

An Overview of the Causes and Countermeasures of Academic Misconduct in Colleges and Universities

Yanni Li

The Experimental Training Base of College of Information and Communication
National University of Defense Technology
Xi'an, China 710106

Yuyi Li

College of Information and Communication
National University of Defense Technology
Wuhan, China 430010

Abstract—The research on academic misconduct is conducive to the correct guidance and reasonable management and control of the current academic research behaviors that frequently resort to fraud and seek quick success, so as to create a positive and clean scientific research environment. The relevant domestic studies are carefully sorted out to find out the existing deficiencies, which will provide references for the follow-up research and ultimately facilitate the smooth development of the work at the level of system and practice.

Keywords—*academic misconduct in colleges and universities; scientific research integrity; academic atmosphere*

I. INTRODUCTION

In late October 2018, a paper titled “The Yangtze River Scholar Professor Liang Ying and her 404 thesis” pushed the former professor Liang Ying of Nanjing University’s school of social sciences to the forefront. Over the past few years, more than 100 of Liang’s Chinese papers, including master’s and doctoral theses, have been deleted from the databases of well-known domestic academic journals such as CNKI, Wanfang, and CQVIP. Although this move was requested by Liang, her explanation that the low level of her earlier papers was obviously untenable. The paper is a stepping stone for a scholar to grow up. Only the superficial in the early stage can achieve the profound in the later stage. The disappearance of more than one hundred papers is more like a bell ringing in the ears, which is tantamount to drawing a similar mark between the deletion behavior and academic misconduct. Before that, a series of incidents, such as Han Chunyu’s withdrawal from Hebei Science and Technology University, Li Xiaoguang’s academic plagiarism at Sichuan University, and Wang Bing’s post-doctoral report plagiarism at Sun Yat-Sen University, showed that academic misconduct is becoming more and more serious in the scientific research circle, and colleges and universities are the worst affected areas of academic misconduct. Therefore, the author first took the academic journal database of CNKI as the main research text, and took “academic misconduct in colleges and universities” and “scientific research integrity” as the theme to search and obtain a total of 496 literatures; secondly, selected a total of 40 articles (Journal of Editing (10), Journal of China University of Science and Technology Research, (6), Research Grant Funds under all kinds of national fund

support documents (24) as main research text; then research the definition, causes and countermeasures of academic misconduct, so as to know the misconduct of the university. Finally, it put forward what the University Journal Editorial Department should do in the boycott of academic work.

II. DOMESTIC DEFINITIONS AND FORMS OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

The rigid demand for publishing papers is a fertile ground for academic misconduct, which is bound to lead to the problem of scientific integrity. Eager for quick success and instant benefit, alienated from academic tradition, buying and selling papers, corrupting the academic atmosphere are the examples. Academic misconduct, academic anomie, academic corruption, etc. [1] are all descriptions of behaviors that violate academic ethics in academic research. These concepts have both connections and differences [2]. In this paper, we use “academic misconduct” to indicate the behavior.

Released in February 2007, the Chinese Academy of Sciences “on Strengthening the Construction of Scientific Norms of the Chinese Academy of Sciences Opinion” (hereinafter referred to as “Opinion One”), the definition of scientific misconduct refers to the various research and academic field fabricated, cheating, plagiarism and other against scientific community accepted the moral behavior, and abuse and obtain scientific research resources against social moral behavior in the process of scientific research activities, and lists the seven standards, such as false statement, damage the copyright of others and misconduct in the research is published or print etc. In March 2009, the Ministry of Education issued “The Notice of the Ministry of Education on Serious Treatment of Academic Misconduct in Institutions of Higher Learning” (hereinafter referred to as “The Notice”), which listed seven kinds of academic misconduct in institutions of higher learning that must be seriously dealt with: first, plagiarism, plagiarism and appropriation of academic achievements of others; second, tampering with others’ academic achievements; third, forge or tamper with data and documents, fabricate facts; fourth, forge notes; fifth, failing to participate in the creation and signing others’ academic achievements; sixth, using others’ names without permission; and seventh, other academic

misconduct. It is made clear that colleges and universities are directly responsible for the investigation and punishment of academic misconduct by relevant institutions or individuals in the university, and they should establish and improve working institutions for dealing with academic misconduct [3]. In December 2011, the Ministry of Education issued the Implementation Opinions of the Ministry of Education on Practically Strengthening and Improving the Construction of Academic Atmosphere in Institutions of College and Universities (hereinafter referred to as "Opinions Two"), resolutely opposing unhealthy academic atmosphere, effectively curbing academic misconduct, and creating a clean and honest educational environment and a pragmatic academic atmosphere [4]. Zhang Guiping [5] and Sun Junheng [6] classify academic misconduct as "non-ethical behavior", and believe that the non-ethical behavior of university teachers in scientific research generally refers to all kinds of corruption in scientific research, including plagiarism and academic fraud. In view of this, there is no consensus on the definition of academic misconduct in domestic academic circles. The concepts and standards defined in Opinion One are accepted by most people. The Notice defines academic misconduct in terms of specific forms, but does not take into account peer review fraud. Opinion Two focuses on measures introduced by colleges and universities on academic misconduct, namely starting from the year when the guideline was issued, the ministry of education has recognized that colleges and universities are the hardest hit areas for scientific research and academic fraud.

