

## FIGHTING PLAGIARISM AMONG STUDENTS THROUGH COPYRIGHT AWARENESS AND POLICY: A FOCUS ON KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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### ABSTRACT

Plagiarism and Intellectual dishonesty have become endemic among the academia with its resultant dwindling of academic integrity and honour. Facilitating this academic 'fraud' is the advent of flexible technologies of cut, copy and paste tools which are easily accessible to students, lecturers and the research community who are tempted to turn to the world-wide-web for prepared literature and scholarly solutions instead of originating independent works. The case study employed the mixed method approach to generate both quantitative and qualitative data to make empirical enquiries to explore, describe, and explain the role of universities in fighting academic plagiarism in Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana, focusing on the Students, Lecturers, the Deputy Registrar (Academics and Students' Affairs), and the University Librarian as the main participants. The study revealed that, despite the fact that KNUST has no documented Copyright Policy Document (CPD), it regards plagiarism as an act of academic dishonesty. Lecturers ensure that students cite references to all the materials they use in their works and finally the university administration has included the subject of plagiarism in the Students' Guide book which is made available to all students on admission. Even though KNUST has put in place measure to fight and prevent plagiarism among the students, the findings revealed that there is low level of awareness about plagiarism amongst KNUST students. The paper suggested possible ways to 'combat' these plagiarism menace at KNUST.

**Keywords:** Plagiarism, Intellectual dishonesty, Research community, Academia.

### INTRODUCTION

The premise of this study is set on the assertion that "the problem of plagiarism could potentially result from uncertainties or lack of copyright awareness of users" (Wahid, 2011). However, it is obvious that tertiary education revolves around the use of other peoples' resources as well. At Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Lecturers rely upon copyrighted works through fair use to make allowance for great flexibility in the course of teaching their students as the students often consult copyrighted materials to meet their educational course work requirements and also to facilitate their learning. Consequently, in such an environment, lack of copyright awareness may result in uncontrollable acts of plagiarism. Plagiarism is a pedagogical challenge (<http://leeds.bates.edu/cbb>, Hanrahan, 2008 Batane, 2010.)

### **Lack of Copyright Awareness leading to plagiarism**

Unfortunately, there is lack of copyright awareness and understanding in the academic institutions. Some students fail to notice that the use of other peoples' works without due acknowledgement is offensive, even though Batane (2010) draws attention to the fact that student plagiarism occurs in different forms, including incorrect citation and totally stealing someone else's ideas and work. Some students still think that using copyrighted materials does or does not require permission from the author or the copyright holder at all times. Following this critically, one can therefore hypothetically attribute the cause of plagiarism in academic institutions to lack of awareness of copyright among students.

Considering that KNUST forms part of the major users of copyrighted materials in Ghana, it would not be wrong to probe into the role of the university in fighting plagiarism among student of the University Community with regards to the appropriation and the daily use of other people's works in the promotion of knowledge and the dissemination of knowledge and knowledge-based products.

The university has a central library block resourced with various copyrighted materials including the large collection of internal and pre-subscribed books, articles, journals, textbooks, essays, encyclopaedias, dictionaries, letters, reports, memoranda and other published materials which are available to students of the University Community for the production of term papers, essays, report, thesis or dissertation, articles, journals and other scholarly publications. This calls for prudent and cogent Copyright Policy Document (CPD), providing guidelines on the use of copyrighted materials, to enable the University to effectively regulate, monitor and protect its intellectual property, academic and institutional values and defend its teaching, research and service mission through effective policy and awareness drive.

### **Lack of Copyright Policy to fight plagiarism**

In other Universities, there are clear Copyright Policies to guide teaching, learning and the promotion of knowledge whiles not plagiarising other people's works. One may even wonder what happens at a University where there is no Copyright Policy in this era where plagiarism has become more evident with the emergence of advanced technology, as it is now possible to copy any material in volumes and works that are likely to be protected by copyright. The situation at KNUST reveals that many students, who cannot afford the prices of materials and textbooks, now make photocopies of essential texts and materials for their academic work at the detriment of the copyright holders.

Resulting from the lack of Official Copyright Policy for KNUST, The University Faculty members and Students are at 'liberty' to use copyrighted works with impunity, with no recourse to who it may hurt. However, it can only be concluded that the detriments caused by copyright infringement do not only affect authors, but also publishers and other stakeholders in the publishing industry. It is therefore prudent, in no other time than now, to investigate the level of copyright awareness at KNUST.

