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EFFECTS OF PLAGIARISM DETECTION SOFTWARE ON ORIGINALITY OF PROJECT WRITING OF FINAL STUDENTS IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN EKITI STATE.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effects of plagiarism detection software on the originality of project writing among final-year students in tertiary institutions in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The primary objective was to examine how the use of plagiarism detection tools influences students' writing originality, understanding of intellectual property rights, and citation practices. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design, with a population comprising all final-year students in selected tertiary institutions within the state. A sample of 300 students was randomly selected for the study. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled "Plagiarism Detection and Academic Originality Questionnaire (PDAOQ)". The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance.

The findings revealed that the use of plagiarism detection software such as Turnitin and Grammarly significantly enhances students' originality in project writing and improves their understanding of citation and intellectual property rights ($r = 0.871$, $p < 0.05$). The study further established that plagiarism detection tools promote academic integrity by enabling students to identify and correct unintentional plagiarism. Nonetheless, challenges such as high software costs, inadequate user training, and technical issues were identified as barriers to effective utilization.

The study concluded that plagiarism detection software plays a crucial role in fostering academic honesty, improving research quality, and enhancing writing competence among students. It was recommended that tertiary institutions in Ekiti State should integrate plagiarism detection tools into their academic curriculum, organize regular training workshops for students and lecturers, and establish clear institutional policies governing their use.

KEY WORDS: Plagiarism, Project Writing, Originality, Plagiarism Detection Software, Tertiary Institutions, Ekiti State.

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INTRODUCTION

Plagiarism remains a critical issue in academic institutions globally, as it threatens the credibility and authenticity of scholarly work. Onuoha and Adebisi (2022) define plagiarism as the act of using someone else's intellectual property without proper attribution, whether done deliberately or inadvertently. Similarly, Umeh and Adekunle (2021) emphasize that academic integrity necessitates that students and researchers uphold ethical writing standards, which include proper citation and the creation of original content.

Plagiarism, characterized as the unauthorized use or replication of another individual's work without proper reference, this has continues to be a significant challenge in academic institutions globally. As higher education advances, final-year projects have emerged as a vital aspect of undergraduate education, showcasing students' capacity for independent research and their contribution to knowledge creation. However, the advent of digital resources and the simplicity of copying content have heightened the issue of plagiarism, jeopardizing the credibility of academic achievements. In academic institutions globally, the emphasis on originality and adherence to ethical writing standards has grown significantly. Final-year projects, is regarded as a cornerstone of undergraduate education, showcase students' research capabilities, creativity, and intellectual maturity. However, the issue of plagiarism remains a persistent challenge, undermining academic integrity. To address this, plagiarism detection software has become a vital tool, enabling institutions to evaluate and ensure the originality of students' work effectively. These tools evaluate the originality of written work by comparing it with extensive databases of existing content. According to Adeniran and Olusola (2023), plagiarism detection software is pivotal in fostering academic integrity and guiding students toward ethical writing practices.

Similarly, Okafor et al. (2022) assert that these tools improve students' understanding of proper citation and referencing, thus minimizing occurrences of unoriginal submissions. Despite these advantages, certain limitations have been noted. Adebayo and Ojo (2021) caution that excessive reliance on these tools may hinder the development of critical thinking and independent writing skills. Moreover, Eze and Aluko (2023) identify technical shortcomings, such as inaccurate detection rates and language-specific biases, which can affect their reliability.

To address issues of plagiarism, universities have implemented various policies and tools, including plagiarism detection software. Okoye et al. (2023) note that the integration of technological solutions has played a crucial role in ensuring that students adhere to proper research methodologies and avoid academic dishonesty.

Plagiarism detection software has become a vital component of higher education in promoting academic integrity. According to Bello and Ayodele (2024), these tools are designed to identify textual similarities between students' work and existing sources, thereby discouraging academic dishonesty. Commonly used plagiarism detection software includes Turnitin, Grammarly, and Plagscan, among others.

