

# University Students' Awareness on Intellectual Property Rights

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## Abstract

The study aimed to determine the level of students' awareness regarding intellectual property rights at one state university in the Philippines. This study used the descriptive research method, employing the online instrument distributed to the 506 students from different colleges. The study used a modified adapted survey questionnaire. Descriptive statistics was used such percent, mean, frequency count, and inferential data using the Kruskal Wallis H-Test. The study revealed that the respondents were aware of the aspects of copyrights, patents, trademarks, industrial designs and geographical indications. However, the respondents were neither aware nor unaware on the aspects of the utility model. Moreover, the study revealed significant difference in the level of students' awareness when grouped according to different IP rights. Therefore, full awareness on the intellectual property rights is vital as there are implications on the protected materials, works and inventions that may lead to infringement for its improper use. Hence, to maintain the level of awareness of students regarding intellectual property rights, it is recommended that the university adopt tactics and resources for wide dissemination, such as an intellectual property rights manual, to enhance the knowledge of its students.

**Keywords:** *Intellectual Property Rights, Copyright, Patents, Utility Model, Industrial Design*

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## 1. Introduction

The Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) describe Intellectual Property (IP) as creations of the mind which can be in form of inventions, brand names and images used in commerce, designs, literary and artistic works, and symbols. According to WIPO, the six types of intellectual include copyright, patent, trademarks, industrial designs, trade secrets, and geographical indications. Copyright is basically the given legal rights for literary and artistic works which cover advertisements, books, computer programs, databases, films, maps, music, paintings, sculpture, and technical drawings (Padil et al., 2020). Patent is the exclusive right given to new invention and useful products. Trademark is considered to enterprise's distinguished sign compared to other enterprises (Ahmed & Varun, 2017). Industrial design may come in two- or three-dimensional features, is a pattern, line, color, shape or surface which creates the aesthetic aspect of an article (Heer et al., 2021). Trade secrets are IP rights on confidential information while geographical indications are names of place as origin of a particular goods (WIPO, 2022). However, in the Philippines, the last two types are not included; instead, utility model is listed and recognized as such. Utility model is like patent but does not include condition of the involvement of an inventive step to be protected (IPOPIL, 2022). Laws protect intellectual property to recognize and give benefits to the creators and intellectual property laws ensure the balance interest of both the innovators and the public consumers; thus, awareness of IP is vital and necessary.

In the 21st century, appropriate comprehension and awareness are becoming crucial instruments in the processes of the expertise economy. As a result, all members of the university environment, particularly authorities, administration, personnel, and learners, must have enough exposure to IP literacy and awareness. The proper use of the IP system necessitates a wide range of knowledge and skills. Copyright and intellectual property rights (IPR) are the main determinants of creativity and innovation (Bach et al. 2010).

Sulekha and Singh (2018) studied the IPR awareness of 50 research scholars of Kurukshetra University Kurukshetra. It has found that among the respondents, male (53%) were more IPR knowledgeable, 26 (52%) researchers knew about copyright, and 23 (46%) identifies IP as a right. The study concluded that large number of research scholars were unaware of IPR hence need of seminar and workshop about it. Moreover, Ahmed and Varun (2017) found out that there is a need for some explanations about the use and importance of IPR; hence suggested, that

seminar, workshop, and conference regarding IP should be upheld. Similarly, a national survey in the United Kingdom was done to investigate attitudes to, awareness of and aspirations for IP higher education and further education students. The study emphasized the importance of libraries in IP like signposting students and staff to external resources to help them with specialist tasks such as finding and using information about patents and obtaining specialist advice on IP issues (McNicol, 2013). In the two Malaysian universities, LimKokWing University (LKW) and Multimedia University (MMU) in Cyberjaya, Ong et al. (2012) found that promoting IPR awareness among the students can be done using social networks and the university's site and intranet, active participation by relevant government bodies and universities, and activities like talks, seminar, contests and training on IPR.

