Ethical Orientation for New and Prospective Researchers

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to identify a range of challenges and dilemmas related to academic integrity. It provides a thorough and thoughtful discussion on different issues associated with research ethics. The objective is to create awareness for new researchers of the seriousness and consequences associated with unethical practices. Academic research is based on six ethical values (a) honesty, (b) fairness, (c) objectivity, (d) openness, (d) trustworthiness, and (e) respect for others. Thus, any violation of these values constitutes fabrication, falsification, and other questionable research practices. However, academic integrity is not limited to research protocol. It involves all academic activities within the scholarly enterprise. Academic dishonesty is a global concern, especially since intellectual property is often stolen. Thus, there is a need for a continuing discussion on academic honesty and intellectual property rights so that the climate of scholastic enterprise is respected.

Keywords: Academic Integrity, Ethical Practices, Confidentiality, Privacy, Informed Consent, Data Handling, Negligence, Plagiarism.

1.0 Introduction

Academic research is a daunting task and research ethics is an important component of academic research. Although research trustworthiness is traditionally a controversial topic, its value in the entire scholarly enterprise cannot be underestimated. Many researchers (Caravello, 2008; Keith-Spiegel & Whitley, 2001; Sieber, 2010) have argued that research ethics is normative and indicates the responsibilities of academic researchers in terms of ethical values. Academic research is based on six ethical values (a) honesty, (b) fairness, (c) objectivity, (d) openness, (d) trustworthiness, and (e) respect for others (Committee on Science, Engineering, & Public Policy, National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineering, & Institute of Medicine, 2009). Thus, any violation of these values constitutes fabrication, falsification, and other questionable research practices (Committee of Science et al., 2009; Lafollette, 1994). There are many challenges facing a researcher: (a) challenges from the research participants, (b) challenges from the community of scholars, (c) challenges from government legislations, and (d) challenges associated with information management (Couper, Fowler, Groves, Lepkowski, Singer, & Tourangeau, 2009). According to Chia (2002), researchers are "governed by a code of practice established by a community of scholars" (p. 4).

Researchers (Beachamp & Bowie 1983; Hammersley& Atkinson 1995; Rimm, 1995; Seidman, 1991) have discussed research ethics in the context of doing justice, preventing harm, remaining honest, preserving the dignity, privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality of research participants. Many others (Fast, Gelman, &Gibelman, 1999; Guiling & Overbey, 1999; Love & Simmons, 1998; Sterns, 1992) have discussed research challenges in the context of five academic constructs: (a) plagiarism, (b) data mismanagement, (c) risk assessment, (d) mistakes and negligence, and (e) consent management. Although there is abundant literature addressing ethical values and academic integrity in specific context, a more holistic, nuanced, and detailed approach remains largely unexplored. Thus, there is very little compliance and enforceable standards associated with ethical assurances in academic research (Boo &Frechtling, 2011; Couper et al, 2009). This article is structured to (a) provide a thorough and thoughtful discussion on the connectedness of different issues associated with research ethics and research trustworthiness and (b) create awareness for potential researchers to anticipate the seriousness and consequences associated with unethical practices.

Reid (1996) warned researchers against 'poisoning the research well' for others by violating ethical codes, exhibiting irresponsible acts, and showing disrespect to the community of scholars. Research ethics is multidimensional and this article will discuss the phenomenon using two interchangeable terms: (a) unethical practices and (b) scholastic dishonesty. According to Wet (2010), "Ethics in research is extensive, complicated, and warrant deep and thoughtful discussion" (p. 303). Although Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) are becoming an indispensable body responsible for research ethics in university institutions, some scholars (Afshani, Cook-Morale, Nguyen, Robinson-Zanartu, Pena.,& Pena, 2005; Boo &Frechtling, 2011) have argued that unethical practices remain increasingly complex and have often been subjected to media criticism. According to Afshani et al. (2005), a lack of standard practice and unarticulated rules, arguably, intensify and exacerbate the dimension of unethical dilemmas within the research community. Thus, given the closeness and inseparable relationship that exist between researchers, research participants, and the community of scholars, this article shares the author's ethical reflections as a qualitative researcher and explores ethical challenges in more detail to clarify complex dilemmas and ambiguous ethical expectations for prospective researchers. According to Janovicek (2006), there are always a traditional controversy and frustrating experiences surrounding qualitative researchers in obtaining approval from their Institutional Review Boards (IRB). Kelman (1982) argued that social researchers should strive to avoid (a) engendering diffuse harm, (b) reduction of private space, and (c) erosion of trust. Unquestionably, ethical consideration involves risk assessment, informed consent, data handling and reporting, confidentiality and privacy, plagiarism, mistakes and negligence, and breach of scholastic integrity (Caravello, 2008; Horner &Minifie, 2011; Martin, Rao, & Sloan, 2009; Shank, 2006; 45 CFR 46, 2009).

