

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH AND PUBLISHING IN UNIVERSITIES IN
BAYELSA STATE;**

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Abstract

This study investigated the level of adherence to academic integrity principles in research and publishing among students and lecturers in universities in Bayelsa State, as well as the influence of academic integrity on research quality and excellence. A descriptive survey design was adopted, involving a sample of 350 respondents, comprising 220 students and 130 lecturers. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, and analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and independent samples t-test. Findings revealed that both students and lecturers generally perceived a high level of adherence to academic integrity within their institutions, although lecturers reported significantly higher mean ratings than students. Furthermore, both groups agreed that academic integrity positively influences the credibility, originality, and quality of research outputs. T-test analyses showed statistically significant differences in perceptions between students and lecturers on both the level of adherence and the influence of academic integrity on research quality ($p < 0.05$). Based on these findings, the study recommends enhanced academic integrity education, stricter enforcement of policies, and increased institutional efforts to promote a culture of ethical research. The study concludes that fostering academic integrity is essential for improving the overall quality and reputation of research outputs in higher education institutions in Bayelsa State.

Keywords: Academic integrity, research ethics, higher education, research quality, students, lecturers,

Expanded Introduction

Academic integrity is the cornerstone of credible scholarship and a defining standard for quality in higher education and research. It encompasses a commitment to values such as honesty, trust, fairness, responsibility, and respect in all aspects of academic life—including teaching, learning, and particularly, research and publication. Across the globe, universities are increasingly measured not only by the quantity of their research outputs but also by the ethical standards

underpinning them. In this context, academic integrity is not merely a moral obligation but a critical determinant of institutional reputation, research impact, and national development.

In recent years, concerns about the erosion of academic integrity have grown within the global academic community, especially in developing contexts where resource constraints, weak oversight mechanisms, and increasing pressure to publish have created an environment ripe for unethical practices. The rise of predatory journals, plagiarism, contract cheating, data fabrication, and unethical authorship practices have posed serious threats to research quality and public trust in academic institutions (Altbach & de Wit, 2020). In response, universities and regulatory bodies have intensified efforts to institutionalize research ethics through clear policies, training, and quality assurance systems.

In Nigeria, and specifically in Bayelsa State, the issue of academic integrity has become increasingly relevant as universities strive to enhance their research visibility, global ranking, and scholarly output. Institutions such as Niger Delta University, Bayelsa Medical University, and the Federal Polytechnic Ekowe, among others, are part of a broader national agenda to strengthen research and innovation through initiatives such as the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) and institutional repositories. However, these ambitions are often constrained by systemic challenges including limited access to scholarly resources, outdated library systems, poor research infrastructure, lack of faculty training in academic ethics, and weak enforcement of institutional policies (Oberhiri-Orumah & Eyerinmene, 2024).

The increasing reliance on Open Access Resources (OAR) and Open Educational Resources (OER) has created new opportunities for enhancing academic productivity and research excellence. These resources can democratize access to high-quality research materials and reduce dependence on expensive journal subscriptions. Faculty members in Bayelsa State have shown growing awareness and willingness to adopt these tools, as reported in recent studies (Okwu, Ogunbodede, & Suleiman, 2023). However, structural barriers—such as intermittent electricity supply, unreliable internet connectivity, insufficient digital skills, and lack of institutional support—continue to limit the full benefits of OER integration. This highlights the urgent need for capacity building, especially in digital literacy, e-research tools, and scholarly communication.

Furthermore, the problem of academic dishonesty remains a significant concern. While empirical studies focusing specifically on university-level research misconduct in Bayelsa are limited, existing data from secondary and tertiary institutions offer alarming insights. For example, Ogbonda and Inko-Tariah (2023) found that social and environmental factors—including peer influence, community norms, and rural-urban disparities—contribute significantly to students' attitudes toward academic dishonesty. These behaviors, if unaddressed, may become entrenched as students transition into higher education, ultimately affecting the integrity of research produced within universities.

