

THE ROLE OF PLAGIARISM AND ANTI-PLAGIARISM CHECKS SOFTWARE ON LIBRARY AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS RESEARCH ACTIVITIES IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY MINNA

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Abstract

The iniquitousness of computers and the advent of the Internet has created a new threat to the society, this menace is referred to as plagiarism. It is the act of taking ownership of information created by someone else. This study looked into the role of plagiarism and anti-plagiarism checks software on library and information technology postgraduate students' research activities in Federal University of Technology Minna. The study adopted descriptive survey design. A self-designed closed ended structured questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. The population for the study was 56 Library and Information Technology postgraduate students in FUT Minna. Findings from the study revealed that LIT postgraduate students are aware of plagiarism and plagiarism check software and plagiarism check software has also increases the originality of students' work. One of the recommendations made is that more awareness should be made so that students will be aware of the items covered by anti-plagiarism checks software and the various sanctions of plagiarism in the university.

Keywords: anti-plagiarism check software, FUT Minna, Library and Information Technology, Plagiarism

Introduction

Universities are educational institutions established for the academic development of all categories of people in that environment. In any university, various programmes have been organized in order to facilitate the dissemination of knowledge on the students. These programmes have been grouped into various strata in order to cater for the various level of students. Universities have undergraduate programmes being run for students who are striving to achieve a first degree in any discipline of their choice as well as postgraduate programmes such as postgraduate diplomas, masters and doctoral degrees in Library and Information technology (LIT).

Today in the academic environment, it is no gain saying that scholarly academic writing such as articles, projects, theses and dissertations are germane and prerequisites for graduation of any student undergoing a postgraduate programme in Library and Information technology. Thesis writing is an integral example and part of the activities of the LIT postgraduate academic programme and without the completion of thesis students cannot be awarded degrees. Adebayo (2008) viewed thesis as a product of lengthy research work which is the result of a well thought out and rigorous analysis. A thesis is expected to show the students' mastery of the topic of interest in the field of study. In Nigeria, various universities allotted various duration of time for

the writing of theses for various postgraduate programmes of study for degrees. A doctoral degree is expected to go on for at least three to five years during which the student must strictly follow systematically the different stages of the write-up. This process inculcates in the postgraduate students a craving for information resources of various formats in order to cater for their information needs.

The technological developments and innovations in the past few decades, have created a new standard of life which could be referred to as "Digital age". The developments in the field of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are engendering a way to make our devices smarter. These trends in development have radically changed the educational institutions as well as the most essential pillar of an educational institution that is libraries settings. The libraries have also evolved a lot from mere "Storehouse of Books" to "Digital Libraries" which may be considered as an ocean of knowledge having surpassed the physical boundaries of the higher institutions of learning. The wide spread of computers and the advent of the Internet however have created a new threat to the society, the act of taking ownership of information created by someone else. This act is referred to as plagiarism.

Onuoha and Ikonne (2013) posited that the incidents of plagiarism nowadays seem to be on the increase especially with the advent of Internet which has made information more easily available and accessible without any geographical constraints; thereby, enabling researchers to have quick and easy access to contents anywhere in the world.

Plagiarism is an act of confiscating another person's work and posing as the original owner. It could also be described as an illegal usage of another person's work without the owner's permission. Kennedy (2006) described plagiarism as an unintentional, reckless or deliberate imitation or use of somebody else's work for one's benefits without proper acknowledgment of the original author. Pai and Parmar (2015) viewed plagiarism, as the method of taking credit for a work, whose words, conversation or even idea was of someone else or in other words, the information copied from any medium (Books, journals, www, Tvetc) and passing it as his own work can be termed as plagiarized information.

