

Influence of Plagiarism factor on Research Output of Postgraduate Library and Information Science Students, Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria

Mercy A. IGERE

Department of Library and Information Science,
Faculty of the Social Sciences, Delta State University, Abraka

ABSTRACT

The study examines the influence of plagiarism on the research output of postgraduate Library and Information Science (LIS) students at Delta State University, Abraka. Five research questions guided the investigation. The study employed a correlational research design, with a questionnaire serving as the primary data collection instrument. The population comprised 52 postgraduate LIS students enrolled in the 2021–2023 academic sessions. Due to the manageable size of the population, an enumerative sampling technique was adopted, selecting the entire population for the study. Data analysis was conducted using percentages and mean scores. The findings revealed low research productivity among postgraduate students and a high incidence of plagiarism. Furthermore, the results indicated a negative impact of plagiarism on the publication output of postgraduate students. The study recommends providing proper guidance on writing quality, researchable works suitable for publication in reputable journals. Additionally, it advocates for increased awareness of the detrimental effects of plagiarism on research and publication outcomes.

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INTRODUCTION

Research activities in higher institutions of learning are carried out among students as well as lecturers who are of various cadres to fulfill academic achievements. Activities of research done by individuals or by collective members often come out in an academic institution to measure work done. Hence research output is described by Chiemeké, Longe, Longe and Shaib (2009) as an actual outcome of research of articles, patent, creative works within an academic institution by students and lecturers. Okpe, Simisaye and Otuza (2013) stated that research outputs encompasses a broad spectrum which ranges from published research papers and patents to inventive technologies, artistic achievements, and policy recommendations. Igere (2021) noted that research output is the number of research conducted and published by an individual or in

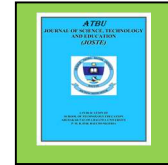
collaboration with others. This multifarious aspect of research which is done in various discipline is in a bid to underscore research activities whether it qualities outweighs the quantity. Most research carried out seems to lack quality because they lack global recognition and ranking. According to Mbachu and Unachukwu (2022), the quality and quantity of research work usually correlate with the global ranking and recognition of an institution. It is also noted by Idiegbeyan-Ose, Nkiko and Osinulu (2016) that the research output of academic staff enhances institutional image but demands integrity, undergoing scrutiny for authenticity. Originality of a research work becomes important, ensuring contributions tend towards genuineness by advancing knowledge and also preserving institutional credibility. Academic integrity and originality are essential principles in higher education, ensuring the credibility and reliability of scholarly research is

Corresponding author: Mercy A. IGERE.

✉ mesoni1@yahoo.com

Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Federal College of Education, Zaria, Kaduna State.

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obtainable. Postgraduate students, who are actively engaged in advanced studies and research, maintaining these principles becomes more critical. The current easy access and availability to information resources has made the unauthorized use and claim of information materials by authors that are not the primary owners of such work be on a rise. Most researchers who are not the rightful owner of a particular work may use a work without acknowledging the owner of the work. The act of claiming someone else's work and passing it as your own work is what is known as stealing and cheating which is also regarded as plagiarism (Savitha & Krishnamurthy, 2020).

According to Savitha and Krishnamurthy (2020) plagiarism means to steal others ideas, words, report, themes, technology, either in writing or virally as one's original work. It invariably means an individual giving credibility to himself on another person's work or idea. Osumah (2023) described also Plagiarism a premeditated utilization of the thoughts or expressions of other people with outright refusal to recognize the source through proper referencing. Researchers who deliberately make use of others work without citing such works are referred to as criminals. It is abnormal to replicate another researchers' work without proper citing of such work. The society is becoming inundated with technological tools and new problems are emerging on daily basis. Although innovations are encouraged in research however, it is a standard practice to acknowledge the authors of ideas. Lack of acknowledgement of the owners of ideas is a blunder which has the capacity of plunging a nation to an unprecedented developmental redundancy. It has been observed that plagiarism is on a high side amongst academics. Husain, Al-Shaibani and Mahfoodh (2017) noted that plagiarism is on the increase in academics like the post graduate students, lecturers, etc. It was found that a large number of U.S. college students make use of the Internet to retrieve and copy scientific materials without acknowledging the rightful owner of the work. More so, it was confirmed that with the aid of technology made easy, many students in the

developing countries use the internet to copy scientific texts without referencing the materials used (Jamali, Ghazinoory & Sadeghi 2014). This academic misconduct is widespread and is not specific to a particular discipline, year, or learning context. It cut across all levels of academia, undergraduate and postgraduate sector and, it has a way of negatively affecting the reputation of individual, institution and society at large

