

**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON**  
**DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION STUDIES**

**AWARENESS AND INCIDENCE OF PLAGIARISM AMONG  
STUDENTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF**

**NARH-BITA COLLEGE**

**BY**

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**THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED TO THE  
UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON IN PARTIAL  
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD  
OF THE MA INFORMATION STUDIES DEGREE.**

**JULY, 2016**

## DECLARATION

I, Zakaria Abukari, declare that, with the exception of the references to other works which have been duly acknowledged, this dissertation is the result of my own survey research work under the direction and supervision of Professor Perpetua S. Dadzie. This research has not been presented in whole or part elsewhere for another degree. I wholeheartedly take responsibility for any shortfalls that may be detected in this work.

Signature.....

Date.....

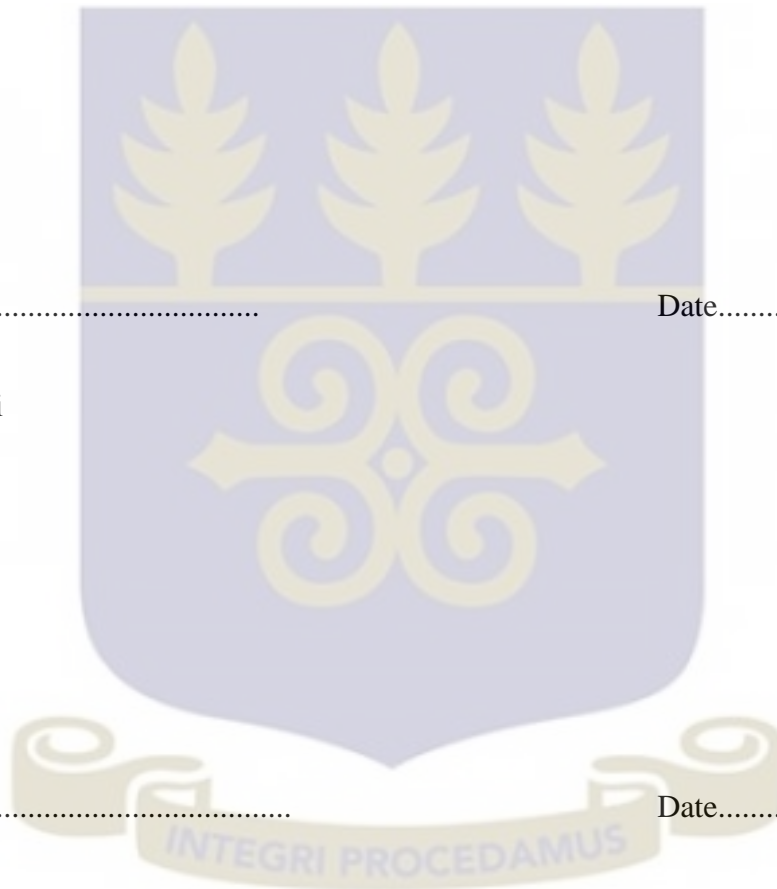
Zakaria Abukari

Signature.....

Date.....

Professor Perpetua S. Dadzie

(Supervisor)



## DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to all persons who through their contributions of time and effort have made this research a reality.

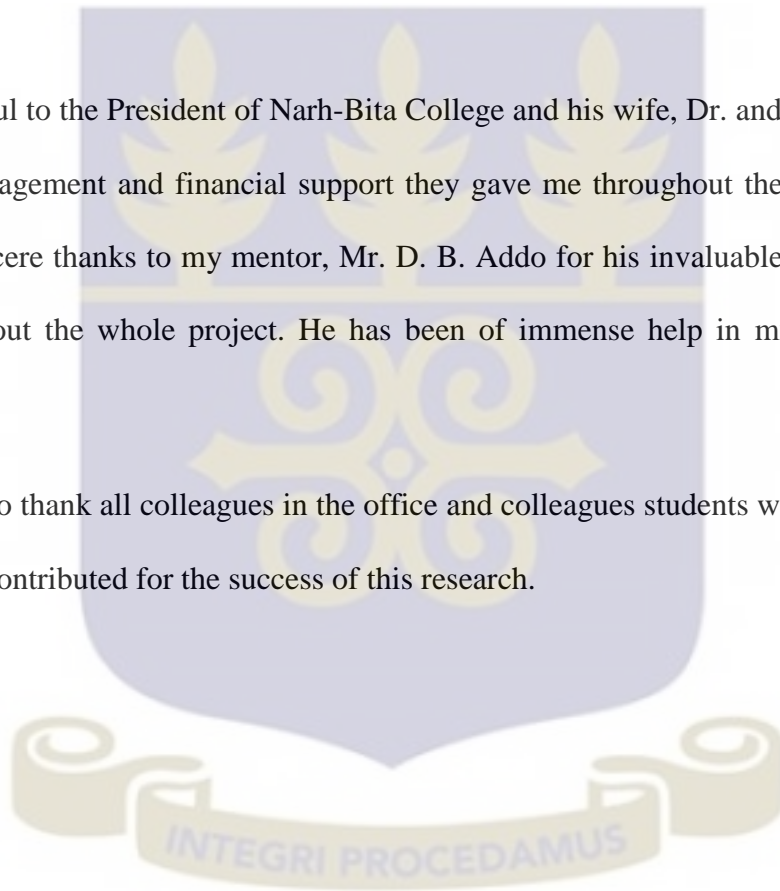


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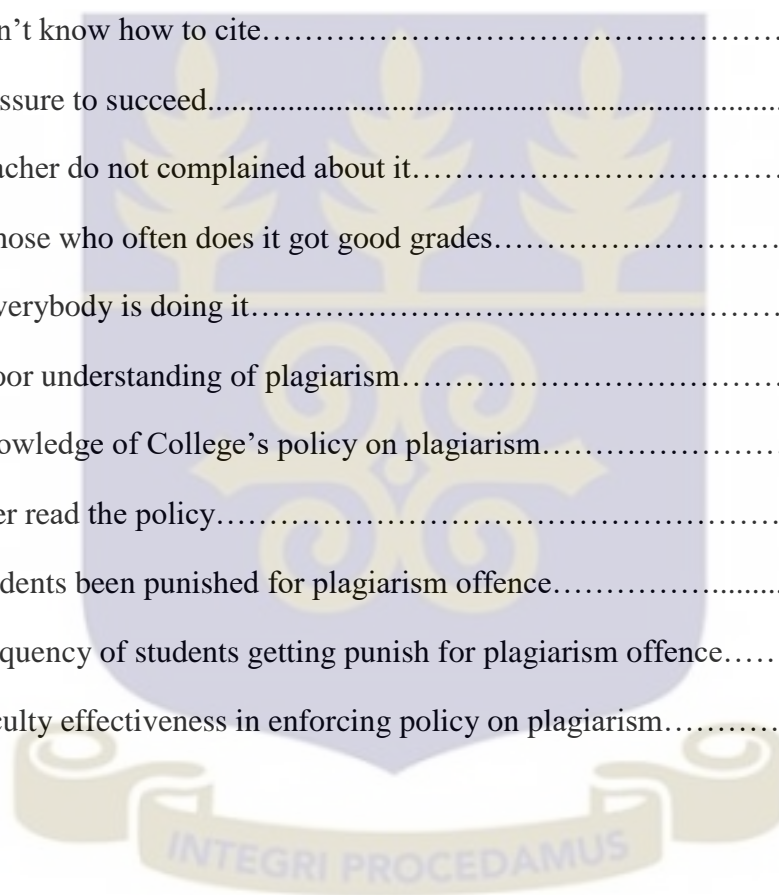
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## ABSTRACT

A series of ethical issues are on the rise in academia, especially plagiarism. In this age of information overload, more and more students and researchers are turning to the Internet for already made solutions and short-cuts for writing assignments, research papers and thesis. This culture certainly does not promote academic excellence and critical thinkers. The study examined students' awareness and incidence of plagiarism at the Narh-Bita College. It further looked at motivations behind plagiarism and students' knowledge of the institution's policy on plagiarism. The study employed the survey research methodology. A total of 143 nursing and physician assistant students participated in this study. A self-reported questionnaire survey was used for collection of data. The findings of the study revealed that there was high level of awareness about plagiarism amongst the students. Findings also revealed that there was high incidence and practices of plagiarism in the academic life of the students. Poor understanding of the concept of plagiarism was ranked as the highest motivator behind plagiarism. The findings of the study further revealed that students' knowledge on the institution's plagiarism policy was low. The study again revealed faculty's laxity in the enforcement of plagiarism policies. Based on the findings of the study, the study recommends among others the teaching of the concept plagiarism to promote the ethical use of information among students and the pro-active enforcement of policies on plagiarism by faculty to effectively stem the incidence of plagiarism in the college.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

The use of information is a common phenomenon among every person in the world especially in the academia. Students use information to write their assignments, reports, and their research works. Likewise faculty and every member of the academia make use of information in one way or the other. Hence, these individuals have ethical responsibility in the manner in which they use information (Bothma et al., 2011).

The recent information overload and the technological advancement where access to information has become much more easier have even made the ethical use of information significantly imperative within the academia.

The information evolution has exposed students and researchers to the intellectual creations of other people on daily basis. These include all forms of written and visual texts, multimedia products, music, spoken text, and audio text. For the purpose of writing assignments, reports and research projects, it is assumed that when these intellectual creations (information) of other people are incorporated into students' works, the appropriate acknowledgement and due credits are given. As Ramzan et al., (2012) put it, the academia and scholarly society are founded on ethics and integrity where new ideas are generated, and research works are produced and made public for mankind to derive the maximum benefit with an expectation of acknowledgement. In their view, universities and higher education of learning do not exist only to generate and produce new ideas, through research but to produce highly skilled and competent graduates with high standards of honesty, ethics and professionalism to serve the community. After all, scholarship involves the use of concepts, facts, or ideas obtained from

others with the expectation of acknowledging where the ideas came from (Rozycki and Clabaugh, 2001).

Unfortunately, this is often not the case. Students often present or use other people's published and unpublished ideas or intellectual products as if it is their own original work without acknowledging or crediting the source of information and thereby committing plagiarism (Bothma et al., 2011).

The word plagiarism is hardly a recent concept. Dames (2006), as cited by Lampart (2008), labelled the concept as the "New Piracy" since it has become a "Hot" new crime in the modern age. Researchers who have studied plagiarism know that it is not a new phenomenon (Lampart, 2008).

The concept of plagiarism has a very long history. The concept dates back as far as in the sixteenth century when religious texts had no identified authors and so people freely copied these texts and incorporated into their works. When painters started signing their works in the mid 1600s, the incidences of plagiarism and stealing became more pronounced in the creative industry including the sciences. Although, plagiarism may be less pronounced in the lives of students especially in the lower educational level up to among majority of students in the higher education, Vinod et al. (2011) assert that about 90 percent of people have indulged in it at least once in their life either knowingly or unknowingly.

The word plagiarism first appeared in English as a result of the numerous battles among Shakespeare and his peers. The Oxford English Dictionary actually mentions Ben Johnson as the first person to have used the word in print (Vinod et al., 2011).

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, plagiarism has a Latin root word “Plagiarus” which means kidnapper, seducer, or plunderer. Plagium means kidnapping, which is in turn derived from plaga meaning to capture or trap.

Plagiarism according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary means to plagiarize. Webster states plagiarism as:

1. *Stealing others themes/technology, ideas/words and report either verbally or in writings as one’s own.*
2. *Extension of an idea/product from an established source with credibility.*
3. *Theft in literature and arts.*
4. *Without giving required credits/permission make use of others production.*

For many researchers the term plagiarism has no universally agreed definition. Each institution develops its own definition, even when it is interpreted differently by individuals as what plagiarism is or what it is not (Neville, 2007; and Colins, 2007: 28; Leask, 2006: 185 cited by Sentleng & King, 2012).

The growing incidences and culture of plagiarism among students as widely reported in the literature should be a major concern to educators and the academic community as a whole. According to Vinod et al (2011), recent statistics have shown that nearly 90 percent of students have plagiarized something at least once and most have even done it a couple of times. A survey carried out by Josephson Institute of Ethics Report Card (cited in Lampart, 2008), revealed that of 12,000 high school students, nearly three quarters admitted to have cheated in an examination once in the past year.

Institutions have recognised how endemic plagiarism has become among its students and have therefore developed and adopt policies on plagiarism to curb incidences of plagiarism.

For example, the University College Dublin School of Nursing, Midwifery & Health Systems has a comprehensive policy on plagiarism that entails what plagiarism is, the establishment of School Plagiarism Committee; spells out the procedures for dealing with a case of alleged plagiarism, has a Plagiarism Declaration Form for research students, and ways of informing students about plagiarism. Similarly, the College of Public Health of the University of Iowa has a policy on plagiarism captured under its Standards of Academic and Professional Conduct in their student manual. This policy defines what constitutes plagiarism, procedures for handling alleged violations of the standards, and appropriate sanctions against offenders (the policy can be found at <https://www.grad.uniow.edu/manual-part-1-section-iv-academic-standing-probation-and-dismissal>). In addition, the University College Cork, Ireland plagiarism policy briefly states “The plagiarism policy aims to inform undergraduate and postgraduate students about plagiarism”.

Indeed in an academic environment such as Narh-bitra College, a private health institution in Ghana, that trains health professionals for the health needs of the country, the use of the intellectual creations of others among its students is not an exception. The students need information for writing assignments, presentations, patient care studies, research projects and finally formal examinations. In all these, the students make use of information of other people’s works. In addition, the College has well-equipped library and a computer laboratory where internet access is freely available. This can heighten the incidences of plagiarism in their coursework where information is downloaded at will. Although, the College has a clear policy on plagiarism and students are duly oriented about it and the fact that a course on communication skills teaches academic writing skills and academic conventions, it remains unclear whether students are adequately aware of the issue of plagiarism.

It is against this backdrop, this research needs to be conducted into finding out the awareness and incidence of plagiarism among Narh-Bitra College students.

## 1.2 Study Area.

Narh-Bita College is a private tertiary health institution located in the Tema Metropolis in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. A Narh-Bita hospital which started as a clinic in 1979, upgraded to the status of a hospital in 1987 played a major role in the establishment of the college. During the early part of 2000s, there was a general shortage of health personnel in the country. The Hospital Management therefore saw the need to establish a health training institution to train more health personnel to augment the existing trainees from the public health institutions. In 2004, the School of Nursing was established to run a Registered General Nursing (Diploma) Programme. In 2006, the School added the training of Health Assistants to the Registered General Nursing Programme. In 2007, it got the accreditation to run a Physician Assistant (Diploma) and a Medical Laboratory Technology (Certificate) Programme. As a result of this progress, the School's Management applied to the National Accreditation Board to be granted a College status. In 2008, the application was granted and the school became a full fledged college with two schools; the school of Nursing which run the Registered General Nursing and the Health Assistant (Clinical) programmes directed and supervised by the Nurses' and Midwifery Council of Ghana, while the University of Ghana is the mentor University. Secondly, the School of Allied Health Science which run the Physician Assistant and the Medical Laboratory Technology programmes supervised by the Medical and Dental Council of Ghana while the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology is the mentor institution.

The college has made significant progress since its inception. It has contributed to increasing the health personnel needs of the country. Continuous students of the college usually from time to time embark on outreach programs in some deprived rural areas to educate rural folks on basic health tips. This has helped to reduce the high incidences of common diseases in these areas thereby lowering pressures on health facilities in the country.

The college has satisfied the operational conditions and therefore has been duly registered and accredited by the Registrar General's Department and the National Accreditation Board respectively.

The college is governed by the college Council and the College Management with administrative staff and teaching staff playing essential roles in the advancement of the college. It currently has a student population of about 735.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

Institutions of higher learning across the world have recognised the issue of plagiarism and have therefore developed policies on plagiarism to curb the incidence of plagiarism. Some students download assignments done by others somewhere and submit them as their own while others copy and paste portions of other peoples work without citing the sources or acknowledging the sources. This form of academic misconduct undermines the principles of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility (Babalola, 2012).

At Narh –Bita College, students are expected to express their authorial voice in their assignments, and other academic writings by synthesizing the ideas drawn from the variety of information sources. In addition, they are expected to acknowledge their sources of information. The College therefore has a well-stocked library, provides easy access to Internet services with a variety of information resources which satisfy the information needs of the students. Furthermore, there is an institutional policy on plagiarism and a course embedded in the curriculum which is supposed to teach the necessary skills needed for academic writing.

Despite the efforts that the school management has put in place to curb plagiarism, students of Narh-Bita do not seem to be knowledgeable or aware of the issues of plagiarism. It is also

uncertain whether the ease of access to internet sources is impeding on the academic integrity of students, hence the commitment of plagiarism (Bothma et al., 2011).

The consequences of ignoring plagiarism among these college students may deny students of mental stimulation and intellectual development that could have resulted in critical and analytical thinking (Centre for Intellectual Property, n. d., cited in Babalola, 2012).

It is against this background that the researcher seeks to investigate the awareness and incidence of plagiarism among students of Narh-Bita College to ascertain their level of awareness and incidence of plagiarism.

#### **1.4 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the survey study is to examine the awareness and incidence of plagiarism among students of higher education and also to examine the factors that motivate the students to engage in plagiarism in Narh-Bita College.

#### **1.5 Objectives of the Study**

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To investigate the students awareness about plagiarism
2. To investigate the prevalence of plagiarism among the students
3. To find out the factors that motivate the students to engage in plagiarism
4. To find out the students' knowledge on the institution's penalties on plagiarism

#### **1.6 Research Questions**

The researcher seeks to find answers to the following questions:

1. What are the awareness levels of the students about plagiarism?
2. How prevalent is plagiarism among the students?

3. What factors motivate the students to plagiarize?
4. Do the students know about the institution's penalties on plagiarism?

### **1.7 Significance of the Study**

The study will further unearth the growing incidences of plagiarism among students of higher education from the Ghanaian perspective. It will also shed more light on the reasons why plagiarism continues to occur despite the severe consequences associated with it so that policy makers will be better informed when formulating policies regarding plagiarism. The findings of the study will be significant in helping make appropriate recommendations to the College Authorities on the best ways of combating plagiarism. Also, knowing the severity of the problem will help major educational stakeholders take proactive steps in dealing with it. Furthermore, the findings of the study will help in creating awareness among practitioners in the academia on the rising levels of plagiarism among students of higher education. It will further serve as an additional source of reference to researchers and students whose studies may be related to the topic under consideration in future.

