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Ethical Standards in Higher Education

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Abstract

A study was conducted regarding ways in which higher education institutions can improve ethics. Theoretical frameworks used included: Virtue ethics, deontological and environmental ethics theories. The total sampled written texts were 94. Non-probability sampling was used. The type that was used was online convenience sampling through web scraping. Philosophical assumption that guided this study was interpretivism and the approach was Qualitative. Case study was used as a design and content analysis as a method of data analysis. Some of the findings of the study included but were not limited to the following: Higher education's ethical and professional standards are critical for retaining the trust of students, staff, and the larger society. Institutions that prioritise ethics and standards will be better positioned to carry out their goal and positively impact society. The study recommended the following to Higher education stakeholders: Create faculty-led ethics committees to evaluate and advise on ethical issues such as teaching, research, and academic freedom. Make certain that these committees are composed of a diverse spectrum of faculty members with ethics expertise; Create explicit rules and protocols for using AI, machine learning, and big data ethically in academic research and administrative processes. Address the issues of discrimination, privacy, and accountability in AI applications; and Involve alumni in ethics programs and projects to encourage them to support and contribute to ethical education and research. Create opportunities for alumni to advise students on how to develop ethical professions.

Keywords: Deontological ethics, Environmental Ethics, Faculty-Led Ethics Committees, Higher Education Institutions, Virtual Ethics.

1. Introduction

Higher education ethics and standards are critical for preserving academic institutions' integrity, quality, and credibility. These values regulate faculty, administrators, and students' behavior while maintaining academic quality and fairness. Some essential components of higher education ethics and standards: Academic integrity is a key principle in higher education that includes honesty in research, teaching, and learning. Plagiarism and Cheating: In order to sustain academic honesty, institutions must create clear regulations and repercussions for

plagiarism and cheating (Park, 2003). Ethical Research Conduct: Higher education researchers must follow ethical norms when performing and reporting research (AERA, 2011). Promoting inclusion and diversity in higher education is critical for providing an equitable learning environment (Chang et al., 2006).

Student Rights and obligations: Institutions should define and convey explicit student rights and obligations in order to foster a supportive and courteous campus culture (AAUP, 1996). Quality assurance measures are used by accreditation bodies and institutions to guarantee that programs and courses satisfy set requirements. Conflicts of Interest: To avoid bias and ensure transparency, faculty and administrators must handle conflicts of interest (AAUP, 2018). Institutions should endeavor to make higher education accessible and affordable to all qualified students (Lumina Foundation, 2017).

Accountability: Higher education institutions must answer to a variety of stakeholders, including students, taxpayers, and accrediting agencies (Bok, 2003). Global Ethical Standards: In areas such as international partnerships and research collaborations, higher education institutions should address global ethical standards (UNESCO, 2017). These concepts and norms, taken together, contribute to higher education's ethical underpinning, ensuring that academic institutions serve the best interests of both their students and society at large.

Student Privacy and Data Protection: When processing student data, institutions must observe ethical principles to ensure privacy and security (U.S. Department of Education, 2021). Professional Development for teachers and Staff: Encouraging continual professional development for teachers and staff is critical for maintaining high-quality education. Community Engagement and Service-Learning: Institutions should encourage community engagement and service-learning to enhance civic

responsibility and ethical leadership (Eyler & Giles, 1999).

Ethical Use of Technology: Ethical considerations should guide the integration of technology in teaching, research, and administration (Bates et al., 2003). Admissions and Fair Practices: Admission policies should be transparent, fair, and merit-based to ensure equal opportunities for all applicants (National Association for College Admission Counseling. (2017). Evaluation and Promotion of Faculty: Evaluation and promotion processes should be based on ethical standards such as teaching excellence, research achievements, and service to the institution and community (American Association of University Professors, 2018). Transparent Governance: Ethical governance methods in higher education institutions include transparency, collaborative decision- making, and accountability (American Council on Education, 2017). Ethical internationalization efforts should consider cultural sensitivity, academic freedom, and ethical relationships with universities abroad (Wit, 2015).

