academicresearchJournals

Full Length Research

Copyright Fair Use and Prevention of Plagiarism among Postgraduate Students in Selected Universities in Nigeria

Bamidele Olawale

University Library, Ekiti State University, Nigeria. E-mail: bamex001@gmail.com

The focus of this research work was to investigate copyright fair use and prevention of plagiarism among postgraduate students in two universities in Nigeria. The population was made up of students from Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti and Federal University of Technology, Akure. The study adopted a survey method with the use of questionnaire to collect data. Random sampling technique was used and the data were analysed using frequency counts and percentages. Out of the two hundred (200) copies of questionnaire distributed to postgraduate students in the two universities, one hundred and fifty-six (156) copies (78%) were returned with valid responses. Findings revealed that there is lack of awareness of plagiarism as an academic crime and non-availability of current and relevant literature among other reasons for plagiarism. However, the study concluded that Plagiarism may not be completely eradicated from Nigeria universities, but its prevalence can be reduced to the barest minimum. It was recommended that institutions of higher learning in Nigeria need to show commitment not just by making use of plagiarism detection soft wares but also developing policy frameworks on plagiarism and also teaching their students to uphold academic integrity all the time among other recommendations.

Keywords: copyright fair, plagiarism, postgraduate students

INTRODUCTION

Universities the world over are expected to be centres for the creation of information and knowledge generated from basic and applied research. As such, students' expectation is high regarding access and use of information for assignments, examinations, and when carrying out academic research. However, literature suggests that students in most universities are engaged in the menace of plagiarism which has a global spread.

The advent of the Internet, World Wide Web (www) and search engines in the early 20th Century has transformed information usage and access. The Internet provides link to myriads of intellectual works produced all over the world, while the World Wide Web provides the channel of access to these works on the Internet (Malik and Mahmood, 2009). With the help of search engines, databases which contain thousands of intellectual works on the web are searched with the use of specific keywords. Thus, with an Internet-enabled device and an Internet connection, just with a click of a button, hundreds of pages of documents can be downloaded. Despite the undeniable advantages of this advancement in Information and Communication Technology (1CT), availability of electronic resources through the Internet has made it very easy for plagiarism to thrive. According to Reitz (2004), plagiarism is a word that originated from a Latin word plagiarius which means to "kidnap". Plagiarism involves the act of taking the ideas, writings of another person and using same as one's own, whether

intentionally or not (Hqriot-Watt University, 2008). Plagiarism is therefore an academic crime that is committed as a result of not acknowledging the source of an idea or a piece of writing.

Plagiarism is an issue in the global academic community that raises concern about academic integrity of students. Some lecturers also engage in this act, the reason some universities in Nigeria have come with stern statements on plagiarism such as the one in the University of Ibadan special bulletin release of December 23, 2014 on the sanction for any member of staff or student involved in plagiarism. This is of serious concern as it is possible for a student to submit a PhD thesis done elsewhere with minor modifications for an award of his/her degree without being detected.

Globally, there are issues of plagiarism among students (Stearns, 1992; Paul, 2009; Teixeira and Rocha, 2010; Obasuyi, 2011; Nejati, Ismail and Shafaei, 2011; Gunnarson, Kulesza and Pelterson, 2014). The developed and the developing countries are facing these challenges and there is need to minimize or prevent it if possible. Students are involved in the menace of plagiarism which are carried out intentionally or unintentionally (Archibong, 2012; Obasuyi, 2011; Schrimsher, Northrup and Alversson, 2011), and it has become a bone of contention in higher education. According to WIPO (2004), Intellectual Property (IP) means original works such as literary, artistic, scientific and industrial are grouped under copyright and industrial properties which protect the rights of intellectual works from being abused by people. Among such abuse of copyright infringement are plagiarism, and replicated data, which is more pronounced in higher institutions of learning, and such abuse would contribute to the scourge of academic fraud among the students.