There are various classifications on the available types of plagiarism. However, Shiremath (2014) and Kashkur et al (2010) identified the following types of plagiarism. They are;

- i. Copy-and-paste plagiarism: that is to Copy large parts of someone else's work.
- ii. Clone plagiarism: Taking someone else's work entirely.
- iii. Re-tweet plagiarism: Contains correctly quoted text, but relies too much on someone else's work.
- iv. Recycle or auto plagiarism: Publishing the same work many times.
- v. Find-replace or word-switch plagiarism: Using synonyms for words in someone else's work.
- vi. Mashup plagiarism: Copying material from different sources
- vii. Error plagiarism: Using incorrect citation.
- viii. Aggregator plagiarism: No originality in the work, although it contains references to the original work. Others are:
- ix. Hybrid plagiarism: Combining judiciously quoted and unquoted parts of someone else's text.
- x. Style plagiarism: Paraphrasing to the extent that the original text is unrecognizable, but the structure of both documents is similar (essential schemes, main arguments, or examples coincide).
- xi. Source-code plagiarism: Taking the source code in computer programming.
- xii. Translation plagiarism: Translating someone else's work into another language.
- xiii. Idea plagiarism: The main idea of the work is not original, but it is masked by the plagiarist's knowledge.

- xiv. Graphics plagiarism: Using a figure or a picture without permission and lastly
- xv. Ghostwrite plagiarism: Contracting another person or website to produce the work for someone.

According to Mozgovoy, Kakkonen, & Cosma (2010) anti-plagiarism detection software compares the target text with a variety of electronic sources. These usually fall into two large categories, hermetic and web-based. The web-based sources are those that have already been published on the web, hermetic sources are those included in the system's own database and usually supplied by the clients. The wider the client network of a plagiarism detection tool, the greater its hermetic power. Plagiarism detection tools are not only powerful due to a wide range of texts they can use for comparison, but also because they are capable of using a range of computational detection strategies, including string matching, parsing, the use of a synonym thesaurus, and latent semantic analysis (LSA). While the use of a synonym thesaurus can help identify plagiarism in cases where some of the original wording has been replaced by synonyms, LSA is a computational technique used to identify textual similarities in meaning.

Awareness refers to the cognitive ability of a person to discern, decipher and judge a given phenomenon. According to Human Perception and Information Processing (2015) perception and awareness are two coins that affect the judgment and action of any individual. Perception is the process of recognizing, organizing and interpreting sensory information, It deals with the human senses and generate signals from the environment through the five sense organs: sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste. Awareness refers to the knowledge about an object or event, the competences or skills as well as the methods of operation; it has to do with one's background knowledge about the object, subject matter, event or any other phenomenon. (Reinhardt, Mletzko, Sloep and Drachsler, 2015).

Utilisation of anti-plagiarism detection software can help to curtail the issue of plagiarism. However utilisation of this anti-plagiarism check software requires the support of tertiary institutions and other stakeholders. Sharma (2011) in a study opined that maintains that plagiarism prevention needs close institutional and teacher's cooperation. This is understandable because, no matter how much an institution wants to uphold academic integrity, it cannot do so without the lecturer who relates directly with the students. Furthermore, Young (2012) argued that cases of plagiarism are teachable moments. In other words, every act of plagiarism should provide an opportunity for a lecturer to guide a student on how to cultivate strong self academic virtue by doing the right thing. vities.

Library and Information technology postgraduate students need to be fully aware of the effects of plagiarism and plagiarism policies in order to be able to produce work which they can lay claim to culpable consequences such could have the originality of its content. Where there is no awareness of the act of plagiarism, there is great negative impact on the research activities of the postgraduate students. It is therefore important that postgraduate students should be fully aware of plagiarism and also utilise the anti-plagiarism check software to help check the act and play safe in all academic engagements.

Statement of the Problem

In the academic community, as part of the criteria for achieving academic excellence, postgraduate students are expected to engage in the writing and presenting series of assignments, term papers, thesis etcetera that depict their original thoughts. These academic papers are the prerequisite to the award of different degrees namely first degree, masters, post-graduate diploma and PhD degrees in universities in Nigeria, including Federal University of Technology, Minna.

