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Awareness and Perception of Plagiarism of Postgraduate Students in Selected Universities in Ogun State, Nigeria.

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Awareness and Perception of Plagiarism of Postgraduate Students in Selected Universities in Ogun State, Nigeria.

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Abstract

Plagiarism undoubtedly constitutes a seemingly imperceptible threat to the growth of genuine global scholarship. The understanding of various perspectives of the phenomenon is critical to finding a lasting solution. It is against this background therefore, that the study investigated awareness and perception of plagiarism of postgraduate students in selected Universities in Ogun State Nigeria. Survey research design was used while adopting stratified and random sampling methods to select 338 respondents from federal, state and private Universities for the study. The findings revealed average level of awareness of plagiarism among postgraduate students, level of training influenced their level of awareness; pressure to meet deadlines, inadequate writing skills and lack of knowledge of what constitutes plagiarism were found to be responsible for the malaise. The study also revealed a significant positive relationship at r = 0.294 and p < 0.05 implying that as awareness increases, the positive perception of plagiarism would also improve. However, it revealed a significant difference in perception of plagiarism at $f_{(2,327)}$ = 25,000 and p < 0.05 implying that what postgraduate students perceived as plagiarism differ across the types of institution. The paper concluded that plagiarism is a heinous academic crime which negates the main objective of research to discover new facts and expand the frontiers of knowledge. The paper recommended the intensification of awareness and sensitization programmes on plagiarism by various institutions; that the National Universities Commission should enforce the use of Turnitin in all Nigerian Universities and the introduction of information ethics as a compulsory course of study in the tertiary institutions.

***Keywords**: Plagiarism, Postgraduate students, Nigerian Universities, Ogun State, plagiarism awareness, plagiarism perception.*

Introduction

Higher education all over the world especially in this 21st century is experiencing heightened reported cases of plagiarism. The prevalence is traceable to the introduction of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in education as well as the plethora of online resources (Gow, 2013; McCab, 2005; Kress, 1999 and Haward, 1999). The inimical act of copious copying of other scholars' intellectual property devoid of proper attribution or what is popularly regarded as 'cut and paste' syndrome is a clear demonstration of the culture of mediocrity. It has the greatest propensity of enthroning superficiality and forestall advancement superficiality and forestall advancement in knowledge and quality of learning. Plagiarism is a contentious issue in higher education, it is perceived, by many to be widespread and increasing among university students. (Flint, Clegg and Mcdonald, 2006 quoted Roberts and Toombs, 1993; Larkham and Manns, 2002). Onuoha and Ikonne (2013) stressed that the incidents of plagiarism nowadays seem to be on the increase especially with the advent of Internet which made information more easily available and accessible without any geographical barriers; therefore, researchers can have access to any document in any part of the world as easily as possible.

The International School of Management (2015) pointed out that in Nigeria, the issue of academic integrity or dishonesty is so crucial in the heart of the higher institutions management. Therefore, the Committee of Vice Chancellors of Nigerian Universities in 2012 contacted the United Kingdom (UK) based academic integrity software company called Turnitin for discussions and technical collaboration. Today virtually all universities in Nigeria have access to the Turnitin system and they can now conduct originality checks of diverse publications to ensure genuine intellectual contributions to scholarship.

Literature Review

Awareness refers to the cognitive ability of a person to discern, decipher and judge a given phenomenon. It 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 background knowledge about the object, event or any other phenomenon. (Reinhardt, Mletzko, Sloep and Drachsler, 2015.). Merikle (1984) defined

3

awareness as 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 and perception 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. (Human Perception and Information Processing, 2015).

Awareness and perception level of researchers will have effects on their involvement in plagiarism. Flint, Clegg and Mcdonald, (2006) cited Liverpool Hope University College, (2003) and defined plagiarism as the use of material which is not cited and referenced to its source and also the direct use of material, referenced or un-referenced, without a clear indication that the material is taken verbatim from its source. In the same way, Pyer (2000) described plagiarism as theft, he stressed that it is taking the words, ideas and labour of other people and giving the impression and or pretending that they are your own, thereby crediting the idea, opinion, and thought to oneself.

