

College Students' Awareness and Perception Regarding the Propagation of Research Paper for Sale

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Abstract— Research is a crucial subject yet challenging to do. It tests the students' perseverance to do an enormous task while developing their critical, writing, strategic, and public speaking skills. With additional errands to do, some might get overwhelmed. Hence, there are individuals or groups who offer to help them making their research in exchange for money. This study aimed to know how aware the college students and to get their stand about this issue. The study employed mixed method to analyze the collected data from an online survey. It was found out that most of the respondents knew this "research paper for sale" since they were in senior high school. They got their information from social media, schoolmates, classmates, friends, teachers, and others. Despite that, the majority of these college students did not intend to buy a research paper; but there were some who admitted that the idea crossed their mind. Almost all of the respondents were against it because it impairs the academic integrity and educational system. Nevertheless, there were few respondents who saw it as a money generating job for those who do it.

Keywords— academic integrity, college students, educational system, research, research paper for sale

INTRODUCTION

Research is an organized way of discovering new ideas which can lead to the development of a society (Islam, 2023); hence, it is given much importance especially in schools and universities. It stimulates the learners to their professional growth and self-reliance (Gupta, 2022).

In the Philippines, this subject is taught as early as Grade 10 in English subject. This continues in senior high school as it offers Practical Research 1 and 2, and Inquiries, Investigation, and Immersion. Universities and colleges teach both qualitative and quantitative research before students make their own theses. Despite these exposures, students are still struggling in this area. According to the study conducted by Briz, et al. (2022), lack of interest and knowledge to the subject, teacher-related factor, learning references, English proficiency, and sample's accessibility hinder the students in research. The result of the study of Pangket (2023) revealed a surprising result in which even graduate students grapple in making research in terms of forming research ideas, problems, and writing related literature. On top of it, students also juggle many school tasks which make them tremendously busy.

Consequently, a business venture has arisen that caters to those who need someone to write a research paper for them. According to an article made by Delos Reyes (2024), there are multiple social media pages offering a thesis or a dissertation to whoever needs it that costs about Php 20,000.00 – Php 40,000.00. This happening

was also observed by the researchers that there are indeed individuals or groups who sell research paper through online. Moreover, by searching in Google, a person can scroll many websites rendering the same service that guarantees its quality and affordability. They promise that these are made by experts who can meet the deadlines and the requirements for the paper. In addition, one of the researchers is a teacher who overheard his student joking about paying someone to make a research paper for Php 3,000.00. He got concerned and asked the student where he got that notion. He replied that there were some who knew that already.

Schools serve also as a moral compass of the students and teach them to adhere to right principles. They educate them about academic integrity. According to Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (2021), members of the school community are expected to be honest, trustworthy, fair, respectful, and responsible. This includes aspects of research such as the avoidance of plagiarism, data fabrication, and falsification. Plagiarism is defined by the University of Oxford (n.d.) as presenting someone's concept and owning it without the proper citation of the original author. Based on National Science Foundation's policy (45 CFR 689), as cited by Kroll (2020), data fabrication is manufacturing data with the intent of propagating it; while data falsification is presenting inaccurate information by altering, adding, or deleting some data. To abstain from these research misconducts, universities

and colleges hold rigorous research defense and invest in plagiarism checker to screen the research paper.

Despite the measures made by the academes, the propagation of research paper for sale continues in the Philippines through online. Though there is no concrete data that tells the number of people who have availed this due to lack of published documents and articles, it is still disturbing. It is worth knowing how college students perceive this issue, because they are susceptible to it and being molded with academic integrity. This study aims to determine their awareness regarding the research paper which is sold and bought. Moreover, this also seeks their stand on this topic. The main goal of this research is to give awareness to people about this trend and guide them to make the right decisions.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research used mixed-method design. It allows the researcher to use both quantitative and qualitative research designs in interpreting the collected data (Dovetail Editorial Team, 2023).

Survey method was employed to get the college students' demographic profile and their awareness about the said issue. The collected data here were quantitative

in nature and were subjected to statistical data analysis such as frequency and percentage. Furthermore, they answered an open-ended question regarding their insights pertaining to the topic. Since the data were in narrative form, these were coded and interpreted qualitatively. The researchers used inductive coding in which they formed the codes based on their readings and analysis on the answers of the respondents (Dovetail Editorial Team, 2023).

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were 100 college students from some provinces in the Philippines. The projected number of respondents was in accordance with statisticians' recommendations that a sample of 100 will bear a valid result (Fox, 2024).

