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## Knowledge of Library and Information Science Undergraduates on Plagiarism in Federal Universities in South-East Nigeria

<sup>1</sup>Obiora Kingsley Udem  
<sup>1</sup>Chisom Marycynthia Nwadibe  
<sup>1</sup>Oluoma Miracle Emereonwu

<sup>1</sup>Department of Library and Information Science, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Nigeria

### Abstract

This study examined the knowledge of Library and Information Science (LIS) undergraduates towards plagiarism in Federal Universities in South-East Nigeria. The study determined LIS undergraduates' level of knowledge on plagiarism, and explored their level of knowledge based on their year of study. Two research questions guided the study and one hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. A descriptive research survey design was adopted for the study. The population comprised 868 undergraduates which included 2021/2022 undergraduates of LIS departments in Federal Universities in South-East Nigeria. The sample size of 274 was selected using the Taro Yamane formula and proportionate stratified random sampling technique. A validated instrument titled Cognitive Test on Students Knowledge of Plagiarism (CTSKP) adapted from Gharedaghi et al (2013) was used for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was established through the Kuder-Richardson (K-R20) formula, yielding a high reliability coefficient of 0.88. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to answer research questions and test hypothesis. The findings of the study among others revealed a moderate knowledge of plagiarism among LIS undergraduates with knowledge variations across academic years. It was recommended among others that LIS educators should augment the curriculum with focused courses on plagiarism, fostering academic integrity.

### Keywords

Knowledge, Plagiarism, LIS Undergraduates, South-East, Federal universities

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CONTACT Chisom Marycynthia Nwadibe@ [mc.nwadibe@unizik.edu.ng](mailto:mc.nwadibe@unizik.edu.ng)  
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## Introduction

The primary objective of any university is to produce quality and competent graduates with certain fundamental principles who can successfully thrive in the society by applying their acquired knowledge in solving real-world issues within themselves and in the society. University education contributes to the development of a knowledgeable society; it goes a long way in sharpening students' thinking, attitude, and behaviour. With the seeming increase of copying that exist in the university especially among undergraduates, students are hardly interested in logical reasoning, critical thinking, developing and harnessing their potentials and also gaining the confidence to express their own ideas. These students graduate and find themselves in a society where they need to defend themselves practically, especially when seeking jobs and other career advancing opportunities.

Library and Information Science (LIS) undergraduates are individuals pursuing a bachelor's degree in LIS department, aiming to become information professionals, librarians, or information managers. Their education include courses designed to expose them with crucial concepts related to plagiarism such as information literacy, and the concept of copyright which helps the students to understand the importance of giving credit to consulted sources and avoid unethical practices as noted by [Nwadibe and Anaehobi \(2023\)](#). With this knowledge, LIS undergraduates are expected to uphold ethical standards and contribute effectively to the information profession. To satisfy the academic requirements for the award of a bachelor's degree in Library and Information Science, aspiring students are required to attend classes, do assignments, seminars, industrial training, take examinations, group works and presentations, and also undergo project writing in their final year. [Elkhatat et al \(2021\)](#) stated that one of the main goals of assignments in the academic environment is to assess student's knowledge and mastery of a specific topic, and it is crucial to ensure that the work is innovative and has been made by the students to assess their competence acquisition. Most times, students seem to copy each other when assignments are given to them; however, in carrying out these activities, undergraduates tend to research, browse the internet, and consult the library for information resources. By doing this, they likely copy research works of various authors without giving credit to them thereby using such ideas and opinions as their own. This trend has contributed to the growth of plagiarism in various Nigerian universities today.

