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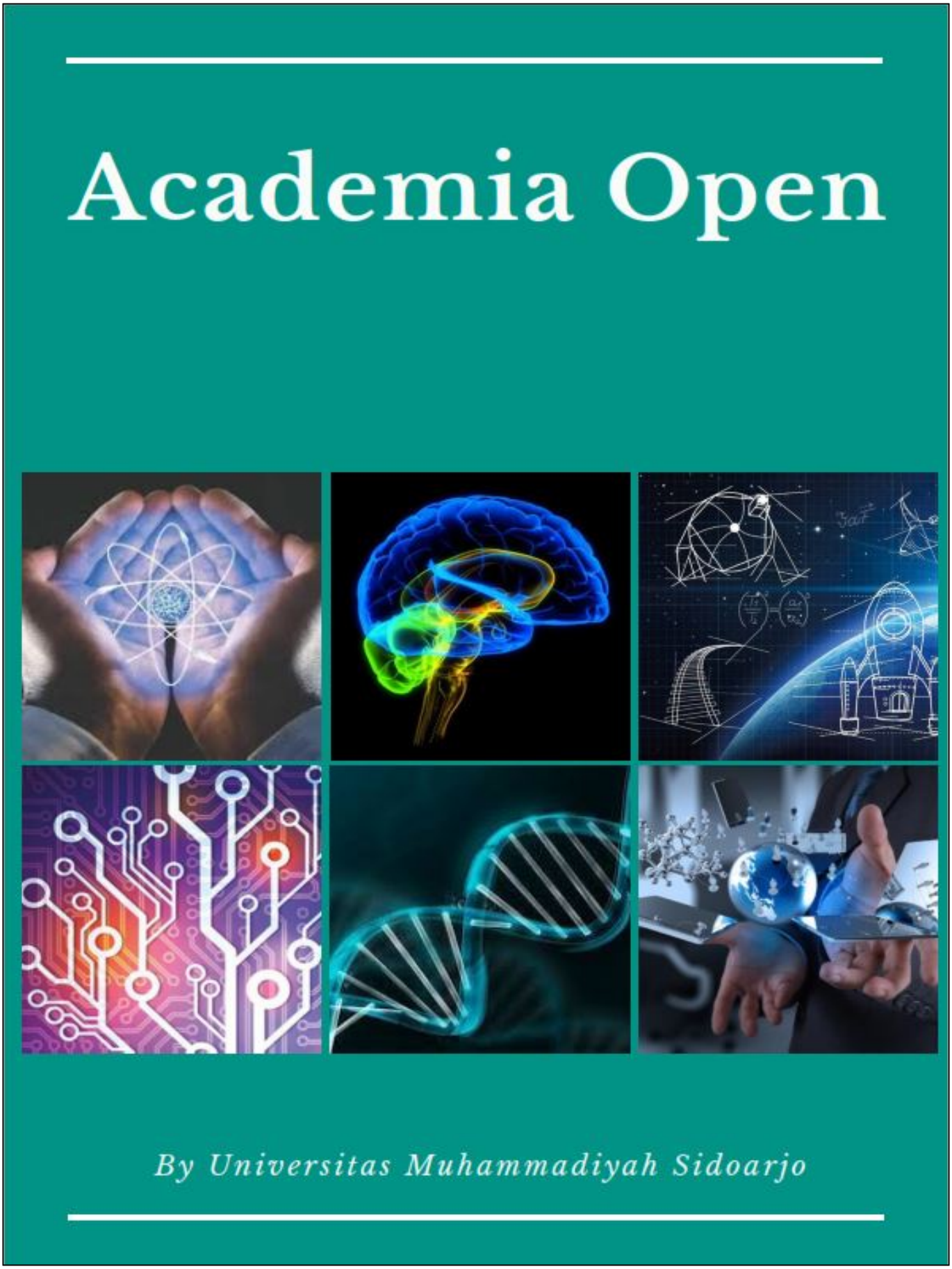