From preliminary investigation by the researcher, it was observed that most LIS postgraduate students have high similarity index when they load their work on the anti-plagiarism detection software and always find it difficult bringing it down to meet threshold laydown by the university and most at times end up not graduating. One begins to wonder what could be the problem, is it that students are not aware of the act of plagiarism and anti-plagiarism check software or its impact on their research activities? It is against the background that the researcher therefore seek to examine the role of plagiarism and anti-plagiarism checks software on Library and Information technology postgraduate students' research activities in Federal University of Technology Minna.

Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of the study is to investigate the role of plagiarism and anti-plagiarism checks software on Library and Information technology postgraduate students research activities. The specific objectives are to:

1. Assess the level of Library and Information technology postgraduate students awareness of plagiarism and anti-plagiarism check software in Federal University of Technology, Minna;
2. Determine the effective impact of using anti-plagiarism check software on Library and Information technology postgraduate students in Federal University of Technology, Minna;
3. Identify the challenges associated with the anti-plagiarism check software utilised by Library and Information technology postgraduate students in Federal University of Technology, Minna.

Research Questions

The study is focused on answering the following research questions:

1. What is the level of awareness of plagiarism and anti-plagiarism check software among Library and Information technology postgraduate students in Federal University of Technology, Minna?
2. What is the effective impact of using anti-plagiarism check software on Library and Information technology postgraduate students in Federal University of Technology, Minna?
3. What are the challenges associated with the anti-plagiarism check software utilised by Library and Information technology postgraduate students in Federal University of Technology, Minna?

Literature Review

Plagiarism is an illicit activity which is synonymous with stealing or cheating. It can be described as corruption of the process of independent and critical thinking that is essential to adding to the body of knowledge. Orim, Borg and Awala-Ale (2014) described.

Fishman (2009) explained further that plagiarism is an academic offence, not because anyone has been deprived of their tangible goods as its harm does not rest entirely on taking, deceiving or distributing the plagiarised information, rather, it is harmful because no benefit from doing the work has been gained by the students, yet they want to be recognised for receiving the benefits they have not earned.

Awareness is the ability of a person to discriminate among several possible stimuli. It enables the person to make right judgment and decision as well as attain high level of performance. Awareness refers to the cognitive ability of a person to discern, decipher and judge a given

phenomenon. It therefore refers to the knowledge about an object or event, the competences or skills as well as the methods of operation; awareness gives the student, learner and researcher the background knowledge about the object, event or any other phenomenon. (Reinhardt, Mletzko, Sloep and Drachsler, 2015.)

In a study by Ramzan et al. (2012) the findings revealed that significant majority (73.1%) of respondents were aware of plagiarism. Perhaps, this may be due to the fact that significant number (42.6%) reportedly knew about the existence of the institution's plagiarism policy. Interestingly, Singh and Guram (2014) found that while significant figure of 85% participants reported their knowledge and awareness of plagiarism, a higher figure of 93% reportedly indicated that they were not aware and that plagiarism was never mentioned to them before they came to graduation. From the works of Ramzan et al (2012) and Guram (2014), it might be concluded that the students with high level of awareness were oriented or had read a plagiarism policy or not visa-vi the high ignorance level, although they reported a plagiarism rate of 55%.

Plagiarism detection tools are not only powerful due to a wide range of texts they can use for comparison, but also because they are capable of using a range of computational detection strategies, including string matching, parsing, the use of a synonym thesaurus, and latent semantic analysis (LSA). While the use of a synonym thesaurus can help identify plagiarism in cases where some of the original wording has been replaced by synonyms, LSA is a computational technique used to identify textual similarities in meaning. However, advanced techniques of natural language processing, such as parsing or LSA, seem to be rarely utilised by plagiarism detection tools, which sets limits to their effectiveness (Mozgovoy, Kakkonen, & Cosma, 2010)

Some examples of plagiarism detection software are programs such as Turnitin, Safe Assignment, Anti Plagiarist, Plagiarism-Finder, SeeSources.com, Mozgovoy, Kakkonen and Cosma (2010) conducted an evaluation of some of these tools. One of the main problems identified in some of these packages were false positives, that is text that was not plagiarised falsely being flagged for plagiarism. Turnitin and Safe Assignment emerged as the top performance tools, mainly because they did not flag any false positives. Safe Assignment was in fact the best at recognising source(s) from the Web, but its performance in the hermetic mode was not equally effective. Turnitin on the other hand seemed to have a gap in its Internet search mode, however it seemed quite effective at addressing technical tricks and locating sources in its own database, thus demonstrating what is termed considerable mill strength.

