

## Graduate Students' Intentions to Writing Thesis without Plagiarism

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### บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์ **ประการแรก** เพื่อศึกษาตัวแปรที่ร่วมกันทำนายเจตนาในการทำวิทยานิพนธ์โดยไม่ลอกเลียนผลงานวิชาการและวรรณกรรมของผู้อื่น ได้แก่ เจตคติ การคล้อยตามกลุ่มอ้างอิง และการรับรู้ความสามารถของตนเอง **ประการที่สอง** เพื่อศึกษาความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างตัวแปรดังกล่าวที่ใช้วิธีการวัดทางตรง และทางอ้อม และ**ประการที่สาม** เพื่อศึกษาความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างเจตคติ การคล้อยตามกลุ่มอ้างอิง และการรับรู้ความสามารถของตนเองที่ใช้วิธีการวัดทางตรงกับเจตนาในการทำวิทยานิพนธ์โดยไม่ลอกเลียนผลงานวิชาการและวรรณกรรมของผู้อื่น ผู้วิจัยใช้ทฤษฎีพฤติกรรมตามแผนของไอเซนเป็นกรอบในการศึกษา กลุ่มตัวอย่างเป็นนักศึกษาระดับบัณฑิตศึกษาที่กำลังศึกษาอยู่ในกลุ่มวิชาทางด้านศึกษาศาสตร์ และรัฐประศาสนศาสตร์ ประจำภาคเรียนที่ 1 ปีการศึกษา 2555 ในหลักสูตรนอกเวลาของการของมหาวิทยาลัยในกำกับของรัฐแห่งหนึ่งในภาคเหนือ จำนวน 135 คน ซึ่งได้มาโดยการสุ่มตัวอย่างแบบแบ่งกลุ่มตามหลักสูตรที่ศึกษาโดยคำนึงถึงสัดส่วน แบบสอบถามพัฒนาขึ้นตามแนวทางการสร้างแบบสอบถามที่อิงทฤษฎีพฤติกรรมตามแผนของไอเซน มีจำนวน 83 ข้อ โดยมีค่าความเชื่อมั่นทั้งฉบับเท่ากับ .91 ใช้การวิเคราะห์ความสัมพัทธ์แบบเพียร์สัน และการวิเคราะห์การถดถอยพหุคูณวิธี Enter ในการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูล ผลการศึกษาพบว่า

ตัวแปรทำนายที่ใช้วิธีการวัดทางตรงสามารถร่วมกันทำนายเจตนาในการทำวิทยานิพนธ์โดยไม่ลอกเลียนฯ ได้ร้อยละ 36.6 อย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติ ( $p < .01$ ) โดยเฉพาะตัวแปรการรับรู้ความสามารถของตนเองที่มีค่าสัมประสิทธิ์เบต้าสูงที่สุดเท่ากับ .291 สำหรับความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างวิธีการวัดแบบทางตรงและทางอ้อมในแต่ละตัวแปรพบว่า การวัดเจตคติ การคล้อยตามกลุ่มอ้างอิง และการรับรู้ความสามารถของตนเองในการทำวิทยานิพนธ์โดยไม่ลอกเลียนฯ มีความสัมพันธ์กันทางบวกอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ระดับ .01 โดยมีค่าสหสัมพันธ์เท่ากับ .37, .52 และ .28 ตามลำดับ นอกจากนี้พบว่าเจตคติทางตรง การคล้อยตามกลุ่มอ้างอิงทางตรงและการรับรู้ความสามารถของตนเองทางตรง มีความสัมพันธ์ทางบวกกับเจตนาในการทำวิทยานิพนธ์โดยไม่ลอกเลียนฯ อย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ระดับ .01 โดยมีค่าสหสัมพันธ์เท่ากับ .30, .42 และ .49 ตามลำดับสรุปได้ว่านักศึกษาลอกเลียนผลงานของผู้อื่นหรือไม่ขึ้นอยู่กับความรู้ว่าตนเองมีความสามารถมากน้อยเพียงใดในการเขียนวิทยานิพนธ์ นอกจากนี้ในการใช้แบบสอบถามที่อิงกรอบทฤษฎีพฤติกรรมตามแผน ผู้วิจัยควรสร้างและใช้ทั้งวิธีการวัดทางตรง และทางอ้อมร่วมกัน เนื่องจากพบว่ามีค่าสัมประสิทธิ์สหสัมพันธ์อยู่ในระดับที่สูง แม้ว่าทั้งสองวิธีจะมีความสัมพันธ์กันทางบวกอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติก็ตาม

