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Fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism: The major threats to social research enterprise in Nigeria

[1]HARUNA, Sheidu Abdulkarim, [2]ISAH, Muniratu Madewo, [1]AUDU, Mohammed, [1]ADEBOYEJO, Gabriel Oladapo,
[1]MUSA, Aboda Bilkisu, [3]EDEGBO, Jeremiah Sunday, [4]AKINTOLA, Kehinde Boluwatife,
[5]JIMOH, Muyideen Lawal and [6]OLUSANYA, Charles Omotola

[1]Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Prince AbubakarAudu University, Anyigba, Kogi State-Nigeria
[2]Department of Community Health, Ajine College of Health Sciences and Technology, Agbeji, Kogi State-Nigeria
[3]Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, Prince AbubakarAudu University, Anyigba, Kogi State-Nigeria
[4]Department of Criminology and Security Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, National Open University of Nigeria
[5, 6]Department of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution, Faculty of Social Sciences, National Open University of Nigeria

Corresponding Email: *haruna.sa@ksu.edu.ng*

Abstract

Fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism (FFP) pose significant threats to the integrity and efficacy of social research in Nigeria. As a nation characterized by diverse socio-cultural and economic landscapes, high-quality social research is essential for informed policy-making, academic advancement, and societal development. This paper explored the prevalence, underlying causes, and consequences of FFP, and also evaluating existing measures and challenges for addressing fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism within Nigerian social research enterprise. It employs secondary data collection approach in the collection of its needed data. The paper reveals a notable prevalence of FFP, driven primarily by the "publish or perish" culture, inadequate ethics training, and weak institutional oversight. The consequences of FFP are multifaceted, including erosion of research integrity, impedes academic advancement and knowledge acquisition, deterioration of public confidence in research institutions, psychological effects on researchers and students, and economic implications. Ethical codes of research and institutional protocols, creation of office research integrity, software for plagiarism detection, training and capacity development, legal and institutional penalties, and global partnerships and norms were found to be the existing measures and policies for mitigating FFP in Nigeria. These existing measures and policies were obstructed by insufficient implementations, insufficient awareness and education regarding research ethics, institutional and structural limitations, publication pressure and professional progression, insufficient legal and regulatory framework, cultural influences and the normalization of misconduct, restricted access to plagiarism detection instruments, and significance global cooperation. Based on these insights, the paper recommends strengthening ethical training programs, enhancing institutional oversight, fostering a culture of integrity, leveraging advanced technological tools, and protecting whistleblowers to effectively reduce FFP in Nigerian social research.

Keywords:

Fabrication, Falsification, Plagiarism, Social Research, Nigeria.

Introduction

Social research is essential for comprehending and tackling the complex challenges that societies encounter. In Nigeria, a nation marked by its many cultures, economies, and social frameworks, social research is essential for guiding policy decisions, promoting academic advancement, and facilitating societal progress (Adebajo, 2018). Rigorous research yields evidence-based insights that can facilitate effective actions in domains such as education, healthcare, governance, and economic development (Obi, 2020).The credibility of social research in Nigeria is increasingly jeopardized by unethical behaviors, particularly fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism (FFP). Fabrication pertains to the creation of false data or results, falsification involves the alteration of research methodologies or findings, and plagiarism consists of appropriating others' ideas or labor without appropriate acknowledgment (Smith, 2020). These activities compromise the validity and trustworthiness of research findings, resulting in erroneous policies and squandered resources (Adeyemi, 2019).

The prevalence of FFP in Nigerian social research can be ascribed to various causes. Initially, scholars face significant pressure to publish often in esteemed journals to obtain funding, promotions, and academic acknowledgment (Oluwole, 2021). The "publish or perish" culture frequently prioritizes quantity above quality, rendering certain researchers vulnerable to unethical conduct (Eze, 2022). Secondly, there is an absence of thorough training in research ethics and integrity, resulting in many researchers being uninformed about the norms and repercussions related to wrongdoing (Nwosu, 2020).