2.0 Literature Review

2.1Informed Consent Requirement

Informed consent is considered the most important of all ethical principles and it is prominent in federal regulations regarding social research (Davidson, 2008; Howe & Moses, 1999; Rivière, 2011; 45 CFR 46, 2009). The basic idea is that it is up to a research participant to weigh the risks and benefits associated with a particular research and to decide whether to take part or not (Howe & Moses, 1999). According to Helsinki Declaration (1975), In any research on human beings, each potential subject must be adequately informed of the aims, methods, sources of funding, any possible conflicts of interest, institutional affiliations of the researcher, the anticipated benefits and potential risks of the study and the discomfort it may entail. (p. 3).

In research institutions located in the United States, qualitative, quantitative, scientific, and social researchers are expected to satisfy all ethical requirements associated with (a) respect for research participant, (b) respect for free and informed consent, (c) respect for privacy and confidentiality, (d) respect for justice and inclusiveness, and (e) respect for vulnerable persons (Charles, Crow, Heath, & Wiles, 2005; Tri-Council, 2010). At Northcentral University, Arizona, where the author is a doctoral candidate, graduate students are required to complete a 12-module collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) examination of the University of Miami as part of ethical research protocol, in addition to following the rigorous ethical requirements of the NCU's Institutional Research Board (IRB). In the study of everyday ethics, Rossman and Rallis (2010) argued that informed consent has become emblematic of moral reasoning and ethical practice. Thus, "sample informed consent letters are part and parcel of a review board's required procedures" (p. 381).

Although many researchers (Johannsen& Murphy, 1990; Veatch, 1977) have challenged IRBs as lacking the specialized knowledge necessary to manage ethical nuances associated with different research methodology and context, some other researchers have argued that despite IRB's bureaucratic nature, they are the only formal ethical mechanism at U.S. universities for overseeing research activities and ethical practices (Dougherty & Howe, 1990; McCarthy, 1983). According to Riviere (2010), informed consent oversight provided by an IRB will support researchers in working through ethical dilemmas associated with their form of inquiry. Yet, other scholars are collectively strong on the view that the IRB obstructs academic freedom and are particularly hostile to qualitative researchers and inhibit the freedom to pursue knowledge (Johannsen& Murphy, 1990). However, the Code of Federal Regulations (45 CFR 46, 2009), stipulated that the staffing of the IRB must represent a range of perspectives, specialization, and interest. Arguably, the controversy surrounding informed consent and the consequences of abandoning the IRB could lead to unethical research slipping through unnoticed and thereby destroying the professionalism of some areas of research (Dougherty & Howe, 1993).

Researchers are required to follow their IRB requirements, federal regulations, and other stipulated regulations regarding the privacy and confidentiality of research participants. The IRB institutional commitment to research ethics demands safeguarding its autonomy from "institutional pressures and other biases" (Abdulgafoor, Dawson, Hyder, &Lavery, 2009, p. 863). Thus, based on the demands for the protection of research subjects and the IRB policies, researchers are required to explain any proposed research to the participants in terms of (a) voluntary participation, (b) refusal to participate, and (c) freedom to discontinue participation at any time (Shank, 2006). Such explanation enables a potential participant to weigh options or any potential harm and be free to accept or decline involvement in a study. Accordingly, university authorities in the United States are mandated under the Code of Federal Regulations (45 CFR 46, 2009) to reinforce the validity of ethical standards related to academic research (Abdulgafoor et al. 2009). The key ethical standards are centered on the protection of privacy and confidentiality of the research participants because these standards are directly related to individual choice and judgment (Gannon, Vess, & Ward, 2009).