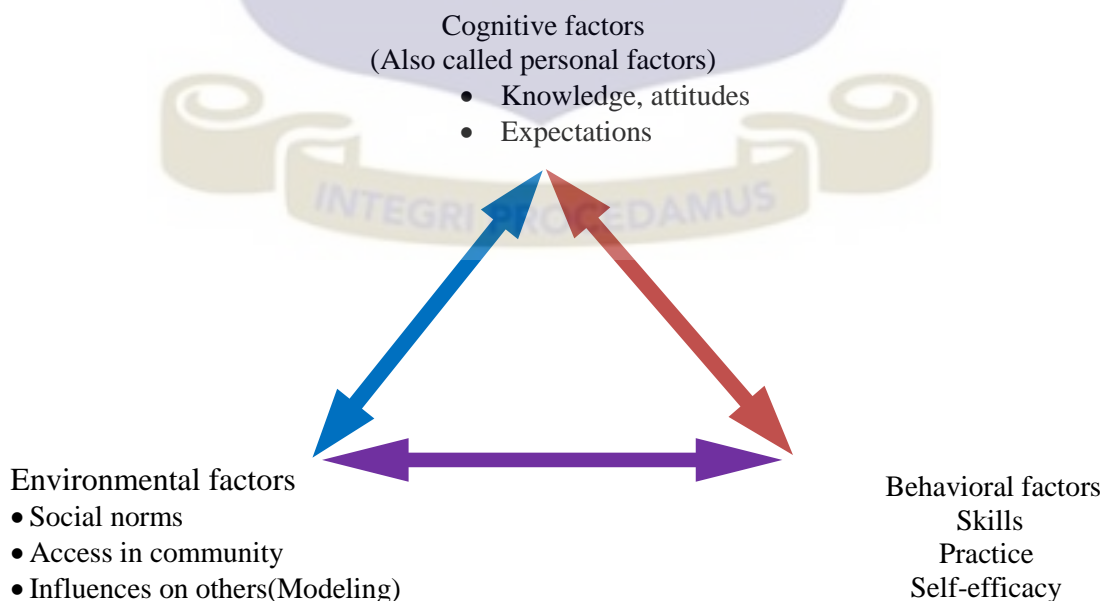
### **1.8 Scope and Limitation of the Study**

The study was focused on the Registered General Nursing students and Physician Assistant students of the College. This was because they constitute majority of the student population of the college that are involved in writing assignments, carrying out patient care studies, presentations, and writing of research reports. The study is limited in its over concentration on students views about the investigated phenomenon.

## 1.9 Theoretical Framework

The Social learning Theory (SLT) was adopted for this study. The social learning theory emerged as an explanation of how people's behaviour can be influenced by environmental factors as well as other factors underlined in the theory.

The social learning theory has gained significant grounds in the study of human behaviour over the years. The theory had its origins in the behavioural writings and works of John B. Watson (1924), B. F. Skinner (1953) and other behavioural theorists. However, the theory was further developed and given the name social learning theory by Albert Bandura (1977, 1989). The theory attempts to explain how a person's thought is shaped and influenced by the interplay of factors, thus, the theory is grounded in the belief that peoples' behaviours are determined by a three-way relationships between cognitive factors, environmental influences and behaviour, in what Bandura (1986), called **triadic reciprocal determinism** (see figure a), in which cognitive and personal factors, behaviour, and environmental factors all operate interactively as determinants of one another.



**Figure (a) Adapted from Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977).**

The cognitive factors also called personal factors according to Bandura (1977), include knowledge, expectations and attitudes. This Bandura explains to mean that a person is full of attitudes, beliefs and expectations that affect the way he acquires information, make decisions, reason and solve problems. These mental processes affect what the person will do at any given moment. Self-efficacy outlined in theory explains an individual expectations, beliefs or conviction to perform certain actions, and that people may choose not to perform certain actions if they have no incentive to do so (Bandura, 1986).

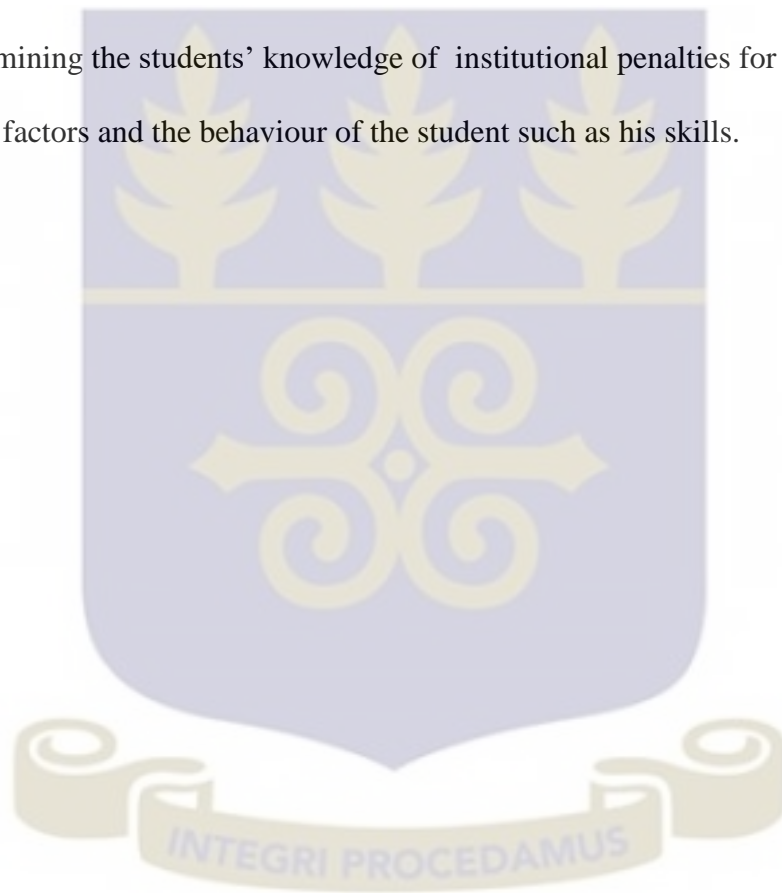
Bandura further explained that the environmental influences include social norms, influences of others (modelling) all interact to determine the behaviour of people. The social norms are the ethical code of conduct and consequences that dictate what is ethical right or wrong in the community. And these norms influence the individual behavioural choices. According to Bandura human behaviour is learned observationally through modelling: by observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviours are learned and this formation of an idea serves a guide for future application of the learned behaviour. This proposition references three key principles: (1) people learn by observing the behaviour of others and the outcomes of those behaviours; (2) awareness and expectations of future rewards or punishments associated with the models also affect behaviour that people learn. In other words people learn by observing others and alter their behaviour accordingly, in what Bandura called **vicarious reinforcement**. These propositions of the theory have many implications in higher education. Students learn greatly by observing others such their peers, parents, and faculty. According to Bandura, people are attracted to models who model certain behaviour. Faculty members could significantly influence positive ethical behaviours and shape students' moral character by modelling high standards of ethical conduct themselves.

In addition, social norms contribute to individuals' behaviour in a particular situation. The awareness of academic rules such as plagiarism policies and the enforcement of such policies can prevent the unethical behaviour of plagiarism. For example, a research by Dadzie (2011) found that policies of plagiarism in most higher institutions of learning are not strictly being enforced. Therefore, faculty who ignore the enforcement of academic rules could negatively affect students' attitude towards plagiarism in the academic community. Likewise, students who observe authorities consistently reinforcing academic integrity in the classroom and punishing those who engage in plagiarism are less likely to engage in the incidents of plagiarism, as Skinner (1953), puts it, actions that are punished tend to be inhibited and those that are rewarded tend to be repeated. Also, students who perceive minimal consequences for plagiarizing are more likely to view such a conduct as acceptable at the institution they attend.

It is also pertinent to note that if faculty members expect academic honesty and integrity from their students, they should have clear understanding of plagiarism policies and articulate them clearly to their students in the classroom, and enforce standards and expectations throughout their academic life informing students of the negative consequences of certain behaviours such as plagiarism. As Hoffman (1983), noted in his new learning model on disciplinary encounters between parents and children that the best way to enhance children moral behaviour is when the moral explanation for that discipline is provided. For example, 'don't do that because it might hurt the other person is more effective than a simple don't do that'. Again, students who perceive the academic environment as one does not place much importance on the issues of plagiarism are more likely to engage in it.

In conclusion, the prepositions propounded in the Bandura's Social Learning Theory (SLT) influence the student behaviour on the issue of plagiarism. Bandura's Social

Learning Theory (SLT) befittingly relates to the objective of this study in the manner that cognitive factors or personal factors which consist of knowledge, expectations, and attitudes to social norms relate to objective one (1) which is to investigate students awareness of plagiarism. Objective (2) to investigate the prevalence of plagiarism among the students which is dependent on environmental factors where there are social norms and influence of others. In addition, finding out motivational factors for plagiarism concur with environmental factors such as the influence of models, the students self-efficacy and lastly, determining the students' knowledge of institutional penalties for plagiarism relate to cognitive factors and the behaviour of the student such as his skills.



### 1.10 Organization of the Study

The study has been organized into five chapters as follows:

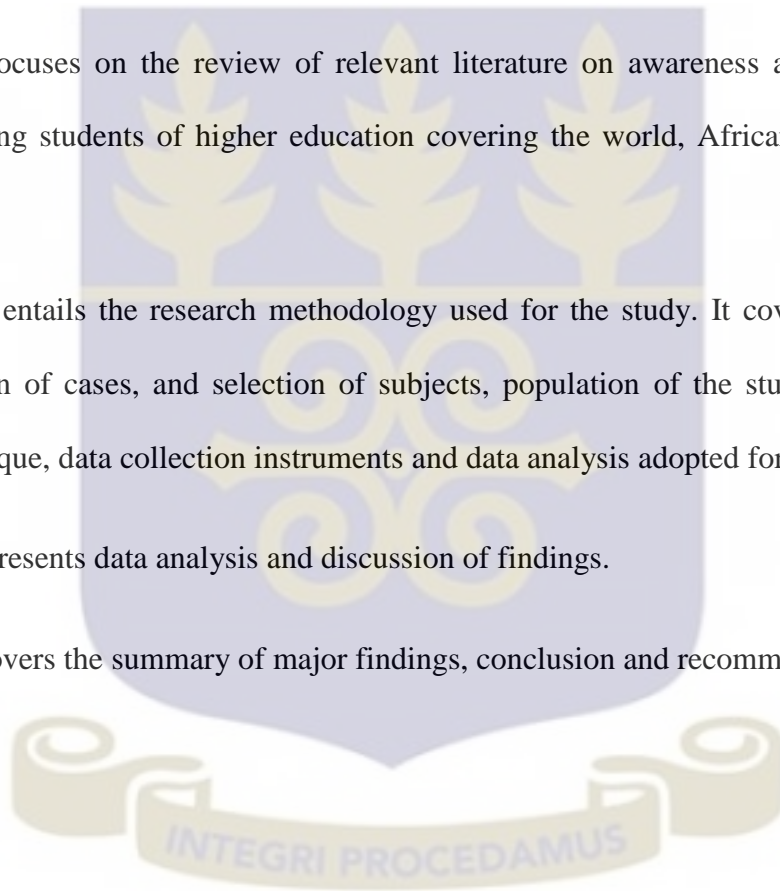
**Chapter one** serves as the introduction which seeks to set the work into perspective. It consists of the background to the study, the problem statement, purpose of the study, objectives and research questions of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, theoretical framework, and organization of the study.

**Chapter two** focuses on the review of relevant literature on awareness and incidence of plagiarism among students of higher education covering the world, African, and Ghanaian views.

**Chapter three** entails the research methodology used for the study. It covers the research design, selection of cases, and selection of subjects, population of the study, sample size, sampling technique, data collection instruments and data analysis adopted for the study.

**Chapter four** presents data analysis and discussion of findings.

**Chapter five** covers the summary of major findings, conclusion and recommendations.



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## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the review of relevant literature on awareness and incidence of plagiarism among students of higher education covering the world, African, and Ghanaian views. Incidentally, plagiarism has received much attention from both scholars and researchers. Therefore, the review was focused on related and relevant journals articles, books, conference papers and other forms of literature to ascertain existing research on the topic and to situate this study within the broader on-going dialogue in the literature, filling in gaps and extending prior studies. Invariably, literary works significant to this study were reviewed in these specific areas in the following order:

- i. Concept of plagiarism
- ii. Awareness of plagiarism
- iii. Prevalence of plagiarism
- iv. Motivations behind plagiarism
- v. Detection and prevention of plagiarism

#### 2.2 Concept of plagiarism

Plagiarism has been interpreted in various ways since the early sixties. It has been embedded in concepts such as cheating, academic dishonesty, academic misconduct, academic fraud, and ethical use of information. These terms are closely related and equated to plagiarism even though they sometimes cover a broader spectrum of issues with plagiarism inclusive. For instance, some studies group all academic misconduct behaviors as a single category, while other studies will prefer a varied terms to define academic dishonesty, with plagiarism often

seen as being a form of cheating, academic fraud, misrepresentation or falsification (Barrett and Cox, 2005; Gullifer and Tyson, 2010; Athanasou and Olasehinde, 2002; McCabe, 2005a; McCabe, Trevino and Butterfield, 2001; 2002; Gullifer and Tyson, 2014). In addition, according to Devlin and Gray (2007), cheating is an umbrella in which plagiarism, falsification and other forms of deceptive activities live.

The concept of plagiarism is gendered on ownership of ideas and authorship. Intellectual properties of individuals are given protection under the copyright law and the law makes provisions for the use of intellectual creations of others under the fair use doctrine. The legal doctrine of fair use allows writers, researchers, and students etc. to use a limited amount of another's work in their works. However, to make sure they are not plagiarizing that work, writers need to adequately and clearly credit the source for every information they used. Therefore issues around plagiarism touch on two significant points—preserving intellectual honesty and giving credit for work done. The academic community strives on the reciprocal exchange of ideas and information to further knowledge and research. Using materials without attribution violates this provision and consequently makes it difficult and if not impossible for researches to verify and build on others' results (Stern, 2007).

Plagiarism is an example of copyright infringement which is complex and problematic to many individuals and cultures. In academia, the concept of plagiarism is often understood differently by both academics and students (Pickard, 2006; Bennett, 2005; Henrikson, 2008 cited in Razera et al., 2010). Culturally, it presents another hurdle because to some the concept of plagiarism is a western construction. To cite the words or ideas of others, even without acknowledgement, may be regarded as a gesture of respect. The conventional concept is that, knowledge is a communal possession, constantly being built up over time, and is a view that teachers and researchers foster and promote in sharp contrast to individualism and ownership of ideas (Eckstein, 2003). Hence, the notion of ideas being the

ownership of individuals or considered as individual intellectual property is strange and relatively recent one (Pennycook, 1996; Sowden, 2005; Eckstein, 2003) and therefore plagiarism is interpreted differently in different cultures.

While a dictionary definition of plagiarism may be simple to come by, in the academic world of constructed meanings, shared values and cultural differences, the definition can be blurred. In spite of this complexity of the concept of plagiarism, some researchers and writers have put forth various definitions of the term. Many writers and researchers see plagiarism from intention to deceive point of view. For example, according Eckstein (2003), plagiarism refers to a deliberate decision not to acknowledge the work of others in assignments--- or deliberately ignoring an obligation to do this. Clearly, the individual has a motive and an intention taken deliberately not to complete this academic obligation of attribution. Malcom et al. (2007), share the view espoused by Eckstein. They define plagiarism as the intentional use of the ideas and words of others without the clear acknowledgement of the source of that information. For instance, copying someone else's work and pasting it as your own. To others, plagiarism is viewed unintentionally. Stern (2007), defines plagiarism as the use of someone else's work – words, ideas or illustrations; published or unpublished without giving the creator of the work sufficient credit. This is a serious breach of the obligation that exists between the creator and the user of the work which constitutes scholarly dishonesty. Some also hold the view that plagiarism is plain theft and therefore has criminal connotations. Pecorari (2008) in quoting Ragen (1987), posits that to take a piece of writing without acknowledging the creator is plain theft; this was a verdict of an academic commenting on a case of plagiarism that attracted public attention. Pecorari observes further that stealing is a common metaphor for plagiarists. According to Betts cited in Pecorari (2008), incidents of plagiarism in science corrupt the soul of the perpetrator ... erode the integrity of the discipline, and diminish the esteem of science in the minds of the general public. Betts

intimates further that if plagiarism is allowed a widespread in science, science would ultimately be destroyed. Angelil-Carter (2000), adds that the concept of plagiarism has criminal connotations. For him, plagiarism needs to undergo “substantial transformation”. Furthermore, other researchers feel that plagiarism amounts to misapplying other people’s work for undeserved benefits. Pupovac (2010), drawing from the works of (Jones, and McLellan, 2000; Elzubeir, and Rizk, 2003; Marusic, 2008 cited in Pupovac et al., 2010) defines plagiarism as the misappropriation of other people’s work, words or ideas, and claiming to be one’s own and giving the perpetrator undeserved benefits. Again, the UNC Honor Court (cited in Mahmood et al., 2010) defines plagiarism as the deliberate or reckless representation of another’s words, thoughts, ideas, as one’s own without attribution in connection with submission of academic work, whether guarded or otherwise. In addition, according to James, McInnes and Devlin (2002), plagiarism varies in both intent and extent, ranging from deliberate fraud, to negligent or accidental failure to acknowledge sources paraphrased from materials and misunderstanding about the conventions of authorship. The Council of Writing Program Administrators (cited in Bretag and Mahmud, 2009) in the United States sees plagiarism as a “multifaceted and ethically complex problem”. Also, writers like Dzaka (2004), view plagiarism as an effort on the part of the plagiarist to conceal his/her actions. He therefore defines plagiarism as an act of pure dishonesty in which the perpetrator hopes that no one finds out about his/her plagiarized text. Dzaka noted that plagiarism arises out of the agonies and inability of an individual in the writing process to advanced one’s arguments cogently and in the end sees other’s ideas as the best way to advance his/her argument.

From the ensuing review, it appears there is no single definition of the concept of plagiarism. According to Harris (2001), it is difficult to provide a single definition of plagiarism. Other researchers echoed the same sentiments (Lampart, 2008; Neville, 2007; Collins, 2007; Leak,

2006). While there appears to be little agreement on a precise definition of plagiarism, there is a consensus that, plagiarism includes either using another person's ideas, work and expressions, and passing them off as if it is one's own ideas, work and expressions (Gibaldi, 2003).

However, it is important to note that the obvious solution to the different interpretations associated with the concept of plagiarism is the adoption and development of an institutional interpretation of the concept. According to Neville (2007), every institution develops its own definition of what plagiarism is and what it constitutes and what it does not constitute. It is this definition that stakeholders (faculty, administrators, students etc.) in the institution abide by and that set the parameters for reporting, investigating and penalizing infringement. More, importantly, it is this definition that should be the benchmark for assessing how well students understand plagiarism. By delimiting the definition of plagiarism to those set in the institution's policy, the confusion of generalizing and finding a universal definition is eliminated (Gullifler and Tyson, 2014).