Plagiarism is an illicit activity synonymous with 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. (Gow, 2013). Orim, Borg and Awala-Ale (2013) quoted Park (2003), also described plagiarism as academic malpractice; and a breach of academic integrity.

Plagiarism occurs as result of certain elements in the academic environment. The causes of plagiarism can be summarized as: ignorance, lack of skills, and academic pressure of publish or perish. To buttress this point, Orim, Borg and Awala-Ale (2013) stressed that most plagiarism cases occurred as a result of lack of awareness and proper skills. They conducted a study on Nigerian students on post-graduate programme in United Kingdom (UK), and found that most of the post-graduate students are not aware of what actually constitutes plagiarism before coming to UK universities. Some plagiarism behaviour such as collusion is clearly intentional, and un-ethical, whereas, some other could be accidental or unintentional which could be referred to as poor practice. (Brown and Howell, 2001; Devlin and Gray, 2007; Elander, Pittman, Lusher, Fox and Payne, 2010; James, Mclnnis and Davlin, 2002 cited in Powell, 2012; Hayes and Introna,2005.)

Onuoha and Ikonne (2013) cited Island, (2011) and Wan et al (2011) and observed that although students may sometimes engage in the acts of plagiarism intentionally, some students unknowingly plagiarize because they are unclear of what constitutes a quotation or paraphrase and they are not equipped with how to cite properly.

Ryan, Bonanno, Krass, Scouller and Smith (2009) carried out a study on undergraduate and postgraduate Pharmacy students' perceptions of plagiarism and academic honesty and discovered that there is widespread deficiency in students' understanding of plagiarism across all years of under-graduate and post-graduate Pharmacy students in University of Sydney, Australia. In the same way, Chukwuemeka, Gbenga, Sunday and Ndidiamaka (2013), investigated academic dishonesty among Nigerian Pharmacy students in comparison to their United Kingdom counterparts and found that the perception of Nigerian students as regards academic dishonesty in the universities investigated was poor, and the students' involvement in cheating was much higher than what was reported in US and UK schools. A research that was conducted in University of Florida in 1987, revealed that 68.1% of the students engaged in plagiarism and other forms of academic misconducts (Maina, Maina and Jauros, 2014).

Theoretical Framework

The study relied on two theories to explain the interrelatedness of the main variables.

Situation Awareness Theory

Stanton, Chamber & Piggott (2001) cited Gilson (1995) and pointed out that the idea behind situation awareness was conceived during the world war 1 on the importance of gaining an awareness of your enemy before the enemy gains a similar awareness of you; the theory further pointed out that in order for people to maintain an adequate awareness about a system status/phenomenon, the development of events in those areas must be tracked as they unfold.

Situation awareness is the appropriate awareness of a situation or event. It is the perception of the elements in the environment within a specific time and space, the perception of their meaning and anticipation of their status in the future (Endsley, 1988, cited in Santon 2015)

Huemer's Theory of Perception: Analysis and Objections

According to Rubin (2015), Michael Huemer's theory lays out an account of perception that supports a version of direct realism. His argument was based on two premises "perception is directed awareness of external reality and it leads to non-inferential knowledge of that reality.

Huemer's theory claims that for awareness to take place there must be relationship between the one who is aware and the object of which he is aware. This implies that for one to be aware of something and there is no object present then there cannot be actual awareness as in the case of hallucination".

Huemer listed three major components of perception:

- Internal mental state: this refers to the perceptual experience
- Object of perception: this is external and roughly satisfies the content of the experience
- Relationship exist between the two – the absence of any of these items listed above disqualifies the event from perception

Perception Error

A coil of rope might be mistaken for a snake. In order to avoid mistakes in perception, Huemer introduces the notion of primary and secondary perception. In secondary perception, the object is perceived by virtue of another perception, perceiving a coil of rope as snake involves the same primary perception in which the image is taken to be of different objects the coil of rope is taken as a snake; it is only acceptable to a reasonable resemblance as the coil of rope has some visual resemblance to a snake and not a coil of rope for a dog, a more serious error.

