AWARENESS AND UTILIZATION OF PLAGIARISM CHECKERS AMONGST UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF LOKOJA

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Abstract
This study investigates the Awareness and utilisation of Plagiarism Checkers among undergraduate Students of the Federal University of Lokoja, focusing on the Faculty of Science, Social Science and Education students. The study adopted four(4) research objectives which includes ascertain the types of plagiarism checkers that undergraduate students of Federal University of Lokoja are aware of, determine the extent of usage of plagiarism checkers among undergraduate student in Federal University of Lokoja, identify the limitation associated with the use of plagiarism checkers amongst undergraduate students in Federal University of Lokoja and suggest ways of improving the use of plagiarism checkers amongst undergraduate students in Federal University of Lokoja. It employed a structured questionnaire in collecting data from 375 respondents, with a response rate of 370(98.7%). According to the findings of the research, tools like Turnitin and Dupli Checker got the highest mean score on awareness of plagiarism checkers. Students use tools like Viper and Plag Scan. Key limitations, such as a lack of understanding of plagiarism concepts, unfamiliarity with plagiarism checkers, and insufficient institutional support and guidance, were associated with the use of plagiarism checkers. Strategies like Institutions prioritising educating students about plagiarism, subsidising subscription costs, developing plagiarism policies and offering technical support were widely accepted for improving the use of plagiarism checkers. The study recommends that Workshops and seminars to educate students about plagiarism, its consequences, and the importance of using plagiarism checkers should be organised, access should also be provided to available plagiarism checkers, and institutions should provide support for subscribing to plagiarism checkers. These strategies aim to promote academic integrity and originality among undergraduate students.
Keywords: Plagiarism, Plagiarism Checker, Awareness, Utilisation, Undergraduate Students

Introduction

Plagiarism is derived from the Latin word "plagiarius," which means to "abduct" or "kidnap". Since the 1960s, plagiarism has been defined through multiple views and authors, consisting of the concepts of cheating, academic deceit, intellectual misconduct, fraudulent scholarship, and unethical handling of information. Plagiarism is a breach of information ethics due to the inability to credit appropriately the intellectual work of others (Ahmed & Anirvan, 2020). Using a person's work, concepts, or phrasing as one's own without acknowledging them properly constitutes plagiarism. It is a severe breach of scholarly ethics and academic honesty that limit the principles of originality and intellectual integrity. One of the following could be a reason why students engage in plagiarism: an absence of ethics or an ignorance of citation conventions among researchers/students (Islam, Koka, Abdulwahab & Khan, 2021). A lot of plagiarism cases are committed due to the lack of knowledge or lack of consequences for such behavior (Lang, 2020). As Makua (2023) notes, students usually underestimate the time and effort required for research-based writing, leading them to feel overwhelmed and resort to plagiarize as a solution. This is true most especially in high-pressure academic

environments where deadlines are tight and expectations are high. When students fail to use the available and sufficient time for research, organization, and proper citation, they become more likely to engage in unintentional or intentional plagiarism.

Despite the growing awareness of plagiarism's consequences, students still continue to engage in this academic misconduct, as was observed by Lulu-Pokubo and Echem (2020). This persistence underscores the plagiarism complexity, comparable to other societal deviances, which resist complete eradication. However, their research suggests that intensified awareness campaigns and fostering favorable perceptions can reduce plagiarism instances. By educating students about the ethical implications and consequences of plagiarism, institutions will practice a culture of academic integrity. In other to effectively curb plagiarism in university education, a student-centred culture of engagement and participation is necessary. Students should be initiative on self-checking their work before submission, by utilizing plagiarism detection software if available. According to Soni (2018), the most effective method for detecting plagiarism involves leveraging online tools, primarily software and plagiarism checking services. These innovative resources efficiently scan and compare texts against vast databases, identifying potential instances of plagiarism. By utilizing these tools, educators, researchers, and writers can ensure the originality and authenticity of their work, maintaining academic integrity and preventing intellectual theft. Plagiarism checkers make use of sophisticated database software to detect similarities between a researcher's texts and existing works, ensuring originality and academic integrity (George & Caulfield, 2022, revised 2024). These advanced tools scan different databases to identify potential matches, enabling universities to effectively monitor student assignments for plagiarism. Some of this tools are Turnitin, Grammarly, Plagscan, Small SEO tools, Quetext, e.t.c. By utilizing plagiarism checkers, educational institutions can maintain high standards of scholarship, prevent intellectual theft, and promote ethical writing practices among students. Today, almost all universities in Nigeria have access to the Turnitin system. Nevertheless, their effectiveness and impact on student's attitude to plagiarism especially among university undergraduate have been assumed rather than confirmed. Not only there is paucity of empirical studies that investigate the adoption, awareness and usage of anti-plagiarism software across the globe, but there is also a dearth of studies that examine the differential level of adoption, awareness and utilization of plagiarism checkers between public and private universities, most especially in Nigeria. Raising awareness and educating on anti-plagiarism skills alone are insufficient; an extensive approach is necessary to effectively address student plagiarism.

