



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

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Evaluation of the ethics perception of academics in Inonu University faculty of medicine

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Abstract

This research was carried out to evaluate the ethics perception of academics working at İnönü University Faculty of Medicine. This is a descriptive study. The universe of the research consisted of 440 academics (Professors, Associate Professors, Assistant Professors, and Research Assistants) working at Malatya İnönü University Faculty of Medicine. The sample size of the study was determined as 120 using power analysis. In total, 123 individuals were reached. The data were collected by face-to-face interviews with academics between July and October 2021, using the Personal Information Form and the Academic Ethics Scale. In the evaluation of the data, descriptive statistics and Kolmogorov Smirnov Test, the Levene test, the Mann Whitney Test, ANOVA, the Duncan test, and the Kruskal Wallis test were used. Any p value less than 0.05 was considered statistically significant. It was found that 47.2% of the participants were research assistants, 50.4% worked for more than 5 years, 34.1% were between the ages of 31 and 40 years, 65% had clinical experience, 74% had national publications, 73.2% of them had sufficient knowledge about academic ethics (per their statements), 69.9% of them would notify authorities in case of unethical behavior, and 14.6% of them faced ethical violations. The participants' average perception of ethical values was 196.76 ± 16.27 [max: 260; Min: 155]. It was found that there was no significant difference between the ethical perception of the academics working at İnönü University, Faculty of Medicine, and gender and the types of ethical violations faced. However, when age, clinical experience, and tenure were grouped under the Academic Ethical Values Scale sub-dimensions, there were significant differences. It was also determined that there were significant differences between the status of complaining about unethical behavior, title, knowledge about academic ethics, and having a national/international publication.

Keywords: Academic, faculty of medicine, ethics perception

Introduction

Today's societies are called information societies. The reason for this is that all vital activities are carried out based on knowledge and nothing can be produced without knowledge [1]. Today, one of the most important institutions of the information society is universities, which are the basic institutions where information is produced, and the people who use the information the most are undoubtedly academics living together with science [2].

University means 'Univerus: translated into one place, gathered in a whole' in Latin. The concept of 'University', which is derived from here, means integrity and community [3]. As can be seen,

the element that gives meaning to the concept of a university is the name of a kind of organization, which is the union established by the students and teachers who want to study. Over time, the concept of the university has gained the meaning of the union of sciences where different knowledge or disciplines come together [4]. Universities, which are rooted in ancient times, have emerged in the modern sense to create a national culture and to train distinguished people who will take place in state administration. [5]. Traditional western universities have been an ideal institution that aims to create a modern society with a high level of knowledge and where individuals can advance themselves academically [6]. The functions of these institutions have been the subject of serious discussion today. The "must have" elements of an ideal university; Academic freedom, Academic autonomy, Academic ethics, Academic merit, and Academic mobility. Especially the first three of these are the concepts that form the core of an ideal university. Among these, especially "academic ethics" has to be one of the most discussed topics in our universities today [2].

"Academic ethics" is one of the sines qua non of the core of an

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ideal university. Sharing knowledge and transferring knowledge to students in the process of scientific studies and activities of faculty members, production and evaluation of academic studies, and training of successful academics (by getting a good education) means complying with the rules of ethical behavior at all stages. When "academic ethics" is defined as carrying out the activities applied in universities following general moral and professional ethics, we can say that the concepts of "ethics in education and training" and "ethics in relations with students" constitute two of the sub-dimensions of ethics. "Academic ethics" or "science ethics" is also related to the sharing and teaching of knowledge [7].

"Academic Ethics"; are the criteria that scientists working in higher education institutions comply with or have to comply with in their professional work. These criteria can be listed as responsibilities towards science and its method, responsibilities towards the place where it works, and duties towards humanity [8].

Academicians who have educational and researcher roles are responsible for fulfilling academic ethical criteria in all their practices within the scope of these roles [9]. Academician is the professional title given to individuals who teach, research, and produce information in higher education institutions and contribute to their field. Just as there are ethical behaviors that every profession must comply with, there are also ethical behaviors that academicians must comply with. These ethical behaviors are also very important for the prestige of the university. Paying particular attention to research ethics will build trust in academics and ensure the development of the university [6].

Publishing on academic subjects is of great importance in terms of knowledge production and transferring it to the next generations. Certain norms and values must be taken into account to produce qualified information. It is important to be able to carry out the knowledge production stages within the framework of ethical norms, which behaviors will cause problems in the production of academic knowledge, and to find solutions to them. In recent years, many concepts such as the behavior of people in daily life or the academic environment, ethics, ethical principles, unethical behaviors, and professional ethics have been on the agenda [1].

