

SCIENTIFIC ETHICS AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

Scientific ethics and academic integrity are foundational principles in the pursuit of knowledge and the advancement of society. This literature review examines the importance of ethical conduct in scientific research and the implications of academic dishonesty on the integrity of the academic community. Ethical considerations in scientific research encompass a wide range of issues, including plagiarism, data fabrication, and conflicts of interest. Violations of scientific ethics not only undermine the credibility of research findings but also erode public trust in the scientific community. Upholding academic integrity ensures the credibility of academic credentials and promotes a culture of honesty and trust in the academic community.

Keywords: scientific ethics, academic integrity, principles, research, literature review

JEL: O30, O31, O34, O35

Introduction

Scientific ethics and academic integrity are essential pillars of scholarship and research (DuBois et. al, 2018; Abad-Garcia, 2018; Bertram-Gallant, 2024). Upholding these principles is not only a moral imperative but also a necessary precondition for the advancement of knowledge and the promotion of an equitable society. From Aristotles viewpoint on and his vehicle „eudaimonia“ or „politics“ for „good society“ and the developments of the standpoint of ethics for „good society“ (Marangos and Astroulakis, 2014), researchers, educators and students must be vigilant in upholding ethical standards and promoting a culture of integrity in their academic endeavors (Macfarlane et al., 2012).

Scientific ethics and academic integrity are fundamental principles that govern the conduct of researchers, educators, and students in the pursuit of knowledge and the advancement of society. This systematic literature review explores the significance of ethical conduct in scientific research and the implications of academic dishonesty on the integrity of the academic community (Holden et al., 2021). The review highlights the importance of upholding ethical standards

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in research practices, the promotion of transparency, and the consequences of ethical violations in scientific and academic settings. Scientific research is built on a foundation of trust, integrity, and ethical conduct. The credibility of research findings depends on the adherence to ethical guidelines, responsible conduct, and transparency in methodology (Smyth and Holian, 2008). Academic integrity, on the other hand, is essential for the credibility of academic institutions and the promotion of a culture of honesty and respect for intellectual property (Jones, 2023). This paper will analyse the various aspects of scientific ethics and academic integrity, their importance, and the challenges they face in the contemporary academic landscape.

Ethical considerations in scientific research encompass a wide range of issues, including plagiarism, data fabrication, and conflicts of interest. Plagiarism, in particular, is a serious offense that undermines the originality of research and violates the intellectual property rights of others (Masic, 2012). Data fabrication and falsification distort the truth and mislead the scientific community. Conflicts of interest, on the other hand, can compromise the objectivity and reliability of research findings. Upholding ethical standards in research practices is crucial for maintaining the credibility and integrity of scientific knowledge. Academic integrity, similarly, is essential for the credibility of academic institutions and the promotion of a culture of honesty and respect for intellectual property. Academic dishonesty, such as cheating, plagiarism, and falsification of data, not only violate ethical principles but also erode the trust and integrity of the academic community (Craig, 2006). Cheating undermines the value of academic credentials and devalues the achievements of honest scholars. Plagiarism, similarly, diminishes the originality and credibility of academic work. Upholding academic integrity is essential for promoting ethical conduct and ensuring the credibility of academic institutions (Lofstrom et al., 2015).

At most it should be stressed the fact that scientific ethics and academic integrity are crucial pillars of scholarship and research (Mahmud and Bretag, 2013). Upholding these principles is not only a moral imperative but also a necessary precondition for the advancement of knowledge and the promotion of a just and equitable society. Researchers, educators, and students must prioritize ethical conduct, transparency, and responsible dissemination of knowledge to uphold the credibility and integrity of the academic community. To achieve this objective, we involved a literature review approach to identify the criteria involved in the process. In the second phase we included a validation from a case study review comparing how the criteria are influencing the whole process towards the opportunities and tackling the challenges with the renewables in different countries, mainly from the eastern cultures (China, Japan) and also western european and american culture.