### **2.3 Awareness of Plagiarism**

According to the Council of Writing Program Administrators (cited in Bretag and Mahmud, 2009) plagiarism is multifaceted and complex problem. It is based on this complexity that institutions have developed their own definitions and interpretations of plagiarism contained in their institutions' policy normally referred to as plagiarism policy or in some jurisdictions Honor Codes. Normally, this policy is contained in the student's handbooks, the institutions' websites, subject guidelines, etc.

No matter how publicized institutions' plagiarism policy, students need to be made aware of the existence of such a policy, what is contained in the policy, in lieu of what plagiarism is, what constitutes proper academic conduct, improper conduct, consequences and all

fundamentals needed to avoid violations. As the consequences of not knowing or not reading institutions' policy on plagiarism may contribute to widespread ignorance of what behaviours constitute plagiarism (Gullifer and Tyson, 2014). Research has shown that where students are made aware or oriented about plagiarism, their awareness level of the phenomenon is high and consequently their awareness of plagiarism (via plagiarism policy) has a direct relationship with their engagement and incidence of plagiarism. McCabe and Trevino (1993), found a significant relationship between academic dishonesty and students' understanding of institutional policy. They report that lower ratings of understanding were associated with higher levels of academic dishonesty. Indeed, students' lack of awareness of academic integrity practices has been noted as a key reason why students plagiarize (Devlin and Gray, 2007; Pupovac, 2010; White, 1993; Rosnow and Rosnow, 1995; Love and Simmons, 1998). For instance, a study by Jordan (2001), in which nearly 95% of the students agreed to have been informed of the college's Honor code, consequently, it was found that those who cheated more, reported significant less understanding of the institutional policy regarding cheating than those who never cheated. Secondly, Ramzan et al. (2012) report that significant majority (73.1%) of respondents were aware of plagiarism. perhaps, this may be due the fact that significant number (42.6%) reportedly knew about the existence of the institution's plagiarism policy. Interestingly, Singh and Guram (2014) found that while significant figure of 85% participants reported their knowledge and awareness of plagiarism, a higher figure of 93% reportedly indicated that they were not aware and that plagiarism was never mentioned to them before they came to graduation. What is however not clear in their study is the two contradictory figures and it is also not clear what could have accounted for such positions. Whether those with the high awareness level were oriented or they had read a plagiarism policy or not visa-vi the high ignorance level, although they report a plagiarism rate of 55%. Similarly, Mones (2013) report in his study that more than half of the respondents (60.9%)

had moderate knowledge of plagiarism, while 35% had high knowledge; only a negligible percent of 3.6 had low knowledge of plagiarism. Contrarily, the above high awareness level did have an effect on engagement level as Mones report that averagely 62.7% admitted to committing plagiarism. Additionally, in a study of medical students' of Tehran knowledge regarding plagiarism by Gharedaghi et al. (2012) it was found that 44% of participants were adequately familiar with proper referencing in Microsoft power point slide shows, and 16% knew what constituted copyright infringement. Despite this, they concluded that the students had poor knowledge regarding plagiarism and copyright infringement. In another vein, findings from two separate studies by Mahmood et al. (2010) and Cheema et al. (2011) report that students lack complete awareness of plagiarism and its associated consequences. As a result, the rate of plagiarism was found to be around 60% among the students. Findings from Wan et al. (2011) indicate that of the total 378 students surveyed, students' level of awareness was considerably low with a mean score ( $M=2.9$ ,  $SD=0.66$ ) against plagiarism mean score of ( $M=3.9$ ). According to Wan et al. students complained that they were not made known about the university's regulations on plagiarism as soon as they entered the university. Hence, they were unsure of the existence of a clear cut policy about plagiarism and were uncertain if they knew what exactly plagiarism was. Wan et al. (2011) therefore conclude that students were not well informed and were found to be uncertain about the conventions of academic writing. In another study by Perry (2010), while the average rate of plagiarism was 77% among the students surveyed, 79% claimed that they were not sure if they were taught about plagiarism and about 48% reportedly said they were unsure if they had been taught how to avoid it. In addition, Marshall and Garry (2005a) observe in their study of international students understanding of plagiarism that although plagiarism was found to be prevalent (72%) due to lack of respect for internet resources, they also found a significant confusion about what actually constituted plagiarism. In that sense students were completely

unaware of what plagiarism was and how to avoid it. On the other side of the spectrum, Russikoff, Fucaloro and Salkausiene (2003) report that when a sample of Latvia students were exposed to four weeks of instruction in academic writing and detailed documentation, the result was that 80% of the students became aware that copying verbatim without appropriate documentation constituted plagiarism. They noted that the high percentage of awareness was a demonstration of the impact of the direct instruction. In the same study, they also found that 75% sampled U.S. students' demonstrated high level awareness of plagiarism. According to Russikoff et al. (2003) students of United States are adequately aware of the negative connotations and consequences of plagiarism and will therefore not admit to such actions of plagiarism, not even to a peer. Direct instruction has been found as effective way of raising the level of awareness of plagiarism among students. Strittmatter and Bratton (2014) reports that when librarians at Long Island University in the Northwest region of the United States decided to incorporate plagiarism instruction into the library instruction program. Students took a pre-test and a post-test survey to evaluate the effectiveness of the plagiarism instruction. The post-test survey found that students were better informed about what plagiarism was (49% vs. 89%), were better able to identify when plagiarism occurred (73% vs. 97%), were better able to cite internet sources (31% vs. 44%), and had a better understanding of the seriousness and penalties associated with plagiarism (26% vs. 88%). The students became more informed and therefore were highly aware of plagiarism after the instructional program. Indeed, Brown and Howell (2001) reports that increasing students' level of awareness of academic integrity has increased the extent to which they perceived plagiarism to be a serious issue. Furthermore, Curtis et al. (2013) reports significant awareness levels of students after they were taken through an online academic integrity training. The students demonstrated significant awareness and knowledge of the different forms of plagiarism and the extent of seriousness attached to plagiarism had increased

tremendously after the training. In a more similar fashion, Kayaoglu et al. (2015) in their cross-cultural study found significant awareness level of the participants mainly attributed to the fact they were familiar with academic writing skills as they had taken academic writing courses. They noted further that the rate of plagiarism was found to be insignificant among the participants.

More so, the adoption of plagiarism software by institutions has also been found to create awareness of plagiarism among students of higher learning. For instance, Martin (2005) reports that when students of a medium sized university in the Southeastern United States were told that their papers (assignments) would be screened for plagiarism over a five semester period by a computer system and their grades would be reduced if plagiarism was detected, the rate of plagiarism was found to have dropped significantly. That is, plagiarism rate was found to be lower in the second semester than the first semester and subsequently the rate for that of third, fourth, and fifth semester had reduced significantly because students had being made aware of plagiarism and its consequences. In addition, Cheach and Bretag (2008b), report that 70.5% of students who had used Turnitin claimed that the use of the software had made them more aware of academic integrity. In a similar study by Batane (2010), 65% of respondents reportedly welcomed the use of Turnitin as it will help them do their assignment properly. The students further indicated that if students knew that their work would be checked for plagiarism, it would reduce their chances of copying. The results of the study indicated that the average plagiarism rate for all the first submitted papers was 20.5% and subsequent screening revealed that the rate had dropped to 16.2% in the subsequent submitted papers. This was because students had become more aware of plagiarism and how to avoid it. In conclusion, the awareness of plagiarism has a direct correlation with the rate of engagement in plagiarism. Raising awareness levels should therefore become a pivotal focus among stakeholders of academia especially in institutions of higher learning. This can be

achieved through orientations, teaching courses or instruction on fundamentals of plagiarism and encouraging students to be abreast with good practices of academic conduct.

#### **2.4 Prevalence of Plagiarism**

The phenomenon of plagiarism is not new in academia. Even before the world became technologically revolutionized, the practices and incidences of plagiarism were common. In fact, as early as 1941, Drake research revealed that 23% of college students have cheated sometime in their academic careers (as cited in Bolin, 2004). In a first mammoth survey conducted by Bowers (1964), a survey of 5,000 students in 99 higher education institutions showed that three quarters of the sampled students admitted to some kind of academic dishonesty of cheating (as cited in Neville, 2007). Since then research has shown that the rate of plagiarism has varied from one study to another. Moon (1999) observed that approximately 60% of university students in the United Kingdom and United States have engaged in some form of academic dishonesty admittedly. McCabe (2005a) found that one in every five students of colleges and universities in United States and Canada admitted to some kind of academic dishonesty especially cheating. He notes further that plagiarism has increased from 10% in 1999 to 40% in 2005. Also, Birchard (2006) reported in his survey of both graduate and undergraduates students that 35% and 50% of the students surveyed respectively admitted to some form of cheating on written course work, such as failing to include footnotes in their work or turning in someone else's work or falsifying a bibliography. Similarly, Maxwell et al. (2006) study of both local students and international Asian students in Australia revealed a significant prevalent rate of 80% of respondents admittedly plagiarizing some time in some form. In addition, the Centre for Academic Integrity recent survey data indicates that nearly 70% of undergraduate students commit acts of academic dishonesty during the course of college studies (Centre for Academic Integrity, cited in Melgoza and Smith, 2008). The increasing rate of plagiarism among students of

higher education has raised anxiety and concerns among academics. Some researchers have argued that the incidences of plagiarism were at a level academics thought they could manage but it has taken on an epidemic proportions (Duggan, 2006).

Rosamond (2002) points out that the increasing rate of the phenomenon is partly being fuelled by the internet where papers are customized for research. According to Eckstein (2003), ever since information and communication technology was introduced to teaching and learning, academic misconduct has been an increasing problem leading to decline of academic integrity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Scanlon and Neumann (2002) reported in their survey that, of the 700 undergraduate surveyed, about some 25% of respondents have gone online to cut and paste materials without citation. McCabe's research survey conducted in the 2002/2003 academic year in United States and Canada reports that around 36% of the respondents voluntarily reported one or more incidences of 'cut and paste' plagiarism from internet sources. Additionally, Russouw (2005) in Batane (2010) found in his study of undergraduate students of University of Pretoria that 80% of the participants admitted to having plagiarized assignments directly from the internet more often. In another survey, the Josephson Institute of Ethics (2006) reports that 33% of high school students surveyed admitted to copying an internet document for a classroom assignment within the past 12 months and 18% did so two or more times. Ma et al. (2007) surveyed 36 middle school secondary students in America who had internet at home and who used the internet quite often, findings were that nearly one-third of them admitted to have gone online to get solutions to their homework without distinguishing their source. Furthermore, Selwyn's (2008) study among undergraduate students in the United Kingdom higher institutions reports that 60% of students have confessed to plagiarizing something from the internet in the last year and that those who are internet savvy are more likely to be engaged in plagiarism more.

The incidences and practices of plagiarism have become more common among internet users and those who have constant access to the internet.

In another breadth, studies have reported a direct connection between students' perception, attitudes, towards plagiarism and the rate of occurrence of plagiarism (Armstrong, 2008) and that when students consider plagiarism as a cheating and negative behaviour, they would be less likely engaged in such misconduct (Jiang et al., 2013; Brown and Howell, 2001; Franklyn-Stokes and Newstead, 1995). According to Kwong et al. (2010) about 31.7% of students think that translating a Chinese article into English and submitting it as their own is not a serious offense. Therefore when students perceived certain acts of plagiarism as less serious, there is high propensity for them to engage in such acts. Rimer (2003) reports that of the 38% surveyed students who admitted to often engage in cut and paste plagiarism at least once a year, almost half of them considered their acts trivial or not cheating at all. Similarly, Wilkinson (2009) reports that of the surveyed students in his research, more than one third (33%) cheated because they perceived cheating in course work to be common. In addition, Pupovac (2010) reports that more than one third of the students considered that they were entitled to plagiarize to some extent because they were still in the learning process.

However, according to Marshall and Garry (2005a) these reported increasing rates of plagiarism prevalence are questionable. They first pointed out that many of these studies are undertaken by asking students whether they have engaged in plagiarism or cheating at some stage in their studies. This they noted is a very broad approach of determining the actual extent of plagiarism and most often than not the results chained out are not reliable to some extent. They argued that examining students using scenario-based and students' perceptions approach about plagiarism could yield more positive results on actual incidences of plagiarism than a more definition-focused instruments. This view is partly reinforced by

several qualitative researchers such as Schaefer (2010) who argued that most studies on academic dishonesty are largely surveys that involve self-reported instances or motivations for plagiarizing. She pointed out that although quantitative data gathered from surveys are vital in showing a problem exists or determines the scope or range of the problem; self-reported surveys are by and large unable to give a true picture of the incidence of plagiarism. She further argued that most survey questions are binary (yes/no) which do not address the issue from a varied perspective or address situational factors that may affect the student's decision-making process. But ironically, Marshall and Garry's scenario-based research approach conducted among New Zealand university students showed a plagiarism prevalence rate of 72% of students having engaged in some form of serious plagiarism frequently.

Similarly, in a case-based scenario questionnaires presented to students to indicate the frequency of being engaged in an identified plagiarism activities by Babalola (2012) results showed that 69.2% often copied and pasted portions of text from the internet, 65.7% of respondents often copied verbatim from a textbook or a journal without using quotation marks, while 58.5% often included references they did not used in their work and 46.7% often submitted assignments without reference. A research by Sentleng and King (2012) reports similar trends of various forms of plagiarism being prevalent in students' works. For example, 38.8% of respondents admitted to paraphrasing works without acknowledgement sometimes, 48.2% have used summarized text in assignments without acknowledgement, while majority (49.6%) admitted to having invented references in their work sometimes.

The incidences of plagiarism continue to grow almost at an alarming rate among students of higher education.

## **2.5 Motivations behind Plagiarism**

All human actions are purely driven by certain hidden forces. These forces can sometimes be described as motivations. Undoubtedly, human actions are driven by motivations. To use the words of Bandura (1986), people would not perform certain actions if they have no incentives to do so. Workers are highly motivated by their salaries levels, the more they are paid, the higher their performance and vice versa. Students and researchers are equally influenced by certain motives in the performance of certain actions such as plagiarism. Hence, motivational factors underpin the actions of man in general. The first step to reduce and prevent the opportunities for plagiarism lies in the understanding of why students plagiarize (Chen and Chou, 2014). There are several motivations behind students' plagiarism behaviour. The under listed entails detail reasons why students of higher education engage in plagiarism:

### **2.5.1 Availability and Ease of Access of Internet Resources**

There is a worldwide held view that academic dishonesty and incidences of plagiarism is increasing in the institutions of higher education around the globe due to enhanced access to vast amount of knowledge and resources on the internet (Ramzan et al., 2012; Brimble and Stevenson-Clarke, 2005; Chen and Chou, 2014). Printed resources used to be the major sources of plagiarism until the mid-nineties when the internet revolutionized the information world and provided extensive opportunities for plagiarism because of ease of access to enormous amount of knowledge and learning materials (Ramzan et al. 2012). The internet continues to provide access to more and more knowledge and information resources. This provides easy avenues for students to cut and paste, download and plagiarize information so easily (Stebelman, 1998; Evans, 2000; Galus, 2000). Lathrop and Foss in Eckstein (2003) state that the possibilities of plagiarism are enhanced by web sites such as the 'Evil House of Cheat' ([www.cheathouse.com](http://www.cheathouse.com)) and [www.schoolsucks.com](http://www.schoolsucks.com) where finished term papers are

available for purchase and easy to transfer to students, and other sources of useful information for examination candidates can be located. In addition, McMurtry (2001) and Eckstein (2003) are of the view that the tendencies of students to easily copy and paste relevant text, exchange papers with friends and students of other universities and downloading papers free from websites or purchasing from paper mills has also added to the preponderance of plagiarism incidences. Literature on plagiarism has shown that majority of students assume that information from internet resources is free and is in the public domain and therefore not copyrighted, so it can easily be manipulated, used and presented as their own work (Stebelman, 1998; Sentleng & King, 2012; Stern, 2007). McCabe (2003) says that plagiarism is more prevalent today because many students do not consider copying from the internet as cheating. A survey of 140 students and staff at Northumbria University showed that 70.9% of students believe that copying and downloading from a book or internet without citing is a common practice (Dordoy, 2002 as cited in Neville, 2007). Therefore students find the internet as a rich source of information where they can easily get information and simply own it. The university of Pretoria reports that in a study on plagiarism conducted among 150 undergraduate students, 80% of the students admitted that they had often plagiarized assignments directly from the internet (Russouw, 2005 cited in Batane, 2010). Furthermore, Babalola (2012) reports in his study that 79.3% of students surveyed plagiarized because information is readily available on the internet to download. With billions of electronic full-text articles available on the internet it becomes difficult and if not impossible for instructors to determine where students have lifted their information from (Batane, 2010). In 2002, CAVAL Collaborative Solutions, a university Library Consortium in Australian (cited in Goh, 2013) submitted students' papers from five higher education institutions to Turnitin. A total of 1,770 papers from various disciplines were scanned. The results revealed that 8.8% of the papers had more than 25% internet plagiarized work. The same study found that only two

papers out of the 1,770 papers had more than 75% plagiarized work. Jones (2006) in Batane (2010) says the internet has become a ‘cesspool’ of plagiarism. In a study by Singh and Guram (2014), 85% of the respondents reportedly admitted that plagiarism cannot be successfully avoided because of the voluminous articles published which make it difficult to track every publication. The internet continues to provide safe havens for students’ plagiarism behaviour to foster. There is too much freedom in institutions of higher learning where there is no close supervision on the part of instructors and students are free to use information from any source including the internet, and are free to obtain help from other persons which they can present as their own work and thereby ending up committing plagiarism. Students feel that their unethical behaviours will never be detected and even if they are caught the perceived punishment is always minimal.

### **2. 5. 2 Personal Traits**

Intrinsic characteristics of an individual often influence his/her performance of certain actions. Individuals who consider academic dishonesty as immoral are less likely to engage in it. Guo (2011) puts it students with high moral capacity are less likely to engage in plagiarism and the reverse is true. According to Chen and Chou (2015), students reportedly regarded copying other’s written text word for word as immoral simply because the copied text in their own words is ‘others’ intellectual property’. Hu and Jun (2015) observed that some students held (specifically two thirds of their participants) condemnatory attitude toward plagiarism, regarding it as a form of cheating, stealing, a wrong act, an academic crime, a shameful act and/or an immoral act. For these groups of students plagiarism is not an issue as they respect intellectual rights of others. However, extensive literature search reveals that the major driving forces of students’ unethical behaviours are the desire to gain better grades (Paterson et al., 2003) and the concern of performance when they are prompted

by anxiety about their capacity to produce acceptable work, the fear of failure, the demands and pressures made on them by external sources such as parents, teachers and the importance of the results of their efforts for the future (Eckstein, 2003). According to Eckstein some students are under pressure to succeed especially International students whose parents and families have spent quite a fortune to send them to school. Therefore failure is not an option, for these students, the thought of bringing shame to the family, the prospect of being repatriated back home and the desire to retain a visa may drive such students toward dubious actions (plagiarism) to avoid these consequences.