### **Permitted used of copyrighted materials**

Copyright everywhere makes provision for a wide range of uses which do not necessarily require the prior authorization of the copyright owner. Some of these uses are for private or

domestic purposes such as criticism, comment, teaching (including multiple copies for classroom use), scholarship, research, or education (Bosumprah, 2009). In their studies, Dankey & Akussah (2008) and Apple Computer Inc. (2006) explain this principle of permitted use as the mechanism that makes the copyright system function properly due to its system of exceptions and limitations to authors' ownership of their works.

In Ghana, for the purpose of academic research and education, sections 19, 21, and 22 of the Copyright Act, 2005 (Act, 690), allows for the use of copyright materials of other people, either in the original or rendition, without compromising the use of a standard referencing style to acknowledge the source of the information or ideas.

While globally students are required to demonstrate their ability to reference evidence in their assessments, many students arrive at university with no prior experience of referencing. However observed that the act of engaging with, and subsequently acknowledging, literature is a key element of higher education learning process. Consequently, any short-cuts in this process diminish the value of the learning and the academic award (Pitchford, 2012).

This notwithstanding, plagiarism is a common form of copyright violation or infringement in academic environment. Osman (2010) defined plagiarism as the use of someone else's expression of ideas or words without properly crediting the source. Maupin (2010) however considers plagiarism that occurs at academic environment as academic plagiarism, and defined this to be an occurrence or a situation whereby students present another person's words or ideas as their own, in academic papers without attributing the source. Considering the issue of plagiarism from the context of students, academic plagiarism occurs in different forms, including incorrect citation and totally stealing someone else's expression of ideas and work. In a global perspective, this act by students make academic plagiarism an unacceptable act of academic dishonesty.

In this prevailing circumstance, research has established that copyright is not an absolute right; though it enables people, within limits to use freely the works of others (Batane, 2010; Amegatcher, 1993 in Dankey and Akussah, 2008).

According to Batane (2010), plagiarism affects not only individual students but also the integrity of their institutions of study as a whole and the quality of its products, it is therefore important to assess the role of universities in Ghana in fighting academic plagiarism among students.

### **Lack of Awareness of Copyright Infringement (ACI) leading to plagiarism**

Copyright infringement has been defined by Osman (2010) as the unauthorized use of a copyrighted work in a manner that violates one of the copyright holder's exclusive rights and does not fall into any of the exceptions or limitations on the holder's rights. Based on this awareness of Copyright Infringement (ACI) can be said to be the awareness that is created when students become conscious, watchful, and responsive that unauthorised use of works that are copyrighted is prohibited. We however agree with Davidson (2010) that before we can discuss what constitutes Awareness of Copyright Infringement (ACI), it is probably a good idea to lay out what specifically are the *rights* of authors or creators, that are granted by *copyright* in Ghana, that are likely to be infringed. According to Bosumprah (2009), in Ghana, copyright is infringed when a work protected by copyright is used in any of the following ways without any permission from the copyright owner:

- Reproduction, duplication, extraction or importation into the country not for personal use but for commercial purposes.
- Distribution of the work for sale in Ghana.

This is because a work exploited in the above mentioned manner may be prejudicial to the honour or reputation of the author. This is why section 41 of the Copyright Act, 2005 (Act 690) regards an act contrary to the rights of an author as provided under sections 5 and 6 as infringement of copyright. So, since the copyright owner has the exclusive right to do all of those things (or to permit others to do them), infringement can happen when someone does any of them without the copyright owner's permission (Davidson, 2010).

Davidson (2010), however agrees with other scholars that the majority of copyright infringement suits involve unauthorized

- Reproduction (as in copying a work) through photocopying, and this according to Panethiere (2005), is one of the common ways of infringing copyright in literary works.
- Distributing (as in copies of the work) through piracy. This happens through unauthorised manufacturing and selling of works in copyright (Panethiere, 2005) – what Osman (2010) regarded as Counterfeiting or the creation or distribution of imitations of genuine works with the intent to deceive the public about their authenticity.
- Use of someone else's ideas or words, as in plagiarism, or using someone else's ideas or words without properly crediting the source (Osman, 2010).

Further to this, Panethiere (2005) argued that it is not necessary for a whole work to be reproduced or for more than one reproduction to be made for an infringement of copyright to occur. An infringement of copyright occurs so long as a substantial portion of a work is reproduced or other copyright use is made of it.

This is because what is a substantial portion is often subjected to a qualitative rather than a quantitative test. Thus, it is the quality or essence of what has been taken rather than the amount that is taken that will often determine whether the portion taken is substantial or not.

