

Conceptual Review of Literature on Student Plagiarism: Focusing on Nigerian Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract

This paper presents a conceptual review on student plagiarism focusing mainly on International postgraduate Nigerian students. The aim of this review is to provide an insight to issues that relate to the concept, which will present information for the Higher Education Institutions in Nigeria and those overseas where the students decide to further their studies. The paper reviews studies on eight themes: the origin of plagiarism, forms of plagiarism, possible consequences of student plagiarism, general views on student plagiarism, possible causes of student plagiarism, Methods of detecting, deterring and mitigating student plagiarism, and proposed solutions.

The author concluded that a lot of Nigerian students struggle with the right perception of plagiarism and in most cases, do not understand the long-term consequences, besides the implementation of a holistic approach at managing student plagiarism, the higher institutions need to monitor and evaluate results and adapt measures to the institutional context. Also, there is a need for overseas universities to adjust their management framework in a way that will cater for international students. In addition, there is need for more empirical studies to be carried out in Nigeria and other African Higher institutions.

Keywords

conceptual review, student, plagiarism, Nigeria, Higher Education

1. Introduction

It is acknowledged that researchers and academic institutions have attempted to find a suitable definition for academic integrity. Many have considered the complexity and pervasiveness of academic dishonesty (McCabe & Trevino, 1993; Pincus & Schmelkin, 2003; Bretag et al., 2011; Mulatu Bachore, 2014; Orim, 2014). For instance, Pincus and Schmelkin (2003, p. 197) concluded that several attempts at a definition of academic dishonesty are “broad and ambiguous” while Bretag et al. (2011) outlined several representations of academic dishonesty, including collusion, examination malpractice and cheating in

assignments, stealing of other students' work, presentation of false data, paying a third party to provide solution to assignments, or downloading assignments from the internet.

Pincus and Schmelkin (2003) argue that most of these are more obvious forms of academic dishonesty. Others such as using technology like email to discuss exams (Etter et al., 2006), seeking help from external tutors, collaboration on homework and copying files from colleagues (Deranek & Parnter, 2015) are still a subject of debate amongst students and academics, hence the need to agree on an unambiguous definition of academic misconduct. There is a consensus though, that academic misconduct is a breach of academic standards (Schmelkin et al., 2008; Sikes, 2009) and an absence of academic integrity (Bretag & Mahmud, 2009; Bretag et al., 2013), and is becoming increasingly widespread amongst students (McCabe & Trevino, 1996), Murdock and Anderman (2006).

This review does not attempt to cover the extremely complex case of academic misconduct in general, rather it focuses on eight aspects of Plagiarism in relation to students: the origin of plagiarism, forms of plagiarism, possible consequences of student plagiarism, general views on student plagiarism, possible causes of student plagiarism, methods of detecting, deterring and mitigating student plagiarism, and concluded by proposing solutions.

2. The Origin of Plagiarism

Plagiarism as a concept relates to various aspects of life. It is certainly viewed as a problem by some researchers in the academic sector, one which is growing and persistent (Maxymuk, 2006; Velliari, 2016) regardless of several interventions (Smedley et al., 2015; Eisa et al., 2015). This is evident in several studies which have been carried out on a large scale (such as AISP, 2010-2012, www.aisp.apfei.edu.au in Australia and IPPHEAE, 2010-2013, www.ippheae.eu in the UK) and also small scale (White, 1993; Ashworth et al., 1997; Weeks, 2001; Seppanen, 2002; Nejati et al., 2011; Babalola, 2012; Orim et al., 2013) stemming from several countries over the years. To understand the recent debate expressed in literature about plagiarism and the relevance of this study, it will be useful to understand how plagiarism originated. The concept of plagiarism assumes a complex nature having originated from a simpler notion which initially emphasized the "stealing" of another person's work or idea to include copyright, legal, ethical, academic and technological issues.

Pennycook (1996, p. 207) and Stout (2013) observed that in early history, people reused text freely in a way we now call "plagiarism". However, over the years, the perception changed gradually. This change was in relation to the invention of the printing press by Gutenberg in 1450 which resulted to the expansion in publications with more people being able to read. The increased demand for the supply of literature by many more literate people created the desire for individuals to claim rights to their work (Bainbridge, 2012). This idea led to devising ways the product of the intellect can be used and owned, resulting to the categorization of the thoughts and ideas of people legally as their properties. Hence the copyright laws of England emerged which, though could not actually protect the authors as they desired, legally recognised the idea of the written word as personal property (Sutherland-Smith, 2008). Over the

years, the act of indiscriminate borrowing of text, words, ideas or the works of others became viewed as seriously inappropriate (Pennycook, 1996) leading to a need for academic guidance.

3. Plagiarism Today

The “copy and paste” system which the internet has provided has made online files easily transferable (Oblinger & Oblinger, 2005; Harper, 2006), with the result that more people have access to the information there in (Tapscott, 2009), and can use, transfer and incorporate the information obtained online into their personal work, presenting students with more opportunities to use another’s work—ethically or otherwise (Etter et al., 2006; Stephens et al., 2007). Sharing of files has become a technology as well as a feature of modern learning as Etter et al. (2006) mentions, and students enhance their learning through active participation by sharing digital files. However, file-sharing has also been considered as one of concern in academic circles (Etter et al., 2006; Manly et al., 2015), uncovering a need to review and thoroughly scrutinise the place of third party sources in academic research.

It may appear that these earlier mentioned studies attempt to suggest that academic dishonesty is a bane of recent times, but Bushway and Nash (1977) argue otherwise, stating that academic fraud existed before digital technology. They suggested that the latter has only made it a lot easier to engage in it. Researchers (MacDonald & Carroll, 2006; Dreher, 2007; Flowerdew & Li, 2007; Orim, 2014) have attempted to tackle the complex issue of plagiarism, some proffering working models to check plagiarism and manage its occurrence (Orim et al., 2013). In agreement with Chandrasoma et al. (2004) this conceptual review seeks to move “beyond plagiarism” as a common concept, to x-ray salient issues that have arisen which may be fanning its flames.

4. Forms of Plagiarism

With the various views on how plagiarism is perceived by different institutions/organizations and individuals, it is not surprising that there are also variations in what different people believe constitutes plagiarism. Several researchers have identified different types of plagiarism and a few (Harris, 2001; Park, 2004; Roig, 2006) are presented for illustration as listed in Table 1. From their views on the forms of plagiarism (Table 1), all these authors perceive plagiarism as acts which are consistent with the definition of plagiarism adopted in this conceptual review, although the scope varies in areas such as ideas and collusion. From Table 1, Harris (2001) focused on inappropriate text use in writing which he described as: copying, translating, cutting and pasting, false citation, paraphrasing and summarising without attribution and he also mentioned source use: online and paper mills.

On the other hand, Park (2004), in addition to his view of plagiarism types as inappropriate text-use in writing (copying or paraphrasing inappropriately) categorised the type of plagiarism per the source use such as “online” and “paper mills” while Roig (2006) looked beyond both text and source-use to introduce “ideas”. Harris (2001) mentioned “*Use of false citations*”, which though an academic misconduct may not be strictly considered as a form of plagiarism. However, the underlying similarity

between these authors is in their view of plagiarism in relation to: “appropriation”, “acknowledgement” or “concealment” of sources.

Table 1. Some Identified Types of Plagiarism

Harris (2001)	Park (2004)	Roig (2006)
Copying a paper from another student	Collusion	Collaborating
Buying from paper mills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of a paper written by another person • Commission (buying a paper from a commercial service, contracting and buying of papers, essay mills) • Submission of some other student’s work • Duplication of work for more than one submission 	Self-plagiarism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of free online resources without attribution • Copying from internet • Translating into English without acknowledgement • Cutting and pasting from different sources • Quoting without acknowledgment • Copying whole phrases and changing some words • Paraphrasing without attribution • Summarising without attribution • Use of false citations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copying or paraphrasing a paper without appropriate acknowledgement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of ideas without appropriate acknowledgement • Copying text • Summarising without attribution • Paraphrasing without appropriate acknowledgement

Where “appropriation” and “acknowledgement” refer predominantly to occurrences which are related to the way and manner of using sources or working with others, “concealment” of sources is usually intentional and sometimes in relation to commissioning of others to do one’s work or buying ready-made work. This review (Table 1) on types of plagiarism was important because this conceptual review explored the perceived types of plagiarism students engage in. This was necessary to be able to design a model that will effectively manage the occurrence of student plagiarism.

5. Possible Consequences of Student Plagiarism

This section presents a review on the possible consequences of the occurrence of student plagiarism particularly when it goes unhindered. This aspect was chosen for review as it provides information on

building a case for mitigating the occurrence of student plagiarism in Nigerian universities.

Plagiarism in Higher Education Institutions (HEI) is presented by Saeed et al. (2011) as a threat to academic standards. Where there is no appropriate understanding of academic ethical values or use of such, there will be breaches of academic conventions. These breaches result in consequences that affect not only the students but also the institution and the society. In pursuit of this view, Power (2009, p. 643) states that when students engage in plagiarism, they “present a problem for all educators” in several ways. Outside of personal learning purposes, when students engage with studies for qualification purposes, they are assessed and grades are assigned to them. Also, the teachers can provide and receive feedback to and from them. The reason for assessment is to rate the extent to which they demonstrate that the learning outcomes have been met. They are awarded grades or marks according to the extent to which they demonstrate that the learning outcomes have been met.

Where the students plagiarise in their assignments, there will be a distortion in the assessment results as the submissions will not be a true reflection of the students’ understanding or achievement of the desired learning outcomes. Furthermore, the results may not provide useful feedback to the teachers for the improvement of the course design; neither will it help the teacher appropriately measure what the assessment aims to determine (Cooper, 1984; Johnson, 2004). Besides affecting the student’s learning potential, the quality of assessment and the regard for the intellectual property rights of the author, Gullifer and Tyson (2010) argue that student plagiarism by-passes learning and produces inadequately trained graduates who are potential threats to the society through lack of competence and skills at various levels. Furthermore, Marsden et al. (2005) suggest that the occurrence of student plagiarism could tarnish the image of the higher education institutions and increased media scrutiny which could lead to negative publicity and reputational damage. However, Alschuler and Blimling (1995) suggest that failure to eliminate plagiarism is not the student plagiarist’s problem, but that of the institution that supports them by providing the enabling environment where information is scarce and deterrence measures are hardly implemented (Sisti, 2007).

