

Academic Dishonesty in Higher Education: A Bibliometric Analysis

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Abstract

The scholarly discussion of academic dishonesty in higher education institutions has experienced significant expansion for almost 30 years. This bibliometric analysis study aims to analyse past studies of academic dishonesty, focusing on higher education from 1981 to 2023. A comprehensive range of terms related to academic dishonesty was used to choose past papers from the Scopus database. Then a bibliometric analysis was conducted, which identified the year of publication, publication journal, country of origin, field of study, and authors. After selection, 594 articles in the Scopus database were identified. The paper's findings showed that research on academic dishonesty began in 1981 and kept increasing until 2023. Regarding journal publication, of the five top journals, four were related to integrity, ethics, and assessment in higher education. The field of study of social science leads to the most articles on academic dishonesty, and this study also found 10 authors who are at the top of journals on academic honesty. This study suggests that proactive steps are necessary to create a culture of academic honesty across all prospects in academia, encompassing higher education administrators, staff, lecturers, business industries, and students.

Keywords: Academic Dishonesty, Academic Fraud, Academic Misconduct, Bibliometric Analysis, Higher Education.

INTRODUCTION

Academic dishonesty in educational contexts is influenced by numerous factors that frequently interact with one another, ultimately leading to students engaging in unethical conduct. The imperative to attain outstanding performance is a significant factor. The presence of high standards and the desire to achieve exceptional grades could motivate students to engage in academic dishonesty to speed up their path to success (Artiukhov & Liuta 2017). This pressure is worsened by the presence of intense peer competition, which creates an environment in which dishonest behaviour appears to be an appropriate way of getting an advantage. Additionally, the convenience of technology contributes to the spread of academic dishonesty and the availability of online resources may encourage students to engage in plagiarism or the unacknowledged copying of information (Cotton et al., 2023). In addition, the fear of consequences such as academic underachievement or parental punishment can motivate students to engage in dishonest behaviour. Inadequate preparation, as a result of poor study practices or delays, may increase the tendency of students to engage in academic dishonesty when faced with incomplete assignments or examinations.

A false impression of academic integrity may be the result of cultural and societal factors, such as value systems that emphasize achievement without care for ethical methods. The lack of uniformity in rule enforcement and educator's leniency towards instances of academic dishonesty may send students incorrect signals about the seriousness of committing dishonest behaviour (Mukasa et al., 2023). To effectively combat academic dishonesty, it is necessary to implement a comprehensive, multifaceted strategy that includes providing instruction on ethical behaviour, developing fair evaluation methods, and creating a supportive educational environment that places importance on the intrinsic value of knowledge (Lancaster 2023).

Two bibliometric analysis studies can be found in Scopus: Mahmud & Ali (2023) and Marques, Ries, and Gomes (2019). Marques et al. (2019) utilised the WoK database, whereas Mahmud & Ali (2023) extracted data from Scopus comprising 782 articles and analysed it for two decades. This study aims to investigate prominent Scopus

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keywords, such as publication year, journal publication, country of origin, field of study, and authors, and to discuss broad concepts from leading authors.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Discussion on bibliometrics started in the 1950s thus the methodology is not considered new even though the bibliometric analysis research has been done by many researchers in the last decade (Donthu et al. 2021). The bibliometric analysis employs two distinct categories of techniques: (1) performance analysis, which assesses the contributions of research components, and (2) science mapping, which investigates the relationship between these research components (Donthu et al. 2021).

Prior studies on bibliometric analysis by Marques et al. (2019), conducted a bibliometric analysis of research on academic dishonesty. In general, they intended to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of knowledge in this field by analysing a variety of scholarly sources. Their research focused on the factors influencing academic dishonesty, the interventions used to combat it, and the broader implications for educational institutions. The study by Marques et al. (2019) contributes to the comprehension of previous academic dishonesty research by highlighting key themes and gaps in the existing literature.

