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Online Resources and Ethical Integrity in Research

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: *The study's main objective was to assess the ethical integrity in research among academicians. The samples were selected from Mumbai consisting of Professors and research scholars.*

Methodology: *Primary data was collected from 123 respondents. Out of these only 74 properly filled questionnaires were considered for the analysis. Structured questionnaires were distributed among them to get the data consisting of close-ended and Likert-based questions. The non-probability convenience sampling method was for the sampling. The study was quantitative and explorative. The chi-square test was used for the data analysis.*

Major findings: *the data emphasizes a strong consensus regarding the pivotal role of academic integrity in nurturing a positive and ethical environment within academic settings. It was observed that there is enough consciousness among academicians about ethical integrity and plagiarism-related plagiarism.*

Keywords: online sources, ethical integrity, and plagiarism.

❖ Ethical integrity in research:

When we talk about the ethical integrity in the research. It clearly shows the adherence to the ethical principles and standards while doing the research. It involves high standards to be followed during the research process. It consists of informed consent from the participants and their agreement to share the data, respect for the respondents protecting their identity and privacy, minimum harm to the participants, visible benefit to the society, proper reporting, publishing transparent findings, complying with the research institutional regulations and acknowledging the work of others. Generally, no work is all origin. The secondary data is used in all kinds of resources. Therefore, there is always a need to acknowledge the other learner's academic efforts.

❖ Online Sources for The Research:

There was a time when access to all the literature was online and researchers had to visit and get references in written form for paraphrasing or rewriting. But today publicly accessible materials and tools are there to use for their work consisting of data sets, publications, software, and educational materials. Although it promotes transparency and collaboration, there are chances of reproducibility and copying. There are many open sources available today like Google Scholar, PubMed, JSTOR, Scopus, Science Direct, Web of Science, ChatGPT, etc., which are widely used in research work.

❖ Literature Review:

Bretag, T., et al. (2019) wrote about the contract cheating and assessment design. The main objective of the study was to explore the relationship between Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education. **Bryman, A. (2016)** Wrote about the social research methods used in the research. Social sciences being not perfect sciences show the complexities of human behaviour and therefore no single method applies to it. **Carroll, J., & Appleton, J. (2001**) mentioned the good practice guide related to plagiarism and covered all the suggested dimensions for the research work without plagiarism. **Devlin, M., & Gray, K. (2007)** carried out a study on Australian university students as a qualitative study on the reasons behind plagiarism. The main objective of the study was to trace out why they plagiarise. **Emanuel, E. J., et al. (2004)** discussed clinical research and Ethics in their writing. The main focus of the study was on clinical research and ethical integrity. **Howard, R. M., & Davies, S. (2009**) mentioned plagiarism and the student's perspectives on it. **Park, C. (2003)** studied the issues of plagiarism among university students, literature, and lessons. The subject was related to assessment and evaluation. **Pecorari, D. (2003),** wrote about the good and patchwriting in academic second language writing covering the concern behind plagiarism in language studies. **Scanlon, P. M., & Neumann, D. R. (2002)** carried out a study on internet plagiarism among college students. It reflected the use of the internet and open sources for plagiarism on a wider scale by the students

❖ Objectives of the Study:

1. To discuss online resources and ethical integrity in the Research
2. To find out the opinion of the academicians about ethical integrity in the Research
3. To explore the reason behind plagiarism, its types, and its impact on the academic life of the academicians.

❖ The hypothesis of the Study:

1. Null Hypothesis (H01):

   There is no association between the frequency of research and views on academic integrity.

2. Null Hypothesis (H02):

There is no significant relationship between the perceived impact of plagiarism and the effectiveness of preventive measures.

❖ Research Methodology:

Primary data is collected from 123 academicians and research scholars. Out of it, only 74 filled questionnaires were considered for the analysis. Data is collected through a structured questionnaire consisting of closed-ended and five scales Likert scale questions. Secondary data is collected from published articles and theses.

❖ Sampling Method:

To collect the data on this topic, the faculties, and research scholars were chosen as sample units. The study was explorative and was based on the non–probability convenience sampling method. The data was collected from Mumbai-based faculties and research scholars.

