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INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS PLAGIARISM BY STUDENTS OF THREE THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTH-WEST, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Attitude towards plagiarism of students of theological institutions is considered important as they are expected to be upholders of moral and spiritual values. However, some studies reveal that students of theological institutions have a positive attitude towards plagiarism. This could be a function of their level of information literacy skills. Thus, the main objective of this study is to examine the influence of information literacy skills on the attitude towards plagiarism by students in three theological institutions in South-west, Nigeria. The descriptive survey research design of the correlational type was adopted for this study. The population consisted of 1472 undergraduate and postgraduate students in three theological institutions in South-west, Nigeria. The two-stage random sampling technique was used to arrive at the sample size of 355. Data was collected with the aid of questionnaire. Results showed that the level of information literacy skills of the respondents is also high (overall mean=85.97). Majority of the respondents ($\bar{x}$=1.41) and ($\bar{x}$=1.48) also disagreed that it is acceptable to copy word for word from a book or journal without acknowledgement, and that is acceptable to copy from the Internet without citing the source. Also, exactly four-fifths of the respondents ($\bar{x}$=1.87) agreed that plagiarism is against their ethical values. This depicts a negative attitude towards plagiarism. There is a significant negative relationship between literacy skills and the attitude towards plagiarism by the students (r = -.156**; df = 299; p< 0.05). Part of the recommendations was that the high level of information literacy skills can be strengthened if librarians in collaboration with lecturers continually organise workshops and lectures to build the capacity of the students of theological institutions in information literacy.

Keywords: Information literacy skills, Attitude towards plagiarism, Students of theological institutions, Nigeria

Word count: 288

INTRODUCTION

There is no straightforward definition of what a theological institution is. The word theology has its roots in two Greek words "theos" which means God, and "logia" which means study or discourse. According to Marbaniang (2012, p.2), theology can be literally defined as "the science of divine things". This means that theology has to do with the study of the systematic operation of the divine. On the other hand, an institution can be defined as a properly organised structure which is put in place for the achievement of a particular purpose. Therefore, a theological institution can be defined as a properly organised structure which serves to provide an atmosphere for the study of God's word. Examples of theological institutions are Bible schools, seminaries, colleges of theology and so on (Ottuh, 2017). There are curricula, guidelines and methods that serve as the fulcrum of the activities and processes that pertain to teaching and learning in theological institutions. Therefore, students in these institutions are usually in need of information related to their line of study.

The information needs of these students require that they seek information from various sources ranging from print information materials to virtual information materials. (Penner, 2009). Students of theological institutions, just like students of other higher institutions of learning have access to information in massive amounts. As much as information is available for use by these students for various purposes, it is necessary to adhere to ethical use of information. In this age, there is an influx of information available to people such that it sometimes becomes difficult to sift and retrieve the actual information that one needs. This has led to acts of breaching information ethics, most especially one which is prevalent in this era, plagiarism.

Plagiarism is among the most prevalent challenges of higher education today. It may be described as the most widespread ethical lapse in scholarly writing (Roig, 2015). The word plagiarism has its root in the Latin word 'plagiarius' which means kidnapper and from 'plagion', a Greek word which means 'kidnapping'. (Mathur and Joshi, 2011). This ultimately means that the act involves taking another person's rightfully owned intellectual property without his consent and claiming to be the owner.

A foundational knowledge required to determine a situation in which plagiarism has occurred, is the knowledge of its existing types and forms. Common categorisations of plagiarism are: clone which is an entire lifting of the contents of another person's work and claiming ownership; ctrl-c, which involves extracting most of the contents used for writing from only one source with very minimal alterations and error 404, which involves providing non-existent quotes or sources. Others in this group are find-replace, aggregator, re-tweet,

remix, recycle, hybrid and mash-up (Roka, 2017). From the earlier discourse on theological students, it can be inferred that they are supposed to be custodians of moral and spiritual uprightness. This would imply that an ethical lapse like plagiarism should not be heard of among them. They are expected to display the right attitude towards plagiarism.

