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Academic Quality and Integrity in the New Higher Education Digital Environment: A Global Perspective, edited by Upasana Gitanjali Singh, Chenicheri Sid Nair, and Rashmi Watson (Chandos Publishing, 2023)

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Book Review: *Academic Quality and Integrity in the New Higher Education Digital Environment: A Global Perspective*

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Introduction

In an era in which digital technologies are profoundly reshaping the landscape of higher education, *Academic Quality and Integrity in the New Higher Education Digital Environment: A Global Perspective*, edited by Upasana Gitanjali Singh, Chenicheri Sid Nair, and Rashmi Watson, emerges as a timely contribution. This edited volume explores the intricate relationship between academic integrity and quality assurance in the digital environment. It addresses a pressing and relevant subject that educational institutions around the world are struggling with, particularly due to the widespread use of artificial intelligence (AI).

With the growing importance of digital platforms in education, the difficulties of upholding academic honesty and preserving the standard of education have become more prominent and complex. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the shift to online learning. This shift, along with the introduction of language model processing and other forms of generative AI, has further magnified these difficulties. This book is an essential addition to current discussions in educational theory and practice.

The relevance of this edited volume extends beyond academic circles into the practical realm of educational administration and policy making. It provides a timely exploration of how digital technologies not only offer new opportunities for learning and engagement but also present novel avenues for addressing academic misconduct. The authors' viewpoints emphasize the universal nature of these difficulties, surpassing regional and cultural limitations. Having a global perspective is crucial for promoting international cooperation and discussion on the most effective methods for maintaining academic honesty in the era of digital technology.

This collection of essays provides valuable insights and a wide range of perspectives and case studies. Throughout the book, the writers have thoroughly analysed, making it a focused and significant contribution to the field of knowledge. Hence, this book will prove valuable to all stakeholders in academia, such as students, staff, researchers, instructors, administrators, and regulators.

Review of Chapters

This edited volume is divided into nine chapters. The following section briefly summarises the chapters and their contributions to the topic.

The first chapter, "An autoethnography and analysis of Australian academic integrity policies amidst threats," by David Morgan, embarks on a critical exploration of Australian academic integrity policies through the lens of autoethnography. Morgan demonstrates the deficiencies in present frameworks when faced with contemporary difficulties like contract cheating and AI-generated content by blending personal experiences with a thorough analysis of policy formation. The author's account traces the development of academic integrity policies, highlighting the disparity between the creation of these policies and the actual experiences of academic staff and students.

The methodological approach presented in this chapter provides a unique and original contribution to the discussion on academic honesty. Morgan's use of autoethnography not only adds a personal touch to the examination of policy efficacy but also functions as a potent instrument for promoting policy improvements. The chapter serves as a strong and urgent appeal for a policy-making process that is more comprehensive and adaptable, specifically designed to tackle the swiftly evolving nature of academic misconduct. Moreover, it emphasises the capacity of personal narratives to enhance our comprehension of academic integrity, opening up possibilities for forthcoming research that is simultaneously deeply personal and intellectually rigorous.

The second chapter, "Reimagining academic integrity through the lenses of ethics of care and restorative justice," by Janus van As and Marike Kluyts, addresses the widespread problem of student readiness in South African higher education institutions (HEIs). It examines academic integrity within the larger framework of educational fairness and student assistance. The authors contend that the conventional criteria for academic misconduct fail to consider the fundamental conditions that contribute to such behaviours, such as limited access to resources and insufficient academic support. The authors advocate for a comprehensive strategy to promote academic integrity by studying the ethics of care and restorative justice. This approach prioritises empathy, understanding, and community rather than punishment.

The chapter greatly enhances the discussion on academic honesty by placing it within a wider educational and ethical context. Van As and Kluyts's endorsement of an ethics of care and restorative justice in academic contexts questions traditional disciplinary methods and proposes a change towards more supportive and inclusive educational practices. This study not only adds to the continuing discussion regarding the most efficient methods to maintain academic honesty but also provides practical recommendations for institutions aiming to foster an atmosphere that supports ethical researchers.

The third chapter connects generic academic integrity modules to professional integrity through curriculum design. The authors, Jen Tindale, Sandra Noakes, Elen Seymour, and Joan Lynch, critically assess the efficacy of generic online academic integrity modules employed by Australian higher education providers. The authors argue that although these modules are essential in familiarising students with the concepts of academic integrity, they frequently do not establish a significant link to the students' professional and disciplinary settings. The chapter examines case studies in law and nursing to see how

incorporating academic integrity education with professional values and identities can improve students' comprehension and dedication to ethical behaviours.

