



## Architecture Students' Understanding of Citations: Turkish vs. Asian and African

### La comprensión de las citas por parte de los estudiantes de arquitectura: Turco vs. Asiáticos y Africanos

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#### ABSTRACT

The purpose of the current study is to investigate architecture students' understanding of the concept of citations. International (28 different countries from the Middle East and Africa) and Turkish university students aged between 17 and 40 and in grades one to four participated in the present study. All the students were found to have at least one misconception about citations. Students were found to lack plagiarism knowledge. Turkish students were more successful in certain areas, while international students were not found to be more successful than Turkish students in any areas. This paper discusses the educational implications of using citations.

#### RESUMEN

##### Palabras clave:

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El propósito de este estudio es investigar la comprensión del concepto de citación por parte de los estudiantes de arquitectura. Participaron en él estudiantes universitarios internacionales (28 países de Oriente Medio y África) y turcos de edades comprendidas entre los 17 y los 40 años, matriculados en los cuatro primeros años de grado universitario. Se encontró que todos los estudiantes tenían al menos un concepto erróneo sobre las citaciones. Se descubrió que los estudiantes carecían de conocimientos sobre lo qué es y significa plagio. Los estudiantes turcos tuvieron más éxito en ciertas áreas, mientras que los estudiantes internacionales no tuvieron más éxito que los estudiantes turcos en ninguna de las áreas estudiadas. Este artículo discute las implicaciones educativas del uso de las citas.

## 1. Introduction

Plagiarism is about the transformation of an art object into an art material or the re-presentation of it in today's sense of art which extends from imitation, appropriation and pastiche to plagiarism (Isitman, 2018). Plagiarism, an old academic issue (Pieterse, 2014) that has become more widespread due to improvements in internet facilities and electronic sources, has become an important and serious problem, particularly in academic environments (Fusch, Ness, Booker, & Fusch, 2017; Šprajc, Urh, Jerebic, Trivan, & Jereb, 2017; Cheak, Sze, Ai, Min & Ming, 2013; Park, 2003; Lepp, 2017; Rincón & Barrutia, 2017). Plagiarism is defined in the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary (2017) as "us[ing] someone's words or thoughts without citing that person". On plagiarism.org (2014), plagiarism is defined as:

- “submitting someone else’s work as your own;
- copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit;
- failing to put a quotation in quotation marks;
- providing incorrect information about the source of a quotation;
- changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit; and,
- copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not”.

Parallel to the increase in plagiarism, research about plagiarism has also increased rapidly. Analysing the literature, we can see that research about plagiarism deals with the definition of plagiarism, the reasons for plagiarism, how to stop students plagiarizing and what kind of legislation should be developed and applied to stop plagiarism, all which focus on intentional plagiarism (Fowler, 1998; Duff, Rogers, & Harris, 2006; Batane, 2010; Romero and Rozano, 2016). On the other hand, students may also plagiarize unintentionally (Baysen, Baysen, & Çakmak, 2017; Baysen, Hošková-Mayerová, Çakmak, & Baysen, 2017a, 2017b; Çakmak, 2015; Grave-line, 2010; Belter & Pre, 2009). Intentional plagiarism can be related to students’ grade anxiety or a desire for high grades, as well as time shortages, an unwillingness to carry out research, difficulties in accessing sources (Evering & Moorman, 2012; Wilkinson, 2009), a lack of legislation regarding plagiarism, a lack of ethical culture in the educational institution, the type, number and quality of assignments (Sureda-Negre, Comas, & Oliver-Trobat, 2015; Harris, 2012), improper teaching (Vieyra & Weaver, 2016) and cultural values and differences (Zimmerman, 2012; Heitman & Litewka, 2011; Amsberry, 2009; Maxwell, Curtis, & Vardenega, 2008; Ha, 2006; Leask, 2006; Bamford & Sergiou, 2005; Hayes & Introna, 2005; Sowden, 2005; Jennifer, 1992). However, unintentional plagiarism originates from a lack of knowledge (Baysen *et al.*, 2017; Baysen *et al.*, 2017a, 2017b; Çakmak, 2015; Ahmad, Manszourizadeh, & Ai, 2012; Mahmood, Mahmood, Khan, & Malik, 2010). A misunderstanding of plagiarism can be considered as unintentional plagiarism (Baysen *et al.*, 2017; Baysen *et al.*, 2017a, 2017b; Çakmak, 2015; Henderson; 2011). The present study focuses on misconceptions of plagiarism in the context of cultural differences.