2.2 Privacy and Confidentiality

Confidentiality and privacy are overlapping concerns in the conduct of a research involving a study participant (Shank, 2006; Wet, 2010). Confidentiality is designed to protect the privacy of the study participants (Shank, 2006). According to Wet (2010), "It is too easily accepted that when standard statements of informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and respect for research participants are included, research is deemed ethical" (p. 312). Since a research process involves data collection in the participants' setting, ethical standards require that participants' are guaranteed confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity (Donnelly et al., 2008). According to the Code of Federal Regulation (45 CFR 46, 1991), the only record that links the participants and the research is the consent document and the principal risk would be a potential harm resulting from a breach of confidentiality. Due to privacy and confidentiality concerns, ethics is becoming increasingly involved with IRB as an indispensable mechanism in the conduct of research in University institutions (Wet, 2010). It is mandatory for researchers to make adequate provisions to maintain data confidentiality and protect the privacy of the participants (Shank, 2006). Such provisions may include (a) protection of personally identifiable information, (b) security of all documents related to the data, (c) security of the database, (d) destruction of unused data after analysis, and (e) exclusion of any third party involvement and communication throughout the data collection and analysis process (Shank, 2006). The protection of individual autonomy, privacy, confidentiality, and their relationship with informed consent is a complex undertaking. Although confidentiality is protected by anonymity, researchers rely on maintaining confidentiality to protect privacy (Howes et al, 1999). Thus, anonymity and confidentiality provide two conditions (a) not gathering identity-specific data and (b) not revealing identity-specific data necessary for safeguarding privacy (Howes et al, 1999).

According to Caplan (1982), privacy has an intrinsic value that is tied to human dignity and security and it is the only ethical principle that is tied to individual sense of personhood. To be consistent with human dignity, Kelman (1982) argued that researchers should avoid engendering "diffuse harm, reduction of private space and erosion of trust" (p. 46). However, Howes et al. (1999) argued that "the line between research misconduct and the protection of research participants vis-à-vis reporting results is a fuzzy one" (p. 44). Some scholars, such as Paul (2004) described confidentiality as a flexible skin necessary to offer protection, and capable of being expanded for the needs of learning and verifiable research because when data confidentiality issue arises, proof of data representation is necessary to articulate the research validity and reliability. According to Goodstein (1991), David Baltimore, was challenged of data misrepresentation because the evident presented by Baltimore and his colleagues did not support the research conclusion. Qualitative researchers in U.S. universities are scrutinized by the IRB on two unique issues: (a) the issue of data misrepresentation, and (b) the management or treatment of research participants in the context of confidentiality, privacy, anonymity, and respect. Thus, the relationship between a researcher and the study participants, including interview questions, surveys, letter of permission and engagement are reviewed by the IRB to ensure research integrity. Given the interpretive nature of qualitative inquiry, researchers face two major challenges (a) upholding participant confidentiality and privacy and (b) data handling and reporting (Damianakis& Woodford, 2012).