[Roka, \(2017\)](#) stated that plagiarism is derived from the Latin word "Plagiarius" which means a kidnapper and it was first described in literature by the dramatist Ben Jonson in 1601 to describe someone guilty of literary theft. [Enamudu, and Akonedo, \(2021\)](#) described plagiarism as an act of adopting and using ideas, writings, texts,

opinions, numbers, data, analysis, argumentations, images, techniques, computer programs and discoveries of others as one's own without making proper acknowledgement of the source(s). [Alzahrani et al \(2020\)](#) defined plagiarism as an act of stealing another person's ideas, methods, results, or words without giving proper attribution. Previous works serve as a reference tool in undertaking a research, however, one should be able to adjust, summarize, paraphrase, and acknowledge sourced materials to avoid cases of plagiarism.

Before the advent of the Internet, students would frequently copy text by hand from books, encyclopedias, newspapers, and journals, which was tedious and time-consuming ([Razera, 2011](#)). [Razera \(2011\)](#) further noted that with the development of the internet and information communication technologies (ICTs), this labour-intensive process has been simplified and replaced by two simple commands, "ctrl+C" and "ctrl+V," the famous "copy and paste" making the problem of plagiarism more difficult to control. Due to the information explosion and the availability of the internet and ICT, students now quickly access information at ease whenever they need it, thereby making information available to them at their fingertips. The Internet is a useful tool and at the same time, it could become detrimental if people's words and ideas are jettisoned. The apparent rise of plagiarism in universities has made researchers to delve into investigating this act, revealing its diverse types and forms.

Although ideas are not sacrosanct, it is essential to recognise and acknowledge the contributions of others when incorporating their concepts into one's creations. As postulated by [Demirdover \(2019\)](#), various categories of plagiarism include; direct plagiarism, self-plagiarism, mosaic plagiarism, non-existing source plagiarism, theoretical plagiarism, and unintentional plagiarism. Direct plagiarism occurs when an individual copies another person's idea word for word without giving due credit by providing in-text citations and references. When someone exploits their prior work without properly crediting it, it is considered self-plagiarism. When a writer or individual incorporates ideas from a variety of sources into a new work without giving credit to the other authors whose works were consulted, they are committing mosaic plagiarism. Non-existing source plagiarism happens when someone presents a fictitious source that is not true; additionally, someone would be guilty of theoretical plagiarism if they copied from an unpublished document without referencing the work. Unintentional plagiarism is not giving proper credit to someone else's ideas, words, or research. Even if it was not intentional, it is still plagiarism and not tolerable. This type of plagiarism may be characterized by citation and referencing errors. Plagiarism must be avoided at all costs when writing, especially in research papers.

Undergraduates tend to frequently copy when writing their academic projects, thus it is critical to examine their level of knowledge towards this practice in order to address and discourage such unethical behaviour. As aspiring information professionals, LIS undergraduates are expected to have a solid grasp of plagiarism. However, understanding and finding out what they know to constitute plagiarism, their level of knowledge towards it forms the foundation of this research. Students' perspectives on plagiarism could contribute to its continued prevalence in tertiary institutions, having a comprehensive knowledge of plagiarism will ameliorate plagiarism to a maximum extent. A good knowledge of plagiarism will unveil its components, types, consequences, proper citation methods, and other relevant information. This knowledge enriches the comprehension of the concept, primarily acquired through education. Knowledge as described by [Mohajan \(2016\)](#) is a combination of experience, relevant information, and competent insight that provides a framework for estimating and integrating new experiences and information. It is also a vital factor of production in today's world of advanced technology ([Chigbu & Idoko, 2013](#)). The saying "knowledge is power" reflects the significance of information, facts, and skills gained through experience or education. Additionally, those who are knowledgeable about something are better equipped to achieve greater results.

Also, students' knowledge of plagiarism may vary according to their year of study, [Issrani et al. \(2021\)](#) showed that interns gave a superior evaluation on the negative impact of plagiarism, followed by fifth-year students and fourth-year students, respectively. Similarly, [Ahmad and Ullah \(2015\)](#) discovered that students pursuing their thesis at the research stage avoid plagiarism more than those performing coursework. Likewise, [Phyo et al. \(2022\)](#) determined a knowledge score that was statistically significantly higher in doctorate students than in master's students. This suggests that as students advance academically, there should be an improvement in their knowledge and understanding of plagiarism. As students progress through their academic journey, they are exposed to a wider range of subjects, assignments, and research projects, this increased exposure allows them to encounter diverse perspectives on academic integrity and plagiarism, enhancing their understanding of the topic.