Another trait that influences students to plagiarize is their inability to manage their time properly. Time management is a major problem among students of higher education. Studies show that students spent a lot time on social activities, sports activities and family activities (Bahadori, et al., 2012; Yeo, 2007; Park, 2003; Dordoy in cited in Neville, 2007) and procrastination (Devlin and Gray, 2007). In the end they are caught up with limited time to complete a number of assignments. According to Ma et al. (2007), majority of students studied admitted to copying and pasting materials from the internet because they had to meet assignment deadlines. Workload couple with poor time management has also been identified as a motivational factor behind students' unethical behaviour. Literature has shown that the inability of students to cope with coursework load plays a significant role in their unethical behaviours over the years (Williams, 2005). Students have expressed their displeasure of having to complete a lot of assignments within a limited time of a semester.

Peer group pressure is a contributory factor to the incidence of plagiarism. Sometimes lot of students are motivated to perform certain actions because of the influences of their colleagues. Studies have shown that students plagiarize because they claim their colleagues are doing it. Ma et al. (2007) reports in their study that 70% of the respondents reported that

they knew some of their colleagues who had copied and pasted sentences online in their coursework. It is therefore a no big deal for these students to engage in plagiarism. In fact, in the same study, one-fourth of the respondents admitted that they had plagiarized themselves. Plagiarism has become a social norm and acceptable among students of higher education. Neville (2007) opines that students have always done it to the extent that it has become a ritual, part and parcel of them and that it is easier and more tempting than ever. In other studies, students have claimed that plagiarizing is fun and enjoyable and that not to plagiarize is considered as doing it the hard way which they labelled as ‘stupid’ (Devlin & Gray, 2007; Bahadori et al., 2012; Park, 2003). In addition, there is a widely held perception among students that plagiarism cases are not dealt expeditiously by authorities. The fact that their plagiarism behaviour can go unpunished or go undetected motivate them the more to engage in it. Stricchez (2001) reports in his survey of 4,500 high school students that 47% of the students believe that their teachers sometimes chose to ignore students who cheated. Ramzan et al. (2012) reports that about 45% of undergraduate students in Pakistan indicated that their institutions were not effective enough to identify and deal with plagiarism cases. According to Dadzie (2011), most academic rules regarding plagiarism and other academic misconduct activities are not being strictly enforced. This gives the students the liberty to engage in these activities with impunity. Literature has also shown that most instructors choose not to report plagiarism cases because of the time and workload involved in proving ‘the plagiarism’ (Bahadori et al., 2012) and therefore they would rather choose to remain quite over plagiarism cases. This certainly does not augur well in authorities attempts at curbing and preventing plagiarism among students. To some students the benefits of plagiarizing far outweighs the risk involved, especially when they think that the probability of being caught is less and the chances of being punished is less (Park, 2003). Again, according to Ma et al. (2008), students reportedly plagiarized occasionally although they knew plagiarizing was not

right but because they perceive no immediate consequences of their acts. Personal traits of students play is a major determinant of plagiarism behaviours of students.

### **2. 5. 3 Academic Integration**

Academic integration plays a significant role in the live of students in determining how they get acquainted with certain practices within the academic environment. A study by Caruana et al. (2000) found a direct connection between an individual's lack of integration in academic life and his propensity to behave dishonestly. Academic integration is how well students fit into the overall academic environment and their academic life. A study by Guo (2011), hypothesized that students who are poorly integrated into the environment are more likely to plagiarize. His finding reveals a statistically significant relationship between academic integration and plagiarism (standardized path coefficient = -0.22,  $P < 0.05$ ). This led Guo to conclude that students who perceived themselves to be poorly integrated into their academic life are more likely to engage in plagiarism. He further describes this negative attitude to include laziness and lack of academic confidence in the student life. Such students feel bored about a particular module or programme to the extent that they become alienated from their institutions (Seemen, 1991; Davies, 2000 cited in Guo, 2011).

Closely related to academic integration is what some researchers describe as lack of interest in subjects offered by some students as another factor that motivates students to engage in plagiarism. Chen and Chou (2015) observed that students reportedly claimed they plagiarize because of lack of interest in their subjects and this view was corroborated by faculty when their opinions were sought on the same issue. For Burnett (2002) in Bahadori et al. (2012), a relationship of trust between a student and their instructors is also a motivating factor behind plagiarism. Bennett observes that students are more likely to cheat when they notice that or believe that their professors do not bother to scrutinize their work properly to detect possible

plagiarism in their work (Park, 2003). The attitude of students toward assignments has been identified as one of the reasons why students plagiarize. Where students have a negative attitude toward assignments and tasks given to them, they are more likely to plagiarize (Howard, 2002).

#### **2. 5. 4 Other Motivational Factors**

Other factors such as poor command of the English language (Bretag, et al., 2002; Carroll, 2002; Devlin and Gray, 2007), students lack of understanding that studying and learning the roots of academic writing is aimed at developing them to be independent and critical thinkers, students doubts regarding and/or underestimate their own abilities to express anything in their own words and their lack of knowledge about what is allowed and what is not allowed (Razera et al., 2010), the desire to take on and test the system, cultural differences in learning and presentation styles where in some settings it is a normal custom to quote the experts without citation (Williams, 2005), students do not possess enough experience and skills to write research papers for the academic demands of universities (Overbey and Guiling, 1999), the excuse of not being able to find materials for assignments, not knowing how to reference properly, forgetting where materials came from (Devlin and Gray, 2007), and many more factors motivate students to engage in plagiarism.

#### **2. 6 Detection and Prevention of Plagiarism**

Detecting and preventing plagiarism among students of higher education is a major challenge since the issue of plagiarism has taken on epidemic proportions (Duggan, 2006). Some academics who have likened plagiarism to pornography argue that it is easy to identify pornography than to identify plagiarism because when you see pornography you can easily tell but same cannot be said about plagiarism (St. Onge, 1988 cited in Marshall and Garry, 2005a). Identifying plagiarized text is quite difficult if not impossible as one researcher puts

it, recognizing plagiarism presents a number of challenges. One of the challenges is recognizing the amount of plagiarized text because it can cover a wider scope. The second challenge is how much change has been made to the original text (Kravitz and Feldman, 2010 cited in Bahadori et al., 2012). Nonetheless some instructors have found ways of recognizing plagiarism in students' works. Paterson et al. (2003), state that one has to either master the subject literature or detect changes from student authorial voice. In each case an instructor should have previously read a paper written by the student to be able determine whether there is plagiarize text in it or not. According to Stern (2007), experienced instructors are able to tell when a paper is not written in a student's style or when the paper is written professionally than expected from a student. Bull et al., (2001) commented that the most common trigger that arouses academics suspicions of plagiarism in students' assignments is a change of writing style within text which may be easier to recognize especially in international students writings. Furthermore, Henrikson (2008) in Razera et al., (2010) reports that Swedish teachers detect plagiarism manually by looking out for the varying levels of language in students writings. For instance, teachers may recognize that some parts or whole part belongs to another author. Or that the student had made tremendous improvements between the current work and the precious work (for example comparing current and previous grades). On the other hand a lot of academic institutions are increasingly now subscribing to plagiarism software [such as Turnitin] to detect and deter plagiarism. Turnitin, a web-based software, since its inception has detected a number of student plagiarism incidences and the promotion of honest academic writing. For instance, the University of Colorado on realizing that plagiarism was becoming rampant on its campus decided to use Turnitin. The users of the software reported that Turnitin had immediate and dramatic impact on academic integrity at the University (cited in Batane, 2010). Students have also reported on how effective and educative the use of Turnitin is. In a survey of 152 students who had used Turnitin to draft

their assignments before submission, Cheach and Bretag (2008b) found that 71.4% of the students indicated that Turnitin had helped them to identify sections of text that had been copied directly from sources; 74.2% said the software had helped them to identify areas that required editing to avoid plagiarism and 70.5% of them believe the use of Turnitin had made them more aware of academic integrity. In another survey of 120 students, 65% of them welcomed the use of Turnitin as it will help them and their colleagues do their assignments properly and they further claimed that if students knew their works would be checked for plagiarism, it will reduce the chances of them copying (Batane, 2010). The use of Turnitin serves as both an awareness creation and a deterrent tool. Because the adoption of Turnitin means students and faculty must be made aware of its existence and usage.

In order to adequately prevent and address the issue of plagiarism, it is important to appreciate and understand the factors that cause its occurrence (Devlin and Gray, 2007). In fact, some researchers hold the view that plagiarism occurs due to lack of awareness and understanding of the concept. Following this line of reasoning, creating enough awareness about plagiarism, about institutional plagiarism policies through orientations, workshops, seminars and the likes among students is one step of preventing plagiarism. Park (2003) suggested that students should be educated about the concept of plagiarism to tackle the problem of plagiarism. In the views of Mahmood et al., (2010) students should be made fully aware of and enabled to understand the concept of plagiarism. They recommend further that the concept of plagiarism should be embedded in the research course offered by Pakistan's students. In addition, Goh (2013) states that students should be given proper education and academic support, that plagiarism policies should be communicated during orientation week to ensure students understand academic rules.

However, other researchers have argued that simply defining and explaining what plagiarism is, is not enough. This needs to be combined with providing students with practice in writing from sources and receiving feedback on their performance (Pecorari, 2003; Wheeler, 2009). Beth et al. (2012), observe that the prevention of the recurring nature of plagiarism among students lies on providing clear instructions on what represents scholarly writing practice and guidance on how to deal with a range of situations where work of others needs to be acknowledged in their coursework. This view by Beth et al. (2012) is reinforced by Chen and Chou (2015). Chen and Chou state that students need more instructions and practice with academic writing skills such as citation knowledge and proper paraphrasing to avoid unintentional plagiarism. Again, Russikoff, Fucaloro, and Salkaushiere (2003) reported that students' understanding of academic writing skills are elevated when they are exposed directly to academic writing conventions. In addition, the adoption of information literacy course will imbibe in students the ethical use of information (Lampart, 2008) which will enable students to able to write scholarly. This will reduce the complexities students face in integrating information from other sources correctly into their own work. It should however be noted that contrary to the views expressed by the above researchers that students plagiarized because of lack of writing skills, Batane (2010), reports that vast majority (75%) of the students surveyed reported that the reason why they plagiarized was due to laziness and not that they did not know how to write papers. Students commented as follows: *we have been taught ... to write papers the right way, we just choose not to ...* in the words of Batane, the students claimed "doing so requires a lot of time and effort on the student".

Another reason that lies behind students plagiarism identified in the literature is lack of enforcement of academic policies on the part of school authorities. In order to prevent and reduce incidences of student plagiarism, there is the need for school authorities to educate students on academic policies and enforce appropriate punishments for those caught

plagiarizing. Faculty members must be involved in the development and implementation of policies and procedures related to plagiarism (Martin, 2005). However, Carroll's (2002) points out that the culture of "detection and punishment" is not effective in preventing plagiarism but rather the promotion of academic integrity through education. Kwong et al. (2010) argues in their study that 46.9% of faculty members favoured educating their students on academic integrity practices who had already committed plagiarism than punishing them.

Literature has also shown that students plagiarize because they believe that everybody is doing it and therefore it has become a social norm. To prevent plagiarism in this direction, faculty needs to show exemplary lives (Gutherie, 1997). Faculty can model the highest academic standards for their students to copy. As Bandura (1986), puts it, certain behaviours are learned observationally through models. If faculty model high academic standards, referencing all power point presentations and emphasizing on the need for ethical use of information, their students are likely to exhibit the same standards, thus plagiarism is likely to be reduced or prevented completely.

Institutions of higher learning must also encourage the development of moral values as this will help students appreciate academic values and act considerably and responsibly (Lau et al., 2013).

Instructors who used the same assignments every year that propel students' plagiarism behaviour can also help by varying their assignments they give out to students. Teachers could give assignments that are interesting, interactive and can stimulate the student learning process and avoid giving unrealistic or difficult assignments (Lau et al., 2013; Sutherland-Smith, 2005).

Proper time management and vigorous planning need to be emphasized among students

Other approaches taken by institutions of higher learning to curb student plagiarism include the use of electronic detection of plagiarism (Mottley, 2004) especially the use of Turnitin. According to Rathore et al. (2015), institutions should invest in detection software and train faculty and students through workshops and seminars on how it is used and make it available to both students and faculty members. Ramzan et al. (2012) suggests that plagiarism detection system needs to be made accessible and visible to students as it may serve as deterrent to students who may plagiarize. An effective use of such as a plagiarism detection system in the academic environment can detect all possible plagiarism cases, and therefore meeting all expectations. Therefore students who hold a stronger belief that plagiarism will be detected may be less likely to plagiarize (Martin, 2005). While there is evidence that Turnitin can detect and help reduce student plagiarism, Razera et al. (2010) point out that teachers in Sweden stated that it was more useful to have clear cut academic guidelines as a way of dealing with plagiarism rather than a detection tool. They fear that once students get exposed to the software, they could manipulate the system for it to **lose** its significance.

The prevention of student plagiarism will require a comprehensive approach on all stakeholders as neither the software nor faculty alone cannot eliminate plagiarism among students.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

In summing up, the review revealed that orientation programs on plagiarism play a vital role in raising students' awareness about plagiarism. Students who are properly oriented on the nitty-gritty of plagiarism may less likely to be engaged in its practice. The review also revealed that direct instruction on academic writing skills is another way of creating plagiarism awareness amongst students. Students appreciate the concept of plagiarism better when they are exposed to rigorous training on how to cite, paraphrase correctly and hence

become effective in incorporating the works of others into their works. In the end they become responsible in the ethical use of information. Again, the review showed that the adoption and use of plagiarism software ultimately lead to high academic integrity awareness.

The rate of plagiarism was found to be endemic in the academic life of students. The review found varying rates of plagiarism from one study to the other. The differing high rates chiefly attributed to ease of access of internet resources. The availability of Internet resources has raised the rate of plagiarism to alarming proportions to the extent that some feared plagiarism can no longer be prevented. The literature review also showed that students' attitudes and perceptions is another determinant of the prevalence of plagiarism. Where plagiarism is perceived to be negative and wrong, there is a high propensity that fewer students will be engaged in it and where plagiarism is perceived to be acceptable and right more students will be engaged in its practices. In addition, the review highlighted personal traits such as desire to obtain good grades which will eventually leads to secured future as well as workload and poor time management as motivations behind plagiarism. The review again revealed that students who are alienated from the academic environment are more likely to be engaged in plagiarism than their counterparts who are well integrated into the academic environment.

Furthermore, the review showed that recognizing the changing voice style of students in their writings and the use detection software such as Turnitin are ways of detecting plagiarism. The review further revealed that recognizing the root causes of plagiarism is one step of preventing its occurrences. Education was highlighted as being the major factor of tackling and preventing students' plagiarism.

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## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter explains the entire processes that were used in carrying out this study. Topics dealt with include the research design, population, sample size, and sampling procedure, instrumentation, data collection procedure, data analysis, and presentation of results.

Methodology according to Clough and Nutbrown (2012), details how research questions are articulated with questions asked in the field. It provides the rationale behind why a particular research ‘recipe’ is used. Methodology is based on values and assumptions that influence a study. The concept of methodology determines how a study should be conducted in an attempt to answer a set of research questions in a study, to prove or otherwise disprove a set of hypotheses. It actually contains a set of coherent plan and procedures to achieve the goal of a study.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

A research design provides a comprehensive and complete guidance or guidelines for collecting data. It entails the general approach to the study, the sampling plan and the design of questionnaire (Panneerselvam, 2011). Babbie (2005) says research design involves a set of decisions regarding what topic to be studied, among what population, with what research methods, and for what purpose. It is the process where the researcher focuses his perspective for the purpose of a particular study. Designing social research is the process of making all the technical decisions and justifications related to the research project before conducting a study (Blaikie, 2010).

The study employed the survey methodology. Although there are available other research designs employed by researchers, Surveys are the most widely used data-gathering technique in the social sciences and in related applied fields according to Neuman (2006). Graziano and Michael (2007) also argue that surveys are the most familiar and common research design in the social sciences. Surveys elicit information from a defined population about their knowledge, feelings, opinions, attitudes and self-reported behaviours. Neuman (2006) intimates that surveys are appropriate for research questions about self-reported beliefs or behaviours. In the view of Creswell (2014) survey research provides a quantitative or numerical data of descriptions of trends, attitudes, opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population from which the researcher can generalize and make inferences from results of a sample to a population by using questionnaires or structured interviews for data collection. Questionnaires are the most common and standard data collection instruments in survey research.

### **3.3 Selection of Case**

The Narh-Bita College has grown to be recognized as one of the renowned private colleges in the country. It continues to add more academic programmes to its fold and therefore student population keeps on growing. Hence, finding out the ethical use of information is important among the growing numbers of students. In addition, the researcher has worked at the College for the past seven years and has observed how students engage in various unethical practices of plagiarism, and therefore conducted this study to find out whether there is a correlation between awareness of plagiarism and the incidences and practices of plagiarism among the college students.

### 3.4 Population

A population is precisely defined as a set of people or collection of items for consideration. According to Graziano and Michael (2007), a population in a survey is a large group in which members are similar to one another about whom researchers wish to obtain information. Babbie (2005), sees population for a study as a group (usually of people) about whom researchers want to draw conclusions about. According to Neuman (2006), a target population is a specific pool of cases or subjects the researcher wants to study. A target population generally possesses certain characteristics that defined and are peculiar to that group alone. Consequently, the target population for this study was students of registered general nursing and physician assistant of Narh-bitu College whose total population was about 488 students. The table below gives a further breakdown of programmes of study and the number of students per programme.

**Table 1: Programmes of study and number of students**

Programme of study	No. of students
Registered General Nursing	
<b>First year</b>	83
<b>Second Year</b>	116
<b>Third Year</b>	147
Physician Assistant	
<b>First Year</b>	29
<b>Second Year</b>	53
<b>Third Year</b>	60
<b>Total</b>	488

(Source: Student Accounts, Narh-Bita College)

### 3.5 Sample Size

One rationale for depending on survey research design to carry out a research is its feasibility and flexibility. Surveys enable a sample to be drawn from a target population; the alternative is census (that is, a survey of everyone in the population which sometimes is practically impossible) or no information (Dooley, 2001).