They were determined using convenience sampling. It is a technique utilized because of the respondents' availability and willingness to join (Simkus, 2023). It was used by the researchers because of the large population of college students. Nevertheless, they still considered that the students must be at the tertiary level.

Table 1 shows the frequency distribution of the respondents based on sex and year level.

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of the Respondents based on Sex and Year Level

Year Level	Male	Female	Total
First Year	15	11	26
Second Year	8	16	24
Third Year	6	23	29
Fourth Year	7	14	21
Total	36	64	100

Despite of the researchers' plan and desire to make the number of respondents equal in terms of sex and year level, this was not obtained because they used convenience sampling. They just depended on the respondents' willingness to be part of the study, and no one was forced to join against their will. This can be considered as a limitation of this study.

Table 2 shows the frequency distribution of the respondents based on their college courses.

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of the Respondents based on College Course

College Course	f
Accountancy	6
Agriculture	1

Architecture	2
Business Administration	7
Business Management	4
Civil Engineering	4
Communication Arts	1
Computer Engineering	1
Computer Science	1
Criminology	1
Development Management	1
Education	16
Electronics Engineering	1
Entrepreneurial Management	1
Hospitality Management	3
Hotel and Restaurant Management	2
Industrial Engineering	4

Information Technology	4
Journalism	2
Mechanical Engineering	1
Medical Laboratory Science	5
Medical Technology	1
Nursing	3
Office Administration	2
Operational management	1
Pharmacy	1
Physics	2
Political Science	1
Psychology	13
Tourism Management	7
Veterinary Medicine	1
Grand Total	100

This shows the different college courses of the students. This implies that the data gathered came from diverse groups of individuals.

The course with the highest number of respondents was Education (16), followed by Psychology (13), and in the third spot, Business Administration and Tourism Management tied with 7 each.

Research Instrument

The study used a researcher-made survey questionnaire that determined the college students' awareness and perception about the research marketed online or personal.

This instrument was validated by a research expert and a grammarian.

They checked the validity and correctness of the questionnaire. After that, it was pilot tested to a group of 35 college students to know if it was reliable. Upon the validation, treatment, and some revisions, the survey questionnaire was suited to use as a research instrument.

The survey questionnaire was composed of two parts: the respondent's profile, and the college student's awareness and perception.

Part I asked for the student's sex, age, and college year level. While the latter part is comprised of 10 questions.

Table 3 shows the rating and description of the college students' self-assessment on their research writing competency.

Table 3. Rating and Description for College Students' Self-assessment on their Research Writing Competency

Rating	Level of Competency
5	Outstanding
4	Very Satisfactory
3	Satisfactory
2	Fairly Satisfactory
1	Needs Improvement

Table 4 shows the rating and description of the college students' pertaining to their level of likeness towards research writing.

Table 4. Rating and Description for College Students' Level of Likeness Towards Research Writing

Rating	Level of Likeness
5	Very Like
4	Like
3	Neither Like nor Dislike
2	Dislike
1	Very Dislike

Table 5 shows the options on how aware the college students about research papers for sale.

Table 5. Awareness Level of the College Students about the Research Paper for Sale

Awareness Level
Very Aware
Aware
Not Aware

Research Procedure

The researchers conducted the study online because of proximity and time constraints.

They sent digital copies of the consent letter to the projected respondents requesting them to be part of the study. This contained its purpose, importance, and the sensitivity of the topic.

Further explanations were given if needed. No one would be harmed in any way, and nobody would be forced to join against their approval.

Once the permission was granted, a survey through Google Form was administered to them. The respondents were allowed to withdraw anytime of the study and be respected if they did not want their data to be used. Their anonymity would be kept confidential for their safety and security.

All the gathered data were subjected through statistical and qualitative analyses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Figure 1 shows 100 college students' self-assessment on their research writing competency.

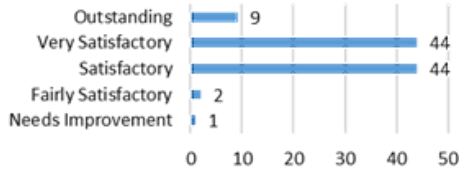


Figure 1. Level of Research Writing Competency based on College Students' Self-assessment

This shows that most of the college students had either a very satisfactory or satisfactory research writing competency according to their self-assessment. There were three (3) students who thought that their competencies were below the average. However, there were nine (9) respondents who labelled themselves as outstanding in terms of doing research. It is important that they are self-aware of their competency in research and find ways to cultivate it. As cited by Marushkevych, et al. (2022), it is correlated to employment, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills as stated in the studies made by Bandaranaike & Willison (2015), Kartika et al. (2019), Missingham et al. (2016), respectively.

