PRI Publication No. 055

State of Research Ethics Compliance in Nepal's Higher Education Institutions

Research Report

नीति अनुसन्धान प्रतिष्ठान
Policy Research Institute

Kathmandu, Nepal

State of Research Ethics Compliance in Nepal's Higher Education Institutions

Research Report

Dipendra Prasad Pant
Bikram Acharya
Mukunda Raj Kattel

नीति अनुसन्धान प्रतिष्ठान
Policy Research Institute

Kathmandu, Nepal

Research Report No. 022

ISBN: 978-9937-9559-3-5 (Print)
ISBN: 978-9937-9559-2-8 (Electronic)

Suggested Citation:
Pant, D.P., Acharya, B. & Kattel, M.R. (2022). *State of Research Ethics Compliance in Nepal's Higher Education Institutions.* [PRI Publication No. 055]. Kathmandu: Policy Research Institute.

Layout : Subin Ulak
Publication Date : October, 2022
Copies : 500

Policy Research Institute
Narayanhiti, Kathmandu, Nepal
E-mail: info@pri.gov.np
Web.: www.pri.gov.np
Phone: +977 1 4530517/4534979

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

FOREWORD

Policy Research Institute (PRI) undertakes research on all issues of policy concerns and, based on the evidence generated, recommends the Government and relevant authorities the policy measures that should be taken to address underlying issues.

What issues to research are identified internally through policy dialogues, which are central to PRI's policy research processes. They are also informed by the feedback from the Government and other institutions. Individual communications are also taken into consideration to identify a research problem. Research is, then, undertaken through the Research Department that comprises five thematic Centres – Economic Affairs, Development and Infrastructure; Federal Affairs, Governance and Public Service Delivery; Political, Legal and Social Affairs; National Interests, Foreign Policy and Strategic Affairs; and, Science, Technology and Natural Resources – and the Information and Knowledge Management Department.

This report is the outcome of the research undertaken through the Information and Knowledge Management Department. It presents a bird's-eye-view of how Nepal's higher education institutions feature in terms of academic integrity, which is key to transformative policy research and innovation, which Nepal requires to achieve economic growth and prosperity, the twin goals of national development.

PRI colleagues Mr. Dipendra Prasad Pant, Dr. Bikram Acharya and Dr. Mukunda Raj Kattel painstakingly worked on the project. I would not let this opportunity pass without thanking them for the hard work put into this. Thanks are also due to the members of the PRI Publication Review and Recommendation Committee – Dr. Hari Sharma, Dr. Giri Raj Sharma, Dr. Shobha Poudel and Dr. Sarmila Tandukar – who carefully reviewed the report and suggested improvements as necessary. Mr. Subin Ulak deserves special thanks for beautifully graphic-desigining this publication. I would also like to thank all the invited experts who presented their invaluable ideas and suggestions in the Public Policy Dialogue conducted in the course of this study.

I earnestly hope the publication will trigger a policy debate on such a crucial issue as interrogated by the report. I also hope the recommendations offered will drive the change that is needed to improve the situation.

Bishnu Raj Upreti, PhD
Executive Chairperson
October 2022

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Education creates new knowledge and skills necessary for a society's advancement and transformation by transmitting cultural heritage from one generation to the next and adding innovation to traditional knowledge.

The transfer of knowledge and skills takes place tacitly as well as explicitly. The modern education system, symbolized by schools, universities and academies, has evolved to generate and impart knowledge and skills explicitly. This evolution draws as much on the reflections of the past (of traditional education) as on the needs of the present and challenges of the future.

While the ancient/traditional system centred around moral education (drawing on traditional customs and religion), at the heart of the modern education system is innovation, which is triggered by the fusion of science and technology under the aegis of educational institutions, primarily universities.

Innovation requires new knowledge generated through research that maintains a high degree of academic integrity, a state characterized by a research process that is 'morally' or 'ethically' right and 'scientifically' robust. While a research study sound in academic integrity is believed to produce credible knowledge, a study that compromises academic integrity is doubted to be reliable.

Innovative knowledge helps build the human capital that serves as the principal determinant of growth and prosperity. The human resources that are informed of overall sociopolitical contexts and issues and market dynamics are the human capital on which the foundation of economic development rests. Such human resources also serve as a trigger for innovation.

How Nepal's Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) fare in terms of innovative knowledge generation is a matter of public concern. As the centre of research and excellence, they are expected to have an enabling environment. If they are found wanting, they should create one. The research study was undertaken with this curiosity and expectation by situating research practices of HEIs in the history of Nepal's higher education and the institutional and normative arrangements that have been developed over the decades.

Using institutional theory as a conceptual guide, the study aimed to explore how the higher education institutions in Nepal would fare in terms of the research continuum

from knowledge generation to dissemination; what factors – ethical, legal, procedural or otherwise – would tolerate academic misconduct, including unethical research practices; and what measures would contribute to creating an enabling environment for ethical academic research.

The study concludes that the level of knowledge and understanding of research ethics among researchers and scholars determines the level of their involvement in academically dishonest behaviour. While informed knowledge of research ethics contributes to the institutionalization of research culture, the absence of such knowledge results in dishonesty in research. The study finds a number of cases and inferences of dishonest acts besetting research in Nepal's HEIs.

Research regulatory mechanisms are scattered and short of internationally established frameworks, more so in the case of those dealing with academic integrity. Political influence is perceived to add to the state of legal insufficiency (gap) and contribute to the perpetuation of dishonest behaviour by complicating the implementation of available instruments.

Academics, the finding of this study has it, believe that intensive discussions, regular discourse and sharing on various aspects of ethics and integrity can build a robust academic and research culture, in which cheating and dishonest acts find no space. So do students and researchers. However, such educational and awareness opportunities are almost non-existent. This lacking indicates that HEI authorities do not consider a violation of research ethics as a serious issue. Even those in supervisory roles are found not to be serious and sincere in fulfilling their responsibilities. All this has resulted in missed opportunities to build an enabling environment for ethical research.

Plagiarism, data fabrication, disingenuous co-authorship and fake ethical approval are some of the unethical practices found to be common in Nepali academia. However, HEIs seem to lack the courage or motivation to investigate such practices and hold those responsible to account. Some allegations have been investigated and responded to. However, the response is not perceived to be enough to deter such practices.

Existing recruitment policies and metrics, which focus more on quantity than on quality, are found to dissuade quality graduates from getting on board, and, in so doing, prevent fresh ideas and energies from entering the system that requires such ideas to cross the 'chasm point', as it is called in innovation theory, and ensure a paradigm shift in the workings of HEIs.

To address the issues observed and identified, the study makes the following recommendations to the government of Nepal and HEI authorities. Together, these recommendations offer immediate remedies as well as long-term solutions to the issues involved.

a. HEIs should make it mandatory across the board to educate and coach fresh researchers and students about the basics of academic ethics. What constitutes dishonesty, and how to detect and report it should be integral to such education. Faculties and supervisors should, likewise, be reminded of their responsibility to create an ethically sound environment within HEIs they are associated with and trained and refreshed as necessary to enable them to do so. Such education, coaching and sensitization should be part of HEIs' academic calendar.

b. Develop policies, systems and legal instruments to deal with various facets of dishonesty at various levels. Such policies and instruments should be clear, focused and enforceable within the scope of work of the institution concerned.

c. Create an environment for the system of meritocracy-based recruitment both for academic and administrative positions. Other considerations, such as political influence and connections, do not enable academia to create the foundation it requires to achieve academic excellence, which all HEIs aspire to.

d. Develop a policy promoting zero tolerance against academic dishonesty in each institution. To this end, the practice of peer reporting should be institutionalised, cases of allegations should be investigated with due priority and those found guilty should be held accountable without any favour.

e. Establish an autonomous office of academic integrity (OAI) as an apex entity to govern and oversee all ethical issues and complaints of all HEIs and RIs. The OAI should be empowered to operate both preventive and curative measures needed to ensure academic integrity remains inviolable in Nepal. The absence of such a body is widely felt in the continuation of academic malpractices despite public outcry.

f. HEIs and RIs should, in close consultation with the OAI, establish for their institution an integrated framework of protocols, rules and regulations in line with internationally accepted research standards and ethics. Existing tools and instruments should be reviewed and updated to ensure their compliance with the integrated framework. Constituent institutions and affiliates should, likewise, build and enforce institute-wide instruments that fit their needs drawing on the integrated framework.

g. HEIs should ensure strict compliance with research and publication procedures and processess at all time. The predatory publication should be rejected outright; editorial engagement in authorship should be discouraged; and, co-authorship should be made transparent. An article that has not passed through the robustness of peer review, ethical approval, copyright regulation and other academic vetting procedures, should not be counted as an academic publication.

h. The UGC should be reoriented to its primary task of inter university collaboration in order for it to be able to build an enabling environment for quality academic activities.

कार्यकारी सारांश

सांस्कृतिक सम्पदाको पुस्तान्तरण र परम्परागत ज्ञानको परिष्कार गरी शिक्षाले समाजको विकास र रूपान्तरणका लागि आवश्यक हुने नयाँ ज्ञान र सीपको सिर्जना गर्छ ।

आधुनिक शिक्षा प्रणालीका प्रतीक मानिने विद्यालय, विश्वविद्यालय तथा प्रतिष्ठानहरूले प्रत्यक्ष रूपमा ज्ञान र सीपको उत्पादन र प्रवाह गर्छन् । ज्ञान र सीपको उत्पादन परम्परागत शिक्षामार्फत अर्जित अनुभवहरूको मन्थन, वर्तमान आवश्यकताहरूको पहिचान र भविष्यका चुनौतीहरूको आकलनका आधारमा गरिन्छ ।

परम्परागत शैक्षिक प्रणालीले परम्परा, रीतिरिवाज तथा धार्मिक मान्यताका आधारमा विकसित नैतिक शिक्षामा जोड दिन्छ भने आधुनिक शिक्षा प्रणालीले विज्ञान र प्रविधिको एकीकरणबाट सिर्जना हुने नवप्रवर्तन (innovation) मा जोड दिन्छ ।

नवप्रवर्तनका लागि अनुसन्धान सत्यनिष्ठा र आचारसंहिताका मूल मर्मअनुरूप सिर्जित ज्ञान अपरिहार्य हुन्छ । यस्तो ज्ञानले सामाजिक-आर्थिक समृद्धिका लागि चाहिने मानवीय पुँजीको विकास गर्छ । सामाजिक-राजनीतिक परिवेश र बजारको गतिशीलता बारे सुसूचित मानव संसाधन तयार गरी आर्थिक विकास र नवप्रवर्तनका लागि अत्यावश्यक ऊर्जा तयार गर्छ ।

सृजनशील ज्ञान निर्माण, ज्ञान सामाग्रीको प्रकाशन र प्रसारणको कसीमा नेपालका उच्च शैक्षिक संस्थाहरू कस्ता छन् भन्ने जनचासो रहदैआएको छ । यिनमा अनुसन्धान र विशिष्टीकृत ज्ञान निर्माणका लागि आवश्यक नीति, नियम र शैक्षिक वातावरण छ या छैन ? छैन भने यस्तो वातावरण किन बन्न सकेन ? उपयुक्त शैक्षिक वातावरण बनाउन के गर्नु पर्छ ? यस अध्ययनमा नेपालका उच्च शैक्षिक संस्थाहरूले अनुसरण गरिरहेका अनुसन्धान तथा अन्य सान्दर्भिक शैक्षिक अभ्यासहरूलाई केन्द्रमा राखेर यिनै जिज्ञासाहरूलाई सम्बोधन गर्ने प्रयास गरिएको छ ।

अध्ययनको निष्कर्ष छ - नेपालका उच्च शैक्षिक संस्थाहरूमा अनुसन्धान, ज्ञान उत्पादन र प्रसारणको अवस्था मिश्रित छ । सबै संस्थाहरू आफूलाई सेन्टर अफ एक्सलेन्स (उत्कृष्टताको केन्द्र) का रूपमा स्थापित गर्ने दावी गर्छन् । तर, त्यो उद्देश्य प्राप्तिका लागि चाहिने नीतिगत, प्राज्ञिक तथा प्रशासनिक तयारीको अवस्था भने सन्तोषजनक छैन ।

अनुसन्धान आचारसंहिताको पालनाको अवस्था पनि मिश्रित छ । आचारसंहिताको आवश्यकता र महत्त्वको बारेमा सम्बद्ध सबै जानकार रहेको पाइन्छ । तर, यसलाई व्यवहारमा लागु गर्न चाहिने सीप, कौसल, नीति, नियम, नेतृत्व-क्षमता र समग्र वातावरणको अवस्था उत्साहप्रद देखिन्न । अनुसन्धान नियमन गर्ने विधि-विधान पर्याप्त छैनन्, जति छन् ती एकीकृत छैनन्, राजनीतिक प्रभाव र हस्तक्षेपका कारण भएका नीति-नियम सहज रूपमा लागु हुने अवस्था छैन; प्राज्ञिक उन्नयनका बारेमा छलफल,

तालिम, संवाद र अन्तर-विभाग अथवा अन्तर-विश्वविद्यालय सहकार्यको अवस्था शून्य-प्राय छ (यो जिम्मेवारी पाएको विश्वविद्यालय अनुदान आयोगले यसतर्फ यथोचित ध्यान दिन सकेको देखिन्न); र, एकाध विश्वविद्यालयमा बाहेक शोधरत विद्यार्थी तथा प्राज्ञहरूले प्राज्ञिक सत्यनिष्ठाबारे उचित सुपरिवेक्षण पाएका छैनन् । परिणामतः प्राज्ञिक सत्यनिष्ठाको अवहेलना सामान्य जस्तो बन्न पुगेको पाइन्छ; अनुसन्धानको गुण र तिनका आधारमा निर्मित ज्ञान सामग्रीहरूको स्तर चित्तबुझ्दो नभएको मात्र होइन यसले प्राज्ञिक उपलब्धि तथा शिक्षामा भएको लगानीको उपदेयतामाथि नै संशय सिर्जना गर्दछ ।

यी र प्रतिवेदनको मूल पाठमा चर्चा गरिएका अन्य सवाल र सन्दर्भको उचित सम्बोधन गर्नका लागि नेपाल सरकार तथा उच्च शिक्षासम्बन्धी निकायसमक्ष निम्न सिफारिसहरू प्रस्तुत गरिएका छन् ।

क) सबै उच्च शैक्षिक संस्थाहरूले अनुसन्धान क्षेत्रका विद्यार्थीहरूका लागि अनुसन्धान आचार संहिताका आधारभूत पक्षहरूबारे प्रशिक्षण दिने र सोबारे उनीहरूलाई शिक्षण गराउनुपर्छ । यस किसिमका शिक्षण तथा प्रशिक्षणहरू प्राज्ञिक अनाचार मानिने अवस्थाको कसरी पहिचान गर्ने तथा कसरी रिपोर्ट गर्ने विषयमा केन्द्रित हुनु पर्दछ । आचार संहितामा आधारित अनुसन्धान वातावरण निर्माणका लागि प्राध्यापन समूह तथा अनुसन्धान सुपरीवेक्षकहरूलाई आफ्ना उत्तरदायित्वबारे सचेत गराउनुका साथै यस विषयलाई शैक्षिक क्यालेन्डरको अङ्गको रूपमा राखी समयसमयमा उनीहरूलाई तालिम दिनुपर्दछ ।

ख) फरक-फरक तहमा देखिन सक्ने विविध किसिमका अनाचारको सम्बोधन गर्नको लागि कानुनी प्रोटोकल, प्रणाली र नीतिहरूको विकास गर्नुपर्छ । यसरी निर्माण हुने प्रोटोकल तथा नीतिहरू स्पष्ट, विषय केन्द्रित र सम्बन्धित संस्थाको कार्यक्षेत्रभित्र कार्यान्वयनयोग्य हुनुपर्छ ।

ग) संस्थाहरूका प्राज्ञिक तथा प्रशासनिक पदपूर्ति योग्यतामा आधारित रहने प्रत्याभूतिका लागि उचित वातावरण निर्माण गरिनुपर्छ । राजनीतिक प्रभाव र व्यक्तिगत सम्बन्धका आधारमा गरिने पदपूर्तिले संस्थाहरूले चाहेका प्राज्ञिक उत्कृष्टताका लागि आधार तय गर्न सहयोग नगर्ने हुनाले यस सम्बन्धमा संस्थाहरू सचेत रहनुपर्छ ।

घ) हरेक संस्थाले प्राज्ञिक अनाचारका घटनाहरू प्रति शुन्य सहनशीलताको नीति अभिवृद्धि गर्नुपर्छ । यस उद्देश्यका लागि सहकर्मी - रिपोर्टिङ (peer reporting) अभ्यास संस्थागत गरिनुपर्छ, आरोप लागेका घटनाहरूमा प्राथमिकताका साथ छानबिन गरिनुपर्छ र प्रमाणित भएका घटनाहरूमा कुनै अनुग्रह नराखी कारवाही हुनुपर्छ ।

ङ) अनुसन्धान तथा उच्चशिक्षा संस्थाहरूको समग्र आचारसँग सम्बन्धित विषय र उजुरीहरू हेर्ने र कारवाहीसमेत गर्ने उद्देश्यको लागि सर्वोच्च र स्वायत्त निकायको रूपमा 'अफिस अफ इन्टिग्रिटी' (Office of Integrity) स्थापना गरिनुपर्छ । प्राज्ञिक आचार र मूल्य अभेद्य (inviolable) बनाउने र सोही रूपमा कायम राख्ने प्रत्याभूतिका लागि उक्त अफिसलाई रोकथाममूलक र उपचारात्मक उपायहरू सञ्चालन गर्ने संस्थाको रूपमा विकास गरिनुपर्छ ।

च) 'अफिस अफ इन्टिग्रिटी' को निकट रहेर प्राज्ञिक र अनुसन्धान संस्थाहरूले आ-आफ्ना संस्थाहरूका लागि अन्तराष्ट्रिय रूपमा स्वीकार्य अनुसन्धान आचार र मानकसम्बन्धी नियम, नियमावली र प्रोटोकलहरूको एकीकृत प्रारूप निर्माण गरी लागु गर्नुपर्छ । उक्त प्रारूपसँग मेलखाने गरी सम्बन्धित मौजुदा औजारहरू समीक्षा र अद्यावधिक गरिनुपर्छ । त्यसैगरी, आङ्गिक र सम्बन्धनप्राप्त संस्थाहरूले पनि सोही प्रारूपमा आधारित भई आफ्ना आवश्यकताअनुरूपका प्रोटोकलहरू निर्माण गरी कार्यान्वयनमा ल्याउनुपर्छ ।

छ) उच्च शिक्षा संस्थाहरूले आफ्ना अनुसन्धान र प्रकाशन प्रक्रियासँग सम्बन्धित प्रोटोकल अनुपालनमा विशेष ध्यान दिएको प्रत्याभूति हुनुपर्छ । आफ्ना प्रकाशनहरूबारे आफूलगायत मातहतका निकाय र विभागहरूले जानकारी राख्नुपर्छ । प्रेडटरी प्रकाशनहरू (predatory publications) अस्वीकार गर्नुपर्छ, स्वयम् सम्पादक भएको जर्नलमा लेखकसमेतको रूपमा रहने अभ्यासलाई निरुत्साहित गर्नुपर्छ भने सहलेखनको प्रक्रिया पारदर्शी बनाइनुपर्छ । स्वस्थ समकक्षी समीक्षा नभएका, आवश्यक आचार संहिता पालनाको स्वीकृति (ethical approval) नलिएका, प्रतिलिपी अधिकार नियमनलाई ध्यान नदिएका र अन्य आवश्यक प्राज्ञिक प्रक्रिया पूरा नगरेका प्रकाशनहरूलाई प्राज्ञिक प्रकाशनको रूपमा लिनुहुदैन ।

ज) अन्तरविश्वविद्यालय समन्वय अभिवृद्धि गरी गुणस्तरीय प्राज्ञिक क्रियाकलापहरूका लागि आवश्यक वातावरण निर्माण गर्ने आफ्नो प्रमुख कार्यादेश प्रभावकारी रूपमा वहन गर्नका लागि विश्वविद्यालय अनुदान आयोगलाई थप उत्तरदायी बनाउनु पर्दछ ।

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Background

Education is the backbone of social transformation. It creates new knowledge and skills necessary for a society's progress and advancement by transmitting cultural heritage from one generation to the next and adding innovation to traditional knowledge. Education, thus, serves as the most potent driver of personal as well as community development (Delors, 1996).

The transfer of knowledge and skills takes place tacitly as well as explicitly via different modes and mediums. The mediums include classroom trainings and education, field observations, mass media and publications. The modern education system symbolized by schools, universities and academies, apart from other non-academic research institutions, has evolved to generate and impart knowledge and skills explicitly. This evolution draws as much on the reflections of the past (of traditional education) as on the needs of the present and challenges of the future (Delors, 1996; Williams, 1899).

While the ancient/traditional system centred around moral education (drawing on traditional customs and religion), at the heart of the modern education system is innovation, which is triggered by the fusion of science and technology (Conway & Waage, 2010). Its focus is on generating knowledge to advance human life and civilization by unpacking human potential and exploiting it to develop a solution to problems facing humankind. Thanks to the modern education system the world has been better equipped and prepared to tackle emerging crises, be they global recessions, climatic adversities or health crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which the world has experienced since March 2020.

Educational institutions, primarily universities, create an enabling environment to generate new knowledge. It is an environment in which students, faculties and researchers (collectively scholars) interface with social needs and built capacity to address those needs by harnessing competitiveness among individuals and institutions (Ion & Castro Ceacero, 2017). They do so by questioning taken-for-granted beliefs and exploring – and experimenting with – new ideas and techniques. The exploration takes place freely in an ethically controlled environment in which 'academic integrity' is held very dear as scholars engage in the development of

theories, scientific discoveries and innovations that arm humankind with the tools through which to fight the threat before it.

In this background, this section sets the scene for the study of how Nepals' higher educational institutions (HEIs) fare in terms of the generation of innovative knowledge. To this end, it critically reviews the ethical, institutional and policy environment in which the HEIs operate engaging both conceptual and substantive literature.

1.1.1 Academic Integrity

'Academic integrity' enjoys a wider range of scope and importance in the modern education system. It is a yardstick against which the validity of knowledge and discoveries are judged. A research study undertaken with the highest level of academic integrity is believed to be credible and accountable. On the contrary, a study that compromises academic integrity is seen with suspicion and its findings are doubted to be reliable and can even be harmful to human kind.

The phrase 'academic integrity' is open to different interpretations (Macfarlane et al., 2014). While it is basically used to refer to ethically sound behaviour and conduct of academics in all aspects of academic engagement (Bretag, 2016), which is how it is used in this document, it is sometimes used in a way that limits the scope to teaching and research missions (Gallant & Drinan, 2008). Despite differences in interpretation and definition, scholars tend to converge that unethical academic engagements – or the breach of academic integrity – are a waste of time and resources, as they fake science and knowledge (Vazire, 2017). The outcomes of such practices pose threats not only to the education system – the only sector that prepares required human resources for any country (Saiti, 2013) – but also to the overall socio-economic advancement (Antes & Mumford, 2011).