The importance of property rights education, communication, and understanding ensures the rights to accomplishments resulting from a range of innovative industrial activities and safeguards the authors' ownership of their accomplishments over a certain length of time. As Boon-Ong et al. (2012) emphasized, enhancing IPR awareness includes the supply of appropriate documentation, public engagement among governmental agencies and institutional administrations, and IPR education initiatives. Furthermore, Kur (2022) found that the Benue State University's inability to have a well-IPR policy framework has impacted the characterization of concepts among some of the major stakeholders, to wit; research students, program professionals, and research scholars, and this, if not acknowledged, seems to be capable of affecting higher education in the coming years.

From these studies and their impositions, this study generally aims to identify the level of awareness of the students in IP rights in terms of copyright, trademarks, patents, utility model, industrial design, and geographical indications. In particular, the difference in the level of awareness of students when grouped according to types of IP rights and colleges/course will be determined.

## **2. Literature Review**

Intellectual property rights have always been a regular issue in all fields of study. It is critical not only for attorneys, justices, and legal professionals, but also for designers, researchers, musicians, craftsmen, ranchers, and even academicians. Therefore, WIPO, a specialized agency of the United Nations, plays a vital role in the worldwide platform in fostering the education of

intellectual property laws in academic institutions (Alikhan & Mashelkar, 2009). It also founded the WIPO World Wide Academy (WWA) to serve as an educational establishment promoting IP education, development, comprehensive instruction, and regulatory mentoring (Oguamanam, 2016).

According to Spinello (2007), copyright laws give the owner full ownership of his or her original thoughts and even the right to make duplicates for distribution. As a result, a complete absence of awareness and information on intellectual property (IP) among lawmakers and their governing bodies will indeed impede the development and execution of IPR (Said, 2010). Therefore, the importance of property rights education, communication, and understanding ensures the rights to accomplishments resulting from a range of innovative industrial activities and safeguards the authors' ownership of their accomplishments over a certain length of time.

According to Ogiya et al. (2018), intellectual property is distinguished by the fact that it is not tangible information but rather an object with a property value. Information is easily copied, does not deplete when used, and may be used by a huge number of individuals at once. IP derived from these areas of expertise was valuable financially. Therefore, education and knowledge of IP will increase understanding of their presence and preserve the correct use of IP (WIPO, 2004). As concluded in the study by Ong et al., (2012), enhancing IPR awareness includes the supply of appropriate documentation, public engagement among governmental agencies and institutional administrations, and IPR education initiatives.

The knowledge and awareness of IP and IP rights are becoming an issue. For instance, study of Ahmed and Varun (2017) revealed that the majority of respondents are unaware of intellectual property rights and have little information concerning the equitable utilization of copyright. Similarly, survey at Durban University of Technology conducted by Bansi and Reddy (2015) found that majority of participants did not understand or agree with licensing rules of the IP Act and were acceptable and were uninformed that their discovery might lead to intellectual property. Another informal survey of intellectual property awareness among engineering students at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) highlighted the difficulties of safeguarding IP in American universities. Therefore, Pickethly (2010) contends that IP awareness is required to run a functional IP system; however, it is critical to define the knowledge and thus what must be fostered for an IP system to function. The need to raise programs to improve student teachers' understanding of what IP is and why it pertains (Villasenor, 2012). Despite the lack of awareness

and knowledge, students agree that understanding intellectual property is vital not just for their current schooling but for their future professions (McNicol 2013).

Patents, trademarks, service marks, industrial design registrations, copyrights, and trade secrets are examples of intellectual property rights. Consequently, the designers must keep this system design to maintain it. Both the owners and the consumers of intellectual property should have a deeper understanding and awareness. Nevertheless, making appropriate use of the informational system of the property will create social chaos. Understanding the value of patent rights is critical for technical education (Pathan & Anandhalli, 2019). As a result, it raises awareness of IPR in educational institutions, including efforts to address, workshops, special presentations, lecturers, and skill training. Therefore, it is suggested that every school of higher education must support intellectual property rights. To gain an actual understanding of plagiarism and proper utilization of copyrighted content or information, learners may indeed be given a guidebook with information concerning the implications of IPR violations of the law. Shrivastava (2018) indicates that students require some in-depth discussions of intellectual property rights, as well as their application and significance. Studies also show students' lack of knowledge and awareness about intellectual property rights. Therefore, universities and organizations must organize lectures concerning intellectual property rights and include them in the curriculum.

