Implementation of Similarity Check Service in Supporting Academic Integrity at Esa Unggul University Library

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Information	*ABSTRACT*
  	This study investigates how the Turnitin-based similarity check service is implemented at Esa Unggul University Library to uphold academic integrity within higher education. The scope of this study covers an evaluation of the effectiveness of similarity check services in reducing plagiarism and enhancing academic ethics awareness within the campus environment. The main objective is to explore the perspectives of lecturers and librarians regarding the use of similarity check services, as well as the challenges and opportunities encountered during its implementation. A qualitative case study method was applied, utilizing in-depth interviews and observations involving librarians and lecturers from various faculties that have implemented similarity check policies. The key findings indicate that the similarity check service not only functions as a plagiarism detection tool but also serves as an educational medium to improve academic literacy among the academic community. Nevertheless, the library's involvement in institutional policy formulation and the strengthening of cross-unit collaboration need further development. This article contributes new insights into the importance of integrating similarity check services in fostering an honest and dignified academic culture in Indonesian higher education institutions. ***Keywords*** *: Academic Integrity; Similarity Check; Turniti; Plagiarism; Library*

1. INTRODUCTION

Academic integrity is a major concern in the world of higher education (Mulenga & Shilongo, 2024). Technological advances allow for wide access to a wide range of sources of information, but on the other hand, increase the risk of plagiarism among students and academics (Kotsis, 2024). Academic plagiarism is a serious issue that can damage the credibility of educational institutions and the quality of the research produced (Tumiran & Mohammad, 2024). Therefore, various educational institutions have adopted text similarity detection technology, one of which is a software-based similarity check

service such as Turnitin (Malik & Amjad, 2025). This service helps in identifying potential plagiarism and raising academic awareness of the importance of the originality of scientific papers (Zimba & Gasparyan, 2021).

The effectiveness of plagiarism detection software in academia as done by revealed that although devices such as Turnitin are capable of detecting the level of similarity of texts, a more comprehensive pedagogical approach is still needed to increase students' awareness of academic ethics Dixon, George, and Carr (2021) (Dixon et al., 2021). In addition, there is a tendency for students to outsmart the system by various methods, such as inserting invisible characters or translating text several times before uploading it to the detection software (Waltzer and Dahl 2021). This study shows that technology alone is not enough in overcoming plagiarism, but must be supported by strict academic policies and education on the importance of academic honesty of users.

In Indonesia, discussions related to academic integrity and plagiarism are increasing, especially regarding academic ethics issued by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia, namely Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia Number 39 of 2021 concerning Academic Integrity in Producing Scientific Works (KEMENDIKBUD, 2021). This regulation regulates the development of academic integrity values in producing scientific works, including policy formulation, regulation setting, socialization, and internalization of academic integrity values in Tridharma activities. In addition, this regulation also regulates violations of academic integrity, reporting procedures, examinations, and the imposition of sanctions for violators. The issue of plagiarism has emerged in recent years with several major cases involving academics and students. This shows that the challenge of maintaining academic integrity is still a homework for higher education institutions (Mishra & Varshney, 2024).

Several previous studies have shown that similarity check services, such as Turnitin, have been widely used in efforts to prevent plagiarism in higher education. Aan Prabowo (2018) revealed the role of librarians in improving literacy in the use of Turnitin at Dian Nuswantoro University, where librarians provided training on how to use this tool to check for plagiarism in students' scientific papers. This study highlights the importance of a good understanding of how to use Turnitin to ensure that scientific work is original and meets academic standards (Aan, 2018). In line with this, Andayani (2017a) also researched the use of Turnitin as a tool for detecting plagiarism. Her research shows that Turnitin is effective in helping to detect plagiarism in scientific papers and increasing students' awareness of the importance of originality in scientific writing (Andayani, 2017a).

In addition, Foltýnek et al. (2020) in their study that tested the device's support for plagiarism detection found that tools like Turnitin are not only useful for detecting plagiarism, but also serve as a learning support tool for college students to improve their writing skills (Foltýnek et.al., 2020). The use of this technology shows a huge role in combating plagiarism while improving original writing skills (K. Ibrahim, 2023). From these various studies, it is clear that similarity check services, such as Turnitin, play an important role in detecting plagiarism and supporting academic integrity in colleges. These studies also affirm the important role of libraries in providing access to plagiarism detection tools and providing education to students about the importance of originality and academic ethics (Bretag, 2013).

