

Authorial Identity: Effect of an Online Educational Experience on Nursing Students' Beliefs and Attitudes about Authorship

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Abstract

Background: Considering the importance of attending to plagiarism in academic settings and hence, the scarcity and inconclusiveness of studies conducted in the university context, the current study set out to evaluate an online educational experience for nursing students to avoid unintentional plagiarism. **Aim of the study:** evaluate the impact of an online educational experience on nursing students' beliefs and attitudes about authorship. **Materials and method:** A quasi-experimental (one group pre-posttest) research design was used in this study. **Settings:** The study was conducted at the Nursing Education Department, Faculty of Nursing, Alexandria University. **Subjects:** A convenience sampling of 50 students affiliated with educational strategies in nursing courses during the first semester of the academic year (2019-2020). **Tools of data collection:** One tool used by the researcher for data collection Part I: students' socio-demographic data such as the students' age, marital status, gender, attending educational programs about plagiarism. Part II: The Student Authorship Questionnaire (SAQ). The SAQ was established to evaluate student beliefs and attitudes about authorial identity in academic writing. **Results:** The results showed that there has been an improvement in students' all authorial identity attitude and belief subscale and thus, the student's overall attitude of authorial identity mean score with the statistically significant difference pre and after attending online educational experience. Also, the results of this study displayed that nearly all of them have a positive attitude and belief about authorial identity. **Conclusion:** The study finding concluded that there has been an improvement in students' all authorial identity attitude and belief subscale. Also, the results of this study displayed that nearly all of them have a positive attitude and belief about authorial identity. Hence, the aim of the study was achieved, and also the hypothesis was proved and there's an effect of an online educational experience on nursing students' beliefs and attitudes about authorship, authorial identity, and how to avoid unintentional plagiarism. **Recommendation:** Based on the current study finding, it can be recommended that by using the SAQ model of authorial identity, teachers can transcend the traditional conventions of academic writing and authorship and train the students who to possess their unique authorial texts and assignment

Keyword: Authorial identity, online educational experience, students, unintentional plagiarism

Introduction

Plagiarism is defined as the act of people copying and using ideas, texts, and discoveries of another author as one's own. Other definitions of plagiarism that any writing that looks similar, but university rules and regulations show that it is difficult to define plagiarism. There is some inconsistency in the possibility of plagiarism; some reviewers have asked researchers whether activities that are mostly not accompanied by citations should be classified as plagiarism (Cheung et al. 2018)

Plagiarism has become a worldwide problem in healthcare education, escalated by the widespread use of the net and other digital

resources. Students often cited common practice among peers and an absence of great consequences or policy implementation, more as stress, time pressure, and better expectations from faculty among the explanations for widespread plagiarism and other types of academic dishonesty (Mahmoud et al.2020).

Some of the sooner research on plagiarism by students in higher education appears to support the concept that academic staff tends to ignore problems with cheating and dishonesty by their students, or, at best, answer them in an off-the-cuff way and on a case-by-case basis (Nadelson 2007, Pickard 2006). Brimble, & Stevenson-Clarke 2011). This notion continues to be supported partially in additional recent

studies, which consult with under-reporting or not reporting instances of student plagiarism when academic staffs are required to do so under institutional policies and procedures (De Maio et al., 2019).

According to studies, there are five diversities of plagiarism that happens, it can be direct, mosaic, self, paraphrase, and accidental. All of those previous types are dedicated to unethical issues: direct plagiarism occurs without citing or pointing out to the source, the total text or a portion of the documents are copied in the same words. This may be one of the main types of public plagiarism. The second kind of plagiarism is mosaic plagiarism. In this kind, the plagiarist borrowed sentences that were not quoted. The third kind of plagiarism is Self-plagiarism: The author customized his/her own previous work without believing it. While Paraphrasing/rephrasing is similar to undeviating plagiarism, excluding this situation, the plagiarizer reshuffles the words of the text or sometimes restates them with the same content. The last one is accidental or accidental, it is unintentional directly, inlaid or unquoted interpretation (Elshafei, & Jahangir 2020, Masic, 2014, Roig, 2006, Starovoytova, 2017).