Research objective & Methodology – Systematic literature review

The current state of the literature review on the crucial role of scientific ethics in academic integrity highlights the significance of ethical conduct in scholarly pursuits and the importance of upholding ethical standards in research practices. In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on the ethical dimensions of scientific research (Rescher, 2001) and the implications of academic dishonesty on the integrity of the academic community. Researchers, educators, and students are increasingly recognizing the importance of ethical conduct in scholarship (Willinsky and Alperin, 2011) and the need to promote a culture of honesty, transparency, and integrity in academic endeavors (Edwards and Roy, 2017; Guerrero-Di et al., 2020; East and Donnelly, 2012).

We use the systematic literature review and the selected case studies to support our thesis that upholding academic integrity ensures the credibility of academic credentials and promotes a culture of honesty and trust in the academic community, especially in today's academic environment. The specifics are based on the number of preliminary conditions, like AI violations and the possibility of violations that cannot be seen as academic threat. In other words, we argue that it is not possible to have a „universal model of academic integrity“ for different cultures. Still we need to emphasize on affirming ethical values through academic integrity and promoting a model for ethical management in our university. This is also very important related to the mission and vision of a university, the academic integrity of the scholars and the quality of research in each paper.

One of the key themes emerging from the literature review is the impact of ethical violations on the credibility and trustworthiness of research findings (Anney, 2014; Morrow, 2005; Rolfe, 2006; Elo et al., 2014). Plagiarism, data fabrication, and conflicts of interest are among the most common ethical issues encountered in scientific research. Plagiarism, in particular, has been identified as a pervasive problem that undermines the originality and integrity of academic work (Abasi and Graves, 2008). Data fabrication and falsification, on the other hand, distort the truth and compromise the reliability of research findings. Conflicts of interest can also compromise the objectivity and credibility of research results. The literature review underscores the importance of upholding ethical standards in research practices to ensure the credibility and integrity of scientific knowledge (Kretser et al., 2019). Academic integrity is another important theme that has gained prominence in the literature review (McCabe et al., 2016). Academic dishonesty, such as cheating, plagiarism, and falsification of data, poses a significant challenge to the integrity of the academic community. Cheating undermines the value of academic credentials and devalues the achievements of honest scholars. Plagiarism, similarly, diminishes the originality and credibility of academic work. Upholding academic integrity is essential for promoting ethical conduct and fostering a culture of

honesty and respect for intellectual property. The literature review highlights the importance of promoting academic integrity to uphold the credibility and integrity of academic institutions (East, 2009).

The literature review also discusses the broader implications of scientific ethics and academic integrity on society (Caellegh, 2003). Ethical research practices are essential for the advancement of knowledge and the development of evidence-based policies. Upholding academic integrity ensures the credibility of academic credentials and promotes a culture of honesty and trust in the academic community. Researchers, educators, and students play a crucial role in upholding ethical standards and promoting a culture of integrity in their academic endeavors.

The current state of the literature review on the crucial role of scientific ethics in academic integrity underscores the importance of ethical conduct in scholarly pursuits (Kerr, 1994; Holland and Albrecht, 2013; Broothe-Perry, 2009). Upholding ethical standards in research practices is essential for maintaining the credibility and integrity of scientific knowledge. Promoting academic integrity is crucial for upholding the credibility of academic institutions and fostering a culture of honesty and respect for intellectual property. Researchers, educators, and students must prioritize ethical conduct, transparency, and responsible dissemination of knowledge to uphold the credibility and integrity of the academic community (DaSilva, 2022; McKiernan, 2016; Lynch, 2003).

Theoretical background: The current state of scientific ethics and academic integrity

Scientific ethics and academic integrity are fundamental principles that guide the conduct of research and scholarship in the scientific community. However, in recent years, there have been growing concerns about the state of scientific ethics and academic integrity. One of the key issues facing the scientific community today is the increasing pressure to publish research in high-impact journals (Lyytinen et al., 2007). This pressure has led to a phenomenon known as „publish or perish”, where researchers feel compelled to publish as many papers as possible in order to advance their careers (Miller et al., 2011). This has, in turn, led to a rise in unethical practices such as data fabrication, plagiarism, and selective reporting of results.