Attitude may simply be defined as a person's disposition with respect to a certain thing, person or event. Eagly and Chaiken (1993, p.1) define attitude as "a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour". Attitude is made up of three components namely: the affective component of attitude which is made up feelings, moods and emotions; the cognitive component which has to do with thoughts, beliefs or ideas, and the behavioural component which is linked with actions. (Kroenung and Eckhardt, 2011). Researchers have been able to identify two basic measures of attitude towards plagiarism which are the positive and negative attitude towards plagiarism. A positive attitude towards plagiarism implies that a person approves of it and sees nothing wrong in the act while a negative attitude implies intolerance for plagiarism (Kumari, Langer, Singh, Gupta, Sharma and Gupta, 2018). Students of theological institutions are expected to display a negative attitude towards plagiarism. Therefore, they are expected to learn about acts that connote plagiarism and desist from them. Unfortunately, theological institutions are not immune from the plague of this ethical delinquency called plagiarism.

A study carried out by Gnanaraj (2014) in India reveals that studies have not given enough attention to the menace of plagiarism in theological schools, hence its prevalence among students of theological institutions in India. The reason for this little attention, which depicts a positive attitude towards plagiarism, may be due to the expectation placed on theological schools and students as custodians of moral and spiritual integrity.

More often than not, acts of plagiarism are not intentional. Rather, they are results of lack of knowledge and skills on the part of information users (Sibomana, 2018). A study carried out by Oyewole and Abioye (2018) among postgraduate students of the University of Ibadan reveals that some behaviours that amount to plagiarism were not considered by some postgraduate students as such simply because they have not been able to identify and distinguish between acts that constitute plagiarism and those that do not. This could be as a result of having very little information of what plagiarism really entails. However, the attitude towards plagiarism of students in theological institutions could be a function of information literacy skills.

3

According to the American Library Association, information literacy is the ability to "recognise when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information" (ACRL: 2000, p.15). It also includes the ability of an individual to identify and determine that he has an information need and to be able to point out what the information need is (Issa and Daura, 2009). The ability to source for and use information the right way is a major characteristic of someone who is information literate.

There are a number of elements which give a detailed picture of the design of information literacy skills. Catts and Lau (2008) classify them as: definition and articulation of information; location of and access of information; assessment of information; organisation of information; use of information; communication and ethical use of information and other skills. The overall aim for which a theological student seeks information is to fill a gap in knowledge. Therefore, he must possess the aforementioned skills.

It may be inferred that when a theological student is fully armed with the skills described above and can put them to use effectively, it would be easier for him to carry out his research or assignments with the aim of producing a unique and original work. In the light of this, it may be perceived that information literacy skills could promote a negative attitude towards plagiarism while the absence of these skills could also promote a positive attitude towards plagiarism.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The present-day society is plagued with a lot of aberrant attitudes and behaviours. Religion plays a great role in ensuring that morality and positive values are promoted in every human society. The society seems to become a more complex entity by the day, hence religious leaders and custodians of spiritual knowledge need to be thoroughly trained and rightly informed to be able to uphold justice and truth in a world filled with various moral and spiritual vices. Theological institutions are citadels of learning for raising men and women who will be upholders of moral and spiritual values. Therefore, students being trained in such schools are expected to maintain a negative attitude towards all forms of moral, ethical and spiritual vices of which plagiarism is one.

However, from the background to this study, it is as if some students of theological institutions have a positive attitude towards plagiarism. The propensity of students of some of these institutions to indulge in this act may not be due to intentional recalcitrance or deviance but may be due to the fact that they lack necessary skills required for the efficient and

effective sourcing for and use of information. Consequent upon this, the quality and originality of the research work being carried out by some of the students of these institutions may be compromised at different points in time. If such persists, the quality of religious leaders and scholars being produced by the institutions may be difficult to ascertain. This study therefore seeks to empirically ascertain whether the students of these institutions possess the necessary skills needed to maintain a negative attitude towards plagiarism. It is based on this backdrop that this study examines information literacy skills and attitude towards plagiarism by students in three theological institutions in South-west, Nigeria.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the level of information literacy skills among students in three theological institutions in South-west, Nigeria?