6. General Views on Student Plagiarism

This section considers views and experiences with student plagiarism focusing on occurrence and issues related to different practices. Although some of the papers selected for review are not recent in date, they are still important and of relevance to this study which focuses on the experiences of the Nigerian students. A small group of these papers (such as Sherman, 1992; Pecorari, 2003; Schmitt, 2005; Sowden, 2005; Kutieleh & Adiningrum, 2011; Gilmore et al., 2010; Hayes & Introna, 2005; Kelm & Sharon, 2013) were selected as the findings and experience of the authors resonate with some of the experiences the researcher has had with some Nigerian students she taught in the past.

Sherman (1992) shares her experience in an Italian university where the students’ academic papers in English did not fulfil her expectations in several ways. She stated that this was because of different cultural attitudes to the functions of written word and the purposes of the writer, some of which she

illustrated by referencing the Italian education system. She also discussed the possible content, value, and implications of a “cultural syllabus”. Some of the areas where she observed failure in fulfilling the academic expectations were as follows.

- In listening or reading comprehension exercises or tests, students lifted their answers verbatim from the text, instead of adapting, reducing, or rewording them as expected.
- In oral examinations (even sometimes in written ones) students occasionally learned some text by heart without regard to appropriateness of context or subject.
- In writing, academic papers, student not only failed to name their sources but quoted from the sources extensively without acknowledging them.
- In writing academic papers, students did not present an argument, or if they did, they did not support it convincingly with evidence.
- They did not organize their writing to reflect a sequential argument.

She stated that her students held that reciting rote-learned set speeches in oral examinations was regarded as a legitimate route to a pass mark, and what she regarded as plagiarism, they saw as not only legitimate but correct and proper. The students were unanimous that it was a good idea to reproduce large tracts from source material when dealing with an academic subject. In relation to their attitude towards plagiarism, they found her requirements for “own wording” and “insistence on paraphrasing” old-fashioned. This aspect of her experience is like the findings of Power (2009) in her study in the US. Sherman (1992) stated that the students pointed out that they could not improve the work of an expert so *taking over* the expert’s words was not only a mark of respect but also necessary to adequately cover the subject. Furthermore, whilst she viewed English academic writing as basically argumentative, the students had no competence with that type of structure. She said that they presented information when she demanded that they made a case. They gave lengthy descriptions when she demanded to know the argument.

What she perceived could be the cause was a predominantly text-based study style seen in the educational system. She explained this as follows.

- The Italian education system uses a very text-based format for homework, tests, and examinations for both school children and university students.
- Students are expected to learn passages and certain books almost by heart and provide detailed answers to questions on these texts verbatim. Hence they feel the *word* is what is required and not the understanding.
- For many courses, there is only one textbook available which at university level is often written by the lecturer, who is also the examiner and expects to have his own work repeated to him in the examination.
- The students could barely separate facts from opinion.

She surmised that it appeared that what the participating Italian student (a case in her paper) had done when she accused her of “plagiarism” was exactly what she had been doing throughout her successful

academic career, which is “presenting the appropriate words of the expert on demand” (Sherman, 1992, p. 192).

Pecorari (2003) explored the topic “Good and original: plagiarism and patch writing in academic second language writing”. The study was carried out with 17 postgraduate students in three British universities. Her participants were international students and non-native speakers of English and her justification for selecting this group was because she believed that their own writing style was often quite different from that of published sources. The method utilized student-generated texts and compared them with the original sources. Additionally, interviews were used to collect primary data from the students and their supervisors. The study was carried out in two phases of collecting writing samples. In the first phase nine master’s students sent in sections of their draft dissertation. In the second phase a minimum of ten consecutive pages of writing samples were taken from the completed theses.

She checked for clarity in relation to the use of language, presence of citation and secondary citation and the student’s intent. She also established that the students did not try to cover up any tracks since they participated willingly, showing their work and answering questions eagerly. Her findings suggested that, although some of the students’ writings had textual features that could be described as plagiarism, the outcome of the interviews suggested that the students did not intend to plagiarize. These findings suggested that there could be other reasons why the student writings had plagiarism-related features. She cited cultural difference as a likely reason for these incidents and explained that non-prototypical plagiarism (lacking the intention to deceive) is seen in the writings of some of the students because of their educational background and as such, they were unaware that unattributed copying is inappropriate. Pecorari (2003) concluded from her findings that unlike the findings from a number of previous studies, culture was not the major reason the students indicated as the cause of plagiarism. She perceived that possible reasons culture did not arise as a fundamental issue was because of the set of students that participated and the method of data collection. The use of unstructured interviews enabled the students to discuss other issues they found more relevant to them than cultural differences. The issues the students identified were in relation to their perception of plagiarism and their skills gaps (such as note-taking and citations). She recommended proactive teaching as an effective way to prevent the occurrence of student plagiarism. This study by Pecorari (2003) is relevant to this review as it explores possible reasons why student writing could have plagiarism-related features when the occurrence of plagiarism is not actually deliberate.

Schmitt (2005), in a book chapter on “writing in the international classroom” expressed her views on teaching international students. She stated that they bring diversity to the classrooms and went on to identify many related factors which could impact on their ability to write with accurate grammar. She found that the major challenge for educators of international students from different backgrounds is successfully guiding them to achieve the set learning outcomes of the respective courses.

In conversation with international students she found that students claimed to have had very minimal exposure to reading and writing exercises. This limitation impacted on the extent of their vocabularies

which in turn influenced their ability to create their own meaning from sources which they read. When these students travel overseas to different educational system that requires more rigorous or critical reading, writing and ability to construct understanding from sources that they have read, it becomes a challenge. In most UK universities, students are faced with a variety of writing tasks which places different demands on the skill set of the students. When they struggle with expressing their understanding in writing in their own words, it could result to unintentional inappropriate use of sources as stated by Marsh et al. (1997) who argued that plagiarism could be unintentional and due to defective cognitive processing.

As Schmitt (2005, p. 65) pointed out, often, neither students nor lecturers are fully aware of “the conceptual demands of the assigned tasks or the variations in complexity across assignments”. Where both groups lack a full understanding of the requirements, the situation will inevitably result to a case where the students do not put in adequate effort into meeting the requirement of the task, and the lecturers’ will not give the required feedback. This will lead to a situation like what Sherman (1992) experienced with her Italian students whom she claimed failed in fulfilling the academic expectations. Also, it will result to the students’ inability to acquire the “skills” required by that particular course (Schmitt, 2005, p. 65). Thus, there is a need for an understanding of the assessment requirements between both students and lecturers. Even when this understanding is achieved, international students could still face challenges while communicating their understanding as they have what Schmitt (2005, p. 65) refers to as “fewer language resources”. Where this challenge becomes unmanageable, the students may use sources inappropriately and fall into the trap of plagiarism.

As Angélil-Carter (2000) explained, complex learning difficulties refers to the inability of the student to achieve the set learning outcomes and self-expression in a way that is academically appropriate. In a case where there has not been the ability to gain knowledge in some specific area, or fail to understand the requirements of the assignment (Schmitt, 2005), when plagiarism takes place, the issue goes beyond *whether students have copied to, whether the work which the students submits as “their own” displays the student’s own learning* (Carroll, 2008). Schmitt (2005, p. 66) stated that plagiarism is “an imprecise concept with ill-defined boundaries which assigns ownership of words to individual writers”. She raises concern on how the western academic community expect students who are unfamiliar with the words of their disciplines to meet the academic assignment requirements while still acquiring the language of the discipline. Writing for a purpose or subject area requires “acculturation into the discipline” (Schmitt, 2005, p. 69) since learning to write for a specific discipline could present the problems associated with source use, citation and referencing.

She explained that it can be “extremely difficult for students to reference effectively until they have spent a considerable amount of time reading around the discipline to understand its key concepts, theoretical underpinnings, values and controversies” Schmitt (2005, p. 69). Furthermore, she said that when students are advised to avoid a behaviour, if there is no understanding of the reason or what else they can do, they will try to find ways of making sense of these expectations and where their attempts do not align

with the expectations of their teachers, they are evaluated negatively, a situation which Sutherland-Smith (2014) also highlighted in her study. Schmitt (2005) stressed the need for lecturers to focus on the writing strengths of the students rather than their weaknesses.

Schmitt (2005, pp. 71-72) explained some ways lecturers can guide students towards successful learning in their discipline.

- Collaborating with the English language unit and identifying the literacy skills that underpin their specific disciplines.
- Finding out what the students can or cannot do or are not aware of regarding academic writing in their discipline.
- Clarifying the characteristics of a good assignment to the students.
- Avoiding cognitive overload in the set assignments.
- Setting realistic targets for the language use of international students bearing in mind that they are still language learners.
- Providing incentives for students to read.

This book chapter by Schmitt (2005) is relevant to this review as it presents some complex reasons students could plagiarise. Highlighting the concern on how students who are unfamiliar with the words of their disciplines can meet academic assignment requirements, she proposed ways the lecturers can help the students. These views are important as this conceptual review is also exploring the reasons student plagiarism occur and recommending ways to manage the occurrence.

The paper by Sowden (2005) focuses on “plagiarism and the culture of multilingual students in higher education abroad”. He argues that “cultural values of multilingual students are sometimes at variance with ‘Western’ academic practice, in matters such as plagiarism” Sowden (2005, p. 226). This study is of direct relevance to the research as Nigerian students can be perceived as multilingual students since they speak English in addition to their native languages. Some of the cultural values he observed amongst Asian (Chinese and Japanese) students were that:

- Ownership of knowledge is communal.
- The reproduction of the words of respected philosophers without citation as their own words is commendable.
- Good students do not challenge their teachers or other authorities but copy them faithfully.
- There is a correct answer to every question which it is the teacher’s duty to provide and the student’s duty to learn.
- Achieving group consensus is more important than demonstrating one’s own understanding and abilities.