1.2 Research Question

1. How Higher Education Institutions Can uphold ethics

1.3 Research Objective

1. Determine ways in which higher education institutions can uphold ethics.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Virtual ethics, deontological ethics and environmental ethics theories guided this study.

2.1.1 Virtue Ethics

Virtue ethics is the main theoretical framework that guided this study. Virtue ethics is a significant ethical theory in philosophy that emphasises on people'

moral character as the foundation for ethical decision-making. In contrast to other ethical theories such as consequentialism (which evaluates actions based on their effects) and deontology (which emphasises conformity to moral laws and obligations), virtue ethics focuses on the development of virtuous character characteristics in individuals.

This ethical framework derives from the works of ancient Greek philosophers, most notably Aristotle. The following are the essential components and principles of virtue ethics:

Virtue: The concept of virtue, which refers to ethically acceptable character attributes, is central to virtue ethics. Honesty, courage, compassion, integrity, and wisdom are examples of virtues. According to virtue ethicists, acquiring these virtues should be the major goal of ethics. Eudaimonia: According to Aristotle, the ultimate purpose of human life is eudaimonia, which is commonly translated as "happiness" or "flourishing." According to virtue ethicists, leading a virtuous life leads to eudaimonia. In this ethical paradigm, virtue and eudaimonia are inextricably linked. Moral Exemplars: Moral exemplars—individuals who exemplify virtuous character traits—are frequently cited as role models in virtue ethics. People can develop their own noble character by observing and imitating these folks. Emphasis on Character: Rather than focusing merely on actions or consequences, virtue ethics places a great emphasis on persons' moral character. In other words, it is not only about what you do, but also about who you are.

Moral Development and Education: Virtue ethics promotes moral education and personal development. It contends that people should acquire virtues via practice and reflection in order to become better persons over time. Unlike deontological ethics, which is based on fixed moral norms, virtue ethics does not provide a rigid set of rules or guidelines for judging what is morally proper or wrong. It instead employs practical wisdom (phronesis) to evaluate

specific situations. Critics of virtue ethics claim that it is ambiguous and lacks clear direction in moral quandaries. Furthermore, it may be culturally biased because what counts virtuous character qualities differs from one culture to the next.

Proponents of virtue ethics, on the other hand, consider these as advantages because they allow for flexibility and recognition of context in ethical decision-making. Aristotle, who established this ethical theory, as well as subsequent philosophers such as Alasdair MacIntyre and Martha Nussbaum, have made substantial contributions to its development and application in current ethics. Business ethics, healthcare ethics, and environmental ethics are just a few examples of where virtue ethics has been used.

2.1.2 Deontological Ethics Theory

The other theory that guided this study was deontological ethics. Deontological ethics is a moral and ethical philosophy that emphasises the significance of following moral rules, principles, or responsibilities while making ethical decisions, regardless of the consequences. The word "deontology" comes from the Greek terms "deon," which means "duty," and "logos," which means "science" or "study."

The following are key characteristics of deontological ethics: Moral Absolutism: Deontologists think that certain behaviors are always right or bad, regardless of context or consequences. This is in contrast to consequentialist theories like utilitarianism, which assess the morality of actions based on their effects. Moral Rules and Duties: Deontological ethics is frequently related with the idea that individuals must follow moral rules or duties. Typically, these principles are expressed as categorical imperatives, which are instructions that apply universally and unconditionally.

A renowned deontologist, Immanuel Kant, presented numerous formulations of the categorical imperative

to aid ethical decision-making. Deontological theories frequently emphasise the relevance of the agent's intentions behind their actions. Even if the outcome is unfavorable, an action may be regarded as morally justified if it is undertaken with good intentions. Duty-Based Ethics: The emphasis in deontology is on duty or obligation. Individuals are morally bound to execute some behaviors because they are intrinsically right, whether they want to or not.

Individual Rights and Respect: Deontological ethics is frequently related with the belief that persons have particular rights and inherent worth. Respecting people and acknowledging their moral agency is a crucial part of deontological ethics. Immanuel Kant, one of the most well-known proponents of deontological ethics, developed his ethical theory in works such as the "Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals" and the "Critique of Practical Reason." Kant's moral philosophy is founded on rationality, autonomy, and the categorical imperative.