Figure 2 shows 100 college students' self-assessment on their level of likeness in doing research.

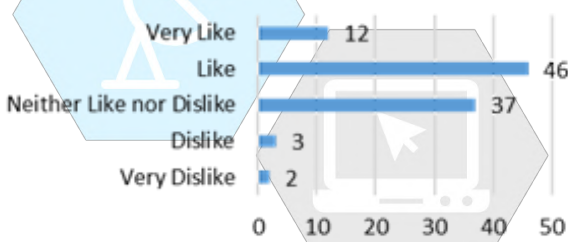


Figure 2. Level of Likeness of College Students in Making Research

The figure presents that about half of the college respondents liked research writing; but 37 of them were undecided. Twelve (12) of them truly enjoyed doing it; but five of the students did not like it.

Figure 3 shows 100 college students' preference in making a research paper.

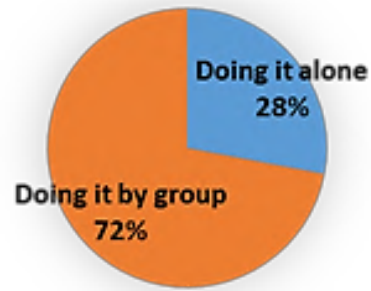


Figure 3. College Students' Preference in Making a Research Paper

Seventy-two percent (72%) of the respondents chose to make a research paper in a group. Accomplishing tasks in a group can foster academic learning in higher education as revealed in the study of Chriac (2014) and provides a support system (Herman, n.d.). On the other hand, 28% of the college students wanted to do it on their own. Its perks are lessening the interruptions, and control over their time and study place (Oxford Learning, 2018). At the end, the students will prefer which of these two will be more helpful for them.

Figure 4 shows the 100 college students' awareness level pertaining to the selling of research paper nowadays.

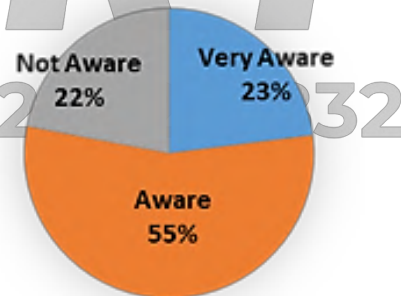


Figure 4. College Students' Awareness Level about Research Paper for Sale

There were 55% and 23% of the college respondents who were aware and very aware, respectively, on the propagation of research paper for sale in the Philippines. These 78 students answered the remaining survey questions about this issue. While 22% of them did not know about the selling and purchasing of research paper.

Figure 5 shows the time period when 78 respondents knew about the research paper for sale.

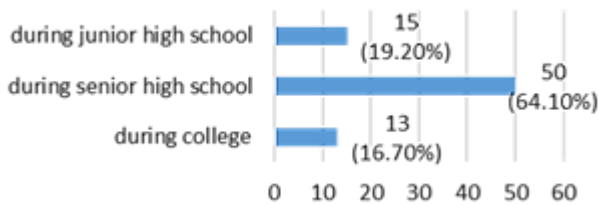


Figure 5. Time Period when College Students Became Aware about Research Paper for Sale

This shows that the majority of the college students (50 or 64.40%) became aware of the said issue during their senior high school days, while others learned about it during junior high school or college.

Figure 6 shows where the 78 respondents get the information regarding the research paper for sale.

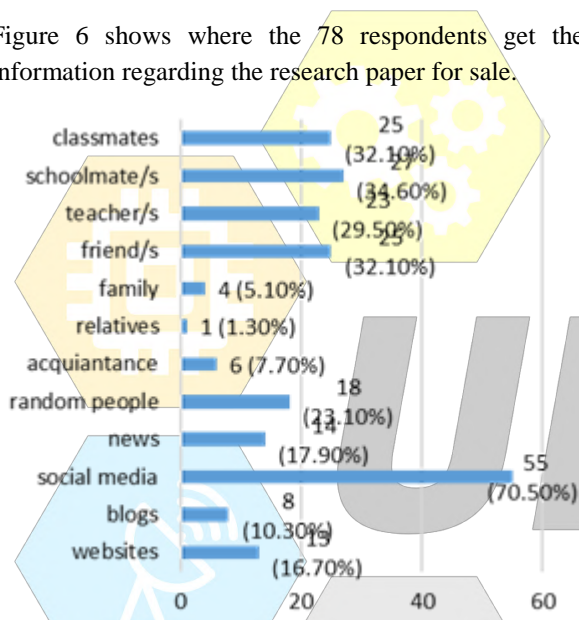


Figure 6. College Students' Sources that Made Them Aware about Research Paper for Sale

The topmost source of the college students how they became aware of the research for sale is social media with 55 (70.50%). It is followed by their schoolmates (27 or 34.60%), their classmates and friends (both with 25 or 32.10% each), and their teachers (23 or 29.50%).

