

**PLAGIARISM IN MASTER OF EDUCATION STUDIES AT SELECTED EAST  
AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES**

**ZAINABU RAMADHAN**

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**Supervisor:** Professor MM. (Nonnie) Botha

**Co-Supervisor:** Professor John K. Chang'ach

**Co-Supervisor:** Dr. Mathabo Khau

## **DECLARATION BY STUDENT**

**STUDENT NUMBER:** 21244247

**QUALIFICATION:** MASTER OF EDUCATION

**TITLE OF PROJECT:** PLAGIARISM IN MASTER OF EDUCATION STUDIES AT  
SELECTED EAST AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES.

In accordance with rule G4.6.3, I hereby declare that the above mentioned thesis is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment to another university or for another qualification.

**SIGNATURE:**.....

**DATE:**.....

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate my thesis to two strong women; my late mum Asmin Nerima and late mother in-law Asudi Omondi, I am what I am because of them. To my husband Daniel Omondi and my children Lucas, Meggy, Benjamin and Regan who had to manage on their own because mummy needed to go to school.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Plagiarism is a form of academic misconduct and is a problematic phenomenon which affects academia globally. Even though the origins of the concept of plagiarism can be traced back throughout history, the term has come to carry many varying implications. This may affect the ways in which plagiarism is understood, detected and prosecuted by the parties it involves, such as students, academics and in policies. Despite its origin in Western tradition, this form of academic malpractice is prominent in African universities. In its most basic definition as theft of intellectual property, plagiarism is intertwined intricately with ownership of knowledge, which is culturally specific. This study situates itself within the context of three African universities, namely Moi University (Kenya), Makerere University (Uganda) and the University of Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), and aims to explore anti-plagiarism strategies implemented at these institutions. More specifically, this study focuses on Master of Education students' perceptions of plagiarism, the supervisors' role in preventing and detecting such malpractice and the institutional disciplinary practices in place. This study analyses the possible reasons for the continuous occurrence of plagiarism at these institutions and aims to explore the potential of further strategies to prevent the various forms of malpractice.

This research is a qualitative study and uses the constructivist paradigm. The research design is a multiple case study because the data collected originates from the contexts of the three selected universities. The data generation was conducted through triangulation of personal interviews with the students, lecturers and policy-makers as well as through focus group discussions with students and document analysis. Three methods of sampling were employed. The student participants were selected through convenient sampling, the supervisors were chosen through purposive sampling and snowballing was used to identify policy-makers. The data analysis was conducted thematically. In discussing the methodology and findings, Vygotsky's Socio-cultural theory (1978) is employed.

The introductory chapter provides an overview of the complexities of plagiarism and problematizes its implications. Chapter two outlines the relevant literature and contextualizes the research topic. The third chapter introduces the methodology. Chapter four presents the data collected. Thereafter, chapter five focuses on the interpretation and the discussion of the data. The last chapter draws conclusions in relation to the research questions and suggests areas for further research.

**Key words:** Plagiarism, academic integrity, institutional policies and socio-cultural theory

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>MKO:</b>	More Knowledgeable Others
<b>ZPD:</b>	Zone of Proximal Development
<b>ORI:</b>	Office of Research Integrity
<b>UNSW:</b>	University of New South Wales
<b>COPE:</b>	Committee on Publication Ethics
<b>PHS:</b>	United States Public Health Service
<b>CAST:</b>	The China Association for Science and Technology
<b>PSSP:</b>	Privately sponsored students' programs
<b>EFL:</b>	English First Language
<b>ESL:</b>	English Second Language
<b>AU:</b>	Moi University
<b>AB:</b>	Makerere University
<b>AC:</b>	University Of Dar es Salaam
<b>STIUA, STIUB, STIUC:</b>	Students Interviews at Moi University, at Makerere University and at the University Of Dar es Saalam.
<b>STFUA, STFUB, STFUC:</b>	Students Focus Group Discussion in Moi University, Makerere University and University of Dar es Salaam
<b>SUUA:</b>	Supervisors University of Moi
<b>SUUB:</b>	Supervisors University of Makerere
<b>SUUC:</b>	Supervisors University of Dar es Salaam
<b>POUA:</b>	Policy Makers' University Of Moi
<b>POUB:</b>	Policy Maker's University Of Makerere
<b>POUC:</b>	Policy Makers' University Of Dar es Salaam

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY**

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

According to Aluede, Omoregie, and Osa-Edoh (2006), many educators believe that the goals of higher education are more than merely imparting knowledge and expertise since society charges higher education with the task of developing moral, spiritual and emotional responsiveness, and of expanding social responsibility, vocational interests and personal life. As such, they believe that academic dishonesty, such as plagiarism, is a threat to the very mission of higher learning educational institutions (Dickinson, 2011). Anney and Mosha (2015, p. 214) believe that plagiarism is so serious a problem that it might lead to the “doom of higher learning institutions; since it defeats the purpose of higher learning education”. According to Masic (2012), plagiarism is literally a form of stealing; taking work done by others and presenting it as coming from oneself. This constitutes unethical behaviour that is unacceptable (Elsevier, 2012).

#### **1.2 PLAGIARISM GLOBALLY**

Plagiarism is not only an offence committed by students but can also be a form of malpractice rooted in institutions themselves. Several studies confirm that students plagiarise almost everywhere globally; and plagiarism as form of academic misconduct is seriously condemned by academics, researchers and experts as “an unacceptable form of misbehaviour and a violation against other researchers” (Heitman & Litewka, 2011, p. 8). This claim appears problematic as plagiarism by public figures, like Maureen Dowd, Nada Beziz, Liloyd Brown, Kaavya Viswanathar, Jayson Bair among others have hit headline news internationally (Baty, 2000), and in South Africa 42 fake colleges and universities were shut down for offering bogus and unaccredited programmes (Mohamedbhai, 2016).

### **1.3 PLAGIARISM IN EAST-AFRICA**

Unfortunately, the problem of plagiarism by students in East Africa is a growing (Paldy, 1996) even though traditional African societies condemn any form of cheating; a dishonest person is regarded a thief and falsifier/charlatan, and a hypocrite; and any academic dishonesty is punished by most universities, in order “to promote [their] academic integrity” (Maxel, 2013, p.138). Nevertheless, a study by Maxel (2013) shows that plagiarism in East African universities in terms of students’ work is perceived to be widespread and ongoing. In a study carried out in 2012 among students in three East African universities, a third of the 475 students admitted to have engaged in plagiarism (Mohamedbhai, 2016). According to Muchuku (2011) plagiarism in Kenyan universities has grown at a higher rate due to the lack of anti-plagiarism software, such as Turnitin, in most universities.

According to the Magara (2016) report based on statements by entrepreneurs and academics, the cause of having many non-performing graduates on the labour market in Uganda is cheating and duplicating of other people’s work.

As a result, there is a clear link between academic multipartite and non-performing in professional fields. Qorro (2003) reported that many of the graduates from universities in Tanzania came out ‘half-baked’ (not well educated) because a large number of them have paid third parties to write their theses and research papers. Anney et al. (2015) observed that lecturers/instructors in Tanzanian universities have not played their role effectively because they have kept quiet in cases of known plagiarism.

Based on the evidence of plagiarism in East African universities, it can be suggested that these institutions have to reorganise the way they carry out their research if they are to meet the international standards of research by upholding academic integrity. Similarly, based on the literature discussed above, it may be concluded that mechanisms for discouraging and prohibiting plagiarism have been put in place in developed countries. Only small percentages have been reported in places like Wisconsin (6%), Maryland (9.4%) and Northeast University (10.0%). According to Maxel (2013), this has not been the case in East Africa.

## **1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Mastering the art of scholarship is the major concern; academic integrity requires a lot of sacrifice and honesty. The University of Tasmania (2010) explains that students' involvement in academic dishonesty can either diminish the institution's reputation for academic integrity or it can destroy the institution's financial viability in the business world. Brimble and Stevenson-Clarke (2005), as well as Marsden, Carrol, and Neill, (2005) found that academic dishonesty hinders the students from practising and applying what they have learned in class in their work places - they lack skills and knowledge needed in their professions after the completion of their degrees. In addition, Lawson (2013) emphasises that unethical behaviours in work places are often due to unethical academy practices in academic institutions.

As noted earlier, only a few studies have been done that have focused specifically on plagiarism in the East African region (Maxel, 2013). This study therefore aims to contribute knowledge towards the limited sources on plagiarism in East African universities. This is done by conducting research on institutional policies and practices relevant to plagiarism in East Africa; specifically the strategies which can be put in place to reduce plagiarism in Master's studies in selected East African universities.

## **1.5 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The study explores issues related to plagiarism in Master of Education Studies in selected East African universities.

### **Objectives**

- To explore the perceptions of plagiarism by Master of Education students and supervisors in selected East African universities
- To explore the institutional policies and practices relevant to plagiarism in selected East African universities
- To explore supervisors' suggestions regarding (additional) strategies for combatting plagiarism in selected East African universities



## **1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

What are the issues related to plagiarism in Master of Education studies in selected East African universities?

- What are the perceptions of Master of Education students and supervisors on plagiarism in selected East African universities?
- What is the nature of those institutional policies and practices relevant to plagiarism in selected East African universities?
- What (additional) strategies do supervisors suggest for combatting plagiarism in selected East African universities?

## **1.7 SOCIO-CULTURAL THEORY AND PLAGIARISM**

This section provides a brief introduction to Vygotsky theory and the full discussion is in chapter 2. In his socio-cultural theory, Vygotsky discusses the powerful role of culture in learning and that our thoughts and minds are created by the culture and history of a community. Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory sees human learning and intelligence as a result of social processes, which, in turn, depends on the society and its culture. This suggests that cognitive development is therefore based on social interaction. Socio-cultural theory works hand in hand with the theory of social constructivism. Oldfather, West, White, and Wilmarth (1999, p. 8) in the study *Learning through children's eyes: social constructivism and the desire to learn*, define social constructivism as "a particular view of knowledge, a view of how we come to know through interactions with others, which takes place within a socio-cultural context" John-Steiner and Mahn (1996) in *Socio-cultural approaches to learning and development: A Vygotskian framework* state that knowledge is something that is constructed by an individual through social interaction.

Vygotsky (1981) addresses a vital point directly related to plagiarism, namely "[l]anguage is a symbolic tool that mediates mental activities. According to (Kao, 2010), language is a psychological tool that serves as a mediator of mental development and activities. Apart from language, Haas (1996) adds to Vygotskian notions by proposing that technologies can be a tool that mediates interaction between individuals and their environment leading to learning. In

addition Haas (1996, p. 17) (cited in Levy and Stockwell, 2006, p. 116), see “terms, tools, signs and technologies as systems that function to augment human psychological processes”.

Cognitive development is influenced by social interaction, such as engagement between teachers and students, physical space and learning environment, meaningful instruction in groups, scaffolding of teaching strategies and what Vygotsky terms the ‘Zone of Proximal Development’ (ZPD). ZPD operates in the context of language (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky (1978 pp. 86-87) describes ZPD as the “bud” of learning, not the fruit. His concept suggests that learning is achieved when the learner is aided in order to develop. He notes that “[t]he distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky 1978, p.86).

The ZPD allows us to focus on the students’ learning and development, the students’ learning stages and predicting students’ future. In this way, Vygotsky argues, teaching should always be in advance of development, stating that “[i]nstruction is only useful when it moves ahead of development. When it does, it impels or awakens a whole series of functions that are in a stage of maturation lying in the zone of proximal development” (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 212).

Vygotsky also identifies the role of the more knowledgeable other (MKO). He claims that “[a]ll higher mental functions--those that are unique to human beings--are initially created through collaborative activity; only later do they become internal mental processes” (1978, p. 20); a process of setting up “the situation to make the child’s entry easy and successful and then gradually pulling back and handing the role to the child as he becomes skilled enough to manage it (Burner, 1983, p. 60). Donato (1994, p. 31) explains MKO in terms of scaffolding as “tasks with peers, tutors and lecturers that students build their capacity to eventually undertake similar tasks unaided. Thus, although scaffolding in the ZPD involves shared and supportive activity, its ultimate objective is independence”. Scaffolding is “a changing level of support in which assistance is adjusted to fit a child’s current abilities and needs Vygotsky (1978, p.17) and which fosters a child’s autonomy and mastery skills” (p. 171). The theory also stresses that for the appropriate learning and construction of the meaning, one’s community plays a very vital role. The theories presented above lay a foundation for the literature review, discussion, data analysis and interpretation of data in this study.

## **1.8 THE LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **1.8.1 The origin of plagiarism**

The notion of plagiarism has been around for a long time. The term ‘plagiarism’ was adopted from Latin word *plagiarius* meaning taking slaves by force (Kolic 1993). Martial used the term to refer to Fidentious, a fellow poet, who used his poetry without permission. Martial emphasised that his “poems shall rise like rebellious slaves and demand their freedom” (Kolic, 1983, p. 143). Subsequently, Ben Jonson introduced the term ‘plagiary’ in his play *The Poetaster* (Jonson, 1601); and it gained respect by its inclusion in Johnson’s Dictionary (1755) (Sutherland-Smith 2008).

### **1.8.2 Definition of plagiarism**

The term plagiarism has existed for a long time but one of the major challenges in combating plagiarism is the identification of a universal definition (Liu, Yang, He, Li, & Doss, 2016). Behind expressions and sayings, such as “[c]opying one book is plagiarism; copying several is research” (Lindey, 1952, p. 2), this brings about the complexity of the concept plagiarism. Plagiarism depends on the field of study, time/level of study, the participants, expectations and the type of written work. Studies done by Davis (2013), who investigates learners’ understanding of plagiarism, show that their understanding is partial and they lack procedural knowledge, which makes it difficult to put such meaning into practice.

Pritchett (2010, p. 120) defines plagiarism as “the presentation of another person’s words, ideas, data, artwork or designs – unless considered common knowledge – as one’s own, without referencing the true author”. According to the literature stated, a text is considered plagiarised when the original author has not been acknowledged or cited.

### **1.8.3 Plagiarism in higher education**

Plagiarism in Higher Education has been seen mainly as the failure of identifying the owner or author of the text or the idea and the user of the idea (Flint, Clegg, & Macdonald, 2006), and the Council of Higher Education in South African has recommended that “institutions should be involved in teaching, scholarship, and research, appropriate to these institutions’ agreed mission, with appropriately qualified staff” to educate students on the issue of plagiarism (Gillard, 2004,

p381-384). Despite such intentions, plagiarism persists in higher learning institutions due to variations of understanding.

#### **1.8.4 Types of plagiarism**

Pecorari (2003) categorises plagiarism as either intentional or unintentional but, as it is difficult to prove or disprove plagiarism; it is only the perpetrators who know the truth of whether the plagiarism was intentional or unintentional (Park, 2003; Pecorari, 2003).

#### **1.8.5 Forms of plagiarism**

As noted before, the concept of plagiarism has been present in the field of academic writing and its long existence has led to branding and labelling of plagiarism in different forms. Howard (1993) refers to plagiarism as patch writing, Chandrosom, Thompson, and Pennycook (2004) as textual misappropriations of text and Pecorari (1993) as borrowing /paraphrasing.

#### **1.8.6 Perceptions of plagiarism**

According to Rubin (2015), perception is the direct awareness of [an] external reality, which can lead to non-inferential knowledge of the reality. Student's perceptions of plagiarism have been studied (e.g. Chuda, Navrat, Kovacova, & Humay, 2012). McCabe, Butterflied and Trevino (2012) found out that generally students do not regard plagiarism as a severe crime since there is no serious punishment for those who plagiarise; and the benefits of their action are greater than the action taken against plagiarism (Clarke, 1995).

#### **1.8.7 Causes of plagiarism in higher education**

Maina, Maina, and Jauros (2014) confirm that students engage in plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct. Frequently, they blame their ignorance on issues related to plagiarism (Michalska, 2012). As early as a decade ago, Madry (2007) stated that many students in the fields of research and academic writing are unaware and unprepared to tackle meaningful and ethical research studies.

Gullifer and Tyson (2010) explain that students plagiarise because they believe that they will not be caught. One's peers or the institutional community also have an influence on plagiarism, by either promoting academic integrity, or failing to do so (McCabe et al., 2012). On the other hand,

Liu et al. (2016) claim that absenteeism and grade inflations are academic settings that contribute to plagiarism. Honig and Bedi (2012) and Decoo (2002) point out that intellectual preoccupation and the discipline or the subject studied play a role in the amount of plagiarism that takes place.

### **1.8.8 Consequences of plagiarism**

Occurrences of plagiarism are situational and they involve a range of varied outcomes (Yadav, Rawal, & Baxi, 2016) because the laws on plagiarism are ambiguous in terms of what is permissible or not; and this makes it difficult for both the author and the plagiariser to abide by the law (McEllrath, Doss, Jensen, Wigginton, Kennedy, Winter, Mongue, Bounds, & Estis-Sumerel, 2013). Tennant and Rowel (2010) confirm that there is considerable variation among different institutions regarding the penalties against student plagiarism. According to Yadav et al. (2016) the consequences of plagiarism include a loss to those who plagiarise, by the papers being withdrawn when plagiarism is detected. The editors or publishers who unknowingly publish such materials are also affected by tarnishing the reputation of the publishing industry and, ultimately, plagiarism can affect the entire scientific community negatively.

### **1.8.9 Strategies to combat plagiarism**

Weber-Wulff (2014) explains that in reducing and/or preventing plagiarism the detection, remedial and disciplinary measures that are applied are of primary importance in countering plagiarism. In addition, Pecorari and Petric (2014, p. 287) recommend that "[e]ducating students explicitly about plagiarism [...] teaching the source uses and referencing in greater depth;" is the most effective way of addressing plagiarism. Dee and Jacob (2010) suggest that, a fairly brief but detailed educational tutorial will assist in combating plagiarism. Anney et al. (2015) recommend that higher education institutions in underdeveloped states should establish honour codes to govern plagiarism for both students and lecturers. Better learning practices, detection and disciplinary measures should be stated clearly (Heckler, Rice, & Hobson, 2013).

Maxel (2013) suggests that the establishment of comprehensive policies and thorough education and awareness measures should be implemented. Researchers and academics should take responsibility for upholding academic values in order to promote academic honesty and integrity.

### **1.8.10 Technology and plagiarism in higher education**

Beyond online courses, internet research provides access to information faster than ever before (Manly, Leonard, & Riemenschneider, 2015). The benefits generated by technology have the potential to be abused for acts of academic dishonesty, this includes unauthorised representation, purchasing written papers, using unattributed secondary sources and ‘cut and paste’ plagiarism (Manly et al., 2015). The internet has advanced the ways in which students can access information, which, in turn, has made it easier to act dishonestly. Maxel (2013) suggests that in large undergraduate classes, technologies, such as clickers, should be employed to allow an instructor to interact freely with the student by posing question about an assignment and immediately collect the responses of the whole class at the same time. The clicker software checks on the cheating students who fail to show up for class and who pose as if they did attend class and had done their own work; while the work was actually copied from their friends.

### **1.8.11 Institutional policies on plagiarism**

There are numerous studies done on institutional policies in higher academic institutions. Such policies explain the effects of plagiarism and how to decrease such practices. They also provide explanation of how to make the issue clear and the sanctions fair to everybody (Grigg, 2010). Grigg recommends that institutions should put a clear demarcation in their policies on different types of plagiarism, their corresponding preventive measures, fair procedural disciplinary actions and clear instructions on how the institutions should counteract plagiarism (Grigg, 2010).

## **1.9 JUSTIFICATION FOR THIS RESEARCH**

Literature on plagiarism reveals that much research on plagiarism has been done in different fields and at different levels of education. Globally, extensive research on plagiarism has been conducted, especially in the Western world, Asia and Middle East. In Africa, apart from South Africa, Nigeria, Zimbabwe and Egypt, few studies have been carried out. Hardly any studies have been done in East Africa. The aim of this study is to delve deeper into problems surrounding plagiarism in Master's studies in the schools of Education in three selected East African Universities. This was done by exploring students' and supervisors' perceptions of plagiarism, institutional policies and practices on plagiarism, and supervisors' additional strategies to combat such plagiarism.

## **1.10 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **1.10.1 Research paradigm**

Paradigms are philosophical assumptions on the world's nature (ontology) and knowledge understanding (epistemology) (Coombes, Danaher, & Danaher, 2004). This study adopted the constructivist paradigm. Constructivists perceive reality as being socially constructed (Stocking, Radcliffe-Brown, & Lowie, 2003). Reality depends on the individual participants' construction of ideas; the inquirer interprets, reconstructs, analyse and criticise the participant's views which later lead to meaningful findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1989). As this study is based on understandings of, and reactions to, plagiarism, the constructivist paradigm is appropriate for framing the exploration and interpretation of students' construction of plagiarism and the exploration of institutional policies, practices and strategies.

### **1.10.2 The research approach**

De Vos, Delpont, Fouché, and Strydom (2011) identify two recognised approaches to research: the qualitative and the quantitative approach. According to Creswell (2012) and Glesne (2011), qualitative research operates within a natural setting and starts with the researcher's interest and is followed by the identification of research questions within a given framework and based on a working theory.

The qualitative approach was employed in this study as this approach is useful when seeking a deeper understanding of a phenomenon. Thurmond (2010) adds that a qualitative approach is best used to explore a person's perceptions, experiences, histories, as well as the interpretation of a certain phenomenon.

### **1.10.3 Research design**

Research designs are "procedures for collecting, analysing, interpreting and reporting data in research studies" (Creswell, Klassen, Plano, & Smith, 2011). Research designs are developed to meet the unique requirements of a study. Johnson and Christen (2008) state that a qualitative research design could be any of the following: phenomenology, case study, ethnography, historical research, or grounded theory. This study employs the multi-site case study design. A case study design focuses on present understanding of a single set. In this case, the single case is the East Africa region and the multi-site is constituted by the three East African universities and

countries: Moi University in Kenya, the University of Makerere in Uganda and the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania.

## **1.11 POPULATION AND SAMPLING**

### **1.11.1 Research population**

The research population is defined as the “members of any well-defined class of people, events or objects” (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 2002, p. 167). Sowell (2001, p. 143) also states that a “population refers to a group that has one or more characteristics in common”. This study targeted students, supervisors and policy-makers in the three selected East African universities, namely Moi University, the University of Makerere and the University of Dar es Salaam.

### **1.11.2 Sampling strategies**

Firstly, students at Master’s degree level at each of these universities were selected via convenience sampling. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2013) refer to convenience sampling as an opportunity sampling since individuals close to the study or researcher at collection time are chosen to serve as respondents. Purposive sampling was also employed. Poulis et al. (2013) define purposive sampling as the selection of participants based on a given set of criteria which is suitable to the researcher. The supervisors were intentionally identified on the basis of their in-depth academic knowledge and academic experience. Supervision experience of postgraduate research for more than five years was a central criteria. Lastly, snowball sampling as a non-probability sampling was used to identify the policy makers from the university authorities. Snowball sampling is a strategy used when other sampling strategies cannot be applied. It is suitable mostly when recruiting population that cannot be accessed easily (Mack, Woodson, Mac Queen, Guest, & Namey, 2005).

The study also relied on secondary data from the universities’ institutional policies and related documents on academic integrity from the three selected universities in East Africa.

### **1.11.3 Sample size**

A sample is defined as a set of elements taken from a whole population according to certain rules (Conrad & Serlin, 2006). The sample size used for this study comprised of five Masters’ students, two supervisors and one policy-maker at each university. Thus, eight participants per



institution participated in the study, leading to a total of twenty-four participants. The sampling was intended to continue until data saturation was reached with each category of the participants.

#### **1.11.4 Data-generation strategies**

A “method of data collection” is defined by Johnson et al. (2008, p. 201) as a “technique for physically obtaining data to be analysed in the research study”. The primary data were generated through face to face personal/individual interviews with the students, lecturers and policy makers and through focus-group discussions with students at the three selected East African universities. The secondary data were collected by the documentary analysis of institutional policies and other documents related to academic integrity.

#### **1.11.5 Data analysis**

Data analysis is the process of evaluating participants’/respondents ‘opinions through organization and explanation of the data collected (Cohen, 2010). The data collected through interviews and focus group discussions were tape recorded. This was followed by the transcription of these data. Coding was done through identification of the main themes and sub-themes from the transcribed data. The coded transcribed data were then converted to Microsoft Word and then uploaded in Excel spread sheet to show the various categories. Documentary analysis was incorporated by coding the content into themes. Axial coding, assembling the data in new ways was done respectively; and thus a central problem leading to the contextual and intervening conditions was identified. In this study, the documents that were analysed included institutional policies and other documents related to academic ethics.

#### **1.11.6 Establishing trustworthiness**

For Holloway (1997, p. 161), “trustworthiness is the truth value of a piece of research”. Lincoln et al. 1989 (in Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, p. 296) refer to trustworthiness, as the “extent to which audiences can be persuaded or convinced that the findings of a study are worth paying attention to”. According to Krefting (1991, p. 214), a research project is trustworthy when it reflects “the reality and ideas of the participants”.

A study and data are termed trustworthy when the participants' ideas are real and the audience trusts the qualitative findings (Loh, 2013). The common criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of qualitative findings are confirmability, dependability, credibility and transferability (Leung, 2015).

#### **1.11.7 Ethical considerations**

Hayes et al. (2005) explain that plagiarism is an act of cheating that is very addictive as it pertains to "guilty knowledge" (De Laine, 2000, p. 85). Several studies reveal criticism and accusations related to plagiarism which may lead to serious destruction of individual or institutional reputations (Stanley & Wise, 2010). Thus, the research of this study adopted the Belmont Report's three basic principles of ethics, namely "respect for human dignity, beneficence, as well as justice" (Polit, Beck, & Hungler, 2001, p.75). The participants were given informed consent forms and permission to withdraw at any time during the research. All participants' identities were protected through the use of synonyms.

In addition, the data were saved electronically/digitally with a password, which could only be accessed by the researcher. Five years after the publication of this research project, the data and artefacts will be destroyed (Creswell, 2012). Finally, I obtained ethical clearance from Nelson Mandela University (NMU) in South Africa and institutional permission from Moi University, Makerere University and the University of Dar es Salaam.

## **1.12 CHAPTER BREAKDOWN**

**Chapter One:** This chapter comprises an overview of the introduction to the study and identifies and contextualizes the statement of the problem.

**Chapter Two:** Literature review – this chapter presents the reviewed literature on past research in the area of plagiarism in general and specifically on student plagiarism.

**Chapter Three:** Research design and methodology –the chapter presents and motivates the selected paradigm, approach, design and generation of data and analysis strategies used for the research.

**Chapter Four:** Presentation of results – this chapter summarises the data interpretation and discusses the findings in relation to the research questions and within the context of the relevant literature.

**Chapter Five:** Interpretation and discussion of the data –this chapter presents the analysis of the data as well as the interpretation thereof.

**Chapter Six:** Conclusion and recommendations – this chapter provides the research conclusion and the recommendations based on the findings.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THE LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW**

A literature review is a summarizing description of what other scholars have published on the area of study. Within this study, the literature review aims at identifying the relevant and weighty literature regarding plagiarism in Master of Education studies in selected East African studies. This serves as an introduction to answering the inclusive research questions on the topic. Im and Chang (2012) note that the literature review assists in obtaining a valued sample and understanding the drawbacks of past studies.

Reis (2014) adds that a literature review aims at outlining and limiting the problem in which the study is situated, in order to relate the study to the latest development of knowledge in the area of research. This also includes avoiding unnecessary duplication, finding the study research methods utilized by other scholars, as well as identifying their strengths and weaknesses in order to adopt or improve them. Finally, the literature review intends to relate the research findings to pre-existing knowledge and aims to suggest further research within the identified field of study.

A literature review is therefore the extraction of information from past studies (Khoo, Na, & Jaidka, 2011). My study reviewed literature from scholarly and peer-reviewed journal articles, the seminal literature and dissertations (or theses) from Nelson Mandela University Library, Moi University Library, university policies, Google Scholar and Science Direct. These were all useful sources for answering and explaining the three research questions. These are the perceptions, institutional policies on plagiarism and strategies for combatting plagiarism.

The concepts that the literature review focuses on are: plagiarism, Master of education, as well as Vygotsky's theory. The consulted literature is categorised into sections and subsections: from broad-to-specific. The literature used in my study includes the introduction to the chapter, the body which identifies themes and subthemes in relation to the research questions and, lastly, the conclusion on the chapter (Khoo et al., 2011).

This chapter is subdivided into thirteen sections, starting with the introductory statement, an outline of the origin of plagiarism, definitions, types, forms, perceptions, consequences,

strategies to combat plagiarism, plagiarism in higher institutions of education globally, causes of plagiarism in higher education, technology and plagiarism in higher education, institutional policies on plagiarism, a discussion on the different theories of plagiarism, the empirical studies on plagiarism; and finally, the conclusion to the chapter.

Based on the literature reviewed under the mentioned subsections, the researcher developed the research questions in relation to the literature to explore issues surrounding plagiarism in Master of Education studies in selected East African universities.

## **2.2 THE ORIGIN OF PLAGIARISM**

Randall (2001, p. 15) comments on the long history of plagiarism by stating that “despite shifts in norms, plagiarism is a very old and continuous phenomenon” The concept of plagiarism did not exist until the enlightenment era. It is bound up with notions of copyright. The Latin word *plagiarius* originated from the Greek word *plagion* meaning kidnapper of children or slaves. The word was first used by the Roman author Martial in his epigram in order to accuse the one (author), who was stealing his poems. This happened in the first century AD and, thereafter, the word was not used until thirteen centuries later. Lorenzo Valla later used the same expression in a book published in 1471 which was an imitation of Martial’s poems (Fitzgerald, 2007).

Bloom, Goodman, Mcewan, Mellers, Rogers, Sutherland, and Urmoon (1982) trace the origins of plagiarism in England to the copyright Act of 1710. Ben Johnson is credited for being involved in coining the term ‘plagiarism’ which means academic theft (Mallon, 1989). According to Sutherland (2008), Ben Johnson used the word plagiarism in English in the play *The Poetaster* (1601); and it was included in Johnson’s Dictionary (1755) after gaining recognition where it was defined as “literary theft”.

Research on the origins of plagiarism has continued into the present with researchers still tracing its origin. Scollon (1995) traces the origin of plagiarism to the thinking of Kant and his book *Science of Right* (1788). Although plagiarism existed, it was not recognised as a serious crime until recently. The available literature shows that plagiarism has existed throughout history and was a common practice (Park, 2003). It was seen as a foreign word that expressed ownership. Some examples where authors drew on prior works of other authors without any acknowledgement (Vint, 2008), include Homer’s *Odyssey*, Virgil’s *Aeneid* and William

Shakespeare who freely used other authors' work. Subsequently, it has been noted that the works of Shakespeare involved much copying from other writers (Thomas, 2000). The fact that Shakespeare himself borrowed other authors' works (Julius, 1998) suggests that such copying was normalized and was habitually practised. The author's responsibility was to find an interesting story written by other authors so that the listener and reader could find it again when required (Vint, 2008).

According to Vint (2008), a skilled writer/author was regarded as one who was able to take the ancient writings and narratives and imitate them in a special and improved way. The creativity of the authors was valued most highly. In Greek, "Mimesis" the Greek gods, regard the concept of plagiarism as the recognition of the writers' ability to imitate the words of great historic writers, mainly in the classical world. Mallon (1989, p. 3) states that "there was a time when the guiding spirits of the literacy dead were deliberately conjured, a time before ancestor worship gave way to that form of youth attraction known as originality".

The concept of ownership that developed into a law emerged during Gutenberg's time in the 15<sup>th</sup> century with the beginning of printing services (Vint, 2008). England passed the first copyright law in 1710 and in 1790, the United States Congress followed suit. Plagiarism was still practised even after 100 years (Hansen, 2003). Thomas (2000) refers to plagiarism as 'textual misappropriations'. It erupted during the mass production of books and written materials when more materials were made available which, in turn, meant that they could be stolen. .

Due to the changing public attitude towards ownership of property, literary ownership and copyright law clearly defined plagiarism during the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. Plagiarists were reprimanded for literal theft (Goldgar, 2001). From the mentioned examples it becomes obvious that plagiarism started a long time ago and that, for centuries, it was not considered a crime. The notion of copying without acknowledgement has become stronger through capitalism, whereby private ownership even of ideas has become normalized. This is contrary to how it was viewed in earlier societies.

### **2.3 A DEFINITION OF PLAGIARISM**

Plagiarism is defined in different ways, depending on many circumstances such as the forms, the types, the communities and context. Various definitions of the term 'plagiarism' exist. Weber-

Wulff (2014) points out that there are some commonly agreed-upon definitions of the word plagiarism. However, he further highlights that there are also definitions which focus on different aspects of plagiarism. In their research, Sarlauskienė, and Stabingis (2014) and Sentleng and King (2012) agree that there is no defined definition of the concept plagiarism. Furthermore, as stated by Jameson (1993), the definition of plagiarism is subject to the content, the writer's situation, and people's expectations, the intention of the writer, or the type and the subtype of the work. This section therefore covers four definitions, as defined from different perspectives. These are: institutional definitions, scholars' definitions, religious definitions, and cultural definitions.

### **2.3.1 Institutional definitions**

Several attempts at defining plagiarism have been made by academic institutions, researchers and organizations. They have similarities and some differences in relation to the scope, complexity, focus on intentions and explicitness. For example, Coventry University's policy document presents a very detailed view on plagiarism which is partly based on a definition used by the Higher Education Academy for England and Wales. According to this definition, plagiarism is understood as the "unacknowledged use of another person's work" (Coventry University, 2013, p. 249). This could take the form of the reproduction without acknowledgement, whether published or unpublished and can be either verbatim or in close paraphrase. This also includes poor academic practice, which is unintentional. This could either be 'open-book' examinations and/or coursework assessments in the form of presentations, reports, essays, dissertations and projects.

Thus, "plagiarism takes place when a writer deliberately uses other people's language, ideas, or other original material – without acknowledging the sources" (Council of Writing Program Administrators, 2005, p.1) With this in mind, it can be noted that many institutions refer to a definition that contains an explanation of the term 'plagiarism' itself.

### **2.3.2 Scholars' definitions**

Scholars are people who have devoted themselves to do research in different areas. Scholars working on plagiarism have executed numerous studies and have come up with a number of

definitions. Among the definitions is Carroll's (2009), who defines plagiarism as the cheating of a teacher, an employer or editor that the work produced is yours when in the real sense it was discovered by somebody else. Carroll adds that plagiarism drains the individuals' and communities' values academically, economically and professionally. According to Pennycook (1996, p. 120), "the act of plagiarising" means "to appropriate ideas, passage, etc. from another work or author". Plagiarism literally means taking words and ideas which belong to another person by force and posing them as one's own.

Masic (2012) and Elsevier (2012) define plagiarism differently by stating that plagiarism is literally stealing of other people's authored materials and presenting it as coming from other sources (such as yourself). It therefore refers to unethical behaviour which is unacceptable. Coughlin et al. (2013, p. 18) define plagiarism by stating that "in written works, this happens in three forms: verbatim copies without quotation marks and/or references; paraphrases without references; and the use of another author's unique ideas, data or evidence without referencing the source".