There are two approaches in the literature interrelating plagiarism with cultural values and cultural differences. While some researchers emphasize cultural differences as a key factor, others pay attention to cultural backgrounds (Karaaziz, Can, & Keskindağ, 2017; Amsberry, 2009). Researchers have stated important differences between Eastern and Western cultures (Zimmerman, 2012; Leask, 2006; Bamford & Sergiou, 2005; Hayes & Introna, 2005; Sowden, 2005; Jennifer, 1992). According to this idea, individualism is prominent in Western culture, while collective tendencies emerge in Eastern culture (Kayaoğlu, Erbay, Flitner, & Saltaş, 2016; Hayes & Introna, 2005). In some of these studies, Eastern culture is called “Orientalism/the Orient” and the East includes developing countries and the Third World; on the other hand, the West is called “the Occident” and includes developed countries (Leask, 2006, p.185). Asian countries are defined using concepts from the Confucian tradition (Chien, 2017; Maxwell *et al.*, 2008). These studies not only place emphasis on cultural differences regarding plagiarism but they also argue that Western undergraduate students (from countries like the US, UK, etc.) have improved skills in individual and independent thinking, critical thinking and learning, as well as the ability to complete independent and unassisted research (Zimmerman, 2012; Jennifer, 1992), and that they place importance on rules of academic honesty, such as anti-plagiarism, and are sensitive in applying these rules (Chien, 2017; Zimmerman, 2012; Leask, 2006). Most research regarding Eastern (Chien, 2017; Leask, 2006; Hayes & Introna, 2005), Confucian or Asian (Maxwell *et al.*, 2008; Sowden, 2005) cultures reveals that students of these cultures are educated based on recitation, in which they memorise the knowledge provided, meaning students lack critical thinking skills. Researchers often define these students as superficial learners who do not fully consider the importance of plagiarism.

Leask (2006) states that the variety of students in higher education is changing and that there is an increase in students from different cultures, particularly those coming from the East. These students not only have cultural but also economic and educational differences. According to Amsberry (2009), a country’s educational system is part of that nation’s cultural traditions and it is difficult to separate education from culture. Amsberry (2009) notes that differences in approach to education can cause misunderstandings regarding plagiarism. In their study on Asian, Chinese and Greek postgraduate students studying in the UK, Hayes & Introna (2005) found that Greek students are required only once in their undergraduate education to write an essay. On the other hand, Shi (2006) found, when interviewing Chinese and Korean high-school students, that their teachers provide the source texts, meaning that the students are not required to learn how to cite sources. Kayaoğlu *et al.* (2016) found that German students are more sensitive and careful than Turkish and Georgian students regarding issues concerning plagiarism and academic honesty. Shi (2006) notes that German students learn about the

concept of citations in high school. On the other hand, regarding Asian universities Maxwell *et al.* (2008) state that issues of plagiarism have been newly raised and understood as significant. Asian students are not used to plagiarism-related issues; they lack an understanding of citation rules and Western-style source use and referencing. Thus, because Asian students are unaware of the concept of plagiarism, they face difficulties in recognising types of plagiarism (Maxwell *et al.*, 2008).

A rising area for the development of cross-cultural understanding has been in education, with international education becoming increasingly popular (Ibrahimoglu & Yilmaz, 2018). Zimmerman (2012), Zamani & Ebadi, (2016), Amsberry (2009), Maxwell *et al.* (2008) and Jennifer (1992) note that international students arriving from different countries (particularly Eastern and Asian countries) to Western nations have difficulties adapting to Western education culture during their time at university. According to Maxwell *et al.* (2008), memorisation in Asian classes still plays an important role and, in this culture, students are given notes to memorise. This encourages students to memorise and copy the work of others. Maxwell *et al.* (2008) note that this experience can produce “learned plagiarism”.

Liu, Liu, Lee and Magjuka (2010) provide an example of a student displaying disappointment regarding plagiarism (p.184):

I had not given the reference from where I had taken this information. When the professor pointed [it] out, I immediately expressed my apology for my ignorance and committed to follow it in future ... But I was reprimanded for academic dishonesty, which caused me to lose marks, and I finally ended up with a lower grade. I personally feel [that] this would have been treated in a different way in India.