❖ Data Analysis

A) Demographic Profile

You are a	**Counts**	**% of Total**
Faculty	37	50.0%
Post Graduate student	2	2.7%
Research Scholar	35	47.3%
You are a faculty of	**Counts**	**% of Total**
Arts and Humanities	26	35.1%
Commerce and Management	36	48.6%
Education	1	1.4%
Law	2	2.7%
Science'	9	12.2%
Gender	**Counts**	**% of Total**
Female	37	50.0%
Male	37	50.0%
Education	**Counts**	**% of Total**
Doctorate	21	28.4%
Postgraduates	47	63.5%
Professional Degree	6	8.1%
Your area of work is	**Counts**	**% of Total**
Mumbai city	34	45.9%
Mumbai suburb	40	54.1%

Source: Primary

- It is observed that Faculty members, numbering 37 and constituting 50.0% of the total, are the predominant group, likely responsible for teaching and research activities within the institution. Post-graduate students, comprising only 2 individuals and making up 2.7% of the total, represent a smaller segment engaged in advanced studies. Research scholars, numbering 35 and accounting for 47.3% of the total,
- **Faculty** across different academic disciplines, with Commerce and Management having the largest presence, followed by Arts and Humanities, while Law, Education, and Science departments have comparatively fewer faculty members.
- **Gender:** The provided data outlines the gender distribution within a specific context, indicating an equal representation between males and females. With 37 individuals each, males and females each constitute 50.0% of the total population.
- **Education:** Overall, the data underscores a diverse educational landscape, reflecting a mix of post-graduate, doctoral, and professional qualifications among the individuals associated with the institution.

B) About Research and Academic Integrity

How frequently do you carry research as an academic practice?	**Counts**	**% of Total**
Always	26	35.1%
Often	17	23.0%
Rarely	9	12.2%
Sometimes	22	29.7%
Do you feel that academic integrity is important for maintaining the credibility of academic institutions?"	**Counts**	**% of Total**
Agree	29	39.2%
Disagree	2	2.7%
Neutral	2	2.7%
Strongly agree	37	50.0%
Strongly disagree	4	5.4%
Do you feel that academic integrity is essential for fostering a culture of trust, respect, and fairness in academic communities?	**Counts**	**% of Total**
Maybe	2	2.7%
No	1	1.4%
Yes	71	95.9%

Sources: Primary

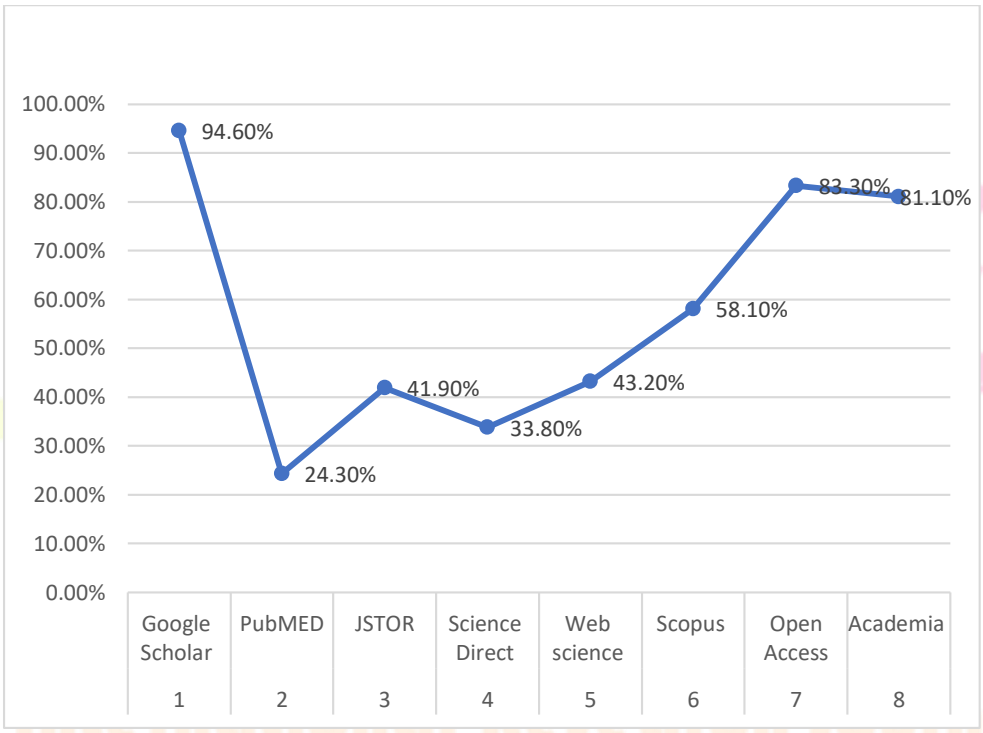
It is observed That:

- 35.1% of the total, reported engaging in research always, Additionally, 23.0% of individuals *stated that they often carry out research*, Conversely, 29.7% of respondents reported engaging in research

sometimes, indicating variability in their research practices. A smaller proportion, comprising 12.2% of the total, stated that they rarely conduct research;

- 39.2% of respondents agree with this notion, further *supporting the significance of academic integrity.* Conversely, only a small minority, representing 2.7% each, either disagree or feel neutral towards the importance of academic integrity. Overall, the data underscores a prevailing recognition among the majority of respondents regarding the critical role of academic integrity in safeguarding the credibility and reputation of academic institutions.
- The majority, 95.9% of the total respondents, agree that academic integrity is essential for cultivating such a culture.