Fialkoff (1993) agreed with the Association of American h77istorians of January 2002 by describing plagiarism as the misappropriation of every single word, whether findings, hypothesis, theories or interpretations without acknowledgment. Researchers have used various expressions and vivid imagery to explain the magnitude of plagiarism. Colon (2001, p. 25) refers to plagiarism as "an unoriginal sin"; while Miller (1993, p.16) calls it "an attack on nothing less than the basic human right, to property, to identity". Moreover, plagiarism is understood as "a disease of articulates" (Bower, 1994, p. 58) and also a "form of mental illness" (Howard, 2000, p. 8). Other descriptions include: "a cancer that erodes the rich legacy of scholarship" (Maxel, 2013, p.1), an "egregious form of misconduct" (Juyal, Thawani, & Theled, 2015, p. 2); a "serious scientific misconduct" (Yadav et al., 2016, p. 1), a "menace and an epidemic, which is eating through the fabric of academic integrity" (Onuoha & Ikonne 2013,p. 105) and "the scourge of fraud and corruption in higher education" (Mohamedbhai, 2016, p. 27).

### **2.3.3 Christian and Muslim religious definition**

The religious definition provided in this section will cover from Christian and Muslim definitions. The Christian understanding of plagiarism implies that stealing and giving false



witness are central problem (Amanullah, 2006). This is understood in addition to failing to acknowledge the source. It is to give the false impression that the ideas have originated from you, based upon scriptural sources. Muslims regard plagiarism as a serious act of sin and fraud that should be punished (McKay, 2014). According to Muslims, plagiarism involves intentional misinterpretation of the reality with the aim of misleading the rest (Mufti, 2015). Islam condemns cheating and deceiving whether Muslims or non-Muslims are involved.

#### **2.3.4 Cultural definition**

Culture is the way of life (Howard 1999). Some assertions show that different cultures have different understandings of plagiarism. The varying cultures among Western, Eastern and Africans countries have different understandings of plagiarism (Coopamah & Khan, 2011). In working on cultural differences and how culture influences learning and teaching, Hofstede (1991, cited by Introna, Hayes, Blair, & Wood, 2003) claims that different communities and their cultures around the world perceive the world differently and have their core values. These values influence teaching and learning processes in their societies. Some communities believe in communal ownership whereby knowledge belongs to everybody and should be shared while other communities follow capitalistic ideas whereby knowledge should be privately owned and guarded (Kennedy, Kennedy, & Smith, 1990). Kennedy et al, (1990) and Bloch (2012) find that students from communal societies, such as outside Western societies, are not able to differentiate between private ownership and public ownership and, as a result, they do not regard plagiarism as negative and punishable activity.

According to Chien (2016), Western culture regards the text as an instrument for insight into truth and in order for one to develop a better understanding one examines others' ideas, ways, knowledge and challenges. The prevailing knowledge allows for the development of connections and it creates new understandings. Within the Chinese educational tradition, copying teachers or authority figures is encouraged as a modality to engage students' capacities to learn actively and to guide the learning of virtuous behaviours (Chou, 2010; Coopamah et al., 2011). Thus, rote memorization and the recitation of new information are encouraged (Li & Deng, 2011).

Given the many varying perceptions and understandings of the term and its implications, plagiarism has been a popular and widely discussed subject. Among the most well-known cases

of plagiarism in recent years is the one of the well-known politician and academic Professor Mary Giraldo, a well-established literary critic, whom the Columbia supreme court sentenced for plagiarising portions of her students' thesis in an article (Cromwell, 2013).

In Germany, the education minister, Annette Schavan, resigned after the revelation that her doctoral dissertation of 1980 was rejected for continuous and premeditated plagiarism (Werkhauser, 2013). In the United States, Doris Kerns Goodwin, and Stephen Ambrose were exposed publically for plagiarism (Wilson & Blankenship, 2010).

In addition, other well-known figures have lost their jobs because of having plagiarised other people's work in the past. Among them was Dr. Phillip Baker, who, as the Dean of academic at the Canadian University of Alberta, was involved in allegations of plagiarising the speech that he gave eventually, he was forced to resign from employment (Dyer, 2011). The German Defence Minister Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg also had to resign from employment after allegations of plagiarising his academic degree (Lose, 2011). The Vanilla Ice's song's lyrics 'Ice Baby' Vanilla Ice (Doss, Glover, Goza, & Wigginton, 2015) were suspected to have been plagiarised. Lastly, the two most recent cases of plagiarism include the Michelle Obama's speech plagiarised by Melanie Trump, whereby she admitted plagiarising Michele Obama's convention speech of 2008 (CNN 19, July 2016). In addition, the Ghanaian president, Nana Akufo-Addo plagiarised President Bush's speech of 2001 and President Bill Clinton's speech of 1993 in his inaugural speech (Daily Nation, January 9, 2017).

At the same time, the Nigerian president, Buhari, apologised for plagiarising Obama's inaugural speech of 2008. This shows that plagiarism affects everybody, irrespective of one's societal status and across different sectors, such as in the classroom and in politics.

In conclusion one can say that the major challenge in understanding and combatting plagiarism is related to the definition of plagiarism (Doss, Henley, Gokaraju, McElreath, Lackey, Hong, & Miller, 2016). Plagiarism depends on the factors, such as audience, context, circumstances, the expectations and the kind of academic work. The majority of definitions view plagiarism as an unethical act and a deviation from the norm; hence it is unacceptable in research writing and should be treated as a serious offence when it comes to punishment.

As a useful working definition for his study focuses on the academic context, Pritchett's (2010) definition will be adopted. It states that plagiarism is the presentation of other people's ideas, words, artwork or designs, and data, unless considered common knowledge, as one's own, without referencing the true author.

## **2.4 TYPES OF PLAGIARISM**

The use of other persons' work, whether intentional or unintentional, published or unpublished without appreciating the author is termed as plagiarism (Logue, 2004). Pecorari (2003, p. 318) groups plagiarism into two categories: firstly, prototypical plagiarism which means the intention to deceive; and, secondly, the non-prototypical plagiarism, meaning unintentional deception. Such unintentional plagiarism occurs when a student uses other people's work without acknowledging the source because of ignorance. It involves omission of used citations, inaccurate referencing, tempering with the morphology of the original text in the name of paraphrasing. It also involves not changing the words of the sentence structure but using quotations.

According to Strayer University iCampus (2010a) plagiarism includes "omitting a citation or citing inaccurately, paraphrasing by only changing the sentence structure of the original text, or by changing the sentence structure, but not the words; and by putting quotation marks around only a part of a quotation". Unconscious or unintentional plagiarism cannot be studied because there is no stated test to prove such kind of plagiarism (Marsh & Bower, 1993).

Plagiarism is termed as intentional when using another author's work without acknowledgment and posing it as one's own knowingly and intentionally. Intentional plagiarism includes: purchasing of pre-written research materials, fabricating a quotation or source, copying from the internet without acknowledgment and copy pasting from different sources to create work without quotations (Strayer University iCampus, 2010b). Therefore, plagiarism can either be intentional or unintentional.

## **2.5 FORMS OF PLAGIARISM**

Due to long term challenges of plagiarism in scientific studies, plagiarism has been labelled as "patch-writing" (Davies & Howard, 2016, pp. 591-606), "transgressive inter-textuality"

(Chandrasoma et al, 2004, pp. 171-193) and “poor paraphrasing or poor textual borrowing” (Pecorari, 2003, p. 317). According to Onuoha et al. (2013), plagiarism occurs in the following forms: copying sections without acknowledging the source of the information; copying an entire source and purporting to be the individual’s original work; paper-buying or project or thesis write-ups from a service bureau or other students. In the following section, different sources will be drawn on in order to discuss various forms of plagiarism.

### **2.5.1 Ghost-writing**

Ghost-writing is a practice whereby an individual makes significant contributions to writings but s/he is not named as the author. This has been identified in honorary authorship where the stated author has not contributed to the authorship in any form. Ghost-writing and honorary authorship are prevalent and such authorship started long time ago and continues to exist nowadays (Wislar, Flanagin, Fontanarosa, & DeAngelis, 2009). However, the actual extent of ghost-writing in journal writings remains unknown (Sismondo, 2009).

The number of students using ghost-writing is increasing, although the overall percentage seems to be still low (Singh & Ramenyi, 2016). However, if the cheater manages to “beat the system,” the fraud will threaten the whole of academic integrity sector.

The practice of ghost-writing has been a topic of interest in the available literature. It involves other practices like the composing of songs as well as singing and visual arts which are seen to include forms of ghost-writing. All academic disciplines are vulnerable to ghost-writing, ranging from the arts to computational sciences. Computer-science students can get programming codes from specialist websites (Tripathi & Kumar, 2017). Research done by Singh et al. (2016) have discovered that undergraduates students mostly write and sell their laboratory reports to their fellow students, thus leading to repetitive work. This was also demonstrated in a study by Ruiz (2014) in a media survey done in East Carolina University. The researcher found out that at least 8.3% of the admitted students had purchased materials and paid for them. Ghost-writing is associated with famous individuals who give contracts to specialised people in any field to write about literature because they do not have sufficient skills and time to do the work themselves (PLoS. Ghost-writing collection, 2016). Ghost-writing is a legal business and the agencies

offering these services have a history of success for producing the work for a given fee (Tomar, 2015).

Before the internet, students would ask a friend or member of the family to come in and complete an essay or a difficult assignment (Singh et al., 2016). Money was not expected as such. The internet has changed everything and it is offering a large number of essay-web writing services at a fee (Augher, 2013). A range of services is provided, starting from essays to doctoral theses. The purchaser has to specify the standard of the essay which can obtain a first class grade, the deadline to which the services have to adhere. And, of course, for high standards the fee is high (Singh et al., 2016). This has undermined the process of defrauding and the examination process by the academic network.

At first, ghost-writing was not complicated and many ghost-written materials were not discovered when turned into antiplagiarism software (Singh et al., 2016). The ghost-writers are now claiming that they can produce original work that cannot show any signs of plagiarism when placed in antiplagiarism software. There are some claims of ghost-writing detection by identifying the author's style of writing by using stylometry. Thus, ghost-writers' work is original and cannot be detected by software alone (Singh et al., 2016).

Over 4.6 million organizations are offering ghost-writing services and the business is booming. The organizations have employed graduates and faculty members, like professors from respectable universities (Taylor & Butt, 2006). Defining ghost-writing is not easy because it differs from other forms of academic dishonesty. In ghost-writing, the issue of theft is complicated since it is primarily misrepresenting or lying about the author of the work. As an offence, ghost-writing is more serious than any other academic dishonest offence since it violates the principle of academic trust (Singh et al., 2016).

Research conducted by Tomar (2015) suggests that there are three distinct groups of people who employ ghost-writers. Those students whose English is their second language or a foreign language (ESL/EFL); students who are not familiar with academic methodology and therefore need an experienced person to do it. The third group includes those who are less interested in their academic work and are heavily sponsored by rich organizations and thus can afford the high fees demanded by ghost-writing agencies. Identification of this group should facilitate the

creation of policies to counteract the ghost-writing act (Singh et al., 2016), which is accorded by the student. If identified, the degree is withdrawn or perhaps not even awarded. Singh et al. (2016) recommend that the certification of other works, like essays or term papers should be done regularly and this should be a core requirement (Singh et al., 2016).

The detection of ghost-written work can only be exposed by the evaluators personally determining the student's knowledge and ability to write (Singh et al., 2016). According to Williamson (1994), there is no harm when individuals, such as politicians, celebrities and judges, use work/speech done by a ghost-writer because there are no academic expectations that those individuals should produce their own work. Posner, (1995) supports this by stating that there is no rule against plagiarism in such situations. When students are involved in ghost-writing, they cause harm to their institution, instructors, and fellow students. Therefore, a researcher is expected to produce his/her own original innovated work, but not that from others.

### **2.5.2 Self-plagiarism**

According to Green (2005) and Roig (2016), self-plagiarism is a type of an academic misconduct associated with publication. The misconduct involves duplication of previous papers and data accumulation and misrepresentation as a new work in the subsequent publication. Self-plagiarism has been criticised in science (Andreescu, 2013). The researcher highlights the impossibility of stealing from oneself (Garfinkel, 2014; Callaham (2014). Despite criticism, the issue of self-plagiarism cannot be omitted since it is widely spread (Bruton, 2014, p. 77).

Self-plagiarism is regarded as not realistic (Jacobs, 2011). The United States public health service (PHS) of research integrity office (ORI) does not consider self-plagiarism to be research misconduct. Dahlberg (2007) explains that if ORI receives an allegation involving a scientist publishing the same data from the same experiment, this does not meet PHS research misconduct standards. According to Halupa and Bolliger (2013), the concept of self-plagiarism is unclear since many institutions consider it to be a form of cheating (Bretag & Mahmud, 2009) while other institutions do not mention it (Salhaney & Roig, 2004).

In other studies, research done by Price (2002), Silverman (2012) and Callaham (2014) states that self-plagiarism is considered to be an acceptable behaviour. However, as stated by Bruton

(2014), the extent to which re-use is done is not revealed and readers are misled. The following forms of self-plagiarism are covered in the relevant literature:

#### ***2.5.2.1 Duplicate publication***

According to Lariviere and Gingras (2010) duplication of publications is a very common type of self-plagiarism; and it started as early as during the 1990s. It occurs when a published paper is submitted to a different journal. This includes publishing a new paper which contains minor changes as compared to the previous paper. At the end, a brand new paper is produced but it contains substantial amounts of recycled text. Choi, Park and Oh (2016) found in their meta-analysis of Korean biomedical research duplicate publications amounting to 69%. Hence, the repeated publishing of old data as new skews the scientific records.

#### ***2.5.2.2 Augmented publication***

Augmented publication refers to the process of republishing data a second time with an inclusion of few new or additional data (Smolxix & Bilic-Zulle, 2013). Kim and Park (2013) refer to augmented publication as the aggregation of data. The old data represent a new and likely contribution to the skewing of the scientific reward. Bonnell et al. (2012), and Davidhizar and Giger (2008) refer to this type of duplication as level 4 of duplicated publications.

#### ***2.5.2.3 Salami publication***

Salami publication means the generation of several papers in the same study (Hoyt, 2011). Frazell, and Tuck (1996) refer to this as disaggregation of data. The less frequent published unit is used in this case (Broad, 1981). Some new authors are added to the list of older authors and some demographic variables are changed. As a result, only a small portion of sample is eliminated.

The researcher might also decide to produce many journal articles by separating the data into several discrete units in order to produce more papers. Martin (2013) and Supak-Smolcic and Bilic-Zulle (2013) provide an example of a researcher publishing the results of cost outcome in one journal and the results gained with regards to health in a different journal. These papers may share some content, such as the methodology, but some parts may be different. For this reason, the so-called salami publications has been defined as a form of self-plagiarism (Bruton, 2014). In

salami publication (Supak-Smolcic et al., 2013), which can be regarded as the opposite of augmented publication, data are excluded instead of added.

#### ***2.5.2.4 Text recycling***

Text recycling means the re-use of a given portion of previously published work as new. This ranges from only a small amount of recycled texts (Bretag & Carapiet, 2007) to larger amounts up to a half of the work or even more than 50% (Neligan Williams, Greenblatt, Cereda, & Ochroch., 2010). Bruton (2014) identifies high transgressions or reuse of academics and journals in the field of science mainly within the biomedical and social-science fields. However, studies suggest that text recycling is found in all disciplines and document forms, including theses, presentations and books (Leonard, Schwieder, Buhler, Bennett, & Royster, 2015)..

Mazer and Hunt (2012) highlight that the electronic submission of student's work and their results would increase knowledge of different forms of plagiarism. This can be a basis for intervention. They suggest that cross-check software detection should be used to screen manuscripts for publication. Editors have been alarmed by a large number of materials plagiarised which could be detected by the technology (Bazdaric, Bilic-Zulle, Brumini, & Petroveck. 2012). Self-plagiarism is a type of text re-use, which is more difficult to manage. Arst (2000) explains how to re-use our own words. This poses a challenge to define plagiarism as one cannot steal from oneself. This problem can be regarded as recycling, rather than as "plagiarism" (Silverman, 2012). Some even see self-plagiarism as a way for advancing knowledge (Callaham, 2014).

Due to the unclear definition of plagiary, many researchers are not aware of its implications (Cope, 2017). The researcher is supposed to replicate minimally while the passage is still cited (Culley, 2014). Reusing one's own text marks it as novel if it is not cited; but at the same time the author is a contributor to the field (Garfinkel, 2014). Rosenzweig, and Schnitzer (2013) propose that journals should hold a copyright on an article but that one may extensively re-use one's own text above the permitted level. Authors in other fields, apart from medical field, can recycle up to 30% without it being seen as plagiarism (Boisvert & Irwin, 2006). Many authors are resorting to publishing under copyright laws, which allow them to re-use articles. Self-plagiarism has also increased in academic work, such as in dissertations (Spinak, 2017).



Beisiegel (2011) reports on the lack of agreement among the research community on how to treat such text re-use. Some publishers have resorted to flagging articles that are later found to have emerged from earlier online posts.

### **2.5.3 Collusion**

Collusion is an illegal collaboration. McGowan (2016, p. 222) explains that “collusion is by definition a social activity; hence, peer and group norms and loyalties come into play”. He further highlights that collusion depends on the context and that its social nature adds complexity both in defining and understanding the circumstances in which it occurs. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines collusion as a secret agreement of co-operation for an illegitimate purpose. Zauner (2014, p. 18) refers to plagiarism as “*die boese Schwester der Teamarbeit*” implying that it is the evil sister of teamwork or the negative side of collaboration. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines collusion as illegal and as a secret agreement to work clandestinely with another person; hence fraud, deception or trickery is implied (Burwell, 2013). Collusion, for instance, occurs when students are instructed to work alone and they fail to adhere to the instructions. They end up producing work that is similar or with minimal alterations (Sutherland-Smith, 2013).

According to Harris (2017), authorised collusion includes the sharing of research sources while unauthorised collusion involves writing a draft or a paper and lending such a document to another student in an electronic format. In higher education institutions, collusion is defined as an “unauthorized collaboration” or unauthorized assistance (McGowan, 2016). There is significant variation of what is understood to constitute collusion (Louder & Schmidt, 2013). Cook et al. (2014, p. 108) conclude that “the level of uncertainty indicates that students are not sure on where to seek assistance outside the classroom”. Sutherland-Smith (2013) finds that significant variation exists between different disciplines. This means that something which is identified as collusion in one context may be viewed as collaboration in a different context. Borg et al. (2013) highlight that collaboration is allowed in the engineering discipline as a lot of tasks are practical, while in law, it is the opposite. Here, the emphasis is on individual work and is understood as: “an attempt to instil a mind-set, rather than a work practice” without any collaboration.

Collusion has been regarded as a most serious academic misconduct (Louder et al., 2013) or as learning (Colnerud & Rosander, 2009; Wideman, 2011). Sometimes it is considered as a form of collaboration, with students contributing to learning or even as a virtuous act. The effects of collusion should be viewed in terms of “co-operation though collaboration to copying” (Barrett & Cox, 2005, p. 110). Consequently, collaboration does not necessarily lead to collusion.

According to Knowlton and Collins (2017), students collude because of difficult assignments and in order to help fellow students with the misunderstanding of a breach and low consequences. Goldwater and Fogarty (2007), and Rettinger and Krammer (2009) identify factors potentially leading to such breaches, such as poor integration, poor learning and writing skills, low Grade Point Average (GPA), breaking rules, influence from peers, designs of assessment and evaluation. Despite knowing the negative and wrong side of collusion, students still undertake it (Brent & Atkinson, 2011). According to Goldwater et al. (2007, p. 131) “[c]heating may not be an ethical statement; but [it] may merely reflect a reaction to the situation or opportunity.”

According to Bretag, Mahmud, Wallace, Walker, James, Green, and Partridge (2011), issues related to academic integrity are educative strategies and should be treated in a serious manner as they involve teaching and learning. The downfalls on strategies to combat collusion as a form of plagiarism is suggested by Sutherland-Smith (2013) who finds the definition of collusion inadequate and states that it has reduced the level of confidence among students by confronting the involved individuals. Batane (2010) discourages collusion as it denies a student a chance to make use of available resources and, therefore, they cannot progress themselves. This denies a student a chance to develop necessary skills with integrity during class assignments and this reduces the quality in collusion. Barrett and Cox (2005, p.11) explain that in hidden collaboration, it “[m]ay be impossible to find out who [the] originators are and whether most of the work is plagiarised rather than the result of too much peer help”.

Lathrop, Ann, and Kathleen Foss (2005) indicate that policies pertaining to an acceptable level of collusion must exist. On the one hand collusion can be acceptable and, on the other hand, should be expected in the student’s work since it is a way of collaboration which, in turn, is a way of teaching and learning. Sutherland-Smith (2013) maintains that when collusion occurs it should be referred to as a form of academic breaching. There should be educative and punitive

responses to help reducing the act. In fact, important knowledge is left unexpressed in the mind of the contributing student, rather than in the one's who was assisted. And, finally, there should be a definition of what collusion or collaboration as a form of plagiarism entails.

#### **2.5.4 Paraphrasing, summarizing and referencing**

According to Roig (2001), research in the context of plagiarism has been carried out on summarizing, paraphrasing and referencing as well. Roig proposes that “[m]ost students know that there is a mechanism in place for attributing ideas to their originators; and that attached to this is the ‘offence’ of plagiarism” (Hutchings, 2014, p.313). Students are often not aware that false referencing can be regarded as a form of plagiarism (Angeli-Carter, 2000; Hutchings, 2014). Some professions also associate plagiarism with the convention of referencing and many fail to address citation as a form of plagiarism (Gullifer et al., 2010).

It has been noted that students do not have sufficient referencing skills, which shows specifically in their own work (Hutchings, 2014). They claim not being conversant with referencing conventions (Gullifer et al., 2010; Hutchings, 2014) and rules on referencing are perceived as complicated and confusing (Hutchings, 2014). Lecturers have their different ways of following and presenting referencing rules and they usually expect their students to do it their way. This can become confusing as the students try to figure out which is the right way (Power, 2009). Also, in many instances students are not informed formally on how referencing should be done in order to avoid plagiarism (Hutchings, 2014; Power, 2009).

#### **2.5.5 Patch-writing and intertextuality**

Patch-writing refers to a writer depending on the use of existing written phrases in order to get their point across, rather than bringing out the idea in their own language (Jamieson, 2016). Jamieson (2016) refers to patch-writing as ‘cryptomnesia’ - unconscious plagiarism that is linked to the concept of paraphrasing (Jamieson, 2016). Patch-writing may also be described as failed paraphrasing (Jamieson, 2016; Jamieson & Howard, 2011). Jamieson adds that some of the scholars argue that when patch-writing is accompanied by citation, then it should not be termed as plagiarism or unethical.

According to Howard (1999, p.17), patch-writing is defined as “copying from a source text and then deleting some words, altering grammatical structures, or plugging in one synonym for another”. Weber-Wulf (2014, p.8) notes that “simply changing words around or inserting or deleting a paraphrase does not result in original work, but rather in an edited work; and thus, it is still plagiarism”. Weber-Wulf (2014) categorises patch-writing as copying and pasting, uncited translation, disguised plagiarism, shake-and-paste collection in no particular logical order, clause quilts, structural plagiarism and experimental set-ups. This also includes ideas being copied without acknowledgement. Pecorari et al. (2012) categorize the participants’ understanding of intertextuality into four types, namely a) conventional intertextuality, b) indirect intertextuality, c) unconventional intertextuality and d) deceptive intertextuality.

Yang, Jiao, and Ssu (2014) conclude that intertextuality can be termed as plagiarism based on the student’s development, identity, and other factors. According to Randall (2001), originality of the text is rare while intertextuality is everywhere and intertextuality is unavoidable, given the “complex aspects of academic writing” (Pecorari et al. (2012, p.150). Moody (2007) concludes that teachers should assist students in developing their own writing skills, rather than imposing punishments. Thus, plagiarism can take one form or several forms in any piece of research. Whether it is in one form or more, it is still plagiarism and it is largely considered unethical and should be eliminated as much as possible.

## **2.6 PERCEPTIONS OF PLAGIARISM**

Several research studies focus on students’ perceptions of plagiarism (Chuda et al., 2012). These studies have explored the ways in which students perceive and comprehend the concept of plagiarism. The relevance of such studies to this thesis is that they provide an insight to how students perceive, understand or view the concept of plagiarism. And this directly related to both deliberate and accidental plagiarism, depending on the level of knowledge. The students’ perception is referred to as students’ views and interpretation of plagiarism, as well as their understanding of the concept and its criteria.

McCabe et al. (2012) assert that students do not regard plagiarism as a crime since there is no serious punishment given to those who plagiarise and the benefits of their action are usually greater than the disciplinary consequences following plagiarism. With respect to the ideological values of academic integrity, some critical international students went so far as to say that

plagiarism is yet “another form of Western ‘superiority’ being exercised over other cultures” (Kutieleh & Adiningrum, 2011, p. 93). While this argument may come across as an untenable attempt to justify a wrongdoing, it also urges us to think more critically about cultural sensitivity regarding plagiarism and the values behind the concept. This research has gone deeper by looking at what Master’s student’s view as plagiarism from different perspectives.

## **2.7 CONSEQUENCES OF PLAGIARISM**

Plagiarism in higher education institutions is presented by Saeed et al. (2011) as a threat to academic standards. Occurrences of plagiarism are situational and they involve a range of varied outcomes (Yadav et al, 2016). Where there is no appropriate understanding of academic and ethical values, or the use of these, there are breaches of academic conventions. These breaches result in consequences that affect not only the students, but also the institution and society as a whole. In light of this, Power (2009, p. 643) states that when students engage in plagiarism, they “present a problem for all educators” and they do this in several ways.

One of these problems is highlighted by Orim (2014) who states that where students plagiarise in their assignments, there will be a distortion in the assessment of results as the submissions would not be a true reflection of the students’ understanding. Furthermore, the results may not provide useful feedback to the teachers for the improvement of the course design. And it would not help the teacher appropriately to measure what the assessment claims to determine (Cooper, 1984).

Gullifer et al. (2010) argue that besides affecting the students’ learning potential, the quality of assessment, regard for the rules of intellectual ownership and author rights, student plagiarism detours teaching and learning. This happens in such a way that it produces incapably trained graduates, who are potential threats to the society through lack of competence and skills at various levels. Furthermore, Marsden et al. (2005) point out that the occurrence of student plagiarism could blur and lower the institution’s reputation, and through negative publicity can lead to reputational damage.

In many instances, clear laws in terms of what is permissible or not are lacking. This causes difficulties for both the author and the plagiariser to abide by the law (McElraeth et al., 2013). In addition, a diversity of beliefs exists on the appropriate consequences to be applied to particular plagiaristic behaviour (Bennett, Behrendt, & Boothby, 2011). The trend is to follow and suggest

punitive practices but in fact the punishment is not always enforced. Another problematic consequence of plagiarism manifests at a micro-level, where students who submit other people's work as their own or patch together various texts without synthesizing the contents, are inclined to fail to develop critical thinking and cognitive skills (Vardi, 2012).

When practised at an extensive level, plagiarism can wreak havoc on a university's reputation (Lupton & Chapman, 2002) and thereby damage the career prospects of its graduates and limit its potential to attract quality students and faculty. At a macro-level, plagiarism impacts negatively on society's opinion of higher education in general. For example, Enron University and Arthur Andersen University have been criticized for sidestepping ethical education and graduating unethical business leaders from the school of business (Swanson, 2004). If universities continue to allow plagiarism to go unchecked, they could eventually dilute the value of post-secondary education (Lawson, 2004). Some studies (e.g. Bennett et al., 2011) suggest that the disciplinary consequences enforced are often a result of the teachers' perspective on plagiarism. Tennant et al. (2010) confirm that there is variation among different institutions on the penalties against student plagiarism. These include a loss to authors who plagiarise, since when detected, the papers are withdrawn. Plagiarism practices also affect the editors or publishers, who unknowingly publish such materials. Ultimately, it affects the scientific community as a whole (Yadav et al., 2016).

Ercegovic (2010, p. 3) notes that dishonest students in their academic institutions often carry the habit to their workplaces. This could take the form of them hiring another person to represent them or do office jobs on their behalf. It could also happen that editors do not report plagiarism for the sake of the individual's and the company's reputation, thereby avoiding the risk of a lawsuit by the plagiarist (Lewis, Duchac, & Beets, 2011). This compromises integrity at the workplace and it has deterred the sharing of knowledge among students and staff in the organization.

## **2.8 STRATEGIES TO COMBAT PLAGIARISM**

Several authors (Weber-Wulff, 2014; McCabe et al., 2012) point out that in order to reduce plagiarism, prevention measures must primarily include the detection as well as remedial and disciplinary actions. On the other hand, Pecorari and Petric (2014, p. 287) recommend

“educating students explicitly about plagiarism [...] teaching the use of sources and referencing in greater depth”. This would be a promising strategy to combat plagiarism. In a similar manner, Insley (2011, p. 2) suggests that the use of preventive measures should include the lecturers managing academic malpractices by using approaches that encourage and motivate the students to uphold academic integrity. Dee and Jacob (2010) accentuate that short but detailed lessons are effective in minimising plagiarism, since it increases students’ knowledge about plagiarism and thus increases awareness and the perceived probabilities of detection and punishment. Mwamwenda (2012, p. 454) highlights that in order to confine academic malpractices, educators have the obligation to make students’ academic integrity as well as the consequences of misconduct key concerns. It is recommended that communication on academic malpractices should be integrated in the daily routine, incorporated in any lesson and should appear as a topic in the curriculum.

Weber-Wulff (2014, p. 148) suggests that “criteria can be defined and applied for judging the seriousness of an offence”. Students’ plagiarism can be pictured in their work and can be dealt with practically in the measurement of students’ work, rather than as a misconception in self-interrogation, insights or expectations from the student (Walker, 2010). Walker (2010) adds that self-confessions can often result in an exaggeration of the problem. Pecorari (2013) suggests that in order to eliminate the confusion about understanding plagiarism, universities should come up with policies that can be used for references in different disciplines, such as engineering, medicine, law. Preferably, the policy should concentrate on writing skills.

Proper learning and better practice concerning academic integrity can be enhanced by improved detection and punitive measures (Heckler et al., 2013). Detection can be done either manually or technically. Manual search involves taking any paragraph from a written document and then searching on single or multiple search engines, such as Google. Harris (2017) suggests that manual detection should look at clues, such as writing going off-topic, unusual formatting, citation styles, references or quotations, acronyms, anomalies of diction and style, as well as obvious indications of copying. Donnelly et al. (2013) note that the traditional/manual approach requires a detailed process of deep, critical thinking and discussion on writing and developing individual ideas while responding to issues and incorporating the ideas of others are also required.

Chuda et al. (2012, p. 27) recommend the use of software to cope with the vast amount of material at hand. They suggest that “while detecting plagiarism is necessary and important, there are too many students and very few staff members to make this easy, automating plagiarism detection would help very much”. Hawkins et al. (2013) suggest that content safeguard should be allowed to justify the ownership of the materials and this should be renewed. Berry (2010, pp. 131-132) discovered that to combat ghost-writing, many states in the US have criminalised the sale of term theses, papers and dissertations or “other materials to be submitted for academic credit”. In this context, it is recommended that assessments are updated regularly and amended because “old assessment tasks and topics make it easy for students to plagiarize” (Ford & Hughes, 2012, p. 184). Similarly, Rooks (2006) suggests that in order to counter plagiarism, general topic assignments should not be encouraged. Standler (2012) suggests that the researcher must face the consequences if plagiarism is detected in the work even if it is after graduation and the certificate has been issued. Such measures also need a strong backing by the institution’s leadership so that lecturers are confident when denouncing significant academic fraud. If they do, their persistence should be appreciated and the appropriate consequences, including disciplinary and informative measures, should be applied (Heckler et al., 2013).

In order to combat plagiarism, Maxel (2013) suggests the establishment of detailed policies on academic integrity as well as the provision of adequate education on plagiarism. He further points out that it is the role of researchers and academics to uphold honesty and integrity in the learning and research institutions. According to Gecer and Tosun (2015), technical solutions like *Safe Assign* or *Turnitin.com* are short-term remedies for academic misconduct that diminish the temptation. But over the course of time, they suggest that educators need to address the ethical or moral issues behind plagiarism since relearning moral ethics at universities is difficult. A more pro-active approach would give students a chance for self-expression. Furthermore, a practical approach to motivate students to become authors should be encouraged (Elander, Pittam, Lusher, Fox, & Payne, 2010). In addition, students and researchers should engage in promoting academic integrity in the socio-cultural environment in order to establish their own “authorial identity” and to become writers in their own right (Elander et al., 2010, p. 159). Eventually, students would be encouraged to contribute their own unique ideas. However, students may be more willing to learn how to summarise and produce the thoughts and words of others.



## **2.9 PLAGIARISM IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS GLOBALLY**

The perceived value of morals and norms in society has decreased in favour of education, which has been viewed as a suitable source for deriving morals and values (Chang'ach, 2014). In teaching, issues of plagiarism should be taught within our traditional societies in such a way that it is presented as a wrongful act of taking without acknowledging the owner. According to Maxel (2013, p. 137), academic malpractices promote academic dishonesty and they infringe on institutional codes and laws. Eventually, they contribute to an erosion of morals in academics. Several studies have been carried out in response to the accelerating levels of students' "plagiarism in higher institutions of learning" (Gledninning, 2014, p. 1). Comparative studies by Purpovac et al. (2008) showed that plagiarism is "deeply rooted" in universities in many countries. A study carried out by a multinational group of economists provides evidence that the home country plays a major role in determining the tolerance to plagiarism. It further showed that US students were exceptional on academic dishonesty (Magnus, Polterovich, Danilov, & Savvateev, 2002). Furthermore, Purpovac et al. (2008) found that national differences were significant even when looking at Europe alone. This would make it impossible to homogenize academic integrity in Europe. The findings of their study show that students in Eastern countries were more tolerant to plagiarism than those from Western countries because the Eastern countries' norms regarding plagiarism are different from those of western countries.

In Japan, institutional policies on plagiarism are not taken as seriously as they are in America (Imran & Ayobami, 2011, p. 10). In a survey study at the University of Hokkaido in Japan, first year students revealed that teaching was conducted in two languages, English and Japanese and plagiarism occurred among Japanese students. The reasons for this is the lack of formal training on plagiarism and also the university's lack of policies that govern plagiarism (ibid.) In China, plagiarism is described as "really" or "rather" serious by The China Association for Science and Technology (CAST) (Kulshmanov & Ishanova 2014). Lempinen (2009) adds that it is seen as a transgression that "surrounds" the Chinese students. In 2010, the figure rebounded because of cheating in academic publications on ghost-written papers (Ying-Jie, 2010). Senior academics in Korea, India, China, Peru and Iran (Kakuk, 2009) have raised a complaint about the rapid spreading of plagiarism in their countries. Saldaña-Gastulo, Quezada-Osoria, Peña-Oscuvilca, and Mayta-Tristán (2010) also report that in India and Peru, plagiarism was seen in medical school theses.

