Credibility of Organizational Research: A Philosophical Asymmetry in Practice and Conceptualization

Justine Chinoperekweyi[1], Takaruza Munyanyiwa[2]
[1]CEO, Centre for Organization Leadership and Development (COLD), Zimbabwe.
[2]Apollos University (USA).
[1]*Correspondence Email: justine@centreold.com

Abstract

The review study was based on understanding the traditional role of organizational research in its evolution and the intended improvement in organizational performance. The review expands on empirical provocative article on publication bias in medical journals which concluded that most in most research designs the research findings are false. This is a serious threat to cumulative knowledge development and is injurious to the academic enterprise. Organizational research is seemingly contaminated by a widely shared prescription for research to be 'interesting' while eliminating philosophical quality. This contributes to the mismatch between the objectives of the research and organizational practices. The field of organizational research is experiencing disruptive trends since it is the meeting point for numerous disciplines. Organizational research should strive to be informed by responsible research than to focus on being merely 'interesting'. This requires paying attention to the research paradigm components: ontology, epistemology, methodology, and methods to resolve the credibility challenge. The study provided a basis for harmonizing philosophical and organizational research to close the discovered gaps. Addressing the credibility dilemma in organizational research is crucial to igniting transformation conversations; maintaining public confidence, and guarding the authority of those in academics. The scientific claims of organizational research should be beyond reproach. This article advocates for the need to shun the current over-reliance on formulaic conformity, instrumental research, and a partisan approach to research.

*Keywords***:** organizational research, credibility, academic enterprise, research methods, research philosophy

Introduction

Globally, there seem to be a continuously evolving gap between organizational research and its credibility in practice. Even with the understanding that an academic institution is a social process navigated by people and institutions with much fallibility, still more needs to be done to resolve this demise. The entire academic social process relies on trust, as self-policing has been the long-cherished belief in academics and research in particular (Martin, 2012; Martin, 2013), which is the essence of this study to establish lasting self-policing for effective organizational research. However, the deepening credibility challenge in organizational research has challenged the effectiveness of self-policing assumptions. There has been an increase in the number of headlines of gross research misconducts across academic enterprises and those in the academe, and little research has been done to provide a conclusive standpoint in this perspective. Some of the commonly cited Questionable Research Practices (QRP) include an increase in retractions, solicitation for contributions by predatory journals, gaming of the publication process, rampant commercialization of research, and data fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism (Steneck, 2006; Martin, 2013; Horbach and Halffman, 2017). This article recognizes that

organizational research is characterized by the credibility demise fueled by gross violations of the ethos of science; which facilitated the rise in academic dishonesty and misconduct (Martinson *et al.,* 2005; Steen, 2011; Fang *et al.,* 2012). The integrity of organizational research process is fracturing under increased publishing pressure and competition among scholars with scarce publication space, research funds, tenure, or promotion (Casadevall and Fang, 2012). Sterba (2006) pointed out that improper research conduct is most often covert. This complicates the ability to promulgate sustainable solutions to resolve the credibility demise. Other scholars attribute the increasing credibility demise in organizational research to scientific ethos, reward systems, and institutional arrangements on which the study relies. Credibility has therefore become a cause of concern in organizational research calling for new insights to develop real solutions to the matter. Therefore, the current review expands on a provocative article on publication bias in medical journals by Ioannidis (2005) which concluded that "most research findings are false for most research designs and most fields."

Buchanan and Bryan (2007) identified six elements of organizational field research that shape the choice of research methods: 1) organizational research context; 2) discipline-specific research tradition; 3) the inevitable politicization of the organizational researcher's role; 4) increasing alarm around research ethics; 5) theoretical and audience-related issues; and 6) personal preferences and biases of researchers and gatekeepers. These characteristics seem to be contaminating organizational research outcomes. This is because there is a reflection of research misconduct which poses threat to useful research outputs. From the vantage point of agency theory, it is essential to not assume that all those in the academic enterprise are responsible agents. Scientific research has the tradition of seeking truth (Hammersley, 1995) and knowledge innovation as its main aim through the integrity of researchers. In line with Oliver (2010), organizational research should achieve its prime purposes through reliance on practice-based methodologies and scholarship. In the context of research in general, Oliver (2010) pointed out that research should allow us to hear alternative views; solve organizational challenges (both technical and adaptive challenges); reveal misperceptions, biases, and inaccuracies; and should open paths to unorthodox but intriguing questions. Organizational research must not only have a philosophical link but must also have transformational value. In contrast to this noble view of responsible research, organizational research is facing the challenge of harming the "dignity of creation" (Saladin, 1996). The ensuing organizational research misconduct is distorting the relationship between scientific practice and the knowledge it produces (Penders, 2017). Therefore, this research-based article seeks to explore the credibility challenge in organizational research and promulgate solutions to restore academic integrity and the ethos of science within this field and in academe.