2. What is the attitude towards plagiarism by students in three theological institutions in South-west, Nigeria?

3. What is the relationship between information literacy skills and attitude towards plagiarism by students in three theological institutions in South-west, Nigeria?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Attitude towards plagiarism of students in higher institutions

Barati (2011) as cited in Sohrabi et al. (2018) opined that with the widespread attitudes that have become diffused throughout the Iranian community, theft is only considered with regards to physical objects and is not defined for thoughts, ideas, and extensive scientific endeavours. In this way, many Iranians advance in their academic pursuits through the platform of plagiarism.

Hosny and Fatima (2014) conducted a study on the attitude of students towards cheating and plagiarism in King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. 115 undergraduate students and 25 Masters Students took part in the plagiarism survey anonymously. The results showed that the level of awareness of plagiarism by the participants was high. 83.48% attested to using electronic sources as a means to plagiarise, 62.61% had used print sources while 51.31% had used other sources asides from this to indulge in plagiarism during their undergraduate studies. In the concluding part of the survey, when students were asked whether or not plagiarism is ethical, 34.75% responded in the affirmative. This implied a positive attitude towards plagiarism among a good number of the students.

In a study on Malaysian public universities students' attitude towards plagiarism carried out by Singh (2014), he opined that one of the main factors that encouraged plagiarism among university students was that they did not have knowledge about the various forms of plagiarism. Singh notes from results that the attitude towards plagiarism of students of public universities in Malaysia is not accurately revealed because their awareness of plagiarism is low. But this finding indicates that the attitude of these students towards plagiarism may be positive, though due to ignorance.

Results from a study carried out by Oyewole, Rasheed and Ogunsina (2018) on Awareness, Perception and Attitude towards Plagiarism by Distance Learners in University of Ibadan, Nigeria show that of all the respondents, 182 students (90.1%) promised that they will make sure they give credence to the sources of information. Furthermore, 168 of the respondents (83.2%) resolved that although they had indulged in plagiarism in the past, they would stop. Finally, 169 (83.6%) succumbed to the fact that plagiarism is an academic evil so they would not indulge in it. These results show that majority of the distance learners studied possessed a negative attitude towards plagiarism.

The findings above reveal that in recent times, the attitude towards plagiarism of students of higher institutions is mostly positive than negative and this does not exclude students of theological institutions. Worthy of note also is the fact that many of the acts of plagiarism are due to little or no knowledge at all about acts that constitute plagiarism.

Information literacy skills of students in higher institutions

In a mixed methods study of information literacy among students of the University of Dar es Salaam, Klomsri and Tedre (2016) observed from survey data that students who had no training in information literacy had higher marks than students who did on almost all groups of information literacy. This revealed that the training at the University was unproductive in passing on knowledge to the students. This was compared to a previous study on four Tanzanian universities which showed that a large number of students perceived the training on how to make use of library resources futile. Some of the reasons for the futility of these trainings were, "inadequate time spent on training sessions, lack of awareness among the students about library resource usage training, and the separation between the training and course offerings" (Klomsri and Tedre, 2016; p.303).

Very little literature exist on the assessment of information literacy in theological institutions (Lipton, 2005). Lincoln (2013) carried out a study to assess the information literacy skills of pastors who had graduated from Bible colleges and seminaries and were

involved in preaching ministries and expressed that librarians in theological institutions believe that theological students do not possess skills and may leave school without a proper equipping in this area for ministry. He also noted that a good number of faculty do not recognise the same need and fight against the inclusion of information literacy instruction because they believe that the curriculum is already crammed. He believed a study of those in ministry could reveal whether pastors are equipped and whether it is important to make any changes to the theological curriculum.

Information literacy skills and attitude towards plagiarism of students in higher institutions

A study to investigate acts of plagiarism among students in Tanzania higher learning institutions by involving one government owned higher institution and another privately owned higher institution was embarked upon by Anney and Mosha (2015). Results showed that plagiarism is a cancer that has eaten deep into the academic blood of the students in the institutions under study. This was discovered as take home work that was turned in as the study progressed included a meaningful amount of text that was lifted from the works of other people with no credence being giving to the legal owners of the work.