In line with this, Ellery (2008) emphasizes the need for a pedagogical approach to prevent plagiarism among undergraduate students, suggesting that conceptual understanding and active guidance are more effective than repressive approaches (Ellery, 2008). Meanwhile, Bertram Gallant (2008) states that academic integrity must be built as part of a continuous learning process, and it is not enough to enforce it through formal rules (Bertram, 2008). The three studies emphasize that educational

institutions need to integrate policies, support services, and information literacy in order to create an ethical and responsible academic environment.

The Esa Unggul University Library has provided a Similarity Check Service using Turnitin which has been operating since November 30, 2023, where users can apply for an examination through an online form. Initially, this service was more used by final year students for final project examinations such as theses or theses and research proposals. However, since the Even Semester Final Exam (UAS) of the 2023/2024 academic year, several faculties such as the Faculty of Law, Faculty of Economics and Business, Faculty of Computer Science, and Faculty of Design and Creative Industries have begun to implement a policy that all UAS assignments must go through Turnitin examinations. This policy was extended again in the odd semester of the 2024/2025 academic year, where the Public Health and Marketing Communication study programs also implemented a similar policy for their coursework.

The increase in users of this service has a direct impact on the workload of librarians who handle similarity check services (Manjunatha, 2023). If previously only one librarian was in charge of document checking, since the even semester of the 2023/2024 academic year, the number of librarians handling this service has increased to three. The surge in demand for services shows that academic integrity is the main focus in higher education policy at Esa Unggul University. However, along with the increase in users, new challenges have arisen, especially related to the strategies used by students in circumventing the Turnitin system (K. H. S. Ibrahim et al., 2025). The librarian found that students tried to avoid plagiarism detection in a variety of ways so that the examination results showed a lower level of similarity than the actual results (Elkhatat et al., 2021). This raises questions regarding the effectiveness of similarity check services in supporting academic integrity.

The main problem that will be researched in this study is the similarity check service at the Esa Unggul University Library in reducing the number of plagiarism and increasing student academic awareness. The importance of this research lies in the urgency of understanding how plagiarism detection technology can be effective in an academic environment. With the increasing cases of plagiarism, evaluation of these services has become crucial to ensure that the existing system is actually functioning according to its purpose. Based on the above background, the research questions based on the formulation of the problem are as follows:

1. Can the similarity check service at the UEU Library reduce the number of plagiarism among students?
2. What is the perspective of lecturers and librarians on the use of Turnitin in supporting academic integrity in the university environment?

The main purpose of this study is to explore the meaning given by lecturers and librarians related to the implementation of similarity check services in preventing plagiarism and supporting academic integrity. Research on similarity check services such as Turnitin has been conducted to evaluate its effectiveness in detecting plagiarism as well as its role in forming a culture of academic integrity (Izi et al., 2024). The majority of studies still focus on the role of systems and policies at the macro level or on the context of institutions outside Indonesia. There have not been many studies that specifically investigate the practice of similarity check services in the context of Indonesian universities as service implementers, including the perceptions of librarians and lecturers, as well as the technical and ethical challenges faced in its implementation.

This study offers a novelty in examining the implementation of Turnitin-based similarity check services in depth from the perspective of librarians and lecturers at Esa Unggul University, an aspect that has not been systematically studied in the previous literature. This research combines the Academic

Integrity Framework and the concept of quality-based services (SERVQUAL). The study provides a unique approach by exploring not only the impact of services, but also user perceptions as well as evaluations of services by librarians. This research is expected to be an important contribution in developing service-based strategies and policies to strengthen the culture of academic integrity in the higher education environment in Indonesia.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This research is a qualitative research. This method is in line with research that wants to understand individual perspectives on complex phenomena (Creswell and Creswell 2018). This study explores the meaning given by lecturers and librarians related to the implementation of similarity check services in preventing plagiarism and supporting academic integrity. The research design used is a case study approach. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), case studies are a qualitative approach that examines phenomena in real-life contexts and uses various resources to obtain a more complete picture. In this study, the Esa Unggul University Library was selected as a case study with a focus on the similarity check service it offers. This study will explore the experiences, perceptions, and views of users to provide insights into the service in supporting academic integrity.