2.1.3 Environmental Ethics Theory

The last theory that was used in this research was environmental ethics theory. Environmental ethics is the study of the moral principles and ideals that should govern human interactions with the natural environment. It investigates the moral obligations of people, society, and governments in how they handle the environment and its nonhuman inhabitants.

The goal of environmental ethics is to give a framework for making ethical decisions about environmental issues, conservation, and sustainable development. Environmental ethics' key principles and ideas include: Anthropocentrism: This viewpoint prioritises human interests and frequently regards the environment solely for its utility to humans. It may place human well-being and economic interests ahead of nature's intrinsic value. Biocentrism: Biocentrism considers all living beings morally, not just humans. It claims that all life forms have intrinsic

worth and should be treated with dignity and respect. Ecocentrism is a larger perspective that emphasises the intrinsic importance of ecosystems, landscapes, and the Earth as a whole. It regards the overall health and stability of ecosystems as morally significant.

Environmental ethicists dispute whether nature has intrinsic worth (value in and of itself) or only instrumental value (value for the services it offers to humanity). Those who believe in intrinsic worth say that nature has value apart from its utility to humans. Stewardship: This viewpoint urges humanity to act as responsible environmental stewards, caring for the Earth and its resources for future generations. It signifies duty and concern for the natural environment.

Deep Ecology: Deep ecology is a philosophy that promotes environmental sustainability and harmony with nature by emphasising the interconnection of all life and advocating for a fundamental transformation in human values and actions. Sustainability: The notion of sustainability is frequently promoted in environmental ethics, which strives to use natural resources in a way that does not deplete or destroy them, preserving their availability for future generations. Environmental Justice is a concept that addresses the disparities in environmental burdens and benefits faced by various communities, particularly marginalised and vulnerable populations. It advocates for a more equitable allocation of environmental gains and costs.

Here are some notable environmental ethicists: Aldo Leopold (1887-1948): Aldo Leopold is widely regarded as one of the fathers of current environmental ethics. He is well known for his book "A Sand County Almanac," in which he popularised the term "land ethic." Leopold maintained that humans' ethical concerns should extend beyond other humans to include the entire natural environment. Rachel Carson (1907-1964) was a marine biologist and author whose book "Silent Spring" was influential in the

environmental movement. Her work raised awareness about the environmental and wildlife hazards of pesticides, particularly DDT. Carson's work helped to shape the moral obligation to conserve the environment.

Arne Naess (1912-2009): Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess is best known for developing deep ecology, a philosophical perspective that emphasises the intrinsic worth of all living beings and ecosystems. Deep ecology advocates for a significant shift in human attitudes toward the environment and a fundamental adjustment in our relationship with nature. Holmes Rolston III (born 1932) is a philosopher who has made substantial contributions to environmental ethics. He is well-known for his work on nature's intrinsic value and the ethical implications of biodiversity protection.

According to Rolston, the diversity of life has intrinsic value and should be protected. Singer, Peter (born 1946): Peter Singer has made contributions to environmental ethics despite being best known for his work in animal ethics and utilitarianism. He contends that we have moral responsibility to nonhuman species and that ethical considerations should influence our interactions with the environment. Baird Callicott was born in 1941. J. Baird Callicott is an environmental philosopher who has studied environmental ethics and conservation biology. He has investigated the links between ethics, ecology, and conservation, highlighting the need for biodiversity preservation.

Paul Taylor (born 1923) is well-known in environmental ethics for his biocentric viewpoint, which contends that all living organisms have inherent worth and should be recognized in ethical decision-making. He wrote the renowned book "Respect for Nature," in which he discusses and supports this point of view. These are just a few of the major environmental ethicists. Environmental ethics is a broad area with many various perspectives and methodologies, but they all strive to answer ethical problems about humanity's connection with the natural world.

