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# **Knowledge, Perception and Attitude of Science and Social Science Undergraduates to Plagiarism in University of Ibadan, Nigeria**

By

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## **Abstract**

*It is a common knowledge that undergraduates in the discipline of science and social science consult a wide variety of information materials to carry out researches, assignments, prepare for examinations and accomplish their terminal projects. As such, they are prone to unethical use, which may constitute plagiarism; hence this study investigated knowledge, perception and attitude of science and social science undergraduates to plagiarism in University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population consisted of 3,459 undergraduates during 2016/2017 academic session. A two stage sampling technique was adopted. A stratified sampling was first employed to group students to levels of study from 100 to 400 Level. Simple random sampling technique was applied to select 10% of the population, making a total sample size of 348. Data collection instrument was a structured questionnaire. The statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) was used for data analysis. The following findings were made: undergraduates are aware of what constitute the act of plagiarism, however, they believe it is difficult to avoid it completely; the knowledge of plagiarism does not stop the indulgence in it; factors promoting plagiarism include: short deadlines, lack of referencing knowledge, lack of penalty for involvement in plagiarism, among others. It was therefore, recommended that higher institutions in Nigeria should include topics on plagiarism, referencing and copyright issues in their curricula. All tertiary institutions*

*should develop and implement an in-house policy on plagiarism and copyright infringement, among others.*

**Keywords:** Copyright, Copyright Infringement, Attitude to Plagiarism, intellectual Property, Knowledge of Plagiarism, Perception of Plagiarism, Plagiarism

## **Introduction**

University education is more than the next level in the learning process; it is a critical component of human development worldwide (Otonko, 2012). The university system helps to transform the society into a knowledgeable one. It instils good attitude and engenders attitudinal changes necessary for the socialisation process in the society and in the long run brings about transformation. In universities generally, there are different categories of people that make up its universality: teaching and non-teaching staff, students, management and other ad-hoc staff. The focal point of this discussion is students aspiring for their Bachelor's degrees, referred to as undergraduates.

An undergraduate is a university student who has not completed the requirements for the award of bachelor's degree. Undergraduates are more likely to be impatient, inquisitive, energetic, and carefree due to the fact that they are young and have not yet known the implications of copyright infringement and the full essence of a university education. Undergraduates in the sciences in University of Ibadan are students who have been admitted into the university to study botany, chemistry, microbiology, computer science, physics, statistics, mathematics, geology and zoology. To fulfil the basic requirement to become a graduate from the faculty, undergraduates in this faculty will have to take various courses such as cryptogrammic biology, inorganic chemistry, introduction to elementary mathematics just to mention a few. They attend classes, do practical, assignments, examinations, project, seminar presentations, field trips and also industrial attachment to qualify in their various disciplines. In University of Ibadan, undergraduates in faculty of social science are students who have been admitted to study economics, sociology, political science, geography and psychology. They do classwork, assignment, group work, group presentation, examinations, projects and practicals to become graduates in their fields of study.

To meet up with this requirements, undergraduates in the science and social science disciplines need information from books, monographs, periodicals, databases, online resources and the Internet. To make learning meaningful, they consult a wide range of

information materials to do assignments, classwork, prepare for examination and also carry out various group works, researches and projects. Undergraduates can access information materials in both print and non-prints format. The various sources through which information is available to undergraduates includes: the university libraries, the Internet, textbooks, periodicals and databases subscribed to by the university and other relevant organisations. In the present information age, students have better access to information than students of years before. This makes it logical to conclude that students in this century may be more susceptible to plagiarism and other copyright infringements.

The act of plagiarism has also been enhanced with advancement in technology. With the emergence of gadgets such as laptop, phones, tablets and the likes, it is much easier to plagiarise. The advancement in telecommunication platforms has been driven by the increased adoption of wireless personal devices, the changes in lifestyles, habits and norms. Increased use of electronic devices and readily available access to online fora among the student population have created an opportunity for Internet fraud and plagiarism to grow in university contexts across the world (Graham et al., 1994; Genereux and McLeod, 1995 cited in Tayan 2017:156). Some undergraduates input search terms on any search engine to retrieve information with just few taps on their gadgets. They copy out whatever information is retrieved without acknowledging the sources. Some are obviously ignorant of the fact that the information was kept there by someone else.

