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ETHICAL ISSUES IN INFORMATION USE AND THE EXPLOITATION OF LIBRARY RESOURCES BY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH-SOUTH ZONE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Libraries acquire and stock all forms of intellectual property documents and materials (print and non-print) required for study, learning and research. They offer information literacy programmes and studies not only to provide access to the resources in their collections but it is also necessary that through these programmes users are expected to be equipped with relevant skills to ethically use the resources in a proper manner in order to promote scholarship and academic discipline. This study investigated the influence of knowledge of ethical issues on the exploitation of library resources by undergraduate students in federal universities in South-south zone, Nigeria. The objective of the study was to investigate the extent of awareness of ethical issues in information use and the exploitation of library resources as a requirement for academic integrity by undergraduate students in federal universities in South-south zone, Nigeria. The research design adopted for this study was ex-post facto design. This was so considered because the researcher had no direct control of the independent variable since their manifestation had already occurred and could not be inherently manipulated. The population comprised 952 registered library users randomly sampled from three selected universities, namely University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State and University of Calabar, Cross River State all in Nigeria. A questionnaire was used to collect data. Data collected was analysed by using mean, standard deviation and simple linear regression analysis. Also, the hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The instrument was validated using Cronbach Alpha reliability

test. The reliability estimate obtained in the variable was .70 showing that the instrument was significantly reliable enough to be used. 10% of the registered users from each of the institutions selected were made up of 346 in University of Uyo, 304 in University of Port Harcourt and 302 in University of Calabar respectively. The study produced a regression co-efficient of R = .573 which indicate that there was a strong positive influence of knowledge of ethical issues in using library resources. The implications of this study are that students learning and information handling experiences or skills can be improved through the teaching of relevant and appropriate information literacy programs or studies. Since information literacy skills have significant influence on appropriate use of library materials and resources in an ethical manner, students should be adequately instructed in information literacy studies. From the study, it was inferred that undergraduates' knowledge of ethical issues was relatively low in the study areas. It was recommended that more adequate attention should be given to guiding, instructing and teaching of information literacy skills with particular focus on ethical issues in information use to avoid the implications of doing otherwise especially in academic environments. It was also recommended that university management should be more committed to put in place appropriate policy measures and strategies that ensure the provision of adequate staff and infrastructure to implement the teaching of information literacy programs in the institutions. It is important that a culture of appropriate use of information resources should be inculcated early in students' learning process.

Keywords: Ethical issues, information use library resources, Undergraduates, Federal universities in South-south zone Nigeria

Background to the study

Libraries enjoy special attention in universities and other academic institutions because they are considered very valuable to these institutions in facilitating the achievement of their mission of teaching, learning, research and recreation. The university library should not only acquire and organise print and non-print information carriers but also acquire equipment, infrastructure and relevant technologies needed to locate, access and use the resources in the collection.

To the undergraduate students, the library is an indispensable complementary learning center. It provides them with all the needed material in all courses offered in the university. The first major role the library plays in preparing grounds for effective and efficient literature search

is the acquisition of current and relevant materials. A fundamental service the library offers to students is library guiding and user education to facilitate easy access, retrieval and proper use of the resources.

The basic aim of user education is to acquaint the students with the knowledge and skills to find their way around the library and make maximum use of its resources. Information literacy is becoming a norm in contemporary environment of rapid technological changes, proliferation and explosion in information resources. Anato and Filson (2014) stated that individual faced diverse and abundant information choices in their personal and academic lives. Uzuegbu (2004) observed that emerging information users faced new challenges and new tasks among of which are (i) ability to determine information need and ways to solve them (ii) understand the several media for knowledge sharing (iii) have knowledge of information search tools and (iv) be conversant with ethical issues in using information resources.

Most library materials are protected by copyright legislation. Copyright protects work of authors which are expressed in some form such as books, journals, web postings, software codes etc. It also grants authors exclusive rights such as production and reproduction, distribution/dissemination, public performance, adaptations, format conversion, translation and public lending rights. Kawooya (2013) stressed that copyright is potentially more complex than intellectual property (IP) rights because it covers a wide range of areas among which are books, pamphlets and other writings, lectures, addresses, sermons, dramatic or dramatico-musical works, musical compositions with or without word, photographic works, encyclopedias, anthologies based on the selection, collection of artistic works and their content arrangement.

