
**ASSESSMENT OF ELEMENTS OF PLAGIARISM AMONG
FINAL YEAR NCE SOCIAL STUDIES STUDENTS AS
IMPEDIMENTS TO QUALITY RESEARCH IN FCE
PANKSHIN IN PLATEAU STATE**

¹Chibuike Sidney **EKE**, ²Nanmwa Nansak **LOHNAN** &
³Kantiyok **REUBEN**

¹*Social Studies Teacher, Delight Academy, Hwolshe, Jos*

²*Department of Social Studies, Federal College of Education,
Kontagora, Niger State*

³*Kaduna State Ministry of Education, Kaduna*

Abstract

This study assessed elements of plagiarism among Final Year NCE Social Studies students' as an impediment to quality research in College of Education in Pankshin, Plateau State. Two research questions and Corresponding hypotheses guided the study. The descriptive research design was used for the study with a sample size of 200 students drawn using the purposive non-random sampling technique, from a population size of 593 Final Year NCE Social Studies students in the College of Education Pankshin. An instrument titled 'Assessment of the Elements of Plagiarism among Final Year NCE Studies students as Impediment to Quality Research in College of Education Questionnaire' (ASSAPIQRCEQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by two experts from Social Studies and Educational Measurement and Evaluation from the University of Jos and the reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach alpha. Data

collected were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, independent t-test and Two-way ANOVA at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that most Social Studies students of Colleges of Education in Plateau State had a positive attitude towards plagiarism, the male student had a negative attitude towards plagiarism while the female students had positive attitude towards plagiarism. It was recommended that College of Education in Pankshin from time to time should organize orientation programmes for all students on the implications of plagiarism towards innovation in research.

Keywords: Plagiarism, Impediment, Quality Research, Social Studies.

Introduction

Education is the act or process of imparting worldwide knowledge or skills, as for a profession. Higher education at college or university level where several discipline are studied in great details and at an advanced level, in order to enable the learner become productive and contribute to the wellbeing of the society. Furthermore, professional work in the field of education requires great responsibility, total commitment, serious, honest lifetime work and learning. According to Razera(2011), an ideal quality of a scientist is to have a passion for the truth. Students benefit not only from good quality care but also from good scientific research. He expects high standards of scientific and educational research practice. Science, after all, is a search for the truth. The integrity, skills, trustworthiness and truthfulness of the researchers are essential in order to gain the confidence of the public.

Educational misconduct has been the focus of interest in the recent years. Research misconduct usually includes fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, and other unethical behaviour in professional scientific research. Out of these, plagiarism is the most frequent type of misconduct. Plagiarism is defined as unauthorized appropriation of another's work, ideas, methods, results or words

without acknowledging the source and original author (Zhang, 2011).

The prevalence of plagiarism has been increasing in the recent years. There are many reasons which can be attributed to the increased motivation towards plagiarism. The first and foremost is the wealth of information which could be accessed at our fingertips through the internet facility. This easy access has made the copy and paste technique to become more widely used in order to copy the ideas, words and works of others into one's own research work.

Chowdhury and Bhattacharyya (2018) identified the following are forms of plagiarism being exhibited by students; Verbatim (word for word) quotation without clear acknowledgement. Quotations must always be identified as such by the use of either quotation marks or indentation, and with full referencing of the sources cited. It must always be apparent to the reader which parts is your own independent work and where you have drawn on someone else's ideas and language; Cutting and pasting from the Internet without clear acknowledgement; Information derived from the Internet must be adequately referenced and included in the bibliography. It is important to evaluate carefully all material found on the Internet, as it is less likely to have been through the same process of scholarly peer review as published sources.

Paraphrasing the work of others by altering a few words and changing their order, or by closely following the structure of their argument, is plagiarism if you do not give due acknowledgement to the author whose work you are using; A passing reference to the original author in your own text may not be enough; you must ensure that you do not create the misleading impression that the paraphrased wording or the sequence of ideas are entirely your own. Failure to acknowledge assistance must clearly acknowledge all assistance which has contributed to the production of your work, such as advice from fellow students, laboratory technicians, and other external sources. This need not apply to the assistance provided by your tutor or supervisor, or to ordinary proofreading, but it is necessary to acknowledge other guidance which leads to substantive changes of content or approach (Kpolovie, 2010).