**คำสำคัญ :** การลอกเลียนผลงานวิชาการและวรรณกรรมของผู้อื่น ; ทฤษฎีพฤติกรรมตามแผน

### ABSTRACT

This study aimed 1) to examine the predictive power of predictor variables on intention to writing thesis without plagiarism 2) to examine the relationship between the variables which are measured by direct method and by indirect method according to Theory of Planned Behavior and 3) to examine relationship between the predictive variables (attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control) that measured directly and intention to write thesis without plagiarism. The Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior was chosen as a research

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framework to examine the relationship among variables. Samples were 135 Thai graduate students who were enrolled in extraordinary programs in education and public administration held during the 1<sup>st</sup> semester of 2012 in autonomous university in the north of Thailand. The participants were selected randomly by using proportional cluster random sampling. The research tool based on TPB was developed and consisted of eighty-three items ( $\alpha = .91$ ). The Person Product Moment Correlation and multiple regression with enter method were employed to analyze the data.

Results were found that all predictor variables can significantly predict intention to writing thesis without plagiarism ( $R^2 = 0.366$ ,  $F = 25.243$ ,  $p < .01$ ) especially perceived behavioral control ( $b = .291$ ). There was a significant positive correlation between each variable that measured in different way -direct and indirect- such as attitudes toward behavior ( $r = .37$ ,  $p < .01$ ), subjective norms ( $r = .52$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and perceived behavioral control ( $r = .28$ ,  $p < .01$ ). All three predictive variables were significantly positive correlated with intentions to writing thesis without plagiarism -attitude toward behavior ( $r = .30$ ,  $p < .01$ ), subjective norms ( $r = .42$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and perceived behavioral control ( $r = .49$ ,  $p < .01$ ). In conclusion, the perceived behavioral control was the highest coefficient value in the model. It indicated that the feeling of controllability or self-efficiency affected students' plagiarizing in writing thesis. Although there were statistically positive correlations between direct and indirect method, its value of correlation coefficients were not high. Thus it is necessary to use both.

**Keywords :** Plagiarism ; Theory of Planed Behavior

## Introduction

Plagiarism is a type of the academic misconducts and is present across all levels of academia. According to Brimble and Stevenson-Clarke's (2005) survey in Australia it showed a high rate and steady increase of plagiarism in university and higher education setting. While Bazdaric. *et al.* (2012) found that 10% - 14% of the manuscripts which will be published in Croatian Medical Journal (CMJ) in past two years (2009-2010) suspected plagiarism. Plagiarism is the act of a person in which they copy others' idea which may be in various forms without citing such as word, text, phrase, picture, diagram, etc. For Thai students, Bunyakiat. (2011) found the types of plagiarism mostly are bringing authors' words, phrases and paragraphs without quotation and reference in deliberate or accidental manner. Moreover some students excused they did

not know what plagiarism is and they plagiarized unintentionally.

In Thai academic context even if there is no research evidence, there are few scandal of this issue in news. However there were some studies that try to discover causes of plagiarism in Thai students. Bunyakiat. (2011) summarized that plagiarism originates from lacks of knowledge what plagiarism is, how to write citation and reference correctly when bringing the authors' idea. In addition time restrictions and task overloads make some unconfident students who poor English language proficiency risk to plagiarize. Moreover, Tayraukham. (2009) explained the more Thai students have high academic achievement the more they tend to plagiarize. He argued Thais like to be a good follower and tend to behave depended on familiarly authorized person thus this cultures make Thai students did not worried

about plagiarism. Razera *et al.* (2010) found some factors effect on plagiarism in Swedish student such as lack of motivation, lack of language skills and other skills related to write academic papers. In conclusion there are several factors that trigger plagiarism occurrence both academic context factors and individual factors.

