Measurement of Research Ethics Criteria for PhD and Postgraduate Students

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Received 27 April 2013         Accepted 8 March 2014

1- Introduction
Ethics is the branch of philosophy that involves systematizing and recommending concepts of right and wrong conduct. Not that long ago, academicians were often cautious about airing the ethical dilemmas they faced in their research and academic work, but that environment is changing today (Gharamaleki, 2004). Research ethics involves the application of fundamental ethical principles to a variety of topics involving research, including scientific research. The academic research enterprise is built on a foundation of trust. Researchers trust that the results reported by others are sound. Society trusts that the results of research reflect an honest attempt by scientists and other researchers to describe the world accurately and without bias. But this trust will endure only if the scientific community devotes itself to exemplifying and transmitting the values associated with ethical research conduct (Khaleghi, 2008).

There are several reasons why it is important to adhere to ethical norms in research. First, norms promote the aims of research, such as knowledge, truth, and avoidance of error. For example, prohibitions against fabricating, falsifying, or misrepresenting research data promote the truth and avoid error. Second, since research often involves a great deal of cooperation and coordination among many different people in different disciplines and institutions, ethical standards promote the values that are essential to collaborative work, such as trust, accountability, mutual respect, and fairness. For example, many ethical norms in research, such as guidelines for authorship, copyright and patenting policies, data sharing policies, and confidentiality rules in peer review, are designed to protect intellectual property interests while encouraging collaboration. Most researchers want to receive credit for their contributions and do not want to have their ideas stolen or disclosed prematurely (Broom, 2006). Third, ethical norms in research also help to

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build public support for research. People are more likely to fund a research project if they can trust the quality and integrity of research. Finally, many of the norms of research promote a variety of other important moral and social values, such as social responsibility, human rights, compliance with the law, and health and safety. Although the last few years in the ethics of research have been tumultuous ones, it is beginning to appear that a new consensus is evolving that involves the stakeholder groups most affected by a problem participating more actively in the formulation of guidelines for research. Finally, researchers face an array of ethical requirements.

2- Theoretical Framework
There are many ethical issues to be taken into serious consideration for research. Researchers need to be aware of having the responsibility to secure the actual permission and interests of all those involved in the study. They should not misuse any of the information discovered, and there should be a certain moral responsibility maintained towards the participants (Saki, 2011). There are two standards that are applied in order to help protect the privacy of research participants. Almost all research guarantees the participants’ confidentiality -- they are assured that identifying information will not be made available to anyone who is not directly involved in the study. The stricter standard is the principle of anonymity which essentially means that the participant will remain anonymous throughout the study -- even to the researchers themselves. Clearly, the anonymity standard is a stronger guarantee of privacy, but it is sometimes difficult to accomplish, especially in situations where participants have to be measured at multiple time points. Research misconduct is the process of identifying and reporting unethical or unsound research. The following criteria are often considered by researchers: accountability, honesty, credibility, and precision.

3- Methodology
This research aims to measure research ethics for PhD and postgraduate students as researchers. University of Tehran was taken as a case. Accountability, Privacy, Anonymity, Honesty, Informed consent and Professional Responsibility were evaluated as Research Ethics dimensions. Thus, we had to collect more than 323 completed questionnaires according to a cluster random sampling skim. A fuzzy-AHP is used to assign adequate relative importance to the criteria and to examine the hypothesis we used t-student test.

4- Results and Discussion
Based on the results, the most important criteria of research ethics is misconduct. Moreover, the results of hypothesis testing revealed research ethics criteria such as: accountability, honesty, misconduct, privacy, and anonymity are acceptable at 5%
significance level in research population. But only truth seeking between students of University of Tehran is vague.

5- Conclusions and Suggestions
Research integrity requires not only that reported conclusions be based on accurately recorded data or observations but that all relevant observations be reported. If some data should be disregarded for a stated reason, confirmed by an approved statistical test for neglecting outliers, there as on should be stated in the published accounts. A large background of negative results must be reported. Any intentional or reckless disregard for the truth in reporting observations may be considered to be an act of research misconduct.

Protecting intellectual property while at the same time encouraging data sharing is highly important in order to ensure valid and reliable research. Research misconduct can be the result of criminal behavior. For example, making up research data that doesn’t exist and other overt acts of fraud are deliberate and punishable criminal acts. Government regulations and criminal punishments are necessary to prevent these criminal practices. Research misconduct can also be the result of mistaken, negligent, unintentional, lazy, or sloppy research practices. Finally, any person who knows that research is being conducted unethically should raise his or her concerns to the appropriate authorities, whether that person is involved in the research or not.

Keywords: Research ethics, Business ethics, Fuzzy-AHP.

References


