



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF APPLIED TECHNOLOGIES IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

<http://www.jatlim.org>

International Journal of Applied Technologies in Library and Information Management 9 (2) 10 - 92-107

ISSN: (online) 2467 - 8120

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Manuscript Number: JATLIM - 2023-09.02/92-107

Ethics in Research: Analysis of Unethical Cases and Implications for Library and Information Science

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Abstract

*This article examines some selected cases of unethical practices and administration of research. **Three research objectives were raised as follows:** to examine the nature of ethical issues in research; to analyse unethical cases in research and to proffer recommendations that will enhance ethical issues in research. The article adopted an exploratory research design. Secondary data were obtained using a desk review of existing literature on unethical cases in research. Emphasis is given to the qualitative analysis of case study discussions on the different dimensions of unethical research practices. Findings revealed the following unethical issues in research: Co-authorship Conflicts, Privacy and Confidentiality, Pirated Ideas for Research, Withholding Study Purposes, Abeg Add My Name and Plagiarism. It is, therefore, recommended that Ethical considerations should guide scholars in every circumstance to balance the demand for moral principles of research, authors should build ethics into daily routines, research and the workplace, Authors should be familiar with legal and institutional frameworks that exist and be conscious of ethical obligations to all stakeholders. As a matter of justice, unethical investigators should not be rewarded by having the data from their studies used. Punishment should be visited upon such investigators who engaged in unethical research. These may include; rejection and retraction of publication and withdrawal of funding.*

Keywords: Co-authorship Conflicts, Privacy and Confidentiality, Piracy and Plagiarism, Intellectual Property

1.1 Introduction

The controversies related to unethical research practices have engendered significant research interest across the globe (Abimbola, Tola, Popoola, Folorunso, Amao-Taiwo, Ige, Ekpe-Iko, Dike, Adebisi, Eze, 2021). Though research or human experimentation has been in existence since

the 18th century (Bhatt, 2010; Schiebinger, 2017), what attracted society's interest in research was the ethical attributes of researchers in the mid-20th century (the 1940s) which was characterised by human exploitations. As a result of this development, professional codes and laws were introduced to check the scientific abuse of human lives.

The first code to be introduced to check the scientific abuse of humans was the Nuremberg Code of 1947, which was a result of Nazi experiments and meant to protect human rights in research (Fouka and Mantzorou, 2011). The code focuses on voluntary informed consent, liberty of withdrawal from research, and protection from physical and mental harm, suffering, and death.

Suffice it to say that at the turn of the 21st century, the nature of research changed rapidly, and impacted society greatly. This is because several codes and laws were also introduced to check all areas of unethical conduct in research. Examples of such are the Universal Copyright Convention of 1971, the Patent Convention Treaty, of 1970, the Berne Convention for Protection of Literary and Artistic Work, 1986, and the International Convention for the Protection of Individual Property (Ports in 1883 and revised in Lisbon, 1958). Also, individual institutions of learning established codes to regulate the conduct of research within their domain. Such include; the University of Huddersfield's Code of Practice for Research adapted from the UK Research Integrity Office's Code of Practice for Research. The codes were designed to encourage good conduct in research and help prevent misconduct, to assist researchers in conducting research of the highest quality. The areas of concern are; research data falsification, plagiarism, authorship Conflict, conflict of interest, and Code of ethics in many instances (Fleming and Zegwaard, 2018; University Grants Commission, 2021) to name a few.

Similarly, the University of Birmingham's code of practice for research; the Code defines the University's policies and expectations regarding the conduct of research under its auspices. This is because the University is committed to research excellence and the rigorous pursuit of new knowledge. As such it is committed to maintaining the highest

standards of scholarly and scientific integrity in its research. It expects all researchers to work within these standards (University of Birmingham, 2021).

The National Code of Health Research Ethics is the highest policy document on research ethics in Nigeria. The code provides guidelines that govern ethical research practice to ensure the protection of human research participants in Nigeria (Federal Ministry of Health (2007). Nigeria is also a signatory to the conventions and treaties on Copyright to ensure the effective administration of activities relating to intellectual property in Nigeria. These include: the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works of 1886; The Universal Copyright Convention (UCC) 1952; the World Intellectual Property Organization Copyright Treaty (WCT) 1996; World Intellectual Property Organization Performance of Phonogram Treaty (WPPT) 1996; Nigeria Copyright Act:

These codes and policy guidelines have provided a common set of rules or standards for all professional researchers/authors to adhere to in the conduct of research. It defines best practices for the professional; provides a basis to meet compliance requirements for the profession and also provides a legal standard for the professionals (Switzer, 2020). Hence, Badyal (2018) stated that developments in society can be achieved through certain parameters and research is one of them. Since research has become an indispensable tool for ensuring development in society, it should be conducted truthfully and systematically; and quality research seeks to answer a definite question by using pre-defined procedures and techniques. In academic parlance, the main purpose of research is to contribute to knowledge by expanding what is already known (Akaranga and Makau, 2016). To do this effectively, researchers must adhere to ethics in conducting and disseminating research findings to society. This paper analysed some unethical issues in research *with*

recommendations on how researchers and scientists can improve through intentional efforts to be ethical in every dealing and practice.

