
ACADEMIC DISHONESTY IN RESEARCH: A QUALITATIVE STUDY WITH PHD SCHOLAR

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ABSTRACT

The current research aimed at the exploration of different forms of academic dishonesties with reference to research. Through qualitative in-depth interview-based research the data was collected from PhD scholars (N=11) belonging to the faculty of Management and Social Sciences through a purposive convenient sampling technique. The data was collected from an in-depth interview guide and structured demographic information sheet. The data was analyzed through Reflective Thematic Analysis (RTA, Braun & Clarke, 2006). After the three round of coding the findings represented in form a model of academic dishonesties in research which entails that these different types are prevailing because of meagre academic research culture. The model highlighted different forms of academic dishonesties that include Forced Contribution (Repetitive or Noncontributing research & Forced Publication), Data Manipulation (Fake Data Collection & Fabrication or Falsification of Data), Manipulation in Citations (Fake & Secondary as Primary), Plagiarism (Translative, Conceptual & Methodological), Inappropriate Authorship Credit, Gifted or Favored Publication and Meagre Publication Culture (Paid Publication, Quid Quo Pro & Subpar Academic Conferences). The findings have important implications for the regulation and policymaking regarding research that is being done at the university level.

KEYWORDS

Academic Dishonesty, Reflective Thematic Analysis, Research, Research Culture, Plagiarism, Publication Culture, Qualitative Research

INTRODUCTION

Academic Dishonesty is one of the most chronic and critical issue that is being faced by academia in Pakistan. Research suggests that it is prevalent across all disciplines at the level of Higher Education in Pakistan (Munir et al., 2011). The issue of academic dishonesty is not only a threat to Pakistan or Asia (Diekhoff et al., 1999; Munir, et al., 2011; Teixeira & Rocha, 2010) but has turned out to be a worldwide challenge, particularly in Higher Education (Abusafia, et al., 2018; Lin & Wen, 2007; Liu & Alias, 2022). It has been defined as deliberate unethical behaviors (Munir, et al., 2011) relevant to academia for the achievement of personal goals (Liu & Alias, 2022), which results in a misrepresentation of academic information or taking credit for someone else's work (UNESCO, 2023). Many studies (e.g. Kidwell, et al., 2003; McCabe et al., 2001; Allen, et al., 1998; Wilfried, 2002) have reported that students are engaged in academic dishonesty at ever-increasing levels.

There are different forms of academic dishonesty present in the literature which include plagiarism, falsification, fabrication, falsified authorship, falsified academic profiles, buying or ghostwriting of papers, and other academic misconduct regulated by relevant organizations (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2016). While Akbulut et al. (2008) added Finagling, Duplication, Least Publishable Units, and Neglecting Support, whereas Bashir and Bala (2018) further included cheating in examinations, outside help, prior cheating, and lying about academic assignments and lastly, Munir, et al., (2011) included Misrepresenting, Unauthorized Possession and Abuse of Academic Materials as some additional forms of Academic Dishonesty. These forms of academic dishonesty can occur during examinations, different classroom and course assignments and activities, thesis, dissertations and research papers (Zhang et al., 2018). Here it is important to note that the prior literature is dominated by cheating or characteristics of cheaters and cheating behaviors (Akers, 2017; Brown et al., 2011; Ferguson et al., 2022; Krienert et al., 2022; Noorbehbahani et al., 2022; Tarigan et al., 2021; Zaho et al., 2022) and plagiarism (Anitha & Sundaram, 2021; Arshad, et al., 2021; Măță, et al., 2020; Rodhiya, & Wijayati, 2020) in the last decade (Heriyti & Ekasari, 2020; Mahmud & Ali, 2023; Munir et al., 2011). From this literature review it is evident that there is very limited work has been done on academic dishonesty in research particularly with reference to the perspective of PhD Scholars.