As Gallant and Drinan (2006) argue, faculties have a central role in maintaining academic integrity, which they should fulfil as much through promotional activities (education, training, awareness, etc) as through curative functions, such as punishment and policing when a case of academic misconduct is reported or suspected.

1.1.2 Role of Higher Education Institutions

Higher education institutions (HEIs) serve as the pillar of the national economy as they create and accumulate required human capital: individuals with knowledge, skills and competencies necessary for their personal as well as socio-economic

development and well-being (Harris, 2001; Brian, 2007). HEIs – universities, academies and institutes offering courses from Bachelor's to PhD levels – contribute to advancing existing knowledge and creating and extending new knowledge through critical pedagogy and research. The knowledge so created and advanced is reflected in various forms ranging from product to process innovations, which ultimately account for overall economic performance (Altbach, 1992; Brown & Lauder, 1996; Lall, 1992) through their embodiment of opportunities and empowerment dimensions (Teague, 2015; World Bank, 2002).

HEIs hone efficiency, promote the productivity of labour forces and improve the quality of labour (Lauder & Mayhew, 2020). In so doing, shape industry dynamics, enhance economic growth, promote global competitiveness and place the country's position in the world economy and politics (Teague, 2015). However, not all HEIs are able to leave a mark. Some HEIs even fail their graduates, unable to run courses on a par with national needs and, as a result, having a low impact on the graduates' chances of employability.

Research-focused HEIs are a fountain of innovation. Through the research-supportive system, a transparent and enabling governance process and good ethical culture therein (Ferguson et al., 2007), HEIs transform raw data around them into innovative knowledge through a rigorous process of research. The resultant knowledge helps build the human capital that serves as the principal determinant of growth, job creation and the overall standard of living (Harris, 2001), the defining elements of the knowledge-based economy of the day. HEIs that embed academic integrity in the educational and research activities they operate also contribute to the production of human resources that are rich in moral integrity and thus are able to make a society just and fair.

1.1.3 Higher Education Institutions in Nepal

The history of Nepal's higher education traces its origin to 1959, when Tribhuvan University (TU) was established "to produce skilled human resources for the total development of Nepal" by delivering "quality education [and] research," expanding "the knowledge of arts, science, technology …" and making this knowledge relevant to the need of the day, as stated in the preamble to the founding act TU.[1]

By September 2022, 15 universities and five academies (deemed to be universities) serve as HEIs offering courses from bachelor to PhD levels. The academies, in

1. The Act is available at https://tribhuvan-university.edu.np/post/5_5dc00271d9a09 (19 August 2022)

Nepal's context, are medical sciences institutions that operate without affiliation with any university.

As elsewhere, Nepal's HEIs serve as the pillar of the nation's economy. Educational services they offer contribute, in principle to the advancement of knowledge and production of quality human resources that are able to think innovatively and act with moral high ground.

According to the World Intellectual Property Organization, Nepal's global innovation ranking is 111th out of 132 economies (WIPO, 2021). The ranking is based on the composite score against seven indices that cumulatively indicate the standing of a country's innovation (1 is the highest possible ranking in each index): Knowledge and technology outputs (Nepal ranks 121st), human capital and research (115th), institution (115th), creative output (108th), infrastructure (98th), business sophistication (59th) and market sophistication (68th). In terms of human capital, the source of innovation, Nepal's ranking is below the average of middle-income economies. A reason behind this is said to be the lack of research culture in our HEIs or the research process and practices they have adopted not being up to the mark in terms of ethical concerns and robust enough to yield innovative knowledge and ideas (Phyak, 2018).

HEIs are mandated to conduct research and development activities besides their regular task of teaching and learning. Through these inputs and processes, they prepare skilled and competent human resources to build the foundation for the national economy.

Research studies are conducted at the faculty levels and also via dedicated centres under them. The research engagement and outcomes are reflected in performance appraisals of faculties, curriculums and courses designed for students and research-based dissertations supervised as partial fulfilment of Master's and PhD degrees.

Among the HEIs, TU is both the oldest and also largest in the country. By the number of students, it is also believed to be one of the largest universities in the world. It holds more than 80 per cent of the total student enrollment in Nepal through its university campus, 62 constituent colleges and over 1,062 affiliated private and community colleges across the country.[2] As the largest and oldest university, it has a major stake in the national development and production of required human resources.

2. Information taken from TU's webpage- https://tribhuvan-university.edu.np/page/5_5dd4e523dc74a on 15 May 2022

Kathmandu University (KU) has been running programmes similar to those of TU. Established in 1991 as a public autonomous institution, KU operates through seven schools – that relate respectively to science, arts, education, engineering, law, management and medical science – offering more than 200 academic programmes and courses from intermediate to PhD levels. As of June 2022, the University has produced 38,339 graduates in the discipline of business administration, pharmacy, environmental science, human biology, geomatics engineering, development studies, social work, civil engineering with specialization in hydropower, landscape management and heritage studies, to name a few prominent areas.[3]

Table 1 List of Higher Education Institutions in Nepal

S. N.	HEIs	Date of Establishment	Website	Highest Degree
1	Tribhuvan University	1959	www.tribhuvan-university.edu.np	Doctoral Degree
2	Nepal Sanskrit University	1986	www.nsu.edu.np	Doctoral Degree
3	Kathmandu University	1991	www.ku.edu.np	Doctoral Degree
4	Purbanchal University	1993	www.purbanchaluniversity.edu.np	Master's Degree
5	Pokhara University	1997	www.pu.edu.np	Doctoral Degree
6	B.P. Koirala Institute of Health Sciences (BPKIHS)	1998	www.bpkihs.edu.np	Doctoral Degree
7	National Academy of Medical Sciences (NAMS)	2002	www.nams.org.np	Doctoral Degree
8	Lumbini Bouddha University	2004	www.lbu.edu.np	Master's Degree

3. Information taken from KU's website (at https://ku.edu.np/about-us) on 15 August 2022.

S. N.	HEIs	Date of Establishment	Website	Highest Degree
9	Patan Academy of Health Sciences (PAHS)	2008	www.pahs.edu.np	Master's Degree
10	Far-western University	2010	www.fwu.edu.np	Doctoral Degree
11	Mid Western University	2010	www.mwu.edu.np	Master's Degree
12	Agriculture and Forestry University	2010	www.afu.edu.np	Doctoral Degree
13	Karnali Academy of Health Sciences (KAHS)	2011	www.kahs.edu.np	MDGP
14	Nepal Open University	2016	www.nou.edu.np	Master's Degree
15	Rajarshi Janak University	2017	www.rju.edu.np	Master's Degree
16	Rapti Academy of Health Sciences	2017	www.rahs.edu.np	-
17	Gandaki University	2019	www.gandakiuniversity.edu.np	Bachelor's Degree
18	Manmohan Technical University	2019	www.mtu.edu.np	Bachelor's Degree
19	Madan Bhandari Technical University	2020	www.mbtu.edu.np	-
20	Madan Bhandari University of Science and Technology	2022	www.mbustb.org	-

Other universities contribute to national development and prosperity either through specialized teaching and research or by being regionally based so that they are easy

to approach and access. For example, the teaching and research opportunities offered by Nepal Sanskrit University (Formerly Mahendra Sanskrit University) focus on preserving, promoting and systematizing Sanskrit education in Nepal. The programmes of Lumbini Boudha University focus on promoting the teachings and philosophy of Lord Buddha. Agriculture and Forestry University offers specialized teaching and research to produce human capital in the area of agriculture and forestry. Likewise, Purwanchal University, Pokhara University, Rajarshi Janak University, Far Western University and Mid Western University decentralize educational programmes aiming to produce human resources required for the region they cover.

The National Academy of Medical Sciences, Patan Academy of Health Sciences and Karnali Academy of Health Sciences aim to produce human capital related to medicine and health. The Madan Bhandari University of Science and Technology and Manmohan Technical University offer multidisciplinary courses with a major focus on science and technology. For those who cannot afford conventional institutions and conventional modes of learning, Nepal Open University offers e-learning services.

All these HEIs contribute to the national goal of development and prosperity by producing human resources in the areas of their priorities through teaching, research and other educational activities, such as educational workshops, conferences and publication of research-based knowledge products.

1.1.4 Regulation and Operation of HEIs

Universities are established under self-governing acts passed by parliament. In order to address the growing demand for skilled human resources, the Government of Nepal has had a policy provision allowing the establishment of universities also by private sectors under the no-profit sharing provision as reflected in the objective (8.5) and strategy (9.13) of the National Education Policy, 2076 (BS).[4] The universities so established raise funds from private sources to govern their management and operation. In addition, the universities also participate in research and development activities in collaboration with other institutions and receive research funds through competitive grants and other funding agencies and mechanisms.

Most of the universities operate constituent colleges/campuses. Some of such colleges run courses on a specific academic discipline (e.g., Amrit Science Campus,

4. राष्ट्रिय शिक्षा नीति, २०७६; उद्देश्य ८.५, रणनीति ९.१३ (Link: https://ugcnepal.edu.np/uploads/web-uploadsfiles/National%20Education%20Policy%2C%202076.pdf)

a TU-constituent, offers science courses only) while others offer a number of academic disciplines (e.g., Patan Multiple Campus, another TU-constituent, offers both science and non-science courses). Such constituent campuses run programmes up to Master's degrees. In addition, the universities have the provision to expand their programmes through affiliated colleges across the country.

Founding (autonomy) regulations, codes of conduct (governing a specific activity, such as research) and examination policies are among the regulatory and operational regimes through which the universities function.

Apart from teaching, the universities do carry out research at various levels and with diverse objectives, as mandated by their founding acts and as envisioned by the national educational policy, which categorically promises a "legal, institutional and practical environment to develop research as an integral part of higher education to promote innovation" (Strategy No 10.11).[5]

1.1.5 Role of Ethics in Research and Innovation

Ethics is an integral part of human civilization. All human societies have developed laws, social mores and ethical norms to define and regulate their behaviour. Laws are enacted to enforce moral standards and ethical norms through which to govern everyday life (Paine, 2008). Just as societies that deviate from the allegiance to ethical standards do not advance, so does research that fails to comply with ethical principles and standards (Frankel, 2000). Research – or systematic investigation and presentation of the resulting knowledge – calls for the allegiance to a minimal ethical standard of widely accepted academic norms. Or else, the research processes and outcomes run the risk of a trust deficit (Elmore & Weston, 2020; Tregoning, 2018), a situation in which research outcomes cannot be trusted to be credible.

Ethics serves as the guide to responsible research and also as the benchmark for objectivity that leads to error-free knowledge and truth. Guarding against fabrication, falsification and misrepresentation of data, ethics promotes accountability and fairness in sharing, transforming and co-creation of knowledge and provides the basis for copyright, patenting policies and confidentiality rules.

Research-promoting agencies, such as the University Grants Commission (UGC), have the responsibility to build an enabling environment that provides ethical bases and guidance to research scholars to work in a competitive atmosphere while making the best use of available resources, including research funds. They should

5. राष्ट्रिय शिक्षा नीति, २०७६; उद्देश्य ८.५, रणनीति १०.११

also be responsible for strengthening the ethical dimension of research governance, such as ethical compliance and regulatory and accountability promoting mechanisms.

The undertaking of ex-ante research evaluation, as well as ex-post evaluation, can be a way to promote an ethical environment as these processes help one gauge how research activities are being delivered under what conditions (Britt Holbrook & Frodeman, 2011; Roper et al., 2004). On the one hand, these processes orient and direct HEIs towards reliable and impactful outcomes. On the other, they ensure the value of the support (value for money) as well as quality outcomes.

Abiding by ethical norms also helps enhance public trust and ownership of research outcomes. Ethics-compliant research builds a foundation for an informed and knowledge-based society, which serves as the fountainhead of social progress and economic prosperity. Similarly, compliance with regulatory and operational instruments protects a research undertaking from consequences that may be harmful to research subjects, the research community as well as the public at large, who are the end-users of research outcomes.

Unethical research practices – such as plagiarism, falsification and fabrication of data, conflict of interest, ghost authorship, misuse of confidentiality and the use of the information without informed consent or the violation of informed consent – erode academic integrity, nullify achievements (DuBois et al., 2013) and ultimately damage the image of a nation. Unethical research may lead to more catastrophic consequences, depending on the domain and application, including financial, social, environmental and other detrimental effects on human life (Kang & Hwang, 2020). For example, the use of fabricated data or the misinterpretation of it could have delayed the development of COVID-19 vaccines and the achievement of the efficiency and public trust that they gained. The vaccine's impact could have been disastrous had it not complied with ethical norms.

Compliance with ethical norms and practices is non-negotiable in research. It is both to maintain a 'right' course of action and to produce a 'right' result. Such deontological practices are all the more important in academia to check the possibility of unethical and fraudulent activities, which some scholars may be vulnerable to because of the 'winner-take-all' tendency or the temptation to make a quick gain. To discourage such possibilities and redress when they occur, honour codes play an important role. Some universities even offer courses on such codes. For example William and Mary University, which has honour codes as elective study, is the first university to formulate honour codes for the academic

integrity.[6] An honour code intends to establish itself as an attribute a person should have and requires students to make a verbal pledge not to lie and cheat both in their academic career and outside. The code is believed to promote a sense of accountability among students by reducing instances of academic misconduct and ingraining a culture of what can be said as academic integrity (Lee, 2020).

1.1.6 Ethical Standards and Compliance

Ethical compliance can be ensured variously to build trust and credibility of the knowledge generated and also to make sure no human subjects are harmed in the research process. Failure to follow compliance provisions tends to promote 'fake science,' a piece of unauthentic knowledge with no potential for application (Hopf et al., 2019). Such knowledge, if put to application, poses threat to the end-users as well as to the entire knowledge ecosystem. For instance, the knowledge generated through dry-lab-based research (that involves applied or computational mathematical analyses of a wide range of applications) may risk turning to fake science (or garbage knowledge) that cannot be applied or its application makes no impact. However, wet-lab-based research (where tests and experiments are carried out in a designated laboratory) carried out in disregard for research compliance will have serious consequences. In addition to the waste of time and resources, the outcomes of wet lab-based research may be detrimental to society at large.

Why research should be ethical has a history of its own. It traces its origin to the Nuremberg Code developed to check the Nazi horrors of experimentation carried out on human beings in the name of medical research (Miracle, 2016). Among other things, the Nuremberg Code defined ethical guidelines for research, placed restrictions on investigational research and, more importantly, set the scene for the Belmont Report that has established three principles for ethical research: (a) respect for persons (enablement of the subjects to decide whether they want to participate in a clinical trial); (b) beneficence (the absoluteness of informed consent for a clinical trial and doing no harm); and, (c) justice (according to fair and equal treatment to all) (Department of Health Education and Welfare, 1979; Miracle, 2016).

The Belmont Report marks an important milestone in the history of clinical research. The guidelines and principles established, particularly the principles of informed consent and respect for the person's autonomy, apply to all types of

6. See the honour codes available at- https://www.wm.edu/offices/deanofstudents/services/communityvalues/honorcodeandcouncils/honorcode/index.php

research, not just clinical. Respecting the person – or the primary informant or a human subject – is not just the respect for an individual's physical being and space, as is commonly taken to be in medical research. It is also a psychophysical space of an individual, disrespect of which amounts to ethical misconduct.

With the technological advancement of the day and the tremendous facilities and options it has brought about, it is possible to collect information remotely about a person without their knowledge. Using technology to collect information without informed consent from an individual is tantamount to the use of human subjects for research (Jacobson, 1999; Kitchin, 2003). A human subject, in this understanding, is a total of biological, morphological, psychological and virtual (information available in cyberspace) attributes. Researching human subjects vis-à-vis such broad identities and dimensions require ethical compliance to be redefined accordingly.

Research, by nature, may involve different approaches based on research questions and objectives. And activities will be designed accordingly to meet the objectives. However, the design and administration of research of all types should be informed of the core of Belmont principles, particularly those related to individual autonomy, collecting of information without deception and sharing of the benefits without harming the research object.[7] Or else, they fall short of ethical standards.

Research ethics and compliance are often pronounced upfront in research activities that involve human subjects. This is to avoid possible (negative) impacts of the activities on the subjects. Failure to do so may give rise to situations that produce results that may harm the subjects variously.[8] Here comes the role of ethics regulations. It is to ensure the balance between risks and potential benefits, protect the rights of participants and provide legal and other remedies in times of ethical compromises and misuse (Babb, 2020). The regulations also contribute to checking the winner-take-all tendency and ensuring that research ethics are not compromised at any stage or cycle of a research process.[9]

7. At the core of the Belmont principles is to protect human subjects as research participants by seeking prior informed consent and engaging them in the process only after an appropriate assessment of risks and benefits and environmental constraints and challenges, especially in situations where the subjects are incapable of reaching decisions independently.

8. Effects of unethical research design may appear in different nature and manifestations. In some cases, the probability of harm may be low but its impact may be serious. In others, probability of harm may be high with a minor impact. Harms also involve temporal factors: some may be felt immediately, while others in the long run.

9. Ethics is a moral value of researchers, a guide to making research products and results a trustworthy source of knowledge. The role of research regulation – through protocols and policies – is ultimately to ensure the research outcomes contribute to knowledge.

1.1.7 Legal Instruments and their Enforcement

Some scholars argue that academic integrity is part of an individual's moral values (Cabral-Cardoso, 2004; Kim & Park, 2018; Nguyen & Biderman, 2008). Others counter-argue that moral values and honour codes are ineffective and therefore a strong legal system, with determined and accountable administration, is needed to address any dishonest behaviour whether at the student's level or at the faculty's. Because, the failure to check any form and degree of academic misconduct on time institutionalizes the culture of dishonesty (Kibler, 1994).

Nepali universities act independently based on their founding acts. Individual institutions are empowered to make institution-wide policies, rules, regulations and honour codes to hire required human resources and undertake other functions the way they think it necessary to meet the institutional objectives. Effective and proactive enactment and implementation of such instruments are believed to foster academic freedom, enable researchers to involve in innovative activities and promote academic excellence.

On the contrary, the absence of legal instruments or their lacklustre enforcement by the administration discourages even well-meaning faculties to engage in activities that promote academic excellence, such as peer reporting and acting again instances of plagiarism and student cheating. Not aware of how the administration would react, many faculties have reportedly been helpless to bring such issues to its notice. Voices are also on the rise that HEIs should retract research articles published in Nepali journals and even seize the degrees of those who have committed serious academic misconduct. Such voices have, however, not found a matching response due in large part to the mix of the lack of a dedicated law and lax academic administration (see for example the Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff Rules 2055 BS, Chapter 8 of Pokhara University).[10]

Ethical misconduct and its severity risk spanning all research domains and academic disciplines. Each of them requires to be monitored and regulated for their outcomes to be credible and beneficial. The Government of Nepal (GoN) regulates research activities in medical/health sciences through Nepal Health Research Council (NHRC), which has the institutional review board (IRB) to review and make sure necessary protocols and standards are developed and complied with. However, non-medical research activities are yet to be systematically regulated. This is particularly true of the research practices in the higher education system, which at times is

10. The Staff Rules are available at https://pu.edu.np/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/PU-Rules-All.pdf).

publicly cried to be on the receiving end of unethical practices (Acharya, 2016). In absence of robust and effective monitoring and regulating mechanisms, research practices and their outcomes cannot be trustworthy.

As existing knowledge suggests compliance with law and ethics promotes research behaviours that make the generation and transfer of knowledge pro-people and pro-society (Elmore & Weston, 2020). Disregarding them, on the contrary, runs the risk of research projects – and their outcomes – being harmful to those who are expected to benefit from the projects.

1.1.8 Political Interference and Leadership Incapacity

Nepal's HEIs are perceived to face political interference in their exercise of operational autonomy, which their founding acts accord. Some of such political interventions occur due to conflicting legal provisions. Others occur because of extra-legal practices of the powers that be. As an insider academic has gone on record, such practices are 'rampant', 'perennial' and 'shameless' and are particularly seen in the appointment of office bearers (Subedi, 2021).

Government appointment of key leading figures does not match the principle of autonomy. It is also against the practice established by high-end universities in the world. That the first and second-ranked officials of the university – i.e., the Education Minister and Prime Minister – are ex-officio members (as Pro-Chancellors and Chancellor) and the third, fourth and fifth-ranked officials – Vice-Chancellor, Rector and Registrar – are government appointees is a case in point of the level of political interference besetting our university systems. And, as long as this appointment process continues, universities will not be able to enjoy the academic autonomy they are supposed to for two inter-related reasons. First, political appointments may not necessarily be merit-based and academically competitive, crucial processes required to ensure competitive leadership.[11] Second, those appointed by political considerations may not have the motivation to lead the institution in the spirit of autonomy.

Political influence gets into academic processes also through professors and faculties who engage in politically-aligned associations operating within universities. Politically aligned faculties may, at best, have excuses not to focus on research and

11. For example, in 2021, faculties were offered a permanent posting en mass without having to sit for competitive examinations. Call for a competitive hiring was rejected on the ground that the posting was a political decision. Further details can be had from the link - https://news.myasianmarketplace.com/deuba-led-tribhuvan-university-meeting-decides-to-hire-teachers-without-open-competition/

academic performance given their allegiance elsewhere. At worst, they may not even have academic expertise and skills to offer students a competitive learning environment in which to engage in academic discourses, critical thinking, innovative research and other skills enhancement activities.

Student welfare councils are another medium of political influence. The council leadership is elected from among student unions that serve as sister organizations of political parties. The elected members and the unions they represent are perceived to create obstructions and interference in running universities (Rai, 2022; The Himalayan Times, 2022).

Politicized appointments of university authorities impact leadership ability. Ethical concerns risks being sidelined or dealt with in a politically coloured manner. The partisan leadership becomes prone to compromising academic neutrality in terms of grants allocation, student grading, faculty hiring and promotion, tackling academic misconduct and holding those responsible to account. Instead, they risk being forced into a situation that promotes academic degradation as well as fake research of the kind elaborated by Acharya (2074 BS).[12]

1.2 Objectives

Set against the background reviewed above, the general objective of the study is to assess the state of the art of academic research in Nepal. Its specific objectives are:

a. to explore how the higher education institutions in Nepal fare in terms of the research continuum from knowledge generation to dissemination; and

b. to explore factors – ethical, legal, procedural or otherwise – that prevent higher educational institutions from being a centre of excellence that they aspire to.

1.3 Research Questions

To meet the objectives of the research, this study sought answers to the following research questions.

a. What is the state of research, knowledge production and dissemination in Nepal's HEIs? Do they have the enabling environment they require to undertake these functions?

12. Acharya's report is available at (cijnepal.org.np/प्राज्ञिक-पतनको-नमूना-बौ/).

b. How do HEIs fare in terms of the centre of excellence, which they are committed to in principle?

c. Do HEIs enjoy the academic freedom and autonomy they require to deliver on their founding objectives?

1.4 Limitations

While a number of secondary references have been used as the source of information to frame an argument, TU's documents and materials – or the absence thereof – have largely been taken as the main source of primary data. As the oldest and largest academic institution in Nepal, what TU has to offer – or lacks – presents a case that the authors think can be generalized.

