Library and Information Perspectives and Research, 8(3), 82 - 96, September 2026
ISSN: 2672-5894 (Online) https://credence-publishing.com
DOI: http://doi.org/10.47524/lipr.v8i3.97

State academic integrity and research competence among final-year undergraduates of Tai Solarin Federal University of Education, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun, Nigeria

Dorcas Tomiyin Fatukasi[1] and Samuel Olamide Akinwole[2]
[1]Department of Library and Information Science, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria
[2]Samtem Consultants, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State, Nigeria
E-mail: [1]olajirefat@gmail.com,[2]akinwole.s4real@gmail.com

Abstract
Academic integrity and research competence are vital aspects in undergraduate teaching and research, especially for senior students with an independent research project. This study therefore investigated academic integrity and research competence among final-year undergraduates of Tai Solarin Federal University of EducationIjebu-Ode, Ogun State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population comprised final-year undergraduates of Tai Solarin Federal University of Education. A sample of 269 final-year undergraduate students was drawn from a population of 1,340 final-year undergraduate students using Taro Yamane's (1967) formula. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, of which 247 valid responses were retrieved and analysed. Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, were used to answer the research questions, while Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) was employed to test the hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that the level of academic integrity among final-year undergraduates was high ($\bar{x}$ = 3.35). The level of research competence among the students was high ($\bar{x}$ = 3.11). The challenges militating against research competence are high cost of internet data ($\bar{x}$ = 3.44), time constraints due to academic workload ($\bar{x}$ = 3.43) and limited access to online databases ($\bar{x}$ = 3.36). There was a significant relationship between academic integrity and research competence among final year undergraduates ($r = 0.742$, $p < 0.05$). It was concluded from the study that research competence was an important factor with relation to academic integrity of final year undergraduate students. Hence, it was recommended that the university should improve research methods, academic writing, information literacy, training in citing and referencing, and introduce regular seminars and workshops on academic integrity and responsible research practices to boost the research competence of the students and encourage ethical academic behaviour.

Keywords: Academic integrity, research competence, final-year undergraduates, undergraduate students

Introduction
Research is integral part of the mission of higher education institutions and is a key contributor to the growth of knowledge, innovation and the development of a nation. Research at the undergraduate level is a key part of the academic experience, which involves students interacting with science through coursework, seminars and research projects towards the end of their studies. The activities will assist students to cultivate critical thinking, analytical reasoning and problem-solving skills, as well as to prepare them for professional practice and lifelong learning. Research is a critical part of university education and serves various functions, such as in informing teaching, decision making, policy development and knowledge building in various disciplines (Afolabi et al., 2022).

Research competence is the knowledge, skills and abilities required for effective research in a given discipline. It includes defining research problems, stating the research questions, conducting literature review, choosing research methods, gathering data and analyzing it, interpreting data and communicating the results of the research (Jose & Salim, 2023). Research competence helps students to solve academic problems systematically and to produce reliable evidence that can be used for the solution of practical and

theoretical problems. Therefore, it has become an important learning outcome of the undergraduate education.

Undergraduate research competence is developed primarily by research methodology courses and supervised research projects. As a result of the learning experiences, students acquire essential research design, literature review, data collection, data analysis, academic writing, critical thinking, communications skills and ethical conduct (Awodoyin et al., 2024). Pupils with these skills will be more likely to generate a good research report, communicate effectively and use appropriate conventions of scholarly writing. They also have more opportunities to recognize sources appropriately and are less likely to commit mistakes due to poor research practices, thus building a close link between research skills and responsible academic conduct.

Academic dishonesty among the students of universities has become one of the most critical issues in higher education (Amzalag et al., 2022). Academic integrity is a commitment to honesty, fairness, trust, respect, responsibility and accountability in teaching, learning and research. It asks students to create original work, credit the work of others appropriately, report the results of research in an honest way, complete academic work independently, and follow ethical guidelines of institutional life (Cotton et al., 2024). These principles help maintain the integrity of academic credentials and thereby serve to protect the public trust in academic research.

The growth of digital technologies and easy availability of information on the web has opened new opportunities for learning, alongside new risks of academic dishonesty. Plagiarism and cheating, such as collaboration without permission, falsification, fabrication, contract cheating and citation, are still prevalent in the academic integrity of university students (Szabo et al., 2018). Students are also at risk from academic dishonesty because they do not understand the principles of academic integrity, have weak academic writing skills, and do not know how to use appropriate referencing styles (Thompson et al., 2017). This has led universities to try to encourage ethical scholarship in their institutions with the following: institutional policies, student orientation programmes and academic integrity rules.

Academic integrity is the moral basis for undergraduates to perform credible and responsible research. Students who uphold the tenets of academic honesty are honest in collecting data, giving credit to others' ideas appropriately, and avoiding plagiarism and giving false credit to others' research. These practices improve the quality, originality and credibility of students' undergraduate research and prepare them for future academic and professional duties. The importance of academic integrity in promoting the quality of research that undergraduate students produce is essential in the context of the growing emphasis on ethical scholarship in universities and other research institutions around the world (Miron et al., 2021).