In this realm, it is important to note that academic researches that have been done in universities hold multifaceted importance. As it is not only important for the academic growth and development (Sultana, 2019) but is essential for societal development. Vekić et al., (2020) highlighted the importance of academic research with reference to sustainable and regional development while Sanchez-Youngman et al., (2021) emphasized on the importance of community-academic partnerships for community

development. Moreover, Perkmann et al., (2021) coined that the academic engagements between different organizations and academia not only ensure organizational development but academic development and discipline as well. Hence, it can be seen that academic research holds a vital standing for development of educational and industrial sector which results in national flourishing. But on contrary the academic research is found to be distant from the practice, particularly in industry, business and management (Ankers & Brennan, 2002; Bolton & Stolcis, 2003; Broekkamp & Hout-Wolter, 2007; Grossman et al., 2001; Starkey & Madan, 2001; Vanderlinde, & van Braak, 2010). There is a huge gap between attitudes, priorities and activities between research or teaching and early careers (Kelly et al., 2014).

LITERATURE REVIEW

As we have seen above academic dishonesty in deeply penetrated academic institutes (Hodgkinson et al., 2016; Jian et al., 2020) and hence academic research is also not spared from it but there is a huge gap in literature where academic dishonesties concerning research are limitedly highlighted. It is important to note that academic researches are done at university level as there is scarcity of independent research institutes. These researches are being done in form of publication of research papers, oral or poster conference presentation, theses and dissertation or project grants (Dohm & Cummings, 2002; Johnston & McCornaack, 1997; Merkel, 2003). It is observed that these research elements generally stem from students' research theses and dissertations. It is important to note that there is a scarcity of prior literature based on academic dishonesty in research, only limited literature is available concerning students' theses and dissertations (de Kleijn et al., 2013; Qiu & Li, 2024; Singh & Remenyi, 2016).

It is noted in the prior literature that research scholars end up doing academic dishonesty when they have to achieve complex research-based goals in a limited time (de Kleijn et al., 2013; Singh & Remenyi, 2016). It has been found that those students who have lower levels of self-determination (i.e., autonomy, competence & relatedness) primarily execute their research thesis immorally (Qiu & Li, 2024). Moreover, a rise has been observed concerning plagiarism and ghost-writing among students in thesis writing (Bosch & Ross, 2012; Fusch et al., 2017; Zhang et al., 2018) where plagiarism is easily identifiable and ghost-writing is only be identified when there is a close link between supervisor and supervisees' research (Singh & Remenyi, 2016). While Mățã, et al. (2020) identified the role of plagiarism, fraudulence and misuse of information and technology. Moreover, Rodhiya and Wijayati (2020) showed that 66% of the students have a neutral attitude towards plagiarism as inadequate actions are being taken against its perpetuation. Lastly, Brimble and Stevenson-Clarke (2005) identified that students are more inclined towards academic

misconduct particularly, falsification of research and plagiarism as compare to faculty members.

Certain theories explain the reasons behind academic dishonesty but there are very limited theories explaining the construct. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TBP; Ajzen, 1991; 2002), Rational Choice Theory (RCT; Cornish & Clarke, 1986), neutralization theory (Skyles & Matza, 1957) and deterrence theory (Zimring & Hawkins, 1973) have been used in explaining the cheating behavior (DiPietro, 2010). Hence, there is a dire need for the development of an indigenous model of academic dishonesty concerning research.

From the above-mentioned discussion it can be seen that there is limited literature concerning academic dishonesty in relevance to academic research, though there is limited literature available attitude toward research thesis and thesis writing of students (de Kleijn et al., 2013; Qiu & Li, 2024; Măță, et al., 2020; Singh & Remenyi, 2016; Zhang et al., 2018). Hence there is a dire need of detailed exploration with reference to academic malpractices that are prevailing in Pakistani context particularly with respect to PhD Scholars. As a lot of departmental research and projects are being executed by PhD Scholars and they also have interactions with the department in capacity of visiting or permanent faculty. Therefore, current research is aimed at the exploration of academic dishonesty and their types that are being perceived by PhD Scholars with reference to research. As Teixeira and Rocha (2010) emphasized on the need of detailed exploration of academic dishonesty in Asian context while Qui and Li (2024) highlighted the need for the development of indigenously relevant theories with reference to the subject matter. Hence the qualitative interview-based research design is most appropriate for this scenario (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Charmaz, 2004).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