Another key source of information has been the University Grants Commission, the only organisation of its kind mandated to create an enabling environment for academic research. Most of the information used is extracted from the materials available online on official webpages of concerned agencies. Trusting that they are officially cleared and verified, no further efforts were made to validate and cross-triangulate them.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

This study uses institutional theory as a theoretical guide. It helps explore and explain how a particular rule, norm and behaviour – academic integrity, in this case – becomes established as an authoritative institutional behaviour and even culture over space and time (de Jonge, 2015). Institutions create rules and procedures to operate them and develop a particular behavioural pattern accordingly. In the processes, hindering factors and practices are discarded and enabling factors, both normative and behavioural, are promoted.

As argued by Scott et. al. (2005), institutional theory "is broadly positioned to help us confront important and enduring questions, including the … relation between structure and behaviour, … the relation between ideas and interests, and the tensions between freedom and order" (p. 478). This lens enables researchers to see what regulative, normative and procedural order has been created and practised within an institution to create an enabling environment for particular conduct, and if not what constrains the institution from doing so. Since research is an important part of HEIs, exploring whether research promoting norms and practices exist in their workings can best be studied using the lens of institutional theory, hence the application of it in this study.

Most of the studies on academic dishonesty relate to criminology. As DiPietro (2010) argues the use of a methodological framework derived from criminology literature – which though depicts students as delinquents – contributes to the study of issues related to academic dishonesty. Studies by Ali et al. (2021), Cabral-Cardoso (2004), Heriyati and Ekasari (2020), Nguyen and Biderman (2008) have also demonstrated that the study of unethical behaviour of students sheds light on other dishonest practices.

How academic institutions are organized and how they operate have a direct bearing on honesty and integrity within their workings. Promoting respect for integrity is one of the core responsibilities of the institutions concerned. To do so they should identify how academic dishonesty gets promoted – or defies efforts to regulate and control it – and put measures in place to address underlying issues. Investing in technology, resources and other initiatives does not reduce academic dishonesty

unless the root cause of it is identified and dealt with (DiPietro, 2010). Academic institutions should be alert that dishonesty not only degrades the value of a university degree, but it also casts doubt on the efficacy of the education system as a whole (Gallant & Drinan, 2008).

Effective policies and fair procedures play a key role in laying the normative foundation for academic honesty. The involvement of faculty becomes crucial to promote it at the functional and behavioural levels (Kibler, 1994). Institutions require to pay sharper attention to the behavioural aspect of the faculty, argue Gallant and Drinan (2006), for academic honesty to become an integral part of an institution's academic life.

Academic honesty thrives on peer collaboration, one in which peer reporting – the whistleblowing of fellow colleagues engaged in an unethical practice to a designated authority – becomes normal. Such reporting occurs as part of an academic duty of anyone when a peer is found – or suspected – to be part of dishonest practices. However, such reporting does not occur if there is no enabling environment. Since there are no incentives involved in such reporting, peers may think that reporting on their peers is not their business and would not do so unless it directly harms their interest (Kish-Gephart et al., 2009; McCabe et al., 2001). Peer reporting to senior management may also have consequences, direct and indirect (Trevino & Victor, 1992) if institutional leadership is not fully committed to ethical research. In a cost, collegiality and friendship may be lost. There may be other costs as well.

A weak leadership gives rise to institutional anarchy in which the line between wrong and right and moral and immoral gets blurred and fuzzy. Some elements, including students and faculties, may take advantage of this void. Some do so unaware of what constitutes right and wrong, and others to sneak through with their malicious intent.

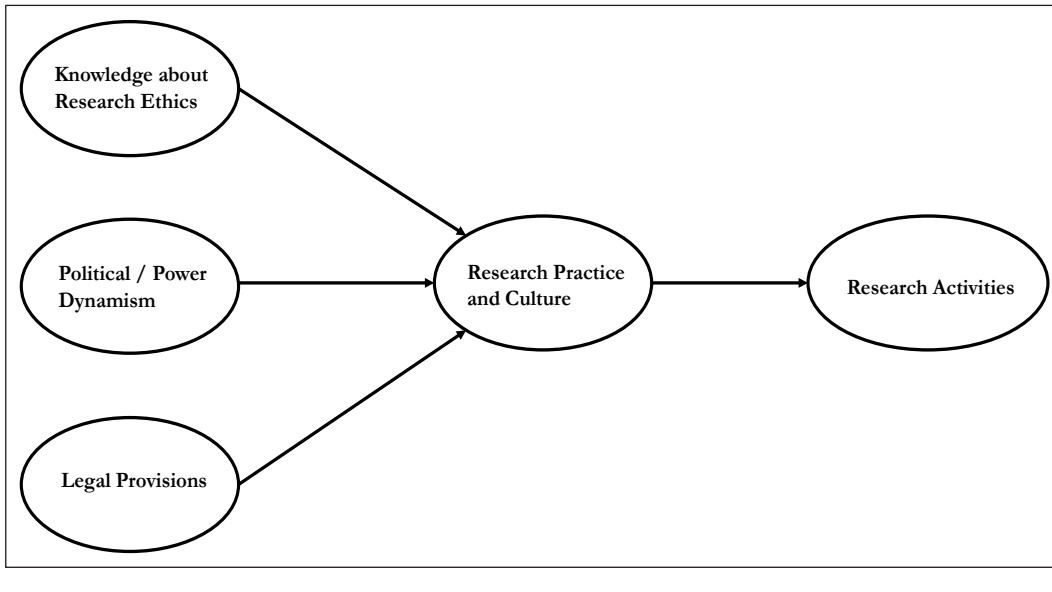
The establishment of an honour code is a way to deal with dishonesty while fostering a system of peer reporting and other good practices (McCabe et al., 2001). However, as Gallant and Drinan (2008) claim, it is not easy to establish and sustain the honour code in the absence of broad, institution-wide moral and legal frameworks and the institutional commitment to abiding by it. Honour codes serve as a mechanism to control academic misconduct by exposing it, through peer reporting, for example, and by helping institutions devise rules and procedures to find a sustainable solution to the issue at stake (DiPietro, 2010). For all this to happen, everyone in the institution, from the top leadership to those at the bottom of the institutional

hierarchy, should be morally committed to making honesty and integrity a part of institutional culture.

Normative frameworks and honour codes do not work in silos and deliver on their own. Institutions should have business plans, processes and activities to enforce them. Provisions of training and follow-ups, monitoring and supervision, and the practice of reward and punishment should be integral to the business plan. Human resources should be planned, attuned, orinted and employed accordingly.

As the foregoing discussion suggests, academic misconduct is not just an act of erosion of moral behaviour or the violation of a norm within an institution. It is rather the manifestation of organisational practices shaped by the interplay of knowledge (or a lack thereof) ethics and integrity, political influence and power dynamism, quality of norms and legal frameworks and the ability of the leadership to stay the right course. Dealing with these interconnected issues requires the highest level of moral rectitude, sound normative order and transformative leadership, as depicted in the conceptual framework (Figure 1), which the authors have developed based on the theoretical framework above for the study.

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework of the Study



CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the research methodology applied in the research, including the sources of data, the tool used to collect the data, code variables and the meanings they signify and the path model developed for the analysis of the data and the reliability of the model. An elaborate discussion is also presented on the demography, educational status and other relevant attributes of the respondents engaged in the study.

3.1 Application of PLS-SEM

This study has used the Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), one of the most powerful and flexible regression models capable of handling complex models. It has been widely used recently in qualitative research because of its ability to explore complex relations between observed variables and latent variables with prediction capabilities without imposing distributional assumptions.

The Structural Equation Model (SEM) primarily focuses on testing causal relationships and processes of observed and unobserved variables based on an established theory. This model is basically based on the covariance between observed parameters and relies on the minimization of differences between covariance matrices (Kock, 2015). The model estimates parameters on the basis of common variance (Hair et al., 2019). Several extensions of the SEM model have been developed and applied in various scientific domains. However, there are concerns that the SEM model risks formulating a wrong theory because of its tendency to accept the model without establishing external mathematical and theoretical validation (Tarka, 2018). Unlike SEM, the PLS-SEM is more reliable as it uses the total variance to estimate the parameters[13] and also the partial least square approach to estimate the parameters involved in SEM (Kock, 2015).

Whether the PLS-SEM approach had a common method bias caused by the information extraction approach employed in the study was checked against the

13. Variance of any variable is composed of common variance and unique variance. Common variance is the amount of variance that is shared among a set of items. Items that are highly correlated will share a lot of variances. Unique variance is any portion of variance that's not common. There are two types: specific variance (it is variance that is specific to a particular item) and the Error variance (comes from errors of measurement and basically anything unexplained by common or specific variance).

variation inflation factor (VIF) values. The check found the VIF values to be below the recommended levels for all indicators and, thus, confirmed that the PLS-SEM was free from the common method bias, which, according to Kock (2015), might arise because of the respondents' perception of implicit desirability while answering the questionnaire, which could cause the indicators to share common variation. Such a scenario did not emerge in the analysis of the responses.

3.2 Sources of Data

This study has primary as well as secondary data. The primary data was collected from two sources: two public policy dialogues and a survey. One of the policy dialogues, organized on December 29, 2021, under PRI's public policy dialogue procedure and criteria, engaged more than 100 scholars, including Vice-Chancellors, Deans, heads of departments of universities and research scholars.[14] In the dialogue, the status of the research codes of conduct and their implementation as well as the research outcomes of research institutions were discussed. The sustainability model adopted by Nepali journals and the state of public debate on the issues raised in journal articles by Nepali scholars were also reviewed. The other public policy dialogue was with non-government organizations involved in research. Over 60 representatives of as many organizations participated in the dialogue which centred on challenges faced by research institutions in the non-government sector.[15]

In both dialogues, the discussants flagged issues around academic integrity, the research environment of Nepal and the quality of knowledge being developed.

In addition, the study prepared and distributed a survey questionnaire among 2000 plus experts, policy advocates, policymakers, academics and research stakeholders listed in PRI's roster of experts through their e-mails asking for their ideas and responses (See Annex). The survey link was also circulated through social media. A total of 234 experts responded to the survey, which has been used as the source of primary information (See Tables 2, 3 and 4).

The authors collected secondary data from different sources. One of them included students' theses, which were collected from university libraries, digital as well as physical, using a random sampling approach. Other sources were founding Acts of universities and UGC reports.

14. Brief report of the public policy dialogue is available here- https://pri.gov.np/ne/events/नेपालको-उच्च-शिक्षामा-अ/

15. Brief report of the public policy dialogue is available here- https://pri.gov.np/ne/events/अनुसन्धानमा-आचार-संहिता/

3.2.1 Descriptive Statistics of the Respondents of the Study

A survey questionnaire distributed online among potential respondents was designed in such a way that would collect their responses and feedback without seeking their personal information, such as their names and addresses. The respondents who participated in the survey were from the demographic, academic and professional categories presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Demographic, Academic and Professional Background of Respondents

Demographic Information	Nos.
Gender	
Male	202
Female	30
Prefer not to be identified	2
Participants' Age Group by Years	
31 to 40	108
41 to 50	56
Below 30	21
51 to 60	38
60 above	11
Highest Academic Degree of Participants	
Doctoral degree	88
MPhil	35
Master's degree	98
Bachelor's degree	13
Academic Discipline of the Participants	
Life Science (Botany, Zoology etc)	17
Social Science (Economics, Sociology, etc)	119
Applied Science (Engineering, Medicine, Agriculture etc)	57
Physical Science (Physics, Chemistry etc)	27
Formal Sciences (Mathematics, Statistics etc.)	10
Respondents' Current Profession	
Government jobs	40
Part time (Adjunct) professorship	19

Demographic Information	Nos.
Researcher	75
Service sector	19
Student (Master or PhD)	30
Tenure track professorship	51

In terms of demography, 46 per cent of the respondents were between 31 and 40 years old, 24 per cent between 41 and 50 and 16 per cent of 51- 60 age groups (See Table 2). This demographic information suggests those in the most active age group are also active in academia. In terms of the current job portfolio, 32 per cent of the respondents were researchers, 22 per cent were tenure track professors, 17 per cent were adjunct professors and 13 per cent of the respondents identified themselves as students (Table 3). By profession, the majority of the respondents were active in academia. Most of the respondents were found to have been familiar with the Nepali higher education environment though their alma maters were not necessarily Nepali.

Table 3 Respondents' Age Group and Profession

Age Group (in Years)	Government jobs	Part-time (Adjunct) professorship	Researcher	Service sector	Student (Master or PhD)	Tenure track professorship	Total
Below 30	2.56%	0.85%	3.42%	0.00%	2.14%	0.00%	8.97%
31 to 40	8.12%	3.85%	16.24%	3.85%	8.12%	5.98%	46.15%
41 to 50	3.85%	1.71%	5.98%	2.14%	2.14%	8.12%	23.93%
51 to 60	2.56%	1.28%	3.85%	1.71%	0.43%	6.41%	16.24%
60 above	0.00%	0.43%	2.56%	0.43%	0.00%	1.28%	4.70%
Total	17%	8%	32%	8%	13%	22%	100%

Table 4 presents the highest degree received by the respondents and the country of their alma mater. As the data shows, 62 per cent of the respondents received their highest degree from Nepali universities, some 26 per cent from universities outside of South Asia and the rest from South Asia. Table 4 also shows that 37.6 per cent of the respondents had obtained doctoral degrees, a large majority of them from universities outside of South Asia. Some 42 per cent of them had a Master's degree primarily from Nepali HEIs.

Table 4 Highest Degree Received by Participants and their Alma Mater

Academic Qualification	Universities from Nepal	Universities from India	South Asian Universities other than Nepal and India	Other (Other than South Asian Universities)	Total
Bachelor's degree	4.7%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	5.6%
Doctoral degree	8.1%	4.7%	3.8%	20.9%	37.6%
Master's degree	36.3%	1.7%	0.4%	3.4%	41.9%
MPhil	12.8%	0.9%	0.0%	1.3%	15.0%
Total	62.0%	8.1%	4.3%	25.6%	100.0%

While a few of the respondents had a good number of published journal articles, almost 55 respondents indicated having no experience of publication in journals (Figure 2). Fewer had the experience in book publishing both from Nepali publishers (Figure 3) and from foreign publishers (Figure 4).

Figure 2 Number of Articles Published in Peer Reviewed Journals by the Respondents

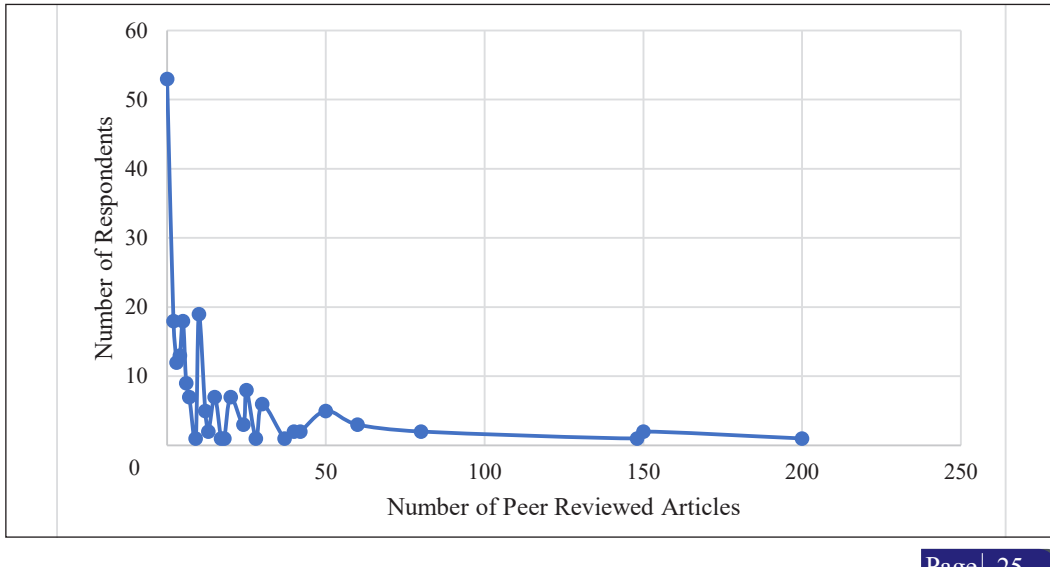


Figure 3 Number of Books Published by Respondents from Nepalese Publishers

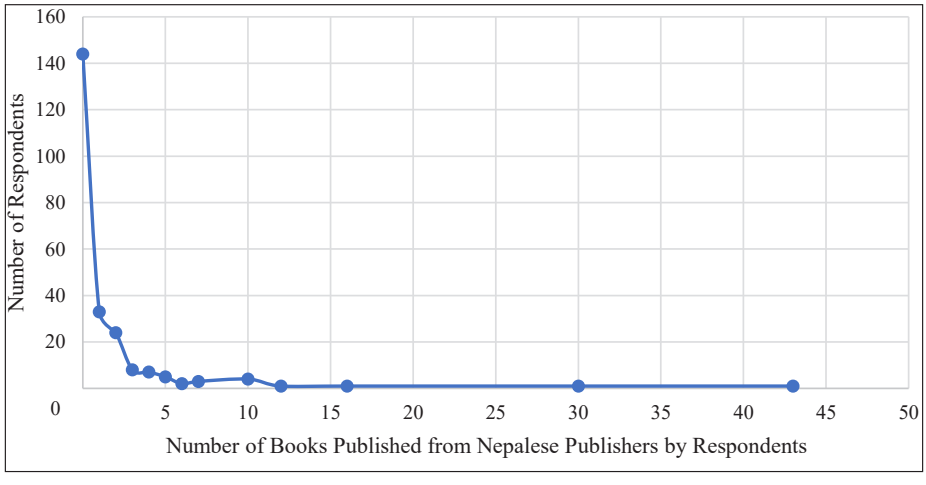


Figure 4 Number of Books Published by the Respondents from Foreign Publishers

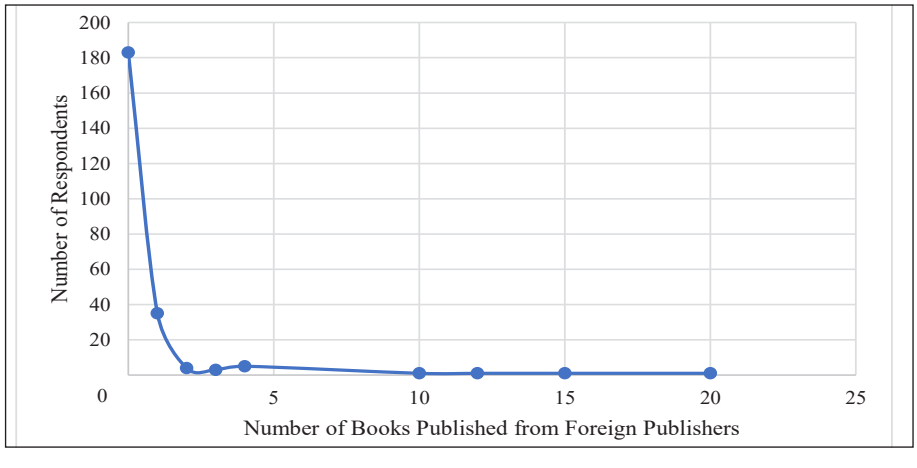


Figure 5 presents a self-disclosed number of articles published in peer-reviewed journals by respondents having doctoral degrees and Master's or equivalent (others were not considered). Almost all those with a doctoral degree had articles published in peer-reviewed journals. Some respondents with Master's degrees or equivalent were also found to have a good number of articles published in peer-reviewed journals. As the information suggests, the majority of the respondents had a good experience in publishing research work in peer-reviewed journals, and more articles by those having a PhD degree than those holding a Master's one, to see in a comparative light.

Figure 5 Comparison of the Number of Peer Reviewed Articles by Respondents having Master's and PhD Degrees

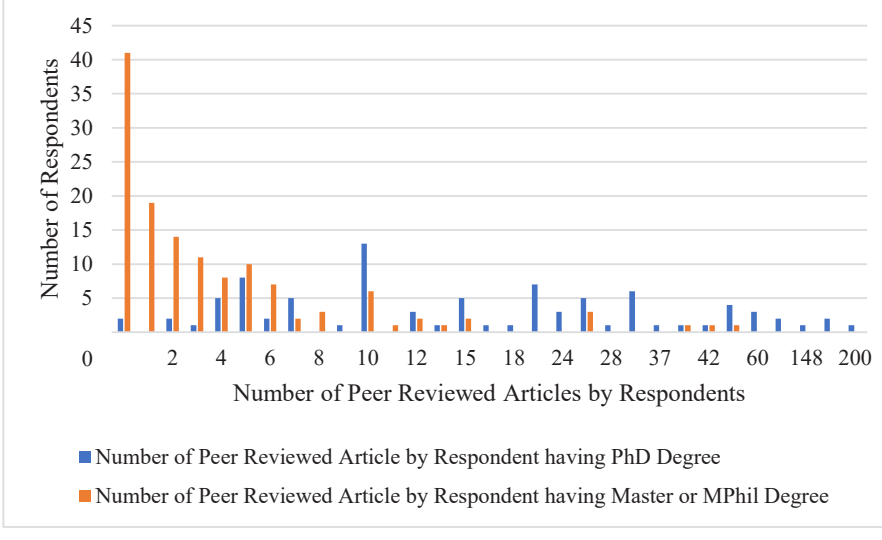


Figure 6 and Figure 7 show that very few respondents have published books, even fewer from foreign publishers.