Unintentional plagiarism, however, is real and happens. Its reasons could be a lack of awareness or a failure to paraphrase and citation correctly. In human sciences, the originality of the content is more essential than the writer or the expressions. Academic writing and its related ethics are rarely taught as a part of the medical or nursing curriculum. Though most nursing students assert that the vast clinical burden and the study pressure thwarts them from scientific writing preparation, the more prospective cause is that there is a lack of supervision from teachers who themselves aren't too knowledgeable in scientific writing (Das, 2019, Selemani, et al. 2018).

Interventions such as simply caution the authors that their work is going to be submitted to plagiarism software don't continuously have the outcome of decreasing plagiarism. Youmans (2011) displayed that when applicants identified that their work is going to be submitted to plagiarism detection software and if they didn't recognize that paraphrasing

and quotations are obligatory in a written assignments, their plagiarism scores were higher. The authors elucidated that anxiety because of knowing that one's works are checked can be grounds for unintentional plagiarism. It could be supposed that these students were only informed that their assignments would be checked without learning how to avoid it, this method may not be perfect at decreasing plagiarism. The best way to reduce unintentional plagiarism by authors is not to tell them that their work will be checked, but to teach them how to avoid it (Obeid, & Hill, 2017).

Emerging a robust and certain authorial voice is a fundamental part of teaching and learning. Evolving the authorial voice ends up in a more assertive and animated authorial identity in academic writing. Aggregating our understanding of students' insights of their authorial voice and identity can aid policy-makers and educators to develop teaching and learning performances that empower and qualify the growing student-writer. One method to decrease unintentional plagiarism is to enhance the students' authorial identity, so they can comprehend the role of the author well, and revenue a more authorial role in the construction of their academic assignments (Singh, & Daniel, 2018).

In academic writing, it's essential to know how to avoid plagiarism practice. Only preparing learners to understand the suitable tactics of direct quotation, paraphrasing, summarizing and citation isn't adequate. It's also necessary to create their principles about plagiarism (Hidayat, et al., 2020). In academic settings, plagiarism continues to be a subject of great importance for educators in this, it prevents students from taking their writing tasks seriously, hinders learning, and, therefore, poses threats to academic enterprise (Babaii, & Nejad Ghanbar, 2017). Considering the importance of attending to plagiarism in academic settings and hence, the scarcity and inconclusiveness of studies conducted in the university context, the current study set out to evaluate an online educational experience for nursing students to avoid unintentional plagiarism

Aim of the study:

The study aimed to evaluate the impact of an online educational experience on nursing students' beliefs and attitudes about authorship.

Research question:

1. What is the effect of an online educational experience on nursing students' beliefs and attitudes about authorship?

Materials and method**Materials**

Research design: A quasi-experimental (one group pre-posttest) research design was used in this study.

Settings: The study was conducted at the Nursing Education Department, Faculty of Nursing, Alexandria University.

Subjects: A convenience sampling of all available (50) students affiliated with educational strategies in nursing courses during the first semester of the academic year (2019-2020).

Tool of data collection:**One tool is used by the researcher for data collection:**

Tool I: Part I: students' socio-demographic data such as the students' age, marital status, gender, attending educational programs about plagiarism.

Part II: The Student Authorship Questionnaire (SAQ). The SAQ was established by Pittam, et al. (2009) to evaluate student beliefs and attitudes about authorial identity in academic writing. It was adopted by the researchers to assess nursing students' beliefs and attitudes about authorship. It comprises 17 statements for six dimensions with five-point Likert scales ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. The SAQ included six subscales; the first one is the Confidence in writing subscale which contains five items. The second subscale assesses the students' understanding of authorship and it is composed of two items. The third subscale assessed the students' knowledge to avoid plagiarism, and it consisted of three items. The

fourth one is related to the top-down approach to writing and it is composed of two items. The fifth one is directed toward checking the Bottom-up approach to writing, and it is composed of two items. The sixth and last subscale is related to evaluating the students' pragmatic approach to writing, and it comprises four items.

