



**Evaluation of Sex and Age Influence on Plagiarism as Academic
Dishonest Behaviour among Postgraduate Students of Federal
Universities in South-South Zone of Nigeria**

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated evaluation of sex and age influence on plagiarism as academic dishonest behaviour among postgraduate students of federal universities in South-South, Nigeria. The study which is a survey research, involved a multi-stage stratified random sampling technique of 440 males and 490 females from 3 universities and 3 faculties of the same universities in South-South, Nigeria. The sample was selected through a stratified random sampling approach. The study adopted frequencies, percentages, factor analysis and multiple classification analysis statistical tools. A questionnaire developed and validated by the researcher titled: "Academic Dishonest Behaviour Questionnaire (ADBQ)" with Cronbach coefficient alpha reliability of 0.83 was used for data collection. Two research questions and one hypothesis were formulated for the study. The findings indicated that the students used for this study were involved in Sex and Age influence on plagiarism aspect of academic dishonest behaviours. Generally, there is a significant influence of age on plagiarism as academic dishonest behaviour among students. Male students show a positive inclination toward plagiarism on academic dishonest behaviour than their female counterparts while on the other hand, ages 20-24years, show more culpability than other ages. It is therefore recommended among others that there should be synergy among stakeholders in the educational process to fight this menace of Plagiarism.

Keywords: sex and age influence on plagiarism; academic dishonest behaviour; Postgraduate students; Federal Universities.

INTRODUCTION

Academic dishonesty may cause negative impacts on individual perpetrators, the educational institutions and the society at large. For lecturers as educators, academic dishonesty misleads the process and causes results of educational assessments to become invalid. Students who commit academic dishonest behaviours also cause a disadvantage for students who have academic integrity. This is seen when during the process of selection of job opportunities after

completing his or her education at the university, they are considered for better jobs due to their fake class of degrees against the genuine ones.

Crown and Spiller (1998) confirmed this following a reviewed literature paper whose finding indicated significant participation of female students in cheating lower than males. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between the sex of students, and their participation involving academic dishonest behaviours. Moreover, Jordan (2001) studied how non-cheaters and cheaters were measured on motivation based on 2 types of (mastery or extrinsic), in regard to assumed social values in terms of cheating, on knowledge about cheating, and on the ability of institutional regulations regarding dishonest behaviour. The 5 variables significantly predicted cheating rates. Furthermore, cheaters were discovered to be motivated lower in mastery, whereas higher in extrinsically motivated in courses in which they were dishonest than in courses in which they did cheat. Those who were dishonest in subjects in which dishonesty is prevalent were also lower in mastery motivation and showed extrinsic motivation, higher than non-dishonest students on their supposedly social values in terms of dishonesty. On their understanding, of academic regulations regarding dishonesty, and on their dishonest attitudes. The consequences of these findings for academic solutions are discussed in this study.

In an investigation carried out by Hardings, Mayhew, Finelli & Carpenter (2004) on investigation of the adoption of a codified form of Planned Behaviour Theory, in comprehending the reasons why students of first degree in humanities, engineering are involved in dishonesty. "The researchers surveyed 527 randomly selected students from three academic institutions. Results supported the use of the model in predicting ethical decision-making regarding cheating. In particular, the model demonstrated how certain variables (gender, discipline, high school cheating, education level, international student status, participation in Greek organizations or other clubs) and moral constructs related to intention to cheat, attitudes toward cheating, perceptions of norms with respect, to cheating, and ultimately, cheating behaviour.

Further to the relative importance of the Planned Theory of Behaviour constructs was consistent regardless of context, whereas the contributions of variables included in the study that were outside the theory varied by context. Of particular note were findings suggesting that the extent of cheating, in high school was a strong predictor of cheating in college and that engineering students reported cheating more frequently than students in the humanities, even when controlling for the number of opportunities to do so.