The effects of Student plagiarism is considered as a highly unethical practice and condemned by academia at large. Since the advent of internet and expansion of information and communication technologies, student plagiarism is becoming an expanding issue at higher education level. Students may be able to recognize crudely what plagiarism is, but unable to distinguish the finer aspects of paraphrasing and referencing. Social Studies students are required to complete assignments and develop their writing skills. However, students are sometimes burdened or confused about academic writing and integrity/honesty attached to it, ending up with intentional or unintentional plagiarism. The ultimate responsibility for developing students' perceptions and positive attitudes become vested in academia. A large number of text matching soft wares are available to detect plagiarism; still, they are unable to replace pedagogical strategies for teaching Social Studies students about honest academic writing, appropriate citation strategies and ethical values.

Social Studies is a value free and value laden course, that teaches the individual to be a patriotic, law abiding and innovative citizen, it is expected that Social Studies Students actions towards academic pursuit should be a noble step taken and not involved in by-cutting the laid down guidelines in carrying out research since the course in itself uses the scientific social science process of carrying out research to ascertain its results from problems identified. Therefore, it is expected that the students of Social Studies in College of Education Pankshin, should not feel lazy when it comes to carrying out credible research works that will yield quality results, because these results gotten will still be applicable in helping to solve the menace of plagiarism among their fellow colleagues in other course of study.

Bailey (2011) pointed out that all academic institutions should create plagiarism policies to regulate the students' involvement in copying other sources. With the considering that plagiarism could be intentional or not, severe or less, Bailey suggested that plagiarism policies that have already been set by academic institutions should be made flexible to ensure justice and equity, as the abundance of information opens a wealth of knowledge for university students,

from where they could either learn or stealing the ideas of others, which is known as plagiarism.

According to Kpolovie (2010) research is man's most rational effort at solving an identified problem in order to meet his needs and as such the act of scholarly writing of research should be thought to avoid plagiarism, this should not be taken for granted. In College of Education Pankshin a lot of factors could be responsible for plagiarism among Social Studies students. These could range from poor provision of academic facilities, poor supervision during projects, theses or dissertations, laziness, personality orientation etc. for whatever reason this may come, the act of plagiarism in College of Education Pankshin recent has not been handled with kid gloves.

It was also stressed by Maina, Maina and Jauro (2014), that the alarming increase in plagiarism and the need to fight it has been due to technology. The advancement of technology in recent times enhances plagiarism among students. It is also noted that many students do see plagiarism as an act that is involved by all and sundry. Hence, a majority of them find little essence in stressing themselves to avoid it. They also noted that indeed, students from even secondary school go to the extent of justifying the act of cheating by stating that it will be unfair to themselves if they avoided cheating since those that do cheat get higher grades while on the other hand those that do not get something less.

Research and publication of articles are mandatory during the programme of many institutions of higher learning, and this can mount pressure on the students. It is expected that Social Studies students to publish articles, they seem to be tempted to copy and paste from the internet, where a huge amount of information is easily accessible. Despite the media enlightenments on ethical issues on proper citation practices and a clear definition of what constitutes plagiarism, students still appear to be seen plagiarizing consciously or unconsciously, there seen to be no much effort in examining Social Studies students' attitudinal variances towards plagiarism in College of Education. Furthermore, it is difficult for education researchers to imagine budgets of that magnitude or to think about the kinds of problems that arise from not having too much money

to carry out quality research. Thus this study, sought to find out the elements of plagiarism among Final Year NCE Social Studies students as an impediment to quality research in College of Education Pankshin in Plateau State.