### **3. Methodology**

This study used descriptive research design which explains what was observed and typically includes documenting or counting remarks about a novel or unusual circumstance (Maxfield & Babbie, 2015). Moreover, it determined the respondents' level of awareness on the various aspects of IPR.

The study included 506 students from different colleges such as College of Computer Studies (CCS), College of Criminal Justice and Education (CCJE), College of Teacher Education (CTE), College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), College of Agriculture (CA), College of Business, Management, and Accountancy (CBMA), College of Hospitality, Management and Tourism (CHMT) and College of Engineering (CoE). The study employed convenience sampling technique in the selection of the participants.

The study adapted the survey questionnaire from Amparado and Miro (2020) as the main data gathering tool. The questionnaire was composed of two parts: demographic profile of the respondents and the questionnaires on IPR such copyright, trademark, utility model, patent, industrial designs and geographical indication. The questions were answered using 5-point Likert-type scales through fully aware to not aware.

The study created the survey questionnaire using Google Forms to distribute to the target respondents. In order to get maximum participation, the survey questionnaire was posted during the conduct of webinar activities of the university as well as through the social media page. It was assured that the data gathering was permitted and has consent from the respondents prior to the submission and answering the survey. The survey was voluntary and participants were oriented on the objectives of the study. It was also assured that data gathered were treated with utmost confidentiality and personnel information was not disclosed at any stage of the study.

Descriptive statistics like percent, weighted mean, and frequency count were used to examine the collected data. Inferential data analysis was carried out using the Kruskal Wallis H-Test.

## 4. Results and Discussions

**Table 1**

*Level of Students' Awareness on Intellectual Property Rights*

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
<b>Copyright</b>		
Copyrights allow the owner to derive financial reward from the use of his/her works	3.7	A
Copyright protection is acquired automatically without the need for registration	3.61	A
Copyrights last equal to 50 or more years	3.39	NANU
Copyright laws are territorial. They apply in the country in which they passed.	3.59	A
An owner of the work provides authorization for others to use or exploit.	3.74	A
The owner of the work has the right to disallow its broadcast from the radio or television.	3.77	A
The owner of the work has the right to oppose changes to a work.	3.79	A
<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>3.66</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>Patent</b>		
An invention is considered new or novel if it is not known to the public through publication or prior use.	3.59	A
Inventions are granted a patent if it involves an inventive step.	3.56	A
Inventions are granted a patent if it is industrially applicable.	3.56	A

Patents are granted if they offer technical solution to a problem in any field of human activity.	3.56	A
Term of the patent is 20 years from the date of filing and is not renewable after.	3.44	A
A patent must be shared in return of the protection after a specified time.	3.49	A
A patent in one country cannot prevent other people from copying it in other countries.	3.51	A
<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>3.53</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>Utility Model</b>		
Ums are called “short-term patents” or “innovation patents.”	3.23	NANU
In UM protection, the invention cannot be commercially made, used, distributed or sold without the consent of the UM owner.	3.27	NANU
Term of protection for Ums are between 7 to 10 years.	3.19	NANU
UMs are cheaper to obtain and maintain.	3.23	NANU
Registration of UM protection is simpler and faster.	3.29	NANU
UMs are non-renewable.	3.2	NANU
UM protection is territorial which means the right can be enforced only within the country in which a utility model is granted.	3.26	NANU
<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>3.24</b>	<b>NANU</b>
<b>Trademarks</b>		
TMs are signs capable of distinguishing the goods or services of one enterprise from others.	3.5	A
The symbol ® means that a name/logo is protected.	3.57	A
Trademarks are filed in respect of different goods and services.	3.58	A
Trademark is any visible sign to indicate the origin, quality and ownership of a product or service.	3.65	A
Duration of trademarks is 10 years and renewable every 10 years.	3.36	NANU
Trademarks can be bought and sold.	3.47	A
A trademark registered in a country does not cover the use in other countries.	3.41	A
<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>3.51</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>Industrial Designs</b>		
Protects the ornamental or aesthetic aspect of a useful article	3.44	A
ID are relevant to graphic symbols, graphical user interfaces (GUI) and how a product looks	3.49	A
Industrial Design (ID) may consist of three-dimensional features or two-dimensional features such as lines, patterns and colors.	3.49	A
ID protection is lifetime protection.	3.44	A
<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>3.47</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>Geographical Indications</b>		
GI are signs used on goods that have specific geographical origin possessing a reputation.	3.41	A
Protection for a GI is obtained by acquiring a right over the sign that constitutes the indication.	3.4	NANU
GI are used for agricultural products, wines, handicrafts and industrial products	3.42	A
<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>3.41</b>	<b>A</b>