However, there are different types of plagiarism software that are used to detect cases of plagiarism by students. Examples include Tumitin, Copycatch, Plagscan and the likes. The International School of Management (n.d) averred that virtually all (if not all) universities in Nigeria have access to Tumitin system and they know how to check cases of plagiarism amongst students. If universities in Nigeria indeed have access to Tumitin, invariably postgraduate schools in these universities also do. Thus, students may be persuaded to exhibit academic integrity when they are aware that they might be caught if they plagiarize.

The use of plagiarism detection software also has its own drawbacks. Martin (2004) stated that some software for detecting plagiarism can only detect word-for-word plagiarism for the documents in its database and as such they cannot determine plagiarism of ideas and sources. In addition, students who copy from sources such as printed texts, CD-ROMs and certain subscription databases may be undetected. This is because not all sources are captured in the plagiarism detection database. Olutola (2014) also added that some of the challenges of plagiarism detection software also includes lack of knowledge on the part of some academics and the inability of the software to detect phantom papers. A phantom paper is an article that is not in existence but cited by students. In addition, free Internet-based software known as article-re writer could inadvertently serve as another barrier militating against the effectiveness of the plagiarism detection software (Olutola, 2014). This is because this software has the ability to rewrite copied texts when pasted on it. This shows that plagiarism detection software may not be the answer to the detection of plagiarism, as some students still engage in this act. This brings the question: Are there other quality assurance methods that can be used to stem the tide of plagiarism apart from the use of plagiarism detection software? The answer to this question lies in the plagiarism policy and building the research competence of students.

Plagiarism among University Students

Research has established that student plagiarize in universities around the globe. Ojokheta (2011), in a study on accessing the knowledge level and practice of plagiarism among distance learning students in Nigeria, established the practice of plagiarism among distance learners in Nigeria universities. His findings show that 99.6% of the students copy other authors' work without citing or referencing them. This implies that mode of study (distance learning) is significant to plagiarism among the universities students. Schrimsher, Northrup and Alverson (2011) survey of Samfrod University student regarding plagiarism and academic misconduct shows that plagiarism occurs in the university. Rezanejad and Rezaei (2013) conducted a research on academic dishonesty at universities and plagiarism among Iranian language students. They found that students admitted that plagiarism was the use of someone else's original work without acknowledgement.

However, literature has shown that many students are not aware of plagiarism, citing and referencing of sources, thus running fowl of plagiarism (Dordoy, 2002; Madray, 2007). Ojokheta (2011) assessed the knowledge level and practice of plagiarism among distance learning students and findings revealed that they did not perceive non-citing of authors' work used as plagiarism as a serious offense which attract different sanctions varying from facing disciplinary committee of the parent institution and withdrawal of such works for moral and economics benefits, withdrawal of certificate and payment of fines based on the gravity of the offence committed and the policy of the institution or the publisher concerned.

A study conducted by Rezanejad and Rezaei (2013) on academic dishonesty at universities focusing on

plagiarism among Iranian students found that students believed that information found on the internet and libraries are in public domain and is free for use without citing or referencing them. Chen and Ullen (2011) in their research outcome on helping the international students at the University of Albany succeed academically through research process, and plagiarism and research process after the workshop. With the newly acquired skills, international students were able to demonstrate improved citing, referencing and quoting of authors of original works used in their research projects.

Reasons for plagiarism by student

University students plagiarize for different reasons. Madray (2007) found that students not being taught by their lecturers on how plagiarism could be avoided and the adoption and use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) such as internet could lead to plagiarism. Schrimsher, Northrup and Alverson (2011) survey of Samford University student regarding plagiarism and academic misconduct found that availability of information on the internet made it convenient to copy, paste and use the resources without restrictions. In the same vein Rezanejad, Ismail and Shafei, (2011) who conducted a study on students' unethical behaviour found that ICT has contributed to the level of plagiarism by students in higher institutions of learning.

