

# The Effect of Plagiarism on the Corporate Image in the Higher Education: An Extended TPB Model

M. I. M. Salleh, S. A. M. Ghazali, Z. Awang, and N. S. Sapiai

**Abstract**—Plagiarism is the critical issue occurred in the higher education nowadays which triggers for further research. Hence, an extended research model from the past TPB model known as PCI model is designed to examine effect of plagiarism on the public university's corporate image. It is highly recommended that an individual's behavior effect towards an institution's reputation itself should consider the corporate image as a new variable to be assessed. Accordingly, it is expected that much studies will be carried out to measure the degree of university's reputation through evaluating the students' behaviors concerning plagiarism in combating this issue entirely.

**Index Terms**—Higher education, plagiarism, TPB model, corporate image

## I. INTRODUCTION

Plagiarism is defined as unauthorized use of ideas, methods, data, language and figures of another author without acknowledging the source [1]. Concerns about the issue of plagiarism do not seem to be abating, despite all the discussion and reasonable advice. This issue has become an issue of morality among the students in public educational institutions nowadays that influences the five fundamental values of academic integrity outlined by Gu and Brooks [2] namely honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. It is believed that the issue of plagiarism may affect the corporate image of an institution of higher education (IHE). It is vital to study the relationship and impact of plagiarism issue on university's reputation in order to sustain organizational performance and also to generate high-quality and morale of students. As a research gap identified which demands for more studies to seek on how the plagiarism can affect the university's reputation, therefore, the best research model has to be developed to guide the interested academia and researchers to fill the gap with the intention to formulate a systematic strategy for reducing this prevalence. It is vital to start investigating whether the corporate image can be affected from plagiarism issue as IHE are now struggling for improving their qualities and productivities to be a world class university. They will soon become major players in the world economy and their students will play effective roles in the workforce. Their ethical behaviors and performance during their studies can be continued to their future careers.

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The authors are with the Universiti Teknologi MARA Kelantan, Malaysia (e-mail: idzwan201@kelantan.uitm.edu.my; aswani211@kelantan.uitm.edu.my; zainudin888@kelantan.uitm.edu.my; shaliza@kelantan.uitm.edu.my).

Thus, public universities have to generate high-quality and morale of students for sustaining their organizational performance and promoting life-long learning. Baker and Balmer [3] stressed that in a market where students are recognized as customers, universities have to implement strategies to maintain and enhance their competitiveness. They need to develop a competitive advantage based on a set of unique characteristics. Moreover, universities need to communicate these characteristics in an effective and consistent way to all of the relevant stakeholders. Under these circumstances, universities have finally realized the role of corporate identity as a powerful source of competitive advantage. They understand that if managed strategically corporate identity can help them develop a competitive edge over competitors [4]. As a result, a growing number of universities have started to develop and implement corporate identity programmes as part of their strategic growth and expansion.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Plagiarism

There are a lot of definitions which can describe the meaning of plagiarism. According to East [5], plagiarism, whereby another's work is deliberately used or appropriated without any indication of the source thereby attempting to convey the impression that such work is the student's own is prohibited. Any student failing to properly credit ideas or materials taken from another has plagiarized. Akbulut *et al.* [1] revealed that there are several reasons on why students plagiarize. Students may think that using several sources, quotes, and citations is the primary goal of writing while their original ideas are secondary. They may fail to cite the source since they cannot differentiate between common knowledge and information that merits citation. They may be confused about the nature and legitimate way of paraphrasing. They may plagiarize because of time pressure. They may plagiarize since their teachers urge them to come up with original ideas that are they find their ideas invaluable. Finally, they may not critically analyze all the information, particularly web-based sources, which leads them to think that all information is equal, truthful and what is more, free, and accessible. Then, Teodorescu and Andrei [6] found that personal characteristics such as gender, age, academic achievement, parents' education, and participation in extracurricular activities have been identified as having an important influence on academic dishonesty. However, grade point average and admissions test scores were found to have no relationship to cheating. Conversely, Wheeler [7] believed

that lack of knowledge among students have encouraged them to plagiarize rather than influence of cultural factors like codes of manner, dress, language, rituals, norms of behavior and systems of belief.

In fact, the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) tools and Internet have made unethical behaviors easier in several ways. First, students' use of Internet information which is unavailable in traditional documents makes documenting academic dishonesty difficult for instructors. Second, word processing programs make it easier for students to cut and paste information from electronic resources into their papers without attributing the work. Third, students can easily get access to term paper databases where they can download or purchase original research papers. Forth, they can participate in online discussion forums, ask for assistance from more proficient learners, cut and paste those learners' responses to their assignments without acknowledging that they received assistance. Finally, more proficient computer users can download completed research papers of their peers from hard drives of campus computers [1]. Therefore, East [5] highlighted that preventing plagiarism, promoting standards of academic integrity and policing, and surveillance prevail as concerns of universities. The roles of lecturer, researcher and student bring different pressures which could lead to different manifestations of academic dishonesty. Many lecturers, researchers, and postgraduate students are under pressure to design, execute and publish original research while undergraduate students are under pressure to meet the assessment expectations of their lecturers. Pertaining to negative impacts of plagiarism, Teodorescu and Andrei [6] also stressed that in the long-term, it is more destructive because it directly impacts the attitude and the work ethic of youth. Students who participate or witness cases of corruption and academic dishonesty in the education system will leave college with poor work habits and questionable ethical foundations so that the future of academic integrity will be affected. Moreover, some direct effects problems are disfunctionalities in promoting academic personnel, academic titles, indirect effects on the values system of the youth population and the cultural model of that region or country. These effects are hard to be quantified on short term but they will determine a decrease of the education performance and economic competitiveness on medium and long term in those countries where the corruption is obviously present.