2.3 Data Handling and Reporting

There is no empirical inquiry without data, and data gathering is a crucial part of research (Shank, 2006). According to Frederick and Miller (2003), data are evidence. Data handling involve three dimensions: (a) data access, (b) data storage, (c) data retrieval (Shank, 2006). As technology advances and become more complex, data handling methods become heavily dependent on technology (Shank, 2006). Thus, in qualitative inquiry, data storage and retrieval methods have become varied, complicated, and flexible (Shank, 2006). According to the Committee on Science, Engineering, et al. (2009), in order to conduct any research responsibly, researchers must treat data correctly and avoid inappropriate and fraudulent data manipulation. Baptiste (2001) presented four common phases for all forms qualitative data handling and analysis (a) defining the type of analysis to use, (b) classifying the data, (c) making connections among different classes of data, and (d) presenting the results of the analysis. The most critical phase in data handling is to choose which data to pay most attention to, and which data to ignore (Shank, 2006). In qualitative inquiry, the process of data sorting involves the coding, grouping, and organization of data by category (Creswell, 2009; Shank, 2006). The questioning of ethical vulnerability and confidentiality-breaching risks associated with data collection, handling, and reporting are not new (Damianakis et al, 2012). Many scholars (Corbin & Morse, 2003; Morse, 2010) have argued that the inclusion of participants' words in data analysis and reporting could risk the disclosure of participants' identities and those of other research subjects in a researcher's narratives.

Many other scholars (Damianakis et al, 2012; Tolich, 2010) have discussed several strategies to avoid confidentiality-breaching risks. Such strategies includes: (a) not collecting identifying information on demographics form, (b) identifying participants by codes only, (c) giving participants the right to refuse to answer any question and to withdraw at any time, (d) informing participants of the limits of confidentiality, (e) removing identifying information, and (f) anonymity transcriptions (Damianakis et al, 2012). The success of a research and the ability to discover a new knowledge is based on honesty (Cooper & Schindler, 2006). The promise to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of participants throughout a particular research must be a guiding ethical principle to avoid invalidation of a research integrity (France, 2012). To ensure confidentiality through data handling, France (2012) argued that participants' information should be identified with a unique code rather than using their names. Arguably, ensuring confidentiality through data handling has the potential to enhance research participation (Cooper et al, 2006). Thus, scholarly endeavor of researchers must not be put above the responsibility to follow and maintain ethical nuances associated with data handling and reporting in relation to research participants (Schram, 2006). Research inquiries are built on truth and trust that must exist between the researchers and the participants (Shank, 2006). Unquestionably, the researchers must be cautious that data handling remains a major area of concentration in the conduct of research, while avoiding mistakes and negligence.

2.4 Mistakes and Negligence

Although many researchers have challenged the legitimacy of IRB oversight, the controversies, mistakes, and uncertainties surrounding the application of the key provisions of the Code of Federal Regulations (45 CFR 46, 2009) by researchers makes the authority of IRBs much valid in educational institutions (Dougherty & Howe, 1993). Institutional review board (IRB) has the responsibility to foster academic integrity regarding risks, benefits, privacy, and confidentiality (Dougherty et al, 1993; Keith-Spiegel & Whitley, 2001). However, qualitative study could characteristically yield unanticipated, multifaceted, and unexpected findings that may reveal points of view that are misleading or beyond the original focus of a research (Anzul, 2001). Many scholars, such as Rosenblatt (1995) and Hadjistavropoulos and Smythe (2001) raised concerns regarding qualitative research and mistakes associated with (a) discovery-oriented interview that complicates informed consent and (b) detailed interview that can induce a negative mood state of respondents. According to Buckle, Dwyer, and Jackson (2010), discovery-oriented interview is implicating due to respondents inability to provide true informed consent because they are uninformed of how the interview will unfold. In addition, neither the researcher nor the participants can predict what will transpire in an open-ended qualitative interview session (Buckle et al., 2010). Interviews are interventions and may be intrusive (Patton, 2002). Thus, any mistake or negligence in handling open-ended interview could legally implicate Institutional Review Board (IRB) that approved the study (Angell, Ashcroft, &Bryman, Dixon-Woods, 2007).

Richard's (2009) study argued that all scientific research is susceptible to error. However, the requirement of quality research is that research errors and negligence be avoided because negligence and preventable mistakes attributable to carelessness could cause major ethical dilemmas in the future (Horn &Monsen, 2008). Richard (2009) however, posited that the way a researcher handles data translates its quality. Data collection and data handling are complex endeavors and are inseparable with the principle of informed consent. According to Schram (2006), consent in such contexts are neither straightforward nor easily achievable. It is important for researchers to strive to honor the trust and build on the "consideration of 'doing good', not just avoiding doing wrong" (Schram, 2006, p. 143). In an effort to avoid negligence and mistakes, Creswell, (2009) argued that researchers need to submit their research plans to their Institutional Review Board (IRB) for review.

