

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: THE PILLAR OF KNOWLEDGE AND THE ESSENCE OF SCHOLARLY PURSUIT

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Abstract

Academic integrity is essential to the moral pursuit of study and is the foundation for forming real knowledge. As a set of moral standards, it requires accountability, openness, and honesty in every facet of academic work, from learning evaluations to research. Maintaining academic integrity ensures that knowledge is distributed consistently and that accomplishments are acquired legitimately, which builds trust throughout educational communities. Plagiarism, fabrication, and cheating are violations that compromise the academic system's integrity and harm an individual's credibility. Encouraging academic integrity fosters respect for the work of others, intellectual development, and a dedication to moral principles that transcend the classroom. To strengthen the foundation of scholarship and truth in society, this article explores the importance of academic integrity, its effects on individual and group intellectual growth, and educational institutions' role in promoting and upholding these principles. Academic integrity is the cornerstone of knowledge creation and transmission since it embodies honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and accountability. It guarantees that scholarly work retains credibility and significantly contributes to the topic in an academic setting. Respecting academic integrity protects the caliber and dependability of scholarly contributions and promotes a culture of trust between academics and institutions. This article highlights the need of both individuals and institutions to foster ethical awareness, investigates the fundamentals of academic ethics, and looks at the repercussions of moral transgressions. In the end, upholding academic ethics guarantees that research advancements are made with integrity, promoting the search for the truth as well as the wider social impact of scholarship.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Integrity, Plagiarism, Moral Principles.

Özet

Akademik dürüstlük, çalışmanın ahlaki arayışı için olmazsa olmazdır ve gerçek bilginin oluşumunun temelini oluşturur. Bir dizi ahlaki standart olarak, öğrenme değerlendirmelerinden araştırmaya kadar akademik çalışmanın her yönünde hesap verebilirlik, açıklık ve dürüstlük gerektirir. Akademik dürüstlüğün sürdürülmesi, bilginin tutarlı bir şekilde dağıtılmasını ve başarıların meşru bir şekilde elde edilmesini sağlar; bu da eğitim toplulukları arasında güven oluşturur. İntihal, uydurma ve kopya çekme, bir bireyin güvenilirliğine zarar vermenin yanı sıra akademik sistemin genel bütünlüğünü tehlikeye atan ihlallere örnektir. Akademik dürüstlüğü teşvik etmek, başkalarının çalışmalarına saygıyı, entelektüel gelişimi ve sınıfın ötesine geçen ahlaki ilkelere bağlılığı teşvik eder. Bu makale, toplumda burs ve hakikatin temellerini güçlendirmek için akademik dürüstlüğün önemini, bireysel ve grup entelektüel gelişimi üzerindeki etkilerini ve eğitim kurumlarının bu ilkeleri teşvik etme ve desteklemede oynadığı rolü araştırmaktadır. Akademik dürüstlük, dürüstlüğü, güveni, adaleti, saygıyı ve hesap verebilirliği bünyesinde barındırdığı için bilgi yaratma ve iletmenin temel taşıdır. Akademik çalışmanın güvenilirliğini koruduğunu ve akademik bir ortamda konuya önemli bir katkı sağladığını garanti eder. Akademik dürüstlüğe saygı göstermek, akademisyenler ve kurumlar arasında bir güven kültürü teşvik etmenin yanı sıra akademik katkıların kalitesini ve güvenilirliğini korur. Bu makale, hem bireylerin hem de kurumların etik farkındalığı teşvik etme ihtiyacını vurgular, akademik etiğin temellerini araştırır ve etik ihlallerinin sonuçlarına bakar. Sonuç olarak, akademik etiğe saygı göstermek, araştırma ilerlemelerinin dürüstlikle yapılmasını garanti eder, gerçeğin aranmasını ve akademik çalışmanın daha geniş toplumsal etkisini teşvik eder.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dürüstlük, İntihal, Ahlaki İlkeler.

