



## **Awareness and Utilization of Plagiarism Detection Software by Postgraduate Students in Federal University Dutsinma, Katsina State**

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## **Abstract**

This study investigated awareness and utilization of plagiarism detection software by postgraduate students in Federal University Dutsinma, Katsina State. Four research questions guided the study. Survey research design was adopted. Sample for the study was 169 postgraduate students. Questionnaire developed by the researchers was the instrument used for data collection. The data collected were analyzed using bar charts, frequency and percentages. The findings of the study revealed that postgraduate students in FUDMA have average level of awareness of Turnitin plagiarism software, most of the postgraduate students take their work to the university library for plagiarism check, postgraduate students mostly use Turnitin to check the similarity index of their Dissertation and Thesis, challenges that hinders effective use of Turnitin include lack of fund to use Turnitin, inadequate knowledge to use Turnitin, among others. The study recommended that the management of Federal University Dutsinma through the postgraduate school should make effort in improving the postgraduate student's awareness through orientation programs, organizing workshops and seminars, all Faculties and Departments should make it compulsory for postgraduate students to subject their Dissertations and Thesis for plagiarism check, the postgraduate school should bring to the notice of the students the necessity of subjecting their work for plagiarism check and the need for them to comply with the law of the school pertaining plagiarism.

**Keywords:** Anti-plagiarism, Turnitin, Awareness, Postgraduate students.

## **Introduction**

Anti-plagiarism software detect work that was copy words by words without being paraphrase by the author and this is an academic offence. The level of academic dishonesty among the academic community has increased since the advent of the internet. According to Hansen (2008) opines that anyone browsing the Web today can access millions of documents on any topic imaginable without ever having to leave their desks. They can electronically copy and paste text, full documents, or just a few phrases into their own work with the touch of a mouse. Experts generally agree that the Internet and other modern technologies have made plagiarism easier.

According to Nketsiah, Imoro, and Barfi (2023) stated that there is a growing incidence of academic misconduct and research ethical violations in many academic institutions across the globe. Students' increased usage of internet resources has been mainly blamed for this scenario (Barfi and Afful-Arthur 2018; Idiegbeyan-Ose, Nkiko, and Ifeakachuku 2016). The ability to articulate the opinions of other scholars in one's own words is a significant obstacle for the majority of pupils writing for academic purposes (AlMarwani, 2020). Pupils frequently replicate parts of secondary sources without giving due credit, whether on purpose or accidentally. This always compromises the quality of the work that these students produce. Bailey and Challen (2015) contend that as we write for scholarly publications we are conversing with our academic peers; as such, it is imperative that we appropriately represent and attribute each other's opinions. Several universities have responded to this threat by implementing official courses like Academic Writing and Information Literacy, even at the postgraduate level. Furthermore, a lot of university libraries include connections to e-books, handouts, webinar recordings, quick films, and online tutorials to help students stay away from plagiarism.

To enhance academic writing, academic institutions can use plagiarism detection tools. For a new technology to be successfully adopted and diffused, institutions or organizations trying to deploy it must be aware of stakeholder perceptions. Thus, prior research has shown that post-graduate students' views of plagiarism have a major impact on how often they use plagiarism detection software (Nketsiah, Imoro, and Barfi, 2023). As a result, these students have played a crucial role in the spread of plagiarism detection software as an essential tool for forming students' academic writing.

Turnitin promotes appropriate use of citing other people's writings; the software provides a web-based service to manage the process of submitting and tracking papers electronically, giving better and faster feedback to authors. Turnitin is an originality checking and plagiarism prevention service used by millions of people and thousands of institutions worldwide (Garba, 2018).