Furthermore, the institutional policies and oversight systems at Nigerian colleges and research institutions are frequently insufficient. Numerous institutions lack effective mechanisms for overseeing research techniques and upholding ethical standards, fostering an environment conducive to misbehavior (Adebayo, 2023). Cultural elements, like the belief that collective achievement supersedes personal integrity, facilitate the normalization of immoral practices (Kareem, 2021).

The influence of FFP transcends individual scholars and institutions. It undermines public confidence in academic research, reduces the credibility of Nigerian studies internationally, and obstructs international collaborations and funding prospects (Johnson, 2018). Moreover, defective research may result in ineffective or detrimental policies, thereby impacting social welfare and progress (Ibrahim, 2022). Confronting the obstacles of FFP is crucial for rejuvenating the social research sector in Nigeria. Enhancing research integrity improves the quality and impact of research while cultivating a culture of honesty and responsibility

essential for sustainable development (Okafor, 2021). Addressing these concerns will enable Nigeria to ensure that its social research significantly contributes to both national and global knowledge, thereby benefiting society as a whole. Articulation of the Issue. Fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism (FFP) provide substantial obstacles to the quality and efficacy of social research in Nigeria. Although social research is essential for influencing policies and advancing society, occurrences of FFP are disturbingly common, compromising the integrity of study findings and diminishing trust in academic institutions (Eze, 2022; Oluwole, 2021).

The rising prevalence of research misconduct in Nigerian universities and research institutes is a significant concern. Research has recorded multiple instances of data manipulation to achieve preferred results, fabrication of whole datasets, or plagiarism of existing works without appropriate acknowledgment (Adeyemi, 2019; Oluwole, 2021). The competitive academic environment exacerbates this trend, as the temptation to publish in high-impact journals frequently compels researchers to emphasize quantity above quality, thereby promoting unethical activities (Eze, 2022).

The absence of rigorous oversight and insufficient enforcement of ethical standards exacerbates the issue. Numerous institutions in Nigeria lack comprehensive policies and effective processes to identify and rectify FFP, permitting malfeasance to remain unaddressed (Adebayo, 2023). This institutional laxity fosters an environment conducive to unethical activity, as there are little consequences for those who commit research misconduct (Ibrahim, 2022). Additionally, the lack of ethical training and awareness among researchers considerably leads to the continuation of FFP. A significant number of researchers in Nigeria receive inadequate education on research ethics during their training, rendering them unprepared to identify and counteract pressures that may result in misconduct (Nwosu, 2020). The deficiency of awareness and comprehension of ethical principles enables the perpetuation of FFP activities, since researchers may not entirely grasp the ramifications of their acts (Kareem, 2021).

The implications of FFP in Nigerian social research are extensive. Researchers engaged in wrongdoing encounter tarnished reputations, diminished credibility, and possible career impediments (Johnson, 2018). Universities and research institutions experience damaged reputations, eroded stakeholder trust, and fewer prospects for collaboration and funding (Kareem, 2021). The integrity crisis in social research results in erroneous policy decisions, unproductive interventions, and eventually obstructs national development initiatives (Ibrahim, 2022).

Moreover, the international academic community is intensifying its examination of research methodologies, and Nigerian research is similarly affected by this trend. Instances of FFP may lead to the retraction of published works, the dissolution of foreign collaborations, and a deterioration in the global reputation of Nigerian academics (Okafor, 2021). The international aspect intensifies the urgency to address FFP, since sustaining global reputation is crucial for securing funding, promoting collaborations, and guaranteeing the effective dissemination of research findings (Johnson, 2018).

Aim and Objectives

This paper examined fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism as significant obstacles to the social research endeavor in Nigeria. It specifically looked at the prevalence, causes, consequential effects, existing measures and policies,and obstacles in addressing fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism in social research enterprise in Nigeria.

Methodology

This paper utilizes secondary data collection methods. Data collection for the paperentailed extensive database searches on prominent academic platforms that are pertinent to fabrication, falsification and plagiarism in social sciences in Nigerian.The study also evaluated current policies and strategies to determine their efficacy in addressing FFP.

