Information Overload and Students' Attitude Towards Plagiarism in Three Theological Institutions in South-West Nigeria

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Abstract
Purpose: This paper examines the relationship between information overload and students' attitude towards plagiarism in three theological institutions in South-west, Nigeria.
Design/methodology/approach: The study employed a descriptive survey research design with a correlational approach, targeting undergraduate and postgraduate students in three theological institutions in the South-west region of Nigeria due to easy accessibility and convenience for data collection at the time of the study. A sample size of 355 participants was arrived at by adopting a two-stage random sampling technique. Data collection involved the use of a questionnaire, and the analysis involved simple descriptive measures such as mean, frequency counts, percentages and standard deviation for the research questions and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) for the hypothesis.
Findings: Results showed that the respondents experienced a high level of information overload. In addition, most respondents disagreed that copying the contents of a book or journal word for word is acceptable, depicting a negative attitude towards plagiarism.
Originality: The study provides original data on the relationship between information overload and students' attitude towards plagiarism in three theological institutions in South-west, Nigeria.

Keywords: Information overload, Attitude towards plagiarism, Theological Institutions, Students, Nigeria

Introduction

The invention of the World Wide Web has made it easy to access information via various digital devices anytime, anywhere and in large amounts. This is a great advantage to the modern-day information seeker but also poses challenges like difficulty in sourcing and locating needed information (Nyatangi, 2013). There are many sources from which information can be consumed these days, especially social media. The number of blogs and articles being propagated via social media is countless. Not only do people have access to consume information; they also have the privilege to make contributions to the already crowded universe of information (Suhaimi & Hussin, 2017). Unfortunately, the attention span of humans is limited, and when it reaches its peak, any other information being taken in causes a strain on the human mental capacity (Liang & Fu, 2016).

With the fast rate of explosion in the amount of published information available both on the Internet and in print form today, students of higher institutions of learning have had difficulties locating, retrieving and using needed information for learning and research. The concept that describes this situation is information overload. Davis (2011) defines information overload as a situation where there is an overwhelming amount of information in a specific area, like a computer screen or a workplace setting, that leads to the inability to achieve an intended goal. It can be deduced from this that the intention of any information seeker is to make use of information to fill their gap in knowledge in a particular area or on a particular subject. When information seekers are exposed

to more information than their mental capacity, it may lead to confusion and distortion of the initial intention. Information overload makes decision-making tedious and, in some cases, impossible, unless professional assistance is sought.

Kurelovic, Tomljanovic & Davidovic (2016) note that specific pointers can be used to determine the level of information overload an individual may experience. Three significant ones are the complexity of the task process, an individual's information processing capacity and an individual's capacity to use advanced search tools to locate and retrieve information. When students have complex assignments, they may be able to access a plethora of information to complete them. However, they could also become burdened with the load of information available to them due to their inability to analyse and logically process information and sift exhaustive information resources from specific ones. This inability to separate the exhaustive from the specific may also stem from their incompetence in using advanced search tools such as Google advanced search or Google Scholar to enhance the specificity of the results they obtain in their search process.

When students experience information overload, it implies that they are overwhelmed by the amount of information they can access. Therefore, they cannot comprehend the information they have located and filter it so that they can use it to create original work. Such students may be working with a time limit, and since they lack the skills to help them overcome the information overload they are experiencing at that moment, they may choose to opt for the fastest method possible. The students, therefore, in their state of confusion, may lift information that seems useful on the surface and make use of it to finish up their assignments or research work. Their lack of comprehension of the information presented in the text they have lifted may hinder them from rephrasing or paraphrasing to produce something original.

They are, therefore, positively disposed towards plagiarism.

Plagiarism is one of the most widespread problems in higher education in this age. It is the commonest breach of academic honesty in scholarly writing (Roig, 2015). A major challenge with plagiarism in higher education is that it has been difficult to define it in a unified way because various academics and scholars have different perceptions of it based on their varying cultural backgrounds (Akbar, 2018). It is, therefore, important to have basic knowledge about the concept of plagiarism, the acts that constitute it and the forms in which it may occur so as to be able to tell when plagiarism has occurred. Hu & Lei (2015) express that plagiarism is commonly regarded as a serious academic misconduct and is usually connected to moral vices like deceit, cheating, and intellectual dishonesty.