Organizational Research

Existing literature indicates that the field of organizational research has incredibly grown based on the increasing number of scholars and the volume of research output (Davis, 2015). It is recorded that the ultimate constituency for organizational research was managers. In confirming the transformation of the field, Buchanan and Bryman (2007) pointed out that the field of organizational research is characterized by 'widening boundaries, a multi-paradigmatic profile, and methodological inventiveness'. All traditional organizational researches were exclusively assessed in terms of "managerial relevance". The changing business environment and particularly the advent of information technology transformed the tasks of management to encompass algorithms. Given these disruptive trends in organizational research, the field is influenced by the norms of practice, epistemological concerns, ethical, evidential, and personal factors. Organizational research competency is influenced by research misconduct, which entails addressing the organizational, historical, political, ethical, evidential, and human elements pertinent to an investigation in a coherent manner (Buchanan and Bryman, 2007).

Because the subject of organizational research is now limitless, researchers from all over the world pursue a variety of goals. Some of the aims of organizational research include: establishing co-variation, determining causal relationships, developing models, or putting hypotheses to the test. Other organizational researchers are

more preoccupied with rich description, capturing the complex texture of the organizational world as a valuable goal in its own right (Buchanan and Bryman, 2007). According to Shadish *et al.,* 2001, the field of organizational research is no longer dominated or constrained by positivist (or neo-positivist) epistemology and its extended family of primarily quantitative hypothetico-deductive methods. Organizational research displays a variety of positivist, critical, phenomenological, constructivist, interpretative, feminist, and postmodern perspectives. The field reflects the paradigm diversity of the social sciences. The organizational research epistemological eclecticism has involved the development of novel terminology, new research methodologies, non-traditional types of evidence, and novel approaches to conceptualization, analysis, and theory construction. This paradigmatic diversity and methodological innovation emerge because organizational research is a meeting point for numerous disciplines. Each of the disciplines, and related sub-disciplines, brings its distinct perspectives and traditions. The multidisciplinary form of organizational research calls for continued ethical scrutiny to enhance the process and outcomes of the field.

Organizational research faces the challenge of 'paradigm soup' as the adoption of mixed-method approaches leads researchers to reserve the epistemological and ontological divisions that formerly divided researchers and because this questions the appropriateness of conventional research best practices in addition to qualitative alternatives (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The field of organizational research is fragmented, with no central core of traditions, frameworks, and concepts (Buchanan and Bryan, 2007). Furthermore, the field has no unified theoretical or practical proposal.

The Ethos of Science and Research

Given the authority of organizational research and its potential impact on society, researchers are expected to uphold the ethos of science and ensure that research findings are reliable and can beneficially guide practice and policy development. Responsible organizational research will restore scientific integrity by reproducing credible and useful knowledge. The field of organizational research is comparable to a sprawling structure (Davis, 2015), guided by standards of cumulative knowledge development, dissemination, and application to real problems. This standard should not be immune to organizational research but to science in general. The standard of cumulative insight should privilege truth and coherence in research output rather than exclusively focusing on novelty and impact. The ability of organizational research to adhere to the ethos of science resolves the credibility dilemma through shirking systematic biases in research.

The ethos of science can be derived from the following words by Thompson (1956) as cited in Davis (2015):

> *The unique contribution of science lies in its combination of deductive and inductive methods for the development of reliable knowledge. Research must go beyond description and must be reflected against theory. It must study the obvious as well as the unknown. The pressure for immediately applicable results must be reduced.*

Merton's norms and the value-free ideal are essential in determining the ethos of science.