### **Dealing with Plagiarism in Education**

In U. S. and other parts of the world, educational institutions, especially colleges and universities, regard plagiarism as a serious breach of academic honesty and integrity. Students who commit plagiarism are suspended or expelled from the school or at least get a failing grade in the course for which they committed the offence. According to a publication by the University of Canberra Library and Academic Skills Program (2010), the university imposes strict penalties on students who are found to contravene the university's Student Academic Integrity Policy (SAIP) which is available in student guide to policies.

In other instances, college students who commit plagiarism face the loss of their degrees upon discovery of the offence, college faculty members who plagiarize the work of other scholars face serious consequences as well, professors who commit plagiarism may lose their tenure and face the loss of their jobs and reputations, whereas an academic institution which is found guilty faces permanent loss of credibility. This is because plagiarism has many effects on education – not only on students and scholars who commit the offence but the institution as a whole. Plagiarism damages the reputation of schools as places of learning and intellectual inquiry. According to Hall (2010), when students present others' work as their

own, they fail to develop and use their critical thinking skills, which are necessary for learning.

### **Avoiding academic plagiarism in the use of copyrighted materials**

A publication by Academic Writing Help Centre (2009) implied that one way of avoiding academic plagiarism is by providing bibliographic citations or references. Thus, the use of a standard referencing style or bibliographic citation is very important in producing academic papers in order to avoid plagiarism. Students and other users of scholarly writings draw arguments, evidence, concepts and theories from other sources to build upon theirs, support their own argument or to make a point in their works. Referencing therefore becomes an important way of acknowledging a source of information or ideas employed in a piece of academic writing.

The Central Queensland University (2000) and Johns et al. (2004) indicate that there are different standard formats or styles of referencing used in academic writing so as to make the writing credibly simpler. The most commonly used ones are the Harvard, APA (American Psychological Association), MLA (Modern language Association) and the Chicago Styles. Works Cited, References, Cited References or Bibliographic pages provide readers with information about the sources which contributed to the content of a text or project. The sources may be cited as footnotes, endnotes, and in-text citations.

However, irrespective of the style of referencing one chooses to use, according to the Nottingham Trent University (2010), there are two interrelated parts to citing references, namely citing and referencing:

- 1) **Citing** - the way the writer refers from the text to the sources used.
- 2) **Referencing** - the process of creating a list of source cited in a work. In other words, providing a consistent description of the elements needed to identify a specific source, providing, author(s) name(s), date of publication, title, place of publication, publisher, etc. This reference list is located at the end of the work.

In order for students to avoid being accused of plagiarism, it is important for that they first understand what constitutes academic plagiarism (Maupin, 2010).

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Since the creation and ownership of knowledge-based products remain an important aspect of the socio-economic development of an individual and as well as the nation, this study will be a significant endeavour in promoting copyright concerns as a national business. The outcomes of the study will form the basis for awareness-raising in support of the institutionalisation of systems that facilitate the protection and easy access to learning materials. Students can avoid plagiarism and legally use copyright-protected materials if they understand and comply with the permitted use of copyright guidelines. It is hoped that the study will contribute to the development of policies that will foster copyright awareness at KNUST.

### **THE STUDY**

The case study employed the mixed method approach to generate both quantitative and qualitative data to make empirical inquiries to explore, describe, and explain the role of

universities in fighting academic plagiarism among students in Ghana from the context of Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, focusing on the Students, Lecturers, the Deputy Registrar (Academics and Students' Affairs), and the University Librarian as the main participants. This is because plagiarism certainly has caught the attention of instructors, librarians, and administrators, but students by-and-large continue to have a vague grasp of it (Hanrahan, 2008). Probability and non-probability sampling methods (Trochim, 2006) were used with simple random, stratified and purposive samplings. The simple random was used to select the departments where the survey and interviews were conducted. The list of the departments were coded numerically (as 1, 2, 3,) in an EXCEL spreadsheet and both columns were sorted – the list of the departments and the random number. Then in the column right next to it, the function =RAND() which is EXCEL's way of putting a random number greater than or equal to and less than 1, evenly distributed (this changes on recalculation). This rearranged the list in random order from the lowest to the highest random number.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
	College of Agriculture and Natural Resources	Random Number	Position								
2	3. Department of Crop Science	0.523944022	1st								
3	1. Department of Agricultural Economics, Agribusiness and Extension	0.848335272	2nd								
4	10. Department of Silviculture and Forest Management	0.975756126	3rd								
5	7. University Research Station, Awomaso-Kumasi	0.684027075	4th								
6	8. Department of Agroforestry	0.704739702	5th								
7	5. Department of Soil Science	0.694006206	6th								
8	6. Boadi Cattle Project, Boadi-Kumasi	0.932009214	7th								
9	2. Department of Animal Science	0.797701805	8th								
10	4. Department of Horticulture	0.348152119	9th								
11	11. Department of Wildlife and Range Management	0.006927073	10th								
12	9. Department of Freshwater Fisheries and Watershed Management	0.429405491	11th								
13	13. Department of Silviculture and Forest Management	0.089082227	12th								
14	12. Department of Wood Science and Technology	0.465552763	13th								
15											
16											
17	College of Architecture and Planning										
18	1. Department of Architecture	0.764098779	1st								
19	5. Centre for Land Studies	0.55811856	2nd								
20	4. Department of Planning	0.348590458	3rd								
21	6. Centre for Settlements Studies	0.856935213	4th								
22	3. Department of Land Economy	0.697746726	5th								
23	2. Department of Building Technology	0.671533335	6th								
24											
25											
26	College of Art and Social Sciences										