Mathur & Joshi (2011) have divided plagiarism into two broad categories: source not cited and source cited but still plagiarised. These two broad groups include various types. The source not cited category involves copying another individual's intellectual work without giving due credit. A person may copy another's intellectual output word for word or copy only a portion. Whatever the case, as long as credence is not given to the original owner, it is plagiarism. The source not cited category includes ghost-writer, potluck paper, poor disguise, self-stealer and labour of laziness. The types in this category do not in any way give credit to the actual owner of works consulted for writing purposes. The source cited but still plagiarised category results from improper paraphrasing or citation of wrong sources for a work. It includes forgotten footnote, misinformed, too perfect paraphrase and others. It is pertinent to note that students' indulgence in plagiarism is greatly dependent on their attitude towards it.

Generally, studies have split attitude components into three: affective, behavioural

and cognitive components. Ajzen & Fishbein (1977) state that attitudes are held with regard to certain areas of a person's life. This implies that an attitude is usually expected to be geared in a particular direction, such as another individual, an event, an object, a kind of behaviour, or a policy. Consequently, how individuals react or respond to their human and non-human environment is referred to as their attitude. Attitudes could be expressed in positive, negative and neutral responses (Jain, 2014). When a person possesses a positive attitude towards plagiarism, it is an indication of the individual's support of it, while a negative attitude indicates a person's disapproval of plagiarism (Kumari et al., 2018). A negative attitude towards plagiarism is one of the many academic and moral virtues that higher education, which encompasses theological education, aims to instil in students.

Theological education is aimed at systematically equipping men and women to be custodians and dispensers of the knowledge of God's word. To achieve the goal for which they are established, theological institutions absorb various categories of students. These students include people who have accepted the call of God into ministry and desire to learn about God, His word, how to carry out ministry effectively and other necessary skills needed to fulfil this divine mandate. This learning takes place under an organised structure (Marbaniang, 2012). This implies that the teaching and learning processes are built around curricula, guidelines and methods. According to Lipton (2011), theology students study various materials and resources that align with their roles as religious or theological leaders or scholars in the time to come. Despite the fact that students of theological institutions are supposed to uphold academic integrity, some of them engage in plagiarism.

Gnanaraj (2014), in a study conducted in India, found that very little attention has been given to research on plagiarism in theological schools.

Thus, it has become widespread among students of Indian theological schools. With the background given above, it can be observed that based on the abundance of information available to theological students, they, like any other users of information, face the challenge of information overload. With this challenge, they may likely be positively disposed to acts of plagiarism either directly or indirectly. Therefore, this work focuses on information overload with respect to students' attitude towards plagiarism in three theological institutions in South-west Nigeria, as this is important in ensuring that theological students maintain a negative attitude towards plagiarism as role models in society.

Statement of the problem

One of the primary goals for which religion exists is to ensure that people embrace the right values. Religious leaders are torchbearers; therefore, they must be schooled and equipped to be good examples to other members of society. Theological institutions exist to provide such equipping for religious leaders. Therefore, students who undergo training in such schools are expected to desist from moral and spiritual vices, including plagiarism.

However, it appears that some students of theological institutions are positively disposed towards plagiarism based on empirical evidence. A possible factor that may trigger the inclination of these students towards this act is the overwhelming effect caused by the information explosion, known as information overload. This could hamper the ability of students to process information and make it difficult for them to make sense of the large amounts of information they are exposed to. The resultant effect is that students resort to methods of completing tasks and assignments that appear to be quicker as they have so much to do within little time; hence they are predisposed to acts that depict plagiarism. This can tarnish the reputation of theological institutions as the quality assurance of the education these

institutions provide may become questionable. Therefore, this study investigates the extent of information overload among students in these institutions and its impact on their attitudes toward plagiarism. Given this background, the research specifically explores the relationship between information overload and students' attitude toward plagiarism in three theological institutions in the South-west region of Nigeria.

Research questions

The following research questions guided the study:

i. What is the level of information overload among students in three theological institutions in South-west, Nigeria?
ii. What is the students' attitude towards plagiarism in three theological institutions in South-west, Nigeria?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was tested at 0.05 significance level:

H_01: There is no significant relationship between information overload and students' attitude towards plagiarism in three theological institutions in South-west, Nigeria.

Literature review

Okere, Adam & Sanusi (2016) carried out a study on the awareness of plagiarism as a copyright violation with implications for intellectual property education in Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria and Redeemers University, Ede, Osun State, Nigeria. Four sittings of focus group discussions, in which eight students of mass communication in their terminal year participated, were anchored by the researchers. Findings revealed that all eight participants affirmed that they knew what plagiarism is all about. They also agreed that plagiarism was widespread in academic institutions and that most students indulge in the act without knowing the consequences.

