ROLES OF INFORMATION PROFESSIONALS (LIBRARY EDUCATORS) IN DISSUADING PLAGIARISM IN RIVERS STATE-OWNED UNIVERSITIES, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the role of information professionals (library educators) in dissuading plagiarism in Rivers State-owned universities, namely Rivers State University (RSU), Nkpolu-Oroworukwo in Port Harcourt Local Government Area, and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUOE), Rumuolumeni in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area. The theoretical frameworks adopted for this study were the Deterrent Theory of Plagiarism or Cheating and Rational Self-Interest, which is a social contract theory where students and researchers consider and act according to what profits them. The target population is comprised of all thirty-three (33) information professionals (library educators) who lecture in library and information science departments at Rivers State-owned universities. The accessible population was 88%, which represented 29 library educators at the two universities. A self-report survey (questionnaire) was designed and administered. The data was analyzed using a simple percentage method. The study found that Turnitin and Checker X are the most common software used by Rivers State universities to curb plagiarism. The study also found that students and researchers are not taught about plagiarism as a mandatory course, which has led to the proliferation of the plagiarism act in Rivers State Universities. Similarly, the study indicated that library educators should employ more strategies that would dissuade plagiarism and boost the confidence of students and researchers in having good and original articles of their own.

KEYWORDS: Plagiarism Information Professionals Library Educators Plagiarism Software and Plagiarism Policy

Introduction

Plagiarism has really proliferated, and most students are being lazy or lack enough time to carry out proper research that would have brought about new and original ideas of their own; rather, they embrace plagiarism, giving it a room to stay in our institutions (universities, polytechnics, and schools). Universities

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around the globe are homes for knowledge advancement; they are a training ground for a higher level of manpower in different career sectors (library, nursing, law, etc.) in our society. The key functions of universities are teaching, research, and community service (Okpokwasili, Akanwa, and Okorie, 2016). The university libraries are crucial resource centers in the lives of universities. It is an integral part of the educational system that supports courses of formal and informal education and is also geared to research and the generation of new knowledge in the universities to which it belongs (Ntui and Edam-Agbor, 2015). The author posited that a library is an open system, a subsystem of the wider education system, whose objectives and functions are determined by the communities concerned. A library is termed the heart of the university' because of its crucial role in acquiring, classifying, cataloging, preserving, and disseminating information in its academic environment. An information professional is an individual who is well versed in collecting, recording, storing, organizing, preserving, retrieving, and disseminating information in various formats. "Information professional" is used to describe professions such as librarians, archivists, information managers, information systems specialists, information scientists, records managers, and information consultants. A librarian, as an information professional or a library educator, plays a great role. A role is the expected behavior that is associated with a particular status (Ahiauzu, 2016). Unfortunately, despite the great role they play in the availability and accessibility of information resources to their users, both in print and digital format, some of these information consumers end up plagiarizing the articles that are made available and accessible to them.

Plagiarism has led to a huge menace that reduces the value of an author's intellectual property. Information professionals, especially library educators, have a great role to play in order to curb plagiarism and eradicate it totally. It is crucial to know the origin of the word plagiarism and its meaning. Plagiarism is derived from the Latin term plagiarius, which means to be kidnapped. Dissuading is a synonym for deterring. Dissuading plagiarism simply means discouraging the act of plagiarism. Khan (2016) opined that plagiarism could be considered a kind of breach of academic integrity as it is rightly believed to lessen or sometimes eliminate the real value of a scholarly work. Oyewole and Abioye (2018) revealed that lecturers must warn students of this menace and at the same time encourage them to assimilate good writing ethics and moral values in life as well as in their academics. Library educators can play a significant role in tackling plagiarism by devising assignments that require students to apply high-level writing skills rather than "copying and pasting," thereby making it very difficult for them to plagiarize (Roberts, Selemani, and Dube (2018)). The conundrum of 'plagiarism' is a great concern amongst universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education owned by federal, state, and even private universities in Nigeria and the world at large. In the ancient era, when there was no internet and nothing like an information explosion, researchers were willing to go to the library building and

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utilize the library resources in order to obtain the right materials needed to carry out good research. Hence, developing good writing and reading skills was mandatory and essential in order for the researchers and students to develop original work of their own, unlike what happens currently, where researchers get all the resources they want with a blink of an eye from the comfort of their homes through the internet. Thanks to information technology, which makes information access easier and less stressful, However, it has emanated laziness in some students and researchers who just depend totally on the internet to access, steal the intellectual properties of others, and utilize the articles to save themselves from stress and invest time into their research work. Pandita and Singh (2019) agreed that "with the introduction of information technology (IT) in plagiarism detection, the noose has been tightened around all such researchers who were used to stealing the content from other sources and projecting it as their own and used to get away scot-free".