1. The current research aimed at the exploration of different forms of academic dishonesties with reference to research.

RESEARCH QUESTION

1. What are different forms of academic dishonesties with reference to research?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

To attain the objectives of the current study qualitative in-depth interview-based research was conducted as it is the most suitable to explore the personal experiences and observations of participants with relevance to a culturally sensitive construct (Charmaz, 2004; Creswell & Creswell, 2017). For data analysis reflective thematic analysis was used (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Participants

For the current study, in-depth interviews were conducted with eleven PhD Scholars currently enrolled in PhD programs of faculty of Management Sciences ($n=4$) and Social Sciences ($n=7$) from both public ($n=3$) and private ($n=8$) sector universities of Karachi, Pakistan. The participant's ages ranged from 29-51 years ($M=37.09$; $SD=7.52$) including both Male ($n=4$) and Female ($n=7$) scholars through a purposive convenient sampling technique. All the participants are currently conducting several researches including their own dissertations, research papers and oral and poster conference presentation as part of their degree and occupation, as all of the participants are either working as a full-time or visiting faculty member.

Measures

For data collection in-depth interview guide was prepared based on the preliminary literature review which included several open-ended questions based on their area of interest in research, their perception and extrospection regarding academic dishonesty concerning research. Their perceptions, experience and observations were probed concerning their sector of university and department. The interview guide was then evaluated by two PhD scholars and their recommended grammatical changes were made in the interview guide. Other than that, a structured demographic information form was made which included questions regarding their age, department, gender, university, faculty, area of research and current status of research.

Procedure

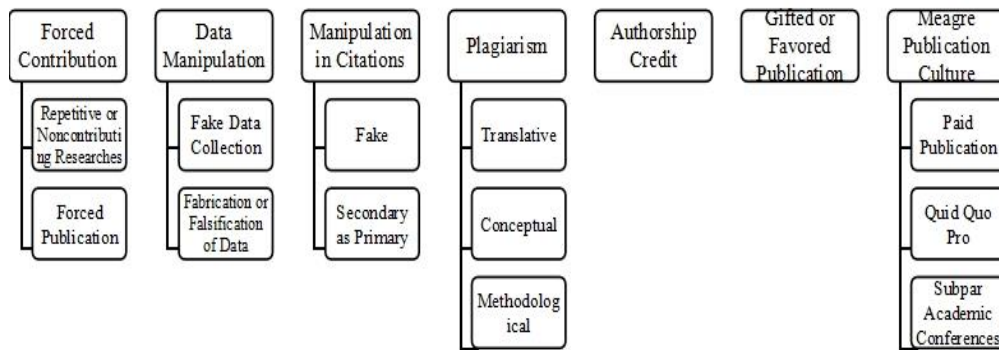
To attain the aims of study first of all a basic interview guide was prepared based on preliminary literature review. After that it was evaluated by two PhD scholars, who recommended minor grammatical correction. After that participants were identified and approach and were asked for an appointment for a telephonic interview. The medium of data collection was kept digital to maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants. The average interview lasts for 30 minutes. The sequence of the questions was kept as per the way discussion was evolving with the participants and the necessary probing questions were also asked. After the collection of data, it was transcribed and then analyzed through Reflective Thematic Analysis (RTA; Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2021). First of all, the familiarization with data was acquired during data collection and transcription, the initial coding was done, then initial themes were generated, after that another round of coding was done, then different categories and subcategories were merged into themes and the results were produced in form of thick description and figure.