In most copyright regulations, the "fair use doctrine" allowed expression of ideas in copyrighted or protected works to be copied or used without violating copyright act within permitted use condition. This condition in the academic environment requires strict adherence to the acknowledgement and referencing of all works and materials cited. Most disturbing issues in academic writing today are the issues of plagiarism. It has become common and worrisome to see students write long essays without providing references of works consulted. They copy and reproduce their lecture notes and most times copy/or replicate past projects submitted to their various departments with only a change in nomenclature. These acts are unethical and undermine academic integrity. The questions that arise are do undergraduate students have adequate knowledge and skills on how to consult and properly acknowledge and cite works and materials

used? Are they conversant with ethical issues involved in using information and the implication of improper use? This work is an attempt to investigate ethical issues and the exploitation of library resources by undergraduate students in federal universities in South-south zone, Nigeria.

Purpose/problem statement

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of information literacy competencies on proper use of library resource by undergraduate students in federal universities in South-south zone, Nigeria. Specifically, the study is designed to assess undergraduates' knowledge of ethical issues in using library information resources. It is expected that user education programmes and information literacy studies carried out by libraries should provide students with knowledge and skills to not only search, identify, locate and use the needed information only. Students are expected to be aware of ethical issues concerning the right ways of using other people's works through proper acknowledgement and citations. Obasi (1999) lamented that there were problems being faced by students in citing works they consult, Babalola (2012) who investigated awareness and incidence of plagiarism among undergraduates in Nigerian private universities revealed that most students lacked knowledge of what constituted plagiarism unintentionally. Again from personal observation an interaction with undergraduate student users, it has been observed that many students make inappropriate use of the materials or resources the consult. They copy other peoples' works such as textbooks, projects and journals without due acknowledgement through appropriate citations.

The crux of information literacy studies lie in the understanding of the knowledge of information access tools, sources of information, information search strategies, evaluation and critical to our study is the ethical issues in using information. These have been emphasized in policy document from Nigeria University Commission (NUC). Our concern in this work is whether students acknowledge and appropriately use information resources in their libraries within ethical boundaries as expressed in the information literacy programmes in the universities investigated. This work intended to assess ethical issues in information use and exploitation of library resources by undergraduate students in federal universities in South-south zone, Nigeria.

Research objective/research question

The study investigated the extent to which undergraduates in the selected universities are aware and use library resources ethically. The question being raised is, to what extent do undergraduate student's knowledge of ethical issues influence their proper use of library resources in universities in South-south zone, Nigeria. This question was translated into null hypothesis to guide the study. The null hypothesis is "Knowledge of ethical issues has no significant influence on proper use of library resources by undergraduate students in federal universities in South-south zone, Nigeria".

Literature review

Several definitions abound for the word ethics. Ethics as defined by the Merrian dictionary means the discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation. The Markkula Center for Applied Ethics (2010) states that ethics consists of standards of behaviour our society accepts, noting further that, being ethical is doing what the law requires.

Ethical issues in the use of information resources have to do with right ways and wrong ways of using other people works especially those covered by intellectual property rights and regulations. Undergraduate students, scholars and other academics are expected to do literature search by consulting and using other purples works while writing their assignments, term papers, projects and reports. This is done in order to establish what has along been done and thereby establishing ground for new discovery since every research is expected to have some element of newness or originality. Thus for any scholarly work to merit its claim and gain some level of authority, citing and referencing related literature or documents used is necessary and ethical as an information literate individual.

Citations and referencing are synonymous terms employed by researchers to avoid the temptation of inappropriately using other people's works without consent or violating author's copyrighted works. Referencing is the acknowledgement scholars give to sources of documents and (materials) they consult (Aina, 2006 and Salami, 2014). According to Nwosu (1995), citing references in a research paper come largely from the work of other people. The researcher needs to give proper credit to the original authors by citing and acknowledging them properly using standard referencing format or styles. He argues that bibliographical citation or reference is a very important aspect of every research work because no good research undertaking exists in a vacuum.

Obasi (1999) lamented that the act of making correct, appropriate and relevant bibliographical citation constitute a big problem to many students both undergraduate and postgraduate students. He enumerated some of the problems these students encounter to include; (i) inability to make reference to books of readings, that is, edited books which contain contributions of several authors (ii) lack of adequate knowledge of various citation method or styles (iii) inconsistency in the use of chosen method of citation (iv) the problem of how to arrange and differentiate long quotations in relation to brief or short quotations and the problem of how to cite an author in a book written by another author; and thereby out of ignorance wrongly credit the ideas to the author of the book they are currently reading.

The above is understandable if they lack the knowledge or they, have not been adequately taught or instructed. Where it is worrisome and unacceptable is the deliberate copying and claiming of works of others' works to gain academic credit and other pecuniary benefits. This is criminal and borders on intellectual theft described in academic parlance a plagiarism.

