Legal Responsibilities of Educational Institutions in Cases of Plagiarism within College Environment

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the legal responsibilities of colleges in managing plagiarism cases within their contexts. The primary aim is to evaluate the effectiveness of internal regulatory frameworks related to plagiarism, the role of detection technology, the level of awareness within the academic community, case management practices, and the potential legal consequences. The research employs a library research methodology with a descriptive-analytical framework, involving an extensive review of literature and analysis of institutional policies. The findings reveal that while many colleges have established internal regulations to address plagiarism, there are significant deficiencies in their implementation, particularly concerning policy dissemination and enforcement of sanctions. Plagiarism detection technologies, such as Turnitin, are crucial for identifying instances of academic misconduct; however, their effectiveness depends on the proper understanding and application by both faculty and students. The study also highlights variations in the understanding of plagiarism among students and faculty, emphasizing the need for more comprehensive and nuanced educational programs.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Plagiarism in college environments is a serious issue that not only tarnishes the reputation of the individuals involved but also threatens the overall academic integrity. Colleges, as institutions of higher learning, bear the responsibility of upholding and enforcing high scholarly standards. In this context, plagiarism is not only considered an ethical breach but also a legal violation that can have

significant consequences for both individuals and institutions(Vasiljevienė & Jurčiukonytė, 2015). Therefore, it is crucial for colleges to have effective mechanisms in place to address and prevent cases of plagiarism.

With the advancement of technology and the increasing accessibility of information, instances of plagiarism among students and faculty are on the rise(Minarti et al., 2024). The ease of accessing information from the internet without adequate oversight often creates opportunities for plagiarism. Beyond being an ethical issue, plagiarism in academic settings necessitates legal responsibility from educational institutions to protect academic integrity and institutional reputation(Kim, 2021). Without proper handling, this issue can evolve into a culture that undermines the quality of education.

The legal responsibilities of educational institutions in cases of plagiarism encompass several aspects, including the formulation of internal regulations, prevention, handling, and sanctioning offenders(Sanusi et al., 2011). Colleges need to establish clear rules regarding plagiarism, including definitions, types of violations, and applicable sanctions(Jiang et al., 2013). Additionally, institutions must ensure that the entire academic community understands and adheres to these rules. In this regard, a preventive approach is crucial to reducing the likelihood of plagiarism, through education, training, and the use of plagiarism detection technology.

One of the major challenges in handling plagiarism is the legal ambiguity and lack of understanding about the legal consequences of such actions(Sholeh, 2023). In some cases, the sanctions imposed may not be sufficient to deter future violations, leading to a continuation of the problem. Therefore, it is crucial for educational institutions to provide a deeper understanding of the legal implications of plagiarism and to enforce sanctions consistently and fairly(Berlinck, 2011). This is essential not only for protecting institutional reputation but also for ensuring that students and faculty respect established academic principles.

Furthermore, the role of technology in preventing and detecting plagiarism cannot be overlooked(Sholeh et al., 2024). Many colleges have adopted plagiarism detection software to help identify written works that may result from plagiarism. However, the use of this technology must be complemented by adequate education so that students and faculty understand the importance of originality and proper citation of sources(Guri-Rosenblit, 2018). In this context, the responsibility of educational institutions extends beyond the implementation of technology to include the development of an academic culture that values honesty and integrity.

The involvement of educational institutions in plagiarism cases is also related to other legal aspects, such as copyright and intellectual property violations(Sholeh, 2023). Plagiarism often involves copyright infringement, which can lead to legal consequences for the perpetrator. Therefore, colleges must have a thorough understanding of copyright law and provide clear guidance to the academic community on the use of legitimate resources(Chon, 2006). Additionally, collaboration with external parties, such as publishers and law enforcement agencies, can be an important step in addressing plagiarism cases involving copyright issues.

In the Indonesian context, regulations related to plagiarism need to be strengthened at both the institutional and national levels(Devlin, 2006). Although there are existing regulations addressing plagiarism in colleges, their implementation faces various challenges(Sholeh et al., 2024). Issues such as insufficient dissemination, unclear sanctions, and weak law enforcement are some of the hurdles that need to be addressed. In this regard, colleges have a strategic role in advocating for more stringent and effective regulatory reforms and ensuring that all stakeholders within the academic environment understand and respect these rules.

Overall this research aims to explore the legal responsibilities of educational institutions in managing plagiarism cases within colleges, focusing on prevention, handling, and the legal implications of plagiarism. By understanding the roles and responsibilities of educational institutions in this context, effective solutions can be developed to address plagiarism and uphold academic integrity in colleges. This research will also provide practical recommendations for colleges to develop

better policies and procedures for preventing and addressing plagiarism, thereby fostering a more honest, fair, and integrity-driven academic environment.