Sampling is therefore a process of selecting a subset of a population for a study of which inferences will be drawn about the population. Obtaining a sample size is a daunting task as there are different views held by various scholars. Fisher (2007) states that obtaining a sample size depends on the margin of error a researcher is willing to accept and the size of the population, and that if a population is 1000 and the researcher was prepared to accept a margin of error of  $\pm 5$  percent, then the researcher could use 5% of the population as the sample size. According to Creswell (2014) researchers often choose a sample size based on selecting a fraction of the population (10% or more). Or the sample size should be based on the margin of error the researcher is willing to accept. Fowler (2002) asserts that the majority of survey samples tend to involve a small fraction of the population. He opines that small increments in the fraction of the population included in a sample will have no effect on the researcher's ability to generalize from sample to population. He notes further that the size of a population from which a sample is drawn has no impact on how well that sample is likely to describe the population. That a small sample size from a larger population can adequately describe the population provided the sampling procedures are accurate. Fraenkel and Wallen (2000) argues that it is often difficult to choose a sample large enough to adequately ensure representativeness. They suggest that a sample should be as large as the researcher can obtain with reasonable expenditure of time and energy. They further state that large samples have a high degree of representativeness compared to smaller samples.

Based on the above, the researcher chose to use 30% of the total target population which came to 147 which fell within the reasonable expenditure of time and energy of the researcher as intimated by Fraenkel and Wallen (2000). This fraction of the population as a sample was important as it was impossible to cover the entire student population due to the clinical schedules of the students. The below table gives the number of students selected per their programmes of study.

**Table 2: number of students selected from each programme of study.**

Program of study	No. of selected students
Registered General Nursing	
<b>First Year</b>	25
<b>Second Year</b>	35
<b>Third Year</b>	44
Physician Assistant	
<b>First Year</b>	9
<b>Second Year</b>	16
<b>Third Year</b>	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>147</b>

**Source: Student's Accounts, Narh-Bita College**

### 3.6 Sampling Technique

The primary goal of any sampling procedure is to ensure representativeness of a population in a sample. Sampling procedure should capture the main characteristic of a target population to ensure confidence in generalizations. Dooley (2001) states that sampling methods are designed to ensure minimal margin of error and maximum confidence based on the sampling theory.

The convenience sampling method was used to select potential respondents for this study. Fraenkel and Wallen (2000) states that it is often difficult (if not impossible at times) to select

a sample by either random or systematic. Neuman (2006) defined convenience sampling technique as a non-random sample in which the researcher selects anyone he or she happens to come across. Convenience sampling is more of voluntary and it chooses the nearest individual to serve as respondents and this process continues until the required sample size is reached. This covered the sampling units in their classrooms.

Using an appropriate distribution formular (as shown below) the proportionate sample size of questionnaires to be completed for each class (year of study) within the chosen programmes were determined as follows:

$$Ps = \frac{\text{Total Class Size}}{\text{Total target Population Size}} * \text{Sample Size}$$

Where Ps = Proportionate sample size

Ttp = Total target population selected (see table 1)

Ss = Sampling size chosen (see table 2)

Tcs = Total class size

Therefore: under Registered General Nursing

Ps (number of questionnaires administered to each class)

$$\text{Therefore: } Ps = \frac{Tcs}{Ttp} * Ss$$

$$1^{\text{st}} \text{ year students} = \frac{83}{488} * 147 = 25$$

$$2^{\text{nd}} \text{ year students} = \frac{116}{488} * 147 = 35$$

$$3^{\text{rd}} \text{ year students} = \frac{147}{488} * 147 = 44$$

Physician Assistants

Ps (number of questionnaires administered to each class):  $Ps = Tcs / Ttp * Ss$

1<sup>st</sup> year students =  $29/488 * 147 = 9$

2<sup>nd</sup> year students =  $53/488 * 147 = 16$

3<sup>rd</sup> year students =  $60/488 * 147 = 18$

From the calculations above, questionnaires were distributed to students to have a fair view of the research across all classes.

### **3.7 Instrumentation**

Several modes of data collection are available in survey research designs. Some of these are administering survey instrument 'live' to a group; by mail; by telephone; or through face-to-face interviews. This study used direct administration to a group, precisely structured survey questionnaires. According to Panneerselvam (2011), questionnaire consists of a set of well formulated questions to probe and obtain responses from respondents. Although common in surveys, questionnaires are also widely used in experiments, field research and other data-collection activities. They are constructed with much thought on the part of the researcher and give the respondent the chance to think carefully before responding. They measure opinions, attitudes, knowledge and behaviours. In most cases respondents are required to check answers from a series and in other cases the view of the respondent is being sought for by providing space to seek respondents' opinions. Thus, questionnaires consist of closed-ended questions and open-ended questions. In closed-ended questions, responses are structured and sometimes coding is provided beside responses to ease the interpretation of data. Survey questionnaires, apart from addressing numerous issues at the same time, are administered to a large group with the same set of questions. Fraenkel and Wallen (2000),

opine that the chief advantage of survey questionnaires is their ability to give high response rate (sometimes often close to 100 percent). Questionnaires by their nature and the mode of administration ensure anonymity.

Questionnaire was used to obtain primary data on awareness and incidence of plagiarism from Narh-Bita students.

### **3.7.1 Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was divided into two separate parts. Part one which consists of background information of respondents. Part two was subdivided into section A, B, C, and D. The four sections covered the objectives of the study. These sections asked questions on respondents' awareness of plagiarism, prevalence of plagiarism, motivations behind plagiarism and respondents' knowledge of institutional penalties on plagiarism.

The questionnaire was structured with forty-nine (49) questions under the two major parts.

For the purpose of avoiding ambiguity and unclear choices of questions and words, the researcher pre-tested the questionnaire on ten students of Health Assistant Clinical of Narh-Bita College. These students were chosen for the pre-test because of the similarity of coursework offered with the chosen population. Corrections were effected and deletion of redundant questions for final approval by the researcher's supervisor.

### **3.8 Data Collection Procedure**

Data are basic units of any processed information that researchers obtain on the subjects of their research. This study used a structured questionnaire as the primary data collection procedure. Primarily, questionnaires tend to produce primary data as compare to secondary data (i.e. data from journal articles, magazines etc.).

The researcher obtained an introductory letter from the Department of Information Studies. This letter sought the consent of the Academic Registrar of the College as well as the various Heads of the Programmes of study. This gave them the assurance that the research was purely an academic requirement. This then gave the researcher access to the sample population. The researcher explained to the respondents the purpose of the study and assured them of confidentiality and anonymity. The questionnaires were then distributed to the respondents by the researcher and within thirty to forty-five minutes the respondents had finished filling the questionnaires. After which the researcher thanked them for their cooperation. This was repeated in each class of the sampled population. This took place in the first week of April, 2016.

### **3.9 Data Analysis and Presentation**

Data collected must be analyzed and presented in a meaningful form to give better insight and understanding of the research problem. This is usually done using appropriate tools and techniques (Panneerselvam, 2011). The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer programme was used in analysing the data collected. The SPSS by far is the most widely used computer package for statistical analysis throughout the world, most especially in colleges and universities for data analysis (Howitt and Cramer, 2008). Analysis and presentation were done under the major themes expressed in the research questions.

### **3.10 Ethical Consideration**

According to Creswell (2009) researchers need to protect their research participants; develop a trust with them; promote integrity of the research; guard against misconduct and impropriety that might reflect on their organizations or institutions, and cope with new challenges. Ethical issues in research are mainly codes of conduct of the researchers. The ethical issues that were considered were informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality,

respecting the privacy of respondents and conforming to the codes of conduct of the Narh-Bita College. Respondents were provided with accurate information in order to appreciate the aim and procedure of the study and voluntarily and freely decided to participate. Data was collected and presented as it is and no way did the researcher seek to manipulate the data to achieve desired results. In addition, the University of Ghana code of ethics on research were adhered to by the researcher.



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## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected from the study. The overarching aim of the study was to investigate the awareness and incidence of plagiarism among students of Narh-Bita College. The study was conducted through a self-administered questionnaire of one hundred and forty seven (147) questionnaires distributed and one hundred and forty three (143) questionnaires were retrieved representing a response rate of 97%. This is typical of a survey research design. According to Neuman (2006), data analysis involves the use of charts, graphs, and tables to give a reader a condensed picture of data gathered in a study. These charts and tables allow the reader to see the evidence collected by the researcher and to appreciate and learn what it is. In order to fulfil this objective stated by Neuman (2006), tables and figures were used to interpret responses statistically.

Data obtained from the study was presented under the following thematic areas which are in tandem with the research questions of the study.

- Background information
- Awareness or knowledge of plagiarism
- Prevalence of plagiarism
- Motivations behind plagiarism
- Knowledge of penalties for plagiarists

## 4.2 Background Information of Respondents

In this section of the study, demographic information of respondents were sought to know their age, gender, programme of study and year or level of study. These were presented as follows:

### 4.2.1 Age categories of Respondents

This question sought the age of respondents. The respondents' were required to indicate their age category. The results have been presented below.

**Table 4.2.1 Age categories of Respondents**

Age category	Frequency	Per cent (%)
16 – 20	13	9
21 – 25	112	78
26 – 30	17	12
Above 30	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

Out of a total of 143 questionnaires collected, it was revealed that majority of the respondents (78%) fell between the age range of 21 to 25, followed by the age range of 26 to 30 constituting 12% of the respondents, while 9% fell between 16 to 20 and only one person was above 30 years of age. The above table 4.2.1 depicts it better.

#### 4.2.2 Respondents Gender

The gender of respondents was sought. The table below illustrates clearly the gender of respondents.

**Table 4.2.2 Respondents Gender**

Gender	Frequency	Per cent (%)
Male	43	30
Female	100	70
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

Table 4.2.2 shows that 100 were females representing 70% of the target population, while 30% (43) were males. The results show that there were more females than males at the time of administering the questionnaires.

#### 4.2.3 Respondents programme of study

The study focused on two major programmes of study in the College. Hence, regarding programmes offered by respondents, of the 143 questionnaires collected, results show that the majority (70%) of respondents who took part in the study came from the registered general nursing programme and 43 came from the physician assistant programme constituting 30% of the target study population. The majority of the respondents were registered general nursing students because the researcher took into consideration the population size of the respondents' programme of study and the nursing students had a larger population size.

#### 4.2.4 Respondents year of study

The respondents' levels of study were sought. Of the 143 questionnaires retrieved, 42% were third year students, followed by second year students with 36% of the target population, while 32(22%) were first year students. The results show a representation of all levels of study because the researcher deemed it necessary to have a fair view of the issue across all levels of study of the target population.

#### 4.3 Awareness and knowledge of plagiarism

This aspect of the study sought from respondents quantitative data on awareness of plagiarism. This was to enable the researcher determine their awareness and knowledge level of the concept of plagiarism. Therefore the following questions were asked and these were their responses:

##### 4.3.1 Knowledge of the Copyright Laws

The copyright laws provide protection for the intellectual creations of individuals. Knowledge of the copyright laws especially among students is imperative since students continually make use of the intellectual productions of other individuals. It also means that the knowledge of the copyright laws has an impact on its infringement. Therefore, the researcher sought to ascertain the students' knowledge on the copyright laws.

**Table 4.3.1 Respondents knowledge of copyright law**

Options	Frequency	Per cent (%)
Yes	94	66
No	46	32
No response	3	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

As displayed in table 4.3.1, when respondents were asked whether they knew about the copyright laws, results show that the majority (66%) of the respondents knew about the copyright laws, 32% responded “NO” to this question, while 2% did indicate any of the choices presented. This finding bears resemblance with the findings of Isiakpona (2012) that majority 170(85.0%) out of 200 undergraduate students of University of Ibadan in Nigerian were knowledgeable and were aware of the existence of the copyright laws. Isiakpona also found that with the high awareness levels of the students on copyright laws, only a negligible 1(0.5) of the students were found to have engaged in plagiarism (in other words, he found a negative correlation between the level of copyright laws awareness of the students and their adherence to the copyright laws).

#### 4.3.2 Awareness of Plagiarism

Awareness of plagiarism is another indicator of the knowledge of the issue of plagiarism. Students who are well aware of the issue of plagiarism are likely to know the nitty-gritty of the concept than those who have never come across the term. Hence, the table below shows the awareness level of plagiarism among the respondents.

#### 4.3.2 Awareness of Plagiarism

Options	Frequency	Per cent (%)
Yes	108	76
No	35	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

When all the 143 respondents from Narh-Bita College were asked if they have heard of the term plagiarism, 76% indicated **YES** to the question, while 24% responded that they never heard it. This finding corroborates the study carried out by Sing and Guram (2014) that the majority (85%) of the participants (Dental Professionals in North India) reported that they

knew about plagiarism. This could stem from the proactive nature of the profession to maintain ethical standards in their writing processes.

#### 4.3.3 Sources of Knowledge on Plagiarism

In addition, the researcher sought to find out sources of respondents' knowledge of plagiarism. The respondents had four choices to indicate where they became familiar with the concept of plagiarism.

**Table 4.3.3 Sources of Knowledge on Plagiarism**

Options	Frequency	Per cent (%)
From Teachers	52	36
From Colleagues	27	19
Through Learning or Reading	64	45
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

As can be seen from the table, 64 (45%) out of the 143 respondents indicated that they learned about plagiarism through their own learning and reading, 36% indicated that they heard about it through their teachers, while 27% learned it through their colleagues. These findings are closely related to the findings of Ndwanne (2009) that knowledge or awareness about information ethics could be obtained through discipline library and information codes, manifestoes, literature, conference, education and training. These findings are also similar to a separate study by Sing and Guram (2014) which revealed that 43% of respondents reportedly indicated that they learned about plagiarism through their supervisors. It is worthy to note that this study however has brought to the limelight a new source which is unique and significant where 27% students became knowledgeable about plagiarism through their colleagues.

#### 4.3.4 Orientation on Plagiarism

A lot of institutions of higher learning normally have orientation programs for their students especially first year students. Plagiarism is one of the issues that receives greater attention in these orientation programs. Therefore, to elicit further respondents' awareness and knowledge level of plagiarism, Narh-Bita students were asked whether they did receive orientation on plagiarism at the entry point to the institution.

**Table 4.3.4 Orientation on Plagiarism**

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)
Yes	38	27
No	105	73
<b>Total</b>	143	100

**Source: Field work, 2015**

From the responses, it appeared the talk on plagiarism during students' orientation did not feature that much, as a whopping 73% of the respondents indicated that they did not receive orientation on plagiarism, while a negligible 27% of the respondents indicated that they were oriented on plagiarism. This finding is at variance with a study by Jordan (2001) that found that nearly 95% of participants agreed (or strongly agreed) that they received information about their college honor system prior to matriculating. Some reasons might have accounted for this variation. One of the reasons may be that faculty members in Narh-Bita College may not place much premium on the session of plagiarism in the orientation program.

Additional way to know if students of Narh-Bita College really understand the concept of plagiarism was by asking them to rate on a Likert scale where **1=Agree, 2=Disagree, 3=Don't know, 4=No response** the following statements about plagiarism.

#### 4.3.5 Copying word for word without Acknowledgement

In the academic environment especially institutions of higher learning it is wrong to copy word for word from a book or journal without acknowledgement and it constitutes plagiarism.

**Table 4.3.5 Copying word for word without Acknowledgement**

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)
Agree	96	67.1
Disagree	26	18.2
Don't Know	19	13.3
No Response	2	1.4
Total	143	100

**Source: Field work, 2015**

As displayed on the table above when respondents were asked whether copying word for word from a book or a journal constituted plagiarism, 67.1% agreed to this statement, 18.2% reportedly disagreed, 13.3% did not know, while a little over one percent (1.4%) did not response to this question. This means that respondents were able to differentiate clearly this form of plagiarism. This finding substantiates the findings of Russikoff et al., (2003) that 87 % of the respondents agreed that copying word for word from a book or a journal is plagiarism.

#### 4.3.6 Copying Verbatim without Quotation Marks

Another form of plagiarism is copying verbatim without putting your quotes in quotation marks. This happens a lot in students' works. Therefore, when respondents were asked whether copying verbatim without quotation marks amounted to plagiarism,

**Table 4.3.6 Copying Verbatim without Quotation Marks**

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)
Agree	66	46
Disagree	48	33
Don't Know	21	15
No Response	8	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

Results show that 46% agreed to the statement, 33% indicated their disagreement, 15% did not know, while 6% did not answer this question. This finding is similar to what Babalola (2012) found that 36% indicated that copying verbatim without quotation marks is plagiarism. This means that the majority of the students could not differentiate this form of plagiarism

#### 4.3.7 Paraphrasing without Acknowledging Source

To paraphrase a work without acknowledging your source equally constitutes plagiarism. The respondents were therefore required to state whether the above statement constituted plagiarism.

**Table 4.3.7 Paraphrasing without Acknowledging**

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)
Agree	74	52
Disagree	39	27
Don't Know	22	15
No Response	8	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

As can be seen from the table above 74 (52%) out of the 143 questionnaires collected agreed to the statement, 27% of the respondents indicated their disagreement to the question, 15%

did not know whether this statement amounted to plagiarism, while 6% did not respond to this statement. This finding contradicts that of Craig and Evans (1990) where they found that almost half of the students surveyed did not realize that paraphrased text must be acknowledged. Mandry (2007) observes that the majority of high school students do not possess paraphrasing and analysing skills.

#### 4.3.8 Summarising a Text without Acknowledgement

Summarising a text without acknowledging is another form of plagiarism. This statement was therefore posed to the students and these were their responses:

**Table 4.3.8 Summarizing a Text without Acknowledgement**

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)
Agree	56	39
Disagree	51	36
Don't Know	24	17
No Response	12	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

From the above table 4.3.8, it shows that 39% reportedly agreed to this question, 36% showed their disagreement, while 17% responded not knowing and 8% did not indicate any response. This finding parallels the findings of Sentleng and King (2012) that reveal that a good number 67 (48.2%) of the 139 of undergraduate students indicated that they had used summarized text in assignments without acknowledging it. Sentleng and King (2012) emphasized that the students did not consider referencing their summarized text as necessary and hence their action was deemed to be plagiarism. From this evidence, it means Narh-Bita students have shown an understanding of the tenets of academic writing such as referencing their works.

#### 4.3.9 Copying from colleague's assignment

Many students consider copying a colleague assignment as nothing but this is another subset of plagiarism. One could be plagiarizing blatantly when one is engaged in this practice. Hence, when students of Narh-Bita College were interrogated on this statement, responses were varied:

**Table 4.3.9 Copying from a Colleague's Assignment**

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)
Agree	50	35
Disagree	66	46
Don't Know	19	13
No Response	8	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

46% indicated that they disagreed with such a statement, 35% agreed, while 13% did not know, 6% of the respondents did not response to this statement. This finding implied that copying colleagues' assignments will be prevalent among Narh-Bita students since majority of the students did not see this as unethical. This finding however contradicts the findings of Babalola (2012) which found that about 44% of undergraduate students in University of Babcock, Nigerian agreed that copying from a colleague's assignment is plagiarism.