Gledinning (2014, p. 1) highlights that “[u]niversities in developed countries have put in place elaborate deterrent mechanisms while their counterparts in Africa have lagged behind”. In a study done at the University of Pretoria in South Africa, a survey of 150 undergraduate students showed that 80% of the students admitted copying their assignments from the internet (Sentleng & king, 2012, p.15). In Kenyan universities, plagiarism has increased in students’ work, which is largely ascribed to insufficient anti-plagiarism software (Muchuku, 2011, p. 5). Academics’ misconduct in developing countries has also been affected by corruption in society (Khater, Khauli, Shahait, Degheili, Khalifeh, Aoun, & Dash, A 2013). These factors have affected the quality of educational achievement that should promote innovation and creativity. Chang’ach (2014) suggests that education is expected to remain an important enterprise and asset by which any society copies and regulates its existence.

## **2.10 THE CAUSES OF PLAGIARISM IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

In order to understand the problem of plagiarism, one also needs to consider the reasons why students engage in this kind of behaviour. Evidence provided by various studies confirms that students who engage in plagiarism have a clear idea of what plagiarism entails (Maina et al. 2014, Michalska, 2012; Kutieleh et al., 2011; Martin, 2012). At the same time, these students may not have a clear understanding of the seriousness of plagiarism and possible consequences in their universities. Some students’ state having personal reasons, such as a lack of time, and others justify their behaviour through the lack of clear policies and the fact that everyone is copying anyway (Imran & Ayobami, 2011). Insley (2011), Maxel (2013) and Evering and Moorman (2012) find that laziness and a lack of interest have contributed to plagiarism while Auer and Krupar (2001) explain that ignorance, lack of commitment to education, situational codes and the lack of consistency in different disciplines may cause plagiarism.

Gullifer et al. (2010) find that students plagiarise because they did not believe that they would be caught as they were aware that the lecturers had no time to read assignments intensively due to their work load. Furthermore, lecturers would assume that students are honest (Njeri, 2015). Thus, the lecturers’ reluctance to investigate potential cases of plagiarism has certainly acted as a contributing factor to the overall increase in plagiarism. In addition, groups of peers or communities in which students socialize, absenteeism and grade inflations in academic settings can either promote academic integrity, or fail to do so (McCabe et al., 2012).

According to Honig et al. (2012), the country of origin, the status of the author, knowledge of the English language and gender all play a role when examining plagiarism. Clarke and Braun (2013) point out that the main cause of plagiarism is the Western intellectual and the criticism on differing values and views about plagiarism, which leads to unintentional plagiarism. Martin, Reaume, Reeves, & Wright (2012, p. 130) propose that “racial identity is a poor proxy for individual differences and psychological differences”. Therefore, it is essential not to attribute intentional plagiarism to any individual race or culture. For example, it cannot be assumed that African students and academics plagiarise more than Western academics or students. Instead understanding the magnitude of the issues surrounding plagiarism is crucial.

Different values and cultural interpretations as to the seriousness of plagiarism can also cause confusion. Differences in cultural norms can be a serious factor affecting plagiarism (Kutieleh et al., 2011; Martin, 2012). These differences may include: language issues (Kutieleh et al., 2011), skill deficiencies and learning styles (Martin et al, 2012) and the misunderstanding of plagiarism (Park, 2003). In contrast, Martin (2012) rejects the idea of a relationship between culture and plagiarism. In many Asian cultures, rote learning is the norm (Nguyen, 2011) and critical thinking and experiential learning are considered inferior to rote learning (Valiente, 2008). However, real learning must be logical and create a meaning for the individual. Many Asian cultures consider knowledge to be collectively owned property (Martin et al., 2012; Nguyen, 2011). Hierarchical relationships, obedience, and respect are cherished values for maintaining the *status quo* of knowledge acquisition and harmony in society. By contrast, in the Western/colonial world, knowledge is created and extended through critical thinking and analytical abilities, rather than through preservation in the form of traditional norms or values.

Another factor that plays a role in causes of plagiarism is discipline. Social sciences or the humanities rely more on longer, descriptive or analytical writing, which encourages plagiarism in the natural sciences, the most common transgression is data fabrication (Decoo, 2002) and duplicate publishing. In the natural sciences, cases with a 100% plagiarism have been identified. Here, the only changes made to the original copy were the author and the title. When looking at systemic factors which may affect plagiarism, poor education systems (Onuoha et al., 2013) including a lower emphasis on honesty and ethical behaviour in learning and teaching institutions (Otuola, 2014) and the lack of an authorized policy on plagiarism (Sharma & Singh,

2011) play a crucial role. This has led to a call for the amendment of policies on plagiarism, for instance, in European national policies on integrity put into place by the European Science Foundation (European Science Foundation Strasbourg, 2010).

In political ideologies, plagiarism is viewed differently. Plagiarism is viewed as being instigated by corruption and it has been criticised for defining texts and other documents as intellectual property while, simultaneously, such documents are also public property. Bureaucrats have also criticised plagiarism as an administrative issue. They state that instead of regulating positions in academic and professional sectors, the administrative element has reduced the importance plagiarism is given academically and professionally (Vessuri et al, 2014). Developing countries have criticised the US for “moral imperialism” and “intellectual colonialism” by failing to factor in the impact of culturally specific views (Bouville, 2008, pp.311-322).

In conclusion, these inconsistent perceptions among students, faculty members the public sphere and politics regarding plagiarism pose a challenge to the prevention of plagiarism, education and finding adequate responses (Roig, 2016). Factors which can add to the confusion about what constitutes plagiarism and what it entails include the following elements: firstly, there is a lack of clarity and inconsistent practices among institutions, such as different rules and practices in citation and referencing. Secondly the lack of agreement among professors about constituents of plagiarism and ambiguous definitions of plagiarism in the institution’s academic integrity policy, poses another difficulty.

## **2.11 TECHNOLOGY AND PLAGIARISM IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

Despite increasing university sanctions and social pressure to act responsibly and morally, plagiarism and academic dishonesty in post-secondary institutions are on the rise (Powell, 2012). Maxel (2013, p. 141) notes that the internet and use of computers have assisted in accessing written materials across the world which, in turn, has enabled increased copy and pasting. Hence, Jones (2011, p. 142) asserts that high-technology has brought with it clever methods of cheating.

In addition, the ubiquitous nature of media and technology in the second decade of the new millennium has probably fuelled the growth in both the incidence and the detection of plagiarism (Parker, Lenhart, & Moore, 2011). A recent CBC survey of more than 40 Canadian universities

indicates that over 7,000 students (1% of the university student population) were caught and punished for the lack of academic integrity (Moore, 2014). Front-page articles about forced resignations of defective school board directors (CBC News, 2013), as well as the suspension of dozens of Harvard University students for cheating (Perez-Pena, 2012) are indications that the media and society are refuse to silently tolerate dishonest behaviour. Internet research provides access to information faster than ever before (Manly et al., 2015). Technology can be seen to have added to the methods of academic dishonesty in several ways. These methods include unauthorised representation, purchasing of written papers, using unattributed secondary sources as well as d cut-and-paste plagiarism (Manly et al., 2015).

It can be noted that the internet has changed the way students choose to cheat and in some way, it could be said that it has encouraged those students who choose academic dishonesty. Students frequently use search engines to quickly access information and this has led to the idea that students view scholarship as borrowing ideas and piecing the ideas together to demonstrate their knowledge (Tsai, 2013). Beyond basic search engines like Google and Yahoo, students are frequently using Wikipedia, Yahoo! Answers, eNotes, OPaers and Slideshare to access information for their assignments (Heberling, 2002; Yang et al., 2014). College students often perceive peer-to-peer sharing as an acceptable type of behaviour (Scanlon, 2003). The ease of access to internet sites provides endless amounts of information for college students which can be regarded as a tempting offer for those willing to act dishonestly.

Technology provides students with avenues to purchase research publications and papers. Some of these behaviours include copying files from friends, manipulating timestamps to request extra time, use of messaging software or emails to discuss exams (Etter, Cramer, & Finn, 2006) as well as the misuse of student response technology in participation (Zou, Long, & Ling, 2011). Another form of technology, which provides an avenue for cheating, is Clickers. These can be used by cheating students who fail to attend class but pretend they did attend and did their own work while the work was done by their friends (Maxel, 2013).

## **2.12 INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES ON PLAGIARISM**

Most of the higher education institution policies on plagiarism consider plagiarism as an unethical act (Grigg, 2010). Generally speaking, higher education institution policies lack clear

specifications as to who should be responsible in cases of plagiarism and how exactly these policies should be implemented. Building on that argument, Jones (2011) suggests that policies should apply the devotion of the code of conduct on plagiarism, collusion or fabrication, so that moral values in academia and in the job sector are enhanced. According to Grigg (2010), for any institution to deal with plagiarism successfully, it should clearly include and define the following aspects in their policies: the definition, types of plagiarism, strategies to prevent plagiarism and clear and fair penalties imposed (Grigg, 2010). Maxel (2013) points out that in East Africa, policies, procedures and mechanisms to deal with cases of academic dishonesty have been put in place. However, due to mainly financial constraints, the processes have not been altogether successful. Thus, he concludes that the economy of a given state has an impact on the prevalence of plagiarism and that financial resources of institutions must be stable in order for the policies to be implemented effectively.

Bretag et al. (2011) and Carroll and Ryan (2007) suggest that the penalties on plagiarism should be weighed in terms of the amount of work plagiarised and the type of materials copied. It is difficult to determine intended plagiarism (Sutherland-Smith, 2010) and often institutional policies do not give a detailed explanation on what is regarded as intended or unintended plagiarism. The guidelines should be uniform across all faculties and departments. Furthermore, the student should be given a chance to challenge the committee on what determines the punishment to ensure that the committee is fair (Carroll & Ryan, 2007). This is based on the assumption that the majority of students who plagiarizes does not do so intentionally.

The institutional policy on plagiarism should be written in a comprehensible manner, so that students can read and conform to it (Sutherland-Smith, 2010). The Centre for Academic Integrity (2010) identifies a number of principles, such as fairness, honesty, respect, trust, and responsibility, as core values in academic integrity-policy documents. These values should be embedded in the curriculum, tested and be an assessment marking criteria. Park (2003) suggests that the punishment for plagiarism should range from rewriting and remarking the assignments, failing the course withholding the degree to the exclusion from graduation permanently. Similarly, Jones (2011) regards the adoption of academic honesty policies and the acquisition of anti-plagiarism software as the central measures to help curbing plagiarism. As such, institutional policy should state clearly what entails plagiarism, the mitigation and punishment.

## **2.13 DISCUSSION OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ON PLAGIARISM**

This study draws on the sociocultural theory (SCT). In particular, four significant concepts of Vygotsky's theory guide the research. These concepts include tools, more knowledgeable others (MKO), the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and language. The use of this approach assumes that these concepts lay the psychological foundation for plagiarism among Master of Education students. The Socio-Cultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978) will be used as theoretical frame based on which the findings of this study will be interpreted. The theoretical focus of this study will be on Vygotsky's concepts in relation to plagiarism in Master of Education studies.

Vygotsky (1896-1934) was a Russian scientist whose ideas have influenced the field of education psychology significantly. Most of his theories have not received extensive attention but, more recently, his work has become the foundation of many cognitive development researches. The theories focus on the role of society in the development of cognition (Vygotsky 1978). He believes that a community plays a vital role in "making meaning". He adds that "[l]earning is a necessary and universal aspect of the process of developing culturally organized, specifically human psychological functions" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 90). Social constructivism goes hand in hand with socio-cultural theory. Oldfather et al. (1999 p. 8) state that social constructivism is a "particular view of knowledge, a view of how we come to know." In social constructivism, a teacher and a researcher view language as co-construction through interactions with others which takes place within socio-cultural context.

According to Vygotsky, social learning contributes a lot to development. He claims social-cultural factors are a requirement for development and regards social-cultural settings as the primary determinant factor in the development of human mentality such as "voluntary attention, intentional memory, logical thought, planning, and problem-solving" Oldfather et al. (1999, p. 20). The theoretical framework provides a lens through which the problem can be viewed, analysed, interpreted (Levy & Stockwell, 2006). SCT will be used to examine plagiarism as a social practice. It will consider students to be the main constructors of learning and assessing the factors involved. The following basic concepts in the sociocultural theory are considered essential in the understanding of plagiarism.

## **2.13.1 Tools**

According to Lantolf (2000), the sociocultural theory asserts that the mind of human beings is assisted by tools. The role of tools in the human mind is to advocate the human minds which cannot work without the help of the tool. According to Vygotsky (1978), tools - whether symbolic or signs - are created by man and depend on the culture and history of the given environment. These tools are used in solving problems and, in doing so, they influence the character of an individual. These tools can change over the course of generations, depending on the needs of a given community.

Vygotsky identifies language as the first tool. This tool acts as a mediator in the child's mind to promote the ability of learning. According to Lantolf (2000), language is the symbolic tool which functions psychologically and which the individuals employ for monitoring physical and mental activities. Lantolf and Apple (1994a) conclude that language, as a symbolic tool, encourages collaboration in order to shape the world according to certain goals. Has (1996) adds that the use of technologies is a psychological tool as well as a sign tool to mediate interaction between people and the environment. William and Burden (2009, p. 40) indicate that tools can be people who enhance human learning by stating that "by selecting and shaping the learning experiences presented to them." In conclusion, Mitchell and Myles (2004) state that learning is controlled by psychological tools, such as language, resources, technologies and also interactions.

Interacting with parents, teachers or peers with different skills and knowledge can lead to effective learning and thus encourages learners to move to the next stage. Hence, tools should empower learners/users with knowledge to be self-reliant.

## **2.13.2 The More-Knowledgeable Other (MKO)**

Vygotsky claims that learners are helpless and depend on others in their early stages of life. These others can be peers or parents who take the initiative of instructing what is right and wrong and to provide model behaviour. Parents pass on cultural knowledge to their child through language. Vygotsky (1978 cited by Wertsch, 1985) claims that a child acquires knowledge through interaction and assimilation from others (inter-psychological) and later internalises the knowledge according to personal importance (intra-psychological). The change from social to



personal transforms the interactive learning to personal values. This is experienced in schools as students do not just copy from their teachers but transform what is being taught to what they are (Vygotsky, 1978).

Williams and Burden (2009, p. 120) claim that the socio-cultural theory advocates that education should be concerned “[n]ot just with theories of instruction, but with learning to learn, developing skills and strategies to continue to learn, with making learning experiences meaningful and relevant to the individual, with developing and growing as a whole person”.

According to Ellis (2000), learning takes place in interaction but not through interaction. The learner performs a new task while being assisted by a knowledgeable person and after internalizing the task he or she can do it on their own. Thus, social learning is mediated and aided in order to perform new tasks. This mediation can be facilitated by either a human being who is more knowledgeable, such as a parent, teacher or peer. However, the MKO can also refer to technology, such as the internet which provides knowledge.

### **2.13.3 The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)**

The zone of proximal development (ZPD) refers to the process whereby the MKO assists the learner to reach a level higher than where he or she was initially. This means, learning is a process of enhancing mediated knowledge through assistance from more knowledgeable people in learning process. The “discrepancy between a child’s actual mental age and the level he reaches in solving problems with assistance, indicates the zone of proximal development” (Vygotsky, 1986, p.187).

Lantolf (2002), Wertsch (1985) and Shayer and Adey (2002) claim that Vygotsky conceptualized the ZPD in order to assess the processes of assisting the learners’, their intellectual abilities and the evaluation of such practices. He suggested that psychologists should predict a child’s future growth. This urge led to the development of ZPD which he defined as “the distance between a child’s actual developmental level, as determined by independent problem-solving, and the higher level of potential development, as determined through problem-solving, under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Wertsch, 1985, p. 60). This helps in determining the maturity of the child’s mind which is constantly developing.

Vygotsky (1978 cited by Wertsch, 1985) claims that effective learning takes place when there is an interaction between people with different levels of knowledge. This helps the mental function which is not yet mature. In addition, ZPD can be viewed as a process of transition from inter-psychological to intra-psychological functioning.

According to Kozulin and Presseisen (1995), the learning process is not an expression of solidarity but a process of appropriation of action methods in a given culture. Kozulin (2003) concludes that human and symbolic mediations are the most common ones. Human mediation addresses the type of involvement that enhances the child's performance and symbolic mediation is concerned with the changes that can be seen when symbolic mediation is introduced.

Shayer and Adey (2002) claim that ZPD awakens inter developmental processes and children are able to operate well when they interact with an MKO. When the process is internalized, the child becomes independent. Vygostky claims that ZPD does not only refer to instructional but also to biological factors. ZPD determines the level of development and form of instruction in the child's life and this development should start earlier in order to awaken the entire life set of situations and stages of maturity Vygotsky (cited in Shayer et al., 2002).

Mitchell et al. (2004) contribute to ZPD by stating that learning takes place socially at first and is followed by individual learning at a later stage. In other words, it is a move from inter-mental to then intra-mental states. But also Van Lier (1996) notes, language learning with peers who have similar or lower proficiency might be more beneficial than interacting with more capable others as it might encourage the creation of different kinds of contingencies and discourse management strategies. From the discussion, the factor of social culturalism can be extracted and employed as essential in this study. Children learn from adults by observation, modelling and feedback. After learning they reach a stage at which they can do the activity alone and without help.

#### **2.13.4 Language**

Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory of mind (1978) regards language as a tool that helps build knowledge while Donato (1994, p.130) explains that collective scaffolding may result in linguistic development in the individual learner. Scaffolding occurs when individuals learn together on a learning task.

Zimmerman and Risemberg (1997) argue that “competency in second language (L2) should not be seen to be located in mastering skills”. The “aspect of literacy “comes about when there is too much concentration instead of engaging in flexibility, competency and fluency. Marshall (1987) asserts that this aspects should not be ignored as teachers will just reinforce what Kennedy (1997) and Kubota (1998) term as ‘fixed routines’ and Vygotsky refers to “fossilisation”. This, in turn, can delay students’ “abilities to develop the multiple skills required for their success in their academic life” (Spack, 1988).

In SCT, learning occurs when the learner constructs the meaning and then assimilates it (Donato, 1994). Task-based contexts “stimulate learners to mobilise all their linguistic resources and push their linguistic knowledge to the limit” Nunan (1988 cited Seedhouse, 1999 page?). In addition, Kumaravadivelu (1993b cited Kumaravadivelu, 2006), proposes that the “task-based activity” is useful for learner-centred tasks, language-centred tasks, and learning-centred tasks. These skills lead to one-way thinking and reject what does not exist in their knowledge. Simister (2004) puts more emphasis on understanding the voice of the students and rebukes the repetition of ideas as it only produces uninspired students. This shows that students should learn how to create and adjust their goals, and adopt learning practices that suit them individually. Language as a tool helps the learner to be able to articulate their mental processes.

### **2.13.5 The implications of the Socio-cultural Theory on plagiarism**

#### ***Implication for the literature***

My study draws on aspects of the socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky 1978), as discussed. Vygotsky’s socio-historical theory provides a better understanding. It proposes that societies are in a continuous state of instability and change. Socio-historical theory traces the development historically. This could have implications for the study of plagiarism. It seeks to establish the changes from the traditional way of learning to the modern way of learning. Situated learning and legitimate peripheral participation demonstrate the ways in which participation in the social and cultural world shapes the development of learners’ knowledge about appropriate citation and source-use practices (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Petrić, 2012).

According to Vygotsky, more knowledgeable others (MKO) are important tools of mediation. They help the learners to learn from them what they cannot do on their own. In connection to

plagiarism, newly registered university students might learn from their student community of practices related to plagiarism and that plagiarism is a wide-spread habit and a successful strategy. If they internalize this MKO learning experience (inter-psychological) and combine it with what they already know and have experienced in terms of their socio-cultural development (intra-psychological) (Evans & Youmans, 2000), this can lead to an increase of plagiarism.

Technology has enhanced psychological processes in such a way that they have taken the place of our thoughts. Technology has enhanced opportunities to plagiarise due to availability of internet sources (Evering & Moorman, 2012). Students can access online materials and instead of using them positively and in an ethical manner, they just copy and paste (Davies & Howard (2016). In addition, Rogoff and Lave (1999) and Wenger (1998) assert that digital technologies, especially the internet and the social-networking media, have changed how society views knowledge.

Language as a tool of mediation also plays a role with regard to plagiarism. Language shapes the level of individual thinking (Vygotsky, 1978). According to Jenkins and Helmore (2006) and Fishman (1981), language and ideas work coherently. They propose that arguments lie in the ownership of ideas and ideas are socially constructed but not owned. Students only get to know the effects and consequences of plagiarism by being taught by a person representing the dominant socio-cultural view. In the case of universities, this can be the lecturer, whose view of plagiarism is socially constructed (Evering et al., 2012). As such, the social learning that tends to precede development opens the dialogue among educators, teachers and students in terms of changing of cultural practices (Evering et al., 2012).

In the schooling situation, the socio-cultural contexts and conditions of schooling have an impact on the learner's development. The social-cultural context is, therefore, a valuable source of theoretical knowledge because it demonstrates how meanings and understandings grow out of the learner's social interactions. Thus, plagiarism is socially constructed as the learners get the concept from society.

### ***Implications of Vygotsky's theory to the methodology used***

The focus-group discussion with the students (see, 1.12.4) brings out issues of socialisation in enhancing learning. In the discussion group, there were those participants who knew more about plagiarism and those who had less knowledge. This revealed the concept of scaffolding as learning was taking place socially where less knowledgeable students learn from more knowledgeable through discussion.

Interviews with the supervisors and policy-makers help to analyse the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), whereby learning takes place when more-knowledgeable others (MKOs) assist the learner in the learning process. The supervisors taught learners on issues related to plagiarism extensively in their teaching session and after this, learners were to refrain from participating in plagiarism. Unfortunately, the MKO supervisors did not introduce the concept to learners' right in the beginning and students could not avoid plagiarism since they did not have enough knowledge on the issue. The views given by the supervisors and policy-makers are of importance to the learners.

Lastly, the institutional policy documents could be perceived as a tool that enhances learning. The institutional policy document is seen as a tool that assists in learning by equipping the learner with the rules and regulations on how to avoid plagiarism.

### **2.14 EMPIRICAL STUDIES ON PLAGIARISM**

Plagiarism has been studied by several scholars using different dimensions and approaches. According to Yang et al. (2014) studies done using a qualitative approach are rare compared to quantitative and mixed-method design studies. As is evident from the literature, empirical studies on plagiarism include Escobar (2015): A College Departmental Approach to Plagiarism: A Case Of Micro-politics; (Vani & Gupta, 2015): The Efficiency Comparison of Various Plagiarism-Detection Techniques; (Njeri, 2015): Academic Integrity and its Inference on Knowledge-Sharing among postgraduate Students in the University of Nairobi; (Coughlin, 2015): Plagiarism in Five Universities in Mozambique: Magnitude, Detection Techniques and Control Measures; (Li & Casanave, 2012): Faculty Members' and/or Students' Perspectives on Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty; (Kostka & Ebsworth, 2014) Case Studies Examining the Prevention,

Detection and Remediation of Plagiarism and/or Cheating, and Orim (2014): An Investigation of Plagiarism by Nigeria Students in Higher Education.

This list does not include issues of plagiarism in Master of education studies in selected East African universities. Masters students' perceptions on plagiarism, institutional policies on plagiarism and combatting strategies are issues addressed in this study. The findings from this study will also contribute to the existing literature on plagiarism.

## **2.15 CONCLUSION TO THE CHAPTER**

Plagiarism refers to acts of using somebody's work without acknowledging the origin and/or the author. It is an issue that affects the world at large, both academics and professionals. Many studies on plagiarism have been carried out especially in the Western world, but little has been done in Africa, especially in East Africa. Muchuku (2011) notes that Kenyan universities are prone to plagiarism due to the lack of anti-plagiarism software. While lecturers teach the conventions of plagiarism, students still plagiarise on a large scale.

Chapter three presents the research methodology and analysis. The chapter highlights concepts of the research approach, the paradigms, research design, sampling and data generation methods and data analysis.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THE METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW**

The purpose of the study is to explore plagiarism in Master of Education studies in East African universities. In order to produce credible results, methodological and procedural requirements were adhered to in a standard, non-biased, reliable and valid manner. This chapter elaborates on research approach, the research paradigm, and the research design, sampling methods, data-generation strategies and data analysis. The steps are presented to show the relationship between the research questions/objectives and the data generation, analysis and interpretation, as proposed by Saunders (2011). Leedy and Ormrod (2013) define methodology as the researcher's general approach in carrying out the research project with respect to sampling, data generation and analysis, in such a way that the research can be criticized, repeated and adapted. The methodology for this study was selected and intended to answer the main research questions, so as to attain the purpose of the study.

The Key Question:

What are the issues related to plagiarism in Master of Education studies in selected East-African countries?

The Research Questions:

- What are the perceptions of Master of Education students and their supervisors on the issue of plagiarism in selected East-African universities?
- What is the nature of the institutional policies and practices relevant to plagiarism in selected East-African universities?
- What (additional) strategies do supervisors suggest for combatting plagiarism in selected East-African universities?

### **3.2 THE RESEARCH PARADIGM**

Collis and Hussey (2013) maintain that a research paradigm can best be described as an idealistic and theoretical framework that outlines the potentially best way in which the research should be carried out. According to Onwuegbuzie and Frels (2016), philosophical assumptions refer to the philosophical understanding of methodology. This comprises the beliefs regarding the axiomatic components of ontology, epistemology and methodology. As such, research philosophy “guides the inquirer’s gaze to look at particular things in particular ways; and [it] offers [the] appropriate philosophical and theoretical justification for this way of seeing, observing, and interpreting” (Green & Glasgow, 2006, p. 93).

This is supported by researchers’ philosophies and theories in relation to the world and the understanding of knowledge. According to Guba (1990, p. 17), the philosophical worldview should be seen as “a basic set of beliefs that guide activity”. Brown and Saunders (2011) conclude that the term ‘philosophical paradigm’ refers to how the researcher views and understands the world. This impacts on the choice of the research methodology, strategies, methods and procedures.

Easterby-Smith (1997) explain the need for a philosophy in carrying out research, in order to refine and specify the most appropriate methods for the research, and finding the limitation of several approaches. This enables the researcher to settle for the most appropriate method that suits the purpose of his/her study. Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba (2011) and Mertens and Baethge (2010) refer to the philosophical worldviews as paradigms while Creswell (2013) categorises paradigms as being potentially post-positivist, constructivist, transformative and as pragmatic.

This research is situated within a constructivist paradigm. Constructivism seeks to understand how participants constructed the term plagiarism in their natural In the case of this study, this would refer to the three universities in East Africa. Lincoln et al. (2011) and Mertens et al. (2010) believe that individuals tend to comprehend the immediate environment in which they live by developing meaning out of their experience. This research aims at determining the participants’ view of the situation being studied. Creswell (2013) adds that subjective meaning is negotiated socially and historically. These constructivists address the interactive processes among individuals and how individuals construct meaning in their environment.



### **3.3 THE RESEARCH APPROACH**

Research is an important activity in any business as well as in academic undertakings. This makes it important for research to be accurate and precise. Creswell (2013) defines research as an approach, a scheme to carry out research. This involves the connection of philosophy, designs and methods. Mingers and White (2010, p. 242) define research methodology as “a structured set of guidelines or activities to assist in generating valid and reliable research results”.

Creswell (2013) defines it differently by stating that a research approach is a strategy or a proposal to carry out research and it has three possibilities, namely quantitative research, qualitative research and mixed research. According to Yan, Yang, Wu, Su, Chen, and Chen (2011), the quantitative method comprises production of numerical data which determines either acceptance or rejection of the proposed hypothesis. The qualitative method includes the participants’ verbal and written responses (Golubovic, 2015). The quantitative approach is appropriate for studies that involve theories and hypotheses (Appleby, Hunt, & Jacob, 2011). For the purpose of this study and its objectives, this method would not be appropriate.

In a mixed-method approach, qualitative and quantitative approaches are involved (Onwuegbuzie, et al., 2016). Keele and Pearse (2011) find that a mixed-method approach involves the incorporation of quantitative data and qualitative data. It uses a given research design that involves a particular philosophical assumption and a specific theoretical framework (Creswell, 2013). Petticrew, Rehfuess, Noyes, Higgins, Mayhew, Pantoja, Shelmith, and Sowden (2013) add to this by explaining that the mixed-method approach is used for syntheses. The mixed method was not suitable for this study since the method deals with exact numerical values (Harrison & Reilly, 2011). Due to in-depth questions used in the data-generation process, the qualitative approach is more suitable for this study.

Using a qualitative research approach helped in understanding the issues related to plagiarism among Master of Education students. This resonates with the findings of MacGregor and Wathen (2014), who emphasise that the goal in using the qualitative method is to delve deeper into the phenomenon and to understand the same phenomenon under its natural environment. In addition, qualitative research suits studies that involve interpretation of actions and interactions of the participants (Golubovic, 2015). As noted by Onwuegbuzie, Byers, Smith, Hwang, Angrove,

Chandler, Christian, Dickerson, McAlister-Shields, Hompson, and Denham (2013), there are six major components of the qualitative research process. These components include philosophy, research; the sampling design, data generation, data analysis, legitimation, meaning-making and presentation. Creswell (2012), Suter and Cormier (2015) state that qualitative research starts primarily with a question and a framework that is based on theory; but it focuses on inquiry and the generation of data in an original setting. Snyder and Chester-Fangman (2011) suggest that qualitative is used in comprehending the meaning of how people construct their philosophical thinking to validate their understanding in the world they live in. Thus, according to Wahyuni (2012), qualitative research is an inquiry and an exploratory study of phenomena and experiences in their natural setting.

When recording verbal data in the qualitative approach, the data normally consist of textual data, stories and narratives which are recorded digitally in photographs, tapes or written notes. The participants express their responses and personal experiences in words. The data-generation strategies of research are used for the acquisition of data. This research involves insights into the issue of plagiarism in Master of Education studies. Barrat, Choi, and Li (2011) justify the use of the qualitative approach by describing it as suitable for collecting oral data from the participants, rather than numerical data. The findings of this study were interpreted by analysing the participants' statements in order to synthesise the data and to draw conclusions.

### **3.4 THE RESEARCH DESIGN**

The process of research design refers to collecting, analysing and interpreting the generated data from participants in order to answer the research questions (Ngoako, 2011). According to Creswell (2013), the design involves the data generation/collection, analysis and drawing of conclusions. The design flows throughout the process (e.g. problems and ethical issues). According to Leedy et al. (2013), the research design links the research components in an exploration of possible answers to the overall research questions Onwuegbuzie et al. (2016) have identified more than fifty qualitative research designs. Creswell (2013) suggests that qualitative research designs entail narrative research, case studies, grounded theory, ethnography and phenomenology Leedy et al. (2013) add that, apart from case studies, other designs in the qualitative method are include ethnography, narrative grounded theory and phenomenology.

Considering the objectives of this study, a case study research design was chosen. This allows to explore issues surrounding plagiarism in Master of Education studies in selected East African universities.

A case-study design involves the exploration of a given phenomenon in its natural setting. According to Creswell (2013), case studies designs are used for inquiry in several fields and are used by the researcher in developing an in-depth analysis of the cases. These cases studies are influenced by factors, such as time, activity and the employment of different data-generation procedures (Yin, 2012).

Gillham (2000, p.1) defines the term “case” as “a unit of human activity embedded in the real world, which can only be studied or understood in context”. A “case” can consist of single or multiple case studies. Multiple-case studies include two or more cases within the same study, with each of the cases predicting similar or contrasting results for different reasons. For the purpose of this study, a multiple-case study approach has been selected. This is based on Yin’s (2003) suggestion that if the results were obtained from one case, they can serve as a means of confirmation for the other cases. In addition, a case study design involves studies with unique factors that influence a phenomenon. This phenomenon can be an individual program and event (Leedy et al., 2013). These multiple cases included Moi University, the University of Makerere and the University of Dar es Salaam.

A case study is a useful method when there are boundaries between the phenomenon and the context. Qualitative case studies are used to observe and analyse particular cases in an ideal setting. The multiple-case studies design is used to comprehend the existing phenomena in a qualitative study. In order to gain an understanding of real-life phenomena in their contexts, I selected the multiple-case study for this project. The reason for this selection is that it allows for the study of complex data within the original context in which the phenomenon occurred. It is the aim to provide an in-depth understanding of the nature and complexity of the phenomenon. Scholars use case studies to observe, study and analyse particular cases in their natural settings (Hashim, Hashim, & Esa, 2011). According to Jones (2011), case studies become significant when there is a demarcation between phenomenon/participant and the environment or the context. Qualitative case studies are used to study, observe and analyse phenomena in their

natural settings (Hashim et al., 2011). Multiple case studies designs are used to comprehend the existing phenomena (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013). In this study, multiple case studies contributed to my understanding of phenomena in their natural environment (da Mota, Naslund, & Jasmand, 2012).

Mason (2010) suggests that 25 participants are the minimum value of participants accepted in the qualitative research, while Marshall and Rossman (2014) suggest that case studies should comprise 15 to 30 interviews. Single case studies should involve 15 personal interviews with participants (Nitecki & Abels, 2013). Curry, Nembhad and Bradley (2009) are among those theorists who conclude that in a study, 20 participants is a reliable sample size to ensure saturation.

The qualitative research approach and the multiple case study design were suitable since this project is interested in local context, addresses a specific issue and, furthermore, it aims to provide insight into the plagiarism issue. Different data-generation methods augmented it with descriptions of the experiences of the participants and communicating the variations of a single issue made it possible to assemble a complete picture of academic plagiarism.

In this research, the multiple case comprised the single case in each of the East African universities. One university in each of the three East African countries was selected. The School of Education participants represented the case in each university and country. The three universities represented of the region of East Africa. This allows to regard East Africa as a bounded unit, as defined by Merriam (2009).

### **3.5 LIMITATIONS, DELIMITATIONS AND SAMPLING OF THE STUDY**

Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) explain that limitations and delimitations are weaknesses likely to occur in a study and those weaknesses are likely to affect the trustworthiness of the findings.

#### **3.5.1 Limitations of the study**

The scope of remains within its limitations and thus affects the outcome (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Time was a limiting factor for this study. Due to many interviews to be conducted, there was no time to prepare for subsequent interviews. Potential participant's biases and the pretence that affected experiences on plagiarism accurately was a drawback, especially during the

interviews. This limited the recording of experiences of plagiarism, either by participant's involvement or the other person's experience.

The areas of study limited the scope of the research given the different contexts from which data had to be collected. Each study area had participants with different characteristics and this impacted the researcher's engagement with the participants. The nature of an exploratory case study approach suggests that the results would not be generalizable (Mistarihi, Al Refai, Al Qaid, & Qeed, 2012). The limitations determine the extent to which researchers can generalize the results from this study beyond the selected three East African universities (Mistarihi et al., 2012).

It was difficult to judge the completion of the process due to the tedious process of data generation. This is in line with what Grbich (2013) suggests. This was counteracted by triangulating the data-generation methods. The methods used were giving the same results

### **3.5.2 Delimitation**

Delimitations are conditions that limit the scope of the research (Bloomberg et al., 2012). These conditions include a criteria in selecting participants. This can be age, gender and level of education. The conditions of the context usually affect the research activity (Bloomberg et al., 2012). Examples of such boundaries are the selection criteria, such as the restriction to master's students, supervisors with experience of over five years and policy makers. Personal interviews and focus group discussion with participants focussed on matters relevant to plagiarism.