### *B. Corporate Image*

Corporate image is defined as "views of the organization developed by its stakeholders; the outside world's overall impression of the company including the views of customers, shareholders, the media, the general public and so on" [8]. Bendixen and Abratt [9] compared that there is a difference between corporate identity (what the firm is) and corporate image (what the firm is perceived to be) that represents the end product of corporate branding. To relate with the higher education, Parameswaran and Glowacka [10] determined that universities with distinct images are in a better competitive position in the marketplace. A number of institutions have increased their investments in order to

distinguish themselves from their competitors by strengthening their image of "prestige" or "quality" [11]. Theus [12] felt that while significant research into corporate image has been established in all fields of marketing and management, relatively less image research has been conducted on service-oriented organizations, including education, hospitals or churches. He further mentioned that for the university that seeks to improve its image or to create and manage the new desirable image, consideration of the multiplicity of university stakeholders and the effects of numerous factors such as organizational, situational, personal and business are critical in the creation and management of the university image. Similarly, Martínez and Garcia [13] pointed out that while much research has focused on the study of corporate image from a business perspective, little attention has been paid to aspects concerning the image of non-profit organizations like universities. The present environment of increasing competitiveness together with the growing limitation of public resources for university education and the social debate about the need for universities to improve their ability to generate income makes image an essential part of modern strategic management in these institutions. Their research findings has come out with a model of image formation that consists of six main dimensions directly affecting the image of university in which are teaching, research, administration, installations and infrastructure, services to the community, and services to society. This model was estimated by Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). From the marketing aspect, Walters and Paul [14] indicated that corporate image features four aspects namely subjectivity, screening, elaboration, and changeability. Walters [15] suggested that the subjective attitude, feelings, or impression on an enterprise or its activities held by consumers are connected with attitude. He categorized the elements of corporate image accordingly and thought that the most important categories for consumers are the following:

- 1) Institution image, which refers to consumers' general attitude towards a company offering commodities or services.
- 2) Functional image, which refers to the attitude formed based on the functional activities carried out by a profit-making enterprise.
- 3) Commodity image, which refers to the attitude held towards commodities offered by a company.

### *C. Theory of Planned Behavior*

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) was introduced in 1985 by Icek Ajzen and also called as Social Cognition Model (SCM). It is a descendant of Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) that adds a third antecedent of intention namely perceived behavioral control to the TRA model. Perceived behavioral control has been viewed to be closely linked to self-efficacy belief concept. The concept of self-efficacy is concerned with people's beliefs in their ability to produce effects [16]. Some research has shown that the TPB has more explanatory power than the TRA for predicting behaviors [17]. It suggested that actual behavior is preceded by behavioral intention and the behavioral intention in turn is influenced by attitude, subjective norms or

perceived behavioral control or all the above factors as illustrated in Figure 1. Since its establishment, TPB is known as one of the most significant models used to explain the user behavior [18]. Further definitions for each variable are:

- 1) Behavioral intention refers to the subjective probability of one's engagement in any behavior. The stronger the behavioral intention, the more likely is the execution of the behavior. The relationship between behavioral intention and the execution of the actual behavior so strong, such that, researchers often replace actual behavior measurement with behavioral intention when studying individual behavior with TPB [19].
- 2) Attitude refers to the degree to which the person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation of the behavior in question [20].
- 3) Subjective norm refers to the perceived social pressure to perform or not to perform the behavior [20]. Subjective norm in a business setting include social, organizational, departmental, and peer norms [18].
- 4) Perceived behavioral control refers to the individual's belief in the ease to execute a behavior. The stronger the individual feels his ability to execute the behavior, the more the resources and opportunities the individual possesses to execute the behavior, the higher the perceived behavioral control [20].

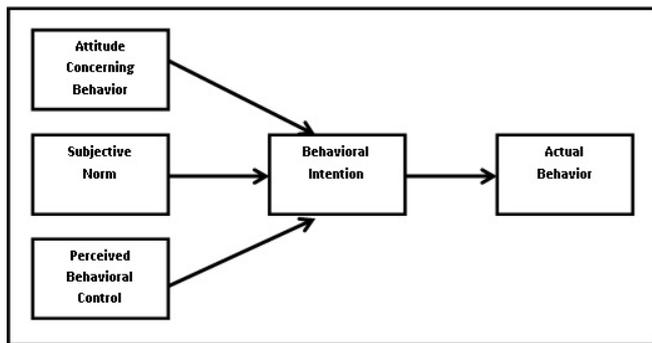


Fig. 1. Theory of planned behavior [20].

