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UTILIZATION OF ANTI-PLAGIARISM SOFTWARE FOR ACADEMIC INTEGRITY PROMOTION BY STAFF IN AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES, ZARIA

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Abstract

This study investigated the utilization of anti-plagiarism software for the promotion of academic integrity among academic staff in Ahmadu Bello University. The study specifically identified the types of anti-plagiarism software available, examined how these tools are utilized, and determined the extent of their utilization among academic staff. A survey research design was adopted, and total enumeration sampling was used to study all 51 academic staff in the university. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages. The findings revealed that several anti-plagiarism software packages are available and in use, notably Turnitin, Grammarly, PlagScan, Drillbit, and Quetext, with Turnitin and Grammarly being the most widely acknowledged. Results further showed that academic staff actively use anti-plagiarism tools for checking originality in research publications and student assignments; however, the level of utilization and institutional integration varies significantly. While many respondents demonstrated high commitment to promoting academic integrity through plagiarism detection, inconsistencies were observed in institutional enforcement, policy implementation, and infrastructural support. The study concludes that although awareness and use of anti-plagiarism software among academic staff are relatively high, inconsistent application and limited institutional support hinder optimal utilization. The study therefore recommends

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stronger library-led policy enforcement, regular training for academic staff, and improved access to licensed plagiarism detection tools to enhance academic integrity within the university.

Keywords: Anti-plagiarism software; Academic integrity; University libraries; Records management; Plagiarism detection

Introduction

Plagiarism, defined as theft, stealing by copying the words or ideas of someone else and passing them off as one's own without crediting the source (Pecorari, 2017), is not a new phenomenon in academia. For decades, studies have reported increasing trends of student plagiarism (McCabe & Trevino, 2013; Park, 2013), though the issue gained renewed attention with the growth of the internet, which intensified the problem. The temptation to cut and paste from online sources without citation, or to purchase prewritten papers from paper mills, has grown. This is driven by easy access to online content, perceptions that internet resources are public goods, low perceived risk of detection, academic pressures, and large class sizes that reduce personal contact between students and faculty (Standler, 2020).

Plagiarism continues to plague academic institutions, undermining the credibility of research and the integrity of scholarly work. Despite repeated warnings, policies, and sanctions, many academic staff and students still engage in unethical writing practices, either deliberately or due to a lack of awareness (Adeyemi & George, 2022). The rapid increase in access to digital content and the ease of copying and pasting materials from online sources have exacerbated this problem, making it more challenging for universities to maintain high academic standards (Olawale, 2023). Consequently, the reliability of academic publications is at risk, as research outputs often contain unoriginal content, diminishing their contribution to knowledge and innovation (Onuoha & Adebayo, 2020).

Academic integrity is a foundational principle in tertiary education, representing the commitment to honesty, trust, fairness, and responsibility in scholarly work. As universities worldwide expand in size and scope, maintaining academic integrity becomes more

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challenging. The availability of digital content and ease of copying from online sources without attribution has made plagiarism more tempting, particularly in institutions under pressure to produce research. Anti-plagiarism software, therefore, has become a critical tool in upholding integrity by enabling the detection of unoriginal content and reinforcing ethical academic practices (Ilchenko 2024).

In Nigeria, the problem of plagiarism is not theoretical; it manifests in both student assignments and the research outputs of academic staff. According to Elonye, Onyenania, and Asunmo (2023), many tertiary-institution users lack full awareness of what constitutes plagiarism, and there is a corresponding deficiency in enforcement of academic integrity policies. Their study suggests that mere awareness of plagiarism does not guarantee its prevention; rather, the systematic use of detection tools needs to be paired with commitment and policy.

Anti-plagiarism tools like Turnitin have been introduced in several Nigerian universities, but their adoption among academic staff is often inconsistent. For example, a study at Bayero University, Kano revealed that while a sizable portion of academicians are aware of Turnitin, the extent to which they actively use it to check for plagiarism is "significantly low." (Akintola, 2023) This indicates a gap between awareness and actual utilization, which undermines the software's potential impact.

The limited use of such tools is not merely a matter of individual choice; systemic barriers inhibit proper adoption. Many academics struggle with interpreting similarity reports, distinguishing between acceptable overlap (such as common phrases, bibliographies, or methodological text) and actual plagiarism. Without specialized training, staff may distrust the reports, misinterpret them, or avoid using the software altogether because they fear falsely accusing colleagues or students (Iichenko 2024).