## **Statement of the Problem**

Plagiarism has become a matter of concern especially in an academic environment. This is because students intentionally or unintentionally involve in the act of plagiarism when writing their thesis, dissertations, projects or assignments. According to Naik, Landge, and Mahender (2015), plagiarism is starting to raise concerns in the academic community. They contended that the ease of unfettered access to the various types of information available on the internet was contributing to the rise in plagiarism. The authors contended that because it is challenging for anyone to verify using the available data, the conventional manual detection of plagiarism by humans is a laborious, erroneous, and time-consuming procedure. As a result, they offer current plagiarism detection techniques. They said that plagiarism detection systems help the academic community identify instances of other people's plagiarism and steer clear of such illegal activities.

However, to address the menace of plagiarism in an academic environment the Federal University Dutsinma comes up with a policy at the postgraduate level mandating all students to carry out plagiarism check at the University library using Turnitin software before a work is submitted for presentation and the result of the check is submitted alongside the work.

Despite the policy made by the University Management and effort by university library to acquire Turnitin anti-plagiarism software, organizing individual training to increase the level of awareness and usage but, preliminary observation revealed that majority of PG students in Federal University Dutsin-Ma are not patronizing the available Turnitin software in the library. Could it be due to lack of awareness of its availability? Or lack of interest to use the library resources and services? Therefore, this research is set to investigate the level of awareness and extent of the utilization of Turnitin anti-plagiarism software in Federal University Dutsin-Ma Library.

## **Research Questions**

The research was guided by the following questions:

1. To what extent are the postgraduate students aware of anti-plagiarism software in Federal University Dutsinma?
2. How do the postgraduate student access and use Turnitin anti-plagiarism software in Federal University Dutsinma?
3. For what purpose do the postgraduate students utilize Turnitin anti-plagiarism software in Federal University Dutsinma?
4. What are the challenges of postgraduate students with Turnitin anti-plagiarism software in Federal University Dutsinma?

## **Literature Review**

Plagiarism simply means presenting the work or property of another person as one's own, without appropriate acknowledgement of their work. 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 cases are increasing daily and currently stand out to academics like a massive boulder. Plagiarism is trapping the scholars as a result. Consequently, many companies have launched various detection systems with varying procedures to tackle the issues. Turnitin is a useful tool among these. (Kumar *et al* 2018). Ensuring originality and author contribution to the scientific global research community is the goal of antiplagiarism software. To identify a plagiarized work, these software techniques rely on large databases and fast word matching algorithms. According to Abduldayan, Yusuf and Olatunde (2019) there are several antiplagiarism checkers such as: DupliChecker, Grammarly, Paperrater, Plagiarisma, PlagTracker, Turnitin, Plagium, and CopyLeaks.

Razera (2011) conducted a study to determine whether awareness, attitudes and perception of plagiarism among students and teachers were equivalent in writing and programming assignments as well as how online and classroom teaching impacted the issue of plagiarism. The research was carried out using paper-based and online surveys as well as semi-structured interviews. The finding revealed that the issue of plagiarism was vague among the students and teachers. Both the students and teachers appeared to have good understanding about code and text plagiarism; however, they appear to have a divergent view about code taken from a book or internet. Some groups were of the view that it is acceptable in programming while the same did not apply in writing assignments. Taking this result into cognizance, the author concluded that even though plagiarism was a common issue, there were some differences on what is allowed and not allowed in terms of code and text plagiarism.

Babalola (2012) studied the impact of awareness on the incidence of plagiarism among undergraduates in a Nigerian private university using a self-administered questionnaire. The study found a positive correlation between awareness and incidence of plagiarism levels and maintained that awareness of the behaviour that constitutes plagiarism may not deter students from engaging in it. The research advocates the discouragement of accidental plagiarism by educating students the proper techniques for resource usage, canvass for value reorientation and sanctions against intentional plagiarism.

Fish & Hura (2013) carried out a survey on students at a large urban college to determine their beliefs about plagiarism. The participants were asked how often they commit plagiarism and how often they think other students commit plagiarism. The participants were further asked about how serious the following plagiarism; using another author's ideas, phrases, sentences or paragraphs, and submitting an entire document written by another author. Most of the respondents were reported to have never committed plagiarism of any type and there was a systematic decline in the admissions of plagiarism as the amount of text that was copied and the frequency of occurrence increased.

