Role of information professionals in alleviating student plagiarism for academic integrity in Kenyan universities: a review of literature

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ABSTRACT

Academic integrity is the commitment and demonstration of honest and moral behavior in an academic setting. This is most relevant at the university level as it relates to providing credit to other people when using their ideas. In simplest terms, it requires acknowledging the contribution of other people. Plagiarism is the act of taking someones else's work and passing them off as your own. Student plagiarism is a known problem facing universities around the world. Plagiarism is perceived to be a growing problem and universities are being required to devote increasing time and resources to combating it. This fraud behaviour of students in universities is great concern today. As result of explosion of plagiarism among university students, many universities in developed countries have been using technologies to combating deceitful plagiarism behaviour of students. As information literacy experts, information professionals are especially suited to take the lead in educating students about plagiarism and promoting academic integrity. University Librarians working in Kenyan universities can develop information literacy programs to address the issue of student plagiarism. Through combining librarians knowledge of research and information literacy with subject heading, and integrating these skills into the curriculum, students will feel more empowered and competent in their academic assignments. This article will review different types of plagiarism practiced by Kenyan university students and how it affects the integrity of their academic work and how this norm can be alleviated. This study aims to conduct a review of literature on the role of information professionals in alleviating plagiarism in universities in Kenya with a view of suggesting possible solutions to the named problem.

Introduction

This research paper aims to review literature on the role of information professionals in alleviating plagiarism for academic integrity in Kenyan universities. Academic integrity is the commitment and demonstration of honest and moral behavior in an academic setting. This is most relevant at the university level as it relates to providing credit to other people when using their ideas. In simplest terms, it requires acknowledging the contribution of other people.

Librarians assist students, faculty and staff from all disciplines with locating, evaluating and effectively using information. As they are on the front lines, librarians witness prominent issues patrons experience with information literacy first-hand. This allows them to observe skills gaps in this competency and to clearly define desired outcomes on the rubric to address these gaps. Librarians are powerful pedagogical resources, they are teachers, collaborators and instructional designers. They tutor students on how to think about their research needs, reflect upon their experiences, and consider different types of sources. Information professionals guide students to use the right formatting when they build citations, they also tutor them to know why they should include citations in their work at all. Teaching students about plagiarism is more than teaching them the difference between right and wrong, between collusion and collaboration or between cheating and good academic practice. A really effective anti-plagiarism programme needs to address the main causes of plagiarism by teaching students about information management. Including anti-plagiarism teaching as a key element in an information literacy teaching programme, and embedding it within an academic course, empowers students to become independent learners. It encourages them to consider the value of information, the quality of resources, the effectiveness of their search and the importance of good citation practice throughout the production of a piece of work. Acquiring the skills to weave secondary research into the student's own hypothesis has to be designed into the course.

Although it could be argued that the explosion in the amount of information available to students has led to an increase in plagiarism, effective Information literacy can illustrate how new technologies can be used to help students avoid accidental plagiarism, and to enhance their work. Librarians are best placed to deliver effective Information Literacy training in universities in Kenya. As information literacy experts, information professionals are especially suited to take the lead in educating students about plagiarism and promoting academic integrity. Through combining librarians knowledge of research and information literacy with subject heading, and integrating these skills into the curriculum, students will feel more empowering and competent in their academic assignments. For an Information Literacy to be successful, it requires activities that involve the library staff in training students not just to find sources, but to evaluate them for appropriateness for a given project, and to use them effectively and honestly in their own programs. Information literacy must be a core goal of all contemporary universities, and anti-plagiarism efforts need to be a key component of any such initiative (Hall, 2005).

In a study carried by Gibson and Chester (2010), found out that a growing number of librarians believe they are responsible for plagiarism prevention instruction. In this study, the researchers asserted, Librarians support the delivery of plagiarism prevention instruction through workshops, one-shot library instruction sessions, tutorials, Web pages and handouts. Moreover, since yester years, librarians have collaborated with faculty to teach information literacy skills to students. There are many institutions where librarians collaborate with faculty and staff from academic support centers to develop a broadly disseminated plagiarism prevention curriculum (Strittmatter & Bratton, 2016). Amsberry (2009), pointed out that it is librarians' responsibility to collaborate with faculty to improve students' understanding of appropriate uses of textual sources."