Gururajan & Roberts (2005) carried out a study to investigate the attitudes of academic dishonesty by students in a specific Australian University setting and discovered that there was no reliability test carried out on the questionnaires employed in the investigation of plagiarism in Australia. From the data analysis, it was yet again discovered that the issue of plagiarism is not well clarified. For different universities in Australia, the meaning, policies and measures of deterring plagiarism were found to be different. This difference in the view about plagiarism appears to have students stuck on the concept of plagiarism; hence they are positively disposed towards the act though it may be unintentional. These findings show that students in present-day higher education institutions, including theological institutions, are predisposed to plagiarism.

According to Suhaimi & Hussin (2017), the challenge of information overload has been coming into the limelight recently, although there are very few empirical studies that address this challenge, especially with respect to student environments. According to a study conducted by Nyatangi (2013), the University of Nairobi's MBA students experienced information overload primarily as a result of excessive information they encountered while attending to work and academic demands. The deduction from the study was that information overload is prevalent among the University of Nairobi MBA students as 194 respondents, which is over 90% of the respondents admitted to experiencing it. 25% experienced it to a moderate extent, 43.1% to a great extent, and 13.7% to a very great extent, and that overall, 80% of the respondents experienced information overload to a great extent.

Williamson & Eaker (2012) carried out a survey sample of 193 respondents at the University of Tennessee, which included information sciences students, library staff, and introductory psychology students. There were positive correlations between information overload and age and college year. Another study by Ojo (2016) aimed to examine the impact of age and gender on information anxiety and information overload among undergraduates at the University of Ibadan and Tai-Solarin University of Education in South-west Nigeria. The research included a sample of 193 undergraduates from four faculties, selected through purposive and stratified random sampling techniques. The findings revealed that neither age nor gender significantly influenced undergraduates' information anxiety or information overload.

Ivwighreghweta & Igere (2014) examined the Impact of the Internet on the Academic Performance of Students in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria and found that information overload is one of the critical factors hindering effective internet access and use in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Ebaye & Osim (2022) also found that information overload in tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria, is primarily caused by the introduction of technological innovations, challenges in efficiently processing the relevant information, and the inability to absorb and assimilate information effectively.

There appears to be a scarcity of available literature with respect to issues bordering on information overload and attitude towards plagiarism in higher education institutions. According to Maina et al. (2014), in a study of a northern Nigerian university, plagiarism may not always be intentional and can sometimes occur unconsciously, potentially stemming from information overload that overwhelms the brain. This overload may result in compromised memory functioning, leading to difficulties in recalling or accurately representing information. This memory malfunctioning can contribute to unintentional acts of plagiarism

A study conducted by Onifade & Alex-Nmecha (2020) explored the influence of information overload on plagiarism among academics in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Employing a qualitative phenomenological research design, the study involved 45 academics in the field of Library and Information Science (LIS). The study's findings highlight that the overabundance of information and the associated challenges in effectively managing it have led to a significant prevalence of plagiarism in Nigerian academic institutions.

Porshnev & Giest (2012), in a study dedicated to reviewing the use of ICT and plagiarism by Russian students, discovered that one of the challenges promoting attitude towards plagiarism is information overload. 85.7% of the students admitted that they loved gaining access to information, 8.7% felt overloaded by information, and 5.6% admitted that they had no knowledge of whether they experienced information overload.

Lorinc (2007), taking a cue from research about information overload and multitasking, mentioned that the human brain is not well furnished with the abilities required to operate productively in an information-loaded digital environment marked with unending disturbances. Consequently, the challenge of information processing, which had been discovered to abound among students even before the advent of the Internet, has probably escalated into a greater challenge. The resultant effect is that students now need to be taught various methods of information synthesis so that

they can desist from indulging in intentional acts of plagiarism.

Theoretical framework
Researchers have identified the Theory of Planned Behaviour as a foundation for understanding attitudes, while the Information Processing Theory offers insights into information overload. These theories will provide a deeper understanding of the variables involved.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour was propounded by Icek Ajzen. One factor that lies at the core of the theory of planned behaviour is the individual's intention to exhibit certain behaviour. Intentions are indications of how much energy an individual is ready to expend in executing a particular kind of behaviour. When there is a very strong intention to be involved in a kind of behaviour, it is more likely that the person will carry out that behaviour.