1.2 Statement of Research Problem

Ethics in research has been of major concern to researchers and policymakers. Policymakers require credible information that will enable them to make decisions that will impact the lives of people. In this regard, they need reliable information that will enable them to make informed decisions. This information is usually provided by researchers. Researchers are expected to research issues that affect society and impact the lives of people. They are, therefore, expected to observe ethical considerations in conducting Research, as this will make their research findings reliable, credible, and acceptable to the scholarly community and society as a whole.

However, the problem with most research has to do with providing research results or findings that are free of unethical issues. Pieces of literature on ethical issues in research show that researchers are more often than not engaged in one unethical issue or the other when producing scholarly publications (Jenn, 2006; Sinha, Singh, Kumar, 2007; Maseko, 2017). Gbenga, (2015) identified some unethical research practices including; falsification of research outcomes; falsification of data; falsification of sample selection procedures; deliberate selection of wrong respondents; drawing of biased inferences; and asking leading questions to respondents. Accordingly, ethical conduct in research is critical to maintaining the integrity of research in all spheres of knowledge (**Cliffs Notes, 2023**). The purpose of clinical and scientific research is to systematically collect and analyse data from which conclusions are drawn, that may be generalisable, to improve the society in future. In this *article*, we will briefly review documented *unethical issues*

found in some selected research,

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

- i. To examine the nature of ethical issues in research.
- ii. To analyse unethical cases in research
- iii. To proffer recommendations that will enhance ethical issues in research

1.4 Scope of the Study

This paper considered some selected cases of unethical practices and the administration of research generally.

2.1 Literature Review

Conceptual Clarifications

2.2 Ethics

Ethics has been described as a branch of philosophy that deals with the dynamics of decision-making as regards what is right or wrong (Fouka and Mantzorou, 2011). A more elaborate perspective is that given by Kovaks, (1985); Blumberg et al, (2005); cited in Akaranga and Makou (2016) that “Ethics is a branch of philosophy that deals with the conduct of people and guides the norms or standards of behaviour of people and relationships with each other”. Ethics is, therefore, a discipline that has to do with what is good and bad; it is also concerned with moral duty and obligation.

Ethics is grouped into two parts: Theoretical Ethics and Applied Ethics. Theoretical ethics includes Normative Ethics, Descriptive Ethics, and Meta-Ethics. Normative ethics is the study of what makes actions right and wrong. Meta-ethics is about the theoretical meaning and reference of moral propositions. Descriptive ethics is about facts. It examines ethics from observations of actual choices made by *moral agents* in practice. Whereas, applied ethics refers to Professional ethics. Applied ethics examines the particular ethical issues of private and public life.

Professional ethics is one of the important branches of applied ethics. In general, professional ethics can be defined as standards or codes to provide people with guidance in their professional lives. Hence, there are four basic principles in ethical codes namely; Honesty, Confidentiality, Conflict of interest, and Responsibilities (Gülcan NY, 2015).

According to Resnik, 2020 adhering to ethical norms in research is important because norms promote the aims of the research, such as knowledge, truth, and avoidance of error. Also, since research often involves a great deal of cooperation and coordination among many different people in different disciplines and institutions, ethical standards promote the values that are essential to collaborative work, such as trust, accountability, mutual respect, and fairness. Furthermore, many of the ethical norms help to ensure that researchers can be held accountable to the public. For instance, federal policies on research misconduct, conflicts of interest, human subject protections, and animal care and use are necessary to make sure that researchers who are funded by public money can be held accountable to the public.

2.2 Research

Research is an essential way of improving the lives of the members of society. It is the major way of advancement in knowledge and adoption of new skills in various disciplines. According to Ikeagwu (1998), research is a systematic, objective and thorough investigation of a subject or problem to discover relevant information or principles. As for Badyal (2018), research means a careful investigation and careful inquiry with the intent to find relevant facts that will be useful in the future. Badyal further states that the purpose behind conducting research is to find a solution to a fundamental problem. Quality research outcome, according to him

ensures improvement in society, directly or indirectly. The basic aim, and purpose of conducting research, he further states, is to inculcate original thinking and analysis. Furthermore, Kabir, (2016) stated that research is a scientific approach to answering a research question, solving a problem, or generating new knowledge through a systematic and orderly collection, organization, and analysis of information with the ultimate goal of making the research useful in decision-making. Accordingly, Systematic research in any field of inquiry involves three basic operations: data collection; data analysis, and report writing.