Merton's Norms

Merton (1942) described the ethos of science as "that emotionally toned complex of values and norms which held to be binding on the man [sic] of science." Control over the scientist's behavior is imposed through these norms by sanctions and rewards and "are in varying degrees internalized by the scientist" (Merton, 1968). According to Merton, there are four norms of scientific inquiry: Communalism, Universalism, Disinterestedness, and Organized Skepticism. To aid memory an acronym *CUDOS* is used. *Communalism* views scientific knowledge as public knowledge, implying that research results belong to the world at large and not to

individual scientists. *Universalism* upholds that the laws of science are the same everywhere; hence there are no privileged sources of scientific knowledge. The laws of science are therefore independent of the researchers involved. *Disinterestedness* points out to scientists as being unbiased. The purpose of research is to advance human knowledge and explore possibilities. Researchers should have no personal stake in the acceptance or rejection of data or claims. *Skepticism* states that scientists take nothing on trust; hence all knowledge is critically scrutinized for possible errors of fact or inconsistencies of argument.

The value-free ideal

The primary purpose of the value-free ideal in science was, and still is, to protect scientific work from the interference of social and political values unrelated to scientific process or epistemology. Value-neutrality helps to ensure researchers can discover knowledge objectively, unbiased by context (Risjord, 2014; Douglas, 2009). Value-free ideal insulate researchers from the worries and social ethos of the larger society. This helps researchers maintain autonomous inquiry and independent thinking. However, value freedom does not imply immunity from accountability. It encompasses upholding ethical demands such as honesty, openness, and integrity. Scientific research should be premised on openness, falsifiability, replicability, and peer review (Bedeian *et al.,* 2010).

Given the multidisciplinary form of organizational research, the field is affected by numerous political properties. As organizations are political systems (Mintzberg, 1983; Pfeffer, 1992), it is difficult for researchers to respect conventional norms of observer neutrality by avoiding entanglement in power and political issues. The routine political actions of researchers are evident when negotiating research objectives, obtaining consent to access respondents, aligning with stakeholder groups, and when attempting to publish findings. Negotiations are mainly done with reviewers, editors, guides (research gatekeepers) who can sanction or block the researcher's work (Korczynski, 2004). Gatekeepers can make their consent contingent, hence jeopardizing the spirit of free inquiry, especially when gatekeepers discourage certain themes and topics.

Organizational Research Credibility Challenge

Organizational research is facing an alarming credibility challenge due to the documented inability to reproduce published research (Butler *et al.,* 2017), thereby deterring the expected transformational value of research in organizations. According to Henninger (2009), "Science is on the credibility bubble. If it pops, centuries of what we understand to be the role of science goes with it." The credibility challenge involves a failure by researchers and academic institutions to adopt and uphold the norms that protect research integrity (Brice and Bligh, 2004), though little research has been done to conclude on the real factors leading to this status quo. This challenge could be attributed to the perverse incentives for publishing in top-ranked journals. Examples of incentives include six-figure salaries, high teaching loads, and tenured lifetime employment (Martin, 2013). The incentivization of research publication fosters competition leading to behavior that undermines research legitimacy (Casadevall and Fang, 2012). Researchers should uphold the values of science thereby insulating the temptation for shortcuts or cutthroat research approaches that compromise research findings. Research misconducts refer to "behaviors in research environment that require attention" (NASCSEPP, 1992). A study by Bedeian *et al.,* 2010, categorized research misconducts into three: 1) fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reporting research results; 2) questionable research practices such as taking undeserved credit for intellectual contributions or discoveries; and 3) other misconduct which include acts that may occur in research setting but are not unique to the conduct of science.

One aspect of the credibility challenge is the tendency by most researchers to emulate their colleagues in other disciplines by advocating dispassionate value-neutrality toward their work. There is a widening gap between solving real-world problems and providing esoteric contributions to a very narrow audience of scholars. This leads to irresponsible outcomes. Organizational research scholars should shift from value-free instrumentalism toward responsible science (Anne Tsui *cited in* Honig *et al.,* 2018).