Data was collected through interviews with librarians and lecturers involved in the similarity check process. This interview aims to understand the evaluation of the implementation of the similarity check service, how academic policies support its use, and how the challenges faced in its implementation. In accordance with the qualitative approach, the questions asked will be open-ended, allowing participants to share their experiences in detail and flexibly. In addition to interviews, observations on the use of similarity check services in libraries will also be carried out to obtain a direct picture of how the system is used in practice, as well as to understand the challenges or obstacles that may be experienced by users. In this study, the informants to be interviewed consist of 3 (three) librarians who handle the Similarity Check Service and 6 (six) lecturers who have implemented similarity checks independently from faculties that have implemented the similarity check policy for final projects and lecture assignments/UAS, namely the Faculty of Law, the Faculty of Economics and Business, the Faculty of Computer Science, Faculty of Design and Creative Industry as well as Public Health and Marketing Communication study programs.

The collected data will be analyzed using thematic analysis. In thematic analysis, the researcher will examine interview transcripts and observation notes to find themes relevant to the formulation of the research problem. The data obtained will be categorized to find insights into the practice of similarity checks in the academic environment. With this method, this research is expected to contribute to the development of more effective academic policies and increase the role of librarians in supporting academic integrity in higher education.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to analyze in depth the implementation of similarity check services in the Esa Unggul University Library as an instrument to support academic integrity in the campus environment. Based on the results of interviews with librarians and lecturers, various aspects were found that describe the dynamics, challenges, and achievements in the implementation of this service, especially with the SERVQUAL approach which highlights the five main dimensions, namely Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Emphaty.

In the tangible dimension (physical evidence), customers, in this case lecturers and students, have the hope that the similarity check service can meet their needs supported by complete facilities, such as stable internet access, an active Turnitin account, as well as clear and easy-to-understand visual guidance materials or infographics to help users understand the service independently. The similarity check service managed by the library has become one of the main pillars in efforts to uphold the values of academic honesty at Esa Unggul University. Access to this service is facilitated by the existence of a Google Form-based submission system that is integrated with institutional email, so users can request a similarity check anytime and from anywhere, as long as they follow the applicable procedures. This system is considered effective in reaching the needs of diverse users, while improving the efficiency of the service process. This is the strength of the service in meeting the basic needs of users. However, there are significant weaknesses, especially in the provision of visual materials, brochures, or infographics that are consistently not optimal. Based on interviews with lecturers, it is clear that the socialization of services through visual guides is less effective. Lecturers even explicitly admitted that they never received visual guidance directly, so users lacked a detailed understanding of the features and procedures of the similarity check service. The weak socialization aspect and lack of clear guidance have the potential to cause confusion for new users and reduce the optimal utilization rate of services.

In terms of reability (reliability), similarity check services are considered quite consistent, especially in terms of service timeliness. User perception of this dimension is quite positive, as can be seen from the assessment that librarians have succeeded in carrying out services according to clear SOPs, with consistent service time procedures, which is a maximum of one working day. The consistent implementation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) is one of the main strengths of similarity check services. Librarians have prepared clear SOPs regarding the checking mechanism, similarity index, and handling of various categories of manuscripts, ranging from theses, theses, journal articles, to course assignments. In practice, the resulting similarity report is then sent back to the applicant, along with an explanation if a high similarity score is found or does not meet the set standards. However, the need for AI-based plagiarism detection has not been met. Some lecturers expressly stated that this limitation is a significant lack of services considering that current academic developments are heavily dependent on AI technology. Therefore, it is necessary to improve the capabilities of similarity check services in order to be able to answer new challenges related to academic integrity.

Librarians' responses to service requests are generally very fast, even under normal conditions can be completed in less than one working day. The standard one-day service time is applied to maintain service quality and meet user expectations, especially during peak times such as before mid-term or end-of-semester exams. However, criticism still arises regarding the pattern of high service requests in the run-up to the exam period, which can lead to queues and potentially slow down response times. Therefore, there is a need for better time management and scheduling mechanisms to anticipate a surge in service demand in a given period. Librarians are considered very responsive, responsive, and communicative in handling questions and requests for help, whether through email, chat, or direct consultation. Good communication between librarians, lecturers, and students encourages the creation of an inclusive and friendly service atmosphere.