Plagiarism has also been seen as an issue among staff in higher institutions. Granitz and Loewy (2007) inferred that plagiarism impacts not only students but also academic staff. They also indicated that some staff at the universities had been caught and sanctioned due to the level of plagiarism they posed in their paper writing. Staff plagiarize either by publishing the work of others without acknowledging the sources or by plagiarizing their own work without acknowledging their sources, which is referred to as self-plagiarism. To be plagiarism-free, there are some rules and standards of academic writing that should be comprehended by the students or researchers because the literature indicates that students or researchers commit plagiarism because of their failure to adhere to the rules and standards of academic writing (Selemani, Chawinga, & Dube, 2018). A consensus has been reached in the literature that educating students on good academic writing and research skills and also creating awareness of the huge negative effects of plagiarism are the best strategies to deal with plagiarism. Kaushik (2023) considered the different types of plagiarism as self-plagiarism, accidental plagiarism, direct plagiarism, patchwork or mosaic plagiarism, and outsourcing. Self-plagiarism is reusing your previous documents without attributing the source. Accidental plagiarism is the unintentional copying or paraphrasing of someone's work. Direct plagiarism is copying text directly from a word document, PDF, or website without including the source it originated from. "Mosaic or patchwork plagiarism is interlacing the work of another author in your own work". Some other acts of plagiarism could be seen as: copying a paper from other students, which was described as collaboration and collusion (Park, 2004) and as a type of plagiarism; copying whole phrases and changing some words; paraphrasing without attribution; summarizing without attribution; using false citations; and duplicating one's work for more than one submission, which is also self-plagiarism (Harris, 2001).

George (2022) posited the consequences of plagiarism, and he opined that they depend on how severe the offense is. He further categorized it into three

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levels: Level one is mild; for instance, citing a source in a text but failing to include it in the reference list or omitting a question mark around a quote Level two is moderate; this involves "text copied from a source with a few words changed and a paraphrased source without proper citation". Level three is severe at this level; at this level, the researcher creates a patchwork of various texts and claims to own the work as original, including articles written by someone else. He further inferred that the consequences for mild and moderate plagiarism are failing the course, while the severe plagiarism consequence is academic probation or expulsion. Afisunlu (2013) stated that four members of the University of Calabar staff were dismissed due to their involvement in plagiarism. The implication of plagiarism has ruined the reputation and integrity of those involved. Findings also stipulated that various factors contribute to the attitudes of students toward plagiarizing. This is seen as a great menace around the globe. Hence, the role of information professionals, especially library educators, in plagiarism control is crucial and cannot be neglected. Martin (2004) averred that some software for detecting plagiarism can only detect word-for-word plagiarism of documents captured in their database and not plagiarism of ideas and sources. The threat still increases; hence, for quality and conformity to be preserved in higher institutions of learning, especially in developing countries like Nigeria, everyone must rise against this menace in our educational system by introducing quality standards such that articles of students are thoroughly scrutinized by librarians and lecturers. Though the task is a strenuous one, it's worth the effort. The Committee of Vice Chancellors met recently and deliberated on the introduction of a software called Turnitin. The software works by high-lighting a few sentences from an article, which indicates the percentage of plagiarized work. The Committee of Vice-Chancellors of Nigerian Universities developed the Eagle Scan Plagiarism Detection Software (EPDS) to dissuade plagiarism and promote originality in academic research (Tyohemba, 2022). He opined that the software was developed with the support of six ICT directors of six Nigerian universities and was now fully ready for adoption in all tertiary institutions in the country.