The research sites were specific universities in East Africa: Moi University in Kenya; the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania and Makerere University in Uganda. Those universities are established ones since they were started before the late 1980s. They are known for producing the best teachers in their respective countries. They have very large student population of more than 10,000 in an academic year. Thus, the experiences on plagiarism are vast. At the time when this study was conducted, the universities were in session; and all the participants could be accessed quite easily.

### **3.5.3 The target population**

The target population refers to the individuals who fit the object of research where the researcher wants to conduct the study (Silverman, 2010, p.14). In this research project, the target group were Master of Education students and the lecturers, who were the supervisors and the policy-makers in the respective institutions.

### **3.5.4 Sample size**

A sample is a part of a whole measurement drawn from a definite population, in which the researcher has interest given the limitation of the study and the resources available (Silverman, 2010, p.14). According to Wilson, Thomas, Burns, Hewitt and Osei-Waree (2012) the estimated sample size depends on the saturation of data .Meigounpoory and Shabankareh (2013) also support the concept suggesting that the sample size stands in relation to saturation. .The most suggestive sample unit in a qualitative research is 20 and 30 units.

Connaway and Powell (2010, p.128) state that it is advisable to use a larger sample size as the rule-of- thumb in research in order to ensure better representation of the target population. The participants for this study were seven Master's students, two supervisors and one policy-maker for each of the three universities. The total sample size was twenty-seven participants.

### **3.5.5 Sampling**

Sampling is the selection of elements in a population for inclusion in a research study (Bingham & O'Leary, 2014). Bonds-Raacke and Raacke (2010) observe that the population in a research refers to the group of individuals on which the researcher is basing his study. In this case, the students, supervisors, and policy-makers in each institution were central to the research. Horyna and Bonds-Raacke (2012) explain that a researcher cannot consult everyone involved in a case; and the researcher, therefore, has to choose those people who can most ably assist in advancing the case.

Hence, a sample requires a researcher to decide on who should be included, which context should be used, which events should be studied, what is to be observed, and what is to be looked

for. The researcher should keenly adopt the sample strategy depending on the factors related to the state of inquiry (Jawale, 2012).

For this study, purposive sampling, convenience sampling and snow-ball sampling methods were employed the in selection of the participants.

#### ***3.5.5.1 Purposive sampling***

Purposive sampling is the process of choosing participants based on suitability of the study and knowledge (Poulis et al., 2013). Purposive sampling is desirable especially when the set scope is small but the characters have to be studied intensively (Etikan, Alkassim, & Abubakar, 2016).

Suri (2011) explains that the main purpose of sampling in qualitative research is to select participants who have rich information for analysis. Pre-existing knowledge has helped me to understand issues related to my study and helped develop research questions and objectives.

For this study, supervisors who have had some experience of supervising students in thesis writing have been selected purposively According to Elliott (2011), purposive sampling involves selecting participants who are rich in information. Pirlott, Kisbu-Sakarya, DeFrancesco, Elliot, and MacKinnon (2012) explain that purposive sampling is used to obtain a small portion of the larger part in order to serve a given purpose. Three supervisors were interviewed at Moi University, two supervisors at the University of Dar es Salaam and two supervisors at Makerere University. This sampling was guided by Mason (2010) who suggests that saturation should be the principle that guides data generation.

#### ***3.5.5.2 Convenience sampling***

Using a representation of the whole population is one of the determining factors for a study is predetermined; so convenience sampling is suitable for such cases (Battaglia, 2008). Convenience sampling, also accidental or haphazard sampling method, is a form of non-probability sampling for which the target population should be easily accessed; since the population is geographically proximal, available at given times, and willing to participate (Dornyei, 2007). The elements are selected as they are situated near the researcher who is conducting the study. Convenience sampling is affordable to carry out since participants are

easily found. The purpose of the convenient sampling method is to collect data from the available participants and can be obtained easily.

The target population is homogeneous; thus, the results obtained are equally homogenous. Convenience sampling is likely to be biased (Gass, Mackey, & Ross-Feldman, 2005). Researchers are advised that convenience sampling should not represent a population. In addition, neither the biases nor probabilities are quantified (Hatch & Lazaraton, 1991). In fact, it is not entirely clear to the researcher to what extent the sample will represent the whole population. The major drawback of convenient sampling is that the samples are unpredictable and is severely hidden (Leiner, 2014). The most reachable students in the researcher's institution are the most conveniently selected (Dornyei, 2007).

Convenience sampling was used in choosing the student participants. This included MEd students, who were in session and available in the institution at that time when research was being conducted.

#### **3.5.5.3 *Snowballing***

De Vos and Strydom (1998, P. 123) define snowball sampling as a “technique for developing a research sample; when the existing study subjects recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances”. These primary subjects serve as “seeds” which means that one subject is recruited who, in turn, recruits subject two; and the sample consequently expands. (Heckathorn, 2011, pp. 355-366).

This sampling method generates a biased sample; since the initial participant provides investigators with participants of similar characteristics to those of the initial participants (Erickson & Rossi, 1979). Johnston and Sabin (2010) suggest that snowballing depends on the participants' choice and helps the researcher not to make bias mistakes. But the participant's choice should be varied to avoid the data being monotonous. Hence the researcher's role is to manage and develop the original participant and monitor how the sampling progresses.

Snowball sampling is used when it is hard to locate participants. The method is suitable when dealing with vital issues in relatively unsearched matters. It requires the knowledge of initial participants to locate other reliable participants.



The recruitment for this study was started by consulting with my supervisor about how to approach the policy-makers in the university. He referred me to the university policy-maker, who, after an interview, referred me to the postgraduate coordinator. These individuals had similar characteristics in terms of working experience on academic integrity.

### **3.6 DATA-GENERATION STRATEGIES**

According to Shea, Grinde and Elmslie (2011), data-generation strategies are strategies used to generate the data from the participants. In qualitative studies, data-generation strategies are essential (Chenail, 2011). Researchers can use more than one strategy to generate data when conducting qualitative research (Creswell, 2012). According to Lincoln and Guba (1995), multiple measures of the same observable data could be used to triangulate the findings. Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007) explain that data-generation methods are applied to four major sources: talk (interviews), documents, observation and visual/spatial.

In another study, Onwuegbuzie et al. (2016) suggest that the two major ways of collecting data during the interview process are verbal and non-verbal communication. Creswell (2012) and Glesne (2011) categorize the methods of data generation into observations, interviews or questionnaires, documents and audio-visual materials. Leedy et al. (2013) suggest that primary data-generation strategies are the best method to gather the data from the participants. Qualitative data-generation methods that best address the guiding questions in this study include interviews (i.e., one-on-one), focus-group discussions and documentary analysis.

For the purpose of this study, data has been collected from the participants according to stipulated data collection methods (Yin, 2011). Primary data generation strategies and secondary data generation methods have been used.

### **3.6.1 Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews were used to answer the following research questions:

- What are the perceptions of Master of Education students and supervisors on plagiarism in selected East-African universities?
- What (additional) strategies do supervisors suggest for combatting plagiarism in selected East African universities?
- What is the nature of the institutional policies and practices relevant to plagiarism in selected East African universities?

Master's students, supervisors and policy-makers were the participants to answer these questions. Bingham and O'Leary (2014, p. 217) define an interview as a data-generation method, whereby the researcher seeks open-ended answers from open-ended questions to the research questions and themes connected to the research objectives. Prior to conducting the interviews, and appointment with the participants was made. Individual interview were carried out with the participants due to the openness this allows in the expression of ideas and opinions.

According to Horn and Johnson (2012), an appropriate data-generation strategy was semi-structured face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions. Probing questions were used in order to help participants exchange their experiences freely (Bjerregaard & Larsen, 2011). Times and venues were chosen by the participants in the study. The interviews began by reviewing the purpose and reasons for the study. Open-ended interviews were suitable for this research as the participants were at ease and it gave provided an opportunity to analyse the participants' habits and attitudes closely. Furthermore, the questions inspire detailed answers (Kendall, Kendall, Kendall, & Kendall, 1992).

Other advantages of open-ended questions are that they give the researcher an opportunity to ask more questions pertaining to the topic and participants are able to express their thoughts freely. Creswell (2012) explains that the interviewees can express their personal perspectives on the topic when engaged in a semi structured interviews. The participants in the interviews for this

study explained to different levels of plagiarism and they were able to ask questions and get clarifications from other participants.

According to Murray, Kendall, Boyd, Grant, Highet, & Sheikh (2010), semi structured interviews also have disadvantages, such as more time and higher expenses and the participants' interest depends on the topic of the research. Yin (2011) comments that pilot studies give a researcher an opportunity to test himself and analyse the tools to be used in the research. In qualitative research, piloting of the studies is not a requisite (Pritchard & Whiting, 2012). For this study, a pilot study was not essential. Testing the tools (research questions) and the research design was not necessary.

I conducted one-on-one interviews to collect the data in order to address the research questions. To understand the views and experiences of plagiarism among Master of Education studies in selected East African universities, I used self-designed interview protocols for students, supervisors and policy makers (see, Appendices C, D & E) respectively.

The questions were adopted from other researchers' work and they were dependent on the research questions. Hood, Hart, Belgrave, Tademy and Jones (2012) used semi-structured interviews to set a standard for the questions in the interview protocols. This study relies on the use of these interview protocols during the data generation in order to ensure the consistent use of unstructured queries and probes for all the participants. Using the interview protocol helped to generate data that were relevant to the research questions and it also assisted in getting in-depth information and allowed for greater flexibility of the questions (Maxel, 2013, p.140).

The primary generating tools for this study were an interview protocol, a digital voice recorder and a laptop. It further required twelve open-ended questions for the student's personal interviews (see Appendix C); 8 open-ended questions for the supervisors (see Appendix D) and 14 open-ended questions for the policy-makers (see Appendix E). These questions were on the interview protocols. It also included questions in the major areas of plagiarism in Master of Education studies in three East African universities. As recommended by Roulston (2010), more details were given by participants through follow up and probing questions.

Handwritten notes were gathered by observing body language. I confirmed researcher's details through triangulation of the data collection methods, audit trail and reflexivity (Black, Palombaro, & Dole 2013). For this study, I triangulated the data from the transcription with written notes and with the institutional policy documents (Oleinik, 2011).

Research field notes were suitable to collect the data, including the participants' personal details, dates of data collection, research questions, participants' responses, and written notes for the study. Each interview session was approximately 60 minutes. Participants were asked questions pertaining to the topic and were also allowed to ask the researcher questions during the research sessions. The participants also provided supporting documentation, especially the policy-makers, who had to produce the university documents on academic integrity during the interview process.

### **3.6.2 Focus-Group Discussions (FGS)**

Master's students answered this question in a focus-group discussion.

What are the perceptions of Master students in education and their supervisors on plagiarism in selected East African universities?

A focus-group method/a group interview/ a group-depth interview or a focus-group interview is used in a group of people who are being interviewed. It comprises of either small or bigger group discussion (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2013). According to Wilkinson, Joffe, and Yardley (2004), a focus group discussion is a formal discussion of people on a given issue. Kritzinger and Silvier (2005) add to this by stating that focus groups are collective discussions, organised to discuss a specific topic; while Krueger and Casey (2000, p. 5) maintain that a focus group discussion is a "carefully planned series of discussions designed to obtain perceptions on a particular area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment". If the process is properly directed, gathering participants in a group should help to reveal relevant ideas, which could lead to further discussions and add further details to the collected data.

The focus-group discussion suited the study in relation to Liamputtong's (2010) understanding. According to this understanding, focus group discussions describe and understand the meanings of interpretations of a given set of phenomena for better understanding on a given problem from the participants' perspective. Rather, focus groups "encourage a range of responses, which

provide a greater understanding of the attitudes, behaviour, opinions or perceptions of [the] participants on the research issues” (Hennink, 2007, p. 6).

The participants were selected to contribute valuable information on the research questions. Interaction among participants led to the identification of the main issue in this project. This method uncovers the aspect of understanding which had not been obvious to the researcher. Instead, focus groups “create data from multiple voices” (Madriz, Denzin, & Lincoln, 2003, p. 15). Meyer, Davidson, McKenzie, Rees, Anderson, Fletcher, and Johnston (2010, p. 20) term focus group discussion as a “group effect” because the control of the group interaction is in the hands of participants and not controlled externally by the researcher. The role of the moderator, which is normally the researcher, is to introduce the topic to the participants and encourage free interaction through guided conversation. The moderator also obtains first-hand information from the group in which the participants address aspects of the problem in the research. Focus group discussion is the most reliable method especially when working with communities (Lloyd-Evans, 2006).

In view of the potential benefits, focus-group sessions were organised for the students in each of the institutions as a means of generating information on their views and their responses to the research questions. Each group was composed of a maximum of seven participants who were Master’s students and, accordingly, they were considered knowledgeable.

The discussion was guided by focus-group protocol. This consists of a set of questions, which are meant to guide the researcher in his/her data-generation process in relation to a focus group discussion. If the process is directed properly, gathering participants in a group would help bring out any relevant ideas. This could lead to further discussions and add more detail to the collected data. In view of the potential benefits, focus-group sessions were organised for the students in each of the institutions as a means of collecting information on their views and their responses to the research questions. A total of twelve open-ended questions were discussed in the focus-group discussion. The focus group prompts were designed in line with the interview questions (see, Appendix C).

### 3.6.3 Documentary analysis

The institution's policy documents were used to answer the question below.

- What is the nature of the institutional policies and practices relevant to plagiarism in selected East African universities?

This question was answered by the policy-makers in every institution and accompanied by the institutional policy documents. Scott (1990) defines a document as an artefact in which the central feature is a universal text. Grix (2010) explains that since documents are written with a purpose, the researcher should be aware of aspects of the documents, such as the origin, purpose and the contributor to the protocol.

The documents for the purpose of research are objectively produced in order to provide information about the object and show the social life of people who initiated those (Elander et al., 2010). The documents are subdivided into two groups. Primary documents are produced by accounts of people who experience an event that is being studied. Secondary documents are produced by those individuals who did not participate in the event but witnessed or read in the form of eye witnesses accounts (Bailey, 1984).

According to Bowen (2009, p. 27), a documentary analysis is a “systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents; and it requires the data to be examined and interpreted, in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge”.

Documentary analysis was used due to its ease of understanding and its cost effectiveness. It is easy and straightforward in establishing reliability and it does not require contact with people, in which case the collection of data can require large amounts of time. Furthermore, it is a more powerful strategy when combined with the interviews, which were also employed in the study (Katchmarchi, Taliaferro, & Kipfer, 2017).

In relation to this study, documentary analyses on plagiarism in Master of Education studies were used. A policy document was collected from each of the three East Africa universities. In UA I the document analysed was entitled ‘Rules and Regulations Governing Postgraduate Studies’ (Moi University Postgraduate Studies Rules and Regulations, 2015). In UB, at Makerere University the document was entitled ‘Academic Integrity Policy’ (Academic Integrity Policy, 2015) and UC I consulted a document entitled ‘Guidelines and Regulations for Plagiarism and

Deployment for Postgraduate Students for Teaching or Technical Assistance’ (The Directorate of Postgraduate Studies, 2016). The data generated from the documentary analysis of these documents were guided by five questions focusing on the following elements: the definition of plagiarism’ aspects considered as plagiarism’ the roles of students, supervisors and policy-makers as well as the punishments and strategies put in place for dealing with plagiarism. A checklist was used for the documentary analysis. A checklist is a list of questions that are set systematically based on the objectives of the study. The research questions were intended to guide the researcher on which document is to be analysed. For this project a checklist a checklist was used in order to analyse the institutions’ policy documents. The documents were provided by policy-makers and some of them were also retrieved from the internet. The questions in the checklist guided the study in terms of the documentary analysis (see Appendix F).

### **3.7 THE DATA ANALYSIS**

Data analysis is the process of rendering data meaningful in an organised and laborious way (Smit, 2002). In this study, the data analysis adopted steps recommended by Yin (2011). These steps include transcribing the recorded interviews’ categorising the data’ and, lastly, coding of the data by placing the data into controllable themes and by explaining the significance of the case study.

#### **3.7.1 Interviews and Focus-Group Discussions**

My data analysis started during the data-generation process in the field, as suggested by Springer (2010). Data generation and data analysis in qualitative research are “recursive and dynamic” (Merriam, 2009, p. 169). This happened when the participants explained their views on plagiarism, thereby allowing for the next step of analysis to be conducted.

The data used was collected by using personal interviews with the master’s students, supervisors and policy makers’ focus-group discussions with master’s students and documentary analysis. The interviews and the focus-group discussions were recorded and transcribed to prepare them for the data analysis. The digital voice recording and the transcribing process were executed using a digital voice recorder. Once each interview had been completed, the digital voice recorder was connected to my personal laptop and the interview was downloaded and converted to an external hard drive as an audio file.

The verbatim transcription of the interviews was done by me. In highlighting the narrative quality of the participants' talk, it was the aim to maintain their choice of words and story structure to stand out. At first, the strict transcription or "concepts using the actual words of the participants" was used in an attempt to capture the significant moments of the interview. For example, there were moments when supervisors described reactions in their students' plagiarism, as well as the students' experiences on plagiarism. This communication included pauses, laughter, gestures, etc. As many backchannel signals as possible were collected. These initial transcriptions were verbatim and they included the markers of prosody. This refers to the study of the rhythms and sounds of language, and sometimes it is possible to talk about the prosody of pros.

The coding began and as suggested by Corbin and Strauss (2008), the passages were analysed and some of the filled pauses and agreements were removed in order to highlight the structure of the participants' views. Intelligent transcriptions were used for the purpose of coding. Morse and Richards (2013) recommend the use participants exact quotes to back during data analysis. Moments in which either the interviewer's talk or that of the participants would assist in creating meaning or mark a movement in the conversation were included. The transcribed work was rechecked for completion. This approach to transcribing the interviews provided a means to see how the participants were understanding plagiarism. The sequence of data generation and data analysis for both interviews and documents was brought together and organized to facilitate the retrieval of data. The data was retrieved continually for emerging patterns and themes that illustrated plagiarism under the study. These initial pauses brought attention to the important issues that the participants were reporting and provided a sense of their overall understanding of plagiarism.

Then the transcribed work was converted into categories by using the closed-coding method, in which I was "breaking (the) data apart and delineating (the) concepts" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p.195).

These concepts of reactions and consequences were organized into categories, based on the specific research questions. Patterns and themes were identified by colouring codes and labelling the data. Personal information was added throughout the transcription for analysis. Patterns were



detected in the coded data by reading across the rows horizontally, to determine any patterns in an individual participant's interview. Charach, Yeung, Volpe, Goodale, and Dosreis (2014) suggest that the generation and refining of codes is continuous until saturation. Reading down the column determines patterns across the participants' responses in the data reduction and similar responses used were grouped together into like categories or themes. The themes were presented through graphics, e.g., the figures for rich description of the discussion of the themes. The graphic representations and descriptions were then used to develop a broader interpretation of the findings. Comparisons with the literature were made and suggestions regarding limitations and future research possibilities were outlined.

### **3.7.2 Documentary analysis**

The documents related to plagiarism used in this study included institutional policy documents on plagiarism provided by the policy-makers as well as those retrieved from the institution's website. The academic integrity policy reviewed the institutional policies in three universities in order to collect evidence of the expected standards of academic integrity. This was intended to provide insight when making comparisons between the participants' views and experiences with plagiarism and the universities accepted positions on this topic. As such, these documents provided tangible information that could not be observed and might not have surfaced in interviews (Creswell, 2012). The documents were analysed by considering the research problem and the research questions. It helped to answer the question by looking at the document. Since physical copies of the documents were available, coding began and was followed by categorising the data into themes. The process of documentary analysis was rigorous and transparent.

Finally, the analysed data from both the interviews and the documents was contextualised within the literature and the theory in order to provide a thick description in response to the research questions. The themes were selected by looking at all the categories that lay within a given unit of meaning together, as stated by De Lange (Personal conversation, February 18, 2017), "put all [the] related data in one pot". The introduction to the theme was done; and then each category was discussed in detail. The findings were narrated in 'my own story' and supported by the literature and the theoretical framework in chapter two. A data check was conducted by comparing the recorded interview data and the transcribed data for accuracy. Furthermore,

triangulation of research methods was used to crisscross the accuracy of the findings (Cope, 2014; Creswell, 2012). In this study, the transcribed interviews and the documents were analysed, as suggested by Cao and Hawkins (2011). Data was obtained from the participant's through semi-structured interviews validated data was comprised from the institutional-policy documents in this study.

### **3.8 THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER**

The researcher's initial role is to retrieve information from the participants (Whiteley, 2012). In this study, data was generated through interviews and focus group discussion, taking notes and recording audio on the research. Photos of the participants were taken in order to allow for reflection on the participation.

According to Chenail (2011), through facilitative and creation of the context participants data concerning familiarities in life can be shared. The chain of communication was facilitated by identifying any signals and setting the participants at ease, as suggested by Whiteley (2012). By using a set of open-ended questions, the participants were able to contribute their perspectives on the questions without any difficulties. This relates to Derrett and Colhoun (2011) who propose that interviewers play a big role on the outcome of the research. Chereni (2014) adds that the interviewer is the primary person in qualitative research. He is responsible for facilitating the conversation during the data generation.

My role as a researcher was to identify the themes, create the interview protocols (questions to be discussed) and the document analysis checklist. I contacted the participants, generated data through personal interviews and focus group discussion and I analysed the results for discussion.

Lange, Rogers and Dodds (2013) report on the protection of vulnerable research participants, such as minor populations, mental and physical challenges from unjust research procedures. In the study, I selected the participants who were major, meaning adults who could sign the consent. I assured them of their confidentiality (Elliott, 2011).

### **3.9 TRUSTWORTHINESS**

Loh (2013) explains the trustworthiness of research as an important methodological issue since other people are supposed to perceive the data from the field to be trusted in the findings of qualitative research. According to Lincoln et al. (1995), trustworthiness of the qualitative findings includes: dependability, credibility, confirmability and transferability. Cope (2014) and Houghton et al. (2013) add that dependability, transferability, confirmability and credibility are the standards used to evaluate the qualitative research rigour. As previously discussed, the above criteria were used in assessing the trustworthiness in the research.

#### **3.9.1 Dependability**

According to Polit and Beck (2013), dependability refers to the stability of the data in equivalent circumstances. In quantitative research, dependability is used as a measure of reliability. The qualitative researcher sees dependability as the strength of the research data (Houghton et al., 2013). According to Cope (2014), a study is dependable when there is harmony amongst the research processes. Repetition of the findings means exhausting suitable procedures and explanations with the participants in comparable environments. Cope (2014) adds dependability is realized when the researcher agrees with the outcomes at each of the research steps

Dependability is ensured by writing of memos, reflexive notes and field notes appropriately (Charach et al., 2014). Dependability is confirmed by an audit trail which is the clear account of research activities and their oral account (Amankwaa, 2016). Audit trail rigour outlines the decisions made throughout the study based on methodologies and interpretative judgement (Houghton et al., 2013). According to Carlson and Ross (2010), an audit trail also involves keeping interview notes, field observation notes, records, journals, drafts of written interpretation and calendars. Member-checking involves the participants' approval of the particular aspects of data interpretation. Member-checking approves the compatibility of the data analysis with the participants' experiences (Carlson et al., 2010).

For this study dependability was implemented by returning the transcribed personal interviews and focus group discussions to participants and they had to verify the accuracy of those transcripts. Clemen and Reilly (2013) add that member-checking involves data testing, analysing

the categories, clarifications and conclusions with the participants, in order to enhance accuracy and authenticity. The participants had access to the interpretations of their oral data to verify the reasonableness of the data in line with the concept of member-checking as suggested by Carlson et al., 2010.

Research strategies should be expendable so that the procedures and processes involved in collecting and evaluating data can be understood and followed. This assures the study's replicability (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010). Detailed descriptions, the operational details of the data generation, and a reflective evaluation of the project were used to permit the readers to systematically advance the methods and their efficacy, as suggested by (Shelton, 2004). Tape recordings were used in the interviews with the participants and were transcribed verbatim. A member check was employed for accuracy.

### **3.9.2 Credibility**

Credibility refers to the validity of the message received (Gerdes & Ohrstrom, 2015). Credibility is rated through the way data is presented (Polit et al., 2013). It also presages principles of the authenticity of the study (Houghton et al., 2013). Credibility is seen when individual participants share the same experiences in life. Then that experience is recognized (Cope, 2014). Credibility is also enhanced when the research is done in a believable manner (Houghton et al., 2013). Credibility in relation to trustworthiness is achieved by perceiving the ethics of the source, such as fairness, truthfulness and lack of bias (Gerdes et al., 2015).

Triangulation, member checking and prolonged engagement with participants enhances credibility (Black et al., 2013). When using member checking, participants check the credibility by reading and re-reading the transcribed work and listening to the recorded audio material to ensure that it tallies with the participant said (Houghton et al., 2013). In this project, credibility was ensured by appropriately asking questions that avoid the need to obtain 'yes' or 'no' answers. I described my personal views and verified the research outcomes with the participants. I established audit trails, meetings and observation by supporting each of the stages in data generation. In this study, the participants' transcript reviews played a significant role in establishing credibility as the participants had to agree that they grasped what they intended to express in the discussion (Cope, 2014; Yin, 2011).

Credibility faces some challenges. One of these challenges is the issue of inadequacy or biases of the previous studies and theories used in the analyses of the results. According to Potter's concept (2013), potential biases in this study were prevented by undertaking data generation and analysis alongside one another until saturation and no new themes were forthcoming from the data. According to Ihantola and Kihn (2011), the second contextual threat is the contradiction between research questions and the research design. This was not experienced in the research for this study. Finally, the contextual validity threat can be experienced during data analysis and interpretation (Ihantola et al., 2011). This potential challenge was overcome by listening to and rereading the collected data several times.

Credibility was ensured by employing researcher credentials and data triangulation as a strategy. It was also ensured that data generation and data recording were done accurately. My pre-existing knowledge in the field of education as well as five years of working experience as a classroom teacher, have allowed me to develop a level of awareness of potential biases. Acknowledging potential biases created a good environment for listening and open communication with the participants. In addition, various sources were used to triangulate the data and to develop a valid conclusion. The data collected from the focus-group discussion, the interviews and the analysis of institutional policy documents of different universities were analysed. After using the interview protocols as a tool for data generation they were also used in combination with members' checks, to review the findings for accuracy. Secondly, an audit trail to established credibility, which and this mitigated any bias.

### **3.9.3 Transferability**

Houghton et al. (2013) and Polit et al. (2013) describe transferability as findings that can be used as a reference for other groups of research. Transferability is the extent to which results of a particular study can be used in different studies. In qualitative studies, a level of transferability is reached when the results from the research can be transferred (Ihantola et al., 2011). The research can extend the results to a wider context to make them transferable. This includes constructive generalizability, theoretical generalizability, practical usefulness, empirical applicability and contextual generalizability. Threats to transferability occur when the researcher fails to reconnect the pragmatic findings to other studies and fails to explain their implication

(Ihantola et al., 2011). Secondly, failure to compare the used theories and the current theory which leads to myopic conclusions can affect transferability. This is addressed by Ihantola et al. (2011).

Schneider and Goffin (2012) emphasise how rigorous research methods can contribute to high quality research. This can be done by evaluating external validity, internal validity and construct validity in methodological rigour (Schneider et al., 2012).

According to Black et al. (2013), transferability is achieved by tackling the original context of the study so that future research can ensure transferability of findings to any specific setting. To achieve transferability in this study, detailed descriptions of the institution and location were used. Similarly, the sampling strategy, the sample size, the data-generation strategies, the length of the data generation process, and the time period, when the data were collected were in line with the propositions of Schneck, Miklowitz, Calabrese, Allen, Thomas, Wisniewski, and Bowden (2004).

#### **3.9.4 Confirmability**

Confirmability is the degree to which the study of data represents the feedback from the participants to ensure that it does not satisfy the researcher's bias (Cope, 2014). According to Houghton et al. (2013), confirmability and dependability are closely linked since they refer to accuracy and neutrality of the data. Cope (2014) claims that confirmability should be revealed in the statements of the interpretations, the illustrations, the conclusions and the findings to show that they result directly from the data. In this project, confirmability was established by quoting the participants responses thematically (Cope, 2014). Houghton et al. (2013) suggest that confirmability should ascertain rigour throughout the research through audit trail.

In this study, confirmability was established through thorough reflexivity, triangulation and a detailed audit trail. The audit trail gave a clear vision on details of the data analysis and processes of findings. And lastly, confirmability was ensured by creating a state of impartiality through describing the chosen methodology for the systematic tracking of the conclusion and the processes in detail. The method was selected and was followed by an explanation as to how it would be used. This study employs triangulation of the data to minimise any biases on the part

of the researcher a state of impartiality was created to ensure confirmability by describing the chosen methodology for the systematic tracking of the conclusion and the processes in detail. The method was selected and an explanation on its use was compiled. Triangulation was applied to minimise the researcher's bias.

### **3.9.5 Saturation**

Saturation is the point of repetition of data during coding processes (Mason, 2010). In qualitative studies, saturation is based on the number of participants. According to Habersack and Luschin (2013), posted the saturation point is just based on the assumption that all data have been captured. In data analysis, saturation occurs when there are no new results in phenomenon structures, reaction typologies and interpretive models. For this study, data was collected from participants until such a time as the data began to be repeated.

In health science research, Carlsen and Glenton (2011) describe the status of the sample size of the focus group by reaching saturation point. Curry, Nembhard, and Bradley (2009) suggest that the sample size of 20 participants can suffice to reach a point of saturation. In a study done by, Essers, van Dulmen, van Weel, van der Vleuten, and Kramer (2011), propose that saturation is achieved by looking at 17 consultants in which the researchers identified 19 context factors that could potentially explain the deviation from generic recommendations on communication skills. Mason (2010) express the saturation point as being reached upon observing diminishing return (when more data could not add any information). In this study, four components of Lincoln and Guba (1995) were used to establish trustworthiness. Based on the above discussion, my study involved twelve participants in each university to ensure saturation.

### **3.10 ETHICAL RESEARCH**

Ethical issues in research can be identified as the physical, emotional and intellectual well-being of the participants (Ridley, 2012). According to Camilleri, Iturrino, Bharucha, Burton, Shin, Jeong, and Zinsmeister (2012), the concept of moral and lawfulness is mandatory in order to protect participants' privacy and informed consent is a very significant document. The consent should be given to a major who has sufficient information and can understand such information (Lambert & Glacken, 2011). Grigg (2016) suggests that the three major elements that the person

issuing the consent form should understand is information, voluntary and confidence so that these elements can be explained to the participants.

When there is a high level of illiteracy among the population and when underdeveloped local language is used, participants should also be issued with a consent form (Gazzinelli, Lobato, Matoso, Avila, de Cassia Marques, Brown, & Diemert, 2010). But Tindana, Bull, Amenga-Etego, de Vries, and Aborigo, (2012) suggest the use of verbal consent. The consent should allow participants to withdraw from participation (Lambert et al., 2011). On the offering of incentives, Ezeugwu, Laird, Saluja, and Winston (2011) suggest that no incentives should be given to participants. A copy of publication should be issued upon publication and upon request. Hanson, Balmer, and Giaradino (2011) recommend that the participants' environment should be treated with respect.

The concept of information involves privacy of a participant's details and personal data (da Mota et al., 2012). Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) ensure that the research is conducted ethically by protecting human rights of the participants (Goldman, 2014). Cronin-Gilmore (2012) suggests safe storage of data before destruction.

Due to the seriousness of plagiarism, such malpractice can result in serious consequences. Some methodological processes were considered in an attempt to carry out ethical and valid research process:

- i. The study was focused on plagiarism among Master of education studies, not detecting plagiarism in students' work,
- ii. Participation was entirely voluntary,
- iii. The participants had the option of asking that the video and/or audio-recording be turned off during the interviews or the group interviews,
- iv. The permission of withdrawal from the study was given to participants,
- v. The interviews were confirmed with audio recordings, and
- vi. The study was open to the revision of the research questions.



In addition, by reassuring the participants regarding confidentiality of their identity and information provided, trust was developed between the participants and the interviewer. This improved access to the participants by improving my communication. This generated a better understanding of the communities. I had some pre-existing knowledge about the participating universities, so I could make ethical decisions on the research. Legal limitations regarding confidentiality and trustworthiness were discussed upfront. Pseudonyms were assigned and the data was kept data safely in password storage.

### **3.11 CONCLUSION OF THE CHAPTER**

I outlined the methodological approach in explaining plagiarism in Master of studies in selected East African universities. A qualitative case study and a constructivist paradigm were chosen for this study. The study presented main research questions, the area of study, and an overview of the sample size and methods of sampling were also identified. Lastly, the generation of data and the analytical data approaches in this study were outlined and the ethical considerations and trustworthiness of the study were discussed. Chapter 4 includes data presentation and all analysis of the data.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

#### **4.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW**

The generated qualitative data are presented based on the themes that emerge from each research question. This chapter includes a chapter overview of the research, the presentation of generated data from the participants, the documents in relation to the themes, additional strategies and the chapter summary.

Key Research Question:

What are the issues related to plagiarism in Master of Education studies in selected East African universities?

#### **The Research questions**

- i. What are the perceptions of Master of Education students and supervisors on plagiarism in selected East African universities?
- ii. What is the nature of institutional policies and practices relevant to plagiarism in selected East African universities?
- iii. What (additional) strategies do supervisors suggest for combatting plagiarism in selected East African universities?

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore plagiarism among Master of Education Studies in East African universities. The problem was continuous plagiarism in East African universities, despite the strategies put in place to curb plagiarism. The participants consisted of Master's students in the School of Education, lecturers who are supervisors in the School of Education and university policy-makers. The institutional policy documentary data in each university were to be compared and triangulated with the data from the participants.

Particular criteria for the selection of the participants for this study were in place. All the participants were to be members of a given selected university fraternity and be a major as they are declared mature. The prospective participants received invitation letters and signed a consent form before the interviews. The invitation letters to potential participants were distributed through

the supervisor of this study, who played a major role in identifying the participants. The environment was favourable for the participants who signed the consent form before responding to the overarching research questions. It was ensured that the participants responded to all the questions on the interview schedules.

The qualitative research approach was used in carrying out the research. It involved the collection of participant's responses in order to uncover themes in relation to the participants' experiences. The sub-headings related to the participants' responses emerged from the themes in the research questions and literature. They included the definition of plagiarism, forms of plagiarism, perceptions, causes, consequences, institutional policies on plagiarism and strategies to combat plagiarism.

The data collection was conducted through personal interviews consisting semi-structured questions. These questions were directed at students, supervisors and policy makers' and focus group discussion with students and the documentary analysis from the institutional policy documents. Both inductive thematic analysis – by reading the literature – and deductive thematic analysis by reading and re-reading through the data were used to combine emerging themes with the relevant questions. The trustworthiness of the research tools was tested through prolonged engagement with the participants, triangulation of research methods, reading out questions to my supervisors and colleagues, who acted as reviewers, and member-checking. The reviewer's suggestions were incorporated. After this they acknowledged the questions and no alterations were done thereafter.