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Institutional policy frameworks in Nigerian universities are also sometimes weak or vague. According to Elonye et al. (2023), one of the key challenges is the "absence of commitment in checking plagiarism" and a lack of clearly stipulated sanctions or thresholds for similarity. Without such frameworks, academic staff may not feel compelled to regularly use anti-plagiarism tools, especially when detection does not automatically trigger consequences or remediation.

To address these challenges, the Committee of Vice-Chancellors of Nigerian Universities (CVCNU) has developed a home-grown plagiarism detection system called EagleScan, designed specifically for the Nigerian higher education context. (Hussain 2024) Unlike global tools, EagleScan allows for local repositories, peer review workflows, document comparison, and a similarity index tailored to the Nigerian academe.

By mid-2022, EagleScan had been adopted by over 230 institutions in Nigeria, indexing more than 790,000 documents from local repositories. (Hussain 2024) This broad adoption underscores both the scale of plagiarism concerns and the institutional appetite for a detection tool that is contextually relevant, rather than relying exclusively on international platforms that may not fully capture local academic output.

8Despite this promising infrastructure, the question remains: to what extent are **academic staff in university libraries particularly in the Northwest Nigeria leveraging EagleScan (or other tools) in their daily roles? University libraries are central to research support: librarians mentor students, deliver information literacy training, manage repositories, and often help supervise academic writing. Their involvement in anti-plagiarism efforts is thus crucial.

The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) in academic writing further complicates the integrity landscape. In Nigeria, there is growing concern that students are using AI-based paraphrasing tools (e.g., QuillBot) to rephrase existing texts in a way that evades classic plagiarism detection

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(Yankova 2024). This trend challenges academic staff to detect not just verbatim copying but subtler forms of content manipulation. AI-driven rewriting tools pose a double threat: they make plagiarism easier and make detection more difficult. As reported in Nigerian academia, lecturers are encountering AI-generated paraphrased submissions that do not trip standard similarity-checking thresholds. (Prashar, 2023) Without sophisticated detection strategies or training, academic integrity mechanisms may lag behind the evolving tactics of dishonest writing.

In response to this growing challenge, universities and research institutions have adopted anti-plagiarism software to detect and curb academic dishonesty (Ayo & Ibrahim, 2023). Tools such as Turnitin, Grammarly, and PlagScan help academic staff evaluate the originality of research papers, theses, and other scholarly documents by comparing them with extensive databases (Ogunleye & Sanni, 2020). While these tools provide an effective means of detecting similarities, their utilization among academic staff remains inconsistent due to factors such as limited technical skills, resistance to change, and inadequate institutional policies (Uche & Nwosu, 2021). Some lecturers fail to integrate plagiarism detection tools into their academic practices, either due to ignorance or indifference, further perpetuating the cycle of academic misconduct (Ibrahim & Kazeem, 2023).

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Given the rapid changes in academic writing, driven by both digital access and AI, federal university libraries in Northwestern Nigeria face a critical moment. If academic staff do not adopt and integrate anti-plagiarism tools effectively, the risk of declining research quality, reputational damage, and unethical scholarship may grow. But if they do, they can reinforce a strong culture of originality, accountability, and ethical research. Therefore, it is imperative to investigate the*utilization of anti-plagiarism software by academic staff in university libraries within Ahmadu Bello University. Understanding not only if staff use these tools, but how they use them, what barriers they face, and how that usage relates to institutional integrity practices, can inform targeted interventions such as training, policy development, and infrastructure investment that will strengthen academic integrity and uphold the credibility of research.

Statement of the Problem

Academic integrity is a cornerstone of scholarly work and career progression for all academic staff, including librarians, in Nigerian universities. Despite the availability of anti-plagiarism software such as Turnitin, Grammarly, PlagScan, and locally developed tools like EagleScan, their adoption and effective utilization by academic staff in federal university libraries in Northwestern Nigeria remain inconsistent, research outputs risk containing unoriginal content, undermining credibility, ethical scholarship, and the global visibility of Nigerian universities (Elonye et al., 2023; Ogunleye & Sanni, 2022; Ayo & Ibrahim, 2023).