Introduction

Although the concept of ethics is defined in many ways, it can be confused with different concepts in many ways. Ethics is derived from the Greek words "ethos-ethikos" and includes the meaning of "ethics"(Aktaş, 2014). It is considered a philosophical discipline according to many researchers (Ay, 2017; Erdirençelebi ve Filizöz, 2019). Ethics in its most general

definition; is a discipline that morally evaluates the rules, values, and concepts used in the formation of social and individual relationships, and investigates and deals with how and according to what people should behave in these relationships (Erdem, 2012; Ay, 2017; Yaşar, 2018).

Depending on the standards on which it is based, ethics is evaluated under four groups personal ethics, professional ethics, business ethics managerial ethics, and social ethics (Erdirençelebi ve Filizöz, 2019). Academic ethics is a subgroup under the heading of professional ethics. The Council of Higher Education (YÖK) defined the concept of academic ethics as follows; "Sharing the knowledge and knowledge of academicians in the process of scientific work, and academic activities and transferring their knowledge to their students, in the production and evaluation of scientific studies, in the rewarding and promotion stages in the relations with different stakeholders of the society, in the structuring of scientific institutions and universities based on scientific competence, and in every stage of the activities of raising well-trained scientists means abiding by the rules of conduct "(Anonymous,). Adhering to this definition, behavioral principles in academic ethics are also;

- Academic freedom and autonomy
- Academic honesty
- Responsibility and accountability
- Protection and strengthening of fundamental rights

- Based on five basic values and principles as respect for others. Academic ethics with these principles; refers freely and honestly to the preparation of scientific studies, and activities of academically working people, to take responsibility for these studies and knowledge, and to comply with the ethical rules of behavior in all stages of raising scientists.

Existence or compliance with ethical rules is not a guarantee that scientific studies meet certain standards. This does not mean that research and practices deemed appropriate by laws are also in compliance with ethical principles. For example; Many scientific studies conducted in Nazi Germany were legally accepted but not ethically appropriate in the way (EC, 2010; Yaşar, 2018).

Academic ethics is not only about research and publication but also about the production, and transformation of knowledge into technology, its dissemination, and teaching. In this context, academic, administrative, and technical personnel, students, and other beneficiary institutions and persons must comply with the ethical rules (Örnek Büken, 2006). However, publication ethics, which is called the presentation of scientific studies to other scientists, is another responsibility (Alev ve Genç, 2015). Erdirençelebi and Filizöz (2019) surveyed 587 academics from 9 state universities on academic ethical values, perception, and attitude levels. In this study, the ethical values, and attitude levels of academicians were tried to be measured by considering the variables of gender, marital status, age, foreign duty, seniority year, and branch. As a result of the study, it was determined that the measured values differ according to demographic variables. Such a difference should not be seen.

In our country, scientific ethics over much was emphasized by the Academy of Sciences of Turkey (TUBA), the Turkey Scientific and Technological Research Council of the National Academic Network and Information Center (TUBITAK-ULAKBIM), Higher Education Council (YOK), and the Inter-University Council (IUC) has done and is doing studies together with the recognition of this issue (Toplu, 2012). In 2001, TÜBİTAK appointed the "Research and Publication Ethics Board" to identify and evaluate ethical problems in publications published by the institution and to impose sanctions when necessary (Ruacan, 2009). In 2006, the Scientific Ethics Board was established by TÜBA to prevent and supervise ethical violations (Uçak ve Birinci, 2008). In 2012, YÖK published the Scientific Research and Publication Ethics

Directive (Anonim, 2012). In this directive, the situations that are not contrary to and contrary to the ethics of scientific research and publication, the formation, duties, working procedures, and principles of these boards in higher education institutions are specified.

TÜBA (2002), on the other hand, evaluated this issue and identified the reasons that push researchers to unethical behavior as four items: 1. Not knowing the ethical rules. The most important factor in this was stated as not giving education on scientific research process and ethics. 2. Publication violations as a result of academic promotion desire or ambition. In this behavior, the lack of education and ethics is the basis. 3. Researchers' emphasis on quantity rather than quality in their work. The thought that a large number of publications will increase academic prestige is a factor. 4. Publications, projects, or scientific activities providing financial support. Unethical behaviors gathered under these four main headings can be reproduced in more subtitles.