Theoretical Framework

This paper utilizes the Research Integrity Theory (RIT) as its theoretical foundation. This theory offers distinctive perspectives on the problem of research misconduct in Nigeria. In contrast to numerous theories within the social sciences and humanities, the Research Integrity Theory (RIT) is not ascribed to a singular individual or organization; rather, it has been developed and refined by a multitude of scholars, ethicists, and institutions, including Nancy Steneck, David Resnik, M. Brown, Martyn Hammersley, Saks and Zimmerman, the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), and the Office of Research Integrity (ORI) within the United States Department of Health and Human Services, all of which are committed to advancing ethical standards in research. Theory of Research Integrity asserts that compliance with ethical standards is essential for both individual researchers and the collective progress of knowledge, as well as for societal confidence in academic institutions (Resnik, 2015).

The fundamental tenets of the Research Integrity Theory, as referenced by Steneck (2006) and Smith (2020), encompass:

i.   **Honesty:** Researchers are obligated to report data and results accurately, devoid of fabrication or falsification.

ii.   **Transparency:** The research process, encompassing methodology and data sources, must be disclosed to facilitate repeatability and verification.

iii. **Accountability:** Researchers bear responsibility for their work and must be ready to justify their techniques and conclusions.

iv.   **Fairness:** Accurate attribution of ideas and efforts guarantees that all collaborators receive appropriate recognition, so reducing plagiarism.

The implementation of Research Integrity Theory in Nigeria is especially relevant given the rising instances of fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism in social research. The Nigerian academic landscape encounters distinct obstacles that require a robust focus on research integrity to guarantee the authenticity and trustworthiness of its research findings. Numerous Nigerian universities and research institutions lack robust research integrity policies. Adebayo (2023) underscores the inconsistency in policy execution among institutions, resulting in gaps that enable misbehavior. Utilizing Research Integrity Theory, Nigerian institutions can formulate consistent ethical principles and implement strong enforcement systems to prevent FFP. Nwosu (2020) asserts that insufficient training in research ethics leads to inadvertent misbehavior. Theory of Research Integrity emphasizes the imperative of including ethics education within the curriculum, guaranteeing that researchers are proficient in ethical norms and cognizant of the repercussions of misbehavior.

Eze (2022) asserts that the widespread "publish or perish" culture in Nigerian academia imposes significant pressure on scholars to publish regularly, frequently compromising ethical considerations. Research integrity theory offers a paradigm for reconciling academic production with ethical accountability, promoting quality over quantity in research outputs. Obi (2020) asserts that transparent research techniques facilitate external verification and replication, essential for preserving the integrity of research findings. Research Integrity Theory advocates for transparency to guarantee responsibility and maintain the legitimacy of scholarly endeavors. Adebayo (2023) emphasizes the necessity for specialized departments within Nigerian institutions to monitor research ethics and offer advice to researchers. Theory of Research Integrity advocates for the creation of support mechanisms to promote ethical conduct and facilitate the reporting of misconduct.

Literature Review

This component of the paper examines pertinentliteratures related to the aim and objectives

Conceptual Review

The foundational concepts of this subject are provided with comprehensive definitions and explanations to ensure a clear comprehension of its direction. These principles encompass fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism (FFP).

Fabrication

Fabrication denotes the generation of fraudulent data or outcomes, which are then documented or presented as authentic (Smith, 2020). This may manifest in several ways, including fabricating data points, producing false responses in surveys, or devising spurious experimental outcomes. Fabrication compromises the fundamental aim of research, which is to provide accurate and dependable knowledge to the academic community.

Falsification

Falsification entails the alteration of research materials, equipment, techniques, or the modification or omission of data, resulting in an inaccurate representation of the research in the record (Smith, 2020). This may involve manipulating data to get a specific conclusion, selectively disclosing findings, or misrepresenting methods.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the unauthorized adoption of another individual's ideas, methodologies, outcomes, or expressions without proper attribution, therefore misrepresenting them as one's own original creation (Smith, 2020). This may include reproducing text verbatim without citation or rephrasing another's thoughts without proper recognition.