MacLennan (2018) expressed that the lack of possession of the necessary cognition and abilities by students are principal determinants of the rise of plagiarism rates in higher education. Most students who indulge in the act do so because they do not possess the needed academic writing abilities and information literacy skills which are crucial to desisting from it. In a study of third year EFL Bulgarian students, it was discovered by Chankova (2017) that the students developed a positive attitude towards plagiarism for diverse reasons such as inadequate abilities to search for information, inadequate information literacy skills, and inadequacy in skills that enable them to effectively write from resources.

A qualitative study was conducted at Tabriz University of Medical Sciences-Iran by Soltany, Abdekhoda and Habibi (2018) on the factors that affect the prevention of plagiarism. The respondents included 18 faculty members of Tabriz University of Medical Sciences, including 14 male and 4 female; 5 professors, 7 associate professors and 6 assistant professors. It was concluded based on the study that considering the rise in positive attitude towards plagiarism by students, a rise in the level of information literacy skills and the employment of the myriad of abilities that lie in the use of information technology will make the prevention of intentional or unintentional plagiarism among students a possibility.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Theory of Reasoned Action by Fishbein and Azjen (1975) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) and the Skill Acquisition Theory have also been found to form the bases for attitude and information literacy skills respectively. Based on this, these theories will be examined with respect to the study.

The Theory of Reasoned Action and Planned Behaviour

The Theory of Reasoned Action by Fishbein and Azjen (1975) states that intentions motivate behaviours. In the Theory of Reasoned Action, preceding intentions consist of negative and positive attitudes alongside the subjective norms of the behaviour (Quartuccio, 2014). Ajzen (1991) states that the Theory of Planned Behaviour is a more pronounced form of the Theory of Reasoned Action. It was necessitated by the constraints of the theory of reasoned action in explaining behaviours over which individuals do not absolute control. According to the popular expectancy-value theory of attitude formation, attitudes are triggered by beliefs and values people hold with respect to a specific object or action (Fishbein, 1963). Therefore a student's attitude towards plagiarism will stem from whatever beliefs the values they hold about plagiarism.

This theory gives a clear perspective of the underlying factors responsible for the attitudes of students of theological institution towards plagiarism. It explains that the perceptions of students about plagiarism may be influenced by external factors like peer pressure and internal influences like personal beliefs and ideologies. Such perceptions instigate the attitude of students towards plagiarism. If a student believes that plagiarism is right, he executes this attitude by indulging in the act. If he believes otherwise, he manifests this attitude by abstaining from plagiarism.

The Skill Acquisition Theory

Vanpatten and Benati (2010) express that Adaptive Control of Thought (ACT) model, which was expounded by John Anderson, is the most recognised model of skill-based theories. Ackerman (1988) theory suggests that several abilities serve as the foundation of performance in successive phases of skill acquisition. Common ability measures such as theoretical intellection form the basis for performance in the first phase. In the second stage, the creation of production structures for the consistent characteristics of performance have led to a reduction in the effects of these components wane and the increases velocity of perceptive capacity seem to be the most critical factors that affect performance in the second

stage. The sole factor that influences performance in the end is the third phase's non-cognitive psychomotor abilities in the third phase.

The skill acquisition theory implies that the acquisition of information literacy skills is not a one off event but would require a series of processes to ensure that the skills learned are ingrained into the cognitive system of an individual. The theory also lays the foundation for information literacy instructions to be delivered to learners via methods that aid easy learning and retention of the skills and also in environments conducive for learning.

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey research design of the correlational type was adopted for the study. The population of study consisted of the regular students (undergraduate and postgraduate) of three theological institutions in South-west, Nigeria. According to the data collected from these institutions, the total number of students is 1494 (Table 1). In order to obtain a sample size, the two stage random sampling technique was adopted for this study. The first stage involved the use of the stratified random sampling to ensure participation of theological students that cut across all undergraduate and postgraduate programmes being run by each of the schools. The probability proportionate to size (PPS) sampling method was used to draw samples from each population unit, that is, undergraduates and postgraduates. With the use of the PPS method, the total sample size is 897. The second stage involved the use of a sampling fraction of 40% of the sample size obtained at the first stage. This therefore gave a sample size of 355 (Table 2). The questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection and was developed based on the review of the relevant literature. The instrument was validated by subject experts in the Department of Library, Archival and Information Studies, University of Ibadan, before administration. Data was analyzed with the use of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPPS) version 21 and presented in form of descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentages, mean and standard deviation.