**Fig. 1: Random selection of sampled departments**

Source: Field survey

A population of 500 respondents was drawn from among the students who responded to questionnaire. The responds from the questionnaire was supported with interviews from Lecturers, the Deputy Registrar (Academics and Students' Affairs), and the University Librarian. The student population was stratified into different groups based on characteristic or variables such as their year groups (Mugo, 2002). All group A were in First Year, group B were Second Year students, group C were also in Third Year, and group D was also made up of Fourth Year students. Each group formed a stratum. In the study, the questionnaire was distributed among the 500 student respondents who were randomly selected from each stratum using the simple random sampling. Table 1 gives the distribution of categories of students selected for the study and their corresponding percentage of representation calculated as:

$$\% = \frac{n}{N} \times 100$$

$$\text{Where } \% = \frac{\text{sampled population}}{500} \times 100$$

**Table 1: Number of students Sampled for the study**

Sample	Size	Percentage
First Years	150	30%
Second Years	125	25%
Third Years	90	18%
Fourth Years	85	17%
Postgraduates	50	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100%</b>

According to George et al. (2006), we can conclude that this sample involving 90% undergraduates (First Year to Fourth Year) and 10% postgraduates is large for the study, as we can represent all categories of students and still have the benefits of the study.

Data was collected from The Deputy Registrar (Academics and Students' Affairs) and Lecturers to find out about copyright policies available at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology to fight plagiarism among the students. According to Learning (2005) purposive sampling allows researchers to target particular group of people as in the case of this study.

The researcher made sufficient time to retrieve the 500 questionnaire that were distributed among the students. The interviews with The Deputy Registrar (Academics and Students Affairs) and Lecturers were also successful. This represents 100% coverage of the data collection as planned.

The data collected were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel. All the responses from the questionnaire were coded into numerical categories in SPSS while the interview responses were transcribed. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including percentages and frequencies. George et al. (2006, p. 4) suggested that, using descriptive statistics makes it possible to apply both quantitative and qualitative techniques to analyse the verbal data. The quantitative analysis of the results helps to provide the basis for comparison among disciplines as well as the overall summary of the study. Chi (1997, p. 1) also suggested that, using qualitative analysis of verbal data makes the interpretation of the results less subjective and yet maintain the richness of its context.

However, to build a foundation for a close analysis of the study, the opinions of the various participants were discussed (Beebe, 2008).

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

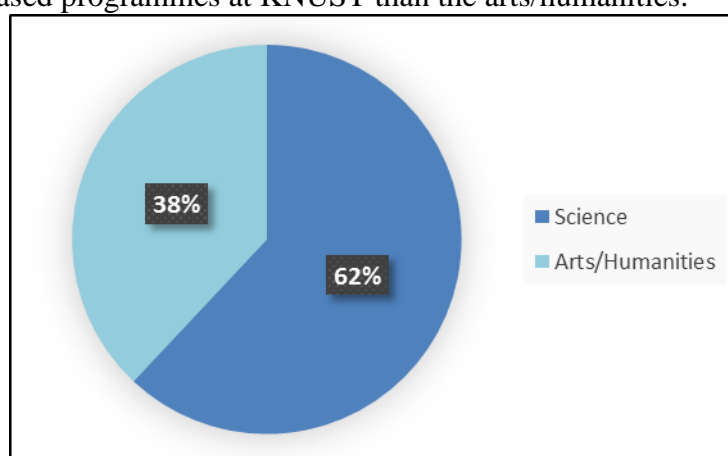
The background of the students, who participated in the study, was studied in two aspects to ascertain how these factors are likely to contribute to the level of plagiarism. This involves their Year of study and Programme of study.

All the 500 students who responded to the questionnaire were grouped into four categories. Table 2 and Fig. 2 set out the distribution of the students by their Year Groups and

programmes of study respectively as recommended by Beebe (2008). Table 2 indicate that 30% (n=150) of the respondents are in First Year, 25% (n=125) are in the Second Year, 18% (n=90) in Third Year, and 17% (n=85) are also Fourth Year Students and 10% (n=50) are Postgraduate Students.