In higher education, the standard institutional culture and policies play a crucial role in shaping students' ethical behaviour. Petrak and Bartolac (2014) found that academic institutions that prioritise and actively support academic integrity are more likely to encourage positive ethical behaviours among their student body. When academic integrity policies are clearly defined and effectively communicated, together with a culture that highly values honesty and fairness, this has a positive effect on students' attitudes toward cheating. This results in a culture that highly values and expects ethical behaviour hence faculty and staff members should provide better guidance and policies for students (Atikuzzaman & Yesmin, 2023). By consistently emphasising the significance of honesty in their instruction and research, educators have the opportunity to promote these values in their students. In addition to influencing students' perceptions, the ethical conduct of faculty and staff actively contributes to the establishment of an integrity-driven culture within the academic community (Jam et al., 2011). Finally, it is essential to establish effective support systems by providing students with access to academic support, counseling services, and other resources that may decrease the pressures that frequently contribute to cheating as a result of academic tension or personal issues (Hersey & Lancaster 2015).

Engaging students in their coursework and promoting their motivation are both crucial. When students are enthusiastic about their coursework, feel connected to their studies, and are motivated to learn, they are more likely to put forth genuine effort and are less likely to engage in dishonest practices (Collier, 2023). In addition, the motivation to deceive decreases substantially when educational assessments place a greater emphasis on critical thinking, creativity, and subject matter expertise than on rote memorization (Bretag et al., 2014). This emphasis on genuine education creates an awareness of personal accomplishment and a sincere commitment to academic excellence.

Awareness and education play a crucial role in promoting a climate of academic integrity. Students who understand the academic integrity principles and consequences of dishonesty are more likely to follow ethical standards. Students gain insight into proper citation practises, avoiding plagiarism, and responsible collaboration through specialised educational programs, seminars, and orientation sessions (MacLeod & Eaton 2020). This approach to education promotes a sense of responsibility and provides students with the knowledge and skills necessary to maintain academic honesty (Bretag et al., 2018). Peers exert considerable influence on the behaviour of students then a majority of students adhering to academic honesty serves as an effective deterrent against dishonest behaviour among their peers. In contrast, widespread cheating can contribute to the normalisation of unethical behaviour, thereby undermining the larger academic honesty initiative.

Among the reasons for academic honesty was utilising plagiarism detection software and other technological solutions to discourage academic dishonesty and demonstrate the institution's commitment to upholding ethical standards (Mahmud et al. 2023). Other than that, personal ethics and values were inherent, students with a strong sense of personal integrity and ethical values are more likely to uphold academic honesty (Bretag & Mahmud 2009). Furthermore, social and cultural factors influence students' perspectives on academic integrity

further and diverse cultural norms and societal values influence how students perceive and approach collaboration and attribution issues (Comas-Forgas et al., 2021). It is crucial to be sensitive to these cultural differences to promote a fair understanding of academic honesty. Therefore, ethical development should be fostered beyond the confines of the educational setting.

METHODOLOGY

According to Donthu et al. (2021), four steps should be taken for bibliometric study. The first is the aims and scope of the study should be defined. Second step, techniques to analyse of bibliometric study will be selected. Next step, data from the database will be chosen, and in the last step, the bibliometric analysis will be run, and the findings will be reported. The analysis to be summarized and reported are usually total publication (TP), number of contributing authors (NCA), sole-authored publication, (SA), co-authored publication (CA), number of active years of publication (NAY), productivity per active year of publication (PAY), total citations (TC), average citations (AC), collaboration index (CI), collaboration coefficient (CC), number of cited publication (NCP), proportion of cited publications (PCP), citations per cited publication (CCP), *h*-index (*h*), *g*-index (*g*), *i*-index (*i*).

Under the Scopus database, this study selects search within article title, abstract, keywords ‘academic dishonesty’, ‘academic fraud’, ‘academic misconduct’, and ‘academic integrity’ with (n=2326). It is important to highlight that this study did not restrict the selection of these main keywords. Then this study refines the search and filter by keyword ‘academic integrity, students, academic misconduct, cheating, academic dishonesty, higher education, education, university, students, learning, academic fraud, academic fraud, academic misconduct, universities, academic honesty, faculty, and misconduct’ from 26 subjects provided. The publications and journals included in the study were only written in the English language. Other than that, the type of document selected is only article, English language, journal source, and publication stage final only. After filtering the subjects and type of document, 877 articles were identified.