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Additionally, emerging challenges such as AI-assisted paraphrasing tools exacerbate the threat to academic integrity, making detection more complex and demanding greater skill and vigilance from academic staff. Librarians, who play a central role in mentoring students and promoting ethical research practices, are not fully leveraging anti-plagiarism software to foster a culture of originality. This gap highlights the need to systematically investigate how academic staff utilize these tools, the barriers they face, and how effective integration can strengthen academic integrity (Uche & Nwosu, 2022; Ganguly & Pandey, 2023).

In light of these realities, this study seeks to investigate the utilization of anti-plagiarism software by academic staff in Ahmadu Bello University

Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to investigate utilization of anti-plagiarism software for the promotion of academic integrity among by the academic staff in Ahmadu Bello University**.**

The specific objectives of this study are as follows;

1. to identify types of anti-plagiarism software available for use for the promotion of academic integrity by the academic staff in Ahmadu Bello University.
2. to assess the utilization of the available anti-plagiarism for promotion of academic integrity in Ahmadu Bello University.
3. to determine the extent of utilization of the available plagiarism software for the promotion of academic integrity among the academic staff in Ahmadu Bello University.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What types of anti-plagiarism software are available for use for the promotion of academic integrity by the academic staff in Ahmadu Bello University?
2. How do the academic staff utilize the available anti-plagiarism for the promotion of academic integrity by the academic staff in Ahmadu Bello University?

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3. What is the extent of utilization of the available plagiarism software for the promotion of academic integrity among the academic staff in Ahmadu Bello University?

Methodology

Survey research design was adopted for the study.

The population of this study was 51 academic staff in the Ahmadu Bello University. Since the population of this study is not large and is considered manageable, the researcher adopted total enumeration sampling, the researcher used the entire population for the study. To obtain reliable and valid responses, a questionnaire was designed and used as the instrument for data collection in this study. The data collected in this study were analyzed using quantitative statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions and percentages, were used.

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the utilization of anti-plagiarism software for the promotion of academic integrity among by the academic staff Ahmadu Bello University.

Research Question One: What types of anti-plagiarism software are available for use for the promotion of academic integrity by the academic staff in Ahmadu Bello University?

Table 1: Types of Anti-Plagiarism Software Used for The Promotion of Academic Integrity by The Academic Staff in Ahmadu Bello University

Software	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
Turnitin	36 (24.3%)	69 (46.7%)	31 (21.1%)	11 (7.9%)
Drillbit	46 (31.3%)	53 (36.2%)	28 (19.1%)	20 (13.2%)
Grammarly	50 (34.2%)	58 (39.5%)	22 (15.1%)	17 (11.2%)
Plagscan	42 (28.9%)	61 (41.4%)	29 (19.7%)	15 (9.9%)
Quetext	37 (25.0%)	63 (42.8%)	35 (23.7%)	13 (8.6%)

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The data presented in Table 1 presents the respondents' views on the types of anti-plagiarism software commonly used. For Turnitin, 36 respondents (24.3%) strongly agreed and 69 (46.7%) agreed that it was widely used, while 31 (21.1%) disagreed and 11 (7.9%) strongly disagreed. This indicates that Turnitin remains the most recognized plagiarism detection tool among the sampled academics. For Drillbit, 46 respondents (31.3%) strongly agreed and 53 (36.2%) agreed to its usage, whereas 28 (19.1%) disagreed and 20 (13.2%) strongly disagreed. This suggests that while Drillbit is relatively popular, opinions about its usage are more divided than those for Turnitin.

Grammarly recorded the highest response of strong agreement, with 50 respondents (34.2%) strongly agreeing and 58 (39.5%) agreeing. However, 22 respondents (15.1%) disagreed and 17 (11.2%) strongly disagreed, showing that Grammarly is perceived as one of the most frequently used tools for academic writing and plagiarism prevention. For Plagscan, 42 respondents (28.9%) strongly agreed and 61 (41.4%) agreed, while 29 (19.7%) disagreed and 15 (9.9%) strongly disagreed, suggesting a moderate level of usage. Quetext attracted 37 respondents (25.0%) who strongly agreed and 63 (42.8%) who agreed, with 35 (23.7%) disagreeing and 13 (8.6%) strongly disagreeing. This implies that although Quetext is also in use, it is not as widely accepted as Grammarly or Turnitin. The results show that Grammarly and Turnitin were the most frequently acknowledged anti-plagiarism tools among the respondents, while Drillbit, Plagscan, and Quetext had moderate recognition.