The number of first year students for each academic year is significantly more than those in the respective years of study. According to Pitchford (2012), most students enter their first year at the university with no prior experience of referencing even though they are required to demonstrate their ability to reference evidence in their assignments. A publication by Academic Writing Help Centre (2009) implied that one way of preventing academic plagiarism is by providing bibliographic citations or references.

In Figure 2, out of the 500 students, 62% (n=280) of them studied science based programmes whilst 38% (n=170) of them studied arts/humanities based programmes. This is because there are more science based programmes at KNUST than the arts/humanities.



**Fig. 2: Frequency of Students based on Programmes of Study**

The fact that 62% of the students studied science based programmes and 38% of them studied arts/humanities based programmes implies that we would have more students who depend on various copyrighted works in the sciences than those who depend on such resources in the arts/humanities, but whatever the case may be, the variations in the number of students who depend on these resources in their academic pursuits at KNUST may ultimately have various impacts on publishers, authors and their works. In a situation like this, authors can only enjoy the economic value of their works when plagiarism awareness is viewed seriously in academic institutions. Although according to Kawooya (2007) copyright establishes public interest in copyrighted works for scholarship and research without resorting to the right-holder, Omoba (2009) also said users of such works must, however, recognise and acknowledge the rights of the authors. This is very important as long as students continue to use the works of authors and publishers in their academics, thus if we want to reap the full benefits of copyright.

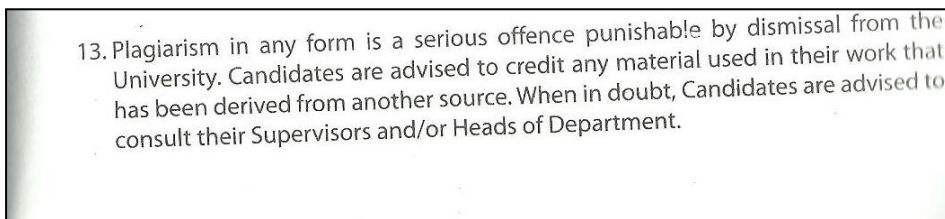
### **Copyright awareness, policy and measures put in place at KNUST to prevent plagiarism**

The study indicated that more than half of the total student respondents, representing 67% (n=335) are aware of plagiarism. According to the interview with the Deputy Registrar (Academics and Students Affairs), it came to light that the university is not being faced with plagiarism issues because the students are aware of plagiarism and its implications at the



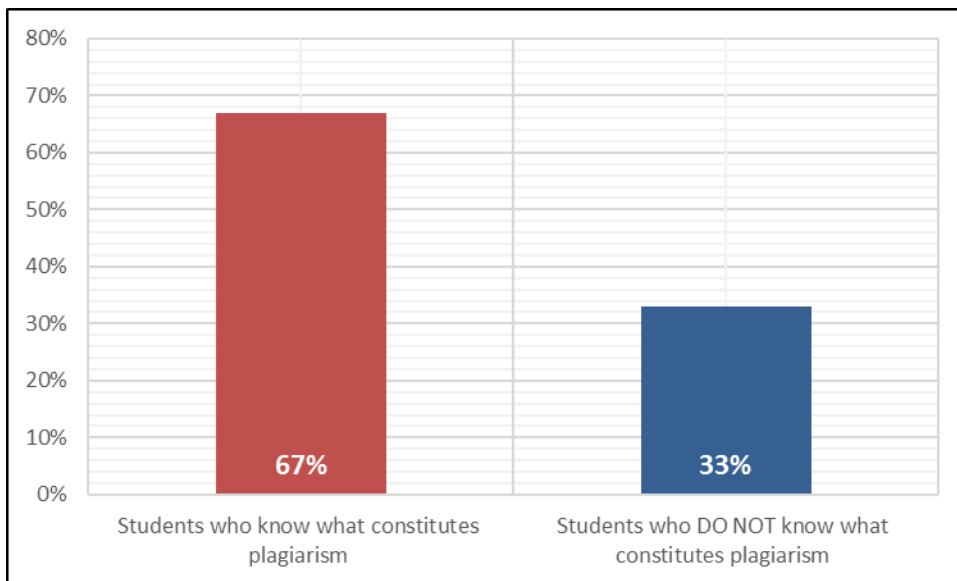
university. Despite the fact that KNUST has no documented copyright policies, it regards plagiarism as an act of academic dishonesty. A postgraduate student said he enquired about the university’s policy on copyright, on behalf of a German publishing company which saw his article in a journal and expressed interest to publish his thesis from which the article was derived. The student, upon consultation with the School of Graduate Studies and other authorities of the university, was told that the school and the university as a whole has no such policy concerning internal and external publishing companies who wish to publish students’ thesis. This unfortunate situation left the student and the publishing company in a fixed. The student’s work which could have also contribute immensely to the society was not published to make for the benefit of the society.