Following the substantial setbacks plagiarism may have on research skills, innovative capabilities, and students' intellectual growth, plagiarism is a serious concern in universities, particularly in developing countries where the acquisition of anti-plagiarism software is yet to be properly acquired. The majority of studies seem to focus more on postgraduate students, presumably due to the nature of their more focused research activities at that stage. However, addressing plagiarism concerns is equally important for undergraduates across all academic levels, highlighting the need for a

harmonious blend of knowledge and learning. Since the undergraduate level is a prerequisite for the postgraduate level, it is preferable to introduce and cultivate good practices early, tailored to their comprehension level. Hence, this study determined the level of knowledge on plagiarism among LIS undergraduates in Federal Universities in South-East Nigeria.

### Statement of the Problem

The curriculum for Library and Information Science (LIS) undergraduates is designed in such a way that the students should be familiar with plagiarism and its components; their courses are rooted in information literacy and plagiarism-related courses that should educate the students on the principles of plagiarism. As a field that encourages the ethical use of information, LIS students are expected to embody these principles. However, the researcher's preliminary observations and interaction with LIS undergraduates from different universities in Nigeria raise some doubt about their possession of plagiarism knowledge, especially with reference to the utilization of the knowledge in their academic activities. Some of these students, when given assignments, seminars, or undertaking their projects, seem to use the shortest time to get acquainted with most of the information sources that can aid them in solving their assignments and projects. Most of them likely download their assignments from the internet and, while at it, copy and paste without giving credit to the owner of the intellectual output. Some students consult information resources available in their library and copy from textbooks without any form of acknowledgement. These negatively impact their critical thinking, innovative skills, intellectual reasoning, and overall development as competent graduates. As a result of excessive copying and a lack of originality, some of them unfortunately find themselves unable to defend or justify their written projects. Plagiarism has become a major area of concern to researchers as it continues to be obvious in universities across the globe. Though some studies have been carried out on undergraduates' knowledge of plagiarism, to the researchers best of knowledge, little has been done to ascertain LIS undergraduates' knowledge of plagiarism in federal universities in the South-East of Nigeria. Therefore, this study is geared towards determining the level of knowledge of LIS undergraduates on plagiarism in federal universities in the South-East of Nigeria.

### Research Objectives

The study determined the;

1. Level of knowledge of Library and Information Science undergraduates on plagiarism in Federal Universities in South-East Nigeria.

2. Level of knowledge of Library and Information Science undergraduates on plagiarism in Federal Universities in South-East Nigeria based on their year of study.

### Research Questions

- 1; What is the level of knowledge of Library and Information Science undergraduates on plagiarism in Federal Universities in South-East Nigeria?
- 2; What is the level of knowledge of Library and Information Science undergraduates on plagiarism in Federal Universities in South-East Nigeria based on their year of study?

### Research Hypothesis

The null hypothesis was tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

1. Ho1: There is no statistically significant difference in the mean test scores of Library and Information Science undergraduates on their knowledge level concerning plagiarism in Federal Universities in South-East Nigeria based on their year of study.

### Review of Related Literature

Knowledge is closely connected to doing (action) and implies know-how and understanding as noted by Igwe et al (2015). [Librarianship Studies and Information Technology \(2017\)](#) stated that knowledge is a theoretical or practical understanding of a subject. It can also be seen as the extent to which one is aware of something ([Igudia & Olagunju, 2021](#)). Understanding plagiarism has become a necessity that ought to be recognised by all, especially those in tertiary institutions. From their first year in school, they should be educated on the general concept of plagiarism and this continues to go deeper as they progress to other levels till their final year. [Agu et al \(2009\)](#) noted that Internet technology advancements have made students' plagiarism more prevalent and this is a barrier to knowledge empowerment. [Sarlauskiene and Stabingis \(2014\)](#) maintained that plagiarism is a phenomenon that is as old as writing itself, and not a consequence of the development of information technology. ICT and the internet made access to information readily available, and should not be blamed for plagiarism which has been in existence before now.