Relevance of this theory to this work

These theories on awareness and perception are relevant to this work as it explained the relationship between awareness and perception; it also discussed perception error which is much related to plagiarism perception. The theory explained primary and secondary perception; this is also relevant to plagiarism as many researchers may not know what actually constitute plagiarism because of their perception of plagiarism. The theories therefore project attitudinal disposition of students and environmental factors as predictors of plagiarism. Institutional policies, actual

6

practices, orientation, core values, legal frameworks and enforcements are intricately related to scholarship outcomes with respect to originality of content or plagiarism. In a University where the culture of honesty and esteem for intellectual property is clearly demonstrated and entrenched as well as palpable recognition of original contribution to knowledge, the proper worldview to plagiarism would have been ingrained in the minds of students.

Conceptual Model of Awareness, Perception and Plagiarism
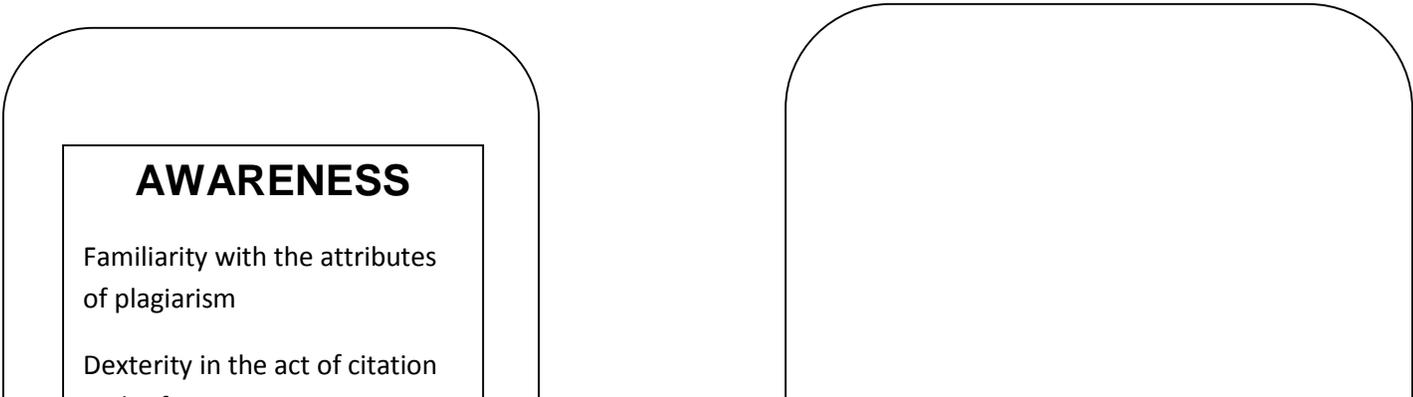
AWARENESS

