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Fighting the Monster Plagiarism among Postgraduate Students in Higher Educational Institutions in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

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Plagiarism is a growing concern among postgraduate students in Nigeria, posing a significant threat to the academic integrity of educational institutions. This paper examines the various forms of plagiarism such as ghost-writing, collusion, internet plagiarism/copying and pasting, paraphrasing, self-plagiarism, patch-writing and intersexuality/mosaic plagiarism, accidental plagiarism, and lazy plagiarism/verbatim plagiarism. The paper further explores the consequences of plagiarism, for individual students, academic institutions, and the larger community as a whole. Furthermore, the paper discusses strategies and interventions that can be implemented to combat plagiarism, such strategies include; education and awareness, encouraging originality, use of plagiarism detection tools, clear academic integrity policies, support for time management and research skills, encouraging collaboration and peer review, collaboration among academic institutions, regulatory bodies, and government agencies. The paper concludes that by fostering a culture of academic integrity and originality, we can empower the next generation of scholars to contribute meaningfully to the advancement of knowledge and learning in Nigeria while upholding the principles of ethical scholarship.

Keywords: *Keywords: Plagiarism, Research Ethics, Higher Educational Institutions, Postgraduate Students, Nigeria*

Introduction

Plagiarism is a serious issue in academic writing. It occurs when someone uses the work of another person without giving proper credit. This can include copying text, ideas, or data without permission or acknowledgment. Plagiarism is the act of using someone else's work, ideas, or words without proper acknowledgment or citation, and it is considered a form of academic dishonesty. According to Bayero University Kano (2018), to plagiarise means to present the documented ideas, words or creations of another as one's own, without attribution appropriate for the medium of presentation. Covenant University Policy (2016), defines plagiarism as a situation where a student, faculty, or staff copies another person's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgment. It explains that plagiarism occurs when a faculty, staff or student misrepresents his/her own work, the work, written or otherwise, by any other person or group of persons or any institution.

Similarly, Ellis, Zucker, and Randall (2018) define plagiarism as the practice of presenting someone else's words and or ideas as your own without appropriate attribution. This is to say that plagiarism arises when a member of the staff, faculty, or student body submits someone else's work in written or any other format as their own, without appropriately acknowledging the source. This includes failing to give proper credit for the idea, data, or words taken from others' work and misrepresenting sources and research findings.

The monster plagiarism has continued to raise its ugly head among students in academic institutions. As noted by Orji and Young (2020), plagiarism has become prevalently one of the academic dishonesties in educational institutions of learning worldwide. This has been made worse with the advent of newer technologies, especially the Internet, which has put individual ideas online and freely accessible to users who are connected to the Internet. Postgraduate students, in particular, face unique challenges that may contribute to the prevalence of plagiarism. The demands of conducting original research, writing dissertations, and publishing papers can be overwhelming, leading some students to cut corners and plagiarize instead of putting in the hard work required to produce original work.

The pressures to excel in academics, publish researches, and meet deadlines can sometimes lead students to resort to unethical practices such as plagiarism. Furthermore, the lack of proper guidance and mentorship in some postgraduate programs can also contribute to plagiarism. It is not out of place to say that the low level of knowledge possessed by students on referencing, styles and citations is a factor that brings about increase in Plagiarism today. This indicates that in the absence of explicit guidance and assistance from faculty members,

students might be inclined to resort to dishonest behaviors.

Plagiarism according to Islam, Koka, Wahab and Khan (2021) occurs as a result of one of the two possible motivations: an absence of ethics or an ignorance of citation conventions among researchers/students. Similar view is shared by Oyewole and Abioye (2018) who observed that, some students plagiarise because they do not know how to integrate ideas and also how to cite those ideas appropriately in their texts. This is to say that plagiarism can arise from either a deficit in ethical standards or a limited grasp of the correct citation practices by researchers and students. It is vital for individuals to comprehend the repercussions of plagiarism and diligently acknowledge the original sources of information in all circumstances.