Schminke (2009) identified various ethical violations by researchers: authors submitting manuscripts "conspicuously similar" to already published work in other journals or submitting multiple manuscripts examining "virtually identical" models with overlapping variables. Duplicate publication or "salami publishing" distorts the knowledge base by making it appear that there is more information available than exist. Another common questionable research practice involves developing hypotheses after results are known. This practice is referred to as HARKing *(Hypothesizing After Results are Known)* (Garst *et al.,* 2002). HARKing involves a situation wherein a post hoc speculation is inserted into a manuscript as if it were a priori hypothesis (Kerr, 1998; Rubin, 2017). Bedeian (2004) pointed out that when "hypotheses are data-driven, they are inherently susceptible to capitalization on chance and are nothing more than a disguised form of data dredging." In some instances, this ghostwriting is necessitated by the scholarly demands or the gatekeepers' expectations. HARKing is problematic to scientific progress because it results in hypotheses that are always confirmed and never falsified by the results. Researchers cannot accurately assess which hypothesis is true and which is false (Rubin, 2017).

Wells (1894) stated that very few books and scientific papers appear to be constructed. The development of research should be well organized and should follow a structured process. It is aptly stated that "intelligent common people come to scientific books neither for humor, the subtlety of style, nor for vulgar wonders of the 'millions and millions and millions' type, but for problems to exercise their minds upon." Organizational research should focus on unraveling evidence and solutions.

Causes of organizational research credibility challenge

In view of the trends in organizational research, below are some of the causes of the credibility challenge in this field. These causes were derived from a review of literature on the subject matter. Five main articles were used to inform the current exploration. To solve a problem, it is essential to determine its underlying causes and factors. The prevention of research misconduct requires the identification of its source. Research integrity has been contaminated by such factors as the absence of policies, peer pressure, age, and gender. Such factors influence a researcher's temptation to falsify or fabricate work or plagiarize the ideas and approaches of other scientists.

- **Demands of contemporary scholarship**

The academic enterprise faces the publish-or-perish challenge leading to "loose authorship" and severe elimination of philosophical quality in scholarly works. Organizational research scholars face increasing pressure to publish in international peer-reviewed journals with high impact factors calculated with mathematical precision (Miller *et al.,* 2011). Scholars who cannot publish in reputable journals are forced to publish in predatory journals. In some instances, free riding is rampant. This involves authors being added to papers without contribution. The rise in unreasonable scholarly expectations has facilitated most scholars to cut corners to satisfy these demands (Casadevall and Fang, 2012). The "publish-or-perish" dictum is regarded by most scholars as partly behind the increase in multi-authored publications and loose authorship (Geelhoed *et al.,* 2007; Fanelli *et al.,* 2017). The unreasonable demands of contemporary scholarship tempt many scholars to deviate from the ethos of scientific research. The academic enterprise should therefore avoid unrealistic

performance standards, extreme publication pressure, excessive peer competition, and ruthless careerism. These facets are associated with environments that are conducive for research misconduct (Mumford *et al.,* 2007).

- **Growth of bibliometrics and excessive formulaic conformity**

In view of the unreasonable demands of contemporary scholarship, there is increased growth of bibliometrics and privileging of formulaic presentations rather than innovation and truth in organizational research. A continuous stream of citation reports has unduly influenced administrators, editors, and scholars (Michael Lounsbury *cited in* Honig *et al.,* 2018). The academic enterprise has been drawn into a deplorable state of valuing formulaic presentations rather than privileging truth and coherence and subsequently cumulative insight. This is seemingly deepening the credibility challenge in organizational research through incentivizing efforts to manipulate data. According to Michael Lounsbury as cited in Honig *et al.,* 2008, this institutional shift is part of a general social trend toward market logics, leading to formulaic conformity.

