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ATTITUDE OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE UNDERGRADUATES TOWARDS PLAGIARISM IN FEDERAL UNIVERSTIES IN SOUTH-EAST NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the attitude of Library and Information Science (LIS) undergraduates towards plagiarism in federal universities in South-East Nigeria. The study aims to identify LIS undergraduates' attitude towards plagiarism and determine their attitude based on their years of study. Two research questions and one hypothesis guided the study. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 868 undergraduates in Library and Information Science in federal universities in South-East Nigeria for 2021/2022 academic session. The sample size of 274 was selected using Taro Yamane formula and proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a standardised structured questionnaire on attitude towards plagiarism which was adapted from Mavrinac et al. (2010) and validated by 3 experts in Nnamdi Azikiwe University. The researchers administered 274 copies of the questionnaire, out of which 270 copies were correctly filled, returned, and used for the study. The data obtained were analysed using descriptive (frequency count, percentages, mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (One-way ANOVA and Scheffe post hoc test statistic were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance). The results revealed that LIS undergraduates in federal universities in South-East Nigeria have a negative attitude towards plagiarism; based on their year of study, second and fourth-year students showed a negative attitude while third-year students showed a positive attitude towards plagiarism. Also, there is a statistically significant difference in the mean rating of LIS undergraduates towards plagiarism which the Scheffe post hoc test revealed to be between second and third-year students and also between third and fourth-year students. Based on the findings it was recommended among others that the university management should make provision for adequate support and resources for organising seminars and workshops where issues of plagiarism will be discussed and can be done every academic session, thereby promoting academic integrity which will strengthen their negative attitude, while those with a positive attitude will develop the right attitude towards plagiarism.

Keywords: Attitude, LIS Undergraduates, Plagiarism, Federal Universities, South-East.

Introduction

Library and Information Science (LIS) undergraduates are students aspiring to obtain a bachelor's degree in LIS who are educated to become information professionals, librarians and information managers. As such, these students have courses that expose them to the concept of information literacy, copyright, and plagiarism in general. It is likely that by the

time they graduate, they will be well-informed on the use of information and promote ethical use of information. Students are generally are exposed to a wealth of knowledge available on the internet which they can access at any point in time, irrespective of location, from which they can either learn or copy. While this provides incredible opportunities for learning and research, it also presents challenges related to plagiarism, having the ease of copying and pasting content, students may be tempted to plagiarise or unintentionally misuse information. As submitted by Onuoha and Ikonne (2013), plagiarism is a general problem; plagiarism are becoming increasingly popular in Nigerian higher institutions evidenced in students' employment of 'copy and paste' while doing assignments or carrying out research projects. Ramos et al. (2019) opined that millions of individuals worldwide can now share information in real time due to advancements in information technology. This further increases the simplicity with which someone can make their publications visible, with a risk that others will use their ideas without giving due credit to them.

Plagiarism which involves taking someone else's work or ideas as one's own without giving credit to them has been observed in recent research indicating that it is becoming more evident in universities across the globe. Tsekea et al. (2021) Noted that plagiarism is the unacknowledged copying of information from different sources. Similarly, Issrani et al. (2021) refer to plagiarism as the use of other people's ideas or words and includes the use of published or unpublished data in the original language or as a translation without acknowledging the author(s). Undergraduates could be exposed to various forms of plagiarism; Epigeum (2021); Orluwene and Magnus-Arewa (2020); explained common types of plagiarism in academic research to include; paraphrasing: this is the most common type of plagiarism and is the act of researcher or student restating a text in their own words, without citing their sources. Paraphrasing with correctly cited sources is not plagiarism but when someone studies and uses several sources, extracts essential ideas and arguments, and then rewrites these as if they were their own, this is called paraphrasing plagiarism; Patchwork or mosaic: it is when the researcher or student copy and paste together pieces of different text to create a new text. Here, works of other people are downloaded and ideas are extracted for a new work to be established, it also involves taking passages from a work and the using quotation marks.; Verbatim plagiarism: This occurs when someone directly quotes text or a statement word for word from a source and then incorporates it into their work without providing adequate credit. This can be avoided by using quotation marks to enclose the words with a proper in-text citation and reference; Source-based plagiarism: this type of plagiarism can happen in several ways. Incorrect citing is key here, so one has to ensure that sources consulted are properly cited and guidelines are strictly adhered to. Making up a source or including inaccurate information about a source are also both forms of plagiarism. If this is done, it could mislead readers that may want to consult any cited sources for further study; complete plagiarism is where students download other authors' works, edit their names and replace them.