The use of mobile phones is no doubt a breakthrough in information and communication technology, it has improved access to information. It has facilitated exchange of ideas, knowledge and created platform for social interaction. It has also created a platform to seek information and expert opinions. In the 21st century, students spend more time on phone especially when an examination or test is not fast approaching and they are not compelled to read. This has led to an increase in the use of Internet and in the long run has contributed to the act of plagiarism.

The use of Internet for educational purpose is on the increase among Nigerian students. Online access to e-journals and e-books seems to be the emerging trend among

learners. The advantage the new media has over print culture is that it combines and presents through the same medium the virtues of print and multimedia resources (Ogungbeni, Adekanye, Bamigbose and Sulaiman, 2016). With the advent of the Internet, World Wide Web and social media, civilisation has taken a step further and this has made it possible for scholars and researchers to circulate their ideas and works faster, which makes access to information easy and this also makes the act of plagiarism easier. One can assume that only the clear cases of plagiarism are reported and this includes the direct cut and paste from materials available online. On extreme cases some students simply print the works of other authors and pass it off as their own. Most students seem to see the Internet as a somewhat magical font of wisdom. This uncontrollable use of the Internet by the end users, students inclusive, is not usually done the proper way and this has aggravated the act of plagiarism.

Infringement refers to the use of the intellectual work in such a way that violates the right of the intellectual owner. This includes plagiarism, piracy and so on. Hashim, Jaafar, Pillai, Lutgen, Yee, Ciaramicoli, Takada, Zawawi, Ruth and Shoniah (n. d.), saw plagiarism as an act of reproducing another individual's ideas, document, or any other form of information without acknowledging the source of such information. Plagiarism is a component of academic misconduct in that it is a misconduct that is rampant in the academia. Ma, Lu, Turner and Wan (2007), classified plagiarism as copying verbatim without acknowledgement whilst not putting the content in double quotes; copying verbatim with acknowledgement but without putting the content in quotes. An increase in demand for literature as more people became more literate, gave rise to the need to claim someone else's intellectual work. Basically, plagiarism involves using or passing off someone else's work as one's work. This involves (but not limited to) consulting materials without referencing or acknowledging the use of such materials and copying verbatim without putting such copied work in quotes.

Knowledge refers to the extent to which a person is aware of something. Knowledge is usually explored at various level and may or may not be a determinant of

how a student relates with what the focus of discuss is. Perception refers to the way one thinks or understands something and this in turn could be a determinant of how one relates with such a thing. Attitude to plagiarism refers to the behaviour of a student when consulting other people's work. It could also be referred to as a student's disposition when using other people's work. Attitude refers to the perceived stance of an individual. It refers to someone's take on something. The way a student thinks affects such student's way of doing things. Attitude to plagiarism infers the way a student thinks, which affects the way such a student does assignments, projects, group work and even research. It refers to the way a student perceives the act of plagiarism.

Different contributory factors would definitely shape an individuals' knowledge, perception or attitude towards something. Culture might perhaps be a contributory factor to what shapes an individual's attitude. By culture, it is suggested from the perspective of the socialisation process. Lack of proper project supervision by lecturers might also be a major contribution to framing students' perception or attitude to plagiarism. Lack of understanding of referencing process might, lack of knowledge about what plagiarism, students' age and level of study, are all determinants of undergraduate students' knowledge, perception and attitude towards plagiarism. Plagiarism in this study refers to the act of copying someone's intellectual property by undergraduates without proper acknowledgement in form of referencing.

Orim (2014), asserts that plagiarism is a problem because though students are meant to learn from the work or writings of other people and add some fresh ideas of their own, there is a need to differentiate which of the writing belongs to them. The main aim of education is to build an independent manpower that can contribute to the society to develop the society at large. This aim might be hindered if plagiarism is not reduced to the barest minimum. Students who rely on copying to advance in academics will most likely not be the best student and will end up not having something tangible to contribute to the society. Plagiarism is also a problem because it discourages researchers from carrying out

researches and publishing their finding. This will in turn have an adverse effect on the economy.