It is observed that these ideas contradict the findings of Pecorari (2003) and are different from what was experienced or propagated in most UK universities. Sowden (2005) pointed out that while it is easy to make assumptions based on the awareness of the cultural predispositions of multilingual students, care must be taken while interpreting behaviours. This is to prevent inappropriate generalisation since

individuals that make up a group of people are inherently different from each other.

He observed that the usual response to the issue of plagiarism by multilingual students is to “encourage them to adopt the norms of their host culture, including those related to plagiarism, and become proficient at the skills involved” (Sowden, 2005, p. 229). However, he argued that this may not be the best approach as it assumes that the host culture will replace that of the students’ culture and he suggested rather that the students should learn to operate in both cultures. Hence a practice like memorization should not be discarded, but harnessed to achieve a status of deep learning. This study by Sowden (2005) is relevant to this review as it provides insight as to how multilingual students hold on to values and practices that encourage plagiarism.

The observations from all the studies are very relevant to this field of study particularly in giving an insight to the experiences of international students regarding plagiarism. Furthermore, they present possible causes of student plagiarism amongst international students. Some similarities were observed in the papers and book chapter although the experience of Sherman (1992) was with Italian students, Pecorari (2003) had 17 international and non-native speakers of English, Schmitt (2005) wrote about International students generally and Sowden (2005) observed Asian (Chinese and Japanese) students. Some of these findings were that:

- The educational system in these other countries (Italy, China, Japan, etc.) differ from that in the English-speaking countries, in relation to the value placed on plagiarism and the prevailing pedagogy (teaching, learning and assessment styles).
- The students’ perception (understanding) of plagiarism was incomplete as the Italian and Asian students in the studies of Sherman (1992) and Snowden (2005) seemed to believe that some plagiarism-related practices are commendable. An example of such practice is the use of memorization without acknowledgement.
- The observation (Sherman, 1992) that Italian students respect the work of experts was like that found among the Asian students in the study of Sowden (2005).
- Where both teachers and students lack a full understanding of an assessment requirement (Schmitt, 2005, p. 65), it will lead to a situation like what Sherman (1992) experienced with her Italian students who failed in fulfilling academic expectations. Also, it will lead to ineffective lecturers’ feedback and students’ inability to acquire the skills required for the course (Schmitt, 2005, p. 65).

Sherman (1992) and Schmitt (2005) observed cognitive-related issues and institutional culture as the major causes of the occurrence of student plagiarism, while Pecorari (2003) cited ignorance of the students that plagiarism was unacceptable and the lack of related skills and cultural values. Then Sowden (2005) observed issues with cultural values and practices, but there was disagreement in their views of these three authors about the influence of cultural factors.

Adiningrum and Kutieleh (2011) carried out a study on “How different are we? Understanding and managing plagiarism between East and West”. The study which was carried out in an Australian university focused on Indonesian students’ understanding of the notion of plagiarism and the challenges

it presents to them. They argued in this study that plagiarism is a “culturally-based concept which sometimes disadvantages students from non-Western educational traditions” (Adiningrum & Kutieleh, 2011, p. 88) using the case of Indonesian students. They adopted a qualitative methodology using five focus group sessions comprising Indonesian postgraduate students. They explored the students’ perception of the issue and tried to ascertain their views on how plagiarism could be addressed in their country and at Australian universities. Their findings suggested that cultural values and educational backgrounds had impact on students’ engagement in plagiaristic behaviours.

Data analysis revealed that Indonesian students perceived plagiarism as a foreign concept which was either completely unknown or not important for the students. Twenty-six out of thirty-three participants agreed that the concept of plagiarism was never introduced during their study in higher education in Indonesia. Three students who had completed a degree in English literature in Indonesia reported a limited exposure to the concept and only students who were taught by overseas-educated lecturers said that they were required to avoid the use of unacknowledged sources. Students’ understanding of plagiarism was not influenced by their profession as the students who held academic positions in Indonesia before commencing their postgraduate studies in Australia were as confused and concerned as others (Adiningrum & Kutieleh, 2011, p. 94). Further findings were as follows.

- Indonesians do not give priority to the notion of intellectual property rights which is contrary to the perception held in “Western” culture.
- The influence of religious teachings was a reason preventing students from critiquing “accepted knowledge” and discouraging creative and analytical thinking which, according to the participants, led to plagiarism.
- Students complained about confusion and insecurity resulting from the inconsistencies in the understanding of plagiarism and the implementation of plagiarism policy by teaching and administrative staff.
- The students believed lecturers usually work based on an ill-informed assumption that students have a sufficient understanding of plagiarism.
- The Australian university should not assume that providing facilities automatically means that international students would use them.
- Some of the students felt that sessions on plagiarism should not be provided as soon as students arrive at the university, because at that point, they are busy with social and academic adjustment.

They stated that the implications of the findings supported the perception of plagiarism as a culturally-based notion. The cultural misunderstanding of plagiarism has, as their findings suggest, adverse effects on students’ academic performance and their attitudes towards their courses and institutions. This is compounded by the inconsistencies in the understanding of the lecturers and the application of plagiarism and the policies associated with it. This study is relevant for review as its findings provide a basis for comparing the plagiarism perception of Indonesian students in the study of Adiningrum and Kutieleh (2011) with the Nigerian students in this conceptual review. Also, their views

on how the issue of student plagiarism can be addressed in Indonesia will provide a basis for comparison with that of the Nigerian students in this conceptual review who are studying in the UK.

Gilmore et al. (2010) carried out a study on “Weeds in the flower garden: an exploration of plagiarism in graduate students’ research proposals and its connection to enculturation, English as a Second Language (ESL), and contextual factors”. The study investigated the occurrence and possible causes of plagiarism amongst graduate students in some master’s and doctoral programs across three universities in the United States of America. They decided to focus on this group because they observed that plagiarism was occurring at a substantial rate with this group. Most of the 113 graduate student participants were in the first year of their graduate studies. The methodology adopted to make the study more reliable was mixed and involved several strategies:

- The use of proposals written by students in their area of study in an attempt to bypass reliance on self-reported occurrence of plagiarism.
- A scope of different contexts comprising three institutions, six disciplines, and two levels of study (master’s and doctoral programs).
- The examination of the association between prior research experience and occurrence of graduate student plagiarism.
- Examination of the relationship between ESL status and the occurrence of graduate student plagiarism and use of Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) scores to determine if English as Second Language (ESL) students plagiarise due to enculturation issues or language barriers.

Findings from the study indicated that plagiarism was a prevalent issue which was more common amongst ESL participants. The same evidence emerged from each of the three university sites sampled and across all the investigated disciplines, although it may have been largely unintentional and due to a lack of disciplinary enculturation (gradual acquisition of the characteristics and norms of a discipline). The findings also suggested that the potential causes of plagiarism were due to inadequate research experience and lack of awareness of the role of primary literature in the research process. The authors suggested a need to provide additional training to ESL students which may include developing skills in areas such as: English language, appropriate paraphrasing, citation methods and identifying and locating high-quality resources in one’s discipline including primary literature. Although this training could be very useful, it may not suffice to fully resolve the problems identified. Solutions to plagiarism among the ESL population are discussed and it was recommended that the universities should:

- Establish a comprehensive definition of plagiarism.
- Provide mechanisms for identifying and addressing student plagiarism.
- Raise awareness about plagiarism issues by engaging faculty and staff in discussions.
- Provide explicit training in the role and use of primary literature to aid the development of graduate students’ research skills.
- Enable structured introduction of graduate students to the culture of research in their discipline.

The study carried out by Hayes and Introna (2005) in the UK focused on values that could be related to

culture among overseas students in relation to plagiarism and the implications this may have for postgraduate education in a “Western” context. 126 participants of 13 different nationalities participated in the mixed methods study involving the use of focus groups and questionnaire. Their findings in relation to this study suggested that because of complex previous educational influences, practices related to plagiarism can occur.

They also found that the approach to learning in China is different from what students in Europe experience. These findings are like those reviewed earlier from the paper written earlier by Pennycook (1996). While none of the participants of the Hayes and Inrona (2005) study were Nigerians, the results of the study provide much insight to different aspects of this conceptual review on student plagiarism. Kelm and Sharon (2013) carried out a study in a UK university which they titled “*When It Comes to Plagiarism-Nationality Matters! Results of an Empirical Study*”. The aim was to determine whether nationality has an influence on the occurrence of student plagiarism. Questionnaires were used for the collection of data from all their new master’s level students. Their findings from a survey administered over two years suggested that there was a perceived significant difference in the rate of student plagiarism occurrence by particular nationalities in their first year of studies.

They found that the rate of student plagiarizing from Africa (26.9%) and the middle east/gulf countries (25.4%) were significantly more than students from other areas of the world, while students from the USA/Canada plagiarise the least (10.3%). This suggested link between the nationality and occurrence of plagiarism could imply a deeper reason which might be in relation to the educational background/systems these groups of students studied in previously. Although these authors draw a link between culture (which relates to nationality) and student plagiarism, some others are of the view that there is no such link. Also, it is not quite clear how they detected the occurrence of the students’ plagiarism, it will be important that the method is reliable. If it is through detection by the tutors, it could be an inconsistent method which could be biased unlike if it is initially through text-matching which is further analysed. In Abukhattala’s (2012) study on plagiarism and culture which was carried out in Libya, he investigated the belief that *plagiarism is culturally approved in non-western countries*. He used both qualitative and quantitative methods to collect his data from 25 participants. He inferred from the study that plagiarism is not related to culture.

Abukhattala (2012) stated that student plagiarism could occur because of the Libyan students’ poor understanding of plagiarism, language proficiency, previous educational practices and a lack of exposure to punitive measures. However, it may be difficult to generalize this finding to all Libyan students as the 25 participants were master’s students with previous experiences of learning in English. Thus, they could have more related skills and understanding than the average Libyan student. In relation to these issues, Hayes and Inrona (2005) suggested that educators need to appreciate the cultural differences to be able to act ethically when responding to issues of plagiarism among international students. However, with international students there are also socio-economic challenges which make plagiarism a big motivator for to enhancing academic credentials and gaining financial benefits as seen in the study of Saeed et al.