After interviewing, the raw recorded data of each interview was transcribed into a Microsoft Word document. The transcribed Ms Word participant data was coded through open coding, axial coding, categorisation and thematic analysis. Then the interview was uploaded into an Excel spread sheet. Microsoft Word and the Excel spread sheets were used to organize the data according to patterns and themes after transcribing. The data-analysis processes ended when saturation occurred.

I used pseudonyms in order to protect the identity of the participants and the participating institutions as follows: UA for University A, UB for University B and UC for University C. The research investigated three institutional policies in the three East African universities. The

following documents from each institution were analysed: UA: ‘Rules and Regulations Governing Postgraduate Studies’ Document, UB: ‘Academic Integrity Policy’ Document and UC: ‘Guidelines and Regulations for Plagiarism and Deployment for Postgraduate Students for Teaching or Technical Assistants’ Document. The participants were identified as follows:

ST for students, SU for supervisors and PO for policy-makers. The theory guiding this study is the Socio-Cultural Theory (Vygotsky 1978). The theory was applied in the methodology clarification and the data analysis.

## **4.2 PRESENTATION OF THE DATA**

The data is presented thematically, starting with the analysis of institutional policy documents. For the interviews, the raw data collected from the students was presented first, followed by the supervisors’ and the policy-makers, respectively. The themes ranged from the definition of the term plagiarism, forms of plagiarism, perceptions of plagiarism, institutional policies on plagiarism and strategies put in place to methods of combatting plagiarism.

### **4. 2.1 Definition of plagiarism**

#### ***4.2.1.1 Institutional policy documentary perspective***

One of the aims of this study was to look at the definitions of plagiarism from institutional policy documents in the three institutions in order to answer the research question:

#### **What is the definition of plagiarism given by the institutional policies?**

All the institutions had their own definition of the term plagiarism, except institution **UA**, which did not offer any explicit definition of plagiarism. One institution noted that plagiarism refers to representing words of another as one’s own’ while another institution stated that it is presenting work, ideas or the creations of others as if they are yours. **UB** and **UC** had definitions that have a common meaning, for example:

*“Plagiarism is representing the words of another, as one’s own in any academic exercise” (UB).*

*“[Plagiarism] is the act of presenting another person’s works (published or not), ideas or creation from any source as if they were one’s own (UC)”.*

#### ***4.2.1.2 Findings from the participant's interviews***

The participants were expected to define plagiarism in their own way. This was to establish their knowledge of plagiarism. Their answers were to show whether they actually understood what plagiarism was. This would determine whether they had ever come across the term.

##### ***4.2.1.2.1 Students' perspective***

The student participants seemed to be knowledgeable about the term plagiarism. Most of them stated that it is 'an act' of not acknowledging. Some students added that it is not only using someone else's written words; but that these were also spoken without any alteration. In their definition, plagiarism was understood as using written work as it is, lifting ideas/words/talked/read and ideas, written, or verbal without acknowledging the author. Another student defined plagiarism as using one's own ideas without acknowledging the source. The students discussed their understanding and interpretation of the term plagiarism in different ways, as shown below:

*Plagiarism is the act of taking one's materials and using them without acknowledging that they are one's own (STIUC).*

*Plagiarism is the act of using someone's ideas or words as if they were your own. They are not actually your original words. They belong to someone else; perhaps you heard that person talking somewhere or perhaps you read them somewhere and you go ahead and lift those words and use them as if they were your own (STFUA).*

Some students defended themselves by saying that previously they were not aware of plagiarism. Some explained that they were introduced to the concept in primary schools' but stated they were just ignorant. They also stated that it only became meaningful when they got into university.

*I think the term has been there right from primary because they just ignore plagiarism. It sounds more than in university level, so in primary, there is copying. You just transfer the work from each other and when they grow up, is when they discover it is called plagiarism; in other words it is copying (STUB2).*

Some students stated that they first encountered the word plagiarism during their undergraduate studies. This was through different courses, depending on the institutions. These students asserted that the term plagiarism was introduced to them by course lectures in first year and to others in

fourth year, depending on the level of academics. Courses with a focus on communication skills, research methods in education and project writing were used to educate students about plagiarism.

*“I was a first year student at University A in undergraduate, and there was a course we were taking and it was communication skills, how we can be better people who can communicate ideas; and my lecturer by the name Madam” (STIUA)*

*“I got it since when I was in fourth year in the course of communication skills where I was introduced to issues of plagiarism, but not seriously. In a serious way is when I was in fourth year; when I was warned several times not to commit plagiarism; because it’s an academic crime; and it can cause you to be expelled from your studies” (STFUC).*

Some students explained that they were aware of the term plagiarism during undergraduate studies; but that increased their awareness increased when they joined the Master’s programme. This shows that at Master’s level instruction on plagiarism was conducted in a serious manner.

*“when I was an undergraduate and seriously during my Masters, also in books of communication skills” (STIUC)*

*“, the word came another time during our course work in Master’s first year. When we were supposed to do our projects after class work; so our lecturer by then Prof [...] told us that when writing your work, you should produce original work and not duplicate other people’s work, or rather plagiarized work” (STFUA).*

One of the student participants said that the term was introduced to her through attending seminars on book writing. She claimed that she had attended the same university since undergraduate’ but she had never seen or heard the term ‘plagiarism’. Although the student now knows the meaning of the term plagiarism, it was not introduced to her by the academic institution or by the lecturers.

*“No. I was there as an undergraduate, that is between 1996 to the year 2002; and by that time, that course had not been designed. It could have been on the timeline; but if it could have been there; because I am taking my Master’s degree there at the moment; still I have not heard about it” (STIUA).*

Some students introduced the term to themselves when they were exploring books on academic writing. The books explained that plagiarism is copying; and that this is not accepted in the world of academics. They came across the term and they were to read on it more and more.

*”to me the first time I came across the word plagiarism is when I was trying to read the book of academic writing; that’s when I got to know plagiarism means copying. There is something called plagiarism that exists in the world of academic and literally which is not acceptable” (STFUB).*

Also, social media played a major role in the introduction of the term plagiarism to some student participants. The concept came across when the participant was not even thinking about it. He received it in a different context when there was news about Michelle Obama’s plagiarised speech. The participant wanted to know more about plagiarism.

*“I came to understand this concept of plagiarism when I wasn’t thinking much about it. It came about on social media. I overheard a conversation where someone had made a comment; and so some people were reacting to those words, especially the person who said those words claimed there was some plagiarism” (STIUA).*

#### **4.2.1.2.2 Supervisors’ perspective**

The supervisors also had the same understanding of plagiarism in their minds. According to this understanding, they defined it as academic theft, taking another person’s work without acknowledging the owner. Though their phrasing varied; it meant that one should acknowledge other people’s work when one quotes it. They also showed deeper understanding and maturity on the term plagiarism by stating that it is taking somebody’s work, ideas, written work, pattern, academic knowledge and anything without acknowledgement of the source as stated:

*“using another scholar’s ideas, written works, pattern without recognizing that person. Without acknowledging that idea or that pattern, something you are using, is borrowed from someone else” (SUUB)*

*”is any one taking anyone’s work, for example in academia knowledge, writing and anything without acknowledging someone’s work; for example, you check the information whether the paragraph or the whole document you copy it and present it as your own work is plagiarism” (SUUC).*

#### **4.2.1.2.3 Policy-maker’s perspective**

The policy-makers described the term plagiarism in very strong terms, in order to emphasise how serious the act is. They termed it as unacceptable and as an illegal activity which involves taking ideas, views, and work without acknowledging the source; and one of them added that it is frustrating. This can be seen as follows:

*“Plagiarism is the process of using somebody else’s ideas, views, without acknowledging the owner of ideas, especially from an academic point view. It’s very, it is unacceptable activities, and it is an illegal thinking [...] uses of ideas from either past research, maybe certain materials from the website, or internet without acknowledging the source; and that is illegal use” (POUA).*

*“Plagiarism is using other people’s ideas and not acknowledging the source by personalizing it; as if they were your own[...] there must be some ownership, accepted because who will own the work? It is just like King Solomon in the bible, two people can’t own the same thing whereby the two women wanted to share the baby” (POUB).*

## **4.2.2 Forms of plagiarism**

### **4.2.2.1 Institutional policy documentary perspective**

Institutional policies provide different definitions of what constitutes plagiarism in their respective institution. And they explained these definitions by answering this question:

#### **What aspects are considered as plagiarism in institutional policies?**

From the documents it became obvious that when supervisors publishes work they have supervised when and examiners publish work that they examined without written consent from the student, this constitutes a case of plagiarism. Another institution document states that plagiarism occurs when one fails to cite the references and submits work done by another. Another institution’s documents did not state that they consider as plagiarism in their institutions.

*“supervisors publishing work that they supervise without the student’s written consent; and examiners publishing work that they examine” UA.*

*“failure to cite references and submitting work done by another, whether a commercial or non-commercial enterprise, including websites, as one’s own work” UB.*

*“Not stated” UC.*

The participants clearly explained how they comprehended or interpreted plagiarism. They also expressed a basic understanding of what comprises and constitutes plagiarism. Almost all participants had the same ideas of what constitutes plagiarism.



#### **4.2.2.2 Findings from the participant interviews**

##### **4.2.2.2.1 Students' perspective**

Most student participants categorized plagiarism as copy-pasting. Other student participants perceived plagiarism as copying from the internet, textbooks, colleagues or the lecturer's work. This also includes working on a topic that has already been done, sloppy referencing, which includes improper citation. This means one is unsure of the author and does not cite the source since the author is not recognized. It also includes and resubmitting somebody else's dissertation. Examples include:

*"change in expression that's why you talk of paraphrasing and all those, You find that I am doing research in a given topic; and maybe somebody somewhere had done it before, I do research on it; and without even making any changes or putting my own voice or my own idea, I pick the text as it is and to some extent if I may use the computer language I paste it; and then I will present it" (STIUA).*

*"a situation where somebody writes a proposal and doesn't cite properly the amounts to plagiarism, or with no citations of the owner is plagiarism" (STFUA).*

Another participant expressed that plagiarism is taking lecturers' or colleagues' work, which does not belong to you. Another participant added that work is plagiarised when presenting work that is similar to that of another person. The student wanted to know if copying in an examination is plagiarism.

*"take a colleague or a lecturer's work and posit it as you own also amounts to plagiarism" (STIUC).*

*"People presented similar work and each of them claimed to be the owners of the work. I don't know whether copying in exams would be categorized as plagiarism" (STUFA).*

Another student suggested that when using another person's work directly, then the excerpt used directly should be quoted and that this would not be termed plagiarism. If everything is taken from another person's work and there is no original information added to it, this constitutes plagiarism.

*"I think if you pick somebody's work, and directly quote what the source, then that is not plagiarism. But now if you pick all the work from the author, then that is a serious form of plagiarism" (STFUA).*

Another student participant stated that any copying from the internet constitutes plagiarism. One has to at least add an idea or some information of one's own. Plucking everything and then citing it; that is like citing a stolen work. It would mean that somebody is taking the whole idea from somebody else without adding something.

*"You can at least give an idea without copying... I will not go to the internet and pluck it and then cite; I will have to make some bits of alterations instead of just citing stolen work" (STIUA).*

One student suggested that not doing enough research is plagiarism. This is where a student researches a topic and uses only one source without doing more research on other literature. This means his/her ideas are just based on one source from the literature.

*"Sometimes you find that we don't do much research on our own and we tend to go to the library and if what I am researching is similar to what someone had done earlier I might be tempted to use what I find relevant in that work as my literature review without researching" (STFUA).*

As one of the student participants stated, copying an assignment from somebody else is also plagiarism. This means that one just copied another person's work and did not cite that person.

*"And also an assignment from somebody, when you copy from someone else it is plagiarism" (STIUC).*

Some students also addressed other forms of plagiarism. One stated that lecturers plagiarise, especially when they use textbooks in class without acknowledging the author. This is seen in their class notes. The lecturers usually use the textbook the way it is and without adding anything or even citing that book.

Another student raised the issue of illegal collaboration/collusion. This was after the participant stated that she discussed the assignment with a friend. They wrote the same work and only the name was different. The lecturer termed it plagiarism; since it was illegal collaboration.

*"Yes we discussed and wrote. I think it was only the hand-writing that was different. He called it illegal collaboration, which is also plagiarism" (STIUA).*

#### 4.2.2.2.2 Supervisor's perspective

Most supervisors also focused on copy/pasting, as the pronounced form of plagiarism since one relies on another person's work without having work of one's own. It is when the student lifts texts and changes a few words.

*"work is taken from somewhere and planted here; then they change one or two words" (SUUA).*

*"if you picked everything; then it means you have nothing to give. It means it is somebody's work. Probably, you are showing that it is yours; but it is not yours" (SUUB).*

Another supervisor suggested that when copying directly, or word for word, then one should put in the quotation marks' cite and then show the page number. If one does not want to quote it verbatim, then one should paraphrase.

*"you need to show if you are copying word by word. You have to invent and show that you have taken it word by word and you put the author's name and even the page number; but if not you to paraphrase to show I am taking these words. But this is what I mean but using the words" (SUUC).*

Some students look for work online, which is on a topic similar to their own. And then they download and copy it. This means someone else has already done it and one is using something that has already been done. When someone else is doing work for you; this means that it is not being done by the person responsible for the work. Of course, if one does not cite the person who did this work, then that is plagiarism. Since the person who did the work is neither known nor acknowledged, this constitutes a form of ghost-writing.

*"...was somebody else doing the work for her" (SUUA).*

*"They go online looking for documents, which they can retrieve. Others actually request people outside universities to write for them" (SUUC).*

One of the supervisors raised a new issue by saying that to her, as a teacher of literature, poor flow in written work and variation in tone can be elements, based on which plagiarism is identified. If ideas do not flow and one concept does not link to another, then this shows that the student is presenting work which is not actually his/hers.

*“When the tone of expression, the kind of words you use and the way you write from one sentence to another begins getting different for me; that’s another sign of plagiarism” (SUUA).*

*“when I don’t see your work flowing I become now keen, my antennae for plagiarism” (SUUA).*

#### **4.2.2.2.3 Policy- maker’s perspectives**

Policy-makers also had same ideas regarding what constitutes plagiarism, which were similar to those of the other participants. However, one policy-maker addressed a different form of plagiarism by explaining how plagiarism comes about when a supervisor publishes work from students’ assignments or the work he/she supervised. It should be stated clearly if it is a collaboration. The student should be named as the primary author and then the lecturer is the secondary author.

*“if we are to publish together; then the student will be the first author. For instance, you and your supervisor, he played a role in this research; so you will write your name first, then his; but it is wrong if he writes his/her name alone or putting you second; as it will amount to plagiarism”(POUB).*

Concerning the above element, the participants’ views on the forms of plagiarism were similar, but different from the institutional policy documents.

### **4.2.3 Motivating factors to plagiarize**

This part was to find what factors are pushing students towards plagiarism. Every group of participants had different views on what causes them as students to plagiarise. The supervisors also answered the question by stating what usually pushes students towards plagiarism.

#### **4.2.3.1 Institutional policy documentary perspective**

Institutional policies had no literature related to the causes of plagiarism in institutions.

#### **4.2.3.2 Findings from the participants’ interviews**

##### **4.2.3.2.1 Students’ perspectives**

Based on the data collected, it can be seen that the students came up with motivating factors to plagiarism. Students blamed themselves for not being responsible and they also blamed the supervisors and the policy-makers.

One of student said that they plagiarise because they are ignorant of what plagiarism is. They have no knowledge on the issues concerning plagiarism and, as a result, they are not aware of issues concerning plagiarism.

*“Most cases, this comes as a result of our ignorance on how to write referencing” (STIUA).*

The supervisors were blamed for not taking their time with students in guiding them after proposal writing. As a result, they could not identify the plagiarised areas. Supervisors are supposed to start working with their students at an early level, so that they would be able to identify the mistakes earlier. This should enable students to avoid such mistakes in the future, even without the supervisor being present.

*“supervisors have not taken most of their time with the students especially graduates; so that as the students are writing their proposal, they guide them in areas in which they think the students have plagiarized” (STFUA).*

Some students said that they plagiarise because of too much work given by lecturers. They claim that they run out of time and they take a shortcut by copy-pasting from the internet, so that they do not submit their assignment late.

*“lecturers give us assignments; and sometimes they become so many; and you get caught up by time; so the best thing you can do, is go to the internet and copy-paste the work there; and print it out; and present it with no idea of what is in the assignments” (STIUA).*

High student populations during undergraduate years contributed to plagiarism significantly because the lecturers were overwhelmed by work. As a result, they could not concentrate on students’ assignment. However, there is less plagiarism among postgraduates because the population is low and the lecturers can look at students’ work more carefully.

*“This is because at undergraduate level, we have heard numerous cases of students presenting similar work; and sometimes because of the high population, the lecturer may not notice. But because of the lesser number at the postgraduate level; there’s a reduction of plagiarism cases” (STFUA).*

The stakeholder has not put the issues on plagiarism clearly. Some issues concerning plagiarism remain unclear.

*“I think the stakeholders or policy-makers have not pronounced them enough so that people can be aware of it” (STIUA).*

One of the student participants also blamed cyber cafes around the institutions for encouraging plagiarism by printing the work of another student who had printed earlier. Only the name and admission number would have been changed. As a result, one finds students with the same assignments and it is unclear who the original author is.

*“As in, around university businesses of printing, typing most students who do not have capital to buy their own computers seek these services here. Most sit at home do their research; and in the process of typing some of your friends know you always do your work in time and because it remains in this typing place they come and ask for the same work and print it and present it” (STFUA).*

Some raised the issue of lack in course designs which should make people aware of institutional policies.

*“But there’s no course for that specifically” (STIUA).*

#### **4.2.3.2.2 Supervisors’ perspective**

Another supervisor blamed fellow supervisors for being reluctant when it came to checking plagiarism in students’ work.

*“I can say that students get involved in plagiarism; but it is us teachers to be keen to notice that the student doesn’t plagiarize another person’s work” (SUUB).*

One of the supervisors stated that actually talks personally about plagiarism during the second year of the Master’s studies. This is the time when students are starting writing their proposals and this might be too late for the student to adhere to the conventions on plagiarism and to adhere to them in their own writing.

*“most is the year they begin to do their own work. In the second year when they begin to do their thesis; it is at that point that chapters begin to come in at the level of writing the proposal” (SUUA).*

Some supervisors reported that the progress of technology, such as use of the internet and the increasing number of private universities, have contributed much to plagiarism. This is due to PhD degree being a requirement despite the absence of hard work.

*“I feel that plagiarism is becoming very big issue, especially with technology, and especially now with the increasing number of universities and increasing number of people needing to have these Masters and PhD certificates; but without working very hard” (SUUC).*

Students' laziness was also seen as a key reason for plagiarism. Students prefer not to exhaust themselves doing research and do not always appreciate being corrected repeatedly by the supervisors. Another supervisor commented that the laziness has been enabled even more by so-called consultants who write students' theses. The students tend to rely on the consultants' work, rather than working for themselves.

*"Our students don't want the hurt of sitting, researching and writing, going to the supervisor to be told that this is not correct" (SUUC).*

*"have heard especially about five to six years we now have very lazy Master's students; and I think this laziness in my view has come up because of these people, who now have consultancies that write their thesis for the students" (SUUA).*

Another supervisor added that language problems have contributed considerably to plagiarism within their university since students cannot paraphrase and construct a sentence. They have an idea but they cannot express it in English given that English is a foreign language to them.

*"You know they fail because of the language problems sometimes. They cannot construct their own sentences in regard to their work" (SUUC).*

Moreover, in new universities lecturers are not as strict as in old universities and students tend to graduate in six-month's time. They are just prioritizing profit. This stipulated timeframe within which they have to complete their studies has driven students to plagiarise. The lecturers do not direct strict criticism at the students' work. The motive behind their study is merely to obtain the degree and is not necessarily driven by the motivation to produce substantial work.

*"And in most cases, you find that even members of staff who are in this new other universities not many like what we are doing here. And people usually run to these new universities because they are told, in six months you will be graduating, don't worry. So these people are not strict. They just take the document, read once or twice and it's done" (SUUC).*

#### **4.2.3.2.3 Policy-maker's perspective**

The policy-makers had no question on the causes of students' plagiarism since their questions were in line with the institutional policies.

The motivating factors discussed consist mostly of students' factors. The supervisors and policy-makers mentioned factors that enable students to plagiarise, which were uniform. On the other hand, the students brought in factors, such as supervisors' reluctance. However, they did not know who the policy-makers were in the institution or what their role is.

#### **4.2.4 Perceptions of plagiarism**

##### ***4.2.4.1 Institutional policy documentary perspectives***

As for the institutions, one institution perceived plagiarism as an act that is not acceptable; but other institutions failed to make any clear statements on this matter.

*“Plagiarism is not accepted” (UA)*

*(UB) and (UC) not stated*

##### ***4.2.4.2 Findings from the participant’s interviews***

All the participants seemed to be fully aware of plagiarism but they had different opinions regarding the matter. They viewed and understood plagiarism differently. Some viewed it as being acceptable’ while others saw it as a crime.

##### ***4.2.4.2.1 Students’ perspective***

Students perceive plagiarism differently. Some termed it as a shortcut to the field of writing. Some people dislike to work hard and they want to do things that are accomplished easily.

*“Occasionally, I look at plagiarism as a shortcut that people do not really want to think much, do much so it creates an opportunity because I want to believe that there are many things that people plagiarize which will be otherwise when given to the lecturer to have a critique of their own” (STIUA).*

Some students perceived plagiarism as unavoidable since it is a complex concept with many difficult elements. Furthermore, plagiarism is perceived as something everybody does at times. The concept of plagiarism concept is understood differently by lecturers. As a result, one lecturer may perceive a text to be plagiarised, while in the perception of another lecture, the same text is not plagiarised.

*“The complication of plagiarism is that it is not a single concept. It means several things that’s why when we are writing in a certain style one lecturer tells you it’s okay but when you write in this style another lecturer tells you it is plagiarism. So, of course it is a complex phenomenon” (STFUC).*

Some claimed that plagiarism is not problematic since they depend on each other’s knowledge. Accordingly, one cannot avoid plagiarism. Instead, it is only the level of plagiarism that matters.



It is through reading other people's work that one is able to identify the gap. There is no such thing as ownership of knowledge since we depend on other people's knowledge.

*"I would like to state that plagiarism is not such a bad thing. We are living in a world where we depend on each other for knowledge. When you read someone's work, then that's when it sparks a need to research on something in you. So you just need to read someone's work, put it in your own words and there you go. That's the positive impact plagiarism has on people" (STIUB).*

*"The very funny thing I have learned is that plagiarism is unavoidable. It is the level of plagiarism that is the problem" (STFUC).*

Some perceived plagiarism differently since they have tried to measure the level of plagiarism in different institutions.

*"To be sincere, I think at the undergraduate level, it is widespread; because we have students who will share assignments. It is minimal at postgraduate level; but higher in undergraduate level" (STFUA).*

#### **4.2.4.2.2 Supervisor's perspective**

One of the supervisors perceived plagiarism as a cancer. It is growing very fast and spreading among students. It is seldom noticed in the early stages, but it noticed when it has already affected every organ. As a result, it is hard to prevent. It is also a form of theft since it denies a researcher or student the opportunity to accurately assess what they can do.

*"Plagiarism is a cancer in our academics and people will never know of what you are capable of in your academics" (SUUA).*

*"call it academic theft" (SUUA).*

#### **4.2.4.2.3 Policy-maker's perspective**

One of the policy-makers perceived plagiarism as a frustrating act. Lecturers have spent their time teaching, only to find that their students have downloaded everything from the internet.

*"When students clearly have taken a report from internet downloaded from website and you are clearly seeing that this is something that is not entirely original from the student and that of course is kind of frustrating" (SUUA).*

This suggests that plagiarism is seen to be an illegal act by most of the participants, except for one student, who maintained that it is good practice.

## 4.2.5 Consequences of plagiarism

### 4.2.5.1 Institutional Policy-Documentary perspective

#### **Are there any stated punishments or sanctions for the act of plagiarism in relation to institutional policies?**

All institutions expect their students to adhere to the university rules and regulations, as stipulated in their institutional policy documents. This is to help them avoid breaking the rules, especially in relation to academic integrity. This regulation governing academic integrity has also led to various penalties and punishment aimed at those who break the institutional policies. The universities have specified punishments for the breaking of the rules on academic integrity. For example;

*“Plagiarized work shall lead to discontinuation and withdrawal of certificate if already awarded” (UA).*

*“Faculty members may only mandate grade-related sanctions, but may recommend suspension or expulsion to a college examination, irregularities and appeal committee” (UB).*

*“Students who plagiarize their case shall be presented to the relevant examiners board of the unit where the student is registered; and the board shall make recommendations to the directors of postgraduate or undergraduate studies for the matter to be dealt with as an examination violation, in accordance with the established regulations of the university. And students who are found to have plagiarized coursework assignment or essay, the examiner shall enter a zero grade and direct the student to submit another assignment; provided that upon re-submission, the highest grade to be awarded shall be a ‘C’” (UC).*

The punishment ranges from discontinuation, expulsion to suspension, withdrawal of the certificates, getting zero marks and resubmitting. It is only deserving of a university ‘C’; but it has a different penalty for the supervisors, who fail to detect plagiarism, as stated:

*“Supervisors who would have failed to detect plagiarism should be required to provide an explanation in writing why disciplinary measures should not commence against them, in accordance with the disciplinary procedures of the university ‘C’” (UC).”*

#### ***4.2.5.2 Findings from the participants' interviews***

In cases of plagiarism, possible enforcement of consequences for not acknowledging the borrowed text is acknowledged by those affected. The participants identified consequences that have negative impacts on their learning. Furthermore, the findings show that there are consequences in the assessment itself. All participants showed that they had knowledge of what disciplinary consequences they could expect if they are found plagiarising. Mostly, it affected their course assessment through partial or total loss of marks and time wastage, especially when the punishment was redoing the work.

##### ***4.2.5.2.1 Students' perspective***

Students explained how they and their fellow students faced the consequences of plagiarism. One student said that in a case of copied assignments, the assignment is invalidated and the student is expected to repeat the work. Furthermore, in the case of a degree already conferred, the degree is revoked.

*“a fellow student when we were given an assignment then he copy-pasted someone else's. It was cancelled and told to redo it. There was also a case of a student who did his master and graduated but it was later noted that his research it was not his work; the degree was cancelled” (STIUC).*

Another student stated that when she was found plagiarising, she was forgiven by the lecturer after being awarded zero marks. The student was given a different question to do and then she was awarded marks for the resubmitted work.

*“told us we had plagiarized someone's work. He forgave us and gave me a different question from my friend and awarded marks and not the initial zero marks; and that's when I realized there's something like plagiarism in universities” (STFUA).*

Some of the students mentioned the legal consequences to anybody who breaches the laws on plagiarism. The reader is first warned by the author and the publisher of the potential consequences for anybody who quotes a part, or the whole book, without acknowledging the source. The disclaimer is stated on the first page of the book. This can lead to legal action being taken against the person who commits the act of plagiarism.

*“written an autograph and on the forward or preface or call it the introduction, she/he tends to give a warning that it is an offense for somebody to take part of this work or the whole of it without consulting me” (STIUA).*

Furthermore, plagiarism can lead to one's position being terminated. This became evident from the Minister of Education in Germany, who was forced to resign because his PhD thesis was found to contain plagiarised work.

*“I don't remember exactly the date; but it was in 2014 I was listening to BBC World service, then they were talking about the resignation of a minister in Germany, I think it was the minister of education and when I followed the reason why that person is running is in her PhD thesis, she had quoted words common in all angles she was accused of plagiarism that's why she resigned” (STFUB).*

#### **4.2.5.2.2 Supervisors' perspective**

Another supervisor commented on the issue regarding potential consequences of plagiarism. She said that the students concerned are normally called to account for the act in front of the committee. They are disciplined and they are forced to do the course again.

*“when such cases are detected normally we call such students to committee, we reprimand them and make them do the course work afresh” (SUUB).*

The participants also showed their awareness of the consequences beyond university and other educational settings. For staff to be promoted, their work should have undergone a plagiarism test. In cases of publications, the event is taken seriously.

*“even us the staff when we publish our works and we apply for promotions our papers must go through plagiarism test before we can be promoted on the basis of those publications so it is something that university takes very seriously” (SUUB).*

#### **4.2.5.2.3 Policy-maker's perspective**

The policy-makers were included in explaining the consequences of plagiarism. One supervisor said that plagiarism led to the rejection of the PhD degree, even though the student was on the graduation list.

*“in the 2015 graduation one of the PhD students was denied his PhD after he found that he plagiarized [...] actually his name was already in the graduation list (POUC).*

In some cases, the supervisors and policy-makers could be sympathetic and they become rather lenient to those students who have plagiarised. They would simply advise them to go and rectify the missing citation and to paraphrase the copy-pasted parts.

*“I get a thesis and I find that some parts appear to have been lifted or copied from another source. Then, you simply indicate that this has been copied from another*

*source. And you say that you can cite the source. If it is too much like one paragraph or one page, then you have to ask the student to paraphrase” (POUA).*

One of the supervisors said that the punishments for plagiarising students were stated in the institutional policy documents. Once found guilty, the student had to rewrite, rephrase and resubmit the work.

*“but the regulations that we have is that they have to rewrite, to rephrase; so that they can then resubmit their work” (POUC).*

Other policy-makers addressed the institutional consequences that were applied when students were accused of having committed plagiarism. The consequences involved withdrawal of the degree as well as expulsion and suspension.

*“will either fail or will be discontinued” (POUB).*

*“ask the student and of course penalize-you can even decide to give zero for one having plagiarized” (POUA).*

The consequences seemed to be obvious. The participant expressed the possible consequences that were similar to those found in the institutional policy documents.

#### **4.2.6 Institutional policies**

It was the aim of this part to determine the availability of institutional policy documents in the institution. The question was whether the participant had any knowledge on the existence of an institutional policy and where this could be found. The effectiveness of these documents was also assessed. Every participant had a different view on this issue.

##### ***4.2.6.1 Institutional policy-documentary perspective***

The documents were available in the institutions libraries, policy-makers offices and also online. In university C, the policies were everywhere in the institution, especially on the notice boards and in strategic positions.

##### ***4.2.6.2 Findings from the participants’ interviews***

###### ***4.2.6.2.1 Students’ perspective***

Some explained that they had never seen the documents and that they had just been informed of the policies that had been put in place.

*“I am not aware; but when we look at the university as the institution of higher learning ... we cannot say that rules do not exist. They exist but to some extent I think the stakeholders or policy makers have not pronounced them enough so that people can be aware of it but at a higher learning institution such as a university it cannot miss” (STIUA).*

Some students stated that they had never heard about the policy on plagiarism. They had just heard of plagiarism detectors. The students said that the lecturers just mention and talk about these detectors, in order to make the students alert and scared.

*“I have not heard of any policy; but one time a lecturer told me there’s a software they install to show them if the work of a student is plagiarized”(STFUA).*

Some said that even though were not aware of institutional policies in their specific institutions, they accepted that the policies exist. However, they have not been made available to the students. Large institutions must have policies to govern them. There is no way an institution can lack a policy on a very serious issue, like plagiarism.

*“it cannot miss but it seems like it is at a lower percentage that is why it does not go out of proportion such that it does not raise an alarm” (STIUA).*

*of course I am not much aware of the policies because I have never seen document describing plagiarism but through the warning and the announcements that I can see on the boards of course University can’t do without a policy the problem is that I have never seen a document that outlines such policy on plagiarism” (STFUC).*

Another student opposed this point by saying that management is working hard to make sure that the rules and regulations are known to the students. Students are equally responsible to work hard and gain knowledge of all the rules and regulations applicable at the institution.

*“of course as a student you have to be aware of different policies followed within the school... so it takes much of their efforts; but the management too should ensure they deal with the issue strictly” (STFUC).*

Some of the students appreciated those supervisors who made an effort to assist the students in understanding the issue of plagiarism. But they also blamed the policy-makers.

*“the supervisors really help a lot; because in most occasions, they tell us to be more of scholars than researchers in that you have to produce scholarly work. Don’t just go out to research and producing work that is irrelevant but learn to do scholarly work. In most cases you will find that a student and supervisor sit down together and go through the work chapter after chapter and since they have. They explained that they dealt with the student who plagiarised at personal level and when it was to a*

*large extent then they forwarded the matters to a higher level after testing by the supervisors” (STIUA).*

Students placed more blame on those supervisors who had never conducted any checks on the authenticity of their work during the writing of their dissertations. The participants supported this by explaining that:

*“Honestly, we don’t get to interact with them. That is why we may not know about them; but since we interact with the supervisors, then that’s all we are sure of “(STIUA).*

When students were asked how the policy-makers assisted them in understanding issues on plagiarism, most of the students did not understand who the policy-makers were, nor what their roles in a given institution were. One of the students enquired more about the policy-makers,

*”who are the policy makers?” (STFUA)*

*“I think under institutional policy-makers they have not been valid” (STIUB).*

*“but policy makers need to go back to their drawing table and find out how best can they curb plagiarism, for example if it is impossible they even go back to their primary school and each tell the children how to write good literature, understanding, recommending and everything” (STFUB).*

#### **4.2.6.2.2 Supervisors’ perspective**

They agreed on the issue of awareness and the presence of the institutional policies, but they blamed the institutional management for not making them available to the lecturers. Lecturers are forced to devise their own regulations, so that they can be guided while managing the issue of plagiarism.

*”we have one. There is a policy. I don’t think it is very active because it is not exposed to lecturers in the departments. We have now had to devise our own like what I am telling you...The University has a policy but I don’t think it is well institutionalized” (SUUA).*

Another supervisor commented that the institutional policies are available but that the students are not exposed to them. They also blamed the students for not being more active in learning about institutional policies.

*“It’s there. And some of the students do not know. It’s a matter of exposure. But the students dare to find the documents and read. ... to search information but it’s there” (SUUC).*

Another supervisor put emphasis on the existence of institutional policies. He said the policies were stated clearly and that they addressed issues, such as the consequences for both Masters and PhD students when found plagiarising. The ethics for both members of staff and students, and the use of Turnitin software to detect plagiarism. The policies also provided clarity on the similarity index that is referred to by the policy makers.

*“yeah. We have post graduate guidelines for masters and PhD which explain very clearly about plagiarism and the consequences if someone is caught plagiarizing or if the document is plagiarized. The second policy is about ethics which we also have for members of staff and for students which they also have to look at ethics for what are the consequences of not following proper guidelines of university and general guidelines of the country in terms of plagiarism. The third one we have the Turnitin software which helps us stop people from plagiarizing because for example if a student is about to submit the final document for external examining the supervisor is supposed to provide a report from Turnitin software to show what is the percentage of is in the document and the standard percentage of our university is 25%. So it should not range above 25 to 27%. If it goes beyond to 30% then the student is not allowed to submit the document. They have to go back and remove the extra work which is not accepted” (SUUC).*

One of the supervisors was sad when he stated that the university had rules and regulations but that these had not been implemented. Management were just talking about them but not putting them in action. The issue of the software was to be put in place but up to that time the research for this study was conducted, it had not yet been implemented.