This theory is important because it explains how attitudes trigger intentions and, subsequently, actual behaviour. The intention of students of theological institutions to plagiarise will be influenced by their attitude. If theological students have a negative attitude towards plagiarism, they will desist from plagiarism. On the other hand, if they have a positive attitude towards plagiarism, they would be predisposed to plagiarism.

The information processing theory, which was first initiated by George Armitage Miller, adopts how a computer works to describe how humans learn. Like the computer, the human mind ingests information, acts on it to modify it, houses it, locates it and generates responses to it. This means information processing involves encoding; retention; and retrieval (Bouchrika, 2021; Celikoz et al., 2019). The information processing theory can be linked with information overload because it explains the process of deep thinking and decision-making to solve a problem. With respect to information overload among postgraduate students, the task which a student needs to carry out usually requires him or her to go through a series of stages or processes. Usually, this task may be in the form of an assignment, a term paper or an extensive research work. When there is a burden on the student's cognitive capacity due to the task process's complexity, it would be difficult to move easily from the encoding stage to the retrieval stage.

Methodology
The study adopted a descriptive survey research design with a correlational approach. This research design is considered suitable for this study because of its ability to draw responses from cause-and-effect relationships and establish relationships among variables. The research design also makes use of a quantitative approach to obtain the necessary data for the study.

The study population included undergraduate and postgraduate students enrolled as regular students in three theological institutions in South-west Nigeria. The South-west was selected due to easy accessibility and convenience of data collection during the study. Some theological institutions in the South-west were contacted randomly, and these three institutions were selected because they offer undergraduate and postgraduate courses and were the only ones willing to disclose their data among the institutions contacted. They also provided an adequate representative sample for the study. According to the data collected from these institutions, the total number of students is 1472 (Table 1).

Table 1 Population of the study

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

Source: The number of students was obtained from the various

Due to the large size of the total population and limitations in time and resources, this study employed a two-stage random sampling technique. In the first stage, a stratified random sampling approach was adopted to ensure the inclusion of theological students from the various undergraduate and postgraduate programs offered by each school. To select samples from each population unit (undergraduates and postgraduates), the probability proportionate to size (PPS) sampling method was employed. According to Murthy (1967),

$n/N = nh/Nh$

Where,

n/N = fractional interval for PPS
= 60% = 0.6

nh/Nh = fractional interval for each stratum

h = stratum

Nh = population of each stratum

nh = number of samples to be extracted from each stratum

Therefore,

$nh \times N = n \times Nh$

$nh = n/N \times Nh$

$nh = 0.6 \times Nh$

Using the PPS method, a total of 884 participants constituted the sample size for the study. In the second stage, a sampling fraction of 40% was employed based on the research conducted by Gay and Airasan (2003) regarding educational research competencies for analysis and application. According to their findings, a sufficient sample size for descriptive research typically ranges from 10% to 20% of the population being studied. However, Gay, Mills, and Airasan (2012) emphasised that these percentages serve as suggested minimums and that researchers should aim to include more participants if feasible. Therefore, a sampling fraction of 40% was chosen to take advantage of the larger participant pool while effectively managing the size and obtaining high-quality information at a reduced cost. As a result, a sample size of 355 participants was obtained (Table 2).

Table 2 Sample size for the study

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

The data collection instrument adopted in this study was a questionnaire, which was designed after conducting a comprehensive review of pertinent literature. The questionnaire comprised three sections. The first encompassed a series of questions intended to gather socio-demographic and personal information from the participants, such as age, gender, educational level, marital status, and more. This section included a combination of open-ended and closed-ended questions, totaling seven (7) items.

The second section of the questionnaire was labelled 'Information overload' and drew upon certain items adapted from Kurelovic et al. (2016). The indicators assessed in this section included the complexity of the task process, the capacity to process information, and the capacity to use advanced search tools. Respondents were asked to rate these indicators on a 5-point scale, ranging from 'very true' to 'very untrue'. This section comprised a total of fourteen (14) items.

The final section of the questionnaire focused on capturing information regarding students' attitudes towards plagiarism in theological institutions. The items in this section were adapted from Quartuccio (2014), MacLennan (2018), and Abukari (2018). The indicators assessed in this section included positive and negative attitudes towards plagiarism. Participants were asked to rate these indicators on a 4-point scale, ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. It comprised a total of fifteen (15) items.