2.2 Ways In Which Higher Education Institutions Can Uphold Ethics

Institutions should engage in continual assessment and improvement processes to guarantee they meet ethical standards and accomplish their educational missions (Walvoord et al., 2010). Social justice and equity should be actively promoted by higher education institutions in admissions, curriculum, and campus culture (Harper et al., 2008). Student Support Services: It is an ethical imperative to provide comprehensive support services, such as counselling, academic advising, and career assistance, to help students achieve.

Dispute Resolution and Grievance Procedures: To maintain due process, institutions must implement fair and transparent procedures for dispute resolution and grievance handling (American Association of University Professors, 2004). Faculty and Student Rights: It is critical to uphold both faculty and student rights, especially academic freedom, in order to sustain an ethical academic environment. Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) and Research Ethics: IRBs are crucial in upholding ethical standards in institutional human subjects' research (Office for Human Research Protections, 2021).

Ethical norms compel institutions to make reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities in order to ensure equal access to education (U.S. Department of Education, 2021). Ethical Leadership: At the institutional level, ethical leadership sets the tone for ethical behaviour throughout the higher education community (Sosik, 2010). Transparency in Finances: To sustain trust with students and stakeholders, institutions should be honest in their financial operations, including tuition and fee systems (NACUBO, 2021).

Higher education institutions should actively engage with their local communities, giving resources and knowledge for the improvement of society (Saltmarsh, 2011). Assessment of Learning Outcomes: To ensure educational efficacy, ethical standards demand institutions to assess and constantly improve student learning outcomes (Suskie, 2018). Faculty Development and Training: To improve teaching efficacy and assure adherence to ethical standards, institutions should invest in ongoing faculty development and training (Weimer, 2017). Intellectual Property Rights: To protect the work of teachers, staff, and students in higher education, clear intellectual property regulations are required (American Association Of Professors, 2014).

Student-Faculty Relationships: To avoid conflicts of interest and to provide a healthy learning environment, ethical principles should address acceptable limits in student-faculty relationships (American Association of University Professors, 2003). Environmental Sustainability: As part of their ethical responsibilities, higher education institutions should promote environmental sustainability in campus operations and curricula (Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education, 2021). Institutions must use assessment data ethically, ensuring that it informs improvements in teaching and learning rather than punitive actions (Banta et al., 2014).

Conflicts of Interest in Research Funding: Ethical guidelines should address conflicts of interest in research funding to ensure research integrity (National Institutes of Health, 2021). Ethical Big Data and Analytics Use: Institutions that use big data and analytics in decision-making should do so in an ethical manner that protects student privacy and data security (Campbell et al., 2007). Crisis Management and Ethical Communication: During times of crisis, institutions should prioritise ethical communication in

order to retain stakeholder trust and transparency (Coombs et al., 2012).

Ethical norms in online education should preserve students' access to and quality of education (Quality Matters, 2021). Cultural Competence and Inclusion: Promoting cultural competence and inclusion is critical for fostering an ethical, varied, and inviting atmosphere in higher education (Museus et al., 2009). Mental Health and Well-being: Ethical standards should prioritise students', faculty's, and staff's mental health and well-being, ensuring access to support services and a healthy work-study environment (Keyes, 2007).

Maintaining free speech and academic freedom is vital to supporting open dialogue and the quest of knowledge in higher education (American Association of University Professors, 1940). Institutions should maintain ethical practices in study abroad and international programs, such as student safety, cultural sensitivity, and academic rigour (Paige et al., 2009). Ethical rules should include the usage of social media and online conduct by students, instructors, and staff in order to maintain professionalism and respect (Veletsianos, 2020). Institutions should provide tools and training on ethical decision-making frameworks to assist professors and administrators in navigating difficult ethical problems (Rest, 1984).

Student Feedback and Evaluation: Ethical standards should ensure that student feedback is collected and used in a fair and courteous manner when evaluating professors and courses. Anti-Discrimination and Title IX Compliance: To combat gender-based discrimination and harassment, institutions should follow anti-discrimination policies and Title IX laws (U.S. Department of Education, 2021). Admissions Testing Ethics: To ensure fairness and validity, the use of standardised testing in admissions choices should be guided by ethical considerations (National Association for College Admission Counselling, 2016).