*Legend: Fully Aware (FA) 4.21 – 5.00; Aware (A) 3.41 – 4.20; Neither Aware Nor Unaware (NANU) 2.61 – 3.40; Less Aware (LA) 1.81 – 2.60; Not Aware (NA) 1.00 – 1.80*

Table 1 displays the level of students’ awareness on the basic IPR. Each type of IP is denoted by several indicators signifying the level of knowledge and awareness.

Data revealed that the respondents are aware on the IPR in terms of copyrights. The respondents are aware of financial reward (3.70), automatic acquisition of protection even without the need of registration (3.61), application of the copyright law is territorial (3.59), owners' authorization in the use of his work by other entity (3.74), the right to disallow in broadcasting its work (3.77), and the right to oppose changes to a work (3.79). However, on the indicator of time that copyright is useable, it shows that the respondents with the mean of 3.39 which is neither aware nor unaware. This means that students of one university in the province of Laguna are aware on the intellectual property rights as gained in various information campaign of the ITSO office. Moreover, respondents also state that information about copyright gives them opportunity to protect their work related to their academic activities. The findings are congruent with the study of Arnold et al. (2016) that interestingly supports the idea that being literate and knowledgeable in intellectual property can enhance information literacy and also competitiveness of the students.

In terms of patents, the results showed a grand mean of 3.53 interpreted as aware. Respondents believed that the work through invention should be protected by applying it into patents. The highest mean (3.59) among the indicators was the invention that is considered new or novel if it is not known to the public through publication or prior use. On the other hand, the lowest mean of 3.51 shows that the patent in one country cannot prevent other people from copying it in other countries. These contradict the study of Ahmed and Varun (2017) which showed that just 30% of research scholars are aware that technological innovations are covered by patents while 50% of research scholars are unaware of patents. It indicates that even some researchers and students are not so much aware and literate about intellectual property specifically patent.

In the university where that study was conducted has different products that has utility model certification. These products were enjoyed by both employees and students. However, data on revealed that the respondents are neither aware nor unaware on the utility model with the grand mean of 3.24. This means that the respondents are using the products that are awarded with utility model certification however in the aspect of certification process and rights has less awareness how the right was given.

Awareness of the respondents on intellectual property rights in the aspects of trademarks revealed that they are aware on the right of trademarks. However, in terms of its duration of usability, results revealed with the mean of 3.36 that the respondents are neither aware nor unaware. This conforms to the validation conducted to the respondents that they are aware on the so-called trademarks but not on its time of use. Similarly, they stated that as long as they see

symbol for trademarks, it is governed and protected by law that it is no longer in use by other entities for business purposes. The results are similar to the findings of Ahmed and Varun (2017) on the relative and significant findings on awareness about intellectual property in the aspect of trademarks. Based on the result of the study, it shows 43% respondents are aware about the importance of trademark while 3% are unaware of it.