Table 6 shows the 78 college students' answers on the two dichotomous questions.

Table 6. College Students' Response on the Dichotomous Questions

Questions	Yes	No
If you are aware, do you know someone who sells a research paper?	17	61
If you are aware, do you know someone who bought a research paper?	17	61

This shows 17 (21.80%) respondents who knew people who sold research paper. Likewise, there were 17 (21.80%) of them knew someone who bought research paper. Upon analysis of the raw data, the researchers found out that there were respondents who knew both seller and buyer, while others knew either seller only or buyer only. Yet, most respondents did not know anyone who did this; their knowledge about this topic was based on what was told to them and what they had read, typically online.

Table 7 shows the 100 college students' answers if they have been tempted to avail research paper for sale.

Table 7. College Students' Response on Question if They Will Avail a Research Paper

Questions	Yes	No	Not Sure
Have you ever been tempted to avail a research paper?	8	89	3

This means that 89 or 89.00% of the college respondents had no plan to buy a research paper. Eight (8) or 8.00% of them admitted that the idea of availing themselves of research paper came to their mind. Lastly, 3 or 3.00% of these students were uncertain if they would resort to purchasing a research paper. Table 8 shows the insights of 15 college students about research paper for sale.

Table 8. College Students' Insight about Research Paper for Sale

Respondent	Insight
R5	If the owner allows his/her work to be sold, then It's fine with me. There's no problem at all. But they need to sell it in an appropriate prize with regards to their time and effort, hard work and stress during the time they are doing the research.
R7	My thoughts about research for sale is If the time comes for them to defend that, they will have a hard time because they did not do that research
R8	While the practice offers a seemingly convenient solution for students juggling multiple responsibilities or facing tight deadlines, it ultimately undermines the core principles of education and research. The practice encourages a false sense of legitimacy and ignores the valuable learning experience of

	researching, writing, and revising a paper. It also violates ethical standards and can lead to severe academic sanctions if detected, harming students' academic integrity in the end.
R22	The prevalence of "research for sale" in the Philippines is a disturbing trend that undermines the very core of academic integrity. This practice not only compromises the quality and reliability of research outputs but also fosters a culture of academic dishonesty. It's a symptom of deeper issues such as insufficient research funding, heavy academic pressure, and a weak ethical framework within the educational system.
R24	The issue of "research for sale" in the Philippines poses a significant threat to the integrity of academic work. When research is commissioned with the expectation of biased results, it compromises the credibility of both the scholars and the institutions involved. This practice can lead to the dissemination of misleading information, influencing public policy and societal beliefs in ways that may not serve the public's best interest. Moreover, it exploits vulnerable researchers who might feel pressured to produce results that align with the desires of those funding the research. To protect the value of academic research, it is crucial to enforce strict ethical standards and promote transparency in the relationship between researchers and their sponsors.
R31	It is an issue that is quite not surprising but is indeed disappointing. It is very hard to eradicate this issue due to the fact that teachers most often do not have the luxury of ability and time to determine if research was just bought or not. What the education sector can do is to integrate research ethics in a comprehensive manner. More so, research defense shall have a more comprehensive process to ensure that students know their paper very well.
R33	I do not have any idea with regard to this issue. But I think there's a reason there is some "research for sale" in the Philippines because some students want to pass their subject easily and to graduate instantly. But the majority of the Institutions here in the Philippines are very strict when it comes to Research Writing. Thesis Advisers and Technical Critic are the ones who check the authenticity and originality of each paper. And another thing, there are Thesis Forms, wherein they should sign if the final draft of each chapter was finalized and checked.
R38	<p>Research for Sale should not be happening in the first place, but I am also aware that even professionals avail this kind of service, and it might be because of the possible factors why it is happening. One thing I could think of is, education system here in the Philippines focus on the quantity of research rather than the quality the students produce. If the academe focus on the quality of research, students and professionals alike will not entertain "research for sale" but rather if the research is of quality, the academe will know if the students really made them in methodologies such as in defending the research they made.</p> <p>Research defense is a critical evaluation process to make sure the quality of research/researchers knows what they are doing.</p>
R44	In the Philippines, the issue of "for sale" research raises significant concerns about the ethical standards and quality of academic work. This practice can compromise the credibility and reliability of research, which is crucial for informing public policies and advancing knowledge. Delving into this problem reveals a broader challenge faced by many people, where maintaining academic integrity is essential for trust in scientific progress and policymaking.
R47	I'm actually unaware of this "research for sale" here in the Philippines since I believe that research is accessible even when not for sale. But with the thought, I think that it can be somehow a good idea for wider accessibility and generation of funds for the researcher's work. However, it may also have possible negative impact such as inequality since not everyone can afford it. Moreover, other researchers might create research out of money rather than its goal that benefits the society.
R55	It is very alarming. It can lead to a lack of trust in academic outputs and may cause false information to be spread across the country. Selling research findings or services is an unethical practice that hurts the honesty of academic and scientific work. It can make research institutions less trustworthy and lead to lower-quality information being shared. I think it is best to have a strict implementation of research making. Having access to research for sale is very concerning as it may make the student/individuals to buy and not to create their own research topics.