Another reason for plagiarism could be attributed to cultural background of the university students. Chen, and Ullen (2011), in a study on helping international students succeed academically through research process and plagiarism workshop, found that cultural factors contributed to the scourge of plagiarism by students from Asian Countries. Comas-Forgas and Sureda-Negre (2010) in their study of academic plagiarism from students perspective cited in Rezanejad and Rezaei (2013) revealed that behaviour of students, ICT, and that the distance between the lecturers and the distance learning students at the University of Ibadan one of the factors that aggravated the practice of plagiarism among the students. Logue, 2004; Harper, 2006; Madray, 2007; Schrimster, Northmp and Alverson 2011; Rezanejad and Rezazaei 2013 conducted studies on plagiarism among students and scholars and attributed the reasons for plagiarism to the quick and easy access to the Information and Communication Technology facilities, as well as open access publication which encouraged copying, cutting, pasting and editing to suit their research purposes. Babalola (2012), in study on plagiarism among the Babacock University students, revealed that 79.3% of the respondents rated the availability and accessibility to free downloads of information on the internet, citing of sources, peer group influence, lack of

current and relevant resources in the library and lecturers' silence over their student's involvement in plagiarism were adduced to the menace.

The Role of Plagiarism Policy in Combating Plagiarism in Nigeria Universities

Plagiarism policy is a formal document that presents the framework of action on issues regarding plagiarism. The policy should state explicitly the acceptable standard of academic behaviour and conduct expected from students and how academic integrity can be achieved. It is important to note that postgraduate schools do not exist in isolation; as such, the plagiarism policy of their parent institutions should be utilized by them to reduce cases of plagiarism. It would be surprising to note that in this present age and time, most universities in Nigeria do not have plagiarism policies that can be accessed on the Internet by both staff and students. This assertion was made because a simple search on Google for plagiarism policies in Nigerian universities conducted in April 2016 returned no result of a single university with a plagiarism policy. When the same search was conducted on plagiarism policy of universities in Europe, the results of the search presented quite a number of universities with such policy.

However, some universities in Nigeria have a semblance of plagiarism policy in their intellectual property laws, but this is not the same as a plagiarism policy. Thus, professional librarians in Nigeria need to advocate for the formulation and implementation of plagiarism policies in their various institutions if they do not have. A plagiarism policy helps to deter, detect and to deal with plagiarism issues. When postgraduate students know that there is an existing policy on plagiarism that cannot be compromised, they would be careful not to plagiarize when writing their thesis. But in a situation where there is no policy on plagiarism with its attendant sanctions, students may not see any reason not to plagiarize. The plagiarism policy removes any doubt about what constitutes plagiarism and consequences for those who plagiarize.

Nigeria universities that want to guarantee quality assurance in thesis writing will ensure that a plagiarism policy is in place in their postgraduate schools. The policy when formulated should be available for download from the institution's website, library website and the postgraduate school website. Once the plagiarism policy is available and accessible to all students, they will not be able to claim ignorance when they run fowl of the policy.

In building the Competence of Students, they should be made to understand how to appropriately quote, paraphrase and summarize sources of ideas and expression that they intend to incorporate into their works and how to correctly cite and reference these sources. In

addition, students should also be provided with tips such as the need to always put quotation marks around quoted sources. They should also be reminded that full referencing must be done for sources used whether print or electronic.

Intellectual property is protected by law which allows for moral economic and fair use, students, lecturers scholars are required to comply with the standard by showing that their studies originated from somewhere when writing on any topic. This implies that both student and academics must read intensively to get up to date information, identify problems and find solution to any research of interest. Consequently, there is a need for postgraduate students to read wide before writing any research work so as not to breach intellectual property rights.

Objective of the Study

The specific objectives of this study are as follows:

1. to find out the level of awareness of plagiarism among postgraduate students in the surveyed universities in Nigeria;
2. to determine the types of document plagiarized by postgraduate students in the surveyed universities in Nigeria;

3. to ascertain the reasons for plagiarism by postgraduate students in the surveyed universities in Nigeria

Research Questions

1. What is the level of awareness of plagiarism among postgraduate students in the surveyed universities in Nigeria?
2. What are the types of documents plagiarized by postgraduate students in the surveyed universities in Nigeria?
3. What are the reasons for plagiarism by postgraduate students in the surveyed universities in Nigeria?