The total Scale scores are calculated as the sum of all subscale scores for the items that are generating each scale, divided by the number of its items. There were some items are reverse-scored therefore the higher scores for each scale demonstrate the greater tendency for the technique to write categorized by the scale.

For subscales one to four, higher scores indicated a more authoritative attitude. For scales five and six, higher scores reflected less authoritative attitudes. The Scoring Items 1-5 and 7-15: strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, neutral = 3, agree = 4, strongly agree = 5. Items 6, 16 and 17: strongly disagree = 5, disagree = 4, neutral = 3, agree = 2, strongly agree = 1.

Then the degrees were summed and categorized under the following

- From 70% and more were had positive attitude, and less than 70% were had negative attitude

The Scale scores of the first subscale "Confidence in writing" = $(5 + 6 + 12 + 15 + 16) / 5$, the second score of Understanding authorship subscale = $(1 + 2) / 2$, the third score of assessing Knowledge to avoid plagiarism subscale = $(3 + 4 + 8) / 3$, the fourth one is Top-down approach to writing subscale which = $(7 + 14) / 2$, the fifth one related to Bottom-up approach to writing subscale = $(9 + 13) / 2$, finally the Pragmatic approach to writing subscale was = $(10 + 11 + 17 + 18) / 4$.

Attached to the study tool is a sheet that contains students' personal and academic data such as; age, gender, marital status, last GPA, and attending educational sessions about plagiarism.

Method

The study was extended to three months after official permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Ethical Research Committee at the Faculty of Nursing. Official

permission to conduct the study was obtained from the dean of the Faculty of Nursing, head of the nursing education department after providing the explanation of the aim of the study.

The study tool was tested for its content validity by 5 experts in the related fields (nursing education), and then the necessary modifications were done accordingly.

Reliability was tested for the study tool using the Cronbach Alpha 0.8.

A pilot study was carried out on 10% of students to ensure the clarity and feasibility of the tools, and the necessary modifications will be done so prior to data collection. Students included in the pilot were excluded from the study.

The researchers collected data in the first semesters of the academic year 2019/2020.

Data collection: data was collected through three phases as follows:

Assessment phase:

Demographic data for the study group was obtained by the researchers. Tool I was used to collect data about nursing students' beliefs and attitudes about authorship through the questionnaire on Google form (initial assessment pretest)

Implementation phase:

For the purpose of implementation of this study, an online workshop was conducted including a PowerPoint presentation, discussion, and brainstorming. The Online workshop was regulated on Zoom Cloud Meeting for nursing students according to their schedule. Two hours for two days' duration followed by a forum discussion was conducted. The online instructional intervention was about the following content; definitions of unintentional plagiarism, how to write an assignment, approaches of assignment writing, academic honesty policy, why does plagiarism happen?, the most common causes, consequences of plagiarism, tips for avoiding plagiarism, and avoiding unintentional plagiarism exercise.

Evaluation phase:

Students' beliefs and attitudes about authorship were reassessed immediately after the implementation of the workshop by using tool I (posttest).

Ethical considerations:

Electronic informed consent was obtained from all nursing students after the explanation of the study aim and potential benefits from participation and the acceptance to participate in the study was by resending the consent and the questionnaire. Confidentiality of responses was assured. The nursing students have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any penalties

Statistical analysis

Data was entered into the pc and dissected utilizing IBM SPSS programming bundle variant 20.0. Descriptive statistics were revealed, consuming numbers and percent. Relations were illustrated by consuming mean, standard deviation, chi-square, and Student t-test. The significance of the results was absolute at the five hundred level.

Results

Table 1 showed that half (50%) of the students aged less than 22 years and also the other half (50) aged 22-25 years. Regarding the students' marital status the majority (82.0%) of students were single. Regarding the students' gender, nearly three-quarters (70.0%) of them were females. In relation to attending educational programs about plagiarism, approximately three-quarters (74.0%) of them didn't attend any previous educational programs about plagiarism.