According to Madaan and Chakravarty (2020) plagiarism do not only affects the quality of research but also negatively affect the reputation of academic institutions. Therefore, academic institutions have to take strict measures to protect institutional and academic integrity because the credibility integrity and reputation of students, lecturers or academic staff and institution can be devalued and also undermined. Widespread to the Internet and other electronic media has served as something of a double-edged sword with respect to plagiarism' (Madaan & Chakravarty, 2020). Chowdhury and Bhattacharyya, (2016) added that the swift development in Information and communication technologies has led to an alarming increase in the instances of academic misconduct with plagiarism emerging as the serious one. In every domain of academics, plagiarism has been adversely affecting the quality of study and research (Debnath 2016). Plagiarism may affect the growth of knowledge among individuals, institution and society at large. This study is therefore embarked upon to investigate the influence of plagiarism on research output of postgraduate Library and Information Science students, Delta State University, Abrak, Nigeria.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study is to investigate the influence of plagiarism on research output of postgraduate Library and Information Science students, Delta State University, Abraka. Specifically the study is set to find out

1. Research output of postgraduate Library and Information Science Students, Delta state university, Abraka.

Corresponding author: Mercey A.IGERE.

✉ mesoni1@yahoo.com

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2. Plagiarism report of postgraduate Library and Information Science Students, Delta state university, Abraka.
3. Influence of plagiarism on research output of postgraduate Library and information Science Students, Delta state university, Abraka.

Research Questions

The following research has been raised for this study

1. What is the research output of postgraduate Library and Information science students in Delta state university, Abraka
2. What is the plagiarism report of postgraduate Library and Information science students
3. How does plagiarism influence research output of postgraduate Library and Information science students

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research is the most important activity that involves the process of generating, discovering, inventing and creating new knowledge in an academic community. According to Ali and Akayuure, (2016) it is one of the major tools which cut across different areas of human doings such as teaching, decision making, policy implementation, accreditation and so on. Furthermore, research is one of the areas being assessed while evaluating programs and institutions in relation to accreditation. Research is meant to discover new areas in any field of study that will be beneficial to human, institutions and the society. Deka, Mishra and Patel (2015) stated that research as a human activity is based on intellectual application in the investigation of matter. Research is aimed at discovering and developing methods and systems for advancing human knowledge which will bring about industrial innovation and entrepreneurship within an institution, society/country. Postgraduate research is often referred to as postgraduate or doctoral studies. It is an advanced level of academic education which allows individuals to pursue in-depth research in a specific field of study beyond their undergraduate degree. It typically culminates in the attainment of a

master's or doctoral degree. Postgraduate research involves the creation of original research projects, the development of critical thinking and analytical skills, and the generation of new knowledge in the chosen discipline (Deka, Mishra & Patel, 2015). Generally, it was noted by Muthuswamy et al. (2017) that the outcome and the extent of the functions of academics in the creation of new knowledge and innovation are forms of research output. Muthuswamy further stated that Research output is a means by which academics contribute their own knowledge to the existing body of knowledge. This can be in form of journal articles, technical reports, books, chapters in a book, supervision and training of students' etc. Shaukat, (2014) described postgraduate research output as a scholarly contributions that is generated by individuals who are engaged in advanced academic pursuits within universities and higher education institutions, predominantly at the master's and doctoral levels. Furthermore, Ali and Akayuure (2016) noted that postgraduate research output is a multifaceted concept which denotes the scholarly work generated by individuals who is pursuing advanced degrees, primarily master's and doctoral programs, within the academic realm. This output consists of a variety of key components which include creating comprehensive theses and dissertations that delve into original research findings, dissemination of research results through peer-reviewed publications in academic journals, conferences and presentation of research findings at scholarly gatherings. It is noted that the more research outcome is published in all formats, the more the probability of availability and access to information is assured.

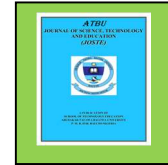
Igere (2020) stated that researcher output cut across quality papers that researcher put together to disseminate knowledge to the public through various sources such as journals, chapters in books, conference proceedings, and technical reports. These outputs collectively help in addressing research questions, enhancing knowledge and enriching the academic and scientific communities with innovative and rigorous insights. It was noted by

Corresponding author: Mercey A.IGERE.