The IRB of every institution in the United States is legally authorized to assess the risk associated with a given study, especially the need to consider vulnerable populations, such as minors and persons with physical or mental impairment (Creswell, 2009). Participant-researcher relationship in the context of data collection and data handling is a major research issue (Buckle et al., 2010), especially in the contemporary age of internet technology. According to Clark and Hair (2007), ethical decision making in terms of data gathering is heavily dependent on technology and different technology will raise different ethical issues. Apart from the issue of insecurity associated with the internet, emerging synchronous technologies permit rapid exchanges of text-based communication in real time (Clark et al., 2007). Thus, carelessness in the use of technology for data gathering could undermine the confidentiality and privacy of the research participants. Traditionally, it is important for researchers to assess risk to prevent mistakes and prevent harm throughout a research process. Levasseur (2011) discussed the development of an integrated research plan (IRP) to serve as a guide throughout a dissertation process to avoid mistakes. Most importantly, the development of an integrated research plan (IRP) will incorporate academic honesty policy to guide the researcher against plagiarism (Sieber, 2004).

2.5 Plagiarism

Many researchers (Amodeo& Collins, 2005; Caravello, 2008; Keith-Spiegel & Whitley, 2001; Martin, Rao, & Sloan, 2009; Sieber, 2004) have discussed plagiarism as a major risk in academic community. Amodeo et al. (2005) defined plagiarism as "the act of representing someone else's creative or academic work as one's own whether in full or in part" (p.528). Although numerous studies have identified plagiarism as highly unethical, students' and researchers' involvement continue to attract considerable media and academic attention (Amodeo et al., 2005; Gullifer& Tyson, 2010). Contemporary literature such as Glassman, Habousha, Minuti, Schwartz, and Sorensen (2011) and Boo et al. (2011) posited that the emergence of Internet technology and computer-mediated capabilities have escalated the issue of plagiarism. Although, many universities constantly face scrutiny in their institutional policies and practices regarding academic dishonesty (Sutherland-Smith, 2010), plagiarism is increasingly evident in the academia (Caravello, 2008; Rao et al., 2009). Plagiarism and its consequences have become increasingly complex and continues to attract considerable attention due to its historical roots (Afshani, et al., 2005). Ashworth, Freewood, and Macdonald (2003), Stearns (1992), and Sutherland-Smith (2005) claimed that plagiarism is an act of theft of individual ownership of intellectual work, arguing that knowledge has a history and that past authors must be acknowledged. According to Stearn (1992), a lack of acknowledgment of original authors could severe the relationship and connection between the original creator of the work and the creation.

Plagiarism and academic dishonesty are interchangeable constructs. Harker (2005) described them as a scholastic "epidemic" while some researchers such as Ross (2003) established the link between plagiarism, dishonesty, and criminal activity. Saunders's (1993) study argued that "an unethical student is likely to be an unethical practitioner" (p. 231). According to Ilani (2006), students who plagiarize academic materials are likely to cheat at some point in their professional lives. Historically, academic cheating dates back to the earliest studies of the twentieth century (Campbell, 1931; Hartshone& May, 1928) and according to Drake (1941), students' competition for grades is a major reason for the historical continuity of academic cheating. Pincus and Schmelkin (2003) argued that cheating is caused by lack of consistencies and consensus in (a) the definition of academically dishonest behaviors and (b) the general understanding of academic dishonesty within the university community. Surprisingly, past and recent studies have reported that plagiarism and unethical practices in colleges around the world is slowly undermining and corrupting the integrity of academic institutions (Harker, 2005; Hallak& Poisson, 2007; Ray, 2006; Sims, 1993). The learning culture of the University is taken over by dishonesty, cheating, plagiarism, and other unethical and unacceptable behaviors (Baratz&Reingold, 2011).