*“so far for quite some time we have just been talking. We have asked them something more than just talking. The last time we are called they had procured some software to help us to ensure that the students present their own work because sometimes it is so hard to know. So far that is what it was the last time I heard about it” (SUUA).*

#### **4.2.6.2.3 Policy-Makers’ perspectives**

The policy-makers confirmed that the institutional policy documents are available on the university website and elsewhere. Furthermore, some supervisors explained how they were assisting students to eliminate plagiarism. They talked about the publication of students’ work by supervisors, for reasons such as a promotion, or a reputation in the field of writing.

*“Yes, we do have what we call rules and regulations covering postgraduate studies which is a document devised in 2015 it has policies regarding plagiarism. For example, it says “using other persons’ work is not allowed, you must acknowledge according to the policies of University B” (POUB).*



Another policy maker in UC claimed that the institutional policies address many issues, for example, the fact no work was to be submitted without the similarity index. The lecturers were trained on how to use it and the students were yet to be trained.

*“We have. We have this one it started in January but it started to be implemented in June. So everything that the student is submitting has to have alternative report. So when it was introduced by experts all the supervisors were called and given training on how to help the students to do that. They were given permission to use the system so they are the ones to use Turnitin. They have not taught the students but later on I think we will have to bring it to the students” (POUC).*

The policy-makers also explained how institutional policies helped in reducing plagiarism in their respective institutions. The policies in different institutions state that no work should be taken to an external supervisor without the similarity index report. The students should be educated on plagiarism – through seminars, heads of departments and supervisors. Similarly, students are expected to present their work so that it can be determined whether it is their original work.

*“if you are taking it to internal examiner we have to send the alternate report. After the internal examiner it goes to external examiner also with the report. Then you have to attach a report before it goes to the director post graduate studies. So you have three stages” (POUC).*

*“Through seminars, heads of departments and also the supervisor has a role of ensuring the student understood it all” (POUB).*

*“For us to get them we normally tell them to do presentations so that we can know this is really your work” (POUC).*

The policy-makers admitted that the rules and regulations were readily available and that they were even placed on the walls of the institutions. They were also produced in books and photocopied so that they would be available to everybody. This was done to make it easy for the students to read the regulations whenever they pass.

*“Yes [...] from directorate of post graduate students. They go there if they want to have. But we put it all over, you haven’t seen it...because when this was introduced I think they did produce a lot of books. The dean said photocopy and put on the wall so that they know that everything they submit must have a report” (POUC).*

The students also were exposed to rules and regulations during orientation in the first years of the Master’s programme. The rules and regulations that exist in the institution were explained to them.

*”when the university students come, we have orientation and during this time, we talk to them about these rules and the role played by all parties. It is a new thing that is why we have been using orientation on letting them know about the policies that exist. But from now on we have a booklet that will be available for every student” (POUB).*

The policy-makers continued by stating that apart from the measures stated in the institutional policy document, there were other measures in place, which allow monitoring plagiarism at an individual level. These measures include submission of both a hardcopy and a soft copy, using of software called Turnitin and also the use of Google Scholar to determine the copied topics.

*“There are other mechanisms like when you are told to bring in your work, you will bring the hard copy and the soft copy. The university is also at the process of buying software called Turnitin which will be used to detect any form of plagiarism. We also can go to the internet and use the Google scholar to detect familiar topics then we know which have been plagiarized” (POUA).*

Due to the general awareness of institutional policies, the policy-makers were able to state whom the policy affected. They stated that the policies affected both students and staff. The policies were intended to protect them from plagiarism.

*“Yes I am aware. That is why I told the policies are not only for students. The policies also cover us the staff” (POUB).*

Given the awareness of the institutional policy, the policy-makers were able to explain the origin of the institutional policy, those who initiated them and reasons its introduction.

*“It was made by a committee called GSREC which was formed, they sat down made the policies and then they were sent to the senate” (POUA).*

*“It came through university channels through the directorate, through the DVC academics, research and extension and then to senate” (POUA).*

One of the policy-makers was not aware of when the institutional policies were initiated. She said she did not know those who initiated the policies or the reasons that motivated them to do so.

*“I don’t know. Maybe you ask somebody at the post graduate directorate. I think most of this came from the supervisors they started showing feelings that people are plagiarizing” (POUC).*

The participants, especially the students, were not sure whether the institutional policy documents existed. Nevertheless, they believed that an institution cannot run without such policies. The supervisors were aware that the institutional policies existed. However, such

policies were not available and they were not known to those who were supposed to use them. And the policy-makers demonstrated the availability of institutional policy documents by giving the copies to the researcher.

#### **4.2.7 Strategies for combatting plagiarism**

##### ***4.2.7.1 Institutional policy-documentary perspective***

What is the role of Masters' students, supervisors and policy-makers in preventing and reducing plagiarism, as stated by the institutional policies? Are there other people who play a role? And if so, who are they and what are their roles?

**University A:** The role of the student was not stated but the roles of the supervisors were to check the thesis at the proposal stage. The role of the policy-makers was to check whether the thesis has been submitted to anti-plagiarism software.

- a) *"the students: not stated*
- b) *supervisors, shall normally check his/her postgraduate students' theses for plagiarism at the proposal stage, thesis drafting and before the thesis is submitted for internal and external examination*
- c) *Policy makers, the chairperson of the school's graduate studies committee (SGSC) will check the theses for plagiarism using the antiplagiarism software Turnitin or any others as will be approved by senate before the thesis is sent for internal and external examination.*
- d) *Others are: board of examiners who handles plagiarism cases and Deputy Vice Chancellor and DPGS for tabling cases."*

**University B** is clear in stating the role of each participant in the institution in curbing plagiarism. The students are to recognise and uphold the policy of academic integrity. The supervisors are to explain to the students what constitutes plagiarism and the policy-makers are expected to become familiar with the policies on academic integrity and to take lead.

- a) *"Students; should recognize their responsibility to uphold the academic integrity policy and to report apparent violations to the appropriate persons, by enrolling in the university, each student agrees to abide by the academic integrity policy by signing he academic integrity pledge and during orientation new students are asked to affirm their understanding and acceptance of the principles of the academic integrity policy called statement of personal responsibility.*

- b) *Supervisors; should make efforts to explain to the class what constitutes plagiarism, should specify instances where the policy may apply in a class assignment and prior examinations, the instructor should do whatever possible to arrange room conditions for examinations so as to reduce temptation to violate academic integrity.*
- c) *Policy makers; they are expected to become familiar with academic integrity policy and take lead in discussing the meaning of academic integrity with all students they should inform students of any requirements to submit signed copies of the academic integrity pledge for all major written assignments and must recognise their responsibility to exemplify the values of academic integrity in their own conduct and to convey by examples as well as precept their expectation that policy shall be followed in all university activities in which they have a part.*
- d) *Other role players: not stated clearly.”*

**University C:** It is not clearly stated what the roles of each participant are in curbing plagiarism.

The institutional policy documents also state clearly what measures these institutions should take in order to curb the plagiarism. UA stated that all work should be submitted to anti-plagiarism software and should be accompanied by a similarity-index report.

*“all written work to be submitted to anti-plagiarism and be accompanied with the plagiarism similarity index report and certificate stating that the thesis has been checked against the plagiarism and approved/cleared for submission if the similarity index (excluding bibliography) is below 30%” (UA).*

**University B** curbed plagiarism by requiring the students to review their plagiarism policy and to acknowledge that they had read and understood this as an institutional document. After this, they have to sign the declaration.

*“each student agrees to abide by the academic integrity policy by signing he academic integrity pledge and during orientation new students are asked to affirm their understanding and acceptance of the principles of the academic integrity policy called statement of personal responsibility” (UB).*

In **University C**, the students were made to understand that it was their role to make sure that they did not plagiarise. The purpose of anti-plagiarism software was to detect and prevent plagiarism from taking place.

*“University C has put in place a mechanism to ensure that students are exposed to methods of avoiding plagiarism while at the same time reminding students that the responsibility of avoiding plagiarism is ultimately theirs. To ensure a clear definition of the concept of plagiarism, so that all units at the university C operate on the basis the same understating of plagiarism..., the use of plagiarism detecting*

*mechanism such as the Turnitin software, to assist academics in detecting, and preventing incidents of plagiarism and putting in place various procedures for discipline and related appeals and other measures for dealing with students who plagiarize” (UC).*

#### **4.2.7.2 Findings from the participants’ interviews**

This research was conducted to find out what the participants were doing to curb plagiarism in their work and in their institutions. The participants, including students, supervisors and policy-makers had some strategies in place.

##### **4.2.7.2.1 Students’ perspective**

One of the students suggested that one should read a lot, write these ideas down and work hard on the ideas and suggestion, in order to develop a new and improved idea.

*“As a student... in my own way I can say a try to read a lot. .... Secondly I also try as much as possible to put my idea down.... I tend to work hard in my own idea and suggestion so that it super sees what these other people have said so that I also become a scholar” (STIUA).*

Another student suggested that books on research are available. These have sections on plagiarism and every student should read it.

*“there is a booklet that talks about research; and everything is written there including plagiarism, what it means and its consequences; so you need to read it” (STFUB).*

One student claimed to be using the conventions on plagiarism, such as citing correctly and not copy-pasting the materials.

*“As a student there are a lot of efforts one of them being citing because without knowing it, you might plagiarize all the time. I also make sure I do not copy and paste the materials but I read and make my own words out of it” (STIUC).*

Two other students said that they had been curbing plagiarism by reading widely and involving supervisors regarding issues that were not clear to them.

*“reading widely is encouraged because it gives you different ideas of rephrasing something” (STFUA).*

*“For me, what I have been doing is engage with my supervisors on matters pertaining to plagiarism. As we said, the University has not given us clear information on plagiarism. So sometimes we work in fear of work being declined” (STUA).*

#### 4.2.7.2.2 Supervisors' perspective

Despite all this, they explained the strategies implemented by the supervisors to address the issue of plagiarism. The supervisors were to answer a question on how they dealt with plagiarism in their own classes. Some said that they do it orally, for instance, they warn the students. Another supervisor said that he talks about it and engages with students' work by becoming a facilitator, as the students answer the questions.

*"just to stop and to learn to read and to learn to write their work ...one doesn't become a scholar by copying" (SUUA).*

*"I sit back and listen to my students. I give them topics, they read, they research, they get information around those topics so in class I become like a moderator" (SUUA).*

*"I train them on how to cite and acknowledge the author; because most of the students do not know how to do this" (SUUA).*

*"So I train them how to acknowledge source and to best acknowledge source because sometimes they don't know how to acknowledge for example use of reference in the text or at the end of the text. So this is how we usually work together and I take them through" (SUUC).*

Another supervisor said that he usually introduces the term plagiarism during assignment writing in class. The work is then handed in and passed through the Turnitin software. The supervisor also checks with references and when a particular source is older than ten years, then it is usually an indication of plagiarism.

*"the very first thing I usually talk plagiarism is when we start writing and especially when we start doing our assignments" (SUUC).*

*"... they bring their work we normally check the similarity index through Turnitin program of which once they submit their work. I subject such work to Turnitin software so that I check the similarity index. Therefore, that's the only measure I use to know whether this person has plagiarized or not. So some of the students you find like similarity go up to 50 or 46 which almost half of the work has been plagiarized. Like out of 5 students I have 3 of them I find that similarity index is above 46. ...They use books which dates 10 years back. That's one of the indications that their work is not original. ...you find a student using a conceptual format which has been used by another previous student. Unfortunately, you find that these are more or less the same" (SUUC).*

Another supervisor introduces the term plagiarism in class by giving examples of people who have been caught plagiarising and the consequences they experience, such as the cancellation of their degrees – even after graduation.

*“occasionally I give them examples of people who have plagiarized and found themselves in trouble. ... but you see graduation does not mean you have escaped ...court the degree was cancelled. So to me it is not arousing fear but is just alerting you that when you cheat you will get into trouble” (SUUA).*

And one of the supervisors stated that she does not talk to students about plagiarism in a light manner. She is firm with them when talking about plagiarism issues. She tells them to read and understand their work.

*“I quarrel my students and tell them you must learn to read, understand your work and yourself” (SUUA).*

Plagiarism is also discussed during orientation. These discussions are directed at both students and staff, particularly at those who aim for a promotion and for publishing papers.

*“Well, right from the time of receiving students to the university, we do orientation. ...emphasized to students only even us the staff when they publish our works and we apply for promotions our papers must go through plagiarism test before we can be promoted on the basis of those publications so it is something that university takes very seriously” (SUUB).*

One supervisor advises his students to remove texts which have no citations and those in which the authors are not indicated.

*“I tell them if you don’t have sources then remove from the thesis because you are stealing peoples work so some have done that and some have removed” (SUUA).*

One of the supervisors suggested that before accusing any student of plagiarism, all parties should be involved. This refers to the original author and the suspected plagiariser.

*“No. we have to involve everyone whose work which is similar and in the process of investigation you will determine who the original owner of this work is” (SUUB).*

#### **4.2.7.2.3 Policy-makers’ perspective**

The policy-makers also explained the ways in which they attempt to curb plagiarism, especially in the publication sector. Here, a supervisor or examiner is prohibited from publishing the work done by some of the students.

*“Now supervisors are prohibited from publishing work that they supervise without the student’s written consent. That’s also an aspect that we bring it. Then it is stated that examiners, if you are an examiner it is prohibited from publishing work that you they examine” (POUA).*

The strategies stated in the institutional policies in most universities were not implemented to prevent plagiarism. The use of Turnitin was mentioned in every institutional document. However, the participants had never encountered Turnitin – even the supervisors and especially in UA and UB. The institutional policy documents indicated that plagiarism could be minimised by measures, such as seminars, first-years’ orientation programmes and even the compulsory signing of a plagiarism declaration. However, these practices were not implemented by one of the supervisors. The participants contributed their knowledge of and practices used against plagiarism. However, this was not based on any institutional-policy documents.

### **4.3 Additional suggested strategies**

#### **4.3.1 Institutional policy perspective**

The institutional policy would have to include the various elements addressed and discussed by the participants.

#### **4.3.2 Findings from the participant’s interviews**

The participants agreed to the fact that there are strategies in place to curb plagiarism. However, these strategies are not very effective since plagiarism continues to exist. The participants provided some additional suggestions that might help in resolving the issues around plagiarism.

##### ***4.3.2.1 The students’ perspective***

Some of the students suggested that training students in terms of citation and acknowledgment of sources may be a way in which awareness of plagiarism can be raised.

*“first of all, training is very important because at times students commit it because they are not aware so they should be trained and made known to them that it is wrong so they should know how to cite or acknowledge the sources because some do not know to what extent is it plagiarism” (STUC).*



Students also noted that an introduction to educational awareness of plagiarism should be implemented at an early point. This could help in mastering the concept and its application during writing.

*“suggest that learners at first year level should be exposed at what plagiarism is so that they are aware of it and also know its importance especially at the higher stage because we also have some courses that requires our own intelligence like engineering, medicine and all those, this is where you don’t play or have chance, either know it and convince you or otherwise” (STUA).*

Some participants suggested that there should be a full course offered on plagiarism. This course could be offered in first year, so that students become aware of the issue and what it entails and are thereby enabled to make progress in avoiding plagiarism. There should be educators specializing in matters of plagiarism so that they can provide a full account of what plagiarism entails.

*“Well may be, they can offer a course in first year pertaining to plagiarism. So as they progress they have an idea of what it is and how to avoid it” (STUA).*

*“I feel that if we had people studying plagiarism broadly they would enable people to understand this sensitive issue better” (STUA).*

One student said that the university should have a database that should keep records of all students, especially those involved in plagiarism. This database should keep any work that has ever been presented.

*“A University should also have a database to point students who have plagiarised and point out work that has been presented before” (STUA).*

There should be a department in the university that deals with soft copies, as supervisors still deal with the hard copies. This should reduce plagiarism since the soft copy would still be submitted to anti-plagiarism software.

*“Supervisors often prefer hardcopy which is difficult to detect plagiarism from. If they dealt with soft copy then it would be easier for the software to detect. Maybe we should have a department in the university where your thesis for example, is put in that software to check for plagiarism” (STUA).*

Students were of the opinion that the universities should offer courses on orientation and create awareness on the issue of academic integrity through workshops and conventions.

*“I think reach forum where they can pull address or address this issue of plagiarism what it is all about under such circumstances can somebody be taught against plagiarism up to his work so we need enough forum to discuss the major to the students such and such form” (STUB).*

The university should set up a course which is examinable and which addresses academic integrity to enable students to adapt to the new system of writing. The course should be taught by professionals in the field. Plagiarism should be included in the syllabus and it should be taught by trained professionals.

*“I think it should be included a lot in curriculum and syllabus and teach the young one that’s when they grow up and they want to publish or they want to pick up academically they really don’t need to copy” (STUB).*

*“So I would suggest that one it be made a disciplinary study, so that we have professionals who can take it as a course and later on they can lecture students on that” (STUB).*

The course should be taught right from primary and secondary level. And this should be continued until university level. This would give the students a good foundation on the issues on plagiarism.

*“New students into the system should be taught right from primary or secondary up to university so that they get sensitization earlier” (STUB).*

One of the student participants posed a question on why I, as a researcher, was being accompanied my supervisor. This gave rise to the question whether the supervisor wanted to ensure that the process of data collection is executed effectively and accurately. The student suggested that it is advisable for the supervisor to monitor the researcher’s work closely throughout the entire process.

*“we were introduced to this forum by the professor who is your supervisor, why was he present. Most of us have collected data, analysed it and submitted our work but we never had a scenario where one or both our supervisors, were present. So I think it is advisable for supervisors to sometimes at least once show up during collection of data by students it helps avoid plagiarism. In most cases you find that you are given a research topic and go to the field and work on it your own way So if it is plagiarized, you will only realize during defence but if they get hold of it during the collection of data stage, then it will encourage us to work and learn” (STUA).*

*“yeah, supervisor should monitor closely what the students is doing up to in the field the way your supervisor is doing” (STUA).*

The issue regarding the availability of research materials also surfaced. Most of the important materials were not available; and the available ones were outdated.

*“There could be shortage of materials. Some will go to the internet and copy paste because they do not get materials enough for them for knowledge. So the students should be provided with enough material to help them through it. That is high quality material which is updated because some are very outdated” (STUC).*

#### **4.3.2.2 Supervisors’ perspective**

One of the supervisors commented that the institutional policies should be made available to everyone – that is, it should be institutionalized. And if there is any software, this should be installed on lecturers’ computers to ensure easy accessibility.

*“First, the policy must be distributed to everyone especially graduate faculty, we should be aware what the institution says about plagiarism....They should find a way of obviously institutionalizing it so that it is obvious... then we have the faculty inducted and if there is a software let everyone be given that software and probably be even installed in our computers for all of us from the university so that we able to access it and use it anytime because supervision is a continues process” (SUUA).*

One of the supervisors suggested that management should continue to fight against plagiarism, starting from the assignment level. This is due to the fact that students generally do well in their assignment; but when it comes to writing their thesis, they are finding this process more difficult and they may start looking for similar work done by others.

*“The strategies which I can suggest to management are to continue the fight against plagiarism. And this should not only be to the dissertations students are submitting but they have to go backwards to the assignments the students are submitting. ... for example students with very clean course work with very high GPA of 3.9 but when you come to writing their dissertation they are writing very horrible. So you`re surprised if these students were able to write these assignments which she got 80 and 90 why is it hard to write to write a dissertation” (SUUC).*

The rules should be followed strictly, especially when it comes to disciplinary actions. This should be applicable to all the students. The university should also regulate the number of admissions so that the supervisors should have enough time to work with the students. In addition, management should ensure that the students are well trained on issues, such as citation and referencing.

*“the second strategy is the management should strict consequences of plagiarism. If it means for example the student should be discontinued then they should discontinue. They should not go back and say you know we feel sorry for this girl. If someone has made a mistake then you get proper punishment. If it is to be discontinued they have to be discontinued; if they have to repeat the year then they have to repeat. I think proper punishment should be there. So the management should not feel sorry when it comes to plagiarism because if you correct this now people will keep this behaviour it along. The consequences should be clear. I think also the university has to regulate the numbers so that we get enough time to train the students on proper writing skills, how to acknowledge source, how to use resources for example a lot of people like to use Google as a source but it is not the source. .... The management should ensure students are trained properly to state authoritative sources so that at the end of the day they come up with good information” (SUUC).*

Two supervisors suggested that all institutions should join hands to ensure that plagiarism is not supported. This means that when institutions join hands, the produced grade will be of equal value when compared to other institutions. This would ensure the standardized quality of the degree. Furthermore, Master’s students should be sensitized with regard to understanding the values of the Master’s programme.

*“So for me I think that we need to joins hands all higher learning institutions to make sure that whatever we are doing, we should make sure that plagiarism is not supported in any form” (SUUC).*

*“I think it is the master’s students we should really sensitize and let them understand the value of a masters and the work that goes into a master’s programme to come up with a thesis” (SUUA).*

#### **4.3.2.3 The policy-makers’ perspective**

Policy-makers suggested that digital tools should be made available to students for detection. This tool should not just be used by the supervisors, but also by the students in order for them to start correcting their work at an earlier stage. Students should also be made aware that their work is being subjected to anti-plagiarism software.

*“So when it was introduced by experts all the supervisors were called and given training on how to help the students to do that. They were given permission to use the system so they are the ones to use Turnitin. They have not taught the students but later on I think we will have to bring it to the students” (POUC)*

*“I think to subject students work to this software is a very good practice because actually a student knows that at the end of the day they will check they will compare with other people who have done in my area. It makes them to work more and sit down and do scholarly work. Because people like consultants they are aid to do students dissertations” (POUC).*

Other policy-makers suggested that the faculty is supposed to train students on plagiarism during class time and supervision. This would enable students to become familiar with the issues related to plagiarism.

*“So every graduate faculty is supposed to talk about plagiarism in the class as well as during supervision” (POUA).*

The supervisors should be able to read and determine whether the work has been plagiarised or not. The supervisors are skilled professionals and they are expected to detect plagiarism, even when the anti-plagiarism software is not available.

*“there other several soft wares but I want to say the following. The methods of establishing whether work has been plagiarized starts from the reading, general reading and knowledge by the expert in that research. .... Then you come to computer based methods and Turnitin is just one of them and that is why we gave the room that we`ll use the Turnitin and any other technique that could be used to detect. But I want say that those techniques like Turnitin are the most reliable ones” (POUA).*

The participants shared their suggestions regarding more effective ways of dealing with plagiarism. The suggestions coming from all the students, supervisors and policy-makers seemed to be uniform. Based on the existing literature, it can be seen that these strategies are already in practice in other universities, especially in developed countries. However, this is not the case at East African universities.

#### **4.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

In this chapter, the relevant data has been presented and analysed extensively. In the next chapter, the qualitative results will be discussed in relation to the main points. They will be interpreted and evaluated in relation to the themes from the research questions and the available literature.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DATA INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter provided a discussion of the main results of the empirical part of this study. These results were discussed in relation to the research questions concerning the issue of plagiarism in Master of Education Studies in selected East African universities. The chapter situates these results within the literature on plagiarism in the literature review in chapter two and also within the broader framework of Socio-cultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978).

Research questions:

- What are the perceptions of Master of Education students and supervisors on plagiarism in selected East-African universities?
- What is the nature of institutional policies and practices relevant to plagiarism in selected East-African universities?
- What (additional) strategies do supervisors suggest for combatting plagiarism in selected East-African universities?

#### **5.2 DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Based on the data analysis, the major findings have been identified in relation to the research questions. They are discussed and related to the literature through relevant references.

##### **5.2.1 What are the perceptions of Master of Education students and supervisors on plagiarism in selected East-African universities?**

This research question was answered by generating data from the students, the lecturers and policy-makers. The participants were to answer the questions by looking at the following themes: definitions of plagiarism' different forms of plagiarism' motivating factors to commit plagiarism and consequences of plagiarism. The participants' perceptions were also discussed in relation to the institutional policy documents on plagiarism.

### ***5.2.1.1 Definition of plagiarism***

Based on the definition, the students saw that plagiarism occurs, when one's own words are used. This can take the form of using one's own ideas, using written work as it is written ideas/verbalized ideas/read ideas; written words or speech – without acknowledging the author. This was very different from what the institutional policy documents states (see, 4.2.1.2.1). The supervisors indicated that, to them, plagiarism is taking somebody's work, ideas, written work, pattern, academic knowledge and anything without acknowledging the source (see, 4.2.1.2.) . The policy-makers suggested that it is unacceptable and an illegal activity to engage in if the original source is not acknowledged (see, 4.2.1.2.3).

From the discussion it became clear that none of the participants had a clear understanding of what plagiarism is. And this was due to some institutional policy document of a university having an unclear definition. For those who had a definition in their mind, this definition remained vague. The participants perceived plagiarism as a concept that has many dimensions (Orim, 2014).

In addition, the participants' awareness of the institutional definition on plagiarism is supposed to be uniform, as stated by the institutional policy documents (Grigg, 2016). But the data indicates that each participant had a different definition because they were exposed to the term plagiarism via different sources. Some of the students said that they were introduced to the term in primary schools, during their undergraduate years in different courses by lecturers, at master's level (at which point it is essential) as well as through social media and through self-exploration in books. Due to the different sources, the students understood the term differently, depending on where they had gained their first knowledge on plagiarism.

This information shows the extent to which participants' understanding on plagiarism depended on the source of the definition on plagiarism. For example, one participant who was taught by social media that plagiarism is taking someone's speech without acknowledging the source. And for those students who came across the term at a later stage, it was difficult to understand the term and then to apply it to their work immediately. There was hardly any seriousness in the way in which the meaning and implications of the term 'plagiarism', were presented to the students. Most of the participants said that lecturers only talked about it in class and then departed. While

some lecturers just mentioned it, others used threats by telling the students the consequences, rather than explaining what plagiarism is how it happens and how to prevent it. Others heard of it through the media.

This generated mixed reaction in the students' minds since some did not consider plagiarism a serious issue while others perceived it merely as a tool to instil fear. This position is supported by Erit and Gokmenoglu (2010) who propose that students know about plagiarism or they have heard about it' but they have no academic knowledge of what it pertains to as researchers.

#### ***5.2.1.2 Forms of plagiarism***

The participants had different perceptions of what constitutes plagiarism. Some said it is just copying from the internet, which means work had already been done. In other words, it would mean researching the topics which have already been done and presenting work, which is similar to others. Secondly, it includes sloppy referencing, such as improper citations and failing to recognize the author by stealing the whole idea without quotation and citation. It also includes using the words said by another person directly and not doing enough research, copying an assignment without citing the original owner. It also includes lecturers using textbooks in class without citing the source. Illegal collaboration, ghost-writing, tone variation, i.e. the flow of ideas, poor flow of written work and copying the work done by oneself were also considered as forms of plagiarism. Also, supervisors who publish assignment or supervised work without consent and submitting the work done by another person is regarded as plagiarism. Most of these forms of plagiarism were also found in the research done by (Onuoha et al., 2013) (see, 4.2.2).

In this study, the commonly found forms of plagiarism comprised copy-pasting from the internet, textbooks, colleagues' work and lecturers' work. This is similar to the findings of Orim (2014), who reports that in Nigerian universities copy-pasting was rampant, due to the limited use of anti-plagiarism software. Another form was poor referencing and the reason provided was poor conventions and instruction on citing and referencing. Jamieson (2016) also categorizes copy-pasting, such as patch-writing, as plagiarism and defines it as the failure to use paraphrasing. He argues that when patch-writing is accompanied by citations, it should not be labelled as plagiarism as unethical or as academic misconduct, but rather as the misappropriation of sources.



According to the data generated in this study, participants indicated that one should be advised to paraphrase, rather than copy-pasting the whole work as it is. Every university has an accepted similarity index for the work to be referred to. Every work should be paraphrased until it is in relation to the similarity index. This notion is rejected by Weber-Wulf (2016), who finds that universities should not accept a particular similarity index since the student may manipulate the text to reach the acceptable value. According to Weber -Wulf (2016), this is still plagiarism since it is not the student's work.

Participants admitted having purchased academic work from the so-called expert. This was also the situation at a cyber cafe near the academic institutions, which concurred with the result of a study conducted by Ruiz (2014). It was a media survey done in East Carolina University which found that 8.3% of the students admitted to having purchased material and having paid for it. There was no evidence of knowledge on substantive editing, as a form of plagiarism in this research. Lines (2016) suggests that substantive editing occurs when a student pays someone to significantly improve or alter something they have written themselves. The University of New South Wales - UNSW (2013) defines substantive editing as a form of collusion which involves paying another person to perform an academic task and declaring it one's own work.

Tomar (2015) justifies ghost-writing by stating that most of those who employ ghost-writers are those for whom English is their second language. They are not familiar with academic methodology. Some students who use ghost-writers may be less interested in their studies and some students who are heavily funded. In line with Tomar (2015) my research found out that both the supervisors and the students identified ghost- writing as a form of plagiarism since they have also encountered it. In East Africa, we found that English is a second language to most people. Most of the researchers, especially the students, pay other people to do work for them so that English language used is of a higher standard. This relates to what Rettinger et al. (2009) suggest in their study.

Most of the students indicated that they plagiarize because they are not informed on the conventions involved in plagiarism. The supervisors have not taught them and, additionally, the students are unmotivated so they want to achieve good results easily. In the institutional policy-documents of the three east African universities there was no statement which mentions ghost-writing in the same way it is explained in the relevant literature (Singh & Ramenyi, 2016). An

existing rule relating to ghost-writing would facilitate the creation of intuitional policies to counteract the Ghost-writing Act. This should be signed by the student.

In the research for this study, self-plagiarism did not surface strongly, neither from the participants nor the institutional policy documents. This concurs with the research done by Roig (2016), which states that institutions do not mention self-plagiarism. This shows that self-plagiarism is not considered as a form of plagiarism in any setting. This statement is also supported by Garfinkel (2014) and Callaham (2014) who argue that one cannot steal from oneself. There is only one definition, in which one participant defined plagiarism as using one's own work without acknowledging yourself as an original author of the original document

According to Green (2005) and Roig (2016), self-plagiarism is textual re-use, multiple publication, redundant publication, dual publication, duplicate publication and presenting it as new work. It is compared to a used car, which has been changed to make it appear new. This is a very serious offence. Silverman (2012) considers it as 'recycling', while Callaham (2014) disagrees and considers self-plagiarism as 'advancing knowledge'.

From the discussion, plagiarism was perceived as having existed in different forms – starting by taking work done by yourself, other people, work done by a professional, or collaborating to cheat, without acknowledging yourself or others which constitutes plagiarism. The adopted work should be paraphrased and cited and in case of direct adoption of one's own ideas, then proper citation should be used by quoting the phrase and including the page number, as well as the author.

### ***5.2.1.3 Motivating factors***

The participants accepted that plagiarism existed; but it was motivated by many factors. An unclear definition of plagiarism. Ignorance, supervisors not taking the responsibility for guiding the students and supervisors reluctance in checking plagiarism. High population and too much work especially during undergraduate studies. invention of technology and cybercafés around the institutions, upcoming universities, which are after money and without the necessary strictness, the need to have certificates who seeks popularity by producing many graduates in less time, enrolment of self-sponsored or privately sponsored students' programmes (PSSP) who dint meet the regulations of enrolment of regular students. Students' laziness and language problems (see,

4.2.3). These results are inconsistent with the findings of Eret and Gokmenogh (2010), who found that factors affecting student's plagiarism are having to use foreign languages in research work. Consequently, time constraints, the lack of knowledge on plagiarism, heavy course obligations, assignment assignments, lack of understanding of the assignment, and lack of vital academic skills.

In East African universities, PSSP students join universities with lower grades than the expected entry level in university. Thus, according to the supervisors' reactions, these students tend to plagiarize more. The quality of student admissions should be reviewed, as recommended by Ohuoha and Ikonne (2013). The PSSP be examined both orally and in written form for them to be admitted. This suggestion is supported by Divan, Bowman, & Seabourne (2013) who found that factors like institutional admission criteria and students' understanding of plagiarism contributed to plagiarism.

From the analysis, there is a perceived occurrence of plagiarism; and the participants' experiences in plagiarism showed that there were those who participated directly, as well as those who had witnessed plagiarism. This is supported by the research work of Orim (2014), who found that there was also the perceived occurrence of plagiarism among Nigerian students; since all the participants had either participated or witnessed plagiarism. Lack of exposure to plagiarism conventions was contradicted by the research done by Murtaza, Zafari, Bashiri, and Hussein (2013) who found a positive attitude towards plagiarism was due to exposure to the promotion of awareness. According to Lines (2016), English Second Language (ESL) students engage in plagiarism more than English First Language (EFL) due to them being disadvantaged in English communication; since they are not able to paraphrase in their own words. This was seen in UC; since Kiswahili is the main language of instruction.

The coming of private universities, which demand that a student complete his/her master's degree in 6 months, provided they pay for their school fees, has placed more pressure on the students. These universities are just after the students' completion of the course, rather than his/her performance. This has led to the students considering cheating (Lines, 2015). Lack of support from their supervisors was the commonest complaint from students.

Supervisors would not have time to read student's and do not regard language editing as their role; the students received weak supervision, as the encouraging factor in plagiarism. This

finding is supported by the works of (Lines 2016; Adeniyi & Taiwo, 2011; Comas-Forgas & Sureda-Negre, 2010). Lecturers have the direct role of preventing plagiarism because of their close contact with these students (Onuoha et al., 2013). Therefore, teaching against stealing is very important; since it grooms one to become a better citizen. Students were also blamed also for not working hard to avoid plagiarism, as suggested by (Onuoha et al., 2013).

It is the role of a student to do some research on the issues relating to plagiarism. There was no evidence of any cultural and religious relationship to plagiarism, as supported by the research of (Martin, 2012). Sherman (1992), however, found that culture and religion contributed much to the issue of plagiarism as religion and culture encourages togetherness and collaboration. This was not the case with my research.

According to the information above, the participants were of the opinion that plagiarism could be caused by number of factors including internal factors like student's personal factors, lecturers/supervisors factors and institutional factors and also external factors such as cybercafé near learning institutions.

#### ***5.2.1.4 Consequences***

Some participants viewed plagiarism as illegal and unacceptable (see, 4.2.5). Plagiarism as an immoral act began in Europe in the 18<sup>th</sup> century during the Romantic Movement; but according to Bhosale (2013), plagiarism was considered as an art in ancient times. One participant commented that nobody owns knowledge; but we depend on other people's knowledge, in order to develop our own. This concurs with the findings of Randall (2001), who pointed out that authentic originality is impossible and that intertextuality was to be found everywhere.

Despite this, plagiarism is illegal, according to the results gleaned from the participants in this study. Therefore, for any illegal act, there must be punishable measures. These consequences affect not only the students, but also the supervisors/ lecturers (Orim, 2014; Punch, 2013).

The participants framed plagiarism as an illegal act that should be punishable. Due to different forms of plagiarism, it is hard for institutional managements to state the punishment for each; and to state to what extent, therefore the disciplinary committee should be involved in determining the plagiarism and also determine the penalties according to the stipulated rules.