Regarding the students' confidence in writing **table, 2** displayed that there was an improvement in students' confidence in writing mean score from 9.720 ± 1.66 Pre online educational experience to 21.04 ± 4.05 with statistically significant difference pre and after attending online educational experience whereas $P < 0.001$. In relation to students understanding of authorship, the table also displayed that there was an improvement in students' understanding authorship mean score from 4.54 ± 1.80 Pre online educational experience to 8.28 ± 2.36 with statistically

significant difference pre and after attending online educational experience whereas $P < 0.001$. As for students' knowledge to avoid plagiarism the table also displayed that there was an improvement in students' knowledge to avoid plagiarism mean score from 5.74 ± 1.96 Pre online educational experience to 12.74 ± 2.34 with statistically significant difference pre and after attending online educational experience whereas $P < 0.001$. Regarding students' Top-down approach to writing the table also displayed that there was an improvement in students' Top-down approach to writing skills mean score from 4.02 ± 1.65 Pre online educational experience to 8.60 ± 1.69 with statistically significant difference pre and after attending online educational experience whereas $P < 0.001$.

In relation to students' Bottom-up approach to writing the table also displayed that there was an improvement in students' Bottom-up approach to writing mean score from 3.96 ± 1.73 Pre online educational experience to 8.42 ± 1.49 with statistically significant difference pre and after attending online educational experience whereas $P < 0.001$. As for students' Pragmatic approach to writing the table also displayed that there were an improvement in students' Pragmatic approach to writing mean score from 6.85 ± 2.24 Pre online educational experience to 13.16 ± 1.96 with statistically significant difference pre and after attending online educational experience whereas $P < 0.001$. Finally regarding students' overall attitude regarding authorial identity the table also displayed that

there was an improvement in students' overall attitude mean score from 35.54 ± 10.32 Pre online educational experience to 72.24 ± 12.36 with statistically significant difference pre and after attending online educational experience whereas $P < 0.001$.

Table 3 and figure 1 compare the student's overall attitude and belief about authorial identity in academic writing before and after the online educational experience. The table displayed that Pre online educational experience only 8.0% of the students have a positive attitude and belief regarding authorial identity, while after online educational experience nearly all (92.0%) of them have a positive attitude and belief regarding authorial identity. The table also displayed that Pre online educational experience the majority (84.0%) of the students have negative attitudes and beliefs regarding authorial identity, while after online educational experience only 16.0% of them have negative attitudes and beliefs regarding authorial identity with statistically significant difference pre and after attending online educational experience whereas $P < 0.001$.

Table 4 correlates between the students' sociodemographic data and the student's total attitudes about authorial identity in academic writing before and after the online educational experience. The table displayed that there were statistically significant differences between the students' age, gender, attending previous training programs, and students' attitude after online educational experience whereas $P < 0.001$.

Table I: distribution of nursing students sociodemographic data (n=50)

Items	Number	Percentage
Age		
Less than 22 years	25	50%
22-25 years	25	50%
Marital status		
Single	41	82.0%
Married	9	18.0%
Gender		
Female	35	70.0%
Male	15	30.0%
Attending educational programs about plagiarism		
No	37	74.0%
Yes	13	26.0%

Table II: Distribution of student’s mean score of beliefs and attitudes about authorial identity in academic writing before and after the online educational experience:

Items	Pre online educational experience	After online educational experience	t test	P value
	Mean ± SD	Mean ±SD		
Confidence in writing	9.720 ± 1.66	21.04 ± 4.05	-26.10	<0.001
Understanding authorship	4.54 ± 1.80	8.28 ± 2.36	-10.45	<0.000
Knowledge to avoid plagiarism	5.74 ± 1.96	12.74 ± 2.34	-22.94	<0.001
Top-down approach to writing	4.02 ± 1.65	8.60 ± 1.69	-18.62	<0.001
Bottom-up approach to writing	3.96 ± 1.73	8.42 ± 1.49	-13.84	<0.001
Pragmatic approach to writing	6.85 ± 2.24	13.16 ± 1.96	-22.25	<0.001
Overall attitude regarding authorial identity	35.54 ± 10.32	72.24 ± 12.36	-25.47	<0.001