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Cultivating Academic Integrity through Islamic Ethical Foundations in Scholarship

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Abstract

(General Background) Academic writing reflects not only intellectual capacity but also ethical responsibility and moral integrity in knowledge production. **(Specific Background)** Within Islamic education, ethics such as honesty, transparency, and accountability are regarded as fundamental principles that ensure the sanctity of knowledge. However, in today's digital era, academic ethics face new challenges due to technological developments, including artificial intelligence, which complicate the identification and prevention of academic misconduct. **(Knowledge Gap)** Existing approaches often limit the understanding of academic integrity to plagiarism detection, neglecting broader ethical dimensions such as methodological transparency and researchers' social accountability. **(Aims)** This study aims to explore the ethical foundations of academic writing in Islamic education and to propose a holistic approach that integrates moral, spiritual, and institutional dimensions of integrity. **(Results)** Using a descriptive qualitative method through library research, findings reveal that ethical education—embedded within the curriculum, training, and mentoring—is crucial for fostering authentic academic integrity beyond mere rule compliance. **(Novelty)** The study presents an Islamic ethical perspective as a normative and philosophical framework for shaping scholars of integrity in the digital era. **(Implications)** Strengthening ethical literacy from early education can cultivate a scholarly culture that upholds honesty, transparency, and accountability, ensuring credible and socially beneficial scientific advancement.

Highlights:

- Academic integrity extends beyond plagiarism to encompass honesty and social responsibility.
- Islamic ethics provide a strong moral foundation for scholarly conduct.
- Ethical literacy and education are vital to sustain integrity in the digital age.

Keywords: Academic Ethics, Islamic Education, Integrity, Plagiarism, Digital Era

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Introduction

Writing scientific papers is an activity that not only requires technical skills in arranging words and data, but also reflects ethical values and integrity that form the foundation of the academic world. In the scientific ecosystem, originality of thought, data accuracy, and transparency in acknowledging sources are the main pillars that maintain credibility and trust in research results.[1] Violations of academic ethics are often narrowly understood, limited to issues of plagiarism. In fact, the scope of academic ethics is much broader and more complex, encompassing various aspects such as data fabrication, manipulation of results, undisclosed conflicts of interest, and the use of artificial intelligence (AI) technology without adequate transparency. One of the main gaps in understanding academic ethics is the perception that simplifies academic integrity merely as an effort to avoid plagiarism. This approach overlooks other dimensions of integrity, such as honesty in reporting data, transparency of methodology, and the social responsibility of researchers regarding the impact of their research.

Sarah Elaine Eaton argues that traditional approaches focusing on plagiarism detection are no longer adequate in today's digital era. Eaton proposes the concept of "postplagiarism," which emphasizes the importance of building a culture of integrity through collaboration between educators and students, as well as the development of policies that are adaptive to technological advancements.[2] Technological developments, particularly artificial intelligence, have brought new challenges in maintaining academic integrity. Tools like ChatGPT can be used to generate text that resembles human writing, which, if used without proper acknowledgment, can lead to ethical violations.

The increase in cases of academic fraud involving the use of AI, which threatens the integrity and reputation of higher education institutions.[3] This indicates the need for policy updates and a more proactive approach in addressing ethical challenges in the digital era. To bridge the gap in understanding and applying academic ethics, education on ethical principles and integrity should be provided to students from an early stage. Comprehensive training programs can help students understand the importance of honesty, responsibility, and transparency in scientific writing. A study conducted by the British University Vietnam shows that educational interventions designed to improve academic writing skills can significantly reduce plagiarism rates and enhance ethical awareness among students.[4] Understanding and applying ethics and integrity in scientific writing is a shared responsibility among educational institutions, educators, and students. By recognizing and addressing gaps in the understanding of academic ethics, as well as adapting approaches to the challenges posed by modern technology, the academic community can ensure that the knowledge produced and disseminated remains credible, reliable, and beneficial to society at large.