(2011).

While Kelm and Sharon (2013) strongly believe that nationality is an important issue for consideration when it comes to student plagiarism, it is appropriate to consider the caution of Sowden (2005) about the danger of slipping into stereotypes and shifting the appropriate educational focus which should be teaching and learning. However, culture is just one of the other intrinsic issues (such as student awareness of the concept, perception, attitude towards the concept, etc.). Knowing that culture, in terms of nationality (Kelm & Sharon, 2013) or previous educational background (Sherman, 1992) can have effects on the occurrence of student plagiarism, it becomes necessary to explore Nigerian students in relation to their previous academic background and how this can affect them. Some of the variables that emerge in relation to perceptions of student plagiarism will be discussed in the following subsections.

Several researchers (Hayes & Introna, 2005; Sowden, 2005; Gilmore et al., 2010; Adiningrum & Kutieleh, 2011; Kelm & Sharon, 2013) seem to have a strong belief that student plagiarism is a nationality or culture-related issue, while others contradict that. Some (Sherman, 1992; Pecorari, 2003; Abukhattala, 2012) suggest it is related to skills gap and different educational systems, expectations and norms. Although there are differing opinions, it is a problem that should be addressed regardless of the differences in views. Hence, the destination (overseas) universities should take some responsibility for addressing the issue. It is observed that the perception of the word “culture” by the different researchers is not entirely the same. Culture is perceived by the researcher of this thesis as the practices, “beliefs, perceptions, relationships, attitudes, and written and unwritten rules that shape and influence every aspect of how an institution [University] functions. This encompasses the way things are done in relation to teaching, learning, assessment, lecturer and student attitude in an academic environment.

7. Views on Some Student Plagiarism Related Factors

Several factors which impact on student plagiarism have been identified. Three of them will be reviewed further in this subsection as follows: student awareness about the concept of plagiarism, student perception of the concept and their attitude towards plagiarism.

8. Students' Awareness about Plagiarism

Although there can be various degrees of “awareness”, the term “awareness”, in this conceptual review refers to the state of being conscious of the existence of the concept of plagiarism. Ramzan et al. (2012) in their study in Pakistan focused on “awareness about plagiarism amongst university students in Pakistan”. Their purpose of carrying out the study was to highlight the seriousness of plagiarism among graduate and post-graduate students in Pakistan, explore the university students' awareness about plagiarism and explore teachers' and universities' effectiveness in its detection and management.

The study was an empirical exploration that made use of questionnaires as a method of data collection from 365 participating undergraduate and postgraduate students selected randomly from both public and private sector universities. Although the title (*awareness about plagiarism amongst university students in*

Pakistan) suggested possible findings in relation to students' awareness of the existence of plagiarism, the findings were about students' understanding of plagiarism, their views on what it constitutes and how the universities responded to it. They reported that their findings included poor understanding of both plagiarism and university plagiarism policies and processes among the students. Furthermore, the findings suggested that many of the students did not understand what plagiarism is although a significant number admitted that they had intentionally plagiarised written materials.

Similarly, in carrying out his study on plagiarism and culture in Libya, Abukhattala (2012) also found, from the data collected from his 25 participants, which many Libyan students were naïve about what plagiarism is. He said they could not distinguish what constitutes plagiarism and this was evidenced in their belief that plagiarising information from the internet is less offensive than from textbooks. Davis (2012) carried out a study on "International postgraduate students' experiences of plagiarism education in the UK: student, tutor and 'plagiarism expert' perspectives". She used interviews as a means of data collection from her eight international student participants and their tutors. The participating students were from China, Japan, Sri Lanka and Algeria serving to enrich the data. The following findings emerged from this study:

- The university definition of plagiarism was unclear to students, who did not interpret it in the same way as the tutors.
- Tutor expectations for source use by the students were very high, while the levels of pedagogical support with source use were low.
- "There is a tendency for tutors to perceive a connection between international students and plagiarism" (Davis, 2012, p. 32).

The students and their tutors had a different understanding of the university's plagiarism definition resulting to different opinions. Furthermore, different problems were identified with the availability of education on avoiding plagiarism. This difference in their views was not surprising as the students stated that they had inadequate access to support resulting in numerous concerns about plagiarism. The tutors expressed concerns about their lack of time and felt that the students should receive the instruction on this aspect elsewhere. However, the "plagiarism expert" that participated in the survey advised that there should be a greater focus on learning rather than adhering to regulations while being more careful to avoid the tendency to connect international students with plagiarism. The study pointed out the need for a continuous pedagogical support throughout the studies of international students. This study is one of those that point out the difference in the understanding of plagiarism by students and tutors.

9. Students' Perception of Plagiarism

Several studies (Sutherland-Smith, 2005; Pickering & Hornby, 2005; Power, 2009; Tsintzoglou, 2011; Roig, 2012) have been carried out on students' perceptions of plagiarism. These have explored the way students perceive and understand the concept of plagiarism. The relevance of these studies to this thesis is that they provide an insight to how students perceive, understand or view the concept of plagiarism,

which influences both deliberate and accidental plagiarism, depending on the level of knowledge. The author of this thesis refers to student perception as students' views and interpretation of plagiarism as well as their understanding of the concept and its requirements.

Sutherland-Smith (2005) carried out research in Australia on "The tangled web: Internet plagiarism and international students' academic writing". She investigated the notion of plagiarism and the internet by surveying English as Second Language (ESL) teachers and students. The purpose of her research was to provide insight to the students' and teachers' understanding of plagiarism of Internet texts, perspectives on Internet plagiarism and ideas of attribution when using Internet sources. A mixed methodology was adopted, administering a questionnaire in the first instance to 11 ESL teachers and 186 ESL students, followed by semi-structured interview with 11 ESL teachers and 41 ESL students. The findings suggested that the students were unclear about how to attribute sources, with 62% of the participating 186 students indicating they had received no previous anti-plagiarism instruction in their home countries and did not know about plagiarism until enrolling in the college.

Furthermore, 31% of students stated in the questionnaire that they did not cite Internet information. At the follow-on interview, 12 out of the 30 student participants explained that they do not cite information taken from the Internet because they believed the information to be *common knowledge*. The results presented conflicting views between teachers and students concerning the notions of authorship and attribution as it related to the use of information on the Internet. Based on this view about "*common knowledge*" and what the students actually perceive the concept to be, the study of Pickering and Horn by (2005) was reviewed. They carried out their research in a New Zealand university on "Plagiarism and international students: a matter of values differences?" The focus of their study was on different perceptions of students about what plagiarism involves and the possible sources of these differences. They adopted a quantitative survey approach with the use of a questionnaire which was administered to thirty-one Chinese students about to start their university study and sixty-three New Zealand students in their first year of university study.

The questionnaire included six scenarios depicting different types of plagiarism and the students were required to make a value judgment about the behaviour described on a nine point Likert scale from "extremely good" to "extremely bad". Results from the analysed data suggested significant differences in views on the gravity of plagiarism. Chinese students were generally more tolerant of the action of the students in the scenarios than the New Zealand students. In fact, many of the Chinese students saw some of the actions described in the scenarios as good, when all the scenarios were in fact, different types of plagiarism. Another difference was that in a crisis the Chinese students were three times more likely to engage the help of a friend to write an essay for them. None of the New Zealand students thought it good (or even neutral) to cut and paste an essay from the Internet, whereas 13% of Chinese thought it good, and a quarter in total did not think the action bad.

The data also suggests that the attitude towards plagiarism of both the Chinese and New Zealand students was different from the stated requirement in the regulations. In this study, it is observed that the New

Zealand students were ahead of the Chinese on their programmes so would have had time to become familiar with the expectations. The Chinese students were just about to start and this gave a rather unfair advantage to the New Zealand students, potentially distorting the statistics and findings.

Another study in this line was that of Power (2009) which she carried out in a university in the US and focused on university students' perception of plagiarism. The purpose of the study was to have an insight into the ways first and second year university students understand the concept of plagiarism. The research method, as opposed to that used by Pickering and Hornby (above), was qualitative using interview and focus group sessions to collect data with the use of phenomenology and grounded theory as an approach to exploring the students' understanding and experiences. Since all the participants were home students, probably due to the location of the university, Powell (2009) did not explore cultural differences. Although there were no Nigerian student participants, the findings are of relevance to this conceptual review as they are indicative of the perceptions of students of other nationalities.

From her findings eleven themes on students' perceptions of plagiarism emerged and were grouped under two core themes: agency and externalization. She used the term "Agency" to code the student responses that suggested they made their own decisions which could result in plagiarism (2009, p. 648). She grouped as "Externalization" the responses which reflected the things the students had been told about plagiarism but did not reflect their own understanding or reason for avoiding plagiarism. She claimed that a few students were comfortable with avoiding plagiarism because of the reasons they have been given by their teachers (externalization). However, many other students expressed a stronger need for a personal reason (agency) because they found that an external reason for adhering to a rule proved to be an insufficient motivation (Power, 2009, p. 645). Her findings further revealed that labelling students who plagiarise as immoral could be because of lacking a deeper understanding of the motivation driving their actions. Many of the students "craved a sense of agency surrounding the issue" (Power, 2009, p. 659). They wanted to be able to make informed decisions that would not result in plagiarism.

In Australia, Tsintzoglou (2011) carried out a doctoral research study on "Japanese postgraduate students' perceptions of and attitudes towards plagiarism". The study which took place in the University of Melbourne adopted a mixed methodology using phenomenology as the approach. The participants were four postgraduate Japanese students who all participated in completing a questionnaire while three participated in a follow-up interview. Analysis showed that the development of the student' perceptions of and attitudes towards plagiarism started in Japan with some instruction on citation techniques, although the regulations were not very strict. On arrival at Australia to study they were met with very strict regulations, more teaching on plagiarism and more emphasis on written essay work. He observed that when the students were introduced to plagiarism in Australia, they did not find it difficult to understand the concept of plagiarism or to learn more specific attribution techniques but felt and expressed the need for more explicit instruction for each of the required referencing styles.

