

## TURN-IT-IN: ANTI-PLAGIARISM SOFTWARE A STRATEGY FOR BRIDGING RESEARCH GAP AND ACHIEVING DEVELOPMENT IN RESEARCH PRACTICES AMONG LECTURERS OF COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN CROSS RIVER STATE

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### Abstract

The study investigated the indispensability of turn-it-in: anti-plagiarism software as a strategy for bridging research gap and achieving development in research practices among lecturers of colleges of education in Cross River State. Descriptive research design of the survey type was used. one research question was formulated and tested for the study with a total of 24 soft copies of research papers for publication by lecturers in colleges of education in Cross River State. The study adopted the disproportionate stratified and purposive sampling technique. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics (simple percentage and bar chart). The study revealed that there was a high percentage of plagiarism in research publications turned in among lecturers within the category of assistant lecturers and lecturer III. There was also decline in the percentage of plagiarism of lecturers' papers turned-in within the categories of lecturer II and I. The percentage dropped drastically for the category of senior lecturers'/ principal lecturers' and chief lecturers' respectively. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended that ICT units of colleges of education should be equipped with turn-it-in software to enable lecturers especially those in the category of assistant lecturers' and lecturer III to turnin their research papers in order to maintain academic integrity peace and security in their research practices.

**Keywords:** *Turn-it-in, Anti-plagiarism software, Promoting education,  
Peace and security, Research practices.*

### **Background to the study**

Turn-it-in is the grand breaking work of John Barrie in 1995, the site now known as Turn-iti-n.com began as Plagiarism.org. John Barrie was then a doctoral student at the University of California, created Plagiarism.org as a response with what he described as "rampant cheating" in the classes he taught as a graduate assistant. After creating a peer review assignment for his large-scale classes of approximately 200 students and above, Barrie's students came to office hours to turn each person's work in order to determine the extent of copying (Barrie, 2008). The software actually helped to curb out cheating tendencies among students as a student is told that their paper will be compared with other papers in that database, a student is then deterred from cheating" (Barrie, 2008). Turnitin began the process of checking the extent of plagiarism in students' papers, web materials, academic papers, books, and other sources to the database. Each subsection of the Turnitin software specializes in a different aspect of writing: plagiarism detection, peer reviewing, or paperless grading, originality check etc.

The plagiarism detection portion of Turn-it-in that originally began as Plagiarism.org runs submitted papers through a massive database, it offers a set of commonly used comments such as awk, c/s, citation needed, and others that can be dragged and dropped onto a student's paper. It also offers a service called Write-Check that integrates 'Educational Testing Services e-rater system and 'Pearson publishers online tutoring services. There's also iThenticate for researchers, Turn-it-in for admissions, and finally, Plagiarism.org, which now serves as a marketing portal for Turnitin and as an educational resource that hosts information about citation styles and plagiarism for students (Coulthard, 2004).

Today, Turn-it-in is the most massive plagiarism detection technology available, a billion-dollar industry that has expanded to include assessment, peer review, and automated grading. It now offers a suite of related services that include Originality-Check, Grade-Mark, and Peer-Mark along with specialized services targeted at students, admissions, and researchers. In Nigeria and other parts of the world, Turnitin has been described as anti plagiarism software that enables individual to check the extent of plagiarism in their research work. Most universities and colleges has welcomed this development, though little empirical work has been done to access plagiarism in colleges lecturers research work in terms of publication, articles textbook etc. it is based on this background that this paper deemed it necessary to investigate the extent of originality in research practices among lecturers in colleges of education in Cross River States.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In tertiary institution, respect and progression of academic staff members depend largely on the number and quality of their research productions, which are communicated in form of meaningful contributions to the community, journal articles and books among others (publish or perish syndrome) which has led most lecturers in the quest for developing ICT skills to enable them search the net for materials in order to publish papers. Even when most of them lack the requisite skills needed, they deliberately do all forms of unethical conduct just to survive in the academic environment. This has led most lecturers to commit dishonest academic blunders such as plagiarism.