#### 4.3.10 Writing an Assignment for a Colleague

In addition to the above, writing an assignment for a colleague is an act of plagiarism. The study further required the respondents to indicate whether writing assignment for a colleague constituted plagiarism. The results are presented in table 4.3.10

**Table 4.3.10 Writing an Assignment for a Colleague**

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)
Agree	26	18.2
Disagree	85	59.4
Don't Know	25	17.5
No Response	7	4.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

Table 4.3.10 reveals that majority (59.4%) said they disagreed with the statement, 18.2% agreed, 17.5% did not know, while 4.9% did not answer this question. These findings resonate with the findings of Sentleng and King (2012) who found that about 75.5% of respondents indicated that they had never written an assignment for a colleague. Only 2.9% admitted to this practice. The implication that may be drawn from this is that the majority of respondents from this current study and the study by Sentleng and King (2012) considered this practice as constituting plagiarism so they refrained from it.

#### **4.3.11 Submitting a Work Individually while it was done by a Group**

Furthermore, submitting a work individually while the work was done by a group amounts to plagiarism. The Narh-Bita College students were therefore asked whether this amounted to plagiarism and these were their responses:

#### **4.3.11 Submitting a Word Individually meanwhile it is done by a Group**

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)
Agree	45	31
Disagree	66	46
Don't Know	25	18
No Response	7	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

31% agreed, 46% disagreed, 18% indicated that they did not know, while 5% did not respond to this question. The results show that the majority of the respondents do not consider the above statement as plagiarism. This finding lends credence to the findings of McCabe et al. (2006) where 28% of graduate business students surveyed admitted to collaborative cheating.

#### 4.3.12 Submitting a Work as Group while it was done by an Individual

Submitting a work as group while it was done by an individual is one of the different forms of plagiarism. The researcher sought to find out whether students know that submitting a work as group while one person has struggled to do it amounted to plagiarism.

**Table 4.3.12 Submitting a Work as Group meanwhile it is done by an Individual**

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)
Agree	48	34
Disagree	55	38
Don't Know	28	20
No Response	12	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

Responses show that 34% agreed that the statement constituted plagiarism, 38% disagreed to the statement, 20% did not know, while 8% did not respond to this statement. This finding bears semblance to the findings by Barrett and Cox (2005) who found in their study that students were much more accepting of collusion because they did not consider this as plagiarism but as a learning process. This they concluded that collusion is a deliberate joint effort to deceive a third party, which appears to be understood by students as something different. McCabe and Trevino (1996) made similar finding that 80% of respondents did not think that submitting a work done by someone else was serious cheating.

#### 4.3.13 Copying from the Internet without Acknowledging the Source

The internet offers vast amount of resources for students and researchers, however sources must be acknowledged when they are used in writings. An individual could therefore be plagiarizing if information from the internet is weaved into one's writing without acknowledgement.

#### 4.3.13 Copying from the Internet without Acknowledging the Source

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)
Agree	65	45
Disagree	37	26
Don't Know	27	19
No Response	14	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

When this statement was posed to the students, out of 143 respondents, 45% agreed to the statement, 26% expressed their disagreement, 19% indicated that they did not know, while 10% did not response. This finding corroborates the findings of Kayaoglu et al. (2015) that 66.1% respondents stated that they did not steal from the internet. This points to the fact that Narh-Bita students understand perfectly well that copying from the internet without acknowledgement amounts to plagiarism.

#### 4.3.14 Not including References in One's Work

Scholarship involves the reciprocal exchange of ideas. One cannot write academically without including the ideas of others. Therefore it is expected that when ideas of other people's are used without including the sources it constited academic dishonesty.

**Table 4.3.14 Not including Reference in One's Work**

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)
Agree	58	40
Disagree	43	30
Don't Know	21	15
No Response	21	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

Hence, when the respondents were asked whether not including references in one's work constituted plagiarism, a good number of 58 (40%) of the respondents responded that they agreed to the statement, 30% reported that they disagreed with the statement, 15% responded that they did not know, while another 15% did not response to this statement. This finding validates that of Babalola (2012) that 34% of respondents agreed that not including references in one's assignment was a form of plagiarism. These results show a generally low understanding of this form of plagiarism among students of the current study and which means that the students may be prone to unintentional plagiarism as far as this form of plagiarism was concerned

#### **4.3.15 Inventing Reference or Bibliography**

It is academic dishonesty to the highest order to invent references or bibliography which either is not in existence or references one did not used in one's writing. In either case one is trying to mislead and deceive, which is where plagiarism takes its roots from.

**Table 4.3.15 Inventing References or Bibliography**

Answers	Frequency	Percent (%)
Agree	39	27
Disagree	52	36
Don't Know	41	29
No Response	11	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

So regarding inventing references, a total of 39 (27%) of the respondents indicated that they agreed that inventing references constituted plagiarism, a good number 52 (36%) however disagreed with the statement, an equally significant number 41 (29%) indicated that they did not know, while 8% did not answer this question. This finding substantiates the findings of McCabe and Trevino (1996) who reported alarming results such as: 52% of students did not think that fabricating, falsifying bibliographies or references was serious cheating. However, contrary to the assertion that inventing references is not plagiarism, Cheema et al. (2011) report that 82% respondents indicated that providing incomplete information about references so that a person could not trace the original source was an act of plagiarism.

#### **4.3.16 Altering Statistics in One's Work**

Altering, falsifying and fabricating data, statistics and the likes all amount to academic fraud, intellectual dishonesty and academic misconduct. All these are forms of deception and cheating which amount to plagiarism.

**Table 4.3.16 Altering Statistics in One's Work**

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)
Agree	43	30
Disagree	59	41
Don't Know	33	23
No Response	8	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

. In response to the statement whether altering statistics in one's work constituted plagiarism, a good number 43 (30%) of respondents agreed that altering statistics in one's work was plagiarism, while a significant percent 41% of respondents disagreed with the statement, 33 (23%) respondents reported that they did not know, and 6% did not response to this question. This finding resonates the finding of Sentleng and King (2012) who report that 40.8% admitted to being guilty of inventing or altering data in their works.

Based on the above findings it is fair to conclude that although the majority of the students showed high level of awareness and knowledge of copyright laws, concept of plagiarism, and varied different forms of plagiarism, there were doubts regarding recognizing certain forms of plagiarism, especially collaboration and collusion. This view is re-echoed by Kwong et al. (2010) when they observe that most students can still not differentiate between collaboration and collusion and certain plagiarism behaviours. This assertion lends credence to the observation made by (Roig, 1997; McCabe and Trevino, 1996), that over 50% of students were unable to identify correctly clear examples of plagiarism.

#### 4.4 Prevalence of Plagiarism

The practices and incidences of plagiarism are common among students of higher institutions of learning. It is purported that the incidence of plagiarism is a daily activity in students' assignments. A close scrutiny of students' assignments will definitely reveal some amount of plagiarism. This section therefore sought to determine the prevalence of plagiarism among students of Narh-Bita College and the following questions were asked which intended to help the researcher achieve this. Respondents were required to rate their responses on the **Likert Scale** where 1= Very Often, 2=Often, 3=Once a while, 4=Never, and 5=No response. The results have been presented as follows:

##### 4.4.1 Copying word for word from a Book or a Journal without Acknowledgement

The researcher sought to know how frequent respondents engage in the plagiarism statement "copying from books or journals without attribution".

##### 4.4.1 Copying word for word from Book or Journal without Acknowledging

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)
Very Often	42	29.37
Often	32	22.38
Once a While	42	29.37
Never	18	12.59
No Response	9	6.29
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

The results above show that significant number 42 (29.37%) admitted that they engaged in this practice very often, 22.38% responded to engaging in this practice often, 29.37% said once a while, 12.59% said they never engaged in this practice, while 6.29% did give any response. This finding is in sharp contrast to the finding of Kayaoglu et al. (2015) where

51.3% participants in a cross-cultural survey in Turkey were found not to copy from a printed source without taking citation into consideration. They concluded that copying without providing references was not a common behaviour among the respondents.

#### 4.4.2 Paraphrasing and Summarising Texts without Acknowledging

With respect to how frequent students indulge in the statement “paraphrasing and summarising texts without acknowledgement” in their writings.

**Table 4.4.2 Paraphrasing and Summarising Texts without Acknowledging**

Answers	Frequency	Percent (%)
Very Often	44	31
Often	42	29
Once a While	32	22
Never	14	10
No Response	11	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

Results show that 31% responded that they indulged in this practice very often, 29% said that they did it often, 22% reported that they have done it once a while, 10% said they never did it, and 8% did not response to this question. This finding resonates with that of Sentleng and King (2012) that 50.3% of undergraduate students studying at higher education institution in South Africa admitted to paraphrasing and summarizing texts frequently without acknowledgement of their sources.

#### 4.4.3 Copying from a Colleague's Assignment without Permission

With regards the above statement, when respondents were asked how frequent they indulged in copying from a colleague's assignment without his/her permission their responses were:

**Table 4.4.3 copying from Colleague's Assignment without Permission**

Answers	Frequency	Percent (%)
Very Often	33	23
Often	30	21
Once a While	34	24
Never	35	24
No Response	11	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

From table 4.4.3, 23% respondents admitted to doing it very often, 21% said they have often done it, 24% reported to doing it once a while, while a good number of 35(24%) responded never to have done it, and 8% did not specify any response. This finding parallels the finding of Babalola (2012) who found that 46% of respondents admitted to copying from a colleague's assignment often with his or her knowledge.

#### 4.4.4 Copying Portions from Electronic Sources without Acknowledgement

The World Wide Web offers numerous full-text electronic resources at a click of a button. This avenue has become a safe haven for most student plagiarists. It has become the major source of information for students' assignments and they often copy these resources without bothering to cite their sources.

**Table 4.4.4 Copying Portions from Electronic Source without Acknowledgement**

Answers	Frequency	Percent (%)
Very Often	40	28
Often	42	29
Once a While	32	22
Never	18	13
No Response	11	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

Therefore when students were asked how frequent they copy materials from electronic sources without bothering to reference their sources, these were their responses; 28% indicated they had done it very often, 29% indicated they often did it, 22% said they did it once a while, 13% indicated they have never done it, while 8% did not response to this statement. This finding is similar to that of Ma et al. (2007) where nearly all middle secondary school students (36) in the United States surveyed admitted to sometimes going online to copy information from the internet since they see the internet as offering vast amount of information which can easily be improperly be used just by few clicks.

#### **4.4.5 Submitting Assignments without References**

A lot of students consider this practice as normal and therefore they often submit most of their assignments without bothering to include the various sources of the information they used.

#### 4.4.5 Submitting Assignments without References

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)
Very often	49	34
Often	39	27
Once a While	29	20
Never	18	13
No Response	8	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

When students of Narh-Bita College were asked to indicate how frequent they submit assignments without references, a significant number 49 (34%) indicated that they submit assignments without references very often, 27% respondents indicated that they have often done it, 20% reported submitting assignments without references once a while, 13% responded to never doing it, while 6% respondents did not indicate any response on this practice. This finding however contradicts the findings of Ramzan et al. (2012) that found an equally significant percentage of 65.9% respondents indicating that they often cite sources in their assignments before submission.

#### 4.4.6 Including References One did not use

It is a common practice among students to include references they did not use in their work. Therefore, the results to the statement of including references one did not use in one's writings are presented in the table 4.4.6.

**Table 4.4.6 Including References One did not use**

Answers	Frequency	Percent (%)
Very Often	26	18
Often	35	24
Once a While	36	25
Never	38	27
No Response	8	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

Table 4.4.6 shows that 18% respondents said they have done this very often, 24% indicated that they have done it often, 25% said they have done it once a while, a good percentage (27) reported that they have never done it, and a small minority (6%) did not indicate any response. This finding resonates with the findings of Babalola (2012) who found that 58% respondents admitted to often including references they did not use in their work.

#### **4.4.7 Altering data or Statistics in One's Work**

It is common to find young researchers and students alter data or statistics in their project works to achieve certain results. Therefore the researcher sought to find out how this is prevalent in the academic life of students of Narh-bitra College.

#### **4.4.7 Altering data or Statistics in One's Work**

Answers	Frequency	Percent (%)
Very Often	22	15
Often	28	20
Once a While	32	22
Never	39	27
No Response	22	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

The results reveal that this phenomenon is commonly practiced by the students. As the table 4.4.7 indicates that 15% said they do it very often, 20% reported that they often do it, 22 %

said they do it once a while, a significant number 39 (37%) indicated that they never did it, while a good number 22 (15%) did not respond to the question. This implied that the students may have considered this practice as forgery which needed to be shunned. However, this finding parallels the findings of Sentleng and King (2012) that less than half (40.8%) of the respondents frequently invent data in their work.

#### 4.4.8 Submitting Work Individually while it is done by a Group

This is a common practice among students of higher education. Many at times students often find it convenient to submit work done by a group as if it was their own work and therefore claiming credit for it. The results have been presented in the table below.

#### 4.4.8 Submitting Work Individually while the work is written a Group

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)
Very Often	17	12
Often	44	31
Once a While	30	21
Never	49	34
No Response	3	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

In relation to submitting work individually while it is done by a group when the students were asked, 12% indicated that they have done it very often, a good number 44 (31%) said they often do it, while 21% admitted to doing it once a while, a significant percentage mentioned that they have never done it, and negligible 3 respondents did not indicate any answer to this statement. This finding is similarly to the findings of Sheard et al. (2002) where a significant number of students frequently engaged in inappropriate styles of collaboration. Perhaps, this practice may be as result of what Yeo (2007) observes, that students consider false declaration about group work as a minor plagiarism, that is if it is plagiarism.

#### 4.4.9 Submitting a Work as Group while it is written by an Individual

The occurrence of the above practice is very common among students of higher education. Most often than not group assignments are left on the shoulders of an individual. A lot of times students' inability to work in group account for this and in the end an individual will volunteer to do the work just to save the group from losing marks.

**Table 4.4.9 Submitting Work as Group while it is written by an Individual**

Answers	Frequency	Percent (%)
Often Very	29	20
Often	36	25
Once a While	35	24
Never	38	27
No Response	5	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

Therefore, when the students were asked how frequent they engage in the above practice (i.e. submitting a work as a group while it is done by an individual), results show that 20% said they have indulge in it very often, 25% indicated to have done it often, 27% reported that they engaged in it once a while, while a significant number 38 (27%) of majority reported that they never did it, and a 4% representing 5 respondents did not answer this question. This finding is consistent with the findings of Sentleng and King (2012) that revealed that more than one third (39.6%) of the respondents admitted to submitting group work while it was done by an individual. Students rating of collusion as a minor plagiarism may have accounted for this phenomenon.

#### 4.4.10 Buying term Paper or Assignment from a Paper Mill

Paper mill and for that matter websites that offer already made assignments in the form of research papers, dissertations, and thesis are common in the western world. These sites provide short-cuts to works that are supposed to be the effort of students, hence they are often patronised by students.

**Table 4.4.10 Buying term Paper or Assignment from a Paper Mill**

Answers	Frequency	Percent (%)
Very often	8	6
Often	24	17
Once a While	24	17
Never	71	49
No Response	16	11
Total	143	100

**Source: Field work, 2015**

When respondents of this study were asked whether they have been engaged in this act, 6% responded that they have been engaged in it very often, 17% indicated that they have done it often, another 17% also said they have engaged in it once a while, however a majority (49%) respondents indicated that they have never done it, and 11% indicated “**No response**” to this question. This finding completes the findings of Babalola (2012) who opined that transactions on paper mills required the use of a credit card which is not a common practice in the African soil. He found that a strong majority (80.47%) of respondent never engaged in this practice and as low as 8.2% only indicated often practising it.

#### 4.4.11 Paying Someone to Write a Work for You

This act of plagiarism is very common in the life a modern students. Most students do not see the need to devote much of their time do proper academic writing and they often resort to this practice in order to fulfil their academic obligations.

**Table 4.4.11 Paying Someone to Write a Work for You**

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)
Very Often	11	8
Often	16	11
Once a While	27	19
Never	59	41
No Response	30	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

Therefore when this statement “paying someone to write a work for you” was posed to the respondents, 8% said they have done it very often, 11% indicated that they did it often, 19% said they have done it once a while, a significant percent (41%) indicated that they have never done it and 21% of the respondents did not give an answer to this statement. Results show that majority had never engaged in this act of plagiarism. This finding is substantiated by the findings of Kayaoglu et al (2015) who found in their cross-cultural study of tertiary students that a healthy majority (81.6) of the participants never offered money to people to complete their homework for them.

Taking together, these findings are in agreement with other studies, suggesting that there is a negative relationship between awareness of plagiarism and engagement in acts of plagiarism. Despite, students showing high levels of awareness and knowledge of plagiarism, the rates of plagiarism were found to be equally high. It therefore leaves a thousand mind boggling

questions why this is so? Take away few instances where they claimed not to have engaged in it but overall the prevalent rate was high.

#### 4.5 Motivations behind plagiarism

It is purported that students' plagiarism behaviours are driven by certain forces. In other words the human being will not perform a certain action if he/she has no incentive to do so. Hence, students are always motivated to plagiarize because of certain factors. Therefore in an attempt to validate those factors, the respondents were asked to rate the following factors adapted from the literature on a **Likert Scale** where **1=Strongly agree, 2=Agree, 3=Disagree, 4=Strongly Disagree, 5=Don't Know, 6=No Response** as motivations behind students' plagiarism. The results were presented as follows:

##### 4.5.1 Poor writing skills

Poor writing skills have been identified as one of the reasons why students engage in plagiarism. Hence, the researcher sought to find out to what extent do students of Narh-Bita agree or disagree to the statement.

**Table 4.5.1 Poor writing Skills**

Answers	Frequency	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	30	20.98
Agree	32	22.38
Disagree	42	29.37
Strongly Disagree	23	16.08
Don't Know	12	8.39
No Response	4	2.80
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

Results show that 20.98% out of 100% strongly agreed to this statement, 22.38% also indicated their agreement to it, a significant majority 42 (29.37%) expressed their disagreement to it, 16.08% said they strongly disagreed to it, while 8.39% said they did not know, a negligible 2.80% did not respond to this question. This finding implies that 43.36% of the respondents were of the view that poor writing skills motivate plagiarism. This however contradicts the findings of Sentleng and King (2012) where a negligible 17% agreed that lack of writing skills is a factor of plagiarism.

#### 4.5.2 Lack of Referencing Skills

The practices and incidences of plagiarism among have been attributed to students' lack of referencing skills. The act of referencing is a special skill students need to develop. Hence, students who lack this skill would always be accused of plagiarizing.