Presentation and Discussion of Results

The research design adopted for the study was survey method with the use of questionnaire to collect data for the study. Random sampling technique was used for the study and the data were analysed using frequency counts and percentages. Out of the two hundred (200) copies of questionnaire distributed to postgraduate students in two universities, one hundred and fifty-six (156) copies (78%) were returned with valid responses. While forty-four (44) copies (22%) were not returned at all.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents on Awareness of Plagiarism

S/N	Awareness of Plagiarism	S.D	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	S.A
1	I have received training in techniques for academic writing and avoidance of plagiarism	17(10.9%)	23(14.7%)	15(9.6%)	48(30.8%)	53(34%)
2	I would like to know more on avoidance of plagiarism and academic dishonesty	7(4.5%)	10(6.4%)	6(4.0%)	45(28.7%)	88(56.4%)
3	The institution where I study has policies and procedures for dealing with plagiarism and academic dishonesty	9(5.7%)	5(3.2%)	21(13.5%)	39(25%)	82(52.6%)
4	In my institution, penalties for plagiarism are administered according to a standard set of rules	4(2.6%)	8(5.1%)	3(1.9%)	50(32.1%)	91(58.3%)
5	I know what penalties are applied to students for different forms of plagiarism and academic dishonesty in my university	42(26.9%)	49(31.5%)	27(17.3%)	20(12.8%)	18(11.5%)
6	I'm aware of at least one case of plagiarism committed by a student in this university	10(6.4%)	25(16%)	39(25%)	48(30.8%)	34(21.8%)
7	I believe I may have Plagiarised (accidentally or deliberately)	12(7.8%)	18(11.5%)	8(5.1%)	52(33.3%)	66(42.3%)

n=156; Key: SD= Strongly Disagree; SA= Strongly Agree

From table 1 above, majority, i.e. 64.8% of the respondents indicated different levels of agreement with the fact that they have received training in techniques for academic writing and avoidance   of plagiarism. The study also shows that 85.1% of the respondents indicated that they would like to know more on avoidance of plagiarism and academic dishonesty. In addition, 77.6% of the respondents noted that their institutions have policies and procedures for dealing with plagiarism and academic dishonesty. On whether institutional penalties for plagiarism are administered according to a standard set of rules, 90.4% of the respondents agreed with this assertion. However, 24.3% of the respondents claim to know what penalties are applied to students for different forms of plagiarism and academic dishonesty in my university. The study further shows that 52.6% of the respondents agreed that they are aware of at least one case of plagiarism committed by a student in this university. Lastly, 75.6% of the respondents believe may have Plagiarised (accidentally or deliberately)

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents on Documents Plagiarised

S/N	Documents Plagiarised	VT	T	ST	NT
1	Theses, Dissertation and Projects	35(22.4%)	29(18.6%)	42(26.9%)	50(32.1%)
2	Books	27(17.3%)	51(32.7%)	41(26.3%)	37(23.7%)
3	Journals	31(19.8%)	48(30.8%)	45(28.8%)	32(20.6%)
4	Reports	13(8.3%)	28(17.9%)	55(35.3%)	60(38.5%)
5	Electronic information resources	47(30.1%)	59(37.8%)	38(24.4)	12(7.7%)

n=156; Key: VT= Very True; T= True; ST= Sometimes True; NT= Not True
Table 2 shows that most the postgraduate students in the surveyed universities admitted that sources such as theses, dissertations, projects, books, journals, reports and electronic information resources were regularly Plagiarised

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents on Reasons for Plagiarism

S/N	Reasons for Plagiarism	VT	T	ST	NT
1	It is cost effective	69(44.2%)	50(32.1%)	28(17.9%)	9(5.8%)
2	It is more convenient	65(41.7%)	49(31.4%)	30(19.2%)	12(7.7%)
3	Because of non-availability of relevant literature	43(27.6%)	51(32.7%)	42(26.9%)	20(12.8%)
4	Lack of access to literature	39(25%)	44(28.2%)	51(32.7%)	22(14.1%)
5	Lack of awareness as an academic crime	31(19.9%)	43(27.6%)	52(33.3%)	30(19.2%)

