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CURBING PLAGIARISM: STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY LIBRARIANS IN UNIVERSITIES IN THE AGE OF ICT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated the strategies for curbing plagiarism by librarians in universities in the age of Information and Communication Technology in Nigeria. . The population comprised librarians in Universities in Nigeria. However, a total number of 15 Universities took part in the study and a random sampling technique was used to select 89 respondents. A self-constructed online questionnaire was designed and distributed to collect the data from the respondents. Nevertheless, 75 online questionnaires were valid and used for analysis. The data was analysed using frequency of the simple percentages and mean scores. The result shows that librarians were aware of strategies for curbing plagiarism. They employ strategies such as; proper referencing of all cited works, Use free online plagiarism software checker and Paraphrase works with software. They encounter challenges such as; Unavailability of authors' detailed information, Lack of information sources retrieval skills and incomplete bibliographic details of sources of information. It was therefore, recommended among others that Librarian should work with IT personnel to invent new and cost effective software that will effectively carry out checks on plagiarism, that Librarians should conduct training and retraining on information search and retrieval skills.

Keywords; *strategies, plagiarism practice, librarian, Nigerian Universities, ICT*

Introduction

Plagiarism is no doubt a torn on the world of research. It is an unlawful practice that is, citing or using another person's work without due acknowledgement. According to Masic (2012), the word plagiarism is deduced from the Latin word "Plagium" meaning "Kidnapping a man", meaning stealing another person's work and presenting it as yours, whether intentionally or unintentionally. plagiarism is against copyright law and could also be when a work that have been written, need creativity, originality or lack good reference or citation of materials used, non-acquisition of authorization from the original authors, extension of materials of others without affirmation, use of writings, figures and whatever other exceptional materials that are not original(Maxel 2013). Plagiarism is falsifying in nature, corrupt, lacks genuineness, infringes on copyright law and legislation, and promotes the practice of intellectual dishonesty in academics, and scholarly research work. Plagiarism affects researchers whether students or academics ability to constructively develop an acceptable and creative work with the good intention of impacting to humanity. Researchers in universities mutilate project works to escape from thorough research work especially with the wide spread of electronic resources, online databases, websites etc. created by the influence of ICT resulting to information explosion. Plagiarism has become the first to mention among other factors militating against quality research output. To this, University managements are intelligently concerned about students' and staff's academic and research skill development. Bethany (2016) explains that plagiarism affects learners' success, ability to develop academic writing skills and creative development. Many researchers find it difficult to develop ideas and initiate research plans on their own. While some struggle to navigate to pick out works related to their research to build on their ideas without due acknowledgement. This has decreased the value and originality of research work most especially in the University setting. As a result, in 2012, the Committee of Vice Chancellors of Nigerian Universities contacted the United Kingdom (UK) based academic integrity software company called "Turnitin" for discussions and technical collaborations on dealing with plagiarism. Today, educational institutions use different software and strategies for conducting originality checks of diverse publications to ensure genuine intellectual contributions to Scholarship (Idiegbeyan-ose, Nkiko and Osinulu 2016). Some University Institutions have also adopted various strategies to

curb this issue. These include teaching their students about plagiarism and how to avoid it as well as setting up anti-plagiarism policies and measures such as plagiarism software etc.

Howbeit, libraries and librarians are indispensable members of any University institution. It could be said that they are human road map to the right information. Aside from their professional need in Universities, they are also experts in information selection, acquisition, organization, storage, dissemination, copyright studies, publishing and intellectual property law. Yet their strategies for curbing plagiarism are not presented in research output in Nigeria.

