CERM-ESA

East and South African-German Centre of Excellence
for Educational Research Methodologies and Management

African Excellence
Fachzentren Afrika

CERM-ESA Master's Programme

PLAGIARISM IN MASTER OF EDUCATION STUDIES AT SELECTED EAST AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES

Introduction

Plagiarism as a form of academic misconduct, has contravened the role of research. It is termed as illegal, according to the literature; and anything that is illegal must be curbed. Despite the strategies put in place, plagiarism still exists; and it is growing very fast in our higher education institutions.

Research question

What are the issues related to plagiarism in Master of Education studies in selected East African universities?

Research Design and Methodology

Methodology: qualitative research approach
Paradigm: constructivist paradigm.
Research design: The case study comprised three selected universities in East Africa.
Participants and sampling methods: The participants were students selected by convenient sampling, supervisors selected by purposive sampling and snowballing by policy-makers. Documentary analysis of the institutional policy documents was done for triangulation.
Data generation: The data were generated by interviews with students, supervisors and policy-makers, in addition to focus-group discussions for Master's students. Content analysis was done to analyse the institutional policy on plagiarism.
Data analysis: Data analysis was conducted thematically by transcribing the raw data, the coding; and it was then converted to Microsoft Word, as well as uploading to an Excel spreadsheet.
Theoretical framework: Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory (1978) guided in the discussion of the findings.
Measure of trustworthiness: Dependability (descriptions), Credibility (triangulation), Conformability (audit trail) and transferability.

Findings

•**Definition of Plagiarism**
*... presenting another person's works (published or not), ideas or creation from any source as if they were one's own**.**
•**Forms of plagiarism**:
 ... somebody else doing work for you.
•**Motivating Factors to Plagiarize:**
 ... ignorance on how to reference properly.
•**Perceptions of Plagiarism:**
 ...it is not a single concept.
•**Consequences of Plagiarism:**
 ... punishments are not stated for a specific form of plagiarism.
•**Strategies for Combating Plagiarism:**
 ... all written work to be submitted to anti-plagiarism and be accompanied with the plagiarism similarity index report

Recommendation

For the existence of effective institutional polices on plagiarism, there should be frequent revision on the issues related to plagiarism by students, supervisors and policy-makers.

Conclusion

The study indicates that there is still a gap on what plagiarism means and therefore institutions should come up with a common understanding and consistent punishments that follows cases of plagiarism.

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Ramadhan, Z. (2017). Plagiarism in Master of Education Studies at Selected East African Universities. Unpublished Med. Port Elizabeth: Nelson Mandela university.

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