Familiarity with the attributes of plagiarism

Dexterity in the act of citation

PERCEPTION		PLAGIARISM
PERCEPTION Capability of positive moral judgment of plagiarism Collusion in submission of assignments Copying my friend's assignment is not plagiarism	→	**PLAGIARISM** The use of material that is not cited or referenced to its source
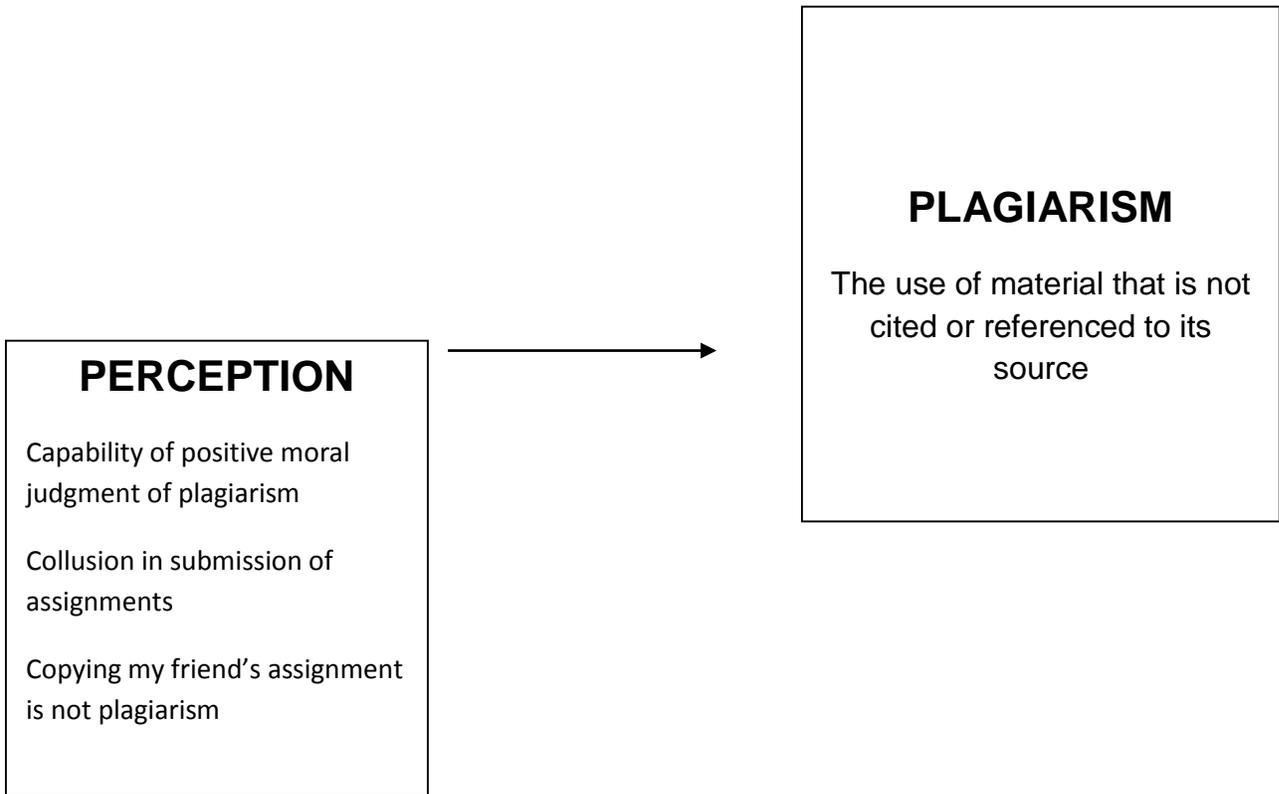
The conceptual model depicts the interplay of awareness, perception and plagiarism. Lack of awareness of the basic attributes and underlying motions of the phenomenon leading to wrong perception and resulting in perpetuation of plagiarism.

Originally developed for this work

Statement of the Problem

Plagiarism has been a serious and widely condemned epidemic ravaging institutions of higher learning all over the world. Several attempts have been made by the management of the various

institutions to arrest this ugly incident. The efforts had led to formulation of institutional plagiarism or academic dishonesty policies. Some institutions had even subscribed to plagiarism detection software such as turnitin. Literature revealed that plagiarism can be unintentional or intentional, a research that was done in United Kingdom to determine the awareness level of Nigerian postgraduates students in that country reported that most of the students are not aware of what actually constitute plagiarism before coming to UK to study. It is against this background that this study sought to investigate the nexus between awareness and perception on plagiarism among Nigerian postgraduate students.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to investigate the awareness and perception of plagiarism by post-graduate students in Nigerian Universities.