Copyright law prevents the infringement of the intellectual contents of literary works by users in higher institutions of learning. Many students get admitted into the university with basic knowledge of how to use the Internet to access information but no prior knowledge on what referencing is about. Rather than being deliberately dishonest, plagiarism by undergraduates might be as a result of misunderstanding, although this does not justify the act. The attitude of undergraduates to plagiarism therefore should be checked because students consult various materials to shape their thought; and are prone to unethical use of the materials they consult. This study therefore investigated to find out the knowledge, perception and attitude of science and social science undergraduates in University of Ibadan, Nigeria to plagiarism. Undergraduates have been considered because many of them seem to be ignorant of the acts that constitute plagiarism. The scope of this study is undergraduates in the science and social science faculties of University of Ibadan.

### **Research questions**

The following research questions have been raised to guide the study:

1. What is the level of knowledge of plagiarism of undergraduates of faculties of science and social sciences of University of Ibadan, Nigeria?
2. What is the perception of plagiarism by undergraduates of faculties of science and social sciences of University of Ibadan, Nigeria?
3. What is the attitude of undergraduates of faculties of science and social sciences of University of Ibadan, Nigeria to plagiarism?
4. What is the frequency of involvement in the act of plagiarism among undergraduates of faculties of science and social sciences of University of Ibadan, Nigeria?
5. What are the factors influencing the attitude to plagiarism by undergraduates of faculties of science and social sciences of University of Ibadan, Nigeria?



## Methodology

Descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. The population of the study consist of undergraduates in Faculties of Science and the Social Sciences at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. This consists of all undergraduates in the nine departments in the Faculty of Science and the five departments in the Faculty of the Social Sciences. According to the Academic Planning Unit of University of Ibadan, Faculty of Science has 2,097 undergraduates while Faculty of Social Science has 1,362 undergraduate s (Academic Planning Unit, University of Ibadan, 2016/2017 academic session). These made a total population size of 3,459 as contained in Tables 1 and 2.

**Table 1: Population of undergraduates in the Faculty of Science**

<b>Departments</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Botany</b>	55	63	39	33	<b>190</b>
<b>Chemistry</b>	120	120	108	58	<b>406</b>
<b>Computer Science</b>	56	49	116	75	<b>296</b>
<b>Geology</b>	66	55	46	39	<b>206</b>
<b>Mathematics</b>	70	32	65	36	<b>203</b>
<b>Micro Biology</b>	53	56	53	55	<b>217</b>
<b>Physics</b>	61	18	56	45	<b>180</b>
<b>Statistics</b>	54	26	61	50	<b>191</b>
<b>Zoology</b>	66	60	53	29	<b>208</b>
<b>Total</b>	601	479	597	420	<b>2,097</b>

*Source: Academic Planning Unit 2016/2017*

**Table 2: Population of undergraduates in Faculty of Social Science**

<b>Departments</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Economics</b>	69	67	68	94	<b>298</b>
<b>Geography</b>	11	55	54	44	<b>164</b>
<b>Political science</b>	59	60	60	92	<b>271</b>
<b>Psychology</b>	22	92	76	96	<b>286</b>
<b>Sociology</b>	74	94	77	98	<b>343</b>
<b>Total</b>	235	368	335	424	<b>1,362</b>

*Source: Academic Planning Unit 2016/2017*

A two stage sampling technique was used for this study. A stratified sampling was first employed to group students to levels of study from 100 level to 400 level in each department in both faculties. A simple random sampling technique was then applied to select the actual sample size of 10% of the population. The sample size was then be divided by four, with each representing a level of study. The same size for Faculty of Science was rounded off to 212, while that of Faculty of Social Science was 136, making a total of 348.

The data collection instrument used in this study was a structured questionnaire. The content validity of the instrument was tested by carrying out a pilot survey on the undergraduates in Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan, 10% of the original sample was used to carry out the pilot survey which amounted to 35 respondents. The Cronbach-alpha method was used to determine reliability co-efficient of the instrument. The details of the results obtained on the sections are as follows: Section B, level of knowledge on plagiarism among undergraduates ( $\alpha=.838$ ); Section C collects information on perception of plagiarism by undergraduates ( $\alpha=.602$ ); Section D, attitude to plagiarism among undergraduates ( $\alpha=.705$ ); Section E, frequency of involvement in the act among undergraduates ( $\alpha=.920$ ); Section F, factors influencing plagiarism among undergraduates ( $\alpha=.865$ ). The overall questionnaire was ( $\alpha=0.747$ ). The statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) was used for the analysis. Descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentages were used to analyse research question

## **Data Analysis**

### **Research question 1: What is the level of knowledge of plagiarism by undergraduates?**

Table 3 answers research question one. It shows the extent to which undergraduate students in Faculty of Science and Faculty of the Social Science in University of Ibadan know about

plagiarism. For the purpose of interpretation, the scale Very High Extent, High Extent, Low Extent and Not Aware was combined into two parts with Very High Extent and High Extent indicating knowledge while Low Extent and Not Aware indicating no knowledge by undergraduate students of University of Ibadan.