Plagiarism is reported by Mohamed, Mohy & Salah (2018) as the most reported type of research misconduct and academic dishonesty. Plagiarism is indeed a prevalent form of research misconduct and academic dishonesty, and unfortunately, postgraduate students are not exempt from engaging in such behavior. It is important for all students, regardless of their academic level, to understand the importance of academic integrity and to uphold ethical standards in their research and scholarly work. By acknowledging the significance of originality and properly citing sources, students can contribute to the advancement of knowledge and maintain the credibility of their academic pursuits.

Plagiarism poses a significant challenge among postgraduate students in Nigeria, undermining the academic system's integrity and diminishing scholars' hard work and originality. No doubt, plagiarism has become a pervasive issue among postgraduate students in Nigeria, posing a significant threat to academic integrity and knowledge dissemination. This unethical practice not only undermines the educational process but also hinders the development of critical thinking and original research. It is imperative that measures be put in place to address this issue and ensure that postgraduates adhere to ethical standards in their research and academic endeavors. As such, educational institutions and stakeholders must take proactive measures to combat this monster of plagiarism.

Types of plagiarism

International Plagiarism

International plagiarism refers to the act of using someone else's work, ideas, or words without proper attribution or permission on a global scale. Unintentional plagiarism according to Selemani, Chawinga and Dube (2018), is committed inadvertently due to lack of knowledge and skills to avoid it. This form of academic dishonesty is a serious offense and is considered

unethical and illegal in many countries. International plagiarism can occur in various forms, including copying and pasting text from online sources, using someone else's ideas without giving credit, or even translating and using foreign-language materials without proper citation.

Lending a voice on acts that constitutes intentional plagiarism, Islam et al. (2021), note that intentional plagiarism include: copying and pasting text from online encyclopedias; copying information from electronic sources (web information, web pages, any electronic source/database) and using it as your own; using photographs, video or audio without permission or acknowledgement; using another student's or your parents' work and claiming it as your own even with permission; quoting a source without using quotation marks-even if you do cite it; citing sources you did not use, patch writing (copying a passage and changing only an occasional word here and there); turning in the same paper for more than one class without the permission of both teachers (this is also called self-plagiarism); using your own work without properly citing it; ask someone else to write a report/dissertation/thesis for you; force others to include your name as co-researcher/co-author without contribution; fabricate references or using incorrect references etc. This implies that acts such as using your own work without proper citation, asking someone else to write a report/dissertation/thesis for you, forcing others to include your name as a co-researcher/co-author without contribution, or fabricating references, is a serious violation of academic integrity.

Intentional plagiarism according to Hillermann (2023) incorporates referring to a source yet precluding quotes for direct citation of words, just as the reference of page numbers. Intentional plagiarism occurs when a writer acknowledges the source but intentionally avoids using direct quotes or providing specific page numbers for citation. It is important to add that, one of the challenges with international plagiarism is the varying standards and expectations for academic integrity across different countries and educational systems. What may be considered acceptable in one culture may be viewed as a serious offense in another. This can create confusion and ambiguity, making it easier for individuals to engage in plagiarism.

Furthermore, the globalization of education and research has made it easier for individuals to access a wide range of sources and materials from around the world. While this has undoubtedly expanded the knowledge base and facilitated collaboration, it has also created opportunities for plagiarism to occur across borders. Hillermann (2023) observed that technological factors such as using the internet (copy and paste) for assignments contribute to plagiarism. With the click of a button, individuals can access and copy content from foreign sources without proper attribution, making it difficult for educators and

institutions to monitor and address international plagiarism effectively.

International plagiarism is a complex issue that requires a coordinated effort to address effectively. By recognizing the challenges posed by cultural differences, technological advancements, and global connectivity, we can work towards establishing a framework that promotes integrity and accountability across borders. Through proactive education, enforcement of standards, and fostering a culture of ethical conduct, we can mitigate the impact of international plagiarism and uphold the principles of academic and professional integrity on a global scale.