Prevalence of Fabrication, Falsification, and Plagiarism in Social Research in Nigeria

The prevalence of fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism in Nigerian social research is significant, with plagiarism identified as the most frequently reported misbehavior (Sofoluwe, et al., 2019). A paper by Eze (2022) indicates that more than 40% of polled academics acknowledged experiencing plagiarism in academic submissions. Adeoye and Olufemi (2020) found that data manipulation was present in roughly 15% of the examined papers. Institutional reports indicate that inadequate control procedures have exacerbated the incidence of research misconduct, especially in smaller academic institutions. These findings

highlight the systemic characteristics of FFP in Nigeria and the pressing necessity for comprehensive responses.

The lack of effective plagiarism detection systems and the rise of predatory journals have greatly influenced this trend. Predatory journals, frequently devoid of stringent peer review procedures, facilitate the publication of substandard and unethical research, as indicated in a study by Uche, et al. (2021). Moreover, dependence on obsolete or inadequately executed plagiarism detection tools has let numerous cases of wrongdoing to remain unnoticed. Case studies from Nigerian institutions indicate that institutional deficiencies, including limited financing for improved detection methods and insufficient staff training on ethical standards, aggravate this problem. A 2022 study of academic personnel across five colleges revealed that 60% lacked familiarity with appropriate citation procedures, exacerbating the issue.

Causes of Fabrication, Falsification, and Plagiarism in Social Research in Nigeria

Academics experience significant pressure to publish for professional progression, frequently resulting in unethical behaviors (Adeleke, et al., 2020). This strain is especially evident in disciplines like social sciences and humanities, where progression necessitates rigorous publication standards, yet money and research assistance are few. A research by Eze (2022) indicated that more than 70% of professors in Nigerian universities encounter stress associated with publishing quotas, frequently compelling them to resort to low-quality or predatory journals. Moreover, junior academics in institutions lacking robust mentorship programs are disproportionately impacted, as shown by Uche et al. (2021), exacerbating the issue. Eze (2022) conducted a case study indicating that this pressure is especially pronounced in institutions where promotions are closely linked to publishing metrics, irrespective of quality.

Moreover, numerous researchers possess insufficient expertise in research ethics (Okon, et al., 2018).

A recent survey conducted by Adeoye and Olufemi (2020) revealed that 45% of Nigerian researchers lacked awareness of fundamental ethical norms, leading to inadvertent wrongdoing. The lack of rigorous enforcement measures enables misbehavior to flourish. Notable regulatory deficiencies encompass the absence of operational supervision entities, such as active institutional review boards (IRBs), in numerous academic institutions. Moreover, policies pertaining to research misconduct are either inadequate or applied

inconsistently, resulting in enforcement deficiencies. Uche et al. (2021) noted that the lack of dedicated offices to oversee compliance, despite existing legislation, frequently fosters a culture of impunity. Likewise, inadequate communication between regulatory bodies and academic institutions has impeded the establishment of cohesive norms for research integrity in Nigeria. Uche et al. (2021) noted that several academic organizations lack operational ethics committees or explicit rules to tackle research misconduct, fostering an atmosphere of impunity.

Lastly, cultural elements, including acceptance of academic shortcuts and little consequences for unethical conduct, intensify the problem. Adeniran (2021) indicated that the institutional cultures in certain colleges emphasize outcomes over procedures, thereby indirectly fostering malpractices. Insufficient funding for research and limited access to contemporary instruments, such as sophisticated plagiarism detection software, hinder researchers' ability to comply with international norms of research integrity (Sofoluwe et al., 2019).

Consequences of Fabrication, Falsification, and Plagiarism in Social Research in Nigeria

The existence of FFP in social research significantly impacts the academic community in various respects:

1. Eroding Research Integrity

The integrity of scientific study depends on transparency, honesty, and precise data reporting (Babbie, 2020). Fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism (FFP) significantly compromise the integrity, credibility, and utility of social research. Johnson (2018) asserts that FFP undermines stakeholder trust, causing policymakers to be reluctant in depending on research findings for decision-making. Resnik (2015) similarly examines the extensive ramifications of diminished reputation, encompassing decreased academic cooperation and a weakened presence in international research forums. Adeyemi (2019) observed recurrent cases of FFP, highlighting how Nigerian academia fosters a widespread perception of unreliability, hence deterring both domestic and international stakeholders from participating in Nigerian research.