**Table 3: Frequency distribution of level of knowledge on plagiarism**

S/N		Very high extent	High extent	Low extent	Not aware	Invalid	Total
		F %	F %	F %	F %	F %	F %
1.	I know that copying verbatim without citing the author or quotation marks is plagiarism.	138 41.2	119 35.5	39 11.6	39 11.6		<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
2.	I know that failing to put a quotation mark in a quote is plagiarism.	89 26.6	123 36.7	76 22.7	44 13.1	3 0.9	<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
3	I know that turning in someone's work as mine is plagiarism.	175 52.2	110 32.8	32 9.6	13 3.9	5 1.5	<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
4	I know that copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit is plagiarism.	157 46.9	110 32.8	49 14.6	17 5.1	2 0.6	<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
5	I know that paraphrasing an idea without acknowledgment is plagiarism.	100 29.9	117 34.9	98 29.3	20 6.0		<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
6	I know that improper referencing is plagiarism.	99 29.6	102 30.4	110 32.8	21 6.3		<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
7	I know that re-use of my previous work in pretense that it is new is plagiarism.	73 21.8	96 28.7	100 29.9	65 19.4	1 0.3	<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
8	I know that giving incorrect information about a source is plagiarism.	81 24.2	103 30.7	109 32.5	40 11.9	2 0.6	<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
9	I know that changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit is plagiarism.	72 21.5	110 32.8	116 34.6	30 9.0	7 2.1	<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
10	I know that copying so many words or ideas from a work that it makes up majority of my work is plagiarism even when acknowledged.	70 20.9	94 28.1	116 34.6	55 16.4		<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
11	I know that improper paraphrasing is plagiarism.	70 20.9	94 28.1	116 34.6	55 16.4		<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
12	I believe I know exactly what constitutes plagiarism and what does not.	63 18.8	128 38.2	113 33.7	31 9.3		<b>335</b> <b>100</b>

*Hint: F=Frequency, %=Percentage*

Generally speaking, findings revealed that majority of the undergraduates' in University of Ibadan are not ignorant of the indices that constitute plagiarism in the use of other peoples' intellectual property.

**Research question 2: What is the perception of plagiarism by undergraduates?**

Table 4 gives answer to research question two. It shows the perception of plagiarism by undergraduate students in University of Ibadan. For the purpose of interpretation the measurement scale which was: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree and Disagree was combined into two parts with Strongly Agree and Agree representing Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree representing Disagreed.

**Table 4: Frequency distribution showing perception of plagiarism**

S/ N		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Invalid	Total
		F %	F %	F %	F %	F %	F %
1.	I think students should be allowed to copy verbatim without using quotation mark.	53 15.8	73 21.8	131 39.1	78 23.3		335 100
2.	I think authors should allow students use their works freely.	66 19.7	164 49.0	81 24.2	24 7.2		335 100
3.	I think authors are very greedy people for not allowing free access to their work.	35 10.4	75 22.4	155 46.3	67 20.0	3 0.9	335 100
4	I think knowing how to research ethically or reference properly is a waste of knowledge.	39 11.6	47 14.0	132 39.4	115 34.3	2 0.6	335 100
5	I think too much attention is given to the act of plagiarism.	55 16.4	70 20.9	160 47.8	50 14.9		335 100
6	I think laziness on the part of the students when it comes to researching should not be condoned.	130 38.8	124 37.0	57 17.0	24 7.2		335 100
7	I think more attention should be given the act of plagiarism.	115 34.3	142 42.4	58 17.3	20 6.0		335 100
8	I think students should be educated on what constitutes plagiarism.	191 57.0	109 32.5	23 6.9	11 3.3	1 0.3	335 100

*Hint: F=Frequency, %=Percentage*

Results revealed that majority of the undergraduates perceive that knowledge of plagiarism is good.