Miranda and Freire (2011) assessed undergraduate students' understanding of academic cheating behaviours, in two Portuguese Universities as they relate to students' age. The result obtained revealed the existent of a relationship that is significant, negative between the students' age and subjects' understanding of dishonest behaviour, thus implying the existence of an inverse relationship between age and an understanding of cheating behaviour. The implication of this is that the older a student, the broader his/her understanding of cheating behaviour and vice versa.

Academic dishonesty as a concept could be explained as the use of dishonest or fraudulent means to obtaining good grades in an academic endeavour. The concept according to Athanasou and Olasehinde, (2002) was conceptualised by the pioneering works of Hartsborne and May in 1928. In a study carried out by Lim and See (2001), they examined students' attitudes toward cheating and whether instances of cheating they witnessed would be reported. They collected data from three educational institutions in Singapore. A total of 518 students participated in the study. Findings suggest that students perceived cheating behaviours involving exam-related situations to be serious, whereas plagiarism was rated as less serious. Their findings suggest that students are morally ambivalent about academic cheating and are rather tolerant of dishonesty among their peers. On the issue of whether cheating behaviours should be reported, they

revealed that a majority of students chose to take the expedient measure of ignoring the problem rather than to blow the whistle on their peers.

Underwood and Szabo, (2003) have argued that the use of Information and Communications Technologies has made academic dishonesty easier but this does not necessarily mean that it is more prevalent. The study presented here investigated the attitudes to, and extent of, self-reported involvement in internet-supported dishonest academic practices. Multiple linear regression analyses showed that Internet experience, acceptability of cheating and assessment of risk predicted an individual student's acceptance of acts such as plagiarism as a legitimate way to achieve academic goals. There was a complex interrelationship among gender, frequency of Internet usage, and maturity of students. Academic offences tended to be more acceptable to males, but also to active Internet users, who were often female: that is females who joined the Internet culture were more prone to plagiarise than their non-active peers. New undergraduates were more likely to err than students in later years of their degree. These results show that there are a number of interrelated factors impacting on individuals' willingness to commit academic offences. The final discussion of the paper both recognises that Internet-supported academic offences occur and briefly outlines some technical and non-technical responses that should be considered by faculty to ameliorate this problem.

Rettinger, Ordan, and Peschiera, (2004), did a study that uses students' evaluations of a hypothetical situation to assess their beliefs about other students' decisions to cheat on an exam. Participants read a vignette describing an examination in which the protagonist has the opportunity to cheat. The description of the vignette's protagonist was manipulated with respect to his perceived competence in the course and the source (intrinsic or extrinsic) of his motivation. In addition, students rated their own likelihood of cheating in the hypothetical situation. Their self-reported motivation and actual cheating behaviour were assessed as well. Vignette results indicate the main effects for both competence and motivation, with high competence and intrinsic motivation leading to lower expected rates of cheating. A three-way interaction among the participants' gender, motivation and competence is also evident. As these results are consistent with the available theory, support is provided for both the theory and the experimental method.

A study was conducted by Rangkuti (2011), the study aims to reveal academic cheating behaviour amongst accounting students at a university in Jakarta. The sample numbered 120 second-year students of accounting. The instrument has two dimensions, namely academic cheating during a test in class (Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient: 0.76) and academic cheating when doing tasks outside the classroom (Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient: 0.81). The results of this study indicate that academic cheating occurs both in test situations in classes and academic tasks outside the classroom. The university needs to create clear and firm academic regulations in anticipation of academic cheating. Academic regulations under consideration include procedures for examinations, forms of a test or assignment, the use of software to detect plagiarism, and strict sanctions applied to perpetrators of academic cheating.

Similarly, Craig and Dalton (2013) carried a study on understanding first-year undergraduate student perceptions of copying and plagiarism: developing a platform for a culture of honest inquiry and the academic construction of knowledge. According to them, academic integrity is a concern in tertiary institutes globally with some perceiving it as endemic. They asserted that some of the issues raised by this practice have serious ethical considerations. To them if students are not doing their own work, which has to do with what is actually being learned? The reasons why students plagiarize are therefore a legitimate area of study and may not be as straightforward as they first appear. The main objective of their research was to gather data that would highlight the perceptions first-year students have concerning the proportion and frequency of cheating among their peers. There was also interest in discovering what students

considered to be the main reasons for such behaviour. Findings show that at the start of the undergraduate programme, three-quarters to four-fifths of the students viewed copying as serious or very serious.