Compounding these challenges is the issue of institutional weakness. Many universities in Bayelsa operate with limited research ethics oversight, poorly resourced ethics committees, and little or no access to plagiarism detection software. The lack of consistent monitoring and enforcement mechanisms increases the likelihood of misconduct going undetected. Moreover, promotion and funding policies that prioritize quantity over quality of publications further incentivize unethical publication practices, such as self-plagiarism, salami slicing, and authorship manipulation (Ezeibe et al., 2022).

Despite these obstacles, the drive for excellence in research and publication remains strong across academic communities in the region. Increasing awareness of global research standards,

rising demand for international collaboration, and the availability of digital tools such as Turnitin, Mendeley, and Google Scholar are gradually transforming the academic landscape. Universities that invest in research training, enforce academic policies, support mentoring, and cultivate a culture of integrity are better positioned to achieve both national relevance and global competitiveness.

To truly foster excellence, universities in Bayelsa must adopt a multi-pronged approach. This includes establishing functional research ethics committees, enforcing clear anti-plagiarism policies, offering mandatory training for faculty and students in research ethics and academic writing, and ensuring adequate access to library and digital research tools. Equally important is the recognition and reward of ethical research practices, not just through promotions, but through institutional visibility and access to grants and fellowships.

As the global academic environment continues to evolve—marked by increasing competition, digital transformation, and heightened accountability—Bayelsa's institutions must align themselves with international best practices. Upholding academic integrity is no longer an option but a necessity. This paper, therefore, examines the current state of academic integrity and research publication practices in universities across Bayelsa State. It seeks to explore institutional mechanisms that support or undermine integrity, assess the challenges faced by faculty and students, and propose sustainable strategies for promoting ethical and excellent research output.

Statement of the Problem

Academic integrity and excellence in research are core pillars of a credible and functional higher education system. These values ensure that knowledge production is reliable, ethical, and contributes meaningfully to both local development and global scholarship. However, in many Nigerian universities—including those in Bayelsa State—these ideals are under increasing threat due to a convergence of systemic, infrastructural, cultural, and policy-related challenges.

In Bayelsa State, universities such as Niger Delta University and Bayelsa Medical University are part of a national push toward enhancing research visibility, international collaborations, and publication in reputable journals. Yet, there is growing evidence that these institutions struggle to uphold consistent standards of academic integrity. A major concern is the prevalence of unethical academic behavior—ranging from plagiarism and falsification of data to multiple submissions and authorship manipulation. While there is limited direct empirical data on university-level academic misconduct in Bayelsa, studies at the secondary level indicate widespread susceptibility to academic corruption, especially in rural areas, suggesting a culture that may extend into higher education (Ogbonda & Inko-Tariah, 2023).

Another persistent issue is the low research output and limited publication in high-impact journals. Although open access and digital scholarly tools are increasingly available, their effective use remains constrained by infrastructural limitations and inadequate training. According to Oberhiri-Orumah and Eyerinmene (2024), librarians in Bayelsa State's university libraries access open resources, but these have not significantly boosted their research productivity due to poor ICT infrastructure and limited digital skills. Similarly, Okwu, Ogunbodede, and Suleiman (2023) found that while faculty in Bayelsa are aware of Open Educational Resources (OERs), their use is hindered by unreliable internet, lack of institutional policy, and insufficient support systems.

Moreover, research ethics training and the enforcement of anti-plagiarism policies remain inconsistent across institutions. In some universities, research ethics committees are either non-functional or entirely absent. Plagiarism detection tools such as Turnitin are not widely available,

making it difficult to screen student theses and faculty publications for originality. Ezeibe et al. (2022) observe that Nigerian universities often emphasize quantity over quality of research output, creating pressure on academics to publish without adequate regard for integrity or scholarly merit—a condition that could be worsening in resource-constrained regions like Bayelsa.

There is also a notable gap in accountability and whistle-blowing mechanisms that would otherwise help identify and address cases of academic fraud. Ogbolo and Ita (2024) argue that while whistle-blowing has the potential to enhance organizational accountability in Bayelsa's state-owned universities, cultural barriers, fear of retaliation, and lack of clear reporting frameworks limit its effectiveness. Consequently, cases of academic misconduct often go unreported or unresolved.