Table 1 Population of the study

S/N	Name Of Institution	No. of Undergraduate Students	No. of Postgraduate Students	Total
1.	The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso, Oyo State.	353	578	931
2.	Life Theological Seminary, Ikorodu, Lagos State.	406	87	493
3.	Reuben George Theological Seminary, Ibadan, Oyo State.	38	10	48
	TOTAL	**797**	**675**	**1472**

Source: The number of students was obtained from the various institutions' record offices.

Table 2 Sample size for the study

S/N	Name of Institution	Sample Size (Undergraduate Students)	Sample Size (40%)	Sample Size (Postgraduate Students)	Sample Size (40%)
1.	The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso, Oyo State.	212	85	347	139
2.	Life Theological Seminary, Ikorodu, Lagos State.	244	98	52	21
3.	Reuben George Theological Seminary, Ibadan, Oyo State.	23	9	6	3
	TOTAL		**192**		**163**
	TOTAL SAMPLE SIZE	**355**			

RESULTS

A total of 355 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the undergraduate and postgraduate students in three theological institutions in South-west, Nigeria. However, 300 copies were returned and found useful for analysis giving a response rate of 84.5% (Table 3).

Table 3 Distribution of questionnaire and return rate

Universities	Distribution	Return
The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary	224	220
Life Theological Seminary	109	68
Reuben George Theological Seminary	12	12
Total	**355**	**300**

Demographic characteristics of respondents

Table 4 presented results on the demographic information of the respondents and findings showed that most of respondents were 163 (54.3%) postgraduates while the least 137 (45.7%) were undergraduates. There were more male participants 264 (88.0%) than their female counterparts. Results also revealed that a significant number of the respondents 124 (41.3%) were between 31-40 years of age, as 2 (0.7%) were between the ages of 15-20. It was also observed that most of the respondents 175 (58.3%) were married, while 3(1.0%) were widowed. Furthermore, most of the respondents 166 (55.3%) had other highest levels of qualification while 2(0.7%) had a highest level of qualification of MPhil.

Table 4 Demographic information of respondents

Demographic Characteristics	Freq	%
Category of student		
Undergraduate	137	45.7
Postgraduate	163	54.3
Gender		
Male	264	88.0
Female	36	12.0
Age		
15-20	2	0.7
21-30	84	28.0
31-40	124	41.3
41-50	68	22.7
51-60	18	6.0

61-70	4	1.3
Marital status		
Married	175	58.3
Single	122	40.7
Widowed	3	1.0
Highest level of qualification		
Ph.D.	8	2.7
MPhil	2	0.7
MTh	27	9.0
BTh	94	31.3
Diploma in Theology	3	1.0
Others	166	55.3

N=300

Answers to research questions

Research question one: What is the level of information literacy skills among students in three theological institutions in South-west, Nigeria?

Table 5 shows the students responses on the statements intended to measure their level of information literacy skills. In order to determine the level of information literacy skills, a test of norm was conducted. There are thirty statements in the scale used to measure information literacy skills and four measures (Strongly Agree, Agree, Strongly Disagree and Disagree). The thirty statements were multiplied by the four measures which gives a score of 120. The division of 120 by 3 gives 40. Thus, the scale between 0-40 shows that the level of information literacy skills among the students is low, the scale between 41-80 indicates that the level of information literacy skills among the students is moderate and the scale between 81-120 shows a high level of information literacy skills among the students. Results show that the overall mean for the respondents is 85.97 which falls between the scale 81-120 indicating that the level of information literacy skills among the students of theological institutions is high.