**Research question 3: What is the attitude to plagiarism by undergraduates?**

Table 5 gives answer to research question three. It shows the attitude of plagiarism by undergraduate students in University of Ibadan. For the purpose of interpretation the measurement scale which was: Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree and

Disagree was combined into two parts with Strongly Agree and Agree representing Agreed, Disagree and Strongly Disagree representing Disagreed.

**Table 5: Frequency distribution table showing attitude of undergraduate students to plagiarism**

S/N		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Invalid	Total
		F %	F %	F %	F %	F %	F %
1	It is difficult to carry out an assignment without using some of the authors' words.	129 38.5	162 48.4	33 9.9	8 2.4	3 0.9	<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
2	Plagiarism is not a big deal because it involves another person's word not material goods.	51 15.2	112 33.4	132 39.4	38 11.3	2 0.6	<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
3.	The Punishment for plagiarism in the university should be light because undergraduates are young and just learning to do research.	64 19.1	187 55.8	65 19.4	16 4.8	3 0.9	<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
4.	The act of plagiarism is justified if the lecturer assigns too much work with short deadlines.	62 18.5	149 44.5	108 32.2	12 3.6	4 1.2	<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
5.	If others do it and get away with it then why not the undergraduates.	53 15.8	112 33.4	135 40.3	33 9.9	2 0.6	<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
6.	It is fun copying a work and posing it as mine.	48 14.3	73 21.8	133 39.7	80 23.9	1 0.3	<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
7.	Plagiarism is against my ethical value.	71 21.2	162 48.4	77 23.0	25 7.5		<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
8.	It is annoying when someone consults the work of another without acknowledging it.	102 30.4	171 51.0	48 14.3	11 3.3	3 0.9	<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
9.	It is unpleasant to lift the entire content of someone's work.	123 36.7	161 48.1	37 11.0	13 3.9		<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
10.	Re-using my work is not bad, it's my work you know.	91 27.2	152 45.4	78 23.3	14 4.2		<b>335</b> <b>100</b>

*Hint: F=Frequency, %=Percentage*

Results revealed that majority of the undergraduate believe it is difficult to avoid plagiarism completely

**Research question 4: What is the frequency of involvement in the act of plagiarism among undergraduates of faculties of science and social sciences of University of Ibadan, Nigeria?**

Table 6 gives answer to research question four. It shows the frequency of involvement in the act of plagiarism among undergraduate students in University of Ibadan. The measurement scale which was: Always, Sometimes, Rarely, Never was combined into two parts for the purpose of interpretation with Always and Sometimes representing Often, Rarely and Never representing Not often.

**Table 6: Frequency distribution table showing frequency of involvement in the act of plagiarism**

S/N		Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Invalid	Total
		F %	F %	F %	F %	F %	F %
1.	I copy verbatim without citing or quoting.	33 9.9	183 54.6	88 26.3	31 9.3		<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
2.	I remove quotation mark from words or sentences that have quotation mark when copying.	37 11.0	145 43.3	113 33.7	39 11.6	1 0.3	<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
3.	I turn in someone's work as mine.	24 7.2	96 28.7	117 34.9	96 28.7	2 0.6	<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
4.	I copy words or ideas from someone else without giving credit.	31 9.3	122 36.4	110 32.8	72 21.5		<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
5.	I paraphrase an idea without acknowledging.	34 10.1	140 41.8	118 35.2	42 12.5	1 0.3	<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
6.	I reference improperly.	43 12.8	141 42.1	94 28.1	56 16.7	1 0.3	<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
7.	I re-use my previous work.	48 14.3	164 49.0	79 23.6	42 12.5	2 0.6	<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
8.	Some downloaded works don't have references so I write whatever I deem fit when acknowledging such work.	60 17.9	188 56.1	60 17.9	26 7.8	1 0.3	<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
9.	Although I change words but I copy the sentence structure of a source without giving credit.	53 15.8	173 51.6	80 23.9	28 8.4	1 0.3	<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
10.	I copy so many words or idea from a work that it makes up majority of my work.	53 15.8	140 41.8	94 28.1	48 14.3		<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
11.	I download from the Internet and submit as it is.	39 11.6	127 37.9	102 30.4	67 20.0		<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
12.	I don't know how to reference.	43 12.8	118 35.2	90 26.9	82 24.5	2 0.6	<b>335</b> <b>100</b>

*Hint: F=Frequency, %=Percentage*

Findings reveal that undergraduates frequently involve themselves in the act of plagiarism despite the fact that they are aware of what constitutes the act.