Method

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach with a library research method to explore aspects of ethics and integrity in scientific writing. The primary focus of the research is to review academic literature and policy documents related to academic ethics principles, forms of plagiarism, and efforts to educate integrity from an early stage in the academic world. Secondary data were collected from open-access scientific sources, including reports from the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), articles in the International Journal for Educational Integrity, and UNESCO documents on open science. The analysis was conducted by interpreting the data thematically, grouping findings based on three main dimensions: (1) the basic principles of academic ethics, (2) the variations and complexities of plagiarism, and (3) strategies for teaching academic ethics. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation, by comparing the views of publication ethics experts, educational institution policies, and previous empirical study results. This study does not aim to generalize, but rather to offer an in-depth understanding of the challenges and gaps in academic ethics in a contemporary context. This method was chosen because it is suitable for exploring normative and conceptual issues that cannot be directly quantified, yet are crucial for shaping a moral and responsible scientific culture.[5] This study also emphasizes the importance of developing ethical literacy as part of the basic academic competencies of students and researchers.

Results and Discussion

This study aims to emphasize that scientific integrity is the primary foundation in building trust within the academic world.

1. Academic Ethics, the Moral Foundation of Islamic Education in Knowledge

Academic ethics are the moral foundation of Islamic education that support integrity in the realm of knowledge. Ethics in the context of scientific writing not only serve as a guide for behavior but also act as a measure of trust between researchers and between science and the wider society. Principles such as honesty, objectivity, fairness, and responsibility are at the core of academic ethics and must be reflected throughout the entire process of research and scientific writing.[6] Objectivity requires researchers to be free from personal or institutional bias in designing research as well as in interpreting data. Therefore, transparency in methodology and reporting is very important. In addition, conflicts of interest, whether financial or non-financial, must be openly disclosed so as not to affect the readers' perception of the credibility of the scientific work.[7] The aspect of fairness is reflected in the recognition of the scientific contributions of others. Using sources without proper attribution constitutes plagiarism, which not only harms the individuals being cited but also disrupts the overall order of scientific integrity.[8] Furthermore, forms of plagiarism such as self-plagiarism, mosaic plagiarism, and unintentional plagiarism often occur due to a lack of academic literacy or institutional pressure.

According to the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), breaches of integrity are not limited to plagiarism alone.

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Practices such as duplicate publication, manipulation of peer review, or concealing affiliations that could potentially affect objectivity also constitute ethical violations. COPE explicitly emphasizes the importance of collective responsibility, not only for individual researchers but also for editors, publishers, and educational institutions in maintaining publication ethics standards.[9] Awareness of ethics is often still normative and has not been deeply internalized. A study by Bretag et al. shows that most violations occur not because of malicious intent, but due to a lack of understanding of the complexities of publication ethics. Guidance on ethics should not be carried out incidentally, but should be an integral part of higher education.[10] The pressure to publish quickly and with a focus on quantity also raises its own ethical dilemmas. The term 'publish or perish' has become a symbol of the structural pressure that often drives researchers to make ethical compromises for career advancement or institutional interests. In such an environment, academic values can be overshadowed by an unhealthy logic of productivity.[11]

Technological advancements, particularly the emergence of AI-based writing tools, pose serious challenges to academic integrity. The article "Exploring the Ethical Landscape of AI in Academic Writing" shows that AI can be used to generate text resembling scholarly work, but it threatens ethics if used without transparency, critical analysis, and strong research sources.[12] Meanwhile, research on the effectiveness of detection tools such as Turnitin, iThenticate, and similar tools shows that they often fail to differentiate between text genuinely written by humans and text generated by AI, especially when the AI text has been modified or "polished". [13] Therefore, although detection tools can be helpful, ethical education and the development of academic character remain irreplaceable aspects. As a solution, many ethics and higher education experts advocate for the strengthening of a systematic academic ethics curriculum. Education on citation techniques, ethical paraphrasing, reference writing, as well as open discussions on ethical dilemmas in research should be taught from the first year of university. In addition, it is also important to introduce the concepts of open science and open access as forms of broader scientific collaboration and accountability. [14]