Since attitude is an antecedent of behaviour as postulated by Oyewole and Yusuf (2020), which in this case is the act of plagiarism, it is crucial to look at the attitude that LIS undergraduates exhibit towards plagiarism. In other words, a student's attitude towards plagiarism may determine whether or not they are likely to plagiarise. Attitude involves students' stance, mindset or dispositions to behaviours or activities that constitute plagiarism. Enamudu, and Akonedo, (2021) described attitude as a complex mental state involving beliefs, feelings, values, and dispositions to act in either a positive or negative way. A positive attitude towards plagiarism shows that one is tolerant and receptive to plagiarism, while a negative attitude shows that one disapproves of plagiarism; in line with the above Oyewole and Yusuf (2020) noted that LIS students who have a positive attitude towards plagiarism are inclined to support plagiarism while a position that detests plagiarism is shown by a negative attitude towards it.

Certain behaviours in tertiary institutions show students' engagement in plagiarism, most of them seem to copy a lot during their degree projects without acknowledging consulted sources. As observed by Omonijo, et al. (2017), some students while working on their projects engage in plagiarism by visiting other universities, choosing project titles, and submitting them to their supervisors. If any of the topics submitted is approved, a photocopy of the entire work will be made and presented to their supervisors chapter by chapter. The supervisor might not be aware of the behaviour, and the student might graduate with this behaviour as well. It would be highly challenging for the student to manage if they choose to pursue their education further in the long run by enrolling in a postgraduate program where research is more prioritized. Phyo et al. (2022) reported a higher attitude score indicating disapproval of plagiarism in doctoral students than masters' students, while Orluwene and Magnus Arewa (2020) found an attitude score that differ significantly between masters and Ph.D. students as Masters Students showed disapproval to plagiarism than Ph.D. students. These disparities shows that attitude can vary according to years of study. To further determine LIS attitude towards plagiarism, year of study was used to test hypothesis and evaluate potential differences. Understanding the attitude of LIS undergraduates towards plagiarism is crucial to effectively address and mitigate the ethical concerns associated with information use. By exploring their perspectives, beliefs, and behaviours towards plagiarism, educators and institutions can develop targeted interventions and educational strategies to promote a culture of academic honesty.

Several studies have been conducted to determine undergraduates' attitudes towards plagiarism, as seen in Ramos et al. (2019) study, which examined the attitudes towards plagiarism in business administration students from two private universities in Arequipa, Peru. Using a qualitative method (interview guide and focus group guide) they found out that students had a positive attitude towards plagiarism. They did not defend the behaviour because they believe it to be wrong, but when asked if "plagiarism is normal," the interviewees agreed that it is a common and even institutionalized practice that begins in school and becomes necessary to graduate in higher education.

Babelghaith et al. (2022) explored the attitudes of pharmacy students in Saudi Arabia towards Plagiarism, evidence from a cross-sectional study. A cross-sectional study was carried out from September 1 to 30 November 2021 on pharmacy students (first year to sixth year) from King Saud University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. A validated questionnaire with twenty- nine statements on attitude towards plagiarism (ATP) was employed for the study. A total of 415 pharmacy students took part in this research. The findings showed a moderately positive attitude towards plagiarism and subjective standards as well as a moderate negative attitude. The overall attitude of pharmacy students was positive towards plagiarism.

Also, Oyewole and Yusuf (2020) examined the relationship between social influence and attitude towards plagiarism by LIS undergraduates of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study. A descriptive survey research design of the correlational type was used and the total enumeration technique was adopted. 223 LIS undergraduates of the University of Ibadan from year one to final year all participated in the study. The instrument used for the study was a questionnaire and data was analysed with the use of frequency counts, percentages, mean, standard deviation, and correlation analysis. Results showed that most of the LIS undergraduates had a positive attitude towards plagiarism and a significant positive relationship was reported between social influence and attitude towards plagiarism by the LIS undergraduates.