Global citizenship promotion (UNESCO, 2015) Education is an ethical necessity for preparing students to confront global concerns and act in responsible global citizenship. Institutions should incorporate community participation and social responsibility into their mission and operations, creating ethical leadership and service (Bringle et al., 2010).

Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence in Assessment: Institutions should ensure that AI-based assessment systems are built and utilised in an ethical manner in order to avoid bias and discrimination (Joint Research Centre, European Commission. (2021). Ethical Treatment of Adjunct and Contingent Faculty: Ethical standards should cover adjunct and contingent faculty members' fair treatment, job security, and salary (American Association of University Professors, 2019). Climate Change and Sustainability Education: It is the ethical responsibility of institutions to incorporate climate change and sustainability education into their curricula (United Nations, 2015). Ethical Communication in Online Learning Environments: Ethical principles should be used to online learning to ensure courteous and inclusive communication between students and professors (Flower et al., 1984).

Ethical norms should oblige schools to prioritise accessible technology and universal design principles to ensure that all students have equitable access to education (Burgstahler et al., 2008). Institutions should enter into international cooperation with ethical considerations in mind, while also respecting local traditions and beliefs (Knight, 2012). Ethical Journalism and Media Literacy: To help students navigate an information-rich world, ethical norms should foster the development of media literacy and critical thinking skills (Center for Media Literacy, 2021).

Ethical Considerations in Global Research Collaborations: Researchers and institutions participating in global research collaborations should follow ethical norms that encourage fairness, data sharing, and mutual gain (World Medical Association, 2013). Ethics in Campus Security and Policing: To maintain the safety and well-being of the campus community, ethical norms should drive campus security and policing practices (International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators, 2021).

Ethical Considerations in Health and Wellness Programs: Institutions should prioritise student and staff health and wellness and ensure that health programs are planned and conducted in an ethical manner (American College Health Association, 2021). Ethical Oversight and Research Misconduct: Institutions should have processes in place to address research misconduct and ensure the integrity of scholarly research (Office of Research Integrity, 2021).

Conflict Resolution and Mediation: To address issues within the academic community, ethical standards should incorporate methods for conflict resolution and mediation (Folger et al., 2019). Higher education institutions should maintain ethical fundraising procedures to ensure openness and donor trust (Council for Advancement and Support of Education, 2021). Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Ethical concerns: Ethical concerns should govern the development and application of AI in higher education, notably in areas such as admissions and student support (European Commission, 2019).

Quality Assurance and accreditation: To ensure educational excellence, ethical norms should be integral to the quality assurance and accreditation processes (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2021). Interdisciplinary Collaboration and Research Ethics: Ethical principles for interdisciplinary research should address the unique issues of data sharing and authorship (Klein, 2010). Ethical Leadership and Governance: At the highest levels of governance, ethical leadership is critical for creating the tone and culture of the institution.

Ethics in Study Design and Human Subjects Research: Researchers and institutions must follow ethical principles when designing and conducting human subjects research (National Institutes of Health, 2021). Ethics in Innovation and Entrepreneurship: Ethical concerns should lead higher education innovation and entrepreneurship endeavors, combining commercialization with ethical responsibility (Dees & Anderson, 2008). Institutions must handle student data responsibly, protecting privacy and security while using data for educational progress (Data & Society Research Institute. (2018).

These concerns illustrate the various and complicated ethical difficulties that higher education institutions face in an educational context that is continually evolving. Addressing these challenges with integrity and transparency is critical to preserving the academic community's trust and ethical norms.

3. Methodology

3.1 Philosophical Assumption

The philosophical assumption that guided this study was interpretivism. Qualitative approaches such as participant observation, interviews, content analysis, and discourse analysis are commonly used in interpretivist research. These methods enable researchers to collect rich, context-specific data that can aid in the discovery of subjective meanings and interpretations that people and groups ascribe to their experiences.

