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A study of status of the research ethics compliance among physical education academic members of Islamic Azad University in reigns 2 & 13

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ABSTRACT

The present research aimed to determine a study of the status of the research ethics compliance among physical education academic members of Islamic Azad University in reigns 2 & 13. To achieve this, 122 faculty members voluntarily filled out the researcher made research ethics and demographic questionnaires. Statistical analysis of data (e.g. One sample test, t test & ANOVA) indicated that physical education academic members consider research ethics moderately ($t=9.415$, $sig=0.01$). It should also be noted that the physical education academic members considered all research ethics indicators except the society needs indicator.

Key Words: Research Ethics Compliance, Physical Education Academic Members, Islamic Azad University, Reigns 2 & 13

INTRODUCTION

Human is inherently a seeker and recognizing the unknown dimensions of the universe has always been exciting and fascinating for him/her. In the past eras, who have done this important job and identified some dimensions of this unknown universe have been respected. The attractiveness and values of recognizing the unknowns have always led human being to deal with to the different types of research and look for the knowledge which resulted in increasing and rapid development of the world in the recent half century. The definitions of research and researcher in the new era have been largely different from these definitions in the past eras and need to be redefined concerning the conditions governing the human society. Despite the unimaginable benefits of the research for the modern human, which could lead human from the depth of the darkness to a great civilization, research itself needs a power and inhibitive framework to be protected from damage and corruption in the complex and sensitive conditions. Experts believe research ethics subject is the most important framework which could be effective in this field and protect the research sanctity. Research ethics involve the principles which guide the main stages of the research i.e. choosing the subject, designing and explaining the research methodology, collecting information, analyzing the data, codifying and publishing the research results. At every stage, research may be subject to the different ethical impasses that we could encounter them very differently. So, there should be a determined framework for encountering this condition which could prevent these deviations (4). This framework is commonly referred to as research ethics. Research ethics provide guidelines for research responsibilities and helps the researchers and scientists to conduct the research by acceptable professional standards. Research ethics refers that researchers should be aware of the principles of justice and honesty and respect to people and their privacy and refrain from harming them (6). Research ethics has been heavily considered in the recent years, so that Martin Harnesli knows research ethics as one of the four social subjects (3). Research extensiveness in the scientific circles and organizations and research ethical vulnerability reveal the necessity of emphasis on research ethics. Beyond ethical recommendations, research ethics creates a coherent knowledge which provides the possibility of identifying and solving the problems correctly by certain

objectives, resources, approaches and methods; so the trial and error is replaced with systematic and scientific analysis in encountering ethical issues (2). There have been always unethical issues in research in the different forms. Studying 3247 accepted articles by the research committee, Martinson, Anderson and DeVries (2005) say each article has at least one unethical and unscientific issue. For example, 15% declared that they changed their research results to respond the sponsors' pressures, 12.5% said that they used incomplete data and did not exclude them from the analysis, 7.6% claimed that to collect the data they deceived the participants sometime (1). Macfarlane and Soitoh (2008) concluded that personal values and cultural norms of Japanese professors influence research ethics interpretation (5). In his study, Zhang and Moore (2005) concluded that training has a students' performance-based impact on observing research ethics (7). Generally, it should be said that research ethics is presently more important than the past; first because individuals and institutions are presently expected to be more responsible for their actions and second because highly intense competitions among the universities and research institutions provides a context for emergence of unethical research behaviors, because writing more articles and doing more research is considered as a score through which people reach a better position in their specialized field; so they hurry to achieve a better position sometimes leads to some unethical behaviors (3). As Islamic Azad University is one of the authentic institutions of higher education which has grown and developed within Iran and after the Islamic Republic Revolution and a great part of the research completed due to the tireless efforts of researchers and professors of this university. So, it is essential for faculty members of this university to pay attention to the observation of research ethics and its components in research dimension, because Islamic Azad University conducts and organizes a great part of Iranian research and also pays high cost for incentive policies and research development. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure the accuracy of these processes in Islamic Azad University and investigate if this university's professors conduct research within the ethical frameworks or not. This research tries to study observation of research ethics and its components among the professors and faculty members of physical education of Azad University of districts 2 and 13.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The method of the current research is of descriptive-analysis type and data gathering is field type and has been done using questionnaires. The statistical population of the current research consists of 250 persons among physical education academic members of Islamic Azad University in reigns 2 & 13. The sample of the study was 150 persons among physical education academic members. The sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's table and a stratified sampling method has been used to select samples from populations. Of 150 questionnaires distributed among the participants, 122 questionnaires (81.33 %) were returned.

Measures

Demographic characteristics

The Demographic characteristics questionnaire has been provided aiming at identifying the members of the research population by the researcher. Through this questionnaire, the data related to age, gender, marital status, educational level, field of study, university degree, educational background, employment status of the participants were gathered.

Research ethics questionnaire

The researcher-made questionnaire was used for determining status the research ethics compliance among Physical education academic members. The questionnaire included 47 items in forms of components of individual characteristics (6 item), sponsors and associates (7 item), topic (6 item), other researchers (5 item), society (4 item), subjects (7 item), data gathering and analysis (7 item) and report of results (5 item) and the participants answered the items within 5 options Likert Scale (Never = 0, Rarely = 1, Sometimes = 2, Very often = 3, Always = 4). The questionnaire's validity was approved by 10 university professors of physical education. In the pilot study conducted on 30 persons, The Cronbach's Alpha was estimated equal to 0.953 for the research ethics.