2. METHODS

2.1. Data Sources

The data sources for this study include both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources consist of original documents such as books by recognized authors, scholarly journal articles, and official publications relevant to the research topic(Babbie, 2020). Secondary sources encompass literature reviews, previous analyses, and other sources that reference or discuss the primary data. Secondary sources may include commentaries, critiques, or analyses from experts with authority in the field.

2.2. Data Collection Process

Data collection in library research involves several stages. First, relevant literature is identified and gathered. This is achieved by accessing various academic databases such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, PubMed, ProQuest, and others. Keywords related to the research topic are used to locate pertinent literature. Once the literature is collected, it is classified and evaluated based on relevance, credibility, and contribution to the research topic. Selected sources must have high validity and academic recognition(McKenney & Reeves, 2012).

Following the collection and classification of literature, the gathered data is organized according to relevant themes or sub-topics. The data is then analyzed using qualitative analysis techniques. The initial step in data analysis is description, where data from literature sources is detailed to provide a clear overview of the information found. Subsequently, the described data is categorized into specific themes relevant to the research questions. This categorization helps identify patterns and relationships among the discovered themes.

2.3. Critical Evaluation

A critical evaluation of the literature is also performed. This evaluation considers various perspectives, methodologies used in previous research, and the strengths and weaknesses of each source. After conducting critique and evaluation, the researcher interprets the data to address the research questions and achieve the research objectives. The interpretation culminates in drawing conclusions based on the findings(Gough et al., 2017).

2.4. Ensuring Validity and Reliability

The validity and reliability of data in library research are maintained through rigorous source selection and critical evaluation of the literature used(Yin, 2009). Only sources that are academically recognized and have undergone peer review are selected. The researcher also employs triangulation by comparing findings from multiple sources to ensure consistency and validity of the data.

2.5 Research Procedure

The library research procedure involves several key stages. First, the researcher determines the topic to be investigated and formulates specific research questions. Next, the researcher collects relevant literature related to the research topic. After gathering the literature, the researcher evaluates the sources to ensure their relevance and quality(Punch, 2013). The collected data is then analyzed and synthesized to address the research questions. Finally, the results of the analysis and synthesis are compiled into a systematic research report.

3.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Analysis of Internal Regulations in Higher Education Institutions for Preventing Plagiarism

This study reveals that a primary preventive measure taken by higher education institutions to combat plagiarism is the development of clear and stringent internal regulations. These regulations are designed to ensure that the entire academic community understands the boundaries that must be respected in academic writing. Typically, these internal regulations include several key components: definitions of plagiarism, types of violations, procedures for handling cases, and sanctions to be imposed on offenders(Stabingis, 2014).

The definition of plagiarism within these internal regulations aims to provide a clear guide regarding what constitutes plagiarism. This definition encompasses various forms of plagiarism, such as the appropriation of text or ideas from other works without proper attribution, and presenting others' work as one's own. A well-crafted regulation should offer a detailed description of each type of violation, including direct plagiarism, self-plagiarism, and improper paraphrasing(Doghonadze et al., 2018). With a comprehensive definition, both students and faculty can clearly understand what actions are considered violations of academic rules.

The procedures for handling plagiarism are a crucial part of internal regulations. These procedures must include steps to be taken when a plagiarism allegation arises. Typically, these steps begin with an initial investigation to gather evidence, followed by a clarification and assessment process by an academic committee or designated panel(Eret, 2010). Subsequently, a decision on sanctions should be made based on the severity of the violation. Effective regulations will incorporate transparent and fair procedures, ensuring that all parties involved understand their rights and responsibilities throughout the process.

Internal regulations should also specify clear and consistent sanctions for plagiarism violations. These sanctions can range from verbal warnings and written reprimands to more severe penalties such as revocation of degrees or disqualification from academic programs(Hu & Sun, 2017). However, the study's findings indicate that, despite the existence of sanctions regulations, their implementation is often ineffective. Many institutions face challenges in enforcing sanctions, which may result from inconsistencies in rule application or ambiguities regarding the sanctioning procedures.

The dissemination of plagiarism regulations to students and faculty is a critical aspect of regulation implementation. Some institutions have included information about plagiarism in academic guidelines that must be read and understood by new students(Akbar, 2019). Nonetheless, the researcher notes that this dissemination is often not accompanied by adequate training on how to avoid plagiarism. This gap results in weaknesses in the understanding and application of regulations among the academic community.