- **Fetishization of Impact Factors (IFs) and rise in academic cybercriminals**

There is so much reliance on impact factors by the academic enterprise to the extent that the validity and reliability of research findings are discounted when published in a low impact factor publication. Impact factors are calculated yearly for journals that are indexed in 'Thomson Reuters' 'Journal Citation Reports' (JCR) as a measure of the average number of citations of articles published in scientific and social science journals. Impact factors measure the frequency with which the average article in a journal has been cited in a given period of time. Since this is commercialized by the academic enterprise, this has created opportunities for manipulating impact factors. The current "romance with Impact Factors" has been greatly problematic to scientific inquiry. The irrational commitment to impact factors has fostered variegated forms of scientific misconduct. Impact Factors has been criticized as being ill-conceived, unreliable, and invalid (Baum, 2011). The continued predominant reliance on Impact Factors is regarded as insidious and has the potential to distort researcher and editorial behavior in ways that deepen organizational research credibility challenge.

Given the irrational demands of contemporary scholarship, there has been an increase in the number of predatory journals and furious publishers. These fake publishers are attracting publications from those in academia who should be custodians of the norms of scholarship. The bogus journals are also created for mere economic benefits by those in the academic enterprise. These fake journals or academic cybercriminals target authors and real journals through bogus companies that compile fake impact factors for journals.

- **Partisan research conclusions**

The credibility challenge in organizational research also emanates from a situation where researchers align or are forced to align research agenda with the interests of specific stakeholder groups. In most cases organizational researchers are forced, implicit or explicit, to support agendas of certain individuals or groups, especially managers. This partisanship is captured by the phrase "servants of power". Organizational research requires management approval, hence making it difficult for researchers to avoid linking research aims explicitly to managerial interests in a way that could potentially damage the interests of other stakeholder groups rather than a well-informed research paradigm. Researchers are therefore forced to align their research findings to the gatekeepers to avoid the consequences of failing to meet gatekeeper expectations. As such most organizational researches are merely restricted to managerially defined themes and problems.

- **Rampant commercialization of publication**

The academic enterprise has been bedeviled by the growing logic of entrepreneurialism. Commercialization has brought great violence to the academic enterprise by fracturing the pluralistic societal values, narrowing how we assess worthiness across all societal domains. The rise in entrepreneurialism invalidates the intrinsic motivations of researchers. As highlighted by Harzing (2009), we have reached a point where the journal itself has become more important than the scientific message. The rampant commercialization of publication has distorted scientific behavior and the utility, quality, and objectivity of articles have deteriorated. The adoption of cutthroat approaches due to the logic of entrepreneurialism combines to undermine the long-term scientific norms in organizational research. As depicted in Figure 1, this has been facilitated by the publication tsunami where there is an exponential increase in the number of articles viz-a-vis the publication space. Publication tsumani implies that the number of articles surpass the capacity of available journals.
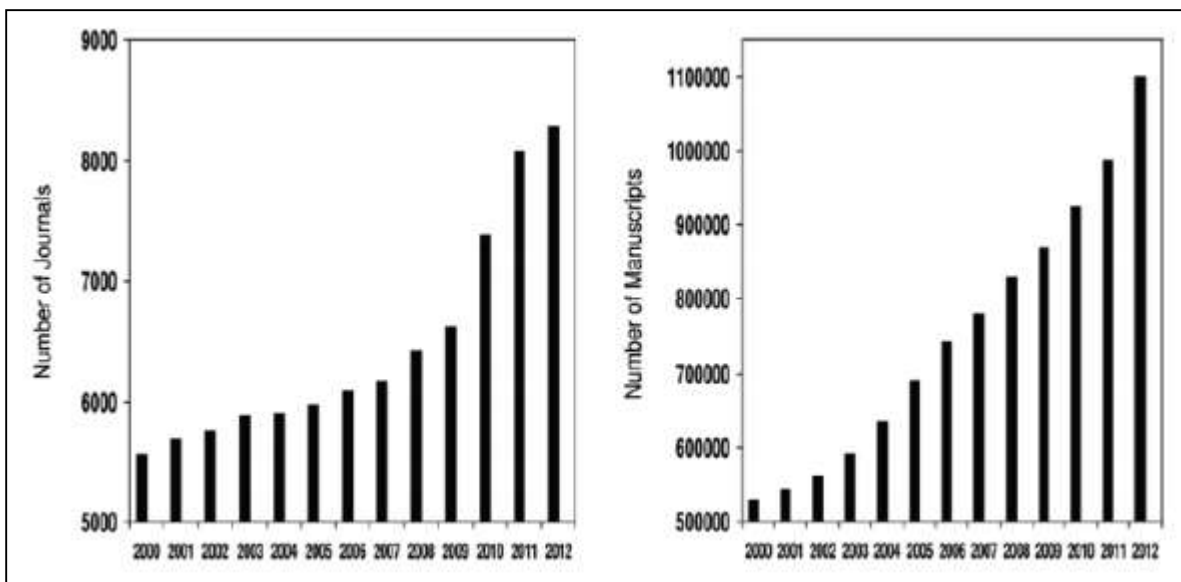
Publication Tsunami