Information literacy is increasingly important in the contemporary environment of rapid technological change and proliferating information resources (Armstrong, 2008). Because of the complexity of information environment, students of higher learning institution are faced with diverse, abundant information choices in their academic studies. Information is available through libraries, resource centers, special interest organization, media and the internet. Information literacy can contribute meaningfully to academic work and research to generate and disseminate information, document and knowledge in universities. In universities, plagiarism can cause downgrading of academic integrity (Kauffman & Young, 2015). In this respect; it is observed that information literacy is needed for reliable and authentic access to the desired information.

Traditional literacy skills are gradually shifting to information literacy skills. Information literacy skills help to find the relevant information of the area of interest to fulfill academic work and also to make efficient and effective use of information to avoid information overload. Information literacy helps in identifying gaps in research and to find the relevant re-

sources that help to contribute to new knowledge to fill existing gaps.

There is a broad agreement from researchers that librarian involvement in plagiarism instruction is a natural extension of their traditional role as gatekeepers of information (Maxymuk 2006). However there is caution as to the boundaries of such instruction, and opinion was divided as to whether such a role should be merely instructional or more involved. Others feel that the role of educating students on using and referencing resources correctly, should not extend to policing and punishing plagiarists, thereby acting as vehicles for the message. Students should take ultimate responsibility for ensuring their work avoided plagiarism, and that this responsibility followed the provision of plagiarism instruction/guidance from the academic institution.

Teaching staff should educate students on plagiarism, and its avoidance, alongside the teaching of correct referencing and citation procedures. The latter of which librarians has an important role to play. Culwin and Lancaster (2001) encourages academics to change assignment criteria annually and to set unique and specific assignments requiring the personal reflections of students. This tactic is also supported by Szabo and Underwood (2004), Gourlay and Greig (2007); Granitz and Loewy (2006); Smith (2003) and Gajadhar (1998) while Maxymuk (2006) suggests including marked oral presentations in modules. Librarians have the skills of referencing and citation of sources, which could be used to ameliorate the problem of internet plagiarism. University librarian's knowledge of referencing and citation procedures could be shared with students to help them avoid committing plagiarism.

Librarians in Kenya universities are experts in the areas of research and citing, skills that are a key asset that librarians could use to enhance students" understanding of the Internet and their ability to source material effectively.

Statement of the Problem

A difficult but essential skill in university writing is using other people's ideas and texts appropriately. All knowledge builds on the contributions of others. In Kenyan public university courses, students are continually engaged with other people's idea: they read them in texts, hear them in lecture, discuss them in class, and incorporate them into our own writing. It is important in their writing both to show their dependence on other people's work and to identify their contribution.

The issue of dishonesty is a matter of great interest in universities. For the last few decades, it has become severe at graduate and undergraduate levels due to availability of technology and connectivity and it has been noted that students continue to exercise the malpractices at their workplace (Akbulut et al, 2008). Ellahi, Mushtaq & Bashir Khan, (2013) explained the eight types of academic dishonesty namely: fabrication, falsification, finagling, plagiarism and duplication, least publishable units, neglecting support and misusing credit. He further points out that the academic dishonesty is the opposite of academic integrity and is defined as any fraudulent actions or attempts by a student to use unauthorized means in connection with a formal academic activity. It involves cheating, plagiarism, deception, fabrication of data and facilitating academic dishonesty (Aldelfatah & Tabsh, 2010). Constantly mutating virus of plagiarism is spreading uncontrollably. Over the years it has acquired many territories, forms and dimensions. It is a luring snare which has trapped many mighty and humble alike. Though its methods and causes are many, yet major motive is one: that is to steal someone intellectual property, gain intellectual wealth without earning it rightly. It is immoral, unethical, sometime criminal, and indeed an academic fraud.

While discussions of intellectual property have engaged librarians, the more traditional challenge of plagiarism in university academic work and the librarian role have seen less attention. The founder of the modern academic integrity movement, Donald McCabe, has argued that it "takes a village" to respond to the student academic. The focus of the academic integrity movement the last decade has been on students, faculty, academic leaders, and student affairs professionals. Librarians have not been regularly included. The issue of plagiarism is one that cries out for the active participation of librarians not only in the academic integrity systems on their respective universities, but also in the national and international academic integrity movement.