Figure 6 Comparison of the Number of Books from Nepalese Publishers by Respondents' Level of Degrees

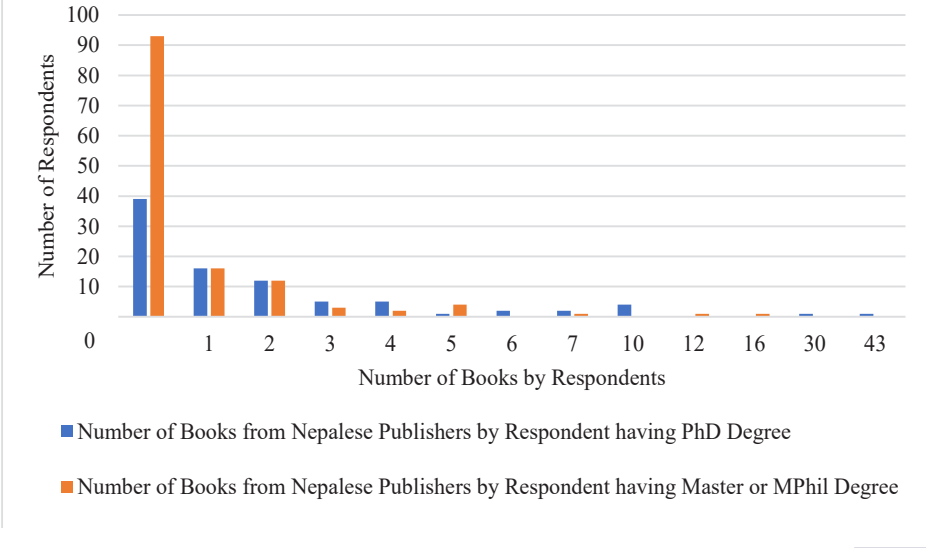
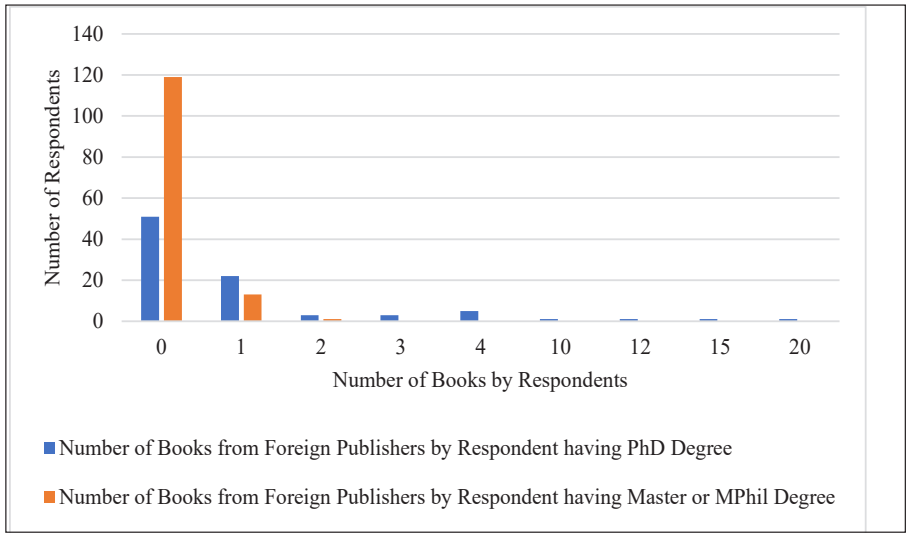
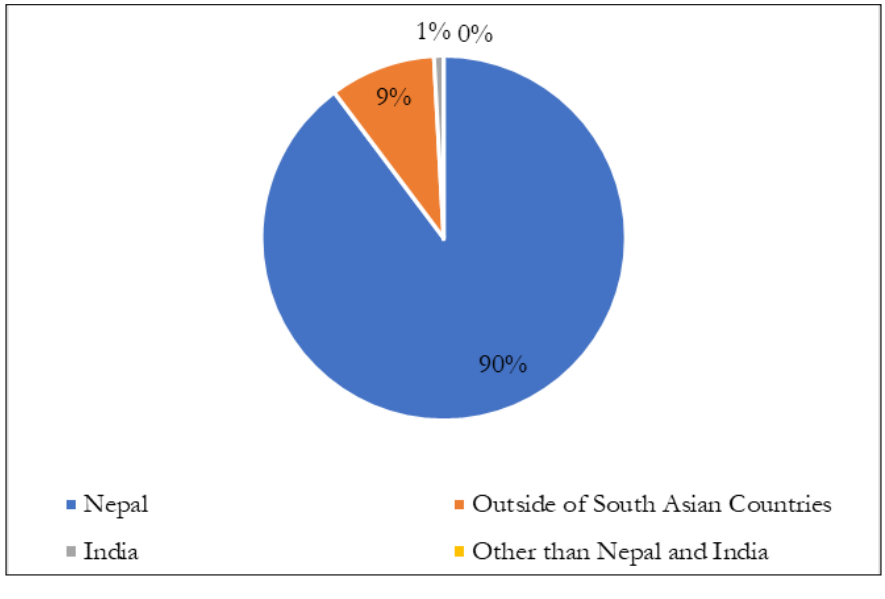


Figure 7 Comparison of the Number of Books from Foreign Publishers by Respondents' Level of Education Degrees



In terms of the place of work, most of the respondents (90%) were working from – or in Nepal – while the remaining nine per cent were working in places other than Nepal and India (see Figure 8).

Figure 8 Respondents' Current Working Location



3.2.2 Constructs and Indicators

Following the methodological framework discussed in Chapter Two, 'research activities' are captured by Dis14, Dis16, Dis17 and Dis18 indicator variables; 'knowledge about research ethics' of researchers (students, faculties, etc.) is captured by Knol2, Knol3 and Knol6; 'political' and or 'power' dynamism that affects research environment is captured by Pol22, Pol26, Pol28; 'legal provisions' about research activities are captured by Leg12, Leg27, Leg29; and 'research practice and culture' is captured by Prac1, Prac11 and Prac8. Table 5, explains what each of the measuring variables include.

Table 5 Codes of Variables and their Description

Variable Code		Description
Research Activites	Dis14	Students' tendency to change, update and modify others' original works, and make them part of their dissertations
	Dis16	The practice of scholars and students to publish journal articles based on others' theses.
	Dis17	The practice of data fabrication and manipulation
	Dis18	The practice of manipulating the results of research works to make interpretations interesting or to align them with established theories
Knowledge about Research Ethics	Knol2	Discussion on academic ethics in Nepali HEIs
	Knol3	Courses on research ethics and academic integrity offered in Nepali HEIs
	Knol6	Quality and rigour enhancement of research through proper guidance of supervisors
Legal Provisions	Leg12	Faculties' legal authority to deal with academic dishonesty such as plagiarism
	Leg27	Penalizing practices of HEIs such as retracting research articles, seizing degrees for serious academic misconduct
	Leg29	Inability on part of HEIs to ban those involved in serious ethical misconduct due to the lack of legal provisions

Variable Code		Description
'Political' and or 'Power' Dynamism	Pol22	HEIs disregard plagiarism committed by their faculties
	Pol26	Perceived personal benefits and risks of engaging in academic dishonesty
	Pol28	Effect on ethical research environment of undue political interferences in academic institutions
Research Practice and Culture	Prac1	Degree of the perceived gravity of research ethics violations
	Prac11	Role of strict academic integrity policies in shaping certain outlooks among students which make them habituated to continue with academic dishonesty
	Prac8	Continuous practice of dishonesty as a culture

3.3 Correlation between Indicators

Whether the indicator variables correlate with each other is shown in Table 6. Reading through correlation values of indicator variables suggests that no individual variables are seriously correlated. Two variables that measure dishonest behaviour in Nepali academia include data fabrication (generation of data without following appropriate procedures for research experiments, including surveys, among others) and manipulation of results to meet the theoretical framework. This survey has tried to capture respondents' perceptions based on the incident they have experienced and news reports on academic integrity. The survey questionnaire contained distinct statements to gauge the perceptions of the respondents and the level of severity of the issue in question.

Table 6 Correlation between Indicators

	Dis14	Dis16	Dis17	Dis18	Knol2	Knol3	Knol6	Leg12	Leg27	Leg29	Pol22	Pol26	Pol28	Prac1	Prac11	Prac8
Dis14	1															
Dis16	0.484	1														
Dis17	0.407	0.421	1													
Dis18	0.357	0.437	0.657	1												
Knol2	0.252	0.235	0.316	0.303	1											
Knol3	0.185	0.148	0.225	0.204	0.388	1										
Knol6	0.211	0.253	0.291	0.25	0.377	0.297	1									
Leg12	0.186	0.154	0.291	0.166	0.156	0.038	0.22	1								
Leg27	0.249	0.174	0.156	0.122	0.235	0.031	0.125	0.236	1							
Leg29	0.212	0.154	0.214	0.264	0.221	0.202	0.094	0.322	0.196	1						
Pol22	0.207	0.202	0.342	0.392	0.282	0.172	0.278	0.312	0.376	0.329	1					
Pol26	0.311	0.293	0.335	0.351	0.31	0.272	0.303	0.3	0.416	0.313	0.484	1				
Pol28	0.185	0.135	0.176	0.215	0.205	0.181	0.186	0.189	0.248	0.359	0.321	0.358	1			
Prac1	0.438	0.333	0.413	0.373	0.506	0.459	0.336	0.164	0.278	0.258	0.369	0.376	0.2	1		
Prac11	0.254	0.23	0.288	0.172	0.18	0.194	0.239	0.406	0.181	0.222	0.249	0.269	0.23	0.255	1	
Prac8	0.293	0.381	0.435	0.361	0.24	0.301	0.382	0.298	0.182	0.204	0.333	0.361	0.127	0.349	0.384	1

Respondents' perceptions of the statements contained in the survey questionnaire (See Table 7) are negatively skewed. The perception on academic integrity statements shows that respondents with Master's degrees have experienced a higher degree of academic dishonesty than those with PhD degrees.

3.3.1 Respondents' Perception Summary

Table 7 Descriptive Summary of Respondent Perception

Codes of variable	Overall Sample				Respondents with PhD Degrees				Respondents with Master's Degrees			
	Mean	Standard deviation	Excess kurtosis	Skewness	Mean	Standard deviation	Excess kurtosis	Skewness	Mean	Standard deviation	Excess kurtosis	Skewness
Dis14	4.013	0.85	0.737	-0.824	3.92	0.882	0.559	-0.752	4.068	0.825	0.928	-0.869
Dis16	3.585	0.813	0.515	-0.734	3.489	0.866	-0.148	-0.499	3.644	0.774	1.196	-0.894
Dis17	3.803	0.835	1.299	-0.904	3.648	0.867	0.902	-0.841	3.897	0.8	1.717	-0.946
Dis18	3.675	0.788	0.951	-0.724	3.489	0.826	0.702	-0.641	3.788	0.742	1.219	-0.751
Knol2	3.906	0.983	1.228	-1.17	3.898	0.977	0.934	-1.128	3.911	0.986	1.48	-1.207
Knol3	3.594	1.122	-0.833	-0.502	3.659	1.086	-0.575	-0.635	3.555	1.141	-0.942	-0.43
Knol6	3.812	0.991	-0.067	-0.782	3.807	0.952	0.158	-0.807	3.815	1.014	-0.151	-0.777
Leg12	3.795	0.961	0.568	-0.886	3.818	1.029	0.842	-1.028	3.781	0.918	0.348	-0.784
Leg27	4.162	0.901	1.204	-1.139	4.239	0.879	1.434	-1.207	4.116	0.91	1.165	-1.114
Leg29	3.85	0.938	0.444	-0.824	3.864	0.944	0.097	-0.712	3.842	0.934	0.709	-0.902
Pol22	4.026	0.872	1.512	-1.063	4.045	0.838	2.771	-1.265	4.014	0.891	0.996	-0.965
Pol26	3.919	0.846	1.248	-0.953	3.875	0.963	0.772	-0.986	3.945	0.766	1.409	-0.832
Pol28	4.346	0.84	2.824	-1.555	4.364	0.907	2.412	-1.631	4.336	0.796	3.286	-1.504
Prac1	3.85	0.969	0.384	-0.915	3.886	0.885	0.945	-0.975	3.829	1.016	0.139	-0.877
Prac11	3.88	0.879	1.236	-1.019	3.898	0.853	2.067	-1.14	3.87	0.893	0.893	-0.963
Prac8	3.628	1.047	0.09	-0.759	3.511	1.118	-0.231	-0.674	3.699	0.996	0.324	-0.793

3.4 Reliability of the Model

The reliability of the estimation model was tested using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR). Latent constructs were built based on the perception indicators. Factor loadings of indicators corresponding to latent constructs were checked and found to be more than 0.600, confirming that the observed variables explain the constructs presented in the model. All the CR and Average Value Extracted (AVE) measures of the latent constructs are either higher or close to recommended values for overall and grouped samples, confirming the convergent validity of the model (see Table 8). The multi-collinearity of the indicators was checked through the variance inflation factor (VIF) and found to be lesser than the recommended value. Similarly, the factor loading of individual indicators to the corresponding latent construct was found to be greater than that of the cross-loading to other latent constructs (see Table 9). The Fornell & Larcker and the Heterotrait-Monotrait Method (HTMT) values were also assessed and found to be under the values recommended by Henseler et al., (2015) (except for a few values) confirming the discriminant validity required for the model validity for the Structural Equation Model(SEM). According to Henseler et al. (2015), higher than the recommended values of HTMT does not present a discriminant validity issue for the value of inter-construct correlation having 0.7 or less (see Table 12).

3.5 Path Model Analysis

The path model for the conceptual model (Figure 9) shows that 'knowledge constructs', 'political constructs' and 'legal constructs' contribute 46 per cent to the construct of practice and culture. Knowledge, defined particularly by the indicators signifying discussion on academic integrity, courses regarding academic integrity and guidance and supervision, has a positive contribution to practice and culture. The model signifies that an appropriate level of understanding of academic integrity and the possible consequences of academic misconduct lead to an institutional culture which prizes academic integrity and discourages ethical misconduct as a moral aberration.

Respondent's perception of dishonest behaviour is linked with the individual's knowledge (the total effect of knowledge on dishonest behaviour, knowledge->dishonest practice for overall sample; see Table 10). The estimation result shows that respondents' perceived knowledge also strengthens good practice and builds a culture that further reinforces good practice (See Table 10 knowledge-> practice / culture).

Moreover, the mediation analysis measures the effect of latent variables in presence of some other latent variables. Sound research culture and good practice depend on individuals' knowledge and experience involving good practices (knowledge ->practice/culture->dishonest: See Table 11).

The result reveals that legal constructs defined by measured indicators contribute to dishonest practice (see Table 10 legal->dishonest practice and legal-> practice and culture for overall sample). The mediation effect of legal provision on dishonest activities (see Table 11 for the overall sample) also shows that weak legal provision affects academic culture and also supports the shaping of academically dishonest behaviours in the institution.

Political constructs significantly contribute (political -> dishonesty and political-> practice and culture for overall sample) to research practice, culture and also dishonest behaviour. The mediation effect of political constructs also shows (see Table 11: Political -> Practice/Culture -> dishonest for overall sample) that political influence (measured through associated indicators) affects dishonest behaviour through research practice and cultural construct.

Practice and culture to dishonest construct measured through (practice and culture -> dishonest for an overall sample) indicators are also found to be significant.

The above results confirm that knowledge of ethical concerns, legal provisions and practices, and political influence have a direct bearing on academic dishonesty. Sometimes, these elements serve as a trigger to dishonesty. At other times, they appear as the consequence.

Figure 9 Path Model for the Conceptual Model

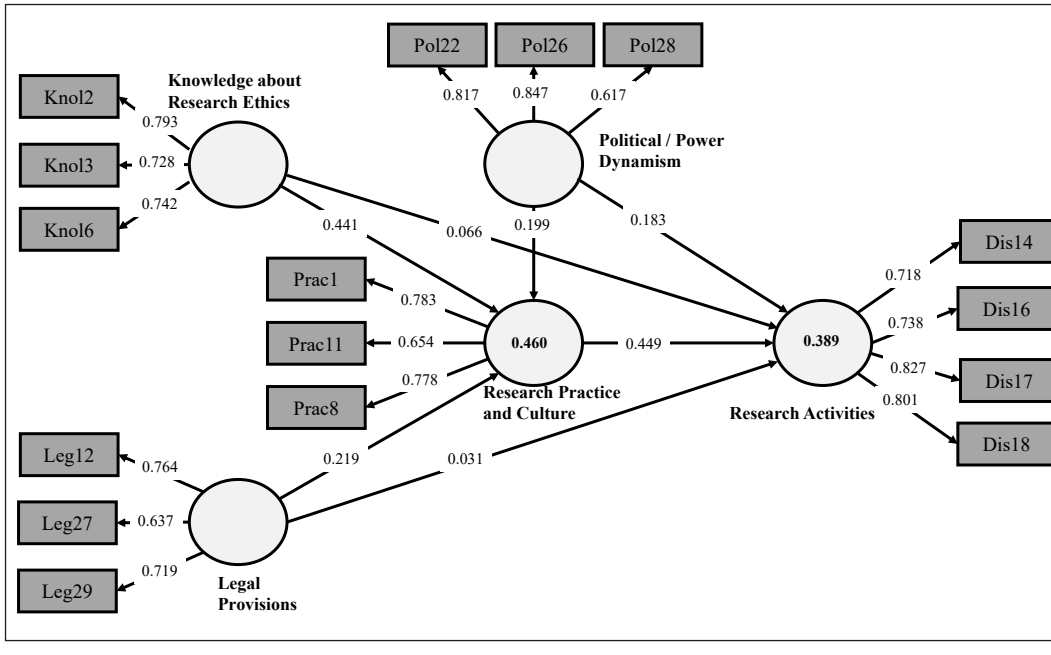


Table 8 Item Loading, Reliability and Validity

Variable Codes	Overall Sample					Sample (Respondents with Doctoral Degree)					Sample (Respondents with up to Master's Degree)				
	λ	Alpha	CR	AVE	VIF	λ	Alpha	CR	AVE	VIF	Λ	Alpha	CR	AVE	VIF
Dis14	0.718	0.773	0.855	0.596	1.401	0.674	0.772	0.853	0.594	1.419	0.728	0.766	0.851	0.589	1.383
Dis16	0.738				1.477	0.764				1.608	0.719				1.384
Dis17	0.827				1.896	0.832				1.802	0.815				1.909
Dis18	0.801				1.864	0.804				1.744	0.728				1.907
Knol2	0.793	0.622	0.799	0.57	1.291	0.784	0.689	0.827	0.615	1.426	0.805	0.58	0.779	0.542	1.236
Knol3	0.728				1.215	0.832				1.387	0.644				1.15
Knol6	0.742				1.203	0.734				1.26	0.751				1.177
Leg12	0.764	0.501	0.75	0.502	1.155	0.834	0.498	0.741	0.504	1.211	0.723	0.502	0.75	0.501	1.142
Leg27	0.637				1.077	0.447				1.042	0.731				1.111
Leg29	0.719				1.135	0.785				1.218	0.668				1.097
Pol22	0.817	0.655	0.808	0.589	1.349	0.767	0.597	0.769	0.54	1.277	0.838	0.698	0.831	0.623	1.423
Pol26	0.847				1.389	0.893				1.295	0.832				1.509
Pol28	0.617				1.186	0.485				1.117	0.689				1.259
Prac1	0.783	0.596	0.784	0.549	1.162	0.812	0.549	0.755	0.514	1.138	0.769	0.627	0.8	0.571	1.184
Prac11	0.654				1.196	0.539				1.133	0.71				1.252
Prac8	0.778				1.274	0.769				1.201	0.787				1.351

Table 9 Discriminant Validity – Cross Loadings

Variable Codes	Overall Sample					Sample (Respondents with Doctoral Degree)					Sample (Respondents with up to Master's Degree)				
	Dishonest	Knowledge	Legal	Political	Practice/ Culture	Dishonest	Knowledge	Legal	Political	Practice/ Culture	Dishonest	Knowledge	Legal	Political	Practice/ Culture
Dis14	0.718	0.288	0.3	0.311	0.456	0.674	0.234	0.259	0.216	0.401	0.728	0.339	0.337	0.391	0.497
Dis16	0.738	0.283	0.225	0.285	0.432	0.764	0.178	0.16	0.282	0.386	0.719	0.366	0.271	0.296	0.48
Dis17	0.827	0.37	0.316	0.385	0.519	0.832	0.376	0.314	0.381	0.494	0.815	0.393	0.341	0.401	0.548
Dis18	0.801	0.336	0.261	0.429	0.425	0.804	0.335	0.246	0.535	0.36	0.802	0.366	0.304	0.367	0.487
Knol2	0.36	0.793	0.284	0.352	0.443	0.253	0.784	0.263	0.367	0.47	0.44	0.805	0.308	0.36	0.432
Knol3	0.249	0.728	0.128	0.273	0.45	0.344	0.832	0.234	0.417	0.608	0.211	0.644	0.07	0.195	0.37
Knol6	0.327	0.742	0.21	0.341	0.437	0.273	0.734	0.21	0.358	0.478	0.37	0.751	0.214	0.339	0.427
Leg12	0.263	0.186	0.764	0.357	0.363	0.251	0.275	0.834	0.357	0.4	0.284	0.127	0.723	0.343	0.332
Leg27	0.225	0.177	0.637	0.463	0.294	0.137	0.085	0.447	0.391	0.161	0.302	0.24	0.731	0.512	0.373
Leg29	0.274	0.228	0.719	0.419	0.308	0.275	0.23	0.785	0.354	0.292	0.282	0.238	0.668	0.455	0.307
Pol22	0.375	0.326	0.474	0.817	0.436	0.339	0.394	0.352	0.767	0.278	0.417	0.289	0.542	0.838	0.529
Pol26	0.418	0.391	0.477	0.847	0.459	0.461	0.451	0.414	0.893	0.47	0.389	0.362	0.526	0.832	0.453
Pol28	0.231	0.253	0.371	0.617	0.244	0.148	0.135	0.374	0.485	0.118	0.311	0.354	0.376	0.689	0.322
Prac1	0.505	0.575	0.323	0.426	0.783	0.462	0.662	0.265	0.37	0.812	0.552	0.535	0.359	0.46	0.769
Prac11	0.307	0.27	0.39	0.322	0.654	0.095	0.226	0.443	0.243	0.539	0.451	0.308	0.375	0.369	0.71
Prac8	0.478	0.406	0.326	0.381	0.778	0.47	0.438	0.314	0.334	0.769	0.476	0.391	0.354	0.439	0.787

Table 10 Total Effects of Path Model

Effects	Overall				Doctoral				Master			
	OS	SM	Std	T-stat(O)	OS	SM	Std	T-stat(O)	OS	SM	Std	T-stat(O)
Knowledge -> Dishonest	0.332	0.334	0.076	4.398	0.181	0.154	0.137	1.316	0.332	0.334	0.076	4.398
Knowledge -> Practice/ Culture	0.383	0.388	0.070	5.487	0.574	0.576	0.084	6.809	0.383	0.388	0.070	5.487
Legal -> Dishonest	0.171	0.171	0.083	2.051	0.103	0.117	0.131	0.790	0.171	0.171	0.083	2.051
Legal -> Practice/ Culture	0.193	0.193	0.089	2.175	0.224	0.222	0.091	2.448	0.193	0.193	0.089	2.175
Political -> Dishonest	0.232	0.228	0.081	2.850	0.334	0.353	0.162	2.064	0.232	0.228	0.081	2.850
Political -> Practice/ Culture	0.284	0.287	0.081	3.504	0.058	0.064	0.086	0.673	0.284	0.287	0.081	3.504
Practice/ Culture -> Dishonest	0.485	0.485	0.095	5.128	0.441	0.423	0.139	3.177	0.485	0.485	0.095	5.128

OS: Original Sample, SM: Sample Mean, T-Stat (O): T-Stat of Original Sample, Std: Standard error

Table 11 Mediation Analysis of Path Model

Mediation	Overall Sample				Doctoral Degree				Master Degree			
	OS	SM	Std	T-stat(O)	OS	SM	Std	T-stat(O)	OS	SM	Std	T-stat(O)
Legal -> Practice/ Culture -> Dishonest	0.098	0.101	0.032	3.040	0.099	0.092	0.048	2.072	0.094	0.093	0.047	2.005
Knowledge -> Practice/ Culture -> Dishonest	0.198	0.200	0.045	4.378	0.253	0.246	0.096	2.644	0.186	0.189	0.053	3.522
Political -> Practice/ Culture -> Dishonest	0.089	0.091	0.030	3.011	0.025	0.027	0.038	0.665	0.138	0.139	0.049	2.791

OS: Original Sample, SM: Sample Mean, T-Stat (O): T-Stat of Original Sample, Std: Standard error

Table 12 Discriminant Validity Using the Criterion by Fornell & Larcker and Heterotrait- Monotrait Method (HTMT)

Level	Indicators	Dishonest	Knowledge	Legal	Political	Practice/Culture
Overall	Dishonest	0.772	0.593	0.574	0.62	0.85
	Knowledge	0.416	0.755	0.493	0.657	0.923
	Legal	0.359	0.278	0.709	1.012	0.847
	Political	0.459	0.428	0.576	0.767	0.782
	Practice/Culture	0.595	0.587	0.456	0.513	0.741
Respondents with Doctoral Degree	Dishonest	0.771	0.494	0.505	0.603	0.73
	Knowledge	0.374	0.784	0.482	0.678	0.977
	Legal	0.321	0.299	0.71	0.976	0.836
	Political	0.473	0.487	0.49	0.735	0.7
	Practice/Culture	0.532	0.669	0.424	0.447	0.717
Respondents with Master's Degree	Dishonest	0.767	0.693	0.658	0.643	0.938
	Knowledge	0.478	0.736	0.518	0.648	0.899
	Legal	0.41	0.286	0.708	1.026	0.851
	Political	0.476	0.416	0.619	0.789	0.825
	Practice/Culture	0.657	0.557	0.478	0.563	0.756

Note: The diagonal elements are square roots of the average variance extracted (AVE). The lower diagonal elements of the matrix are correlations between latent variables and upper diagonal elements and HeteroTrait-MonoTrait (HTMT) values.