Islamic educational institutions and journal publishers play a crucial role in fostering a culture of integrity. They need to provide clear ethical guidelines, establish active ethics committees, and enforce sanctions fairly and transparently. Without adequate regulation and education, ethical violations will continue to occur and weaken public trust in knowledge. Academic ethics are not merely an administrative obligation but an essential part of a scholar's morality. In a world full of pressures and technological dynamics, maintaining ethics is a long-term commitment to preserving the integrity of knowledge. Ethics is not a burden but the identity of a true academic.

2. Plagiarism and Its Variations

Plagiarism, in general, is defined as the act of copying or taking over someone else's ideas, words, or works without giving proper acknowledgment. In the academic context, plagiarism is considered one of the most serious ethical violations because it can undermine scientific integrity and harm the academic community's trust in research results. With the advancement of technology and increasing academic pressures, forms of plagiarism have also become more complex. No longer limited to direct copying without attribution, plagiarism now encompasses various forms that can sometimes be difficult to recognize without adequate ethical understanding.

a. Mosaic Plagiarism One of the most difficult forms of plagiarism to detect is mosaic plagiarism, which involves rearranging sentences or phrases from various sources without properly citing the original source. Although not copying verbatim, the writer still takes ideas or rhetorical structures from other authors, which is still considered a violation.[15] This form often appears in the academic writings of students or novice researchers who try to disguise quotations to make them appear as original thinking. Mosaic plagiarism is also referred to as "patchwriting" by experts, which is a writing strategy that involves combining pieces of sentences from various sources and then slightly modifying them.[16] Although it may seem harmless, this practice actually creates an illusion of originality and can mislead readers about the true source of ideas.

b. Auto-plagiarism differs from plagiarism of other people's work; auto-plagiarism, or self-plagiarism, is the act of reusing parts of one's own previously published work without the publisher's permission or without indicating that those parts have been previously published.[17] This often occurs in the publication of journal articles, dissertations, or technical reports. Although the author is the original owner of the work, republishing without acknowledgment violates the principles of academic honesty and can lead to data duplication in the scientific literature. Some journals explicitly state that they do not accept manuscripts that have been previously published, even partially, unless clearly stated from the outset.

c. Unintentional Plagiarism This type of plagiarism occurs due to ignorance or a lack of understanding of proper citation and paraphrasing techniques. Many writers, especially students, are unaware that taking ideas from sources without providing references, even in their own words, still constitutes plagiarism.[18] This problem generally arises due to academic education that has not emphasized the importance of ethical scientific writing skills from an early stage. A preventive approach is more effective in this regard than a punitive approach. Intensive training in information literacy skills, paraphrasing techniques, and the use of reference management tools such as Zotero or Mendeley can reduce the likelihood of unintentional plagiarism.[19]

d. The Role of Technology; Detection without Education Detecting plagiarism, many universities and scientific journals now use software such as Turnitin, iThenticate, and PlagScan. These tools are capable of identifying text similarities with other documents in their database.[20] As stated by experts in publication ethics, this software is only capable of detecting, not teaching ethics. Automatic detection does not replace the understanding of the values of integrity and honesty. There is a tendency to rely excessively on the similarity index scores from this software. This can create a misconception that ethical writing is merely about keeping certain numbers low, rather than about a philosophical understanding of academic integrity itself.[4]

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e. Solution; Islamic Ethics Education and Contextual Understanding In facing the increasingly complex forms of plagiarism, ethics education becomes the main key. Higher education institutions need to integrate a curriculum that explicitly teaches the principles of academic integrity, including proper citation practices, the use of open access sources, as well as discussions on ethical dilemmas in publication.[21] The role of academic advisors is crucial in shaping students' and young researchers' awareness of the value of scientific honesty. Openness to discussions about mistakes and a humanistic learning process can help prevent plagiarism from its root causes: ignorance and excessive pressure. Addressing plagiarism is not just about tightening detection systems, but also about building an academic culture that upholds integrity, dialogue, and continuous education.