Methodology

Survey design was used for the study. According to Ajayi (2013) survey method is quantitative in nature and aims to collect information from a sample of the population such that the results are representative of the population within a certain degree of error. Survey research method is suitable for the study because data will be collected and used to describe and interpret issues on awareness and utilisation of anti-plagiarism checks software on Library and Information Technology postgraduate students' research activities in Federal University of Technology, Minna.

The target population of the study is fifty seven(57) Library and Information Technology postgraduate students in Federal University of Technology, Minna. This figure is for admitted LIT postgraduate students from 2015/16 to 2016/17 academic session. Copies of questionnaire were administered to respondents manually and via e-mail. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and percentages.

Data Analysis

Table 1: Response Rate

S/No	University	No of Administered Questionnaire	No of Returned Questionnaire	Percentages(%)
1	Federal University of Technology, Minna	55	32	56

Research Question 1: Level of awareness of plagiarism and anti-plagiarism check software

Table 2: Level of awareness of plagiarism and anti-plagiarism check software

S/No	Statements	HA	A	AA	LA	NA	N	FX	X	SD
1	Are you aware of the anti-plagiarism law in your university?	14	10	3	4	1	32	128	4	1
2	Are you aware of the various levels of plagiarism tolerance in your university?	8	12	5	2	5	32	112	3.5	0.5
3	Are you aware of the items covered by anti-plagiarism checks software?	5	5	3	12	7	32	85	2.66	0.34
4	Are you aware that copying someone's work verbatim and submitting them in a paper without your name on it is plagiarism?	8	12	8	4	2	34	122	3.81	0.81
5	Are you aware of the various sanctions of plagiarism in your university?	8	14	5	4	1	32	120	3.75	0.75

Key: HA= Highly Aware, A= Aware, AA= Averagely Aware, LA=Lowly Aware, NA=Not Aware, X= Mean, SD= Standard Deviation

Result of Table 2 revealed that four items have high mean scores about the criterion mean of 3.0. They are item 1: Are you aware of the anti-plagiarism law in your university ($X = 4$, $SD = 1$), Item 2: Are you aware of the various level of plagiarism tolerance in your university ($X = 3.5$, $SD = 0.5$), Item 4: Are you aware that copying someone's work verbatim and submitting them in a paper without your name on it is plagiarism ($X = 3.81$, $SD = 0.81$), Item 5: Are you aware of the various sanctions of plagiarism in your university ($X = 3.75$, $SD = 0.75$), while Item 3: Are you aware of the items covered by anti-plagiarism checks software ($X = 2.66$, $SD = 0.34$) have a mean score below the criterion mean of 3.

Research Question 2: Effective impact of using anti-plagiarism check software

Table 3: Impact of Using anti-plagiarism check software

S/NO	Effect of Using Anti-Plagiarism Check Software	SA	A	D	SD	N	F	X	SD
i.	It increases the originality of students' work	15	10	5	2	32	102	3.19	0.69
ii.	It develops students research writing skills	6	14	5	7	32	83	2.59	0.09
iii.	It increases students' engagement	7	3	7	15	32	66	2.06	0.44
iv.	It makes students to be more serious with their academic work	10	3	11	8	32	79	2.47	0.03
v.	It helps to identify plagiarized materials	8	4	13	7	32	77	2.41	0.09
vi.	It helps students understand how to write with academic integrity	11	7	5	9	32	84	2.63	0.13

Result of Table 3 revealed that three items have high mean score about the criterion mean of 2.5. They are item 1: It increases the originality of students' work ($X = 3.19$, $SD = 0.69$), Item 2: It develops students research writing skills ($X = 2.59$, $SD = 0.09$), Item 6: It helps students understand how to write with academic integrity ($X = 2.63$, $SD = 0.13$), while Item 3, 4 and 5 have mean scores below the criterion mean of 2.5 indicating that the anti-plagiarism check software has no impact.