On the attitude of the Japanese students, Tsintzoglou (2011) observed that there were some variations in attitude which followed Australian university regulations. He explained that the three students

interviewed showed a connection with their primary academic context. It appeared that the initial introduction of the concept of plagiarism and the academic regulations had a lasting impact on the students that participated in this study. There is value in the methodological approach adopted by Tsintzoglou (2011) for his research, but the sample size is quite small and findings from phenomenological research are usually not generalisable. However, this study provides insight for education providers and other stakeholders to better understand and help this specific category of students, knowing that they have preliminary understanding of plagiarism issues and can adapt successfully to new academic context without much difficulty.

The findings of the doctoral research by Tsintzoglou (2011) are relevant to this review because it provides different evidence to other studies with international students successfully adapting to a more stringent set of regulations for plagiarism. It will be interesting to find out if the Nigerian students were introduced to plagiarism in Nigerian universities and compare the impact it has had on them with the findings of the impact on the Japanese students.

In summary, Pickering and Hornby (2005) expressed their views on the perceptions of the Chinese and New Zealand students based on questionnaire results. These views portrayed largely incomplete understanding of the concept of plagiarism among the group of students. Sutherland-Smith (2005) revealed widely differing conceptions of plagiarism by students, staff and the institution. Power (2009) suggested that students were unclear about plagiarism evidenced in their inability to differentiate between quoting, citing and paraphrasing. These were similar to the findings of Roig (2012) that students are often unclear as to what constitutes plagiarism and do not understand correct forms of paraphrasing. Tsintzoglou (2011) asserted that where there is an early introduction and education on the concept in the home country of the international students, it can have a long-lasting impact. Power (2009) found that students who understood the concept of plagiarism and its requirement wanted a personal reason to adhere to the “rule” or requirements for proper academic writing. It can be deduced from these findings that where students have a good foundation of understanding and they also have a personal reason to adhere to the requirements, they are likely to have a better attitude to plagiarism.

10. Students' Attitude towards Plagiarism

Attitude refers to the perceived stance of an individual. In this conceptual review, it is referred to as the tendency to intentionally partake in unacceptable academic conduct which could result in plagiarism or condoning the act of plagiarism. Several researchers (Tran, 2012; Murtaza et al., 2013; Ghajarzadeh et al., 2013) have explored the attitude of students towards plagiarism arriving at different findings which suggest that there could be many influences on their attitude.

Tran (2012) investigated the perceptions and attitudes of international students towards plagiarism through action research. The study carried out in Australia presented plagiarism views and attitudes among students enrolled in a core subject in the Diploma in Business Administration at La Trobe University Melbourne. These students were mainly from China, Vietnam, Thailand, Japan, Oman and

Saudi Arabia. Tran (2012) argued that culture is not decisive in shaping students' understanding and attitude towards referencing and plagiarism. Since the researcher believed that these students need timely support and a structured guidance to learn to manage plagiarism they designed an action research project in which citation and referencing was explicitly taught in one of their subjects.

Following the teaching embedded in the action research, the researcher used mixed methods: a questionnaire was completed by 72 students and a focus group session in which eight students participated at the end of the 13-week course. Another source of data was the researcher's field notes on students' feedback regarding referencing during the trimester. Although the study of Tran (2012) did not centre entirely on student attitude, the focus was on factors that could affect the development of students' attitude towards plagiarism which explores how they behave rather than how they understand the concept.

The findings suggested that plagiarism is the outcome of complex personal and situational factors. Some of the factors identified were students' English proficiency, the inherent writing style in their home country, their motivation, their learning style (passive or active), together with the different approaches to referencing adopted by different teachers. Findings included the following.

- Forty-five per cent of the students surveyed indicated that they still did not believe they could write a good essay and manage referencing correctly.
- At the end of the course some students reported that they were still not sure what plagiarism meant and how this word was pronounced.
- They found referencing to be confusing.
- They felt that they needed more time to practice citation and referencing and generally more guidance with plagiarism requirements which they found particularly difficult.
- Although by the end of the course, most students understood the importance of citation, some students still believed that referencing was not that important.

Tran (2012, p. 21) suggested that these factors need to be considered while designing activities aimed at familiarising international students with issues of academic integrity in "Western" institutions and providing them with adequate support. In a similar vein, Murtaza et al. (2013) carried out a large-scale study on the "Evaluation of student's perception and behaviour towards plagiarism in Pakistani universities". The focus was on students' knowledge of related policies, their attitude towards plagiarism and their views about penalties. This mixed methods study used both interviews and questionnaires as data collection tools from 25,742 participating students across 6 disciplines in 35 Pakistani universities. The conclusions were that there was an extensive lack of student understanding of plagiarism across all the 35 universities surveyed. From their findings, 94% of the students reported that they were unaware of the plagiarism policies.

Taking a different approach from those adopted by Tran (2012) and Murtaza et al. (2013), Ghajarzadeh et al. (2013) carried out an empirical study on the attitude towards plagiarism among Iranian medical students of Tehran University of Medical Sciences. The researchers aimed at assessing the attitude of

these medical students with the use of questionnaires (of which 198 were completed out of 230). They found that the interns (those that will be specialists soon) gave more correct answers to questions in the “*attitude towards plagiarism questionnaire*” than the other participants. They had a relatively higher score of positive attitude towards plagiarism (fewer tendencies to plagiarise) than the other participants. This suggests that they were less likely to participate intentionally or condone unethical academic practices in relation to plagiarism because they had a better understanding.

They concluded that resident doctors training in developing countries were not sufficiently familiar with plagiarism and therefore more training should be provided for them. This study gives an insight to the potential problems that could result from inadequate exposure and education of students on the concept of plagiarism.

11. Possible Causes of Student Plagiarism

The earlier section focused on student plagiarism-related factors (awareness, perception and attitude) that will be investigated in this conceptual review paper and this section considers other possible causes of student plagiarism. It is of interest to the researcher as it provides further insight to the possible reasons Nigerian students plagiarize which informed the conceptual model designed by Orim (2014) for managing the occurrence of student plagiarism in Nigerian universities. Although cheating is not necessarily plagiarism, deliberate plagiarism is a type of cheating and Saeed et al. (2011, p. 123) suggested that the students’ act of deceit could be mainly due to lack of awareness. This could be the case in many institutions where there is inadequate awareness created about plagiarism. However, there are other possible reasons to consider.

In her study carried out in a Nigerian university, Babalola (2012, p. 53) identified the most significant causes of student plagiarism as the “ease of copying from the internet”, desire to earn good grades, poor knowledge of appropriate citing principles and pressure to meet assignment deadlines. In addition to lacking the skills to adhere to academic conventions and to manage their time, these students seemingly plagiarised deliberately for other personal academic gains. However, Ellery (2008) observed in her study in South Africa, that when students plagiarise, they do so with little deliberate intention to deceive, but rather, because of poor understanding of technical matters (such as correct referencing norms). Additionally, she identified ignorance of higher-order issues such as writing as a process, knowledge as a constructed entity, establishment of one’s own voice through language, and referencing, together with a lack of awareness of plagiarism, as problems.

Hence, the students could plagiarise accidentally either because they were not aware or lacked the requisite skills. They could also plagiarise intentionally because they want to achieve certain objectives. From reviewed literature Park (2003, pp. 479-480; Orim, 2014) identified some reasons why students plagiarise that were in relation to students:

- Thinking the lecturer will not care;
- Thinking they will not get caught;

- Running out of time;
- Not having any moral or ethical reason not to plagiarise;
- Not wanting to learn anything but to just pass the assignment;
- Not seeing the difference between group work and collusion;
- Not being aware of penalties;
- Having a poor attitude towards their teachers;
- Being unable to cope with workload;
- Getting themselves to believe there is nothing wrong with it;
- Feeling the task is completely beyond their ability;
- Believing it is easy to cut and paste from the internet;
- Feeling external pressure to succeed;
- Have always written like that;
- Viewing it as a means of showing lack of regard for authority;
- Having the impression about their lecturers as not being thorough;
- Attempting to trivialize the act;
- Finding it tempting to have so much available information;
- Believing policies will not be enforced;
- Believing there are no deterrence mechanism in place;
- Believing penalties are not given if students are discovered;

The Council of Writing Program Administrators (WPA, 2008, p. 2) observe in their article on “Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism: The WPA Statement on Best Practices” that “no excuse will lessen the breach of ethical conduct that such behaviour represents”, understanding the reason students plagiarize can help teachers determine how to reduce the opportunities for plagiarism. They identified the following as possible causes:

- The fear of failure or taking risks in their own work.
- Poor time-management or planning skills.
- View the course, the assignment, conventions of academic documentation, or the consequences of cheating as unimportant.
- The fact that teachers may present students with generic assignments.
- Failure of Instructors and institutions to report cheating and enforce appropriate penalties when cheating occurs.

WPA (2008) pointed out that students could engage in some practices and conditions that could result in texts that falsely appear to represent plagiarism as it is defined. Some of these are:

- Not knowing how to integrate the ideas of others and document the sources of those ideas appropriately in their texts.
- Making mistakes as they learn how to integrate others’ words or ideas into their own work.
- Not knowing how to take careful and fully documented notes during research.

- Coming from an earlier education background where plagiarism was viewed differently or less stringently.
- Being viewed by lecturers in the new institution as having already learned appropriate academic conventions of research and documentation.
- Receiving insufficient support from instructors when learning how to research and document sources.
- Failure of instructors to appreciate the difficulty of novice academic writers to execute these tasks successfully.
- Lack of familiarity with the conventions governing attribution and plagiarism in foreign institutions.