3. Integrity, More Than Just Avoiding Mistakes

Academic integrity is not merely a moral slogan, but a comprehensive commitment to the ethical values that form trust and credibility in the world of scholarship. Every scholarly writer, whether a student, lecturer, or professional researcher, is required to uphold the principles of integrity such as honesty, responsibility, transparency, and the courage to admit mistakes. Without integrity, research results lose legitimacy, and contributions to knowledge become flawed both morally and methodologically.

a.The Urgency of Honesty and Transparency in the Scientific ProcessAn honest attitude in writing and publishing scientific work includes honesty with data, methods, and the conclusions drawn. Honest authors present their research results as they are, without manipulation or biased data selection. As explained by The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, scientific honesty involves "reporting results accurately, not falsifying data, and not omitting relevant negative findings."[22] Transparency also includes the disclosure of conflicts of interest and sources of research funding. For example, if a study is funded by an institution that may have a stake in its results, this must be explicitly stated. Ignoring this principle can raise suspicions about the objectivity of findings and erode public trust in science.[23]

b.Integrity from the Beginning to the End of the Research Process Academic integrity does not only apply at the final stage when a work is about to be published. It must be upheld from the very beginning, starting from the literature search, the development of the theoretical framework, to the formulation of methodology. Authors are required to accurately cite the sources used during the literature search and review stage. Proper citation demonstrates respect for previous scholarly work and strengthens the foundation of arguments. Meanwhile, in the formulation of methods, researchers must present procedural steps in detail to allow replication by other researchers, an important principle in scientific validation.[24] The reporting of results must also be done honestly, including when the results do not meet expectations or contradict the initial hypothesis. A researcher who upholds integrity will not conceal data, alter interpretations, or ignore negative findings. Instead, they will present all results transparently, because in the world of science, all data, whether supporting or refuting a hypothesis, are part of the process toward scientific truth.[25]

c. Education and Cultivation of Integrity Academic institutions have the responsibility to nurture and instill integrity in students from an early stage. This can be done through a curriculum that includes training on research ethics, proper scientific writing techniques, and the use of plagiarism detection technology not merely as a legal tool, but as a means of learning. [22] Moreover, it involves creating an academic environment that supports openness and ethical reflection. When students or researchers feel safe to acknowledge mistakes and learn from them, a healthy scientific culture will be established. As emphasized by UNESCO, academic integrity is a fundamental foundation of an open science system that is collaborative, fair, and trustworthy.[26]

d. Integrity as the Identity of a Scientist Maintaining integrity is not merely to avoid sanctions, but because it reflects the identity of a true scientist. A scientific author with integrity will produce work that stands the test of time, makes a real contribution to knowledge, and is respected by the academic community. Integrity is a long-term investment in personal reputation and collective contribution to the advancement of science.

4. Ethics Education From Early Childhood

Early education in academic ethics is a crucial foundation in shaping intellectual integrity among students and early-career researchers. In an era of abundant information and increasingly easy access to scholarly works, challenges to originality and academic honesty are also growing. Educational institutions have a moral and pedagogical responsibility to instill a strong understanding of ethical values in scientific writing from the early stages of higher education. The ethics of scientific writing are not just a technical skill, but also a matter of moral awareness. The process of cultivating this awareness must begin in the classroom. Students need to be equipped with knowledge on how to cite correctly, ethically paraphrase, understand copyright, and recognize various forms of plagiarism, whether intentional or unintentional. Such training should not merely be administrative or based on plagiarism detection software, but must address philosophical aspects.