CHAPTER FOUR
DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the main findings of the study engaging the elements that underlie the research continuum from knowledge generation to dissemination, as well as the factors that HEIs require to evolve into a centre of excellence. It also reviews research and publication practices that exist within HEIs and other relevent institution.

4.1 Awareness of Research Ethics

The result shows the respondent's perception of knowledge on academic integrity directly contributes to building ethical practice and sound academic culture. Offering courses on research integrity among students, researchers and faculties increase awareness and, as a consequence, decreases academic misconduct, as a survey respondent underlines:

> Research culture and behaviour should be rooted in the undergraduate level of students in the education sector. Preparation of project reports and term papers are the major research tasks in which students get the opportunity to learn about the research process and ethical issues. Institutions and faculties have the responsibility to orient students and researchers to the basics of academic ethics and keep them aware of available technological and other apparatuses that contribute to fostering a plagiarism-free ethical research environment. Symposiums, discussions and debates should be conducted rigorously to refresh the knowledge of research scholars and also to keep them updated about new developments.

This response aligns with the findings of Ali et al. (2021) who argue that prior knowledge about research procedures and compliances helps minimize research misconduct. Put differently, awareness of the basics of research ethics helps build the moral ability and acumen necessary to prevent unethical practices.

Ethical knowledge should be a part of formative education. Equally important is to integrate domain knowledge with an ethical framework, which in fact is the main purpose of academic institutions (Guerrero-Dib et al., 2020). Universities and academic institutions should have a clear ethical mission and a team of champions able and committed to translating the mission into a daily practice of faculty and

students (Gallant & Drinan, 2006). The Higher Education Reform Project (HERP) in Nepal had envisioned recruiting and empowering such champions, but to no avail, due to the combination of many factors, including political partisanship and low morale of qualified and committed faculties politicisation of administration (Phyak, 2018; 2021).

Some still argue that unethical behaviour in research is more about moral issues and has less to do with an intensive knowledge of academic ethics. For instance, many cases such as Hwang's academic misconduct (Kim & Park, 2018) and others, a few to mention, are, arguably, not the result of the lack of knowledge, they are rather what Etgar et al. (2019) call as 'white-collar crimes' compounded by the existing research ecosystem. However, such claims should not be seen to deny the fact that morality is not an innace attribute but a human value that is learned and honed over time (Resnik, 2020).

4.2 Knowledge Sharing and Exchange

Consultative dialogues, discussions and sharing sessions among colleagues, both seniors and peers, are found to enhance researchers' knowledge of the indispensability of ethics in research and also contribute to building an ethical research environment. This result is compatible with the observation of Gallant and Drinan (2006) that the sharing of understanding and perceptions on academic integrity among faculty and students increased the likelihood to contribute to the culture of academic integrity. An interactive environment that allows regular exchange on ethical issues and concerns inculcates an urge for academic integrity in students and faculty members. It also propels those differently oriented to introspect their understandings, beliefs and underlying assumptions of research and related issues and pursue a better path.

Capable human resources, particularly faculties and researchers, and the quality environment for research and development are a precondition for research and innovation. Early career researchers and students need mentoring and knowledge transfer by expert faculties to build on and hone existing knowledge. Mentorship helps students identify and firm up the field of their interest, map existing knowledge by way of the review of prior research works and interactions with scholars and peers, add to the knowledge gap in any way possible and contribute to some form of innovation. Supervisors with poor or no research experience will not be able to deliver ethically appropriate guidance. One of the respondents of the survey comments in a similar line:

> Many HEIs recruit faculties giving less or no priority to their research experience, which may not strictly be necessary for their career progression, including promotion to professorship. The faculties, thus, may not have the capacity to effectively guide and supervise the research projects of students. Thesis writing has, however, been made mandatory from Master's and sometimes Bachelor's levels. How can students produce a quality thesis without proper guidance?

Sharing of knowledge on ethical research prerequisites inculcates positive perceptions toward research integrity. Educating students and faculties about the intent and significance of the concept reduces the burden on policing and punishing academic dishonesty. Taking care of the obstacles to institutionalizing academic integrity and addressing them with urgency positively impacts attitudes, values and assumptions held by the faculty and students. Policy development and implementation without systematic attention to reducing obstacles may negatively affect the potential of the institutionalization of academic integrity (Gallant & Drinan, 2006).

As one of the respondents puts it, many faculties of HEIs are not properly trained in and informed of ethical research and, as such, do not have any substantive knowledge to share with their students. To improve the situation, the respondent suggests, a budget should be allocated for ethics training in all HEIs, the curriculum for school-level education should be revised with critical thinking being integral to it and the practice of inter-university sharing and exchange should be institutionalized. The last bit of the suggestion relating to inter-university collaboration is the central function of the UGC. However, in course of the study, no evidence was available to substantiate that the UGC was able to foster such an environment.

4.3 Research Supervision

Effective supervision enables researchers to solve the problem facing them by creating an enabling environment in which both 'academic' as well as other relevant issues are bilaterally discussed and resolved (Cullen et al., 1994). Academic supervisors create a research environment for supervisees. To this end, they facilitate a process in which research knowledge and skills, both ethical and substantive, are developed as a part of the solution to the research problem. At the core of supervision is to empower students – by broadening their methodological, theoretical and ethical competencies – to conduct and lead research projects independently.

An ideal supervisor will have domain knowledge of the discipline concerned as well as facilitation skills (Cullen et al., 1994). The success of the research work

depends as much on students' ability and enthusiasm for the topic as on the supervisor's expertise, availability of time and supervisory skills (Heath, 2002). The study conforms to this observation, with many respondents underlying the importance of disciplinarily expert and ethically uncompromising supervision for quality research outcomes. However, as a respondent categorically remarked, "Nepal's HEIs lack informed, skilled and committed supervisors that are required to produce students who can independently deliver. The academic environment we have does not motivate even those who are able to make a difference. We are in a sorry state." Another respondent was more elaborative:

> Many HEIs recruit faculties giving less or no priority to their research experience, which may not strictly be necessary for their career progression, including promotion to professorship. The faculties, thus, may not have the capacity to effectively guide and supervise the research projects of students. Thesis writing has, however, been made mandatory from master's and sometimes bachelor's levels. How can students produce a quality thesis without proper guidance?

4.4 Institutional Leadership

A graduate or a trained researcher of an institution is the synergistic result of an individual researcher, supervisor and the institution. Any form of unethical acts found in degree theses, for example, is not just an act of academic misconduct of an individual student but also a reflection of the workings of the concerned institution as a whole. Here comes the role of institutional leadership in fostering and maintaining an environment that is appropriate for ethical research.

Evidence suggests that the moment institutional leadership falters or fails to independently run the institution it is in charge of, academic misconduct and fraudulent practices start to find their way into the institution (Berggren & Karabag, 2019). Some of Nepal's HEIs are not an exception to this scenario. Failing to ensure proper and timely supervision of students and colluding variously with those elements that are engaged in a variety of dishonest practices, as revealed by an investigative journalist in 2016 (Acharya, 2016), some HEIs have been responsible for indirectly promoting academic misconduct.

The failure of the institutional leadership to rise to the occasion – such as to create institution-wide policies and systems promoting zero-tolerance against academic misconduct, promote them through teaching and sensitization and take action when cases of misconduct are reported without favour–has lent credence to the perception

that institutional leadership is not sincere about its academic duty, a perception a number of respondents shared. One of them spoke of the "trade of theses around university premises" suggested by public notices that a thesis could be prepared for a certain amount of money. Another spoke of "many cases of manuscripts" not being shared "with co-authors" before being submitted for publication as well as the practice of manuscripts being submitted to "more than one journal simultaneously." A third respondent thus put his experience of a professor engaged in an untoward practice:

> I have seen a professor demonstrating biogas combustion by hiding an LPG cylinder behind a wooden curtain. This is to establish the success of the project of the construction of an anaerobic bio-digester that he was part of. Projects involving analytic hierarchy processes consume so much fake and fabricated survey data that they lead to wrong inferences. Externally funded researchers tend to get involved in such acts to make funding agencies happy by yielding fake and fabricated successes.

Despite HEIs making remedial efforts, such as the installation of the software to check plagiarism, such cases are believed to continue due to the precedents of such acts going unnoticed, if not promoted, and the confidence that the institutional leadership is too weak to take action against such cases. The fact is, academic misconduct continues to remain pervasive, as indicated by Table 13 and Figure 10, which respectively present the instances of Master's level theses being doctored variously.[16]

Table 13 Master's Level Theses with Similar Titles

Award Year	Thesis Title	Department	Degree	Link
2008	Women's Participation in Community Forest Management xxx VDC, Morang District	*xxx*	*Master's*	https://elibrary.tucl.edu.np/handle/123456789/xxx7
2008	Women's Participation in Community Forest Management xxx VDC, Bhaktapur	*xxx*	*Master's*	https://elibrary.tucl.edu.np/handle/123456789/xxx3

16. The authors have not verified the authenticity of the information, as the survey did not ask or collect respondent's information in detail. We assume the statements to be valid given the prevalence of numerous documents (see Figure 10) presenting falsified data. Table 13 that presents a snapshot of academic misconduct being pervasive at the Master's level of Nepal's HEIs add to our claim of validity.

Award Year	Thesis Title	Depart-ment	Degree	Link
2006	Women's Participation in Community Forest Management xxx VDC, Chitwan District	*xxx*	*Master's*	https://elibrary.tucl.edu.np/handle/123456789/xxx5
2009	Women Participation in Community Forest Management xxx VDC in Taplejung	*xxx*	*Master's*	https://elibrary.tucl.edu.np/handle/123456789/xxx4
2011	Women's Participation in Community Forestry Programme: (xxx Forest User Group, Saptari District)	*xxx*	*Master's*	https://elibrary.tucl.edu.np/handle/123456789/xxx0
2010	Women Participation in Community Forest Management: xxx V.D.C., Jhapa District	*xxx*	*Master's*	https://elibrary.tucl.edu.np/handle/123456789/xxx5
2009	Women's Participation in Community Forestry Programme xxx VDC, Sunsari District)	*xxx*	*Master's*	https://elibrary.tucl.edu.np/handle/123456789/xxx2
2006	People's Participation in Community Forest Management: xxx VDC of Nuwakot District	*xxx*	*Master's*	https://elibrary.tucl.edu.np/handle/123456789/xxx3
2008	Role of Women in Community Forest Management xxx VDC, Surkhet)	*xxx*	*Master's*	https://elibrary.tucl.edu.np/handle/123456789/xxx0

Table 13 is only indicative, not exhaustive. There are a number of other Master's degree theses that match each other except for candidates' names. For example the thesis with the title Socio-Economic Condition of xxx (xxx Madhesa VDC in

Sunsari District)[17] and Socio-Economic Condition of xxx (xxx Madhepura VDC in Saptari District)[18]; and the Problems and Prospects of Tourism xxx (xxx Gorkha Municipality)[19] and A Study of Problems and Prospects of xxx xxx (xxx of Gorkha)[20] submitted to one of the Central Departments have barely a sentence different from each other. Some other dissertations have similar contents, with titles, figures, sentences and paragraphs reordered haphazardly to delude the thesis scrutiny committee (see Figure 10 and Figure 11 for an indication).

Figure 10 Very Similar Contents Presented in two Different Master's Level Theses

Table 7.4

Voting Behaviour of Bote in Different Election

Election	Knowledge about Politics		
	Participation	Non-Participation	Total
Parliament Election 2048	13	12	25
Mid -term Election 2051	15	10	25
Local Election 2054	17	8	25
Parliament Election 2056	20	5	25
Constitutional Assembly Election 2064	22	3	25

Source: Field Survey, 2009

https://elibrary.tucl.edu.np/handle/123456789/5[redacted]1 page 76

(A)

Table 4.9 Voting Behaviour of Bote in Different Election

Election	Knowledge about Politics		
	Participation	Non-Participation	Total
Parliament Election 2048	26	24	50
Mid –term Election 2051	30	210	50
Local Election 2054	34	16	50
Parliament Election 2056	40	10	50
First Constitutional Assembly Election	44	6	50
Second Constitutional Assembly Election	38	12	50

Source: Field Survey, 2015

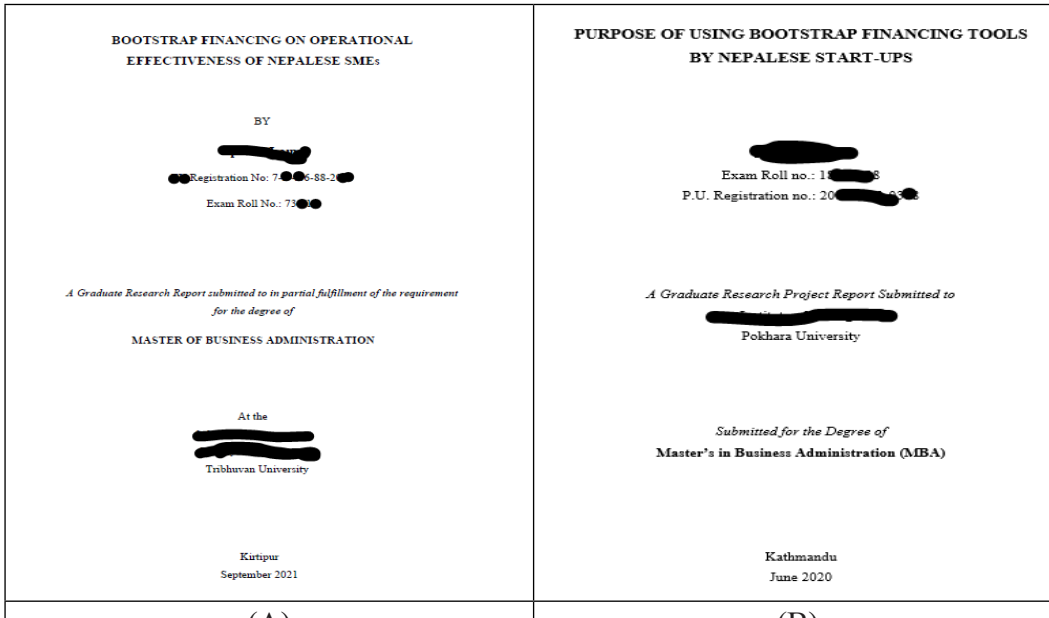
(https://elibrary.tucl.edu.np/handle/123456789/2[redacted]8 page 48)

(B)

Figure 10 presents an example of inter-university connection in plagiarism, falsification and data fabrication in Master's level theses. The documents submitted to the two universities seem to be different in titles, but their contents are similar (barring some numerical values and attributes), with heavily plagiarized, manipulated and fabricated data. A close inspection suggests that document A is derived from document B as the latter was submitted earlier. This should bring home to all concerned why critical observers underline the importance of inter-institution collaboration to foster the culture of ethical research and academic integrity (Ali et al., 2021). This was also the suggestion of some respondents contacted for the study.

17. Available at: https://elibrary.tucl.edu.np/handle/123456789/xx4
18. Available at: https://elibrary.tucl.edu.np/handle/123456789/6xx9
19. Available at: https://elibrary.tucl.edu.np/handle/123456789/3xx8/
20. Available at: https://elibrary.tucl.edu.np/handle/123456789/9xx1

Figure 11 Degree Dissertations with Different Titles but Plagiarized and Fabricated Data (Based on Document B)



BOOTSTRAP FINANCING ON OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS OF NEPALESE SMEs

BY

[redacted]

[redacted] Registration No: 7[redacted]6-88-2[redacted]

Exam Roll No.: 73[redacted]

A Graduate Research Report submitted to in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

At the

[redacted]

Tribhuvan University

Kirtipur

September 2021

PURPOSE OF USING BOOTSTRAP FINANCING TOOLS BY NEPALESE START-UPS

[redacted]

Exam Roll no.: 1[redacted]8

P.U. Registration no.: 20[redacted]

A Graduate Research Project Report Submitted to

[redacted]

Pokhara University

Submitted for the Degree of

Master's in Business Administration (MBA)

Kathmandu

June 2020

(A)	(B)

Title pages of two similar theses submitted to different universities

Supervisory inefficiency and negligence are the apparent reason behind the persistence of cases as indicated in Figures 10 and 11. The cure to such malaise is to hold the supervisors – the focal persons responsible for helping students in the design, administration and producing ethically sound products – accountable. This is possible only when institutional leadership is academically committed and is able to take bold administrative decisions when required. However, as an internal investigation of TU suggests, such leadership is wanting (Subedi et al., 2018).[21] Concerns by independent activists[22] as well as by an institution (such as the Center for Investigative Journalism)[23] also suggest so. Even senior officials of HEIs confess

21. The investigation was undertaken by a team constituted (by TU) to investigate allegations of academic dishonesty within the institution. The investigation has found numerous instances of irregularities and suggested actions against those responsible. Submitted to the TU's Executive Council, whose head is Vice Chancellor, the report has two clear messages: that academic misconduct and unethical behaviours are systemic (withing TU); and that the institutional leadership has failed to tackle those and create an enabling environment.

22. For further details see - http://107.170.225.98/cgi-bin/koha/opac-detail.pl?biblionumber=20232

23. https://cijnepal.org.np/case-academic-degeneration-nepali-universities/, www.cijnepal.org.np/प्राज्ञिक-पतनको-नमूना-बौ/ and other academic integrity related reports on CIJNepal

that tackling academic misconduct has been challenging despite (in some cases) the availability of policies and procedures.[24]

4.5 Laws and Policies against Ethics Violation

Founding acts of all HEIs empower them to enact policies and bylaws governing research ethics. The TU's autonomy rule 2005 (2062 BS) provides for codes of conduct both for students (Chapter 8, p.32) as well for teachers and other employees (Chapter 17, p.75). However, the codes of conduct are said to be "as identified by the Executive Committee," which were not available (at least publicly) during the study.[25] Even when the codes of conduct are available, they may not necessarily relate to research ethics or other academic issues, as the placement of the code for teachers suggests, which is in the chapter that follows provisions governing office time, leave facilities, retirement, and salaries and benefits, indicating that the code would not address other issues. The autonomy rule also provides for the code of conduct for students, which too would be as issued by the institution's board of directors (Tribhuvan University, 2073 BS, Chapter 16, PP 67-69). During the study, the code of conduct was not available publicly. When it comes to the future, it may centre around non-academic and reputational issues as indicated in the rule.

Unlike TU, KU has a distinct policy governing ethical issues, including conflict of interest. One of the aims of the policy is to create a "research enabling environment, faculty motivation, and faculty support for research."[26] To promote academic integrity within the institution, KU has developed specific guidelines – Policy Guidelines on Academic Integrity, 2018 – that apply to all faculties, non-teaching staff and students.

TU's Semester Examination Policy (2070 BS) defines academic integrity as 'plagiarism' and its consequences are limited to a one-year restriction on thesis writing. The definition and sanction are so narrow that they actually mean nothing towards checking untoward practices and contributing to integrity. Similarly, the provisions governing tenure termination in the TU autonomy regulation do not include academic misconduct as an issue (Tribhuvan University, 2073 BS, Chapter 16, PP 67-69), indicating that it does not feature in the imagination of the leadership as an important factor.

24. A number of participants at the Validation Workshop, including a senior official of TU, spoke of the difficulty dealing with misconducts within their institution.

25. The autonomy rule of TU and its founding act are available here: https://tribhuvan-university.edu.np/downloads/6?page=2

26. See, fifth objective of the 'Policy' available at https://rdi.ku.edu.np/policy/

That the largest academic institution in Nepal is silent on ethical compliance is an indication that Nepal's HEIs are either not fully sensitized to the importance of academic integrity and other compliance issues or pay little or no attention to them as they engage in academic and research undertakings. The failure to recognize and institutionalise these values has resulted in the failure to establish processes and procedures to hear complaints, if any, and deal with them when reported. The absence of such instruments has, at times, opened HEIs and RIs to public criticism that they have no institutional autonomy to take action against ethical misconduct and even when they do so it is seen just as eye-washing.[27] Authorities do not agree with such observations and contend that they take any case of academic aberration seriously and are engaged in the development and/or activation of mechanisms (such as research committees and research code of conduct) to make research and publication ethically and academically sound.[28]

In a positive development in this regard, academic misconduct has started to find its way into Nepali media, as Table 14 below presents, suggesting that it has been an issue of public concern. Discussing both positive developments, when occurr and are available, and the continuation of malpractices, the media reports urge authorities to take immediate and due actions against instances of academic misconduct.