III. CAUSES OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Academic misconduct is the product of the interaction between social objective environment and individual utilitarianism. From the perspective of personal interests, the guidance of academic quantitative evaluation system is wrong, and the evaluation mechanism and reward mechanism are biased. In the process of professional title evaluation and position promotion, the excessive pursuit of index quantification and maneuverability leads to the fact that people tend to focus on the results rather than the process. From the perspective of system, the reasons for academic misconduct can be divided into academic evaluation, personnel assessment, scientific research management, professional title evaluation, legal system defects, among which, the academic evaluation mechanism is the source of the target. This paper analyzes the causes of academic misconduct from the perspective of the main responsible person based on the actual situation of China's scientific research circle.

A. *Colleges and Universities Are the Disaster Areas of Academic Misconduct*

Zhang Yingli [5] using the method of questionnaire survey to analyze the university teachers' academic dishonesty of personal and environmental impact, concluded that the influence of environmental factors on the anomie is bigger than the other forces. His survey to the 3021 teachers in 62 undergraduate colleges indicates a lack of running

autonomy and independence of academic institutions in our university. It is hard to deal with the internal academic misconduct in the school. Colleagues' anomie behavior, possibility to be reported, penalty severity, trustworthiness atmosphere, and school tolerance are associated with this. Du Yunxiang et al. [6] pointed out that the mechanism of academic management in colleges and universities forces teachers to make short, even and fast academic research and earnings, which to some extent stimulates the occurrence of academic misconduct. The utilitarianism of academic research makes university teachers regard academic research as a means and a profitable tool, resulting in the rampant prevalence of academic misconduct [7]. All these indicate that the main reasons why colleges and universities have become the disaster area of academic misconduct are the "excessive academic evaluation" of academic management departments and the almost completely "administrative" academic management mechanism.

B. *Misconduct in the Editorial Process*

The "Three-Examination system" and "Three-Emending system" in the editing industry also provide opportunities for academic misconduct. Du Yunxiang et al. [6] believe that there are three forms of editors' misconduct. One is to imply that the reviewer will pay special attention to a certain manuscript. Third, individual journals can publish any article as long as they pay for the layout fee, which completely turns academic research into a transaction between the author and the editorial department. In order to pursue economic benefits, some periodicals are free to enlarge the layout, reduce the font size, increase the page number, and publish supplement and special issue. Such commercialization has increased the number of publications, but the academic value has decreased sharply. Kang Yinhua et al. [8] believe that reviewers' misconduct is reflected in the following aspects: reviewers know the author or have some kind of interest relationship with the author, so that low-quality papers are approved; The second is to deliberately review high-quality papers to modify or not to employ, plagiarize the auditee's results; Third, perfunctory cope with or according to some kind of suggestion review, does not express own opinion truly. Kong Yan et al. [9] insisted that the author should submit the letter of commitment at the same time of submission, requiring the author to indicate in the letter of commitment that if the author violates the content of the commitment, the published and submitted papers will be voluntarily revoked, and the journal will be authorized to publish an apology statement in the name of all the authors of this article. This way of urging the author to be self-aware, self-disciplined and self-alert in the way of commitment, so that the author knows the cost of academic misconduct, which is also to convey the harm of academic misconduct to the author, can yet be regarded as an effective means to eliminate academic fraud. The author perceived from years of editing experience that the editorial department is the chief editor responsibility system, so the role of editors and reviewers in the acceptance of manuscripts is excessively detailed, which is inconsistent with the fact, and few people conduct new refining research on the chief editor responsibility system.

C. *Legal Vacancy in Academic Field*

At present, China's laws have no clear provisions on misconduct in the academic field, and the punishment of misconduct is basically in a "case by case" state, with very weak binding force, and the low cost and risk of misconduct cause great temptation to people's speculative psychology. Xu Heping et al. [10] believed that at the current national level, basic, systematic and normative documents should be adopted to punish academic misconduct. Hu Zhibin etc. [11] think that it is necessary to add in the current criminal law in academic fraud, and I feel the same way that we can trace has just been exposed of resveratrol, the late 20th century, the university of Connecticut, a scholar named Das DK highly praised this so-called anti-aging, anti-oxidation high-price health care products, but behind the aura is a damage of kidney cases happened. The 117 articles published by him on resveratrol research is deliberately fraud, Das himself has been expelled from university. Thus it can be seen that the social harmfulness caused by serious academic misconduct has reached the level of criminalization.