Researchers violate ethical standards in a variety of ways, regardless of the motivations for their actions. Such ethical transgressions can occasionally be committed by people, sometimes with knowledge and others without. TÜBİTAK (2006) categorized ethical violations under the following headings:

- Fabrication: Producing unavailable data without research and using them in publications or reports.
- Falsification: Making changes in research materials, devices, processes, and records or changing results in a way that can give different results.
- Plagiarism: Using methods, data, writings, and figures belonging to others without citing them.
- Duplication: A researcher republishing a previously published research to increase the number of publications.
- Slicing (Least Publishable Units): Making more than one publication by improperly breaking the results obtained in research.
- Not expressing support: The articles do not mention the support of the institutions or organizations that support the research.
- Author name change: To remove from publication without a written opinion of the co-researcher in studies with more than one author, or to add a non-contributing researcher to the publication, or to change the author's order.
- Other: Other behaviors that are incompatible with research and publication ethics principles.

Unethical behaviors determined in studies; scientific negligence, scientific deflection or misleading, and scientific plagiarism or plagiarism are seen as a more accurate generalization (Anadolu Üniversitesi, 2011; Yaşar, 2018). Scientific negligence; It can be done unknowingly from the lack of education and inexperience of the researcher, or it can be consciously caused by financial support, time, or sloppy work. This situation coincides with the sections of slicing, not expressing support, and changing the name of the author in the study of TÜBİTAK (2006) on ethical violations. Scientific fallacy; deliberately altering the results or processes of a scientific study, thereby damaging the credibility of the study. It is the falsification, fabrication, or duplication of data. Scientific plagiarism or plagiarism; is the researcher's showing and presenting all or part of another researcher's publication as if it were his own work (İnci, 2009; Anadolu University, 2011; Yaşar, 2018).

According to the results of the research, the most common unethical behavior in academia is plagiarism. According to the Turkish Language Association (TDK, 2007), plagiarism is; It is defined as “taking excerpts and lines from other people's writings and presenting them as one's

own, or adopting other people's topics and telling them in a different way". In a study (Arda, 2001) in which the editors of 41 journals included in the TUBITAK Turkish Medical Index were evaluated on publication ethics, the cases that did not comply with the ethical rules were grouped under 7 headings, and the results were stated as percentage (%). According to the results of the study; the publication of information, examples, cases, or data belonging to others without permission and without being cited in the bibliography (20.6%); An evaluation was made in the form of quoting (20.6%) from the works of others without giving the source. It is seen that plagiarism is the most unethical behavior with a total value of 41.2%.

The increasing use of the internet today and the judgment that the information here can be considered as "public domain" is one of the important reasons that increase plagiarism. Park (2003) stated that plagiarism has a double-sided effect and stated that the easier it is to access information and plagiarize on the internet, the easier it is to reveal plagiarism (Uçak and İlk, 2008). Szabo and Underwood (2004), in their study on the determination of attitudes and behaviors about plagiarism, which included 291 university students, stated that more than 50% of the students were allowed to use the internet unethically, and 30% of them used the resources on the internet without permission in their studies (Yasar, 2018).

In universities, which are one of the most important institutions of the information society, the most important concept that can never be ignored during the production of knowledge and training of professionals and scientists is academic ethics. Although people who are full of professionals are brought up in environments where there are no ethical principles, social damage, and collapse are observed after a while. Ethics is as important for the academic community as morality and virtue are for humanity.

Considering the importance of academic ethics, the Council of Higher Education imposes penal sanctions for behaviors that may pose a problem in this respect. Penal provisions are envisaged according to the importance of unethical behaviors in these penal practices. According to the Higher Education Law adopted in 1981 (Anonymous, 1981), some of these are as follows:

Warning: It is a written notification to the instructor that she should be more careful in her duties and behaviors.

-Not to mention the supporting persons, institutions or organizations and their contributions in the publications made as a result of the research carried out with support.

Withdrawal from salary or wage: From the gross monthly; or deduction of 1/30 to 1/8 from the wage for once. A few of them on the subject are as follows;

- Not to use the data and information obtained from other persons and institutions in scientific studies, to the extent and in the manner permitted, not to comply with the confidentiality of this information and not to ensure its protection.

- To misuse the resources, places, facilities, and devices provided or allocated for scientific research.