C) Open Sources Used While Doing Research



Sources: Primary

It is observed that:

- The overwhelming majority of respondents, comprising 94.6% of the total, reported utilizing Google Scholar as an online resource for their research needs.
- Comprising 75.7%, of respondents do not utilize PubMed as an online resource for their research needs, while the remaining 24.3% do.
- 41.9% of respondents utilize JSTOR as an online resource for their research needs, while 58.1% do not.
- 33.8% of respondents utilize Science Direct as an online resource for their research needs, while the majority, comprising 66.2%, do not.
- 43.2% of respondents utilize the Web of Science as an online resource for their research needs, while 56.8% do not.
- 58.1% of respondents utilize Scopus as an online resource for their research needs, while 41.9% do not. This suggests that Scopus is utilized by a majority of respondents within this sample. comprising

83.8% of respondents, utilize open-access journals as an online resource for their research needs, while only 16.2% do not. This suggests that open-access journals are widely utilized by researchers within this sample.

- 81.1% of respondents, utilize Academician as an online resource for their research needs, while 18.9% do not. This suggests that Academician is widely utilized by researchers within this sample.

D) About Plagiarism

- comprising 90.5% of respondents, are aware of **direct copying**, which involves word-for-word replication of another's work without proper attribution.
- 75.7% of respondents are aware of **self-plagiarism,** which involves reusing one's work without proper citation or acknowledgment.
- 68.9% of respondents are aware of **patchwriting,** a form of plagiarism characterized by the paraphrasing of source material that closely resembles the original while attempting to present it as original work.
- 77.0% of respondents acknowledged engaging in **fabrication a**s a form of plagiarism, wherein they create information and present it as factual. Conversely, 23.0% indicated they did not partake in this practice.
- 60.8% of respondents admitted to engaging in **ghostwriting,** a form of plagiarism characterized by the use of data without providing proper credit.
- A higher incidence of plagiarism (59.5%) is characterized by **"Mosaic plagiarism**," which involves piecing together sentences and phrases from various sources without proper attribution. a majority (68.9%) of respondents are familiar with or have engaged in "Visual plagiarism," which involves the unauthorized use of graphs and created diagrams without proper attribution.

E) Why is Plagiarism is Done?

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
lack of good understanding	37.8%	51.4%	8.1%	1.4%	1.4%	4.2297
Less time available to work	33.8%	47.3%	12.2%	6.8%	0%	4.0811
inadequate research skills	39.2%	47.3%	12.2%	1.4%	0%	4.2432
The craze to success fast	40.5%	47.3%	6.8%	5.4%	0%	4.2297
Lack of interest or motivation	32.4%	55.4%	12.2%	0%	0%	4.2027
Peer pressure	28.4%	40.5%	23.0%	6.8%	1.4%	3.8784
last moment working	37.8%	44.6%	14.9%	1.4%	1.4%	4.1622
poor time management	33.8%	51.4%	12.2%	2.7%	0%	4.1622
lacking actual aptitude	32.4%	48.6%	16.2%	2.7%	0%	4.1081

Sources: Primary

It is observed that:

- Over 89% of respondents fall into these two categories. This suggests that there is a widespread belief that individuals plagiarize due to shortcomings in comprehension or knowledge
- Nearly 81% of respondents fall into these two categories. This suggests a prevalent belief among the surveyed population that time constraints contribute significantly to the decision to plagiarize.
- Over 86% of respondents fall into these two categories. This indicates a prevailing belief among the surveyed population that deficiencies in research abilities contribute significantly to the occurrence of plagiarism.
- Nearly 88% of respondents fall into these two categories. This suggests a widely held belief among the surveyed population that the desire for rapid success can lead individuals to resort to plagiarism as a shortcut.
- Over 87% of respondents fall into these two categories. This indicates a prevailing belief among the surveyed population that individuals may engage in plagiarism due to a lack of enthusiasm or drive for the task at hand.
- around 69% of the respondents, a significant percentage also fall into the neutral category. This indicates a level of uncertainty or variability in opinion among the surveyed population.
- with over 82% either strongly agreeing or agreeing with this statement. This suggests a widely held perception that time pressure and procrastination contribute to individuals resorting to plagiarism as a means of coping with impending deadlines.
- 85% of respondents, either strongly agree or agree that poor time management is a key factor influencing plagiarism.
- 81% of respondents either strongly agree or agree with this statement, indicating a widespread perception that individuals who lack genuine ability or skill in a subject may resort to plagiarism to compensate for their deficiencies.