In terms of industrial designs, the respondents are aware with the grand mean of 3.47. Looking into the parameters, both the relevance of graphic symbols, graphical user interfaces and how the products looks and the dimensional features had a mean of 3.49. On the other hand, in terms of the protection of the ornamental or aesthetic aspect of useful article and the duration of protection both had a mean of 3.44.

In terms of geographical indications, data revealed that the aspect of geographical indications is used for agricultural products, wines, handicrafts and industrial products with the mean of 3.42 interpreted as 'aware'. On the other hand, the awareness on the signs used on goods that have specific geographical origin possessing a reputation with the mean of 3.41 interpreted as 'aware'. However, in terms of the protection for a GI is obtained by acquisition of right over the sign that constitutes the indication, revealed that respondents are neither aware nor unaware. Moreover, Sharma (2014) denotes that GI is a product originates from a specific location and has unique traits as a result of that location, which could be a village or town, a region, or a country. The advantages of its registration are shared by all members of the community because it is an exclusive privilege granted to a certain group of people.

Table 2 shows the distribution of the awareness level according to the college where the student-respondents belong. This particularly tests any significant difference on the awareness levels of the students depending on their enrolled course or program. With the different colleges' strategies and activities related to IP, the study expects that students were exposed to various activities, seminars, programs and interventions that keep them aware of the different aspects and facets of IPR. At .05 level of confidence, the p-value should be lower than or equal to .05 to be significant. The results clearly indicate any differences on the level students' awareness by college.

**Table 2***Level of Students' Awareness as grouped according to college*

Awareness	College	N	Mean Rank	Computed Value	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Copyright	CTE	83	257.78	7.218	0.407	Failed to Reject Ho	Not Significant
	CAS	14	333.04				
	CBMA	81	259.97				
	CCS	68	240.2				
	CCJE	26	285.13				
	CA	41	239.09				
	COE	12	258.33				
	CHMT	181	245.89				
Patent	CTE	83	245.42	6.387	0.495	Failed to Reject Ho	Not Significant
	CAS	14	318.61				
	CBMA	81	258.35				
	CCS	68	264.6				
	CCJE	26	289.15				
	CA	41	236.62				
	COE	12	240.62				
	CHMT	181	245.39				
Utility	CTE	83	226.95	14.068	<b>0.05</b>	<b>Reject Ho</b>	<b>Significant</b>
	CAS	14	295.39				
	CBMA	81	231.78				
	CCS	68	268.38				
	CCJE	26	309.21				
	CA	41	225.61				
	COE	12	221.08				
	CHMT	181	267.03				
Trademarks	CTE	83	243.17	13.096	0.07	Failed to Reject Ho	Not Significant
	CAS	14	332.43				
	CBMA	81	263.9				
	CCS	68	268.29				
	CCJE	26	293.9				
	CA	41	214.7				
	COE	12	300.58				
	CHMT	181	241.78				

	CTE	83	239.4				
	CAS	14	311.07				
	CBMA	81	243.69				
Industrial	CCS	68	274.65	7.748	0.355	Failed to Reject Ho	Not Significant
Design	CCJE	26	292.71				
	CA	41	232.72				
	COE	12	257.29				
	CHMT	181	250.78				
	CTE	83	237.83				
	CAS	14	311.75				
	CBMA	81	255.65				
Geographical	CCS	68	258.35	7.418	0.387	Failed to Reject Ho	Not Significant
Indication	CCJE	26	299.42				
	CA	41	227.44				
	COE	12	256.62				
	CHMT	181	252.49				
	CTE	83	237.83				
	CAS	14	311.75				

There is no significant difference in students' level of awareness when grouped according to college except for the utility model. This implies that students from different colleges have the same level of awareness on copyright, patent, trademark, industrial design, and geographical indication but have a different awareness of the utility model. Post hoc analysis using the Conover test determined significant differences in the awareness of students between teacher education and criminal justice education and hospitality management and tourism. Significant differences were also determined between criminal justice education and teacher education, business management and accountancy, and agriculture. Other differences were also determined between business management and accountancy and criminal justice education and hospitality management. Based on the findings, students from criminal justice education are the most aware of the utility model. In addition, significant differences were also determined between hospitality management and tourism and teacher education, and business management and accountancy; students from the hospitality management and tourism are the most aware. However, students from the arts and sciences, computer studies, and engineering have no significant differences from the other colleges in the awareness of the utility model. This means that students from these colleges and students from other colleges have the same level of awareness as presented in table.