Contrary to the above is the finding of Onuoha (2016). The study examined undergraduates' attitude to plagiarism and their personal information management behavior at Babcock University, Ogun State Nigeria. A descriptive research approach was adopted for the study and the population of students consisted of 214 students of the Department of Information Resource Management. It was discovered that most of the respondents had a negative attitude towards plagiarism, as they rejected the statements that seemed to support plagiarism.

Also, Sagar et al. (2022) investigated the knowledge, attitude, and practices towards plagiarism observed in undergraduate medical students at a teaching school in South East Asia. Cross-sectional study design and study was done from February to April 2022 in a sample of 200 undergraduate medical students from year one to final year. A questionnaire instrument was used for data collection. Data were analysed using Microsoft Excel and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16. It was found that (80%) majority of the students know about research principles and practices of plagiarism, and a majority were found to have a negative attitude towards plagiarism.

Although several studies have been carried out on the attitude of undergraduates towards plagiarism, none known to the researcher has been done on LIS undergraduates in federal universities in South-East Nigeria. Therefore, to fill this gap the researcher seeks to determine the attitude of LIS undergraduates towards plagiarism in federal universities in South-East Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Plagiarism has been found to have become a menace among various universities, especially among undergraduates in different disciplines (LIS

inclusive). This connotes that many of these undergraduate students display an attitude favouring plagiarism while carrying out their academic tasks. It shows that students exhibit behaviours that describe tolerance to plagiarism like using authors' works without any form of acknowledgement, paraphrasing without in-text citation and reference, and copying verbatim without quotation marks. LIS undergraduates who are better equipped to understand plagiarism being in a department that promotes ethical use of information, and has some of their courses expose them to the concept of plagiarism are expected to have the right attitude towards plagiarism by acknowledging consulted materials in any format. Some studies in other areas found LIS Students to have the dispositions that favours plagiarism. Examining undergraduates' attitude towards plagiarism in federal universities in South-East Nigeria does not seem to be given much attention. Thus there is a need to identify the attitude of LIS undergraduates towards plagiarism in federal universities in South-East Nigeria. Against this backdrop, this study was undertaken to determine LIS undergraduates' attitude towards plagiarism in federal universities in South-East Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What is the attitude of Library and Information Science undergraduates towards plagiarism in federal universities in South-East Nigeria?
2. What is the attitude of Library and Information Science undergraduates towards plagiarism in federal universities in South-East Nigeria based on their year of study?

Research Hypothesis

A null hypothesis (H0) was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no statistically significant difference among second-year, third-year, and fourth-year LIS undergraduates in their attitude towards plagiarism in federal universities in South-East Nigeria.

Research Method

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The study was conducted in federal universities in South-East Nigeria, an area known to be an educationally advantaged zone. Since only little has been done in this area, this research will birth new empirical evidence among LIS undergraduates in federal universities in South-East Nigeria. They have five federal universities which are Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Alike (AE-FUNAI), Federal University of Technology Owerri (FUTO), Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike (MOUAU), Nnamdi Azikiwe University (NAU), and University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN). However, only three of them—MOUAU, NAU, and UNN—offer undergraduate programme in library and information science and were used for the study. The population of the study was made up of 868 regular LIS undergraduates from the following institutions; NAU(98, 97, and 117 in years 2,3,and 4 respectively), UNN(51, 60 and 85 in year 2, 3, and 4) and MOUAU (249 and 111 in year 2 and 3 respectively) for 2021/2022 academic session. MOUAU does not have final year students as a result of deregistration done in 2017/2018 to remove non-agriculture-related courses from the university which was later reversed in the 2019/2020 academic session. Taro Yamane formula ($n=N/1+N(e)^2$) was