Another problem international students (Eastern, Asian or Confucian) face, involves learning English. Because English is not their mother tongue and they lack an understanding of the grammar, students may not be successful in critical thinking and writing (Liu *et al.*, 2010; Fawley, 2007; Leask, 2006), which can result in students copying and pasting, thus plagiarising, during their research assignments.

Analysing the research that focuses on plagiarism and cultural values or cultural differences, similar to plagiarism studies in general, we can see that the research also explores intentional plagiarism. It is remarkable that there are so few studies that focus on misconceptions of plagiarism, explore the comprehensive reasons for plagiarism or suggest recommendations (Baysen *et al.*, 2017; Baysen *et al.*, 2017a, 2017b; Çakmak, 2015; Cheak *et al.*, 2013; Ahmad *et al.*, 2012; Henderson, 2011; Graveline, 2010). Further, no studies explore plagiarism-related misconceptions in terms of cultural values and cultural differences. Thus, the present study adds significantly to the research by relating misconception-based plagiarism to cultural values and cultural differences.

Similar to the research carried out on misconceptions (Brown, 2014; Holding, Denton, Kulesza & Rigdway, 2014; Baysen & Silman, 2012; Baysen & Baysen, 2013; Monteiro, Nóbrega, Abrantes, & Gomes, 2012; Baysen, 2011; Nehm & Reilly, 2007; Baysen, Temiz, Baysen, & Yağbasan, 2004; Linke & Venz, 1979; Siramkaya & Aydin, 2017), research on plagiarism has been mostly carried out in the areas of educational sciences, behavioural sciences, psychology and engineering (Gullifer & Tyson, 2010; Eminoğlu & Nartgün, 2009; Dawson & Overfield, 2006; Duff *et al.*, 2006; Köklü, 2000; Asak, 2017). When we investigated the literature related to plagiarism, we discovered that the amount of research dealing directly with the discipline of architecture is rare (Allmer, 2016; Ejezi, 2015; Eweda, 2011; Rimmer, 2002) and we realised that architecture is mostly mentioned in relation to the arts, creative arts and visual arts (Kınık, 2015; Garrett & Robinson, 2012; Porter, 2010; Mullin, 2009). Analysing plagiarism in relation to architecture can be interdisciplinary as it can involve several other disciplines, such as agricultural economics, politics, the natural sciences, business management, computing, mathematical science, engineering and technology, law and English literature (Selwyn, 2008; Crocker & Shaw, 2002). In general, plagiarism research in architecture usually focuses on intentional plagiarism. Such research states that there are two kinds of text used: written and visual (Eweda, 2011; Mullin, 2009). Thus, architecture students can attempt to plagiarise in two ways: written and visual plagiarism. Such research found that architecture students mostly plagiarise through passing off, pastiche, parody, intertextuality, echoing, cutting and pasting, appropriating and via visual means. Mullin (2009) states that similar projects given to students and the habit of joint studies in architecture education can cause students to plagiarise. Thus, we can conclude that plagiarism-related architecture research has, until now, focused on intentional plagiarism and has not considered cultural values and cultural differences. The present study aims to fill this gap in the knowledge and contrast the misconceptions of plagiarism held by Turkish and international [mostly Middle Eastern (not including Turkey) and African] students.

## 2. Method

The present study used quantitative research to explore the understanding of the concept of citations among the students of the Department of Architecture. Because we attempted to explore the natural state of architecture students' understanding of citations, this is a descriptive study.

### 2.1. Participants

Five hundred and thirty-one students are included in the present study, with many from Asian and African countries. Instead of categorising the students as Asian and African, we prefer to group them as those who are Turkish ( $n=291$ ) and those who are other nationalities, international students ( $n=241$ ) (Table 1). The international students are from 28 different Asian and African countries. Architecture students are required to complete assignments and projects in their four-year university career. Half of the curriculum is theoretical, while the other half is practical. Students are required to write reports in both types of courses. The second researcher of the present study declared that she tried to eliminate students' misconceptions about citations, noting that she tries to teach her students how to cite correctly, as well as inform them of the principles and ethical issues behind providing citations.