Turnitin.com (N.D.) summaries the 10 types of plagiarism expected to be known by every academic writer and these we find very common without recourse to their obvious negative implications. These types are (i) Clone-plagiarism: Where another person's work is copied word-for-word by a person without any change and claiming it as his own work, (ii) Remix-plagiarism: Here persons collect and mix information from various sources together as a single document, then claiming the work as their own, (iii) Ctrl-plagiarism: Where persons copied a significant portion of a text from a single source without alteration, (iv) Hybrid-plagiarism: Perfectly cited source of documents that are copied and arranged as a new document without citation, (v) Find-replace-plagiarism: This is done without making changes in the essential document but changing the most common keywords and phrases in the copied content without proper citation, (vi) Recycle-plagiarism: This is called self-plagiarism. It is an act of borrowing from one's own previous document without proper citation, (vii) Mashup-plagiarism: This is copying a written document from more than one source and mixing all together without any proper citation, (viii) 404 Error-plagiarism: This is creating a document by copying from various sources and preparing it as a single document with citation. However, if the citation is inaccurate or leads to non-existing resource, then it is called 404 type of plagiarism, (ix) Aggregator-Plagiarism: Here the written document does not contain the original work itself but includes all the proper citations, (x) Re-

Tweet: Here all the written documents seem perfect with properly cited marks, yet the document resembles somewhere the original text's structure or wordings.

Marius' (1988) work on how to avoid plagiarisms warned that when people borrow something and use it in their own writing they must leave no doubt in their readers' minds as to what they have borrowed. To avoid plagiarism, Dike and Amelechi (2012) stressed the use of quotation marks appropriate citations, paraphrasing and referencing of all materials consulted and used.

In general, plagiarism can manifest in more diverse forms than had earlier been identified. Source even attempted distinction between deliberate or intentional plagiarism. Park (2003) revealed intentional plagiarism as the deliberate act of literary theft. It is designed to deceive, hence more difficult to detect. He described some aspects of intentional plagiarism to include: the presentation of the whole documents written by others as one's own work, buying and processing papers from paper mills, hiring someone else to write assignment or term papers, projects, theses and citing false references in writers works that were never consulted. In the same vein, unintentional plagiarism is caused by ignorance of citation and referencing rules. It involves copying word for word either from a print or an electronic on/off line source without acknowledging the source.

Young (2001) described that the wide and increase in the use of the Internet by students have brought about a new craze of 'cut and paste' approach to research. According to Willems (2003), generally, students have the misconception that the Internet is a free source of collecting information without acknowledging the source and authors of whose works are collected. He further observed that with the advent of internet technology, student are presented with lots of hard to resist temptation to plagiarism on the internet because of the number of available paper mills and websites that often write term papers for a fee. These acts negate ethics of academics and scholarship.

IkeepSafe (2014) described cyber ethic as a code of behavior on the internet. Its major concern is about ethical standards applied to the online environment. It is considered indiscipline and criminal using inappropriate and unethical behavior by not acknowledging the right of the owners of sources of information obtained from online environment. According IkeepSafe (2015) people violate cyber ethics when they:- (i) other people's intellectual property is appropriated (ii) Ignoring the social and legal consequence that related to software program writing or the computer

system designing, illegally copy or use proprietary software that has not been paid for which credit has not been given, (iii) Interfere with others computer or online works, (iv) snoop into or alter others computer files or data, (v) use computer causing harm to others, (vi) use others computer resources prior authorization and (vii) use computers ignoring the consideration of and respect for fellow human beings among others.

Microsoft Safety and Security Centre (2014) cautioned that practicing cyber ethics, people are more likely to have a safer and enjoyable Internet experience. To maintain cyber ethics, it suggests that (i) people should not be cyber-bully "by not being rude, avoiding bad language and not make threats or attempts to humiliate other people on the net, (ii) by reporting bullies to appropriate authorities and by not using copyrighted information sources as our own.

A study conducted by Babalola (2012) investigated the level of awareness and incidence of plagiarism among undergraduate in Nigerian private universities. The study also sought to find out key factors responsible for plagiarism by the undergraduate students. The results revealed that most students lacked adequate understanding of the act of plagiarism and were likely to commit unintentional plagiarism. The study also showed that copying from the web was very common as more than 60% of students interviewed admitted doing that without attribution. It further found that accessing information from the Internet with ease, desirability to earn good grades, inadequate knowledge of appropriate citing principles and the pressure to meet assignment datelines were the most prominent reasons for plagiarism. However, a positive significant relationship was found between levels of awareness and incidence of plagiarism.