2.3 Research Ethics and Unethical Research Practices

As a concept, 'research ethics refers to a complex set of values, standards and institutional schemes that help constitute and regulate scientific activity. Ultimately, research ethics is a codification of ethics of science in practice. In other words, it is based on the general ethics of science, just as general ethics is based on commonsense morality. Research is often intertwined with other specialist activities. The ethical responsibilities inherent in research are partly associated with standards related to there search process, including relationships between researchers, and partly with respect for the individuals and institutions being studied, including responsibility for the use and dissemination of the research. Many standards must be weighed against other considerations and modified in light of them when making specific assessments in individual cases(Ezea and Idoko, 2018).

Akaranga and Makau (2016), state that research ethics is a branch of applied ethics with established rules and guidelines for conducting research. Research ethics, according to Fouka and Mantzorou, (2011) involves requirements for daily work, the protection of the dignity of subjects, and the

publication of the information in the research. Simply put, research ethics can be considered to be the rules, guides, or code of conduct that is meant to guide researchers in producing quality research findings and results, while unethical behaviours occur when decisions enable an individual or organization to profit at the expense of the larger society.

The abuse of research activities necessitated the need for research ethics. The rationale for research ethics is to avoid harm to human subjects and ensure that research projects are carried out for human development and advancement. Similarly, as a means of ensuring that the institutes of higher education meet the societal demand for research-based solutions to teeming challenges, it has become a policy for academic staff to engage in academic research as they progress in their career as facilitators of knowledge. It is however sad to note that this policy, rather than being a source of motivation for commitment to academic research, appears to be gradually increasing the spate of unethical practices among academic staff. For instance, Salami as cited by Kana (2016) itemised fraud, plagiarism, honorary or gift authorship, fabricated peer reviews, article retractions and publishing in predatory journals as some of the adverse effects of “publish or perish”- the often-criticised system that reward researchers for maximising publication in top journals.

Adeleye and Adebamowo (2012) in a study on the range of research wrongdoings and the potential predictors in two states in Nigeria reported that fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism were common practices and such actions were predicted by knowledge gaps in research ethics and pressure to publish enough papers for promotion. According to Gureev, Lakizo and Mazov (2019), the concept of unethical authorship is considered a critical point in the academic sphere, because publication is a major determinant of academic resources.

This dire need to meet the demands of the profession to attain the requirements for promotion has resulted in diverse forms of unethical research practices (Olesen, Amin and Mahadi, 2018). Prominent among these unethical research practices is unethical authorship, which is explained as a misrepresentation of the real authorship of a research publication which makes it quite problematic, to evaluate the reliability of such a study against any potential bias (Padayachee, 2019). An author must have contributed substantially to the conception and development of the research and be able to interpret and defend the results and effectively participate in the review of the article (Shamoo and Resink, 2009). This suggests that for anybody to have their name on the authorship list of a research work, such must have actively participated in its making. The concept of honorary authorship is also an unethical research practice.

Harvey (2018) defined honorary authorship as 'gift, guest or unjustified' authorship as persons who assume the position of authors simply because of their influential positions in the faculty or area of the research and who probably helped in securing funding for the research work. This form of authorship according to Harvey is best described as unscrupulous and a malpractice in scientific research. The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that the conferment of honorary authorship goes without any involvement or contribution of the person in the research study. This misconduct in research sometimes is done to curry favour from a senior member of the faculty or the area where the study is carried out and sometimes it is done to improve the credibility of the research work (Harvey, 2018; Gopi Rethinaraj and Chakravarty, 2017).

In a science editorial, Greenland and Fontanarosa (2012) maintain that honorary authorship infringes on the principle of true

authorship and utterly condemned the practice which was reported to have been included in 25 per cent of research reports, 15 per cent of review articles and 11 per cent of editorials (p.1019) which were published in six outstanding medical journals in 2008. Analyzing the forms in which this unethical authorship occurs, Greenland and Fontanarosa explained that in some cases, honorary authorship could be done by coercion, when a junior researcher is made to include the name of a senior researcher without any contribution of any kind to the study, and against his will. In some other cases, it could take the form of a deliberate inclusion of prominent researchers in a particular field to promote the acceptability of the paper for publication. From whichever angle the situation is considered, Greenland and Fontanarosa believe that honorary authorship is a fraudulent practice in research because it is a violation of the principles that characterize an academic setting.

In a research study on the prevalence and perception of honorary co-authorship among a cohort of top medical academics, O'Brian, Baerlocher, Newton, Gautam and Noble (2009) described honorary authorship as the inclusion of the names of friends, colleagues and mentors in research studies as authors without any substantial contribution to the study. O'Brian, Baerlocher, Newton, Gautam and Noble acknowledged that even with all the ethical guidelines that have been published to curb the menace of unethical authorship, honorary authorship is still prevalent. The result of the study showed that 52 per cent of the participants had been included in an honorary co-authorship at some point in the course of their career, and about 18 per cent of the participants had at some point, been required to include as authors those who provided data through a business relationship, while the majority of the participants accepted the existence of possible detrimental effects of honorary

authorship for both the real authors and the coauthors.