The results are congruent with the findings of Igudia et al. (2020) on the perception of undergraduate students on intellectual property. The study also found significant responses from college students regarding their understanding of IP. In total, 237 students from various faculties at UI stated that they understood what intellectual property was all about, whereas 76 students at LCU also expressed this level of understanding. Nevertheless, 25 students from UI and 4 from LCU argued that they were ignorant of the idea of intellectual property. This suggests that a sizable portion of students in the four faculties taken into account at the two universities were aware that they could produce and possess intellectual creations.

**Table 3**

*Level of Students' Awareness as grouped according to different IP rights*

Awareness	N	Mean Rank	Computed Value	P-value	Decision	Interpretation
Copyright	506	1706.00				
Patent	506	1563.42				
Utility	506	1306.78				
Trademarks	506	1544.35	56.882	<0.001	Reject Ho	Significant
Industrial Design	506	1513.41				
Geographical Indication	506	1477.03				

Table 3 shows the distribution of the awareness level according to the different IPR. This particularly tests any significant difference on the awareness levels of the students depending on the type of IP. The students level of knowledge and awareness could be attributed to the ones most familiar to them, commonly heard and commonly practiced at the university. With the different colleges' strategies and activities related to IP, the study also expects that students were exposed to various terminologies related to IPR. At .05 level of confidence, the p-value should be lower than or equal to .05 to be significant.

Significant differences were found in the students' level of awareness when grouped according to IPR. Students have different awareness levels in copyright, patent, utility model, trademark, industrial design, and geographical indication. Using the Conover test, awareness levels on copyright were significantly different with patent, utility model, trademark, industrial design, and geographical indication. The patent was significantly different with copyright, utility model,

and geographical indication. The utility model was significantly different with copyright, trademark, industrial design, and geographical indication. The trademark was significantly different from the copyright and utility model. The industrial design was significantly different from copyright and trademark. The geographical indication was significantly different from the copyright, patent, and utility model. These significant differences imply that students are most aware of the copyright as shown in the table.

## 5. Conclusions

The IPR protects and values the works of its inventors or owners. Thus, this study aims to determine the students' awareness on intellectual property rights in one state university in the Philippines using descriptive research design. There were 506 student-respondents from CCS, CCJE, CTE, CAS, CA, CBMA, CHMT and CoE. The study adapted the survey questionnaire from Amparado and Miro (2020) as the main data gathering tool distributed through Google Forms. The questions were answered using 5-point Likert-type scales.

Results revealed that university students can adequately understand copyrights, patents, trademarks, industrial designs and geographical indications whereas students have less awareness and understanding of the utility model and its aspect. Full awareness on the IPR is vital as there are implications on the protected materials, works and inventions that may lead to infringement for its improper use. Thus, it is recommended that the university design strategies and ways to develop tools such as intellectual property rights manual for wider dissemination and raise awareness of its students. Moreover, increasing the students' awareness level on IPR can also be done through continuous conduct of seminars, conferences, and training programs as this will also benefit the university and its academic community. As the results provide evidence that students from different colleges have the same level of awareness on the different IPR except from utility model, it is the role of the university to take further steps in distinguishing utility model among others. Illustrations on the meaning, purpose and distinctions should be introduced to students to avoid confusions.

Lastly, the students' levels of awareness on IPR were highly significant. Rights can be confusing and misunderstood on the part of the students, hence, it is recommended that the

university should constantly educate and inform the students to become aware not only on the distinctions and how it is being practiced but also its effects in order to prevent infringement.

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