The specific objectives of the study are to:

- Investigate if the post-graduate students are aware of plagiarism
- Ascertain if there is gender difference in plagiarism awareness of post-graduate students in Nigerian Universities
- Find out if there is difference in plagiarism awareness of post-graduate students in Nigerian Universities from different level of education
- Investigate if there is difference in plagiarism awareness of post-graduate students in Nigerian Universities from different age groups
- Find out if training will have effect on plagiarism by post-graduate students in Nigerian Universities

- Find out the reasons why postgraduate students plagiarize

- Investigate if there is difference in awareness of plagiarism by postgraduate students in federal, state and private universities in Nigeria

9

- Investigate if there is difference in perception of plagiarism by postgraduate students in federal, state and private universities in Nigeria

- Ascertain if there is relationship between awareness and perception of plagiarism among postgraduate students in Nigerian universities

Research Questions

1. Are post-graduate students in Nigerian Universities aware of plagiarism?
2. Is there gender difference in plagiarism awareness of post-graduate students in Nigerian Universities
3. Is there difference in plagiarism awareness of post-graduate students in Nigerian Universities from different level of education?
4. Is there difference in plagiarism awareness of post-graduate students in Nigerian Universities from age groups?
5. Will training have effect on plagiarism by post-graduate students in Nigerian Universities?
6. Why do postgraduate students plagiarize?
7. Is there any difference in awareness of plagiarism by postgraduate students in federal. State and private Universities in Nigeria?
8. Is there any difference in perception of plagiarism by postgraduate students in federal. State and private Universities in Nigeria?
9. Is there any relationship between awareness and perception of plagiarism by postgraduate students in Nigerian Universities?

Hypotheses

H_1. The post-graduate students in Nigerian Universities are not aware of plagiarism in academic writing

H$_2$. There is no significant difference in awareness of plagiarism by post-graduate students in federal, state and private Universities in Nigeria

H$_3$. There is no significant difference in perception of plagiarism among post-graduate students in federal, state and private Universities in Nigeria.

H$_4$: there is no significant relationship between awareness and perception of plagiarism by postgraduate students in Nigerian Universities.

Methods

This descriptive study adopted a survey research design. A stratified sampling technique was used to select participants from three strata; federal, state and private universities. In all 338 respondents participated in this study. This sample comprised 116 participants from federal university out of the 160 administered, 74 respondents from state university from 85 copies of the questionnaire administered and 148 participants from private university out of the 190 administered. Questionnaire developed by the researcher was used in data collection. The data collected were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. A research assistant was employed for the distributions and collections of the questionnaires in the various institutions.

Data Analysis and Interpretations of Results

The results of data collected and analyzed to achieve objectives raised for this study are highlighted below;

Table 1: Demographic of respondents (n=338)

Variation	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	175	51.8
Female	163	48.2
Age		
Less than 20 years	1	.3

11

20-25years	58	17.2
26-30years	110	32.5
31-35years	51	15.1
36-40	53	15.7
41years and Above	65	19.2
Institution		
Federal	116	34.3
State	74	21.9
Private	148	43.8
Degree		
PGD	27	8.0
Masters	192	56.8
M.Phil/PhD	43	12.7
PhD	76	22.5

Survey, 2015

The gender distribution revealed that 51.8% of respondents were male and female respondents accounted for 48.2%. The age distribution revealed that 0.3% was less than 20 years those respondents within 20-25 years bracket were accounted for 17.2%. The respondents within 26-30 years bracket were accounted for 32.5%. The respondents within 31-35 years bracket were accounted for 15.1%. Those respondents within 36-40 years bracket were accounted for 15.7% and respondents were 41 years and above accounted for 19.2%. The ownership structure of universities where respondents were selected from revealed that 34.3% from federal and 21.9% from state and 43.8% from private. The analysis of types of degree registered for by the respondents revealed that 8% PGD students, 56.8 were Masters students, MPhil/ Phd students were 12.7% and PhD students were 22.5%