used to determine the sample size of the study which is 274 LIS undergraduates, proportionate stratified random sampling technique was further employed to determine the sample across different years of study. This is to ensure that every subgroup (year of study) participates in the study in the same size as they do in the population. The instrument used for data collection was a standardised structured questionnaire, titled ‘‘Attitude Towards Plagiarism Questionnaire” adapted from Mavrinac et al. (2010). The instrument was divided into two sections, A and B. Section A (contains one item) focused on the demographic profile of the respondents (year of study), while section B (contains 19 items) focused on items addressing the research questions. It elicited information on both positive and negative activities concerning plagiarism which was randomly distributed to the respondents. Each of the items has 4-point response categories as follows: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The instrument for the study was validated by three experts, two from the Department of Library and Information Science, and one from the Department of Educational Foundations (Measurement & Evaluation Unit) at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The instrument's reliability was measured using 20 regular LIS undergraduates from the University of Jos, Plateau State. The university was used because they share similar features with the area of study. Data collected were analysed, and the internal consistency of the instrument was determined using Cronbach alpha. The internal reliability coefficient estimate of 0.82 was obtained which shows that the instrument is reliable. The researcher administered 274 copies of the questionnaire to the respondents with the help of two research assistants. 270 (98.5%) copies of the questionnaire were completed and returned while 4 copies (1.5%) were lost. The researcher used 270 copies which were returned for analysis. IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 22) was used in the analysis of data. Descriptive and inferential statistics (frequency count, percentages, mean, standard deviation, and One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)) were used for the analysis of data. Frequency count and percentages were used to analyse section A of the questionnaire while Mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the data on research questions one and two. ANOVA was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance and the Scheffe post hoc test of multiple comparisons, following a One-Way ANOVA was also run to analyse and interpret where the statistically significant differences between pairs of group means exist. Since the scale used in the collection of data is a 4-point Likert scale, the decision rule for research questions 1 and 2 is as follows; Strongly Agree=3.50-4.00, Agree=2.50-3.49, Disagree=1.50-2.49, and Strongly Disagree =1.00-1.49 respectively. Consequently, the attitudinal grand mean score with Strongly Agree/Agree is positive while that of Disagree/Strongly Disagree is negative. The decision rule for the null hypothesis is to reject the null hypothesis if the p-value is less than 0.05, otherwise do not reject.

Presentation of Results

Table 1: Respondents Year of Study

Years of Study	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
2	122	45
3	84	31
4	64	24
Total	270	100

Table 1 shows the number of students and their year of study. Results indicate that 122(45%) of the students were in second-year, 84(31%) in third-year, and 64(24%) in fourth-year.

Research Question 1: What is the attitude of Library and Information Science undergraduates towards plagiarism in federal universities in South-East Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation Scores of Library and Information Science Undergraduates on their attitude towards plagiarism

SN	The Attitude of LIS undergraduates towards Plagiarism	$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision
1	Sometimes one cannot avoid using other people's words without citing the source, because there are so many ways to describe something	1.52	0.62	Disagree
2	Students cannot write their assignments without copying from others	2.62	1.12	Agree
3	Short deadline gives students the right to copy a bit without providing in-text citation and references	2.06	0.95	Disagree
4	Students are still learning and should receive milder punishment for copying authors' works without acknowledging them	2.06	0.92	Disagree
5	Copied part of a paper may be ignored if the paper is of great educational value	2.24	0.99	Disagree
6	Since copying author's works without giving credit to them is a form of recycling, it should be promoted	2.50	1.09	Agree
7	Students can copy their friend's work if they have their permission and are not breaking any rules	2.16	1.02	Disagree
8	It is justified to use my previously published work without providing any citation and reference in the current work	2.41	1.07	Disagree
9	Students who duplicate or copy people's works do not belong in the academic community	2.32	1.00	Disagree
10	The names of students who copy authors' works without acknowledging the work should be disclosed in the university community	2.59	0.97	Agree
11	In times of moral decline, it is important to discuss issues like copying the intellectual ideas of authors and creators without giving credit to them	3.11	0.87	Agree

12	Copying authors' works and using them as one's own is as bad as stealing in an examination	3.36	0.79	Agree
13	Copying authors' works without proper acknowledgement reduces the investigative spirit	3.05	0.89	Agree
14	A copied paper does not harm research	2.53	1.00	Agree
15	Since plagiarism is taking other people's words rather than their tangible assets, it should not be a serious offence	2.61	1.08	Agree
16	Sometimes students are tempted to copy because everyone else is doing it.	1.99	0.92	Disagree
17	Copying authors' works without giving credit to them is not a big deal	2.87	1.04	Agree
18	Sometimes students copy a sentence or two just to become inspired for further writing	1.77	0.83	Disagree
19	There should not be punishment for copying an authors' work without giving credit to them	2.52	1.05	Agree
	Grand Mean and SD	**2.44**	**0.96**	**Disagree**