The measuring instrument consisted of 36 items. The instrument was validated by subject experts in the Department of Library, Archival and Information Studies, University of Ibadan, Nigeria, before administration.

The data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. Descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, percentages, mean, and standard deviation, were used to present the findings for the research questions. Furthermore, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was employed to examine the hypothesis stated in this study.

Results

355 questionnaires were distributed to undergraduate and postgraduate students of the three institutions employed for the study. Out of these, 300 questionnaires were returned and deemed suitable for analysis, resulting in a response rate of 84.5%. (Table 3).

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

Demographic characteristics of respondents

Table 4 presents the respondents' demographic information, and the findings highlight several key observations. Firstly, most of the respondents were postgraduates, comprising 163 (54.3%) individuals. Conversely, the smallest group consisted of undergraduates, with 137 (45.7%) participants.

In terms of gender distribution, the study had a higher number of male participants, accounting for 264 (88.0%) of the total sample size. The number of female participants was comparatively lower. Regarding age, a significant portion of the respondents, 124 (41.3%), fell within the 31-40 age bracket. On the other hand, only 2 (0.7%) individuals were between the ages of 15-20.

Regarding marital status, the majority of the respondents, 175 (58.3%), were married, while a small number of 3 (1.0%) were widowed. Furthermore, when examining the respondents' highest levels of qualification, it was observed that the highest number, 166 (55.3%), had

Table 3 Distribution of questionnaire and return rate

qualifications outside the specified categories, while only 2 (0.7%) respondents held a highest level of qualification of MPhil

Table 4

Demographic information of respondents

Demographic Characteristics	Freq	%
Category of student		
Undergraduate	137	45.7
Postgraduate	163	54.3
Gender		
Male	264	88.0
Female	36	12.0
Age		
15-20	2	0.7
21-30	84	28.0
31-40	124	41.3
41-50	68	22.7
51-60	18	6.0
61-70	4	1.3
Marital status		
Married	175	58.3
Single	122	40.7
Widowed	3	1.0
Highest level of qualification		
Ph.D.	8	2.7
MPhil	2	0.7
MTh	27	9.0
BTh	94	31.3
Diploma in Theology	3	1.0
Others	166	55.3

N=300

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

Table 5 presents the students' responses to statements designed to assess their level of information overload. To ascertain this level, a test of norms was conducted. The scale used for measuring information overload consisted of fourteen statements, each rated on a scale of five measures: Very true, True, Fairly True, Untrue, and Very Untrue. Multiplying the fourteen statements by the five measures yielded a total score of 70.

To interpret the results, the total score of 70 was divided by 3, resulting in 23.3. Consequently, the scale from 0 to 23.3 indicates a low level of information overload among the students, the scale from 23.4 to 46.6 suggests a moderate level of information overload, and the scale from 46.7 to 70 indicates a high level of information overload.

The findings revealed an overall mean score of 48.32 for the respondents, falling within the scale of 46.7 to 70. This indicates a high level of information overload among the students in the theological institutions.