Statement of problem

Librarians are professionally copyright experts and are charged with the responsibility of promoting and leading the campaign for quality research works in Universities in Nigeria. In the same vein they are also not exempted from research misconduct through plagiarism. However, it have been observed by the researchers that librarians must have employed some strategies for curbing plagiarism, but these strategies are not unveiled in research works in Nigeria. Based on this observation, the study is carried out to know the strategies for curbing plagiarism by librarian in Universities in the age of ICT in Nigeria.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are

1. To determine the level of awareness of strategies for curbing plagiarism practices by librarian in universities in the age of ICT in Nigeria.
2. To find out the Strategies employed by librarians in curbing plagiarism practices in Universities in the age of ICT in Nigeria.
3. To identify the challenges of curbing plagiarism by librarians in Universities in the age of in the age of ICT in Nigeria.

Research questions

1. What is the level of awareness of strategies for curbing plagiarism practices by librarian in universities in the age of ICT in Nigeria?

2. What are the Strategies employed by librarians in curbing plagiarism practices in Universities in the age of ICT in Nigeria?
3. What are the challenges of curbing plagiarism by librarians in Universities in the age of in the age of ICT in Nigeria?

Plagiarism practice in academic community

The academic community system is founded on the basis of research for development through innovation and invention. The world greatest inventions are produced through originality of research output. This in turn has fostered economic and socio-cultural improvement over the years. In the same vein, Plagiarism is a threat to the founding objective of research – which is to arrive at new facts or get additional information to the existing one. As explained by, Agu, Olibie and Anyikwa (2009) that higher institutions are meant to produce research findings and innovation that will contribute to the advancement of nations.

University is a seat of learning where scholars of different subjects of specialization operate and function to create, build and refine knowledge, impact knowledge, ideas and skills on students and also help them realize their veiled potentials. Universities are therefore responsible for engaging in teaching, research and community service with the aim of improving the standard of human living, produce high- level human resources as provided in section 6 of the Nigerian National Policy on Education (NPE), Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN 2004). The policy more so reiterated that research and development are among the ways through which objectives of higher education can be achieved. Nwokeocha (2014), asserted that an education system without an institutionalized normality of research is like an empty rolling drum, full of noise but of no effect. Therefore, university Education is Self Empowering exposing individuals to the system of invention and innovation through research. Different scholars have argued the essence of project writing in Universities. One of the most significant reasons is to acquaint the student with the essential skill of self discovery, organization of idea and creative invention and innovative thinking. This implies that the central idea of university education is human capacity development. Plagiarism is the bad egg that contaminates the objective of research. This implies that the change brought about by plagiarism will slow down and hardly ensure positive research output that could be problem solving, hence research are meant to be devoid of ingenuine practices. Breen and Maassen (2005) go on to explain, many plagiarism incidents result from

ignorance and poor skills rather than intentional misconduct. Indeed, many universities focus on tools to detect plagiarism and on punitive measures without considering the reasons behind plagiarism.

The effects of plagiarism on University education are felt in almost all countries educational institution. For example, in the year 2015, five researchers in a university in Rwanda were investigated by a disciplinary committee for having copied other people's works in their research reports (Rugira, 2015). However, the plagiarism incidents reported in Rwandan higher learning institutions may be far below the actual number because this issue appears not to have been taken seriously in teaching and learning processes, practices or in academic policies. Researchers appear not to be equipped enough not to plagiarize: they are hardly taught how to avoid plagiarism in academic research. This may be happening because teaching/learning activities and assessment tasks may not be empowering them with skills and abilities to avoid plagiarism in their writing (Spiller & Ferguson, 2011). Indeed, University institutions in Nigeria appear not to develop critical and innovative thinkers because of the notion that students should write exactly word for word the dictate of the teachers. In similar vein, Rugira (2015) argues that for the most part, students are expected to memorize and reproduce the notes and handouts from lecturers on test and/or exam day, "after which the students must flush all this material out of their brain in order to make enough memory room for the next exam." The only work which seems to require the students to read published and unpublished materials critically