From the results in Table 2, it shows that item 2, 6, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, and 19 were rated as agree with the mean rating ranging from 3.36 to 2.50, while the remaining 9 items were rated as disagree. The items that were rated as disagree are item; 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 16, and 18 with a mean rating of 1.52 to 2.41. The grand mean score of 2.44 was obtained which shows that LIS undergraduates in federal universities in South-East Nigeria have a negative attitude towards plagiarism as they disagreed with items that seem to promote plagiarism. Standard deviation scores ranging from 0.62 to 1.12 show that respondents' ratings were homogenous.

Research Question 2: What is the attitude of Library and Information Science undergraduates towards plagiarism in federal universities in South-East Nigeria based on their year of study?

Table 3: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation Scores of Library and Information Science Undergraduates on their Attitude Towards Plagiarism based on their Year of Study

	Attitude towards Plagiarism	**Year Two**			**Year Three**			**Year Four**		
s/N	**Attitude of LIS undergraduates towards Plagiarism**	$\bar{x}$	**SD**	**Decision**	$\bar{x}$	**SD**	**Decision**	$\bar{x}$	**SD**	**Decision**
1	Sometimes one cannot avoid using other peoples words without citing the source, because there are so many ways to describe something	1.52	0.58	Disagree	1.58	0.69	Disagree	1.43	0.59	Strongly Disagree
2	Students cannot write their assignments without copying from others	2.59	1.06	Agree	2.94	1.19	Agree	2.25	1.03	Disagree

3	Short deadline gives students the right to copy a bit without providing in-text citation and references	2.09	0.86	Disagree	2.13	1.04	Disagree	1.90	1.00	Disagree
4	Students are still learning and should receive milder punishment for copying authors' works without acknowledging them	2.02	0.86	Disagree	2.11	1.01	Disagree	2.09	0.92	Disagree
5	Copied part of a paper maybe ignored if the paper is of great educational value	2.24	0.98	Disagree	2.15	1.01	Disagree	2.37	1.00	Disagree
6	Since copying author's works without giving credit to them is a form of recycling, it should be promoted	2.36	1.09	Disagree	2.83	0.98	Agree	2.31	1.12	Disagree
7	Students can copy their friend's work if they have their permission and are not breaking any rules	2.11	1.03	Disagree	2.23	0.99	Disagree	2.17	1.02	Disagree
8	It is justified to use my previously published work without providing any citation and reference in the current work	2.51	0.98	Agree	2.43	1.12	Disagree	2.21	1.11	Disagree
9	Students who duplicate or copy people's works do not belong in the academic community	2.25	0.96	Disagree	2.36	0.96	Disagree	2.39	1.11	Disagree
10	The names of students who copy authors' works without acknowledging the work should be disclosed in the university community	2.61	0.95	Agree	2.55	0.95	Agree	2.60	1.06	Agree
11	In times of moral decline, it is important to discuss issues like copying the intellectual ideas of authors and creators without giving credit to them	3.14	0.89	Agree	3.13	0.86	Agree	3.05	0.86	Agree
12	Copying authors' works and using them as one's own is as bad as stealing in an examination	3.33	0.74	Agree	3.42	0.82	Agree	3.34	0.84	Agree
13	Copying authors' works without proper acknowledgement reduces investigative spirit	3.11	0.79	Agree	3.01	0.91	Agree	2.97	1.04	Agree

14	A copied paper does not harm research	2.37	0.97	Disagree	2.77	0.94	Agree	2.55	1.08	Agree
15	Since plagiarism is taking other people's words rather than their tangible assets, it should not be a serious offence	2.46	1.03	Disagree	2.85	1.02	Agree	2.56	1.21	Agree
16	Sometimes students are tempted to copy because everyone else is doing it.	2.06	0.85	Disagree	1.92	1.01	Disagree	1.94	0.92	Disagree
17	Copying authors' works without giving credit to them is not a big deal	2.86	1.00	Agree	2.86	1.05	Agree	2.86	1.10	Agree
18	Sometimes students copy a sentence or two just to become inspired for further writing	1.75	0.81	Disagree	1.73	0.84	Disagree	1.86	0.83	Disagree
19	There should not be punishment for copying authors' works without giving credit to them	2.39	0.96	Disagree	2.77	1.05	Agree	2.42	1.16	Disagree
	Grand Mean and SD	**2.41**	**0.92**	**Disagree**	**2.51**	**0.97**	**Agree**	**2.38**	**1.00**	**Disagree**

