

PLAGIARISM IN GRADUATE EDUCATION IN INDONESIA: A THREAT TO ACADEMIC QUALITY AND REPUTATION

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Abstract

This study examines the issue of plagiarism within Indonesia's graduate education system, highlighting its impact on academic integrity and the overall quality of education. Plagiarism, defined as the use of others' work without proper attribution, is increasingly common due to advances in technology and widespread access to information. This paper investigates the factors contributing to plagiarism among graduate students, including individual motivations, lack of understanding about proper citation, and external pressures such as lenient institutional policies and limited supervision. The study uses a qualitative literature review, incorporating findings from recent academic research and relevant legal regulations, to analyze these contributing factors and propose strategies for improvement. Key recommendations include strengthening institutional policies, providing comprehensive training on citation practices, and integrating anti-plagiarism software to ensure academic honesty. The findings underscore the need for a sustained commitment to fostering a culture of integrity and originality within Indonesian graduate programs. By addressing these issues, educational institutions can enhance student competence and maintain the credibility of Indonesian higher education in an increasingly globalized academic environment.

Keywords: Plagiarism, Academic Integrity, Higher Education, Indonesia, Graduate Students

I. Introduction

Graduate education in Indonesia plays a crucial role in developing high-quality human resources capable of competing globally. However, advances in technology and widespread access to information have introduced significant challenges, particularly the increasing prevalence of plagiarism in academic settings. Plagiarism, defined as the act of using or copying another's work without proper attribution, threatens the quality and integrity of higher education in Indonesia (Adiningrum, 2015).

The rise of digital technology has made academic materials more accessible while simultaneously enabling unethical practices such as plagiarism. Research indicates that plagiarism is not merely an issue of academic dishonesty but also a reflection of broader systemic problems, including insufficient awareness of academic integrity, inadequate enforcement of plagiarism policies, and cultural attitudes toward originality in scholarly work (Akbar & Picard, 2019). Furthermore, the pressure to publish research in highly competitive academic environments has contributed to the normalization of unethical practices among both students and faculty member (Aziz, Silfiani, & Mustafa, 2020).

In an era of rapid information access and technological progress, plagiarism has become a serious issue that higher education institutions must address to ensure that graduates can compete on a global scale. At the graduate level, where students are expected to develop expertise in their fields, plagiarism hinders intellectual growth and meaningful research production. Plagiarism not only affects individual students but also tarnishes the reputation of Indonesian higher education, endangering the quality of graduates and the scientific innovations produced at the graduate level. Additionally, the impact of plagiarism extends beyond academia, potentially affecting employment opportunities and the credibility of Indonesian scholars in the global research community (Maimunah, 2018).

Several studies have investigated the causes of plagiarism among graduate students in Indonesia. One notable finding is that plagiarism is not limited to students but is also prevalent among faculty members, indicating that it has become a systemic issue affecting the entire academic ecosystem (Surjandy, 2018). The lack of comprehensive plagiarism education, limited institutional oversight, and insufficient use of plagiarism detection tools contribute to the persistence of this problem (Maimunah, 2018).

Another critical aspect of plagiarism is the influence of cultural and linguistic factors. Studies suggest that non-native English speakers, including many Indonesian graduate students, struggle with paraphrasing and proper citation due to limited proficiency in academic writing, leading to unintentional plagiarism (Patak & Tahir, 2020). Moreover, societal attitudes toward academic integrity vary, and in some cases, copying is not always perceived as a serious offense but rather as a means of knowledge acquisition (Akbar, 2018).

Technological advancements have played a dual role in both facilitating and preventing plagiarism. While the internet provides instant access to a vast array of academic materials, making it easier for students to copy text without proper citation, the development of plagiarism detection software such as Turnitin and Grammarly has helped institutions monitor and discourage plagiarism (Patak & Tahir, 2020). However, the effectiveness of these tools depends on their proper implementation and the willingness of faculty members to enforce academic integrity policies (Wijaya & Gruber, 2018).

Indonesian higher education institutions must take concrete steps to address plagiarism to maintain academic quality and uphold their reputation. Institutions should implement stricter policies, provide extensive plagiarism education, and integrate technological solutions such as plagiarism detection software (Mulyanto & Wibawa, 2024). Furthermore, fostering a culture of academic honesty and integrity should be prioritized to encourage ethical research practices among students and faculty alike.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the impact of plagiarism on graduate education in Indonesia, particularly concerning academic integrity and the quality of graduates. This study will also discuss necessary measures to prevent plagiarism and the importance of fostering an academic culture that upholds ethical standards. By understanding the impact of plagiarism, it is hoped that Indonesia's academic community can create a dignified graduate education environment free from plagiarism, ensuring that Indonesian graduates contribute meaningfully to the global knowledge economy.