Therefore, Plagiarism in Universities has been attributed to a number of factors, one of which is ignorance. The level of knowledge that a researcher have on the subject of plagiarism play a vital role in determining if or not the act would be committed. An individual who also the knowledge about the subject of plagiarism may carry out plagiarism without noticing the offence committed. Hence ignorance is seen as one major cause of plagiarism (Jerome, etal 2018). Sridhar, Selvan and Prabhu (2013) stated that poor knowledge possessed by researchers on referencing, referencing styles and citations is a factor that brings about increase in plagiarism today. In the same vein Onuoha and Ikonne (2013) citing Insley (2011) and Wan et al. (2011) noted that some students engage in acts of plagiarism ignorantly because they possess no knowledge on the intricacies of proper citations and referencing. The proliferation of digital gadgets and information explosion has created an express way of plagiarism practices. This have facilitates easy access to information on the internet by downloading, copying, pasting and

formatting. These have resulted to intellectual laziness among students and researchers. Onuoha and Ikonne (2013) supported this by asserting that the ease in copying available materials from the internet makes it enticing for researchers to cheaply 'cut and paste' when given academic work to do. Another common factor that causes plagiarism is time constraint. A lot of students and researchers instead of going through the thorough process of downloading academic materials, perusing and internalizing the materials to produce their own papers, they would rather plagiarize to meet deadlines. This was attested by the findings of the investigation carried out by Idiegbeyan-ose, Nkiko and Osinulu (2016) on plagiarism by postgraduate students. They reported that 35% of the respondents attributed their reason for plagiarizing as pressure to meet deadlines while 32% noted that they plagiarize as a result of lack of adequate skill. Other factors includes less stringent penalties for offenders, the desire for quick fix solutions, unavailability of mechanisms and software to check plagiarism, etc.

This act of plagiarism could go a long way in discouraging authors to write because they find out that their intellectual property is being misused by other researchers or students. An adverse effect of plagiarism is the decline in the level of knowledge and frontal of innovation. The continuous practice of plagiarism brings about an obvious recycling of the same available knowledge; no new idea is created but rather already existing ideas are just being used over and again.

Strategies for curbing plagiarism

Research has proven that plagiarism and its consequences on intellectual property rights and academic integrity in higher education is the increase, which raises serious concerns about students' and staff's academic and research skill development (Gullifer & Tyson, 2010; Obeid & Hill, 2017). There is need to quickly find solutions to the emerging dishonesty. Gibson and Chester-Fangman (2011) posited that though it will take the involvement of all Stakeholders to deal with the problem of plagiarism, Universities has a major role to play. Since Universities and her community members are involved in intellectual property creation, accessibility and management. Plagiarism negates the protection of intellectual property rights. It therefore poses a great challenge to libraries and librarians. Burke (2004) opined that in dealing with plagiarism, libraries should not only be concerned with detection; they should also take proactive steps in preventing occurrence of plagiarism. Prevention measures range from information literacy and

correct citations campaigns, research clinics and advocacy programmes. Specifically, in preventing and detecting plagiarism, librarians can play the following roles;

Knowledge of Citation Methods and Skills

Referencing and citation of works forms and important feature of a credible research work. This is because, it gives information concerning the sources of information consulted, it shows that the work is a research indeed and it also gives the work originality and perspective analysis of the topic of study. Absence of reference or incorrect references shows dishonesty in research and is termed plagiarism. Lampert (2008) said that some plagiarists are victims of incident who probably lack the knowledge of proper citation methods. Sciammerella (2009) noted that some librarians are unaware of the exact current edition of citation style. There is therefore need for librarians to be abreast with current trends in citation and referencing styles. This is as a result of the update in Referencing styles.

Development of Plagiarism Policy

Organizations and institutions thrive on policies. This is because policies serve as a punitive measure to assess the originality of research. A policy on plagiarism is therefore very important. Librarians who are knowledgeable on intellectual property and copyrights are very useful in drafting such documents. Their knowledge of standards and best practice become very useful to their institutions in drafting policies on plagiarism. The policy should address issues on what constitute plagiarism, procedures for plagiarism checks and penalty for defaulters.