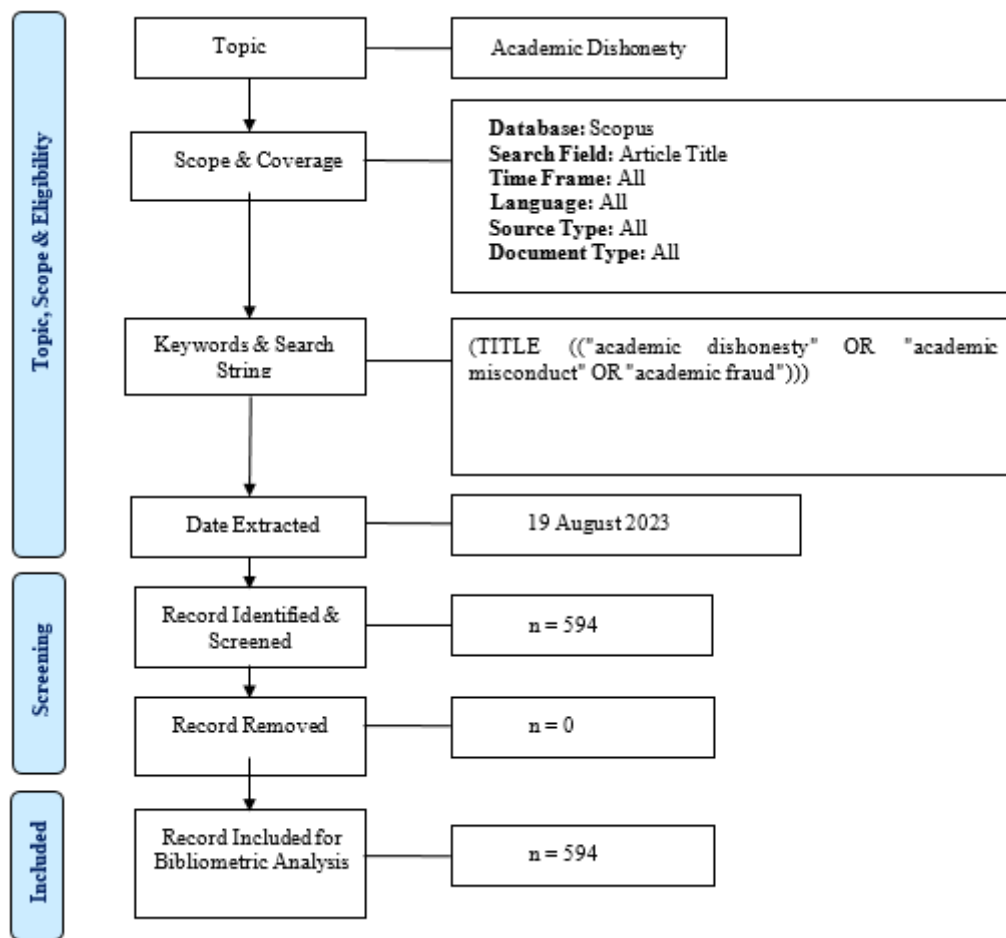


Figure 1. Flow diagram of search strategy.

Source: Moher et al. (2009) & Zakaria et al. (2020).

RESULTS

Following are the results of Scopus articles on academic dishonesty in higher education. This paper selects the year, journal publication, country of origin, field of study, and authors.

Table 1. Document Type.

Document Type	Total Publication (TP)	Percentage (%)
Article	434	73%
Conference Paper	50	8%
Review	37	6%
Book Chapter	32	5%
Editorial	14	2%
Letter	11	2%
Note	11	2%
Erratum	2	0%
Short Survey	2	0%
Book	1	0%
Total	594	100%

Documents Profile

Figure 1 below shows the number of articles published on academic dishonesty in higher education. The results show the number increasing, starting in 2001 with 9 articles and reaching 19 in 2008. In 2016, the number of

articles in Scopus increased to 48 and never decreased again. After that, from 2017 until 2021, it keeps increasing to 50, 51, 78, 78, and 95. The highest number of articles published in Scopus in 2022 is 138.