Table 5 Level of information literacy of students in three theological institutions in South-west, Nigeria

Items	SA F	%	A F	%	D F	%	SD F	%	Mean	SD
Definition and articulation of information need										
I can recognise when I need information.	88	29.3	183	61.0	18	6.0	11	3.7	3.16	.690
I understand the need to use information resources to fill my knowledge gap.	102	34.0	162	54.0	22	7.3	14	4.7	3.17	.756
I can identify the exact kind of information I need.	81	27.0	172	57.3	35	11.7	12	4.0	3.07	.737
I can express my information needs in clear terms.	69	23.0	193	64.3	28	9.3	10	3.3	3.07	.673
I possess the skills to recognise appropriate information resources (like reference sources, journals, textbooks, e-books, websites, etc.) and select the best ones.	60	20.0	177	59.0	45	15.0	18	6.0	2.93	.766
Location and access of information										
I know where and how to find necessary information resources to complete my assignments and research works.	59	19.7	169	56.3	56	18.7	16	5.3	2.90	.768
I am familiar with everyday online and offline search tools.	38	12.7	135	45.0	100	33.3	27	9.0	2.61	.820
I can use keywords to search for information materials on the web.	58	19.3	173	57.7	58	19.3	11	3.7	2.93	.728
I have the ability to navigate the library catalogue to search for resources in a library.	45	15.0	148	49.3	86	28.7	21	7.0	2.72	.801
I have ability to construct complex searches and search across a wide range of databases using different user interfaces, redefining terms, and repeating searches as required.	20	6.7	142	47.3	108	36.0	30	10.0	2.51	.765
I know the right search engines to use to find necessary information materials.	36	12.0	170	56.7	76	25.3	18	6.0	2.75	.742
I have the ability to find the exact information I need within a particular reference material or information resource.	39	13.0	185	61.7	56	18.7	20	6.7	2.81	.741
Assessment of information										
I can effectively identify when information is from a reliable source.	45	15.0	161	53.7	74	24.7	20	6.7	2.77	.783
I can identify specific information sources that are accurate and relevant based on author, publisher, date of publication, etc.	52	17.3	176	58.7	55	18.3	17	5.7	2.88	.755
I lack the ability to evaluate the accuracy and credibility of information.	17	5.7	103	34.3	123	41.0	57	19.0	2.27	.831

13

Items	SA F	%	A F	%	D F	%	SD F	%	Mean	SD
I understand the concepts of accuracy, relevance and comprehensiveness of information resources.	40	13.3	179	59.7	67	22.3	14	4.7	2.82	.715
I can select, retrieve and summarise information resources to suit my needs.	52	17.3	202	67.3	39	13.0	7	2.3	3.00	.631
I have the ability to filter information resources.	43	14.3	183	61.0	62	20.7	12	4.0	2.86	.701
Organisation of Information										
I know how to merge new information with existing thought to create new information.	54	18.0	180	60.0	52	17.3	14	4.7	2.91	.731
I understand how to use logic and reasoning to synthesise information.	38	12.7	171	57.0	74	24.7	17	5.7	2.77	.740
I understand that existing information can be combined with original thought, experiment and analysis to produce new information.	42	14.0	203	67.7	42	14.0	13	4.3	2.91	.669
I have ability to reflect on problems encountered.	42	14.0	192	64.0	49	16.3	17	5.7	2.86	.716
Use of information										
I can extract relevant information from a source.	65	21.7	191	63.7	31	10.3	13	4.3	3.03	.703
I can apply my critical thinking and analytical skills effectively.	63	21.0	193	64.3	30	10.0	14	4.7	3.02	.706
I can use information obtained to solve the problems on ground.	64	21.3	188	62.7	36	12.0	12	4.0	3.01	.703
I am unable to use bibliographic references in research reports.	25	8.3	105	35.0	105	35.0	65	21.7	2.30	.902
Communication and ethical use of information										
I can clearly present the new knowledge I have created to others.	43	14.3	212	70.7	30	10.0	15	5.0	2.94	.665
I know the appropriate platforms to use for the dissemination of the new knowledge I have created as information to others	38	12.7	192	64.0	60	20.0	10	3.3	2.86	.665
I am aware of and respect copyright issues with respect to information use.	77	25.7	171	57.0	37	12.3	15	5.0	3.03	.762
I can effectively give credence to authors of works used for my research using tools like citation and referencing.	89	29.7	168	56.0	28	9.3	15	5.0	3.10	.762
Overall mean									**85.97**	

Research question two: What is the attitude towards plagiarism by students in three theological institutions in South-west, Nigeria?