Pandita and Sngh (2019) opined that the similar detection tools enhance the prevalence of plagiarism across research and the academic community by making it more visible. Plagiarism checking tools that could be used to deter plagiarism are: Grammarly, Copyscape, Unicheck, iThenticate, Plagiarism Checker X, Paper Rater Copyleaks, PlagiarismCheck.org, Noplag, Scribbr, Plagramme, ProWritingAid, Quetext, PlagiarismScan, and Plagium (Kaushik, 2023). According to her, Grammarly is an error-free app; this was the first kind of plagiarism tool that avoided grammatical errors. Copyscape provides robust plagiarism detection for professionals popular with content owners and webmasters to avoid duplicate content, check and confirm originality, and track down content copies (Kaushik, 2023). The Unicheck tool supports 99% of bulk uploads and file formats while offering a detailed plagiarism report. It also

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provides Google add-ons to check the similarities in the content; it considers the originality of a work and checks if it has been duplicated. All the anti-plagiarism software shares a similar role in checking the content for originality and also if it has been duplicated elsewhere in the online space. Inman (2014) averred six strategies to dissuade plagiarism, which are: educating students on intellectual property, which includes the policy of plagiarism; designing assignments that are more challenging; empowering students to succeed; creating a positive and inclusive classroom climate that would encourage students to be honest about their research work; using plagiarism detection software to detect the originality of the work; and responding appropriately to acts of plagiarism in order for the students not to plagiarize in the future. These strategies should be applied in institutions by librarians, lecturers, and other authorities in order to curb plagiarism. Oyewole and Abioye (2018) posited that a plagiarism policy is a formal document that presents the framework of action on matters pertaining to plagiarism. The feasibility and applicability of a plagiarism policy act as a prevention mechanism (Onuoha and Ikonne, 2013). Awareness of the availability of a plagiarism policy at the university by the students could also determine whether they will avoid plagiarism or not. Olutola (2016) explained that failure to teach students properly the nitty-gritty of academic writing and how to dissuade plagiarism by academics is considered a fundamental element that brought about the surge in plagiarism in Nigeria. Selemani et al. (2018) suggested that there is a need for a university to be consistent in defining what constitutes plagiarism and to articulate how it is handled in terms of its depth and the corresponding sanction. The use of various software such as Plagium, Turnitin, and many more would be of great help in detecting an article that is plagiarized or plagiarism-free in Rivers State-owned universities and other higher institutions globally.

Statement of the Problem

Plagiarism is a global conundrum because it exists in our institutions. Chaurasia (2016) mentioned that some countries in Asia viewed plagiarism as a social issue deeply rooted in their education system dogma, which encourages the reuse and reproduction of textbook contents (information) and overpowers original creative ideas and thinking. What can institutions, especially Rivers State-owned universities, do in terms of software tools and policies to stern the cankerworm of plagiarism? Thus, the problem of the present study is to investigate the role information professionals (library educators) play in dissuading plagiarism, which is an unintelligent behavior for any student or researcher that is involved in this act.

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Objectives of the Study

This study is aimed at the role of information professionals (library educators) in dissuading plagiarism in Rivers State-owned universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. The following are the specific objectives of the study, which include:

1. identify the kind of tools used to check plagiarism.

2. determine the strategies library educators employed to curb plagiarism in an academic environment.

3. ascertain the role played by library educators in plagiarism control.

Research Questions

Three research questions were formulated for the study are as follows:

1. What kind of tools are used to check plagiarism?

2. What strategies can library educators use to reduce the level of plagiarism in an academic environment?

3. What are the roles played by library educators and information professionals in plagiarism control?

Methodology

The study utilized a survey design to investigate the roles of library educators as information professionals in dissuading plagiarism in Rivers State-owned universities. The Rivers State-owned universities are Rivers State University (RSU) in Port Harcourt Local Government Area and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUOE) in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, both in Rivers State, Nigeria. The purpose of the survey design was to find out from library educators the roles they play in deterring plagiarism. A self-report survey questionnaire was designed and administered to library educators in library and information science departments. The data collected from the Library and Information Science Department in Rivers State Universities revealed that a total of fifteen (15) library educators were in Rivers State University, Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, and a total of eighteen (18) library educators were in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni. The total population of this study comprised thirty-three (33) library educators from the two universities (RSU and IAUE). These library educators' work experience in the Library and Information Science Department ranged from 0 to 15 years. Amadi (2020) opined that the entire population can be studied if it is relatively small. Thus, the entire population of 33 library educators was used for the study. The instrument used by the researchers is a questionnaire that was validated by two professors in library and information science. The questionnaire consisted of two parts: Parts 1 and 2. Part 1 comprised the demographic data of respondents, while Part 2 was divided

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into three sub-sections: subsections 1, 2, and 3. Subsection 1 sought to identify the tools used by library educators in checking plagiarism in Rivers State Universities with six (6) items; Subsection 2 was designed to ascertain the strategies employed by library educators to reduce the level of plagiarism in Rivers State Universities with five (5) items; and Subsection 3 solicited information about library educators' roles in dissuading plagiarism in Rivers State Universities with six (6) items. In developing the instrument, library educators agreed or disagreed with the questions posed.