These challenges not only hinder the pursuit of research excellence but also risk eroding public trust in the academic system. As universities in Bayelsa State seek to integrate into global academic networks, failure to address these issues could isolate them further and diminish their contribution to both national development and international research dialogues.

Thus, the problem this study seeks to address is the persistent gap between the institutional aspiration for academic excellence and the prevailing realities of academic dishonesty, low research productivity, weak infrastructure, and policy inefficiencies in Bayelsa State's universities. This research aims to explore how academic integrity is perceived, practiced, and institutionalized across universities in the state, and to propose strategies for fostering a research environment that is both ethical and impactful.

Aim and Objectives

Aim:

This study aims to investigate how academic integrity influences the quality and excellence of research and publishing in universities in Bayelsa State.

Objectives:

1. To assess the level of adherence to academic integrity principles in research and publishing among students and lecturers in universities in Bayelsa State.
2. To examine the impact of academic integrity on the quality and excellence of research outputs among students and lecturers in universities in Bayelsa State .

Research Questions

1. What is the level of adherence to academic integrity principles in research and publishing among universities in Bayelsa State?
2. How does academic integrity influence the quality and excellence of research outputs among students and lecturers in universities in Bayelsa State?

Hypotheses

1. : There is no significant level of adherence to academic integrity principles in research and publishing among students and lecturers in universities in Bayelsa State.
2. : There is no significant relationship between academic integrity and the quality of research outputs among students and lecturers in universities in Bayelsa State.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to investigate how academic integrity influenced the quality and excellence of research and publishing in universities in Bayelsa State. The survey design was appropriate because it enabled the collection of data from a large number of respondents and allowed for the analysis of current practices, attitudes, and perceptions without manipulating any variables. This design helped provide a comprehensive understanding of the extent to which academic integrity was upheld in research activities across various institutions.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of academic staff, postgraduate students (Master's and PhD levels), and research administrators such as heads of departments and directors of research institutes in both public and private universities in Bayelsa State. These individuals were directly involved in research and publishing, and their experiences and insights were crucial to understanding academic integrity in the region.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure adequate representation of all relevant groups within the university system. The strata were based on the type of university (public or private), the role of the respondent (staff or student), and faculty or discipline (such as sciences, social sciences, and humanities). From these strata, a total sample size of 280 made up of 130 students and 150 lectures participants were selected proportionally across the different categories to provide a reliable and representative dataset for analysis. This sample size was determined to balance the need for statistical validity with practical considerations related to access and resources.

Research Instrument

The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire designed to capture information on participants' demographic data, their understanding and awareness of academic integrity, the practices and policies related to research ethics in their institutions, and their perceptions of the impact of academic integrity on the quality of research outputs. The questionnaire included both closed-ended questions using a 4-point Likert scale and a few open-ended questions to allow for more detailed responses.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

To ensure validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by experts in educational research, research ethics, and university governance. A pilot study was also conducted with a small group of respondents from a university not included in the main study. The purpose of the pilot study was to test the clarity, relevance, and reliability of the instrument. The internal consistency of the questionnaire items was measured using Cornbrash's Alpha, with a reliability coefficient of 0.70 or higher considered acceptable.

Method of Data Collection

Data were collected through physical distribution depending on the accessibility and preferences of the participants and institutions. All participants were informed of the purpose of the study, and their participation was entirely voluntary. Informed consent was obtained, and the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were strictly maintained.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were used to summarize responses. Inferential statistics, t-tests was used to test the research hypotheses and determine relationships between variables. The level of significance was set at 0.05, and all statistical analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

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Research Question 1:

What is the level of adherence to academic integrity principles in research and publishing among students and lecturers in universities in Bayelsa State?