Another issue that has raised concerns about scientific ethics is the influence of funding sources on research (Ebadi and Schiffauerova, 2016). Many researchers receive funding from industry or other external sources, which can create conflicts of interest and bias the results of their research. This can undermine the credibility and trustworthiness of scientific findings, as well as compromise the integrity of the research process. In addition, the rise of predatory journals

and conferences has also posed a threat to academic integrity. These publications often lack rigorous peer review processes and publish low quality or even fake research, which can mislead the scientific community and the public. Researchers who publish in these journals may also be perceived as lacking credibility and integrity. Furthermore, the lack of transparency and reproducibility in scientific research has also been a cause for concern (Franzen, 2016). Many studies are not adequately documented or made available to other researchers, making it difficult to verify the results and conclusions. This lack of transparency can undermine the trustworthiness of scientific research and hinder the progress of science

In response to these challenges, the scientific community has taken steps to promote ethical conduct and academic integrity. Many universities and research institutions have established policies and guidelines to promote responsible conduct of research and to prevent misconduct (Steneck, 1994). Funding agencies have also implemented stricter guidelines to ensure transparency and accountability in research. However, more needs to be done to address the root causes of unethical behavior in science (Carpenter et al, 2004; Tenbrunsel and Messick, 2004; Kaptein, 2011; Moore and Gino, 2015). Researchers, institutions, and funding agencies must work together to create a culture of integrity and accountability in the scientific community. This includes promoting open and transparent communication, fostering a culture of collaboration and mentorship, and holding individuals accountable for their actions.

In conclusion, we must underline the fact that scientific ethics and academic integrity is facing significant challenges, but there are opportunities for improvement. By promoting ethical conduct, transparency, and accountability in research, we can ensure that the scientific community remains a trusted source of knowledge and innovation. It is essential for all stakeholders in the scientific community to work together to uphold the highest standards of integrity and ethics in research.

Comparison analysis of academic integrity the from Far East to wild Wild West – Japan, China, EU and the United States of America

In the second phase of the research, we have selected different case studies from different countries as a comparison of the pedagogical approach in the eastern cultures – Japan and China and Western European cultures and the USA. As of 2024, the approach used to promote academic integrity has evolved significantly, with a growing emphasis on proactive measures to prevent academic dishonesty and promote a culture of honesty and ethical conduct in scholarly pursuits. This theoretical review examines the strategies and initiatives implemented in these regions to address academic integrity issues and enhance ethical standards in

research and education. Academic integrity is a foundational principle that underpins the pursuit of knowledge and scholarship in universities and research institutions around the world. In Japan and China, two countries with rich histories of academic excellence and innovation, academic integrity plays a crucial role in maintaining the credibility and trustworthiness of their educational systems.

In Japan, academic integrity is highly valued and emphasized in higher education institutions. The Japanese educational system places a strong emphasis on honesty, respect for intellectual property, and the ethical conduct of research. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are considered serious offenses, and students and researchers are expected to adhere to high standards of integrity in their work (Ahmed, 2019). One of the key aspects of academic integrity in Japan is the concept of „*giri*”, which refers to a sense of duty, obligation, and responsibility towards others. This concept is deeply ingrained in Japanese culture and serves as a guiding principle for ethical behavior in academia. Students and researchers are expected to uphold their academic responsibilities with integrity and honesty, and to respect the contributions of others in the academic community.

In China, academic integrity is also a core value in the educational system. The Chinese government has implemented strict regulations and policies to prevent academic misconduct, such as plagiarism, data fabrication, and cheating (Macfarlane et al., 2012). Universities and research institutions in China have established mechanisms to promote ethical conduct, including codes of conduct, ethics committees, and disciplinary measures for those who violate academic integrity standards. In recent years, there have been growing concerns about academic integrity in China, particularly with the rise of academic fraud and misconduct. Some researchers have been found to engage in unethical practices, such as fabricating data, falsifying research findings, and engaging in plagiarism. These incidents have raised questions about the credibility of Chinese research and the need for stronger enforcement of academic integrity standards.