II. Research Methods

This study employs a qualitative research design, specifically a literature review methodology. The review synthesizes findings from existing research on plagiarism and academic integrity, with a focus on identifying best practices for deterring and addressing plagiarism in the context of higher education. The literature highlights the growing threat of contract cheating, or ghostwriting, which is particularly challenging to detect due to its undetectable nature and the limitations of current plagiarism detection software (Ali & Alhassan, 2020).

In this case, the study examines plagiarism in Indonesian graduate education by reviewing academic articles, institutional reports, and legislative documents, including the Indonesian Copyright Law and Ministry of Education guidelines on academic integrity.

According to the Six Steps To Success, (3rd Edition), a rigorous literature review follows a structured approach involving problem formulation, data collection, data evaluation, analysis, and interpretation (Alzahrani, 2020). This study adheres to these principles by systematically gathering data from credible sources that focus on both individual and systemic factors influencing academic integrity. The selection criteria for sources were guided by their relevance, credibility, and contribution to the discourse on plagiarism and academic honesty.

The data analysis technique follows thematic analysis, as recommended by (Braun & Clarke, 2006), to categorize and interpret findings. The identified themes include individual awareness, institutional oversight, and the impact of technology on plagiarism prevention.

This approach ensures that the research synthesizes a broad spectrum of perspectives while maintaining analytical rigor.

Furthermore, the study evaluates anti-plagiarism strategies by assessing existing literature on effective interventions. Different preventive measures are categorized into policy enforcement, educational initiatives, and technological interventions (Jamieson & Howard, 2019). The effectiveness of these strategies is analyzed through a comparative review of their implementation and impact across various academic institutions.

By integrating these methodological approaches and drawing on expert perspectives, this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of plagiarism in Indonesian higher education. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of actionable recommendations that enhance academic integrity and mitigate plagiarism among graduate students.

III. Result and Discussion

Definition of Plagiarism

According to the online version of the KBBI (the Indonesian Dictionary), plagiarism is defined as the act of taking another person's ideas or work and claiming it as one's own. Plagiarism involves adopting or copying someone else's work or ideas without proper attribution, whether done intentionally or unintentionally, which directly violates copyright as governed by Law Number 28 of 2014 (Surjandy, 2018). Thus, plagiarism can be considered a form of copyright infringement. The author of a scientific work automatically holds the copyright over their creation, which is protected by law. Violating this copyright may result in criminal charges or fines.

According to Ministry of Education Regulation Number 17 of 2010, plagiarism is the act of obtaining or attempting to obtain recognition or academic credit for a scientific work by copying parts or the entirety of someone else's copyrighted work and/or scientific work, whether intentionally or unintentionally. Individuals or groups who commit plagiarism are referred to as plagiarists. The regulation also outlines the scope of plagiarism as follows: a. Quoting words, terms, or sentences from a source without clearly citing the source; b. Randomly quoting words, terms, or sentences from a source without clearly citing the source; c. Using information sources, data, or references without clearly attributing the source; d. Independently formulating words or sentences based on a source without clearly citing it; e. Claiming another person's work or written creation as one's own without clearly citing the original source.

Types of Plagiarism

Plagiarism can be divided into several types, including idea plagiarism, word-for-word plagiarism, source plagiarism, and authorship plagiarism, each varying in severity. Among these, authorship plagiarism is considered the most serious, as it involves claiming ownership of another person's work (Smith, 2016). According to (Purbowati, 2022), forms of plagiarism include:

Partial Plagiarism

This type occurs when a person takes parts of another's work without proper attribution.

Complete Plagiarism

Complete plagiarism involves fully copying another's work and claiming it as one's own.

Self-Plagiarism

Self-plagiarism happens when a person reuses their own previous work in a new project without citing the original source.

Cross-Language Plagiarism

This occurs when a quotation from a foreign-language source is translated into another language (e.g., Indonesian) without citing the original source.

The Anti-Plagiarism Guidelines from UGM (Istiana & Purwoko, 2016) further define the scope of plagiarism as follows:

Quoting words or phrases without quotation marks or clear attribution,

Using another person's ideas without citing the source,

Using data from another party without proper attribution,

Paraphrasing without citing the source,

Claiming another person's written work as one's own,

Recognizing someone else's work as if it were personally created.

These definitions emphasize the diverse forms that plagiarism can take and the necessity of proper citation to maintain academic integrity.

Causes of Plagiarism

Several factors that lead to plagiarism can be grouped into individual factors, external factors, and institutional factors. Individual factors include a lack of understanding of the topic and poor ethical standards, while external factors encompass technological advancements and wide access to information. Institutional factors are related to weak educational policies and a lack of anti-plagiarism socialization (Salmaa, 2023). Educational institutions must have a strict monitoring system to reduce plagiarism, provide clear guidelines, and encourage students to commit to original research and ethical knowledge development (Engkizar, 2018).