The Assurance dimension highlights the user's expectation that librarians must have sufficient competence and skills to support similarity check services, while being able to guarantee user confidence in the results of similarity checks. User trust in the competence of librarians is very high and is considered to be able to provide good assistance. Both lecturers and students feel confident that librarians have adequate knowledge and skills in accompanying users during the similarity checking

process. Although formal training on the use of Turnitin for librarians is still minimal, the knowledge gained through internal training and daily practical experience is sufficient to maintain the quality of service. This trust is an important social capital for the development of similarity check services in the future. Therefore, the implementation of official and periodic training for librarians is a strong recommendation to maintain trust and ensure the optimal quality of similarity check services.

The empathy factor is also reflected in the flexibility of the service. Librarians strive to accommodate the needs of users from different backgrounds, levels of understanding, and time conditions. As long as procedures and SOPs are followed, services can be accessed at any time, both by lecturers and students. Librarians also pay attention to students who experience obstacles, both in terms of technical and substance of writing. However, continuous socialization and education are needed so that students better understand the importance of originality and writing ethics, and not only view similarity checks as a mere administrative tool.

Overall, the similarity check service at the Esa Unggul University Library has a strong operational quality, especially in terms of responsiveness and trust in librarian competence (assurance). However, there are still a number of challenges and gaps that need to be addressed immediately, including the lack of effective visual guidance (tangibles), limited AI detection capabilities (reliability), lack of formal training for librarians (assurance), and the need for more massive education and a clearer scheduling structure (empathy). Through this recommendation, it is hoped that the similarity check service at UEU can develop into a stronger and more effective instrument in supporting a culture of high academic integrity.

Similarity check service reduces plagiarism rate

The findings of the study show that the existence of this service brings significant changes to student behavior and academic supervision patterns by lecturers and librarians. The results of interviews with librarians and lecturers show that the similarity check service is actually the main tool in efforts to prevent plagiarism. The majority of lecturers recognize this service as a verification tool to ensure the originality of scientific papers and prevent plagiarism, thus supporting the upholding of academic integrity. The librarian also emphasized that the implementation of this service is served optimally and many access and utilize the service. These findings are in line with the research of Andayani (2017) and Bretag (2013), which emphasizes the importance of plagiarism detection technology as part of a system for preventing and enforcing integrity in higher education.

This service does not only depend on the availability of technology, but also on the consistency of SOP implementation and librarian assistance. In an interview, the librarian explained that with SOPs and clear similarity limits, students are encouraged to improve their manuscripts before re-submitting, so this process encourages the improvement of the quality of scientific work and accustomed students to writing in an ethical way.

Studies by Aan Prabowo (2018) and Manunggal and Christiani (2018) also confirm that Turnitin is effective not only as a detection tool, but also as an educational tool for original scientific writing. In practice at Esa Unggul University, students are more aware of the importance of paraphrasing and citation techniques. This finding is also reinforced by literature (Bretag et al., 2011) which states that education-based plagiarism prevention strategies are more effective in the long term than sanction-based approaches.

However, the results of the study also highlight several obstacles. For example, student digital access and literacy is still a challenge, for example, some students are still unfamiliar or do not know the

right procedures. There are technical obstacles such as forgetting the institution's email password. In addition, the librarian admitted that he had not been formally involved in handling cases of high similarity. This indicates the need to strengthen cross-unit coordination so that efforts to suppress plagiarism are more comprehensive.

Lecturers and Librarians' Perspectives on the Use of Turnitin in Supporting Academic Integrity

Lecturers and librarians' perspectives on the use of Turnitin are very positive, but also critical. Lecturers recognize the importance of Turnitin as a quality standard in the academic world. Where the similarity check service acts as a verification tool to ensure the originality of academic works and prevent plagiarism. They consider similarity reports to be important data to guide students to write ethically. Because if there is a violation, the faculty will call the student concerned for clarification and ask for revision. In severe cases, it can be taken to the academic ethics committee. From the side of librarians, their role is not only administrative, but also educational. As revealed in the interview, the library has carried out information literacy activities where librarians provide training on the Mendeley application which is also embedded with material for the prevention of plagiarism. This is in line with Aan Prabowo (2018), who emphasizes the importance of librarians as facilitators of information literacy and academic ethics. Lecturers appreciate librarians as mentors, helping students understand the meaning of similarity and teaching them how to paraphrase correctly.