R60	It's a convenient alternative for those who are taking masteral as well as working
R66	Here are my two cents: For the seller, it may be a good thing because they are getting income from exercising their own knowledge and intelligence in terms of writing and researching. However, for the buyer, they are not acquiring necessary knowledge and important actions about research writing because they choose not to practice it and just let others do it for them. I thought it is an unacceptable thing to do because it is just like buying other people's knowledge, letting them do all your work, and just give them money. They are able to get the degree but not the understanding.
R47	That's alarming, research makes the students experience being a researcher where in a lot of skills/abilities can be develop and as well as knowledge to obtain through the process. If students are engaged with this kind of activity "buying research" this hinders them to learn and grow by themselves.
R91	It speaks volume of the educational crisis that has been long prevalent to the country. It's honestly horrendous, disgusting, and outrageous. As someone who took the Special Science section during my Junior High School days, this is a travesty and a big insult to the intelligence of smart Filipinos.

The table shows the different point views of college students about research for sale in the Philippines. Most of them, including the other respondents, commented that this is alarming. This reflects the country's education crisis, as mentioned by Respondent 91. According to them, it violates ethical standards in doing research, deteriorates the academic integrity and quality of education in the Philippines, leads to students lack knowledge and skills, and culminates to unreliable research results and misinformation. To refrain this from happening, Respondent 24 suggested to rigidly implement the ethical standards in making research. In addition, Respondent 31 had a similar recommendation and added that research defense must be more comprehensive. Respondent 38 proposed that Philippines needs to focus on the research quality rather than the quantity of research.

On the other hand, some respondents pointed out the possible benefits why research paper sale persists; but they also gave some potential down sides. Respondent 5 thought it would be acceptable if the author itself sells the paper intentionally and must be sold at an appropriate price to compensate their effort. Respondent 60 expressed that availing "research paper for sale" becomes an option to those who take master's degree and who have jobs. Moreover, Respondent 66 stated that it is beneficial to the seller because they earn money; but not to the buyer because they do not obtain the learning that they are supposed to get though they earn their degree. Respondent 8 acknowledged that this becomes an easy option for those who have busy schedules; but at the end, it damages the research ethical standards.

Seventy-eight (78) of the respondents implied that they were not in favor of selling and buying a research paper. While 12 of the college students were neutral about the

topic. They balanced the benefits and consequences of this action. There were four (4) students who were in favor if it is not abused. Six (6) students did not give their stand on this topic.

CONCLUSIONS

Most of the students were aware that "research paper for sale" happens in the Philippines. They found out about it since senior high school due to exposure to social media and from the information relayed to them by their schoolmates, friends, classmates, teachers, and others. Some of them knew people who sold and/or bought research paper. The majority of the respondents did not plan to avail this kind of service; however, several respondents were considering it.

Generally, they are not in favor of "research paper for sale". They thought it ruins the academic integrity and educational system. It does more harm than good to the students, as they were deprived of the competencies that research writing teaches. This also produces invalid and unreliable research. Though some see it as a money generating job and an easy way out from the burden of schoolwork.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the lack of research studies addressing the phenomena, the researchers suggest further investigation into this area.

The researchers recommend including additional groups to get a more varied outcome, such as professors, school faculty, graduate students and other professionals from various locations and sectors to gather diverse viewpoints. Furthermore, the future researcher may use other methodology and sampling techniques to explore this topic deeply.

The researchers advise the research teachers to have extensive research paper checking and put more dedication to have a much comprehensive process on research defense. Hence, the research paper will be assessed and evaluated very well. They may guide their learners to strongly adhere to academic integrity in writing research.

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