✉ mesoni1@yahoo.com

Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Federal College of Education, Zaria, Kaduna State.

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Tella and Onyancha (2020) that there is need for postgraduate students to be constantly involved in publishing in various sources. It is presently a norm in most universities in Nigeria that post graduate students must publish from their thesis before graduating. But some post graduate students find it difficult to put together quality papers for publication. This is as a result of some factors one of such factors which was found by Cahill et al. (2008) as non-writing abilities needed to produce research papers that could be published in a reputable journals. Similarly, Garban and Samuel (2013) revealed that, lack of academic writing resources in library and information science has a way of depriving researcher's ability to produce quality scholarly papers. Adeyemi (2009) as cited by Igere (2022) found that the average number of publications by academic staff in Covenant University was two conference proceedings, two seminar presentations, and two journal publication which was regarded as low productivity. In a study by Igere (2019), it revealed that librarians publication output was low on some of the items such as textbooks, chapters in books, single authored works, co-authored works, patent. In another study by Igere (2022) on publication output of lecturers revealed that about 28(32.6%) respondents had 1-4 textbooks, 21(24.4%) had 5-8 textbooks, 57 agreed they had 1-4 articles within three years indicating the researchers were productive. All past studies revealing either low productivity or high productivity at a particular time were associated to some reasons of either not been able to put together a quality work to be published in a reputable journal or it was herculean in getting a good work done. The inability of researchers to be able to publish in a reputable journal could also be as a result of plagiarism factor which maybe high at some point.

Plagiarism could be termed as a way of depriving authors their right of ownership to knowledge put together. It can also be regarded as a deprivation of credit to an author of information put together (Ude-Akpeh & Ezekulie (2022)). It is expected that when another person's idea is adopted or adapted, appropriate

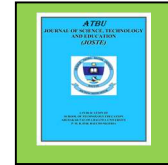
acknowledgement should be given to the source of the idea. When this is neglected, it is plagiarism and it is a form of stealing. Helgesson and Eriksson, (2015) noted that there are some cases where, authors work are infringed into by other author who may also carry out proper acknowledgement but needed to seek the consent of the owner of the work for permission and when this is not done, it becomes infringement and not plagiarism. . Helgesson, and Eriksson, furthermore stated that, plagiarism could occur in various ways. There are cases of self-plagiarism, a situation where authors duplicate the entire or part of their work. In a situation where the plagiarizer repeatedly uses text or passages or figures, it is known as recycling of work. When the same work is divided into different papers, in order to get more publications, it is regarded as "salami slicing". An investigation in Ogun state by Jerome, Christopher and Osinulu, (2016) as cited in Osumah, O. A. (2023) shows that most students do not know the style of writing scholarly articles because they rely on copying others work word for word. Fatunde (2019) cited in Osumah, O. A. (2023) also noted that Okebukola the former executive secretary of National Universities Commission (NUC) asserted that postgraduate level of plagiarism is between 15-20% for Masters students and 8% for PhD students. In a comprehensive literature review conducted by Guraya and Guraya (2017), the prevalence of plagiarism among postgraduate students emerged as a disconcerting trend. A study on plagiarism detection of medical postgraduate researchers by Zimba and Gaspayan (2021); Chambers, Michener and Falcone, (2019); Kardeş, Levack, Ozkuk, Aydin and Karabulut (2020) noted that the high percentage of plagiarism has led to the denial of some articles in the past and it is still going on. They further noted that there were a great number of 20% cases of plagiarism in 2008. Further report mentioned among the postgraduate researchers showed that there were only 4 cases of 16% plagiarism reported, 40 cases of 23% plagiarism reported, 11 cases of 26% plagiarism reported, 7 cases of 13% plagiarism reported and 7 cases of

Corresponding author: Mercey A.IGERE.

✉ mesoni1@yahoo.com

Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Federal College of Education, Zaria, Kaduna State.

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32% plagiarism reported. In the same vein, Darman (2022) study on the level of similarity index of students shows an average percentage of the similarity index (38.44 %) in the publication of doctoral students. The report revealed a low similarity index on plagiarism report of post graduate students.

it is an indication that most doctoral students in the developed world have a reduced percentage on their research articles. In the developing world, most of the researchers lack awareness on the consequences of plagiarism and as such, the extent to which they plagiarise is high. Technology has brought in increased access to vast sources of information which has also increased plagiarism without researchers considering the adverse effect of high plagiarism on research output. According to Igere (2020) there are a lot of ways of acceding information in this technological age to through various metadata, teaching literacy skills and converting analogue to digital for global accessibility.