According to above statements, the plagiarism is current problem in an academic context and it should be resolved urgently as well as it is very necessary to discover what causes of plagiarism are or to find out the factors that can protect students from being plagiarism, namely, what are the factors which help the students write their thesis without plagiarism. The Ajzen's theory of planed behavior (TPB) is one of theories can explain the presence of human behaviors. TPB theorists believed that the intentional behaviors and behaviors were influenced conjointly from three main factors such as whether the person is in favor of doing it ('attitude'), how much the person feels social pressure to do it ('subjective norm') and whether the person feels in control of the action in question ('perceived behavioral control'). These variables in TPB model can be assessed in two methods. The variables can be measured directly by using of bipolar adjectives (i.e. pairs of opposites) which are evaluative (e.g. good - bad, useful - worthless or pleasant - unpleasant) to capture their overall attitude, or indirectly e.g. by asking respondents about specific behavioral beliefs and outcome evaluations, specific normative belief and motivation to comply with the referent as well as specific control belief and perceived power of control factors. It is recommended that both be included in TPB questionnaire and should be positively correlated because it assesses the same construct

as well. Moreover, the items measured by direct and indirect method should be mixed-well arranged in through questionnaire (Francis. *et al.*, 2004).

In Thailand there are some studies employed Ajzen's Theory of Planed Behavior or TPB to explain how variables to relate with or effect on academic behaviors but there is no exact evidence to study about plagiarism. For examples, lacking the virtue of honesty (Wichiranon. 2008), academic dishonesty (Kornpetpanee. 2007, 2006 and Suwannachote. 2006), intention to fraud examinations (Boontima. 1993a, 1993b) and intention to perform ethical behaviors (Mokekhao. 1996). Besides, TPB was generally used to study in health field but apply less to educational behavior likes plagiarism.

Therefore, Ajzen's theory of planed behavior (TPB) was chosen to understand the relationship between the graduate students' intention and its causes of writing thesis without plagiarism. The aim of this study was to understand the predictive power of predictor variables on intention to writing thesis without plagiarism. In addition specific aims were to examine the relationship between the variables which are measured by direct method and by indirect method according to TPB and to examine relationship between the predictive variables (attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control) that measured directly and intention to write thesis without plagiarism. According to the conceptual framework of this study based on Ajzen's TPB model (Figure 1), the main hypothesis was established that all predictors such as attitude (AB), subjective norms (SN) and perceived behavioral control (PBC) can predict the graduate students' intention to writing their thesis without plagiarism (I). Moreover, to reassure different methods are tapping the same



construct, namely, the variables measured by direct method are positively correlated with the variable measured by indirect method, so the hypothesis 1 to 3 were set. To prove the important factors that show in TPB model and to confirm that not violate assumption for multiple regression analysis, each predictive variables in TPB model which are measured by direct method must be tested their positive relationship with the criterion variable, intention to writing thesis without plagiarism (I), so the hypothesis 4 to 6 were set.

## Methods

### Participants

The participants were 135 graduate students recruited from 120 education students and 60 public administration students who were enrolled in extraordinary programs, that were held during the first semester of 2012 in autonomous university in north of Thailand. The participants were randomly selected by using proportional cluster random sampling method. All of the samples participated in this research process voluntarily. A total of 160 questionnaires were sent. A total of 143 questionnaires were returned and some incomplete were excluded. The demographic profile of the participants included their gender, average of age, program of study, year of studying and the average time to take course. As seen in the Table 1, most participants were female (63.7%) and studying in year 1. Approximately 90% of samples were studying in master degree, which require two years to complete coursework.