All works covered by intellectual property rights have both tangible and intangible values. When individuals know that their creative works are protected and that they can benefit from their labour, they are more likely to be more productive by striving to create or develop new ideas and encourage new inventions which lead to development while promoting societal growth. It is imperative therefore that a culture of ethical use of information resource must be stressed, inculcated and imbibed by tertiary institutions undergraduate students.

Research Method

The research design adopted was ex-post factor design because the researcher did not have control of the independent valuable because their manifestations had already occurred and could not therefore be manipulated. The research area was South-south zone, Nigeria. The population

comprised of 14860 registered undergraduate library users from 3 selected universities in 2017/2018 academic session. The stratified random sampling technique was adopted to select 10% each of registered users from the universities relative to the population totaling 952. From the University of Uyo, 346 were randomly selected from a population of 3456, University of Port-Harcourt 304 were selected from 3035 and University of Calabar 302 were gotten from 3016. This is presented in table 1.

Table 1 Sample Frame

S.	Institution	Population	Sample Size	Percentage
1	University of Uyo	3456	346	10
2	University of Port-Harcourt	3035	304	10
3	University of Calabar	3016	302	10
	Total	9506	952	

The instrument used to collect data was developed by the researcher. The draft copy was verted by two experts in educational measurement. In the process, some items were rewarded, dropped or replaced. Thus the instrument was first validated.

The scale used was a 4 point Likert-type assessment scale. The questionnaire used weas divided into sections 'A' and 'B'. Section 'A' sought demographic information while section 'B' assessed ethical concerns and issues in information use.

The reliability of the instrument was obtained by using Cronbach Alpha approach. The reliability coefficient obtained for the two sub scales were 0.70 and 0. 76 for ethical issues and use of library resources respectively. It shows that the instrument was significantly reliable enough to be used. See Table 2. Mean (x) and Standard Deviation (sd) were used to analyse the data collected. The instrument was administered personally in each of the universities visited with the help of two research assistants. Thus all questionnaires were retrieved.

Table 2 Cronbach Alpha Reliability Estimate of Study

S.	Variable	Items	Co-coefficients
1	Ethical issue	8	70
2	Use of library resource	20	76

Source: Field Survey (2019).

Findings

The variables in the study are knowledge of ethical issues in using information sources (independent variable) and proper use of library resources (Dependent variable) by undergraduate students in federal universities in South-south zone, Nigeria. These variables are continuous. Since they are human related variables, their normality was assumed. Consequently, parametric statistics were applied. The descriptive analysis of the mean and standard deviation is presented in Table 3. The interpretation can be inferred by comparing the calculated mean with the population mean of the instrument. The knowledge of ethical issues in using library information source has a mean score of 14.87 out of a maximum of 32. If this value is compared with the expected mean of 20, the mean of the value is relatively lower than the expected mean. It can thus be inferred from the result that the undergraduates' knowledge of ethical issue involved in the use of library resources is relatively low.

One null hypothesis was tested. The hypothesis states that; knowledge of ethical issues in using library resource has no significant influence on the use of library resource by undergraduate students in federal universities in South-south zone, Nigeria. This was tested from 950 respondents. The simple regression analysis was used to analyze the data. The result has been presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Descriptive Analysis of Mean and Standard Deviation of the Variables

S.	Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	N
1	Knowledge of ethical issues in using information resource.	14.87	3.81	950
2	Use of library resource.	45.55	10.48	950

The regression model produced a regression coefficient. $R^2 = .573$ which indicates that there is strong positive influence of knowledge of ethical issue in using information resources and use of library sources. This means that the more the knowledge of ethical issues on the use of information sources, the more or better utilization of the sources. Precisely, an R+ value of .329 indicated that knowledge of ethical issues in using information source may account for 32.9% of the influence of proper use of library resources in the study area. The F-value of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) obtained from the regression table is F=464.50 to 2 decimal places and significant value of .000 (or $p<.05$) at the degree of freedom (df) 1 and 949. The implication of this result is that the null hypothesis was rejected and the inference drawn from it is that knowledge of ethical issues in using information resources has significant influence on appropriate use of library resources by undergraduate students in federal universities in South-south zone, Nigeria.

Table 4 Simple regression analysis of influence of ethical issue in using information resources on use of library resources by undergraduate students in the institutions.

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Spinet		
.573α	.329	.328	8.596		
	Sum of Square	Of	Mean Square	F	Sig
Repression	34321.553	1	34321.553	464.498	.000
Residual	70121.188	948	73.890		
Total	104442.740	948			

1. Dependent variable: Use of library resources
2. Predictor. (Constant) knowledge of ethical issues in using information sources.