Purpose of the Study

The aim of the study is to assess elements of plagiarism among Final Year NCE Social Studies students as an impediment to quality research in College of Education Pankshin in Plateau State. The specific objectives are to:

- i. determine Social Studies students' positive attitude towards plagiarism.
- ii. examine Social Studies students' negative attitude towards plagiarism.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised and answered:

- i. To what extent do Social Studies students have a positive or negative attitude towards plagiarism at the College of Education?
- ii. To what extent does the attitude of male and female Social Studies students towards plagiarism differ in colleges of education?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance in the study:

H₀1: There is no significant difference in the attitude of Social Studies students with a positive and negative attitude towards plagiarism in Colleges of Education.

H₀2: There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female Social Studies students towards plagiarism in Colleges of Education.

Methods

The research design for this study is a descriptive survey. The population for this study will consist of all Social Studies education Final Year NCE 2 students in Federal College of Education Pankshin for 2018/2019 academic session. The sample consists of Two hundred (200) students (M=105, F=95), out of five hundred and ninety-three (593) selected through random sampling technique. Data was collected with a self-constructed questionnaire ‘Assessment of Social Studies Students Attitude towards Plagiarism as Impediment to Quality Research in College of Education Questionnaire’ (ASSAPIQRCEQ) was used for all the students that will participate in the study. All the research questions will be answered using the Mean, while the hypotheses will be tested using chi-square.

Results

Research Question One: To what extent do Social Studies students have a positive or negative attitude towards plagiarism at the College of Education?

Table 1: Difference in Final Year NCE in the Attitude of Male and Female Social Studies Students towards Plagiarism in the College of Education Pankshin

Gender	Attitude	N	Mean	Std.D
Male	Positive	42	47.83	14.80
	Negative	63	52.52	13.97
	Total	105	50.65	14.42
Female	Positive	19	57.68	6.70
	Negative	76	52.72	12.58
	Total	95	53.72	11.78

From Table 1 above, male SOS students were 105 while females were 95. Males with a positive attitude were 42 while 63 had a negative attitude towards plagiarism. Their mean values were 47.83 and 52.52 respectively. This mean indicates that males had a

negative attitude towards plagiarism. On the other hand, 19 females had a positive attitude while 76 had a negative attitude. Their mean value was 57.58 and 52.75 respectively. This mean showed that females had a positive attitude towards plagiarism.

Research Question Two: To what extent does the attitude of male and female Social Studies students towards plagiarism differ in Colleges of Education Pankshin?

Table 2: Attitude of Male and Female Students Towards Plagiarism in the College of Education Pankshin

Sources	Sum of square	df	Mean square	F	P-value	α	Results
Cor. Model	1378.37	3	459.45	2.64	.049	.05	Significant reject Ho
Intercept	420856.94	1	420856.94	2443.33	.000		
Gender	942.780	1	942.78	5.473	.020		
Attitude	0.182	1	0.18	0.001	.974		
Gender/ Attitude	859.18	1	859.18	4.988	.027		
Error	33760.43	196	172.24				
Total		200					
Cor. Total		199					

From the analysis in Table 2, the calculated F was 4.98, while p-value was 0.027. hence, since p-value ($p = .05$) is less than the alpha level, the null hypothesis was rejected meaning that there is a significant difference in the attitude of male and female Social Studies students towards plagiarism in the Colleges of Education Pankshin.

Discussions

The result in Table 1 showed that the mean score of Social Studies students identified as having a positive attitude towards plagiarism is 49.66 while those with a negative attitude is 39.22. The result shows that there is a difference in the mean scores of Social Studies students at the College of Education, Pankshin who have a positive attitude towards plagiarism and those with a negative attitude. From the result of Table 1 the calculated t-value = 9.67, P-value

($p=.05$) is less than the alpha level, hence the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is a significant difference in the attitude of Social Studies students with a positive and negative attitude towards plagiarism at the College of Education Pankshin.

From Table 2 male Social Studies students were 105 while females were 95. Males with a positive attitude were 42 while 63 had a negative attitude towards plagiarism. Their mean values were 47.83 and 52.52 respectively. This means indicates that males had a negative attitude towards plagiarism. On the other hand, 19 females had a positive attitude while 76 had a negative attitude. Their mean value was 57.58 and 52.75 respectively. This means showed that females had a positive attitude towards plagiarism.