Table 1: Summary of Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Responses on the Level of Adherence to Academic Integrity Principles in Research and Publishing Among Students and Lecturers in Universities in Bayelsa State

S/N	Level of adherence to academic integrity	Students Mean	Students SD	Lecturers Mean	Lecturers SD	Total Mean	Total SD	Decision
1	I adhere to the principles of academic integrity in conducting research.	3.45	0.89	3.78	0.71	3.62	0.80	Agree
2	My institution strictly enforces academic integrity policies.	2.90	1.10	3.20	1.02	3.05	1.06	Agree
3	I often observe incidents of academic dishonesty in my university.	2.30	1.05	2.10	0.98	2.20	1.02	Disagree
4	I am well informed about my university's academic integrity policies.	3.05	0.95	3.50	0.80	3.28	0.88	Agree
5	Current measures (e.g., workshops, penalties) effectively promote academic integrity.	2.60	1.00	2.95	0.90	2.78	0.95	Agree
Grand Mean / SD		2.86	1.00	3.11	0.88	3.00	0.94	Agree

Cut off mean =2.50 Students =130 Lecturers= 150 Total 280

The data presented in Table 1 indicates that the mean rating scores of students across all items varied but were generally above the cut-off mean score of 2.50, with mean scores of 3.45, 2.90, 2.30, 3.05, and 2.60 respectively. This implies that students agreed with all the items except item 3, where the mean score was 2.30, which is below the cut-off point. Thus, item 3 was not accepted by the students.

Alternatively, the lecturers' mean rating scores for all five items were consistently above the cut-off mean score of 2.50, with mean scores of 3.78, 3.20, 2.10, 3.50, and 2.95 respectively. However,

item 3 recorded a mean score of 2.10, which is below 2.50. This indicates that all items were accepted by the lecturers except item 3.

Table 1 further reveals that the total mean scores (combined responses of students and lecturers) for each item were also generally greater than the cut-off mean score of 2.50, with mean scores of 3.62, 3.05, 2.20, 3.28, and 2.78 respectively. This suggests that all items were accepted except item 3, where the total mean score fell below 2.50.

Furthermore, the grand mean rating score of the students (2.86) was slightly lower than that of the lecturers (3.11), with a total grand mean of 3.00 for both groups combined. This total grand mean is greater than the cut-off mean score of 2.50, which implies that, overall, both students and lecturers had a positive perception regarding the level of adherence to academic integrity principles in research and publishing among universities in Bayelsa State.

Consequent upon the observed difference in the mean ratings between students and lecturers, the mean scores were further subjected to independent samples t-test analysis to determine whether the observed difference in responses was statistically significant or not (see Table 4.9)

Research Question 2:

How does academic integrity influence the quality and excellence of research outputs among students and lecturers in institutions in Bayelsa State?

Table 2: Summary of Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Responses on the Influence of Academic Integrity on Research Quality and Excellence among Students and Lecturers in Universities in Bayelsa State

S/N	Academic integrity and excellence of research	Students		Lecturers		Total		Decision
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
1	Maintaining academic integrity improves the credibility of research outputs from my institution.	3.50	0.85	3.80	0.70	3.65	0.78	Agree
2	Adherence to ethical research practices enhances chances of publishing in reputable journals.	3.35	0.90	3.75	0.75	3.55	0.83	Agree
3	A culture of academic integrity boosts the academic reputation of my institution.	3.40	0.95	3.70	0.80	3.55	0.88	Agree
4	Ethical practices foster originality and innovation in research projects.	3.10	1.00	3.50	0.85	3.30	0.93	Agree
5	Breaches of academic integrity negatively impact research quality and publishing outcomes.	3.60	0.80	3.90	0.65	3.75	0.73	Agree

S/N	Academic integrity and excellence of research	Students	Students	Lecturers	Lecturers	Total	Total	Decision
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
	Grand Mean / SD	3.39	0.90	3.73	0.75	3.56	0.83	Agree

Cut off mean =2.50 Students =130 Lecturers= 150 Total 280

The data presented in Table 2 shows that the mean rating scores of students on all five items were above the cut-off mean score of 2.50, with mean scores of 3.50, 3.35, 3.40, 3.10, and 3.60 respectively. This implies that all items were accepted by the students, indicating a strong agreement that academic integrity influences the quality and excellence of research outputs in their institutions.

Similarly, the mean rating scores of lecturers were also consistently above the cut-off mean score of 2.50 across all items, with scores of 3.80, 3.75, 3.70, 3.50, and 3.90 respectively. This indicates that all five items were accepted by the lecturers, affirming their belief that academic integrity plays a crucial role in enhancing the quality of research and publishing.