Research Question 3: Challenges associated with the anti-plagiarism check software utilised

Table 4: Challenges associated with the anti-plagiarism check software

S/No	Statements	SA	A	D	SD	N	FX	X	SD
i.	Instructors rely on the software to do key parts of their job	5	5	12	10	32	69	2.16	0.34
ii.	The anti-plagiarism check software companies take students' work without compensation	16	8	3	5	32	99	3.09	0.59
iii.	Fails to check whether figures or table used within the work are legitimate or plagiarized	15	11	5	1	32	104	3.25	0.75
iv.	It focuses students' attention on achieving a figure rather than developing academic integrity	4	6	14	8	32	70	2.19	-0.31
v.	Does not differentiate between correctly cited material and plagiarised materials	16	9	1	6	32	99	3.09	0.59
vi.	Cannot trace materials copied from discussion boards	18	7	5	2	32	105	3.28	0.78

Table 4 revealed that three items have high mean score about the criterion mean of 2.5. They are item 3: Fails to check whether figures or table used within the work are legitimate or plagiarized ($X = 3.25$, $SD = 0.75$), Item 5: Does not differentiate between correctly cited material and plagiarised materials ($X = 3.09$, $SD = 0.59$), Item 6: Cannot trace materials copied from discussion boards ($X = 3.28$, $SD = 0.78$), while Item 1,2 and 4 have mean scores below the criterion mean of 2.5.

Discussion of the Findings

The result of the analysis on the level of awareness of plagiarism and anti-plagiarism check software shows that LIT postgraduate students are highly aware of plagiarism and anti-plagiarism check software (Table 2). This probably could be due to the fact that most LIT postgraduate students have used the anti-plagiarism check software during their undergraduate studies. The findings of this study is similar to the findings of (Richa et al 2015) in a study of awareness about plagiarism among research scholars in Hindustan university, Chennai: a study, revealed research scholars are aware about plagiarism but still there is a need to give more knowledge about it.

The study revealed that using anti-plagiarism check software by LIT postgraduate students has increased the originality of students' work, developed research writing skills and has also helped students on how to write with academic integrity (Table 3). This finding is similar to that of Brad and Chris (2009) who concurred that use of anti-plagiarism check software has a positive effect on academic outputs. Finally the study also revealed that some of the challenged faced in the use of the anti-plagiarism check software are; companies take students' work without compensation, failure to check whether figures or table used within the work are legitimate or

plagiarized and the software cannot trace materials copied from discussion boards these findings are similar to that of Mozgovoy, Kakkonen, & Cosma (2010) who revealed that one of the main problem identified in some of the anti-plagiarism checks software is their inability to identify contents copied verbatim from an information material that is not online.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Findings from the study revealed that LIT postgraduate students are aware of plagiarism and plagiarism check software. Plagiarism check software has also increased the originality of students' work and has also developed students' research writing skills. Some of the challenges with anti-plagiarism check software are anti-plagiarism check software companies take students' work without compensation, fails to check whether figures or tables used within the work are legitimate or plagiarized and cannot trace materials copied from discussion boards.

The following recommendations based on the findings are therefore made:

1. More awareness should be made by school management studied so that students will be aware of the items covered by anti-plagiarism checks software and the various sanctions of plagiarism in the university
2. The use of the software should be extended by the school management studied to assignments and term papers so as to familiarize students to the software.
3. The threshold created by the Federal University Minna should be reduced in other not to mount pressure on the students.

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