**Table 4.5.2** Lack of referencing skills

Answers	Frequency	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	41	29
Agree	43	30
Disagree	22	15
Strongly Disagree	17	12
Don't Know	19	13
No Response	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

Therefore when the respondents were asked whether indeed the above statement is a motivational factor behind plagiarism, responses were; 29% indicated that they strongly agreed to the statement, majority 43 (30%) reported that they agreed to it, 15% said they disagreed, while 12% responded that they strongly disagreed to it, 13% said they did not know, and only a single respondent did not answer this question. This result shows that the

majority (59%) agreed that poor referencing skills motivate plagiarism. This finding bears semblance with the findings of Kayaoglu et al. (2015) who reported that two thirds (63%) of their respondents agreed that not knowing how to cite is the cause for academic theft.

### 4.5.3 Poor Teaching and Learning Methods

Another reason why students plagiarize is poor teaching and learning methods. Sometimes, very little attention is been paid to proper way of taking notes during both teaching and learning. Students learn to copy verbatim both in the classroom and outside it. When this phenomenon is prevalent in students' life, it automatically leads to plagiarism.

**Table 4.5.3 Poor Teaching and Learning Methods**

Answers	Frequency	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	39	27
Agree	43	30
Disagree	29	20
Strongly Disagree	13	9
Don't Know	11	8
No Response	8	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

From the table 4.5.3 27% showed that they strongly agreed to this statement, 30% constituting the majority showed their agreement to it, 20% indicated that they disagreed to the statement; a negligible 9% showed that they strongly disagreed with it, 8% did not know, while 6% did not respond to this statement. The finding of this study contradicts that of Sentleng and King (2012) where 8% agreed that poor teaching and learning methods result into plagiarism. Approximately 92% of the respondents in Sentleng and king (2012) disagreed with the assertion of the current study.

#### 4.5.4 Laziness and Poor Time Management

Most students plagiarize because they are lazy and lack time management skills. They often wait to the final hour to do their assignments and most often than not are pressured into plagiarizing.

**Table 4.5.4 Laziness and Poor Time Management**

Answers	Frequency	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	49	34.27
Agree	36	25.17
Disagree	20	13.99
Strongly Disagree	26	18.18
Don't Know	12	8.39
No Response	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

Hence, when the students were asked if laziness and poor time management motivated students' plagiarism, 34.27% representing majority of respondents indicated that they strongly agreed to it, 25.17% said they agreed to it, 13.99% reported that they disagreed with the statement, while 18.18% strongly disagreed with it, only 8.39% did not know. This finding endorses the finding of Sentleng and King (2012) where 42% of the students of South African University reportedly plagiarized because of laziness and poor time management.

#### 4.5.5 Assignment being Difficult

The difficulties of assignments have been blamed as one of factors of plagiarism. When assignments are seen as difficult students take the easy way by copying verbatim without caring about the consequences of plagiarism. Therefore when students were asked whether they attributed plagiarism to assignment being difficult as one of the causes of plagiarism, these were their responses:

**Table 4.5.5 Assignment is Difficult**

Answers	Frequency	Percent (%)
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	32	22
<b>Agree</b>	41	29
<b>Disagree</b>	30	21
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	26	18
<b>Don't Know</b>	7	5
<b>No Response</b>	7	5
<b>Total</b>	143	100

**Source: Field work, 2015**

Out of 143 respondents, 32 (22%) strongly agreed to this, 41 (29%) representing majority expressed their agreement, 30 (21%) indicated that they disagreed with it, while 26 (18%) said that they equally strongly disagreed with it, 7 (5%) did not know, and an equivalent 7 (5%) failed to respond to this question. This finding lends credence to the finding of Kayaoglu where 36% of tertiary students in Turkey, German, and Georgian agreed that not understanding assignments could cause plagiarism.

#### **4.5.6 Easy Access to Internet Resources**

The advent of the internet has increased the incidence and practices of students' plagiarism. Majority of students believe that it is easy to access vast amount of information on the internet and so for them information from the internet is free of charge. This notion has fuelled the cases of internet plagiarism to alarming proportions. Therefore abundance of materials to be freely downloaded from the internet is muted as a major motivator behind the high plagiarism rates experienced over the last three decades or so.

**Table 4.5.6 Abundance of Materials to freely download from the Internet**

Answers	Frequency	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	41	29
Agree	44	30
Disagree	30	21
Strongly Disagree	21	15
Don't Know	6	4
No Response	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

So when the above statement was put to the students; 29% responded that they strongly agreed to it, 30% representing the majority said they agreed to the statement, 21% indicated their disagreement, while 15% said they strongly disagreed, 4% of the respondents indicated that they did not know and an insignificant 1% failed to answer this question. The finding of this current study confirms that of Babalola (2012) where 79.3% plagiarize because of ease access to internet materials.

#### **4.5.7 Don't know how to cite internet sources**

The lack of knowledge and skills to cite internet sources has also been blamed as contributing to the rising prevalence of students' plagiarism. Students' lack the necessary skills and knowledge needed to decipher the copyright owners of internet resources and therefore the notion that the resources on the internet are not copyrighted.

**Table 4.5.7 Don't Know how to cite Internet Sources**

Answers	Frequency	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	35	25
Agree	35	25
Disagree	27	18
Strongly Disagree	24	17
Don't Know	20	14
No Response	2	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

Hence, the respondents were required to indicate to what extent the statement above motivates plagiarism. Their responses were: 25% strongly agreed, 25% also agreed, 18% disagreed, 17% said that they strongly disagreed to the statement, 14% did not know, and 1% did not response to it. This finding endorses the finding of Babalola (2012) that 61.5% plagiarized because they do not know how cite internet sources.

#### **4.5.8 Pressure to Succeed**

Students desire to make good grades, obtain high GPAs, which will lead to higher class to secure a good job, pressure from the family, the society and other external factors sometimes put pressure on the students to achieve these at all cost. They will therefore do anything to succeed including indulging in plagiarism. When students of Narh-Bita College were asked if the statement “**pressure to succeed**” is a contributory factor to the rising incidence of plagiarism; they responded as follows:

**Table 4.5.8 Pressure to Succeed**

Answers	Frequency	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	47	33
Agree	44	31
Disagree	25	17
Strongly Disagree	17	12
Don't Know	7	5
No Response	3	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

33% responded that they strongly agreed to it, 31% indicated that they agreed to it, 17% said they disagreed, 12% reportedly said that strongly disagreed, an insignificant 5% did not know, whilst as 2% failed to respond to the statement. This finding agrees with the finding of Ramzan et al. (2012) that 62.3% of students from some selected universities in Pakistan agreed that the temptation of achieving high marks was responsible for student plagiarism behaviour.

#### **4.5.9 Teachers have never Complained about it**

Most teachers in various institutions of higher learning do not take the acts of plagiarism serious. Therefore, the teachers never act or complain about it and this posture gives students the leeway to indulge in plagiarism with impunity.

**Table 4.5.9 Teachers have never Complained about it**

Answers	Frequency	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	21	15
Agree	37	26
Disagree	47	33
Strongly Disagree	26	18
Don't Know	9	6
No Response	3	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

Therefore, with regards to the statement teachers have never complained about as motivation behind students' plagiarism behaviour; the table shows that 15% respondents indicated that they strongly agreed to the above statement, 26% said they agreed, 33% responded that they disagreed, 18% strongly disagreed, 6% did not know, whereas 2% did not respond to this question. This finding of the current study is confirmed by the finding of Pupovac (2010) that 50% of medical students in Croatia considered self-plagiarism as harmless and not punishable.

#### 4.5.10 Those Who does it often get Good Grades

Some students believe that a lot of their colleagues who plagiarize often end up in getting good grades to the detriment of those who do not. So why watch on while others are doing it and getting good grades. Hence, they are motivated by this.

**Table 4.5.10 Those Who does often get Good Grades**

Answers	Frequency	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	34	24
Agree	32	22
Disagree	27	19
Strongly Disagree	30	21
Don't Know	16	11
No Response	4	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

From the above statement, it was found that 24% representing majority of surveyed respondents indicated that they strongly agreed to the statement above, 22% said that they agreed, 19% showed disagreement, 21% showed that they strongly disagreed to it, 11% did not know, and 3%, did not respond this case study. This finding confirms the finding of Babalola (2012) that 53.3% of students in Babcock University in Nigerian believed that those

who engage it often got higher marks. This further confirms the conclusion by Babalola (2012) that plagiarism has become a conduit for getting better grades.

#### 4.5.11 Everybody is doing it

Plagiarism has become a ritual and social acceptable norm among students. The notion that everybody is doing it is enough justification to also indulge in it. They see plagiarism as no big deal after all others do it and therefore they should not be an exception.

**Table 4.5.11 Everybody is doing it**

Answers	Frequency	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	39	27
Agree	35	25
Disagree	32	22
Strongly Disagree	20	14
Don't Know	14	10
No Response	3	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

The table above shows the results when the students were asked whether the statement “everybody is doing it” is a motivation of student plagiarism. Of the 143 questionnaires collected, 39 (27%) reported that they strongly agreed to this statement, 35 (25%) indicated their agreement, 32 (22%) said that they disagreed with the statement, while 20 (14%) responded that they strongly disagreed, 10% of the respondents did not know, 2% failed to provide answer to this question. This finding corroborates the findings of Babalola (2012) that 37% of the respondents agreed that plagiarism resulted from the belief that everybody was doing it. Neville (2007) pinioned that plagiarism has now become a ritual among students.

#### 4.5.12 Poor understanding of plagiarism

Poor understanding of plagiarism has also been identified as a contributory factor of plagiarism. Plagiarism is a complex concept that is subjected to varied interpretations. There can exist different meaning or what constitutes acceptable and what does not constitutes unacceptable behaviour between students and their instructors. Students' poor knowledge of the concept sometimes leads them to commit plagiarism inadvertently. In order to find out whether poor understanding of plagiarism is also a motivational factor behind plagiarism, students of Narh-Bita were asked to rate the extent to which they agree or otherwise, their responses were:

**Table 4.5.12 Poor understanding of Plagiarism**

Answers	Frequency	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	58	40
Agree	38	27
Disagree	16	11
Strongly Disagree	17	12
Don't Know	10	7
No Response	4	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

A whopping 40% respondents reported that they strongly agreed, while 27% said they agreed, 11% responded that they disagreed, 12% reported that they strongly disagreed, 7% did not know, 3% failed to respond to this question. This finding concurs with several studies (Devlin and Gray, 2007; Pennycook, 1996; Bennett, 2005; Pickards, 2006; Razera et al., (2010) where the lack of understanding of the concept is often attributed as the reason why the incidences of plagiarism are rising.

#### 4.6 Knowledge of Penalties for Plagiarists

This aspect of the study sought to find out respondents knowledge of the institutional penalties for those who engage in plagiarism. The knowledge and awareness of academic rules regarding plagiarism can determine the practices and incidences of plagiarism. Most of these codes or rules are often contained in students' handbooks to which student are not aware of. In addition, most of these rules are hardly being enforced. Therefore the researcher deemed it necessary to find out whether students of Narh-Bita knew the existence of the institution's plagiarism policy and whether faculty was enforcing those policies. Hence, the following questions were asked to achieve this:

##### 4.6.1 Knowledge of the College's Plagiarism Policy

Institutional policies on plagiarism contained in students' handbooks spell out in clear terms what is considered as academic dishonesty and what is not. It also contains consequences of plagiarism. Therefore, students' knowledge of these policies can to a large extent determine plagiarism occurrences among students. Hence, the researcher sought to elicit from the respondents their knowledge and awareness of the institution's policy on plagiarism. Therefore, students were asked to indicate whether they knew the college's policy on plagiarism.

##### 4.6.1 Knowledge of the College's Plagiarism Policy

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)
Yes	26	18
No	117	82
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

The results show that whopping 82% respondents were not aware of and had no knowledge of the college's policy on plagiarism, while a little of 18 percent responded that they knew

about the policy. The results reveal that majority of Narh-Bita students did not know that the college has a policy on plagiarism. This is contradictory to the findings of Ramzan et al., (2012) where a good number of students 149 (42.6%) from a randomly selected four universities in Pakistan reported that they knew the existence of their universities' policy on plagiarism.

#### 4.6.2 Ever Read the Policy

Reading for general information is a habit some students have never really cultivated. So it is not a surprise when students have never read policies such as one on plagiarism that seek to guide their academic life. For that matter this was a follow up question to the first question to those who had answered “Yes” to the question. This was further to ascertain whether indeed they actually knew the existence of the institution's policy on plagiarism.

**Table 4.6.2 Ever read the Policy**

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)
Yes	11	8
No	132	92
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

The results show that a negligible number of 11(8%) said that they had read the policy, while a majority of the respondents (92%) responded that they had never read the policy. The results implied that students were not conversant with academic rules contained in their handbooks. This finding is not consistent with that of Jordan (2001), who reports that a strong majority (73.1%) of respondents indicated that they had read their school's honor code. Gullifier and Tyson (2014) share similar findings to that of Jordan in which they report in their study that 52% of the participants indicated that they had read their university (Charles Sturt University, Bathurst, Australia) policy on plagiarism

#### **4.6.3 Penalties or Sanctions for being caught Plagiarizing**

Every plagiarism policy contains sanctions for those who are found indulging in plagiarism and these penalties or sanctions are expected to be enforced to the letter for strict compliance. Hence, students' awareness of such penalties can determine compliance levels and ultimately determine occurrence of plagiarism. Therefore, another follow up question to the former question was asked to determine if students had read the policy. There were therefore asked to provide the various penalties prescribed in the policy for those caught plagiarizing. Only a few could answer this question correctly. They stated suspension as one of the penalties prescribed by the policy. This buttresses the point that the majority of the surveyed students lacked knowledge and awareness of the institutional policy on plagiarism. This finding is substantiated by the findings of Cheema et al., (2011) where the majority of research students at International Islamic University, Islamabad in Pakistan indicated that they had no idea about the penalties against the offence of plagiarism recommended by the High Education Commission in Pakistan. They conclude that students are unaware about the exact penalties of plagiarism.

#### **4.6.4 Has any Student being Punished of any Plagiarism Case?**

It is believe that when students who engaged in plagiarism are not punished there is a notion that plagiarism is an acceptable act. The researcher sought to ascertain the level of enforcement of plagiarism violation rules in the College. There is a tendency for institutions to lack the will to enforce academic rules. Hence, the researcher asked “has any student being punished of any plagiarism offence”.

**Table 4.6.4 Has any Student being Punished of Plagiarism Offense**

Any student being punished	Frequency	Percent (%)
Yes	36	25
No	107	75
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

The results were that majority (75%) respondents said that no student had ever being punished of any plagiarism offence, while one-fourth indicated that students had being punished of plagiarism offence. This implied that plagiarism cases are hardly being detected and hence offending students hardly got punished. This finding is inconsistent with that of Ramzan et al. (2012) where 42 (27.1%) of students from four randomly selected universities in Pakistan reported that they being charged according to the universities' plagiarism policy.

#### **4.6.5 How often do Students' Plagiarists got punished?**

Most students are often not punished when they are found to have committed plagiarism. Institutions of higher learning often do not take greater interest in cases of plagiarism thereby allowing the behaviour of plagiarism to foster among students. This question was therefore asked to further help the researcher to ascertain the enforcement level of academic rules such as dealing with plagiarism cases. Students were therefore asked to indicate how frequent students who misconduct themselves academically got punished.

**Table 4.6.5 How often do Plagiarists get punish**

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)
Very often	13	9
Often	21	15
Once a while	13	9
Never	96	67
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

The table 4.6.5 shows that 9% responded that offending students got punished very often, 15% reported that they got punished often, similar 9% of the respondents indicated offending students got punished once a while, while significant percent of 67 indicated that offending students never got punished. The results show that there is laxity in the enforcement of academic rules specifically plagiarism rules. This finding partially corroborates the finding of Ramzan et al. (2012) who found that 45 (29%) of students from four selected universities in Pakistan were never charged for plagiarism violation although they were found to have plagiarized

#### **4.6.6 Faculty being Effective in Enforcement of Policy on Plagiarism**

Literature has shown that faculty has often shown laxity in enforcing rules and regulations on academic misconduct. Plagiarism cases are often been overlooked by faculty in most institutions of higher education. Therefore this was a penultimate question to gauge whether faculty at Narh-Bita College was enforcing plagiarism policy effectively.

**Table 4.6.6 Faculty Effectiveness in Enforcement of Plagiarism Policy**

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)
Yes	33	23
No	110	77
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2015**

The results show that a whopping majority (77%) responded that faculty was not effective in enforcing plagiarism policy, while a little below quarter indicated that faculty was effective in enforcing plagiarism policy. This result further enhanced the notion of laxity on the part of school authorities especially faculty to strictly enforce academic rules. . This finding is consistent with several findings in the literature. Previous research has found that the majority of colleges' faculties have been reluctant to get involved in the cases of academic integrity for variety of reasons (Schneider, 1999). However, McCabe, Butterfield and Trevino (2006) posit that when faculty failed to act on cases of plagiarism, this sends a message that cheating is acceptable or at least no consequences will result from it and thereby furthering the culture of academic dishonesty. Indeed, the attitude of faculty to cases of academic dishonesty such as plagiarism has a direct relationship to the incidence and practices of acts of plagiarism. Just as one model in psychology puts it, attitude can predict behaviour (see Ajzen, 1991, 2005).

Based on the above findings, it is clear that Narh-Bita College students lack knowledge of the institution's policy on plagiarism couple with the laxity on the part of faculty in the implementation or enforcement of policies on plagiarism. These are capable of triggering unethical use of information in the College

#### 4.7 Relationship of the study to the theory

One of the key prepositions of the social learning theory by Bandura (1977, 1986) is that much of the human behaviour is learned observationally. People observe others and learn from others in what Bandura (1986) called **Vicarious processes**. In other words people learn by observing others and alter their behaviour accordingly. Behaviours that are rewarding tend to be repeated and those that are punished tend to be refrained. When students observe their colleagues plagiarize successfully without being punished the tendency for them also engaging in such behaviours is high. According to McCabe and Trevino (1993) when students see their peers cheating, cheating may be viewed as an acceptable way of behaving and of getting ahead. This preposition concurs with the findings of this study as the laxity in the enforcement of plagiarism policies has the tendency to trigger incidences of plagiarism. On the other hand the enforcement of academic rules could serve as disincentives and a deterrence to acts of plagiarism. Disincentives (social norms) such as reduction in grade or the award of a particular grade, suspensions etc. have a bearing on plagiarism violations. This view is supported by Jordan (2001), who found that there is direct relationship between social norms regarding plagiarism (plagiarism policies) and engagement in plagiarism.