Statement of Problem

Plagiarism significantly become an issue in higher education globally, and Nigerian institutions are no exception. It has increasingly permeated student assignments, theses, and academic articles. If this is left unaddressed, plagiarism could severely damage the reputation of universities, compromise the quality of its education, and undermine the credibility of it graduates. This has led to a growing concern on how persistent academic dishonesty is among students, at undergraduate level. While various anti-plagiarism software have been implemented by university managements, such as the use of plagiarism checker like Turnitin for postgraduate students, plagiarism remains rampant among undergraduates. This has led to a growing concern on how persistent academic dishonesty is among students, at undergraduate level. While various anti-plagiarism software have been implemented by university managements, such as the use of plagiarism checker like Turnitin for postgraduate students, plagiarism remains rampant among undergraduates. Plagiarism detection tools offer a possible solution, their effectiveness depends on how well users are informed and how frequently they are utilized. However, the understanding of how aware students are of these tools and how effectively they utilize them is not enough, limiting their ability to fight plagiarism. The increasing prevalence of this issue, despite various efforts to combat it, suggests that awareness alone is insufficient. Existing research has largely focused on postgraduate students, with limited studies addressing the awareness and utilization

of plagiarism checkers among undergraduates, particularly at institutions like Federal University Lokoja in Kogi State. Based on the review of existing studies, it is clear that none have specifically addressed the awareness and utilization of plagiarism checkers among undergraduate students in Lokoja. Therefore, this research aims to investigate the awareness and utilization of plagiarism checkers among undergraduate students in Federal University of Lokoja.

Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to investigate the awareness and utilization of plagiarism checkers among undergraduate students at Federal University of Lokoja. Specifically, it aims to:

1. Ascertain the types of plagiarism checkers that undergraduate students of Federal University of Lokoja are aware of.
2. Determine the extent of usage of plagiarism checkers among undergraduate student in Federal University of Lokoja.
3. Identify the limitation associated with the use of plagiarism checkers amongst undergraduate students in Federal University of Lokoja.
4. Suggest ways of improving the use of plagiarism checkers amongst undergraduate students in Federal University of Lokoja.

Research Questions

This research is aimed at providing answers to the following questions:

1. What are the types of plagiarism checkers that undergraduate students of Federal University of Lokoja are aware of.?
2. What extent do undergraduate students use plagiarism checkers in Federal University of Lokoja?
3. What are the limitations associated with the usage of plagiarism checkers amongst undergraduate students in the Federal University of Lokoja?
4. How can the limitations outlined be improved in the usage among undergraduate students in the Federal University of Lokoja?

Literature Review

Conceptual Review
Concept of Plagiarism

In society, technological tools are being updated, resulting in new challenges emerging daily. Researchers are encouraged to produce more work than ever before, making it tempting for some to intentionally or unintentionally replicate the work of others, thus, giving rise to the concept of plagiarism. While innovation is promoted in research, it is required to give credit or acknowledgement to the original authors of ideas by properly citing them (Akoh, 2023). Plagiarism involves the use of material without proper acknowledgment, meaning claiming someone else's work as your own, which also means dishonesty or theft. This is practiced across various fields of human endeavor, including in literature and arts, where individuals may use the exact content of a novel or book without giving due credit or obtaining permission to utilize another person's creation (Akoh, 2023). Lanier (2016) labeled plagiarism as a form of cheating.