Oluwole (2021) identifies particular cases in which fabricated data resulted in the withdrawal of studies at Nigerian universities, consequently damaging institutional reputations. Research conducted by Oluwadare (2021) and Adewale (2018) indicates that these practices have emerged as a substantial issue, notably affecting the reproducibility and trustworthiness of social science research inside Nigerian university environments.

2. Impedes Academic Advancement and Knowledge Acquisition

Okeke (2020) discovered that the repercussions of academic misconduct were especially detrimental to the social sciences in Nigerian academic environments. The utilization of faked or manufactured data as a basis for further study might perpetuate flaws in fundamental social science ideas and frameworks. This hinders the advancement of novel approaches and insights that could facilitate social enhancements or the settlement of societal issues.

3. Deterioration of Public Confidence in Research Institutions

The significance of research in influencing public policy is especially critical in a developing nation such as Nigeria, where evidence-based policymaking is vital for tackling societal challenges. Ajayi and Odusanya (2018) discovered that the discovery of falsified or plagiarized research findings diminishes policymakers' reliance on academic research for decision-making, hence obstructing effective governance and sustainable development. This diminished dependence on research may lead to the implementation of inadequately informed policies that do not effectively meet societal requirements. Ibrahim (2022) examines how prominent incidents of FFP in Nigeria have engendered significant suspicion over the credibility of academic research, hence diminishing public support for academic endeavors. Decreased trust diminishes community involvement in research studies, since participants exhibit reluctance to provide data or interact with researchers (Oluwole, 2021). Once confidence is eroded, its reconstruction becomes very challenging, necessitating transparent and ethical research methodologies, as well as effective communication of research methods and results (Obi, 2020).

4. Psychological Effects on Researchers and Students

Fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism adversely impact students and nascent scholars. The academic environment is crucial for promoting ethical behavior; when students witness or experience wrongdoing, it conveys the notion that such actions are permissible, thereby sustaining a cycle of unethical conduct. Nwachukwu and Chukwuemeka (2019) assert that students exposed to unethical research procedures may cultivate a distorted comprehension of research ethics, hence influencing their future professional behavior. Moreover, participation in FFP by researchers or students may result in stress, anxiety, fatigue, adverse effects on mental health and productivity, as well as emotional distress, including feelings of betrayal and diminished motivation (Nwosu, 2020; Smith, 2020; Oluwole, 2021).

5. Economic Implications

The financial repercussions of fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism are considerable. Adebayo (2023) claims that funding organizations are becoming increasingly cautious about

investing in Nigerian research institutes due to prominent instances of wrongdoing, resulting in diminished research grants. The financial ramifications of FFP impact the wider economy, as poor policies grounded in erroneous research may result in the improper use of public resources (Adeyemi, 2019). Enonche and Usman (2020) assert that this waste might be especially detrimental in Nigeria, where research funding is frequently constrained and fiercely competitive. According to Kareem (2021), retracted research not only squander initial funds but also require supplementary resources to address the misbehavior, so burdening institutional finances. According to Oluwole (2021), this has resulted in numerous worldwide collaborations being reluctant to participate with universities recognized for high occurrences of FFP, hence restricting access to supplementary resources and knowledge.

Existing Measures and Policies to Combat Misconduct in Nigeria

The matter of research misconduct, particularly fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism, has garnered considerable attention from policymakers, academic institutions, and researchers in Nigeria. Throughout the years, numerous measures and rules have been enacted to mitigate these unethical acts; yet, obstacles persist in guaranteeing effective enforcement and fostering a culture of research integrity. The following measures and policies encompass:

1. Ethical Codes of Research and Institutional Protocols

A primary strategy for addressing research misconduct in Nigerian universities and research institutions is the formulation of ethical standards and institutional protocols. Numerous universities have implemented extensive research ethics rules delineating the anticipated behavior for researchers, students, and staff members. The University of Ibadan (UI) in Nigeria has established a Research Ethics Committee (REC) to evaluate and guarantee that research proposals adhere to ethical norms, including the prevention of data manipulation and plagiarism. Adewale (2018) asserts that these committees are crucial for ensuring ethical monitoring, especially in research involving human beings or sensitive data. Comparable programs have been instituted throughout other Nigerian institutions, mandating researchers to submit their work for ethical assessment prior to its execution or publication.