On the subject of copyright awareness at the university, it was revealed during a separate interview with the University Librarian, that the KNUST Library takes it as a separate duty to educate students on plagiarism as a way of creating awareness of copyright in them. This normally takes place during freshers’ orientation at the beginning of every academic year. On this wise, the students are made aware of the fact that plagiarism in any form is a serious offence, punishable by dismissal from the university and are advised to credit any material they use in their works. The extract in Plate 1 is a portion of the KNUST Students’ Guide that is used by the KNUST Library in this exercise.



**Plate 1: An extract from the KNUST Students Guide on plagiarism**

Fig. 3 however shows the relationship between the students who know what constitutes plagiarism as against those who do not know what constitutes the act of plagiarism.



**Fig. 3: Frequency of Students’ Awareness of Plagiarism**

It is evident that, despite the fact that KNUST Library spends time to educate freshers' on plagiarism and the effort University Administration to include the subject in the Students' Guide, relatively, most of the First and Second year students still lack knowledge about plagiarism.

**Table 2: Students' Awareness of Plagiarism**

<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Variable</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Students who know what constitutes plagiarism	First year	16%
	Second year	11%
	Third year	15%
	Fourth year	17%
	Postgraduate	8%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>67%</b>
Students who DO Not know what constitutes plagiarism	First year	14%
	Second year	14%
	Third year	3%
	Fourth year	0%
	Postgraduate	2%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>33%</b>

### **Students' Perception about Plagiarism**

From Fig. 3, there is an indication that out of the 67% students, as seen in Table 2, who said they know what constitutes plagiarism, 51% of them, representing a little more than half of the total population could define plagiarism correctly. The remaining 16% had different perceptions about what plagiarism means. Some of them, based on the checklist provided, perceived plagiarism to be the photocopying or scanning of literary works; the creation, distribution or imitation of genuine works with the intent to deceive the public about their authenticity. However, the students who had the correct perception about plagiarism perceived it to be the use of someone else's expression of ideas or words without crediting the source. Nevertheless, some of the students still had explicit doubts about what plagiarism means. This indicates that out of the 67% students who perceive they understand the concept of plagiarism, there are others among them who, in reality, lack its fundamental understanding and what constitutes plagiarism.

According to Pitchford (2012), this, perhaps, demonstrates the degree of ambiguity and confusion over plagiarism.

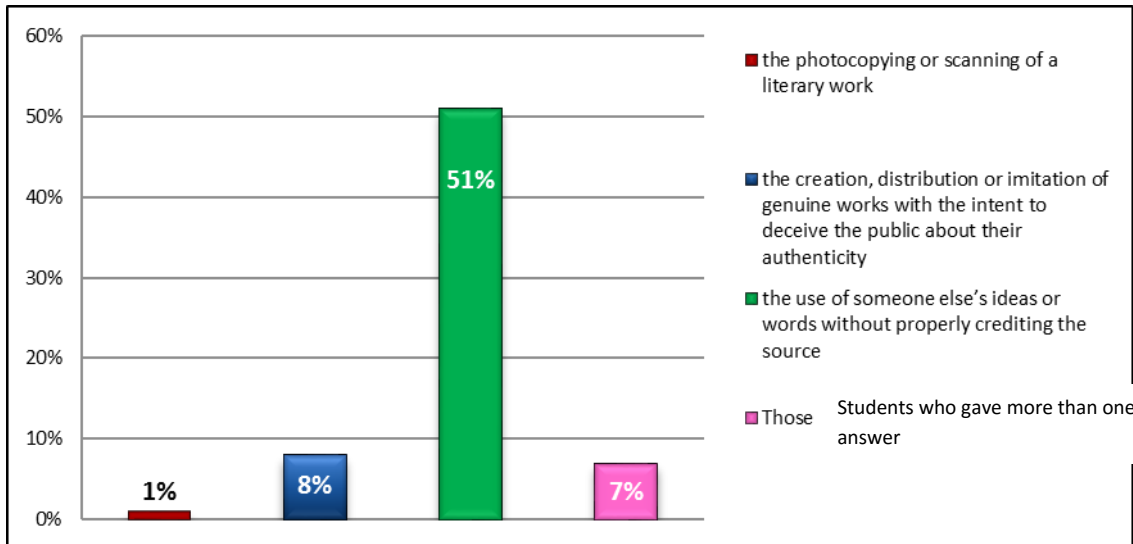


Fig. 4: A distribution of Students' understanding of Plagiarism

**Good practices that are being followed to ensure that students avoid plagiarism at KNUST**

Batane (2010) emphasized that student plagiarism occurs in different forms, including incorrect citation. In the study, it is established that most of the students, thus 97% (n=485), expressed that they are aware that they have to cite sources of information they use in their academic works as seen in the Fig 4.