n=156; Key: VT= Very True; T= True; ST= Sometimes True; NT= Not True
Table 3 shows that most of the postgraduate students in the surveyed universities admitted that cost effectiveness (94.2%), convenience (92.3%), non-availability of literature (87.2%), lack of access to literature (85.9%) and lack of awareness as an academic crime (80.8%) are the reasons for plagiarizing information resources.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that postgraduate students in Nigeria had plagiarized before. Although most of them claimed to received training on techniques for academic writing and avoidance of plagiarism while few claimed otherwise. However, the study shows that the students lacked proper awareness of plagiarism; hence, the possibilities of plagiarizing either intentionally or unintentionally. This study revealed that students indicated that they had just plagiarized from different sources of information such as dissertation, theses and projects, books, journals reports and the electronic information resources. The findings is in line with the position of Rezanejad and Rezaei (2013) in a study on academic dishonesty in universities focusing on plagiarism among Iranian students found that students believed that information found on the internet and libraries are in public domain and is free for use without citing or referencing them. Also, Ojokheta (2011) assessed the knowledge level and practice of plagiarism among distance learning students. Findings revealed that they did not perceive non-citing of authors' work used as plagiarism is a serious offense which attract different sanctions varying from facing disciplinary committee of the parent institution and withdrawal of such works from moral and economics benefits, withdrawal of certificate and payment of fines based on the gravity of the offence committed and the policy of the institution or the publisher concerned.

The findings of the study is in consonance with Madray (2007) who found that students not being taught by their lecturers on how plagiarism could be avoided and the adoption and use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) such as internet could lead to plagiarism. In addition, Schrimsher, Northrup and Alverson (2011) in their survey of Samford University students regarding plagiarism and academic misconduct found that availability of ICT such as internet made it convenient to copy, paste and use electronic information without recourse to fair use. In the same vein Rezanejad, Ismail and Shafei, (2011) who conducted a study on students' unethical behavior found that ICT has contributed to the level of plagiarism by students in higher learning institutions.

Comas-Forgas and Sureda-Negre (2010) in their study of academic plagiarism from students perspective cited in Rezanejad and Rezaei (2013) revealed that students' behaviour, ICT, distance between the lecturers and distance learning students at the University of Ibadan are one of the factors that aggravated the practice of plagiarism among the students. Logue, 2004; Harper, 2006; Madray, 2007; Schrimster, Northmp and Alverson 2011; Rezanejad and Rezazaei 2013 conducted studies on plagiarism among students and scholars and attributed the reasons for plagiarism to the quick and easy access to the Information and Communication Technology facilities, as well as open access publication which encouraged copying, cutting, pasting and editing suit their research purposes. Babalola (2012), in study on plagiarism among the Babacock University students, revealed that 79.3% of the respondents rated the availability and accessibility to free downloads of information resources on the internet sources citing , peer group influence, lack of library resources searches and lecturers' silence over their student's involvement in plagiarism were adduced for the menace.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Plagiarism may not be completely eradicated from the world of academic writings, but its prevalence can be reduced to the barest minimum. Institutions of higher learning in Nigeria need to show commitment not just by making use of plagiarism detection soft wares but also developing policy frameworks on plagiarism and also teaching their students to uphold academic integrity all the time. This will go a long way in developing students' competencies in order to stem the tide of plagiarism and promote quality assurance in our educational system. The study shows that plagiarism is a common phenomenon among postgraduate students in the surveyed universities. Though there were some causative factors to the menace such as lack of awareness as academic crime, lack of access to literature, non-

availability of current and relevant literature. The study offered a significant insight into copyright fair use and plagiarism among postgraduates in the surveyed universities; consequently, the following recommendations are suggested.

1. Mass publicity and awareness campaign programmes on plagiarism and highlight its effect on the student and the institution
2. Regular acquisition of current and relevant information resources in both print and electronic formats should be done by the university libraries
3. University management should ensure checks and balances such as putting in place plagiarism detection soft wares such as turnitin to enable the lecturers detect any plagiarized work before submission is made by the students
4. Stiffer penalties should be enforced against students found guilty of plagiarism offences.
5. Professional librarians should continue to advocate for the formulation and implementation of plagiarism policies in their various institutions if they do not have any in place.