Despite these challenges, there are efforts underway in both Japan and China to promote academic integrity and uphold ethical standards in research and scholarship. Universities and research institutions are implementing educational programs on research ethics, providing training on proper research conduct, and establishing mechanisms for reporting and investigating academic misconduct. Having said the above, we must underline the fact that academic integrity is a cornerstone of the educational systems in Japan and China, and both countries are taking steps to promote and uphold ethical standards in research and scholarship. By fostering a culture of integrity, honesty, and respect for intellectual property, universities and research institutions in Japan and China can ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of their academic work.

Upholding academic integrity is essential for maintaining the quality and reputation of higher education in both countries and for contributing to the advancement of knowledge and innovation on a global scale. In China, academic integrity is a growing concern, with efforts being made to address issues of academic dishonesty and promote ethical conduct in research and education. One of the approaches used to promote academic integrity in China is the development of national guidelines and standards for research ethics and academic integrity. The Chinese government has implemented measures to strengthen oversight and regulation of research practices, including the establishment of ethics committees and research integrity offices. Additionally, there is a growing emphasis on research integrity education and training for students, faculty, and researchers to raise awareness about ethical standards and promote a culture of integrity in academic institutions.

In Europe, academic integrity is a key priority for educational institutions and policymakers, with a focus on promoting ethical conduct among students, faculty, and researchers (Glenn dining, 2014). One of the approaches used to promote academic integrity in Europe is the implementation of institutional policies and guidelines that outline expectations for ethical behavior and consequences for academic dishonesty. Many universities and research institutions in Europe have established academic integrity committees and offices to oversee compliance with ethical standards and investigate cases of misconduct (Stenneck, 1994). Additionally, there is a growing emphasis on education and awareness-raising initiatives to inform students and faculty about the importance of academic integrity and the consequences of unethical behavior.

On the other hand, case studies from the USA provide data (Sefcik et al., 2019) that academic integrity is a central concern for higher education institutions, with a strong emphasis on promoting ethical conduct and preventing academic dishonesty. One of the approaches used to promote academic integrity in the USA is the integration of ethics education into the curriculum, with a focus on teaching students about the principles of ethical conduct, proper citation practices, and the importance of academic honesty. Many universities in the USA have also implemented honor codes and academic integrity policies (McCabe and Trevino, 1999) that outline expectations for student behavior and provide guidelines for reporting and addressing cases of misconduct. Additionally, there is a growing emphasis on technology-based solutions, such as plagiarism detection software, to prevent and detect instances of academic dishonesty.

All of the above case studies shed light on the the theoretical review on the approach used to promote academic integrity in Europe, the USA, Japan and China as of 2024 highlight the importance of proactive measures to prevent academic dishonesty and promote ethical conduct in research and education. By

implementing institutional policies, ethics education initiatives, and technology-based solutions, these regions are working to uphold the credibility and integrity of academic institutions and foster a culture of honesty and respect for intellectual property. Continued efforts to promote academic integrity and ethical conduct will be essential for maintaining the credibility of research findings and upholding the values of scholarship and education in the years to come.

Affirming ethical values through academic integrity: A model for ethical management in the university

Affirming ethical values through academic integrity is essential for fostering a culture of honesty, trust, and respect within universities. This paper proposes a model for ethical management in universities that emphasizes the promotion of academic integrity as a means to affirm ethical values among students, faculty, and staff. By prioritizing ethical conduct and upholding academic integrity, universities can cultivate a community that values honesty, integrity, and ethical behavior in all aspects of scholarly pursuits. The model for ethical management in universities begins with the establishment of clear ethical guidelines and policies that outline expectations for ethical behavior and consequences for academic dishonesty. These policies should be communicated to all members of the university community, including students, faculty, and staff, to ensure a shared understanding of the importance of academic integrity. By setting clear expectations and standards for ethical conduct, universities can create a culture that values honesty, integrity, and ethical behavior.