Alongside institutional norms, numerous colleges have implemented academic codes of conduct that specifically tackle fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism. These regulations establish a framework for addressing claims of misconduct and delineate the repercussions for researchers who breach ethical standards. The National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) has instituted a definitive code of academic integrity that delineates procedures for detecting and handling plagiarism charges, with repercussions varying from official warnings to expulsion for severe infractions (Idris, 2020).

2. Offices of Research Integrity

In reaction to the increasing apprehension regarding research misconduct, several Nigerian universities have instituted specialized offices for research integrity. These offices are tasked with encouraging ethical research procedures, teaching researchers on appropriate conduct, and reviewing claims of misconduct. The University of Lagos (UNILAG) possesses an office of research integrity that partners with the university's ethics committee to oversee and uphold research standards (Adewale, 2018).

These offices are essential in fostering ethical research by organizing workshops and seminars on research ethics, advocating for good citation procedures, and instructing researchers on the avoidance of plagiarism and data manipulation. Nonetheless, although these offices are advantageous, their efficacy is frequently hindered by budget limitations, insufficient institutional backing, and a lack of comprehensive awareness among academics on the existence of these offices and the services they offer.

3. Software for Plagiarism Detection

Plagiarism detection software is now commonly utilized to combat academic dishonesty in Nigeria. Nigerian universities are increasingly utilizing tools like Turnitin, Plagscan, and Urkund to identify and mitigate plagiarism in academic writing. These tools facilitate the detection of plagiarized content from other sources, offering researchers and faculty members a straightforward method to evaluate the originality of written work prior to publication. Research conducted by Nwachukwu and Chukwuemeka (2019) indicates that numerous Nigerian universities have incorporated plagiarism detection software into their academic protocols, particularly for postgraduate theses and dissertations. Nonetheless, the expense of these technologies and the limited accessibility in certain institutions present obstacles to their comprehensive deployment. Moreover, although these techniques proficiently detect blatant plagiarism, they fail to tackle concerns related to data fabrication or falsification, necessitating a more sophisticated methodology.

4. Training and Capacity Development

An additional crucial strategy to address research misconduct is the provision of training and capacity building in research ethics. Numerous Nigerian universities have integrated research ethics into their curricula, especially for postgraduate students. Training sessions frequently address subjects including the significance of originality in research, appropriate citation methods, and strategies to prevent data manipulation. The University of Nigeria, Nsukka

(UNN) has included research ethics into the mandatory training for all postgraduate students (Akinwunmi, 2021). This course aims to cultivate ethical research practices from the beginning of students' academic journeys. Moreover, conferences and lectures on academic honesty are conducted routinely to reinforce these concepts.

Notwithstanding these endeavors, some researchers contend that the training offered is frequently insufficient or not entirely comprehensive. Okeke (2020) asserts that training programs frequently fail to encompass the whole spectrum of concerns pertaining to research misconduct, with a predominant focus on preventing plagiarism rather than tackling more intricate matters such as data falsification or fabrication.

5. Legal and Institutional Penalties

Legal and institutional penalties for research misconduct in Nigeria are a crucial mechanism for ensuring responsibility. Upon detection of research misconduct, researchers may encounter several repercussions, including retraction of papers and potential suspension or termination from academic institutions. Nigerian universities typically possess disciplinary structures; nevertheless, the implementation of sanctions might differ markedly among institutions. A study by Enonche and Usman (2020) indicates that several Nigerian institutions possess a procedure for examining charges of misbehavior; yet, the application of sanctions frequently lacks consistency. In several instances, institutions hesitate to act due to concerns about harming their reputation or jeopardizing research funding. The inconsistency in enforcement diminishes the efficacy of policies aimed at addressing wrongdoing.