Research Question One: What types of anti-plagiarism software are available for use for the promotion of academic integrity by the academic staff in Ahmadu Bello University?

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Table 2 Utilization of Anti-Plagiarism Software

Item	Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
1	I use Turnitin to check for plagiarism in my academic work in the library.	44(29.6%)	69(46.7%)	28(19.1%)	6 (4.6%)
2	I use PlagScan to check the originality of academic documents in the library.	50 (34.2%)	54 (36.8%)	23 (15.8%)	20 (13.2%)
3	I use Grammarly's plagiarism checker for my publications in the library.	49 (33.6%)	55 (37.5%)	29 (19.7%)	14 (9.2%)
4	Anti-plagiarism tools are integrated into my institution's library.	42 (28.3%)	49 (33.6%)	36 (24.3%)	20 (13.8%)
5	I use plagiarism software as part of my research activities in the library.	40 (27.0%)	58 (39.5%)	31 (21.1%)	18 (12.5%)

Result in Table 2 show that a number of respondents indicated they actively use anti-plagiarism software in their academic and research work. Specifically, Turnitin had the highest level of agreement, with 44 respondents (29.6%) strongly agreeing and 69 (46.7%) agreeing that they use it to check plagiarism in their academic work. Similarly, the use of PlagScan was acknowledged by 50 respondents (34.2%) who strongly agreed and 54 (36.8%) who agreed, indicating widespread adoption. The use of Grammarly's plagiarism checker was also notable, with 49 respondents (33.6%) strongly agreeing and 55 (37.5%) agreeing, suggesting that it is a popular choice for checking originality in publications. In terms of institutional integration, 42 respondents (28.3%) strongly agreed and 49 (33.6%) agreed that anti-plagiarism tools are embedded into their institutions' academic workflow. However, this item also recorded higher disagreement levels (36 respondents, 24.3%; and 20 respondents, 13.8%), indicating variability

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in institutional practices. When asked about using plagiarism software as part of research activities, 40 respondents (27.0%) strongly agreed and 58 (39.5%) agreed. Also, 31 respondents (21.1%) disagreed and 18 (12.5%) strongly disagreed, suggesting that while the majority use these tools, a significant minority still do not. The findings reveal that Turnitin, PlagScan, and Grammarly are the most widely utilized tools.

Research Question Two: How do the academic staff utilize the available anti-plagiarism for the promotion of academic integrity by the academic staff in Ahmadu Bello University?

Table 3 Extent of Utilization of Anti-Plagiarism Software

S/N	Extent of Utilization	VH (%)	H (%)	L (%)	VL (%)
1	I regularly used anti-plagiarism software in the library before submitting research for publication	40 (27.2%)	44 (29.9%)	39 (26.5%)	25 (17.0%)
2	I frequently require students to submit assignments using plagiarism detection tools in the library.	30 (20.4%)	52 (35.4%)	42 (28.6%)	23 (15.6%)
3	There is consistent institutional enforcement of anti-plagiarism checks in the library	41 (27.9%)	45 (30.6%)	42 (28.6%)	19 (12.9%)
4	I'm highly committed to using anti-plagiarism software in the library as part of research process	35 (23.8%)	65 (44.2%)	31 (21.1%)	16 (10.9%)
5	The university provides sufficient support for anti-plagiarism tools in the library	41 (27.9%)	46 (31.3%)	37 (25.2%)	23 (15.6%)

Table 3 reveals that, on the use of anti-plagiarism software in the library before submitting research for publication, 40 respondents (27.2%) reported very high utilization, while 44 (29.9%) indicated high utilization. Conversely, 39 respondents (26.5%) reported low utilization, and 25 (17.0%) indicated very low utilization. This suggests that although many

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academic staff are committed to originality checks; a considerable proportion remain inconsistent in their practice.