Table III: Comparison between the student’s overall attitude and belief about authorial identity in academic writing before and after the online educational experience:

Overall attitude and belief regarding authorial identity	Pre online educational experience		After online educational experience		Test	P
	N	%	N	%		
Positive	2	8.0%	46	92.0%	X2 = 0.489	<0.001
Negative	42	84.0%	8	16.0%		

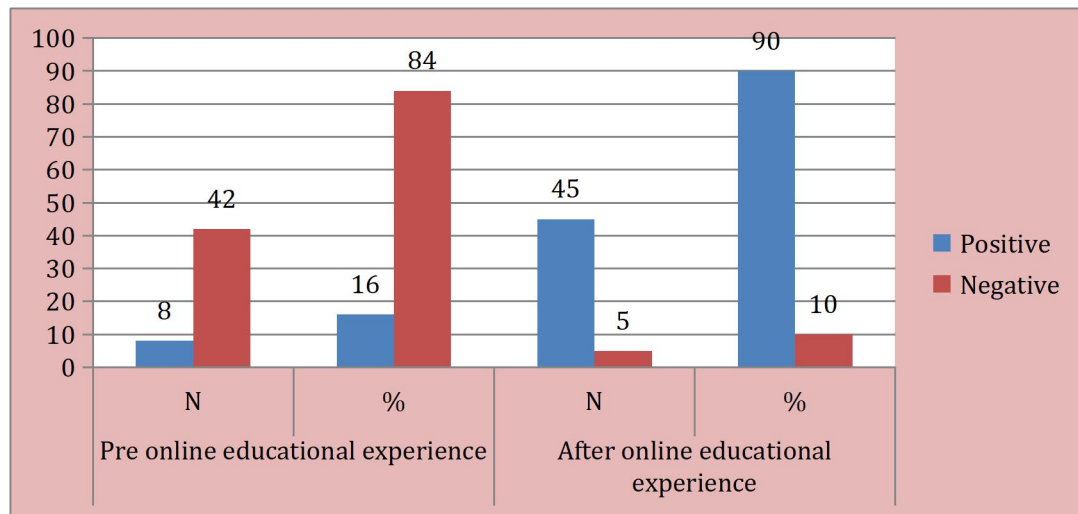


Figure 1: Comparison between the student’s overall attitude and belief about authorial identity in academic writing before and after the online educational experience

Table IV: Correlation between the students' sociodemographic data and student's total attitudes about authorial identity in academic writing before and after the online educational experience:

Items	Attitude Pre online educational experience		Attitude After online educational experience	
	Pearson correlation	P Value	Pearson correlation	P Value
Age	0.022	>0.005	0.386**	<0.001
Gender	0.175	>0.005	0.458**	<0.001
Attending previous training programs	0.063	>0.005	0.305**	<0.001

Discussion

A little number of students recognized instinctively with the role of the writer in an instructional context, and the majority of students perceive that authorship and authorial identity are applied mainly to professional researchers.

The student perspective is vital, especially the role of academics and researchers is discussed more and more altogether in previous studies. There are many kinds of research that have surveyed teachers' perceptions on student plagiarism (Flint et al., 2006; Wilkinson, 2009) and features of academic writing (Harrington et al. 2006) there are a minimum researchers examining the authorial identity from the students' perspective correspondingly having to acquire by different instructions on academics' attitudes and beliefs. This issue is frequently significant because students who play crucial roles in developing upcoming researchers must learn from their undergraduate levels what's the meaning and also the importance of authorial identity and how to avoid unintentional or accidental plagiarism.