Salmaa identifies at least eight factors contributing to the prevalence of plagiarism. First, the lack of socialization regarding plagiarism is a primary cause of its occurrence. As mentioned earlier, plagiarism is an act of theft or considered a legal violation, so it must be prevented from an early stage. Prevention of plagiarism can be achieved by socializing among students about its forms, impacts, and how to avoid it.

A lack of understanding of the research topic is the next factor leading to plagiarism. Authors must be able to master the research topic well to avoid plagiarism. Another factor that causes plagiarism is an overload of work hours or a lack of deadlines, along with high demands from educational institutions. The numerous assignments received by students with close deadlines often hinder the opportunity to explore new ideas. As a result, plagiarism occurs when students consciously or unconsciously resort to it to complete their assignments on time.

It cannot be denied that the lack of supervision creates a gap for plagiarism among students or academics. Therefore, higher education institutions need to have a strict originality monitoring system for works. Plagiarism is becoming easier due to the advancements in technology and the internet. Writers have easy access to the research works of others through the internet and may copy sentences or ideas from those works. A common sense of laziness can lead a student to be reluctant to seek references that are rich in information, thus resulting in their work being free from plagiarism. Lastly, poor ethics and morals are also factors contributing to the occurrence of plagiarism.

How to Avoid Plagiarism

According to the UNISA anti-plagiarism guide (UNISA, 2016), plagiarism can essentially be avoided through several methods, such as:

Quoting

The process of quoting words or sentences must be accompanied by quotation marks to indicate that the statement comes from another source, and the source must be clearly referenced. Furthermore, the reference sources used in the quotes should be listed clearly in the bibliography according to the citation guidelines of each institution.

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is the process of rewriting the ideas of the author or others into sentences with a new style of language without the intention of changing the original author's ideas. Paraphrased sentences still need to include the reference source of the ideas or concepts.

Using Anti-Plagiarism Software

Anti-plagiarism software is now available as web-based tools that help authors check the level of plagiarism in their work.

According to Comparative Media Studies, there are five basic rules when using information in professional and academic writing:

When using source texts, the author must quote accurately, provide quotation marks, and cite the source.

If the author uses ideas or information that is not commonly known, the author must mention the source.

If the work being referenced is not written by the author, the author must include the source.

We do not paraphrase unless specifically requested by the professor. If in doubt, the author can write the source, thereby strengthening the reader's trust in the author's honesty.

The Impact of Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a highly detrimental act in the educational world, especially at the master's level. In an academic context, plagiarism is the use or copying of someone else's work without proper attribution, which not only harms the individual who is the victim but also undermines the integrity of higher education. The most significant impact of plagiarism on master's education in Indonesia is the decline in the quality and integrity of student research, which should produce competent and expert researchers in their fields. When plagiarism occurs, the research loses its academic value and fails to make a meaningful contribution to the advancement of knowledge (Adiningrum, 2015).

Plagiarism also creates an unhealthy and unfair academic environment. Honest students feel disadvantaged when they see their peers who engage in dishonest behavior receive undue recognition or rewards, which can ultimately affect the academic atmosphere and hinder the development of master's education in Indonesia. Additionally, plagiarism impacts the overall image of higher education; the public may doubt the quality and competence of graduates if plagiarism is known to occur frequently, potentially damaging public trust in educational institutions (Akbar & Picard, 2019).

Research shows that technology facilitates plagiarism through quick access to online information. Without strict guidelines and supervision, the level of plagiarism among students continues to rise. This negatively affects the development of analytical skills and independent research capabilities, which are crucial in professional careers (Rawa et al., 2021; Palembang & Sumual, 2021). In the long run, students who frequently engage in plagiarism lose confidence in their ability to produce quality academic work independently, leading to dependence on copy-paste methods that may trigger repeated instances of plagiarism in the future (Febriana, 2022).

In addition to academic consequences, plagiarism also carries legal ramifications. Under Law No. 28 of 2014 concerning Copyright and the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 17 of 2010, copyright violations due to plagiarism can result in criminal penalties or fines, as well as various academic sanctions ranging from warnings to diploma revocation. By enforcing an academic culture that upholds integrity, educational institutions can maintain public trust in the quality of graduates and their research outcomes while minimizing the risk of plagiarism that damages academic reputations (Harwani, Hesti, & Hidayat, 2018).