The attitude towards plagiarism by students in the three theological institutions is captured in Table 6. Findings revealed that the respondents ($\bar{x}$=1.66) disagreed that since plagiarism is taking other people's words rather than tangible assets, it should not be considered very important. Majority of the respondents ($\bar{x}$=1.41) and ($\bar{x}$=1.48) also disagreed with the statement that it is acceptable to copy word for word from a book or journal without acknowledgement, and that is acceptable to copy from the Internet without citing the source. More than half of the respondents ($\bar{x}$=2.21) agreed that if a student buys or downloads free a whole research paper and turns it in unchanged with his or her name as the author, the student should be expelled from the university. Also, exactly four-fifths of the respondents ($\bar{x}$=1.87) agreed that plagiarism is against their ethical values. A high number ($\bar{x}$=1.81) also indicated that plagiarism is as bad as stealing. In addition, many of the respondents ($\bar{x}$=2.01) agreed that plagiarism impoverishes the investigative spirit. The responses of the students to the statements aimed at eliciting information about their attitude towards plagiarism revealed a negative attitude towards plagiarism.

Table 6 Attitude towards plagiarism by students of three theological institutions in South-west, Nigeria

Items	SA F	%	A F	%	D F	%	SD F	%	Mean	SD
Since plagiarism is taking other people's words rather than tangible assets, it should not be considered very important.	20	6.7	33	11.0	73	24.3	174	58.0	1.66	.920
Sometimes one can copy a sentence or two from other people's works verbatim just to get inspiration for further writing.	25	8.3	117	39.0	88	29.3	70	23.3	2.32	.925
It is acceptable to copy word for word from a book or journal without acknowledgement	5	1.7	18	6.0	71	23.7	206	68.7	1.41	.680
It is acceptable to copy from the Internet without citing the source	4	1.3	24	8.0	83	27.7	189	63.0	1.48	.701
Buying term paper or assignment from people who make already prepared papers available to students is not a big deal.	6	2.0	21	7.0	79	26.3	194	64.7	1.46	.714
If a student buys or downloads free a whole research paper and turns it in unchanged with his or her name as the author, the student should be expelled from the university.	82	27.3	109	36.3	73	24.3	36	12.0	2.21	.978
It is alright to submit assignments without references.	9	3.0	19	6.3	127	42.3	145	48.3	1.64	.734
Self-plagiarism should not be punishable as plagiarism.	11	3.7	104	34.7	119	39.7	66	22.0	2.20	.822
Students who do not plagiarise spend more time to complete assignments and term projects.	91	30.3	128	42.7	51	17.0	30	10.0	2.93	.934
Plagiarism is against my ethical values.	124	41.3	116	38.7	35	11.7	25	8.3	1.87	.922
Because plagiarism involves taking another person's words and not his or her materials goods, plagiarism is no big deal.	14	4.7	27	9.0	106	35.3	153	51.0	1.67	.826
Plagiarism is as bad as stealing	141	47.0	103	34.3	29	9.7	27	9.0	1.81	.945
Plagiarism impoverishes the investigative spirit.	87	29.0	142	47.3	51	17.0	20	6.7	2.01	.854
Plagiarism is justified if the lecturer assigns too much work in assignments or term papers	9	3.0	49	16.3	131	43.7	111	37.0	1.85	.796
The punishments considered for plagiarists are not severe enough.	26	8.7	88	29.3	140	46.7	46	15.3	2.31	.835

16

Research question three: What is the relationship between information literacy skills and attitude towards plagiarism by students in three theological institutions in South-west, Nigeria?

Table 7 shows the results of the correlation analysis conducted between information literacy skills and the attitude towards plagiarism by students in three theological institutions in South-west, Nigeria.

