

Developing and Validating a Sociocultural Plagiarism Questionnaire for Assessing English Academic Writing of Iranian Scholars

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Abstract: Plagiarism is considered as a serious problem in academia around the world. The issue of plagiarism has recently received global inquiry in different fields of science, especially in foreign language (L2) academic writing. To meticulously assess the Iranian academics for plagiarism at both theory and practice grounds, developing an accountable instrument seemed to be inevitable. To bridge the gap, in phase 1 of the study, a conceptual framework for Iranian academics' grasp of plagiarism and its components was designed after a thorough review of literature. In phase 2, a number of M.A. graduates and graduate students (n = 224) in six State and Islamic Azad universities in Iran were recruited to partake in piloting the newly-designed plagiarism questionnaire. After a two-step revising the inefficient items (n = 11), the final draft of the developed questionnaire with 36 items was administered with the main sample of participants (n = 288). An Exploratory Factor Analysis was performed to identify the components of the instrument, followed by Confirmatory Factor Analysis to measure its construct validity. As a result, the final draft of the Sociocultural Plagiarism Questionnaire contained 31 Likert-point and 5 multiple choice items in four components of awareness (10 items), attitude (8 items), sociocultural beliefs (8 items), and perception (5 Likert-point and 5 multiple choice items), which were suggested as having fundamental contributions to the Iranian academic writers' sensitivity to plagiarism. Findings of the study suggested that (a) the Iranian academic writers' normative sociocultural beliefs can probably reduce their sensitivity to plagiarism, (b) while the Iranian academics might have relatively high awareness and deep perception about plagiarism, their attitude toward plagiarism seems relatively neutral or even insensitive.

Keywords: Attitude, Awareness, Perception, Plagiarism, Questionnaire, Sociocultural Beliefs.

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