According to Abirami, & Kavitha, (2019). Plagiarism is classified and distributed into four types: Complete Plagiarism: A part of work copied totally from one or more sources; Copy and Paste (Direct Plagiarism): Accessible information off internet or from electronic journals; Unintentional Plagiarism: If an individual copy a sentence or paragraph into your project and making modification with in sufficient words it will still be reflected to stand plagiarism; Self-Plagiarism: Self-plagiarism stays once a person reclaim your own previously written work or data in a new project and do not acknowledge it properly.

Plagiarism Checker

In other to protect the institution and it academic integrity, educational institutions often implement strict measures to address plagiarism, as it can devalue academic credibility and undermine the integrity of lecturers and academic staff. To counteract plagiarism, various electronic detection software solutions have been developed and implemented (Akoh, 2023).

A plagiarism checker is designed to search the internet for duplicated textual content and may exist as stand-alone programs installed

on users' computers or as integrated functions on websites. Many academic institutions have adopted plagiarism checkers to check if research work is copied, and it has become a common tool in recent years. Universities have also established policies on academic integrity. Nevertheless, despite the introduction of plagiarism checkers in higher institutions, the problem of academic dishonesty persists, as many students still fall prey to plagiarism offenses. This may be attributed to a lack of awareness and understanding of how to effectively use these plagiarism-checking tools (Akoh,2023).

Theoretical Framework
Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

This study is anchored on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) proposed by Ajzen (1991), which explains that human behavior is influenced by three key factors: attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In the context of plagiarism detection, attitude refers to how students perceive plagiarism and the usefulness of plagiarism checkers (Opesanwo & Anwana, 2023); subjective norms relate to the influence of peers, lecturers, and institutional culture on students' willingness to use such tools (Arabyat et al., 2022); while perceived behavioral control reflects students' confidence in their ability to operate plagiarism checkers effectively (Kiran-Kumar & Chikkamanju, 2019). TPB suggests that when these three components are favorable, the likelihood of a desired behavior, such as the consistent use of plagiarism checkers increases.

Empirical Review

Research scholars, Kiran-Kumar, & Chikkamanju (2019) carried out a study on awareness and use of anti-plagiarism software for quality research. The survey method was adopted, using questionnaire as a tool for data collection. A structured questionnaire was designed and distributed among research scholars. Out of 158 questionnaires distributed, 131filled in questionnaires were received back amounting 82.91%. In addition to questionnaire method, interview schedule was also used to collect required information as a supplement to the questionnaire method. The findings revealed that, 123 (93.89%) of research scholars opine as yes towards familiarity and awareness of plagiarism detection software and 08 (06.11%) of research scholars opine as no towards familiarity and awareness of plagiarism detection software

Arabyat *et.al*(2022) conducted a research on, faculty members' perceptions and attitudes towards anti-plagiarism detection tools: applying the theory of planned behavior. An online survey based on the theory of planned behavior was sent to members of science faculties in Jordan. Multivariate Logistic regression was conducted to determine predictors of previous use of APTs, and multivariate linear regression to predict future intentions. A total of 173 faculty members completed the survey. Their findings revealed that 78.13% indicated previous APTs use. Turnitin® (43%) and Ithenticate® (32.8%) were the most commonly used APTs. These tools were mainly used to evaluate papers before sending them to journals (65.5%) and to detect plagiarism in theses/dissertations (50.4%).

Opesanwo, & Anwana (2023), on adoption and use of plagiarism software by postgraduate students in universities in South-west, Nigeria. This study adopted a survey design to examine the adoption and use of plagiarism software by postgraduate students in universities in South-west, Nigeria. The population of the study comprised 102 postgraduate students of Library and Information Studies in three universities in South-west, Nigeria. Thirty-four post-graduate students from the department of library and information science from each of the universities were randomly selected for the study. A set of structured questionnaires was used for data collection. The questionnaire contained four sub-scales on level of awareness of plagiarism software, frequency of use of plagiarism software, purpose of use of plagiarism software and challenges of using plagiarism software by post-graduate students. 102 copies of the questionnaire were administered to postgraduate students of selected Universities and same were retrieved. The findings of the research, some of the challenges militating against the use of plagiarism software by post-graduate students in universities in South-west, Nigeria, include: cost of subscription, inadequate knowledge about how to use plagiarism software, lack of access to steady power supply, restriction in the size and

format of files that could be uploaded among others.