According to Tracey Bretag, an academic expert from the University of South Australia, teaching about academic integrity should not be limited to rules and penalties, but rather as part of the moral development of students within the global academic community.[27] This awareness can be shaped through a pedagogical approach based on discussions, case studies, and ethical problem-solving in an academic context. An important aspect of ethics education is understanding information literacy and copyright. Students often do not realize that using images, tables, or quotations without permission or attribution violates laws and ethics. Education on copyright, Creative Commons licenses, and intellectual property protection should be integrated into academic literacy training. This is not only to protect the work of others but also to teach students to respect creative works as part of an honest and responsible scientific process.[28]

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Efforts to cultivate a collaborative and transparent academic culture also require introducing students to the concepts of open science and open access publication. Open science is a collaborative approach in research that emphasizes openness in sharing data, methodology, and research results, making them accessible and verifiable by anyone. It represents a new ethical paradigm in science that promotes social responsibility, research replication, and open access to knowledge. Open access publication allows research results to be freely available and easily accessed by the wider public. According to UNESCO, open access greatly contributes to the equal distribution of knowledge, accelerates innovation, and democratizes access to scientific information. Introducing this concept to students is important to foster the awareness that scientific writing is not only for personal academic purposes but also a contribution to the global community.

a. The Role of Lecturers and Educational Institutions Lecturers and educational institutions play a key role in creating a strong academic ethics ecosystem. Lecturers are not only teachers but also models of integrity that students will emulate. Good practices in citation, data transparency, and recognition of others' contributions must be consistently demonstrated. Educational institutions also need to provide resources and clear policies regarding academic integrity, including written guidelines, regular training, and mechanisms for handling violations that are fair and educational. Additionally, student involvement in discussions about ethics and academic dilemmas should be actively facilitated. In this way, students not only understand the rules normatively but also internalize scholarly values reflectively.

b. Facing the Challenges of the Digital Era In the digital era, plagiarism and ethical violations are becoming increasingly complex. With artificial intelligence technology, automatic paraphrasing, and access to millions of online documents, the ability to distinguish between original work and copied work becomes a unique challenge. Therefore, an educational approach to writing ethics should not rely solely on detection but must prioritize the development of scientific character and ethical digital literacy.[2]

Integrity cannot be taught merely through software. It must be cultivated through habits, reflection, and an academic environment that supports honest scientific practice. Ethics education from an early age is a long-term investment in building a generation of academics who are not only intelligent but also responsible and highly integrity-driven.

Conclusion

Ethics and integrity in scientific writing are not merely focused on efforts to avoid plagiarism, but rather constitute a fundamental commitment that encompasses the entire attitude and behavior of the writer in upholding scientific honesty. This honesty includes the accurate presentation of data, transparency in disclosing methods and sources, as well as the moral responsibility to acknowledge limitations and errors in research. In the digital era characterized by information openness and increasing pressure to publish scientific work, these ethical values become even more crucial. Fierce competition and demands for publication quantity often trigger the temptation to sacrifice integrity for quick results, yet this can potentially damage the credibility of individuals and academic institutions as a whole. The academic community, ranging from students and lecturers to professional researchers, plays a crucial role in fostering and upholding this culture of integrity. Educational institutions and journal publishers need to actively implement policies, training, and support mechanisms that emphasize the importance of ethics at every stage of the scientific process. Additionally, creating an academic environment that is open, transparent, and collaboration-oriented is key to raising awareness that integrity is not merely a normative obligation but a fundamental value that binds the entire scientific ecosystem. Knowledge can continue to develop in a healthy and trustworthy manner by maintaining a strong culture of integrity, providing broad benefits for society and the advancement of human civilization as a whole. Integrity in scientific writing is an irreplaceable foundation in safeguarding the purity and sustainability of knowledge for the future.

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