Figure 1: Publication Tsunami

Source: Tijdink, n.d

- **Ivory Tower Approach to organizational research**

This is a top-down approach to research based on administrative and procedural aspects dictated by research gatekeepers. Casadevall and Fang (2012) referred to this approach as a pyramid scheme comprising a "small number of principal investigators presiding over an army of research scientists, postdocs, students, and technicians who have little autonomy and increasingly uncertain career prospects." The nature of ivory-tower-style research restricts academic freedom and independent scientific inquiry. Ivory tower approach is shrouded by commercial and ideological values associated with entrepreneurialism. The approach prioritizes gatekeepers' views and opinions thereby privileging an instrumental approach to research. The academic enterprise is therefore prioritizing novelty and impact rather than cumulative insights and contribution to a greater good

(Tsui, 2016). A transformation from instrumental research to responsible science is necessary to ensure organizational research lives to its purpose of true science.

Ivory tower approach encompasses the epistemological privileging of certain forms of knowledge by those in editorial positions. Researchers are therefore tempted to engage in a credentialing exercise, that is, a combination of language use and appropriate referencing just to get gatekeepers' approval. Collins and Rainwater (2003) pointed out that some researchers adopted stylistic manipulations such as publishing research findings several different "voices". Researchers are mainly forced by gatekeepers to downplay the significance of qualitative data to get published as quantitative researchers. This leads researchers to be closet qualitative researchers because of the biased position of research gatekeepers (Sutton, 1997). The biases are in most cases too strong that researchers are disadvantaged by editors and reviewers.

- **Sloppiness in the publication process**

Responsible research should be relevant, valid, efficient, and sound. However, in prioritizing instrumentalism organizational research is characterized by ignorance, honest error, biases, and dubious integrity. Systemic effects in the publication process contribute to scientific misconduct, some frequencies of which are depicted in Figure 2. The publishing process is characterized by suspect authors and publishing process leading to "loose authorship". There is increasing sloppiness on the part of reviewers and editors. As noted by Gans (1989), it seems most publishers operate as "machine shops", in which publications are treated like piecework. There is an urgent need for systemic counter-pressures that will reorient the publication process to avert rationalizations for misconduct. Barley (2016) pointed out that there is need for fundamental changes in the system that reviews, publishes, and evaluates research. As agents and advocates of responsible research, journal reviewers and editors have a responsibility to detect and deter research misconduct.