The two qualities research competence and academic integrity are complementary and help promote quality undergraduate research. Academic integrity gives the ethical guidelines for the responsible use of research knowledge and skills, while research competence ensures the students have the methodological knowledge and skills needed to engage in systematic research. Adequate research competence helps reduce the potential for academic misconduct in that students are more likely to look for credible information, critique information they find, cite sources correctly, and create original research. On the other hand, insufficient research skills can lead to poor referencing and unintentional plagiarism, and failing to keep a high level of integrity in research can affect the validity of well-conducted research. Although ethical scholarship has

been encouraged in Nigerian universities, little empirical evidence exist regarding the relationship between academic integrity and research competence amongst final year undergraduates of Tai Solarin Federal University of Education. This study, therefore, explores academic integrity and research competence of final year undergraduates of Tai Solarin Federal University of Education.

Statement of the problem

The growing trend in higher education to encourage undergraduate research has sparked a greater need for undergraduate students to have good research skills and maintain academic honesty. Despite this, issues have been raised about the quality of undergraduate research work and its problems, including low research skill and the lack of good academic writing, wrong citation and plagiarism. Such difficulties can be harmful to the trustworthiness of students' studies and jeopardize the goals of higher education institutions. While research methodology courses and University policies encourage good research practice, there are instances when some undergraduate students are unable to apply the relevant research skills and follow the rules of academic integrity. Such lack of knowledge of the research procedure and ethics can result in substandard research products and academic dishonesty. Although academic honesty and research skills are crucial, there is hardly any empirical studies that explored the relationship between academic honesty and research skills among the undergraduates of a university in particular, for this study, Tai Solarin Federal University of Education. Hence, this study explores academic integrity and research competence of final year, final year undergraduates in Tai Solarin Federal University of Education.

Research questions

The following questions are answered in the study:

1. What is the level of academic integrity among final year undergraduates of Tai Solarin Federal University of Education?
2. What is the level of research competence among final year undergraduates of Tai Solarin Federal University of Education?
3. What are the challenges militating against research competence among final year undergraduates of Tai Solarin Federal University of Education?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis is tested in the study at the 0.05 level of significance:

H0: There is no significant relationship between academic integrity and research competence among final year undergraduates of Tai Solarin Federal University of Education.

Literature review

Academic integrity is the subject of research in various scientific publications and publications that cover theoretical aspects of the concept as well as its practical application in the educational process in higher education institutions. In ensuring the quality of education and professional training for students, Dotsenko (2022) makes it clear that academic integrity is a vital element. Academic integrity, which is defined as any activity in the search for truth within the context of learning, teaching, research and service (ICAI, 2021), opposes dishonest behaviors like cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, falsification, sabotage and bribery (Sozon et al., 2024) that are vital for the development of academic competence. Academic integrity relies greatly on six core values in practice, each with the courage to ensure that each of the core values features. The fundamental values of academic integrity identified by the International Center for Academic Integrity (ICAI) are: Honesty, Trust, Fairness,

Responsibility, Respect and Courage (ICAI, 2021). Educational institutions would have to make these fundamental values a priority for academic integrity to become a reality, cautioned the ICAI. These basic values, however, are endangered in the event of apathy and the importance that academic institutions accord their students becomes meaningless. It also involves taking appropriate avenues to achieve wisdom, striving to develop and share knowledge, displaying effective service competencies and making good use of learning opportunities and maintaining high levels of professional practice (Stone, 2023). The following are key points relating to academic integrity that are discussed, based on these principles:

i. *Honesty:* Academic honesty means protecting all of the pillars of academic integrity (ICAI, 2021). In other words, it is a commitment to deliberately eliminate any academic dishonesty such as forgery, fabrication, fraud, deception, theft, bribery, etc., and make learning, teaching, research, and services free of it (Imran et al., 2024). Honesty is therefore a prerequisite in the pursuit for other fundamental values such as trust, fairness, respect and responsibility (ICAI, 2021) as it is extended from one person to the larger academic community. If not, it seems like it's impossible to make an impact on those who set the policy and the community of practice within the academic world.

ii. *Trust:* Academic integrity's second fundamental value is trust. In schools that respect the value of honesty, the academic community can rely on and mutually support each other. The trust promotes free expression of ideas so that scholarly research can have the widest possible range of expression (ICAI, 2021). The scholars in other words, are free to share their ideas and join the proposed project from the first to the last. Trust develops over time from the experience of long-term relationships, and in such a journey, actions are more likely to matter than the words we use to realize it.

iii. *Fairness:* The third fundamental value of academic integrity is fairness. It is a way of setting clear and transparent expectations, standards, and policies in the relationships with students, colleagues, and administrators (McAfee & Rodriguez, 2024). Fairness can be shown through avoiding getting an unfair advantage in the enjoyment of something; treating people fairly in an academic environment without considering them a race, an ethnic group, a gender, anything else by which they can be labeled; or taking action to stop injustice that might endanger the academic community. Fair treatment is important for establishing ethical communities, even beyond the academic setting.

iv. *Respect:* The fourth fundamental value of academic honesty is RESPECT. Academic communities can only flourish when members value themselves, fellow members, the community, and dissenting opinions. A fairly honest academic society puts a high emphasis on cooperation, collaboration, and the participatory nature of learning, as well as taking into account opposing perspectives and opinions (ICAI, 2021). In advance, ICAI said that the best and most dynamic academic settings foster active participation in academic fulfillment, robust assessment and tracking of progress, robust debate, intense conflicts over ideas and esteem for the creators of ideas.

v. *Responsibility:* The sixth of the initial five core values of academic

honesty is courage, the last of which is responsibility. According to International Center for Academic Integrity, "personal accountability and the desire of individuals and groups to lead by example, follow mutually agreed-upon standards, and react responsibly and appropriately to academic integrity issues are the building blocks of academic communities of integrity" (ICAI, 2021, p. 9). Responsibility suggests a moral citizen who upholds the integrity of learning, teaching, research and service, as both individual responsibility and shared responsibility for integrity.