Table 1: Distributions of Questionnaires According to Rivers State-Owned Universities

S/N	Name of Rivers State-Owned Universities	Number of library Educators
1.	Rivers State University (RSU)	15
2.	Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUOE)	18
	TOTAL	33

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion

A total of 33 questionnaires were administered to the respondents; Library Educators in the departments of Library and Information Science. The sample size for this study was 33. However, due to time constraint and busy schedule of some Library Educators, the researchers were only able to retrieve 29 questionnaires out of the 33; giving the value of 88% as shown in Table 2 below. The study sought to investigate Data collection done directly through One -on One basis and Via What Sapp calls to some of the Library Educators whom were unavailable or too busy at the moment.

Table 2: Distribution of Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Population (Questionnaires distributed)	33	100%
Questionnaire retrieved	29	88%
Unanswered questionnaires	4	I2%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Research Question One: What plagiarism tools can be used by Library Educators to check Plagiarism?

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Table 3: Frequency and percentage distribution on plagiarism tools used by library educators. (N=29)

S/N	Item Statement	Agreed Frequency	Agreed %	Disagreed Frequency	Disagreed %	Decision
1.	Ithenticate	3	10.3	26	89.6	Rejected
2.	Turnitin	28	96.5	1	3.4	Accepted
3.	Plagium	2	6.9	27	93.1	Rejected
4	Checker X	16	55.1	13	44.8	Accepted
5	Scribbr	4	13.8	25	86.2	Rejected
6	Any other	2	6.89	27	93.1	Rejected

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 3 above showed that respondents used only two major plagiarism software in Rivers State University namely; Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. The items and individual percentages score indicated the following: Turnitin (96.5%) and Checker X (55.1%). Based on the rule, 50% upward is accepted and below 50% is rejected. The above results indicated that Library Educators agreed to be using only Turnitin and checker X for plagiarism purpose.

From the data presented above and analysis done in table 3, the result of the study on plagiarism tools used by Library Educators in the Departments of Library and Information Science of Rivers State Universities revealed that Checker X plagiarism tool is popular but Turnitin is more popular and well used than other plagiarism tool. The finding is in line with Nahas (2017) who inferred that Turnitin plagiarism tool is intended for the academic establishments. Millions of professors and larger numbers of students utilize this programme because of Its ability to detect plagiarism in the internet and database of the company. It provides "originality report" that could display different colors, the probable plagiarized texts. Bull and Nahaz (2017) agreed that Turnitin is better than other programmes, but it is slower and more expensive. 15,000 institutions in 150 countries make use of Turnitin (Foltýnek 2020). Weber-Wulff, Möller, Touras & Zincke (2013), averred the top three systems to be Turnitin, PlagAware, and StrikePlagiarism.com. He refers to Turnitin as one of the best. Turnitin searches the web including an archive of all previously indexed web pages. Turnitin also compares the texts against published academic articles. Although Turnitin is not free but it is reliable and confirms the originality of an article. The Plagiarism Checker on the other hand is free and can be used easily as an online programme, it accepts any language and depends on Google search.

Research Question Two: What are the strategies employed by library educators to reduce the level of plagiarism?

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Table 4: Frequency and percentage distribution on the Strategies employed by library educators to reduce the level of plagiarism. (N=29)

S/No	Item	Agreed Frequency	Agreed %	Disagreed Frequency	Disagreed %	Decision
1.	Encourage academic integrity	27	93.1	2	6.89	Accepted
2.	Have a policy on plagiarism	25	86.2	4	13.7	Accepted
3.	There is presence of plagiarism detection software in examining.	24	82.8	5	17.2	Accepted
4.	Respond appropriately to act of plagiarism	26	89.6	3	10.3	Accepted
5.	Familarise student about the reference management tools, its use and benefit.	20	68.9	9	31.0	Accepted.

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 4 represents the respondents (library education) the strategies employed to reduce the level of plagiarism. The following items with their percentage score were accepted. Encourage academic integrity (93.1%), have a policy on plagiarism (86.2%), presence of plagiarism detection software in examining (82%) respond appropriately to act of plagiarism (89.6%), familiarize student about the reference management tools, its use and benefit (68.9%). Based on the decision rule and the attainment of the criteria, percentage score of 50% and above the result in the table depicted that all the 5 items were accepted as strategies employed by Library Educators to dissuade plagiarism in Rivers State Universities.