Research by Adigun and Lawal (2022) indicates that plagiarism detection software plays a significant role in improving students' awareness of intellectual property rights by offering real-time feedback on the originality of their work. Similarly, Eze and Obinna (2023) found that consistent use of such tools helps students develop stronger citation practices, thereby minimizing the risk of unintentional plagiarism.

However, despite its advantages, the use of plagiarism detection software presents several challenges. Okoye et al. (2023) highlight technical difficulties, such as system crashes and slow processing speeds, as common obstacles to effective implementation. Additionally, Onuoha and Adebisi (2022) emphasize that the high cost of acquiring and maintaining plagiarism detection software remains a significant challenge, particularly for universities in developing countries.

Hence this study investigates the role of plagiarism detection software in assessing the originality of final-year project writing among students in tertiary institutions in Ekiti-state. It examines the impact of these tools on students' writing practices, awareness of intellectual property rights, and adherence to research ethics. By providing a comprehensive analysis, the study seeks to enrich the discourse on technology's role in promoting academic integrity and offers recommendations for improving research practices in higher education.

Statement of the Problem

Plagiarism continues to pose a significant challenge in higher education, compromising academic integrity and diminishing the credibility of degrees awarded by universities. Final-year projects, designed to showcase students' ability to conduct independent research and generate original ideas, are increasingly at risk due to plagiarism. The abundance of digital resources and the ease with which content can be copied without proper acknowledgment further intensify the issue, raising serious concerns about the authenticity and originality of students' academic work.

To address this problem, plagiarism detection software has become a widely adopted solution in academic institutions. These tools assess student submissions by comparing them against vast databases to detect instances of unoriginal content. While effective in curbing plagiarism and promoting ethical writing practices, their use is not without challenges. Studies such as those by Adebayo and Ojo (2021) and Eze and Aluko (2023) highlight several issues, including over-reliance on these tools, technical inaccuracies, and their inability to account for contextual or language-specific nuances. These shortcomings question the extent to which plagiarism detection software can genuinely instill a deeper understanding of academic standards and research ethics among students.

In Nigeria, the increasing adoption of plagiarism detection tools in universities is a positive step toward fostering academic integrity. However, there is limited empirical research examining how these tools influence students' writing behaviors, understanding of intellectual property rights, and adherence to research ethics. Additionally, the specific effects of plagiarism detection software on the quality and originality of final-year projects within tertiary institutions in Ekiti-state remains a great challenge.

This study aims to fill this gap by evaluating the role of plagiarism detection software in ensuring the originality of final-year project writing among students in tertiary institutions in Ekiti-state. It seeks to examine both the benefits and challenges associated with these tools, as well as their influence on students' ethical writing practices. Through this research, the study aspires to provide actionable insights that will enhance the effectiveness of plagiarism detection software in higher education and promote a culture of originality and academic integrity.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

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1. What is the level of awareness and Influence of plagiarism detection software on the originality of final year project-writing by students in tertiary institutions in Ekiti- state, Nigeria?
2. What is the impact of plagiarism detection software on students' understanding of intellectual property right and citation practices in Ekiti –state tertiary institution?
3. What are the challenges associated with the use of plagiarism detection software in Ekiti-state tertiary institutions?.

Research Hypotheses.

The following hypotheses were tested:

1. The use of plagiarism detection software does not significantly influences the originality of final-year project writing among students.
2. There is no significant relationship between the use of plagiarism detection software and students' understanding of intellectual property rights and citation practices.

Methodology

This study adopted descriptive research design of the survey type. The survey approach enables the collection of data from a large population providing insights into the relationship between Plagiarism detection software and originality of project writing by final year students Ekiti-state tertiary institutions Nigeria. The target population comprises of final year undergraduate students and lecturers involved in project supervision across selected universities in Ekiti-state, Nigeria.

