Perception and Awareness of Copyright Laws among Pondicherry University Postgraduate Students

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Abstract

Perception and awareness of copyright laws is an essential issue in the digital age, as more and more people engage in activities that involve using and creating copyrighted material. Copyright laws are designed to protect the rights of creators and owners of original works of authorship, such as books, music, movies, and software. These laws give the copyright owner the exclusive right to reproduce, distribute, and display their work and to create derivative works based on their original material. The study focuses on the perception and awareness of copyright laws among PG students. By understanding the perception and awareness of copyright laws among different individuals and groups, policymakers can develop effective strategies for promoting compliance and reducing copyright infringement.

Keywords
Copyright laws; Copyright law awareness; Perception; Pondicherry University

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1. Introduction

Copyright is a form of intellectual property protection granted under Indian law to the creators of original works of authorship such as literary works (including computer programs, tables and compilations, including computer databases which may be expressed in words, codes, schemes or in any other form, including a machine-readable medium), dramatic, musical, and artistic works, cinematographic films, and sound recordings. Copyright law protects expressions of ideas rather than the ideas themselves. Under section 13 of the Copyright Act 1957, copyright protection is conferred on literary works, dramatic works, musical works, artistic works, cinematograph films and sound recordings. For example, books and computer programs are protected under the Act as literary works. Copyright refers to a bundle of exclusive rights vested in the copyright owner by Section 14 of the Act. These rights can be exercised only by the copyright owner or by any other person duly licensed in this regard by the copyright owner. These rights include the right to adaptation, the freedom of reproduction, the right to publication, right to make translations, communication to the public, etc. Copyright protection is conferred on all Original literary, artistic, musical, or dramatic, cinematograph and sound recording works. Original means that the work has not been copied from any other source. Copyright protection commences when a work is created, and registration is optional. However, it is always advisable to obtain a registration for better protection. Copyright registration does not confer any rights and is merely a prima facie proof of an entry regarding the work in the Copyright Register maintained by the Registrar of Copyrights. So, perception and awareness of copyright laws are critical. Perception and awareness of copyright laws is an essential issue in the digital age, as more and more people engage in activities that involve using and creating copyrighted material. Copyright laws are designed to protect the rights of creators and owners of original works of authorship, such as books, music, movies, and software.

1.1 Indian Perspective on Copyright Protection:

The Copyright Act of 1957 provides copyright protection in India. It confers copyright protection in the following two forms:

- Economic rights of the author

- Moral Rights of the author.

a) Economic Rights of the Author:

The copyright subsists in original literary, dramatic, musical, and artistic works, cinematograph films and sound recordings. The copyright authors in the aforesaid works enjoy economic rights u/s 14 of the Act. The rights are mainly, in respect of literary, dramatic, and musical, other than computer programs, to reproduce the work in any material form, including the storing of it in any medium by electronic means, to issue copies of the work to the public, to perform the work in public or communicating it to the public, to make any cinematograph film or sound recording in respect of the work, and to make any translation or adaptation of the work.

b) Moral rights:

Section 57 of the Act defines the two basics 'moral rights of an author. These are:

- Right of paternity,
- Right of integrity.

The right of paternity refers to the right of an author to claim authorship of work and a right to prevent all others from claiming authorship of his work. The right of integrity empowers the author to prevent distortion, mutilation or other alterations of his work, or any other action in relation to said work which would be prejudicial to his honor or reputation. Libraries play a significant role in providing access to copyrighted works to their users. They provide information and knowledge to various individuals, including students, researchers, and professionals. Libraries are expected to provide access to copyrighted works while complying with copyright laws. Libraries are expected to educate their users about the laws and regulations that govern the use of copyrighted works.

2. Studies related to the Perception and awareness of Copyright Laws among users

There are several studies have been conducted on the awareness among library users, Bhardwaj and Kumar (2018) studied copyright awareness and knowledge among library and information science professionals in Delhi NCR. This study explored the level of copyright awareness and knowledge among library and information science (LIS) professionals in Delhi NCR. The study used a survey questionnaire to collect data from 185 LIS professionals from academic and research libraries. The findings revealed that the majority of the respondents had a basic understanding of copyright laws but needed more in-depth knowledge of the legal aspects of copyright. The study also found that LIS professionals were less likely to adhere to copyright laws when providing services to library users. The study recommended that LIS professionals should receive more training on copyright laws and should educate library users on copyright issues. In another study by Bhatia, he investigated the awareness of copyright laws among postgraduate students in Indian universities. The study collected data through an online survey from 350 postgraduate students from various disciplines. The study found that most respondents had a basic understanding of copyright laws but needed to gain knowledge of the legal aspects of copyright. The study also revealed that most of the respondents did not seek permission before using copyrighted materials in their research work. The study recommended that universities should provide copyright education to students and faculty members to improve copyright awareness.
Similarly, a study by Chakraborty (2019) on copyright awareness among researchers in North-East India aimed to investigate the perception of copyright laws among the academic community in Kolkata, India. The study collected data through a questionnaire from 250 faculty members and research scholars from different educational institutions. The study found that most respondents had a basic understanding of copyright laws but lacked knowledge of the legal aspects of copyright. The study also found that most respondents did not seek permission before using copyrighted materials in their research work. The study recommended that universities should provide copyright education to faculty members and research scholars to improve copyright awareness.