Librarians are essential professionals in public universities, and it is time that this professionalism becomes engaged on the matter of strengthening academic integrity. Librarians need not pose as passive service providers; issues like academic integrity are central to the teaching and scholarly missions of our universities, and librarians should assert the centrality of their roles in bridging tradition and adaptability, supplying needed coherence, and providing key platforms for guardianship of accumulated knowledge and the creation of new knowledge.

Information professionals will find many allies in this more active profile, and the results can be provocative and long term.

Discussion

Types of Plagiarism

Plagiarism by Kenyan public university students comes in many forms, some more severe than others, from rephrasing someone's ideas without acknowledgement to stealing a whole essay. These are the five most common types of plagiarism:

Global plagiarism which means takings an entire text by someone else and passing it off as your own. Because it involves deliberately and directly lying about the authorship of a work, this is the most serious type of plagiarism (Streefkert, 2022). Kenyan public universities can avoid this type of plagiarism by writing their own academic essays.

Verbatim plagiarism is the opying words directly, its also known as direct plagiarism, means copying and pasting someone else's words into your own work without attribution. This could be text that's completely identical to the original or slightly altered. If the structure and the majority of the words are the same as in the original, this counts as verbatim plagiarism, even if you delete or change a couple of words. In academic writing, you can and should refer to the words of others. To avoid verbatim plagiarism, you just need to quote the original source by putting the copied text in quotation marks and including an in-text citation.

Paraphrasing plagiarism is the putting of a piece of text into your own words. Paraphrasing without citation is the most common type of plagiarism. Paraphrasing, like quoting, is a legitimate way to incorporate the ideas of others into your writing. It only becomes plagiarism when you rewrite a source's points as if they were your own. To avoid plagiarism when paraphrasing, cite your sources just as you would when quoting. If you translate a piece of text from another language without citation, this is also a type of paraphrasing plagiarism. Translated text should always be cited; you're still using someone else's ideas, even if they're in a different language (Streefkerk, 2022).

Patchwork plagiarism is the stitching together sources, also known as mosaic plagiarism, means copying phrases, passages, and ideas from different sources and putting them together to create a new text. This can involve slightly rephrasing passages while keeping many of the same words and the same basic structure as the original, and inserting your own words here and there to stitch the plagiarized text together. Make sure to cite your sources whenever you quote or paraphrase to avoid plagiarism. This type of plagiarism requires more effort and is more insidious than just copying and pasting from one source, but plagiarism checkers like Turnitin can still easily detect it (Streefkerk,2022).Self-plagiarism is the plagiarizing your own work. Self-plagiarism means reusing work that you've previously submitted or published. It amounts to academic dishonesty to present a paper or a piece of data as brand new when you've already gotten credit for the work.

The most serious form of self-plagiarism is to turn in a paper you already submitted for a grade to another class. Unless you have explicit permission to do so, this is always considered self-plagiarism. Self-plagiarism can also occur when you reuse ideas, phrases or data from your previous assignments. Reworking old ideas and passages is not plagiarism as long as you have permission to do so and you cite your previous work to make their origins clear (Streefkerk, 2022).

What has exuberated plagiarism in Kenyan Universities today

The habits of university students today have changed drastically thanks to the technological tools at their disposal and the access to an enormous amount of information on the web, which they can Literature reports various factors that motivate students' plagiarism in academia. According to Gullifer and Tyson (2010) and Walker (2009)students plagiarise because: inadequate time to study; fear of failure perceived between actual grade and student's personal effort; student studying so many courses that results to a lot of work per semester; a believe that student will not caught because lecturers do not have time to read extensively the assignments because of work pressure; motivation of doing well of getting good grade; student feeling of alienation by colleagues; and student individual factors such as age, grade average point, gender and others(Gullifer & Tyson, 2010, p. 465).Likewise Betts et al. (2012) also reported similar factors for student plagiarism but added other factors that are likely to attract student to act plagiarism behaviour. These include: first, if students are not well integrated in the academic community culture in particular lack of orientation on ethics of academia; second, student with part-time job which affects student study time; third, parental pressure that demand students to perform well; fourth, lack study skills; and finally good student-lecture relationship where lecturers are unlikely to punish them for academic dishonest.