[Ibegbulam and Eze \(2015\)](#) opined that in Nigeria and other developing countries where the danger associated with plagiarism is not suitably addressed and remains

unchecked, they will end up producing graduates who have little or no skill in research and writing; a situation that most likely would be carried on to the postgraduate level. It has been observed that Nigerian students find it difficult to cope with academic writing when they travel outside the country for further studies, In their findings from a study conducted at a UK institution, [Orim et al \(2013\)](#) opined that the majority of Nigerian postgraduate students had little or no knowledge about plagiarism before travelling to the UK University for their Master's studies and find it difficult to cope with their academic writing tasks. [Orim, \(2014\)](#) noted that plagiarism is a problem because students are meant to learn from the work or writings of other people and add some new ideas of their own, there is a need to differentiate which of the writings belongs to them. [Ramos et al\(2019\)](#) stated that respondents who were asked if plagiarism is a normal thing agreed that it is an institutionalised practice that starts in school and evolves into a requirement in the university. This could be due to their level of understanding of plagiarism. There are means through which students might engage in this activity, assignments are provided, seminars must be written, and project writing must be completed. While completing these academic tasks, there is a strong likelihood that students will engage in plagiarism, throughout the learning process, there is continuous usage of information resources to solve a problem or another. [Echanique \(2020\)](#), observed that there has been little empirical investigation on what students know about plagiarism, it is therefore necessary to sensitize students on plagiarism.

[Buraimo et al \(2020\)](#) in their study found that undergraduates have a high level of knowledge of plagiarism. [Laizer and Mosha \(2021\)](#) examined students' understanding of plagiarism in universities in Tanzania and found that they have little understanding of plagiarism. [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. It was found that (80%) majority of the students know about research principles and practices of plagiarism. Also, [Igudia and Olagunju \(2021\)](#) investigated the knowledge, perception and attitude of science and social science undergraduates to plagiarism at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Results revealed that the respondents are knowledgeable of what constitutes the act of plagiarism, though, they believe it is hard to avoid it completely. [Saliu et al \(2021\)](#) found an average of awareness of plagiarism among postgraduate students. Furthermore, [Issrani et al. \(2021\)](#), investigated the knowledge and attitude of Saudi students towards plagiarism where most of the students displayed adequate knowledge concerning plagiarism in terms of copying words or ideas, quoting references, and copying words without changing the matter. [Memon et al \(2019\)](#) in their Knowledge of plagiarism study found that participants had significant knowledge of plagiarism and the importance of referencing.

## Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was carried out in federal universities that offer undergraduate programme in library and Information science in South-East Nigeria. These universities are Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka (NAU), University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN), and Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike (MOUAAU). The population comprised 868 undergraduates in the Department of Library and Information Science, which included 312 at NAU, 196 at UNN, and 360 at MOUAAU in the 2021–2022 academic sessions. Taro Yamane formula ( $n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$ ) 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 sub group (year of study) participates in the study equivalent to the population. The instrument used for data collection was a “Cognitive Test on Students’ Knowledge of Plagiarism (CTS-KP)” adapted from Gharedaghi et al. (2013) which was subjected to face and content validation. The reliability of the instrument was established using Kuder Richardson (K-R) which yielded reliability coefficient of 0.88. Out of 274 copies of instrument that were distributed to the undergraduates, 270 copies were retrieved. The data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequency count, percentages and mean were used to analyse data obtained from the research questions. The results from the test were evaluated across three proficiency levels: Level 1: Scores below 50% were categorized as indicative of low/poor knowledge; Level 2: Scores ranging from 50% to 69% were considered as reflecting moderate knowledge; Level 3: Scores surpassing 70% and above were classified as demonstrating high knowledge of plagiarism. The null hypothesis was tested using a one-way ANOVA at 0.05 level of significance.