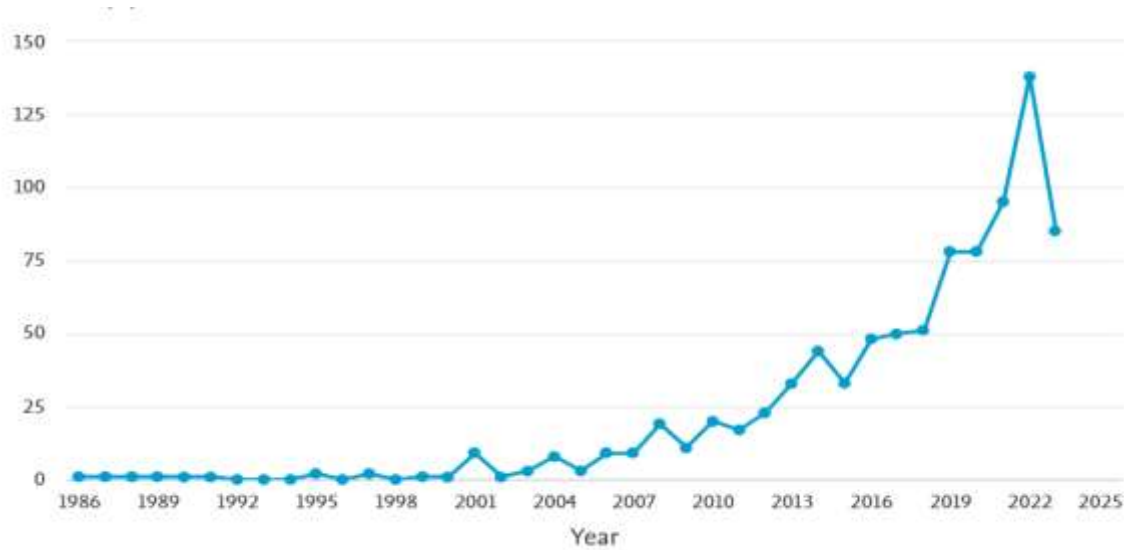


Figure 1. Number of articles and year published.

Publication Journal

Figure 2 below shows the top 5 sources of articles published by source in Scopus. The International Journal for Educational Integrity is the highest-ranked journal published, with 78 articles from 2007 until 2023. The International Journal for Educational Integrity published the second-highest number of articles on academic dishonesty, with 66 articles, and started publishing this topic in 2015. Source journals from Ethics and Behaviour Frontiers and Assessment produced 29 articles from 2001, and Evaluation in Higher Education produced 27 articles from 2010 to 2023. The Journal of Dental Education published 14 articles from 1997 until 2019.

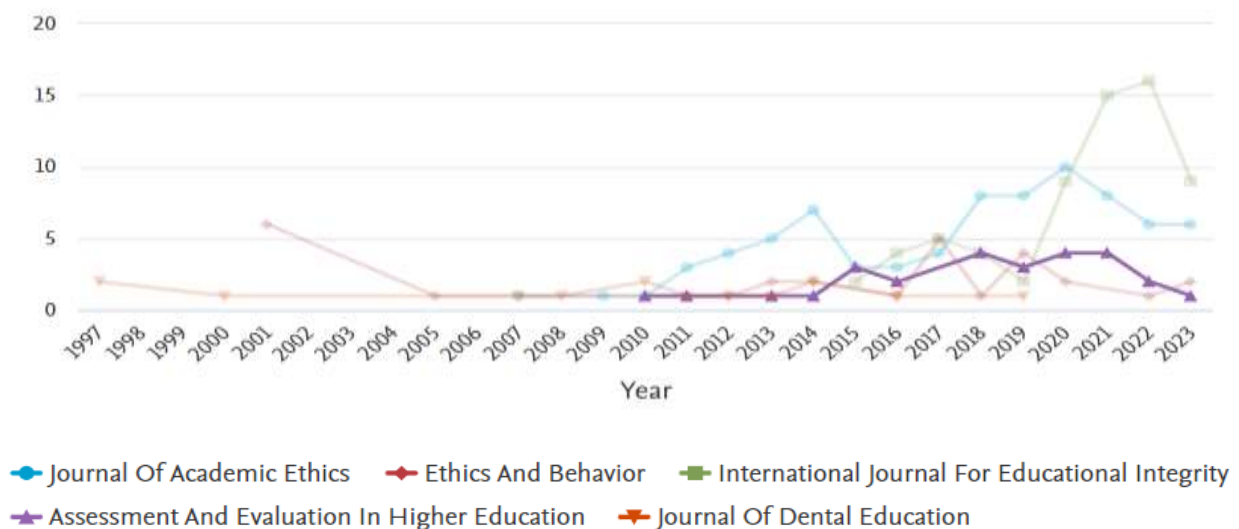


Figure 2. Top 5 journal publisher.