The concept of ghost authorship equally suggests that an author whose name is supposed to be included in the list of authorship has been omitted. According to Gotzche *et al* (2007), ghost authorship is the failure to name an individual, as an author, who has made substantial contributions to an article or a research work. This may mislead readers, and result in a lack of accountability. In the same vein, Schofferman (2015) states that the use of ghost authors is unethical, and in science or education it is not acceptable. Ghost authors dilute the credibility of the authors in question. The author suggests a complete disclosure of the role an individual plays in manuscript research design, data collection, analysis, writing or editing (Barbour, 2010). Hence, anyone who makes substantial contributions to a paper should be listed as the author and no one should simply be listed to improve the work's reputation.

According to the Ethics Code Standard 8.12c, Publication Credit of the American Psychological Association (APA, 2010), authorship is a preserve of individuals who substantially contributed to a study and are also responsible for the published work. This point is further explained to mean that authorship is not only for the person who actually wrote the work but also includes those who made meaningful scientific and professional contributions to the work. Such contributions according to APA include the articulation of the research problem and hypothesis; organizing the research design; carrying out the data analysis, result interpretations or writing a substantial part of the work. On contributions that do not amount to authorship, APA lists support services such as constructing of devices, advice on data analysis methods, collection or inputting of data, enlisting research participants and computer programme configuration and suggests that such contributors could be

acknowledged. Similarly, the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE, 2019) developed clear standards on authorship to avoid misrepresentations. According to them, an author is expected to satisfy the following conditions; substantial contributions to the conceptions or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content; final approval of the version to be published; agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved. Additionally, ICMJE identified a list of activities that alone do not place the contributor in the position of an author, but at most deserve to be acknowledged. They include sourcing for or obtaining funding for the research; overseeing the activities of the research group offering administrative support to the group and providing other forms of support like writing, proofreading, editing or technical support.

2.4 Ethical Considerations in Research

Ethical considerations in research are some of the genres that researchers follow to protect the rights in developing research strategies and building a trusted relationship between the study participants and investigator (Rana, Dilshad, Ahsan, 2021). Some of the ethical issues are discussed below.

- i. **Informed consent** – This is the major ethical issue in conducting research. It implies when a person knowingly and voluntarily gives his/her consent to the researcher.
- ii. **Beneficence** – This has to do with conducting research that will be beneficial to the subjects or constituents. It usually involves considering the welfare of the subjects and should be devoid of anything that will harm the subjects.

- iii. **Respect for anonymity and confidentiality** – A researcher must consider these two factors in conducting research. Anonymity is protected when the person's (subject) identity cannot be linked with the responses. However, if the researcher cannot promise to protect anonymity then he has to ensure confidentiality, which is the ability to manage private or personal information by the researcher to protect the identity of the subject. The challenges of confidentiality are more in qualitative research because the researcher faces the subject or respondent in person. Therefore, the researcher must consider the psychological and social implications that a breach of confidentiality may have on the respondent or subject.

- iv. **Respect for privacy** – Privacy connotes the freedom an individual has to decide the time, extent and general circumstances that guide the divulgence of private information from the public. It is worth noting that the invasion of privacy occurs when private information such as beliefs, attitudes, opinions, etc., is shared with others without the subject's knowledge or consent. However, researchers must ensure that all measures are put in place to protect subjects from psychological, physical, or social embarrassment during the research or after the presentation of results.

- v. **Treatment of vulnerable groups:** These comprise prisoners, students, the mentally ill, the aged, children, the critically ill, the unconscious, those with learning disabilities, etc. Opinions are divided on whether to use these categories of people in research. However, if they are to be used, the researcher must seek the consent of their parents or guardians before engaging them in the research. (Fouka and Mantzorou, 2011)

- vi. **Honesty** – A true researcher should present the facts and position and refrain from introducing fabricated, false, or plagiarised information.

vii. **Objectivity** – A researcher should avoid biases while conducting his work. Although he/she might have a particular position concerning a particular problem his work should not reflect the one-sided approach.

viii. **Carefulness** – A researcher should be very careful while relying upon certain data and leaving the other portion. One of the reasons cited for plagiarism is that the researcher is unaware of the fact he is committing plagiarism. However the same can be avoided if the researcher acts carefully and diligently.

ix. **Respect for Intellectual Property** – Intellectual Property rights recognise that the owner has spent time, resources, and skill in

creating the work. If these rights are not honoured, then it will prove detrimental to the owner, and neither will it contribute anything new to the field of study. Thus, the primary reason behind the introduction of the concept of plagiarism. (Orb, Elsenhauer and Wynaden, 2001).