Jolayemi, Oyewole, & Oladejo (2024) in their study on facilitating conditions and the use of plagiarism detection software by postgraduates of the university of Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design of the correlational type was adopted for the study. The population of this study consists of postgraduates of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. According to the data collected from the Record Office of the Postgraduate College of the University of Ibadan, there are 12,296 postgraduates in the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. The multi-stage random sampling technique was used for this study. In the first stage, 60% of the faculties at the University of Ibadan were selected through the balloting method. The researchers stated that if the faculty can motivate postgraduates to use plagiarism detection software often by ensuring that assignments are submitted with similarity reports. If the postgraduates know this, their use of plagiarism detection software will improve. Thus, it is clear from the literature reviewed that, a lot has been done on Awareness and Utilization of Plagiarism Checkers, but little or nothing has been done on Awareness and Utilization of Plagiarism Checkers amongst Undergraduate Students of Federal University of Lokoja, hence the need for this research tends to fill the gap.

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive research design, that involves analyzing a sample to make inferences about the larger population. A descriptive research design Is a type of research project that aims to obtain information in other to systematically de scribe an object, situation, or population (Ansari et.al.2022). The population of the study consist of 10,253 undergraduate students enrolled at three (3) faculties (Science, Social Science, and Education) in Federal University of Lokoja, Kogi State. The sample size of 375 was used for the study using Krejcie and Morgan table (1970), A multistage sampling technique was employed to select 375 respondents from the three (3) faculties: Science, Social Science, and Education. Out of 375 questionnaires administered by the researcher 370 were duly completed and returned, representing 98.7% return rate used for the study. A structured questionnaire titled "awareness and utilization of plagiarism checkers amongst undergraduate students of Federal University of Lokoja" was used as an instrument for this study. The structured questionnaire was validated by a professional from the department of Library and Information Science at Federal University of Lokoja. The questionnaire was administered to respondents through personal contact. The data in Section A was subjected to frequency analysis, and percentage. The collected data in Section B was analyzed using descriptive statistics of means. Specifically, the arithmetic mean was calculated based on a 4-point rating scale to address the research questions.

Results

Table 1: Response Rate

Faculties	Questionnaire Distributed	Percentage of Questionnaire Distributed	Questionnaire Returned	Percentage of Questionnaire Returned
Education	125	33.3%	123	32.8
Science	125	33.3%	124	33.1
Social Sciences	125	33.3%	123	32.8
Total	375	100	370	98.7

Table 1 above shows that out of 375 questionnaires distributed to the undergraduate students, 370 were adequately filled, 189 (51.1%) male and 181 (48.9) female were submitted and considered useful for the analysis, representing a 98.7% response rate.

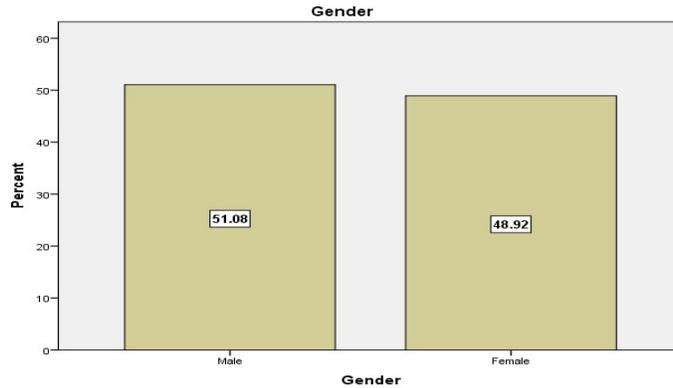## 4.3 Data Analysis

Figure 1: Gender of Respondents

Figure 1: The above shows the gender distribution and that males are 189(51.1%) and have the highest respondents, while female respondents are 181(48.9%).