Country of Origin

Following is Figure 3, which indicates the top 10 countries that produced articles relating to academic dishonesty in higher education. The United States is the highest-producing country with 275 articles, followed by Australia, the United Kingdom, and Canada with 137, 85, and 63 for each country while other countries such as China, the United Arab Emirates, India, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Arab Saudi Arabia produced between 19 to 31 articles.

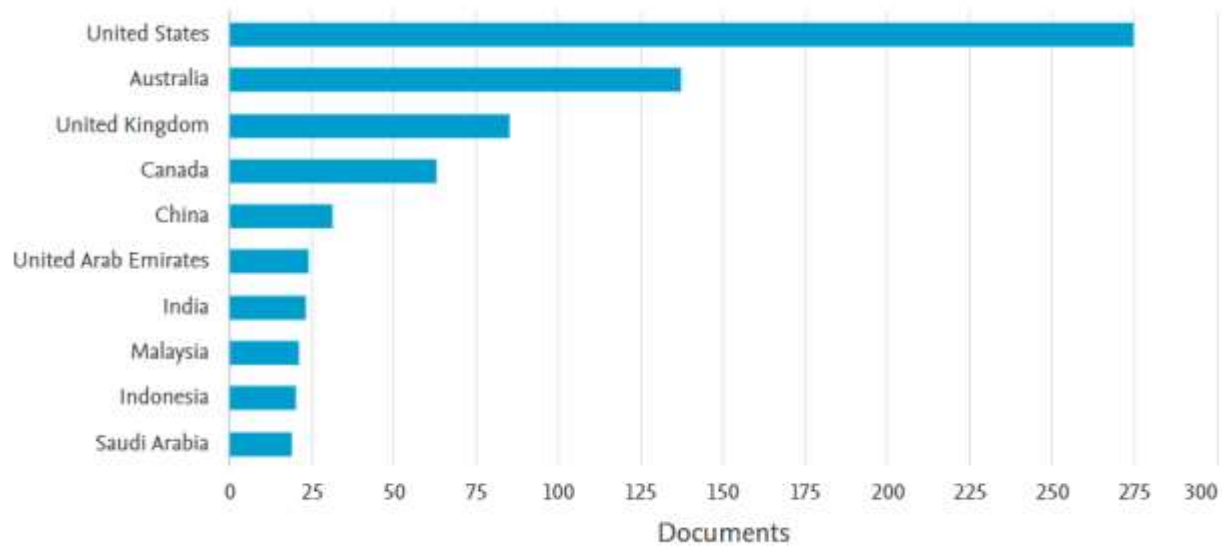


Figure 3. Top 10 countries publish articles on academic dishonesty.

Field of Study

As shown in Figure 4, the field of study in social science produces the most articles with 675 (47.7%). This is followed by Arts and Humanities with 147 (10.4%) and Business, Management, and Accounting with 81 (5.7%). While the other areas, computer science, psychology, nursing, medical, engineering, economics, econometrics, and finance, have between 49 (3.5%) and 77 (5.4%) articles,