Table 14 Some News Reports and Articles Published on Nepal's Academic Misconduct

Title of the Report/ Opinion/Article	Key Message/Discussion	Link
thesisa kharīdabikrī chānabina prativedanako sujhāva : 'bauddhika corī garneko ḍigrī radda'	Critical commentary on the report of the committee formed by TU on addressing irregularities and improving the quality of degree research works at TU	https://cijnepal.org.np/thesis-investigation-tu/

27. https://kathmandupost.com/national/2021/03/28/in-a-first-tribhuvan-university-takes-action-against-its-teaching-faculty-for-plagiarism

28. Such assurance was given by a TU's office bearer in a research validation workshop organized by PRI

Title of the Report/ Opinion/Article	Key Message/Discussion	Link
trivimā thesisako kharīdabikrī	Transaction of degree theses under TU	www.cijnepal.org.np/ त्रिविमा-थेसिसको-खरीदबिक्/
prājñika patanako namūnā : bauddhika corīmā lekcarara, riḍara ra prophesara	Involvement of faculties in plagiarism and academic dishonesty	www.cijnepal.org.np/ प्राज्ञिक-पतनको-नमूना-बौ/
ḍā.kṛṣṇa bhaṭṭacanako patra khopakelāī	University professor writes to editor refuting his alleged involvement in plagiarism	www.cijnepal.org.np/डा-कृष्ण-भट्टचनको-पत्र-खो/
A Case of Academic Degeneration in Nepali Universities	Involvement of faculties in plagiarism and academic dishonesty	https://cijnepal.org.np/case-academic-degeneration-nepali-universities/
Why Plagiarism Thrives	Provides cases of plagiarism in Nepal's academia and has opinions as to why it continues as a problem	https://myrepublica.nagariknetwork.com/news/why-plagiarism-thrives/
In a First, Tribhuvan University Takes Action Against its Teaching Faculty for Plagiarism	TU penalizes the incident of plagiarism	https://kathmandupost.com/national/2021/03/28/in-a-first-tribhuvan-university-takes-action-against-its-teaching-faculty-for-plagiarism
Understanding of Plagiarism through Information Literacy: A Study among the Students of Higher Education of Nepal	Explores the importance of information literacy in academic work among the Nepali students of higher education	https://www.nepjol.info/index.php/jbssr/article/view/28132
Plagiarism among Students	Urges academicians to get stricter while checking the	https://docs.google.com/document/d/1v34hzjSawOe

Title of the Report/ Opinion/Article	Key Message/Discussion	Link
	work of their students vis-a-vis plagiarism	JVCQ-NTLmLDGtIL-CW0Vhf/edit
Thesis Plagiarism Detector Software At Tribhuvan University	Tribhuvan University's plan and preparation to procure and manage plagiarism detector software to control the incidents of intellectual theft in degree theses	https://english.headlinenepal.com/details/5500
Plagiarism: Types, Causes and How to Avoid This Worldwide Problem	Suggests some of the ways to minimize instances of plagiarism	https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/2ab2/361ea075a3f5db8456b4414505077b9f6c69.pdf
Open University Launches Plagiarism Checking Software in Nepal	Plan of Nepal Open University to procure plagiarism detecting system to avoid plagiarism and plagiarism in thesis and research papers	https://ictframe.com/open-university-plagiarism-checking-software/
Five KU Docs Found Plagiarizing Research Findings	Reports an instance whereby a team of medical doctors put the research findings of another team of doctors as their own findings	https://myrepublica.nagariknetwork.com/news/five-ku-docs-found-plagiarizing-research-findings/
Beyond Plagiarism	Discusses why it is important for Nepalese media to report and document the instances of plagiarism	
Writing without Worries	Discusses the ways of avoiding plagiarism while writing	https://afaceofktm.wordpress.com/2016/12/31/writing-without-worries/

Title of the Report/ Opinion/Article	Key Message/Discussion	Link
We are Taking Plagiarism Seriously: TU Service Commission	Report quoting TU's Service Commission authority's commitment to take action against plagiarism	https://myrepublica.nagariknetwork.com/news/we-are-taking-plagiarism-seriously-tu-service-commission/
Seven Barred from Research after Plagiarism, Duplications in Eleven Papers	Reports the instances whereby journal articles are retracted after the articles are found plagiarized and data fabricated.	https://retractionwatch.com/2021/04/05/retired-professor-banned-from-research-after-plagiarism-duplications-in-eleven-papers/
Abuse of Prominent Researcher's Resume for Scientific Research	Reports a research consulting company that submitted an unauthorized resume to get a scientific research project from a Government office and then submitted a report to the office	https://ekagaj.com/article/special-report/32521/
Ten Doctoral Degrees's Equivalent Applications were Dismissed because of Substantial Plagiarism in their Theses	Reports refusal of Tribhuvan University to provide degree equivalence to ten applicants who received doctoral degrees by submitting plagiarized theses.	https://ekantipur.com/news/2021/11/30/163823685775377835.html

The media reporting has contributed to the sensitization of all the concerned, including the office bearers of the HEIs, to the need for a robust policy or code promoting ethical research. Of late, scholarly discussions have also begun on the issue. Contributions by Paudel et al. (2020), Bista et al. (2019) and Gaulee and Bista (2019) are a few examples that interrogate academic integrity and quality in the context of research practices being undertaken as well as the broad educational direction Nepali HEIs have pursued. However, these budding efforts are yet to yield a concrete result.

Why HEIs do not develop such instruments, which appear to be within their power, to promote academic integrity, hold those responsible for misconduct to account and forestall possible recurrence of it requires further research, which was not the scope of the study. It is high time, however, they realized the fact that winking at faculty involvement in unethical acts and sidestepping student wrongdoing creates a 'cheating culture' in which faculty oversight and students' involvement in wrong practices are perceived to be given and acceptable (Davis et al., 1992; Kaplan & Mable, 1998; Molnar, 2015; Stearns, 2001). Nepali HEIs are vulnerable to such culture, which was a central worry among most of the respondents.

HEIs cannot afford the luxury to remain inactive, unmoved and "dead," as a highly respected public intellectual has suggested in the case of TU, which, in his assessment, has lost the academic vitality that a university requires (Mathema, 2019, 2076 BS). They should no more be responsible for the continuation of the status quo. They should take proactive efforts to explore a sustainable solution to it. One way of doing so is to engage students in discussions, debates and classroom activities to promote ethical values and integrity norms by making students aware that academic integrity is a civic virtue as well as their social responsibility (Wilcox & Ebbs, 1992). As students become aware of the principles and values, they make them part of their academic life.

A supplementary way is to work toward an appropriate law, which, according to a respondent privy to the force of law about academic integrity and ethics, is not in place or is not sufficiently robust:

> We blacklisted some researchers who were found to engage in plagiarism, but were helpless and could not sustain. The lack of appropriate legal instruments – through which to pursue the case – forced us to give up and entertain them instead. We had no choice.

Nepal's HEIs and RIs have rules and procedures governing issues that range from ethical misconduct of an individual to intellectual property rights, right to privacy, human subject, animal subject, and the protection of minorities and endangered species. If they don't, they are empowered by their founding acts to develop and enforce them.[29] These instruments are needed to check unethical research behaviours, control their harmful consequences and create an enabling environment for all researchers and end-users to engage in research and avail related resources and opportunities. For example, a study on human subjects should follow ethical standards developed by Nepal Health Research Council. UGC-developed research

29. See founding Acts of TU (at https://lawcommission.gov.np/en/?cat=553) and KU (at https://lawcommission.gov.np/en/?cat=496)

guidelines and ethical standards regulate research activities in HEIs. Some HEIs, such as KU, and faculties, such as the TU's Faculty of Management,[30] do also have their institution-wide or faculty-wide rules and guidelines. To promote innovative and ethical research, KU has established a separate structure – Research, Development and Innovation – with mandates to oversee research processes and outcomes as per the institute-wide policy.[31]

What is lacking is a mechanism to coordinate the implementation of these instruments, which, at best, remain scattered, monitor their effectiveness and validate their outcomes. TU, which is supposed to be the centre of innovation and a role model for other universities, lacks even a research code of conduct, which TU is reportedly working alongside other documents and instruments.[32]

4.6 Conflict of Interest

Conflict of interest (CoI) is perceived to prevail within HEIs in different manifestations: financial incentives, credit-sharing (claiming co-authorship without any contribution) and institutional involvement in research to serve the personal interests of a few officials. "Conflict of interest is rampant," said one office bearer present at the validation workshop "and those who have no ability to write papers, which they need for promotion into professorship, are engaged in it, especially in data fabrication and credit-sharing." Another expert present at the workshop adds: "The fact that a thesis can be bought and sold is a case of the prevalence of conflict of interest of some form. This trade does not operate if teachers are not part of it."

"Assessing xxx …" published in "Eurxxx Journal of xxx, Volume 13, page 9xx-9xx in 2019" is quite instructive in this regard. The first author of the article, who is also a corresponding author, received a fund from a research-promoting agency. A person of that funding agency, who is responsible for decision-making about grant administration and management, review and quality assurance including the grant on which the article builds, appears as a co-author. The main task of the research promoting agency is – by its very nature and as per the act and associated by-laws governing it –to ensure good research governance across the sector. However, allowing – or winking at – the practice of its kind, it has been responsible for promoting conflict of interest with the same person engaged in 'decision-making' on the grant and 'benefit sharing' of it.

30. For example, the Faculty of Management of TU has issued a Master's Degree Dissertation Writing Guidelines for the Faculty, available at: https://www.fomecd.edu.np/aboutus.php

31. The policy is aavailable here: https://rdi.ku.edu.np/policy/

32. This assurance was given by TU authorities when contacted in course of the study

In another case, multiple research funds have been approved for the same project led by the same person (a senior person) by wrongly interpreting a provision that governs multiple funding (see https://doi.org/10.3xx6/tuxx.v6i0.2xxx2). The concerned institution has, however, remained silent in this case too. In doing so, it has allowed a conflict of interest to pester.

"HEIs are a part of the broad socio-political ecosystem and cannot remain untouched by the happenings around them," said one expert observer at the Validation Workshop, suggesting that conflict of interest and other dishonest practices perceived or reported in HEIs are the reflection of the ecosystem. The cure to them should be the responsibility of all, not only of the HEIs, he implied. What can only be added to this observation is overlooking such issues – or the delay in tackling them – not only smirches the image of HEIs but also kills their health.

4.7 Faculty Recruitment and Promotion

Professor Burton R Clark, a leading and influential thinker of higher education argues – after considering various factors and possibilities, including seniority and experience of faculties – the vitality and effectiveness of HEIs depend on merit and competence, and not on other factors (Clark, 1987). Almost invariably, all academic and research institutions recruit scholars – on a competitive basis – based on their academic merits, which basically include the knowledge of the subject matter, track record of scientific research and quality of publications. The best among the contenders is hired to ensure an environment in which teaching and research activities are undertaken in an ethically sound and academically robust manner.

TU recruits scholars under two mechanisms. The first mechanism involves the direct recruitment of lecturers, assistant professors and associate professors following a normal procedure. Ten per cent of weightage is allocated for research competency in recruiting a lecturer, while it is 20 per cent in the case of assistant professors, associate professors and professors. The university recruits 80 per cent of assistant professors from the open competition and 20 per cent of the vacancies are filled through internal promotion.

HEIs have recently adopted a research metric-based faculty hiring system, an encouraging and forward-looking step that is inspired by the UGC-administered Higher Education Reform Project. It is to recruit faculty members with research expertise to improve the overall research environment and performance of the institution concerned. The worry is the research works undertaken under the HERP itself have not been of competitive quality. According to the (University Grants

Commission, 2018), 12 per cent of the articles that derive from HERP-funded projects were published in predatory journals listed in Beall's Predatory journal list,[33] an indication that the grantees are not aware of the basics of research integrity or do not find it morally obligatory to abide by it.

The TU guidelines for promotion do not allow the consideration of articles published in predatory journals in Beall's list. However, the identification of one particular source –Beall's list – leaves others unaccounted for, as not all predatory journals are listed in Beall's list. In addition, the assessment of candidates' research impact through the H-index (of Google Scholar) which is generated from all articles published, including those in predatory journals, is wrong (Figure 12), as it focuses on quantity and not quality and impact.

Figure 12 Research Evaluation Metric Used to Hire Faculty Based on Research Excellence

अनुसूची १
अनुसन्धान तथा कृति प्रकाशनको पूर्णाङ्क विभाजन र अन्य व्यवस्था

१.१. विभिन्न पदका लागि निर्धारित अनुसन्धान तथा कृति प्रकाशनको पूर्णाङ्क विभाजन यसै अनुसूचीको द्रष्टव्य र अनुसूची १.२ को अन्य व्यवस्थाको अधीनमा रहने गरी देहाय बमोजिम हुनेछ ।

विवरण	प्राध्यापक		सह -प्राध्यापक	
	प्रति एकाइ अङ्क	अधिकतम अङ्क	प्रति एकाइ अङ्क	अधिकतम अङ्क
१. अनुसन्धान लेख				
(क) विज्ञ समीक्षित अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय जर्नलमा प्रकाशित				
वर्ग १ Nature Index Journals	१४	असीमित	२८	असीमित
वर्ग २ SCImago Journal Ranking Q1	१०		२०	
वर्ग ३ SCImago Journal Ranking Q2-Q4	६		१२	
(ख) पेटेन्ट दर्ता	१४		२८	
(ग) विज्ञ समीक्षित राष्ट्रिय जर्नल मा प्रकाशित				
वर्ग ४ AJOL/INASP Journal Publishing Practices and Standards (JPPS) star rated	४	२८	७	२८
वर्ग ५ अन्य मान्य राष्ट्रिय जर्नल	२		४	
२.अनुसन्धानात्मक पुस्तक	२	८	४	८
३.लेखकको अनुसन्धान प्रभाव (Author H-Index)	१	असीमित	२	असीमित
यथावत कूल		यथावत कूल		यथावत कूल
अन्तिम प्राप्ताङ्क (सापेक्षिक)		निरपेक्ष १४० प्राप्ताङ्क भन्दा माथिका प्राप्ताङ्कहरू मध्ये अधिकतम प्राप्ताङ्कलाई १४० बराबर मान्ने सापेक्षिकता को सूत्र अनुसार		निरपेक्ष १४० प्राप्ताङ्क भन्दा माथिका प्राप्ताङ्कहरू मध्ये अधिकतम प्राप्ताङ्कलाई १४० बराबर मान्ने सापेक्षिकता को सूत्र अनुसार

Source: https://www.tuservicecommission.edu.np/index.php/rules-regulation

33. The list is available at: https://www.beallslist.net/. The journals listed are predatory. This is not an exhaustive list. Other journals not found in Beall's list may also be predatory, especially those published by predatory publishers. For the purpose of the study, the authors relied on Beall's Predatory journal lists and did not check other sources.

KU's practice is different from that of TU. The former requires a list of publications of the last five years and has special criteria to evaluate an individual publication by domain experts (Kathmandu University, 2021 Appendix 19). In doing so, it discourages the acceptance and inclusion of sub-standard and plagiarized articles and promotes publications from the journal having ethical and standard editorial and review processes.

KU's promotional policy and criteria also include research and development activities based on annual research and consulting activity targets of the departments (Kathmandu University, 2021 Appendix 20 section D). The policy also assesses candidates through other criteria, such as academic and professional leadership competencies and commitment and other metrics that contribute to academic excellence. This evaluation criteria promotes 'quality' and discourages 'quantity' and low-quality activities. In addition, a faculty's academic and professional performance is taken as a determining factor for retention and promotion. TU's policy does not have such criteria for performance appraisal.

In many countries, funding allocation for HEI is tied to the performance track record of its faculties (Hicks, 2012). Performance-based funding promotes competitiveness among faculties and researchers, which leads to quality outcomes. In Nepal, however, such a system has not been fully operational. HEIs operate based on public funds available irrespective of their record of performance. As some respondents have hinted, easy availability of funds is a factor that has not encouraged competitiveness within HEIs, especially in TU that receives some 90 per cent of public funds.

4.8 Research and Publication

Research and publication are a hallmark of academic excellence. The quality of research undertaken by faculties and the journals in which they publish the research outcomes contribute to the image and standing of higher education institutions (Lancho-Barrantes & Cantu-Ortiz, 2021). Articles published in top journals, those with high impact factors, are considered trustworthy and scientifically reliable (Tregoning, 2018). The faculties that feature in top journals epitomize the standard and standing of the universities they are a part of.

A high-ranked journal follows a robust process before deciding on submissions. All articles are, first, subject to initial screening to make sure they meet the journal priority (aims and scope of journals) and basic scientific standards and quality.

Those that pass the initial screening, are forwarded to an editorial member – or a team of members with expertise on the subject – to vet their academic excellence and take a final call on them. This is done through a robust review, which is anonymous and blind, by a number of peer experts identified based on their track record, who critically review the articles and help the editorial member decide on their fate (LaPlaca et al., 2018). Based on the quality or lack thereof (both methodological and content-wise), the reviewers may suggest outright rejection or consideration for publication with additional work in the form of a 'minor' or 'major' revision. To this end, the editorial member works as the bridge between authors and reviewers until a point they are confident about making a decision. However, not all journals follow these steps and processes.

Whether an article has gone through the required peer-review process is difficult to gauge unless the process is transparent. Here comes the role of editors - to make sure the process is robust and transparent and the quality offered is credible. Editors, as such, serve as gatekeepers of due process as well as of the quality of scientific knowledge (Alberts, 2010; Crane, 1967). They also become a catalyst for capacity building of young and emerging researchers by engaging them in the review of submissions alongside seasoned researchers and, thus, helping them internalize objectivity, accountability, transparency and scientific rigour, which are central elements of research integrity (Ahmed & Mohini, 2021; Vazire, 2017).

Not all journals are committed to academic excellence. Some journals operate for profit (money) not for knowledge. They "deceive authors to publish for a fee without providing robust peer-review or editorial services, thereby putting profit over trustworthy and dependable science" (Elmore & Weston, 2020 p.607). These deceptive – or, predatory – journals fake science and trap scholars into the production of garbage knowledge.

Self-publication by editors, data fabrication, plagiarism, fake approval, contribution to a journal by a close circle of professionals and co-authorships without contribution are other issues that make a journal low-quality and the knowledge being disseminated questionable. Anyone committed to academic excellence would avoid getting published in such journals.

In recent years, journal launching has been an encouraging trend in Nepal's academia. This is an indication of research and publication being part of an academic activity. According to Nepal Journals Online (NepJOL), a database of published

journals managed by TU Central Library, 280 journals are up and running now.[34] Only in August 2022, four new journals have been registered in the database. However, the quality of journals does not appear to be encouraging. As Table 15 indicates, editors, who are supposed to control the quality of journals, also serve as primary contributors. A journal with an editor taking a double role risks compromising the moral integrity that a high-end journal is supposed to maintain.

Table 15 Editorial Involvement in Authorship in Some Nepali Journals

Names of Journal	Publication of Articles by Editors in the Journals they Edit
NARC Journal	Yes
Quest Journal of Management and Social Sciences	Yes
Bibechana	Yes
NHRC Journal	Yes
Nepal Journal of Ophthalmology	Yes
Kathmandu University Medical Journal	Yes
Journal of Nepal Medical Association	Yes
Journal of Nepal Pediatric Society	Yes
Nepal Journal of Biotechnology	Yes

Source: Respective Journals' webportals

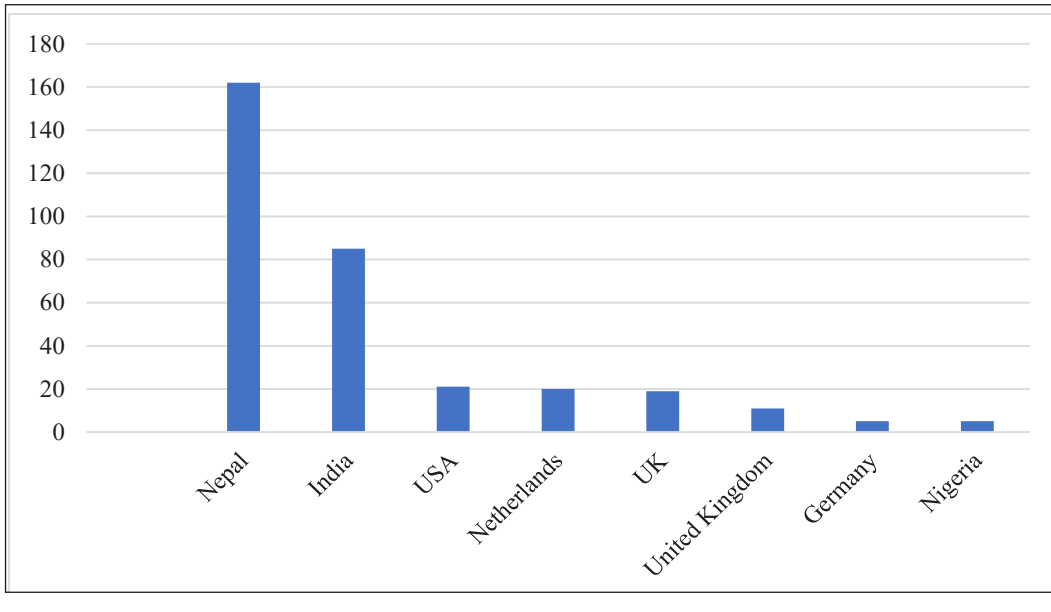
Deception is also found to be rampant in journal publishing practices. A UGC-funded study published in a journal with DOI number "10.11xx/1758-26xx-13-7" claims that the study received ethical clearance from the internal review board of UGC, which does not exist. In fact, requests for ethical approvals are redirected to the National Health Research Council (NHRC) if the study involved humans as participants. The article in question, which UGC has projected as a case of its success, has not received approval from the NHRC as well.

Similarly, an article published in a journal with DOI number "10.137x/journal.poxx.017xxx4" got retracted because the research on which it was built did not meet the "Nepalese regulatory requirements or PLOS ONE's publication criteria for human subjects research" (The PLOS ONE Editors, 2017). The article too had presented a false claim regarding ethical approval. In yet another example, the

34. Information taken from https://www.nepjol.info as of 1 September 2022.

article with DOI number "10.312x/tuxx.v7i0.3xxx4" claimed to have collected a clinical specimen, including blood samples, from a large number of patients but failed to provide proof of ethical approval to collect the required data. Publication in predatory journals is another issue besetting Nepali academia. As Figure 13 shows, a majority of articles are published in journals based in Nepal (of which only four are indexed in the Scopus database) and India, which is home to the highest number of predatory journal publishing houses in the world (Erfanmanesh & Pourhossein, 2017). These articles draw on research projects funded by HERP which the UGC has implemented.

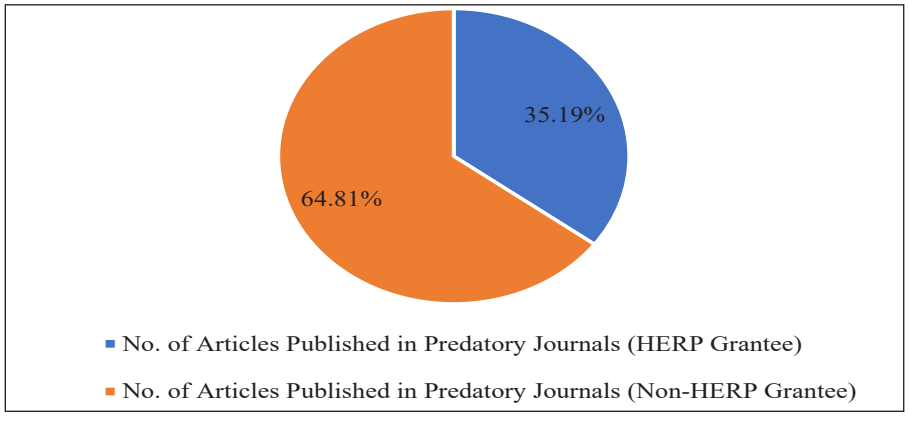
Figure 13 Number of Articles and the Country of Publication from UGC Funded Research



Source: University Grants Commission (2018)

The HERP was envisioned to attract scholars with a strong research track record and build complementary assets required to excel in research and development activities in HEIs. To this end, the UGC provides a lucrative funding opportunity to scholars. Unfortunately, the articles that draw on HERP funds (which came into operation in 2016) share a remarkable percentage of predatory publications, nearly 35 per cent of the articles (under UGC grants) published in the predatory journals or the journals from the predatory open access publishers found in Beall's list (Figure 14).