Research is essential in the field of education; it is the base for evidence-based decisions and the stepping stone in the development of knowledge in a dynamic world. Students learn important skills such as problem solving, critical thinking and data analysis by doing research. These skills are essential for students to excel in school and thrive in their future careers, as they will face them in the workforce.These skills are needed for students to be successful in school and in their future careers, because they will face these skills in the workplace. With the fast pace of the modern world, research skills are becoming essential. Research students get applied learning, connecting classroom work with real-world application. Integrating research into the learning process improves student learning and equips them to handle complex situations, Zhang (2020) argues. In order to be relevant, educational institutions should prioritize research in their programs, as research competency is required in order to adapt to a changing environment, as indicated in the studies conducted by Comon and Corpuz (2024).

Research competencies (RC) are the skills and abilities that are acquired to be able to carry out research effectively and successfully, which include the ability to formulate relevant research questions, collect and analyze information, use the right methods and techniques, interpret the findings, clearly communicate the findings and make decisions based on the information obtained (Jeréz et al., 2022). RC also involves critical thinking and problem-solving, teamwork and research ethics. Because of this they are seen as a group of skills and knowledge that are required to conduct in-depth research and help develop knowledge within a specific field.

Research competencies are the competences and knowledge to work in a research manner, and ethically. Learning the research skills also makes a student more self-directed learner as noted by Robinson and Persky (2020). Such attributes help beginning students acclimate to the rigors of college life after graduating from high school. The ability to independently access information, handle data critically, and communicate results effectively is key competencies needed in both professional and academic contexts. Educational institutions are essential in developing these skills when providing students with an opportunity to conduct research. This approach promotes good academic performance and lifelong learning.

Research competence is made up of a number of skills that are interrelated, such as literature searching, research design, data collection, data analysis, academic writing and ethical conduct. According to Adeyeye and Oboh (2024), undergraduate research projects offer hands-on experience for students on how to apply the research methods and how to communicate the results of research. Likewise, Awodoyin et al. (2024) found that research design, information management, analytical skills, communication ability and ethical awareness are important aspects of research competence among students. Although research competency is of vital importance, many undergraduates face research difficulties because of their imperfect

understanding of research methodology, lack of statistical knowledge, weak information literacy skills and less academic assistance. The problems can impact on the quality of the undergraduate research products, and affect students' readiness for post-graduate study and professional life. Thus, universities must offer efficient research training and encourage learning environments that help to develop students' research skills.

Olusanya et al. (2020) studied academic staff perceptions of the cause of plagiarism in the writing of final year project among undergraduates in Southwest Nigeria. The researchers used descriptive survey based ex post facto method and sampled 18 Universities in the region with 1,800 respondents and analysed the data through descriptive statistics. The study revealed that the main causes of plagiarism among Undergraduates include laziness, lack of awareness of what plagiarism are insufficient experiences of writing with sources, and most importantly, lack of adequate skill to write the final year project. This is interesting because this study found that undergraduate research competencies weaknesses can be a direct cause of violation of academic integrity in the same geopolitical zone as Tai Solarin Federal University of Education.

In another study, Oladejo et al. (2020) explored the relationship between information literacy skills and attitudes of undergraduate and postgraduate students in three theological institutions in South-west Nigeria. Based on the correlational research design and the sample of 355 students, the resulting relationship was statistically significant and negative as was the relationship between students' information literacy skills and their attitude towards plagiarism, with students having a higher level of information literacy skills having more negative attitudes, ethically sound attitudes towards plagiarism. The results support the notion that research skills and academic honesty are related: when skills are lacking, space becomes available for dishonesty.

In addition to the Nigerian context, Ayoub-Al-Salim and Aladwan (2021) explored the link between academic integrity of online university students and its impact on their academic performance and learning quality. The findings indicated that the academic honesty of the students has statistically significant influence on the quality of students' learning and there is a significant difference in academic honesty between male and female students, meaning that the ethical aspect of students' learning activities has a measurable impact on the quality of students' learning processes and products.

Likewise, Brown et al. (2020) examined predictors of academic integrity among 701 undergraduate and graduate entry Masters in occupational therapy students across five universities in Australia, of which 609 were undergraduate students. Using a two-part self-report questionnaire, which consisted of six standardized scales, and bootstrapped multiple linear regression, the study revealed that age, gender, GPA, moral practice, general tendency towards cheating, tendency towards dishonesty in conducting research, and tendency not to give appropriate references and acknowledgements were significant predictors of academic integrity. Dishonesty in behaviour and reporting of research results, and poor referencing practices, as measurable indicators of integrity further underscore the conceptual proximity between students' research competence and their integrity.