Figure 2: Age Range of Respondents
Figure 2 shows that the age distribution of the largest group of respondents is 21-30 years 166(44.9%), followed by those aged 16-20 years 120(32.4%), and finally those aged 31 and above 84(22.7%).
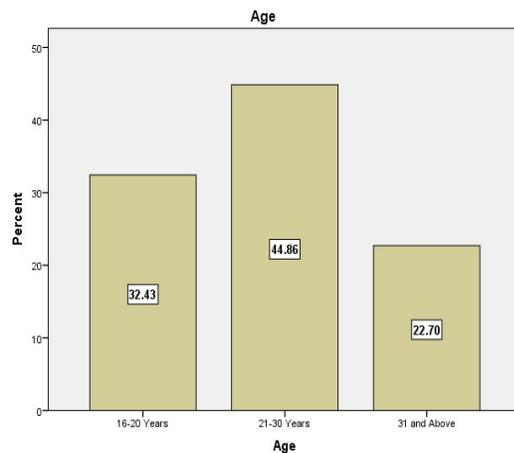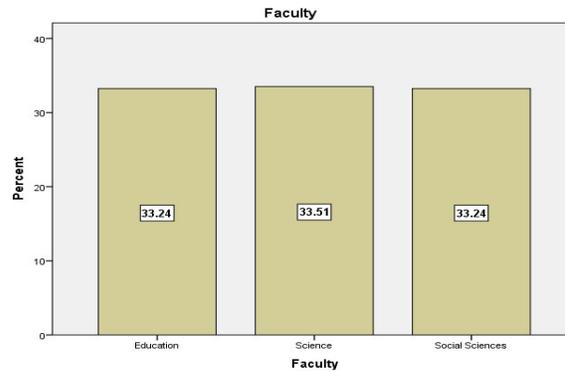
Figure 3: Faculties of Respondents

Figure 3 above shows the distribution of faculty of respondents, indicating that the largest group is the faculty of science, 124(33.5%), followed by the faculty of education, 123(33.2%), and the faculty of social science 123(33.2%).

Figure 4: Level of Study
Figure 4 shows the distribution of the academic levels, which indicates that the largest group is 400 level 1103(27.8%), followed by 300 level 99(26.8%), and other levels 100 and 200 as presented in the bar chart below.
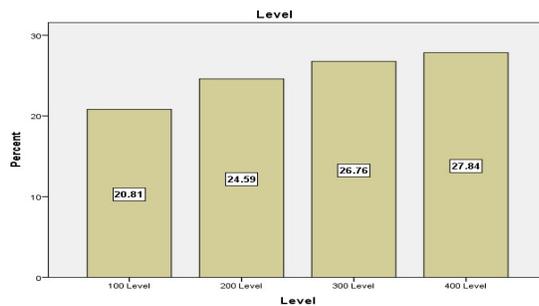

Table 2: Awareness of the Types of Plagiarism Checkers by Undergraduate Students

S/No	Items	VA	A	PA	NA	Mean	Remark
	Check for Plagiarism	65(17.6%)	116(31.4%)	120(32.4%)	69(18.6%)	2.48	Partially Aware
	Plagiiarisma	65(17.6%)	118(31.9%)	120(32.4%)	67(18.1%)	2.49	Partially Aware
	Plag Scan	68(18.4%)	121(32.7%)	121(32.7%)	60(16.2%)	2.53	Aware
	Viper	66(17.8%)	121(32.7%)	120(32.4%)	63(17.0%)	2.51	Aware
	Quetext	66(17.8%)	121(32.7%)	123(33.2%)	60(16.2%)	2.52	Aware
	Copy Leaks	66(17.8%)	114(30.8%)	120(32.4%)	70(18.9%)	2.48	Partially Aware
	Dupli Checker	70(18.9%)	119(33.0%)	123(33.2%)	58(15.8%)	2.54	Aware

Turn it in	70(18.9%)	122(33.0%)	116(31.4%)	62(16.8%)	2.54	Aware
EduTie.com	65(17.6%)	118(31.9%)	120(32.4%)	67(18.1%)	2.49	Partially Aware

Keys: VA= *Very Aware*, **A** = *Aware*, **PA** = *Partially Aware*, **NA**= *Not Aware*

Table 2 above reveals that Dupli Checker and Turnitin recorded the highest awareness levels (2.54 each), followed closely by Plagscan (2.53), Quetext (2.52), and Viper (2.51). These figures suggest that students are most familiar with tools that are either widely promoted in academic settings or are easily accessible online. However, other tools such as Plagiarisma (2.49), CopyLeaks (2.48), Check for Plagiarism (2.48), and Edutie.com (2.49) fall into the "partially aware" category, indicating a knowledge gap that may be due to limited promotion, niche use, or lower institutional endorsement. The fact that Turnitin has high awareness is expected, given its global reputation and institutional adoption in many universities.