Bertram Gallant's (2008) theory of moral panic explains that modern campuses face pressure to maintain academic integrity amid easy access to digital information. In this context, Turnitin and similar services have become the institutional response to these challenges. However, as stated by Dixon et al. (2021) and Foltýnek et al. (2020), automatic detection does not necessarily replace the need for character building and a culture of honesty in higher education. The results of this study show that, although Turnitin is very helpful in detection, lecturers and librarians at Esa Unggul University also emphasize the importance of continuous education. Lecturers hope that similarity check services can be more integrated into the learning process and used as a means of academic ethics education from an early stage, not just as a tool for detecting plagiarism.

The high usage of similarity check services reflects the academic community's high level of trust in library services. This trust is an important foundation for ensuring that similarity check services remain relevant and trusted as a tool for preventing plagiarism. However, the interview results also reveal challenges in collaboration between faculties and libraries. Lecturers stated that collaboration with librarians regarding plagiarism had never been carried out. This indicates the need to strengthen more integrative institutional policy synergies. As emphasized by Bretag et al. (2011), effective academic integrity policies require the collaborative involvement of all stakeholders, including lecturers, students, librarians, and institutional leaders.

Furthermore, according to Permendikbud No. 17 of 2010 and Permendikbudristek No. 39 of 2021, every university is required to have a mechanism for preventing, combating, and enforcing sanctions against plagiarism. The findings of this study indicate that the similarity check service at the Esa Unggul University Library is already part of this mechanism, but aspects of prevention, education, and policy dissemination can still be improved to have an optimal impact on the formation of an academic culture of integrity.

Overall, the similarity check service at the Esa Unggul University Library has been proven to be able to reduce the number of plagiarism and support academic integrity, as reflected in the positive perspective and active participation of librarians and lecturers. However, the sustainability of the

effectiveness of these services depends on strengthening collaboration, updating academic literacy, and integrating services into the broader learning curriculum. Thus, the library is not only the administrative center for plagiarism checks, but also a center for education, innovation, and the cultivation of academic character throughout the Esa Unggul University community.

4. CONCLUSION

This study shows that the implementation of similarity check services at the Esa Unggul University Library has made a significant contribution in maintaining and strengthening academic integrity in the campus environment and is expected to be integrated with learning in the future. This service, which is professionally managed by librarians, has become a key tool in the prevention and detection of plagiarism among students and lecturers. Easy access to services through Google Forms, consistent implementation of SOPs, and the quick response of librarians in handling requests are the main strengths that are felt directly by users. The similarity reports generated by Turnitin are used not only for administrative purposes, but also as an educational tool that encourages students to write in an original and ethical manner.

However, the results of the study also identified a number of challenges and areas that still need improvement. The involvement of libraries in the formulation of academic integrity policies and the continued cases of high similarity are still limited, librarians play more roles as service implementers, not yet strategic partners in institutional decision-making. Formal collaboration between faculties and libraries, especially in handling cases of violations of academic literacy education, is also still minimal and needs further strengthening.

The similarity check service at the Esa Unggul University Library has encouraged behavior change among students and lecturers, raising awareness of the importance of correct paraphrasing and citation techniques. This service has been integrated into the information literacy program, although special Turnitin training and technical education for lecturers and students are still very much needed. In addition, the service infrastructure is considered adequate, but the development of facilities, increasing the number of active accounts, distribution of digital educational materials, and internet bandwidth are appropriate concerns going forward.

Thus, it can be concluded that the similarity check service at the Esa Unggul University Library is not only effective as an instrument for plagiarism detection, but also has the potential to be a means of character building, education on the ethics of scientific writing, and strengthening an honest and dignified academic culture. To support the sustainability and optimization of the role of this service, it is necessary to strengthen cross-unit collaboration, update academic literacy materials, increase the capacity of librarians, and integrate similarity checks into the broader learning curriculum within Esa Unggul University.

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