MANAGING RESEARCH INTEGRITY IN ACADEMIC RESEARCH

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1.INTRODUCTION:

Research is all about creating new knowledge and understanding through in-depth observations from the view point of the researcher. Since researcher work in a dynamic global research ecosystem where multiple stakeholders with diverse interests are involved, it is necessary for them to maintain research integrity. Such integrity is based on a set of commonly shared values that include ethics, relevance, transparency, respect and accountability etc. Research related misconduct is not a new phenomenon. Such academic level of misconduct can occur at any stage of the research cycle from the initial stage of selection of the research problem, followed by the dissemination of the research outputs among others. So, we have to maintain the research integrity at every stage of our research journey. A researcher requires adherence to some basic ethical practices. Since, all Higher Educational Institutes (HEIs) under affiliated bodies like UGC and AICTE within India are also entrusted with the responsibility of training young minds with the appropriate methods of research.

2. SCIENTIFIC MISCONDUCT& RESEARCH FRAUD:

Scientific misconducts are on the rise due to the increasing emphasis on research by many academic institutions in order to enhance their credibility. A review of the literature shows various reasons behind this trend, starting from the difficulty of publication to the constant pressure to publish in academia.

On the other hand, research fraud is an unethical process where publishing data were not generated via true experiments or observations, but through data manipulation process. Following frauds are find in scientific and research publishing: FFP (Fabrication; Falsification & Plagiarism). We will discuss the issues related to academic dishonesty with the help of few cases:

3. MANAGING PUBLICATION ETHICS:

3.1 CASE I: MANAGING AUTHORSHIP

As an author of the paper, we can contribute for the development of the manuscript in at least one or more of the following ways as per the guidelines of COPE. These are:

- Contributed significantly in the concept development and/or design of the entire research work;

- Research data acquisition, analysis, and/or interpretation of data during the research work;

- All possible drafting/editing of the research work or revising of it critically done by the person.

TYPES OF AUTHORSHIP

- Ghost authorship
- Guest authorship
- Gift authorship

COPE GUIDELINES TO AVOID AUTHORSHIP ISSUES:

- SUBMIT: Adopt a transparency policy around who contributed to the submitted work in various capacity.
- ENCOURAGE: Create awareness about use of emerging standards like ORCID.
- BEHAVIOUR: Check unusual patterns of behaviour that may create authorship problems.

3.2 CASE II: CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Conflicts of interest may influence the judgment of author, reviewers, and editors at large. The editors, authors, and peer reviewers should disclose their true interests or maintain transparency during the work undertaken, otherwise that might affect their ability to present or review work objectively. Some of the best possible ways to avoid it are given below:

- Adopt a policy of comprehensive disclosure policy especially with respect to the financial conflicts;
- Use scientific merits while providing a grant or during manuscript evaluation;
- If there exists any doubt or ambiguity, editors should opt for greater disclosure from the author;
- Editors should publish a confirmation in that context if there are no conflicts of interest.

3.3 CASE III: DATA FABRICATION AND FALSIFICATION:

During research data fabrication is a common phenomenon. In this situation, the researcher did not actually undertake the research study in a true sense, but they used faked data. Data falsification, on the other hand, means that the researcher did the experiment, but tactfully manipulate some of the data generated from their field report.

3.4 CASE IV: MULTIPLE SUBMISSIONS:

It is not ethical to submit the same manuscript in more than one journal at the same time without prior permission from the earlier authority. Doing such unlawful act is nothing but wastage of time to editors and peer reviewers who are evaluating the paper, and it can subsequently damage the reputation of the researchers. If the journal authority came to know that the paper was submitted and published later on in more than one journal, they can retract the paper.

3.5 CASE V: REDUNDANT PUBLICATIONS

It can occur when two or more papers, without proper cross reference, share the same hypothesis, data, sample size, identical methodology, or similar type of conclusions. The following ways such unethical act can be undertaken by a researcher.

- Reproduction of an article already published using similar sample and methodology;
- Assembly of two or more articles in order to create another article;
- Reporting of different observations from the same study sample;
- New data is added into the preliminary article.

WAYS TO AVOID DUPLICATE/ REDUREDUNDANT PUBLICATIONS:

- There was no need to be repeated the same published data unless further confirmation;
- Use proper citation in all related papers, including those papers which are under review;
- Make full disclosure about your previous submissions;
- Authors must clear in submitting a manuscript what new information it contains

3.6 CASE VI: SALAMI SLICING

In other words, authors divide their entire research findings from a single study into minimally publishable pieces. Unlike duplicate publication, which involves representation of the exact same data in two or more publications. At the time of submission, authors should disclose details of related manuscripts closely related to the manuscript under consideration

3.7 CASE VII ISSUES RELATED TO PLAGIARISM:

As per UGC guidelines plagiarism means an act of academic dishonesty and a breach of ethics. (UGC, 2018). In other words, it means the use of others published and unpublished (e.g. un-published theses and dissertations) or may be taken someone's ideas or words (or other intellectual property) without proper attribution or permission and presenting them as original rather than derived from an existing source.

Recently, UGC, a statutory body the Government of India has adopted a new policy on July 23, 2018 related to academic integrity and plagiarism in HEIs. The guideline issued by the UGC on "Promotion of Academic Integrity and Prevention of Plagiarism in Higher Educational Institutions" adopted by the University Grant Commission (UGC) has issued various levels related to plagiarism based on ascending order of severity (see. Table: 1).

Table:1 Levels of Plagiarism[1]

(Based on UGC recommendation based on ascending order of severity)

Level of Similarities	Characteristics
Level 0	Similarities up to 10% i.e., minor similarities, no penalty
Level 1	Similarities above 10% to 40%
Level 2	Similarities above 40% to 60%
Level 3	Similarities above 60%

Source: UGC Guideline (2018)

4.ETHICS OF PUBLICATION: A FINAL REVIEW

- Not based on plagiarized content;
- Accuracy;
- Protect the identity of the respondents;
- Due acknowledgement must be given for any information generated from web;
- Give attribution in all related papers, including those submitted but not yet accepted;
- Avoid all possible types of authorship which includes Guest, Ghost and Gift authorship;
- A work which is submitted and accepted for publication should not generally, be announced to public before its formal appearance;
- Reproduction of an article based on a previous work done using identical sample and outcomes;
- Multiple submissions are unethical;
- Getting suggesting from friends/acquaintances as potential reviewers is also unethical.

5.CONCLUSION:

Finally, we can say that, trust becomes a major dimension in the process of research, and its output is essential in developing a healthy knowledge driven society. So, research should be conducted based on the culture of research integrity.

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[1] The University Grant Commission (Promotion of Academic Integrity and Prevention of Plagiarism in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2018.