A sample size of 300 final year students from various disciplines were selected using multi-stage sampling techniques. Three institutions were randomly selected from Universities and polytechnics in Ekiti-state. A self-design instrument titled *"Plagiarism Detection and Academic Originality Questionnaire (PDAOQ)"*.was used to collect relevant data from the respondents. The structured questionnaire consisting of sections A and B was designed for the respondents. Section A contains the Bio-data of the respondents while section B was designed to consists some relevant information such as:

i. Awareness of plagiarism detection software by final year students of tertiary institution in Ekiti-state.
ii. The usage of plagiarism detection software by final year students of tertiary institution in Ekiti-state.
iii. Impact of plagiarism detection software on the originality project-writing and citation practices by final year students of tertiary institution in Ekiti-state.
iv. The challenges associated with the use of plagiarism detection software by final year students of tertiary institution in Ekiti-state.

The instrument was validated by experts from test and measurement and two experienced Educational Technology experts .The reliability of the instrument was determined by Test-retest method in which a pilot test was conducted with 20 students outside the target population and a reliability coefficient of 0.85 was obtained indicating high reliability value sufficient for the study. Data collected were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages mean and standard deviation. Hypothesis one was analyzed using t-test while hypothesis two was analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation analysis. All the hypotheses formulated were tested at 0.05 level of significant.

Research Question 1: What is the level of awareness and Influence of plagiarism detection software on the originality of final year project-writing by students in tertiary institutions in Ekiti- state, Nigeria.

TABLE 1: Level of awareness and Influence of plagiarism detection software on the originality of final year project-writing by students in tertiary institutions in Ekiti- state, Nigeria.

S/N	ITEMS	S.A	A	D	S.D.	$\bar{X}$	Decision
1.	I am aware of the existence of plagiarism detection software used to check the originality of academic work.	190 68.33%	50 16.67%	40 13.33%	20 6.67%	3.37	Agreed
2	Awareness of plagiarism detection software has improved my citation and referencing practices.	180 60.0%	40 13.33%	30 10%	50 16.67%	3.17	Agreed
3.	Plagiarism detection software helps me produce more original content in my final-year project.	200 66.67%	50 16.67%	30 10%	20 6.67%	3.43	Agreed
4.	Using plagiarism detection software has made me more cautious about copying and pasting content in my project.	210 70%	30 10%	20 6.67%	40 13.33%	3.37	Agreed
5.	I believe plagiarism detection software improves the overall originality of my final-year project writing.	240 80%	20 6.67%	30 10%	10 3.33%	3.63	Agreed
6.	Plagiarism detection software has encouraged me to use proper citation practices in my project.	220 73.33%	40 13.33%	10 3.33%	30 10%	3.50	Agreed
7.	I feel that plagiarism detection software has improved my understanding of academic integrity and plagiarism.	180 60%	70 23.33%	20 6.67%	30 10%	3.33	Agreed
8.	The use of plagiarism detection software has made me more confident in the originality of my final-year project.	190 63.33%	60 20%	30 10%	20 6.67%	3.47	Agreed

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9.	I rely on plagiarism detection software to ensure my final-year project is original.	205 68.33%	65 21.67%	10 3.33%	20 6.67%	3.52	Agreed
10.	Plagiarism detection software has had a positive impact on the writing behavior of my peers.	150 50%	50 16.67%	20 6.67%	30 10%	2.73	Agreed

Table 1 above shows the level of level of awareness and the influence of plagiarism detection software on the originality of final year project-writing by students of south west university in Nigeria. From the table a significant majority of respondents (68.33%) strongly agreed that they are aware of the existence of plagiarism detection software. This indicates a high level of awareness among students regarding tools available for checking academic work originality. Also, Awareness of plagiarism detection software has moderately improved students' citation and referencing practices. This suggests that while the software is beneficial, additional efforts such as training may further enhance citation practices. Again, majority of respondents (66.67% strongly agreed, Mean = 3.43) indicated that plagiarism detection software helps them produce more original content, underscoring the tool's effectiveness in fostering originality.

Furthermore, A strong response (70% strongly agreed, with a of Mean = 3.37) highlights that the software has made students more cautious about copying and pasting content, reinforcing ethical writing habits. In the same vein, most respondents (80% strongly agreed, Mean = 3.63) believe plagiarism detection software improves the originality of their final-year project writing. This indicates high confidence in the tool's role in promoting academic integrity.