Methods

The study used descriptive correlational survey design since it aimed to explore the relationship between academic integrity and research competence among final year's undergraduates without any manipulation of the variables. The population for the study was the final year

undergraduate students of selected colleges of Tai Solarin Federal University of Education in Ogun State, Nigeria, of which 1,340 students were used. A sample size of 269 was selected from this population with the use of a formula developed by Taro Yamane (1967). The sampling technique used was multi-stage sampling. Three colleges: College of Specialised and Professional Education (COSPED), College of Humanities (COHUM), and College of Vocational and Technical Education (COVTED) were purposively selected due to the diversity of the type of academic programmes offered in each of these and the representation of undergraduate students in each. For the second stage simple random sampling was used to select departments from the three colleges. After that the number of respondents was proportionately drawn from each department sampled. A structured questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. The questionnaire included parts to assess the demographic characteristics, academic integrity, research competence and challenges to research competence of the respondents. The questionnaire was sent directly to the selected undergraduate students and 269 copies were distributed of which 247 copies were properly completed and returned, with a 91.8% response rate and were found suitable for the study. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used in analysing the data collected. To answer the research questions, descriptive statistics were employed and they were frequency, percentages, mean and standard deviation while to test the hypothesis, Pearson's's Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented based on college, gender, age range, and level of study. The findings indicate that out of the 247 respondents, 91(36.8%) were from the COSPED followed by 84(34.0%) respondents from COVTED while 72(29.1%) respondents were from the COHUM.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
College	COSPED	91	36.8
	COHUM	72	29.1
	COVTED	84	34.0
Gender	Male	116	47.0
	Female	131	53.0
Age Range	21–25 years	98	39.7
	26–30 years	82	33.2
	31–35 years	42	17.0
	36 years and above	25	10.1
	Total	**247**	**100.0**

In terms of gender, the findings reveal that 131(53.0%) of the respondents were female, while 116(47.0%) were male. This indicates that female students constituted a slightly higher proportion of the respondents than their male counterparts. Regarding age distribution, the majority of the respondents, 98(39.7%), were within the 21–25 years age bracket. This was followed by 82(33.2%) respondents aged 26–30 years. Respondents within the 31–35 years age range accounted for 42(17.0%), while those aged 36 years and above constituted 25(10.1%) of the sample.

Research question one: What is the level of academic integrity among final year

undergraduates of Tai Solarin Federal University of Education?

Table 2: Level of academic integrity among final year undergraduates

S/N	Academic Integrity	SA	A	D	SD	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	SD
	Honesty						
1	For me to be honest it starts from myself	149 (60.3%)	75 (30.4%)	16 (6.5%)	7 (2.8%)	3.48	0.76
2	Honesty trains us to believe in our abilities.	137 (55.5%)	84 (34.0%)	17 (6.9%)	9 (3.6%)	3.41	0.79
3	I really appreciate friends who do the tasks with their own ability.	141 (57.1%)	78 (31.6%)	19 (7.7%)	9 (3.6%)	3.42	0.81
4	I am sure that any work done honestly results will be satisfactory.	132 (53.4%)	89 (36.0%)	16 (6.5%)	10 (4.0%)	3.38	0.82
5	Originality of ideas is an important thing to have when writing.	159 (64.4%)	65 (26.3%)	14 (5.7%)	9 (3.6%)	3.51	0.77
	Weighted Mean					**3.44**	**0.77**
	Fairness						
6	I am happy to pass the course material to my friend.	115 (46.6%)	93 (37.7%)	26 (10.5%)	13 (5.3%)	3.26	0.88
7	I am glad when a friend asks my idea in doing the lecture work.	123 (49.8%)	85 (34.4%)	25 (10.1%)	14 (5.7%)	3.29	0.90
8	I am active to participate in academic activities inside and outside of the campus.	109 (44.1%)	98 (39.7%)	28 (11.3%)	12 (4.9%)	3.23	0.86
9	I love studying other people's research results.	129 (52.2%)	78 (31.6%)	26 (10.5%)	14 (5.7%)	3.30	0.92
	Weighted Mean					**3.27**	**0.89**
	Respect						
10	All students have equal opportunities to get involved in campus activities.	118 (47.8%)	90 (36.4%)	26 (10.5%)	13 (5.3%)	3.28	0.87
11	Regular academic evaluation is very important in the learning process.	148 (59.9%)	71 (28.7%)	19 (7.7%)	9 (3.6%)	3.45	0.80
12	Trusting each other's friends is a solid foundation for collaboration on campus.	126 (51.0%)	82 (33.2%)	25 (10.1%)	14 (5.7%)	3.29	0.91
	Weighted Mean					**3.34**	**0.86**
	Trust						
13	I like to discuss how to cite the reference sources that lecturers present in the classroom.	112 (45.3%)	95 (38.5%)	26 (10.5%)	14 (5.7%)	3.23	0.89
14	For me preparing the material before the lecture is a natural thing.	121 (49.0%)	87 (35.2%)	25 (10.1%)	14 (5.7%)	3.28	0.90
15	I enjoy discussing college assignments with friends.	130 (52.6%)	76 (30.8%)	28 (11.3%)	13 (5.3%)	3.31	0.91
	Weighted Mean					**3.27**	**0.90**
	Responsibility						
16	Getting a scholarship is like having a responsibility to serve the nation.	140 (56.7%)	75 (30.4%)	20 (8.1%)	12 (4.9%)	3.38	0.87
17	I feel a good image of campus is a shared responsibility.	151 (61.1%)	68 (27.5%)	17 (6.9%)	11 (4.5%)	3.45	0.82
	Weighted Mean					**3.42**	**0.85**
	Overall Weighted Mean = 3.35						