Data gathering method

For gathering data, the questionnaires were given to the participants and then, the questionnaires were gathered after two weeks. In total, out of 155 distributed questionnaires, 122 questionnaires were completely filled out and returned. In this study, descriptive statistics were used in order to summarize and classify the data and to calculate the mean, frequency, standard deviation and to draw diagrams and tables, and the one sample t-test was used for determining status the research ethics compliance and their indices.

RESULTS

The descriptive results of the data demonstrate that the male participants with 64.8 percents formed the highest frequency percentage. The highest age range of the participants was between 30-40 years equal to 48.6 percent. 86.1 percent of the participants held M.A degree (Table 1).

Table 1. Description of the demographic characteristics of participants

	Gender		Age (Year)			Educational Level		Field of Study			
	Male	Female	30>	30-40	40<	M.A	Ph.D	General Physical Education	Sport Physiology	Sport Management	Motor Behavior
Frequency percentage	64.8	35.2	6.9	48.6	7.6	86.1	13.9	27.9	41.8	22.1	8.2

Considering table 2, The result one-sample t test showed that there is a significant difference ($\text{sig}=0.01$) between the average research ethics variable and assumed average. It can be stated that the physical education academic members consider research ethics moderately. Also, The result one-sample t test showed that there is a significant difference ($\text{sig}=0.01$) between the average all research ethics indicators (except the society indicator) and assumed average. It can be stated that the physical education academic members consider individual characteristics, sponsors and associates, topic, other researchers, subjects, data gathering and analysis and report of results moderately.

Table 2. One-Sample Test for Research ethics and indices

	Test Value = 2					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Research Ethics	9.415	121	0.000	0.35491	0.2803	0.4295
Individual Characteristics	3.833	121	0.000	0.28904	0.1398	0.4383
Sponsors and Associates	3.071	121	0.003	0.25107	0.0892	0.4129
Topic	4.858	121	0.000	0.26765	0.1586	0.3767
Other Researchers	9.570	121	0.000	0.55967	0.4439	0.6755
Societal Needs	1.308	121	0.193	0.09221	-0.0473	0.2318
Subjects	15.035	121	0.000	0.73841	0.6412	0.8356
Data Gathering and Analysis	6.865	121	0.000	0.45762	0.3256	0.5896
Result Reports	3.348	121	0.001	0.18361	0.0750	0.2922

DISCUSSION

The results revealed that physical education professors moderately consider the ethical characteristics. Considering the personal characteristics means the physical education professors honestly complete their research with a spirit of cooperation, partnership and delight. They patiently seek the truth with inner consent and conduct their research on the basis of a real issue; they are always responsible for the results of their research and accept criticism. They rarely conduct research for financial reasons, fame, personal ambition and strengthening the resume. Islamic view has a virtue-oriented approach to research ethics. Islam believes that people's intentions are important and researcher should have some traits such as making no pretense, perseverance in doing good actions, abstaining from improper actions and amenability. The most reliable ethical work in the field of ethics is training conscientious, sympathetic and responsible researchers. The most important responsibility of the researcher is toward Almighty God. One of the main ethical principles of research for the researcher is to have a benevolent motive and an intention to serve people before beginning the research activity. Researchers should act in good faith and know they are responsible to Almighty God.

The results revealed that physical education professors moderately consider the right of sponsors and associates. Physical education professors collaborate with research sponsors and appreciate them in their articles and research projects. They also take the financial and non-financial rights of their colleagues into consideration and try to share the research benefits among them properly and write their name in the articles or other research achievements. Finally, the research result is more important than the sponsors' satisfaction for the physical education professors of this research; in other words, they look for the truth not deviate the results according the sponsors' opinion. First, it should be mentioned that researchers should not lose their scientific and practical freedom in collaboration with sponsors; they should not accept the conditions which are in conflict with the principles such as secrecy, retaining information and supporting contributors or such condition should not be imposed on them. They should try to collect and publish their information without any bias. Second, in reverse case the researchers need to be sensitive about their obligations towards sponsors and must accept the responsibility for violating the rules and regulations of sponsoring institutions.

The results of the study dealing with other researchers' rights manifested that physical education professors consider the ethical elements moderately. Thus, it can be stated that physical education professors try to avoid plagiarism as much as possible so that referring is carried out in a correct and ethical manner.

The results revealed that physical education professors consider the society needs less. Physical education professors pay less attention to the society needs to select research subject and consequently the research which is not based on societal needs will not help to solve the society's problems. So, physical education professors should take this fundamental weakness into consideration in their future research and try to evaluate the effects of their research on the society and select the subjects which are more applied and based on the community needs.

The results indicated that physical education professors moderately consider the right of research subjects. Sample and population are correctly selected in the research of the physical education field. The subjects are volunteers selected and there is no obligation, threat, enticement and seduction; in general research subjects' rights are respected.

The results showed that physical education professors in their research moderately consider the ethical indices regarding data collection and analysis. Physical education professors use proper methods to collect data. The actual data are collected for the research and analyzed by correct methods. Data making is avoided at this stage and the information is finally presented honestly and without any manipulation.

The results revealed that physical education professors moderately consider the ethical indices regarding result reports. Physical education professors honestly publish the results of their research and try to refrain from publishing an article in the different journals.

CONCLUSION

It could be generally concluded that physical education academic members pay attention to the research ethics in the field of physical education and sport science and moderately consider the frameworks. Since the researchers in this field are away from achieving the desired condition of considering the research ethics, they should try to become more familiar with the concepts of research ethics and its frameworks and consider them in their future research in the field of physical education and sport science more than before.

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