However, after only one semester this percentage had dropped considerably for some areas. The frequency of cheating also varied from the first to the second semester. Such data has resulted in considerations of what kind of changes might be required in order to minimize the perceived "need" to copy or plagiarize, and generate institutional discussion on the issues. The paper highlights proposals for structural and content changes to curriculum focus, delivery, and the learning environment, based on current good practice in these contexts within our institute, in particular, concepts and practices of student ownership and buy-in which we believe removes a significant part of the "need" for copying and plagiarism.

Moore (2013) in his paper on sloppy referencing and plagiarism in students' theses, discussed plagiarism in Finnish higher education as being scarce. He worked with the statistics provided by the National Advisory Board on Research Integrity (2012) that revealed only two cases of plagiarism in Finland in 2011. This according to him is in sharp contrast with international figures of plagiarism. The paper introduces a study about referencing practices in electronically published theses. The data consist of a sample of theses published in Theseus data base (an electronic publication forum for universities of applied sciences in Finland). Altogether 91 randomly chosen theses in the area of health and business studies were analysed. Most students who master referencing follow good writing practice. However, a significant amount of theses lack in referencing. According to him, examples of writing malpractice are diverse.

Quotations are presented without quotation marks, the primary source is not identified, and referencing can be misleading and unclear. Several plagiarised text columns were also found: text from an existing source is taken, sentences might be slightly altered, and the sources of the original text are copied. Based on the data, there is evidence that plagiarism is present in Finnish students' theses, and the writing instructions given by each institution are not always followed. He further concluded that local understandings of plagiarism and the criteria for accepted writing practice vary.

Orim, Borg and Awala-Ale (2013), in their study on students' experience of institutional interventions on plagiarism: Nigerian case, observed that the last ten years, there has been much research into academic integrity with a focus on plagiarism in developed countries. There is still a dearth of such research in developing countries like Nigeria. Their paper presents the results from a larger exploratory study on student plagiarism in Nigerian universities, which is associated with the Impact of Plagiarism Policies in Higher Education across Europe. Their study was intended to contribute to the body of knowledge by focusing on the experiences of previous institutional interventions on student plagiarism issues and their impact on student experience compare to when they study elsewhere.

According to them, Nigerian students studying abroad had to adapt to diverse teaching, learning and assessment styles under a different institutional system. This resulted in the students struggling when they had to apply skills they had not acquired during their previous study. The study adopted a mixed-method approach; 25 Nigerian Postgraduate Students studying in a United Kingdom University were interviewed for the qualitative data and 171 of Plagiarism Policies in Higher Education across Europe, students questionnaires were completed for the quantitative data. Results from the data suggest that the previous institutional system experienced by the students was quite different from what they met in their present institutions of study in England. As a result, the students struggled to cope with their studies when they had to apply skills they had not acquired.

Quartuccio (2014) investigated students' attitudes towards plagiarism in a public Mid-Western University in the USA and found that age was a significant predictor of students'

attitudes towards plagiarism. By adopting a descriptive correlational research design and purposive sampling to select respondents whose responses were collected using a questionnaire and Pearson Product Moment correlation statistics, age was found a significant predictor, given that older students (from 25 and above) showed a higher level of intolerance towards plagiarism. The result suggests that student proclivity towards academic integrity improved with age.

Statement of the problem

The increasing tendency for sex and age influence on plagiarism as academic dishonest behaviours among students at all levels of the educational system has been a serious threat to the Nigerian School System. This menace has great consequences on assessment validity and decisions that depend on such falsified data. However, sex and age influence plagiarism do not happen in a vacuum, but rather result from the interaction of many variables and factors. A lasting solution to this problem can only be meaningfully addressed when the root causes are identified and explained.