Plagiarism is a global problem that has bedeviled the academia. It is regarded as unethical and morally wrong intellectual thievery that could negatively impact on not only the reputation of the individual but to the institution concerned. Although plagiarism is a general setback in the educational sector, incidents of plagiarism are becoming increasingly popular in most Nigerian institutions of higher learning as most lecturers who assumed to have written quality paper for publications but if critically assessed with turn-it-in, most of them employ what is commonly known as “cut and paste syndrome.” Statistics show that in March 15<sup>th</sup> 2013, a release issued by the secretary to the council and registrar of University of Calabar Dr. (Mrs.) Julia Omang made available to the nation in Calabar disclosed the dismissal of four academic staff of the University for Plagiarism. Also, in Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta Ogun State some years back, a professor and an assistant lecturer were dismissed for plagiarism. In September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2013 The Vice-Chancellor, Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti, Prof. Oladipo Aina, confirmed the sack of six lecturers for sexual harassment and plagiarism. This has become a serious menace in the academic field as most of these lecturer claimed they are not aware of the indispensable role of turnitin, an anti plagiarism checker plays as a grand braking guide against plagiarism.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to examine the indispensability of turn-it-in: anti-plagiarism software as a strategy for bridging research gap and achieving development in research practices among lecturers of colleges of education in Cross River State. Specifically, the study intends to find out the percentage of originality and plagiarism in seminar/conference/workshops paper and text books presented by lecturers in colleges of education.

### **Research questions**

The study is guided by the research question

1. What is the percentage of originality and plagiarism in research practices among lecturers of colleges of education?

## Methodology

The research study was essentially descriptive/survey in nature. Since lecturers in colleges irrespective of their sex and geographical location are involved in the study, the target population for the study therefore consisted of all the lecturers in these two institutions in Cross River State. Purposive sampling technique was adopted in selecting the lecturers that constitute the study sample. Turnitin.com an anti plagiarism software was used for data collection as the lecturers text books; seminar, conferences and workshop papers were turned in. The result is presented in Table 1.

## Presentation of Results

The result of the study is presented in percentages and frequency as shown in Table 1.

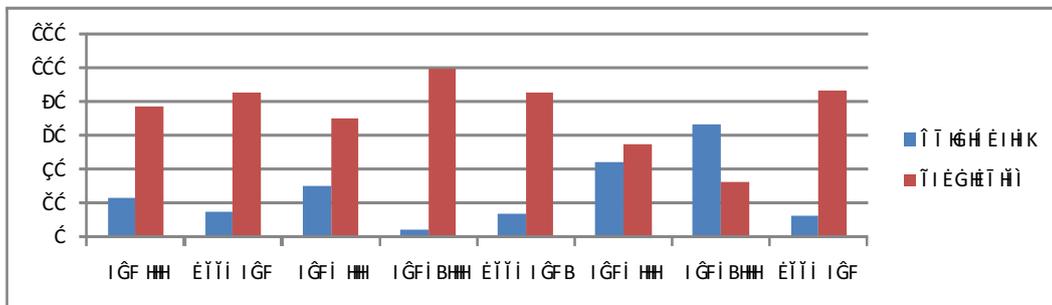
**Table 1**

**Summary of Seminar/Conference/Workshop Papers and Text Books Turned-in with Corresponding Percentage of Originality and Plagiarism among College Lecturer in Cross River State, Nigeria.**