Shaffer's (1966) study erroneously argued that cheating was widely tolerated in U.S. educational system and was becoming ingrained part of students. Gallant and Bertram (2006) held contrary views and argued that research regarding academic dishonesty was relatively new in other part of the world. For example, Heshin (2006) posited that in Israel, very little research on academic dishonesty was conducted in the past, compared to a large number of researchers in the United States. According to Paldy (1996), plagiarism is widespread and growing bigger. Park's (2003) study on his United Kingdom's study held similar view that "there is mounting evidence that student cheating in general, and plagiarism in particular, are becoming more common and more widespread" (p. 471). According to Park (2003), evidence is multidimensional and comes from many countries, such as the UK (Ashworth, Bannister, & Thorne, 1997), the United States (White, 1993), Finland (Seppanen, 2002), and South Africa (Weeks, 2001). Alschuler and Blimling (1995) described the situation as 'epidemic cheating'. The exponential growth in academic dishonesty in UK colleges and universities is much more complex and increasingly intense with substantiated allegation in UK law schools (Birmingham, Jones, & Watson, 2010). Similarly, Abdullahi, Olasehinde-Williams, and Owolabi (2003) and Gesinde (2006) collectively discussed the disturbing incidence and causes of academic dishonesty among students, teachers, and researchers in Nigeria. Relatedly, Abdallah, Feghali, and McCabe's (2008) research on the academic dishonesty in the Middle East shared the problematic level of cheating and plagiarism within the Lebanese academia amidst insignificant influence of institutional policies and regulations.

The importance of paying adequate attention to the problems of integrity and academic honesty cannot be overstated. Academic integrity and honesty is emphasized to encourage students, faculty, and researchers to uphold the fundamental values of education in the context of truth, academic freedom, courage, quality, and the spirit of free intellectual inquiry (Evans & Novak, 1974). Although teachers have a unique responsibility to teach and assure ethical commitment in the academic community, their academic trust is often compromised (Morrisette, 2001). Barnett and Dalton's (1981) investigation revealed that "the regular administration of "old" tests can foster the belief among students that faculty don't care about academic integrity" (p. 550). In addition, an earlier study by Bowers (1968) argued that grading system is a strong factor that shape student academic conduct because college credit is "a means to many important ends" (p. 77) such as employment, appointment, and advanced education. Thus, grade is a "kind of social credit" in social and work settings (Bower 1968, p. 77) and academic dishonesty may be an orientation from it (Houston, 1976). In the first decade of the 21st century, many researchers have regularly made several claims of a decline academic integrity (Boynton, 2001; Eckstein, 2003; Haynes & Berkowitz, 2007). All over the world, academic stakeholders are panicking about plagiarism, fraudulent behavior, dishonesty, and the culture of cheat and malpractices within the campus (Callahan, 2004).

Many, if not all tertiary, college, and universities have been especially worried about increased student involvement in cheating. Yet, the development and implementation of policies to address issues of student plagiarism and dishonesty have been practically ceremonial. McCabe and Pavela (2000) suggested that "significant student involvement in designing and enforcing campus-wide academic integrity policies, and in educating other students about the importance of academic integrity," (p. 35) could establish positive academic values and enforce systemic orientation. In an earlier study, Darnell (1997) proposed that "students and faculty must be engaged in policy formulation and the adjudication of academic misconduct" (p. 41). Darnell emphasized "the need to integrate the academic and nonacademic worlds of students through a broad-based, unified approach to student discipline that demonstrates and reinforces the importance and integrity of institutional values" (p. 94).In Hoekema's (1991) *Campus Rules* literature, it was argued that students "will no longer heed a code of conduct handed out like the pronouncements of a distant parent" (p. 64).Thus, delegating a considerable measure of responsibility on students for self-regulation could bring about a higher level of compliance, consensus, and cooperation to achieve academic integrity (Hoekema, 1991). A great number of researchers have expressed concerns about the potential of academic dishonesty to compromise the quality of certificates issued by colleges and universities (Olasehinde-Williams, 2008). Many others (Pulvers&Diekhoff, 1999; Olasehinde, 2000) have suggested several approaches ranging from (a) application of stiff punishment, (b) deemphasizing the worth of certificates, (c) reinforcement of positive values, to (d) reorientation of overall academic and nonacademic practices to curb the menace of academic dishonesty.