Liddell (2003) noted that Turnitin is a tool which allows the tutors to check for suspected plagiarism, as well as evolving into a more all-round electronic submission and grading tool. From another view, Badge and Scott (2009) identified Turnitin as a service when they reported that Turnitin is service that checked for individual collusion and copying from the internet within the same service; that instructors save time using electronic detection services and use reports generated to educate students about writing from sources and citation rules; and, that, for effective deterrence, use of electronic services for detecting plagiarism is coupled with educating students about plagiarism penalties and consequences. Similarly, on the effect and strength of Turnitin in detecting plagiarisms, Jocoy and DiBiase (2006) emphasized that Turnitin detected five times more instances of plagiarism than manual methods.

## **Methods**

The study adopted the survey research design, which is suitable for this kind of study, as it aims to obtain the general awareness and utilization of Turnitin anti-plagiarism software by postgraduate students in Federal University Dutsinma. The total population of the study was 1,688 PG students of which 10% (169) were sample, this is according to Neuman (2006) that researcher can select 10% of the population above 1000 and 30% of population below 1000. Questionnaire developed by the researchers was the instrument used for data collection. The data collected were analyzed using bar charts, frequency and percentages.

## Results

The postgraduate students aware of Turnitin anti-plagiarism software in Federal University Dutsinma

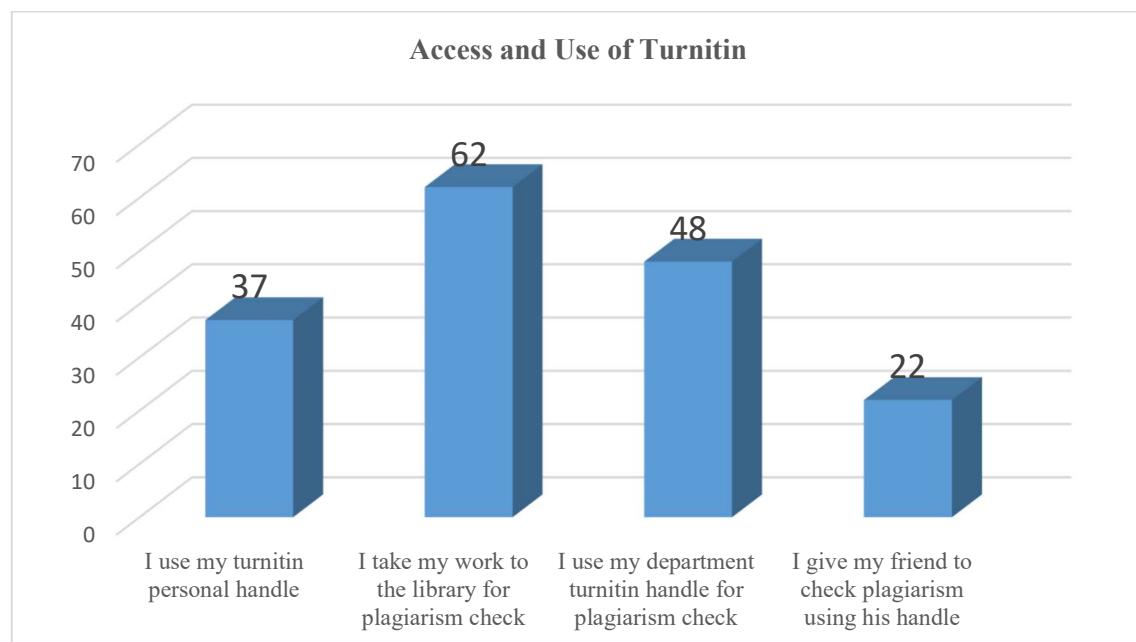
**Table 1: Level of Awareness.**

Level of Awareness	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High level of awareness	53	31
Average level of awareness	78	46
Low level of awareness	38	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>100</b>

The above table 2 sought to determine the level of awareness with regards to the existence of the Turnitin software in detecting plagiarism among the postgraduate students in FUDMA. The findings revealed that almost half of the respondents 78 (46%) reported average level of awareness. However, 53 (31%) reported high level of awareness and 38 (23%) reported low level of awareness. This shows a moderate level of awareness of the existence of the Turnitin software in detecting plagiarism generally.