As part of preventive efforts, some institutions have adopted plagiarism detection software such as Turnitin. This technology serves to check the similarity between students' written work and sources available on the internet. The use of this software can assist faculty in identifying potential plagiarism. However, the effectiveness of this technology greatly depends on the extent to which faculty and students understand and utilize the tool. Without adequate understanding of how to properly use the software, its potential benefits in detecting plagiarism may not be fully realized.

For internal regulations and plagiarism detection technology to function effectively, institutions need to conduct regular evaluations. This evaluation aims to assess the effectiveness of existing regulations, identify weaknesses in their implementation, and adjust policies according to the latest developments in the academic and technological fields. By performing routine evaluations and improvements, institutions can ensure that the measures taken to prevent plagiarism remain relevant and effective, thereby supporting overall academic integrity.

3.2   Implementation of Plagiarism Detection Technology

This study reveals that the implementation of plagiarism detection technology has become a crucial component in the effort to prevent plagiarism in higher education institutions(Agarwal et al.,

2013). Plagiarism detection software such as Turnitin, Grammarly, and similar tools have become common across various academic institutions. These technologies are designed to identify and analyze textual similarities with existing documents, both online and within other academic databases. By using these technologies, institutions can ensure that the work submitted by students is original and free from plagiarism.

The use of plagiarism detection technology has two main impacts. Firstly, as a detection tool, it allows faculty to check students' written work and ensure that there are no suspicious similarities with existing documents. In this way, technology can help prevent cases of plagiarism that might not be detected through traditional methods. Secondly, this technology also serves as an educational tool for students.(Beasley, 2004) By checking their work using this software before final submission, students can assess the potential for plagiarism and make necessary corrections. This process helps students better understand the boundaries in academic writing and improves the quality of their work.

Despite the benefits of plagiarism detection technology, this study identifies several challenges in its implementation. One major issue is the lack of understanding among students regarding how the software works and how to interpret the results. Many students do not fully grasp how this technology operates or how to read plagiarism detection reports(Bin-Habtoor & Zaher, 2012). This lack of understanding can lead to misunderstandings or ineffective use of the software. To address this issue, institutions need to provide adequate training and guidance to students on using plagiarism detection technology and interpreting its results.

The study also identifies resistance from some stakeholders regarding the use of plagiarism detection technology. Some faculty and students express concerns that this technology may reduce creativity and stifle academic freedom. They argue that an excessive focus on preventing plagiarism through technology may overlook other important aspects of intellectual development, such as open discussion and idea collaboration(Khaled & Al-Tamimi, 2021). This concern reflects the view that, while plagiarism detection technology is important, it should not replace interactions and learning processes that support creativity and critical thinking in an academic context.

In summary, while the use of plagiarism detection technology is a critical step in preventing plagiarism in higher education, its implementation needs to be managed carefully. While this technology helps ensure the originality of work and provides valuable educational tools for students, institutions must address challenges related to understanding and resistance to the technology. By providing adequate training and considering broader perspectives on creativity and academic freedom, institutions can effectively utilize plagiarism detection technology without compromising important aspects of higher education.

3.3. Awareness and Understanding of Plagiarism Among the Academic Community

The analysis results show that the level of awareness and understanding of plagiarism among the academic community varies significantly, both among students and faculty. For students, especially those in the early stages of their studies, understanding of plagiarism is often minimal. This can be traced to a lack of prior knowledge from previous education and insufficient dissemination by higher education institutions(Ramzan et al., 2012). Most new students do not fully understand what constitutes plagiarism, how to avoid it, and why adhering to these rules is important.

A concrete example of this issue is the number of students who are unaware that citing without proper source attribution or using paraphrasing that is too similar to the original text can be considered plagiarism. This lack of awareness highlights the urgent need for better education on proper academic writing practices. Some institutions have attempted to integrate academic writing training into their curricula as a solution(Khathayut & Walker-Gleaves, 2021). However, the implementation of this training is not uniform, and not all students receive thorough or effective training.

From the faculty perspective, most are aware of the importance of preventing plagiarism and understand the consequences of plagiarism. They generally recognize that plagiarism undermines academic integrity and can have serious repercussions for the institution's reputation and educational

quality. However, the main challenge faced by faculty is ensuring that students not only understand but also apply principles of academic honesty in their work.

Some faculty members have expressed a need for more support from educational institutions related to the dissemination and training on plagiarism. Additionally, there is a need for fair and consistent enforcement of sanctions for plagiarism violations(Babalola, 2012). This support could include additional training for faculty in educating students about plagiarism, as well as providing resources and tools to effectively address this issue.