Table 3: Extent of the Use of Plagiarism Checker by Undergraduate Students

S/No	Items	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Mean	Remark
	Check for Plagiarism	52(15.7%)	115(31.1%)	127(34.3%)	70(18.9%)	2.44	Low Extent
	Plagiarisma	65(17.6%)	118(31.9%)	120(32.4%)	67(18.1%)	2.49	Low Extent
	Plag Scan	72(19.5%)	120(32.4%)	117(32.4%)	61(18.1%)	2.55	High Extent
	Viper	72(19.5%)	124(33.5%)	120(32.4%)	54(14.6%)	2.58	High Extent
	Quetext	65(17.6%)	121(32.7%)	123(33.2%)	61(16.5%)	2.51	High Extent
	Copy Leaks	65(17.6%)	115(31.1%)	120(32.4%)	70(18.9%)	2.47	Low Extent
	Dupli Checker	66(18.4%)	126(34.1%)	121(32.7%)	57(15.4%)	2.54	High Extent
	Turn it in	68(18.4%)	110(29.7%)	127(34.3%)	65(17.6%)	2.49	Low Extent
	EduTie.com	64(17.3%)	117(31.6%)	120(32.4%)	69(18.6%)	2.48	Low Extent

Keys: VHE= *Very High Extent*, **HE**= *High Extent*, **LE**= *Low Extent*, **VLE**= *Very Low Extent*

Table 3 above shows that Viper (2.58), Plagscan (2.55), Dupli Checker (2.54), and Quetext (2.51) are used to a high extent, while CopyLeaks (2.47), Check for Plagiarism (2.44), Plagiarisma (2.49), Turnitin (2.49), and Edutie.com (2.48) have lower usage rates. This pattern suggests that students tend to use tools that are freely available, require minimal setup, and provide instant feedback. The lower usage of Turnitin, despite its high awareness, may stem from institutional restrictions that limit its availability to postgraduate students or certain courses, as well as possible unfamiliarity with its advanced features. In contrast, tools like Viper and Plagscan are often free or have freemium models, which makes them more appealing for frequent use.

Table 4: Limitations Associated with the Usage of Plagiarism Checker among Undergraduate Students

S/No	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Remark
	Lack of Understanding of plagiarism concept	63(17.0%)	124(33.5%)	119(32.2%)	64(17.3%)	2.50	Agree
	Cost of subscription	68(18.4%)	161(43.5%)	76(20.5%)	65(17.6%)	2.63	Agree
	Lack of policy guidelines for plagiarism checker	63(17.0%)	123(33.2%)	121(32.7%)	63(17.0%)	2.50	Agree
	Unfamiliarity with plagiarism checkers	63(17.0%)	124(33.5%)	120(32.4%)	63(17.0%)	2.51	Agree
	Inability to evaluate result	65(17.6%)	119(32.2%)	119(32.2%)	67(18.1%)	2.49	Disagree
	Insufficient institutional support and guidance	66(17.8%)	120(32.4%)	117(31.6%)	67(18.1%)	2.50	Agree

Keys: SA= *Strongly Agree*, **A**= *Agree*, **D**= *Disagree*, **SD**= *Strongly Disagree*

Table 4 above shows that the most significant limitation reported by respondents is the cost of subscription (2.63), followed by unfamiliarity with plagiarism checkers (2.51), and lack of understanding of plagiarism concepts (2.50). The findings suggest that financial barriers remain a strong deterrent to usage, particularly for premium tools such as Turnitin and Grammarly. Additionally, the lack of training and limited institutional support (2.50) further hinders students from using these tools effectively, even when they are aware of them. Interestingly, the inability to evaluate results was not considered a major limitation (2.49), possibly because most students focus on the similarity percentage without delving deeply into the qualitative aspects of the report. that respondents agree to most of the items listed as limitations, with cost of subscription (2.63) and unfamiliarity with plagiarism checkers, with a mean score of (2.51) are agreed as limitations, while inability to evaluate result, with mean score (2.49) was disagreed to be a limitation.