3. Methodology

The study is designed to determine the Perception and awareness of copyright laws among Pondicherry University PG students. An online survey was conducted to reach students from different departments. This method is best suited to reach the maximum number of students in the digital world.

3.1 Research Design

The following heads cover the methodology of the present study:

a) Variables used for the study
b) Population and sample selected for the study

c) Data collection procedure
d) Data analysis techniques

3.1 a) Variables used for the study:

Variables considered for the study are divided into Dependent and Independent variables. The following are taken as Dependent variables for the study.

- Awareness of copyright laws
- The extent of awareness about copyright-related issues
- Awareness on Open Access Publishing, Common creative license
- The extent of misinformation about copyright-related issues. The independent variables used for the study are:
  - i. Gender.
  - ii. Age

b) Population and sample selected for the study:

The study aims to understand the perception and awareness of copyright laws among the PG students of Pondicherry University. Thus, the study population constitutes PG students of various departments of Pondicherry University. In the present survey, random sampling is adopted. The questionnaire was distributed through Google Forms using different social media platforms like WhatsApp, Telegram and Gmail and 87 Google forms were filled.

c) Data Collection Method:

A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the PG students, designed using Google forms. The questionnaire was pilot-tested before starting the original survey. The questionnaire is prepared and distributed in person. The questionnaire contains a total number of 21 questions. The questionnaire was designed after studying several similar studies in the same area. The questionnaire is divided into parts based on the objectives of the study. The first part contains details of demographic information of the staff.

d) Data Analysis Techniques:

The data were analyzed using the standard statistical method. For analyzing the data, the percentage method was used. Microsoft Excel was used for the consolidation of the data. Based on the formulated objectives, the data were analyzed.

Table 1: Gender-Wise Distribution of Respondents

Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Female	50	57.5 %
Male	37	42.5%
Total	87	100

Table2: Age-wise Distribution of Respondents

Age	Respondents	Percentage
21-24	60	68.9%
25-27	20	22.9%
27-30	7	8%
Total	87	100

Table3: Respondents by Schools they are affiliated

SCHOOLS	RESPONDENTS	PER-CENTAGE
SchoolofMedia&Communication	26	29.9%
SchoolofSocialSciences	16	18.4%
RamanujanSchoolofMathematicalSciences	1	1.2%
SchoolofEngineering& Technology	5	5.7%
SchoolofLifeSciences	5	5.7%
SchoolofHumanities	8	9.5%
MadanJeetSchoolofGreen EnergyTechnologies	26	29.9%
Total	87	100

Table 4: Respondent's awareness of basic principles of copyright laws

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	45	51.7%
No	24	27.6%
Notsure	18	20.7%
Total	87	100%

Table 5: Respondents'opinion on copy right laws be a barrier to academic research and creativity

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	10	11.5%

Somewhat agree	22	25.3%
Neutral	35	40.2%
Somewhat disagree	12	13.8%
Strongly disagree	8	9.2%
Total	87	100%

Table 6: Challenges faced by respondents in obtaining permission to use copyrighted materials for their academic work

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	45	51.7%
No	42	48.3%
Total	87	100%

4. Major Findings

The key objective of this study is to find out how well-informed Pondicherry University PG students are about copyright laws. From the survey, it's shown that some significant insights regarding the actual scenario of copyright awareness and infringement by the students. Out of the 87 respondents, the majority of respondents, 50(57.5%) are female respondents, and 37(42.5%) are male respondents. The majority of the respondents, 60 (68.9%), are aged 21–24. Most respondents are from the School of Media and Communication, Madan Jeet School of Green Energy Technologies. Both are 26(29.9%). The most miniature representation is from the Ramanujan School of Mathematical Sciences with 1 (1.2%). Most of the respondents visit the library weekly or monthly. 51.7 % of respondents have an awareness of basic principles of copyright laws. Out of 87 Respondents, 10 strongly agree that copyright laws are a barrier to academic research and creativity; however, 8 respondents strongly disagree. 51.7% of the respondents agree that they are facing challenges in obtaining permission to use copyrighted materials for their academic work.

4.1 Summary and Conclusion

The study investigates the perspectives and consciousness of copyright and copyright infringement among Pondicherry University PG students. The study revealed that students infringe on copyright on academic and personal grounds. Some students occasionally violate educational ethics and fall prey to dishonesty in the age of competition and the digital world. Pondicherry University needs to undertake some strategies to impart an understanding of copyright and copyright infringement.

It is indeed high time for the faculty members, institutes, departments, libraries and other entities to enforce stringent standards for enforcing copyright law. The findings of this study will create additional fields of copyright-related research and make it easier for Pondicherry University to implement the copyright Act for teaching and learning. This study might lead to further research in copyright teaching, learning, and other relevant areas. This study has a few limitations as well. The study's representative sample is limited, and participants are from several departments of a single university. Moreover, representation from various departments was unequal. Further studies may be undertaken with a broader scope, with more participants from some departments and addressing other facets of copyright understanding and notions among students. Research may be carried out in different universities. Also, comparative studies may be undertaken between universities.

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