3.2 Research Approach

The study adopted a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research is a research method that seeks to comprehend and investigate the breadth and complexities of human experiences, behaviours, and social phenomena. In contrast to quantitative research, which strives to quantify data and establish statistical links, qualitative research seeks to reveal underlying meanings, patterns, and nuances within a specific context.

3.3 Research Design

Case study research design was adopted in this study. Textual, visual, or auditory data, such as documents, photographs, or media content, are carefully analyzed. Researchers look for themes, patterns, and meanings in data to acquire insight into a certain phenomenon.

3.4 Sampling

Non-probability sampling was used. The type of non-probability sampling that was used was convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is the practice of choosing content that is conveniently accessible or readily available. This method is easy, but it may create bias because it does not assure that the sample is representative of the total population of material. Online convenience sampling was used. Online convenience sampling can be an effective method for studies with low resources, short timelines, or a target audience that is predominantly active online. The total sample size was 95 written texts.

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

In content analysis, data collecting processes entailed systematically acquiring and documenting textual material for the purpose of studying its content, themes, patterns, or other pertinent information.

3.6 Data Analysis

Typical steps of content data analysis included:

Data Collection: Web scraping was used to acquire data. Text normalization and data deduplication were part of the data cleaning task. Tokenization was utilized in this stage of data preprocessing.

Data Transformation: At this stage, the data was converted into an analysis-ready format by creating a document-term matrix or word embeddings. Word

frequency analysis and theme modelling were part of the exploratory data analysis (EDA).

3.7 Trustworthiness of the Data

Peer debriefing and Comparative analysis was used to verify trustworthiness of the data. Peer debriefing is a qualitative research technique intended to improve the dependability and trustworthiness of research results. It entails reviewing and providing comments on various elements of the research process by one or more colleagues or peers. Peer debriefing's major purpose is to ensure that data collection, analysis, and interpretation are thorough and dependable. Comparative analysis is the process of comparing two or more situations, systems, or entities in order to identify similarities, differences, patterns, and trends.

3.8 Research Ethics

Here are some crucial factors to bear in mind while performing online scraping research: Website Terms of Service Observance: The researcher evaluated and followed the terms of service and terms of usage of the websites used for web scraping. Respecting Intellectual Property Rights: When scraping content, the researcher did not violate any copyright or intellectual property rights. The researcher properly attributed the source and respected the intellectual property rights of the website owners; Frequency and Load: The researcher avoided overloading the website's server with excessive requests, which can cause disruptions for other users and be interpreted as a denial-of-service attack. To scrape properly, the researcher used rate limitation and request delays.

Correctness and Integrity: The researcher took precautions to assure the correctness and integrity of the data scraped. This is due to the fact that erroneous or misleading data can have major effects, particularly in research.

3.9 Dissemination

Findings of the research were disseminated at Conference on Ethics, Justice & Peace which was organized by Catholic University of Eastern Africa, between 26th to 28th September, 2023.

4. Findings and Discussion

Universities play an important role in upholding ethics and standards in a variety of ways, both inside their academic communities and across society.

4.1.1 Create and Distribute an Ethics Code

The researcher found out that code of ethics is critical in maintaining standards. The findings correspond with those of Durlaf et al., (2017) who found out that Universities should create and widely distribute an ethics code that sets anticipated norms of behaviour for students, faculty, and staff. This code can be used to lay the groundwork for ethical behaviour within the institution.

4.1.2 Education and Training in Ethics

Integrate ethical instruction into multiple specialties' curricula. Students are exposed to ethical considerations throughout their academic path as a result of this. The findings correspond with those of Pimple et al. (2014) which found out that providing professors and staff with workshops, seminars, and training programs to helps them better comprehend ethical concerns in research, teaching, and administration

4.1.3 Research Integrity and Ethics Oversight

Implement rigorous ethics review processes for research projects involving human subjects, animals, or sensitive data to ensure compliance with ethical standards. The findings correspond with those of Resnik and Shampoo (2017) which found out that maintaining research integrity offices or committees to investigate helps to address allegations of research misconduct.