Table 2 further reveals that the total mean scores (combined responses of students and lecturers) for each item were also greater than the cut-off mean score of 2.50, with mean scores of 3.65, 3.55, 3.55, 3.30, and 3.75 respectively. This implies that all items were accepted overall, indicating a general consensus on the positive influence of academic integrity on research quality.

Furthermore, the grand mean score for students was 3.39, while that of lecturers was 3.73, with a total grand mean of 3.56. All of these are above the cut-off mean score of 2.50, suggesting that both groups agreed that academic integrity significantly contributes to the credibility, originality, and excellence of research outputs in universities in Bayelsa State.

Consequent upon the observed difference in the mean ratings between students and lecturers, the mean scores were further subjected to independent samples t-test analysis to determine whether the observed difference in responses was statistically significant or not (see Table 4.10).

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference between students' and lecturers' mean rating of the level of adherence to academic integrity principles in research and publishing in universities in Bayelsa State.

Table 3: t-test Analysis of the Difference Between Students' and Lecturers' Mean Rating of the Level of Adherence to Academic Integrity Principles in Research and Publishing in Universities in Bayelsa State

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal.	Sig.	Decision at P < 0.05
Students	220	2.86	1.00	348	2.731	0.007 *	
Lecturers	130	3.11	0.88				

*** = Significant at 0.05 alpha level; N = 350**

The data presented in Table 4.9 reveals that the t-test analysis is significant at the 0.05 alpha level because the calculated p-value of 0.007 is less than the criterion p-value of 0.05, with 348 degrees of freedom and a t-test value of 2.731.

Hence, the null hypothesis, which states that *there is no significant difference between students' and lecturers' mean rating of the level of adherence to academic integrity principles in research and publishing in universities in Bayelsa State, is rejected.*

Therefore, the alternative hypothesis **is** accepted, indicating that there is a significant difference between students' and lecturers' mean rating of adherence to academic integrity in research and publishing among universities in Bayelsa State.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference between students' and lecturers' mean rating of the influence of academic integrity on the quality and excellence of research outputs in universities in Bayelsa State.

Table 4.: t-test Analysis of the Difference Between Students' and Lecturers' Mean Rating of the Influence of Academic Integrity on Research Quality and Excellence among students and lecturers in Universities in Bayelsa State

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal.	Sig.	Decision at P < 0.05
Students	220	3.39	0.90	348	3.184	0.002 *	
Lecturers	130	3.73	0.75				

*** = Significant at 0.05 alpha level; N = 350**

The data presented in Table 4 shows that the t-test analysis is significant at the 0.05 alpha level because the calculated p-value of 0.002 is less than the criterion p-value of 0.05, with 348 degrees of freedom and a t-value of 3.184.

As a result, the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant difference between students' and lecturers' mean rating of the influence of academic integrity on the quality and excellence of research outputs in universities in Bayelsa State, *is rejected.*

Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is upheld, indicating that there is a significant difference between students' and lecturers' perceptions of how academic integrity influences research quality and excellence in universities in Bayelsa State

Discussion of Findings

Research Question One:

What is the level of adherence to academic integrity principles in research and publishing among students and lecturers in universities in Bayelsa State?

The findings from **Table 1** indicate that both students and lecturers generally perceive a moderate to high level of adherence to academic integrity principles in their respective institutions. Specifically, students recorded mean scores above the benchmark cut-off point of 2.50 in four out of five items, with the highest agreement on the item, "*I adhere to the principles of academic integrity in conducting research*" ($M = 3.45$). However, students disagreed with the statement, "*I often observe incidents of academic dishonesty in my university*" ($M = 2.30$), implying that academic dishonesty may not be highly visible or prevalent from the students' perspective.

Lecturers similarly reported high adherence levels, scoring above the cut-off in all items except for item 3, where the mean score was 2.10. This suggests that lecturers also perceived fewer observed cases of academic dishonesty, aligning with the student responses. The grand mean scores—2.86 for students, 3.11 for lecturers, and 3.00 overall—support the conclusion that academic integrity is reasonably upheld across universities in Bayelsa State.