As a doctoral candidate, the author's experience at the Northcentral University (NCU) is that ethical issues is the collective responsibility of the mentors, the graduate school, the institutional review board, and the researcher or student. Although the student is receiving expert guidance, the system of assessment is so cascaded that the mentor-student relationship could be adversarial, frustrating, and uncompromising to cheaters and disgruntled students. The rigidity of the assessment criteria for doctoral students is so difficult to alter and the likelihood of cheating is significantly reduced. The bottom line is that there are too many uncensored and independent eyes on one paper. The review and revision process from the student to the graduate school and from the graduate school to the student is a frustrating closed loop. However, the demand of the process is for every student to possess the moral compass necessary for academic pursuit (Arpey, Marcuccio, & Stokes, 2011). The procedural requirement is time-consuming, demanding, and university-specific. According to Darnell (1997), the approach to academic dishonesty must be collaborative and unified across all stakeholders, faculty, academic administration, and students. Nonis and Swift (2001) argued that "if students do not respect the climate of academic integrity while in college, they will not respect integrity in their professional and personal relationships" (p. 76). It is important to create a culture of academic integrity through enforcement of institutional rules and policies that provide a level playing ground for all stakeholders in the university community. Such policies and institutional rules will inhibit the syndrome of "getting ahead at any cost", "cheating to win", and "easy way out" (Arpey et al., 2011). A few years ago, Callahan (2004) wrote a unique summation that "it's easier to just go along with the cheating culture. And often, when you're deep inside a system where cheating has been normalized, you can't even see that there are choices between being honest and playing by corrupt rules." (p. 26). In McCabe et al's. (2004) cheating research, five principles of academic integrity were established: (a) recognition and affirmation of integrity as a core value, (b) encouragement of students' responsibility for academic integrity, (c) clarification of expectations for students, (d) reduction of opportunities for dishonesty, and immediate response to academic dishonesty.

3.0 Summary

There are many and unique ethical challenges facing researchers, students, and the academic community. Ethical concern in the academic community is an extensive, complicated, and controversial topic that warrants deep and thoughtful discussion (Wet, 2010). Although many concerns on ethical issues are directed to researchers, ethical rules are not limited to protecting research respondents, respecting participants, doing justice, preventing harm, remaining honest, preserving the dignity, privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality of research participants, or using informed consent to engage a study participant (Atkinson &Hammersley, 1995; Beachamp& Bowie 1983; Wet, 2010). Ethical dilemmas are also related to risk assessment associated with data handling and reporting, mistakes and negligence, plagiarism and other acts of academic dishonesty (Angell, Ashcroft, &Bryman, Dixon-Woods, 2007; Dougherty & Howe, 1993; McCabe &Pavela, 2000; Richard, 2009). Academic dishonesty or violation of ethical standards is becoming more widespread and although many universities do not want to risk their reputation, appropriate and effective punitive and preventive measures have not been developed (Devlin, 2003). However, many researchers have proposed several measures, ranging from, delegation of responsibility on students for self-regulation, application of stiff punishment, deemphasizing the worth of certificates, reinforcement of positive values, and reorientation of overall academic and nonacademic practices to check the menace of academic dishonesty (Hoekema, 1991; Olasehinde, 2000). Yet, countless cases of ethical violations are detected and reported daily (Devlin, 2006) and the challenges of deciding the consequences or suggest approaches and methods to confront academic misconduct remain elusive.

