

**Editorial****Open Access****Code: 5408****Beyond Plagiarism Checker Software****Tesfaye Gebeyehu**

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With a letter dated 30/ 07/2016 E.C. (April 8, 2024), with a reference number 1/256/917/16, the MOE of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia released a guideline titled: “Evaluation and Accreditation of Research Journals Published in Ethiopia-April 2024 Version”. One of the purposes is to minimize plagiarism-related problems. According to the letter, the degree of plagiarism [text similarity percentage] of local journals submitted for accreditation to the MOE was beyond the internationally accepted threshold. The letter insists editors and publishers consider plagiarism checking before publishing manuscripts to enhance journal quality. According to the letter, plagiarism [text similarity] beyond 30% is unacceptable for journals submitted for national accreditation, “A major shift undertaken to enhance the quality of research journals published in Ethiopia”.

The direction given by the concerned office is important and timely. However, the office should stretch beyond preparing guidelines and giving directions. The outcome of the plagiarism (more than 30% text similarity) cannot be a surprise for three main reasons. For one thing, many local journals did not have plagiarism checker software for many years. Second, even after getting the software, editorial board members trained on how to use the software are less motivated to use it as it consumes time, and they do not believe that checking the text similarity is their role. Above all, journal management in general, and the plagiarism checker software, in particular, requires at least one full-time managing editor and a language editor. It is important to remember that journals indexed in internationally recognized indexing platforms like Scopus have more than one journal managing officer, who checks text similarities upon manuscript submission. As it is well known, many publishing Ethiopian universities have not employed full-time managing editors and considered incentives for the editorial board members. Without addressing these problems, the editor-in-chiefs alone cannot address the problems. Even the burned-out editors would not only be discouraged but could also endanger the sustainability of journals when they leave the position. The editorials of EJSSLS (Vol. 3. No.1, 2016) and Vol. 10. No.1, 2023) also addressed the seriousness of the issue..

Therefore, to address the problem, all concerned stakeholders should come together and find solutions .Yes, stretching beyond the plagiarism checker is very imperative.

The editor

NB: This editorial is late prepared after the release of the letter mentioned at the onset of this editorial.