Table 2: Analysis of Variables

Variation	Frequency	Percent
Awareness		
High Level of Awareness	131	38.8

12

Average Level of Awareness	157	46.4
Low Level of Awareness	50	14.8
Causes of plagiarism		
Pressure to meet deadlines	116	35
Inadequate writing skills	106	32
Lack of knowledge on what constitute plagiarism	108	33
Training on proper citation and referencing		
High level of exposure to training on proper citation and referencing	50	15
Average level of exposure to training on proper citation and referencing	86	26
Low level of exposure to training on proper citation and referencing	194	59
Factors that can reduce level of involvement in plagiarism		
Awareness	17	5
Training and education	50	15
Definite university policy on plagiarism	139	42
Introduction of plagiarism detection software	124	38

In analyzing the variables of this study, awareness was observed at the three levels the results revealed that 38.8% reported high level, 46.4% average level and 14.8% low level. The causes of plagiarism among students were identified; the analysis revealed that 35% of respondents blamed the prevalence of plagiarism on pressure often placed on students to meet deadlines, while32% blamed it on inadequate writing skills among students and 33% cited lack of knowledge among students on what constitute plagiarism. The exposure of students to training on proper citation and referencing revealed that 15% reported high exposure, 26% average and 59% low level of exposure. The respondents suggested ways of reducing or curbing act of plagiarism among postgraduate students, 5% believed that increasing awareness among students will curb the act of plagiarism, 15% suggested adequate training and education on proper citation and referencing while 42% suggested that universities should have definite university policy on plagiarism and 38% suggested introduction of plagiarism detection software.

Answers to Research Questions

Research Question 1: Are postgraduate students in Nigerian universities aware of plagiarism?

Table 3: Level of Awareness of plagiarism among postgraduate students in Nigerian universities

Variation	Frequency	Percent
High Level of Awareness	140	41.4
Average Level of Awareness	156	46.2
Low Level of Awareness	42	12.4

In answering the first research question which sought to determine the level plagiarism awareness among postgraduate students in Nigerian universities, the awareness was observed generally regardless of ownership and specifically which put ownership into consideration. The findings revealed as presented in table 3 that almost half of the total respondents or 46.4% reported average level of awareness. However, 38.8% reported high level of awareness and only 14.8% reported low level of awareness. This implies an average awareness of plagiarism issues among postgraduate students in Nigerian universities. However, the awareness level was considered at federal, state and private level as presented in figure 1.

Figure 1: Awareness Level of Plagiarism

The figure 1 showed that awareness of plagiarism is higher among postgraduate students in private than federal and state universities. In interpreting these findings, one can conclude that considering the level of education of the respondents, average level of awareness of plagiarism may not be

14

appropriate because of the seriousness of the concept of plagiarism in academic circle. This may pose a serious threat to quality of academic work and output.

Research Question 2: To what extent does gender affect awareness of plagiarism among postgraduate students in Nigerian universities?

Table 4: Gender difference in awareness of plagiarism among postgraduate students in Nigerian universities

Gender	High	Average	Low
Male	3.2%	36.2%	12.4%
Female	38.2	10	

The gender effect on awareness of plagiarism among postgraduate students in Nigerian universities was examined. The findings revealed that 175 (51.8%) males against 148 (48.2%) females participated in this study. However, only 3.2% males against 38.2% females reported high level of plagiarism awareness while 36.2% males reported average level of awareness against 10% female. The findings equally revealed that while 12.4% of males reported low level of plagiarism awareness no females did. These findings imply that females are better aware of plagiarism than males.

Research Question 3: To what extent does educational level affect awareness of plagiarism among postgraduate students in Nigerian universities?

Table 5: Educational level difference in awareness of plagiarism among postgraduate students in Nigerian universities

Degree	High	Average	Low
PGD	-	-	8
Masters	10	42.4	4.4
M.Phil/PhD	8.1	4.6	-
PhD	22.3	0.2	-

The findings as presented in the table above show that awareness increases as the educational level increases. The Ph.D students reported highest level of awareness meanwhile there is little difference in the level of awareness of Masters and M. Phil/Ph.D while PGD students reported lowest level of awareness.

Research Question 4: To what extent does age affect awareness of plagiarism among postgraduate students in Nigerian universities?