DATA ANALYSIS

During data analysis inductive constructivist, experiential approach was kept under consideration while several rounds of latent coding were done as recommended by

Braun and Clarke (2006). In the light of analysis a model of academic dishonesties have been formulated with reference to research. The findings of the study entails that there is a meagre research culture that is flourishing in the departments that come under Management Science and Social Sciences and it is perceived as the primary reason for the academic dishonesties relevant to research. Here it is important to note that this meagre research culture constitutes of unsaid norms and practices which are used by everyone and hold normative acceptance despite of their immoral nature. Moreover, it is being notified that the majority of the research that is being done in the department are done by the research scholars only either by Graduate or Post Graduate Scholars and as their teachers supervise them, and are considered as coauthor. This entails that the faculty members are doing limited or bare minimum researches on their own as one of the participants explained *“humary department main jo bhi research ho rahi hey who students hi kar rahy hain, teachers aur HoD k naam to being supervisor aa jaty hain jub k wo kuch nai karty [whatever research is being done in our department it is being done by students only, the names of teachers and HoDs are just added as supervisors but in reality, they do nothing]”*. Furthermore, it has been perceived by the participants that at post graduate level academic dishonesties are more relevant which are related to research as it is most vital part of their degrees as evident by the verbatim *“At post grad level dishonesty occur only for research”*. All the malpractices are listed below in thick description and figure which have been found to be embodied in the contemporary research culture, in which these practices are perceived as norm and due to lack of awareness and academic rigor are not considered as dishonesty.

Figure 1: Showing the Academic Dishonesties in Research as Perceived by PhD Scholars (N=11)



The above-mentioned figure shows the unethical practices that are grouped together under meager research culture. These malpractices included forced contribution, data manipulation, manipulation in citations, plagiarism, authorship credit, gifted or

favoured publication and meager publication culture.

Forced Contribution

The first sub-category that has emerged in this realm is false contribution. As research is considered a contribution to the field and advancement of the existing literature by the academicians. However, it has been noted that a lot of researchers unable to meet the said standards and fail to accomplish a real contribution in the field because of conducting repetitive or noncontributing researches either in the form research dissertations, published papers, conference papers, or class projects.

Repetitive or Noncontributing Research

As has been said above the majority of the research is being done by research scholars hence, they are unable to find the real gap in the literature consequently they end up doing those research that is not substantial for the field as they hold limited exposure to the field and consequently, unable to find the real problem of the study which results in the limited utility of these researches in the industry as one of the participants said: *“have you ever seen that any research is being done by keeping the real problems off the field in mind, we just follow the trends of the department or supervisor, we are not benefiting the field”*. The real reason behind the distance between research and the field is an inadequate literature review and exposure to the field of both faculty members and research scholars.

Another factor that has been found in this regard is every department has found to have their own preference towards certain research methods and students are encouraged to use those research methods which results in repetitive research topics and methods. As one of the participants explained, *“yahan koi nai research nai karta sab bus wohi ghisay pitay topics pay hi kaam karty hain, kisi k pas itni knowledge ya skills hi nai k kuch naya kar sakain [nobody tries to do something new in research, everyone is doing the usual mundane topics, no one has the skills and knowledge to do something new]”*. This is perceived as academic dishonesty because this practice violates the ethical standards of research as research should be beneficial for the field of study and the population. Moreover, the majority of the research makes false claims regarding the nature of severity of the problem that is being studied. The problem is discussed in a manner that it seemed very vital and limitedly worked upon, but the reality is further away from that. Consequently, these researches are not contributing to the field and also misrepresenting contemporary issues as well. As one of the participants said, *“hum nay daikha hey log aik normal problem ko bhi aisy present karty han k is say bara koi masla hey hi nai jub k wo koi itna bara masla hota bhi nai [we have seen people that they present their problem as huge but in reality, it is not an issue even]”*.

Forced Publication

In relation to above that majority of the researches are being done by students as the faculty members ask them to do different studies as a part of their courses. It is being perceived as unethical because the faculty members coerce the scholars to publish this research against their will. As the research scholars explained as these researches were part of their academic requirement to pass the course, they do not find them sufficient or rigorous enough to be published. But the faculty members force them because being the course instructor they appear as co-authors and attain a publication credit for personal interests. As per the participants writing research papers is a skill that can be acquired with experiential learning but it is unethical on the part of faculty members when they force the candidates to publish it somewhere because of two reasons i.e. these researches are found to be inadequate to be published nor the faculty members have contributed enough to be claimed as co-authors.

