of SOM, that is, their outscoring those from other departments reflects their maturity and higher sensitivity to the harmful effects involved in academic dishonesty. Students of nursing and allied health sciences are equally noteworthy; the relatively greater amount of individual and collaborative research tasks (which are often complex) in their courses could justify their higher level of knowledge along this area.

For area E, on the other hand, students of SBAHM, SNAHS, and SITE are notably more knowledgeable than those of other departments – which means that these students perform better in terms of acknowledging in their academic papers their sources of information through proper citation and documentation using a particular referencing style. Their low level of knowledge, nevertheless, reflects the finding that plagiarism is more common in business, engineering, and information technology[39]. Of special interest is the level of knowledge of SOM and SASTE along area E; despite their very high understanding of the Consequences of Plagiarism (D), they scored very low on Citation and

Documentation (E). This suggests that awareness of the undesirable effects of plagiarizing does not necessarily mean familiarity with proper acknowledgment of sources. Sufficient knowledge and skills on referencing plays a crucial role in avoiding plagiarism because “there can be a fine line between plagiarism and poor referencing practice”[59].

Also remarkable is SITE students' level of knowledge along area E. Though they are significantly more knowledgeable than students from SASTE and SOM, they still manifested low level of knowledge on referencing despite the department's offering of such degree program as information technology that supposedly equips students on research software (e.g., Turnitin, Grammarly, among others) which are widely used by universities to match electronic texts and detect similarities. This finding suggests that familiarity with text-matching software does not necessarily equate with adequate knowledge of referencing; it also echoes the report that the presence of plagiarism-detection software does not totally deter students from intellectual theft[34]. In general, these results indicate that department is a determinant of students' knowledge of plagiarism, thus supporting the finding that department affects one's tendencies to plagiarize[4]. The inadequate knowledge of students from the concerned departments along these specific areas needs to be addressed as this has significant implications to the students' future professional practice[12].

In terms of the significant interaction effect between profile variables on participants' level of knowledge of plagiarism along the five areas identified, sex and type of SHS graduated from have a statistically significant joint effect on the students' level of knowledge; the null hypothesis, therefore, was rejected. In particular, these variables have a notable interaction effect on Ways of Detecting Plagiarism (C) and Consequences of Plagiarism (D). Generally, the data indicate that although the six groups of students have very high level of knowledge, female students from private (non-sectarian) SHS are significantly more knowledgeable along these two areas. This finding suggests that the combination of these two variables is a determinant of knowledge along areas C and D. Presently, no similar research provides report in relation to this finding; therefore, further studies need to be conducted to validate the significant interaction effect between sex and type of SHS, including the joint effects of other profile variables.

In the study, the participants were also asked about the activities they would suggest helping them increase their knowledge of plagiarism. The conduct of seminar-workshops and training was most commonly cited, which points to the key role played by plagiarism-awareness conferences and symposia in helping capacitate students for ethical discourse, against intellectual theft. This is supported by the report that “short seminars/lectures can be used to improve the

students' knowledge of plagiarism"[59]. They also emphasized the need for referencing exercises and intensive classroom discussions on plagiarism, thus supporting the report that "providing opportunities for teaching staff to discuss referencing practice and principles could prove to be useful – and perhaps is more of an incendiary topic than might be imagined"[60] and echoing the call for teachers to devise innovative strategies that would help students avoid various forms of intellectual theft through proper citation and documentation of sources. By extension, the need also resonates the finding that creative instructional strategies[25], such as web-based module[61] and translation method[62], can increase students' knowledge on plagiarism, that pedagogy is the best way to counter this form of academic dishonesty[63], and that "faculty should act as educators, rather than as detectives"[64]. Evidently, these open responses reflect the students' dire need to be adequately oriented on this form of intellectual stealing and confirm the report that "academic dishonesty is best addressed from a student development perspective"[65].

Based on the results of the study, the researcher proposes the adoption of an honor code as a form of intervention towards acculturating the students to academic integrity in general and helping them expand their knowledge of plagiarism in particular. The crucial role of honor codes in cultivating the culture of integrity in discourse communities like the academe is supported by research findings. For instance, academic dishonesty like cheating is less prevalent in institutions with an honor code system[66]. Also, an integrity policy such as an honor code is recognized to be a feasible response to academic dishonesty[67] and "the use of honor codes has been reported to positively influence the attitudes and behaviors of students"[68]. Moreover, teachers of institutions with an honor code system "have more positive attitudes toward their schools' academic integrity policies and are more willing to allow the system to take care of monitoring and disciplinary activities"[69]. Furthermore, "educators worldwide face challenges surrounding academic integrity. The development of honor codes can promote academic integrity"[70].