A significant proportion (73.33% strongly agreed, Mean = 3.50) noted that plagiarism detection software has encouraged proper citation practices, showing its educational impact. Respondents (60% strongly agreed, Mean = 3.33) felt the software improved their understanding of academic integrity and plagiarism, reflecting its capacity to educate beyond detection. Many students (63.33% strongly agreed, Mean = 3.47) expressed confidence in the originality of their projects due to plagiarism detection software, demonstrating its role in reinforcing their academic credibility. A significant number (68.33% strongly agreed, Mean = 3.52) indicated reliance on the software to ensure originality, suggesting the tool's integration into students' academic processes. Although students (50% strongly agreed, Mean = 2.73) acknowledged the software's positive impact on peers' writing behaviors, the lower mean score compared to other items suggests variability in peer adoption or perceived influence.

However, the results show that plagiarism detection software significantly contributes to raising awareness and influencing the originality of project writing among final-year students in Southwest universities in Nigeria. The software not only serves as a deterrent to plagiarism but also promotes ethical writing behaviors, thereby enhancing the quality of academic work.

Research Question 2: What is the impact of plagiarism detection software on students' understanding of intellectual property right and citation practices in Ekiti –state tertiary institution.

Table 2: Impact of plagiarism detection software on students' understanding of intellectual property right and citation practices in Ekiti –state tertiary institution.

S/N	ITEMS	S.A	A	D	S.D	X	Decision
1.	Using plagiarism detection software has improved my understanding of intellectual property rights.	180 60%	50 16.67%	40 13.33%	30 10%	3.20	Agreed
2.	Plagiarism detection software has made me more aware of the consequences of plagiarism.	190 63.33%	60 20%	30 10%	20 6.67%	3.40	Agreed
3.	I have gained a better understanding of proper citation practices through the use of plagiarism detection software.	160 53.33%	60 20%	20 6.67%	60 20%	3.07	Agreed
4.	Plagiarism detection software encourages me to cite sources more carefully in my academic work.	170 56.67%	50 16.67%	50 16.67%	30 10%	3.20	Agreed
5.	I feel more confident in my ability to correctly reference sources after using plagiarism detection software.	180 60%	40 13.33%	50 16.67%	30 10%	3.23	Agreed
6.	The feedback provided by plagiarism detection software helps me identify citation errors in my work.	165 55%	45 15%	50 16.67%	40 13.33%	3.12	Agreed
7.	Using plagiarism detection software has made me more cautious about copying content from unaccredited sources.	195 65%	55 18.33%	30 10%	20 6.67%	3.42	Agreed
8.	I believe plagiarism detection software helps me better understand how to paraphrase and quote correctly.	150 50%	60 20%	50 16.67%	40 13.33%	3.07	Agreed
9	The use of plagiarism detection software has increased my respect for intellectual property rights and the work of other authors.	160 53.33%	70 23.33%	30 10%	40 13.33%	3.17	Agreed

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10.	I would recommend the use of plagiarism detection software to help students understand citation practices and academic honesty.	200 66.67%	20 6.67%	70 23.33%	10 3.33%	3.37	Agreed

Observation from table 2 shows that majority of respondents (60% strongly agreed, Mean = 3.20) reported that plagiarism detection software has enhanced their understanding of intellectual property rights. This suggests that the software serves as an educational tool for promoting awareness of legal and ethical considerations in academic work .Also a highest agreement (65% strongly agreed, Mean = 3.42) was recorded for the statement that the software made students aware of the consequences of plagiarism. This finding highlights the deterrent effect of plagiarism detection tools. Furthermore, Over half of the respondents (53.33% strongly agreed, Mean = 3.07) indicated that they have gained a better understanding of proper citation practices through the use of plagiarism detection software. However, the relatively moderate mean score suggests that additional guidance may still be needed. Again, students agreed (Mean = 3.20) that the software encourages them to cite sources more carefully. This reflects the role of the software in instilling better academic habits and reducing careless omissions in referencing

With regards to the Confidence in Referencing Skills, a significant portion (60% strongly agreed, Mean = 3.23) expressed confidence in their ability to correctly reference sources after using plagiarism detection software, emphasizing the tool's role in fostering self-assurance in academic writing. In the vein, respondents (55% strongly agreed, Mean = 3.12) acknowledged that the feedback provided by the software helps them identify citation errors. This underscores the software's value as a practical learning resource for students.