Table 3 shows the mean rating of LIS undergraduates' attitude towards plagiarism based on their different years of study. From the 19 items, year 2, 3 and 4 students agreed to Items 10, 11, 12, 13 and 17 with a mean rating of 2.55 to 3.42 while they disagreed with items 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 16, and 18 with the mean range of 1.90 to 2.39. There are differences in their responses as shown in item 1, 2, 6, 8, 14, 15, and 19. Generally, a grand mean score of 2.41, 2.51, and 2.38 was obtained from year 2, 3, and year 4 students respectively which show that LIS Year 3 students in federal universities in South-East Nigeria have a positive attitude towards plagiarism as they agreed to statements that support plagiarism, while year 2 and year 4 LIS undergraduates in South-East Nigeria have a negative attitude towards plagiarism as they disagreed with items that tolerate plagiarism behaviour. The standard deviation scores which range from 0.58 to 1.09, 0.69 to 1.99, and 0.59 to 1.21 for year 2, 3 and 4 respectively for all the items are within the same range. This indicates that LIS students' opinions are relatively homogenous, showing a degree of consensus among LIS students.

The result of Table 3 is presented in the bar chart below:

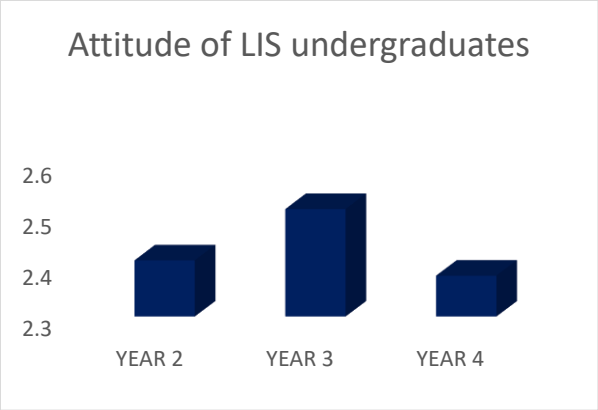


Figure 1: LIS students grand mean scores represented according to their year of study are 2.41, 2.51 and 2.38 respectively. This shows that LIS undergraduates' attitude varies according to their year of study.

Ho1: There is no statistically significant difference among second-year, third-year, and fourth-year LIS undergraduates in their attitude towards plagiarism in federal universities in South-East Nigeria.

Table 4: One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on LIS Undergraduates' Attitude towards Plagiarism in Federal Universities in South-East Nigeria based on their year of study

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	.740	2	.370	4.501	.012	Significant
Within Groups	21.948	267	.082			
Total	22.688	269				

Data in table 4 shows a p-value of 0.01 and 269 degree of freedom. Since p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that second-year, third-year and fourth year LIS undergraduates differs significantly in their mean ratings on their attitude towards plagiarism in federal universities in South-East Nigeria. Post hoc analyses was carried out using Scheffe to help indicate and interpret the statistical significance differences between pairs of group means in multiple comparisons as presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Post Hoc Analysis on Attitude of Library and Information Science undergraduates towards plagiarism based on their Year of Study

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Attitude
Scheffe

(I) Year of study	(J) Year of study	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
YEAR 2	YEAR 3	-.10246*	.04065	.043	-.2025	-.0024
	YEAR 4	.02501	.04425	.852	-.0839	.1339
YEAR 3	YEAR 2	.10246*	.04065	.043	.0024	.2025
	YEAR 4	.12747*	.04757	.029	.0104	.2446
YEAR 4	YEAR 2	-.02501	.04425	.852	-.1339	.0839
	YEAR 3	-.12747*	.04757	.029	-.2446	-.0104

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 5 shows the Scheffe Post Hoc Tests for Multiple Comparisons of students' attitude towards plagiarism based on their respective years of study. It indicates a significant difference in the attitude of year 2 and year 3 students; and between year 3 and year 4 students ($p < .05$). However, a significant difference did not occur between year 2 and year 4 ($p > .05$).