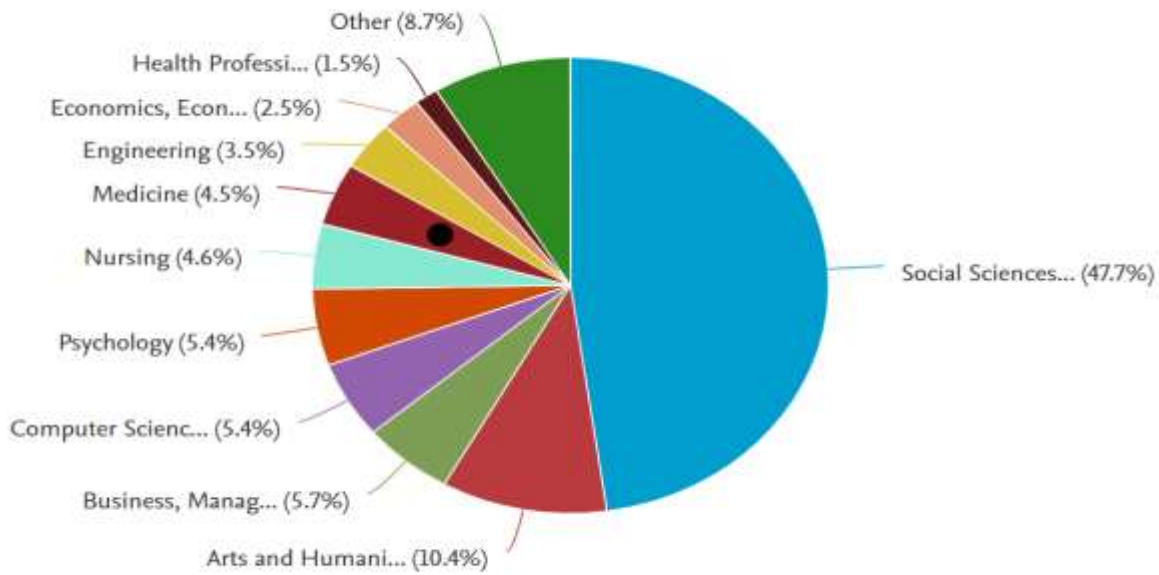


Figure 4. Field of Study on Academic Honesty's Article.

Author of Article

As shown in Figure 5 below, these are the top 10 authors who have produced articles on the academic honesty topic. Bretag, T., had the most articles, with 12 articles, followed by Eaton, S. E., and Lancaster, T., with 10 articles. The other authors, such as Amigud, A., and Curtis, G.J., produced nine articles, while Harper, R., and Roff, S., produced seven articles in the Scopus database. While the others from Khan, Z.R., and Saddiqui, S., both had produced six articles, and Dawson, P., produced five articles.

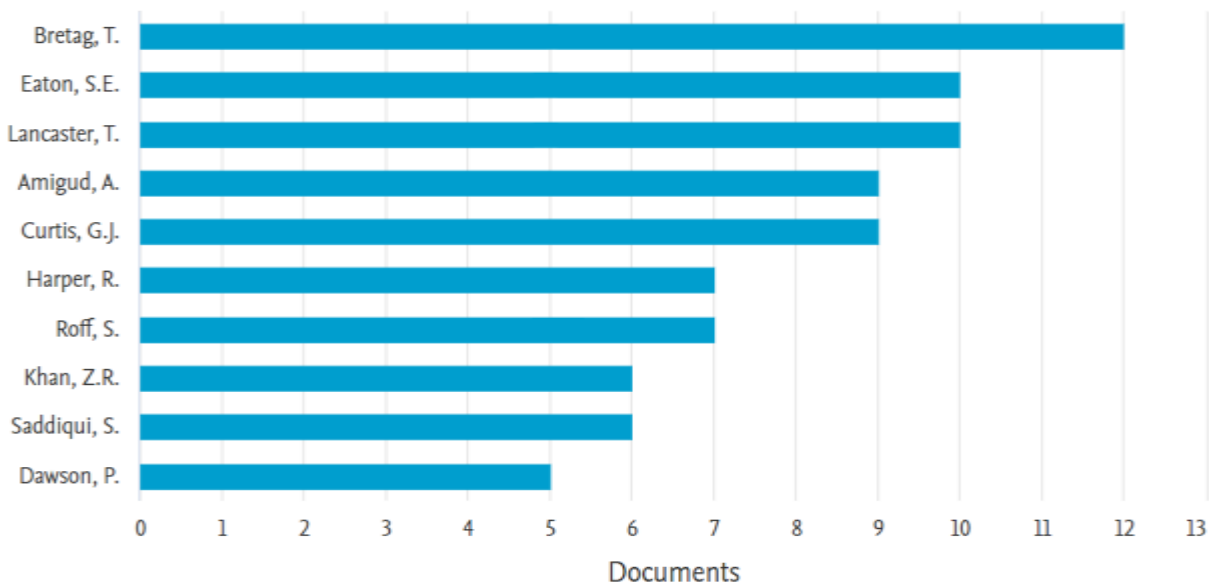


Figure 5. Authors for Academic Honesty.