Academic research, for example, is based on six ethical values (a) honesty, (b) fairness, (c) objectivity, (d) openness, (d) trustworthiness, and (e) respect for others (Committee on Science, Engineering, & Public Policy et al., 2009). Thus, any violation of these values constitutes fabrication, falsification, and other questionable research practices (Committee of Science et al., 2009; Lafollette, 1994). Although some studies, such as Richard's (2009) study argued that all scientific research is susceptible to error. the requirement of quality research is that research errors and negligence be avoided because negligence and preventable mistakes attributable to carelessness could cause major ethical dilemmas in the future (Horn &Monsen, 2008). Researchers in American Universities are scrutinized by the IRB to ensure research integrity in the context of data management and the treatment of research participants regarding confidentiality, privacy, autonomy, anonymity, and respect (Howes et al, 1999; Shank, 2006; Wet, 2010). In an effort to avoid negligence and mistakes, Creswell, (2009) argued that researchers need to submit their research plans to their Institutional Review Board (IRB) for review.

The IRB of every institution in the United States is legally authorized to assess the risk associated with a given study, especially the need to consider vulnerable populations (45 CFR 46, 1991). Due to the consequences of negligence and mistakes, ethics is becoming increasingly involved with IRB as an indispensable mechanism in the conduct of research in University institutions (Wet, 2010). It is mandatory for researchers to make adequate provisions to maintain data confidentiality and protect the privacy of the participants (Shank, 2006). To maintain research integrity, researchers are restricted from gathering identity-specific data, revealing identity-specific data and are committed to (a) the security of all documents related to the data, (b) the security of the database, (c) the destruction of unused data after analysis, and (d) the exclusion of any third party involvement through the research process (Shank, 2006). However, academic integrity is not limited to research. It involves the overall academic activities within the university community.

The academic stakeholders all over the world are continuously worried about the level of academic dishonesty, regarding plagiarism, fraudulent behavior, and the culture of cheat and malpractices within the university community (Callahan, 2004).McCabe et al. (2000) suggested the involvement of students in designing and enforcing campus-wide academic integrity policies to establish positive academic values and enforce systemic orientation. As a doctoral candidate, the author's experience at the Northcentral University (NCU) is that ethical issues is the collective responsibility of the mentors, the graduate school, the institutional review board, and the researcher or student. Although the student is receiving expert guidance, the system of assessment is so cascaded that the mentor-student relationship could be adversarial, frustrating, and uncompromising to cheaters and disgruntled students. The review and revision process from the student to the graduate school and from the graduate school to the student is a frustrating closed loop for cheaters. The demand of the process is for every student to possess the moral compass necessary for academic pursuit (Arpey, et al., 2011). Nonis et al. (2001) provided a unique summation that "if students do not respect the climate of academic integrity while in college, they will not respect integrity in their professional and personal relationships" (p. 76).

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Ethics is more of an innate quality for humans to develop further for a better life. It is the same for researches also. But there are ethical codes by certain government agencies, who publish specific ethical codes to conduct research and report them. There are many reasons for adhering to certain basic ethical norms of scientific conduct during academic research like: To maintain the credibility of the scientific community. For the proper perception of the people to judge and accept the new results. To increase the authenticity of the published research results for its readers and scientific Most researchers want to receive credit for their contributions and do not want to have their ideas stolen or disclosed prematurely. Third, many of the ethical norms help to ensure that researchers can be held accountable to the public. Â Fourth, ethical norms in research also help to build public support for research. Â (New York: Oxford University Press). Ethical Decision Making in Research. Although codes, policies, and principles are very important and useful, like any set of rules, they do not cover every situation, they often conflict, and they require considerable interpretation. It is therefore important for researchers to learn how to interpret, assess, and apply various research rules and how to make decisions and to act ethically in various situations. Whilst ethical requirements in research can vary across countries, these are the basic principles of research ethics. This is important not only for ethical reasons, but also practical ones, since a failure to meet such basic principles may lead to your research being (a) criticised, potentially leading to a lower mark, and/or (b) rejected by your supervisor or Ethics Committee, costing you valuable time. In the sections that follow, we discuss the five of the main practical ethical principles that stem from these basic principles.