Unintentional plagiarism

Unintentional plagiarism refers to the act of inadvertently using someone else's work or ideas without proper citation or acknowledgment. This can occur when a person is not aware that they are plagiarizing, such as when they fail to properly attribute a source or mistakenly paraphrase someone else's work too closely. Unintentional plagiarism can occur in various forms, including copying and pasting text from the internet without citation, failing to use quotation marks when directly quoting someone else's words, or neglecting to include a proper reference for information obtained from a source.

According to Islam et al (2021), unintentional plagiarism is plagiarism arising from disregard for correct scholarly procedures. While it is important to acknowledge that plagiarism can occur unintentionally, it is crucial to understand that the seriousness of the act remains unchanged. Students are educated and held accountable for their understanding of the ethical considerations associated with conducting research. It is essential to appropriately acknowledge and cite all sources utilized in your work to prevent intentional plagiarism. This involves giving proper credit for both direct quotes and paraphrased material. Emphasizing the use of one's own language and concepts in presenting information is crucial, rather than resorting to mere replication of the original source. Employing quotation marks when using direct quotes further contributes to averting intentional plagiarism.

Unintentional plagiarism can have equally serious consequences as intentional plagiarism. It's important to always properly cite sources and give credit to the original authors to avoid any potential issues. Whether it's accidental or deliberate, plagiarism undermines the integrity of academic and professional work. It's essential to be mindful and diligent in acknowledging the work of others to maintain ethical standards and academic integrity.

Forms of Plagiarism

Plagiarism, a serious matter in terms of ethics and academia, can lead to significant repercussions. Understanding the various types of plagiarism is crucial for students, researchers, and writers to steer clear of it. In this article, we will briefly delve into the various types of plagiarism and how to recognize and avoid them.

1. **Ghost-writing plagiarism:** This refers to the act of someone hiring a writer to create content on their behalf, but then presenting that content as their own original work without giving credit to the actual writer. Singh and Remenyi (2016) note that detection of ghost-written work can only be exposed by the evaluators personally determining the student's knowledge and ability to write. This type of plagiarism is common in academic settings, where students may hire someone to write their papers or essays for them. It is also prevalent in the professional world, where individuals may hire ghostwriters to create speeches, articles, or books for them. In both cases, if the true authorship of the work is not acknowledged, it constitutes plagiarism.
2. **Collusion:** Collusion in plagiarism refers to the act of working together with others to produce work that is then presented as original and individual. Collusion in research is a serious ethical violation that undermines the integrity of scientific inquiry. McGowan (2016) posits that, in higher education institutions, collusion is defined as an unauthorized collaboration or unauthorized assistance. It involves illegal collaboration among researchers to fabricate data, plagiarize work, or manipulate results for personal gain. This can involve sharing ideas, copying each other's work, or deliberately not acknowledging the contributions of others. Collusion undermines the principles of academic integrity and honesty, and it is considered a form of cheating. Individuals need to produce their own work and give credit to others for their ideas and contributions.
3. **Internet Plagiarism/Copying and Pasting Plagiarism:** The advancement in technology has contributed significantly to academic misconduct among researchers. This type of plagiarism is the most obvious, involving the direct copying and pasting of content from a source without proper attribution. Many scholars (Orji and Young 2020; Hafsa, 2021; Islam, et al. 2021; Hillermann, 2023) have acknowledged the alarming rate of internet plagiarism in recent times. Copy and paste can occur in academic papers, online articles, and other written works. For instance, a student might copy entire paragraphs from a website into their essay without acknowledging the original source. Plagiarism through copying and pasting is a grave violation of academic ethics. Properly attributing the original source and employing quotation marks when directly citing someone else's work are essential. Furthermore, it is imperative to rearticulate and condense the information using one's own language to evade plagiarism.
4. **Paraphrasing Plagiarism:** Paraphrasing Plagiarism involves rephrasing someone else's work or ideas in your own words without giving proper credit to the original source. This form of plagiarism is committed by a researcher who is well-informed about what constitutes plagiarism. In this case, small pieces of research work from different sources are copied to make a new whole document. This is considered unethical and can result in serious consequences, including academic penalties and legal action. It is observed by Gordon, Simmons and Wynn (2017) that some researchers cleverly paraphrase sentences from various authors, all in a bid to escape plagiarism but this is unethical. While paraphrasing is a common writing technique, it becomes unethical when the original author is not acknowledged. For example, a writer might rephrase a passage from a book or article and present it as their own work.
5. **Self-Plagiarism:** Self-plagiarism refers to the act of reusing one's own previously published or submitted work in a new context without proper citation or acknowledgment. According to Orluwene and Magnus-Arewa (2020), self-plagiarism occurs when an individual presents their own previously published work as new in a subsequent publication. This can include duplicating previous papers or misrepresenting data accumulation. It is important for researchers and academics to be aware of this type of academic misconduct and to ensure that their work is original and properly cited. Self-plagiarism happens when a person submits their own work for multiple purposes without proper citation. This can involve submitting the same paper to different classes or journals without disclosing its previous publication. Authors must be open about reusing their work to avoid self-plagiarism.
6. **Patch-writing and intersexuality / Mosaic Plagiarism:** Mosaic plagiarism refers to an act of academic dishonesty in which an individual integrates content from multiple sources to produce a new work without appropriate acknowledgment. This may entail extracting fragments from diverse sources and merging them to make it seem like original work. Mosaic plagiarism, also called patch writing, involves using phrases or sentences from a source and integrating them into one's own writing without proper citation. This can be a subtle form of