Ethics is one of the indispensable elements in science. Science advances with knowledge; that is, information that emerges as a result of research guides further research [10].

In this case, the more attention is paid to ethical norms during the production of scientific knowledge, the more reliable and valid information will be revealed, and this will contribute to the development of science. If ethical rules are not followed, a scientific study will be harmful rather than beneficial. Ethical rules are an issue that should be paid attention to in academic studies. These rules form the foundations of scientific ethics. Aydın [11] emphasizes that since honesty is very important in terms of scientific ethics, what is meant by honesty is the presentation of scientific research results with real data. Uçak [12], who stated that there should be a method in the production of scientific information, also emphasized the importance of including reliable and original information.

One of the issues in which the question of value has reached an important point is the concept of academic ethical value put

forward by researchers working to increase the scientific level. While academics act as an example to society, they carry out their research. For this reason, the problems within the scope of academic ethical values caused the attention of the academic world to this subject and they concluded that it should be emphasized [13].

Ethical values; Besides being the values that bind the professions to a certain standard and norm and give them personality, they are the elements that enable the establishment of successful and healthy relationships in professional life. All of the ethical principles that guide and guide the attitudes and behaviors of people in their professional life are called "professional ethics". It refers to the professional criteria that make it compulsory for a professional group to adhere to a certain rule, ensure that individuals who do not have principles and are inadequate, leave the profession, set limits to individual tendencies, protect service goals and regulate professional competition. Academicians are also within the scope of their educator and researcher roles; they should fulfill some ethical criteria that ethically evaluate every stage of the process of producing scientific knowledge [9]. These criteria enable ethical thinking and ethical consideration and make scientific research qualified [14].

Due to the misconception that publishing too many publications will increase scientific prestige, quantity over quality may cause ethical problems [15].

It is possible to talk about ethical problems such as Fabrication, Plagiarism, Falsification, Duplication, Slicing, and Unfair Authorship [16-18].

Compliance with ethical principles is not only important in every sector, but it is even more important in the health sector, which is of vital importance. New information is important in the protection and development of health. In accessing new information in health, health academics need to make the information they have obtained follow the rules of science ethics until the publication stage [19].

Giving importance to ethical values in health has special importance for researchers as well as participants and society. Ethical values should be given importance during the research. Failure to pay attention to certain ethical principles in research conducted with volunteers may cause harm to the subjects. This situation is not welcomed in terms of human values. At this stage, academics who will set an example for society are expected to comply with humane and moral values [20]. When the literature is examined, studies on academic ethics have been found, but no study has been found for the medical faculty academy. In this context, the study aims to determine the knowledge and attitudes of medical faculty academicians on ethical behaviors. In addition, it is thought that this study will make an important contribution to the academic ethics literature, which has an important place today.

Materials and Methods

This research is the descriptive type of research. The research was carried out by İnönü University Faculty of Medicine academicians between July and October 2021. The universe of the research consists of 440 academicians (Prof. Dr., Associate Professor, Dr. Lecturer, Research Assistant) working at Malatya İnönü University

Faculty of Medicine.

The sample of this study was determined by power analysis. According to the calculation made using the G*power 3.1 program; The sample size was determined as 120 with an effect size of 0.41, a margin of error of 0.05, a confidence level of 0.95, and a population representation of 0.95. Academicians were selected from the population by a simple random sampling method. At the end of the three months, 150 academicians were reached. 27 academicians refused to participate in the study. The sample of our research consisted of 123 academicians. Considering possible losses, more academics were tried to be reached, but 290 academicians could not be reached, although their places of duty and examinations were visited at least three times.

The personal Information Form and Academic Ethical Values Scale created by the researcher were used to collect the data. The data were interviewed with the academicians of İnönü University Faculty of Medicine, the purpose of the study was explained and their consent was obtained, and they were asked to fill in the questionnaire prepared by the researcher. The average time to fill out the questionnaire is 10-15 minutes.

The personal information form was developed by the researcher, and how long the participants worked as an academician, their titles, ages, genders, whether they have worked in a clinic, whether they have published national-international articles, and whether they have enough knowledge about academic ethics, whether they have experience/suggestions. It includes questions about whether he is not ethical and whether he will complain when unethical behavior is encountered. It consists of 10 questions in total.

The analysis of the data included in the research was carried out with the SPSS (Statistical Program in Social Sciences) 25 program. Compliance tests of the data with normal distribution were performed and it was determined which of the parametric and non-parametric methods would be used. The Kolmogorov Smirnov test was used to check whether the data included in the study fit the Normal distribution.