Furthermore, although legal frameworks, including intellectual property laws, are established to combat academic misconduct, the Nigerian legal system frequently exhibits sluggishness and inefficiency in addressing instances of research misconduct. Idris (2020) highlights a frequent disjunction between institutional policies and the legal framework, complicating the accountability of researchers for unethical conduct.

6. Global Partnerships and Norms

Alongside internal policies, foreign cooperation and compliance with global norms have contributed to mitigating research misconduct in Nigeria. Numerous Nigerian universities engage in global research networks that underscore the significance of research integrity and ethical norms. Through collaboration with international institutions, Nigerian researchers and organizations gain exposure to exemplary practices in research ethics and are frequently subjected to elevated norms of behavior. Nigerian institutions collaborating with foreign

organizations like the foreign Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) or the World Health Organization (WHO) must comply with stringent ethical criteria in research activities. These relationships ensure that Nigerian researchers adhere to international norms of research integrity, hence mitigating the occurrence of misconduct (Adewale, 2018).

Obstacles in Addressing Research Misconduct in Nigeria

Confronting research misconduct, including as fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism, presents considerable hurdles in Nigeria. Despite initiatives by academic institutions, government entities, and international organizations to mitigate these unethical acts, various reasons hinder the efficient management and prevention of misbehavior.

1. Insufficient Implementation of Policies

A major obstacle to tackling research misconduct in Nigeria is the irregular and frequently insufficient execution of current policies. Although numerous colleges and research institutes have implemented ethical committees and codes of conduct, the execution of these regulations may be inadequate due to institutional limitations, including resource scarcity, limited personnel, and bureaucratic inertia. Idris (2020) asserts that although numerous organizations have established written ethical norms, the enforcement of consequences for violations such as plagiarism or data fabrication is frequently not diligently implemented. The absence of clearly delineated procedures for investigating misconduct complaints can impede enforcement. In many cases, these systems are either excessively sluggish or insufficiently transparent to ensure accountability (Adewale, 2018). The apprehension of reputational harm and the inclination to safeguard distinguished researchers within the institution may result in instances when wrongdoing is disregarded or addressed informally.

2. Insufficient Awareness and Education Regarding Research Ethics

The absence of awareness and comprehension of research ethics constitutes a primary challenge in Nigerian academia. Okeke (2020) asserts that numerous researchers, particularly those in the nascent stages of their careers, may lack comprehensive awareness of the ethical principles governing research activities. Although ethical training is frequently included in postgraduate programs, it may be inadequate or not sufficiently broad to encompass the entirety of ethical dilemmas researchers could face.

Insufficient training results in a lack of awareness of appropriate citation methods, data management, and reporting requirements, potentially resulting in unintentional or intentional

misbehavior. Nwachukwu and Chukwuemeka (2019) emphasize that, despite attempts to incorporate research ethics into curricula, significant further efforts are necessary to cement ethical practices within the academic culture of Nigerian universities.

3. Institutional and Structural Limitations

Nigerian universities and research institutions frequently encounter substantial institutional and budgetary obstacles that hinder the proper administration of research integrity. Numerous schools are inadequately supported, lack advanced research infrastructure, and face challenges in supplying sufficient resources for faculty and students. These limits can lead to settings that promote research misconduct, such pressure to publish for career progression or inadequate oversight procedures. Adewale (2018) posits that insufficient financing for research integrity offices, ethical committees, and training programs intensifies the issue. In the absence of allocated financial resources, many institutions find it challenging to formulate and execute effective anti-misconduct programs. Moreover, in certain instances, university administration may deprioritize research ethics, resulting in an atmosphere where wrongdoing is either overlooked or condoned.