### **5.2.2 What is the nature of the institutional policies and practices relevant to plagiarism in selected East-African universities?**

In this question, I concentrated mostly on plagiarism issues, according to the institutional policy documents, and how relevant the issues are to the participants. I started by looking at the institutional policy documents on definition: what is regarded as plagiarism? Some strategies to combat plagiarism, as well as the consequences of plagiarism; this was to be compared with the participants' knowledge on the stated issue.

From the analysis it became clear that institutional policies and documents on plagiarism existed in every institution but the participants were not aware of them. The institutional policies were available in the institution; but they were not available to students and lecturers. Glendenning (2014) claimed that most institutions have institutional policies; however, the question is: How consistently and fairly have these policies been made known, shared and implemented? Student participants in East African universities were expected to work hard, know the rules and regulations of the institutions; while the lecturers had to invent a way of managing plagiarism.

Lecturers mention detectors to make the students alert and scared; but they don't tell the students what is expected of them pertaining plagiarism so that they don't fall victims of plagiarism. According to supervisors, the institutional policies were just in written form but not in practice. This contradicts the research done by Li et al. (2012, p. 170), which found that the participants could "recite the basic policy of plagiarism and recognize that plagiarism was an unacceptable practice in university-written assignments".

#### ***5.2.2.1 Definition***

In the institutional policy documents, the university 'UA' has no eligible definition; while 'UB' and 'UC' have definitions, which are different from those given by the students (4.2.1.2.1). From the above results, there is no uniform definition of the term plagiarism; and this was also supported by Sentleng and King (2012). Sarlauskiene and Stabingis (2014) maintains that there is no valid definition of 'plagiarism'; and the one presented is just a background of a more detailed explanation of the term plagiarism. From the information found in the institutional policy documents on definition and plagiarism, which of the UA lacks definition; this contradicts Colin (2007), who said that all higher education institutions should make sure that their

definitions are known to their students. Inadequate understanding of the concept is depicted; since there is not a single concept. This was also reported in studies by Orim (2014) and Murtaz et al. (2013) who found in their respective studies that students perceived plagiarism relate to many different concepts.

Engel (2014) suggests that the term's instability offers an avenue to interrogate the wide range of practices with students. Brown and Howell (2001) suggested that, students must be educated on plagiarism issue to change their perceptions. The answers given by the participants pertaining to the definition did not match with what was in institutional policy documents. This is indicative of how the institutional policies were ineffective; and it contradicts the research done by Grigg (2010), who found that 82% of the institutional policies in his research had a definition of plagiarism in their institutional policy documents.

There is discrepancy in the way East African universities see information and respond to the basic issues of academic integrity; since they lack these key elements in their institutional documents. The lack of sufficient literature in institutional policy guidelines on plagiarism as an academic misconduct tells us just how plagiarism in this sector is looked down upon.

#### ***5.2.2.2 Forms of plagiarism***

The various forms of plagiarism in the institutional policy documents are not adequately presented. One of the university allows a supervisors to publish work they have supervised since the institutional policy allows them to do so long as they seek consent from the student and then the supervisor becomes the co-author while the student the main author (see, 4.2.2.1). According to the research done by Witton (1973), he found that supervisors mostly expect to be a co-author of those papers to which they have contributed less or not at all; and they may even declare sole authorship of a student's work. From this the presentations in chapter four it is clear institutional policy documents did not reveal much in terms of what constitutes plagiarism. The answers given by participants on what is considered as plagiarism are also considerably different from what is in the institutional policy documents.

This shows that actually what is in the institutional policy documents regards as forms of plagiarism is not known to the participants.

### ***5.2.2.3 Consequences***

Plagiarism was found to be regarded as illegal in all institutional-policy documents; and anything illegal should be punishable. The participants claimed that the penalties are not uniform as some are punishable and others not punishable (see, 2.4.5.1). There was no institutional policy document which states that forgiveness should be a consequence to those who plagiarize. This concurs with the study done by Bretag et al. (2011), which states that academic integrity policies do not define the different types of academic integrity breaches, or their associated outcomes and penalties. This revealed that plagiarism had so many consequences; and those supervisors who fail to detect plagiarism should provide an explanation by in writing, according to institutional policy in another university, plagiarism could lead to resignation from the job and not being promoted.

From the data ( see, 4.2.5.2.1)), students were aware of the consequences as they ranged from cancellation of assignments, already awarded degrees, repetition of the assignment, awarding zero, being forgiven, suing in case of plagiarizing a book, facing the committee and being rebuked, suspension and expulsion from the institutions; and advising students to go and cite and paraphrase the copied work. Henderson, Whitelaw, and Jose (2014) suggested the need to expose the students to the consequences of plagiarism, such as reprimands, course failure and even expulsion – depending on the policies of a particular institution. These research consequences, like the loss of marks and possible expulsion, were also noted by Currie (1998).

The inconsistencies of penalties seen in different universities in East Africa, as stated in institutional policies with different penalties was also observed in the research done by Hall and Berardino (2006), whereby punishment for academic integrity breaches were not coherent across the Australian universities.

In the case of suspicion about plagiarism, both parties should be involved, as suggested by one policy-maker participant: the one who plagiarizes and the original author (see, 4.2.5.2.3). This concurs with findings by Weber-Wulff, Möller, Touras, and Zincke, (2013) who commented on ‘false negative’ outcomes, whereby plagiarism is in the text; but it cannot be flagged because of the lack of the original source. The source should be digitized, in order to make it possible to prove plagiarism. From the above illustration, it is clear that institutional policies had

information on the consequences in cases of plagiarism; but the consequences were not sufficient and consistent.

From the findings in this research it is clear that some institutions are lacking the information on the punishable measures; while other institutions have shallow information on what is considered as consequences of plagiarism.

#### ***5.2.2.4 Availability of institutional policy documents***

From my findings, the universities were well equipped with institutional policies. This was evident by the copies of institutional policies documents handed to me by the policy makers. In UC the policies on plagiarism were everywhere on the notice boards and walls of the institutions. This shows that every institution had institutional policy documents equipped with policies and rules (see, 4.2.6).

The students during interviews reacted differently by accepting that every institution must be having institutional policy documents but they are not available to students. Those students knew about institutional policies from what they heard and not from what they read. Some students were not aware of institution policy makers who are the custodians of institutional policy documents (see, 4.2.6.2.1).

The supervisors blamed the policy makers for not making institutional policy documents available to both students and lecturers especially in UA. They admitted that the institution cannot run without policy documents but it is because of reluctance in performance that has contributed unawareness of institutional policies among students and lectures (see, 4.2.6.2.1).

The policy makers proved the availability of institutional policy documents by providing copies of the documents to me. Lecturers in UC were trained on how to use Turnitin and were yet to train students. Every work in UC was to be submitted with a similarity index report. The policy makers made sure that rules and regulations were available everywhere in the compound to increase awareness (see, 4.2.6.2.3).



#### **5.2.2.5 Strategies**

The participants also responded on what they did to combat plagiarism. This was to check whether those strategies went hand-in-hand with the institutional-policy document on the issue pertaining to the strategies for combating plagiarism. However, they had less to say about combating plagiarism (see, 4.2.7.2.1). This was a clear indication of less information on plagiarism. From the my data, students combated plagiarism by reading much literature, writing ideas down, working hard in their academic, reading books on plagiarism, using conventions, such as citing and involving supervisors in their work this was contrary to research done by Orim (2014).

From my data supervisors stopped plagiarism by passing the assignment through Turnitin especially in UC, by use of google scholars, discussing plagiarism during orientation, provision of original author in case of copying from another person and governance on publication sectors (see, 4.3.7.2.2).

Orim (2014) also suggested the use of electronic detection combined with manual analysis to provide clear determination on the occurrence of plagiarism. This tallies the strategies written in the institutional policy documents: that every supervisor should check all work before submission; while the chairperson of school of graduate schools should check the work by using Turnitin. The participants accepted that the Turnitin software was not a sure way of indicating plagiarism; since sometimes its tests for plagiarism were not and do not indicate whether there is plagiarism, as suggested by Weber-Wulf (2016). Thus, apart from using Turnitin, Weber-Wulf (2016) suggests the use of optical-character recognition (OCR), which is offered by the scanner software installed by machine. These tools provide evidence that can be objectively evaluated. The students are also expected to sign that the submitted work is their original work; so that in case of plagiarism, they can be judged. This statement is supported by Singh et al. (2016), who suggested that students are expected to accompany their finished work with a certificate of 'own work', which is signed by the student.

Bretag and Mahmud (2009) support this argument by suggesting that students should take responsibility for their own work while working together with the supervisors.

From this information, we find that the strategies identified by the participants are considerably different from what is found in the institutional-policy documents. This is a clear indication that the strategies found in the documents are not familiar to the participants. As a result, the relevant people do not benefit from them sufficiently.

The institutional policy documents in East African universities examined in this study fail to address the basic information relating to definition, types of breaches or their associated outcomes and penalties. In relation to this, Bretag et al. (2011) suggest that the institutional policies should address various elements of academic integrity, such as access, approach, responsiveness, details and support. In as much as the university has policies governing institutions on academic integrity, especially on plagiarism, the universities should revisit the policies and the implementation thereof. Jamieson (2016) suggests that the world is changing, especially in terms of technological progress. Therefore, a rigorous and more holistic institutional approach to the adoption of such policies is necessary.

### **5.2.3 What (additional) strategies do supervisors suggest for combatting plagiarism in selected East-African universities?**

Although this question was to be answered by the supervisors, the student participants and the policy-makers also provided their view, given that they are also affected by plagiarism and form part of the institutions. Participants accepted that there were strategies to combat plagiarism. However, plagiarism continues to pose a problem. . The participants suggested more strategies, which could be used in combating plagiarism. These strategies were suggested in addition to the strategies already implemented in the selected institutions. Section 4.3 covered these suggestions. The suggestions include the following:

- i. Training students on citation and acknowledgment
- ii. Early introduction to education on plagiarism
- iii. Set up a series of full examinable courses on plagiarism, which could be integrated into the curriculum
- iv. Universities should have a database that should keep records of all those students who plagiarize.
- v. There should be a department that deals with soft copies.
- vi. Orientation and workshops should be used for increasing the awareness of plagiarism.

- vii. The course on plagiarism should be taught right from primary to secondary levels and should continue into tertiary education.
- viii. Supervisors should monitor researchers' work.
- ix. Research materials should be made available for research work.
- x. Institutional policies should be made available to everybody. Anti-plagiarism software should be installed in lecturers' computers for easier supervision.
- xi. Plagiarism should be fought at assignment level.
- xii. Strict control of student admission numbers- the entry level should be emphasized.
- xiii. Joining hands among institutions not to support plagiarism by promoting grades of equal values.
- xiv. Students should be made aware that their work is being submitted to anti-plagiarism software.

From the literature available, it becomes evident that these suggestions already exist and that they are being implemented in other institutions, except for at from East African universities. Orim (2014) also suggests that the integration of a course on plagiarism into higher education institutions' graduate curricula could be important in combating plagiarism. This was also suggested some of the participants who proposed that the course on plagiarism should be taught right from primary to secondary level, and on to university.

Including education on plagiarism in the syllabus should help in the prevention thereof. This is the consensus agreed upon in the literature, as suggested by Bruwelheide (2010) and Davis, Drinan and Gallant (2011). This research found that raising awareness of plagiarism from an early level and the inclusion of educational measures in the curricula would help in curbing plagiarism. This was supported by Vehviläinen, Löfström, and Nevgi (2017), who say that the ethics in the education curriculum should start as early as possible.

The strategy of the supervisor working closer with the student is important in the detection of plagiarism, especially in relation to ghost-writing. Singh et al. (2016) suggest that the detection of ghost-writing detection can only be achieved through the evaluator being familiar with the student's level of knowledge and the student's` natural style of writing.

There were no suggestions from the participants who indicated that supervisors also needed support in developing skills to effectively implement pedagogical measures that can equip them

and their students in coping with plagiarism as suggested by Botha (2016). This clearly indicates that participants only considered plagiarism which affects students, but not their supervisors.

From the discussion, the main issue which emerged was that the institutions should state clearly what they consider to be plagiarism. They should then start training the students on plagiarism at an earlier stage of their learning trajectory. The training should be embedded in the syllabus and be examinable so that the course is taken seriously.

### **5.3 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESULTS**

From the results, it becomes evident that the participants claimed to use the plagiarism concept during their academic writing or that they may have heard of it. This contradicts Vygotsky's (1978) concept, which suggests that development only happens when there is a highly systematized procedure in learning. And since there is no systematic procedure in delivering the concept on plagiarism, learning does not take place.

According to Vygotsky (1978), cognitive development is promoted through the collaboration that occurs during the joint-social interactive process in teaching and learning. From the results, this idea can be interpreted positively or negatively. On the positive side, for the student to understand fully the meaning of plagiarism, there must be co-operation between the lecturers and the students. Through this students can be taught about the issues related to plagiarism to prevent any form of plagiarism in their work. Furthermore, the supervisors should be able to detect it easily and to reprimand the student for becoming involved in such an activity. On the negative side, collaboration means that one student copies from another student. In terms of academic integrity, collaboration is seen as plagiarism – especially if it is illegal. This includes a student doing an assignment for another student or submitting the same assignment on the basis of an agreement. According to Vygotsky (1978, P. 58), “individuals construct meaning through their interaction with others, i.e. they internalize the meaning constructed by the group of cultures; as they become encultured”. This is not to be encouraged when it comes to the issues on plagiarism, unless it is a legal collaboration, in which case every group member would be cited in the work done.

Vygotsky focuses on the powerful role of culture and the community in learning. This theory presents the radical idea that our much-thought intelligence is really not our own. It is the

product of history and culture. From the literature examined, it becomes evident that culture has influenced the understanding of plagiarism. From these results, it can be seen that the university community has also contributed to the way plagiarism occurs – either by rules not followed strictly-or by the lack of clear definitions of such terms.

Culture creates ‘mental tools’, which transform our mental work, just like physical tools transform our physical work. Language is the mother of all mental tools. Another symbolic artefact, which mediates student-textual production in this study, was language as suggested by Vygotsky (1978). The participants were convinced that their language proficiency affected plagiarism. The text and the paraphrasing presented a problem because of the language. This was seen in the way in which participants understood the definition. The consequences of plagiarism also mediate on stopping plagiarism especially in (section 4.2.3.2.1) where a participant has said that they work on the consequences.

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is reached when a more knowledgeable other (MKO) assists the less knowledgeable, in order to reach the proximal zone. The MKO in this context can be a lecturer and the learning materials can, for instance, be internet.

Lecturers are supposed to assist the students from the early stages, right up to the level, whereby they can do their work alone. They are supposed to introduce the concept of plagiarism earlier to help the students implement it. After that, they are supposed to do this on their own. Introducing the concept later and expecting the students to put in practice immediately means that the learning would not occur fully. The internet, as an MKO, is also supposed to help students develop as it a very helpful means of obtaining information.

On the other hand, there have been cases in which the students have been copying the work of a lecturer, or that of a peer student. The internet has played a substantial role in plagiarism by assisting the students in copy-pasting at an earlier stage.

According to Vygotsky (1978), the learning and the development processes operate independently but they are mutually influential. Learning through the participation process shapes development. ZPDs define and shape the relationship between the supervisor and the student. This relationship is dynamic and evolves over time to form an expert/novice relationship to a more co-operative and collaborative one.

The mediating artefacts of an activity system are those physical or symbolic tools with which individuals modify their environments, and which, in turn, serve to modify their own forms of cognition and behaviour (Vygotsky 1978).

This study showed the relevant elements in order to demonstrate that students can plagiarize, or not plagiarize – with the help of both physical and technological sources. The presence of physical tools, such as books, can help a researcher to read more. As a result, this may prevent them from plagiarizing. Technology, such as the internet, can facilitate plagiarism in the form of copy-pasting. But technology can also be used in the detection of plagiarism. An example of this is Turnitin. This also reduces plagiarism once the students realize that their work is being passed through Turnitin. This was seen in the cases of plagiarism in which individuals were copy-pasting text from the internet (see section 4.2.3.2.2). The use of technology, such as Turnitin, has also been suggested as a strategy to stop plagiarism (see section 4.3). From the findings there was no evidence that peers introduced students to plagiarism. This contradicts the research done by Grigg (2016), which states that people plagiarize because everybody else is doing it. The MKO who are supervisors and knowledgeable policy-makers failed to advise students on the matters pertaining to plagiarism by helping them understand issues related to plagiarism. The ZPD did not come out strongly in this research because plagiarism is not a positive act. It is a negative act. A learner does not need assistance and when given time he/she will be available to do it alone.

## **5.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter has presented the main results of the thesis in relation to the key literature in the field of plagiarism and the theoretical implications of the socio-cultural theory suggested by Vygotsky (1978). From the findings there is a need to integrate this theory while presenting issues related to plagiarism. It is the role of the institutional fraternity to participate in stopping the act of plagiarism. This includes the students, staff who are supervisors and the administrators who are the policy makers. The chapter also brought out the recommended policy interventions which show that plagiarism is not tolerated. In addition, the study has confirmed the results of previous studies that show that the participants are aware to a large extent of the meaning and significance of plagiarism in academia.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the summary and conclusions related to the major findings of the study are presented. The study concludes that socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky 1978) can be integrated in order to improve the conceptual understanding of plagiarism. This is due to the fact that positive leaning takes place when academic integrity is observed with the learning environment. Academic integrity deals with discipline and moral which brings about positive learning (Mukhumo, 2002). The chapter started by examining the purpose of the research by looking at the research questions. Chapter two examined the available literature in relation to socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) through which the theory can assist to understand better issues related to plagiarism.

Using a qualitative research approach, a constructivist paradigm and a multi-case study design, the findings show that for plagiarism to be stopped the entire institutional community should utilize the tools available in teaching and it should implement anti-plagiarism practices. Students should be taught the concepts of plagiarism clearly. They should be taught a clear understanding of what can be regarded as plagiarism, how to control plagiarism and manage disciplinary actions. The study sought to identify additional strategies suggested for the combatting of plagiarism. The study aims at exploring plagiarism in Master of Education Studies in selected East-African universities. The following research questions were used to meet the objectives.

**This research had to answer the following research questions:**

- What are the perceptions of plagiarism among Master of Education students and supervisors in selected East African universities?
- What is the nature of the institutional policies and practices relevant to plagiarism in selected East African universities?
- What (additional) strategies do supervisors suggest for combatting plagiarism in selected East African universities?

## **6.2 GENERAL STUDY SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

This section provides the summary of the findings discussed in relation to the research questions.

### **6.2.1 What are the perceptions of Master of Education students and supervisors on plagiarism in selected East-African universities?**

The study found that many participants, especially the student participants, had some knowledge of plagiarism before their Master's studies. Many of the students had internalized the prevailing discourse of plagiarism, as a moral and academic issue, as was suggested by Henderson et al. (2014). Consequently, plagiarism was viewed as an act of cheating or stealing. As suggested by the definition they gave, some students also suggested that plagiarism was not altogether a bad thing (Yang et al., 2014) since researchers depends on another researcher's knowledge. This was also supported by the research done by Hayes et al. (2005). The participants expressed that plagiarism was a serious issue and that students, staff and institutions should come together to fight any form of plagiarism, as suggested by Henderson et al. (2014). The act of plagiarism was perceived largely as an act of copying without acknowledging the original source. Some also saw referencing as a mechanism against plagiarism. This is also supported by the study done by Henderson et al. (2014). Overall, the participants perceived plagiarism as an illegal act of failing to acknowledge the work done by others and presenting such work as one's own. Students are supposed to be taught the conventions of plagiarism so that they understand the term well, rather than feeling unsure about the meaning. There should be a fixed stated definition that explains all issues, starting with the causes, forms, mitigations and consequences of plagiarism.

Regarding the occurrence of plagiarism, most of the students and lecturers admitted there was occurrence of student plagiarism – particularly when they talked about their own experiences. One of the policy-makers claimed that plagiarism was not perceived as a problem in their institution because they were using Turn-it-in before the students submitted their final work. The lack of technology in most of the universities made it difficult to monitor the work plagiarized since most the work was submitted in the form of a printed hardcopy. The identified forms of the perceived occurrence of plagiarism in the students' work comprised largely of the following forms copy and paste; copying from the text and careless referencing. The supervisors demonstrated a deeper understanding of plagiarism. They identified forms of plagiarism, such as



collusion, the reuse of other people's dissertations as well as ghost-writing. These were stated as the worst forms of plagiarism. These findings from supervisors and students suggest that it is difficult to show how serious plagiarism is. Any form of plagiarism should be discouraged and highly condemned in the strongest terms possible. Ghost-writing is just as serious as copy and paste and others. Consequently, the researcher should be on guard for any form of plagiarism as all the forms are condemned.

In addition to these views on the causes, lecturers and students indicated almost the same reasons for why students plagiarize. These reasons include laziness, participants' ignorance, supervisors not taking their responsibility for guiding students, too much work, and high population – especially during undergraduate studies-, unclear definitions of plagiarism, cybercafés around the institutions, supervisors' reluctance in checking plagiarism and technology. This also included upcoming universities, which are after money and do not practice academic integrity. Furthermore, it included the need to have certificates, students' laziness, the enrolment of self-sponsored students, as well as privately sponsored students' programs (PSSPs), Master students and language problems.

However, one of the supervisors accepted that they also failed the students by introducing the concept of plagiarism at a rather late stage. Furthermore, some participants suggested that the lack of sufficient resources and that large classes played a major role. Oftentimes lecturers were reluctant to focus on plagiarism.

Based on the data, it can be stated that participants identified two major factors to cause plagiarism: an internal factor and an external factor. Internal factors included those factors that are in the university, such as the student-based factors, for instance, ignorance, laziness, too much work, language problems, this is followed by lecturer/supervisor-based factors, such as supervisors not taking the necessary responsibility. In addition, there are institutional factors, such as unclear definitions of plagiarism, unclear entry levels and large number on admission. The external factors included cyber cafés, up-and-coming universities and technology. Based on this, I conclude that as much as students are being accused of plagiarism, their lecturers have contributed to this significantly by not addressing the issue, having less time to talk about plagiarism and remembering to introduce the wider concept simultaneously.

All in all, the lack of knowledge and skills relating to plagiarism constitute the main causes for continuous occurrence of plagiarism. If researchers are taught about the conventions of plagiarism, this may eliminate other contributing factors because they would already know what is expected of them.

On the issue of strategies, most participants claimed that they were not aware of any strategies for dealing with plagiarism since those strategies were found in institutional policy documents. Students also had their own strategies, such as working hard and reading up on plagiarism. The teaching in undergraduate levels was not adequate for the students to be prepared for future writing since most of the students complained about the lecturers not introducing the concept earlier.

The lecturers said that they had talked about the issue during lecture hours and when reading through the students' work. They had looked for personal ways of combatting plagiarism. The policy-makers suggested that they had rules and regulations they shared with the students during orientation. The students and supervisors perceived that institutions had failed to implement those policies since they had just heard about them; but they had never seen any policies for governing plagiarism in their institutions. The policy-makers expected both the students and the supervisors to make sure that they were familiar with the conventions for combatting plagiarism since they were printed in the institutional policy documents.

The participants perceived plagiarism as illegal. There were consequences for any illegal activities. These consequences were not uniform across the universities and so the consequences were perceived as not being specific in terms of the forms and extent of plagiarism. The discussion above shows that stopping plagiarism is not achieved by punishing those plagiarise or by having a booklet of rules and regulations which might not be known to learners. Plagiarism can only be stopped by the close talking about the issue and discuss it with the learners. Close monitoring of the students work is also very important as it questions a student from early stage especially those who plagiarise unintentionally.

### **6.2.2 What is the nature of institutional policies and practices relevant to plagiarism in selected East-African universities?**

Inconsistency in stating the information and response on the basic issues of academic integrity in East-African universities was observed. In addition, there is less literature on plagiarism as an academic misconduct in the institutional policy documents. And this shows clearly how the concept is underestimated since the key elements are not presented. Increased awareness of plagiarism among students, lecturers and the university as a whole could result in a revision of the institutional policies that would recognize plagiarism as a vital issue in learning and development. Documents analyzed were mentioned in 3.6.3.

Starting with the definition of plagiarism in institutional documents, one of the institutions had no definition for such a very vital element and the remaining two institutions each had a different definition for plagiarism. This shows that there should be a change in policy and practice in institutional policy in order for it to match other institutions (Henderson, 2014). A good number of the students claimed not being aware of academic writing requirements although their lecturers defended themselves by saying that they had introduced the concept in the first year. It was up to the students to know the institutional rules and regulations.

The answers given by the participants on plagiarism were also very different from what is stated in institutional-policy documents. This shows that actually what is in the institutional policy documents is not known to the participants as a form of plagiarism. From this information, it is clear that the institutional policy documents did not have a clear definition of plagiarism.

Findings about the penalties indicated that the participants' views were unanimous. When plagiarism occurred in the students' work, it was addressed mostly by the senate as illegal. The penalties did not just affect the students, but also the supervisors, as stated in the institutional policy documents. Most of the penalties stated by the participants were found in the institutional-policy documents. Although some of the penalties, such as forgiveness and awarding zero – and then resetting for exams –, were not in the institutional policy documents at all.

The researcher could access the institutional policy documents from the policy-makers' offices and from the internet. The document stated clearly how the students and the supervisors should conduct themselves ethically in their academic roles. Although there was less information in the

document on plagiarism, some of the documents lacked even a definition. The supervisors claimed that the present rules and regulations were just in written form, but nothing was done in practice. There was hardly any use of digital software for deterring plagiarism – except in university C which had just introduced anti-plagiarism software by the research was being undertaken. The institution policies are a very important tool in any academic sector as they control and direct the mode of morals in an institution. These documents should be very detailed so that the learner understands every concept clearly. Details on plagiarism should be stated clearly, starting with what is meant by plagiarism and how to control and punish. The policies also should be available everywhere especially in libraries, on the walls of lecture halls and notice boards so that learners are reminded now and then.

### **6.2.3 What (additional) strategies do supervisors suggest for combatting plagiarism in selected East-African universities?**

From the discussion, most of these additional strategies suggested by the participants already existed in the institutional policies, but the participants were not aware of them. Some existed in other universities, but not in East African universities. The suggestions are to combine the efforts of the students, the supervisors and the policy-makers. The policy-makers can adopt the strategies that are important to their institutions and drop those that are not relevant.

## **6.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The research has offered an explorative perspective of Plagiarism in Master of Education studies in selected East-African universities. A qualitative approach was in the generation of data from students, supervisors, policy-makers, and institutional documents. Consequently, I encountered the following limitations:

- i. The participants included only the members of a given university in the selected countries in East Africa. This limited the results since it was a qualitative study and no generalization is allowed to a larger population (Yin, 2009). Time was a limitation, especially for the different geographical locations of the university. This required me to move from one country to another and I had to make travel arrangements. The different universities also had different times for Master's students' sessions. For example, in UB

the students were only available from 6.00 pm to 10.00pm and their lecturers did not want to miss the lectures, as scheduled. I had to wait until late hours and to rush through the interviews because time was limited.

- ii. In UB, getting participants was not easy since the lecturers were on strike and the students were demonstrating for not being taught. In UA, the participants were more than willing and the contacted ones all attended their interviews. I could not turn them down and this led to a strenuous schedule. Since the participants were willing and available, especially the supervisors, they had a lot to say and this led to a large load of data from UA. Getting the right answer from the information given by a participant was difficult.
- iii. There was the possibility of the participants not being honest about the answers they were giving although Salkind and Rainwater (2003) state that the data collected from the qualitative research is subject to research interpretation. Some participants, for example, one of the policy-makers in UC said that there were no signs of plagiarism in their university since the initiation of Turnitin had led to reduced plagiarism. Little did she know that plagiarism, like ghost-writing, cannot be detected by Turnitin since it is an original work done by a professional who could not be acknowledged.
- iv. Findings were limited to schools of education in three East-African universities. Therefore, the findings might not relate to departments, schools or faculties in other disciplines.

## **6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Completing this research allowed me to grow personally and professionally as a scholar, as a researcher, and as a teacher. My intention for the future is to continue growing as an agent for change in the education sector, in academic integrity and to improve students' learning and their understanding of plagiarism. I plan to apply my skills and knowledge by leading as an example to scholars, and by conducting additional research on plagiarism in academic institutions. Therefore, the following recommendations are made to the following groups:

### **6.4.1 To the students**

Students should be trained so that first they understand what academic integrity entails. This should be done right way in the earlier stages of learning, so that they are able to produce their

own original work when they progress in academia. It is the responsibility of the student to make sure that he/she reads all rules and regulations that pertain to academic integrity and takes the responsibility for his/her own writing.

#### **6.4.2 To lecturers/supervisors**

Lecturers/supervisors should introduce the concept of plagiarism at an early stage in university courses.

Rules and regulations should be available to lecturers so that when they present the course to the students, they should refer to those rules that are available in the institutional documents. The supervisors should understand that their roles as supervisors and that they are supposed to guide the students' journey in research until they successfully complete their course. This includes guidance on plagiarism.

Lecturers committed more time in teaching and emphasizing the rules in their respective classes, in addition to emphasizing the severity of plagiarism (Yang, 2014). This also refers to the special forms of plagiarism, such as collaboration and ghost-writing (Yang, 2014).

#### **6.4.3 To policy-makers and curriculum Implementers**

The findings in this study are transferable if management feels that they would assist their organizations (Lincoln & Guba, 1995). The findings might help the university management, especially the policy-makers to boost their management in terms of the prevention, detection and punishing of plagiarism. There should be co-operation in an entire university family – starting with the students, supervisors and policy-makers because they are the ones that are affected by plagiarism. Consequently, they have the solution to this problem. The rules made should not only affect students, but also every individual that is in the academic department, as suggested by Thomas and De Bruin (2012).

Since technology has led to rise in the rate of plagiarism, the same technology should be used to fight plagiarism. Sentleng and King (2012) states that we need to fight technology by the use of technology. Anti-plagiarism software should be made available to both lecturers and students so that they can be used, where necessary, to correct their mistakes sooner. Students should be

made aware that anti-plagiarism software will be able to detect plagiarism in the work. Therefore, they take the necessary caution and be ready for consequences.

The policy-makers should adopt a wider interpretation of plagiarism in their institutional policy documents, in order to meet the wider concept of plagiarism, as recommended by Gallant and Drinan (2008).

I recommend that the institutions should develop strategies that can be used to curb plagiarism, the institutional stakeholders come together and discuss the concept of plagiarism and for every case of plagiarism there be a strategy for mitigation. This could lead to new strategies that would assist in mitigation and this should be done continuously. There should be a stated entry level and the number of admissions should be controlled, so that the number would be manageable at all times.

#### **6.4.4 On methodology**

My study concentrated on qualitative research. I suggest that future research should use a quantitative research approach since it works under a high standards of strictness and involves numerical data collection to discuss and control the phenomena of interest (Kothari 2003). Testing of statistics and hypothesis is involved to describe conditions, relationships, cause and effect (Amin, 2005, p. 67). Regarding instruments, questionnaires could be used in addition to in-depth interviews as these multi-modal methods would help to explain why the participants select certain responses and, therefore, they produce more information for analysis.

#### **6.4.5 For further research**

This chapter is a synopsis of core issues discussed in the whole study and embodies in the social cultural theory (Vygotsky's 1978). I therefore recommend the following areas to be researched on so that to expand on available knowledge on plagiarism.

- i. To investigate student-supervisor relationships in relation to plagiarism. This is due to the fact that students were complaining that supervisors did not introduce the concept of plagiarism at the right time, but only when they were about to do their research (see, 4.2.3.2.1).

- ii. How English as a second language influences plagiarism in East Africa. I find that for most of countries in East Africa, English is the students' second language after Kiswahili. This the mother-tongue for Tanzania and Kenya and the medium of instruction in some stages of education. For Uganda, Luganda is the national language and the usual medium of instruction at primary level. Since the research work is written in English as a requirement, this has interfered with the way in which researchers express themselves. It has also led to the copying of other people's languages to suit their own ideas (see, 4.2.3.2.1).
- iii. The effectiveness of anti-plagiarism software in East-African universities. From the findings, only UC utilized the use of turn-it-in while the rest were on the process of implementing the software in their Institutions (see, 4.2.7.2.3).

In investigating this topic, researchers and institutional management can understand factors that affect understanding of plagiarism among students, faculty, and institutions at large. Such new knowledge would assist the university fraternity to amend their policies to enable them to guide the higher educational institutions in East Africa.

## 6.5 CONCLUSION

Plagiarism in academic institutions is a complicated issue that calls for serious discussion in order to solve this problem once and for all (Thurmond, 2010). Furthermore, the world is changing and people must also change, in order to be *on a par* with the changing world. Consequently, the institutions should review their policies on plagiarism so that the problem is solved at a time when it emerges in a different version. And they should state their reasons for what would have contributed to that.

In East-African universities, plagiarism is growing very fast – despite the presence of institutional polices that have been put in place to curb it. This research has sought to investigate the additional strategies that could be put in place to curb plagiarism in East-African universities. By using a qualitative case design, I collected data from students, superiors and policy-makers through interviews and focus group discussion. In addition, I analyzed the institutional policy documents.



From the definition given by the participants, and that in the institutional policy documents, I suggest that the definition of plagiarism should be explained in detail. I recommend that the definition should state clearly just what comprises plagiarism and the consequences that affect the individual who seems to be guilty of plagiarism. Those consequences should explain the clear extent of plagiarism. The proposed definition should clarify just what plagiarism is, namely, the wrongful appropriation of one's own ideas, other people's ideas, and any illegal collaboration without acknowledgment.

Effective prevention of plagiarism requires proper education on plagiarism early in time. Such courses on academic integrity should be embedded in the syllabus. Students cannot stop plagiarizing when they do not understand just what plagiarism is. They should be trained first and this becomes easier when the introduction is done in class.

In this study, the students' basic comprehension of plagiarism failed to provide a detailed explanation on plagiarism as stated by the institutional policy. The participants showed an awareness of the term, but they were confused in understanding the term. The participants, especially the students, should be made to understand what forms of plagiarism lead to a given punishment and how to mitigate it. The supervisor should play their professional role as a supervisor and not as an examiner. Plagiarism should be detected right away from the proposal level – so that the students become aware and take the necessary steps. The scholars should identify deeply the possible causes of plagiarism and each cause should have a mitigating factor. If mitigation is ignored, the punishment would follow.

Plagiarism is real and complex and calls for scholars to work tirelessly against it, but also there is a need to teach researchers on how to be scholars that are reliable, who can work without illegal collaboration and come up with a legal solution.

