

# Plagiarism, Lack of Data, and Nigeria's Attitude Towards Intellectual Property Rights

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Respect for property, rights, and life is the hallmark of civilization. As a corollary, lack of respect for the trio also denotes primitivity, backwardness, and underdevelopment. Property can be tangible or intangible. Our interest in this article is on intellectual property – an intangible property.

Plagiarism, which is the “basest form of theft,” is a serious academic issue in advanced countries. It is a grave matter in less advanced countries. One of the biggest problems in issues relating plagiarism is compilation of data on plagiarism. It is interesting to note that in Australia a regulation has been in force since 2014 “requiring high schools in the state to keep records on instances where students were caught cheating and record information on the assignment, nature of the cheating and the punishment that was applied.” This New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA) regulation has made it possible to compile data on plagiarism in schools in Australia.

As a consequence of the NESA regulation of 2014 on data compilation on plagiarism, in 2016, it was discovered that “there were 374 cases of plagiarism tracked out of 722 total incidents. That means plagiarism represented 52% of all cheating incidents in the state.”<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately, Nigeria does not yet have this laudable regulation. The reason for this is not far-fetched. First, our orientation about taking people's property is rather nebulous. Second, lack of data and documentation on the most serious matters is a far cry, let alone seemingly unimportant intellectual property concepts. Third, poor leadership, which has resulted in backwardness and retardation, has been a clog in the wheel of progress in this direction. Fourth, a continuous plummeting standard in education caused by poor remuneration of teachers and lack of drive and failure of an honest and proper incentivization of education has not helped matters. The list goes on and on.

The consequence of not having a strong IP and academic policy is all too obvious. Intellectual property rights infringement and plagiarism have continued to be on the rise. Some students have never even heard of the word “plagiarism” talk more of knowing its meaning. Until we give serious attention to intellectual property protection, begin to see the need for the compilation of data and documentation, as is obtainable in any sane clime, and keep education of youths as a matter of urgent national importance, we will remain a laughingstock in the eye of other advanced and advancing nations.

*J. Bailey, "Plagiarism and Cheating in Australia", available at <https://www.plagiarismtoday.com/2017/06/14/plagiarism-and-cheating-down-under/>, accessed June 14, 2017. 2 J. Bailey, *Ibid*.*

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### **About Ezeudo Maduka**



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