The uneven understanding of plagiarism among the academic community underscores the need for more intensive efforts in dissemination and education. Institutions should focus on developing curricula that include comprehensive academic writing training and ensure that all members of the academic community have access to the necessary information and tools to prevent plagiarism. By improving awareness and understanding of plagiarism, it is hoped that academic integrity can be maintained and the quality of education can be enhanced.

3.4   Handling Plagiarism Cases and Imposing Sanctions

The handling of plagiarism cases at colleges varies significantly depending on each institution's policies. This study reveals that most institutions have established standard procedures for managing plagiarism cases, typically involving three main stages; investigation, hearing, and sanctioning. These procedures are designed to ensure that each plagiarism case is handled systematically and fairly, considering the available evidence and arguments from all parties involved(Deubel, 2018).

During the investigation phase, institutions usually collect information related to the suspected plagiarism, including examining the allegedly infringing work and hearing explanations from the involved students. This process aims to determine whether plagiarism has actually occurred and the extent of the violation(Worthen, 2004). If the suspicion of plagiarism is deemed valid, the case is then brought to a hearing, where the student has the opportunity to present their arguments and defend themselves. This hearing typically involves a committee consisting of faculty members and academic officials who will evaluate the evidence and make decisions.

The implementation of these procedures often faces various challenges. One major issue is procedural ambiguity, where not all students or faculty fully understand the steps that should be taken and their rights during the plagiarism handling process(Green, 2002). Additionally, a lack of transparency in handling plagiarism cases can lead to dissatisfaction among students. Some students feel that they are treated unfairly or are not given adequate opportunities to explain their positions.

In practice, the sanctions imposed on students involved in plagiarism vary. For minor infractions, sanctions may include a warning or a reduction in the grade for the assignment in question. However, for more serious cases of plagiarism, sanctions can include course failure, graduation delay, or even suspension from the institution(Park, 2004). Although these sanctions are intended to deter future plagiarism, the study indicates doubts about their effectiveness in preventing plagiarism. Some interviewed students expressed that the threat of sanctions does not always serve as an effective deterrent, especially if they feel under significant academic pressure or lack sufficient time to complete assignments properly.

The lack of transparency and fairness in handling plagiarism highlights the importance for institutions to develop and implement clear, transparent, and fair procedures. Institutions need to ensure that all members of the academic community understand the plagiarism handling process and feel that they are treated fairly. This includes providing sufficient information to students about what constitutes plagiarism, the process to be followed if they are involved in a plagiarism case, and their rights during this process. By implementing better procedures, institutions can handle plagiarism cases more effectively and enhance academic integrity within college environments.

3.5 Legal Implications of Plagiarism in College

This study reveals that plagiarism in the college environment is not only an academic issue but also has significant legal implications. Generally, plagiarism is considered an academic violation regulated by each institution's internal policies. Institutions have policies and procedures for handling plagiarism, including definitions of plagiarism, types of violations, and applicable sanctions(Strickland, 2011). However, when plagiarism involves violations of copyright or intellectual property rights, the legal implications can become broader and more complex.

Colleges have a legal responsibility to ensure that works produced by the academic community, including students and faculty, are free from plagiarism. If plagiarism occurs, particularly in works that are officially published, institutions may face legal consequences such as copyright infringement lawsuits. In this context, copyright includes exclusive rights to creative works, and violations of these rights can lead to legal action from the rightful copyright holders(Mohamed et al., 2018). Therefore, institutions must have comprehensive policies and effective legal enforcement mechanisms to protect themselves from potential litigation and to ensure that all academic works comply with applicable copyright laws.

In Indonesia, plagiarism in colleges has become a serious legal issue in some cases. Plagiarism offenders sometimes face legal actions from aggrieved parties, such as original authors or publishers(Dao, 2023). These cases demonstrate that plagiarism not only impacts the academic reputation of individuals or institutions but can also result in substantial legal consequences. Legal actions may involve fines, compensation claims, or other penalties related to copyright infringement.

To avoid detrimental legal implications, it is essential for colleges to have robust policies regarding plagiarism and effective legal enforcement mechanisms. Additionally, institutions must ensure that the entire academic community understands the legal consequences of plagiarism. This involves comprehensive education on copyright, writing ethics, and compliance with relevant legal regulations. By doing so, institutions can promote ethical and legal writing practices and protect themselves from legal risks arising from plagiarism.

3.6. The Role of Education in Preventing Plagiarism

A significant finding of this research is the crucial role of education in preventing plagiarism in higher education institutions. The study indicates that effective education can serve as a potent tool in reducing instances of plagiarism, with many colleges implementing various educational and training programs(Breen & Maassen, 2005). These programs are generally designed to increase awareness among both students and faculty regarding plagiarism and ethical academic practices.