This chapter provides a detailed and nuanced viewpoint on academic integrity education by connecting the divide between general integrity modules and specialised professional requirements within different disciplines. The authors' emphasis on the interaction between academic and professional integrity offers valuable perspectives on how curriculum design might be used to encourage a more profound involvement with ethical ideals. The chapter provides specific instances of successful incorporation of professional relevance into academic integrity education in the fields of law and nursing. This serves as a valuable resource for educators and administrators seeking to enhance the quality of their academic integrity education.

Chapter four, "Developing an all-voices plan: A case study of embracing community to uphold academic integrity," by F. Elizabeth Gray and Jennifer Scott, presents a compelling case study of the Melbourne Business School's response to the challenges of upholding academic integrity in the wake of COVID-19. The All-Voices Plan described in the chapter is an innovative community-driven plan that combines the efforts of staff, students, and administrators. The authors provide a comprehensive account of the plan's creation and execution, emphasising the significance of transparent communication, reciprocal regard, and collective accountability in cultivating a culture characterised by honesty and ethical behaviour.

The study highlighted in this chapter is notable for its inventive method of tackling academic integrity concerns by involving the community. The All-Voices Plan demonstrates how academic institutions can effectively respond to unexpected difficulties by cultivating an inclusive culture that appreciates the contributions of all individuals. This case study not only contributes to the existing information on effective integrity tactics but also provides a model that may be replicated by other institutions dealing with similar difficulties. The focus on community involvement and common principles offers a new viewpoint on academic honesty, highlighting its function as a collaborative effort rather than a sequence of individual actions.

Chapter five, titled "Addressing academic misconduct through embedding academic skill development in subject teaching: A collaborative approach" is about addressing academic misconduct by embedding academic skill development in subject teaching. Written by Lauren Bliss, Mei Li, and Alex Griffin, the chapter explores innovative programmes aimed at mitigating academic misconduct by integrating academic skill development directly into the curriculum of a media and communications foundation subject at the case study HEIs in Australia. This study thoroughly examines the collaboration of experts in different academic disciplines and teaching specialists, revealing how integrating the development of skills inside topic teaching can significantly decrease occurrences of academic misconduct. The programme prioritises improving students' comprehension of academic standards and the intricate demands of their fields, thereby cultivating a more profound respect for academic honesty. Bliss, Li, and Griffin provide a clear plan for educators who want to address academic misbehaviour by demonstrating how to enhance academic skills within a practical context. Their approach emphasises the importance of teaching practices that provide students with the essential skills to ethically handle academic difficulties. Moreover, the chapter questions conventional beliefs about addressing academic misbehaviour only

through punishment and emphasizes the significance of instructional design in fostering honesty. This work is highly useful because it suggests that academic integrity can be developed through careful curriculum planning and multidisciplinary collaboration.

The following chapter, titled, "Retooling online proctoring technology in the Fourth Industrial Revolution Learning Contexts—from big brother to learning buddy" is on retooling online proctoring technology in the Fourth Industrial Revolution Learning Context. Norwell Zhakata, the author, critically examines the contentious use of proctoring technology (PT) in assessments, especially in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution's impact on education. Zhakata explores the ethical, pedagogical, and practical issues related to PT, arguing for a reassessment of its function from a surveillance instrument to a supportive "learning companion." Through the presentation of four assessment scenarios, the author examines how PT may be used to facilitate ipsative assessment approaches. This transforms PT into a valuable tool that improves the assessment process for students by offering immediate feedback and assistance.

This chapter makes a substantial contribution to the current discussion about the role of technology in maintaining the honesty and fairness of assessments. The author suggests a change in how PT is understood and used, which not only tackles the ethical challenges of monitoring technologies but also offers creative solutions that are in line with contemporary educational requirements. This paper promotes an innovative method of thinking about how technology might be used to enhance the concepts of academic honesty and teaching efficacy. Zhakata's progressive approach to proctoring technology as a fundamental part of a nurturing learning environment encourages additional investigation and discourse on the incorporation of technology in education.

Pete Leihy and José M. Salazar's chapter, "'Linkage with the midst': Digital impact and institutional identity in Chile," investigates the digital strategies employed by Chilean HEIs to communicate their societal contributions, focusing on the concept of *linkage with the midst*. The chapter examines how these institutions use digital media to strengthen their institutional identity and academic credibility, actively involving diverse audiences to increase the visibility and influence of their academic and civic responsibilities. The authors view the digitalization of academic enterprises as a dual prospect, presenting both a threat to academic integrity and an opportunity to strengthen academic integrity on a global scale.