Plagiarism Checks

Effective check on citations and references of intellectual works is helpful. This will help to forestall attempts of plagiarism. Fortunately, there are now standard and effective online plagiarism checkers. Researchers could easily subscribe to them. Arguably, there is some software for plagiarism checks in academic institutions; some are free while others are to be subscribed to. Librarians must be able to interpret the result of the online plagiarism check. In most cases, online plagiarism checkers indicate overall plagiarism index and the sources that were plagiarized. One out of the numerous limitations of online plagiarism checkers is their inability to check plagiarized sources that are not available on the internet.

Plagiarism advocacy

Librarians are known as property/copyright rights campaigners. In a bid to stop plagiarism, awareness campaigns using various platforms are important. Jerome et al (2018) sees

social media as a veritable platform for such campaigns. Academics and researchers are active on social media platforms nowadays, so constant reminders on the evils of plagiarism using comics relief, designs and captions has impact on the spread of the ills of plagiarism.

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was librarians in Universities in Nigeria. However, a total number of 15 Universities took part in the study and a random sampling technique was used to select 89. A self-constructed online questionnaire was designed and distributed to collect the data from the respondents. The online questionnaire were grouped into 3 clusters which included; the level of awareness of various strategies of curbing plagiarism by librarians in Universities in the age of ICT in Nigeria, ascertain the strategies employed by librarians in curbing plagiarism in Universities in the age of ICT in Nigeria and identify the challenges encountered by librarians in curbing plagiarism in Universities in the age of ICT in Nigeria. A total of 89 respondents filled the online questionnaires, but 75 were valid and useful for analysis. The data was analyzed using percentage and mean scores. Using the four-point likert scale, the mean was calculated as: $4 + 3 + 2 + 1 = 10 \div 4 = 2.50$

Decision Rule: Based on the mean of 2.50, the decision was that any item with a mean of 2.50 and above was accepted while any item with a mean below 2.50 was rejected

Analysis and discussion of result

Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Sex

Item	Frequency
Male	32(43%)
Female	43(57%)

Educational qualification

Item	Frequency
PhD	17(23%)
MLIS	23(31%)
BLIS	35(40%)

The respondents consisted of 75 librarians from 15 Universities in Nigeria. The results showed that there were 32(43%) males and 43(57%) female librarians. The results of their educational qualifications were; 17(23%) PhD, 23(31%) MLIS and 35(40%) BLIS.

Research Question one: **what is the level of awareness of strategies for curbing plagiarism by librarians in Universities in the Age of ICT in Nigeria?**

To what extent are you aware of the strategies for curbing plagiarism in the age if ICT in Nigeria	Mean	Decision
Proper referencing of all cited works	3.8	Aware
Use free online plagiarism software checker	3.8	Aware
Use subscribed online paraphrased software	2.3	Not Aware
Paraphrase works with software	2.5	Aware
Using quotations in everything that comes directly from a text	2.6	Aware
Keep accurate records when doing research	2.7	Aware
Checking the paraphrased words	2.6	Aware
Paraphrase work manually	3.5	Aware

The table 1 shows the level of awareness of strategies for curbing plagiarism by librarians in Universities in the Age of ICT in Nigeria. Respondents were asked to rate their awareness of strategies for curbing plagiarism by librarians in Universities in the Age of ICT in Nigeria based on a 4 point likert scale (4-1) of Highly Aware (HA), Aware (A),Somehow Aware (SA)and Not Aware (NA). It shows proper referencing of all cited works (3.8), Use free online plagiarism software checker (3.8), Paraphrase work manually (3.5), Using quotations in everything that comes directly from a text (2.6), Checking the paraphrased words (2.6) and Paraphrase works

with software (2.5) were the strategies the respondents were aware of in curbing plagiarism in Universities. But the respondents were not aware of Use subscribed online paraphrased software (2.3). With the evidence shown in this table, it is obvious that librarians are highly aware of the strategies for curbing plagiarism; nevertheless, it disagreed with Sciammerella (2009) who noted that many researchers in higher institutions are not aware of the correct procedure for documenting information sources to avoid plagiarism. it therefore show that librarians as the masters of copyright laws are aware of the strategies that will ensure the reduction or total eradication of plagiarism in Universities in the age of ICT.