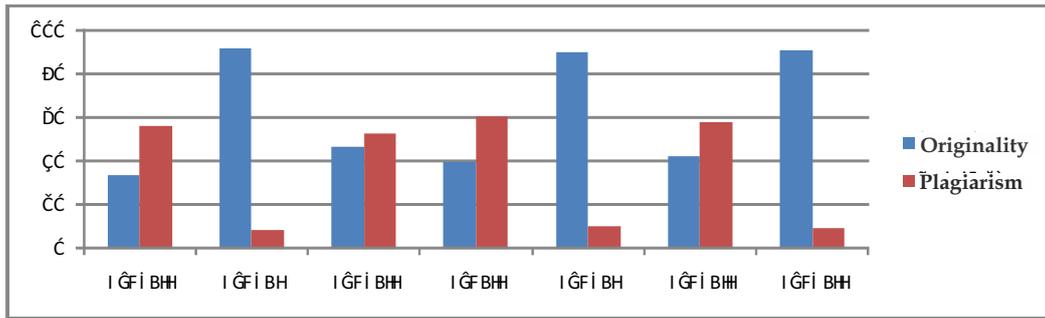
S/N	Academic Staff	Journal Articles/Books Sampled	Percentage of Originality Expected (90%)	Percentage of plagiarism Limit (10%)
<b>Category 1</b>				
1	<b>Asst lecturer &amp; lecturer III</b>	8	%	%
I	LECT. III	1	23	77
Ii	ASST LEC.	1	15	85
Iv	LECT. III	1	30	70
V	LECT. III	1	5	100
Vi	ASST. LECT	1	14	86
Vii	LECT III	1	45	55
Viii	LECT. III	1	67	33
Ix	ASST. LEC	1	13	87
<b>Category 2</b>				
2	<b>Lecturer II and lecturer I</b>	7	%	%
i	LECT. II	1	34	56
Ii	LECT. I	1	92	8
Iv	LECT. II	1	47	53
V	LEC. II	1	40	60
Vi	LECT. I	1	90	10
Vii	LECT. II	1	42	58
Viii	LECT. II	1	91	9

3	Senior lecturer & principal Lecturer	5	%	%
	SENIOR LECT	1	94	6
Ii	PRIN. LECT.	1	75	25
Iv	PRIN. LECT	1	87	13
V	SENIOR. LECT	1	91	9
Vi	SENIOR. LECT	1	94	6
	<b>Category 4</b>	4	%	%
4	Chief lecturer			
I	CHIEF LECT.	1	98	2
Ii	CHIEF LEC	1	90	10
Iv	CHIEF. LECT	1	89	11
V	CHIEF. LECT	1	94	6

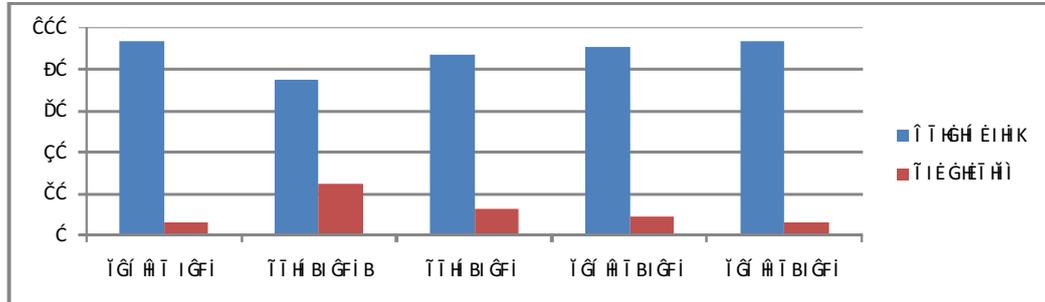
**Table 2:**  
**Graphical Presentation of Percentage Originality and Plagiarism in Research output of Assistant Lecturers and Lecturers III in Colleges of Education in Cross River State, Nigeria**



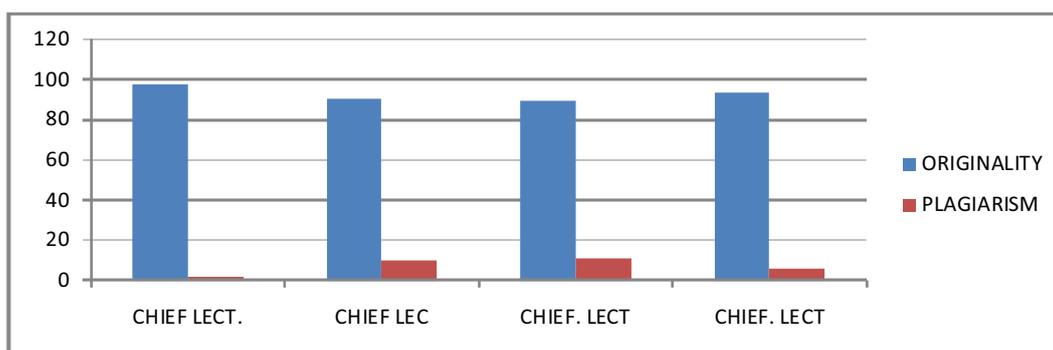
**Table 3:**  
**Bar chart showing the Percentage of Originality and Plagiarism in Research Practices among Lecturer II and Lecturer I in Colleges of Education in Cross River State, Nigeria.**