Data Manipulation

Another academic dishonesty that has been observed with reference to research is data manipulation, that includes fake data collection, fabrication and falsification of the data. Data collection is one of the foundational steps of any research, which is why manipulation in it is perceived as academic dishonesty as it may lead to misleading findings. Two sub-themes have emerged in this area discussed below in the thick description.

Misrepresentative or Fake Data Collection

The majority of the researches that are being done by scholars and published with departmental affiliation is based on fake or partially fake data. It has been observed that fake or meager data collection is highly prevalent which leads to fake or manipulated findings. Either the data is not collected at all and is simulated through different means or if it is collected then been done it meagerly and sometimes the number of observations or participants are increased. Another academic dishonesty that has been observed is the misrepresentativeness of the sample. Where the data has been collected from a limited subsection of population, researchers do not make efforts to reach the actual population and generalize their findings on a larger scale. As one of the participants explained, "*Scholars do not leave their comfort zone to collect they just go limited places from where they can easily find the data, I think it's not the true representation*". Consequently, the findings based on these fake or misrepresentative data are not authentic and do not characterize the real population. Another aspect of this is that the instruments or tools that are being used in these researches are not adequate or culturally relevant. It is being observed that the researchers prefer the easily available instruments as they do not want to put themselves in the hassle of development of indigenous measures or the translation or adaptation of the already existing tools. These barriers limit the scope of participant availability and

comprehensiveness hence the data remain unauthentic and misrepresentative.

Falsification and Fabrication of Data

It has been widely observed that it is being desired that the hypotheses should be accepted. To attain this goal, researchers use several unethical practices, which include using of analytical approaches that may provide anticipated results that are not theoretically adequate. Examples of these strategies include the use of certain software or the division of the participants into different experimental conditions in a way that desired results are guaranteed.

Moreover, it has been in the experience of the participants that researchers sometimes alter their results or phrasing of the hypotheses to support them. As one of the participants said “*is main kon si itni bari baat hey, directional hypothesis ko nondirectional hypothesis banana [how big is a deal, to change non-directional hypothesis to directional]*”. The research scholars do not always use these strategies on their own and sometimes they are being advised by the faculty members as well like deleting or increasing the number of participants. Moreover, these practices are perceived as *smart research hacks* rather than unethical or immoral.

Manipulation in Citations

An extensive literature review provides basis to good research and to build theoretical and literature foundation the authors need to cite several research papers, books and other sources. In this regard there are two primary malpractices that are prevailing which includes fake citations and referring secondary citation as primary.

Fake Citations

It has been observed that it is widely belief that there should be an extensive list of references to any research article and to execute that sometimes authors use man-made citations or references, which have no existence in real literature. These citations cannot be found in any digital and print medium. Scholars use these citations in different parts of their research to support their arguments but in reality, these researches have never been done, they are considered as fake evidences. This practice is used by both scholars and faculty members.

Making Secondary Citations as Primary

It has been found out that one of the most prevalent but unrecognized academic dishonesty where researchers do not investigate the primary sources of information yet present them as primary. It is found more in conceptual or theoretical frameworks where the researchers cite different theories and information from the secondary but use the primary references, hence they present the perspectives of others as their own “*Everybody quotes Maslow but did anyone read his original work*”. In addition to

when researchers have to justify the statistical inferences, they use secondary citations without even considering either they are relevant for their scenario or not or even they are recently revised or updated. Students do not read or cite the original work they just go for whatever is available to them. Citing of secondary references as primary promotes false claims and prepositions which lack scientific rigor and foundations.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism has been found out to be most prevalent among researchers where they cite others' work without giving due credit to the respective authors. From the data analysis, three types of plagiarism have emerged, which include, translative, conceptual and methodological.