The result of the study on strategies employed by library educators in Rivers State Universities as depicted in Table 4 includes; Encourage academic integrity, have a policy on plagiarism, presence of plagiarism detection software in examining, respond appropriately to act of plagiarism, familiarize student about the reference management tools, its use and benefit.

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The result revealed that Awards and special recognition should be presented to student who has an article that is free from plagiarism. Maintaining a high level of originality of the article would help encourage others to dissuade from Plagiarism and more awareness should be executed in order for Rivers State Universities to be freed from plagiarism. Oyewole and Abioye (2018), agreed that awareness of the availability of a plagiarism policy in the university by the students could also determine whether they will plagiarise or not. The result proved that Library Educators are taking the necessary strategies needed to reduce the level of Plagiarism in our Universities

Research Question Three: What are the Roles Library Educators Play in Dissuading Plagiarism?

Table 5: Frequency and percentage distributions on the roles of library educators in dissuading plagiarism. (N=29)

S/N	Item Statement	Agreed Frequency	Agreed %	Disagreed Frequency	Disagreed %	Decision
1.	The use of social media tools to create awareness	20	68.9	9	31.0	Accepted
2.	Execute orientation and training programmea	26	89.6	3	10.3	Accepted
3.	Introduction of a mandatory course for student about Plagiarism	25	86.2	4	13.7	Rejected
4.	Guide the student on different referencing styles	25	86.2	4	13.7	Accepted
5.	There is high level of plagiarism awareness	15	51.7	13	44.8	Accepted
6.	Research work and assignment is accompanied with the originality	24	82.7	5	17.2	Accepted

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report generated by anti-plagiarism software.					

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 5 presents the respondents' view on the role library educators' play in dissuading plagiarism in Rivers State Universities. The following items with their percentage scores were accepted: Use of social media to create awareness (68.9%), Execute Orientation and training programmes on Plagiarism (89.6%), Introduction of a mandatory course for students about plagiarism (86.2%), Guide the students on different referencing styles (86.2%), There is a high level of plagiarism awareness (51.7%), Research work and assignment is accompanied with the originality report generated by anti-plagiarism (82%). Based on the decision rule and the attainment of the criteria, percentage score of 50% and above the result in the table depicts that all the 6 items were accepted as the roles of library educators in dissuading plagiarism in Rivers State Universities.

Analysis of results in Table 5 showed the roles library educators play in dissuading plagiarism; Use of social media to create Awareness, Execute Orientation and training programmes on Plagiarism, Introduction of a mandatory course for students about plagiarism, Guide the students on different referencing styles, there is a high level of plagiarism awareness, Research work and Assignment is accompanied with the originality report generated by anti-plagiarism. Idiegbeyan-ose, Ifijeh, Goodluck., Segun-Adeniran, Esse, Owolabi, Sola and Aregbesola Ayooluw (2018) agreed that the roles include awareness creation, teaching of referencing and citation skills, information literacy programmes among others. Findings revealed that Rivers State Universities axe executing the necessary roles in order to curb plagiarism but does not offer a mandatory course on Plagiarism.

Conclusion

Plagiarism has led to a huge menace that reduces the value of an author's intellectual property. Information professionals, especially library educators, have a great role to play in order to curb plagiarism and eradicate it totally. It is crucial to know the origin of the word plagiarism and its meaning. Plagiarism is derived from the Latin term plagiarius, which means to be kidnapped. Dissuading is a synonym for deterring. In the ancient era, when there was no internet and nothing like an information explosion, researchers were willing to go to the library building and utilize the library resources in order to obtain the right materials needed to carry out good research. Hence, developing good writing and reading skills was mandatory and essential in order for the researchers and students to develop original work of their own, unlike what happens currently, where researchers get all the resources they want with a blink of an eye from the

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Recommendations

Sequel to the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made

1. Plagiarism should be added to the university's curriculum and treated as a mandatory course in order for all the students (both undergraduates and postgraduates) to be thoroughly guided about the Nitti gritty of plagiarism. This would promote academic integrity, aid in the reduction of plagiarism to a significant degree, or eradicate it totally from Rivers State Universities, institutions in Nigeria, and Africa at large.

2. Orientations and workshops should be conducted frequently to help researchers and students know what plagiarism is all about and employ referencing tools.

3. It is crucial for the management of the universities to formulate and implement an official plagiarism policy for the universities, and every plagiarist should face the consequences of his or her actions.

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