3.1 Methodology

The article adopted an exploratory research design. Secondary data were obtained using a desk review of existing literature on unethical cases in research. Emphasis is given to the qualitative analysis of case study discussions on the different dimensions of unethical research practices.

4.1 Unethical Cases in Research

Cases	Narratives
Case 1- Theme 1: Co-Authorship Conflicts	Case 1 Narration: Hiroko is a graduate student who has been working on protein replication. She has spent almost a year developing the methodology for this project but, she is not getting along well with her advisor. She decides to move to another lab with a new advisor and begin a new project. A few months later, Hiroko finds out that her old lab is about to submit a paper to a journal on research conducted by a new graduate student using the methodology Hiroko developed. Hiroko feels that she should be a coauthor and raises this concern with her former advisor. Her former advisor explains that the data being published are not from Hiroko's project and, therefore, she should not be a coauthor. Hiroko brought her complaint to the chair of the department, arguing that her technique is not available in the open literature, so the data could not have been collected without her work in the lab. [1]
Case 2 - Theme 2: Privacy and Confidentiality	Case 2 Narration: The Powers Institute in Missouri is conducting a study on group therapy for women who are sex addicts. This type of addiction is less common in women so identifying specific treatment options for this group would be highly beneficial. There is a great risk to participants should their identities be exposed. Due to the sensitive nature of this study, the consent form promised strict confidentiality. Dr Maria Rodriguez, the principal investigator on the project, has also obtained a certificate of confidentiality from the sponsoring agency to protect study data from subpoenas. During one therapy session, Amanda, a high school math teacher, discloses that she is having sex with an unnamed 16-year-old student. Sexual relations with an individual under 17 by an individual over 21 years old constitute statutory rape in Missouri and are reportable. As a co-investigator on this project, you have become aware of Amanda's sexual relationship and asked Dr. Rodriguez whether or not to report it. Dr. Rodriguez is aware of the law but argues against reporting. She says it would break their promise of confidentiality to the women and destroy their trust in the researchers. This would ruin both the study and the therapeutic alliance they've established. Moreover, she says that reporting the offence would be devastating to Amanda; she would lose her job and her relationship with her two daughters would be damaged. She says that the situation might be different if the boy were younger and did not consent. You wonder if Dr. Rodriguez is showing too much sympathy for Amanda because Dr. Rodriguez is herself a recovering sex addict. [1]

<p>Case 3 - Theme 3: Pirated Idea for Research</p>	<p>Case 3 -Narrative: While reviewing a grant proposal, a member of an NIH study section concluded that her lab would be better equipped to perform the research and could get it done more quickly even though it was somewhat different from her normal research. She gave the idea to one of her post -docs the next day and he began working on it diligently.</p> <p>The research resulted in a paper that was submitted for publication in a highly regarded journal. One of the reviewers for this journal was the original researcher, who had reached similar findings but had been holding off publication because of a pending patent application. The researcher who had submitted the original proposal complained to the Office of Research Integrity. [1]</p>
<p>Case 4- Theme 4: Withholding Study Purpose</p>	<p>Case 4 - Narrative: Dr. Kasparov has received funding to develop and test an intervention to prevent child abuse among pregnant women in outpatient drug treatment programs. Many current and recovering substance -abusing women are at risk of abusing their children due to difficult life circumstances and a lack of personal and financial resources needed to cope with the demands of a young child.</p> <p>Prior research has identified economic and psychological factors associated with child maltreatment, including personal childhood experiences of maltreatment, poor mental and physical health, lack of social support, limited education, and limited knowledge of infant development. Yet, little research has been done to determine whether child abuse rates can be decreased through intervention programs with mothers being treated for substance abuse.</p> <p>Dr. Kasparov plans to use the Parenting Stress Index and test knowledge of child development to identify mothers who are at risk of abusing their children. Those who are at risk would then be randomized to receive either social work visits alone or the experimental intervention involving counselling, a brief education program on child development, and regular social work visits. After six months control group participants would receive the full experimental treatment. The social work visits would have two purposes: (1) to provide additional resources tailored to the participant's needs and (2) to look for signs of child abuse and neglect in the home. The dependent variables are (1) predictors of risk (i.e., scores on the Parenting Stress Index and knowledge of child development) and (2) signs of child abuse and neglect. Dr. Kasparov mentions in her proposal to the IRB that participants will be told that the study is a service program designed to improve parenting skills but their data might be used in a quality assurance study. She does not want to inform them of the purpose of the study for fear that they would decline to participate out of fear that their children could be taken away and because labelling them as "at risk of abusing their children" is stigmatizing. She argues that the risks of non -disclosure are far outweighed by the potential benefits to children. [1]</p>
<p>Case 5 - Theme 5: Abeg Add My Name</p>	<p>An Illustration of "abeg add my name": A certain lecturer Mr Sabi in a university was busy Putting the finishing touches to a research paper that had taken about three months to write. A colleague by the name of Mr. Alagbari came into his office and a brief welcome greeting was followed by a gesture made by Mr. Alagbari, I trust you are writing a paper, "Hmmm, you brilliant people, don't forget people like us oooo, abeg add my name to it". This is a request and the choice to grant this request is left to Mr Sabi which depends on his understanding of such being unethical or not. For some other reasons, a consideration for accepting such a request could be based on reciprocating one good favour or just for the sake of not wanting the colleague in question to be offended. Sometimes, the compromise could be for financial consideration of footing the bills associated with the publication of the paper. It could also be for the avoidance of hatred because of refusal(Abimbola et al. 2021)</p>