## Results and Discussion

This section presents the findings of the study. The details are illustrated from Table 1-4.

**Table 1: Demographic Information of respondents**

Year of study	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Year 2	122	45
Year 3	84	31
Year 4	64	24
Total	270	100



Table 1 revealed that 122(45%) of the respondents were in second-year, 84(31%) in third-year while 64(24%) were in fourth-year. This implies that the majority of the respondents came from second-year students, while fourth-year students have the lowest respondents.

**Research Question 1:** What is the level of knowledge of Library and Information Science undergraduates on plagiarism in Federal Universities in South-East Nigeria?

**Table 2:** Cognitive Test Responses of Library and Information Science Undergraduates on their Level of Knowledge on Plagiarism.

S/ N	Questions	F	%	Decision
1	It is appropriate for a student to copy a paragraph verbatim from a source by using quotation marks (""), then mentions the source of the paragraph in the text and also include it at the end of the work in the reference list	231	86	High
2	A student can take phrases from different sources, put them together and add a few sentences of their own without citing the sources.	114	42	Low
3	Students are required to provide in-text citations and a list of references for the information sources they consulted when writing their assignments, seminars and research projects.	234	87	High
4	A summary of an author's idea is presented, with the personal opinion of a student at the end of a paragraph. The student must credit the author in the text and also provide the source of the information in the reference list at the end of the work.	241	89	High
5	Copying ideas or contents from the internet and submitting them as they appear is plagiarism	179	66	Moderate
6	It is okay for students to use pictures from Google and prepare a PowerPoint presentation without acknowledging the source	150	56	Moderate
7	When students use a graph from another article in their work and are aware that the graph is related to a published article in a journal, they should acknowledge the author and the year both in the work itself and in the reference list	230	85	High
8	Combining passages from several sources to make it appear as though they were written by the students is	146	54	Moderate

	not plagiarism			
9	Not acknowledging authors' or creators' works is beyond textual content and can be seen in music, movies, designs and works of art.	189	70	High
10	It is right for students to paraphrase authors' ideas, change the structure of the sentences and include the sources of the information only in a list of references at the end of an article.	96	36	Low
<b>Average Percentage Score</b>			<b>67</b>	<b>Moderate</b>

Table 2 shows LIS undergraduates' scores based on the 10 cognitive test questions that they were asked to find out their understanding of plagiarism. From the results in Table 2, items with the percentage response scores within the range of 70-100% are questions 1, 3, 4, 7, and 9, which show that 70 to 89% of the students have a high knowledge of the questions. For questions 5, 6, and 8, the response scores indicate a moderate level of knowledge, with percentages ranging from 50% to 69%. Questions 2 and 10 indicate a low knowledge with percentage response scores below 49%. The average percentage score of 67% shows that LIS undergraduates in Federal Universities in South-East Nigeria have a moderate level of knowledge regarding plagiarism.

**Research Question 2:** What is the level of knowledge of Library and Information Science undergraduates on plagiarism in Federal Universities in South-East Nigeria based on their year of study?

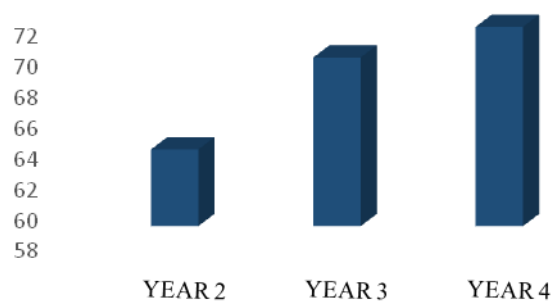
**Table 3:** Cognitive Test Responses of Library and Information Science Undergraduates on their Level of Knowledge on Plagiarism based on their Year of Study