The findings from research question one show that Social Studies students generally from the College of Education, Pankshin have a positive attitude towards plagiarism. This finding surprisingly means that students at the College of Education, Pankshin do not see anything wrong with copying other people's work. The finding is very surprising to the researchers because the College of Education, Pankshin does not take the act of plagiarism kindly, the non-lenient measure adopted by the College of Education, Pankshin, should probably scare the students towards developing a positive attitude towards plagiarism. However, this nonpenitent approach may be the reason why students do this. The finding is in line with Adebayo (2011) who found that paraphrasing materials without source acknowledge is a common practice among Nigerian university students.

From research findings two, it is seen that there is a significant difference in the attitude of male and female undergraduate students towards plagiarism at the College of Education Pankshin. This finding specifically indicated that female students have a more positive attitude towards plagiarism than male students. This finding also implies that male Social Studies students may take the issue of plagiarism seriously more than their female colleagues. This finding may be attributed to the researchers' observation that male undergraduate students at the College of Education, Pankshin may be more careful and meticulous in their academic work than female students. The finding, however, is in line with previous

studies by Alshomer, Kattan and Abdulaziz (2017) who all noted that the perception plagiarism checks as enhancing educational quality control certainly does not differ significantly.

Conclusion

The present study has shown that plagiarism occurred among the Social Studies participants. The level of positive attitude towards plagiarism is high in students of College of Education Pankshin. The most common factor for plagiarism was willful copying as well as ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism. However, the most common preventive measures were the use of anti-plagiarism software and orientation.

Recommendations

From the findings, it is recommended that the College of Education, Pankshin from time to time should organize orientation programmes for all Social Studies students based on the concept of anti-plagiarism. Social Studies students should be taught good writing skills in every higher institution. This will help those who are not competent in writing or research to avoid plagiarism. Students should be taught of the ill effect of plagiarism on time as while as research ethics to avoid and reduce the act of plagiarism among students.

References

- Adebayo, S. O. (2011). Common cheating behaviour among Nigerian university students: A case study of University of Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria. *World Journal of Education*, 1(1), 114-129.
- Alshomer, F., Kattan, A., & Abdulaziz, A. (2017). The practice and attitude towards plagiarism among postgraduate trainees in Saudi Arabia. *Journal of Health Specialties*, 5(4), 91-102.
- Bailey, J. (2011). What should the punishment for plagiarism be? 2011. Retrieved on 10/07/ 2021 Brookes University.
- Carroll, J. A (2007). *Handbook for deterring plagiarism in higher education*. 2nd Oxford
- Chang, C. M., Chen, Y. L., Huang, Y., & Chou, C. (2015). Why do they become potential cyber-plagiarizers? Exploring the alternative

- thinking of copy-and-paste youth in Taiwan. *Computers and Education*, 87, 357-367, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu>.
- Chowdhury, H. A., Bhattacharyya, D. K. (2018). Plagiarism, taxonomy, tools and detection techniques. Paper of the 19th National Convention on Knowledge, Library and Information Networking (NACLIN 2016) held at Tezpur University, Assam, India.
- Cleary, M. N. (2012). Top ten reasons students plagiarize and what you can do about it. Retrieved on 9/7/21 Available: <https://offices.depaul.edu/oaa/facultyresources/teaching/academic>.
- Harris, R. (2004). Anti-plagiarism strategies for research papers. Retrieved on 20/7/2021 from <http://dx.doi.org/10.10177/j.compedu>.
- Kpolovie, P. J. (2010). *Advanced research methods*. Owerri: Spring Field Publishers.
- Maina, A. B., Maina, M. B., & Jauro, S. S. (2014). Plagiarism: A perspective from a case of a Northern Nigerian University. *International Journal of Information Research and Pattern Recognition*, 44(2), 471-487.
- Razera, D. (2011). Awareness, attitude and perception of plagiarism among students. *Review*, 1(12), 225-230.