- To divide the results of research into parts in a way that violates the integrity of the research and publish it in more than one issue, and present these publications as separate publications in academic appointments and promotions.

- To include people who have no active contribution among the authors or not to include those who do, to change the order of authors unjustifiably and inappropriately, to remove the names of those who contributed actively from the work in subsequent editions, to include their names among the authors by using their influence even though they have no active contribution.

Stopping rank progression or cutting multiple charges:

To use non-existent or falsified data in scientific research, to falsify research records or data obtained, to present devices or materials that are not used in the research as if they were used,

to falsify or shape the research results in line with the interests of the people and institutions that are supported.

- Presenting its repetitive publications as separate publications in academic appointments and promotions.

Dismissal from the university teaching profession:

To present the original ideas, methods, data, or works of others as partially or completely as one's own without attribution by scientific rules.

- In appointments and promotions, in gaining a title or degree; To use publications and studies that are not based on personal effort and experience, except for contributions that do not include academic evaluation, such as survey application and data collection, and produced by others for a fee or free of charge.

Dismissal from public office:

- Unlawfully obtaining, recording, using, storing, distributing, changing, or destroying the data of the institution.

Conclusion

In universities, which are one of the most important institutions of the information society, the most important concept can never be ignored during the production of knowledge and the training of professionals and scientists in academic ethics. Although people who are professionally full as much as desired are raised in environments where there are no ethical principles, social damage, and collapse are observed after a while. Just as morals and virtue are important to humanity, ethics is also important to the academic community. It is of vital importance for academic staff and higher education institutions to adhere to ethical principles in both the training of professional individuals and the production of scientific knowledge in terms of building social trust. An academic environment devoid of ethical values can lead not only to individual failures but also to irreparable damage to the social structure. Therefore, every individual in universities should adopt honesty, impartiality and transparency as a guide in their scientific work. In conclusion, ethical behavior, which is morals and conscientious responsibility, is one of the most important issues that faculty staff should attach importance to in higher education institutions that train professionals and scientists. Academic staff who should set an example for those who will have a profession should avoid unethical behavior. Trust is also essential in scientific studies. Universities are accepted as science centers and the scientists working there have serious responsibilities in the face of society and the world. Regardless of the reason, they should carry out their work without compromising scientific quality and without any influence. As stated in the "Observatory Magna Charta Universitatum Agreement", which is signed by 889 universities worldwide and accepted as the "Constitution of Universities", universities can be ready for the needs of the world in which they exist, and their research and teaching studies are spiritual and intellectual independence from all other economic and political forces is possible.

As a result, academic ethics is a fundamental element that strengthens the place and importance of universities in the knowledge society. It is of vital importance for academic staff and higher education institutions to adhere to ethical principles in both the training of professional individuals and the production of scientific knowledge in terms of building social trust. An academic environment devoid of ethical values can lead not only to individual failures, but also to irreparable damage to the social structure. Therefore, every individual in universities should adopt honesty, impartiality and transparency as a guide in their scientific work. The

responsibilities of scientists to society and humanity are not limited to producing knowledge. At the same time, the transfer of this knowledge in accordance with ethical values and the provision of moral and intellectual guidance to new generations are also among these responsibilities. Conducting research and education independently of economic or political pressures is one of the most important ways to preserve the universal quality and reliability of science. As stated in the "Observatory Magna Charta Universitatum Agreement", the spiritual and intellectual independence of universities is a fundamental requirement for them to respond to the needs of both individuals and societies. In addition, knowledge produced within the framework of ethical principles has the capacity to produce solutions not only to current problems but also to future global challenges. In this context, academic ethics plays a critical role in ensuring the sustainability of scientific studies and ensuring that knowledge is used for the benefit of humanity. The fact that academic staff adopt an attitude that adheres to ethical principles both in their professions and in their private lives will contribute to the increase in trust in science and universities in society. In short, universities should not only produce knowledge, but also be institutions that ethically direct this knowledge for the benefit of humanity. Therefore, creating an academic environment where academic ethical principles are not neglected, the independence of science is preserved, and individuals are raised with these values will make great contributions to the progress of societies both today and in the future.

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