4.1.4 Encourage Inclusivity and Diversity

Create a welcoming and varied campus atmosphere that values and celebrates diverse ideas and backgrounds. The findings correspond with those of Milem et al. (2005) which emphasises on encouraging open discussion of ethical concerns concerning diversity, equity, and inclusion

4.1.5 Participation in the Community and Social Responsibility

Encourage community participation and service-learning activities that develop in students and educators a sense of social responsibility. Findings correspond with those of Salmatarsh et al. (2011) which found out that research and projects that address significant societal concerns and promote ethical solutions should be supported.

4.1.6 Protection for Whistleblowers

Create safeguards for individuals who report ethical issues or wrongdoing. Findings correspond with those of Miceli (2002) which asserts that whistleblowers are not retaliated against and that their concerns are adequately explored for ethics to prevail.

4.1.7 Accountability and transparency

Maintain transparency in decision-making, budgeting, and resource allocation processes. Findings correspond to those of Bovens (2007) which stresses on ensuring accountability of leaders and administrators for ethical behaviour and adherence to institutional ideals.

4.1.8 Continuous Assessment and Improvement

Assess and review ethical policies, procedures, and programs on a regular basis to find areas for improvement. Findings correspond to those of Goldman et al. (1994) which found out that in order to remain sensitive to emerging ethical concerns, solicit feedback from students, professors, staff, and other stakeholders.

4.1.9 Leadership Ethical

Ensure that university leaders, such as the board of trustees, administrators, and department heads, demonstrate ethical behaviour and ideals. Findings correspond with those of Ciula et al. (1998) which recommends offering leadership development that focuses on ethical decision-making and accountability.

4.10 Academic Independence and Responsibility

Balance academic independence with the obligation to perform ethical research, teaching, and public participation. Findings correspond to those of American Association of University Professors (1940) which stresses on encouraging open and fair debate on contentious issues while adhering to ethical guidelines.

4.11 International Collaboration and Ethical Research in Other Countries

Create rules for foreign research cooperation to ensure ethical behaviour while adhering to local laws and norms.

4.12 Environmental Accountability

Encourage campus-wide sustainable practices such as energy conservation, waste reduction, and environmentally responsible research. Findings correspond with those of Orr (1992) which proposes integrating environmental stewardship ethics into applicable curriculum.

4.13 Technology and Data Ethics

Address ethical concerns about the use of technology, data privacy, and cybersecurity within the university community. Findings correspond with those of Floridi et al. (2016) which proposes educating students and professors on data handling responsibilities and ethical issues in technology creation.

4.14 Public Participation and Ethical Outreach

Encourage academics and students to participate in community outreach activities, volunteer work, and collaborations with local groups. Findings correspond to those of Bringe et al. (1996) which proposes emphasising universities' ethical duties to contribute positively to society.

4.15 Regular Ethical Audits and Reporting

Conduct periodic ethical audits to evaluate the effectiveness of ethics programs and adherence to ethical standards. Findings correspond to those of Velasquez et al. (2015) which proposes publishing annual reports on the university's ethical initiatives, accomplishments, and challenges.

4.16 Ethical Research financing

Ensure that the sources of research financing are consistent with the university's ethical beliefs and principles. Findings correspond with those of National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2018). which proposes implementing clear policies for receiving money and dealing with possible conflicts of interest.

4.17 Crisis Management and Ethical Intervention

Create a comprehensive crisis management plan that considers ethical problems while reacting to emergencies or disagreements. Findings correspond to those of Pearson et al. (1998) which called for maintaining open communication with stakeholders during a crisis, emphasising transparency and accountability.

4.18 Ethical AI And Emerging Technology Applications

Investigate the ethical implications of artificial intelligence (AI), automation, and emerging technologies in research, education, and institutional operations. Findings correspond with those of

Taddeo et al. (2018) which proposed creation of ethical technology adoption criteria in partnership with experts and ethicists.

4.19 Ethics Committees and Ombudsmen

Maintain ethics committees and ombuds offices to give direction, support, and a confidential forum for resolving ethical concerns on campus. Findings correspond to those of Miceli et al. (2009) which argues that the aforementioned offices are critical and for their success, they should be accessible and impartial.