In addition to establishing ethical guidelines and policies, universities should prioritize ethics education and awareness-raising initiatives to promote a culture of academic integrity. By integrating ethics education into the curriculum, universities can teach students about the principles of ethical conduct, proper citation practices, and the importance of academic honesty. Faculty and staff should also be provided with training and resources to support ethical decision-making and promote a culture of integrity within their departments. Technology-based solutions, such as plagiarism detection software and academic integrity tools, can also play a role in affirming ethical values through academic integrity. By implementing these tools, universities can prevent and detect instances of academic dishonesty, promote responsible research practices, and uphold the credibility of academic work. Technology can be used as a tool to support ethical behavior and reinforce the importance of academic integrity within the university community. Furthermore, ethical leadership is crucial for promoting academic integrity and affirming ethical values within universities. University leaders, including administrators, deans, and department chairs, should demonstrate

a commitment to ethical conduct and serve as role models for the university community. By modeling ethical behavior and prioritizing academic integrity in decision-making, university leaders can create a culture that values honesty, integrity, and ethical behavior.

In conclusion, affirming ethical values through academic integrity is essential for promoting a culture of honesty, trust, and respect within universities. By implementing a model for ethical management that prioritizes ethical guidelines and policies, ethics education initiatives, technology-based solutions, and ethical leadership, universities can cultivate a community that values ethical conduct in all aspects of scholarly pursuits. Upholding academic integrity is a key component of affirming ethical values within universities and fostering a culture of honesty, integrity, and ethical behavior among students, faculty, and staff.

Data fabrication and falsification are other critical topics for academic integrity. Fabricating or falsifying data involves manipulating research findings or results to support a specific hypothesis or conclusion. This unethical practice can lead to false or misleading conclusions and can have significant consequences for the integrity of scientific research. Researchers must adhere to strict standards of data collection, analysis, and reporting to ensure the accuracy and reliability of their findings.

Ethical conduct in research is also a key topic in scientific ethics. Researchers must adhere to ethical guidelines and principles in the conduct of their research, including obtaining informed consent from research participants, protecting the privacy and confidentiality of data, and avoiding conflicts of interest. Ethical considerations are essential for safeguarding the rights and well-being of research participants and ensuring the integrity and validity of research outcomes. Transparency and reproducibility are also important topics in scientific ethics. Researchers are expected to provide clear and transparent descriptions of their research methods, procedures, and findings to allow others to verify and replicate their work. Reproducibility is essential for confirming the validity and reliability of research findings and for advancing scientific knowledge. Researchers must provide sufficient documentation and data to enable others to reproduce their results.

Conflict of interest is another critical topic in scientific ethics. Researchers must disclose any financial, personal, or professional relationships that could potentially bias their research or influence the interpretation of their findings. Transparency and disclosure of conflicts of interest are essential for maintaining the credibility and objectivity of scientific research and for ensuring the trustworthiness of research outcomes. In conclusion, academic integrity and scientific ethics are essential for upholding the integrity, credibility, and trustworthiness of research and scholarship. Researchers and students must be aware of key topics such as

plagiarism, data fabrication, ethical conduct, transparency, reproducibility, and conflicts of interest to ensure the ethical and responsible conduct of research. By adhering to high ethical standards and promoting integrity in academic work, researchers can contribute to the advancement of knowledge and innovation in their respective fields.

Discussion and results

Scientific ethics and academic integrity are critical topics that shape the conduct of research and scholarship in various fields of study. In today's rapidly evolving and complex research landscape, several important questions for discussion are central to upholding ethical standards and promoting integrity in academia. One of the key questions for discussion is the impact of emerging technologies on research practices. With advancements in areas such as artificial intelligence, gene editing, and big data analytics, researchers are faced with new ethical dilemmas and challenges. Questions arise about the responsible use of technology in research, the potential risks and benefits of new technologies, and the ethical implications of conducting research in rapidly evolving fields.