Frequencies of Research Misconduct and Questionable Research Practices
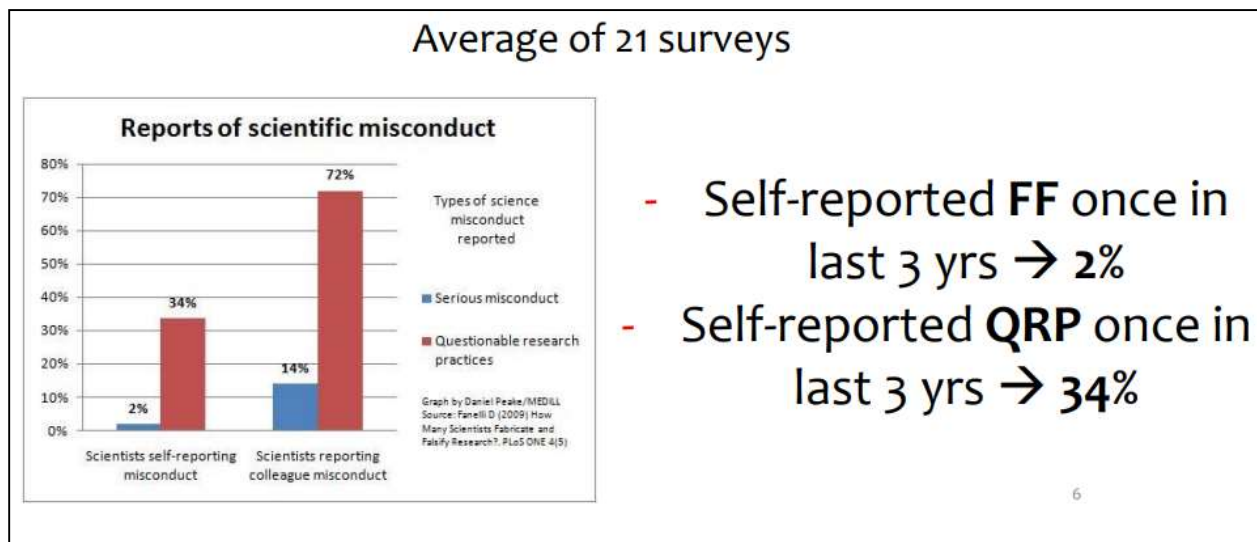
Figure 2: Frequencies of Research Misconduct and Questionable Research Practices

Source: Tijdink, n.d

- **Deviant normalization dilemma**

Organizational research is greatly influenced by the reliance on norm-based systems. Cultural sanctioning normalizes deviations to the extent that initial errors go uncorrected and eventually become the "new normal." Organizational research faces the challenge that slippages in standards occur without intention or fraud. Much of the deviance from established rules can become normalized over time due to the demands of contemporary scholarship, logic of entrepreneurship, and sloppiness in the publication process. There is need for systemic counter-pressures that reorient the publication process such that norm deviations do not become standardized or rationalized for misconduct.

- **Personality characteristics**

According to Kish-Gephart *et al., (*2010) the credibility dilemma is also facilitated by personality characteristics such as Machiavellism and having an external locus of control. Machiavellism involves the tendency by some researchers to have a cynical worldview, a willingness to engage in research misconducts, and a repertoire of manipulative tactics to secure desired outcomes (Christie and Gei, 1970). Some of the examples of Machiavellism and unethical behaviors include theft (plagiarism), lying and deceit (HARKing), sabotage, and cheating (Dahling *et al.,* 2012). Generally, researchers choose topics of personal interest and use research methods in which they are trained and competent. Some qualitative researchers enjoy in-depth, face-to-face encounters; others find satisfaction at a computer screen, discovering associations in quantitative data sets. These choices are greatly influenced by the researcher's training and skills. To restore the credibility of research findings, novice researchers do not allow personal preference and bias to intrude on the research process and decisions. Though most scholars subscribe to the convention that relationship with research participants contaminate data, Dutton and Dukerich (2006) supported the idea of leveraging the researcher's social networks and interpersonal skills in research. These elements are considered critical to designing and sustaining interesting organizational research.

Data Collection Method

The article adopted indirect questioning of respondents to reduce social-desirability effects associated with the normative disinclination to personally acknowledge engaging in such conduct and tapping respondents' own beliefs and behaviors (Fisher, 1993). This is in view of the Muhammad Ali effect, which states in part that individuals see themselves as more moral than their peers (Allison *et al.*, 1989). Informed by the main empirical pieces, these respondents where lecturers, professors, editors, and those who support researchers during publication. The researcher sort to understand the causes of credibility challenge in organizational research. This study relied on four main empirical pieces of researches in building and justifying the existence of the credibility challenge in organizational research. Reference has been made to Davis (2015), Bedeian *et al.,* 2010; Honig *et al.,* 2018; and Aguinis *et al.,* 2019 as the main sources of literature review.

Potential Remedies and Recommendations

Bedeian *et al.,* 2010, pointed out that preventing research misconduct means identifying its source. Some of the recommendations for restoring academic integrity include:

- Tighten rules and call attention to questionable research practices
- Value-neutrality and shift from quantified self to qualitative substance
- Systemic counter pressures that reorient the publication process and address norm deviations
- Applaud organizational researchers who uphold the norms of appropriate research

- Fundamental reorientation of authorship and publication.