### Instruments

The process of tool development was based on the guideline of TPB constructing questionnaire

(Francis. *et al.*, 2004 and Ajzen. 2002). It was divided into two main stages. The first stage was to discover salient beliefs from thirty-eight graduate students by using open-ended questionnaire and then the data were gathered and rank to construct the indirect (belief-based) measures items for all the predictor constructs in the TPB model. The second step was to examine validity and reliability of this tool. Five professionals proved validity and thirty graduate students who have educational backgrounds similar to the sample group completed the questionnaire for primary reliability testing. Table 2 shows primary data of the variables and the developed tool was reliable ( $\alpha = .91$ ). The 83-item well-arranged questionnaire can measure all four variables both directly and indirectly methods which based on theory of planed behavior. Its detail was described as below.

### Attitudes

The items measured attitudes include 45 items rated on a seven-point Likert's scale assessing graduate students' feeling, appraisal or opinion about writing thesis without plagiarism. The measure of attitude can be measured into two methods. First, 7 items using bipolar adjective pairs that are evaluative for measuring direct attitude (e.g. good - bad, satisfied - unsatisfied). Second, 38 items measure two components of indirect attitude which work together: belief about consequences of writing without plagiarism (behavioral beliefs; e.g. writing without plagiarism will make something new happen) and the corresponding positive and negative judgments about each these features of the writing thesis without plagiarism (outcome evaluation; e.g. something new happening is desirable/undesirable).

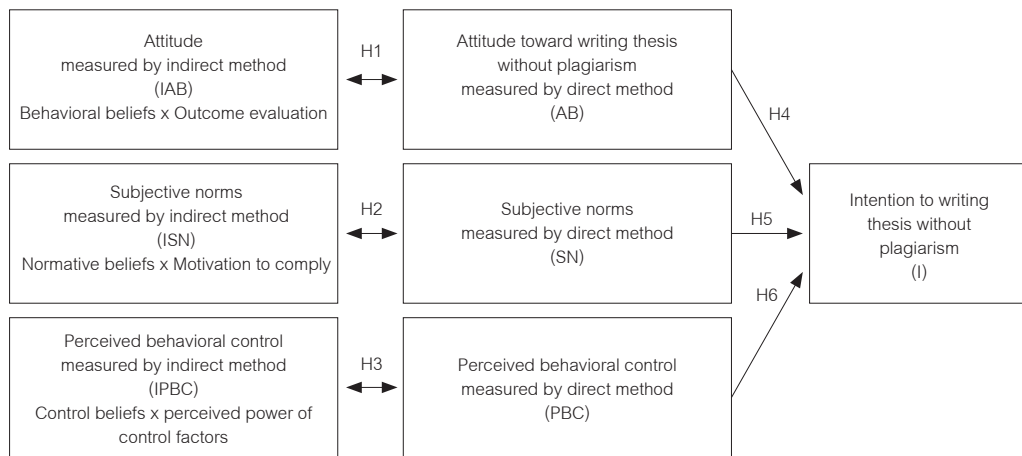


Figure 1. Conceptual framework and hypotheses of this study

Table 1 Demographical data of samples in the study (n = 135)

Characteristics		Frequency	Percent
1. Gender	Male	49	36.3
	Female	86	63.7
2. Average of age = 31.40 years old			
3. Programs of study	Master degree in education	78	57.8
	Master degree in public administration	45	33.3
	Doctoral degree in education	12	8.9
4. Year	Year 1	90	66.7
	Year 2	45	33.3
Average time to take the course = 2.00 years			

### Subjective Norms

All 11 items were designed to understand a student's own estimate of the social influences to writing thesis without or with plagiarism. For direct subjective norms, three items measure influences of important people in general on students' writing thesis and the responses range from 'Strongly agree' to 'Strongly disagree' (e.g. I feel under social pressure to write thesis without plagiarism). Eight items measure two components that work in interaction: beliefs about what important people think a person

should do (normative beliefs; e.g. my thesis advisor thinks I should not plagiarize) and the strength of motivation to comply with each reference group or individual (motivation to comply; e.g. I tend to follow what my thesis advisor recommended).