plagiarism, as the writer may make slight changes to the source's words.

7. Accidental Plagiarism: Accidental plagiarism occurs when a person unknowingly uses someone else's work and presents it as their own. Accidental plagiarism is committed mostly by people who lack the prerequisite knowledge on the practice of plagiarism, thus committing plagiarism ignorantly. This can happen due to various reasons such as forgetfulness, lack of proper citation, or confusion over sources. It is important to be mindful of the sources we use and give proper credit to the original creators to avoid accidental plagiarism. Accidental plagiarism occurs when a person unintentionally fails to cite sources or improperly paraphrases content due to a lack of understanding of academic integrity. This can happen when a writer forgets to include quotation marks around a direct quote or neglects to include a citation for a specific idea.

8. Lazy Plagiarism/Verbatim Plagiarism: This is a type of plagiarism whereby one simply copy the write-up of another student or researcher verbatim, that is, makes little or no changes to the content of the work except their names. Lazy/Verbatim plagiarism is the act of directly copying someone else's work word for word without giving proper credit or citation. This type of plagiarism is straightforward and easily detectable, as it involves lifting entire sentences or paragraphs without any attempt to rephrase or attribute the original author. This is considered a serious ethical and legal issue in academic and professional settings.

Understanding the various types of plagiarism is essential for maintaining academic integrity and ethical writing practices. By comprehending these different forms and learning how to avoid them, writers can guarantee that their work is original, properly attributed, and free from ethical violations. This knowledge is crucial for upholding high standards of academic honesty and ensuring the credibility of one's work.

Plagiarism in Higher institutions

Plagiarism in higher institutions is indeed a widespread issue that has been observed in educational settings worldwide. It is a serious concern as it undermines the principles of academic integrity and honesty. Many studies (Orji & Young, 2020; Islam, et al. 2021; Hafsa, 2021; Hillermann, 2023) have shown that Plagiarism is indeed a significant problem that has far-reaching consequences for both individuals and organizations globally. Institutions have a responsibility to address and combat plagiarism by implementing strict policies and

guidelines. Institutions are constantly working to address this problem through various measures such as educating students on proper citation and referencing, using plagiarism detection tools, and promoting a culture of honesty and originality are crucial steps in preventing plagiarism. Despite these efforts, it remains a challenge for educators and administrators to combat plagiarism effectively.

Despite these efforts, it is sad to note, advancements in technology have made it easier for students to plagiarize by providing access to a vast amount of information online (Jereb, Perc, Lamnlein, Jerebic, Urh, Podbregar & Sprajc, 2018; Matsebatlela and Kuhudzai 2018; Peytcheva-Forsyth, Aleksleva, & Yovkova, 2018; Hasan & Khan 2019). The advent of technology has undoubtedly facilitated easier access to an extensive pool of online information, thereby heightening the necessity for institutions to invest in plagiarism detection tools and software to safeguard the authenticity and proper attribution of academic work. This makes it even more important for institutions to invest in plagiarism detection tools and software to ensure that academic works are original and properly cited.