Key: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD).
Decision rule: If mean is 1.00–2.00 = Low; 2.01–3.00 = Moderate; 3.01–4.00 = High

Table 2 shows that the level of academic integrity among final-year undergraduates of Tai Solarin Federal University of Education was high ($\bar{x}$ = 3.35). The construct was measured across five dimensions: honesty, fairness, respect, trust, and responsibility. The weighted mean scores for the five dimensions were: honesty ($\bar{x}$ = 3.44), fairness ($\bar{x}$ = 3.27), respect ($\bar{x}$ = 3.34), trust ($\bar{x}$ = 3.27), and responsibility ($\bar{x}$ = 3.42). It could therefore be concluded that the level of academic integrity among final-year undergraduates of Tai Solarin Federal University of Education was high.

Research question two: What is the level of research competence among final year undergraduates of Tai Solarin Federal University of Education?

Table 3: Level of research competence among the final year undergraduates

S/N	Research competence	SA	A	D	SD	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	SD
	Research knowledge						
1	I know how to write the statement of the problem for my research	130 (52.6%)	79 (32.0%)	25 (10.1%)	13 (5.3%)	3.33	0.89
2	I know how to formulate research objectives	137 (55.5%)	75 (30.4%)	23 (9.3%)	12 (4.9%)	3.36	0.89
3	I know how to formulate research questions/hypotheses	127 (51.4%)	82 (33.2%)	25 (10.1%)	13 (5.3%)	3.32	0.88
4	I know how to explain the significance of the study	134 (54.3%)	78 (31.6%)	23 (9.3%)	12 (4.9%)	3.35	0.89
5	I know the critical skills needed to read and summarise the contents of the literature	124 (50.2%)	85 (34.4%)	25 (10.1%)	13 (5.3%)	3.30	0.88
6	I know how to review and analyse previous literature	129 (52.2%)	81 (32.8%)	25 (10.1%)	12 (4.9%)	3.32	0.88
7	I know how to identify and apply relevant theories in my study	118 (47.8%)	87 (35.2%)	28 (11.3%)	14 (5.7%)	3.22	0.91
8	I know how to develop conceptual model for my study	113 (45.7%)	89 (36.0%)	30 (12.1%)	15 (6.1%)	3.19	0.93
9	I know how to determine subjects and draw participants for my study	121 (49.0%)	84 (34.0%)	28 (11.3%)	14 (5.7%)	3.26	0.91
10	I know how to use suitable academic referencing style to format list of references	143 (57.9%)	70 (28.3%)	22 (8.9%)	12 (4.9%)	3.39	0.89
11	I know how to choose the right research methodology for my research work	123 (49.8%)	85 (34.4%)	27 (10.9%)	12 (4.9%)	3.29	0.88
12	I know how to use the current statistical tool for my data analysis	109 (44.1%)	87 (35.2%)	34 (13.8%)	17 (6.9%)	3.16	0.94
	Weighted Mean					**3.29**	**0.90**
	Research Skills						
13	I can write an abstract	135 (54.7%)	76 (30.8%)	23 (9.3%)	13 (5.3%)	3.35	0.89
14	I can confidently develop background to the study in any research work	127 (51.4%)	81 (32.8%)	27 (10.9%)	12 (4.9%)	3.31	0.89
15	I have the ability to define a research problem	124 (50.2%)	82 (33.2%)	28 (11.3%)	13 (5.3%)	3.29	0.89
16	I have the ability to plan research	121 (49.0%)	84 (34.0%)	28 (11.3%)	14 (5.7%)	3.26	0.91
17	I can explain the purpose of my research	134 (54.3%)	76 (30.8%)	25 (10.1%)	12 (4.9%)	3.34	0.89
18	I can confidently write the significance of the study	130 (52.6%)	78 (31.6%)	27 (10.9%)	12 (4.9%)	3.32	0.89
19	I can do a literature review	123 (49.8%)	84 (34.0%)	28 (11.3%)	12 (4.9%)	3.28	0.88
20	I can develop correctly a conceptual model for my research	112 (45.3%)	90 (36.4%)	30 (12.1%)	15 (6.1%)	3.18	0.93