Table 6 Age   difference in awareness of plagiarism among postgraduate students in Nigerian universities

	High (%)	Average (%)	Low (%)
Less than 20 years	.0	.3	.0
20-25years	2.7	14.5	.0
26-30years	14.8	11.8	3.0
31-35years	5.9	7.4	1.8
36-40	3.0	5.9	6.8
41years and Above	8.9	6.5	.9

The findings as presented in the table above shows no relationship between awareness and age of students. The distribution does not reflect any pattern to suggest whether awareness increases or decreases as age increases.

Research Question 5: To what extent does training affect awareness of plagiarism among postgraduate students in Nigerian universities?

Table 7 Cross tabulation of training and awareness of plagiarism among postgraduate students in Nigerian universities

		Awareness of plagiarism		
		High	Average	Low
	High	50 (15%)	-	-
	Average	71 (22%)	15 (5%)	-

16

Training on proper citation and referencing	Low	-	142 (54.5%)	42 (0.12%)

The awareness of plagiarism among postgraduate students in Nigerian universities was cross tabulated with the training on proper citation and referencing. The result revealed that all the 50 (15%) participants who reported high level of training equally reported high level of awareness while 71(22%) out of 86(37%) who reported average level of training reported high level of awareness and while remaining 15(5%) reported average level of awareness. Meanwhile 184 (54.4%) participants reported low level of training out of which 142(54.5%) reported average level of awareness while the remaining 42(0.12%) reported low level of awareness. It can be inferred that training affect awareness of plagiarism among postgraduate students in Nigerian universities. The more the students are exposed to training on proper citation and referencing the better their level of awareness.

Research Question 6: Why do postgraduate students in Nigerian universities plagiarize?

Table 8: Reasons for students' Involvement in Plagiarism

	Frequency	**Percent**
Pressure to meet deadlines	116	35
Inadequate writing skills	106	32
Lack of knowledge on what constitute plagiarism	108	33

The reasons while students plagiarized was examined and three factors were reported as responsible for plagiarism The pressure in meeting deadlines in academic endeavours was reported by 35% while 32% cited inadequate writing skills of postgraduate students in Nigerian universities and 33% of participants blamed the act of plagiarism on poor knowledge on what constitute plagiarism.

Hypothesis testing

The hypotheses raised for this study were tested and the results presented below

17

Hypothesis 1: The post-graduate students in Nigerian Universities are not aware of plagiarism in academic writing

Table 9: Level of awareness of plagiarism among postgraduate students in Nigerian universities

Variation	Frequency	Df	X^2-Ob	P
High Level of Awareness	140	2	70.57	<0.05
Average Level of Awareness	156			
Low Level of Awareness	40			

The result of the first hypothesis tested revealed that post-graduate students in Nigerian Universities are aware of plagiarism in academic writing at X^2=70.57, 2 degree of freedom, <0.05 significant level. This implies the finding is significant; average level of awareness of plagiarism was observed among post-graduate students in Nigerian Universities.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in awareness of plagiarism by post-graduate students in federal, state and private Universities in Nigeria.

Table 10: ANOVA table showing Summary of awareness of plagiarism of post-graduate students in federal, state and private Universities in Nigeria

Variations	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	18.359	2	9.180	1.064	.346
Within Groups	2822.129	327	8.630		
Total	2840.488	329			

This hypothesis sought to determine the significant difference in awareness of plagiarism by post-graduate students in federal, state and private Universities in Nigeria. The findings revealed no significant difference at $f_{(2,327)}$ =1.064 and p=0.346. it implies that the level of awareness cut across the types of institution without one having advantage over others.

18

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference in perception of plagiarism among post-graduate students in federal, state and private Universities in Nigeria.

Table 11: ANOVA table showing perception of plagiarism of post-graduate students in federal, state and private Universities in Nigeria

Variations	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	596.419	2	298.210	25.000	.000
Within Groups	3924.460	329	11.928		
Total	4520.880	331			

This hypothesis sought to determine the significant difference in the perception of plagiarism by post-graduate students in federal, state and private Universities in Nigeria. The findings revealed a significant difference at $f_{(2,327)} = 25.000$ and $p < 0.05$. It implies that that what postgraduate students perceived as plagiarism differ across the types of institution.