Previous attempts at addressing these challenges have directed researches more on common academic dishonest behaviours like copying from another student in examination with or without consent; taking illicit materials into the examination hall; collusion with another student to communicate answers; impersonation etc during examinations. Also influence of moral development, and home environmental variables on academic dishonesty, with a total neglect of sex and age influence on plagiarism that manifest before or outside the examination

Moreover, researches that focused on how post graduate students' and how sex and age influence various factors of academic dishonest behaviours are rare. It is on this basis that the present study is conceived to address the problem of sex and age influence on plagiarism as academic dishonest behaviours in federal universities of the South-South zone of Nigeria.

Research questions

1. What are the rampant academic dishonest behaviours among post-graduate students' of Federal Universities in South-South Nigeria?
2. What are the underlying factors associated with Plagiarism as academic dishonest behaviours among post-graduate students of federal universities in South-South Nigeria?

Hypothesis

There is no significant influence of sex and age on plagiarism as academic dishonest behaviours

METHOD

This study adopted the survey design. The survey design was chosen because it is a research approach specifically designed to systematically collect data about a group of individuals, who have the same characteristics, through the use of written, questionnaires, etc. There was no manipulation of variables since they had already manifested in the population before the study and it is an efficient means of collecting data from a large number of respondents, representing the entire population (Idaka & German, 2012). Evaluation of Sex and Age influence on plagiarism as academic dishonest behaviour among postgraduate Students of federal universities in South-South zone of Nigeria was investigated.

The population of the study

The population is estimated at one thousand eight hundred and sixty (1860) post-graduate students of federal Universities in the South-South zone of Nigeria. The universities are of: Benin, Calabar, Otuoke, Port-Harcourt, Uyo and Warri. Data relating to the population of students in the universities used for this study were obtained from their various graduate schools.

Sampling technique

A multi-stage cum stratified random sampling approach was used for this study. The universities were stratified along with states. The first stage involved simple random sampling to select three states from the six states of Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo and Rivers. The selected states were: Edo state, Cross River state and Rivers state. The three federal universities from these states were those used for the study. The universities selected were: Benin, Calabar and Port Harcourt. The second stage involved simple random sampling to select three Faculties in one of the participating Universities whose outcome was replicated to other participating universities in the study. The three Faculties of Education, Social Sciences and Art/Humanities selected are those that were used for this study. A simple random sampling approach was further adopted to select the respondents.

For each of the participating faculties, 50 percent of the students were selected through a simple random sampling approach. The researcher on one hand collected the names of postgraduates students and their addresses from their respective Head of Departments. With the list, students who leave off-campus, the researcher enveloped an instrument and dispatched through staff in the Head of Department office to them with the Head of Department office as the returning address. For those students living on campus, the researcher visited the hostels and administered the questionnaires. Lecture halls, as well as defence venues, were also visited and administered the instrument to the respondents.

The sample for this study consisted of nine hundred and thirty (930) post-graduate students of three federal universities in the South-South zone of Nigeria. The sample is made up of 440 males and 490 females while age was made up of 20-24=69; 25-29=215; 30-34=232; 35-39=241 and 40 and above = 173, which represented 50 percent of graduate students' population from the Universities of Calabar, Port-Harcourt, and Benin.

Instrumentation

Academic Dishonest Behaviour Questionnaire (ADBQ) was used to measure the frequency of occurrence of each type of dishonest behaviour identified among students. It has two major sections. Section A focuses on students' characteristics: university, faculty, programme of study, sex and age. Section B is made of the academic dishonest behaviours which include among others; paraphrasing material without acknowledging the source. The subscales were designed on a five-point rating scale in which subjects indicated their responses such as; Never, Once, 2times, 3times and more than 3 times. The items were designed from the study of literature on Sex and Age influenced plagiarism as academic dishonest behaviours after careful scrutiny by the experts.