The results of this study showed that there has been an improvement in students' confidence in writing, understanding authorship, knowledge to avoid plagiarism, Top-down approach to writing, bottom-up, approach to writing, pragmatic approach to and the students' overall attitude toward authorial identity mean, score with statistically significant difference pre and after attending online educational experience whereas $P < 0.001$.

The study results were in line with Fazilatfar et al. (2018) results which endorse

the students' perceived mounting confidence in struggling academic writings. The finding also demonstrated that more than three-quarters of the students, mutually undergraduate and postgraduate deliberated the course as exact useful and effective in aggregating their confidence in writing from shreds of evidence and it also significantly monitor the tutorial writing students' creators to identify, which problematic parts are perceived as some way more unclear for the students and request to be emphasized in the writing courses.

The results were also congruent with Elander et al. (2010) results that displayed that direct evaluative view displayed that nearly all examined students supposed the intervention assisted them to avoid plagiarism and more than half of them supposed it assisted them compose well assignments. Post-interference study groups revealed upgraded student cognitive abilities and attitudes about authorial identity and academic writing. The results also demonstrated that interferences can support students to avoid accidental plagiarism by taking more authorial roles in their academic writing.

Furthermore, the results are matched with Maguire et al. (2013) results which displayed that nursing students had higher mean scores and lower variance on all actions of beliefs and these were statistically significant for reading and writing their assignments and comprehending authorship.

These study results also showed that pre-online educational experience the rest of the students have a positive attitude and belief about authorial identity, while after online educational experience nearly all of them have a positive attitude and belief about authorial

identity. Moreover, the results of the current study displayed that Pre online educational experience the majority of the students have a negative attitude and belief about authorial identity, while after online educational experience less than one fifth of them have a negative attitude and belief about authorial identity with statistically significant difference pre and after attending online educational experience whereas $P < 0.001$.

The results of the current study was in line with Jabali, (2018) study findings, which displayed that students had positive attitudes toward writing, the wide-ranging writing subject matters presented by the college, the manuals, and teaching methods costumed, and their writing abilities and methods.

Also, Elander et al. (2010) results showed that direct evaluative feedback was also positive, with nearly all examined students supposed the intervention assisted them to avoid plagiarism and more than half of them supposed it assisted them to write well assignments.

The current study results also showed that there has been a statistically significant difference between the students' age, gender, attending previous training programs, and students' attitude after online educational experience whereas $P < 0.001$.

The results are matched with Maguire et al. (2013) results which showed that the older students had higher scores on entirely the measures and these variances were statistically significant for writing, knowledge to avoid plagiarism, and confidence in writing. First-generation students also notched significantly higher on perceiving themselves as novices.

The conceivable Justification of this study results is that authorial identity was predominantly pitiable, specifically in essay assignments, which are generally not perceived by students as private pieces of work. On the other hand, there was extra consideration to ownership and authorial identity from the colleges and universities but the problem is still present and many students did not know how to avoid this unintentional or accidental plagiarism and the authorial identity. So, if the students receive training first on authorial

identity, academic writing, and how to avoid unintentional or accidental plagiarism it will be effective and this response matched with our results which displayed that after the online workshop their attitude toward all items of authorial identity was improved.

Conclusion

The main goal of this study was to evaluate the impact of an online educational experience on nursing students' beliefs and attitudes about authorship. So, this study finding concluded that there has been an improvement in students' all authorial identity attitude and belief subscale and thus, the student's overall attitude of authorial identity mean score with the statistically significant difference pre and after attending online educational experience. Also, the results of this study displayed that nearly all of them have a positive attitude and belief about authorial identity. Hence, the aim of the study was achieved and also the hypothesis was proved and there's an effect of an online educational experience on nursing students' beliefs and attitudes about authorship, authorial identity, and how to avoid unintentional plagiarism

Recommendations

The present study recommended that by using the SAQ model of authorial identity, teachers can transcend the traditional conventions of academic writing and authorship and train the students to possess their unique authorial texts and assignments. Also, if there's a marked increase in the authorial identity level of university students and novice writers' workshops and training programs can cause a serious decline in the amount of unintentional plagiarism practiced at universities.

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