Ethical approval was obtained from the Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of İnönü University. In addition, written permission was obtained from the Dean of İnönü University Faculty of Medicine to conduct the research. Consent was obtained from the individuals participating in the research; The individuals were informed that their information would not be shared with others, that they were free to participate in the research, and that they could leave the research at any time. In this way, the principles of "confidentiality" and "informed consent" were complied with. In addition, permission was obtained from the Developing/Adapting Corresponding Writer Oğuzhan Sevim to use the academic ethical values scale so that the principles of "honesty, respect for human dignity and labor" were followed.

Limitations and Generalizability of the Study

The limitation of the study is that the sample consisted of only İnönü University Faculty of Medicine academicians and the results could only be generalized to the group in which the research was conducted.

Results

The personal information of the participants participating in the study was calculated as numbers and percentages, and the results are given in the table below.

Table 1. Demographic Information

Variable	Group	Number	Percent
Gender	Female	51	41.5
	Male	72	58.5
Age	23-30 Age	31	25.2
	31-40 Age	42	34.1
	41-50 Age	28	22.8
	51-60 Age	17	13.8
	60 Age over	5	4.1
Title	Research Assistant	58	47.2
	Dr. Lecturer	16	13.0
	Associate Professor	20	16.3
	Professor	29	23.6
Mission time	0-1 year	10	8.1
	1 - 5 year	51	41.5
	5- 10 year	23	18.7
	10 year over	39	31.7
Clinical Mission	Yes	80	65.0
	No	43	35.0
International Article	Yes	78	63.4
	No	45	36.6
National Article	Yes	91	74.0
	No	32	26.0
Information on Ethics	Yes	90	73.2
	No	33	26.8
Ethical Violation Encountered	Plagiarism	3	2.4
	Falsification	1	0.8
	Unfair Authorship	13	10.6
	Slicing	1	0.8
	None	105	85.4
Unethical Complaint	Yes	86	69.9
	No	37	30.1

The mean score of the participants on the AED scale was calculated as 196.76±16.27 standard deviations, the lowest score on the scale was 155 and the highest score was 260.

A statistically significant difference was found between age groups in the scores obtained for the "Academic Ethical Values Scale" sub-dimension, "ethical values towards colleagues" in the participants included in the study ($p<0.05$). Pairwise comparisons were made with the Duncan Test between which groups the difference was.

A statistically significant difference was found between those aged 23-30 and those aged 30-40 years in the scores obtained for the

"Academic Ethical Values Scale" sub-dimension, "ethical values towards colleagues" ($p=0.008<0.05$).

A statistically significant difference was found between titles in the scores of the participants included in the study for the "Academic Ethical Values Scale" and its sub-dimensions "ethical values for scientific research, ethical values for the institution, ethical values for colleagues" ($p<0.05$). Pairwise comparisons were made with the Duncan Test between which groups the difference was.

A statistically significant difference was found between research assistants and professors in the scores for ethical values for scientific research in the sub-dimension of the "Academic Ethical Values Scale" ($p=0.030<0.05$).

A statistically significant difference was found between research assistants and professors in the scores obtained for the "Academic Ethical Values Scale" sub-dimension, "ethical values towards colleagues" ($p=0.049<0.05$).

A statistically significant difference was found between research assistants and professors in the scores obtained for the "Academic Ethical Values Scale" sub-dimension, "ethical values for the institution" ($p=0.006<0.05$).

A statistically significant difference was found between research assistants and professors for the total score of the "Academic Ethical Values Scale" ($p=0.016<0.05$).

There was no statistically significant difference between the terms of office in the scores of the participants included in the study for the "Academic Ethical Values Scale" and its sub-dimensions "ethical values for scientific research, ethical values for the institution, ethical values for the social and ethical values for the teaching process" ($p>0.05$).

In the participants included in the study, a statistically significant difference was found between the terms of office in the scores obtained for the "Academic Ethical Values Scale" sub-dimension, "ethical values towards colleagues" ($p<0.05$). Pairwise comparisons were made with the Duncan Test between which groups the difference was.

A statistically significant difference was found between 0-1 year employees and 5-10 years old scores for the "Academic Ethical Values Scale" sub-dimension "ethical values towards colleagues" ($p=0.037<0.05$).

In the participants included in the study, there was a statistically significant difference between those who complained about unethical behavior and those who did not in the scores obtained for the "Academic Ethical Values Scale" and its sub-dimensions "ethical values for scientific research, ethical values for the institution, ethical values for the society and ethics for the teaching process". found ($p<0.05$).