Regarding the requirement for students to submit assignments through plagiarism detection tools, 30 respondents (20.4%) reported very high usage, and 52 (35.4%) reported high usage. However, 42 (28.6%) indicated low usage, while 23 (15.6%) reported very low usage. This points to moderate adoption, with room for improvement in integrating plagiarism checks into student assessments. On institutional enforcement, 41 respondents (27.9%) noted very high enforcement, and 45 (30.6%) indicated high enforcement. Still, 42 (28.6%) and 19 (12.9%) reported low and very low enforcement, respectively, reflecting a lack of uniform policy application across institutions. Commitment to using anti-plagiarism software as part of the research process was more evident, with 35 respondents (23.8%) reporting very high commitment and 65 (44.2%) indicating high commitment. However, 31 (21.1%) and 16 (10.9%) expressed low and very low commitment, highlighting gaps in consistent engagement. Institutional support for the use of anti-plagiarism tools received mixed responses. While 41 respondents (27.9%) and 46 (31.3%) acknowledged very high and high levels of support respectively, 37 (25.2%) reported low support, and 23 (15.6%) indicated very low support. The results reveal that although the utilization of anti-plagiarism software is relatively widespread, its application is inconsistent.

Discussion of Findings

This study investigated the utilization of anti-plagiarism software for the promotion of academic integrity among academic staff in federal university libraries located in the Northwestern states of Nigeria. The discussion of findings is presented in line with the research questions that guided the study.

The results from Table 1 indicate that academic staff were aware of and used several anti-plagiarism software packages, including Turnitin, Drillbit, Grammarly, Plagscan, and Quetext.

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Among these, Grammarly and Turnitin emerged as the most widely acknowledged tools, with high levels of agreement among respondents regarding their use. This finding aligns with global trends where Turnitin has become the most established plagiarism detection system in higher education, particularly valued for its large database and institutional integration (Ugbede *et al*., 2021). Grammarly's growing acceptance can also be attributed to its dual role as a grammar improvement and plagiarism-checking tool, making it more versatile for academics engaged in writing and publishing. The moderate recognition of Drillbit, Plagscan, and Quetext suggests that while these tools are present, their adoption is not as widespread. This finding supports prior studies that report differential adoption of plagiarism detection tools depending on institutional policies, availability, and staff awareness (Jolayemi, 2024).

As presented in Table 2, the results revealed that staff actively use anti-plagiarism tools for their academic and research activities. Turnitin, Plagscan, and Grammarly were the most frequently utilized. The integration of these tools into institutional workflows, however, varied, as evident from the relatively high levels of disagreement. This inconsistency reflects earlier findings that, while many universities have adopted plagiarism detection systems, implementation at departmental and individual levels often remains uneven (Arabyat *et al*., 2022; Olukanni, 2022). The findings suggest that a significant number of academic staff independently use plagiarism detection tools in their research, even when institutional support structures are limited.

The findings in Table 3 revealed moderate to high utilization of anti-plagiarism software, particularly for research publication and ensuring originality in student submissions. Nevertheless, variability was observed in institutional enforcement and support. While many respondents reported high commitment to using plagiarism detection tools, others expressed lower levels of engagement, pointing to gaps in policy enforcement and digital culture within institutions. These results are consistent with the observation of Ugbede *et al*. (2021), who

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noted that institutional enforcement and culture strongly influence the extent to which anti-plagiarism software is consistently applied.

Conclusion

The findings of this study underscore the pivotal role of federal university libraries in promoting academic integrity through anti-plagiarism software. Academic staff in Northwestern Nigerian universities are aware of and, to varying extents, utilize these tools in their scholarly activities. Libraries provide access, guidance, and support, but the lack of institutional standardization, policy enforcement, and infrastructural support limits the full potential of these tools. The uneven use of anti-plagiarism software highlights the critical need for libraries to take a central, proactive role in coordinating training, facilitating access, and integrating software use into academic workflows.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study makes the following library-focused recommendations:

Federal university libraries should collaborate with academic planning and quality assurance departments to develop and implement clear policies mandating the use of anti-plagiarism software for all academic outputs, including undergraduate projects, postgraduate theses, and staff publications.

Libraries should organize regular workshops and training sessions to enhance the technical competence and digital literacy of academic staff, ensuring effective utilization of plagiarism detection tools.

Libraries should prioritize investment in high-speed internet, reliable ICT infrastructure, and licensed anti-plagiarism software, making them readily accessible to all academic staff and students.

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