DISCUSSIONS

Academic dishonesty is one of the issues that seem to constantly arise among higher education students creating obstacles for institutional administration. This study employs bibliometric analysis as a means of obtaining an overall picture of past papers, focusing on the top 10 most-published journals in Scopus, as many past studies cited most of the author's article on academic honesty for their discussion and reference. Among the discussions on academic honesty by top author, Harper et al. (2019) investigated contract misconduct based on higher education students' perceptions. Lancaster's third-ranked author contributed information on online exam dishonesty during the COVID-19 period. In addition, Hersey and Lancaster (2015) examine industries that ease academic dishonesty that providing students with the means to plagiarise or hire writers through secure websites that offer pre-written papers or the option to commission custom-written content. Comas-Forgas et al. (2021) reveal educational institutions should be alert regarding the possibility of exam cheating among their students.

The top author, Bretag focuses on outsourcing other parties to complete an assignment by students, known as contract plagiarism in 2019 (Mahmud et al., 2019). Bretag, T. (2009) investigated self-plagiarism and the appropriate reuse of previously published work. Self-plagiarism has the potential to compromise the integrity of academic research and publication if it is not appropriately addressed. Another study by Bretag et al. (2018) also found that students who reported many chances to cheat showed a higher rate of academic dishonesty. Moreover, when assessing the perceived likelihood of encountering particular assessment formats, the study found that perceptions were significantly higher in the fields of commerce and engineering than in other academic disciplines (Bretag et al., 2018).

To reduce academic honesty, Bretag and Mahmud (2009) utilize software designed for electronic text-matching to recognise several forms of plagiarism and they suggest a model for recognising possible cases of plagiarism in higher education students' assignments. However, Bretag surveyed a large number of higher education students in Australia and found that students require proper supervision to avoid academic dishonesty. In other words, students want their lecturers to pay attention and provide them with clear directions so that any task will be easier to complete. Similarly, students who were dissatisfied with the quality of the teaching and learning environment showed higher unethical conduct. Students who are likely given a chance to commit plagiarism and who are dissatisfied with the teaching and learning environment are more likely to be involved in academic dishonesty (Bretag et al., 2019).

According to MacLeod and Eaton (2020), many lecturers receive a lack of support from the administration and are unable to officially report some academic dishonesty due to the burden of the workload of administrative tasks and the requirement for providing evidence. They are also aware that weak students, who are international students who fight with language barriers and unfamiliarity with new academic environments make the students contribute to academic dishonesty.

The findings suggest that higher education institutions should cooperate to create a unified academic integrity framework. The framework should be very well-defined and clear-cut descriptions of plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct while maintaining consistency across provinces (Eaton, 2017; Stoesz and Eaton, 2022). Previously, Bretag et al. (2011) already suggested the five pillars model of academic integrity policy which are access, approach, responsibility, detail, and support. They believe that the elements should serve as guidelines for practice. Eaton et al. (2022) urge bigger support for the improvement of academic honesty scholarship, to strengthen advocacy, policy development, and practical application efforts.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study has explored the evolution of academic dishonesty in higher education over the past three decades. Examining studies from 1981 to 2023, this study viewed a remarkable increase in scholarly interest and research on this topic. The findings highlight the prevalence of publications in journals emphasizing integrity, ethics, and assessment in higher education, indicating an intensive effort to promote academic

honesty. The dominance of articles originating from the field of social sciences highlights the interdisciplinary landscape of arguments relating to academic dishonesty.

Nowadays, with online learning platforms and distance education especially after COVID-19 education practice, new challenges relating to academic honesty have occurred. The change to online study has raised concerns about the possibility of increasing the opportunities for academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, contract plagiarism and cheating on exams. Online learning environments nowadays can make it easier for higher education students to be involved in academic dishonesty, posing significant challenges for lecturers and institutions to reduce academic dishonesty.

Significant measures include teaching, supervision, and administrative training, together with other management strategies, explicit definitions of cheating, and the utilization of special software for the detection of students' assignments (Petrak & Bartolac, 2014). As we negotiate these changing educational paradigms, stakeholders from academia must work together to address the challenges of academic dishonesty in online learning contexts. This involves the introduction of proactive measures to promote academic integrity in digital classrooms. Strategies such as promoting ethical conduct through educational interventions, using technology to identify plagiarism, and creating a supportive learning atmosphere conducive to honesty and openness are critical.

Looking ahead, higher education institutions must adapt and innovate in their efforts to fight academic dishonesty in the digital era. By staying on top of developing trends and properly harnessing technology, we may maintain scholarly quality and protect the integrity of academic endeavors in an increasingly online learning environment.

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