D. *Deviation from Social Values*

From the aspects of social environment, in the period of transformation of social values, moral values have been kidnapped by fame fortune, money in social life, the utility of the ethos, heavily trampling on the justice and fairness and justice, integrity in the wind of misconduct is becoming more and more impetuous and indulgence, and the social soil is a breeding ground for misconduct. Zhang Guiping [12] proposed the concept of "academic self-esteem" in his research on academic misconduct. For scientific research workers in colleges and universities, self-esteem is also an important factor affecting academic misconduct. But until now, there has been no unified conclusion on the mechanism of self-esteem's influence on misconduct. The author supports the second view that the widespread academic misconduct and institutional defects are on the one hand caused by the deviation of some scholars' values in the final analysis. To prevent academic misconduct by improving system construction is a kind of follow-up compensation behavior. Only when scholars establish correct values, exercise strict self-discipline, and consciously maintain professional ethics, can they fundamentally eliminate academic misconduct.

IV. COUNTERMEASURES FOR DEALING WITH ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT IN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

The behaving decision of college teachers is related to the future of education and scientific innovation in China. The behaviors that colleges and universities blindly compare themselves with each other and even violate the laws of scientific research and ignore the academic ability of teachers and students, and only ask for "high yield" of academic papers, makes the phenomenon of "high quality but low quality" of academic papers everywhere. Driven by policies and interests, academic misconduct and speculation become inevitable. The spread and frequent occurrence of academic misconduct have seriously hindered the spread and development of science and technology and worsened the

educational environment of colleges and universities. Therefore, the premise of academic prosperity and progress of higher education must be to effectively curb and prevent academic misconduct.

A. *Reforming the Human Resource Management System in Colleges and Universities*

Zhang Guiping [12] believes that colleges and universities need a reasonable positioning and should implement classified management of the scientific research and academic research of their teachers according to the level and type of higher education. In the aspect of human resource management system, the income of human capital should be increased while teachers' teaching income is increased. In some western universities, although teachers are also faced with great pressure of scientific research, they still divide teachers into two types, teaching type and scientific research type, so that each type of teachers can find their own position. For our current practice, we should establish a matching teacher resource management system, such as the establishment of teaching and scientific research posts, full-time teaching posts and full-time scientific research posts. Take the author's college as an example, in the past, the promotion, Title performance evaluation of all the teachers and logistic staff are conducted in accordance with the standards of teachers, with the logistic staff have no competition of teachers; now, the teachers and logistic staff are divided into two parts, the assessment to the teachers focuses on the scientific research and teaching tasks, actual workload and other quantitative assessment are to the logistic staff, and the research requirement is no longer a standard for the logistic staff.

B. *Improving the Evaluation Index of Science and Technology*

Du Yunxiang et al. [6] believe that the evaluation index of science and technology can only be used in scientific and technological academic activities, and should not be linked to personal interests such as professional title assessment and job promotion. In the setting of academic evaluation index, we should not only pay attention to quantitative assessment. Currently our country science and technology evaluation index system is not perfect. For example, science and technology evaluation classification is not clear; same evaluation criteria evaluation is used to evaluate different types of science and technology activities, etc., These, to some extent, encourages the unhealthy atmosphere behaviors such as being eager for quick success and instant benefit, impetuous and grandiosity. In the letter from the Department of Education and Technology of the Ministry of Education (2018), it is clearly proposed to clear up the "only papers, only titles, only awards" special action notice, the purpose is to reverse the science and technology evaluation orientation, the implementation of this move can be regarded as a blessing for higher education workers.

C. *Increasing the Cost of Academic Misconduct*

Hasani [13] pointed out that most human behaviors can be explained by economic interests and social recognition.

Irrational participants may give up economic benefits due to face preference or completely disregard social face in pursuit of economic benefits. The reason why individuals disregard social face is more that the cost of losing social face is quite low. Therefore, making full use of the amplification effect of media is an important way to improve the cost of scientific research corruption reputation. The author thinks that, to increase the cost of university teachers' scientific research of corruption, the first to join in the project application, academic review academic moral evaluation indicators, one ticket is overruled make, strengthen the annual appraisal of science and technology personnel ethical, the assessment results as the post, personnel selection and appointment, promotion title selection advanced important basis. [14] These punitive measures have invisibly increased the economic cost of teacher research corruption.

V. CONCLUSION

Academic integrity is a systematic and long-term project, involving many factors, such as professional ethics and academic integrity education, interest temptation, academic evaluation mechanism, social atmosphere, etc., so we cannot hold the mentality of quick success and instant success. Through literature review and interpretation, it is believed that theoretical research is more, empirical research is less, and theoretical research needs to be expanded; the research content needs to be deepened. So the problems to be solved at present are to establish an efficient, pragmatic, high maneuverability of academic integrity security system. Therefore, we need to understand the origin and current situation of the development of effective countermeasures, set up academic integrity security system, in order to evoke the academic discussion, create a fresh academic atmosphere, so as to offer an inexhaustible driving force for the promotion of the sustainable and healthy development of university's scientific research.

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