Park expressed that plagiarism is “often complex and multidimensional with no simple cause and effect link” (2003, p. 479) and as such there has to be a complex approach to addressing it (Macdonald & Carroll, 2006; Howard & Davies, 2009; Velliari, 2016). So, beyond the reasons in the aforementioned lists (Park, 2003; WPA, 2008) there are complex issues which could result to instances of students’ inappropriate use of sources or texts. In relation to possible causes of student plagiarism, some other authors have expressed their views on pedagogy, previous educational background, language of origin, skills gap and internal and external pressure. Some of these views are summarised as follows.

Pedagogy refers to the teaching, learning and assessment style the students have been exposed to (Ellery, 2008, p. 507). Where they have become used to the “rote” learning approach unlike the “student-centred” approach to learning they would struggle to express themselves. In a system where students believe they do not have a right to their own expressions (Abasi & Akbari, 2008) they struggle to be “heard” and at the same time, reproduce what they are taught. The high level academic writing skills (such as critical thinking) become elusive and they may not fully understand what they study.

Some international students studying in UK come from countries where it is believed that knowledge is held as universal and adherence to international conventions on copyrights is not appropriately emphasised as seen in the study of Carroll (2007, p. 29). Furthermore, Walker (1998, p. 93) observed that many students assume that the standard from the previous study background should still be applicable in the new. So in cases where the previous institutions did not put emphasis on the issue of plagiarism, the students may expect no more stringent requirements in the new institutions they may attend. Besides these possible causes of student plagiarism, Williams (2002) observes that other causes of student plagiarism irrespective of the student’s ability could be grouped as pressure to plagiarise arising internally within an institution (e.g., poor time management, inability to cope with workload, lack of motivation to excel, illness) or externally (e.g., finance, parental factors, desire to test the system).

12. Methods of Detecting and Deterring Student Plagiarism

Due to the perceived complexities and diversity in the way student plagiarism occurs, it follows that its detection and mitigation may also be varied depending on the situation.

13. Detecting Student Plagiarism

The detection of plagiarism is a difficult process which involves checks for similarities in texts, words, phrases and writing styles. It further entails the analysis of identified instances to understand why they occur and furthermore to determine the intent to deceive, which is difficult to establish. As Pecorari (2008, p. 4) stated, demonstrating intentional deception is not straightforward and in certain cases it may be difficult to arrive at a conclusion about whether deceptive intent was present.

Plagiarism detection from similarity checks can be approached in different ways which can be categorised broadly as manual and automated. Most manual strategies use approaches such as visual examination of written documents, manual use of computer systems to search for text matches, examination of the writing style and forensic analysis of documents. Based on the approach to detection, Maurer et al. (2006, p. 1056) categorized plagiarism detection into three methods: Manual search of characteristic phrases, Text-matching and Stylometry.

13.1 Manual Search of Characteristic Phrases

This involves taking any paragraph from a written document and carrying out a search on a single or multiple search engines (e.g., Google). Harris (2011) suggested some defined steps for this manual detection as looking for the clues such as writing going off the topic, identification of unusual formatting, mixed citation styles, lack of references or quotations in the piece of work, anachronisms (where the submission refers to long-past events as current), anomalies of diction and style and where there are obvious indicators of copying. Following the identification of the clues, he suggested locating the source by checking:

- The list of sites for “free” or “for-sale” term papers;
- All publicly mounted Web pages and those with articles free to users and accessible only by going directly to the site;
- Paid databases over the Web;
- CD-ROM resources having encyclopaedias and some databases.

Then, if the source is not yet found, he proposed searching for the paper online by checking search engines (like Google, AltaVista, etc.), some appropriate databases on the Web or the institutions’ library’s online database. Finally, he suggested that plagiarism detection software can be used where there is still no success at the manual detection although; the software is usually only able to carry out text matching. The second category proposed by Maurer et al. (2006, p. 1056) was **Text matching** which involves the word by word comparison of one document against another set. Pecorari (2008, p. 4) explained that checking the textual features involves not only checks on text similarities but also the absence of other textual features, such as quotation marks, which would make the similarity acceptable. Hence she asserts that to determine that a piece of writing has plagiarism features, it must be established that the document in question:

- contains words and/or ideas that are also present in another writing;
- has similarity to another writing that is not accidental;

- fails to adequately attribute its relationship to the earlier one.

This text matching approach differs from the first category which basically checks for similarities by using phrases. This text matching category was further differentiated by the location of the operation into cases where the comparison takes place:

- Locally on the user computer, performing the analysis on local databases of documents or using internet searches;
- Remotely on the server when the user uploads the document and the detection processes take place remotely as well.

In both cases, the detection can only show similarities but there is still the need to examine these occurrences to determine if they are instances of plagiarism or whether there are other reasons for similarities detection. In the second option the use of text-matching software is employed. Where there are large class sizes as is the case in most Nigerian federal and state universities, it will be challenging to use these approaches manually as most lecturers would be unwilling to engage. In view of this, the use of digital tools for automating the process of detecting text matches becomes appealing.

These tools (Turnitin, CopyCatchGold, Eve2, Ephorus, Urkund, Kopi, WordCheck, etc.) work in different ways but are usually based on the comparison of two or more documents to detect levels of similarities and identification of inconsistencies between texts (Culwin & Lancaster, 2000; Lukashenko et al., 2007) state that in order for this comparison to take place, there is a need to assign numeric values called similarity scores to each document. These scores are usually based on different metrics which could be parameters and aspects in the documents.

Culwin and Lancaster (2000) stated that the plagiarism detection task is not the same as basic authorship attribution checking but also relates to content. Even though text matches are relatively easy to detect, several forms of plagiarism (ideas, processes, unpublished work, large amounts of copyrighted material, non-digitised sources and ghost-written work) may not be detected by text matching tools.

The third category suggested by Maurer et al. (2006) was Stylometry. This is based on understanding the individual and unique writing styles of different persons which will enable the analysis of these writing styles. This manual process can be carried out within the same document where there is a check for instances of plagiarism or it could be compared with earlier written document by the same author (student). The disputed writing can be evaluated using different factors within the same writing. These factors could include common spelling mistakes, a change of vocabulary, use of punctuation and common structural features such as word counts, sentence length distributions, etc. (Maurer et al., 2006, p. 1056).

Very large class sizes would mean that this approach will be difficult to adopt in most Nigerian universities except the private ones where the class sizes are manageable so the lecturers can understand the students' writing styles and keep record of their previous writings. Although a number of these approaches and the present text-matching software work well in detecting similarities, Maurer et al. (2006) pointed out that software tools may not always detect these similarities due to plagiarism when:

- There is a deliberate attempt to interfere with the way they work by using extensive paraphrasing with the help of synonym sing tools, syntactic variations or different expressions for same contents;
- Plagiarism is based on documents that are not available in the electronic format;
- Plagiarism crosses language boundaries.

In universities where students use textbooks and lecturer hand-outs (such as some Nigerian Universities) and rarely submit coursework electronically into databases, instances of plagiarism could be based on documents that are not available electronically, or in accessible databases. In cases like these, it becomes difficult to detect instances of the occurrence of plagiarism digitally; hence, manual use of search engines for text-matching and checking on the writing style becomes a very useful option where the class size is manageable.

14. Deterring Student Plagiarism

The occurrence of plagiarism takes different forms as explored in section 2.1.3. Several attempts have been made by researchers to deter these different types of plagiarism. Macdonald and Carroll (2006) observed that the main concern was how best to use different electronic systems to detect student plagiarism. They argue that there was a missing aspect in the debate which was the recognition of plagiarism as a complex problem. Other researchers (Carroll & Appleton, 2001; Park, 2004; Relph & Randle, 2006) were of similar opinions and expressed that attempting to mitigate student plagiarism is not just about detecting it but is all encompassing involving the institutions, lecturers and students. To some extent this is a historical account about research circles because the debate has now moved on and the complexity is more generally recognised. However, there is still a lot of catching up to be done in some countries that have been less engaged with the earlier research.

In line with these views, Wellman and Fallon (2012) carried out research on deterring inappropriate collusion as a form of student plagiarism. They reported their progress and findings on an action research project designed to address the problem of collusion among postgraduate students on an international MBA program at a management school in a UK university. The action research resulted in findings that a case study approach to assignments had largely designed-out plagiarism (as recommended by Carroll, 2007) but collusion between students had taken its place. The researchers used mixed methods involving the use of 25 student-interview sessions, 3 focus group sessions and self-administered questionnaires with 182 participants. They adopted a strategy where all MBA assignments were submitted to the Turnitin text matching software with a wide broadcast of the dangers and penalties resulting from malpractice before or after the survey. The findings were as follows:

- Students believed that assignments requiring reference to common sources of information meant that submission similarities could not be avoided;
- Mixed reactions were observed in relation to sharing of materials, some were of the view that it was inevitable and others felt it was as a result of not wanting to fail or in some cases lack of ability to avoid its occurrence;

- Self-reporting of low level of occurrence.

These findings led to some specific changes in relation to:

- Induction was revised to include formative assessments specifically on anti-plagiarism;
- The Module content was increased to include core skills taught throughout the first semester to address the difficulties these students face;
- Staff support systems and staff development were adjusted to achieve greater awareness within the teaching team.

Wellman and Fallon (2012) conclude that their prevention strategy was effective, resulting in the reduction of the overall rate of collusion among the investigated cohort. This strategy is a good one because it does not focus on one group of stakeholders which would have been insufficient to discourage the occurrence. Carroll (2007) articulated methods for discouraging student plagiarism which are reinforced by other researchers. These ideas are described next.

14.1 Informing Students

Informing students about institutional academic conventions can be challenging as they receive so much information when they commence their studies so that it becomes difficult for them to identify which is most relevant. Carroll (2007) observed that regardless of the option adopted for informing the students, the critical facts should always be stated. She suggested being positive, by stressing the link between good marks and attributing ideas and references before mentioning punishment. She also emphasised the need to signpost or indicate where help can be received on related issues.

14.2 Teaching the Skills

Park et al. (2011, p. 46) observed in their study that there was an on-going debate on who was responsible for providing plagiarism and citation instruction between the English department, writing centre, tutoring centre, instructor who incorporates research component, or library. A much earlier study by Scanlon and Neumann (2002) argued that faculty should focus on acting as educators and are in agreement with the idea of viewing students as learners who may lack the requisite academic writing skills.