S/N	Research competence	SA	A	D	SD	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	SD
21	I can confidently describe data collection procedure	126 (51.0%)	81 (32.8%)	28 (11.3%)	12 (4.9%)	3.29	0.89
22	I can develop the pattern of my literature review using my conceptual model	115 (46.6%)	87 (35.2%)	30 (12.1%)	15 (6.1%)	3.17	0.93
23	I am able to identify appropriate method for analysing my data	120 (48.6%)	85 (34.4%)	28 (11.3%)	14 (5.7%)	3.25	0.91
24	I can make valid conclusion from the result of analysis	124 (50.2%)	82 (33.2%)	28 (11.3%)	13 (5.3%)	3.29	0.89
25	I can identify relevant theories that best explain my research	117 (47.4%)	87 (35.2%)	29 (11.7%)	14 (5.7%)	3.24	0.91
	Weighted Mean					**3.27**	**0.90**
	Research Attitude						
26	Writing the background to the study makes me scared	37 (15.0%)	59 (23.9%)	90 (36.4%)	61 (24.7%)	2.30	1.00
27	Statement of the problem is very difficult to write	42 (17.0%)	62 (25.1%)	87 (35.2%)	56 (22.7%)	2.38	1.01
28	Research objectives are so stressful for me to come up with	40 (16.2%)	61 (24.7%)	88 (35.6%)	58 (23.5%)	2.34	1.01
29	Research questions and hypotheses writing makes me nervous	43 (17.4%)	64 (25.9%)	84 (34.0%)	56 (22.7%)	2.39	1.03
30	I feel confident writing the literature review	129 (52.2%)	79 (32.0%)	26 (10.5%)	13 (5.3%)	3.31	0.89
31	I feel research is stressful and also a complex task	75 (30.4%)	87 (35.2%)	58 (23.5%)	27 (10.9%)	2.84	0.98
32	I find it easy choosing the correct research design for my study	118 (47.8%)	85 (34.4%)	30 (12.1%)	14 (5.7%)	3.24	0.91
33	I find it difficult to understand the concepts of research	34 (13.8%)	56 (22.7%)	95 (38.5%)	62 (25.1%)	2.25	0.98
34	I feel confident at interpreting and writing a research paper	123 (49.8%)	84 (34.0%)	28 (11.3%)	12 (4.9%)	3.28	0.88
35	It is difficult for me to use statistical tools for my study analysis	53 (21.5%)	70 (28.3%)	75 (30.4%)	49 (19.8%)	2.51	1.06
36	I find it easy to communicate my research and its finding	120 (48.6%)	84 (34.0%)	29 (11.7%)	14 (5.7%)	3.25	0.91
37	I feel good about my research outcome	132 (53.4%)	76 (30.8%)	27 (10.9%)	12 (4.9%)	3.33	0.89
	Weighted mean					**2.76**	**0.96**
	Overall weighted mean = 3.11						

Key: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD).
Decision rule: If mean is 1.00–2.00 = Low; 2.01–3.00 = Moderate; 3.01–4.00 = High

Table 3 shows that the level of research competence among final-year undergraduates of Tai Solarin Federal University of Education was high ($\bar{x}$ = 3.11). The construct was measured across three dimensions: research knowledge, research skills, and research attitude. The weighted mean scores for the three dimensions were: research knowledge ($\bar{x}$ = 3.29), research skills ($\bar{x}$ = 3.27), and research attitude ($\bar{x}$ = 2.76). It could therefore be concluded that the level of research competence among final-year undergraduates of Tai Solarin Federal University of Education was high.

Research question three: What are the challenges militating against research competence among final year undergraduates of Tai Solarin Federal University of Education?

Table 4: Challenges affecting research competence among the final year undergraduates

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	SD
1	High cost of internet data reduces my ability to conduct research effectively.	151 (61.1%)	65 (26.3%)	20 (8.1%)	11 (4.5%)	3.44	0.87
2	Time constraints due to academic workload affect my research activities.	147 (59.5%)	69 (27.9%)	20 (8.1%)	11 (4.5%)	3.43	0.87
3	Limited access to online databases affects my research competence.	140 (56.7%)	70 (28.3%)	23 (9.3%)	14 (5.7%)	3.36	0.92
4	Poor access to research materials limits my ability to carry out academic research.	137 (55.5%)	71 (28.7%)	25 (10.1%)	14 (5.7%)	3.34	0.92
5	Inadequate research skills training affect my research competence.	127 (51.4%)	79 (32.0%)	28 (11.3%)	13 (5.3%)	3.29	0.91
6	Poor library facilities limit my research effectiveness.	126 (51.0%)	79 (32.0%)	28 (11.3%)	14 (5.7%)	3.28	0.91
7	Inadequate supervision from academic supervisors affects my research output.	123 (49.8%)	81 (32.8%)	29 (11.7%)	14 (5.7%)	3.26	0.91
8	Difficulty in identifying credible academic sources affects my research competence.	118 (47.8%)	86 (34.8%)	29 (11.7%)	14 (5.7%)	3.24	0.91
9	Lack of adequate ICT skills hinders my research activities.	115 (46.6%)	84 (34.0%)	33 (13.4%)	15 (6.1%)	3.20	0.94
10	Lack of motivation affects my engagement in research activities.	112 (45.3%)	87 (35.2%)	33 (13.4%)	15 (6.1%)	3.18	0.94

Key: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 4 shows that the major challenges militating against research competence among final year final year undergraduates of Tai Solarin Federal University of Education include the high cost of internet data ($\bar{x}$ = 3.44), time constraints due to academic workload ($\bar{x}$ = 3.43), limited access to online databases ($\bar{x}$ = 3.36), and poor access to research materials ($\bar{x}$ = 3.34), inadequate research skills training ($\bar{x}$ = 3.29), poor library facilities ($\bar{x}$ = 3.28), and inadequate supervision from academic supervisors ($\bar{x}$ = 3.26). It could therefore be concluded that the challenges militating against research competence among final year undergraduates of Tai Solarin Federal University of Education are high cost of internet data and time constraints due to academic workload, and limited access to online databases.

Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between academic integrity and research competence among the final year undergraduates of Tai Solarin Federal University of Education

Table 5: Relationship between academic integrity and research competence among the final year undergraduates

Variables	N	Mean	SD	R	p-value	Decision
Academic Integrity	247	3.35	0.82	0.742	0.000	Reject H_0
Research Competence	247	3.29	0.85			

($r(245) = 0.742, p < 0.05$)

Table 5 reveals that the calculated r-value of 0.742 indicates a strong positive relationship between academic integrity and research competence among final year undergraduates. The correspondingp-value of 0.000 is less than the 0.05 level of significance. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there was a significant relationship between academic integrity and research competence among final year undergraduates of Tai Solarin Federal University of Education.

Discussion

The study found that the academic integrity of the final year undergraduate was high. This implies that the students in general

have good awareness and practice of the ethical values expected in educational environments. The finding is consistent with Dotsenko (2022), who emphasized that academic integrity is an essential component of educational quality and students' professional development. The discovery also aligns with the International Center for Academic Integrity (ICAI, 2021) which concluded that honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage are key values that are a part of academic integrity.

The study also revealed that research competence among final year of the undergraduate students is high. The discovery corroborates what Adeyeye and Oboh (2024) have indicated, namely that undergraduate research projects teach students to apply research methods and present their research findings. It also augments Awodoyin et al. (2024) who cited research design, information management, analytical skills, communication ability and ethical awareness as research competencies that students must possess. This finding of high research competence in this study can be explained as a result of students' experience in research methodology courses as well as final year research projects, which enable the application of research knowledge and skills in solving academic problems in practice.

The study showed that the major problems encountered by the research competence of the final year undergraduate students are the cost of internet data, time constraint because of academic load and the access to online databases. The finding is in line with the literature review which indicates that the poor information resources, the limited research skills, the poor information literacy and the limited academic support can be limiting factors of the students' research competence. Adeyeye and Oboh (2024) and Awodoyin et al. (2024) highlighted the need for proper research training and provision of suitable information sources to foster research competence among students. The importance of the high cost of internet data is especially noteworthy in the present study because current undergraduates' research relies heavily on electronic journals, Internet databases, digital libraries, and other electronic sources of scholarly information.

The study found that academic integrity is positively related to research competence among the final year undergraduates. This finding agrees with Olusanya et al. (2020) which studied the factors that motivated plagiarism in the final year project writing among the undergraduate students of the universities in South-West, Nigeria. They came up with the following factors which lead to plagiarism: lack of knowledge about what plagiarism is, lack of experience in writing with sources, and lack of skills in writing final year projects. This is in line with the present finding as research competence will enable students to perform research appropriately, use research materials correctly and write research without involving in any unethical practices.

Conclusion

This study examined academic integrity and research skills among the final year students of Tai Solarin Federal University of Education. The results revealed that the students demonstrated a high rate of academic honesty, meaning that they typically grasp and follow the rules of academic honesty in their studies, which include honesty, accountability, proper credit of sources, and ethical behavior. Based on this study, it can be concluded that research competence is an important factor that is associated with academic integrity among final year undergraduate students and that the development of research methods, Academic writing, information literacy, citation and referencing skills and research supervision will promote ethical and competent research practices among undergraduates.

Based on the result and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations can be made:

1. The university management should improve the academic integrity programmes by regularly educating final year undergraduate students about plagiarism, correct citation and referencing, research ethics, fabrication, falsification of data, and other academic dishonesty.
2. University library should conduct regular information literacy and research skill programmes for final year students, focusing on effective information searching, assessing information sources, citing and referencing, paraphrasing and ethical use of information resources.
3. Academic supervisors should give more and regular supervision to the final year students during research. This will make it possible for students to get proper guidance about the methodology of research, writing of research papers, handling data and research ethics in a timely manner.
4. To make plagiarism-detection and research-supporting devices more easily accessible to students in the university. Students should be taught to use such tools correctly to address potential issues with citing and referring, prior to submission of research product.

References

Adeyeye, S. V., & Oboh, O. R. (2024). *Research competencies of postgraduate students at Lead City University, Nigeria.* In K. K. Matusiak, K. M. Bright, & D. Schachter (Eds.), *Bridging the digital divide*. De Gruyter Saur.https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110772593-019

Afolabi, O. E., Afolabi, O. E., & Aragbaye, M. O. (2022). Research competence of postgraduate students in library schools in South-West, Nigeria. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*, 7181. https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/7181/

Amzalag, M., Shapira, N., & Dolev, N. (2022). Two sides of the coin: lack of academic integrity in exams during the corona pandemic, students' and lecturers' perceptions. *Journal of Academic Ethics*, *20*(2), 243-263.