A statistically significant difference was found between the scores of the participants included in the study for the "Academic Ethical Values Scale" and its sub-dimensions "ethical values for scientific research, ethical values for the institution" ($p<0.05$).

A statistically significant difference was found in the scores of the

participants included in the study for the "Academic Ethical Values Scale" sub-dimension, "ethical values for scientific research" between those with and without clinical duties ($p<0.05$).

A statistically significant difference was found in the scores of the participants included in the study for the "Academic Ethical Values Scale" and its sub-dimensions, "ethical values for scientific research, ethical values for the institution" ($p<0.05$).

A statistically significant difference was found in the scores of the participants included in the study for the "Academic Ethical Values Scale" and its sub-dimensions "ethical values for scientific research, ethical values for the institution, ethical values for colleagues, and ethical values for the teaching process" between those with and without an international article. ($p<0.05$).

Discussion

With the developing technology, the controlled dissemination of information becomes an important element. Academicians have an important role in the process of producing scientific knowledge and presenting it to society. For this reason, it is very important to acquire and maintain academic ethical values in universities.

The findings obtained from this research were discussed within the scope of studies conducted with other faculties, and the dissimilar parts were discussed within their findings since there were no one-to-one studies conducted for medical faculty academicians.

The majority of the individuals who constitute the scope of our study, which was conducted to evaluate the ethical perception of Inonu University Faculty of Medicine academics, were 31 years old and over, working for more than 1 year, had clinical work experience, and those whose national or international articles were published (Table 1).

Age groups and academic ethics perceptions of the academicians participating in the research were compared. When the literature is examined, in the study conducted by Yalçınkaya on nurse academicians; It was tested whether there was a difference between age groups in the scores of the participants for the "Academic Ethical Values Scale" and its sub-dimensions "ethical values for scientific research, ethical values for colleagues, ethical values for the institution, ethical values for the social and ethical values for the teaching process". it was stated that there was no statistically significant difference [21]. In his study, Akçam found that the views of the lecturers about the level of compliance with academic ethics did not change according to their age [22]. However, in this study conducted at İnönü University Faculty of Medicine, there was no statistically significant difference between age groups in the scores obtained for "ethical values for scientific research, ethical values for the institution, ethical values for the society, and ethical values for the teaching process" ($p>0.05$). A statistically significant difference was found between 23-30 years old (37.87 ± 5.34) and 31-40 years old (41.4 ± 4.3) scores for "ethical values towards colleagues". The average score of the academicians between the ages of 31-40 was higher ($p<0.05$).

The academic ethics perceptions of the academicians participating in the research were compared with the title. In the study conducted by Akçam, it was found that the views of the instructors about the

level of compliance with academic ethics did not change according to the title ($p>0.05$) [22]. However, a statistically significant difference was found between research assistants and professors in the participants included in the study at İnönü University Faculty of Medicine. For the Academic Ethical Values Scale total score, the total mean score of the professors (202.93 ± 13.65) was higher than the total mean score of the research assistants (192.07 ± 18.16) ($p<0.05$).

The terms of office of the academicians participating in the research were compared with their perceptions of academic ethics. In the study conducted by Yalçinkaya on nurse academicians; it was stated that there was no statistically significant difference between the academic ethics perceptions of the participants and their term of office [21]. In the study conducted by Akçam, it was found that the views of the instructors about the level of adherence to academic ethics did not change according to seniority [22]. However, in the study conducted with the participants included in the study at İnönü University Faculty of Medicine, the scores obtained for the "Academic Ethical Values Scale" and its sub-dimensions "ethical values for scientific research, ethical values for the institution, ethical values for the social and ethical values for the teaching process" are among the terms of office. While no statistically significant difference was found ($p>0.05$), a statistically significant difference was found in the scores obtained for "ethical values towards colleagues" between those who worked for 0-1 years (37.5 ± 8.3) and 5-10 years (42.09 ± 4.67). The average score of the academicians working between 5-10 years was higher than the academicians working between 0-1 years ($p<0.05$).

It was compared whether there was a difference between the types of ethical violations faced by the academicians participating in the research and their perception of ethics, and no statistically significant difference was found ($p>0.05$).

The genders of the academicians participating in the research and their perceptions of academic ethics were compared. In the study conducted by Akçam, a significant difference was found between the views of female lecturers and the opinions of male lecturers about the level of compliance of lecturers with academic ethics [22]. However, there was no significant difference between gender in the scores obtained for the "Academic Ethical Values Scale" in the participants included in the study at İnönü University Faculty of Medicine ($p>0.05$). There is also a study in the literature that supports this research finding. In the study conducted by Yalçinkaya, it was stated that there was no significant difference between gender [21].