Carroll (2007, p. 59) recommended some ways of teaching the skills such as: offering a compulsory general course on study skills, making the skills a required aspect of the study, incorporating skills into discipline-based teaching and providing optional guidance and academic support as suggested also by Ellery (2008). Some of the required skills are related to basic note-taking, proper citation and referencing procedures, use of referencing management software, essay writing, paraphrasing, summarizing, etc. Like this approach, Roig (2006, p. 597) had advocated concentration on an instructional system of prevention through the development of courses on responsible conduct of research which would explore a variety of research integrity issues. He identifies the need for the incorporation of research integrity into continuing education with instructions on plagiarism and a focus on ethical writing.

14.3 Instituting and Implementing Institutional Policies and Culture

Kenny (2007, p. 14) suggests the need to foster a culture of honesty and integrity which clearly states that “plagiarism in any form is unacceptable” among its academic community. Where an all-inclusive

approach is desired, there is a need to have an institutional culture and effective plagiarism policies, which will make it difficult for plagiarism to take place. However, Onuoha and Ikonne (2013, p. 104) observed that while institutional policies provide guidelines for plagiarism prevention, the task of its detection lies directly with lecturers due to their close contact with the students. As Harris (2011) noted, a lot can be done to detect plagiarism, though there is a need to report the cases to the right people so the students can be consistently judged in line with institutional guidelines and procedures.

Where these institutional policies are present, Carroll (2007, p. 110) observed that if they have not been reviewed, evaluated and updated in the “last few years”, they are probably not fit for purpose. Macdonald and Carroll (2006) listed some ways of identifying an institution requiring policy review as lacking:

- Clear documented evidence of teaching students the required skills to adhere to academic writing conventions;
- Clear evidence of institutional promotion of academic integrity for both staff and students;
- Clear approach to creating awareness of academic regulations;
- The creation of awareness of the academic responsibilities of the students;
- Staff development activities in the deterrence of plagiarism;
- Staff update processes on current procedures and regulations, course design, plagiarism detection and legal responsibilities;
- Systematic and coherent approach to collecting and archiving data on plagiarism cases;
- Consistent approach to deterring plagiarism which may be evident in staff taking individual decisions in handling identified cases of plagiarism in student work;
- Accurate statistical figures of cases.

14.4 Using Assessment to Deter Plagiarism

Some researchers argue that the structure of the assessment is a factor in student plagiarism as the students may view assessment as purely a means to “pass” (Le Heron, 2001, p. 261) and make progress in life. Some other researchers are of the view that the likelihood of copying is minimised where assignments are made difficult for students to easily get their answers by using search engines. Christie (2003, p. 58), referred to this strategy as “setting up roadblocks within the course”. In line with this view, a number of researchers have identified that focus on the “process” over the “product” is an effective way to deter student plagiarism (Carroll & Appleton, 2001; Harris, 2001; McKeachie, 2002; Johnson, 2004). In order to design out plagiarism, Harris (2011) in agreement with Carroll (2007, p. 36) suggested that giving clear and specific instructions and using a signed statement of originality. Davies (2004) however suggested the use of peer review process in assessment as a tool for the improvement of learning and discovering plagiarism. Carroll (2007, p. 47) suggested that learning can be assessed by requiring an outline or annotated list of sources and drafts instead of an essay in some instances. Another innovative method in assessment also suggested as a possible deterrent is the use of reflective journals (McDowell & Brown, 2001, p. 6). Furthermore, Carroll (2007, p. 48) stated that other assessment types can be used to verify authenticity in the form of open-book tests, in-class or supervised tasks and random viva voce

examinations.

14.5 Instituting and Implementing Penalties

The implementation of all the foregoing suggestions without instituting penalties may not result in the desired result. Carroll (2007, p. 88) argued that an all-inclusive or holistic approach to the deterrence of plagiarism should include informing students of the possible consequences of their failure to adhere to the academic regulations.

Since Lambert et al. (2006) reported from their findings that one of the strongest deterrents is the fear of being caught and what might happen as a result, it seems clear that instituting and implementing penalties should be a part of the holistic approach of the deterrence of plagiarism. However, a case for uniformity is made by Park (2003, p. 484) in the process of applying penalties across faculties and institutions.

14.6 Sustainable Reforms

Although some universities are aware of issues surrounding academic integrity and are managing plagiarism in several ways, Sutherland-Smith (2010) pointed out that most of these management strategies are basically detection, deterrence and provision of information about plagiarism. She expressed the view that such measures may not lead to sustainable management practices for plagiarism and academic integrity. She explained in agreement with Macdonald and Carroll (2006) that “sustainable” reform refers not just to engaging the student in ethically sustainable academic practices, but also enabling the institution to engage in discussions about its overall plagiarism management philosophy and practices (Hayes & Introna, 2005; Flowerdew & Li, 2007). Sutherland-Smith (2010) suggested a holistic approach to the management of plagiarism, through the adoption of proper dialogue about the association between academics, universities and students.

15. Current or Proposed Solutions

The conceptual review suggests that a focus on the factors that influence the plagiarism as “a concept” and not the “practice of plagiarism” is tightly linked to a number of issues. These identified issues are: advancements in Information and Communications Technology (ICT); advancements in knowledge and understanding of the concept and the evolving educational system with these advancements in technology.

16. Advancements in Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

Advancements in ICT as a product of globalization is one of the most recognizable influences that has made a difference with respect to plagiarism. Technology has increasingly influenced the scope of the concept of plagiarism. When plagiarism was initially understood, it was summed up as the theft of an individual’s idea or work. This was the prevailing notion with respect to the concept, therefore, plagiarism was limited to acts such as summarizing without attribution and false citations etc.

However, with the rise in modern technology especially information and communications technology, there is an increase in the scope of the subject matter or what plagiarism entails. Plagiarism is not limited

to rudimentary academic misconducts such as paraphrasing without attribution, rather it involves more complex and intricate acts such as digital file sharing. Sharing digital files is now enhanced and easily done and thus this has become a worrying feature of the modern plagiarism practice. The shared files can then be easily incorporated into the plagiarists work and passed on as theirs without detection (Oblinger & Oblinger, 2005; Babalola, 2012, p. 53).

The implication of technology that this literature review has shown is that technology leads to an increase in the forms of plagiarism. As Bushway and Nash (1977) and Simmons (1999) argue, academic fraud existed before the digital age and the form of plagiarism during the pre-digital age era could include: stealing another's idea. But with the digital era, the landscape of plagiarism as it was known began to shift, the concept started to incorporate so many other practices. In summary, advancements in ICT has made concept of plagiarism more complex and intricate, imbuing it with a character much different than when it was originally conceptualized.

17. Advancements in Knowledge and Understanding of the Concept

Having seen how technology affects the notion of plagiarism, changing it from a simple concept to one that is more complex, this section shall examine another influence on the concept of plagiarism. It is the belief of this paper that increased knowledge and understanding with regards to plagiarism changes how people perceive the concept. It changes the mental image or idea that people have with regards to the concept thus affecting how it will be addressed in the future.

Modern technology brings about an easy collation of ideas and materials about plagiarism and this aids in furthering research on the issue. Some of these ideas have great implications on the concept, they result in a paradigm shift leading to a more holistic concept. For example, the idea that culture has a significant influence on the practice of plagiarism changes the notion that plagiarism is an intentional act to steal an individual's work or idea. In contrast to earlier times when plagiarism was simply summed up as stealing an individual's work or idea, in present times, the notion cannot effectively encapsulate what plagiarism entails. Increased research has shown that it is erroneous to regard every act of plagiarism as intellectual property theft.

Thus, when the culture of a student is not considered, it will be easy to regard every paper with features of plagiarism as an intentional and blatant theft of intellectual property. However, when the culture of a student is considered, a paper with features of plagiarism will not be flagged and penalized arbitrarily. There is the tacit understanding among the lecturers that this act was not done intentionally to steal an individual's work or done with the intention to circumvent an assessment. This was reaffirmed by Pecorari (2003) who, in one of her studies concluded that although textual features of the students' works could point to plagiarism, the outcome of her interviews with the students revealed that they did not intend to plagiarize. That much is true; it is a fact that the educational culture of students can greatly limit their ability to avoid plagiarism in the future especially when they find themselves in a foreign or more developed educational environment in contrast to where they came from. This was argued by both Marsh

et al. (1997) and Schmitt (2005). Furthermore, a study carried out by Adiningrum and Kutieleh (2011) is important here as it reinforces the point. In their study, they found out that twenty-six out of thirty-three participants acknowledge that the concept of plagiarism was foreign and was never tackled.

A further example is with regards to Italian and Asian students wherein aspects of plagiarism like memorization without acknowledgement is commended because it is culturally acceptable (Sherman, 1992; Sowden, 2005). Thus, when students from Italy and Asia find themselves in Western institutions, they may unintentionally engage in plagiarism. Sherman (1992) also highlighted the influences of culture in connection to plagiarism. The author pointed out that students may engage in the practice because of respect for the expert they copy as they regard correcting or paraphrasing the work as disrespectful. Research that has uncovered these evidences brings about a realization that plagiarism is not intentional (non-prototypical plagiarism) but a function of the educational background of the student. It thus becomes apparent that increased understanding of the concept is a great influence on how plagiarism is perceived and will be treated in institutions. Plagiarism has thus become a concept that is beset with inconsistencies which leads to continued redefinition of the concept.

18. The Evolving Educational System

Based on the literatures reviewed, it can be discerned that the primary aim of most higher educational systems is to teach the students to synthesize various academic materials into an idea that would be regarded as theirs demonstrating that “learning of the content has taken place”. Educational systems want to ensure that students can appropriately communicate understanding in writing. This has influenced the concept of plagiarism in the sense that it has led to an increase in the popularity of the concept. Contrastingly, if educational systems focused on rote learning and multiple choice exams, then plagiarism will not be so much of an issue and would not assume as much importance as it does presently. Nevertheless, it is arguable that to test “deep-learning” there is a need for academic writing in the form of “essays”, “coursework”, etc.