Country name	No. of students	Country name	No. of students
Egypt	13	Palestine	19
Iraq	36	Sudan	4
Yemen	3	Kenya	4
Pakistan	2	South Africa	1
Zimbabwe	6	Kuwait	2
Nigeria	29	Turkmenistan	1
Pakistan	4	Chile	1
Russia	1	Zambia	1
Iran	2	Eritrea	2
Lebanon	3	Rwanda	1
Cameroon	3	Tanzania	1
Libya	9	Newis (South Kitts and Newis Islands)	1
Jordon	20	Saudia Arabia	1
Syria	71	Ethopia	1
Total			241

Table 1. Distribution of international architecture students depending on their country

### 2.2. Data collection

A questionnaire developed by Baysen, *et al.*, ("Yes", "No" and "I'm not sure") was used (Baysen, *et al.*, 2017; Baysen *et al.*, 2017a, 2017b) in this study. The statements were comprehensible by university students. University students responded the questionnaire during class time with 30 to 40 other students. The students answered the questionnaire in 15 minutes. The second researcher gave information about the research during the test applications. The students placed importance on answering the questionnaire seriously and they took the time to do so.

### 2.3. Data analysis

The numbers of students possessing correct conception and misconceptions were revealed. The number of students who were not sure was calculated. Chi square was calculated to reveal significant differences between the number of correct and incorrect answers.

3. Results and discussion

Question no.	Turkish						Sig.	International						Sig.
	Conception (C)		Misconception (M)		Not sure			Conception (C)		Misconception (M)		Not sure		
	f	%	f	%	f	%		f	%	f	%	f	%	
1	109	39	78	28	94	34	<b>C&gt;M; p&lt;.05</b>	94	39	104	43	43	18	No Diff.; p>.05
2	108	38	101	36	72	26	No Diff.; p>.05	79	33	107	44	55	23	<b>M&gt;C; p&lt;.05</b>
3	110	39	92	33	79	28	No Diff.; p>.05	109	45	75	31	57	24	<b>C&gt;M; p&lt;.05</b>
4	95	34	127	45	59	21	<b>M&gt;C; p&lt;.05</b>	63	26	121	50	57	24	<b>M&gt;C; p&lt;.001</b>
5	69	25	157	56	55	20	<b>M&gt;C; p&lt;.001</b>	67	28	127	53	47	20	<b>M&gt;C; p&lt;.001</b>
6	87	31	139	50	55	20	<b>M&gt;C; p&lt;.05</b>	85	35	107	44	49	20	No Diff.; p>.05
7	78	28	133	47	70	25	<b>M&gt;C; p&lt;.001</b>	77	32	115	48	49	20	<b>M&gt;C; p&lt;.05</b>
8	162	58	67	24	52	19	<b>C&gt;M; p&lt;.001</b>	117	49	80	33	44	18	<b>C&gt;M; p&lt;.05</b>
9	161	57	53	19	67	24	<b>C&gt;M; p&lt;.001</b>	95	39	95	39	51	21	No Diff.; p>.05
10	134	48	79	28	68	24	<b>C&gt;M; p&lt;.001</b>	128	53	82	34	31	13	<b>C&gt;M; p&lt;.05</b>
11	174	62	51	18	56	20	<b>C&gt;M; p&lt;.001</b>	127	53	58	24	56	23	<b>C&gt;M; p&lt;.001</b>
12	117	42	95	34	69	25	No Diff.; p>.05	99	41	94	39	48	20	No Diff.; p>.05
13	129	46	84	30	68	24	<b>C&gt;M; p&lt;.05</b>	115	48	95	39	31	13	No Diff.; p>.05
14	87	31	114	41	80	29	No Diff.; p>.05	61	25	127	53	53	22	<b>M&gt;C; p&lt;.001</b>

Table 2. Students' (mis)conceptions and significancies

Quest. no.	Sig.	In favour of	
		International students	Turkish students
1	<b>Yes; p&lt;0.05</b>		√
2	<b>Yes; p&lt;0.05</b>		√
3	No Diff.		
4	<b>Yes; p&lt;0.001</b>		√
5	No Diff.		
6	No Diff.		
7	No Diff.		
8	<b>Yes; p&lt;0.05</b>		√
9	<b>Yes; p&lt;0.001</b>		√
10	No Diff.		
11	<b>Yes; p&lt;0.05</b>		√
12	No Diff.		
13	No Diff.		
14	<b>Yes; p&lt;0.05</b>		√

Table 3. Conceptions of international and Turkish students

All of the Turkish students with at least one incorrect answer, which asserts that all of them can plagiarize (Table 2). Regarding Turkish students, more of them have misconceptions concerning items 4, 5, 6 and 7. More of them answered correctly items 1, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 13. Finally, regarding items 2, 3, 12, and 14 there is no significant difference in between those answering incorrectly and correctly. While items 5 and 6 were the most difficult for the Turkish students, items 8 and 11 were the easiest for this group.