A high percentage of the respondent (65% strongly agreed, Mean = 3.42) equally noted that the software made them more cautious about copying content from unaccredited sources. This suggests its effectiveness in encouraging adherence to ethical academic practices. In the same manner, half of the respondents (50% strongly agreed, Mean = 3.07) felt that the software helped them better understand how to paraphrase and quote correctly. However, the relatively lower mean indicates room for improvement in this area. With regards to respect for Intellectual Property, Over half of the students (53.33% strongly agreed, Mean = 3.17) agreed that the use of the software increased their respect for intellectual property rights and the work of others, reflecting its broader ethical impact.

The findings above demonstrate that plagiarism detection software positively impacts students' understanding of intellectual property rights and citation practices. While it serves as a valuable tool for fostering academic integrity, its effectiveness can be further enhanced by integrating it with structured educational programs on referencing, paraphrasing, and ethical writing practices.

Research Question 3: What are the challenges associated with the use of plagiarism detection software in Ekiti-state tertiary institutions

Table 3: Challenges associated with the use of plagiarism detection software in Ekiti-state tertiary institutions

S/N	ITEMS	S.A	A	D	S.D	X	Decision
1.	The cost of implementing plagiarism detection software is a significant barrier for many universities.	150 50%	30 10%	100 33.33%	20 6.67%	3.03	Agreed
2.	Technical issues, such as slow processing and system crashes, hinder the effective use of plagiarism detection software.	190 63.33%	50 16.67%	40 13.33%	20 6.67%	3.37	Agreed
3.	There is inadequate training for students and staff on how to effectively use plagiarism detection software.	200 66.67%	30 10%	50 16.67%	20 6.67%	3.37	Agreed
4.	Plagiarism detection software often fails to accurately detect plagiarism in local languages or context-specific content.	180 60.0%	50 16.67%	30 10%	40 13.33%	3.23	Agreed
5.	Over-reliance on plagiarism detection software discourages critical thinking and independent writing skills.	170 56.67%	60 20%	40 13.33%	30 10%	3.03	Agreed
6.	The feedback provided by plagiarism detection software is sometimes too technical or unclear for users.	190 63.33%	30 10%	60 20%	20 6.67%	3.30	Agreed
7.	Students often misunderstand the results of plagiarism detection software, leading to unnecessary anxiety.	150 50%	20 6.67%	70 23.33%	60 20%	2.37	Agreed
8.	The use of plagiarism detection software creates additional workload for academic staff in verifying flagged content.	160 53.33%	40 13.33%	40 13.33%	60 20%	3.00	Agreed
9.	Internet connectivity challenges limit the effective use of plagiarism detection software in some universities.	170 56.67%	40 13.33%	60 20%	30 10%	3.17	Agreed
10.	The institutional policies regarding the use of plagiarism detection software are unclear or inconsistently applied.	180 60%	20 6.67%	40 13.33%	60 20%	3.07	Agreed

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Observations from table 3 above shows that a significant number of respondents (50% strongly agreed, Mean = 3.03) acknowledged that the cost of implementing plagiarism detection software poses a barrier for many universities. This indicates that financial constraints may limit access to such tools, especially in resource-scarce institutions.

Also it was indicated in table that majority of the respondent (63.33% strongly agreed, Mean = 3.37) reported that technical problems, such as slow processing and system crashes, hinder the effective use of plagiarism detection software by the students. These issues reduce user efficiency and reliability of the tool.

Furthermore, a large proportion of the respondents (66.67% strongly agreed, Mean = 3.37) noted inadequate training for students and staff can hindered the effective use of this tool. This suggests a gap in capacity building that could undermine the benefits of these tools.