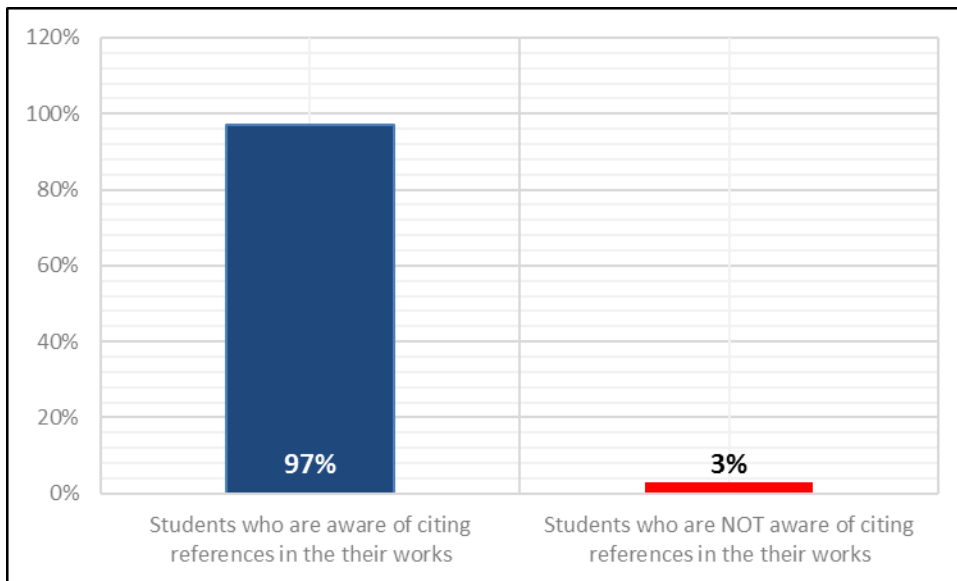


Fig. 5: Students' awareness of citation of references

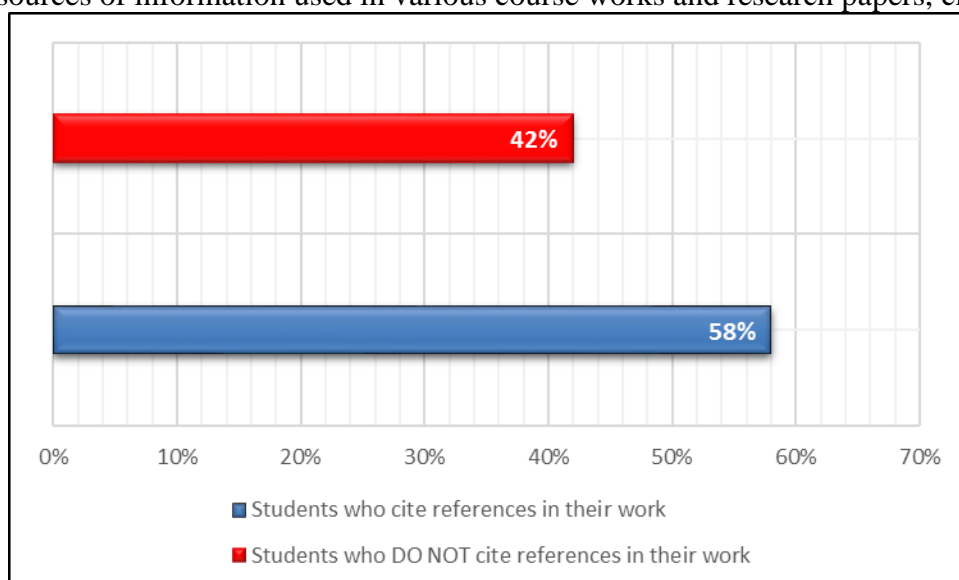
Anybody can therefore expect, based on the fact in Fig. 4 that majority of the students have the culture of citing references of their works based on their awareness, but the question is “Does the level of their awareness really reflect in providing acceptable references in their works?” or “Do all the 97% of the students who claim they are aware of citing references in their works actually do so?”