Leihy and Salazar provide a unique perspective on the impact of digitalization on academic integrity and institutional identity. Their analysis of the Chilean setting offers valuable perspectives on how HEIs might effectively traverse the digital realm to promote their core principles and contributions. Focusing on the concept of *linkage with the midst,* a term used widely in Chili to demand HEIs demonstrate their contributions to society, Leihy and Salazar expand the discourse on academic integrity beyond the limitations of conventional academic environments, to emphasise the capacity of digital platforms to cultivate a more involved and open academic community. This contribution is especially significant in a time when the online presence of educational institutions is becoming increasingly important for their reputation and influence on society.

Chapter eight, on the "Development of doctoral student perceptions of plagiarism and academic integrity: The roles of agency and aspirational identity," written by Minh Ngoc Tran, Stephen Marshall, and Linda

Hogg, delves into the complex process by which doctoral students in New Zealand develop their perceptions of academic integrity. The chapter emphasises the impact of human agency, identity formation, and the learning environment on moulding the comprehension and attitudes of doctoral students towards scholarly practices, as well as their views of plagiarism. Applying Marginson's theory of international student self-formation as a framework, the authors conduct a detailed investigation of how international and local doctoral students navigate their identities and ethical positions over their academic journey.

The chapter provides insights into the concept of academic integrity specifically in the context of PhD studies. The authors shed light on the complex relationship between human agency, institutional culture, and academic expectations by examining how doctoral candidates shape their own development. This study provides useful insights into the methods by which institutions might organize doctoral education to facilitate the growth of ethical academics. Moreover, the focus on the responsibility of supervisors in guiding the ethical and scholarly growth of doctoral candidates highlights the significance of mentorship and support structures in fostering academic integrity.

The final chapter of the volume, "Open academic systems as key levers of integrity and quality assurance for assessments at the Université des Mascareignes." The Author Nirmal Kumar Betchoo explores the capacity of open academic systems to maintain high standards and honesty in assessments. Betchoo evaluates the difficulties and advantages of using dissertations, group-based assignments, coursework, and online assessments to uphold academic standards in the digital era. The author assesses how open systems, which have less direct supervision and more flexibility, can yet maintain strict quality assurance and integrity standards through innovative practices and regulations.

Betchoo's contribution to this volume is especially important because it carefully examines how traditional ideas of quality assurance and academic integrity might need to be adjusted to fit the changing nature of higher education. This chapter gives us a few crucial insights into how open academic systems can keep and maybe even raise educational standards in the digital world by looking at the systems and strategies used at the HEIs that were studied. More than that, Betchoo's chapter makes us think again about the the links between assessment methods, the requirement for flexibility, and academic integrity.

Conclusion

Academic Quality and Integrity in the New Higher Education Digital Environment: A Global Perspective stands at the crossroads where the digital meets the physical. The book significantly contributes to the discourse on navigating the challenges of academic integrity and quality assurance in an increasingly digital yet predominantly brick-and-mortar-based educational landscape. It presents a comprehensive review of these topics from a global perspective, providing educators, administrators, and policymakers with important insights as they endeavour to adjust to the changing requirements of higher education. The book's inclusion of a wide array of case studies and perspectives underscores the complex and multifaceted characteristics of the issues under consideration, placing particular emphasis on the necessity of a cooperative and flexible strategy to safeguard credibility and excellence in higher education.

The critical relevance of this work in contemporary times cannot be understated. As higher education continues to evolve under the influence of digital technologies, the insights provided by Singh, Nair, Watson, and their contributors offer a roadmap for navigating these transformations ethically, responsibly, and effectively. Their work underscores the importance of developing robust policies, pedagogies, and practices that leverage the benefits of digital technologies while safeguarding academic standards and integrity.

However, critical consideration of developing trends and technologies that affect academic integrity and quality assurance would have been a welcome addition to this conversation. An exploration of the potential use of adaptive learning technology, gamification, and blockchain to create more engaging and safe educational environments could have deepened the discussion. This edited volume is noteworthy because it comes at the perfect time. When much discussion about digital higher education is concentrated on technologies, the editors decided to bring the focus back to the quality and integrity of the learning.

Academic Quality and Integrity in the New Higher Education Digital Environment: A Global Perspective, therefore, provides a crucial foundation for understanding and addressing the challenges of academic integrity in the digital age. The ever-evolving nature of technology and pedagogy calls for ongoing exploration and adaptation. The book marks an important step in this continuous journey, inviting further research and dialogue to explore the uncharted territories of digital higher education.