Translative

A lot of researchers are found to be involved in translative plagiarism. In translative plagiarism authors take research papers in foreign languages like German or Chinese and translate them and get them published; sometimes they translate it by themselves or sometimes they use translative tools. As one of the participants said, *"People take research papers in foreign languages let's say they take a German or Chinese paper they translate it in English and get it published which is wrong"*.

Conceptual

It is widely prevailing but barely recognized or considered academic dishonesty. In this, researchers use someone else's conceptual idea and change the methodology a bit and do their research. They fail to mention that it's a conceptual adoption or adaptation they present it as their inferential theory. Sometimes they are also found to be replicating the same research idea and unable to recognize it as a replication study. As one of the participants said, *"log is baat lo plagiarism consider hi nai karty k kisi aur k research idea ko apna bna k paish kar dain [people do not consider it plagiarism that they present someone else's idea as their own.]"*

Methodological

As far as methodological plagiarism is concerned it is again widely prevalent yet not recognized. Scholars tend to use the methodologies of other authors and present it as their own. Scholars lack comprehensive knowledge of the methods and replicate the methodologies and analytical approaches of prior research papers. Scholars do not find contemporary trends and improvements that are being practiced and rely on old citations that are being used by prior scholars.

It is important to note that the research journals have very strict policy with reference to plagiarism and only limited percentage of plagiarism is allowed. Yet to identify the percentage of plagiarism AI based tools are being used which are only able to identify

text-based plagiarism but there are scientific tools to identify the above-mentioned types of academic dishonesties.

Authorship Credit

It has been observed that faculty members engage their multiple colleagues and students for researches hence, the sequence of authors becomes a dispute among scholars where everyone desires to become a primary author. Hence the sequence of the authorship is not decided on the basis of contribution but on the basis social prestige. Here it is being noted that some faculty members or supervisors are credited as authors whom have either not done any or very limited contributions in the study. In some instances, faculty members present them as primary where the original work is being done by students. It has also been found out there are some faculty members publish their students work as primary author and, in some instances, where the students are primary authors supervisors or faculty members which are presented as coauthors do not even pay the publication fees.

Gifted or Favored Publication

In the same realm researchers favor their colleagues and peers in publication where they put the names of other faculty as coauthors who do not have any real contribution in the research. There are certain groups of authors who always publish together even they have worked on the paper or not. They may comprise of different faculty members and scholars. Scholars also support each other in that manner. Students also include the names of their faculty members who have not contributed in a study as a gift to build or maintain an alliance with them. This whole subtheme works on the principle of quid quo pro, where scholars put each other's names as coauthors in the research papers to increase the number of publications. Moreover, it has also been observed by the participants that few coauthors do not have any actual contribution in the work except for financial contribution in terms of publication fee.

Meagre Publication Culture

Dissemination of research is one of the key elements of research culture, hence it is also not devoid from academic dishonesty. For PhD scholar research publication become more critical as it is the requirement of HEC that PhD scholar cannot submit their thesis without publication while some of the universities demand more than one publication from the scholars. While for promotions and other monetary benefits faculty members also require research publications. Universities also require research publications of their scholars and faculty members for their national and international ranking. Hence research publication becomes a very crucial part of academia where these requirements give rise to research publication but at the same time give birth to meagre research publication culture because the focus is more on quantity than quality. As elaborated by a participant *"The authorities are only concerned with the number of*

researchers, not with the quality of research", this promotes a meager research culture. In this regard, three important facets have been highlighted i.e. paid publications, quid quo pro publications and subpar academic conferences.

Paid Publication

There are some national and international journals whose real aim is to earn money rather than dissemination of quality research work. In this regard they publish the research without any review processes hence the credibility of those researches becomes questionable. These journals provide guaranteed publication to authors despite of poor quality of research. In this way, subpar researches are promoted and decreases academic and research rigor. There are plenty of journals that just publish without any review process just for the money they don't even see the quality of the journal.