Despite the support from the literature that personal or individual factors are major reasons for academic dishonest among university students, contextual factors such peer cheating behaviour, peer disapproval of cheating behaviour, and perceived severity

of penalties for cheating are reported to be more influential than any other factors(McCabe & Trevino, 1993; McCabe, Treviño, & Butterfield, 2002). There is much correlation between

Peer-related factors and student cheating practice in larger compares with more student ration that lecturer in higher learning institutions (McCabe et al., 2002). Despite concern of academic institutions in the negative impact of plagiarism in academic institutions, and the introduction of honor codes(McCabe & Trevino, 1993) to manage plagiarism practices among university students are yet unsolved. Introduction of honor codes and plagiarism policies are reported to lower the academic dishonest in institutions with honor code that the one without(McCabe & Trevino, 1993; Sutherland-Smith, 2013)though the problem is still growing. Of course, managing plagiarism require legal framework which is identified in the university honor codes and plagiarism policies, and these provides penalties for infringements. Apart from using honor codes and plagiarism policies as way of addressing academic dishonest, recently the major focus of higher learning institutions has shift from detecting to addressing the problem through introduction of academic writing skills course although various software to detect plagiarism are still being used. As Pecorari and Petrić (2014) recommended that the best way to address is by "educating students explicitly about plagiarism ... teaching source use and referencing in greater depth" (p. 287). Thus, combating plagiarism is worth activity for academic institutions because it affects the integrity of institutions apart from affecting student growth in intellectualism (Batane, 2010).

Conclusions and Recommendations

Plagiarism is a menace that has eaten deep into Kenya Universities system. It should be addressed immediately so as to curb its negative effects on the individual, the educational system, the society and the world at large. Gibson and Chester-Fangman (2011) posts that though it will take the involvement of all stakeholders to deal with the problem of plagiarism, the library has a major role to play. Libraries are involved in intellectual property creation, accessibility, protection and preservation. Plagiarism negates the protection of intellectual property rights. It therefore poses a great challenge to libraries. Burke (2004) opined that in dealing with plagiarism, libraries should not only be concerned with detection; they should also take proactive steps in preventing occurrence of plagiarism. Prevention measures range from information literacy and correct citations campaigns, research clinics and advocacy programmes.

The recommendations below can help librarians in helping the Kenyan universities alleviate the plagiarism menace and maintenance of academic integrity:

Discuss plagiarism within the context of research ethics.

At the undergraduate level, students are generally unaware of the extent to which research publications function as a sort of currency within the academic world, determining scholarly reputation and opportunities for advancement. During freshmen orientation at Kenyan universities, the library orientation need to make students aware of how ideas and scholarly work is credited. While this information should be imparted in the context of classes on writing and research, it can also be provided in more piecemeal fashion by associating ideas discussed in class with specific scholars and published works. In other words, much of the learning about how attribution functions in the academic world comes from emulating appropriate behavior modeled by instructions. Scandals involving ethics violation by high-profile scholars or politicians may also provide an opportunity to discuss the serious sanctions against plagiarism within the academic community.

Check for plagiarism.

No policies on plagiarism can have an effect if unethical practices are not detected in the first place. In many cases, plagiarism can be detected as the instructor reads through the paper with sensitivity to features that signal the borrowing of words or ideas. Ideally, it will be detected in earlier drafts of a paper and on assignments that students do in their earlier years of their programs. Researcher shows that pointing out instances of plagiarism has some effect by encouraging students to moderate their behavior in later assignments (Walker, 2010).

Libraries could designate one or more librarians to check on citations and references of intellectual works of members of their immediate academic community. This will help to forestall attempts of plagiarism. Fortunately, there are now standard and effective online plagiarism checkers. Libraries could easily subscribe to them. Arguably, the most popular commercial software for plagiarism checks in academic institutions are Turnitin and WriteCheck. There are also some that are freely available on the internet.