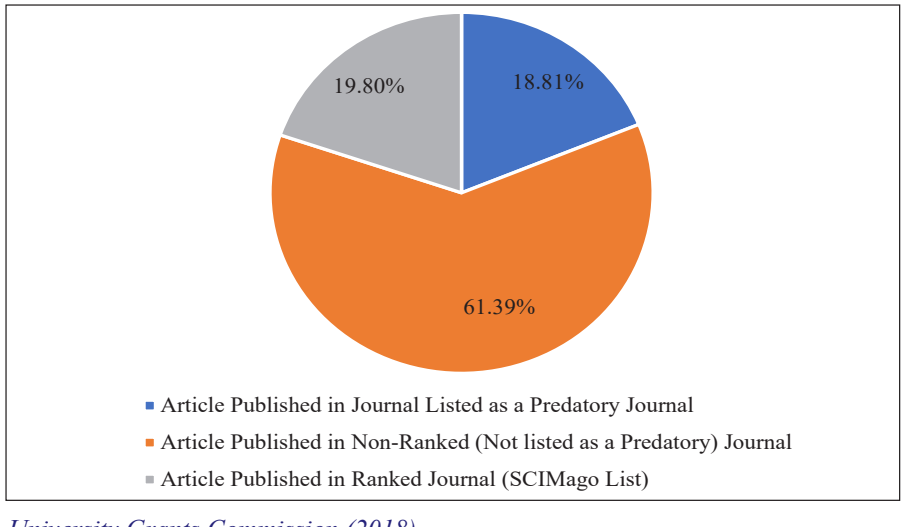
Figure 14 Share of Predatory Articles by HERP and Other Grantees



Source: University Grants Commission (2018)

Among the articles published by HERP project grantees, 19 per cent were published in predatory journals and 61 per cent in non-indexed journals, as Figure 15 shows. Publishing research articles in a non-indexed journal is not a problem in itself. However, since HERP project fellows are expected to be trendsetters in high-quality research and publication, their articles appearing in non-indexed journals do not meet the expectation.

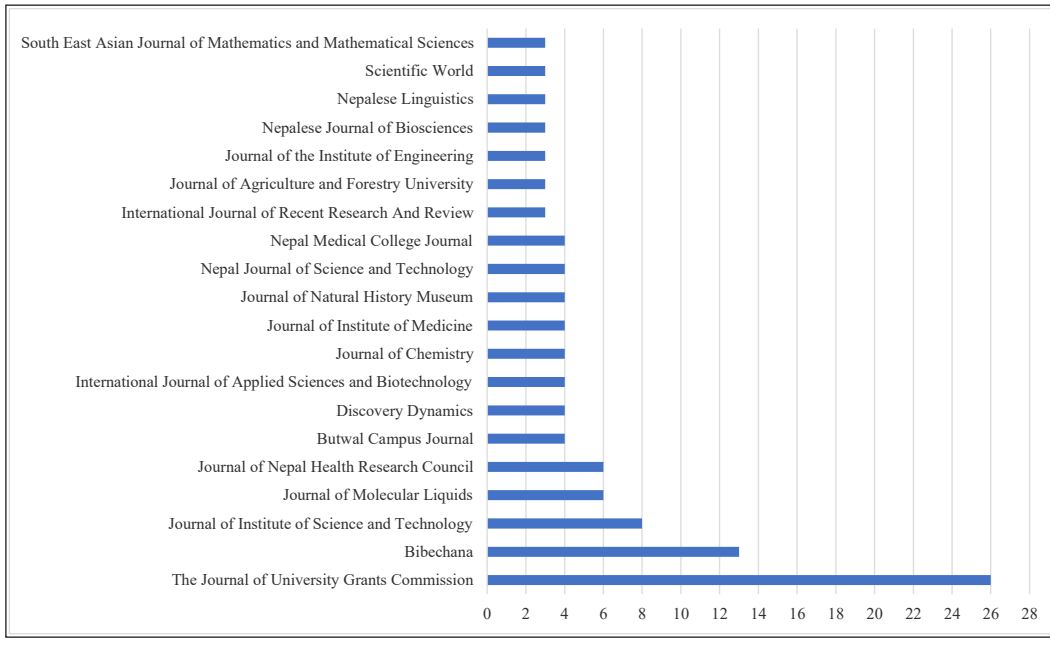
Figure 15 Type of Journal Where the HERP Project Grantee Published their Research Works During 2016-2018



Source: University Grants Commission (2018)

The Journal of the UGC has become the publishing outlet for 10 per cent of articles published in any of the journals between 2008 and 2018, and it has become the most preferred outlet of UGC grantees (Figure 16). The journal- Bibechana is the second largest where as Journal of the Institute of Engineering is the third largest. UGC operating its own journal to share outcomes of the research project it has funded causes one to raise an eyebrow given the absence of quality control mechanisms of the projects, such as ex-ante and project impact evaluations.

Figure 16 Journals that Published at Least Three UGC-funded Articles During 2008-2018



Source: University Grants Commission (2018)

The criteria for research project selection of the UGC are also problematic. Its policy provides for 'additional marks' to the principal investigator from underprivileged groups (University Grants Commission, 2021 PP. 11). Supporting researchers from such communities is not a bad idea per se. When judged against quality criteria, however, it goes counterintuitive. One's economic status or ethnicity should not be a criterion for a research project selection. There should be other ways to empower and level up. The UGC also gives priority to researchers from remote and community-based institutions and provides additional marks without assessing the quality and the prospective impact of research proposals.

HEIs and research-promoting agencies are responsible for transferring knowledge to the next generation and empowering backward communities to benefit from available opportunities. However, they should be reminded that allowing scholars with poor research expertise to lead research projects result in low-quality outcomes (Y. K. Lee et al., 2021). The proposal by Rojas et al., (2020) is instructive in this regard that HEIs should, first, focus on the progressive development of research capacities and scientific inquiry skills of those from underprivileged communities. Then, once they are able to conduct research independently and report them in scientific publications, they can be entrusted with research leadership. Such an imagination was not available in the practice of HEIs and UGC.

CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The state of research, knowledge production and dissemination in Nepal's HEIs is mixed. So is their preparation for evolving into a centre of excellence. While they are found committed to creating an enabling environment that is required to undertake these functions and achieve the goal, most of them, however, lack the instruments and the leadership ability to walk the talk.

The state of compliance with research ethics and norms is not encouraging either. There is awareness of the importance of ethical compliance among researchers and scholars and the zeal for enforcing compliance mechanisms among office bearers, but the state of practical realization appears to be far from satisfactory. Compliance systems and mechanisms are not enough, especially in the case of TU, the largest university that is expected to serve as a role model for others. Where they exist, they either do not directly relate to research ethics or are too vague to promote it.

The study confirms that informed knowledge of research ethics correlates with integrity and honesty. And, no medium is better than regular interactions, discussions and sharing of good practices. These processes contribute to building a robust academic and research culture by helping beginners internalize the importance of integrity, and seasoned researchers and research supervisors refresh their knowledge and skills. However, the study does not find such an enabling environment in all HEIs. As such, academic integrity, though central to research ethics, remains abstract as the concept is rarely systematically discussed, debated and qualified, barring some exceptions.

Research regulatory mechanisms – such as protocols, rules and regulations – of most HEIs are scattered and do not necessarily conform to internationally established frameworks, even more so those dealing with academic integrity.

Issues and instances of academic misconduct largely remain unreported and unexposed. Weak legal provisions, lax implementation of existing procedures and the lack of a peer-reporting environment cause such unethical practices as plagiarism, data fabrication and manipulation and disingenuous co-authorship to continue. Even when cases of misconduct were reported some HEIs were found to lack the

courage or motivation to investigate the cases and hold those responsible to account. Some allegations were investigated and responded to. But, the response was not perceived to be enough to deter such practices.

Undue political influence stands as the main barrier to strengthening academic integrity and creating an ethically sound research environment. Not only does it affect the functions of the faculty and daily administration, but it also weakens the morale of the leadership and incapacitates it to the extent that it is rendered ineffective even to implement available instruments.

Existing recruitment policies and metrics being used by some HEIS focus more on quantity than on quality. They, thus, dissuade quality graduates from getting on board, and, in so doing, prevent fresh ideas and energies from entering the system that requires such ideas to cross the 'chasm point', as it is called in innovation theory, and ensure a paradigm shift in the workings of HEIs. This is particularly true of the TU recruitment system.

Research and publication practices are also not encouraging. Many scholars do not appear to be aware – or worried – about predatory publishing. Even the institutions supposed to make scholars aware of the danger of such publishing and prevent them from falling into the trap are not found to have risen to the occasion. They have rather been a bystander – if not a promoter – to such deceptive practices that not only harm the reputation of the scholars and the institutions they are associated with but also the interest of the end-users – the people at large – of the knowledge disseminated.

Multiple factors cause and reinforce dishonesty by creating a 'fraud triangle' – to borrow from (Ariail & Crumbley, 2016) – that comes about from the interplay of pressure, opportunity and rationalization. The deadline for thesis completion, the fear of failure, financial stress and the lack of proper supervision are some of the factors that create 'pressure' on students to complete the research project anyway paying no heed to other concerns and values. Perceived opportunities, such as the chances of not getting noticed or tracked for dishonest academic behaviours, the absence of the culture of peer reporting and the institutional history and experience of laxity in dealing with similar acts, encourage students and faculties alike to engage in dishonest acts. The inability or reluctance of university authorities to trace and address such serious issues as plagiarism, stealing and the manipulation of the testing and scoring system creates a psychological state in which students and faculties rationalize dishonest academic practices and let them go as a routine act.

5.2 Recommendations

The discussion and conclusion presented above lead to the following recommendations, which the government of Nepal and those responsible for the regulation of higher education and research should take seriously and implement with due priority.

a. HEIs should make it mandatory across the board to educate and coach fresh researchers and students about the basics of academic ethics. What constitutes dishonesty, and how to detect and report it should be integral to such education. Faculties and supervisors should, likewise, be reminded of their responsibility to create an ethically sound environment within HEIs they are associated with and trained and refreshed as necessary to enable them to do so. Such education, coaching and sensitization should be part of HEIs' academic calendar.

b. Develop policies, systems and legal instruments to deal with various facets of dishonesty at various levels. Such policies and instruments should be clear, focused and enforceable within the scope of work of the institution concerned.

c. Create an environment for the system of meritocracy-based recruitment both for academic and administrative positions. Other considerations, such as political influence and connections, do not enable academia to create the foundation it requires to achieve academic excellence, which all HEIs aspire to.

d. Develop a policy promoting zero tolerance against academic dishonesty in each institution. To this end, the practice of peer reporting should be institutionalised, cases of allegations should be investigated with due priority and those found guilty should be held accountable without any favour.

e. Establish an autonomous office of academic integrity (OAI) as an apex entity to govern and oversee all ethical issues and complaints of all HEIs and RIs. The OAI should be empowered to operate both preventive and curative measures needed to ensure academic integrity remains inviolable in Nepal. The absence of such a body is widely felt in the continuation of academic malpractices despite public outcry.

f. HEIs and RIs should, in close consultation with the OAI, establish for their institution an integrated framework of protocols, rules and regulations in line with internationally accepted research standards and ethics. Existing tools and instruments should be reviewed and updated to ensure their compliance with the integrated framework. Constituent institutions and affiliates should,

likewise, build and enforce institute-wide instruments that fit their needs drawing on the integrated framework.

g. HEIs should ensure strict compliance with research and publication procedures and processess at all time. The predatory publication should be rejected outright; editorial engagement in authorship should be discouraged; and, co-authorship should be made transparent. An article that has not passed through the robustness of peer review, ethical approval, copyright regulation and other academic vetting procedures, should not be counted as an academic publication.

h. The UGC should be reoriented to its primary task of inter university collaboration in order for it to be able to build an enabling environment for quality academic activities.

REFERENCES

Acharya, P. (2016). *Thesis on sale*. Centre for Investigative Journalism. https://cijnepal.org.np/thesis-on-sale/

Ahmed, S., & Mohini. (2021). Building trust in journals and in peer review: need of the hour during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Rheumatology International*, *41*(2), 501–502. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00296-020-04741-y

Alberts, B. (2010). Promoting Scientific Standards. *Science*, *327*(5961). https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1185983

Ali, I., Sultan, P., & Aboelmaged, M. (2021). A bibliometric analysis of academic misconduct research in higher education: Current status and future research opportunities. *Accountability in Research*, *28*(6), 372–393. https://doi.org/10.1080/08989621.2020.1836620

Altbach, P. G. (1992). Higher education, democracy, and development: implications for newly industrialized countries. *Interchange*, *23*(1 & 2), 143–163.

Antes, A. L., & Mumford, M. D. (2011). Making sense of academic misconduct. In *Crime and Corruption in Organizations: Why It Occurs and What To Do About It* (pp. 235–268). Routledge.

Ariail, D. L., & Crumbley, D. L. (2016). Fraud triangle and ethical leadership perspectives on detecting and preventing academic research misconduct. *Journal of Forensic & Investigative Accounting*, *8*(3), 480–500.

Babb, S. (2020). *Regulating human research: IRBs from peer review to compliance bureaucracy*. Stanford University Press.

Berggren, C., & Karabag, S. F. (2019). Scientific misconduct at an elite medical institute: The role of competing institutional logics and fragmented control. *Research Policy*, *48*(2), 428–443. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2018.03.020

Bista, K., Sharma, S., & Raby, R. L. (Eds.). (2019). *Higher education in Nepal: Policies and perspectives*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351139205

Bretag, T. (2016). Handbook of academic integrity. In *Handbook of Academic Integrity*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-287-098-8

Brian, K. (2007). *Human Capital: How what you know shapes your life*, OECD Insights, OECD Publishing, Paris. https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264029095-en.

Britt Holbrook, J., & Frodeman, R. (2011). Peer review and the ex ante assessment of societal impacts. *Research Evaluation*, *20*(3), 239–246. https://doi.org/10.3152/095820211X12941371876788

Brown, P., & Lauder, H. (1996). Education, globalization and economic development. *Journal of Education Policy*, *11*(1), 1–25. https://doi.org/10.1080/0268093960110101

Cabral-Cardoso, C. (2004). Ethical misconduct in the business school: A case of plagiarism that turned bitter. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *49*(1), 75–89. https://doi.org/10.1023/B:BUSI.0000013864.76547.d5

Conway, G., & Waage, J. (2010). Science and innovation for development. In *Society* (Vol. 82, Issue 3). UK Collaborative on Development Sciences.

Crane, D. (1967). The gatekeepers of science: Some factors affecting the selection of articles for scientific journals. *Source: The American Sociologist*, *2*(4), 195–201.

Cullen, D. J., Pearson, M., Saha, L. J., & Spear, R. (1994). *Establishing effective PhD supervision*. Department of Employment, Education and Training, Australian Government Publishing Services.

Davis, S. F., Grover, C. A., Becker, A. H., & Mcgregor, L. N. (1992). Academic dishonesty: Prevalence, determinants, techniques, and punishments. *Teaching of Psychology*, *19*(1), 16–20. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15328023top1901_3

de Jonge, A. (2015). *The glass ceiling in Chinese and Indian boardrooms: Women directors in listed firms in China and India*. Elsevier. https://doi.org/10.1016/C2013-0-16842-0

Delors, J. (1996). *Learning: The Treasure Within*. UNESCO.

Department of Health Education and Welfare. (1979). *Protection of human subjects; Notice of report for public comment*.

DiPietro, M. (2010). Theoretical frameworks for academic dishonesty: A comparative review. *To Improve the Academy: A Journal of Educational Development*, *28*(20210331). https://doi.org/10.3998/tia.17063888.0028.018

DuBois, J. M., Anderson, E. E., Chibnall, J., Carroll, K., Gibb, T., Ogbuka, C., & Rubbelke, T. (2013). Understanding research misconduct: A comparative analysis of 120 cases of professional wrongdoing. *Accountability in Research*, *20*(5–6), 320–338. https://doi.org/10.1080/08989621.2013.822248

Editorial. (2022, August 30). *End TU stalemate*. The Himalayan Times. https://thehimalayantimes.com/opinion/editorial-end-tu-stalemate

Elmore, S. A., & Weston, E. H. (2020). Predatory journals: What they are and how to avoid them. *Toxicologic Pathology*, *48*(4), 607–610. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192623320920209

End TU Stalemate (2022, August 30). The Himalayan Times. https://thehimalayantimes.com/opinion/editorial-end-tu-stalemate

Erfanmanesh, M., & Pourhossein, R. (2017). Publishing in predatory open access journals: A Case of Iran. *Publishing Research Quarterly*, *33*(4), 433–444. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12109-017-9547-y

Etgar, S., Blau, I., & Eshet-Alkalai, Y. (2019). White-collar crime in academia: Trends in digital academic dishonesty over time and their effect on penalty severity. *Computers and Education*, *141*(September 2018), 103621. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2019.103621

Ferguson, K., Masur, S., Olson, L., Ramirez, J., Robyn, E., & Schmaling, K. (2007). Enhancing the culture of research ethics on University campuses. *Journal of Academic Ethics*, *5*(2–4), 189–198. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10805-007-9033-9

Frankel, M. S. (2000). Scientific societies as sentinels of responsible research conduct (44535D). *Proceedings of the Society for Experimental Biology and Medicine*, *224*(4), 216–219. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/153537020022400406

Gallant, T. B., & Drinan, P. (2006). Institutionalizing academic integrity: Administrator perceptions and institutional actions. *NASPA Journal*, *43*(4), 61–81. https://doi.org/10.2202/0027-6014.1723

Gallant, T. B., & Drinan, P. (2008). Toward a model of academic integrity institutionalization: Informing practice in postsecondary education. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, *38*(2), 24–43. https://doi.org/10.47678/cjhe.v38i2.508

Gaulee, U., & Bista, K. (2019). *Assessing Nepal's higher education: Current status and future directions for the federal democratic republic.* In K. Bista, S. Sharma, R. L. Raby (Eds.), Higher education in Nepal: Policies and perspectives, 214-229.

Guerrero-Dib, J. G., Portales, L., & Heredia-Escorza, Y. (2020). Impact of academic integrity on workplace ethical behaviour. *International Journal for Educational Integrity*, *16*(1). https://doi.org/10.1007/s40979-020-0051-3

Hair, J. F., Risher, J. J., Sarstedt, M., & Ringle, C. M. (2019). When to use and how to report the results of PLS-SEM. *European Business Review*, *31*(1), 2–24. https://doi.org/10.1108/EBR-11-2018-0203

Harris, R. G. (2001). The knowledge-based economy: intellectual origins and new economic perspectives. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, *3*(1), 21–40. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2370.00052

Heath, T. (2002). A quantitative analysis of Phd students' views of supervision. *Higher Education Research and Development*, *21*(1), 41–53. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360220124648

Henseler, J., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2015). A new criterion for assessing discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modeling. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *43*(1), 115–135. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-014-0403-8

Heriyati, D., & Ekasari, W. F. (2020). A study on academic dishonesty and moral reasoning. *International Journal of Education*, *12*(2), 56–62. https://doi.org/10.17509/ije.v12i2.18653

Hicks, D. (2012). Performance-based university research funding systems. *Research Policy*, *41*(2), 251–261. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2011.09.007

Hopf, H., Krief, A., Mehta, G., & Matlin, S. A. (2019). Fake science and the knowledge crisis: Ignorance can be fatal. *Royal Society Open Science*, *6*(5). https://doi.org/10.1098/rsos.190161

Ion, G., & Castro Ceacero, D. (2017). Transitions in the manifestations of the research culture of Spanish universities. *Higher Education Research and Development*, *36*(2), 311–324. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2016.1208153

Jacobson, D. (1999). Doing research in cyberspace. *Field Methods*, *11*(2). https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X9901100204

Kang, E., & Hwang, H.-J. (2020). The consequences of data rabrication and falsification among researchers. *Journal of Research and Publication Ethics*, *1*(2), 7–10.

Kaplan, W., & Mable, P. (1998). Students' perceptions of academic integrity: Curtailing violations. In D. D. Burnett, L. Rudolph, & K. O. Clifford (Eds.), *Academic integrity matters* (pp. 22–31). National Association of Student Personnel Administrators.

Kathmandu University. (2021). छनौट समितिको आन्तरिक कार्यविधि निर्देशिका - २०६७. [chanauṭa samitikō āntarika kāryavidhi nirdēśikā - 2067]. https://ku.edu.np/file-access/1547

Kibler, W. L. (1994). Addressing Academic Dishonesty: What are Institutions of Higher Education Doing and Not Doing? *NASPA Journal*, *31*(2), 92–101. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220973.1994.11072345

Kim, J., & Park, K. (2018). Ethical modernization: Research misconduct and research ethics reforms in Korea following the Hwang Affair. *Getting to Good: Research Integrity in the Biomedical Sciences*, 394–420. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11948-011-9341-8

Kish-Gephart, J. J., Detert, J. R., Treviño, L. K., & Edmondson, A. C. (2009). Silenced by fear:The nature, sources, and consequences of fear at work. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, *29*, 163–193. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.riob.2009.07.002

Kitchin, H. A. (2003). The Tri-council policy statement and research in cyberspace: Research ethics, the internet, and revising a 'living document'. *Journal of Academic Ethics*, *1*(4). https://doi.org/10.1023/B:JAET.0000025671.83557.fa

Kock, N. (2015). Common method bias in PLS-SEM: A full collinearity assessment approach. *International Journal of E-Collaboration*, *11*(4), 1–10.

https://doi.org/10.4018/ijec.2015100101

Lall, S. (1992). Technological capabilities and industrialization. In *World Development* (Vol. 20, Issue 2).