Validity of the instrument

In order to estimate the validity of the instruments, the draft version of the questionnaire was given to five research experts in the field of measurement and evaluation and educational

counselors to give it face validity. Face validity refers to the superficial appearance of the items in an instrument to ascertain its suitability for its intended purpose (Joshua, 2005). The instrument was developed to measure academic dishonest behaviours among students. After careful study of the instrument, they validated it as being suitable for the purpose it was meant for.

Reliability of the instrument

In order to estimate the reliability of the instruments, the draft version of the questionnaire was trial-tested on 68 post-graduate students in three faculties from the Cross River University of Technology, Calabar who were not part of the final study sample. Cronbach coefficient alpha of 0.83 was obtained as an estimate of internal consistency reliability for the instrument of "Academic Dishonest Behaviour Questionnaire" (ADBQ).

Procedure for data collection

The final version of the questionnaire was administered by the researcher after due permission has been obtained from the Dean of the various graduate schools to subjects in the respective Universities with the help of four trained research assistants. Lecturers in the universities cooperatively worked with the researcher to ensure maximum cooperation of subjects in their respective lecture halls. The researcher enveloped questionnaires and sent them to students who leave off-campus by hand delivery, also visited the respondents in the hostels and other areas on campus where activities were being carried out like defence venues.

Procedure for data preparation/scoring

A scoring key was developed for every variable in the questionnaire and coded. Information on personal data was coded as follows: Sex: Male = 1, Female = 2; Age group: 20-24 = 1, 25-29 = 2, 30-34 = 3, 35-39 = 4, 40 and above = 5. The responses on the instruments were manually scored. This provided the initial raw data for the study. Each response on the Academic Dishonest Behaviour Questionnaire (ADBQ) was measured on a weighted value of five through one (Never = 1; Once = 2; 2times = 3; 3times = 4; More than 3times = 5).

Procedure for data analysis

Frequencies and percentages count of rampant academic dishonest behaviour was calculated. Factor analysis was used to provide data on the underlying factors associated with sex and age as academic dishonest behaviours. In addition, multiple classification analysis was used to find out the relationship of the independent variables; sex and age on the factor of academic dishonest behaviour.

Results

Research question 1

What are the rampant academic dishonest behaviours among post graduate students' of Federal Universities in South-South, Nigeria?. To provide answer to this research question, mean and standard deviation were used to summarise the data.. Based on this, their corresponding mean and standard deviations were computed. The result is presented on table 1. The result on table 1 presents the general pattern of academic dishonest behaviours.

Table 1. Mean of the underlying factors

Factors	Mean	SD
Impersonation	34.72	14.38
Plagiarism	30.45	10.26
Unruly behaviour	21.40	8.83
Concoction	13.16	5.17
Copying	14.97	4.48
Colluding	15.05	4.94

The result in table 1 presents the mean and standard deviation of respondents in which Plagiarism as academic dishonest behaviours accounts for the mean of 30.45 and standard deviation of 10.26, it is regarded as one of the most rampant dishonest behaviour.

Research question 2

What are the underlying factors associated with Plagiarism as academic dishonest behaviours among post-graduate students of federal universities in South-South Nigeria?

Table 2. factor matrix for Plagiarism as academic dishonest behaviour

Items	F	Items	F	Items	F
item1	.609	item21	.088	item41	.140
item2	.589	item22	.258	item42	.149
item3	.610	item23	.370	item43	.121
item4	.630	item24	.318	item44	.224
item5	.716	item25	.300	item45	.171
item6	.691	item26	.067	item46	.025
item7	.670	item27	.127	item47	-.145
item8	.697	item28	.107	item48	-.149
item9	.659	item29	.151	item49	-.079
item10	.614	item30	.145	item50	.093
item11	.582	item31	.167	item51	.074
item12	.523	item32	.165	item52	.029
item13	.532	item33	.315	item53	.157
item14	.292	item34	.225	item54	.068
item15	.303	item35	.183	item55	.015
item16	.244	item36	.262	item56	.071
item17	.084	item37	.091	item57	.210
item18	.000	item38	.051	item58	.286
item19	.101	item39	.177	item59	.295
item20	.204	item40	.039	item60	.294
Eigen value	6.303			item61	-.040
Percentage	10.332				
variance	35.017				
Cumulative%					