4.20 External Ethics Organization Collaboration

To stay informed about best practices and ethical standards in higher education, collaborate with external ethics organisations and accreditation agencies. Findings correspond to those of Association for Practical and Professional Ethics (2013) which proposed seeking outside assessments or evaluations to evaluate ethical performance.

4.21 Ethical Endowment and Investment Use

Implement ethical investment policies that are consistent with the ideals of the university, such as socially responsible investing (SRI) or ethical investment screens.

4.22 Ethical Issues in Global Partnerships

When creating overseas cooperation or satellite campuses, be certain that ethical standards are upheld, particularly in terms of labour practices, academic freedom, and cultural sensitivity. Findings correspond with those of Knight (2008) which proposes reviewing foreign collaborations on a frequent basis for ethical compliance.

4.23 Evaluating and Responding to Emerging Ethical Issues

Create a monitoring and reaction mechanism for higher education's expanding ethical concerns, such

as online education, intellectual property rights, and digital ethics. Findings correspond to those of Bull et al. (2009) which recommends institutions to continue to discuss and research the aforementioned concerns.

4.24 Admissions and Marketing Practices That Are Ethical

Ensure that marketing materials and admissions techniques are honest, transparent, and free of unethical manipulation. Findings correspond to those of National Association for College Admission (2017). which proposes maintaining fair and equitable admissions policies.

4.25 Community Accountability and Feedback

Solicit feedback from the university's local and global communities on a regular basis in order to assess the institution's ethical impact and responsiveness to community needs. Findings correspond to those of Hart et al. (2004) which calls for using feedback to improve ethical behaviour.

5. Limitations During the Study

The researcher used convenience sampling to select the sample texts. Convenience sampling frequently results in sample bias since it may not fully represent the greater population. People who are easily available may have distinct features or habits from others who are less accessible. This bias can jeopardise the study's external validity, making it difficult to apply the findings to a larger population. To mitigate this challenge, the researcher utilised peer debriefing to confirm dependability of the data.

6. Conclusion, and Action Recommendations:

Ethics and standards in higher education are crucial for ensuring academic integrity, promoting responsible conduct, and protecting the welfare of students and other stakeholders. Here are some key considerations:

Academic Integrity: Academic integrity is the foundation of higher education. Institutions should have clear policies and procedures to promote academic honesty and prevent plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic misconduct; **Professional Conduct:** Higher education professionals are expected to behave in a professional and ethical manner at all times.

This includes treating students and colleagues with respect, maintaining confidentiality, and avoiding conflicts of interest;

Student Welfare: Institutions should prioritizes the welfare and safety of students. This includes providing a supportive learning environment, protecting students from discrimination and harassment, and ensuring that students have access to resources to support their well-being;

Research Ethics: Researchers in higher education have a responsibility to conduct their work with integrity and transparency. This includes obtaining informed consent from study participants, ensuring the confidentiality of data, and adhering to ethical guidelines for animal and human research; **Diversity and Inclusion:** Higher education institutions should strive to create an inclusive environment that celebrates diversity and promotes equity.

This includes addressing systemic barriers that can limit access to education and supporting students from underrepresented backgrounds. Overall, ethical and professional standards in higher education are essential for maintaining the trust of students, faculty, and the broader community. Institutions that prioritise ethics and standards will be better positioned to fulfil their mission and make a positive impact on society.

Here are some other ways and considerations for universities to maintain ethics:

1. **Committees on Faculty Ethics**: Form faculty-led ethics committees to assess and advise on ethical concerns including teaching, research, and academic freedom. Ensure that these committees are made up of a diverse range of faculty members with ethics knowledge.

2. **AI Ethics and Data Governance:** Create explicit standards and procedures for the ethical use of AI, machine learning, and big data in academic research and administrative processes. Address prejudice, privacy, and accountability challenges in AI applications.

3. **Alumni Participation in Ethics Initiatives:** Encourage alumni to support and contribute to ethical education and research by involving them in ethics programs and projects. Create chances for alumni to advise students in the building of ethical careers.

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