**REAL SCHOLARS ... NO PLAGIARISM!!!!!!!**

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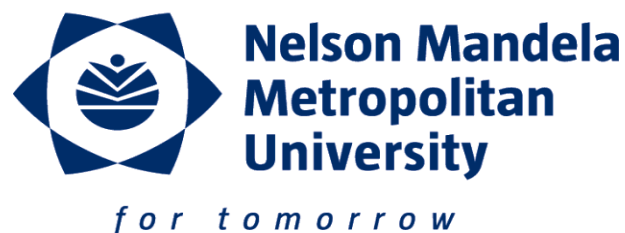
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## ANNEXURES



### APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE

#### FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Tel . +27 (0)41 504 4568

Fax. +27 (0)41 504 1986

11 January 2017

Ms Z Ramadhan / Prof N Botha

Education Faculty

NMMU

Dear Ms Ramadhan

#### **Plagiarism in Master of Education studies at selected East African Universities**

Your above-entitled application for ethics approval was approved by the Faculty Research,

Technology and Innovation Committee of Education (ERTIC) via round robin in November 2016.

We take pleasure in informing you that the application was approved by the Committee. The ethics clearance reference number is **H16-EDU-ERE-021**.

We wish you well with the project. Please inform your co-investigators of the outcome, and convey our best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Ms J Hay

Secretary: ERTIC

16/10/2016

## **APPENDIX B: REQUEST FOR INSTITUTIONAL PERMISSION**

DEAN OF EDUCATION

MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

BOX 7062 KAMPALA

UGANDA

Dear Sir/ Madam,

I would like to request authorization to conduct a research study at **MAKERERE UNIVERSITY** for my masters' thesis at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, "**Plagiarism in Master of Education Studies in selected East-African universities.**" This study will investigate perceptions of students on plagiarism, supervisor's additional strategies and institutional policies on plagiarism.

I request permission from the university to access student, supervisors and police makers email addresses to select participants through purposeful and convenience sampling and send them an electronic mailing that explains the research thesis and requests their participation.

**All participation is voluntary:** I intend to conduct focus group discussion with the masters' students for 1 hour and individual interviews (less than 1) with 2 students, 2 supervisors and at least 2 policy makers.

My Qualitative Multiple - Case Study seeks to address the following:

- a) To explore plagiarism perceptions of master's in education students and supervisors in selected East-African universities.
- b) To explore supervisors' suggestions regarding (additional) strategies towards combating plagiarism in selected East-African universities.
- c) To explore institutional policies and practices relevant to plagiarism in selected East-African universities.

The information gathered during the interviews with Masters Students and supervisors and policy makers will only be used for the purposes of my research. The identities of the institution and participants will not be revealed.

I appreciate your consideration and am happy to discuss this study with you in detail. Please contact me via email [ramadhanzainab2@gmail.com](mailto:ramadhanzainab2@gmail.com) or phone +254715853110 if you have any questions regarding my request.

**The attached Synopsis of the Research Study provides additional information.**

Thank you.

Sincerely,

---

ZAINABU RAMADHAN

[ramadhanzainab2@gmail.com](mailto:ramadhanzainab2@gmail.com)

+254715853110

Enc. (1)

## **APPENDIX C: MASTERS STUDENT FOCUS GROUP SCHEDULE**

### **Part I. Overview of study and participant information**

**Personal introduction.** My names are Zainabu Ramadhan, a teacher by Profession and Masters Student in Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, South Africa. My Research Topic is “**Plagiarism in Master of Education Studies at Selected East African Universities**”.

**The purpose of the Research:** Recent studies suggest that plagiarism may be a serious issue among masters’ students. When masters’ students are accused of lapses of plagiarism, it is often assumed that these students have poor academic skills or that they lack integrity. The failure to consider other issues in learning has led to these views. An examination of learning experiences is needed to achieve a deeper understanding of how different issues influences one’s understanding of plagiarism. This study seeks to gain a better understanding of Masters Students’ and supervisors and policy makers’ views of concept of plagiarism in East Africa universities that may influence these views.

**The structure of the interview:** The focus group discussion and personal interviews with individuals will last approximately 50 to 60 minutes and will be digitally audio-recorded for later transcription. Attached is masters’ students Consent to Participate in Research.

### **Part II. Focus Group Discussion Guide for Students and Interview Guide for Students, Supervisors and Policy Makers (for one sessions)**

#### **Resources**

Tape recorder, cassettes, hard disk, phone, laptop, batteries, pens, paper, tables and chairs, diary (extra cassettes, batteries and stationery)

## **Preparation**

I will introduce myself then I will ask the participants to introduce themselves. I will ensure that the tape recorder is in good condition and that there will be minimal or no disturbance during the discussion for clear recordings. Ask for permission from the participants to record all the discussion sessions from the start to the end, taking notes and make observations for any body language. The chairs should be arranged around the table to allow focus group discussion and face to face siting arrangement for interviews. This creates an accepting environment that puts participants at ease allowing then to thoughtfully answer questions in their own words and add meaning to their answers.

Lead the discussion by introducing the topic and overview of the topic. Participants should share viewson perceptions and their understanding of the concept plagiarism, strategies on plagiarism and institutional policies and practices relevant to plagiarism.

### Part III. Questions

## PLAGIARISM IN MASTER OF EDUCATION STUDIES AT SELECTED EAST AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES

### STUDENTS FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION SCHEDULE

Dear respondent, this focus group discussion is aimed at addressing plagiarism in master of education studies at selected East Africa universities. This is responding to question “What are the perceptions of master’s in education students and supervisors on plagiarism in selected East-African universities?”

1. What is your understanding of the term plagiarism?
2. How did you get to this particular understanding of plagiarism?
3. Who introduced you to the concept of plagiarism?
4. What examples in general can you provide for what constitutes plagiarism in the academic setting in your university?
5. Would you please share with me any incidences you are aware of pertaining to plagiarism?  
**Probe:** Were you aware that those incidences were examples of plagiarism?  
**Probe:** Any other example of plagiarism that you are aware?
6. Is there any course/module designed in this university concerning issues related to academic dishonesty?  
**Probe:** Can you provide an example?
7. Are you aware of any policies and rules regulating plagiarism in your university?  
**Probe:** To what extent are rules and institutional policy regulating plagiarism?  
**Probe:** Can you provide an example?
8. In what ways do supervisors and policy makers help you understand better matters pertaining to plagiarism?  
**Probe:** Can you provide specific examples?
9. What suggestions can you give to supervisors and policy makers which can help students have a better understanding of plagiarism?
10. What have you done as a student to ensure you follow the rules regarding plagiarism?
11. What is the extent of plagiarism in this institution?
12. Is there anything else you want to tell me about plagiarism that you think is important for me to know?



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**16/10/2016**

## **APPENDIX D: SUPERVISORS INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

### **Part I: Overview of study and participant information**

**Personal introduction.** My names are Zainabu Ramadhan, a teacher by Profession and Masters Student in Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, South Africa. My Research Topic is “**Plagiarism in Master of Education Studies at Selected East African Universities**”.

**Scope of the Study:** Minimum of five Masters Students for focus group discussion, two masters’ students, two supervisors and one policy maker Moi/Makerere/Dar es Salaam University will be interviewed for this study. Before conducting this study, both Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University and Moi/Makerere/Dar es Salaam University will review the proposal and approve its administration.

**The purpose of the Research:** Recent studies suggest that plagiarism may be a serious issue among masters’ students. When masters’ students are accused of lapses of plagiarism, it is often assumed that these students have poor academic skills or that they lack integrity. The failure to consider other issues in learning has led to these views. An examination of learning experiences is needed to achieve a deeper understanding of how different issues influences one’s understanding of plagiarism. This study seeks to gain a better understanding of Masters Students’ and supervisors and policy makers’ views of concept of plagiarism in East Africa universities that may influence these views.

**The structure of the interview:** The focus group discussion and personal interviews with individuals will last approximately 50 to 60 minutes and will be digitally audio-recorded for later transcription. Attached is supervisors Consent to Participate in Research.

**Part II. Focus Group Discussion Guide for Students and Interview Guide for Students, Supervisors and Policy Makers (for one sessions)**



**Resources**

Tape recorder, cassettes, hard disk, phone, laptop, batteries, pens, paper, tables and chairs, diary (extra cassettes, batteries and stationery)

**Preparation**

I will introduce myself then I will ask the participants to introduce themselves. I will ensure that the tape recorder is in good condition and that there will be minimal or no disturbance during the discussion for clear recordings. Ask for permission from the participants to record all the discussion sessions from the start to the end, taking notes and make observations for any body language. The chairs should be arranged around the table to allow focus group discussion and face to face sitting arrangement for interviews. This creates an accepting environment that puts participants at ease allowing them to thoughtfully answer questions in their own words and add meaning to their answers.

Lead the discussion by introducing the topic and overview of the topic. Participants should share views on perceptions and their understanding of the concept plagiarism, strategies on plagiarism and institutional policies and practices relevant to plagiarism.

**Part III. Questions**

# **PLAGIARISM IN MASTER OF EDUCATION STUDIES AT SELECTED EAST AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES**

## **SUPERVISORS INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

Dear respondent, this interview is aimed at addressing plagiarism in master of education studies at selected East African universities. This is responding to question “What (additional) strategies do supervisors suggest towards combating plagiarism in selected East-African universities?”

1. What is your definition of plagiarism? or How do you define plagiarism?
2. How do you talk about plagiarism with your students?
3. What steps do you take to ensure your students understand issues related to plagiarism?
4. Would you describe for me experiences you have had dealing with plagiarism issues among Masters Students?  
**Probe:** Can you provide specific details regarding your experiences with masters’ students and the topic of plagiarism?
5. Are you aware of institutional policies put in place to curb plagiarism?  
**Probe:** If yes, what is the source?
6. What suggestions would you offer to Masters Students about plagiarism issues?
7. What other strategies can you suggest to the management on plagiarism?
8. Is there anything else you want to tell me about plagiarism that you think is important for me to know?

## **Part IV. Closing**

Thank you for participating in the interview and I assure you of the confidentiality of your information. I will be contacting you anytime to clarify your responses.

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16/10/2016

## **APPENDIX E: POLICY MAKERS INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

### **Part I.: Overview of study and participant information**

**Personal introduction.** My names are Zainabu Ramadhan, a teacher by Profession and Masters Student in Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, South Africa. My Research Topic is “**Plagiarism in Master of Education Studies at Selected East African Universities**”.

**Scope of the Study:** Minimum of five Masters Students for focus group discussion, two masters’ students, two supervisors and one policy maker Moi/Makerere/Dar es Salaam University will be interviewed for this study. Before conducting this study, both Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University and Moi/Makerere/Dar es Salaam University will review the proposal and approve its administration.

**The purpose of the Research:** Recent studies suggest that plagiarism may be a serious issue among masters’ students. When masters’ students are accused of lapses of plagiarism, it is often assumed that these students have poor academic skills or that they lack integrity. The failure to consider other issues in learning has led to these views. An examination of learning experiences is needed to achieve a deeper understanding of how different issues influences one’s understanding of plagiarism. This study seeks to gain a better understanding of Masters Students’ and supervisors and policy makers’ views of concept of plagiarism in East Africa universities that may influence these views.

**The structure of the interview:** The focus group discussion and personal interviews with individuals will last approximately 50 to 60 minutes and will be digitally audio-recorded for later transcription. Attached is policy makers Consent to Participate in Research.

## **Part II. Focus Group Discussion Guide for Students and Interview Guide for Students, Supervisors and Policy Makers (for one sessions)**

### **Resources**

Tape recorder, cassettes, hard disk, phone, laptop, batteries, pens, paper, tables and chairs, diary (extra cassettes, batteries and stationery)

### **Preparation**

I will introduce myself then I will ask the participants to introduce themselves. I will ensure that the tape recorder is in good condition and that there will be minimal or no disturbance during the discussion for clear recordings. Ask for permission from the participants to record all the discussion sessions from the start to the end, taking notes and make observations for any body language. The chairs should be arranged around the table to allow focus group discussion and face to face siting arrangement for interviews. This creates an accepting environment that puts participants at ease allowing then to thoughtfully answer questions in their own words and add meaning to their answers.

Lead the discussion by introducing the topic and overview of the topic. Participants should share views on perceptions and their understanding of the concept plagiarism, strategies on plagiarism and institutional policies and practices relevant to plagiarism.

### **Part III. Questions**

## **PLAGIARISM IN MASTER OF EDUCATION STUDIES AT SELECTED EAST AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES**

### **Policy makers interview schedules**

Dear respondent, this interview is aimed at addressing plagiarism in master of education studies at selected East African universities. This is responding to question “What is the nature of institutional policies and practices relevant to plagiarism in selected East-African universities?”

- In your own understanding can you define plagiarism?
- Would you describe for me experiences you have had dealing with plagiarism issues among Masters Students?

**Probe:** Can you provide specific details regarding your experiences with masters’ students and the topic of plagiarism?

- Does the university have specific policies in place related to plagiarism?

**Probe:** Where would masters’ students find these policies?

- Who came up with institutional policies on plagiarism? What process was followed?
- In what ways do you or the institution help masters’ students understand what plagiarism conventions are at this University?

**Probe:** To what extent?

13. Apart from institutional policies, are there any other documents or strategies that deal with plagiarism in higher education?

14. Is there anything else you want to tell me about plagiarism that you think is important for me to know?

### **Part III. Closing**

Thank you for participating in the interview and I assure you of the confidentiality of your information. I will be contacting you anytime to clarify your responses.

## APPENDIX F: CHECKLIST FOR DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

A checklist for document analysis for the Research Question: **What is the nature of institutional policies and practices relevant to plagiarism in selected East-African universities?** The following questions will give a guideline in choosing the relevant content for document analysis in the study.

- What definition of plagiarism is given by institutional policies?
- What aspects are considered as plagiarism in institutional policies?
- What is the role of masters' students, supervisors and policy makers in curbing plagiarism as stated by institutional policies? Are there other role players and if so, who are they and what are their roles?
- Are there any stated punishments or sanctions to the act of plagiarism in relation to institutional policies?
- What strategies and practices are stated in the policy to combat plagiarism?



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## **APPENDIX G: MASTERS STUDENT CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH PLAGIARISM IN MASTER OF EDUCATION STUDIES AT SELECTED EAST AFRICA UNIVERSITIES.**

**Researcher:** Zainabu Ramadhan Masters of Education Candidate, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

### **Introduction**

This research study is being conducted as part of a dissertation under the supervision of Prof. Nonie Botha, Prof. Chang'ach and Dr. Mathabo Khau in the program of education research the School of Education at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a Masters student and are currently enrolled at Moi University.

### **Purpose**

- a) My qualitative multi-case study seeks to: Explore the perceptions of the concept of plagiarism by Masters students who are attending East Africa universities
- b) Explore how Moi University supervisors and policy makers who engage with masters' students describe these students' understanding of the concept of plagiarism and strategies to combat plagiarism.
- c) Explore institutional policies on plagiarism.

## **Procedures**

Masters students who agree to participate in this study will be asked to sign a consent form, complete a demographic data form that you will receive prior to the interview appointment, and participate in face-to-face interviews. You will be asked to provide your name, contact information, age, gender, and field of study. You will tell me some options for our interview day and time. Interviews will last approximately 50-60 minutes and will be digitally audio-recorded for later transcription. During the interviews, you will be asked to share your understanding and how you make meaning of the concept of Western plagiarism. Students will be asked to explain how you believe others differences may influence your understanding of the concept of plagiarism issues that arise in the context of course assignments at Moi University.

## **Risks/Benefits**

There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this study beyond those experienced in everyday life. Measures will be taken to minimize the probability of a breach of confidentiality. All individuals and the participating institution will be assigned false names.

## **Confidentiality**

All information collected will be kept confidential and secure. The name of the institution and names of all participants will not be published. The researcher will manually transcribe the digital audio recordings of the interviews. The data collected will be analysed and reported only as part of this master's thesis. A summary of the results of the study will be available upon request. The data will be made available for re-use under strict conditions.

## **Voluntary Participation**

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not want to participate in this study, you do not have to participate. Even if you decide to participate, you are free to choose not to answer any question or to withdraw from participation at any time during the study without penalty.

## **Contacts and Questions**

If you have any questions about this research or interview, please feel free to contact Zainabu Ramadhan [ramadhanzainab2@gmail.com](mailto:ramadhanzainab2@gmail.com) +254715853110. Other contacts upon request.



**Statement of Consent**

Kindly sign below to indicate that you have read and understood the information provided above, and that you have also been given an opportunity to ask questions, and agree to participate in this research study at this time. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

---

Participant's Signature Date

---

Researcher's Signature Date

16/10/2016

**APPENDIX H: SUPERVISORS AND POLICY MAKERS CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE  
IN RESEARCH  
PLAGIARISM IN MASTER OF EDUCATION STUDIES AT SELECTED EAST  
AFRICA UNIVERSITIES.**

Researcher: Zainab Ramadhan Med Candidate, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

**Introduction**

This is a research study being conducted as part of a dissertation under the supervision of Prof. Nonie Botha, Prof. Chang'achi and Dr. Mathabo Khau. med in the program of education research in the School of Education at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a supervisors and policy makers' member who is supervising masters' student from East Africa at the Makere University.

**Purpose**

My qualitative case study seeks to

- a) Explore the perceptions of the concept of plagiarism by Masters students who are attending East Africa universities
- b) Explore how Makere University supervisors and policy makers who engage with masters' students describe these students' understanding of the concept of plagiarism and strategies to combat plagiarism.
- c) Explore institutional policies on plagiarism.

## **Procedures**

Supervisors and policy makers who agree to participate in this study will be asked to sign a consent form, complete a demographic data form that they will receive prior to the interview appointment, and participate in face-to-face interviews. Supervisors and policy makers will be asked to provide their name, gender, age, academic field of expertise, and number of years of teaching experience. Interviews will last approximately 50 – 60 minutes and will be digitally audio-recorded for later transcription. During the interviews, Supervisors and policy makers will be asked to describe their perceptions of Masters Students' understanding of plagiarism and discuss factors that contribute to this understanding. Supervisors and policy makers will be asked to explain their perception if others differences may influence Masters Students' understanding of the concept of plagiarism issues that arise in the context of course assignments at Makere University.

## **Risks/Benefits**

There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this study beyond those experienced in everyday life. Measures will be taken to minimize the probability of a breach of confidentiality. All individuals and the participating institution will be assigned false names.

## **Confidentiality**

All information collected will be kept confidential and secure. The name of the institution and names of all participants will not be published. The researcher will manually transcribe the digital audio recordings of the interviews. The data collected will be analysed and reported only as part of this master's thesis. A summary of the results of the study will be available upon request. The data will be made available for re-use under strict conditions.

## **Voluntary Participation**

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not want to participate in this study, you do not have to participate. Even if you decide to participate, you are free to choose not to answer any question or to withdraw from participation at any time during the study without penalty.

## **Contacts and Questions**

If you have any questions about this research or interview, please feel free to contact Zainabu Ramadhan [ramadhanzainab2@gmail.com](mailto:ramadhanzainab2@gmail.com) +254715853110.

## **Statement of Consent**

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above, have been given an opportunity to ask questions, and agree to participate in this research study at this time. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

---

Participant's Signature Date

---

Researcher's Signature Date

16/10/2016

## **APPENDIX I: WRITTEN INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS**

Overview of the Research Study: **Plagiarism in Master of Education Studies at Selected East Africa Universities.**

**Researcher:** Zainabu Ramadhan Med Candidate, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

**Masters Supervisors:** Prof. Nonie Botha, Prof. Chang'achi, Dr. Mathabo Khau

### **Introduction**

My name is Zainabu Ramadhan and I am a masters' student in the program of Education Research in Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. Am a part-time lecturer at the Moi University, Eldoret, Kenya.

This research study is being conducted as part of a masters' thesis under the supervision of Prof Nonie Botha, (NMMU); Prof. Chang'achi, (MU) and Dr. Mathabo Khau, (NMMU).

This study seeks to:

- a) Identify and interview Masters Students and supervisors on their perceptions and understanding of plagiarism.
- a) Identify and interview supervisors and policy makers who are currently teaching or have taught on the strategies of combating plagiarism.
- b) To explore relevant institution policies and practices on plagiarism.

## **Purpose**

My qualitative case study seeks to

- a) Explore the master's students and supervisor's perceptions of the concept plagiarism in Makerere University.
- b) Explore how Makerere University. Supervisors and policy makers who engage with Masters Students on understanding of the concept of plagiarism and the strategies to combat plagiarism.
- c) Examine the relevancy of institutional policy understanding of plagiarism.

## **Procedures**

The qualitative data collection methods used in this study will include face-to-face one-on-one interviews, for master students, supervisors and policy makers and focus group discussion for Masters Students and documents analysis for intuitional policies those who agree to participate in this study will be asked to sign a consent form that they will receive prior to the interview appointment, and participate in face-to-face interviews. Masters students will be asked introduce themselves and sign consent form.

The Supervisors and policy makers will be asked to provide their name, gender, age, academic field of expertise, and number of years of teaching experience. Focus group discussion and Interviews will last approximately 50 - 60 minutes providing an opportunity to speak directly with participants and learn about their experiences first hand. The interview and focus group discussion will be digitally audio-recorded for later transcription. The researcher will conduct all interviews at the respective offices for the supervisors and policy makers at main campus and for students in a private study room. During the focus group discussions, Masters Students will be asked to share their understanding and how they make meaning of the concept of plagiarism.

Supervisors and policy makers who engage with Masters students will be asked to describe their perceptions of these students' understanding of plagiarism and discuss factors that contribute to this understanding. Students and supervisors and policy makers will be asked to explain how they believe instructional policies may influence Masters Students' understanding of the concept of plagiarism issues that arise in the context of thesis writing Makerere University.

## **Benefits**

There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this study beyond those experienced in everyday life. The findings of this research has the potential to create social change at the

research site among faculty, administration, advisors by increasing their understanding of Masters students, improving current educational practices, and servicing this student population.

### **As part of the Informed Consent**

Agreement, all participants will be informed that their answers will be confidential and each participant will be assigned an identification code. This identification code will be used to identify participants in the findings. This study has the potential to increase educators' (i.e., participants') and masters' students (i.e., participants) understanding of current educational plagiarism practices.

### **Confidentiality**

All data collected will be placed on a password-protected external hard drive and locked in a file cabinet in the researcher's office; the researcher will have the only key. All data and artefacts will be destroyed 5 years after research and publication of master's thesis. The name of the institution and names of all participants will not be published. The researcher will manually transcribe the digital audio recordings of the interviews. The data collected will be analysed and reported only as part of this master's thesis.

Before beginning any research activities, I will provide Makerere University a copy of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University approval for this research.

When the research is completed, I will provide Makere University education office the published thesis

### **Contacts and Questions**

If you have any questions about this research or interview, please feel free to contact Zainabu Ramadhan [ramadhanzainab2@gmail.com](mailto:ramadhanzainab2@gmail.com); +254715853110. For the supervisors their contact details will be given to you upon request.



**Nelson Mandela  
Metropolitan  
University**

*f o r t o m o r r o w*

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• Port Elizabeth • 6031 • South Africa • [www.nmmu.ac.za](http://www.nmmu.ac.za)

16/10/2016

## **APPENDIX J: LETTER OF INVITATION TO MASTERS STUDENTS**

MAKERERE UNIVERISTY  
P.O BOX 7062, KAMPALA  
UGANDA.

Dear Sir/madam,

I would like to invite you to participate in a research study for my master's thesis in Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in the area of education research. This study explore plagiarism in Master of Education Studies in selected East-African universities. I am requesting that you participate in a 50 - 60 minute, focus group discussion at a mutually agreed upon date, time, and location.

If you participate, the researcher will hold the data obtained from our interview in strict confidence. All personal information related to you or Makerere University will be removed prior to my analysis. No one at Makerere University will know of your involvement in the study should you decide to participate, and your participation in no way will affect your academic standing or immigration status.

I have enclosed a brief synopsis of the research study to help you in making the decision to participate. I look forward to your favourable response. If you have any questions about participation, please contact me via e-mail at [ramadhanzainab2@gmail.com](mailto:ramadhanzainab2@gmail.com). Once I have received your response to participate, I will contact you to arrange the interview. Thank you again for your consideration.

Sincerely,

---

Zainabu Ramadhan  
[ramadhanzainab2@gmail.com](mailto:ramadhanzainab2@gmail.com)  
Telephone number: +254715853110  
Enc(1)



## **MASTERS' STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC FORM**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

(Mr./Ms./Mrs./Dr.) First Middle Last

Local Mailing Address:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

City State Zip

Preferred Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Circle which range best describes your age:

(21-35) (36-50) (51-65) (Over 65)

Which department do you belong to? \_\_\_\_\_

In what program are you enrolled? \_\_\_\_\_

16/10/2016

**APPENDIX K: LETTER OF INVITATION TO SUPERVISORS AND POLICY  
MAKERS**

MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

P.O BOX 7062

KAMPALA

UGANDA

Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to invite you to participate in a research study for my master's thesis at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in the area of education research. This study will explore plagiarism in Master of Education Studies in selected East-African universities. I am requesting that you participate in a 50 – 60 minute, face-to-face interview at a mutually agreed upon date, time, and location.

If you participate, the researcher will hold the data obtained from our interview in strict confidence. All information related to you or Makerere University will be removed prior to my analysis. No one at Makerere University will know of your involvement in the study should you decide to participate, and your participation in no way will affect your employment standing or immigration status.

I have enclosed a brief synopsis of the research study to help you in making a decision to participate. I look forward to your favourable response. If you would like to participate in this study or have any questions about participation, please contact me via e-mail at [ramadhanzainab2@gmail.com](mailto:ramadhanzainab2@gmail.com) by [Date]. Once I have received your response to participate, I will contact you to arrange the interview. Thank you again for your consideration.

Sincerely,

---

Zainabu Ramadhan  
[Ramadhanzainab2@gmail.com](mailto:Ramadhanzainab2@gmail.com)  
+254715853110  
Enc. (1)

## **SUPERVISORS AND POLICY MAKERS DEMOGRAPHIC FORM**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

(Mr./Ms./Mrs./Dr.)

Name of Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Mailing Address:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

City State Zip

Work Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Circle which range best describes your age:

(21-35) (36-50) (51-65) (Over 65)

Are Masters Students currently enrolled in any of your courses?

(Yes) (No)

Have you previously taught Masters Students? (Yes) (No)

## APPENDIX L: SAMPLE TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW

**Researcher:** Thank you so much professor welcome to this session. My name is Zainab Ramadhan a student in Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University and a CERM-ESA scholarship holder. I'm also a teacher by profession and part-time lecturer with Moi University. With me we have Mr. James who is an editor and Mr. Daniel who is cameraman. I'm doing my research on plagiarism in master's education in East Africa; I'm starting with Kenya then I'll be moving to Tanzania and then Uganda. I chose specifically you because I know you are knowledgeable and you will give me right information that will help me in this research. During the session we are going to take video and also am expecting you sign the consent form. I hope you will accept.

**Participant:** No problem

**Researcher:** Okay thank you so much

**Researcher:** thank you so much prof and maybe you can tell us about yourself

**Participant:** yes. I am a member of academic staff in the education studies here at ... Essentially I can say I have been teaching at ....since 2007 actually.

**Researcher:** thank you so much and welcome. Now I think we will go straight to the questions so that we can discuss them. The first question is what is your definition of plagiarism or how do you define plagiarism?

**Participant:** I want to say plagiarism is using another scholar's ideas, written works, pattern without recognizing that person. Without acknowledging that idea or that pattern, something you are using, is borrowed from someone else.

**Researcher:** so you mean that when you acknowledge somebody that is not plagiarism?

**Participant:** yes, because you have not stolen, you've shown that that idea or that pattern does not belong to you. It belongs to someone else.

**Researcher:** But suppose you pick everything and you acknowledge is that still okay?

**Participant:** of course if you picked everything then it means you have nothing. It means it is somebody's work. Probably you are showing that it is yours but it is not yours.

**Researcher:** How do you talk about plagiarism with your students?

**Participant:** well, I've seen students sometimes plagiarizing work. Sometimes unknowingly because you see somebody has borrowed very good piece of idea from someone that does not appear to be originating from the student and yet the student does not want to point out the source of this information that he or she is trying to use. And sometimes we point out that this is not your idea, this thing is in so and so book. Why don't you recognize him? Why don't you show that this is not your original idea, you are borrowing from someone. Because that is form of dishonest and plagiarism is about dishonest. I can say that students get involved in plagiarism

but it is us teachers to be keen to notice that the student doesn't plagiarize another person's work. We have seen recently in proposal writing you find that someone has same topic like someone who did the work like two years ago and if you not keen the students may want to get away with it yet somehow when you are keen you will detect that this work was done by one of our students a few years ago and therefore it cannot be repeated again at this time for no justification.

**Researcher:** thank you prof. What steps do you take to ensure your students understand issues related to plagiarism?

**Participant:** well, right from the time of receiving students to the university, we do orientation. And during orientation we really emphasize the issue of plagiarism in the very beginning although at that time the students may not be so conversant with what plagiarism is. But we tell them using people's ideas or works without permission or without recognizing them is academic dishonesty. And academic dishonesty is called plagiarism, and it is not only emphasized to students only even us the staff when they publish our works and we apply for promotions our papers must go through plagiarism test before we can be promoted on the basis of those publications so it is something that university takes very seriously.

**Researcher:** would you describe for me any experience you have during plagiarism with masters' students?

**Participant:** personally I have not. Okay the commonest I have come across is when the students write an idea that has come up somewhere that I know and I don't see them acknowledging the source where they got it and most of the cases I tend to point it. This one no. this is not your idea. This one here you should indicate where you got it. Because this does not appear to be your idea. And normally when you tell them they know that you know what you are talking about and most cases they rectify. But among my colleagues I have noticed instances when students plagiarize for example course works students follow their colleagues up to the point where they type their work and they print the same work. They want to submit the same work. Sometimes word by word, they only change the word. Once in a while we have been able to detect that. Actually here the school where I am the chair of our examination regulatory committee and when such cases are detected normally we call such students to committee, we reprimand them and make them do the course work afresh. Because once we can detect that this work was originally from student A B or C maybe from where they print or type.

**Researcher:** how will you know that this one has taken from another person? How will you be telling the plagiarizer?

**Participant:** no we have to involve everyone whose work is similar and in the process of investigation you will determine who the original owner of this work is. In most cases the culprits confess. They come out and say you know what sir time against me that's why I did that please forgive me. Something like that.

**Researcher:** thank you prof. Are you aware of institutional policies put in place to curb plagiarism?

**Participant:** yes I am aware. That is why I told the policies are not only for students. The policies also cover us the staff. The policies prevent use of other person`s material without recognition or permission. It depends on the type of material. There are certain types of materials you just have to get permission especially things that are patented. Things with patent rights you are supposed to get permission from the person who is given the right over that invention or whatever product you might be trying to use. But if it is mainly for academic work then you have to recognize from whom that idea is being borrowed or adapted. So the university policy is very on it both for the staff and the students. Meaning people who plagiarize definitely go against university policy.

**Researcher:** what are the sources of university policies?

**Participant:** when we have a teaching learning policy of the university and that teaching policy the issue of plagiarism is talked about. We also have research policy and innovation the issue of plagiarism is also talked about.

**Researcher:** Thank you so much professor

**APPENDIX M: SAMPLE CODED INTERVIEW MICROSOFT WORD AND  
UPLOADED ON EXCEL SPREAD SHEET**

<b>P ag e</b>	<b>Comment scope</b>	<b>Comment text</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Date</b>
1	using another scholar`s ideas, written works, pattern without recognizing that person.	Using other people`s ideas, written work, pattern without acknowledgement	Ramadhan	17-Mar-2017
1	acknowledging that idea or that pattern, something you are using, is borrowed from someone else.	Acknowledging the borrowed work	Ramadhan	17-Mar-2017
1	It belongs to someone else.	Acknowledgement shows that the work is not stolen	Ramadhan	17-Mar-2017
1	picked everything then it means you have nothing	Picking everything means you have nothing	Ramadhan	17-Mar-2017
1	Sometimes unknowingly because you see somebody has borrowed very good piece of idea from someone that does not appear to be originating from the student and yet the student does not want to point out the source of this information that he or she is trying to use.	Students plagiarize unknowingly	Ramadhan	17-Mar-2017
2	And sometimes we point out that this is not your idea, this thing is in so and so book.	By pointing out the plagiarized ideas	Ramadhan	17-Mar-2017
2	Why don`t you recognize him?	Advising the student to recognize the owner	Ramadhan	17-Mar-2017
2	I can say that students get involved in plagiarism but it is us teachers to be keen to notice that the student doesn`t plagiarize another person`s work.	Its teachers to make sure students don`t plagiarise	Ramadhan	17-Mar-2017
2	We have seen recently in proposal writing you find that someone has same topic like someone who did the work like two years ago and if you not keen the students may	Teachers should be keen on the works already done	Ramadhan	17-Mar-2017

	want to get away with it yet somehow when you are keen you will detect that this work was done by one of our students a few years ago and therefore it cannot be repeated again at this time for no justification.			
2	we do orientation	Orientation of first years	Ramadhan	17-Mar-2017
2	But we tell them using people`s ideas or works without permission or without recognizing them is academic dishonesty.	Plagiarism is academic dishonest	Ramadhan	17-Mar-2017
2	And academic dishonesty is called plagiarism, and it is not only emphasized to students only even us the staff when they publish our works and we apply	Plagiarism does not only affect students but also staff	Ramadhan	17-Mar-2017
2	Promotions our papers must go through plagiarism test before we can be promoted on the basis of those publications so it is something that university takes very seriously.	Papers should be tested before publishing for promotion	Ramadhan	17-Mar-2017
3	Somewhere that I know and I don't see them acknowledging the source where they got it and most of the cases I tend to point it.	Pointing out the source	Ramadhan	17-Mar-2017
3	And normally when you tell them they know that you know what you are talking about and most cases they rectify.	When you point out they rectify	Ramadhan	17-Mar-2017
3	their colleagues up to the point where they type their work and they print the same work	Printing work done by others in the cyber	Ramadhan	17-Mar-2017
3	normally we call such students to committee,	Students face the committee	Ramadhan	17-Mar-2017
3	we reprimand them and make them do the course work afresh	They redo the course	Ramadhan	17-Mar-2017
3	we have to involve everyone whose work which is similar and in the process of	Involve the work during investigation	Ramadhan	17-Mar-2017
3	In most cases the culprits confess.	Culprits usually confess	Ramadhan	17-Mar-2017
3	They come out and say you know what sir time against me that's why I did that please	They accuse time as a factor for	Ramadhan	17-Mar-



	forgive me.	plagiarism		2017
3	yes I am aware.	yes	Ramadhan	17-Mar-2017
3	That is why I told the policies are not only for students. The policies also cover us the staff.	policies are for both students and staff	Ramadhan	17-Mar-2017
3	The policies prevent use of other person`s material without recognition or permission. It depends on the type of material.	policies governs the use of other people materials without acknowledgment	Ramadhan	17-Mar-2017
4	There are certain types of materials you just have to get permission especially things that are patented	some materials you have to get permission before using it.	Ramadhan	17-Mar-2017
4	But if it is mainly for academic work then you have to recognize from whom that idea is being borrowed or adapted.	For academic work recognize the other	Ramadhan	17-Mar-2017
4	Meaning people who plagiarize definitely go against university policy.	People who plagiarize go against university policy	Ramadhan	17-Mar-2017
4	a teaching learning policy	Teaching learning policy	Ramadhan	17-Mar-2017
4	research policy and innovation.	Research policy and innovation	Ramadhan	17-Mar-2017