Plagiarism has a way of affecting the researchers' reputation and also affecting the institution and the journal that is responsible for the publication. According to Kour (2022), plagiarism leads to knowledge distortion in a particular field of study of research. It dampens innovation by encouraging the recycling of ideas already existing. In another way, it impede the generation of novel knowledge. The act of plagiarizing research wastes valuable resources, including time and funding, diverting them from genuine endeavors. Credibility erosion is another consequence, manifesting through retractions and publication issues. Wasay and Siddiqui (2015) as cited by Osumah (2023) noted that those students who were involved in plagiarism were punishable by reducing the score or grade

of the students or they were expelled. Osumah, O. A. (2023) further stated that a lot of instances of plagiarism which occurred among academics in some Nigeria universities have led to their demotion, refusal from promotion or removal from position. In the developed world, such cases of plagiarism led to discontinuation of the articles. It is an indication of negative influence of plagiarism on publication output of researchers. In another case at Ohio University, a student who was involved in plagiarism was expelled from the university. From various literature reviewed, it is found that plagiarism hae negative influence on the publication output of researchers.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a correlational design with the use of structured questionnaire to eliciting information from the respondents. The population of the study was 52 postgraduate students of Library and information science from the 2021/2022, 2022/2023 academic session. The enumerative sampling technique was used which led to the use of the entire population as a result of the size of the population of the study. The entire questionnaire distributed was retrieved from the respondents. Data collected from the respondents were analysed using descriptive and influential statistics with a criterion mean of 2.50.

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

This section discuss data presented in the study and findings

Research Question One: What is the research output of postgraduate Library and Information Science students in Delta State University, Abraka?

Table 1: Research Output of Postgraduate Students

S/N	Items	Freq.	%
1	0-1Publication a year	34	65.4
2	2-3 publication a year	11	21.2
3	4-5 publication a year	7	13.5
4	6-7 publication a year	0	0
5	8-9 publication a year	0	0
6.	10 and above	0	0
	Total	52	100

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✉ mesoni1@yahoo.com

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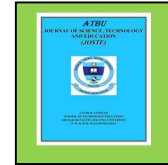


Table 1 presents the research output of postgraduate Library and information science students in Delta State University, Abraka. The study found that majority of the postgraduate students, constituting 34 (65.4%), produce a research output of 0-1 publications per year. 11 (21.2%), agreed to 2-3 publications annually. 7(13.5) responded to 4-5 publication within a year. No respondents agreed to producing 6-7, 8-9, 10 and above publications per year. This is an indication that publications made by postgraduate students ranges from 0-1 per year

implying low productivity. This finding is in line with Igere (2019) that research output of librarians was low and also at variance with the study of Igere (2022) on the number of publications of lecturers within 3 years indicating researchers were productive.

Research Question Two: What is the plagiarism report on research conducted by postgraduate Library and Information Science students in Delta State University, Abraka?

Table 2: Plagiarism Report on Research Conducted by Postgraduate Students

S/N		Agree		Disagree	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1.	1-5 percentage	4	7.7	48	92.3
2	6-10 percentage	4	7.7	2	3.8
3	11-15 percentage	6	11.5	2	3.8
4.	16-20 percentage	10	19.2	0	0
5.	21-25 percentage	14	26.9	0	0
6.	26 and above percentage	14	26.9	0	0

Table 2 provided an insights into the plagiarism reports associated with research conducted by postgraduate students in Delta State University, Abraka. The data reveals a range of responses regarding the extent of plagiarism detected in their research endeavors. A notable portion, constituting 14(26.9%) agreed a high percentage plagiarism report of 26 and above, same percentage of 26.9 agreed to 21-25 percentage as plagiarism report, 10(19.2%) acknowledge a plagiarism report of 16-20 percentage, 6(11.5%) agreed to 11-15 range of plagiarism report while only 4(7.7%), acknowledges a minimal level of plagiarism, falling within 1-5 and 6-10 percentage range.