Complaining of unethical behavior of the academicians participating in the research was compared with their perceptions of academic ethics. Those who complained about unethical behavior had a higher mean score on the "Academic Ethical Values Scale" (199.94 ± 16.53) than those who did not (189.35 ± 13.1) ($p<0.05$).

The academic ethics perceptions of the academicians participating in the research were compared with their knowledge about academic ethics. When the analysis results of the study by Yalçinkaya were examined, it was determined that there was a statistically significant difference between the academicians' having sufficient knowledge about ethics and their perceptions of "values for society" ($p<0.05$). The mean score of academicians (32.14 ± 3.56) was higher [21].

However, no statistically significant difference was found between the academicians' having sufficient knowledge about ethics and their perceptions of values towards society in İnönü University Faculty of Medicine ($p>0.05$). A statistically significant difference was found between the scores obtained for "ethical values for scientific research, ethical values for the institution" between having enough knowledge about ethics or not. The average score of the academicians who stated that they had sufficient knowledge about academic ethics in the perception of values towards science (37.3 ± 5.04) and the institution (34.8 ± 4.38) was higher ($p<0.05$).

The clinical experience of the academicians participating in the research and their academic ethics perceptions were compared. When the results of the analysis by Yalçinkaya were examined, it was determined that there was a statistically significant difference between the clinical experience of the academicians and their perceptions of the values of the institution and the teaching process ($p<0.05$). Academicians with clinical experience have a higher mean score in the perception of values for the institution they work at (28.69 ± 4.56) and values for the teaching process (58.93 ± 3.36) [21]. In the study conducted at İnönü University Faculty of Medicine, no statistically significant difference was found between those with and without clinical duties in the scores for "ethical values for the institution and the ethical values for the teaching process". A statistically significant difference was found. In the values for scientific research, the mean score of those with no clinical experience (37.95 ± 5.68) was higher than those with clinical experience (35.91 ± 4.37) ($p<0.05$).

The academic ethic perceptions of the academicians participating in the research were compared with their national-international articles. When the analysis results were examined by Yalçinkaya, it was determined that there was no statistically significant difference [21]. However, in the study conducted at İnönü University Faculty of Medicine, a statistically significant difference was found between those who have a national article and those who do not. The mean score of those whose national article was published (198.42 ± 14.85) was higher than those who did not have a national article (192.03 ± 19.26) ($p<0.05$). According to the status of having an international article, a statistically significant difference was found between those who have an international article and those who do not. The total mean score of the academicians with an international article (200.88 ± 15.02) was higher than those without an international article (189.6 ± 16.03) ($p<0.05$).

Conclusion

As a result, with the ethical perception of the academicians working in the Faculty of Medicine of İnönü University; There is no significant difference between gender and the types of ethical violations encountered. Significant differences were found when age, clinical experience, and tenure were grouped under the Academic Ethical Values Scale sub-dimensions. Significant differences were found between the status of complaining about unethical behavior, title, knowledge about academic ethics, and having a national-international article.

Both professional and academic development will be provided in line with the education of undergraduate and graduate students by taking research ethics into account in academic life. Suggestions in line with the research findings; Academic ethics training should

be given from the undergraduate period and awareness pieces of training should be organized periodically for academicians in the following period.

Ethical problems faced by research assistants and lecturers evaluated within the scope of this study in matters such as conducting scientific research should not be ignored. These ethical issues need to be addressed and resolved. In addition, the problems of academics who do not complain or cannot complain about unethical behavior (who answered no to this question and answered as "known reasons in face-to-face interviews") should not be ignored, this problem should be addressed and resolved.

In this study, only the ethical perception of Inonu University Faculty of Medicine academicians was evaluated. In future studies, more comprehensive comparisons can be made by researching academicians from different disciplines and other medical faculties.

Conflict of interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in the study.

Financial Disclosure

The authors declare that they have received no financial support for the study.

Ethical approval

Ethical approval was obtained from the Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of İnönü University. In addition, written permission was obtained from the Dean of İnönü University Faculty of Medicine in order to conduct the research. Consent was obtained from the individuals participating in the research; The individuals were informed that their information would not be shared with others, that they were free to participate in the research and that they could leave the research at any time. In this way, the principles of "confidentiality" and "informed consent" were complied with. In addition, permission was obtained from the Developing/Adapting Corresponding Writer Oğuzhan Sevim in order to use the academic ethical values scale, so that the principles of "honesty, respect for human dignity and labor" were followed.

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