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## Research Integrity and Ethical Challenges in African Higher Education

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### Introductory and Editorial Note

The proposal for this special issue was ambitious, broad, and purposeful. Researchers must follow ethical and integrity principles throughout the research process, from design to reporting. There is a greater focus on research ethics and integrity in higher education institutions (HEIs) to avoid researcher misconduct, which can have a negative impact on the institution's reputation. Many HEIs have established strategies to oversee and manage ethical issues related to research within their institutions because of this notion. The primary function of such guidelines is to monitor research studies, particularly, those involving human subjects, to ensure that they adhere to national and international ethical guidelines and standards. This special issue titled *Research Integrity and Ethical Challenges in African Higher Education* aims to emphasize the significance of ethics and integrity in the development of African educational practices, as well as the subsequent ethical challenges.

The task of ensuring ethical research or research integrity consist of a variety of stakeholders. Individual researchers, like institutions, have responsibilities when it comes to conducting ethical research. From ensuring anonymity to confidentiality to informed consent to the principle of beneficence and benevolence in research, ethical considerations have become increasingly important when conducting research. In fact, the distinctive features of ethical processes have an influence on the quality of research conducted. Several academics have also argued that the integrity of university researchers is inextricably linked to the quality of research they produce. In response to such arguments, HEIs must do everything possible to support and promote the integrity of their research, as well as their researchers, by actively participating in the development of a research culture within their institutions. The special issue highlights the importance of ethics and integrity in the development of African research and education practices, as well as the accompanying challenges in the African context, in view of the above context.

In one of the articles, about fostering research integrity in African Higher Education Institutions, Patrobers Robert Simiyu, Elutunji Buraimoh and, Innocent Ewaen Davidson provide a detailed literature investigation of the occurrences of irresponsible research conduct in Africa's HEIs, existing efforts to mitigate them, and the path forward to foster research integrity. Article by Mantombi Maseme, addresses ethical issues specific to the African continent research agenda in relation to the vulnerability of African researchers particularly because of inadequate resources, inadequate or lack of applicable legislation and genetic variability of African populations that make samples from such populations most sought-after by researchers from other continents. Articles by Ntombela and Ramsuraj address new challenges in interpretation and application of ethical procedures, resetting HEI services during and after the pandemic in the drive to maintain rigor and transformation in teaching and learning research. Furthermore, the conceptual article by Suriamurthee Moonsamy Maistry, foresees a (South) African research ethics in institutions whose governance is inspired by

the traditional colonial (Anglo) model that pledges allegiance to a heterosexual white male value system thus requiring a critical deconstruction in the face of transformation and social cohesion discourses that urge the rejection of race and race markers.

These are just a few of the important topics in Research Integrity and Ethical Challenges in African Higher Education that AJIMS will cover in this special issue, and the journal stands ready to give voice to new ethical, regulatory, and policy challenges that may emerge as 21st-century science continue to move into uncharted territory.