From table 2, Factor “plagiarism” accounted for 10.332% of total variance. 13 variables are associated with it which loaded positively. The variables here are; 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13. The underlying plagiarism factors associated with academic dishonest behaviours among post graduate students in Federal universities in South-South, Nigeria that loaded

positively include; Paraphrasing materials without acknowledging the source, Permitting coursework to be copied by another student, Fabricating references, Falsifying references, Altering data collected through fieldwork, Inventing data in doing research work. Mishelving library materials for easy access to yourself, Collaborative generous marking of coursework, Submitting joint work as a personal work Doing coursework for another student, Medically lying to secure extension of the deadline, Taking illicit materials into the exam and Illicit procurement of information on exam paper's content.

Hypothesis

There is no significant influence of sex and age on plagiarism as academic dishonest behaviour among post-graduate students of federal universities of South-South, Nigeria. To test this hypothesis, multiple classification analysis was applied to the data. The result is presented in table 3.

Table 3. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) on academic dishonest behaviour of plagiarism in federal universities in South-South, Nigeria according to the independent variables.

Source of variance	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F-ratio	P-level
Combined effect	4018.167	5	803.633	7.950	.000
Sex	28.640	1	28.640	.283	.595
Age	3989.526	4	997.382	9.867	.000
Model	4802.102	9	533.567	5.278	.000
Residual	92895.510	919	101.083		
Total	97697.612	928	105.278		

Table 3 shows that there is no significant influence of sex ($F_1, F_4 928=.283, 9.867, p>0.05, p<0.05$) on plagiarism on academic dishonest behaviour while on the other hand. There is a significant influence of age on plagiarism as academic dishonest behaviour among post graduate students in federal universities of South-South, Nigeria. Table 4 indicate that the adjusted mean scores for sex and age on plagiarism are; 30.6921, 30.2259, and 32.7071, 32.2517, 31.9760, 29.1671, 27.0426 respectively; suggesting that male students show a positive inclination toward plagiarism on academic dishonest behaviour among post graduate students of federal universities of South-South, Nigeria

Table 4. Multiple classification analysis (MCA) on academic dishonest behaviour of plagiarism in Federal Universities in South-South Nigeria according to the independent variables

Variables	Group/levels	No.	Unadjusted mean	Adjusted mean	Eta	Beta
Sex	Male	440	30.6318	30.6921	.017	.023
	Female	489	30.2802	30.2259		
Age	20-24years	69	32.7971	32.7071	.202	.202
	25-29years	215	32.2326	32.2517		
	30-34years	231	31.9610	31.9760		
	35-39years	241	29.1494	29.1671		
	40years and above	173	27.0751	27.0426		

Male students show academic dishonest behaviour of plagiarism in Federal Universities in South-South Nigeria than their female counterparts while on the other hand, ages 20-24years, 25-29years, 30-34years, 35-39years and 40years and above show culpability in that order. The result also shows a beta value of .023 for sex and .202 for age. This implies that only 2.3 percent of variance scores on plagiarism on sex and 20.2 percent of variance scores of age are involved in academic dishonest behaviour among post-graduate students of federal universities of South-South, Nigeria.

Discussion

Findings show that academic dishonest behaviours among post graduate students in Federal universities in South-South, Nigeria as named by the researcher included impersonation, plagiarism, unruly behaviour, concoction, copying and colluding. A six-factor extraction was obtained by the researcher based on the criteria of using at least five items to name a factor. The six factors which correspond to six dimensions are as named above.

The result is really revealing in that four items of the questionnaire could not be loaded successfully under any of the dimensions due to signs of low loadings or sign of multi-dimensionality or being poorly responded to by the respondents. It can be perceived that the items may be intrinsically biased in favour of a unifactorial interpretation. Considering the theoretical and empirical shortcomings of the items of the instrument, the researcher perceives that respondents may have misunderstood the contents of the items consequently providing scores that serve as outliers in the study which perhaps have resulted in the outcome of this study.