Quid Quo Pro approach towards a publication

As we have discussed above research publication has become mandatory for scholars and faculty members to find different ways to get their work published. After HEC restrictions on institutional publications or publication from reviewers and board members now faculty members publish each other's work regardless of the quality of work. For example, institutions publish the research of a PhD scholar or expedite the publication process of some other university as a favor with the understanding that when their PhD scholars or faculty members would need their papers to be published, they will return the favor. All of this is not documented or out loud verbalized but has become integral part of the culture where research publications are done in mutual beneficiary basis.

Subpar Academic Conferences

Another malpractice that is being observed by the participants is the conduction of subpar academic conferences. The scope of these conferences is made so generic so that research papers can be accepted from all fields of expertise and just to increase the scale of the conference all the papers are accepted and then published in the proceedings. Special preferences are given to the host departments and universities or those with whom they hold alliances. Session chairs, speakers and panelists are called based on personal and professional relationships and not based on their areas of expertise. Lastly, some of these conferences are labeled as international just based on the fact one or two panelists are invited from foreign countries where their contribution to the academic rigor of the conference is minimalistic. Hence these conferences are not uplifting the research culture but alleviating its quality and rigor by promoting substandard Research and practices.

It has been observed that all the subcategories of meager research culture hold the

extrospection of participants and are interlinked and have been found to be deeply rooted in the research culture where they are not perceived as academic dishonesty rather, they are perceived as smart solutions to issues concerning research and academia.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the current study entail that academic dishonesty with reference to research is embodied in the meagre academic research culture which can be explained by the Theory of Planned Behavior (TBP, Ajzen, 1991; 2002). In prior literature it has been used to explain cheating behavior (Harding, et al., 2007; Whitley, 1998; Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2002) but in current context the components that drive the intention of any behavior explains the foundation of meagre academic research culture. Where the normative acceptance (subjective norms) of academic dishonesty in research is supporting a positive attitude towards certain malpractices through which execution of research is easier and increase in number of publications is possible. This attitude flourishes on the lack of identification and reprimands of these forms of academic dishonesties in research which provides the confidence for their perpetuation (behavioral control). Moreover, this hue of malpractices is penetrated in the research culture and the members are learning them from their environment. Hence Social Learning Theory (Bandura & Walters, 1963) provides supports for different forms of academic dishonesties with reference to research as well, where researchers are not only learning new forms of academic dishonesties but also observing a supportive attitude towards them. As prior (Lersch, 1999; McCabe & Trevino, 1993; 1997) shows this support towards cheating and other academic misconducts. The prior researches have highlighted the prevalence of academic dishonesty with reference to cheating (Iberahim, et al., 2013; Valerie et al., 2001) at graduate level but the current results have pointed out that this extends till post graduate level and faculty members particularly with reference to conducting research.

Moreover, it was found out that majority of the departmental research work is done by the research scholars rather than by the faculty members. As they assign their work to their supervisees or students and negligibly contribute in the researches and do not even consider it dishonesty. This behavior is explained by the neutralization theory (Skyles & Matza, 1957) and extends this theory to academic dishonesty with reference to research where it is already shedding light on cheating (Meng et al., 2014; Storch et al., 2002; Whitley, 1998). Building on Storch et al. (2002) work on neutralization techniques that are being used by cheater, faculty members also justify their projection of research work on students through *denying the responsibility*, where they do not consider it academic dishonesty as they attribute it to their burden of professional responsibilities and *blame the authorities*. They also *add the value* to their argument that they are doing this for the academic and professional development of students.

Current study proposed a model of different forms of academic dishonesties with reference to research. First of all, Forced Contribution (Repetitive or Noncontributing Researches & Forced Publication) have been identified. This aspect has been limitedly addressed in prior literature which can be justified by the incompetencies of faculty members and students. As previous research notified that under graduate scholars find it extremely difficult to establish a sound theoretical framework and selecting an appropriate theory to justify their importance of research, this is being referred as ability frustration (Qui & Li, 2024) and lack of knowledge among nursing students (He et al., 2024). Current study is elaborating these findings for PhD Scholars and faculty members where they also find them incompetent to conduct researches on contemporary issues and methodologies and consequently end up extending the gap between academic research and the needs of the industry. As far as, Data Manipulation (Fake Data Collection & Fabrication or Falsification of Data) is concerned the prior researches have pointed out the issue of increasing the number of participants from whom the data was actually collected at the level of undergraduate thesis writing (Qui & Li, 2024) or falsifying the results (Brimble & Stevenson-Clarke, 2005; Akbari Khudlan et al., 2020). The current research elaborated in detailed that how this data manipulation occurs at departmental level in different form of researches where in some stances the data is either fake or nonrepresentative or altered for the desired results.