However, considering that information technology is growing into every facet of the educational system, new methods of setting assignments should put into consideration the desired outcome in terms of the achievement of learning outcomes. Cummings (2003) suggests that creative assignments would divert the attention of students from seeking direct answers from the internet or online sources. Assignments which have straightforward answers rather than exploration of “what if” scenarios for instance, may not be productive in eliciting deep-learning from the students (Arce Espinoza & Monge Nájera, 2014). Teachers should set questions with these in mind and think of ways to get the students thinking, away from ready online answers.

19. Discussion

As challenges with university admission, infrastructure, funding, quality and standards, research and development and a high rate of graduate unemployment prevail, students are placed under continual

pressure. They are under pressure to secure admission and thereafter, succeed. Where fewer than 40% of students get places to study every year, the rise in student mobility will most likely continue (Clark & Ausukuya, 2013). This poses some concern over the preparedness of these students in relation to their Nigerian academic background as opposed to that which they will meet at the universities overseas.

These issues coupled with very few studies into most aspects of student plagiarism in Nigerian universities have confirmed the need for more research. Though some of the researchers (Adebayo, 2011; Orim, 2011; Babalola, 2012; Onuoha & Ikonne, 2013; Orim et al., 2013; Orim, 2014) have explored Nigerian student experiences, awareness, perception and some aspect of referencing, they were in relation to single universities, presenting the opportunity for more broad-based research that would focus on addressing areas that have not been considered so far. This conceptual review paper has presented the findings from the review of literature on student plagiarism. In summary, the findings were that:

- Sometimes, plagiarism may be a form of academic misconduct which impacts on the ability of the student to actually learn and satisfy assessment requirements or it may be an indication of a deep-seated learning difficulty;
- Plagiarism is a great concern in intellectual circles depicted in literature mainly by developed countries (e.g., Australia, United States of America and United Kingdom) and more sparsely by developing countries (e.g., Egypt, South Africa and Nigeria);
- There has not been adequate research on plagiarism as a form of academic misconduct in Nigerian universities (relative to the number carried out in developed countries);
- In the last four years, some researchers have started to carry out studies on student plagiarism in Nigerian universities;
- Student plagiarism appears to be the result of the existence of an enabling environment where there is lack of awareness and information, with minimal checks in place and in some cases, lack of deterrence measures;
- The creation of awareness and teaching of the appropriate skills is not a complete strategy to adopt for dealing with student plagiarism; rather, there is a need for a holistic approach.

20. Conclusion

The aim of this conceptual review paper was to provide an insight into the situation of plagiarism among students generally and particularly in Nigerian higher education institutions. This insight provided is to ensure institutions in Nigeria and abroad comprehend the situation with respect to Nigeria. With the aim in mind, the author concluded that because of several factors (such as culture, awareness, perception), some Nigerian students struggle with the right perception of plagiarism. This inability to comprehend the nature of their actions makes an understanding of the short term and long term consequences of their actions impossible. This conclusion was reached following the examination of the eight themes which served as the body of the paper. These themes include: origin of plagiarism, forms of plagiarism, possible consequences of plagiarism, general views on student plagiarism, possible causes, methods of detecting,

detering and mitigating student plagiarism and proposed solutions.

The concept of plagiarism originated from the simple idea that it revolved around stealing someone's work but the concept has grown and does not subscribe to that notion alone. It has so many forms including and not limited to copying, cutting and pasting, false citation, paraphrasing and summarizing without attribution and the use of third parties such as paper mills (Harris, 2001). Irrespective of the form the practice took, they all led to similar consequences as it not only affected the student but the higher institution in which the practice occurred. The harmful consequences of the practice have naturally led to scholars seeking an understanding of the concept with the hope that increased understanding will unlock solutions that could help curb the practice. The exploration of the general views on student plagiarism could be regarded as the most significant aspect of this study. This sections provided an insight to what could be the root cause of plagiarism among some students in Nigeria HEI.

Amongst other factors identified which influenced plagiarism amongst Nigerian students frequently was culture and this reveals what the traditional notion of plagiarism does not cater for. The traditional notion is that "*plagiarism is the theft of a person's work or idea*", but an examination of the influence of culture showed that plagiarism may occur not with the intention to steal a work or an idea but may occur because of a different notion of acknowledgement. The westernized notion of plagiarism does not consider the varying cultures and their different notions and perceptions of knowledge sharing. Plagiarism cannot be understood the same way by everybody. Unlike in western culture, other cultures such as in Asia may not see knowledge as a commodity or as intellectual property that must be cited. Knowledge belongs to all and thus citation or attribution does not hold much importance. If this point is applied to Nigerian higher educational systems, one can begin to grasp the nature of the problem in Nigeria and appropriate measures can be formulated and implemented.

Summarily, a lot of Nigerian students struggle with the right perception of plagiarism and in most cases, do not understand the long-term consequences. Besides the implementation of a holistic approach at managing student plagiarism, the higher institutions need to monitor and evaluate results and adapt measures to the institutional context. Equally, the traditional methods for tackling plagiarism in western educational systems cannot be arbitrarily applied to international students as different methods should be formulated as the situation is quite unique. Also, there is a need for overseas universities to adjust their management framework to properly cater to international students.

Recommendations

The author recommends the following as probable solution: Promoting Academic Integrity; Embracing Cultures; Proactive Learning Environment; Discarding Stereotypes and the Traditional Notions of Plagiarism; Enabling Technology and training Staff and the Provision of Institutional support for students and reinforcement of good practice.

1) Promoting Academic Integrity

Findings from studies carried out by several researchers (Agu et al., 2009; Orim, 2011; Orim et al., 2013; Orim, 2014; Ibegbulam & Eze, 2015; Olutola, 2016) in Nigerian Higher Institutions of learning suggest that there are occurrences of student plagiarism. As reviewed in several other sources earlier, this finding is not peculiar to the Nigerian Higher Institutions of Learning. There is a need for a shift in focus from labelling this as academic misconduct to seeking ways for promoting good academic conduct. Some universities in the past have used different methods such as Honour Code to achieve the promotion of good academic conduct, but this may not prove relevant in another university in another context.

The Nigerian Higher Education Institutions could benefit from the display and award of a certificate for a very well written piece of course work which will encourage the students to continue in the right path of proper research and academic writing as well as model good practice to the other students encouraging them to do the same. This approach would glean from that promoted by a consortium of over 200 North American higher education institutions that support an approach that emphasizes the fundamental values of academic integrity: honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility (McCabe & Pavela, 1997).

2) Embracing Cultures

As revealed by this conceptual review, culture plays a role in how individuals write and acknowledge ideas (Kelm et al., 2013; Szilagyi, 2014). Individuals from different educational cultural upbringing offer insight and this should be coveted. They offer a deeper insight into the concept of plagiarism and what it entails. They are the key to unlocking a more complete understanding of the concept. If the culture of others with respect to acknowledging ideas is embraced instead of out rightly condemned, the implications include the creation of radical solutions and policies that have shaped how plagiarism is addressed (Sherman, 1992).

For instance, Sowden (2005) proposed a solution whereby instead of forcing students to adopt the educational norms of their host countries, the aim will be to encourage them to operate in both cultures (2005, p. 229). So as Sowden (2005) noted, instead of discarding memorization, it can be harnessed. Solutions will thus go beyond whether students have copied and how to apprehend those students but solutions will be geared towards checking if the student has displayed any form of learning and how it can be improved. Solutions will thus be geared towards preventing stigmatization or inappropriate responses since the act may not be intentional. This is what Hayes and Introna (2005) argued, they hoped that educators having understood the cultural influence on plagiarism would act ethically when responding to the issues of plagiarism among international students.

3) Proactive Learning Environment

There is the need for learning environments to be proactive, measures should be taken to ensure that the practice of plagiarism should not occur rather than waiting for it to occur and then taking care of it. With the understanding that not all plagiarism is intentional, there could be methods in place to properly assimilate foreign students or students with different educational cultures.

4) Discarding Stereotypes and the Traditional Notions of Plagiarism:

Chandrasoma et al. (2004) seeks to move “beyond plagiarism” as a common concept. This is the same principle this author believes should be utilized as a solution. There is a need to look “beyond plagiarism” as a concept and how it is defined. The stereotype is that any act of plagiarism is intentional but as several authors (Marsh et al., 1997; Schmitt, 2005) have highlighted, that is far from the truth. Thus when a student submits an assignment (irrespective of the fact that plagiarism is detected), the question should be asked “did the student submit a paper that is reflective of the students learning?”. Hence, there should be a focus on strengths, not just weaknesses. The concept of plagiarism should not be encapsulated only in the rudimentary notion that plagiarism entails stealing another person’s work or idea. It has evolved beyond this point and a grasp of this fact is the first step in solving the problem. What will follow will be a discard of outdated measures that accompanied the above mentioned notion.

5) Enabling Technology and Staff Train

Where there is available license for text-matching software, this should be implemented with very robust deterrence policies to check the students’ tendency to acknowledge sources. This will ensure that not only are they informed and aware (Ramzan et al., 2012), they are guided to act in accordance with the requirements for appropriate citation of sources for their learning benefit and that of the institution.

6) Providing Institutional Support for Students

In addition to setting assessment that will not encourage plagiarism, it will be useful for the Higher Institutions in question to set up English language units or Academic Writing Centre where Institutional support can be given to the students on a regular basis. Some measures were identified by Schmitt (2005, pp. 71-72) earlier in the review which will be relevant in Nigerian Higher Institutions include: collaborating with the English language unit and identifying the literary skills that underpin their specific disciplines; finding out what the students can or cannot do or are not aware of regarding academic writing in their disciplines and avoiding cognitive overload in the set assignments.

7) Reinforcing Good Practice

Darab (2006) suggests a preventive approach to tackling the issues of plagiarism. Reinforcing good practice including teaching students about the issue of plagiarism and checking their commitment will be a step towards helping them internalize the values that promote academic integrity.

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