

## **UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON PLAGIARISM**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Plagiarism is a pervasive and increasing problem at all levels of study in higher education. Institutional awareness of plagiarism has largely been to focus on a pedagogical response and deterrence through punishment. The study sheds light on students' experiences of plagiarism, their understandings of and attitudes towards it. Based on a self-reported study of a stratified sample of 300 undergraduate students drawn from three colleges of a public university in Ghana, this paper explores the nature of plagiarism and students' understanding of the concept. The study revealed that unattributed copying and falsification of references was a common activity amongst students as a result of poor understanding and lack of real engagement with plagiarism and referencing issues. It is evident that the institution's 'awareness strategies' to avoid or minimize plagiarism is not effective. The paper concludes that institutional efforts to dissuade students from plagiarism should be centred on focusing not only on deterrence through punishment but on developing a more holistic institutional pedagogical approach instead of in a piecemeal manner.

**KEYWORDS:** Plagiarism, Education, Plagiarist Acts