### **How the postgraduate student access and use Turnitin anti-plagiarism software in Federal University Dutsinma**

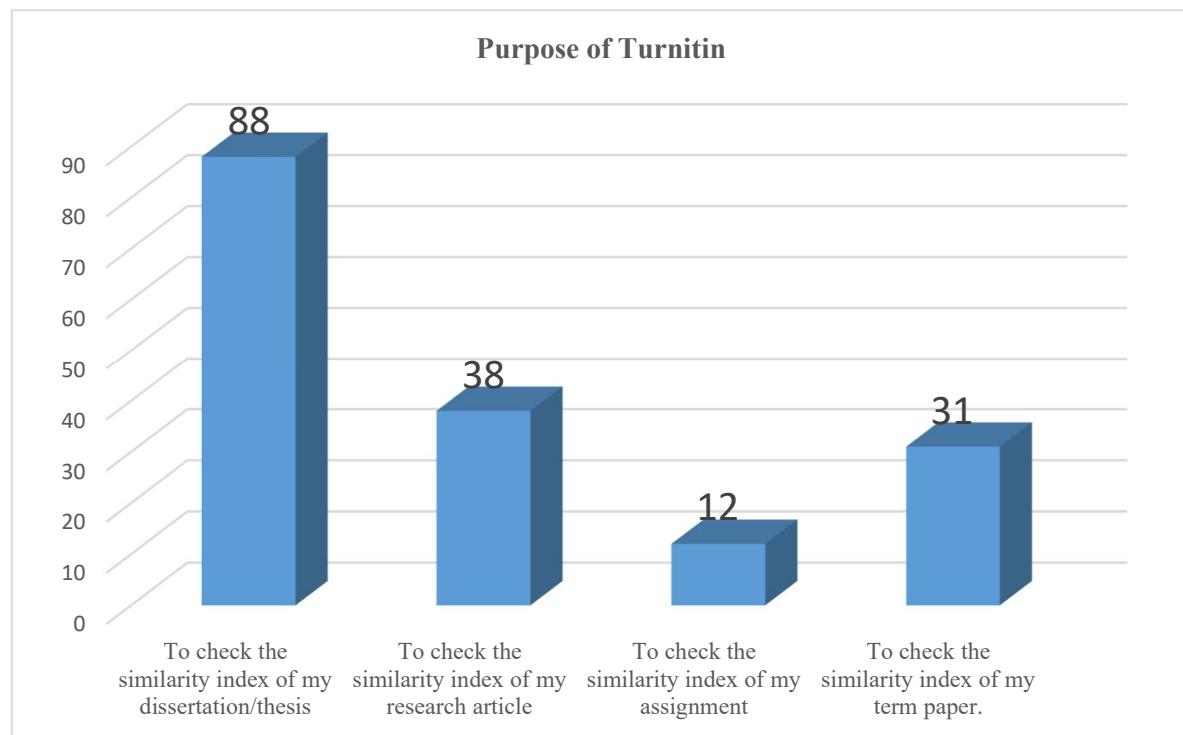
**Figure1: Access and Use of Turnitin**



From the above figure 1, a significant number of the respondents 62(37%) take their work to the library for plagiarism check, 48(28%) of the respondents do consult their department for plagiarism check, 37(22%) of the respondents use their personal handle to check plagiarism while 22(13%) of the respondents give their friends their work for plagiarism check. This is to say that FUDMA postgraduate students' access and use Turnitin anti-plagiarism software to check the plagiarism index of their research work.