REFERENCES

Archibong I.A. (2012) Forms of dishonesty among academic staff and way forward. Canadian social sciences, 8(6), 39-43.

Babalola Y.T.(2012). Awareness and incidences of plagiarism among undergraduates in a Nigerian private university. African Journal of Library, Archival of Information Science 22(1), 53-60

Chen, Y. and Ullen, M.K.V (2011). Helping international students succeed academically through research process plagiarism workshops. College and Research Libraries, 209-235.

Council of Writing Program Administrators. (2003). Defining and avoid plagiarism: the WPA statement on best practices. Retrieved from http://www.wpacouncil.org

Gunnarssom, J., Kulesza, W.J. and Pettersson, A. (2014). Teaching international students how to avoid plagiarism: librarians and faculty in collaboration. The Journal of Academic Librarianship, http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2014.04.006 viewed on 07 July, 2014. 5p. In press.

Heriot-Watt University .(2008). Student guide to plagiarism. Retrieved from http;//www.hw.ac.uk/students/.../plagiarismguide

Madray, A. (2007) Developing students awareness of Plagiarism: Crisis and opportunities. Library Philosophy and practice. Retreved on 10 July, 2014 from http://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/moblin/madray.htm 10p.

Malik, A. and Mahmood, K. (2009). Web behavior of university students: a case study at University of the Punjab. Webology.6(2). Retrieved from http://www.webology.ir/2009/u6n2/a70.html

Martin, B. (2004). Plagiarism: policy against cheating or policy for learning. School o f Social Sciences, Media and Communication, University o f Wollongong. Retrieved from http://www.uow. edu.au/art/sts/bmartin

Nejati, M., Ismail and Shafei, A. (2011). Students unethical behaviour: Insights from an African Country. Global business and Management Research, 3(3/4), 276-295.

Obasuyi, L. (2011). Promoting best research practices amongst palms scientists in Nigeria: The issue of plagiarism, The Information Manager 11(1/2), 25-31.

Ojokheta, K.O. (2011) Assessing the knowledge level and practice of plagiarism among distance learning student in an integrated distance learning institution in Nigeria, International Journal of Film, Literacy and Media Studies 7/8(1/2)53-71

Olutola, F. O. (2014). Towards a more enduring prevention of scholarly plagiarism among university students in Nigeria .Global Journal o f Human-Social Science (C). Sociology and Culture. 14 (6) Retrieved from http://www.creativecommons.Org/licenses/by-nc/3.01

Paul, S. (2009) Plagiarism: What is it, exactly? Retreived 04 August, 2014 from http://www.legalzoom.com/articles/plagiarism-what-is-it-exactly

Reitz, J. M. (2004). Dictionary of library and information science. Westport: USA: Libraries Unlimited. P. 544

Rezanejad, A. and Rezaei, S. (2013). Academic dishonesty at universities: The case of plagiarism among Iranian language students. Journal of Academic Ethics, DOI 10.1007/s10805-013-9193-8

Schrimdher, R. H., Northup, L.A. and Alverson, S.P. (2011). A survey of Samford University students regarding plagiarism and academic misconduct. *International Journal for Educational Integrity, 7(1),3-17*

Stearns, L. (1992). Copy wrong: plagiarism, process, property and the law. California Law Review, 80(2),513-553

Sinha, R., Singh, G. and Kumar, C. (2009). Plagiarism and unethical practices in literature. Indian Journal of Ophthalmology, 57(6), 481-485.

Sutherland-Smith, W. (2014). Legality, quality assurance and learning: competing discourses of plagiarism management in higher education. Journal o f Higher Education Policy and Management. 36 (1), 29-42. http://10.1080/1360080X.2013.844666.

Tiexeira, A.A. C. and Rocha, M.F. (2010) Cheating by economics and business undergraduate students: an exploratory international assessment, High Educ. 59, 633-701.

world Intellectual Property Organization (2004). World Intellectual Property Organization Hand Book. Publication No. 489 (E) 488p.