### III. PROPOSED RESEARCH MODEL

A final model is developed named as Plagiarism and Corporate Image (PCI) model to examine the effect of plagiarism behavior on the corporate image of a public university. The PCI model has demonstrated the six main constructs including attitude concerning plagiarism, subjective norm, and perceived plagiarism control as the independent variables, intention to plagiarize, and actual plagiarism as the mediating variables and corporate image as the dependent variable (see Figure 2). The model also is adopted from the past TPB model with a revised edition by the researchers to include corporate image as a new variable yet to be tested. Numerous previous studies revealed that the independent and mediating variables from the model proposed were positively correlated. Ajzen and Fishbein [19] do not denied that the presence of other factors such as character traits (demographic profiles), social, and technical factors (use of ICT tools) as the external variables or moderating variables in this model. When relating to plagiarism behavior, these main constructs are defined as:

- 1) Attitude concerning plagiarism is an individual's negative feeling to plagiarize.
- 2) Subjective norm is an individual's perception of whether social, cultural, institutional, peer or academic needs may influence he or she to plagiarize.
- 3) Perceived plagiarism control is the perceived ease or difficulty of committing plagiarism.
- 4) Intention to plagiarize can be influenced by the three determinant factors of attitude concerning plagiarism, subjective norm, and perceived plagiarism control.
- 5) The stronger an individual's intents to plagiarize, the more likely he or she will actually commit such behavior.
- 6) It is hypothesized that an individual's plagiarism behavior will be significantly affected the corporate image of university.

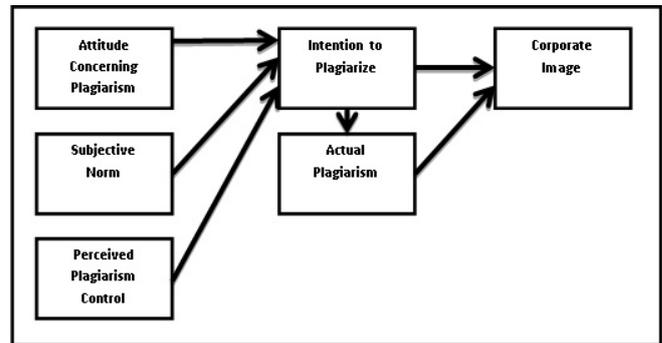


Fig. 2. Extended TPB model: PCI model.

### IV. CONCLUSION

Due to abundant of literature on examining the corporate image in the business industries, it is now significant to begin investigating the issue of plagiarism in the higher education since the students are the future workforces and leaders in this modern society. The PCI model designed in this paper has provided the effect and relationships among the key constructs of plagiarism behavior with the corporate image as a new construct to be measured which have been explained from the relevant theories in the literature for assisting the IHE to plan and implement the most preventive action to address the issue and to nurture their successful images for promoting their brands to the external stakeholders thus to ensure its long-term sustainability. Besides studying plagiarism, the model also may be applicable to assess other types of academic dishonesty behaviors such as cheating on tests/exams, cheating on assignments, and electronic cheating for both qualitative and quantitative methods. It is stimulating to discover the root and effect relationships between plagiarism behavior and corporate image at the same time. It is believed that the findings derived from the PCI model adoption will aid the management of universities to develop and retain a resilient corporate image.

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management, knowledge management practices, and organizational learning.

**M. I. M. Salleh** is a Lecturer at the Faculty of Information Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Kelantan, Malaysia. He has been an Associate Member (Computer Society) of IEEE since 2011. He received his Master's Degree on information management from the same faculty in 2008. His major area of research areas are academic dishonesty behaviors, issues in information management, information system development, electronic records



**S. A. M. Ghazali** is a Lecturer at the Faculty of Information Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Kelantan, Malaysia. She received his Master's Degree on library and information science from the same faculty in 2008. Her research areas include academic integrity, plagiarism issue, library management, and knowledge management practices.



**Dr. Awang** is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Computer Science and Mathematics, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Kelantan branch, Malaysia. He has been a Lecturer since 1989 and a research consultant since then. He received his PhD in Marketing from University Malaysia Terengganu. He has published several books in his area of specialization. Among the books are Quantitative Business Analysis, Research Methodology and Structural Equation Modelling using AMOS. His main area of research interests are academic integrity, marketing of services, corporate branding, customer satisfaction, and managing loyalty in the marketing of service related industry such as healthcare, financial, higher education, and hospitality management.



**N. S. Sapiai** is also a Lecturer at the Faculty of Information Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Kelantan, Malaysia. She received his Master's Degree on information management from the same faculty in 2007. Her research areas include academic integrity, information system design, and management.