This shows that a very few percentage of the respondents acknowledge a low level of plagiarism report ranging from 1to 20. While a high percentage agreed to a high level of plagiarism report ranging from 21 and above percent. This study is related to the findings of Osumah, O. A. (2023) that postgraduate level of plagiarism is between 15-20% for Masters' Students and 8% for PhD students which could be regarded as low.

Research Question Three: How does plagiarism report influence research output of postgraduate Library and information science students in Delta State University, Abraka?

Table 3: How Plagiarism report Influence Research Output among Postgraduate

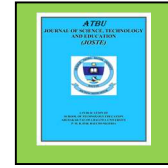
S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{x}
1.	Plagiarism can severely damage the reputation of the researcher, academic institution, or journal involved	30	20	2	0	3.54
2.	Plagiarism can have legal and ethical consequences	19	30	2	1	3.29
3.	Plagiarism misrepresents the state of knowledge in a field	19	22	6	5	3.06
4.	Plagiarism stifles innovation by promoting the recycling of existing ideas and findings rather than the generation of new knowledge	23	15	7	7	3.04

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✉ mesoni1@yahoo.com

Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Federal College of Education, Zaria, Kaduna State.

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S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{x}
5.	Plagiarism deters collaboration	21	17	9	5	3.04
6.	Plagiarized research wastes valuable resources, including time and funding	21	16	9	6	3.00
7.	Plagiarism erodes the credibility of the researcher and their work	21	16	4	11	2.90
8.	Retraction and publication issues	18	16	12	6	2.88
9.	Plagiarism inhibits the free flow of knowledge	17	19	8	8	2.87
10	Plagiarism in research can erode public trust in the scientific community	17	20	6	9	2.87
11	Lost opportunities for genuine authors	16	17	9	10	2.75
12	Plagiarism in research set a negative example for students and aspiring researchers	14	18	12	8	2.73
	Aggregate Mean					3.00
	Criterion Mean					2.50

Data presented in Table 3 revealed that Plagiarism can severely damage the reputation of the researcher, academic institution, or journal involved with the mean of 3.54, plagiarism can have legal and ethical consequences ($\bar{x} = 3.29$), plagiarism misrepresents the state of knowledge in a field ($\bar{x} = 3.06$), plagiarism stifles innovation by promoting the recycling of existing ideas and findings rather than the generation of new knowledge ($\bar{x} = 3.04$), plagiarism deters collaboration ($\bar{x} = 3.04$), plagiarized research wastes valuable resources, including time and funding ($\bar{x} = 3.00$), plagiarism erodes the credibility of the researcher and their work ($\bar{x} = 2.90$), retraction and publication issues ($\bar{x} = 2.88$), plagiarism inhibits the free flow of knowledge ($\bar{x} = 2.87$), plagiarism in research can erode public trust in the scientific community ($\bar{x} = 2.87$), lost opportunities for genuine authors ($\bar{x} = 2.75$) and plagiarism in research set a negative example for students and aspiring researchers ($\bar{x} = 2.73$). The study found an aggregate mean of 3.00 which is higher than the criterion mean of 2.50. This implies that plagiarism influence research output among postgraduate students in a negative way. This finding relate to that of Osumah, (2023) that plagiarism lead to demotion, refusal from promotion or removal from position of academic staff which is an indication of negative influence of plagiarism on publication output of researchers.

CONCLUSION

Research output is paramount to both individual and organisation at large because it brings about visibility of individual and the organisation the researcher is attached. Sometimes, researchers are discouraged as a result of high plagiarism report on write up which could deprive publication in reputable journals. This study has revealed that postgraduate students could have low research output. Also, the study found a high percentage of plagiarism report, indicating a high plagiarism report of postgraduate students research work. On the same level, it has been seen that plagiarism has a negative influence on publication output of postgraduate students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings on this study, it is recommended that:

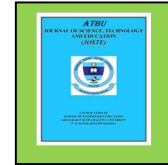
1. Postgraduate students should be guided on how to put together researchable work for publication in reputable journals.
2. Awareness on the effect of plagiarism should be created to inform postgraduate students
3. The negative effect of high plagiarism index should be made known to the students

Corresponding author: Mercey A.IGERE.

✉ mesoni1@yahoo.com

Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Federal College of Education, Zaria, Kaduna State.

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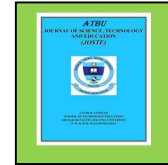
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Corresponding author: Mercey A.IGERE.

✉ mesoni1@yahoo.com

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✉ mesoni1@yahoo.com

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