Discussion

The study reveals that knowledge of ethical issues in using information resources has a relatively high influence on appropriate utilization of library resources in the study area. An R^2 value of .329 indicating that ethical issues in information use account for 32.9% of student's utilization of library sources calls for concern to be paid to the teaching of these skills in the libraries. The result of the study is in consonance with Salami (2014) and Mobolaji and lyabo

(2015) whose studies stress the importance of ethical use of library resources through appropriate referencing and bibliographical citation in research and other academic works.

From the study, when compared the knowledge of ethnical issue in using library resources which has a mean store of 14. 87 relatively lower than the expected mean of 15, it can be inferred that undergraduate knowledge of ethical issues is relatively low in the institutions in South-south zone, Nigeria. Findings are also integrated with Babalola (2012) whose work revealed that most students lacked adequate knowledge of the acts constituting plagiarism so were prone to use library resources unethically. The result is also in infirmity with Turnitin.Com (ND) which listed various types of plagiarism common with academic and other scholarly writers.

The findings from the study are also in line with Park (2003) who observed some deliberate acts of unethical use of library resources to include presentation of whole documents written by other people as one's own, buying papers from paper mills and citing false references among others. It can be inferred that libraries and librarians are not doing enough to teach and inculcate ethical values in their information literacy programmes and studies or users are deliberately, out of desperation or negligence are not keeping or observing ethical codes in their consultation and use of information resources.

The study has underscored the need for caution to maintain ethical codes while utilizing information resource by undergraduates in the study area. The work also emphasizes the need to give credit or to acknowledge the sources consulted in learning, research and doing scholarly writing without which the work of a student or researcher can be accused of plagiarism. The grave consequence for doing otherwise is obviously not palatable. It is morally and legally wrong as culprits stand chances of criminal prosecution.

Conclusions and Recommendations

From the study, it can be concluded that lack of knowledge of ethical issues significantly influence inappropriate use of library resources by undergraduate students in the institutions studied in South-south zone, Nigeria. Information literacy competence programmes are an important component of the university library system. These play crucial role not only by guiding users to identify and locate sources but also teach how information sought is used and app and appropriately acknowledged documented. It is obvious that lack of information literacy skills and competence have negative impact on how undergraduate students use information sources.

- It is recommended that university management should be more committed to put in place appropriate policy measures and strategies that ensure the provision of adequate staff and infrastructure to implement the teaching of information literacy programs.

- User education programs currently being taught in Nigeria universities should be reviewed taking into cognizance not only print/digital content of resources but emphasis should be placed on inculcating ethical values in scholarship

- More focus should be given to documentation and appropriate use of materials through increased modules on referencing styles and bibliographic citations.

Implications of the study

- Effective information literacy skills have significant influence on appropriate use of library materials and resources in an ethical manner. Students should be adequately instructed in ILS.

- Students' learning and information handling experiences can be improved through the inclusion of relevant and appropriate information skills training programs.

- Undergraduate students are more likely to use library information resources more appropriately if they have adequate knowledge of ethical issues and the implications of using other peoples' work without acknowledgement or appropriate citations and referencing in their academic work.
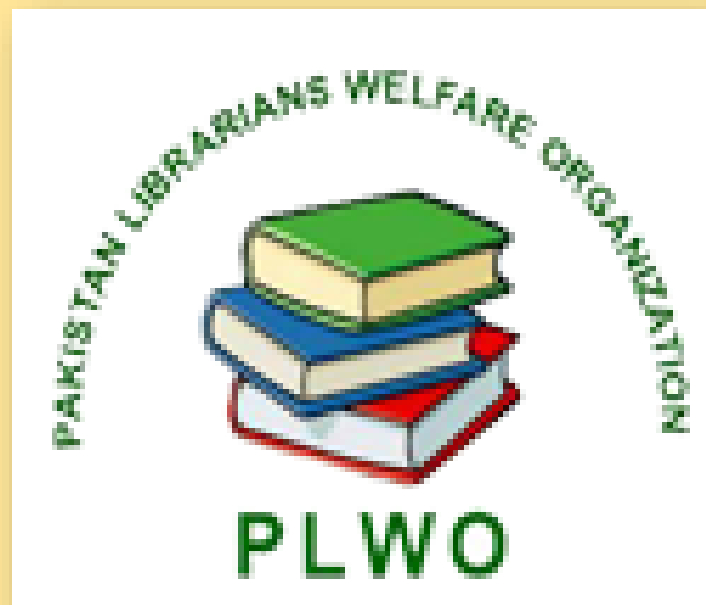
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