4. Publication Pressure and Professional Progression

Numerous academic institutions in Nigeria exert significant pressure on researchers to publish regularly in high-impact journals to further their careers. This pressure, frequently associated with promotion standards and the quest for research funding, might motivate unethical conduct. Okeke (2020) asserts that the "publish or perish" mentality is a principal catalyst for research misconduct, prompting researchers to falsify data, plagiarize, or fabricate results to satisfy publishing requirements. The drive to publish is especially pronounced in the social sciences, where research output frequently serves as a metric of achievement. In a fiercely competitive academic landscape, academics may feel pressured to yield findings at any expense, potentially undermining their ethical principles. The culture of careerism, coupled with the constraints of limited resources and opportunities, fosters an environment conducive to wrongdoing (Adewale, 2018).

5. Insufficient Legal and Regulatory Framework

Nigeria's legal and regulatory framework, although established to fight plagiarism and intellectual property rights, frequently proves inadequate in addressing research misconduct. The current legislation regarding plagiarism and academic misconduct is often ambiguous or

inadequately formulated, with enforcement lacking consistency. Enonche and Usman (2020) assert that Nigeria's intellectual property legislation and academic rules lack the robustness necessary to adequately address the entirety of research misconduct, particularly with data manipulation or falsification. The deficiency in the legal system is exacerbated by the sluggishness of justice and the absence of specialized legal entities capable of efficiently addressing research misconduct issues. Consequently, those who participate in academic dishonesty frequently encounter minimal to no legal repercussions.

6. Cultural Influences and the Normalization of Misconduct

In Nigerian academia, like in several global contexts, research misconduct may be normalized or perceived as less severe in specific situations. Cultural influences, such as an absence of a robust ethical tradition and a prioritization of academic achievement over ethical considerations, might facilitate the continuation of misconduct. Researchers could see fabrication or plagiarism as permissible expedients to fulfill the exigencies of their scholarly pursuits. Ajayi and Odusanya (2018) contend that, in certain instances, the academic community in Nigeria may regard research misconduct as a minor infraction, especially when it pertains to senior or influential scientists. The normalization of wrongdoing exacerbates efforts to address the issue, as it may be condoned or even tacitly supported by academic colleagues or institutional authorities.

7. Restricted Access to Plagiarism Detection Instruments

Although plagiarism detection systems like Turnitin are prevalent in numerous academic institutions globally, their application in Nigerian universities remains restricted, chiefly due to financial limitations. The exorbitant expense of these instruments renders them unattainable for numerous scholars, especially those affiliated with public universities that operate under constrained financial resources. Moreover, the budgetary constraint may be compounded by a lack of comprehensive training among some researchers in the application of these tools, resulting in their underutilization. Nwachukwu and Chukwuemeka (2019) assert that despite the availability of plagiarism detection techniques, their use may not be consistently or effectively implemented across all forms of academic work, including minor publications or faculty research endeavors.

8. Significance of Global Cooperation

International collaboration may enhance research standards in Nigeria by familiarizing local researchers with excellent methods; yet, it can also pose obstacles in maintaining uniform ethical standards. As Nigeria increasingly interacts with global research networks, variations in research ethics between areas may hinder the development of internationally accepted standards.

Ajayi and Odusanya (2018) observe that whereas international collaborations might enhance access to superior resources and research infrastructure, they can pose obstacles in conforming to global standards of research integrity. Researchers may occasionally face a conflict between adhering to international norms and addressing local difficulties of resource scarcity and institutional monitoring.

Conclusions

Research misconduct, encompassing fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism, poses a substantial threat to the integrity of academic endeavors in Nigeria. Fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism compromise the integrity of research and erode public confidence in scientific and social research results. Despite notable advancements, including the formation of research ethics committees, the implementation of plagiarism detection tools, and the provision of training on research ethics, further efforts are required to enhance institutional mechanisms, improve ethics education, and cultivate a culture of research integrity in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the above obstacles to the existing measures and policies for mitigating FFP in social research in Nigeria, the paper recommended the followings:

1. The study recommended the need for strengthening ethical training programmess.
2. It alsorecommended the enhancementof institutional oversight.
3. It further recommended the fostering of a culture of integrity among researchers and students as well.
4. The study also recommended leveraging on advanced technological tools to mitigate research misconduct.
5. finally, the recommended the protection of whistleblowers to effectively reduce FFP in social research in Nigerian.

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