Research Question two: Strategies employed by librarians in curbing plagiarism practices in Universities in the age of ICT in Nigeria.

Strategies employed for curbing plagiarism in the age if ICT in Nigeria	Mean	Decision
Proper referencing of all cited works	3.4	Agree
Use free online plagiarism software checker	2.5	Agree
Use subscribed online paraphrased software	2.4	Disagree
Paraphrase works with software	2.4	Disagree
Using quotations in everything that comes directly from a text	2.2	Reject
Keep accurate records when doing research	2.6	Agree
Checking the paraphrased words	2.5	Agree
Paraphrase work manually	3.2	Agree

Table 2 above shows the strategies employed for curbing plagiarism in the age if ICT in Nigeria, based on a 4 point likert scale of ranging from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree(D) Strongly Disagree (SD), the respondents accepted Proper referencing of all cited works (3.4), Paraphrase work manually (3.2), Keep accurate records when doing research (2.6), Use free online plagiarism software (2.5) and Checking the paraphrased words (2.5) were strategies used employed for curbing plagiarism. On the other hand, the respondents disagreed on Using quotations in everything that comes directly from a text (2.2), Use subscribed online paraphrased software (2.4) and Paraphrase works with software (2.4). This corroborate with Emenalo (2016)

who discovered in her research that Universities uses strategies such as teaching and improving the knowledge of researchers on referencing and citation.

Question three: the challenges encountered by librarians in curbing plagiarism in academic institutions in Nigeria?

The challenges encountered by librarian	Mean	Decision
Unavailability of authors detailed information	3.7	Agree
Lack of information sources retrieval skills	3.6	Agree
Information explosion	3.0	Agree
Inadequate referencing skills	2.4	Disagree
Incomplete bibliographic details of sources of information	2.7	Agree
Insufficient fund for subscription	3.5	Agree
Poor plagiarism software skills	3.4	Agree
Poor paraphrasing skills	3.1	Agree

Table 3 above shows the challenges encountered by librarians in curbing plagiarism in the age of ICT in Nigeria, based on a 4 point likert scale of ranging from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) Strongly Disagree (SD). The respondents agreed that Unavailability of author's detailed information (3.7), Lack of information sources retrieval skills (3.6), insufficient fund for subscription (3.5), Poor plagiarism software skills (3.4), Poor paraphrasing skills (3.1), Information explosion (3.0) and incomplete bibliographic details of the sources of information (2.7). While, they disagreed that Inadequate referencing skills (2.4) is not a challenge encountered by librarians in the age of ICT in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Plagiarism in academic writing is a very grievous offence that dilutes the efficacy of research and knowledge expansion. This study is presented in the most suitable way to highlight the conventional and unconventional strategies employed by librarians for curbing plagiarism in the age of ICT in Nigeria. This investigation revealed that librarians in Universities in Nigeria are aware of the strategies that could be employed for curbing plagiarism. They agreed that they employed strategies such as proper referencing of all cited works, keep accurate records when doing research work. They also encountered challenges such that includes; unavailability of authors detailed information, lack of information resources retrieval skills, information explosion, incomplete bibliographic detailed sources of information. It is evidence that librarians in Nigeria employ some strategies for curbing plagiarism in Universities. However, there is need for librarians to improve and invent better systems of curbing plagiarism in research in the age ICT in Nigeria.

Recommendation

The study recommended that:

1. There is need for Nigerian Library Association and other associate organization to increase the awareness of effective methods of curbing plagiarism in Nigeria.
2. Librarian should work with IT personnel to invent new and cost effective software that will effectively carry out checks on plagiarism.
3. Librarians should conduct training and retraining on information search and retrieval skills.

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