Plagiarism not only undermines the value of education but also hinders the development of critical thinking and research skills. Higher education institutions need to take a proactive approach in addressing plagiarism and promoting a culture of academic honesty and integrity. By doing so, we can uphold the true value of education and ensure that students are equipped with the necessary skills to succeed in their academic and professional endeavors.

Educational establishments bear the responsibility to tackle and confront instances of plagiarism by enacting stringent policies and protocols. Equally significant in the plagiarism prevention effort is the education of students regarding the significance of upholding academic honesty, provision of accessible resources for accurate citation and referencing, and fostering an atmosphere that celebrates integrity and creativity.

Consequences of Plagiarism

Plagiarism, the act of using someone else's work without proper attribution, has serious consequences in both academic and professional settings. In academic institutions, plagiarism can result in severe penalties, including failing grades, suspension, expulsion or even revocation of professional credentials. In the professional world, the repercussions can be equally damaging, leading to loss of credibility, legal action, and damage to one's reputation. One of the most significant consequences of plagiarism is the erosion of trust. When individuals or organizations are found to have plagiarized, it undermines their integrity and reliability. Orji and Young

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(2020), notes that educational institutions specifically detest any plagiarist act. Once a lecturer or a student is involved or accused of plagiarism and is confirmed, the academic environment will always regard whoever is involved with suspicion and as a cheat, thereby denting the reputation of the culprits.

This can have far-reaching effects, impacting relationships with colleagues, clients, and the public. Trust is a fundamental component of any successful endeavor, and plagiarism can irreparably damage it. Similarly, plagiarism, whether committed by an individual or an organization, carries significant personal and professional consequences that can have lasting effects. Once an individual or entity has been branded as a plagiarist, it becomes a challenging task to rebuild trust and credibility within their respective fields. This tarnished reputation can severely impact future career prospects, collaborative opportunities, and potential partnerships. The damage to one's professional reputation can hinder career advancement and limit opportunities for employment or academic pursuits.

On the other hand, plagiarism deprives students of the opportunity to develop critical thinking, research, and writing skills that are essential for their future careers. Plagiarism not only obstructs students' academic development but also undermines their capacity to think critically, engage in research, and cultivate proficient writing skills. These skills are vital for their prospective careers and professional achievement. Hence, educators should prioritize emphasizing the significance of originality and ethical writing methods to aid students in excelling in their academic and professional pursuits.

The consequence of plagiarism on academic institutions is significant and far-reaching. When an academic institution is found guilty of allowing or overlooking plagiarism, it faces permanent loss of credibility. This loss of credibility not only affects the institution itself but also has broader implications for education as a whole. The effects of plagiarism extend beyond the individuals who commit the offense, impacting the institution's reputation and standing within the academic community. Instances of students' plagiarism can tarnish the institution's reputation, leading to negative publicity and damaging its standing in the eyes of society. This, in turn, can have a detrimental effect on public opinion of higher education in general.

A notable example of the repercussions of unethical practices within academic institutions can be seen in the case of Enron University and Arthur Andersen University. These institutions faced severe criticism for their failure to uphold ethical standards and for producing business leaders who engaged in unethical conduct (Sibomana, Ndayambaje & Uwanbayinema 2018). Such instances serve as a stark reminder of the damaging consequences of plagiarism and ethical misconduct

within academic settings. The impact of plagiarism on academic institutions is profound and should not be underestimated. Institutions must uphold the highest standards of academic integrity and ethical conduct to maintain their credibility and standing within the educational landscape.