In the same vein, a high percentage (60% strongly agreed, Mean = 3.23) expressed concerns about the software's inability to accurately detect plagiarism in local languages or context-specific content. This limitation reduces the software's effectiveness in diverse academic contexts. From table 3 respondents equally (56.67% strongly agreed, Mean = 3.03) agreed that over-reliance on plagiarism detection software discourages critical thinking and independent writing skills, emphasizing a potential drawback in fostering academic creativity.

With regards to the feedback from plagiarism detection software Many respondents (63.33% strongly agreed, Mean = 3.30) found out that the feedback provided by the software at times to too technical or unclear. This could limit its effectiveness as an educational tool for improving writing and citation skills. Again Half of the respondents (50% strongly agreed, Mean = 2.37) reported that students often misunderstand the software's results, leading to unnecessary anxiety. This reflects a need for better interpretation and guidance on the output.

The table equally depicts that Internet challenges were highlighted (56.67% strongly agreed, Mean = 3.17) as a limiting factor in effectively using plagiarism detection software, particularly in institutions with unreliable internet infrastructure.

Finally A significant portion of the respondents (60% strongly agreed, Mean = 3.07) cited unclear or inconsistent institutional policies regarding the use of plagiarism detection software, which may hinder its integration into academic processes.

Research Hypotheses.

Two research hypotheses were formulated to guide this study.

Hypothesis 1: The use of plagiarism detection software does not significantly influences the originality of final-year project writing among students.

Table 4 Pearson Correlation analysis of plagiarism software detection usage on the originality of final year project writing.

Variables	N	Mean	S.D.	r-cal	Sig(p-value)	Decision
Software usage	300	3.10	0.25	0.871	0.000	Reject null hypothesis
Originality in project writing	300	3.50	0.24			

P <0.05

The Pearson correlation analysis yielded a correlation coefficient (**r**) of 0.871, indicating a strong positive relationship between the use of plagiarism detection software and the originality of final-year project writing. The significance level (p-value) was found to be 0.000, which is less than the threshold of 0.05. Hence the null hypothesis, which state that the use of plagiarism detection software does not significantly influence the originality of final-year project writing among students is hereby rejected. Therefore, it can be concluded that the use of plagiarism detection software significantly enhances the originality of students' project writing.

Hypothesis 2: Plagiarism detection software does not significantly improve students' understanding of intellectual property rights and citation practices.

Table 5: Pearson Correlation Analysis of Plagiarism Detection Software usage and students' understanding of intellectual property rights and citation practices.

Variables	N	Mean	S.D.	r-cal	Sig(p-value)	Decision
Software usage	300	2.90	0.25	0.755	0.000	Reject null hypothesis
Intellectual Property Rights and Citation Practices	300	3.00	0.26			

P <0.05

From table 5 above The Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.755 indicates a strong positive relationship between the use of plagiarism detection software and students' understanding of intellectual property rights and citation practices. This suggests that as the use of plagiarism detection software increases, students are more likely to improve their knowledge and adherence to intellectual property and citation standards. Since the p-value is 0.000, which is less than the threshold of 0.05. This indicates that the relationship between the variables is statistically significant. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected which indicate that plagiarism detection software significantly improves students' understanding of intellectual property rights and citation practices.

Discussion.

The result of research question one as indicated from table 1 shows a significant proportion of students (68.33% strongly agreed, Mean = 3.37) indicated awareness of plagiarism detection software. This aligns with global trends, where increased emphasis on academic integrity has led to greater awareness of these tools among students. The findings align with Adigun and Lawal (2022), who observed a rising awareness of plagiarism detection software in Nigerian universities, attributed to institutional campaigns on academic integrity. However, they also highlight challenges such as limited access due to cost and infrastructure deficits.