Another key proposition referenced in the social learning theory is the principle of self-efficacy. According to Bandura (1986) people may not perform certain actions if they have no incentives to do so. This concurs with findings of this study that most students agreed that obtaining good grades and pressure to succeed could motivate them to plagiarize. In addition, Bandura (1986) explains that individual's beliefs about their capabilities may also influence their actions in accomplishing certain goals. This is consistent with the findings of the study that students agreed that plagiarism may occur as a result of weakness in the understanding the concept of plagiarism, weakness in writing skills and poor academic performance (triggering the desire to obtain good grades or marks etc.). Furthermore, students'

unawareness of institutional plagiarism policy also relates to social norms referenced in the theory.



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## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter which marks the concluding aspect of the study, the researcher made an attempt to review the work of previous chapters and to recapture and summarise the main points that underpin the study. Recommendations regarding how best to address various unethical practices that came out of the data analysis and discussions, and suggestions on how Narh-Bita College can properly instil proper academic conduct among its students were made. The researcher also made some recommendations based on the findings of the study. Indeed, the recommendations would aid future research of a related or similar topic that will be undertaken in this area.

The study set out to investigate the awareness and incidence of plagiarism among students of higher education, a case study of the Narh-Bita College and the specific objectives were: to determine the awareness level of the students about plagiarism; to find out the prevalence of plagiarism among the students; to ascertain what motivate the students to plagiarize and lastly, to investigate their knowledge about the College's plagiarism policy. A summary of the findings are presented as follows:

#### 5.2 Summary of Major Findings

First, the findings revealed that students were adequately knowledgeable and aware of the copyright laws. This was based on the fact that the majority of the students expressed their familiarity and awareness of the copyright laws. Findings also revealed that the students were aware and familiar with the concept of plagiarism. The majority of the students indicated that they had acquired knowledge about plagiarism through the literature and only a few had

learned about plagiarism through their colleagues. Again, it was revealed that orientation on plagiarism among the students was low. The majority of the students claimed that they never received orientation on plagiarism when they entered the College as first year students. In addition, findings showed that students had a good understanding of the different forms of plagiarism. However, almost all the students were unable to recognize that collaborations and collusions were major forms of plagiarism and should be shunned in their academic life.

Secondly, findings revealed that the incidence and practices of various acts of plagiarism among the students were very high since a lot of the students were found to be engaged in almost all the acts of plagiarism presented to them. This was disturbing to know because while the majority of the students claimed to be adequately aware of the concept plagiarism, it was expected that the rate of plagiarism would be low. However, what was encouraging was that, more than half of the students mentioned they never paid someone to write their project work for them or bought an assignment from a paper mill.

Further, it was found out that, poor understanding of the concept of plagiarism was ranked top as motivation behind plagiarism. Findings also revealed that students mentioned pressure to succeed, laziness and poor time management, lack of referencing skills, ease of access to internet resources, and everybody was doing it as other factors that influenced their plagiarism behaviours.

Furthermore, the findings showed that almost all the students had no knowledge of the existence of the College's plagiarism policy. Since, the majority of the students earlier on claimed that they never received any orientation on plagiarism in the school. It was therefore going to be difficult for them to know about the College's plagiarism policy. It was revealed further that only few of the students had read the College's plagiarism policy. This finding was troubling because ignorance of the policy on plagiarism was certainly going to lead to

widespread of unethical academic practices in the college. The findings also revealed a complete ignorance of plagiarism penalties among the students. As only very few of them managed to state one of the penalties. It was found also that students who were caught plagiarizing hardly got punished. Hence, the findings showed that the frequency of students' plagiarists being punished was low. This finding perhaps highlighted the high prevalence rate of plagiarism revealed in the study. Moreover, it was found out that, the views of the students pertaining to the enforcement of academic rules and regulations by faculty as far as plagiarism was concerned were negative. Students indicated that faculty was ineffective in the enforcement of prescribed penalties for students who were caught plagiarizing. This finding showed general laxity of faculty in dealing with plagiarism cases. This was found not to be promoting high academic standards among students as a lot of the students felt that they could be spared when caught engaging in acts of plagiarism.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

In conclusion, students' awareness of plagiarism and for that their knowledge of the copyright laws bear a negative correlation to the copyright infringement such as plagiarism. The majority of the students were engaged in plagiarism practices although they knew it was not right. This attitude, coupled with poor understanding of the concept of plagiarism, complete ignorance of plagiarism policy in the College and the laxity of faculty in enforcing regulations on academic misconduct violations affect the development and the acquisition of academic ethical morals among the students. As academic misconduct practices continue to grow among the College students, the onus lies on faculty to device measures of curbing these practices.

## **5.4 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, and the literature of the phenomenon, the following recommendations were proposed for Narh-Bita College:

### **5.4.1 Much Emphasis on Plagiarism in the Orientation Program by Faculty**

With the relative low percentage of respondents who answered ‘no’ to receiving orientation on plagiarism when they entered the College, it demonstrates the need to pay much attention and emphasis on plagiarism during orientation of fresh students. The session on plagiarism on orientation program should be made compulsory for all students to cover most students if not all students. This can be made possible when a special session on plagiarism is structured to take place at the time when the majority of the students have reported to school. Topics to be covered by the orientation program should include the concept of plagiarism, consequences of plagiarism and the benefits to be driven when students develop the habit of scholarly writing and behaving ethically in academic writing.

Faculty must create consciousness among students to read the policy on plagiarism contained in their handbooks as ignorance of the rules is not an excuse to information ethics violations. Policies on plagiarism should be publicized in any other avenue such as the College’s website, notice boards in order to achieve an appreciable level of awareness of plagiarism among students.

### **5.4.2 Being Effective in the enforcement of Penalties against Plagiarism violators by Faculty**

The findings of the current study revealed that faculty was not effective in punishing perpetrators of information ethics violations as well as not strictly enforcing rules on academic misconduct. Faculty must therefore be proactive in enforcing plagiarism rules and

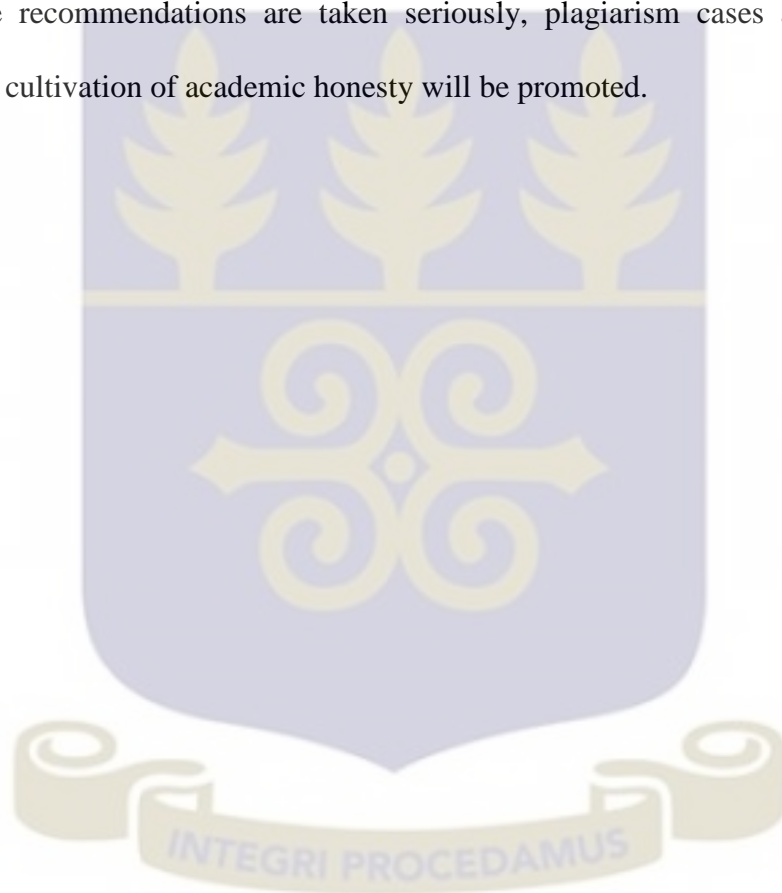
those found culpable should be punished. That is, the appropriate sanctions should be applied. This will curtail and prevent the incidence and practices of academic misconduct behaviours such as plagiarism. Otherwise, when students see their colleagues engaged in acts of plagiarism and nothing happened to them, the culture of academic dishonesty will foster the more as reported in the literature. All plagiarism cases must be reported to the appropriate quarters (in this case **The Office of the Registrar** or **Academic Disciplinary Committee**) to be thoroughly investigated for the right punishment to be meted out to the students involved. Hence, faculty members must take special interest in detecting plagiarism cases and reporting them. When this is effectively done majority of the students are likely to shun away from plagiarism behaviours.

#### **5.4.3 Instruction and Organization of Workshops on Plagiarism by Faculty**

Literature has shown that awareness of plagiarism through orientations alone does not help students to understand and appreciate the concept of plagiarism that much. Therefore, the need for direct instruction and formal education on the nitty-gritty of plagiarism will play a vital role in students' understanding and appreciation of the concept. Students must be exposed to intensive instruction on fundamentals of academic writing. This should include how to cite sources correctly (being taught on the various referencing styles and specify the referencing style that the institution has adopted and therefore the mastery of the chosen style by the students), how to paraphrase correctly and above all being ethically responsible in the use of information. Students must be given exercises on academic writing and the feedback communicated to them, pointing out where necessary areas they need to improve on. The library staff can play a key role in this direction. As the librarian of the College and his/her staff must be abreast with information literacy skills and be ready to impact onto their students. The library is a focal point as far as ethical use of information is concerned and the library staff must position themselves to transform the information literacy skills to their

students. In addition, faculty should organise workshops or seminars on plagiarism from time to time to refresh students' memory about academic integrity practices. Right conditions to develop academic ethical morals must be promoted and created by faculty. This is very important as the health field largely depend on honesty; hence students produced must exhibit the highest moral standards which are embedded in the code of ethics of the health profession such as nursing.

When all these recommendations are taken seriously, plagiarism cases are likely to be reduced and the cultivation of academic honesty will be promoted.



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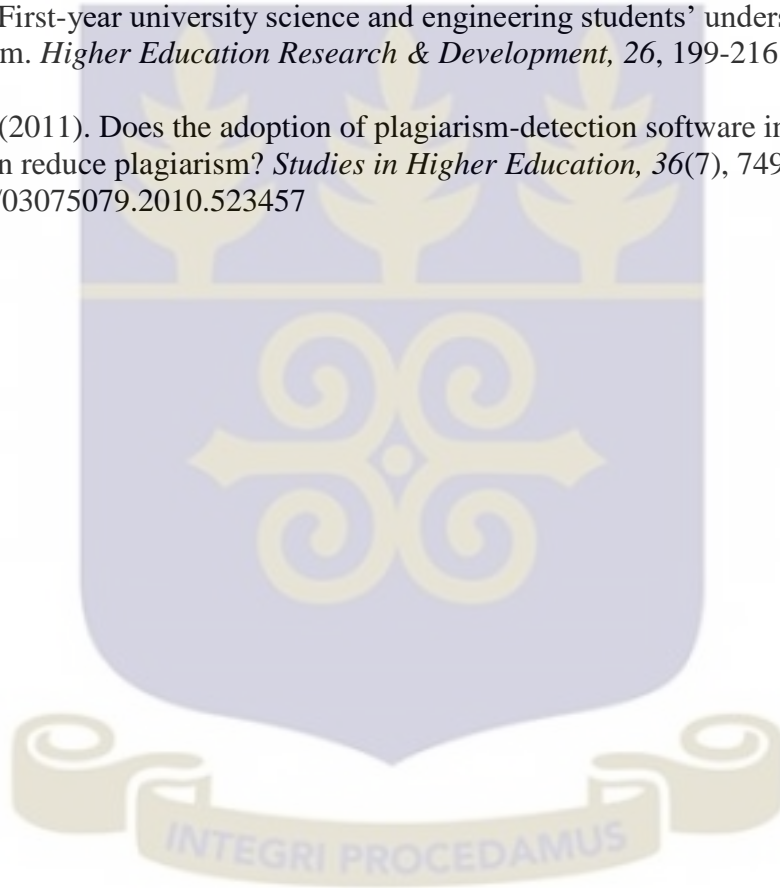
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## APPENDIX

University of Ghana

Department of Information Studies

### QUESTIONNAIRE

**Dear Sir/Madam**

This study seeks to investigate the **awareness and incidence of plagiarism among students of Narh-Bita College**. This study is an academic requirement. You have been identified as a key participant for this study. Please it will be appreciated if you can spare a few minutes of your busy schedule to fill this questionnaire. Please be assured that your responses will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Please select the best response by **TICKING** or **CIRCLING** where appropriate.

#### **PART I – BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

1. What is your age?
  - a. 16 – 20
  - b. 21 – 25
  - c. 26 – 30
  - d. Above 30
2. Gender
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
3. What is your programme of study?
  - a. RGN
  - b. P. A.
4. What is your year of study?
  - a. First year
  - b. Second year
  - c. Third year

**PART II****SECTION A****AWARENESS OR KNOWLEDGE OF PLAGIARISM**

1. Do you know of the copyright laws?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
2. Have you heard of the term '**plagiarism**' before?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
3. Where did you hear the term from?
  - a. From my teachers
  - b. From my colleagues
  - c. Through learning or reading
4. Did you receive a talk on plagiarism during your orientation as a fresh student?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

**To what extent do you rate the following statements as constituting plagiarism in the use of information in your writings? Please rate on the scale where 1= Agree, 2= Disagree, 3= Don't Know, 4= No Response.**

<b>Statements about plagiarism</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
5.	Copying word for word from a book or journal without acknowledgement				
6.	Copying verbatim from another person's work without using quotation marks				
7.	Paraphrasing a text without acknowledging the source				
8.	Summarizing a text without acknowledgement				
9.	Copying from a colleague's assignment				
10.	Writing an assignment for a colleague				
11.	Submitting a work as an individual while it is written by a group				
12.	Submitting a work as a group while it is written by an individual				

13.	Copying from the Internet without citing the source				
14.	Not including reference in one's work				
15.	Inventing references or bibliography				
16.	Inventing or altering statistics in one's work				

## SECTION B

### PREVALENCE OF PLAGIARISM

**How often do you engage or commit the following acts of plagiarism? Please rate your responses on the scale where 1= Very Often, 2= Often, 3= Once a While, 4= Never, 5= No Response.**

Acts of plagiarism		1	2	3	4	5
1.	Copying word for word from a book or journal without acknowledgement and using quotation marks					
2.	Paraphrasing and summarising a text without acknowledgement					
3.	Copying from a colleague's assignment with or without his/her permission					
4.	Copying portions of text from electronic sources without acknowledgement					
5.	Submitting assignments without references					
6.	Including references one's did not use					
7.	Altering data or statistics in one's work					
8.	Submitting a work as individual while it is written by a group					
9.	Submitting a work as a group while it is written by an individual					
10.	Buying term paper or assignment from a paper mill					
11.	Paying somebody to write a work for you					

**SECTION C****MOTIVATIONS BEHIND PLAGIARIZING**

**To what extent will you rate the following as motivations for plagiarism? Please rate on the Likert Scale where 1= Strongly Agree, 2= Agree, 3= Disagree, 4= Strongly Disagree, 5= Don't Know, 6= No Response.**

<b>Motivations or reasons for plagiarizing</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
1.	Poor writing skills						
2.	Lack of referencing skills						
3.	Poor teaching and learning methods						
4.	Laziness and lack of time management						
5.	Assignment is difficult						
6.	There are lot of materials to be downloaded free of charge from the Internet						
7.	Do not know how to cite Internet sources						
8.	Pressure to succeed						
9.	Teachers have never complained about it						
10.	Those who does it often get better grades						
11.	Everybody is doing it						
12.	Poor understanding of plagiarism						

**SECTION D**

**KNOWLEDGE OF PENALTIES FOR PLAGIARISTS**

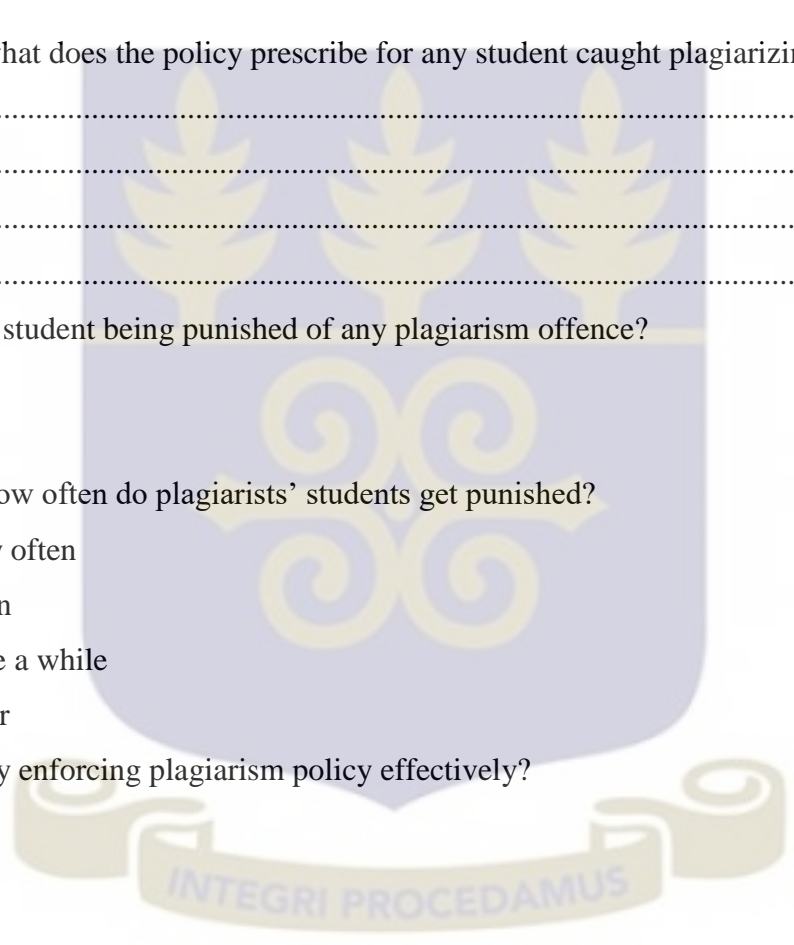
1. Do you know the college's plagiarism policy?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
2. Have you ever read the policy?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
3. If yes, what does the policy prescribe for any student caught plagiarizing?

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4. Has any student being punished of any plagiarism offence?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
5. If yes, how often do plagiarists' students get punished?
  - a. Very often
  - b. Often
  - c. Once a while
  - d. never
6. Is faculty enforcing plagiarism policy effectively?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No



THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!!!!!!!