Table 5 Information overload among students in three

theological institutions in South-west, Nigeria

Items	VT		T		FT		U		VU		Mean	SD
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Complexity of Task Process												
The assignments and term papers I have to work on are usually difficult.	25	8.3	107	35.7	92	30.7	64	21.3	12	4.0	3.23	1.007
The topics I have to write on are usually ambiguous.	20	6.7	72	24.0	96	32.0	89	29.7	23	7.7	2.92	1.053
There are too many stages I need to go through in completing my assignments, and research works.	65	21.7	101	33.7	78	26.0	53	17.7	3	1.0	3.57	1.046
The time I have to complete assignments and research work is usually insufficient with respect to the processes I have to go through.	75	25.0	124	41.3	60	20.0	30	10.0	11	3.7	3.74	1.056
Capacity to Process Information												
I easily select only information I need when surfing the web.	69	23.0	116	38.7	72	24.0	34	12.0	7	2.3	3.68	1.030
When I am searching for information, I lose attention easily when I cannot get the information I need.	28	9.3	90	30.0	63	21.0	107	35.7	12	4.0	3.05	1.092
I feel like my brain shuts down when I have too much information resources to examine.	43	14.3	87	29.0	75	25.0	76	25.3	19	6.3	3.20	1.156
I spend too much time looking for information needed for research and assignments because of the overabundance of information.	58	19.3	103	34.3	75	25.0	50	16.7	14	4.7	3.47	1.119
I am easily overwhelmed by too much information.	39	13.0	101	33.7	81	27.0	72	24.0	7	2.3	3.31	1.048
Capacity to Use Advanced Search Tools												
I can make efficient use of discipline specific search engines and this lessens my worry over the complexity of assignments.	60	20.0	122	40.7	82	27.3	28	9.3	8	2.7	3.66	.987
I can use advanced search tools on digital library databases such as JSTOR and this eases my search for information resources on the internet.	52	17.3	115	38.3	75	25.0	52	17.3	6	2.0	3.52	1.033
I know which Web domains I can get information from and this helps me to execute my scholarly writing tasks easily.	50	16.7	124	41.3	87	29.0	33	11.0	6	2.0	3.60	.958
I can use search engines like Google Scholar, Researchgate, Google Books and Microsoft Academic, making it less burdensome for me to locate scholarly books, journals and articles.	75	25.0	121	40.3	68	22.7	31	10.3	5	1.7	3.77	.994
I can use advanced search tools like Google advanced search, which helps me streamline the number of materials I can view so that I am not overwhelmed.	55	18.3	124	41.3	72	24.0	46	15.3	3	1.0	3.61	.988
Overall mean											**48.32**	

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

Table 6 presents the insights into the students' attitude towards plagiarism in the three theological institutions. The findings indicate that the respondents disagreed with certain plagiarism-related statements. Firstly, the respondents disagreed ($\bar{x}$ = 1.66) that plagiarism, the act of taking others' words rather than physical possessions, should not be considered highly important. Additionally, most respondents ($\bar{x}$ = 1.41) disagreed with the statement that copying directly from a book or journal without giving proper credit is acceptable, as well as the statement that copying from the Internet without citing the source is acceptable ($\bar{x}$ = 1.48).

Furthermore, approximately four-fifths of the respondents ($\bar{x}$ = 1.87) agreed that plagiarism goes against their ethical values. Additionally, a significant number of students ($\bar{x}$ = 1.81) expressed the belief that plagiarism is as morally wrong as stealing. The students' responses to the statements aimed at assessing their attitude towards plagiarism indicate a negative attitude towards the act.

Table 6 Students' attitude towards plagiarism in three theological institutions in South-west, Nigeria

Items	SA F %	A F %	D F %	SD F %	Mean SD
Since plagiarism is taking other people's words rather than tangible assets, it should not be considered very important.	20 6.7	33 11.0	73 24.3	174 58.0	1.66 .920
Sometimes one can copy a sentence or two from other people's works verbatim just to get inspiration for further writing.	25 8.3	117 39.0	88 29.3	70 23.3	2.32 .925
It is acceptable to copy word for word from a book or journal without acknowledgement	5 1.7	18 6.0	71 23.7	206 68.7	1.41 .680
It is acceptable to copy from the Internet without citing the source	4 1.3	24 8.0	83 27.7	189 63.0	1.48 .701
Buying term paper or assignment from people who make already prepared papers available to students is not a big deal.	6 2.0	21 7.0	79 26.3	194 64.7	1.46 .714
If a student buys or downloads free a whole research paper and turns it in unchanged with their name as the author, the student should be expelled from the university.	82 27.3	109 36.3	73 24.3	36 12.0	2.21 .978
It is alright to submit assignments without references.	9 3.0	19 6.3	127 42.3	145 48.3	1.64 .734
Self-plagiarism should not be punishable as plagiarism.	11 3.7	104 34.7	119 39.7	66 22.0	2.20 .822
Students who do not plagiarise spend more time to complete assignments and term projects.	91 30.3	128 42.7	51 17.0	30 10.0	2.93 .934
Plagiarism is against my ethical values.	124 41.3	116 38.7	35 11.7	25 8.3	1.87 .922
Because plagiarism involves taking another person's words and not their materials	14 4.7	27 9.0	106 35.3	153 51.0	1.67 .826

goods, plagiarism is no big deal.					
Plagiarism is as bad as stealing	141 4 7.0	103 3 4.3	29 9.7	27 9.0	1.81 .945
Plagiarism impoverishes the investigative spirit.	87 2 9.0	142 4 7.3	51 1 7.0	20 6.7	2.01 .854
Plagiarism is justified if the lecturer assigns too much work in assignments or term papers	9 3 .0	49 1 6.3	131 4 3.7	111 3 7.0	1.85 .796
The punishments considered for plagiarists are not severe enough.	26 8.7	88 2 9.3	140 4 6.7	46 1 5.3	2.31 .835

Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between information overload and students' attitude towards plagiarism in three theological institutions in South-west, Nigeria.