### Perceived behavioral control

Twenty-four items measure graduate students' feel able to enact the writing thesis without plagiarism. There are four items to assess directly perceived behavioral control that reflected students' self-efficacy and their beliefs about the controllability (self-efficacy;



e.g. I feel confident that I could write thesis without plagiarism, controllability; e.g. Whether I write thesis without plagiarism or not is entirely up to me). It has two components to assess indirect perceived behavioral control: beliefs which might make it difficult to write thesis without plagiarism (or not) (control beliefs; e.g. I think research skills affect writing thesis without plagiarism) and how those control beliefs make students perform easier or more difficult (power of control beliefs; e.g. Having research skills make me write thesis without plagiarizing).

### Intention

Three items were used to reflect graduate students' intention to write thesis without plagiarism.

The respondents rated on a seven-point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree (e.g. I expect to write my thesis without plagiarism).

### Data Analysis

To answer the question about how the intention to writing thesis without plagiarism can be explained by attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control, multiple regression with enter method was used in this study. To examine the relationship between variables measured directly and indirectly, Pearson's correlation was employed. Table 4 shows inter-correlation of variables in this study and guarantee that theses variable can be used to analyze by multiple regression.

**Table 2** Cronbach's alphas, means, standard deviations and range of variables in the study

Variable	Alpha	Mean	SD	Range	Level*
IAB	0.84	643.05	107.07	38 - 1862	Low
ISN	0.75	166.09	26.43	8 - 392	Average
IPBC	0.87	420.78	57.92	20 - 980	Average
AB	0.73	41.09	7.00	7 - 49	Extremelyhigh
SN	0.42	18.71	2.37	3 - 21	Extremelyhigh
PBC	0.44	24.82	2.23	4 - 28	Extremelyhigh
I	0.78	19.60	1.68	3 - 21	Extremelyhigh

Notes. IAB: attitude (indirect), ISN : subjective norms (indirect), IPBC: perceived behavioral control (indirect), AB: attitude (direct), SN : subjective norms (direct), PBC : perceived behavioral control (direct) and I : intention

\* Classification of level of each variable was set according class interval. It can be categorized into 5 categories: extremely low, low, average, high and extremely high. The class interval was derived from this formula: class width = (Mix - Min) / number of classes

## Results

The regression model explained 36.6% of the variance that it showed the criterion variable 'intention to writing thesis without plagiarism' was influenced significantly by the predictors -attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control- (Table 3). This allows us to answer the main hypothesis. The results showed the direct method and indirect method employed to examine all predictive variables in TPB model were significantly positive correlation. Hence, the hypothesis 1<sup>o</sup> 3 were supported. Furthermore the results showed that all three predictors measured by direct method could be used to analysis of multiple regression because of its significant correlation with

intention to writing thesis without plagiarism. Hence, the hypothesis 4<sup>o</sup> 6 were supported (Table 4).

## Discussion and Conclusion

According to regression analysis, the regression model explained 36.6% of the variance that it showed the criterion variable 'intention to writing thesis without plagiarism' was influenced significantly by the predictors -attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control-. Although intention was explained by the variables at 36.6%, there were some factors that can influence on intention that did not add in this study. Moreover, it found that perceived behavioral

**Table 3** Regression model of intention to write thesis without plagiarism

Predictors	b	SE	$\beta$	t	p
AB	.037	.017	.156	2.156	.033
SN	.216	.051	.304	4.210	< .01
PBC	.291	.055	.387	5.321	< .01

Note : a = 6.797, R = 0.605, R<sup>2</sup> = 0.366, Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = 0.352, SE<sub>est</sub> = 1.352, F = 25.243\*\*