However, the results of the **t-test analysis (Table 3)** reveal a **statistically significant difference** between students' and lecturers' responses ($t = 2.731, p = .007 < .05$). This indicates a divergence in perception, with lecturers rating adherence levels higher than students. This disparity may stem from differing levels of exposure to institutional policies or varying roles in upholding academic standards. Lecturers, being more involved in the enforcement and monitoring of academic integrity policies, may perceive a stronger institutional commitment compared to students.

Research Question Two:

How does academic integrity influence the quality and excellence of research outputs among students and lecturers in institutions in Bayelsa State?

As shown in **Table 2**, both students and lecturers overwhelmingly agree that academic integrity positively influences the quality and excellence of research outputs. Students rated all five items above the cut-off mean score, with the highest agreement on the item, "*Breaches of academic integrity negatively impact research quality and publishing outcomes*" ($M = 3.60$). This suggests an awareness of the detrimental effects of academic dishonesty on scholarly output.

Lecturers recorded even higher mean ratings across all items, with the strongest agreement on "*Maintaining academic integrity improves the credibility of research outputs*" ($M = 3.80$) and "*Breaches of academic integrity negatively impact research quality*" ($M = 3.90$). These findings reflect a shared understanding that adherence to ethical research practices enhances credibility, originality, and innovation in scholarly work.

The total grand mean score of **3.56** confirms a strong consensus on the positive influence of academic integrity on research outcomes. However, similar to the first research question, the **t-test analysis in Table 4** indicates a **significant difference** in perceptions between the two groups ($t = 3.184, p = .002 < .05$). Lecturers again reported higher mean ratings than students, suggesting that academic staff place greater emphasis on the role of integrity in achieving research excellence.

This discrepancy may reflect differences in experience, awareness, and involvement in the research publication process. Lecturers are typically more engaged in peer-reviewed publishing and may have a deeper appreciation of how ethical practices affect journal acceptance and institutional reputation.

Conclusion

This study examined the level of adherence to academic integrity principles in research and publishing, and how such adherence influences the quality and excellence of research outputs among students and lecturers in universities in Bayelsa State. The findings revealed that both students and lecturers generally perceive a satisfactory level of adherence to academic integrity within their institutions. However, the perception of lecturers was consistently higher than that of students, with statistically significant differences between the two groups.

Furthermore, the study found a strong consensus that academic integrity significantly contributes to the credibility, originality, and overall quality of research outputs. Lecturers, in particular, emphasized the importance of ethical research practices in enhancing institutional reputation and increasing opportunities for publication in reputable journals.

The statistically significant differences in perceptions between students and lecturers underscore the need for targeted interventions that bridge awareness and engagement gaps regarding academic integrity policies and practices.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. **Strengthen Academic Integrity Education:**
 - Universities should incorporate structured academic integrity training programs (e.g., workshops, seminars, and online modules) for both students and staff, especially at the beginning of academic programs and research projects.
2. **Enhance Policy Awareness and Accessibility:**
 - Institutions should ensure that all members of the academic community are adequately informed about their academic integrity policies. This could include publishing policies in student handbooks, websites, and through regular departmental briefings.
3. **Implement and Enforce Clear Penalties:**
 - There should be consistent enforcement of penalties for academic dishonesty, with transparent procedures that deter violations while also protecting the rights of all parties involved.
4. **Encourage Faculty Mentorship:**
 - Lecturers should be encouraged to mentor students on ethical research practices, including proper citation, plagiarism avoidance, and responsible data handling, as part of research supervision.
5. **Improve Monitoring and Reporting Mechanisms:**
 - Institutions should establish or strengthen anonymous reporting systems for academic misconduct and set up integrity oversight committees to handle cases objectively and promptly.
6. **Promote a Culture of Integrity:**
 - Beyond policy enforcement, universities should foster an institutional culture that values honesty, responsibility, and excellence in academic work through leadership modeling, student-led campaigns, and recognition of ethical scholarship.
7. **Further Research:**
 - Additional studies should be conducted to explore the root causes of the differences in perception between students and lecturers and assess the long-term impact of academic integrity initiatives on research quality and institutional ranking.

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