Discussion of Findings

Analysis in Table 1 shows that most respondents came from second-year, while fourth-year students have the lowest number of respondents probably because MOUAU does not have fourth-year students. Table 2 showed that LIS undergraduates have a negative attitude towards plagiarism because the majority of the items that appeared to promote plagiarism were disregarded. However, their negative attitude is a little below the positive. This indicates that students in the LIS programme probably receive education regarding proper citation practices, information literacy, and plagiarism during their course work which possibly played a role in shaping their attitude towards plagiarism. As this finding suggests that LIS undergraduates have a negative attitude towards plagiarism, it is also important to note that individual attitude varies. This gives credence to the study of Onuoha (2016), who examined undergraduates' attitudes towards plagiarism and their personal information management behaviour and found that most of the respondents had a negative attitude towards plagiarism, as they rejected the statements that seemed to support plagiarism. Also in line with this study is the study of Sagar et al. (2022), which showed a negative attitude towards plagiarism among its respondents.

The findings on table 3 also showed that second-year and fourth-year LIS undergraduates have a negative attitude towards plagiarism, while third-year LIS undergraduates showed a positive attitude towards plagiarism. The variations in attitude towards plagiarism based on the year of study indicate that apart from educational experiences; personality traits and individual differences might play a significant role in shaping students' attitudes towards plagiarism. The findings suggest that while the level of study and educational experience

may contribute to shaping attitude towards ethical behavior, it is also essential to consider some other factors such as individual personality traits, academic environment, and perception of consequences among individuals. Additionally, the positive attitude of third-year students towards plagiarism found in the current study is consistent with the study of Orwulene and Magnus-Arewa (2020). Also Oyewole and Yusuf (2020), in which they discovered that LIS undergraduates exhibit a positive attitude towards plagiarism. This suggests that one could have an understanding of plagiarism and still indulge in the act. Furthermore, Babelghaith et al. (2022) found that undergraduate students in pharmacy also possess a positive attitude towards plagiarism. These findings indicates that attitude towards plagiarism varies among different disciplines and academic contexts.

The null hypothesis revealed that LIS second, third and fourth-year undergraduates differed significantly in their mean rating on their attitude towards plagiarism. Though, the post hoc analysis indicated significant differences in the mean ratings between second and third-year students; and between third and fourth-year students. However, there was no significant difference between second and fourth-year students. Their differences could be a result of notable variations in how students perceive, and approach issues related to plagiarism. This is similar to the findings of Matsebatlela and Kuhudzai (2018) who found that there is a statistically significant difference in plagiarism attitude across levels of study, which was indicated in the post hoc test to be between first-year and third-year students.

Conclusion

In pertinent to the findings, LIS undergraduates were found to have a negative attitude towards plagiarism. Based on their year of study, their attitude varies as second and fourth-year students showed a negative attitude towards plagiarism while third-year students showed a positive attitude towards plagiarism. Furthermore, there is a statistically significant difference in the mean rating of LIS undergraduates' attitude towards plagiarism based on their years of study in federal universities in South-East Nigeria.

Recommendations

1. The University stakeholders should make provision for adequate support and resources such as organising workshops, seminars and conferences for students where issues of plagiarism will be discussed, and can be done every academic session so that undergraduates can develop the required skills needed in consulting authors' works. This in turn will strengthen their understanding and further reinforce their negative attitude towards plagiarism. It will also enlighten students that have a positive attitude to understand the concept and develop the right attitude towards it.

2. The University Management, National Universities Commission (NUC) and other stakeholders should also develop clear and defined policies on plagiarism and academic integrity in the institution and ensure that this is implemented vigorously to create an environment that does not tolerate plagiarism. This will further

promote academic integrity and ethical use of information and communicate the consequences of academic misconduct effectively. The consequences of plagiarism such as failing a plagiarised assignment, or rewriting a plagiarised project could also be integrated into the policy as punishment for defaulters.

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