**Table 4:**  
**Bar Chart showing the Percentage of Originality and Plagiarism in Research Practices among Senior Lecturers and Principal Lecturers in Colleges of Education in Cross River State**



**Table 5:**  
**Graphical Presentation of the Percentage of Originality and Plagiarism in Research Practices among Chief Lecturer of Colleges of Education in Cross River State**



From the descriptive statistic in Table 1, it can be discerned that for lecturers within the rank (category) of Assistant lecturer and lecturer III, all the seminar/conference/workshop papers and book chapters (research practices) turned-in were found to be below the acceptable percentage of originality. This result may be due to the fact that most of these lecturers lack appropriate research skills and practices on how seminar/conference/workshop papers are written. Most of them are not familiar with turn-it-in software, as majority of lecturers under this category are internet guru, they deliberately download materials in the course of writing their paper without given appropriate credit to who credit is due while other lack confidence in their ability to write papers for presentation. Hence they resort into copy and paste syndrome which is highly unethical in the academic environment.

From the articles turned-in using lecturers who falls under the categories of lecture II and lecturer I, the percentage dropped as seen in Table 1 (category 2 and graph 2 respectively), seven seminar/conference/workshop papers were turned-in, out of these number, three papers satisfied the acceptable percentage required by turnitin. This implies that lecturers under this category were more experienced and partly aware of the dangers of plagiarism in the course of their research practices.

It can also be discerned from Table 1 (category 3), of senior lecturer and principal lecturers that only five (5) seminar/conference/workshops paper were turned-in the output with the anti plagiarism.com software shows that only two research paper did not met with the expected percentage thought with a high percentage of originality (75, and 87 respectively). The implication of this result shows that lecturer at that cadre display high level of originality in their research practices as they are conscious of the dangers of plagiarism.

The final category as shown in Table I (chief lecturers), four seminar/conference/workshop papers were turned, three of the research work meet with the acceptable standard of turn-it-in anti plagiarism software while only one did not meet with turn-it-in standard though with an encouraging percentage (89%) level of originality with just (11%) of plagiarism. The implications of this result are that lecturer at that cadre displays high level of originality and are quite aware of the dangers of plagiarism in their research publications. These results are also presented graphically in Table 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively.

### **Literature Review**

Plagiarism originated from a Latin word 'plagiarius' and 'plagium' which literally mean 'kidnapper' and 'kidnapping' respectively. It was originally used by the first century Roman poet, Martial who lay complain that some verse of her poet had been 'kidnapped (stolen) by another poet'. The Oxford English Dictionary describes it as 'the wrongful appropriation or purloining and publication as one's own, of the ideas, or the expression of the ideas of another'. According to Sharkey & Culp (2005) plagiarism means to kidnap. To plagiaries therefore involves an action of taking by force that which belongs to someone else. It is the theft of someone's intellectual property. Hence, Hexham (1999) notes that the common definition of plagiarism is theft. Wilson (2007) as cited in Grantham (2009) outlined different types of plagiarism as: copying an entire source and presenting it as one's own; copying sections from a source without proper acknowledgement; paraphrasing materials from a source without proper acknowledgement; presenting another person's work with or without their knowledge.

With the advent of the Internet, information is more easily accessible without geographical constraints; hence researchers can now lay their hands on documents in any part of the world. Although, this is a laudable development considering that scholars develop new ideas while learning from the writings of others (Coulthard, 2004), some researchers, however, prefer to steal the ideas of others rather than learn from their work. Okeke (2001) points out that the plague of plagiarism can be attributed to an educational system that seems to produce fake (inexperienced) intellectuals, who merely endure education while stealing the work of others as cover up.