Ford (2018) recommends the following strategies that support research integrity:

- Ensuring establishment and commitment to policies governing academic research;
- Leadership involvement in setting standards for supervision of all testing;
- Establishing an Office of Research Integrity;
- Enforcing expectations for process rigor through instituting checklists and notebooks;
- Conducting compliance training and workshops to communicate expectations for accurate accounting of time spent on research activities; and
- Evaluating the strength of grant accounting function.

As raised by Bedeian *et al.,* 2010, it is recommended to formally and informally expose emerging organizational researchers to the highest norms of socially useful scholarship and as such influence their future behavior as researchers. Organizational researchers should strive to build a more meaningful and generative dialogue about the goals of organizational research and how it should be valued. There is need for continued ethical scrutiny in organizational research. The process and outcomes of all types of scientific inquiry have greatly been questioned; hence increasing calls for researchers to justify research approaches. It is also important for researchers to comply with such legislation as discrimination, data protection, and privacy as an ethical approach to protecting research participants. This is against the understanding that some social and organizational research involves vulnerable respondents while some focuses on controversial and sensitive issues. In these cases, research participants may be reluctant to share insights openly. To ensure the credibility of research outcomes, researchers must refrain from exerting pressure on individuals to submit to a project's requirements.

Credibility in organizational research requires consideration of consumers of research findings and how the findings could be used. This information is useful in making research methods choices that are relevant to the audience. Most research findings are considered too theoretical for organizations to adopt and as such the research papers seemingly circulate among scholars. Organizational researchers should consider the potentially conflicting interests and expectations of academic, managerial, and research participant audiences. From a scholarship of discovery dimension, those in academia assess research findings through the lens that searches for new knowledge and theoretical insight. On the other hand, from the scholarship of application and scholarship of practice dimensions, organizational managers search for practical recommendations. Those who actively participate in the research are interested in knowing that their contributions have been interpreted and used appropriately and are presented anonymously.

The linear research processes presented in most academic enterprises appear simple but are problematic, especially when dealing with real adaptive organizational challenges. The relationships between evidence and practice in most fields are complex (Fitzgerald *et al.,* 2002), and the external validity of organizational research remains contentious. As the integrity of the organizational research process is fracturing, there is an urgent need to warn organizational researchers and publishers of the progressive threat to the validity and reliability of most published works. This process demands a review of the demands of contemporary scholarship and how these demands are worsening the credibility of organizational research.

Conclusions
The credibility challenge is a stumbling block to the development of the field of organizational research. The need for research-enhancing individual and organizational mechanisms within the academic enterprise cannot

be overemphasized. As written by Oliver (2010), practice-based research and scholarship that awakens alternative views and allows people to see beyond the horizon is socially useful. Given the dynamic operating environment, organizational research should allow organizations to tackle innumerable adaptive challenges. Such scholarship is socially useful. Organizational researchers need to appreciate that scholarship that reveals misperceptions, biases, and inaccuracies is socially useful. Scholarship that opens paths to unorthodox but intriguing questions is socially useful. This article submits that organizational research should be guided by these elements from Oliver (201). This article further concurs with Peter Saladin's phrase that, scholarship that harms the "dignity of creation" (Saladin, 1996) is not useful. Given the deepening environmental challenges, organizational research should contribute to the peace of humanity with itself and its environment. Oliver (2010) further reiterated that senior and novice researchers need to become advocates for a more realistic model of the modern management scholar.

Organizational researchers should appreciate that objectivity and ethics in empirical research are essential for generating useful knowledge (Nahrin, 2015). Organizational research should be rescued from the credibility dilemma through instituting reforms that prioritize methodological rigor and facilitate change from the current hypercompetitive publication culture (Casadevall and Fang, 2012). The discussions raised in this article can be corroborated by the research by Casadevall and Fang (2012) who identified the following problems with contemporary science: a workforce imbalance, publish and still perish, survival of the fittest, winner takes all, the priority rule, and science as a team effort. The authors recommended methodological and cultural reforms to address these problems.

We, therefore, conclude by making a call to those in the academe to respect the ethos of science, to be responsible advocates and agents of research.

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