In comparing Fig. 4 to Fig. 5, it is easy to realise the relationship between the number of students who are aware that they have to credit sources of information they use in their academic work and the number of students who are not aware as against the number of students who were found to practically acknowledge sources of information they use in their academic works and those who do not. Out of the 97% students, in Fig. 4, who said that they are aware of acknowledging sources of information they use in their academic works, only 58% were found to practically do so, as seen in Fig. 5. It is obvious to see from Fig. 5 that there is an increase in the number of students who said they are aware that they have to cite sources of information they use when they actually DO NOT do so.

Whatever the case is or may be, citation of references is very important in every academic work and Nottingham Trent University, (2010) has given three reasons why students must cite references, including:

1. To acknowledge other writers.
2. To demonstrate the body of knowledge upon which a research is based.
3. To enable all those who read the materials to locate its sources easily.

This means, Citation or Referencing is the way through which acknowledgement is given and sources of information used in various course works and research papers, credited.



**Fig. 6: The Practice of Citing References among Students**

All the Lecturers interviewed revealed that they do ensure that their students acknowledge the sources of the information they use in their write-ups, especially, assignments, project reports, and lab reports submitted in any form, be it printed, power-point or via e-mail. This is done to prevent students from plagiarising other people's works. The lecturers try as much as possible to use Language, Search Engines (SE), Plagiarism Detecting Software (PDS) such as Turnitin (Prescott, 2012) and Plagiarism Detecting Websites (PDW) to detect where students plagiarised.

In an attempt to prevent plagiarism among the students, some of the lecturers admitted that they prepare materials on how to acknowledge sources for their students. Others also said they help their students to provide acceptable references by providing sources of materials they have used in preparing lecture notes for the students. As observed by Pitchford (2012), some of the students at KNUST also expressed strong concern about the limited teaching they

had received on how to reference and avoid plagiarism which makes them still find referencing difficult, particularly online sources.

During the interview with the lecturers, most of the lecturers admitted that as technology has now made it easy to plagiarise other people's works, it has also made it easy to detect works that are plagiarised. According to Maupin (2010), students who are guilty of plagiarism face at least a failing grade in the course for which they committed the offence or possibly, suspension or even expulsion from the university. This was confirmed during the study when one of the lecturers said that, in an effort to maintain a high standard of academic integrity, students who plagiarised are not allowed to go free but are penalised for their action by marking them down, trailed, or asking them to redo the work.

For instance, it was revealed during the interview with the Deputy Registrar (Academics and Students Affairs) that, a postgraduate student who was found to have submitted someone else's thesis as his own was charged with plagiarism and had his thesis cancelled and was asked to redo the work. Batane (2010) said there are many reasons why it is important for institutions to fight plagiarism among students. Plagiarism affects not only individual students but also the integrity of the institution as a whole and the quality of its products. Therefore, it is important that each university crack down on this problem for its own sake and for the sake of the students. Also, apart from imparting academic knowledge to students, universities and colleges have a responsibility to impart moral and ethical values to students. Regardless of technological changes, the goal of Librarians, Educators and Scholars is to find an equilibrium whereby the widest access to scholarly works is ensured while the intellectual properties of copyright holders are protected (Abdulla 2007).

## **CONCLUSION**

Despite the fact that the KNUST has no documented Copyright Policy Document (CPD), it regards plagiarism as an act of academic dishonesty. The university by this reason plays a major role in fighting academic plagiarism among its students through Plagiarism Awareness Programme (PAP) by the University Library, lecturers ensure that students cite references to all the materials they use in their works and finally the university administration has included the subject of plagiarism in the Students' Guide book which is made available to all students on admission.

Even though KNUST has in place measure from the administration of the school through to the classroom level to fight and prevent plagiarism among the students, the students' knowledge about what constitute plagiarism and their awareness of copyright is not up to the level expected with some of the students expressing strong concern about the limited teaching they had received on how to reference and avoid plagiarism. This makes them still find referencing difficult, particularly online sources.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. There is a need for prudent and cogent Copyright Policy Document (CPD) at KNUST, providing guidelines on the use of copyrighted materials, to enable the university to effectively regulate, monitor and protect its intellectual property, academic and institutional values and defend its teaching, research and service mission.

2. The National Accreditation Board should make it a requirement for all tertiary to have Copyright Policy Document (CPD) since they form part of major users and creator of copyright materials.
3. Plagiarism awareness notices should be placed at places where copyrighted materials are used, such as the library and lecture halls, to create awareness in each and every student.
4. References in students works should be marked and attract marks to motivate them to see the need of crediting sources of information they use their write ups.
5. Lecturers should be always available to provide guidance to students to provide proper referencing in their works.

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