Reviewed literature in this study does not show many works on the different dimensions of the enumerated factors of academic dishonest behaviour only but a few that mentioned plagiarism and collusion. Jordan (2001) sought to establish the assessment of cheaters and non-cheaters based on two types of motivation (mastery and extrinsic) on perceived social norms regarding cheating. In that study, all the factors were significant predictors of cheating behaviours. The study is in total agreement to this finding. Similarly, Crown and Spiller (1998), Harding, Mayhew, Finelli & Carpenter, (2007), with Miranda and Freire (2011) are all in agreement with the result of this study. Beyond the above-cited works, studies similar or dissimilar to this finding could not be compared by the researcher in terms of the naming of the factors. This could be because there had not been much work on post-graduate studies or the aspects of factor analysis for loading corresponding items or variables of academic dishonest behaviours to similar factors are rare. This present study will therefore add to the literature in this area.

The findings on sex and age on plagiarism as academic dishonest behaviour among post graduate students of federal universities of South-South, Nigeria shows that there is no significant influence of sex on plagiarism on academic dishonest behaviour while on the other hand, there is significant influence of age on plagiarism on academic dishonest behaviour. The adjusted mean scores for sex and age on plagiarism suggests that male students show a positive inclination toward plagiarism on academic dishonest behaviour than their female counterpart.

This result is no doubt in support of existing literature like (Lim and See, 2001, Underwood and Szabo, 2003) who had reported that plagiarism exists as an academic dishonest behaviour. Male students are more involved in academic dishonest behaviour than female students. However, Lim and See (2001) asserted that plagiarism is less serious in their study. Nevertheless, Orim, Borg and Awala-Ale (2013), in their study on students' experience of institutional interventions on plagiarism, emphasised the need for an institution to be more serious in advancing the need for its reduction.

On the other hand regarding age, the result confirms the findings of Quartuccio (2014) who saw age as a predictor of academic dishonest behaviour. This study confirms his work that students of younger age are more involved in academic dishonest behaviour. Quartuccio's findings however could be said to be so because his study was focused on the undergraduate level whose ages are relatively within the young age bracket. The researcher believes that as the student goes higher in their studies at the level of postgraduate; they are supposed to show maturity even if by age of birth they are young.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the evaluation of sex and age influence on plagiarism as academic dishonest behaviour among post graduate students of federal universities in South-South, Nigeria, shows that it is very obvious that there exist some levels of academic dishonest behaviours in the area of study. It is also of interest to note that plagiarism forms the major aspect of dishonest behaviours that the students in these universities do engage in. The association by way of the significance of the student's characteristics like the sex and age to the different underlying factors mentioned above are clear signs that the students, lecturers, parents, training institutions as well as the government need to rise up to the challenge steering them on the faces and bring these menace to an end. These will help to restore the lost glory of our universities and place us among the topmost universities of the world.

In light of this study, the following recommendations will be useful in curbing academic dishonest behaviours among postgraduate students of federal universities of South-South, Nigeria on one hand and indeed, the National and Global Educational System by extension:

1. Since it has been seen that plagiarism as academic dishonest behaviours exists, The university authorities should produce a code of conduct for the students. If they already had, then its implementation should commence and drastic decisions melted to defaulters.
2. With the plagiarism identified as academic dishonest behaviours, Universities should no longer treat with kid gloves issues and incidences of plagiarism as academic dishonest behaviour in our tertiary institutions. Sanctions or penalties should appropriately be melted to defaulters to discourage them from further engagement and to serve as a deterrent to others.
3. There should be synergy among stakeholders in the educational process to fight this ugly problem of plagiarism starting from the point of admission by universities, the student should be made to know the consequences of getting involved in it.
4. Universities curriculum should include courses on academic dishonest behaviours with a special focus on plagiarism. Also, periodic workshops and seminars be organised to help in sensitising the students about these cankerworms in our school system.

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