Knowledge of plagiarism	Year Two			Year Three			Year Four		
	Questions/Items	F	%	Decision	F	%	Decision	F	%
1	97	80	High	78	93	High	56	88	High
2	43	35	Low	39	46	Low	32	50	Moderate
3	103	84	High	73	87	High	58	91	High
4	108	89	High	75	89	High	58	91	High
5	69	57	Moderate	58	69	Moderate	52	81	High
6	69	57	Moderate	48	57	Moderate	33	52	Moderate
7	106	87	High	71	85	High	53	83	High
8	54	44	Low	51	61	Moderate	41	64	Moderate
9	81	66	Moderate	59	70	High	47	73	High
10	41	34	Low	31	37	Low	24	38	Low

<b>Average Percentage Scores</b>		<b>63</b>	<b>Moderate</b>		<b>69</b>	<b>Moderate</b>		<b>71</b>	<b>High</b>
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Table 3 revealed the number and percentages of LIS undergraduates according to their various academic years that passed each item in the test. Item 1, 3, 4 and 7 with percentage scores ranging from 80 to 93% across the three years are above 70%. These shows that year two, three and four students have a high knowledge of those questions concerning plagiarism. Question 6 shows moderate knowledge across all years, while question 10 shows a low knowledge of the item. There are percentage scores with variations across the three years which can be seen in questions 2, 5, 8 and 9. Question 2 with a percentage score of 35 in year 2 and 46 in year 3 shows low knowledge of the item while year 4 shows a moderate knowledge of it with a 50% score. Question 8 shows moderate knowledge in year 2 and year 3 students while year 4 students have a high knowledge of the question. For item 8, year 2 students showed low knowledge of the question with a percentage score of 44 while year 3 and year 4 students shows moderate knowledge of the item.

Generally, the average percentage scores show that fourth-year students have high knowledge of plagiarism while third-year and second-year students have a moderate knowledge of plagiarism. The average percentage scores of LIS undergraduates' knowledge of plagiarism, as measured by their years of study is presented in Figure 1 below;



**Figure 1:** Bar Chart representing Data in Table 4.1

Based on the data presented in Figure 1, the average percentage scores for LIS students' level of knowledge on plagiarism are 63, 69, and 71 for their respective years of study. This shows a variation in plagiarism understanding based on the students' year of study. Specifically, fourth-year students are more knowledgeable about plagiarism,

followed by third and second-year students that have moderate knowledge respectively.

**Hypothesis:** There is no statistically significant difference in the mean test scores of Library and Information Science undergraduates on their knowledge level concerning plagiarism in Federal Universities in South-East Nigeria based on their year of study.

**Table 4:** Summary of One-Way ANOVA analysis on Difference in the Mean Test Scores of LIS Undergraduates on their knowledge level concerning 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	.557	2	.279	2.739	.066	Not Sig.
Within Groups	27.166	267	.102			
Total	27.723	269				

Data in Table 4 shows a p-value of 0.066 and 269 degree of freedom. The analysis revealed that the p-value of 0.066 is greater than the alpha level of the test (0.05), hence the null hypothesis was not rejected. The result indicates that there is no statistically significant ( $p > 0.05$ ) difference in the mean test scores of LIS undergraduates on their knowledge level concerning plagiarism in Federal Universities in South-East Nigeria based on their year of study.

## Discussion

The findings revealed that the majority of the students have a moderate knowledge of plagiarism. Hence, the finding of this study revealed a moderate knowledge which suggests that LIS undergraduates have received some form of education or exposure to the topic of plagiarism. They probably have a fundamental understanding of what plagiarism is, but their lack of background and comprehensive information suggests that they need more exposure. Students' capacity to effectively engage with academic materials and create original works may as well be hindered by their degree of