Lancho-Barrantes, B. S., & Cantu-Ortiz, F. J. (2021). Quantifying the publication preferences of leading research universities. *Scientometrics*, *126*(3), 2269–2310. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-020-03790-1

LaPlaca, P., Lindgreen, A., Vanhamme, J., & di Benedetto, C. A. (2018). How to revise, and revise really well, for premier academic journals. *Industrial Marketing Management*, *72*, 174–180. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2018.01.030

Lauder, H., & Mayhew, K. (2020). Higher education and the labour market: an introduction. In *Oxford Review of Education* (Vol. 46, Issue 1, pp. 1–9). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2019.1699714

Lee, C. (2020). *Why is it important to update honor codes for online learning environments?* https://www.turnitin.com/blog/why-is-it-important-to-update-honor-codes-for-online-learning-environments

Lee, Y. K., Ng, C. J., Sim, J. H., Amira, F., Foong, C. C., Hong, W. H., Sanusi, J., Lim, A. J. H., & Boey, C. C. M. (2021). Barriers to effective research supervision in clinical specialist training: Experience from a medical school in Malaysia. *Malaysian Family Physician*, *16*(3), 77–86. https://doi.org/10.51866/oa1222

Macfarlane, B., Zhang, J., & Pun, A. (2014). Academic integrity: a review of the literature. *Studies in Higher Education*, *39*(2), 339–358. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2012.709495

Mathema, K. B. (2019). चिहान भइसक्यो हाम्रो विश्वविद्यालय, त्यहाँ सबै मृत छन्. [cihāna bhaisakyō hāmrō viśvavidyālaya, tyahām̐ sabai mr̥ta chan]. https://www.setopati.com/opinion/196302

McCabe, D. L., Trevino, L. K., & Butterfield, K. D. (2001). Dishonesty in academic environments: The influence of peer reporting requirements. *Journal of Higher Education*, *72*(1), 29–45. https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2001.11778863

Miracle, V. A. (2016). The belmont report: The triple crown of research ethics. *Dimensions of Critical Care Nursing*, *35*(4), 223–228. https://doi.org/10.1097/DCC.0000000000000186

Molnar, K. K. (2015). Students' perceptions of academic dishonesty: A nine-year study from 2005 to 2013. *Journal of Academic Ethics*, *13*(2), 135–150. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10805-015-9231-9

Nguyen, N. T., & Biderman, M. D. (2008). Studying ethical judgments and behavioral intentions using structural equations: Evidence from the multidimensional ethics scale. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *83*(4), 627–640. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-007-9644-5

Paine, L. S. (2008). Law, ethics, and managerial judgment. *Journal of Legal Studies Education*, *12*(2), 153–170. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-1722.1994.tb00039.x

Paudel, P. K., Giri, B., & Dhakal, S. (2020). Is research in peril in Nepal? Publication trend and research quality from projects funded by the University Grants Commission-Nepal. *Accountability in Research*, 27(7), 444-456. https://doi.org/10.1080/08989621.2020.1768374

Phyak, P. (2018, June 21). Reforming higher education. *MyRepublica*. https://myrepublica.nagariknetwork.com/news/reforming-higher-education/

Rai, N. (2022). *Politicised and polluted: Tribhuvan University, Nepal's biggest academic institute, is sick of protests and padlocks*. OnlineKhabar. https://english.onlinekhabar.com/tribhuvan-university-endless-protests.html

Rojas, F. A., Villar-Mayuntupa, G., & Roman-Gonzalez, A. (2020). The formative research in the development of reading and writing skills and their impact on the development of indexed publications by engineering students. *2020 IEEE World Conference on Engineering Education (EDUNINE)*, 1–4. https://doi.org/10.1109/EDUNINE48860.2020.9149495

Roper, S., Hewitt-Dundas, N., & Love, J. H. (2004). An ex ante evaluation framework for the regional benefits of publicly supported R&D projects. *Research Policy*, *33*(3), 487–509. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2003.10.002

Saiti, A. (2013). Education for economic development: Can Greece achieve it? In P. Sklias & N. Tzifakis (Eds.), *Greece's Horizons Reflecting on the Country's*

Assets and Capabilities (pp. 161–170). The Konstantinos Karamanlis Institute for Democracy Series on European and International Affairs. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-34534-0_13

Scott, W. R. (2005). Institutional theory: Contributing to a theoretical research program. In Smith, K.G., Hitt M.A. (Eds.). *Great minds in management: The process of theory development*, *37*(2), 460-484. https://www.econbiz.de/Record/great-minds-in-management-the-process-of-theory-development-smith-ken/10002817529

Stearns, S. A. (2001). The student-instructor relationship's effect on academic integrity. *Ethics and Behavior*, *11*(3), 275–285. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327019EB1103_6

Subedi, A. (28 Feb 2021). Political interference at Tribhuvan University, The Kathmandu Post

Subedi, B. P., Jha, L. N., Chhetri, R. B., Sharma, A., & Tripathi, G. R. (2018). *Report on Addressing Irregularities and Improving Quality of Degree Research Works and Tribhuvan University*.

Tarka, P. (2018). An overview of structural equation modeling: its beginnings, historical development, usefulness and controversies in the social sciences. *Quality and Quantity*, *52*(1), 313–354. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-017-0469-8

Teague, L. J. (2015). Higher education plays critical role in society: More women leaders can make a difference. *Forum on Public Policy Online*, *2015*(2).

The PLOS ONE Editors. (2017, November 6). Retraction: Anti Japanese encephalitis virus IgM positivity among patients with acute encephalitic syndrome admitted to different hospitals from all over Nepal. *PloS One*, *12*(11), e0187867. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0187867

Tregoning, J. (2018). How will you judge me if not by impact factor? *Nature*, *558*(7710), 345. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-018-05467-5

Trevino, L. K., & Victor, B. (1992). Peer reporting of unethical behavior: social context perspective. *Acadeiny of Mnnogemenl Journal*, *35*(1), 38–64.

Tribhuvan University. (2070 BS). *TU Semester System Operational Guideline: Vol. Tribhuvan University*. Tribhuvan University.

Tribhuvan University. (2073 BS). त्रिभुवन विश्वविद्यालय स्वायत्ततासम्बन्धि नियम २०६२ (२०७३/९/२० सम्मको संशोधन सहित). [tribhuvana viśvavidyālaya svāyattatāsambandhi niyama 2062 (2073/9/20 sammakō saṁśōdhana sahita)] In *Tribhuvan University* (Tribhuvan University Act). https://www.tuservicecommission.edu.np/index.php/rules-regulation.

University Grants Commission. (2018). *Scientific Output from the UGC Research Grants (2008-2018)* (Issue December). http://www.ugcnepal.edu.np/ugc_header_images/Scientific publications from the UGC funded research projects (2008-2018) update 12-18-18.pdf

University Grants Commission. (2021). *Research development and innovation programs implementation guidelines, 2021*.

Vazire, S. (2017). Quality uncertainty erodes trust in science. *Collabra: Psychology*, *3*(1). https://doi.org/10.1525/collabra.74

Wilcox, J. R., & Ebbs, S. L. (1992). The leadership compass: Values and ethics in higher education. In *ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No.1* (Vol. 1). https://doi.org/10.1016/0099-1333(93)90766-x

Williams, S. G. (1899). *The history of modern education: An account of the course of educational opinion and practice from the revival of learning to the present decade*. Palala Press.

WIPO. (2021). *Global Innovation Index 2021: Nepal*. https://www.wipo.int/edocs/pubdocs/en/wipo_pub_gii_2021/np.pdf

World Bank. (2002). *Constructing knowledge societies : new challenges for tertiary education.* World Bank. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/15224

ANNEX

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Survey Regarding Academic Integrity in Nepal

Mandated for policy review and research on a wide range of issues of Nepal, Policy Research Institute (PRI) is a Think Tank of the Government of Nepal. Currently, PRI is undertaking a research project titled "sources of academic dishonesty in Nepal's higher education system" with the objective to analyse the sources and practice of academic integrity in the sector.

This online survey aims to study the perception of students, faculties, policymakers and those closely observing the higher education system of Nepal about what they think are the sources of academic integrity.

PRI would be grateful if you could spend some 15 minutes to respond to the questions below. Your responses will remain anonymous as the questionnaire does not collect your personal information directly or indirectly (through the use of cookies). All the responses collected through this survey will be processed using statistical application and only the inferences derived from all observations will be drawn to meet the research objectives.

Thank you very much for your kind cooperation.

Policy Research Institute,
Information and Knowledge Management Department

* Required

1. Kindly identify your gender from following alternatives *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Male
- ◯ Female
- ◯ Prefer not to be identified
- ◯ Other: _____

2. What is your age group? (In years) *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ below 30
- ◯ 31 to 40
- ◯ 41 to 50
- ◯ 51 to 60
- ◯ 60 above

3. What is your highest level of academic degree? *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Bachelor's degree
- ◯ Master's degree
- ◯ MPhil
- ◯ Doctoral degree

4. Which of the following broad academic disciplines best matches your highest academic qualification *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Social Science (Economics, sociology, etc)
- ◯ Life Science (Botany, Zoology etc)
- ◯ Applied Science (Engineering, Medicine, Agriculture etc)
- ◯ Physical Science (Physics, Chemistry ect)
- ◯ Formal Sciences (Mathematics, Statistics etc.)

5. What is your current profession? *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Tenure track professorship
- ◯ Part time (Adjunct) professorship
- ◯ Student (Master or PhD)
- ◯ Researcher
- ◯ Service sector
- ◯ Government jobs

6. Where did you graduate from? (highest academic degree) *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ University from Nepal
- ◯ University from India
- ◯ South Asian universities other than Nepal and India
- ◯ Other: other than south Asian universities

7. How many articles (peer-reviewed) have you published? *

_____

8. How many books have you published from Nepalese publisher/s? *

_____

9. How many books have you published from foreign publisher/s? *

_____

10. Where are you currently working? *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Nepal
- ◯ India
- ◯ In South Asian countries (other than Nepal and India)
- ◯ Outside of South Asian Countries

Questions on Academic Integrity

This section has 29 statements regarding academic integrity. Please tick the options depending on the extent you agree/disagree with the statements.

11. The academic and research institutions of Nepal do not consider the instances of violation of research ethics as a serious issue. (नेपालका प्राज्ञिक तथा अनुसन्धान क्षेत्रका संस्थाहरूले अनुसन्धान आचार संहिता उल्लङ्घनका विषयलाई गम्भीररूपमा लिने गरेको देखिदैन) *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Neutral
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Strongly Agree

12. Academic ethics is one of the least discussed academic concerns of the Nepalese academia. (प्राज्ञिक आचार संहिताबारे नेपालको प्राज्ञिक क्षेत्रमा खासै बहस हुदैन ।) *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

13. Nepal's academic institutions do not offer courses on research ethics and academic integrity. (नेपालका प्राज्ञिक संस्थाहरूले अनुसन्धान आचारलाई आफ्ना पाठ्यक्रममा राखी पठनपाठन गरेको देखिदैन ।) *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

14. Nepal's higher education system is relatively weak in research culture. (अनुसन्धान अभ्यास र संस्कृतिमा नेपालको शिक्षा क्षेत्र सापेक्षिक रूपमा कमजोर देखिन्छ ।) *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

15. Nepal's academic institutions do not pay required attention to research compliance. (नेपालको प्राज्ञिक संस्थाहरूले अनुसन्धान आचार पालनामा आवश्यक ध्यान दिएको जस्तो देखिदैन।) *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Neutral
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Strongly Agree

16. Ensuring proper guidance to researchers by supervisors contributes to the quality and rigor of a research, which, however, is lacking in Nepal. (सुपरिवेक्षकले अनुसन्धानकर्तालाई दिने उचित सल्लाह र दिशानिर्देशले अनुसन्धानको गुणस्तर अभिवृद्धि गर्न सहयोग पुग्ने भएतापनि नेपालमा यो अभ्यासको अभाव रहेको छ ।) *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Neutral
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Strongly Agree

17. Academic misconduct is often understood as synonymous with plagiarism. It is an incomplete understanding, as academic misconduct includes many other forms, which are more serious than plagiarism. (प्राज्ञिक दुराचार (academic misconduct) र बौद्धिक चोरी (plagiarism) लाई अक्सर समान अर्थमा बुझ्ने गरिन्छ जुन पूर्ण बुझाइ होइन। प्राज्ञिक दुराचार भित्र बौद्धिक चोरी भन्दा अन्य तर धेरै गम्भीर विषयहरू समेत पर्दछन्।) *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Neutral
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Strongly Agree

18. Academic dishonesty was a practice in Nepal, it exists now and goes on unchecked. (नेपालमा प्राज्ञिक बेइमानी (academic dishonesty) पहिले देखि नै चल्दै आएको छ, वर्तमानमा पनि कायम छ र भविष्यमा समेत निरन्तरता पाउने देखिन्छ।) *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Neutral
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Strongly Agree

19. Lack of sufficient research funds is directly associated with the increase in academic dishonesty in the universities and research institutions. (अनुसन्धानलाई आवश्यक पर्ने बजेट तथा कोषको अभावको कारण अनुसन्धानमा देखिने प्राज्ञिक बेइमानीमा वृद्धि हुन सक्छ।) *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Neutral
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Strongly Agree

20. Speaking up and acting against academic integrity now can meaningfully decrease academic integrity practice. (प्राज्ञिक आचारसंहिता उलंघनबारे आवाज उठाएमा र त्यसको विरुद्ध तत्काल काम थालेमा आचार पालनामा वृद्धि हुन सक्छ।) *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Neutral
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Strongly Agree

21. Nepal's academic and research institutions lack strict academic integrity policies as a result of which students' outlook are shaped accordingly ultimately contributing to dishonest academic practice. (नेपालका अनुसन्धान संस्थाहरूले आवश्यक प्राज्ञिक आचार नीतिहरू निर्माण नगरेका कारण प्राज्ञिक आचारको विषयमा विद्यार्थीहरूको दृष्टीकोण पनि सोही अनुसार बन्दै गएको छ जसले गर्दा भविष्यमा उनीहरूले प्राज्ञिक बेइमानी अभ्यास गर्ने सम्भावना देखिन्छ ।) *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Neutral
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Strongly Agree

22. Faculties, during their professional tenures, have come across a lot of instances of plagiarism but are helpless to raise the issue due to lack of penalizing provisions. (नेपालका विश्वविद्यालयका प्राध्यापकहरूले आफ्ना कार्यकालमा बौद्धिक चोरीका घटनाहरू देखेका वा अनुभव गरेका हुन्छन् तर कारवाहीका लागि आवश्यक प्रावधानहरू नभएका कारण केही गर्न सक्दैनन् ।) *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Neutral
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Strongly Agree

23. A faculty member recruited based more on research criteria of recruitment tends to work more towards preventing academic dishonesty. (अन्य आधारहरू भन्दा अनुसन्धान अनुभवलाई आधार मानी नियुक्त भएका प्राध्यापकहरू प्राज्ञिक बेइमानी रोकथाम गर्न बढी सक्रिय हुन्छन् ।) *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Neutral
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Strongly Agree

24. Students generally change, update and modify others' original works, make them part of their dissertations and submit to their academic institutions. (विद्यार्थीहरूले अर्काको सोधपत्रहरूमा केही थपघट गरी वा परिवर्तन वा अद्यावधिक गरी आफ्नो सृजना भन्दै बुझाउने गरेको समेत पाइन्छ ।) *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Neutral
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Strongly Agree

25. Students tend to copy whole or part of other writers' texts and submit as their own. (विद्यार्थीहरूले अर्काको सोधपत्रहरू पूर्ण वा आंशिकरूपमा परिवर्तन गरी आफ्नो सृजना भन्दै बुझाउने गरेको पाइन्छ ।) *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Neutral
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Strongly Agree

26. Scholars and students alike publish journal articles basing on others' theses. * (प्राज्ञ तथा विद्यार्थीहरूले अन्य व्यक्तिको सोधपत्रहरूमा आधारित भई जर्नलमा लेख लेख्ने गरेको समेत पाइन्छ ।)

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Neutral
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Strongly Agree

27. Data fabrication and manipulation is a normal practice among Nepalese academia. (नेपाली प्राज्ञिक क्षेत्रमा अनुसन्धानका क्रममा तथ्यांक तोडमोड गर्ने चलन अझै अभ्यासमा छ ।) *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Neutral
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Strongly Agree

28. Manipulating results of research works to make interpretations interesting or to align it with the established theories is a common practice. (अनुसन्धानलाई थप रुचिपूर्ण बनाउन वा स्थापित सिद्धान्तसँग सम्बन्ध देखाउनका लागि अनुसन्धानको निष्कर्षलाई हेरफेर गर्ने काम समेत अभ्यासमा छ ।) *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Neutral
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Strongly Agree

29. Journal review process in Nepal is more ritualistic than scientific.(नेपालको जर्नल समीक्षा(peer-review) प्रक्रिया प्रेशागत र वैज्ञानिक भन्दा पनि बढी कर्मकाण्डी किसिमको छ भन्ने गरिन्छ ।) *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

30. Nepal's academic institutions have promoted their faculty members also based on the articles published in predatory and low-quality journals. (न्युन गुणस्तर र predatory जर्नलहरूमा प्रकाशित आलेखहरूको आधारमा समेत नेपालका प्राज्ञिक क्षेत्रका विज्ञहरूको पदोन्नती हुने गरेको छ ।) *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

31. Faculties communicate available honor polices of their academic institutions to students frequently. (आफ्ना प्राज्ञिक संस्थाहरूले निर्माण गरी कार्यान्वयनमा ल्याएका अनुसन्धान आचार नीतिहरूको बारेमा प्राध्यापकहरूले विद्यार्थीहरूलाई बारम्बार जानकारी गराउछन् ।) *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

32. Serious levels of plagiarism committed by university faculties were made public in Nepal however concerned authorities unheeded the gravity of the issue. (विश्वविद्यालयका प्राध्यापकहरूमाथि गम्भीर प्रकृतिका बौद्धिक चोरीको आरोप लाग्दा समेत सम्बन्धित विश्वविद्यालय प्रशासनहरूले आवश्यक कारवाही नगरेको भन्ने गरिन्छ।) *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

33. Nepal's plagiarism practice has to do more with lack of knowledge on plagiarism than other intentions and circumstances. (बौद्धिक चोरी कार्य अन्य कमजोरीका कारण भन्दा पनि अज्ञानताका कारण बढी हुने गर्दछ।) *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

34. Stricter provisions on academic integrity curbs academic freedom ultimately encourages the practice of academic dishonesty. (प्राज्ञिक आचारसम्बन्धी नीति तथा प्रावधानको शक्त र कठोर कार्यान्वयनले प्राज्ञिक स्वतन्त्रतामा अवरोध गर्ने भएकाले अन्ततः प्राज्ञिक बेइमानीलाई नै प्रोत्साहित गर्दछ।) *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

35. Academic writing that depends on copying relevant texts on an issue from the internet and paraphrasing them to suit ones' context promotes academic dishonesty. (इन्टरनेटबाट सान्दर्भिक विषयवस्तुका पाठहरू लिने र त्यसलाई आफ्नो लेखको सन्दर्भअनुसार तोडमोडगरी व्याख्या गर्ने कार्यले पनि प्राज्ञिक अनाचार नै झल्काउछ।) *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Neutral
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Strongly Agree

36. Possible personal benefits of academic dishonesty outweigh its risks in the Nepalese context. (नेपालको सन्दर्भमा प्राज्ञिक अनाचार गर्नेले यस्तो अनाचार गर्नुमा जोखिमभन्दा व्यक्तिगत फाइदा बढी देख्छ त्यसैले सो कार्य गर्न हिच्किचाउदैन।) *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Neutral
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Strongly Agree

37. Academic institutions in Nepal should practice retracting research articles published in Nepali journals, seizing degrees and penalizing otherwise if scholars are found involved in academic misconducts. (यदि प्राज्ञिक आचारसंहिता पालन नगरेको र बौद्धिक चोरीसमेतमा संलग्न भएको पाइएमा विश्वविद्यालयहरूले सम्बन्धित व्यक्तिको लेखहरूलाई अमान्य घोषणा गर्ने, सम्बन्धित तहको पढाइको प्रमाणपत्र नै जफत गर्नेलगायत अन्य तरिकाले कारवाही गर्नुपर्छ ।) *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Neutral
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Strongly Agree

38. Undue political interventions in academic institutions weaken the ethical research environment ultimately contributing to promote academic dishonesty. (प्राज्ञिक संस्थाहरूमा हुने अनुचित राजनीतिक हस्तक्षेपले आचार र मूल्यमा आधारित अनुसन्धान वातावरण बिगार्नुका साथै अन्ततः प्राज्ञिक अनाचारलाई बढवा दिन्छ ।) *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Neutral
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Strongly Agree

39. Due to lack of legal provisions, public academic institutions of Nepal cannot ban even those involved in academic ethical misconducts. (कानुनी संयन्त्र र प्रावधानको आभावका कारण नेपालका सार्वजनिक प्राज्ञिक संस्थाहरूले प्राज्ञिक अनाचार गर्ने समेतलाई कारवाही गर्न नसकेको अवस्था कायम छ ।) *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Neutral
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Strongly Agree

40. Would you please share with us the aspects of academic dishonesty or examples other than those discussed in the questionnaire above, if any?

About Authors

Dipendra Prasad Pant

Mr. Pant holds Master's degrees in English Literature and Sociology form Tribhuvan University. An Analyst at PRI, he brings with him years of experience in teaching, civil society activism and P&ME (planning monitoring and evaluation). His areas of expertise include social research, research governence, projects design and results-based project management. He has edited a dozen of volumes of human rights journal, co-edited five books on human rights, conflict-era enforced disappearances and COVID-19 pandemic. He has also undertaken research on human rights education and foreign direct investment besides publishing articles in national and international journals and newspapers.

Bikram Acharya, PhD

Bikram Acharya, holds a PhD in Technology Management Economics and Policy from the Seoul National University, Republic of Korea. Currently, he is a Research Fellow under Information and Knowledge Management Department of Policy Research Institute. He brings with him a diverse experience in academic and policy research. To his credit are a number of peer-reviewed articles in international journals and some books chapters. His areas of interests include consumer behaviour, demand and technology forecasting and public policy. At PRI Dr. Acharya also serves as the Executive Editor of PRI's journal: Nepal Public Policy Review.

Mukunda Raj Kattel, PhD

Mukunda Raj Kattel holds a PhD in human rights and peace from Mahidol University, Thailand. A Senior Research Fellow and the Head of Information and Knowledge Management Department at PRI, he brings with him years of professional experience, national and international, in human rights documentation, research and advocacy; organisational leadership; post-conflict peacebuilding; and capacity building of change agents (human rights defenders, civil society organisations and national human rights institutions, in particular). His current area of professional interest is in knowledge management for social transformation.

PRI is a think tank of the Government of Nepal established on 26 September 2018 in accordance with the Policy Research Institute Board (Formation) Ordinance with a vision to contribute to effective and responsive public policy for national prosperity. PRI's mission is to establish itself as a credible institution that offers informed public policy and its goal is to generate reliable, evidence-based and transformative knowledge for public policy. Its seven core values – quality, objectivity, integrity, diversity, transparency, accountability and engagement – define its workings.

PRI carries out policy research on all issues and sectors of public policy concerns – through five thematic centres and 18 units – and recommends to the Government of Nepal what reforms it has to undertake in each of these policy areas. All researches are conducted in accordance with PRI's public policy research process and standard, which form part of a broad policy cycle.

Knowledge management is an important component of PRI. It operates a public policy dialogue forum as a regular mechanism for learning, sharing and debating policy issues. In PRI's belief, public policy formation requires the combination of three types of knowledge: (a) scientific knowledge generated through research and analysis, (b) administrative knowledge gathered through bureaucratic experiences and (c) societal knowledge developed through social and political processes, such as political debates, media advocacy as well as people's experiences.

9789937955935