Although plagiarism is a universal problem, incidents of plagiarism are becoming increasingly popular in most Nigerian institutions of higher learning as students employ what is commonly known as "cut and paste" when doing assignments or carrying out research projects. Udotong as cited by Obinna (2012) sadly notes that plagiarism and poor writing skills are the bane of Nigeria's educational system. Most lecturers find it difficult to write due to lack of confidence in their ability

coupled with lack of skills needed to coherently compose their papers before publication. This is understandably so as plagiarism affects not only the integrity of the individual concerned but also the integrity of the institution.

In a study carried out in Egypt, Nejati, Ismail & Shafaei (2011) found out that the most common forms of plagiarism behaviours are found among junior lecturers who deliberately give incorrect information about the source of a quotation. Boaduo (2003) observed that writing actually generated fear and anxiety for a significant number of academics most especially junior lecturers who have little or no experience on what publications entails. Furthermore, a perceived lack of skill was a barrier to publication writing as reported by McGrail, Rickard & Jones, (2006) observed that most junior academics fail to recognize that writing is not a mechanical skills but rather it is a process that clarifies and explores relationships between ideas and can be improved by watching others, collecting pointers from colleagues about better ways to write and by practicing writing.

Hekelman, Zyzanski, & Flocke (1995) who carried out an empirical study on the research output with lecturers and suggested that newly appointed academic staff need to enroll in programs that focus on research activities and how to garner research resources for paper writing. In similar study by Major and Dolly (2003) discussed the need to orientate new academic staff using research workshops and even course work, as long as this orientation occurred in a 'low threat' setting. Kudos to the recent move by some Nigerian universities to unite and wage war against plagiarism, by deploying highly rated anti-plagiarism software like Turn-it-in, is a welcome development. It is a promising intervention by the Committee of Vice Chancellors of Nigerian Universities (CVC) to tame the monster. While the software may not be a perfect antidote, given that it can only recognize and work for items on the internet, it is certainly a good starting point. After all, it has been reported that Turn-it-in is used by more than 10,000 institutions in 126 countries worldwide. According to Kyvik, (2003) in the United Kingdom alone, '98 per cent of the country's higher institutions use the software to check for academic originality and authenticity, save instructors time and provide valuable feedback to students'.

### **Types of plagiarism**

There are different ways to plagiarise, these are ordered from specific to general and they include:

1. Clone, CTRL-C, find-replace, remix, recycling, hybrid, mashup, 404 error, aggregator and re-tweet and accidental plagiarism these are explained below:

2. Clone: Cloning means an act of copying, duplicating or replicating and submitting another person's work word-for-word as one's own. Plagiarism has become a serious unethical crime in the academic field of study as it leads to bridge of integrity.
3. Ctrl-C: Most at time people copy a small written piece of work that contains significant portions of text from a single source without alterations and without referencing such source.
4. Find and replace: The act of changing key words and phrases but retaining the essential content of the source in your work.
5. Remix: This is an act of paraphrasing from other sources and making the content fit together faultlessly.
6. Recycle: The act of borrowing liberally from one's own previous work without citation that is, self plagiarize.
7. Hybrid: The act of combining perfectly cited sources with copied passages without citation in one paper.
8. Mashup: This is a paper that represents a mix of copied material from several different sources without proper citation.
9. 404 error: A written piece that includes citations to non-existent or inaccurate information about sources.
10. Aggregator: The "Aggregator" includes proper citation, but the paper contains almost no original work.
11. Re-tweet: This includes proper citation, but relies too closely on the text's original wording and/or structure.
12. Self-plagiarism: Here the author copies a work earlier published by him and republished again without appropriate referencing himself.
13. Accidental plagiarism: Accidental plagiarism can occur when a researcher does not fully understand what citations are and how to go about it.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The findings of the present study show that most cases of plagiarism in Nigeria are among junior lecturer. This finding is in line with the expectations of the presents study as most junior lecturers who see themselves as research Guru deliberately copy and paste peoples work without given credit to such sources. This is true because most lecturers who are hunger and thirty for rapid promotion indulge themselves in unethical conduct in the course of writing their papers for promotion. The findings are in consonance to that by Nejati, Ismail & Shafaei (2011) who found out that the most common forms of plagiarism behaviours are found among junior lecturers who deliberately give incorrect information about the source of a quotation in their research practices. The present findings also agrees to that by Hekelman, Zyzanski, & Flocke (1995) who carried out an empirical study on research output among lecturers in tertiary institution and suggested that newly

appointed academic staff need to enroll in programs that focus on research activities and how to garner research resources for paper writing.