Table 5: Strategies for Enhancing the Usage of Plagiarism Checkers among Undergraduate Students

S/No	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Remark
	Institution should place greater emphasis on educating students about plagiarism	124(33.5%)	116(31.5%)	65(17.6%)	65(17.6%)	2.81	Agree
	The university should subsidize the cost of subscription for students	122(33.0%)	116(31.5%)	66(17.8%)	66(17.8%)	2.79	Agree
	Development and implementation of policy for plagiarism checker	111(30.0%)	125(33.8%)	68(18.4%)	66(17.8%)	2.76	Agree
	Training students on the use plagiarism checkers by themselves	120(32.4%)	115(31.1%)	68(18.4%)	67(18.1%)	2.78	Agree
	University should invest in comprehensive training programmes	119(32.2%)	113(30.5%)	70(18.9%)	68(18.4%)	2.76	Agree
	Institutions should offer training resources and technical support	117(31.6%)	112(30.3%)	72(19.5%)	69(18.6%)	2.75	Agree

Keys: SA= *Strongly Agree*, **A**= *Agree*, **D**= *Disagree*, **SD**= *Strongly Disagree*

Table 5 above shows that respondents strongly agreed on several strategies for improving usage, with the highest support given to educating students about plagiarism (2.81), followed by subsidizing subscription costs (2.79), providing training for self-use of plagiarism checkers (2.78), and developing institutional policies for plagiarism detection (2.76). These findings indicate that students value both the technical and educational aspects of plagiarism prevention. They recognize that awareness alone is insufficient; without accessible tools and clear guidelines, usage will remain inconsistent. The moderate to strong agreement for comprehensive training programs and technical support suggests that students are open to institutional involvement in building a culture of academic integrity. Implementing these strategies could

bridge the gap between awareness and consistent usage, particularly for high-profile tools like Turn-it-in that currently suffer from underutilization.

Discussion of Findings

The study shows that some plagiarism detection tools, such as Dupli Checker (2.54), Turn it in (2.54), have highest awareness levels, while others, like Plagiarisma (2.49), Check for Plagiarism (2.48), Copy Leaks (2.48), and Edutie.com (2.49), have lower awareness levels. The recognition of tools like Dupli Checker and Turn it in may be due to their effectiveness, user-friendly interfaces, or widespread adoption. Findings of this study is in line with the study of Kiran-Kumar & Chikkamanju (2019) who highlighted the significance of familiarity with plagiarism detection tools, with 93.89% of research scholars aware of such software. Notably, Turn-it-in arguably has the most recognized tool globally records high awareness but low usage. This discrepancy suggests that awareness alone is insufficient to ensure adoption, a point supported by the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which emphasizes that attitudes, perceived norms, and perceived behavioral control jointly influence behavior. From a TPB perspective, the high awareness of Turnitin may reflect a generally positive attitude toward the idea of plagiarism detection, yet low usage suggests that perceived behavioral control, in this case, the ability to access and effectively use the tool is limited. Institutional policies that restrict Turnitin to postgraduate students or certain assignments reduce students' sense of control and access, thereby lowering usage rates.

The study shows that some plagiarism detection tools, such as Viper (2.58), Dupli Checker (2.54), Plag Scan (2.55), and Quetext (2.51), are used to a high extent, however tools like Plagiarisma (2.49), Check for Plagiarism (2.44), Copy Leaks (2.47), Turn it in (2.49), and Edutie.com (2.48), are used to a low extent. The lack of use of these tools including the widely accepted tool like turn it in suggest a gap in students' familiarity that it is available in the institution. This is in line with Abiodun, Olayemi, & Omojola (2019) whose study revealed that 47.5% of students reported good working knowledge and usage of plagiarism software suggests a moderate level of utilization, emphasizing on the importance of understanding students' awareness and utilization of plagiarism detection tools.