Aruğaslan, E. (2024). Examining the relationship of academic dishonesty with academic procrastination, and time management in distance education. *Heliyon,10(19), e38827.* https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e38827

Awodoyin, A. F.; Olutoki, A. E.;& Osoba, M.A. (2024). Research self-efficacy as Correlates of Research Competence of Library and Information Science Postgraduate Students' in Selected Universities in Southwest, Nigeria. *Communicate: Journal of Library and Information Science* 26(1)' https://www.cjolis.org/cjolis/article/view/72

Ayoub/Al-Salim, M. I., &Aladwan, K. (2021). The relationship between academic integrity of online university students and its effects on academic performance and learning quality. *Journal of Ethics in Entrepreneurship and Technology*, 1(1), 43–60. https://doi.org/10.1108/JEET-02-2021-0009

Brown, T., Isbel, S., Logan, A., & Etherington, J. (2020). Predictors of academic integrity in undergraduate and graduate-entry masters occupational therapy

students. *Hong Kong Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 33(2), 42–54. https://doi.org/10.1177/1569186120968035

Comon, J., &Corpuz, G. (2024). Teachers' research competence and engagement: Basis for research development plan. *American Journal of Arts and Human Science,* 3(1), 24–44. https://journals.e-palli.com/home/index.php/ajahs/article/view/2340

Cotton, D. R., Cotton, P. A., & Shipway, J. R. (2024). Chatting and cheating: Ensuring academic integrity in the era of ChatGPT. *Innovations in education and teaching international*, *61*(2), 228-239.

Dotsenko, I. O. (2022). Academic integrity in the system of quality assurance of higher education. *Pedagogical Education: Theory and Practice,* 32, 31- 42. https://doi.org/10.32626/2309-9763.2022-32-31-42

Imran, A. M., Hussien, S., &Alaraimi, A. S. (2024). Examining the utility of an extended theory of planned behavior (TPB) on academic dishonesty among undergraduates. *Journal of Academic Ethics,* 23, 363–388. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10805-024-09548-1

International Center for Academic Integrity [ICAI]. (2021).The fundamental values of academic integrity (3rd ed.). https://academicintegrity.org/images/pdfs/20019_ICAI-Fundamental-Values_R12.pdf

Jeréz, I. E. H., Laza, O. U., Martorell, L. D. L. C. M., & Hernández, L. L. (2022). Research skills of nursing graduates at the Institute of Hematology and Inmunology. *RevistaCubana de Hematologia, Inmunologia y Hemoterapia*, *38*(4), 1-16.

Jose, N., & Salim, S. (2023). Research Competence of PG Students in Assumption College (Autonomous), Changanacherry, Kerala. *International Journal For Multidisciplinary Research*, *5*(5), 1-8.

Lee, D. (2023). Witnessing academic dishonesty and student's satisfaction with learning, motivation for studying and evaluation of faculty [Master's thesis, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York].CUNY Academic Works. https://academicworks.cuny.edu/jjetds/271

McAfee, S. C., & Rodriguez, J.-M.G. (2024). The importance of clear expectations related to academic integrity in a chemistry course syllabus: What counts as cheating? *Journal of Chemical Education,* 101(1), 3–9. https://doi.org/10.1021/acs.jchemed.3c00942

Miron, J., McKenzie, A., Eaton, S. E., Stoesz, B., Thacker, E., Devereaux, L., & Rowbotham, K. (2021). Academic integrity policy analysis of publicly-funded universities in Ontario, Canada: A focus on contract cheating. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, (197), 62-75.

Oladejo, O., Alonge, A. J., & Oyewole, O. (2020). Information literacy skills and attitude towards plagiarism by students of three theological institutions in South-west, Nigeria. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*, 4047. https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/4047/

Olusanya, F. O., Buraimo, O., Oyedokun, S. O., Ogunsanya, A. O., & Ajani, F. O. (2020). Perceptions of academic staff on causes of plagiarism in project writing among undergraduate in Southwest Nigeria. *American Journal of Information Science and*

Technology, 4(4), 58–66. https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajist.20200404.11

Robinson, J. D., & Persky, A. M. (2020).Developing self-directed learners. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education, 84*(3), 847512.https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7159015/

Sozon, M., Alkharabsheh, O. H. M., Fong, P. W., Chuan, S. B., McKenzie, A., Ghimire, S. N., Parnther, C., & Margaliot, A. (2024). Cheating and plagiarism in higher education institutions (HEIs): A literature review. *F1000 Research,* 13, 1099. https://doi.org/10.12688/f1000research.147140.2

Stone, A. (2023). Student perceptions of academic integrity: A qualitative study of understanding, consequences, and impact. *Journal of Academic Ethics,* 21, 357–375. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10805-022-09461-5

Szabo, S., Larkin, C., & Sinclair, B. (2018). Examining the academic integrity of current graduate-level education students. *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, *84*(5), 26-36.

Taro Yamane (1967): Elementry sampling theory. Published by Prentice Hall, USA.

Thompson, L. W., Bagby, J. H., Sulak, T. N., Sheets, J., & Trepinski, T. M. (2017). The cultural elements of academic honesty. *Journal of International Students 2017 7*(1), 136-153.

Zhang, R. (2020). Exploring blended learning experiences through the community of inquiry framework. *Language Teaching and Technology Forum,* 24, 38–53.