ACCOUNTING PRACTICES AMONG NON-RELIGIOUS STUDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS.
A CASE OF KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (KNUST) CAMPUS

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Abstract: This dissertation is to unearth accounting practices among students' Associations on KNUST Campus. There was the need to know the extent of accounting practices among students' leaders in recording daily transactions of the association and this caused the researchers to study into this area.
To know the extent of accounting practices adopted by trustees of students' associations, the researchers sought to know the accounting knowledge base of stewards, books kept by students' associations and recording procedures. In addition, we looked into the degree of accounting practices by stewards, communication channels and its effectiveness as well as related challenges they face in applying accounting practices. Accounting knowledge and practices promote accountability and ensures effective operations; corroboration to this assertion in relations to students' associations was assayed.
The researchers sampled hundred units from twenty (20) students' associations and six halls on KNUST campus and assessed them using questionnaires, interviews and observations to know the extent of accountability by stewards to stakeholders.
Based on the data and facts gathered, we realized most students' leaders have a considerable knowledge in accounting but the knowledge was not sufficient for proper recording of financial transactions and effective financial reporting for the betterment of the association.

Keywords- Accounting Practices, Communication channels, Accountability.

I. INTRODUCTION

The body of rules that governs financial accounting in a given jurisdiction is called Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, or GAAP.
In Ghana, The Companies Code provides basic requirements for accounting and reporting applicable to all private and public companies in Ghana. The Companies Code provides the requirements for preparation and publication of financial statements, disclosures, and auditing, among other provisions. The Companies Code, Act 179 (1963), has not been significantly amended since its promulgation over 41 years ago. The formats for presentation of financial statements and requirements on disclosures prescribed in the Companies Code dictate the need to make financial statement available to stakeholders of the business organization, institution or associations. Non-religious students' associations like all other Non-profit making organizations must ensure those proper books of account and other accounting records are kept for all financial transactions. Non-profit making organizations are required to keep separate Operating Income and Expenditure Account for each financial activity they undertake. They must commission an independent review of their financial records to be carried out by an auditor. The auditing process goes a long way to ensure that proper books of account are kept and that the books are free from errors and material misstatements. Such a review should be performed in accordance with applicable legal regulatory framework.
Internal control is fundamental for sound and prudent financial management. Non-profit making organizations should always ensure that adequate internal controls are in place having regard to the nature and size of their organization and the services provided. Hence there is the need that students' leaders present the day-to-day financial transactions of the students' associations to the stakeholders which are the students of the colleges or departments.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To find out books kept by students' associations and the recording procedures they adopt.
- To find out the basic accounting knowledge among stewards responsible for record keeping and preparation of financial statements in students' associations.
- To identify the extent to which accounting practices are applied by students" associations and related challenges they face.
- To find out if stewards of students' associations communicate financial statements to stakeholders and how often it is done.
- To identify the extent to which accounting knowledge and practices can enhance the performance of students' associations on KNUST Campus.

III. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

To aid our research, we sampled hundred units. These units included the financial secretaries, organizers and presidents of the six colleges, six halls and some faculties under the colleges. From the SRC, we contacted the presidents, treasurer and women's commissioner. The executives contacted, gender-wise were made up of sixty males and forty females. From these, eighteen were executives of the various halls and the remaining eighty-two from the various students' associations.

The research revealed that every association and hall maintain some form of accounting records. The extent of the accounting practices and depth of the records kept however, depended largely on the accounting knowledge base of the executives.

IV. BASIC ACCOUNTING KNOWLEDGE AMONG STEWARDS

Generally, the results showed that basic accounting knowledge among stewards of associations is fairly good, but inadequate for effective accounting practices. Out of those in charge of keeping financial records, thirty percent (30%) have never had any course or studies on accounting.
Out of the 70% who have had courses or studies on accounting, eighty-five (85%) percent have accounting knowledge and acquired it as a course along the academic ladder. Others had the knowledge through friends and/or personal studies.

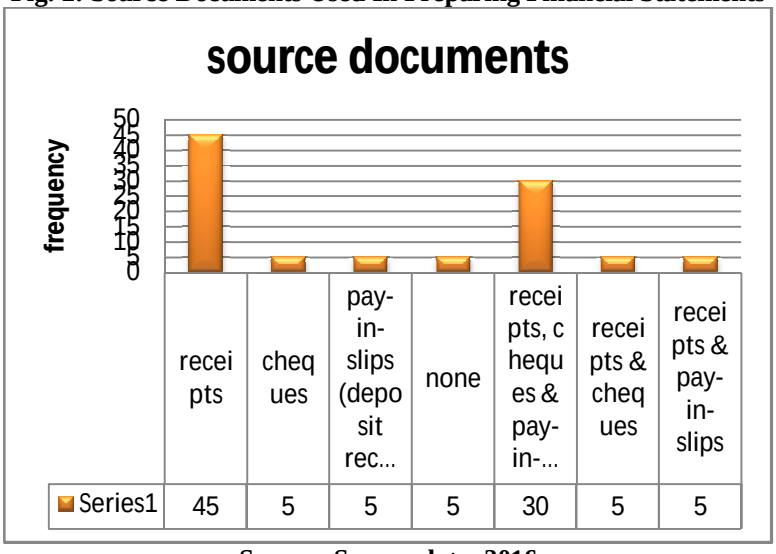
Fig. 1: Self Assessment of Stewards on Their Accounting Knowledge