Case 6– Theme 6: Plagiarism	<p>a) While reviewing a grant proposal, a member of an NIH study section concluded that her lab would be better equipped to perform the research and could get it done more quickly even though it was somewhat different from her normal research. She gave the idea to one of her post-docs the next day and he began working on it diligently. The research resulted in a paper that was submitted for publication in a highly regarded journal. One of the reviewers for this journal was the original researcher, who had reached similar findings but had been holding off publication because of a pending patent application (1).</p> <p>b) A research scientist in biology at Clark Atlanta University copied the research design and preliminary research from a publication on cadmium exposure, and he falsified it as data on mercury exposure for his own NIH grant application, as alleged by a reviewer. He was debarred in 1996 for 3 years, as well as prohibited from advisory committee service. [2]</p>
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Sources: 1. <https://bioethicsresearch.org/resources/case-studies>
2. <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/not96-202.html>

5.1 Discussions

5.2 Theme 1: Co-Authorship Conflicts: Case 1 narratives indicated that there is authorship conflict: Authorship conflict means dispute among collaborators which **ranges from** who should be named as an author/contributor; order of authorship and expectations for contributors to a scientific document (article, text, report, project). Faulkes (2018) stated that disputes over authorship in the academic circle are on the increase. This is attributed to several factors like the inability of scientists to define who the authors of scientific articles or documents are and the order in which they should be listed. Failure to determine authorship before or during the development of the research may cause conflict among those responsible for the publication.

Second, the 'publish or perish' in academia has put a lot of pressure on researchers and scientists to inadvertently permit unethical practices in publishing. "Publish or perish" is an aphorism describing the pressure to publish academic work to succeed in an academic career. The pressure to publish or perish has led to *compromises in research integrity* and most times conflicts of interest are conveniently ignored. The Royal Society (2022) stated that in the world of

publish or perish; it is not surprising that authorship disputes are fairly common. For a researcher, career advancement often depends on credit, and at times it can seem like this can only be achieved through the publication record. No wonder then, that every scientist wants to receive due credit for the work that they have done in the form of being a named author on a published paper. Furthermore, the prospect of receiving credit for an impactful piece of work is too tantalising for those who have been involved in the research, no matter how small their contributions are. This brings to the fore questions about authorship; who qualifies as an author? Essentially, how do authors make sure that everyone receives the appropriate amount of credit while ensuring that authors don't stray into the realms of unethical behaviour? The solution is clear communication. Clear and honest communication can clarify roles, spur motivation, and minimize disappointments among the participants.

5.3 Theme 2: Privacy and Confidentiality:

Case 2 presents privacy and confidentiality as one ethical issue in scientific research. The ethical duty of privacy and confidentiality in research

includes obligations to protect information from unauthorized access, use, disclosure, modification, loss, or theft. Fulfilling the ethical duty of confidentiality is essential to the trusting relationship between researcher and participants, and the integrity of the research project. Furthermore, certain areas of research (such as research involving children at risk of abuse or studies of criminal behaviour) are more likely to put researchers in positions where they may experience tension between the ethical duty of confidentiality and disclosure to third parties. However, researchers shall maintain their promise of confidentiality to participants to the extent permitted by ethical principles and/or law (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, 2019). Conversely, privacy and confidentiality breaches erode trust and run the risk of weakening or losing the security of research participants. However, the ethical duty of confidentiality must, at times, be balanced against competing for ethical considerations, and legal or professional requirements that call for disclosure of information obtained or created in a research context. For example, in exceptional and compelling circumstances, researchers may be subject to obligations to report information to authorities to protect the health, life, or safety of a participant or a third party (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, 2019).