As depicted in Table 7, the correlation analysis examined the relationship between information overload and students' attitude towards plagiarism in three theological institutions in South-west, Nigeria. The results revealed a significant positive correlation between information overload and students' attitude towards plagiarism (r = .156**, df = 299, p < 0.05). This shows that as the students experience information overload in higher degrees, their attitude towards plagiarism tends to become more favourable. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 7 Relationship between information overload and students' attitude towards plagiarism in theological institutions

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	r	Sig. (P)	Remarks
Information Overload	48.32	7.287	300	.156**	.007	Sig.
Attitude Towards Plagiarism	28.85	5.790				

Discussion

Findings showed a high level of information overload among the theological

institutions' students. This could be as a result of the overabundance of information to which the students are exposed in the process of sourcing for information to complete assignments and research works. It may also be that the assignments their lecturers give them are difficult and the processes they have to undergo to complete them are many. Insufficient timing to carry out assignments may also lead to high level of information overload. This result aligns with that of Nyatangi (2013) who carried out a study on information overload among the MBA students of the University of Nairobi, Kenya and concluded that information overload is prevalent among University of Nairobi MBA students as almost all the respondents admitted to experiencing it. This is in contrast to the findings of Porshnev and Giest (2012), who reported in a study dedicated to a review of Russian students ICT usage and plagiarism, that only a few of respondents felt that they were overloaded by information.

Results also showed that the theological students' attitude towards plagiarism is negative. This is in consonance with the Theory of Planned Behaviour which explains that attitude is a determinant of behaviour. A person's attitude towards a behaviour is how tolerable that behaviour is to the person and the individual's perception or beliefs of the behaviour and its consequences. (Leili and Masomeh, 2018). A negative attitude towards a behaviour results in refraining from it while a positive attitude towards a behaviour leads to embracing it. With respect to the present study, it can be inferred from some of the responses elucidated from the questionnaire that the respondents believe that plagiarism (which is the behavior being considered in this study) is wrong. This belief is what makes plagiarism intolerable to them and consequently, restrains them from indulging in the act. This may be a function of their religious upbringing.

This negative attitude towards plagiarism may also be due to increased awareness about plagiarism. This aligns with the findings of Oyewole and Abioye (2018) that postgraduate

students in the University of Ibadan, Nigeria are becoming more aware of plagiarism acts as a result of the proactive steps being taken by management and faculty towards creating awareness. In another view, Hosny and Fatima (2014) in a study on students' attitude towards cheating and plagiarism in King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia explained that although the level of plagiarism awareness of the respondents was high, majority had indulged in the act as undergraduates.

Furthermore, the results showed that there is a significant and positive correlation between information overload and students' attitude towards plagiarism in the three theological institutions. This implies that the more information overload experienced by students, the more likely it is for them to develop a positive attitude towards plagiarism. Students who find it difficult to process information may not be able to move from one stage of the tasks they need to carry out to another. This may result in their giving in to acts that depict plagiarism. This aligns with the findings of Gullifer (2013) in a study of students of the Charles Sturt University who notes that as the session advances, students find it difficult to take in any extra information asides that which has to do with their core academic work including necessary information with regards to academic misconduct due to the pressures of time; hence they are predisposed to such acts of misconduct such as plagiarism.

Conclusion

Theological students must possess a negative attitude towards plagiarism in order to set good examples in the society. Therefore, they will need to give themselves to training in the necessary skills so that they can become scholarly writers who uphold academic integrity. This training may be acquired personally or by

maximising platforms provided by information professionals in theological institutions.

Recommendations

1. To maintain the negative attitude towards plagiarism, more avenues like seminars and workshops should be created for students, especially at entry levels, on how to identify what plagiarism entails and ways to continually avoid it when they engage in scholarly writing.
2. In order to reduce the problem of information overload identified by the respondents, students who are already information literate have to continue to apply these skills. Overtime, growth in expertise of the application of information literacy skills will gradually help them beat down the information overload effect. Students who do not have a moderate to high level of information literacy skills should take advantage of platforms being provided by the institutions to which they belong and also pursue personal development in that area.

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