### **Conclusion**

Plagiarism to some is a normal act of copying one's work due to lack of self-belief of one's ability and creative power. This kind of plagiarism includes cutting and pasting a paper together from Internet sources without given credit to the institution of source to which the information was derived. When such research works are sent for publication locally or internationally plagiarism has occurred. Reasons vary, but procrastination and lack of self-confidence in one's ability are probably high on the list of reasons. Plagiarism is an epidemic eating through the fabric of academic integrity. Available literature admits critical need for eradicating it through the combined efforts of all stakeholders within the academic community such as governing bodies, lecturers and students. Each group must identify their role and work towards maintaining an academic environment free from the plague of plagiarism. It is therefore expected that every lecturer, student in the academic field must be aware of the indispensable role turn-it-in has come to play as a tool for promoting academic integrity, peace and security in education.

### **How to avoid Plagiarism in your Research Work**

When writing a research paper or any other type of academic assignment, you will likely use review literature (works of authorities in the chosen area) such as books, articles and websites written by other people to support your argument. However, when using someone else's information, you must indicate the source from which such information was derived. If you fail to acknowledge your sources, you are guilty of plagiarism. The following steps if strictly adhere to can help avoid plagiarism in your research work

1. Use turn-it-in to turn your entire work so as to determine the level of originality and plagiarism as this act will further help to build some element of clarity in your research work.
2. Develop the spirit of self confidence in your ability to write by reading wider, travel wider, use e-mediums to gather facts and verify the authenticity of your source.
3. Be creative: To present your work as completely original, start by rational thinking into what could be the content of your writing. Your research paper should have assisted in giving you knowledge about what you are writing about.
4. Use your language construction skills creatively to bring out the best in you.
5. Paraphrase, summarize, quote and acknowledge appropriately the other writer where you have to in recognition of their efforts.

### **Ensuring Educational peace and Security in Research Practices**

Academic exercises are expected to be made free for human consumption but because of the level of stealing in the internet, it is advisable to protect articles from fake intellectuals who cannot reason for themselves but merely rely on stealing the work of others for promotion. Copyright, tynt, disabling text and watermark are few method of protecting ones work from plagiarism these are explained hereunder:

1. Copyright is defined as the sole right to reproduce a literary, dramatic, musical, artistic work or academic work, such as the manuscripts, journals and papers published by the original owner and that nobody is expected to copy such work except by permission.
2. Tynt: This is a service that provides which enable you to insert into your web pages and will also tell you how many time your content has been copied and pasted. When someone copies and pastes your content.
3. Disable text selection on your blog: This is the first and most essential step to discourage direct copying of your content. Users of the Blogger platform can disable text selection from their blogs by manual installation of some Java script code.
4. Watermark your images: It's important to watermark all the original images you've created for use on your blog. A watermark proves that you are the owner of the copyright to all those images. Moreover, watermarks discourage others from using your photos.

### **Recommendation**

The research paper poses the following recommendations

1. Lecturers who intend to present papers in conferences/seminar and workshops should start their papers early as almost all conference gives reasonable time to conferee to develop papers on time.
2. Conferee (lecturers) should avoid developing and sending of abstracts first before the full papers as this act can be misleading. Most at time when abstracts are sent in advance, relevant materials may not be readily available for use to compose such work coherently.
3. Lecturer should be encouraged to delve into topics they have a good insight on this is because research endeavours starts with a curious mind raising question about unclear phenomenon therefore, academic exercise must start with a consultation and reasonable exploration and reading of available literature which will help to build a better understanding of the problem to be researched.
4. Nigerian colleges of education should follow the footsteps of some universities to train and equipped it staff (ICT units) on the use of turn-it-in software which will help to equip them on the essence of turning in their research papers before publication.

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