The role of social media and digital platforms in academic integrity is another important question for discussion. The widespread availability of information and the ease of sharing and disseminating content online have raised concerns about the prevalence of plagiarism, fake news, and misinformation in academic circles. Researchers and institutions must grapple with questions about how to navigate the digital landscape while upholding ethical standards and ensuring the credibility and trustworthiness of research. The issue of diversity, equity, and inclusion in research and academia is also a crucial topic for discussion in scientific ethics and academic integrity. Questions arise about how to promote diversity and inclusivity in research teams, ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities, and address systemic biases and discrimination in academic settings. Upholding ethical standards and promoting integrity in research requires a commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive research environment that values and respects the contributions of all individuals.

Transparency and reproducibility in research are also crucial questions for discussion in terms of credibility in scientific ethics and academic integrity. Ensuring the transparency of research methods, data, and findings is essential for verifying and replicating research outcomes, building trust in the scientific community, and advancing scientific knowledge. Questions arise about how to promote open science practices, share research data and materials, and improve the reproducibility of research findings to enhance the reliability and credibility of research.

The issue of research misconduct and accountability is another challenging issue for discussion in scientific ethics and academic integrity. Questions arise about how to prevent and address misconduct such as plagiarism, data fabrication, and conflicts of interest, and how to hold individuals and institutions accountable for unethical behavior. Establishing clear guidelines, codes of conduct, and mechanisms for reporting and investigating misconduct is essential for upholding ethical standards and promoting integrity in research.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Academic integrity and scientific ethics are crucial components of the research and scholarly community, ensuring the credibility, trustworthiness, and reliability of academic work. Several key topics are essential for understanding and upholding academic integrity and scientific ethics (Lytinen et al. 2007). One of the most important topics for academic integrity is plagiarism. Plagiarism involves the unauthorized use or reproduction of someone else's work, ideas, or intellectual property without proper attribution. A serious offense undermines the credibility of academic research and scholarship. Researchers and students must be aware of what constitutes plagiarism and how to properly cite and reference sources to avoid plagiarism.

There are several important questions for discussion in scientific ethics and academic integrity that are central to ensuring the responsible conduct of research and scholarship. Researchers, institutions, and policymakers must engage in meaningful dialogue and collaboration to address these questions, uphold ethical standards, and promote integrity in academia. By grappling with these complex and evolving ethical challenges, the scientific community can continue to advance knowledge and innovation (Glendinning, 2014) in a manner that is ethical, transparent, and accountable. In this regard, we are proposing few key recommendations to be able to meet the high international criteria of the scientific ethics and academic criteria in correspondence with the specifics of the Bulgarian academic environment:

- Organization of tailored made courses and thematic discussions with doctoral students and young researches, focused on the competitive criteria for publishing in highly regarded international and national journals, working papers of research centers and leading international organizations. Special attention has to be paid on the key requirement for „scientific contribution“ and „novelty“ of any research product proposed for publishing.
- It is highly recommended that the author's arguments and/or contra arguments are clearly indicated in the critical analysis of the literature review. This could better highlight the uniqueness of the author's input in the discussion and will pave the way for successful defense of his/her research findings.

- The qualitative selection of primary and secondary data as well as various publications is an absolute must. It supposes detailed analysis of the selected sources in relation of their reliability, quality level, national and international recognition, etc. The citation of sources does not give automatic confidence about the reliability of the used data or analytical papers. From this perspective, even perfect citation may lead to misleading research conclusions.
- The uniqueness of the research outcomes as an antipode of plagiarism strongly depends on the incorporation of primary research and case studies always when possible. The incorporation of case study component of any study allows identifying the specific manifestation of even well-known common economic relationships, lows and dependencies. A creative analysis of specific company or market institution without any doubts meet the criteria for scientific „value added”. In this respect, the use of cited well-known concepts, models or econometric formulas is not a plagiarism but rather a scientific platform for solving challenging problems in concrete economic and business environment.

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