Educational programs implemented at colleges typically cover several critical aspects, including academic writing training that encompasses correct citation techniques, appropriate use of references, and understanding copyright and intellectual property(Bansal & Jaiswal, 2021). These trainings aim to provide the technical knowledge necessary to avoid plagiarism and emphasize the importance of academic integrity and moral responsibility in the research and writing processes. With comprehensive education, students and faculty are expected to understand and apply principles of academic honesty in their work.

Several colleges have successfully integrated plagiarism education into their curricula in various ways(Lampert, 2004). For example, some institutions offer mandatory courses on research ethics that include topics such as plagiarism, or organize special seminars addressing academic ethics. The integration of this material into the curriculum has proven effective in enhancing students' understanding of plagiarism and methods to avoid it. These programs contribute to creating an academic environment that supports honesty and integrity.

Despite significant progress, this study also finds that there remains room for improvement in involving faculty in these educational programs. Faculty play a crucial role as facilitators and exemplars in promoting academic honesty. Therefore, there is a need to engage faculty more actively in plagiarism education, both through specialized training and by providing greater support in implementing anti-

plagiarism policies in their classrooms. This study suggests that strengthening the role of faculty as models in promoting academic integrity can further enhance the effectiveness of plagiarism education and training programs.

3.7 Strategies for Developing Anti-Plagiarism Policies in Colleges

Based on the findings of this research, several recommendations can be proposed to enhance the effectiveness of anti-plagiarism policies in colleges. These recommendations aim to strengthen plagiarism prevention efforts and ensure that the policies in place are truly beneficial for the entire academic community(McGowan, 2005). The first important step is the development of a comprehensive and easily understandable anti-plagiarism policy. This policy should provide a clear definition of plagiarism, including various forms of violations that may occur. Additionally, procedures for handling plagiarism cases need to be outlined in detail, from reporting through investigation and enforcement of sanctions. Sanctions should be proportional and consistent, providing a deterrent effect while remaining fair. The policy should be distributed to the entire academic community, including students, faculty, and staff, so that all parties understand and adhere to the established rules.

Anti-plagiarism policy dissemination should be continuous. This dissemination should not only occur when new students are admitted but should be carried out regularly throughout their academic tenure(Zimba & Gasparyan, 2021). Various methods can be used for dissemination, including seminars, workshops, and online educational materials. Furthermore, it is important to involve faculty in this dissemination process. Faculty should receive training on how to detect plagiarism and handle potential cases. With appropriate training, faculty will be better prepared to teach students about the importance of academic honesty and how to avoid plagiarism.

Colleges should also ensure adequate support for students in developing writing and research skills. Academic writing centers or specialized mentoring services can be activated to assist students who have difficulty understanding how to avoid plagiarism(O'Sullivan & Dallas, 2010). These services can provide practical guidance on correct academic writing, proper citation techniques, and ethical research practices. With this support, students will be better equipped to produce original and high-quality academic work.

Colleges need to have a continuous evaluation mechanism for the anti-plagiarism policies implemented. This evaluation is crucial to ensure that the policies remain relevant and effective in preventing plagiarism. Evaluation processes can be conducted through surveys, interviews, and analysis of plagiarism cases that occur. The results of these evaluations will provide insights into aspects of the policy that need improvement or updating. With routine and systematic evaluation, colleges can continually refine and adjust their policies according to the needs and latest developments in the academic field

4. CONCLUSION

This study underscores the importance of having clear and rigorous internal regulations for addressing plagiarism cases in higher education institutions. These regulations should include precise definitions, handling procedures, and sanctions, with consistent implementation and dissemination to ensure that the entire academic community understands and adheres to them. The use of plagiarism detection technology, such as Turnitin, has proven effective in identifying violations, but its effectiveness depends on the understanding and application by both faculty and students. Therefore, ongoing training is essential to maximize the benefits of this technology. The study also reveals that understanding of plagiarism varies among students and faculty. While faculty members are generally more aware of the consequences of plagiarism, students often lack a clear understanding of how to avoid it. This indicates a need for more in-depth educational programs on academic ethics. Challenges in handling plagiarism cases, such as unclear procedures and lack of transparency, are still prevalent in higher education institutions. Continuous evaluation and improvement are necessary to ensure more effective and equitable procedures. Plagiarism can also have legal consequences, especially when it

involves copyright violations. College institutions have a responsibility to prevent plagiarism and protect themselves from legal risks by strengthening regulations and enforcement mechanisms. With a holistic approach, involving robust regulations, appropriate technology, comprehensive education, and fair enforcement procedures, institutions can uphold academic integrity and safeguard intellectual property rights.

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