The proposed SPUP Honor Code, therefore, would serve as the foundation of ethical scholarship in the University by providing the necessary framework or structure for managing academic dishonesty such as plagiarism. A non-punitive approach to dealing with breaches of ethical standards, the SPUP Honor Code is envisioned to be instrumental in fostering a culture of academic integrity through educative, corrective, and restorative mechanisms. It acknowledges that students commit mistakes, whether deliberate or accidental, and that they deserve to be guided and given second chances. The concept of educative, corrective, and restorative intervention means adopting programs and pedagogical

practices where both administrators and teachers work towards building students' capacities and competencies in avoiding academic dishonesty such as plagiarism. It means informing students of the implications of dishonest practices and directing the erring ones back on track through systematic and creative instructional strategies. In other words, the concept places the teacher at the center of ethical academic discourse serving both as a model and a guide, not as a vindictive adjudicator policing and punishing student-violators. The SPUP Honor Code, therefore, is a validation of the belief that "to address the ongoing issue of plagiarism and other breaches of academic integrity, educational institutions must work towards fostering a culture of integrity that goes beyond deterrence, detection, and punishment of students"[18]. From this code will flow the principles of honesty and responsibility, the steering philosophy of all academic work especially research of students, teachers, and the rest of the academic community. The end goal of the SPUP Honor Code is ethical academic discourse – or work that adheres to the highest standards of ethical scholarship.

5. Conclusions and Implications

This study determined first-year students' level of knowledge of plagiarism. Based on the findings, the researcher concludes that undergraduate students have very high level of knowledge in terms of the basic concepts about plagiarism, the ways of detecting this form of intellectual theft, and the possible adverse consequences when one was caught plagiarizing. However, students have low level of knowledge of the subject in terms of its more technical aspects such as its different types or forms, as well as accurate citation and documentation of sources. Sex affects understanding of intellectual theft along its undesirable consequences since females are more knowledgeable than males on this aspect. Department is also a determinant of knowledge of plagiarism along detrimental effects and referencing. The higher level of knowledge of medical, nursing, and allied health sciences students on intellectual stealing in terms of its harmful consequences reflect their sharper sensitivity to the ethical implications of intellectual dishonesty as well as their broader exposure to various and complex research activities in their programs. Students across departments have inadequate knowledge of plagiarism along citation and documentation, with engineering and IT students showing more notable knowledge which could be attributed to their familiarity with text-matching and referencing software. Also, sex and type of senior high school graduated from have a significant interaction effect on students' knowledge of plagiarism along ways of detecting plagiarism and consequences of intellectual theft, with female students from private (non-sectarian) schools having significantly higher level of knowledge. In

addition, students see the importance of capability-building programs such as seminars, workshops, and training as well as classroom-based activities such as referencing exercises, intensive discussions, and interactive learning experiences towards helping them expand their knowledge of intellectual stealing. Considering these findings, the researcher proposes the establishment of the SPUP Honor Code to dissuade students from academic dishonesty especially plagiarism and to inculcate in them the values of academic integrity.

The findings presented and conclusions drawn, therefore, have the following implications: Senior high school teachers, especially those teaching research, may intensify their discussions on intellectual honesty particularly as regards forms of plagiarism and referencing systems; they may focus on developing ICT and library competencies towards strengthening their students' foundation on responsible scholarship and adequately preparing them for the more challenging academic life in college. Also, college instructors, especially those teaching general education courses, may consider recalibrating their capacities in concretizing the philosophy of ethical discourse by devising innovative and value-based strategies that would help raise their students' awareness of the multiple aspects of plagiarism. Generally, educators at all levels may re-examine their pedagogical practices particularly in terms of assessment and identify areas where they could leverage their resources towards cultivating intellectual honesty among students in all facets of learning. Modeling of ethical discourse by educators in their own instructional delivery and scholarly work may also be given more attention. Moreover, university administrators may adopt an honor code that would serve as the foundation for an academic integrity policy that upholds the highest standards of academic scholarship. Furthermore, future researchers may consider conducting similar studies on this subject among college students of different levels to validate this study's findings and explore other variables that are potential determinants or correlates of knowledge of plagiarism.

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