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity plays a crucial role in preventing plagiarism, as the principles of honesty and respect for the work of others form the foundational basis for creating an ethical and credible academic environment" (Macfarlane et al., 2014). Academic integrity reflects attitudes rooted in moral values and norms prevalent in the academic community, encompassing aspects of truth, fairness, and honesty. These values, articulated in six main dimensions—honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and humility—are essential for building a sustainable and ethical academic culture (Harwani, Hesti, & Hidayat, 2018).

In this context, various factors can influence the extent to which an individual maintains academic integrity, including age, gender, education, and external factors such as strict school policies and technological advancements that can either encourage or

discourage academic misconduct (Jiang et al., 2013). In their writing mention several factors that influence a person's academic integrity:

Age

Older students or learners tend to exhibit greater maturity and are less likely to commit academic errors such as plagiarism. Generally, the enthusiasm of older students reflects a higher commitment to the learning process compared to younger students.

Gender

Previous research indicates that age also affects academic integrity. It has been noted that male students are more likely to engage in plagiarism than female students. However, both male and female students have similar potential for committing plagiarism.

Education

Educational level appears to influence the amount of plagiarism that occurs among students. The higher the educational level, the lower the incidence of plagiarism, suggesting a greater maturity among students and a strong commitment from graduate students to build their future careers.

School Policies

Strict school rules encourage active participation from students in maintaining academic integrity. Additionally, strict regulations established by educational institutions can reduce other negative behaviors among students. Academic integrity is not only the responsibility of students; teachers and staff also play an equal role in upholding academic integrity within the educational environment.

Sense of Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is key to preventing academic errors or violations. Students need to be trained and accustomed to building habits that uphold their academic integrity.

Moral and Personal Beliefs

Violations of academic integrity often occur because students perceive these actions as minor infractions. This self-justifying attitude can unconsciously become a habit if not addressed. Students must commit to acknowledging violations of academic integrity, even at a low level.

Culture

Cultural or language differences often serve as a primary cause of plagiarism among students in international classes. For instance, in the UK, students from countries where English is not the primary language in their social lives may have a tendency to plagiarize.

Technology

Current technological advancements provide many benefits to users, including students, in conducting research and seeking references for their writing. However, technological progress also increases the possibility of academic violations such as plagiarism. Technology has also created various platforms that facilitate plagiarism. Yet, it has also led to the emergence of web-based platforms aimed at preventing or detecting plagiarism.

Pressure

It cannot be denied that the learning environment significantly influences students in building their academic culture. When in an environment that tolerates violations of academic integrity, a student is likely to be swayed by the situation, especially when facing pressures from overwhelming assignments with tight deadlines or other demands from their surroundings.

Research by Aji (2018) provides deep insights into the patterns of plagiarism among master's students at FISIP Unair. From a questionnaire, 40% of respondents indicated that they did not engage in direct plagiarism, meaning they did not copy or use the works of others explicitly without permission or attribution. This shows an ethical awareness among

students to respect copyright. However, the finding that 71.43% of students do not commit total plagiarism suggests a varied understanding of what constitutes "partial" plagiarism or more subtle forms, such as using some ideas or writing structures without giving full credit.

Interestingly, 95.71% of respondents admitted to having committed unintentional plagiarism, primarily by failing to include sources in their bibliography. This percentage reflects a lack of knowledge or attention to proper citation practices and reference preparation, possibly due to limited understanding of citation techniques or administrative oversight. These findings emphasize the importance of education about plagiarism and proper academic writing methods to help students avoid errors that could be seen as violations of academic ethics, even if they occur unintentionally.

According to Bretag (2016), educational institutions play a significant role in instilling awareness about academic integrity through policies that educate and restrict practices such as plagiarism. Research shows that age and maturity, for example, are linked to a lower tendency to commit plagiarism, while pressures from the learning environment can make an individual more susceptible to academic integrity violations. Not only students, but also educators and academic staff must have a strong commitment to maintaining academic honesty so that integrity values are preserved in the educational environment (Macfarlane et al., 2014). By applying these principles, the academic environment can become a place that promotes appreciation for originality and high-quality intellectual contributions.

IV. Conclusion

Plagiarism in Indonesian graduate education presents a significant challenge to maintaining academic quality and upholding institutional integrity. This study identifies that various factor, such as inadequate understanding of proper citation, insufficient institutional enforcement, and the accessibility of digital resources, contribute to the prevalence of plagiarism among graduate students. Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach. Institutions must implement stringent academic integrity policies, educate students on ethical research practices, and utilize advanced plagiarism detection tools to safeguard originality. Fostering a strong academic culture that values honesty, transparency, and respect for intellectual property is essential to reducing plagiarism rates. Such an environment not only enhances the credibility of academic institutions but also ensures that graduate students develop genuine research skills that are critical for their professional growth and the advancement of knowledge. By prioritizing academic integrity, Indonesian higher education can cultivate competent graduates and reinforce its reputation in the global academic community.

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