For the present study, in the international group, no students answered all of the questions correctly. Thus, similar to the Turkish group, all of the international students can plagiarize (Table 2). The most difficult items for this group were 5 and 14, while the easiest items were 10 and 11. Significant difference was that more international students gave the wrong answers for items 2, 4, 5, 7 and 14 (Table 2). More of them will not plagiarize regarding items 3, 8, 10 and 11. Concerning international students no significant difference was found between the number having conceptions and misconceptions regarding the items 1, 6, 9, 12 and 13.

The Turkish students were more successful in items 1, 2, 4, 8, 9, 11 and 14 than their counterparts (Table 3). There was no item where international students were more successful than the Turkish students. We can interpret from this result that plagiarism is an issue of importance in the Turkish context, more so than in other Middle Eastern and African countries, which is a promising result for Turkey, while disappointing for Middle Eastern and African countries. Regardless, these results show that both groups could improve the students' understanding of plagiarism. These results are consistent with the results comparing Western and Middle Eastern students in terms of academic honesty and plagiarism (Zimmerman, 2012; Leask, 2006; Bamford & Sergiou, 2005; Hayes & Introna, 2005; Sowden, 2005; Jennifer, 1992). Such research also notes that, because of the rote learning and collective thinking culture in Eastern cultures, students' skills in individual and independent thinking, critical thinking and independent research are not as developed as those of Western students. Such research states that Eastern students are not sensitive to ethical issues, plagiarism and academic honesty. In several studies, Turkish students are considered to be Eastern (Gertzog, 2011), while in other studies, Turkish students are considered to be (southern) European (Teixeira & Rocha, 2010). The present study reveals that students from Asia and Africa hold more misconceptions about plagiarism than Turkish students. Considering research by Baysen *et al.* (2017) with Turkish and Czech students, we can conclude that, while Turkish students are more knowledgeable than Asian and African students, they are less knowledgeable than their European counterparts regarding plagiarism.

On the other hand, we should approach these results with caution, as there is a need to spread the research to other countries in Africa and the Middle East and to include more participants in the sample. Nevertheless, this study is pioneering and should be taken seriously.

Finally, there are no significant differences between the number of international and Turkish students who answered items 3, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12 and 13 correctly. This is half of the total number of items.

Turkish students answering "Not sure" ranged between 19-34%, while their counterparts ranged between 18-24%. As a frequent and mean percentage, we can state that those not sure about items was around 20%. These results can be interpreted as students being suspicious about the issues in question. This result is consistent with a lack of knowledge and thus the creation of misconceptions.

The findings are not surprising. Although the second researcher of the present study emphasises the importance of providing citations, when completing their assignments or projects most of the architecture students do not provide any references, they simply copy and paste the material they need. They include photographs, visuals and maps, etc. without citing their sources. Sometimes, a student can submit an entire report that is formed by someone else's study.

#### 4. Conclusion and recommendations

Repeating the research, the results of the present study reached similar findings, corroborating the literature findings. Middle Eastern (including Turkish) and African students hold misconceptions regarding citations. These misconceptions affect students' use of citations and mean they are liable to commit plagiarism. Turkish students are more knowledgeable than their counterparts regarding issues of plagiarism. It is important to increase architecture students' knowledge of ethical issues regarding reporting research and, specifically, plagiarism, otherwise they will plagiarise in their future professional and academic lives. Educational programmes designed to prevent plagiarism and improve citation knowledge are important (Curtis & Popal, 2011; Maxwell *et al.*, 2008; Ha, 2006; Hayes & Introna, 2005). Universities could develop programmes to increase international students' awareness of plagiarism and help them find ways to adapt to Western education systems (Ha, 2006;

Jennifer, 1992). Academic librarians could support international students through workshops, guidance and educational programmes (Zimerman, 2012; Amsberry, 2009; Tsikati, 2018).

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