Source: Survey data, 2016

V. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS IN STUDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS

Fig. 2: Source Documents Used In Preparing Financial Statements



Source: Survey data, 2016

Fig 3: Financial Statements prepared by Students' Associations

	Financial statements	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Income and expenditure	90	90.0	90.0	90.0
	Balance sheet and income and expenditure	10	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey data, 2016

VI. APPLICATION OF ACCOUNTING PRACTICES BY STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS

The extent of application of accounting practices has direct relationship with the type of books and records kept, financial statements prepared and mode of communication. From the data presented herein, it infers most associations keep only those records which would enable them know their resources, mainly cash and the disbursement of the cash. The knowledge base of the executives being fairly good, that is 59.5% means they hardly go by the principles and concepts of financial accounting. For instance the double entry system is almost not adhered to. We obtained this fact after posing a question on the compliance with the double entry principle.

Figure four (4) below shows the response from this objective. Only 45% of associations comply with the double entry principle. The remaining 55% do not comply with the double entry principle.

Fig. 4: Compliance with Double Entry Principle

Do You Comply With Double Entry System?

Reponses	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
yes	45	45.0	45.0	45.0
no	55	55.0	55.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey data, 2016

Fig. 5.

Signatories	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
The president and treasurer only	65	65.0	65.0	65.0
The president and other executives	10	10.0	10.0	75.0
President, treasurer and bursar	25	25.0	25.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Signatories to the associations' bank account

Fig. 6:

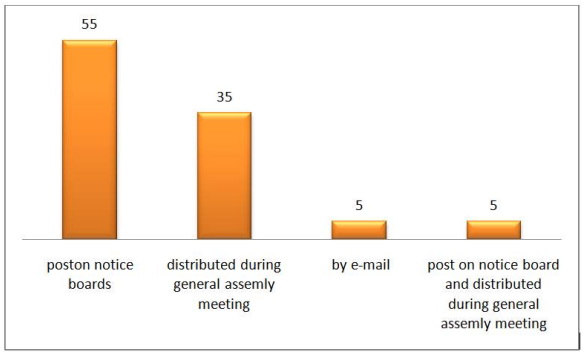
Responses	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
yes	35	35.0	35.0	35.0
no	65	65.0	65.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Fig. 7: How Often Are the Financial Statement Prepared

	Duration	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Once a year	25	25.0	25.0	25.0
	Once a semester	70	70.0	70.0	95.0
	Twice every semester	5	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey data, 2016

Fig. 8: Mode of Presentation of Financial Statements



Source: Survey data, 2016

Fig. 9: Do the Stakeholders Like the Communication Channel

Responses	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
yes	35	35.0	35.0	35.0
no	65	65.0	65.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Fig.10: Benefits of Accounting Knowledge

	Strongly agree	agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
Accounting knowledge and practices promote accountability and ensures effective operations of Students' associations.	90	0	10	0	0

VII. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the above findings to the study, the researchers propose the following recommendations:

- Introduction of accounting as a course to every department.
- Organization of short courses and seminars as well as workshops to student leaders
- Monitoring of student leaders by patrons, auditors and other bodies should be frequent
- Technology or inexpensive and adaptable method should be promoted to enhance proper accounting practices.
- Lastly, acquisition of modern accounting software.

CONCLUSION

The study was on accounting practices among students' associations on KNUST campus. We realized most faculties on KNUST campus do not offer accounting as a course; however it is without doubt that knowledge in accounting is required for proper management of the administrative task of students' associations. The existence or otherwise of accounting knowledge among leaders of associations in all faculties, the SRC and the halls triggered our inquisitiveness into this field.

To ensure the attainment of the objectives of the study, examination was carried out to cover such areas as accounting records and books kept by association, basic accounting knowledge among stewards, financial statements in students' associations, application of accounting practices by student associations, communication of financial statements to stakeholders, and how accounting knowledge and practices can enhance the performance of students' associations.

It was realized that most students' leaders had knowledge in accounting, but the extents of their knowledge was not sufficient or adequate enough for effective and efficient accounting practices.

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