**Purpose the postgraduate students utilize Turnitin anti-plagiarism software in Federal University Dutsinma**

**Figure 2: Purpose of Turnitin**



From the above figure 2, a substantial number of the respondents 88(52%) use Turnitin to check the similarity index of their dissertation/thesis, 38(23%) of the respondents use Turnitin to check the similarity index of their research article, 31(18%) of the respondents use it to check the similarity index of their term paper while 12(7%) use Turnitin to check the similarity index of their assignment. This implies that majority of the FUDMA postgraduate students use Turnitin anti-plagiarism software for the purpose of checking the similarity index of their dissertation/thesis.

**The challenges of postgraduate students with Turnitin anti-plagiarism software in Federal University Dutsinma**

**Table 2: Challenges of Turnitin**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Inadequate knowledge to use Turnitin anti-plagiarism software.	41	24
Internet access is a barrier to use Turnitin anti-plagiarism software.	27	16
I don't get result instantly after using Turnitin anti-plagiarism software.	23	13
Lack of fund to use Turnitin for plagiarism check	78	46
<b>Total</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 above shows the respondent responses about the challenges of Turnitin by postgraduate students in FUDMA, a significant number 78 (46%) believed that lack of fund to use Turnitin for plagiarism check is a challenge thereby, hindering them to access Turnitin ant-plagiarism software, 41 (24%) responded that inadequate knowledge to use Turnitin anti-plagiarism software is hindrance to use the software for plagiarism check, 27 (16%) indicated that Internet access is a barrier to use Turnitin anti-plagiarism software and only 23(13%) were of the opinion that they don't get result instantly after using Turnitin anti-plagiarism software.

### **Discussion of the Findings**

The findings of this study revealed that postgraduate students in FUDMA have average level of awareness of Turnitin anti-plagiarism software. This finding is in line with the work of Garba (2018) when he reported an average awareness of Turnitin. Furthermore, most of the postgraduate students take their work to the university library for plagiarism check before is submitted for presentation at their respective departments.

Another finding of the study revealed that postgraduate students mostly use Turnitin to check the similarity index of their Dissertation and thesis. This finding disagrees with the study of Ledwith and Rísquez (2008) who found that the purpose of using anti-plagiarism software was statistically associated with students awarding lower grades to their peers.

Lastly, the findings of this study revealed the challenges that hinders effective usage of Turnitin to include lack of fund to use Turnitin, inadequate knowledge to use Turnitin, internet access is a barrier to use Turnitin and I don't get result instantly after using Turnitin. This result is in line with the study of Abduldayan, *et al* (2019) who reported that poor internet services available to them affects their regular use of the platform and interest in checking their write up.

## Recommendations

In line with the findings of study the following recommendations were made:

1. The management of Federal University Dutsinma through the postgraduate school should make effort in improving the postgraduate student's awareness through orientation programs, organizing workshops and seminars.
2. All Faculties and Departments should make it compulsory for postgraduate students to subject their Dissertations and Thesis for plagiarism check before is submitted for presentation.
3. The postgraduate school should bring to the notice of the students the necessity of subjecting their work for plagiarism check and the need for them to comply with the law of the school pertaining plagiarism.
4. The University management should make effort to make network available, accessible and improve on the strength for easy surfing the internet and Turnitin anti-plagiarism software.

## Conclusion

Plagiarism has become a matter of concern especially in an academic environment this is because students intentionally or unintentionally are involved in the act of plagiarism when writing their thesis, dissertations, projects or assignments. The findings of this study have indicated that an average level of Turnitin anti-plagiarism software awareness existed among postgraduate students in FUDMA. It equally revealed that postgraduate students mostly use Turnitin to check the similarity index of their Dissertation and Thesis. Turnitin promotes appropriate use of citing other people's writings; the software provides a web-based service to manage the process of submitting and tracking papers electronically, giving better and faster feedback to authors.

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