As mentioned in the literature review that prior literature is dominated with plagiarism (Anitha & Sundaram, 2021; Arshad, et al., 2021; Măță, et al., 2020; Rodhiya, & Wijayati, 2020) while different indigenous research also identified the prevalence of plagiarism at undergraduate level (Nazir & Aslam, 2010; Mahmud & Ali, 2023; Qui & Li, 2024). The current research has emphasized on different types of Plagiarism that have been penetrated in current research culture i.e. Translative, Conceptual and Methodological. It is being emphasized that plagiarism is not limited to referring someone else's work without due credit, it is beyond than that and promoting substandard researches which are not related to the theoretical, methodological and cultural context. In the same realm Manipulation in Citations (Fake & Secondary as Primary), is a culturally relevant finding, where it has not been notified in prior literature. It holds great importance concerning indigenous research as their foundation, explanations or inferences can be flawed because of them.

Moreover, as far as Authorship Credit, is concerned He et al., (2024) identified that authors use rationalization to justify their minimalistic contribution. In current context the unjustified authorship credit and gifted or favored publication are found to be rooted in the esteem and prestige that is being associated with the faculty members. Where, it is being considered as a sign of respect when students add the names of noncontributing faculty members as primary or co-authors. Other than that, as

Pakistan is a developing country and it is difficult for students to pay the publication fee, hence by adding several authors the issue of the fee can be resolved and the esteem of the research paper can be increased while adding the names of distinguished faculty members. Lastly, another aspect that is pertinent to the Indigenous context only is Meagre Publication Culture (Paid Publication, Quid Quo Pro & Subpar Academic Conferences). To support the meagre academic research culture a meagre publication culture is prevailing to subside its limitations. It can be justified by the situational ethics framework which enlightens that such unique situations give birth to unique considerations to support each other (Fletcher, 1966) as this framework has also been supportive of academic and workplace dishonesty (Carpenter et al., 2006; Nonis & Swift, 2001). It can be further explained with the theory of planned behavior where the meagre publication culture provides opportunities to accommodate the meagre research culture.

Current study provides an extensive model of academic dishonesties with reference to research in public and private sector universities of Karachi, Pakistan. The model entails different forms of academic dishonesties that prevail with reference to research which are embodied in a meagre academic research culture. These include Forced Contribution (Repetitive or Noncontributing research & Forced Publication), Data Manipulation (Fake Data Collection & Fabrication or Falsification of Data), Manipulation in Citations (Fake & Secondary as Primary), Plagiarism (Translative, Conceptual & Methodological), Inappropriate Authorship Credit, Gifted or Favored Publication and Meagre Publication Culture (Paid Publication, Quid Quo Pro & Subpar Academic Conferences).

These findings of the study will create awareness among members of university regarding academic dishonesty and facilitate in identification of it at semantic and latent levels. Moreover, they will be helpful in policy making and its implementation regarding the issue. They can be the foundational steps in identification and control of academic dishonesty and creating a conducive research culture. It will alleviate the indigenous research standards which consequently academic and industrial growth of the nation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The focus of current study was limited to qualitative exploration only and future researches can acquire a quantitative approach. Moreover the findings of the current study are based on the perspective of PhD Scholars and junior faculty members, perspective of senior faculty members can also be taken account for further researches. Based on the findings of the study indigenous scale for academic dishonesty in research can be developed. Lastly experimental studies can be conducted in future where the efficacy of the measures to control academic dishonesty can be established.

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