Librarians must be able to interpret the result of the online plagiarism check. Generally, online plagiarism checkers indicate overall plagiarism index and the sources that were plagiarized. One of the limitations of online plagiarism checkers is their inability to check plagiarized sources that are not available on the

internet; for example, Turnitin software scans the internet for plagiarized sources of any submitted document and then returns an originality report.

Point out the value of knowing how to read and conduct research.

Academic libraries should educate their patrons (faculty, staff and students) on the negative effects of plagiarism on individual, educational system, society and the world at large; this may definitely curb the incident of plagiarism in our educational system. Students often perceive research writing assignments as yet another hoop to jump through in order to pass a class and graduate. In this sense, apathy toward research and citation standards may reflect a general state of demotivation regarding learning. As Blum (2009) says, As long as contemporary students regard their university years as simply a stage of life that must be endured and this may be a hard reality for academics to accept there will be a fight for their attention. Scaring them into honoring the rules of attribution is unlikely to succeed. What we ultimately desire is for them to want to learn.

Students' motivation to engage in their own original research without resorting to plagiarism will be enhanced if students see a connection between research topics and their own interests and feel that they have a worthwhile contribution to make. It is therefore worth pointing out that the ability to understand research will be crucial throughout their lives as they evaluate research-related findings that they encounter in the news and other sources. Moreover, research skills translate well in many situations in which they must solve complex problems in life or at work.

Provide an adequate introduction to research-related skills

Academic libraries should take the issue of training of the faculty, staff and students on proper citation and referencing more seriously so as to curb the incident of plagiarism in our educational system. Faculties, who have often been highly active as consumers and producers of research, can easily underestimate how foreign research is to students, who have probably only encountered knowledge ensconced in textbooks and other authoritative works. For this reason, a preliminary step is to expose students to simple research studies in outline form as early as possible. Students should then be systematically trained in key research skills to include: Source identification and evaluation (Pickering, 1998) including web based sources (Stapleton & Helms-Park, 2006) along with

practical techniques for tracking sources during research such as the use of bibliography managers (e.g., EndNote, RefWorks, etc.), Formulation of a research question that is focused, clear, and answerable to guide the research process (Agee, 2009) that is appropriate for the student's skill level, time constraints, and access to information, Aplication of a method and a framework of analysis, and Reporting and discussion of findings, with realistic conclusions regarding what can be discovered in a single small study and with appropriate hedging of speculative statements (K. Hyland, 1996).

Provide an adequate introduction to citation, paraphrasing, and summarization

In most schools, librarians are usually giving the responsibility of library instruction and information literacy. In carrying out this responsibility before now, librarians only concentrate on library use and information search. There is the need to include citation methods and skills in the curriculum. This could take the form of college approved courses (elective or required) for a semester or session. It could also be included in periodic orientation programmes for new students and faculties.Librarians should also collaborate with faculties in carrying out library instruction to students.

Opportunities like seminars and workshops should be provided for faculties and researchers who need to refresh their citation skills.A potential challenge to librarians' involvement in these roles is the lack of adequate time either on the part of the librarian or those to be trained. For example, the role may conflict with the librarians' core duties. In most institutions, students have very tight schedules, such that they hardly have time for other assignments other than their core academic work.In some climes, a specific librarian is charged with these responsibilities (Burke, 2004); this helps to promote effectiveness and efficiency.

Libraries should advocate for the inclusion of library instruction in the students' official timetable. The curriculum for teaching citation skills should include, but not limited to meaning of citation, citation and referencing styles and practical work and assignments on citation. Other information resources that can further enlighten users like citation manuals may be provided after the class. Librarians must be acquainted with current citation and referencing styles, if they must teach others.They therefore need to be abreast with current trends in citation and referencing styles.

Create clear institutional guidelines with consistent adherence.

Kenya Universities should develop a written plagiarism policy and make it available to their faculty, staff and students. Kenyan universities like all other institutions and organizations are guided on their daily operations by policies. For an important phenomenon that borders on academic integrity and ethics, there is need for institutions to formulate policies. A policy on plagiarism is therefore very important. Librarians who are knowledgeable on intellectual property and copyrights are very useful in drafting such documents. Their knowledge of standards and best practice become very useful to their institutions in drafting policies on plagiarism. The policy should address issues on what constitute plagiarism, procedures for plagiarism checks and penalty for defaulters.

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