**Research question 5: What are the factors influencing the attitude to plagiarism by undergraduates?**

Table 7 gives answer to research question five. It shows the factors affecting the attitude to plagiarism by undergraduate students in University of Ibadan. For the purpose of interpretation the measurement scale which was: Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree was combined into two parts with Strongly Agree and Agree representing Agreed, Disagree and Strongly Disagree representing Disagreed.

**Table 4.7: Frequency distribution showing factors influencing attitude to plagiarism**

S/ N		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Invalid	Total
		F %	F %	F %	F %	F %	F %
1.	I can download work from the Internet and pass off as mine because my friend has done it before and nothing happened.	50 14.9	85 25.4	138 41.2	62 18.5		<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
2.	I think the time given for submission of research work is too short therefore it is easier to download and submit.	46 13.7	159 47.5	101 30.1	29 8.7		<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
3.	I was not taught nor explained to how to reference in my school.	53 15.8	120 35.8	122 36.4	39 11.6	1 0.3	<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
4.	I have done so many works without referencing and I have never been penalized.	43 12.8	128 38.2	133 39.7	28 8.4	3 0.9	<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
5.	I don't think there is a way someone could be caught using electronic resources without referencing the source.	48 14.3	124 37.0	127 37.9	32 9.6	4 1.2	<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
6.	I download electronic documents easily.	63 18.8	178 53.1	80 23.9	13 3.9	1 0.3	<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
7.	The procedure for carrying out a research work is too high.	47 14.0	163 48.7	108 32.2	16 4.8	1 0.3	<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
8.	I am so busy so I only have time to do my researches when the deadlines is approaching.	50 14.9	112 33.4	141 42.1	28 8.4	4 1.2	<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
9.	There are always too many assignments, term papers and project works so I have no other choice than to copy and paste from the Internet.	52 15.5	121 36.1	128 38.2	31 9.3	3 0.9	<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
10.	I find it difficult to construct sentences as this takes a lot of time and effort.	45 13.4	108 32.2	135 40.3	46 13.7	1 0.3	<b>335</b> <b>100</b>
11.	I have never had any formal training on how to research.	73	130	91	41		<b>335</b>

		21.8	38.8	27.2	12.2		<b>100</b>
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*Hint: F=Frequency, %=Percentage*

Findings from data on Table 7 revealed that majority of undergraduate students agree with most of the indices that reflect various factors as an influence on their attitude to plagiarism.

**Discussion of the findings**

The findings revealed that undergraduates are aware of what constitutes plagiarism. From the findings, majority of the students investigated knew that copying verbatim the work of an author without citing such author is plagiarism; failing to put quotation marks in a quotation is plagiarism; turning in someone’s work as theirs is plagiarism; copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit is plagiarism; paraphrasing an idea without acknowledging is plagiarism; improper referencing is plagiarism; giving incorrect information about a source is plagiarism; changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit is plagiarism; reuse of their previous work is plagiarism. In fact, 191 students representing 57% of the respondents indicated that they believed they knew exactly what constitutes plagiarism and what did not. However, majority of the respondents do not know that improper paraphrasing is plagiarism. This is also in line with Akbulut, Sendag, Birinci, Kilicer, Sahin and Odabasi (2008, in Salleh, Ghazali, Awang and Sapiai 2012) who explained that students think the primary goal of writing involves using quotes, citations, sources and acknowledging authors while their originality is secondary. They further stated that there may also be confusion on the basic way of paraphrasing which will lead to increase in the act of plagiarism.

The findings on students perception of plagiarism revealed that despite the fact that students do not think they should be allowed to copy verbatim without inserting quotation marks, they also do not agree that authors are very greedy people but majority of them think authors should allow people use their work freely. Many of the students thought knowing how to research ethically or reference properly is not a waste of knowledge.