E) Impact of Plagiarism

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
Damage to Reputation	55.4%	39.2%	4.1%	1.4%	0%	4.4865
Legal action	41.9%	48.6%	8.1%	1.4%	0%	4.3108
loss of respect and trust	47.3%	44.6%	4.1%	4.1%	0%	4.3514
Career growth can be stalled	37.8%	50.0%	10.8%	1.4%	0%	4.2432
Academic isolation	32.4%	54.1%	12.2%	1.4%	0%	4.1757
bad name among the students as well	41.9%	47.3%	9.5%	1.4%	0%	4.2973
Emotional impact once caught	37.8%	47.3%	10.8%	4.1%	0%	4.1892

Sources: Primary

It is observed that:

- Over 94% of respondents either strongly agree or agree that plagiarism results in ***damage to reputation.***
- Over 90% of respondents either strongly agree or agree that plagiarism can ***lead to legal action.***
- Over 91% of respondents either strongly agree or agree that plagiarism results in a **loss of respect and trust.**
- Over 87% of respondents either strongly agree or agree that plagiarism can stall career growth. Over 86% of respondents either strongly agree or agree that plagiarism can ***lead to academic isolation.***
- Over 89% of respondents either strongly agree or agree that plagiarism can result in a ***negative reputation among peers.***

F) Why is plagiarism unethical fundamentally

Why is plagiarism fundamentally unethical, according to you	**Certainly Yes**	**Yes**	**Neutral**	**No**	**Certainly no**	**Mean**
Violates academic integrity	52.7%	41.9%	4.1%	4.1%	0%	4.4324
unfair advantage	40.5%	54.1%	5.4%	0%	0%	4.3514
no respect for IPR	44.6%	47.3%	8.1%	0%	0%	4.3649
Betrayal of the trust	43.2%	50.0%	6.8%	0%	0%	4.3649
violates honesty	43.2%	52.7%	4.1%	0%	0%	4.3919

Sources: Primary

It is observed that:

- Over 94% of respondents either certainly agree or agree that plagiarism violates academic integrity undermining the principles of honesty, fairness, and responsibility in academic work, they agree or agree that plagiarism provides an unfair advantage.
- Over 91% of respondents either certainly agree or agree that plagiarism shows no respect for intellectual property rights (IPR).
- Over 93% of respondents either certainly agree or agree that plagiarism constitutes a betrayal of trust.
- Over 95% of respondents either certainly agree or agree that plagiarism violates honesty.

❖ **Hypothesis Testing:**

Hypothesis 01

Null Hypothesis (H0): There is no association between the frequency of research and views on academic integrity.

Test: Chi-square

The analysis yielded a Pearson Chi-Square value of 11.475 with 10 degrees of freedom, resulting in an asymptotic significance (2-sided) of 0.322. Since the p-value is greater than the typical significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

Hypothesis 02

Null Hypothesis (H0): There is no significant relationship between the perceived impact of plagiarism and the effectiveness of preventive measures.

Test: Chi-square

A significant positive correlation ($r = 0.577$, $p < 0.01$) emerged between the perceived impact of plagiarism and the effectiveness of preventive measures, suggesting a relationship where greater perceived plagiarism impact aligns with more positive perceptions of preventive measure effectiveness, thus supporting the alternative hypothesis.

❖ SUGGESTIONS:

1. Researchers should choose the topic of their interest area only
2. Time management is a must while doing the research.
3. Online sources should never be copied but referred.
4. Researchers and academicians should not overlook the long-term impact of unethical work.
5. Ethics should be the part of the research process.

❖ Conclusion:

It is observed in this study that the facilities and the research scholars are well aware of the ethical integrity and plagiarism issues in the research. Then too many of them go for it due to many constraints like lack of time, lack of guidance, lack of writing skills, language issues, craze to get a doctorate, and so on. The issue of plagiarism is always has been at the core of ethical integrity. The researchers are well aware of its sources, impact, and ways of minimizing it.

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