The societal consequences of plagiarism are equally far-reaching and detrimental, particularly in the realm of education and professional development. When individuals engage in plagiarism, they compromise their own learning and skill development, ultimately leading to a workforce that is ill-equipped to meet the demands of society. This has been highlighted by Yadav, Rawal and Baxi, (2016), who emphasize that the practice of plagiarism not only hinders individual growth but also impacts the scientific community as a whole. That is to say that the implications of plagiarism extend beyond the individual, affecting the organizations and institutions to which these individuals belong. Graduates who have resorted to plagiarism in their academic pursuits often lack the necessary expertise and competence to contribute meaningfully to their respective fields. As a result, when these individuals enter the workforce, they are ill-prepared to provide high-quality service, posing a threat to the organizations that employ them.

The discovery of plagiarism within an organization not only damages its integrity and reputation but also has far-reaching consequences. When a staff member is found guilty of plagiarizing work, it reflects poorly on the entire organization, undermining trust and credibility. This can lead to damaged relationships with stakeholders and a negative impact on the organization's standing within the broader community. Therefore, it is essential for organizations to have strict policies in place to prevent and address plagiarism in order to uphold their reputation and trustworthiness.

In addition, plagiarism is a serious issue that carries significant legal consequences. When individuals engage in plagiarism, they risk infringing on copyright laws, which can result in expensive legal disputes and financial penalties. This is particularly relevant in academic environments, where stringent policies and procedures are in place to address instances of plagiarism. In such settings, students and faculty members who are found to have committed plagiarism may face legal action from the rightful authors. It is crucial for individuals to understand the legal implications of plagiarism and to prioritize ethical and original work to avoid potential legal repercussions.

From analysis above, it can be seen that the consequences of plagiarism are severe and far-reaching. From academic penalties to legal ramifications and damage to one's reputation, the impact of plagiarism can be devastating. Individuals and organizations must understand the gravity of plagiarism and take proactive measures to avoid it at all costs. Maintaining integrity and

ethical conduct is crucial for success in both academic and professional pursuits.

Strategies for Combating the Monster Plagiarism among Postgraduate Students in Nigeria

Plagiarism is a serious issue that has been on the rise among postgraduate students in Nigeria. It does not only undermine the integrity of academic research but also hinders the development of critical thinking and originality. To combat this monster plagiarism, it is crucial to implement effective strategies that address the root causes and provide support for students to uphold academic honesty. Here are some strategies that could be implemented:

1. **Education and Awareness:** One of the most effective ways to combat plagiarism is through education and awareness. Postgraduate students should be educated about what constitutes plagiarism and the consequences of engaging in such unethical practices. Several scholars agree on the workability of education and awareness on best practices in scholarly writing and research data management (Doghonadze, Pipia & Parjianadze, 2018; Shiva, 2019; Idiata, Osaghae, & Edoimioya 2019; Ndebele, 2020, Akwang & Chimah, 2021). Educating students on scholarly writing is crucial for reducing plagiarism in academic settings. By teaching students the proper techniques for citing sources, paraphrasing, and structuring their work, they can develop a deeper understanding of academic integrity. Additionally, providing guidance on how to conduct thorough research and critically analyze information will empower students to produce original work. Workshops, seminars, and training sessions can be organized to provide students with the necessary information and skills to avoid plagiarism.
2. **Encouraging Originality:** In the realm of postgraduate education, it is imperative to nurture the development of students' own ideas and thoughts. This is a pivotal aspect of academic growth and intellectual maturation. Faculty members play a crucial role in this process by offering guidance and support to help students cultivate their critical thinking and research skills. Encouraging students to think independently and develop their own unique perspectives is essential. By fostering a culture of originality, postgraduate students are less likely to resort to plagiarism as a shortcut. Instead, they are empowered to engage in rigorous exploration and analysis of their chosen fields, contributing to the advancement of knowledge and understanding. Faculty members should create an environment that values creativity

and intellectual curiosity. This can be achieved through open discussions, challenging assignments, and opportunities for independent research. By providing constructive feedback and mentorship, educators can inspire students to push the boundaries of existing knowledge and embark on innovative scholarly pursuits. Moreover, it is crucial to instill in students a deep appreciation for academic integrity. Emphasizing the importance of citing sources, respecting intellectual property, and upholding ethical standards in research is fundamental. By fostering a strong sense of ethical responsibility, postgraduate students are better equipped to navigate the complexities of academic work with integrity and professionalism.