Majority of the respondents did not think too much attention is giving to the act of plagiarism; in fact, they thought more attention should be given to the act of plagiarism. The respondents also agreed that laziness on the part of students during research should not be condoned. Three hundred students representing a whopping 89.5% of the respondents agreed that students should be educated on what constitutes plagiarism. These findings supported Abasi and Graves (2008) when they explained that students understand they have to avoid plagiarism but this in return causes stress in proving that the work is not completely their own. Students actually perceive that knowledge of plagiarism is good and the act ought to be avoided

The findings on attitude to plagiarism revealed that majority of the respondents felt it is difficult to carry out an assignment without using some of the authors' original words. Students' response here revealed that they felt it is difficult to avoid the act of plagiarism. In the same vein, most of them think plagiarism is a big deal even if it just involves another person's idea and not material goods. The respondents also agreed that the punishment for plagiarism should be light because undergraduates are young and are just learning the act of researching. They also feel that plagiarism is justified if the lecturers assign too much work to students with short deadlines. This finding is in line with Akubulut, et. al. (2008 in Salleh et al. 2012) who explain that one of the reasons why students plagiarise is short deadlines.

Half of the respondents felt if others did it and got away with it then why not undergraduates? This findings agrees with Obanya (2007) who said that students' are interested in the shortest route possible. They feel the benefit they will get outweighs the risk they might encounter. Although the students did not find it fun posing someone's work as theirs. They also thought it is unpleasant to lift the entire content of someone's work. Majority of the respondents felt plagiarism is against their ethical value although they felt re-using their previous work is not bad. These findings reveal that although student, to a certain extent, know what plagiarism is and they perceive that knowledge of plagiarism is good, nevertheless, they believe it is difficult to avoid plagiarism completely. This

realisation is germane as Smith, Ghazali, Noor and Siti (2007) said that factors that lead to plagiarism are lack of information, lack of understanding, lack of competence and personal attitude.

The findings on frequency of involvement in the act of plagiarism revealed that majority of students often copy verbatim without citing and quoting; remove quotation mark from words or sentences that have quotation mark when copying; paraphrase an idea without acknowledging; reference improperly; re-use their previous works; write what they deem fit when they download works that do not have reference; change words but copy the sentence structure of a source without giving credit; copy words or ideas from a work that make up majority of their work. Findings reveal that although students, to a certain extent, were aware of plagiarism, they still frequently involved themselves in the act of plagiarism. This implies that the knowledge of plagiarism does not in itself put an end to the act of plagiarism. A good amount of the respondents do not know how to reference. Although most of the respondents still often did not turn in someone's work as theirs and they do not often download from the Internet and submit as it is.

Findings on the factors influencing attitude to plagiarism revealed that majority of the students were of the opinion that short deadlines, lack of knowledge on how to reference, lack of penalty for involvement in the act, lack of knowledge on the fact that there is a mechanism for detecting the act, easy access to electronic and virtual space, laziness, tight schedule, work overload, carelessness and lack of training on acts of plagiarism are all factors influencing their attitude towards plagiarism. These finding supported Anney and Mosha (2015), who stress that plagiarism has been growing fast in this era of technologies where students are able to submit someone's work as their own. Scanlon and Neumann (2002) had earlier stressed that the advent of electronic space has reduce the stress involved in the act of plagiarism and this has accelerated the involvement in the act. This findings also supported Batane (2010) who believes that students plagiarise because of laziness. In the same vein Dordoy (2002) revealed that the most important

factors influencing plagiarism includes laziness or mismanagement of time, easy access to materials on the Internet, unawareness of rules and regulation and unwitting plagiarising.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations have been made to ensure that the act of plagiarism is reduced to the barest minimum:

1. Higher institutions in Nigeria should include topics on plagiarism, referencing and copyright issues to their curriculum, especially in the first year of learning. This should include proper orientation on the implications of plagiarism and copyright infringements in research.
2. Stakeholders in copyright enforcement should organise enlightenment programmes like workshops, seminars for the general public. This will in turn create better awareness and more practical guide on how to avoid the act of plagiarism and copyright infringements completely.
3. Educational institutions should include research ethics and guides in their curriculum at the secondary school level to sensitise students at the early stage of their education.
4. Tertiary institutions should develop an in-house policy on plagiarism and copyright infringement this should be implemented in due course.
5. Government should intervene by ensuring that there is a strict policy on zero tolerance to the act of plagiarism and copyright infringement.
6. Anti-plagiarism software should be adopted and use in all higher institutions in Nigeria to ensure that similarity index should not exceed the required level in students' works.

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