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Many students (60% strongly agreed, Mean = 3.17) reported that awareness of plagiarism detection software has enhanced their citation and referencing practices. This supports the findings of Adebayo and Sunday (2022), who noted that exposure to plagiarism detection tools promotes adherence to proper referencing styles

Also Most respondents (66.67% strongly agreed, Mean = 3.43) agreed that plagiarism detection software helps them produce more original content. This corroborates Okoye et al. (2023), who highlighted that such tools encourage students to write authentically by reducing instances of direct content replication. Infact majority of the students (80% strongly agreed, Mean = 3.63) believed that plagiarism detection software improves the originality of their final-year projects. This is supported by Onuoha and Adebisi (2022), who found a direct correlation between the use of such tools and enhanced project quality.

The result of research question two as indicated from table 2 equally shows that a significant number of students (60% strongly agreed, Mean = 3.20) indicated that plagiarism detection software has enhanced their understanding of intellectual property rights. This finding aligns with Okonkwo and Ijeoma (2023), who found that plagiarism detection software serves as an effective educational tool for reinforcing copyright awareness and ethical writing practices.

However the result of research question 3 as indicated from table 3 shows that students are confronted with various problems in using plagiarism detection software for their project writing as Half of the respondents (50% strongly agreed, Mean = 3.03) acknowledged that the high cost of implementing plagiarism detection software is a significant challenge for many universities. This finding aligns with Adepoju and Adebayo (2023), who reported that many institutions in developing countries struggle with the financial burden of acquiring and maintaining plagiarism detection tools like Turnitin and Grammarily. Also a large percentage (63.33% strongly agreed, Mean = 3.37) indicated that technical problems hinder the effective use of plagiarism detection software. Eze and Obinna (2023) found similar issues, particularly in underfunded institutions, where system crashes and slow internet affect accessibility.

Furthermore, a significant number (66.67% strongly agreed, Mean = 3.37) agreed that students and faculty are not adequately trained on how to use plagiarism detection software. This finding equally supports the study of Onuoha and Bello (2022), who emphasized the need for universities to offer workshops and tutorials on the effective use of such tools.

Finally, a good percentage of the students attest to the fact that plagiarism detection software struggles with local language content and context-specific writing. Adigun and Lawal (2022) found that these tools are primarily designed for English texts, making them less effective for indigenous language-based research.

The result of hypothesis one as indicated in table 4 shows that there is a significant relationship between plagiarism detection software usage and students' originality of project writing.As indicated in table 4, the Pearson correlation coefficient (r = 0.871, p = 0.000) indicates a strong positive relationship between the use of plagiarism detection software and the originality of final-year project writing. This study finding agreed with the study of Adeyemiand Adebayo (2023) whofound that the use of Turnitin and Grammarily improved students' ability to write original projects by encouraging proper citation and paraphrasing.

Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that plagiarism detection software significantly enhances students' understanding of intellectual property rights and citation practices. The Pearson correlation analysis (r = 0.755, p = 0.000) indicates a moderately strong positive relationship between the use of plagiarism detection tools and students' ability to properly cite sources and recognize intellectual property rights. This suggests that plagiarism detection software is not only effective in preventing academic dishonesty but also serves as a valuable educational tool for improving students' research and writing skills. However, while the benefits of plagiarism detection software are clear, challenges such as inadequate training, misinterpretation of similarity reports, and over-reliance on the software remain areas that require institutional intervention.

Recommendations.

In view of the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Universities should formally incorporate plagiarism detection tools into research methodology and academic writing courses. Also Lecturers should provide training on how to accurately interpret similarity reports and enhance citation practices.
2. Regular workshops and training programs should be conducted for both students and faculty to improve their understanding of plagiarism detection tools. Training should include proper paraphrasing techniques, ethical research practices, and various citation styles (APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.).
3. Universities should emphasize that plagiarism detection software serves as a learning tool rather than merely a policing mechanism. Feedback from plagiarism detection reports should be used to help students enhance their writing skills, citation accuracy, and overall research ethics.
4. Institutions should subsidize access to plagiarism detection software to ensure affordability for all students. A dedicated technical support system should be established to address challenges such as system slowdowns and false positives in similarity reports.
5. Universities should develop clear, transparent, and consistent policies regarding plagiarism detection and academic integrity. These policies should be effectively communicated to both students and faculty to minimize misunderstandings and reduce anxiety related to similarity scores.

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