Table 7 Relationship between information literacy skills and attitude towards plagiarism by students in theological institutions

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	r	Sig. (P)	Remarks
Information literacy skills	85.97	12.423				
Attitude Towards Plagiarism	28.85	5.790	300	-.156[**]	.007	Sig.

Findings showed that there is a significant negative relationship between literacy skills and the attitude towards plagiarism by the students (r = -.156[**]; df = 299; p< 0.05). This implies that as the level of information literacy skills of the students increases, their attitude towards plagiarism becomes more negative. u

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The level of information literacy skills among the students of theological institutions is high. This upholds the tenets of The Skill Acquisition theory which takes into account that skills become ingrained in the learner are learned overtime. This may be as result of recent inclusion of information literacy instructions in the curriculum of theological institutions by the commission responsible for accrediting theological institutions. This aligns with The Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools (2010) report that information literacy was included as a standard in the accrediting criteria not too long ago by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) for seminaries. On the contrary, Lincoln (2013) expressed that theological librarians believe that theological students lack these skills.

Findings showed that the attitude towards plagiarism of students of theological institutions is negative. This agrees with the basic principles of the Theory of Planned Behaviour which suggests that attitude is an important factor that foretells behavior. A

negative attitude towards plagiarism could result in shunning the act while a positive attitude towards plagiarism could result in embracing the act. It may also be due to their exposure to information literacy instructions in recent times. Increased awareness about acts that constitute plagiarism may also be responsible for this negative attitude towards plagiarism. This agrees with the expression of Oyewole and Abioye (2018) that the level of awareness of the acts that constitute plagiarism by postgraduate students' in the University of Ibadan, Nigeria appears to be on the rise as more focus is being placed on the issue by management and faculty on different platform.

On the contrary, Hosny and Fatima (2014) in a study on the attitude of students towards cheating and plagiarism in King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia noted that data from the plagiarism survey exercise revealed that despite the fact that the level of awareness of plagiarism by the participants was high. A notable number attested to using electronic sources as a means to plagiarise, more than three-fifths had used print sources while a little over half had used other sources asides from this to indulge in plagiarism during their undergraduate studies.

Findings also revealed that there is a significant negative relationship between literacy skills and the attitude towards plagiarism by the students. This implies that as the level of information literacy skills of the students increases, their attitude towards plagiarism becomes more negative. This finding corroborates the finding of Zhang and Almani (2018) in a study conducted on inputs from international graduate students of University of Windsor, Ontario, Canada on information literacy education and plagiarism issues. From the discussion, it was agreed that information literacy instruction is an indispensable tool in helping students have an in-depth knowledge of what plagiarism is and how to avoid it.

CONCLUSION

Students of theological institutions need to develop and possess the right attitude towards plagiarism in order to be true emblems of moral and spiritual uprightness in the society. Students of theological institutions should not always opt for short cuts in the process of completing his assignments or carrying out research work. Instead, students of theological institutions will ensure to equip themselves with all that it takes to become producers of intellectual works marked with originality. This equipping can be achieved on a personal basis and by taking advantage of the provisions made by the faculty, librarians and administrators in theological institutions.

Critical to the development of a negative attitude towards plagiarism is a high level of information literacy skills on the part of students of theological institutions. If students of theological institutions possess a high level of information literacy skills, they will have the ability to source for and use information effectively, thereby carrying out original research work without going against the ethics of academic writing. Thus, critical to attitude towards plagiarism are information overload and information literacy skills.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In order to sustain the negative attitude towards plagiarism among students of the three theological institutions in South-west, Nigeria, lecturers and librarians in theological institutions should create more avenues like seminars, workshops and orientation programmes for awareness about acts that constitute plagiarism at entry levels and also provide trainings tailored towards knowing how to avoid it in academic writing.

2. The high level of information literacy skills can be strengthened if librarians in collaboration with lecturers continually organise workshops and lectures to build the capacity of the students of theological institutions in information literacy. For institutions that do not have information literacy instruction incorporated into their curriculum, incorporation into the curriculum as non-credit courses which must be taken and passed should be considered.

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