The study reveals that respondents agree on several limitations to using plagiarism detection tools, including lack of understanding of plagiarism concepts (2.50), cost of subscription (2.63), lack of policy guidelines (2.50), unfamiliarity with plagiarism checkers (2.51), and insufficient institutional support and guidance (2.50). The cost of subscription is the most significant limitations, followed closely by unfamiliarity with plagiarism checkers. These findings suggest that addressing these challenges through education, affordable solutions, clear policies, and institutional support can promote effective plagiarism detection and prevention. This study is in line with the findings of Opesanwo & Anwana's (2023) who revealed challenges such as cost of subscription, inadequate knowledge, lack of access to steady power supply, and restrictions in file size and format. Similarly, this research likely highlights comparable challenges, underscoring the need for addressing these issues to promote effective use of plagiarism detection tools. Socio-economic factors further compound this issue. The cost of subscription emerged as the most significant limitation, indicating that financial constraints heavily influence students' choice of plagiarism checkers. Freely accessible tools such as Viper and Plagscan achieve higher usage rates not necessarily because they are more effective, but because they align with students' economic realities. This reflects a broader trend in resource-limited educational environments, where cost-free alternatives despite potential limitations in accuracy, are favored over premium institutional tools. Institutional influences are equally critical. The absence of clear policies and consistent training initiatives weakens the institutional culture of academic integrity. Even when students are aware of plagiarism checkers, the lack of structured guidance on how to interpret similarity reports or integrate these tools into their writing process results in underutilization.

Students strongly agree on several measures to enhance the use of plagiarism checkers. Institutions should prioritize educating

students about plagiarism (2.81), subsidizing subscription costs (2.79), developing plagiarism policies (2.76), providing training on plagiarism checkers (2.78), investing in comprehensive training programs (2.76), and offering technical support (2.75). These measures can promote academic integrity, and effective tool use. The findings is in line with Akoh (2023) study who recommended that educational institutions should launch awareness campaigns, provide training sessions, and offer resources to enhance students' technical skills in using plagiarism detection software. The results also suggest that addressing the socio-economic realities of students, through subsidies, institutional licenses, and access to free or low-cost alternatives, can significantly improve utilization rates. In the context of Nigerian higher education, where financial and infrastructural challenges persist, a combined approach of policy development, economic support, and technical training is necessary to foster a sustainable culture of academic honesty.

Conclusion

The study revealed that while Turnitin and Dupli Checker are widely known, Viper and Plagscan are mostly used, leading to a significant gap in the use of the widely accepted tool used in tertiary institutions, Turnitin. The study concluded that, even though undergraduate students are aware of these plagiarism checkers, they seem to be naïve and ineffective in adopting and using the software. It revealed the importance of addressing limitations associated with the use of these tools, such as unfamiliarity and a lack of understanding of the concept of plagiarism. By prioritizing education, affordable solutions, policy development, and comprehensive training, institutions can promote academic integrity and originality of work. Implementing these measures can help enhance the quality and credibility of academic work.

Recommendation

1. Education and Training: Workshops and seminars to educate students about plagiarism, its

consequences, and the importance of using plagiarism checkers should be organized. These interactive sessions can provide practical

training, guidance, and opportunities for discussion and Q&A to equip students with the required knowledge and skills.

2. Provide access to the available plagiarism tools: Access should be provided to the available plagiarism checker to promote academic integrity among students. By offering access to plagiarism checkers like Turnitin, Grammarly, or Quetext, students can check their work for potential plagiarism and ensure originality.

3. The institutions should provide support for subscribing to plagiarism checkers: The institution should provide support for subscribing to plagiarism checkers by covering costs, offering institutional licenses, and ensuring accessibility for all students.

4. Set clear policies on the tools used for plagiarism checkers and follow up on students who require additional support: The institution should establish clear policies on the use of plagiarism detection tools, including guidelines on the interpretation of reports. Regular follow-up with students who require additional support would help identify areas for improvement, provide targeted guidance, and ensure students understand and apply proper citation practices.

Limitation

The study was conducted exclusively at the Federal University of Lokoja, focusing on undergraduate students from three faculties. While this provides in-depth insights into the awareness and utilization of plagiarism checkers within this specific context, the findings are limited to a single institution. Therefore, the results may not be directly generalizable to other universities in Nigeria or to higher education institutions globally. Future studies involving multiple universities across different regions would provide a broader and more representative understanding of the phenomenon.

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