5.4 Theme 3: Pirated Idea for Research:

Case 3 is an example of piracy of a research paper that contains preliminary *research results yet to be published by the owner*. Piracy is **copyright infringement** i.e. the use of works protected by copyright without permission for a usage where such permission is required (Wikipedia, 2022). Therefore, any form of copyright infringement can and has been referred to as piracy. Lawson (2017) stated that piracy is seen as unethical from some angles while others see it as a justified act of civil disobedience. Whichever side,

piracy of research ideas is illegal because it violates copyright laws. Piracy is synonymous with stealing. Stealing a physical object can be a moral dilemma for many people because it deprives an owner of their rightful intellectual property. Piracy hence is the equivalent of theft and is, therefore, a crime. As the forms of piracy have become more prevalent, the act of piracy has become increasingly criminalized.

The concept of intellectual property has been closely linked to piracy (Enago Academy, 2018). Intellectual property is generally characterized as non-physical property that is the product of original thought. Typically, rights do not surround the abstract non-physical entity; rather, intellectual property rights surround the control of physical manifestations or expressions of ideas. Intellectual property law protects a content-creator's interest in their ideas by assigning and enforcing legal rights to produce and control physical instantiations of those ideas (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2022). The notion of copyright i.e. granting authors moral and legal ownership of their words, therefore, was born to combat piracy. However, these notions have been evolving since they were first created.

5.5 Theme 4: Withholding Study Purpose:

Case 4 depicts a scenario where the study purpose was concealed from the study participants. Withholding Study Purpose means participants are not adequately informed on the motivation for the research and why they should be involved. Central to the ethical standards governing the participation of human subjects in research is the notion of respect for persons. This principle demands that subjects enter into the research voluntarily and with adequate information (Belmont Report, 2016 as cited in Oregon State University, 2022). When deceptive methodologies are used, participants are given incomplete or misleading information about what to expect during the study activities which compromises their ability to give fully

informed consent. Ordinarily, research proposals failing to adhere to the principle of respect for persons by compromising the consent process would not be approved. However, in unique circumstances where the study design requires the omission of details that might alter the subject's responses that are being investigated, vital information about the study or study activities can be withheld from subjects until after their participation. Furthermore, withholding and incomplete disclosure can be valuable research methods and studies involving the use of deception have resulted in significant contributions to science. The use of deceptive methodologies places a special burden of responsibility on researchers to provide scientific justification for the deception. Researchers must also provide the appropriate additional safeguards, beyond those safeguards normally in place, to protect the rights and welfare of participants. Researchers are urged then, to explore the literature within and outside of their field to fully understand the history and critical issues related to deceptive methods (Oregon State University, 2022).

5.6 Theme 5: Abeg Add My Name:

Case 5 represents a situation where prospective authors solicit favour for their names to be added as co-authors on research they do not participate in from its conception to the point of writing the article. This is a clear case of unethical research practices. The construct of "abeg add my name" is an addition to the variants of unethical authorship which appears to be gaining ground among academics. This research anomaly no doubt has watered down the importance of research, just like others in its category.

The word "abeg" is a mixture of broken English and English language, which is mostly used in West Africa and the meaning is "to plead" for something (Urban Dictionary, 2006). The phrase is mostly used loosely to suggest a friendly request for co-authorship without participating in the

research work. It simply means "Please add my name to the research paper you are either working on or worked on". This request no doubt is unethical and it is multi-dimensional, as it could either be from a senior colleague, a junior or a person of the same status. This is somehow becoming rampant and with great consequences. For example, an author who plagiarized another author's work is not the only one liable but all others whose names appear on the research paper, without them knowing about the plagiarism.

Radda (2009) affirmed that universities in Nigeria are not spared of these unethical practices and this appears to be a threat to the universities' mission and vision of providing quality education for individuals and the quest for national development. These unethical practices have affected the fortunes of the Nigerian educational system and her universities, once prided as the citadel of learning and centre of academic excellence (Ikechi and Akanwa, 2012). Research, teaching and community service are the three responsibilities expected of academic staff in a tertiary institution. Therefore, a lecturer who indulges in the "abeg add my name" malady cannot be said to be responsible as regards the research role expected of such. This is likely to affect the lecturers' capabilities in other areas of responsibility, as well as productivity.

Abimbola et al. (2021) enumerated several factors that may be responsible for these unethical practices such as; 1) laziness; this could presume to be responsible for the "abeg add my name" misdemeanour. This is because; a lazy lecturer is likely to seek a shortcut to academic research. Academic research entails due diligence which extends to extensive reading and literature search and a lazy researcher might see this as a challenge and as such resort to the "abeg add my name" shortcut. 2) Incessant changing of promotion rules by those in positions of authority in tertiary institutions from time to time appears sometimes to have set some struggling

academics in the area of research to take the shortcut route of "abeg add my name" to meet up with the changing requirement. 3) The pressure to publish to progress. Without the required volume of publications, an academic staff cannot be promoted, as such colleagues under the guise of pity encourage the "abeg add my name" to meet up with the pressure of the volume of publications required for promotion and as such, they are ready to go the way of "abeg add my name".