3. **Use of Plagiarism Detection Tools:** Institutions should implement robust plagiarism detection mechanisms to identify and address instances of academic dishonesty. Investing in state-of-the-art plagiarism detection software can serve as a deterrent and provide educators with the necessary tools to effectively combat this issue. (Isiegbeyanose, Ifijeh, Segun-Adeniran, Esse, Owolabi & Aregbesola 2018; Sibomana, et al. 2018; Rama, 2019; Adekannbi & Megwaonye, 2020; Ndebele, 2020). Additionally, promoting a culture of originality and independent thinking through research mentorship and guidance can help nurture a generation of scholars committed to producing authentic and innovative work. Universities and academic institutions should invest in plagiarism detection tools to identify and deter plagiarism. These tools can help faculty members and students to check for any instances of plagiarism in research papers, theses, and dissertations.
4. **Clear Academic Integrity Policies:** In addition to preventive measures, there is a need for strict disciplinary actions against those found guilty of plagiarism. Hillermann (2023) notes that not understanding the policy may contribute to widespread ignorance of what behaviours cause plagiarism. Clear policies and procedures for handling cases of academic dishonesty should be established, ensuring that offenders are held accountable for their actions. By enforcing consequences for plagiarism, institutions can send a strong message that unethical behavior will not be tolerated within the academic community. It is essential for universities to have clear and comprehensive academic integrity policies in place. These policies should outline the expectations for academic honesty and the consequences of plagiarism. By clearly communicating the repercussions of plagiarism, students are more likely to adhere to ethical standards.

5. Support for Time Management and Research Skills:

Postgraduate students often resort to plagiarism due to time constraints and lack of research skills. Hillermann, 2023 laments that it is common knowledge that students may lack time management skills or make inefficient plans for the time and effort needed for research-based writing, leading them to believe they have no other option except to plagiarise. Universities should provide support services such as time management workshops, research methodology courses, and access to academic resources to help students manage their workload effectively. Universities play a crucial role in supporting students to manage their workload effectively. Providing services such as time management workshops, research methodology courses, and access to academic resources can greatly benefit students in their academic journey. These support services can help students develop essential skills and knowledge to handle their workload more efficiently, ultimately leading to their academic success.

6. Encouraging Collaboration and Peer Review:

Collaboration and peer review can be effective strategies for preventing plagiarism. Collaboration and peer review are valuable tools for ensuring originality and integrity in academic and professional work (Khumalo& Reddy 2021). By working together and seeking feedback from peers, individuals can help each other identify and address potential instances of plagiarism. This collaborative approach not only promotes a culture of accountability and ethical behavior, but also fosters a supportive environment for learning and growth. Through open communication and constructive criticism, individuals can collectively strive to maintain high standards of academic and professional integrity. By encouraging students to work together on projects and engage in peer review processes, they are more likely to produce original work and hold each other accountable for academic integrity.

7. Collaboration among academic institutions, regulatory bodies, and government agencies:

Collaboration among academic institutions, regulatory bodies, and government agencies is crucial in the fight against plagiarism. By working together, these entities can establish clear guidelines and policies to prevent and address plagiarism effectively. This collaboration can also involve sharing resources and best practices to educate students and researchers about the importance of academic integrity. Additionally, by collaborating, these entities can develop and implement robust mechanisms for detecting and investigating cases of plagiarism, ultimately upholding the standards of academic honesty and integrity.

Conclusion

Fighting the monster of plagiarism among postgraduate students in Nigeria requires a multifaceted approach that encompasses education, detection, discipline, and collaboration. By fostering a culture of academic integrity and originality, we can empower the next generation of scholars to contribute meaningfully to their respective fields and uphold the principles of ethical scholarship. It is only through collective efforts and unwavering commitment that we can effectively combat this epidemic and ensure the advancement of knowledge and learning in Nigeria. This commitment to academic integrity will not only benefit the current generation of scholars, but also lay a strong foundation for the future of education and research in our country. It is imperative that we continue to prioritize and promote ethical scholarship to ensure a bright and prosperous future for Nigeria.

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