**Table 4** Correlations among all the variables measured in the study

	AB	IAB	SN	ISN	PBC	IPBC
AB	1**					
IAB	.37**	1**				
SN	.19**	.08**	1**			
ISN	.26**	.28**	.52**	1**		
PBC	.22**	.21**	.23**	.28**	1**	
IPBC	.19**	.42**	.43**	.64**	.28**	1
I	.30**	.53**	.42**	.58**	.49**	.63**

Notes. AB: attitude (direct), IAB : attitude (indirect), SN : subjective norms (direct), ISN : subjective norms (indirect), PBC : perceived behavioral control (direct), IPBC : perceived behavioral control (indirect) and I : intention

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01



control variables showed the highest score of beta coefficients that has an impact on intention to not plagiarize when writing thesis. In accordance with Johdan's study (2001) that he found college students who have high mastery motivation will tend to act without academic dishonesty. His result showed students would act dishonestly or not; it depends on perception of capacities themselves, their belief about cheating is easy or difficult thing to do and abilities to deal with obstacles that make individual perform difficulty and to realize some supporters that make them perform easily. Like Bandura's theory of self-efficacy that he stated "people take action when they hold efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations that make the effort seem worthwhile. They expect given actions to produce desired outcomes and believe that they can perform those action" (Bandura. 1997). He emphasized on individuals' internal factors that play important role to behaviors. Bandura hold that the persons perceived situations by observation and evaluation of their abilities to deal with the situations.

According to hypothesis 1- 3, the result showed significant positive correlation between the use of direct and indirect method for measuring three predictive variables. Thus it proved that obtained scores from both direct and indirect method were correlated and it was consistent with the constructing principle of tool based on theory of planned behavior according to this statement "...When different methods are tapping the same construct, scores are expected to be positively correlated, recommended that both be included in TPB questionnaire" (Francis. *et. al.*, 2004). These results were similar to other studies that found positive correlations between these variables measured by direct and by

indirect method and correlation coefficients were approximately between 0.2 - 0.4 (Luenglue. 2008 and Pimsen. 2004)

According to hypothesis 4- 6 that the aim was to study the relationship between attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control measured by direct method and intention to writing thesis without plagiarism among graduate students. The result found that each three predictor variables was positively significantly correlated with intention to writing thesis without plagiarism among graduate students ( $r_{AB,I} = 0.30$ ,  $r_{SN,I} = 0.42$ ,  $r_{PBC,I} = 0.49$ ). The results showed moderate relation between all three independents and dependent variable and reflected that the more students have the high level of attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control about writing without plagiarism, the more they have a high of intention to not plagiarize and vice versa. The results of this study not only were concordance with theory of planned behavior that holds individuals' intention is caused by attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control but also align with other studies based on TPB model and found these three variables were positively significantly correlated with intention (Kornpetpanee. 2007; Suwannachote. 2006 and Boontima. 1993a, 1993b).

### Limitations and Recommendations

This study has some limitations that need to be addressed in future research. First, this study used a cross- sectional design. Although there is theoretical support for our model, we cannot conclude strong causal inferences. Future research needs to use longitudinal designs to examine the causality of these relationships. Second, TPB model selected in this study was not full model, the part of



behaviors was cut, and thus it made ours understand unclearly about behaviors involved with plagiarism. However, some argued intention can be used as a proximal measure of behavior (Francis. *et al.*, 2004). For the future research, a behavior part must be added up because perceived behavioral control can affect directly on behaviors by without mediating effect of intention. Third, because of this study used the TPB as framework to study relationship among variables, therefore it made other variables were neglected so the regression model explained 36.6% of the variance. For future research some related variables must be considered such as gender, grade point average and field of study by designing these variables as moderator variables. Finally, the other methods of data collections such as in-depth interview or focus group discussion could be selected to gain rich-covered information. However the finding of this study can be implied to create some intervention for enhancing students' perceived behavioral control or perceived self-efficacy to write thesis without plagiarism as well as to promote academic honesty.

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