understanding. While LIS undergraduates may have some understanding of plagiarism, there may also be misconceptions or gaps in their knowledge. It is possible that the focus placed on academic integrity in their curriculum is insufficient, as they showed low knowledge in some questions in the test. It could also be that the present resources and teaching strategies being employed to inform students about plagiarism are inadequately addressing the complexities and changing nature of plagiarism in this digital age. This has similar finding to the study of [Laizer and Mosha \(2021\)](#) and [Saliu et al \(2021\)](#) which found moderate knowledge of plagiarism among their respondents. Also, contrary to the current study are studies of [Buraimo et al., \(2020\)](#); [Igudia and Olagunju, \(2021\)](#); [Issrani et al., \(2021\)](#); [Memon et al., \(2019\)](#); [Sagar et al., \(2022\)](#) which found high knowledge of plagiarism among their respondents.

LIS students' average percentage scores for plagiarism knowledge were found to vary according to their year of study (second-year, third-year and fourth-year) which are 63%, 69% and 71% respectively. This shows that LIS fourth-year students have good knowledge of plagiarism, while third-year students and second-year students have moderate knowledge of plagiarism. Though, third-year students' score is higher than that of second-year students. This suggests a progression in understanding of plagiarism as students' advance in their academic journey. It goes further to indicate that as students progress from their second year to their third and fourth year in the LIS programme, their understanding of plagiarism tends to improve. The progressive increase in knowledge suggests that LIS students have been exposed to the topic of plagiarism at various stages of their programme which reflects a successful educational approach that deepens students' understanding over time. The fourth-year students' good knowledge could be that the coursework, assignments, and learning experiences they have encountered throughout their programme have successfully reinforced the importance of academic integrity and proper citation practices, while third and second year students are still in the process of getting to that level. This is in line with the study of [Issrani et al., \(2021\)](#) which states that interns have superior knowledge of plagiarism, followed by fifth-year students and fourth-year undergraduates. Similar to this, [Ahmad and Ullah \(2015\)](#) found that the stage of study is a predictor of plagiarism knowledge and its avoidance, as master's degree students in their thesis writing stage avoid plagiarism more than those at the course work stage. Further findings showed that there is no statistically significant difference in the mean test scores of Library and Information Science undergraduates on their knowledge level concerning plagiarism based on their year of study. This suggests that the curriculum implemented for LIS students is consistent throughout the programme, with a focus on imparting a similar level of knowledge concerning plagiarism regardless of the year of study. It is possible that topics concerning plagiarism are introduced early in LIS programme, providing

students with a solid foundation of knowledge that remains consistent across subsequent years. This finding is contrary to the result of [Matsebatlela and Kuhudzai \(2018\)](#) who found a statistically significant difference in plagiarism awareness among undergraduate students (years 1,2,and 3) of health sciences at the University of Pretoria.

### Conclusion

In pertinent to the findings, this study concludes that Library and Information Science undergraduates have a moderate knowledge of plagiarism. Their understanding of plagiarism shows improvement as they progress through their academic journey. Notably, fourth-year students exhibited good knowledge, while third and second-year students demonstrated a moderate level of understanding concerning the elements that constitute plagiarism. However, the study did not identify any statistically significant difference in the mean test scores of LIS undergraduates on their knowledge level concerning plagiarism based on their year of study.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, these recommendations were made:

1. Library educators should incorporate a course on plagiarism and academic integrity in the LIS curriculum when provided with such opportunities, which will offer specific topics that delve deeper into the ethical use of information, plagiarism avoidance techniques, and citation practices. This will provide students with a solid understanding of plagiarism, equip them with the necessary skills to avoid plagiarism and foster a culture of academic integrity which will further strengthen their understanding of plagiarism-related concepts, guidelines, and best practices within their curriculum.
2. The University management, National Universities Commission (NUC) and other stakeholders should ensure that every discipline including LIS has a course in their early year in school which focuses on plagiarism and academic integrity. They should also develop clear and defined policies on plagiarism and academic integrity in the institution plagiarised project could also be integrated into the policy as punishment for defaulters. This will go a long way to curb this unethical act.

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