Gopi and Chakravarty (2017) conclude that the violation of the ethics of authorship in any form constitutes unethical authorship and they are indicated in diverse forms such as honorary (guest) authorship, gift authorship and ghost authorship as the commonest in different contexts and they are granted to persons in most cases for different reasons ranging from respect, obligation, dependence, honour and desire to enhance the publication status or credibility of the research work and so on.

5.7 Theme 6: Plagiarism.

Case 6 represents a case of plagiarism i.e. copyright infringement. Plagiarism is defined as the appropriation of another person's words or ideas without proper permission or acknowledgement (Taylor, 2006). The literature on ethics in research reveals that plagiarism is the most serious and most widely recognized ethical lapse (Roig, 2020). Plagiarism has attracted stigmas such as "academic stealing (stealing another person's work or ideas', *Smith, 2012*) and academic fraud (University of Virginia 2022).

A 2015 survey of teachers and professors by Turnitin, identified some forms of plagiarism that authors and students commit as follows: Submitting someone's work as their own, Taking passages from their previous work without adding citations (self-plagiarism), Re-writing someone's work without properly citing sources, Using quotations but not citing the source, Interweaving various sources together in the work without citing, Citing

some, but not all, passages that should be cited, Melding together cited and uncited sections of the piece (Turnitin 2015).

Consequently, plagiarism is considered a violation of academic integrity and journalistic ethics, as well as social norms around learning, teaching, research, fairness, respect, and responsibility (*International Center for Academic Integrity 2021*). For this reason, policies on plagiarism in academic Institutions across the globe are introduced (University of Lagos, 2017, National Open University of Nigeria, 2021, Hudson Valley Community College, 2023, Michigan State University College), However, failure to observe them gives rise to accusations of plagiarism (Woolfs, 2006).

5.8 Unethical issues in research and Implication for Librarianship

This article has implications for Librarians and library and information science disciplines. The library is the focal point of academic research. It makes sense if the library and librarians become the vanguard for promoting ethical conduct in research in academic institutions. According to Onoyeyan, Ajayi, Adesina and Bamidele (2014), Library and information professionals are the essential link between information users and the information required. Hence librarians have privileged position which carries corresponding responsibilities. Therefore, Librarian and information professionals can actively lead in raising awareness against unethical practices in research (Giannakouli, Vraimaki, Koulouris, Kokkinos, Kouis, Kyprianos and Triantafyllou 2023). Accordingly, AI and the LinkedIn community (2023) highlight a few ways librarians and educators need to employ to prevent unethical practices in research as follows: 1: make students aware of the potential consequences of unethical research practices, 2: teach students the skills in writing. These skills include how to paraphrase, summarize, quote, cite, and

reference sources correctly and appropriately, 3: create original and engaging assignments that challenge students to think critically and creatively.

Summary of Key Findings

The main objective of this study was to examine the nature of unethical issues in research and its implication for library and information science disciplines. The paper adopted an exploratory research design. Secondary data was obtained using a desk review of existing literature on unethical cases in research. Emphasis is given to the qualitative analysis of case study discussions on the different dimensions of unethical research practices

1. Ethical issues discussed in this paper include but are not limited to the following; Informed consent, Beneficence, Respect for anonymity and confidentiality, Respect for privacy, Honesty, Objectivity, Carefulness, Respect for Intellectual Property
2. Unethical cases examined in this research paper are cases bordering on Co-Authorship Conflicts, Privacy and Confidentiality, Pirated Ideas for Research, Withholding Study Purpose "Abeg Add My Name Syndrome and Plagiarism.
3. One of the many challenges in ethical research in academia is the publish-or-perish syndrome. This has facilitated a lot of unethical issues in academic research.

Recommendations

Arising from the discussions above, the following recommendations and implementation strategies are hereby proffered:

- i. Ethical considerations should guide scholars in every circumstance to balance the demand for moral principles of research.
- ii. Authors should build ethics into daily routines, research and the workplace.
- iii. Authors should be familiar with legal and

institutional frameworks that exist and be conscious of ethical obligations to all stakeholders.

- iv. As a matter of justice, unethical investigators should not be rewarded by having the data from their studies used. Punishment should be *visited upon such investigators who engaged in unethical research. These may include;* rejection and retraction of publication and withdrawal of funding.

Conclusion

Ethics in research ensure that the research produces knowledge by ensuring that research is not repetitive. Every research must produce some new knowledge, promote truth and minimize error. Research ethics create some prohibitions on behaviours such as falsifying data, incorrect reporting misrepresentation of facts, etc. Ethical behaviour is similarly essential for cooperative work since it inspires an atmosphere of trust and reciprocal admiration among researchers. This is important particularly when bearing in mind matters linked to joint authorship, exclusive rights, guiding principles, confidentiality, privacy and so on. Without ethics, it is very difficult to get authentic and reliable findings or results of the research. If the results are not reliable then it creates an impediment in utilisation of research results.

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