Hypothesis 4

There is no significant relationship between awareness and perception of plagiarism.

		Awareness	Perception
Awareness	Pearson Correlation	1	.294(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	330	325
Perception	Pearson Correlation	.294(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	325	332

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

This hypothesis sought to determine the significant relationship between awareness and perception of plagiarism among post-graduate students in Nigerian Universities. The findings revealed a

significant positive relationship at r=0.294 and p<0.05. It implies that as the awareness increases, perception will also improve.

Discussion of Findings

Research is at the very core of postgraduate studies. This requires following systematic processes in expanding the frontiers of knowledge through original and novel discoveries, unique contributions to scholarship, patentable innovations. The academia places highest premium on observance of ethical standards in the pursuit of scientific inquiries devoid of intellectual dishonesty. Consequent upon observed increase in the wave of plagiarism in the country, the study sought to investigate the awareness and perception of this phenomenon among post-graduate students in selected Universities in Ogun State. The resultant findings are discussed hereunder:

The average level of awareness of plagiarism reported by respondents in this study presupposes obvious deficiency in ethical value expectations in research activities. The post-graduate students ought to have had requisite exposure and preparations in this regard during their undergraduate lectures on research projects. This deficiency is corroborated by Orim, Borg and Awala-Ale (2013). This trend must be checked to guarantee the credibility and capability of Nigerian graduates to undertake postgraduate studies without recourse to auditing basic courses like academic writing as a prerequisite for progression to research activities.

It is noteworthy that the study showed that awareness of plagiarism is higher among postgraduate students in private Universities than their public counterparts. This could be attributable to stricter oversight by Management of private Universities leading to comparative advantage in efficiency. Although the awareness difference in these institutions is not significant.

Training on proper citation and referencing is regarded as having the propensity to eliminate or reduce plagiarism. Since attribution as exemplified by citation and referencing is at the root of respect for intellectual property, mastery must not be assumed but painstakingly taught and practiced through insistence on proper compliance to best practices in report writings, seminar papers, dissertation and thesis.

20

The study showed significant positive relationship between awareness and perception of plagiarism among post-graduate students in the respondent institutions. This finding resonates with Stanton (2015) Situation Awareness theory and Huemer's theory of perception. This goes to underscore the fact that the Universities' roles in sensitization, advocacy and providing appropriate regulatory frameworks as well as actual scholarly practices are non-negotiable ingredients in shapening students' attitudinal dispositions and perspectives about plagiarism.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of this study have indicated that an average level of plagiarism awareness existed among post-graduate students in Nigeria Universities. The findings equally showed low level of training on citation and referencing and wrong perception about what plagiarism is all about. These findings indicated a serious challenge that calls for immediate attention. Plagiarism being a serious academic crime may work against achieving the goals of research in the university. Viewed from the perspective that universities exist to solve the problem of mankind through research, plagiarism can be counterproductive in the continuous realization of these lofty ideals.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings

1. Awareness programme on plagiarism should be intensified by all Nigerian Universities so as to minimize the rate of involvement by students.

2. The National Universities Commission (NUC) should enforce the use of turnitin plagiarism detection software by all Universities in Nigeria so as to reduce the rate of plagiarism by students and faculty. Any university that fails to comply should be sanctioned by the National Universities Commission.

3. The Federal and state government of Nigeria should introduce scholarship for postgraduate students so as to reduce their financial burden and encourage scholarship in research.

21

4. Information ethics should be introduced as a compulsory course for all postgraduate students irrespective of their departments so that they can be taught on policies that govern the use and reuse of information. A lecturer in the department of Library and Information Science or Information Resources Management Department should teach the compulsory general course. In universities where there is no Library and Information Science Department, a seasoned professional librarian should teach the course.

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