



Contriving Research Ethics While Standardizing Research Tool

Dr. Sarla Nirankari

Professor Sant Baba Bhag Singh University Jalandhar Punjab.

Research carried out needs to have humanitarian considerations. Humanitarian researchers need and want training and support for the ethical challenges they face at all stages of research and evidence generation. This could be addressed through further attention to the development of ethics tools, training and guidance materials. The role of ethics in research is quite intimate. Without ethics the research is like a body without soul. The drifting ethics are the genuine apprehension of the day. Human personality, values and beliefs are unmeasurable. It is very tough to check the humanity level of a person. Present study is an effort to evaluate the principles and the procedure of standardizing the tool. It is felt that the tools should be standardized by protecting ethical concerns at utmost priority.

Psychological tools are used to test different psycho-social variables. But human tendencies are unmeasurable. The unpredictable human tantrums are not altruistic. These emotions and values are beyond calculative constraints. No tool is perfect to measure humanity perfectly. Only love for humanity is its parameter. Similarly, good research is known by its inherent ethics. All external agencies have failed in controlling unscrupulous practices and implementing the integrity in researches particularly in social sciences. It may be because of various factors just as the nature of social problems, human behavior, habits and deficiency of practical testing in social sciences. Copious psychological (standardized) tests are available through several catalogues. But their applicability, impracticality (in some areas) procedure and the way of standardizing is great concern. The lack of ethics in the data collection tools have bewildered the academia. The present paper is an effort to discuss research ethics and revival of ethics in the process of standardization of research tool. This deficit of ethics is felt by various educationists. A little review of literature is presented here. Several concerns are desirable to be incorporated and treated in the code of ethics in tools construction

Review of literature:

Alderson & Morrow (2016) reviewed the currently rapid changes in research ethics governance affecting many kinds of social research. It is concluded that the use of multidisciplinary research ethics committees, guidance and governance can be an effective and necessary part of social research methodology. This paper reviews questions arising during rapid changes in research ethic governance.

Kulliyah A. (2018) The protection of human subjects through the application of appropriate ethical principles is important in all research study. In a qualitative study, ethical considerations have a particular resonance due to the in depth nature of the study process.

Jones, K (2000), the standard texts on quantitative research in education and the consideration of ethical issues in the research process are discussed. The overall aim of the research is to reveal the situated nature of research ethics and how they are practiced in quantitative research. Declaration on Professional Ethics, ethical Guidelines for Statistical Practice and crucial issues are discussed in detail here. The deficiency in ethics is fingered here.

McCormick Rod M. (1998) This paper discusses ethical considerations in First Nations counselling and research. In addition to examining relevant sections of the ethical guidelines of the Canadian Guidance and Counselling Association (CGCA), the paper illustrates the unique ethical issues and considerations that Canadian counselling practitioners and researchers need to be aware of in working with First Nations people.

Sivasubramaniam et al. (2021) Ethics and ethical behavior are the fundamental pillars of a civilized society. The focus on ethical behavior is indispensable in certain fields such as medicine, finance, or law. In fact, ethics gets precedence with anything that would include, affect, transform, or influence upon individuals, communities or any living creatures.

Principles fixed to control ethical trepidation in research can be such as:

- Engagements with public: most contemporary research is missing this direct in touch with public. General research is conducted without including general masses. The needs of different sections, arenas and forms of community is mislaid in our research. Industry+ agriculture+ education+ society is far away from the research.
- Pursue the truth: the perusal of truth is seriously needed in the research. The tempering with data, analysis and results; have led to dubious and devious findings. As wrong decisions taken on false research results will lead nowhere. Thus should be tracked in any case.
- Minimize harm: the harm performed by the loss of ethics have created a havoc. In Covid-19 period, it was vehemently seen that health industry, pharmaceutical and para-medical forces, plundered the human interests desperately. False reports have subjugated the common interest acutely. Hence the benefit of the population should be utmost priority.
- Engage with decision makers: the other principle for accumulating ethics in research should be to strong public engagement with the decision makers. The local pains and gains should be taken into consideration while chalking and crafting any research proposal in social sciences.
- Support diversity: this particular phenomenon is missing in all through research. Regionalism, racism, colorism and caste reflections are predictably in the research. Had the slogan 'The whole world is a family' an integral part of research; the world would not have seen the epidemic?
- Be a mentor/resource: this principle establishes researcher as sole responsibility for good and true research. Only a mentor could take care of the mentees 'interests. To become a resource is in itself an ethical compliance.
- Be accountable: the anonymity in research had led to the scarcity of accountability. This ethical attitude can lead to complete virtuous research.

Procedure of tool construction and standardizing has great place in research. The ethical practicalities start from this procedure only. Here lies the essence of humanitarian research. But this procedure has become most weak and corruption sensitive. It could be better understood by going through the rationale for Tool construction as follows:

To fix objectives for the tool: the procedure of the construction of tool begins from this very step of choosing objectives for the research proposal. It is the preliminary phase for the tool construction. It is sorry to state here that the drifting of values starts from here. Lot's Ph.D. thesis are written and approved without having any worthwhile objectives. The research should be able to solve problems of students, teachers and community. But waywardness in objective framing has made the procedure complicated. Mostly objectives are copied and stolen. Sarcastically to attain Ph.D. degree has become a fashion. It looks people are as crazy about it as one is purchasing clothes just to fill wardrobe.

Research Design: the selection of research design is dependent on the convenience of investigator. Moreover, he/she is least concerned about the need of the research. It is desired by the investigator that a problem as well as a research design should be suggested by the supervisor only. The escapist attitude of the investigator reflects from here only.

Population and sample: at the criteria of selection of population and sample, ethic question raise. The investigator is biased to select the population where he could easily influence the group. Mostly sample for data collection is taken from the known population. Moreover, the data collection is manipulated by the investigators for their vicious interests. Another challenge found during observation is forecasting the answers of questionnaire to the selected sample members. If the sample is controlled initially, how could we expect unbiased results?

The literary world is earnestly in the need to check the deteriorating standards in research. The bulk production of Ph.D. thesis is increased but the quality of research is at stake. The fashion of copying the topic, replicating the variables with minor changes, repeating the stereotype researches, photocopying the review of literature, stealing not only the data and research analysis but also the results and standardizing the tool without any ethical concern are the blatant issues of contemporary research. In fact, the collection, interpretation, derivations and implications of Data; all depend upon the quality and preciseness of a tool or instrument. Every research problem need certain tools for the authentication of research. If research tool is wrong the whole process of research will be erroneous. Henceforth the tool inhabits a main place in social science researches. Unfortunately, a tool measures something, but the measurement could not be valid. Sometimes the tool measures one thing in one place and it measures other thing in another place. The universal versatility of a tool is an inherent quality. If the tool is homogeneous, unswerving and dependable its results will be more reliable, concrete and practical. Turpin(2019)suggests that a tool allows the researcher to get on with the research and not be side tracked into "reinventing the wheel". Moreover, it allows others to verify and or follow on with reported results due to standardization of measurements. Improvements in measurements through testing research, corroborates the results. The tools are considered more expedient if their measuring proficiency is higher. Therefore, the measuring tools must have the characteristics of measurement such as validity, reliability, objectivity, easy to administration, easy to scoring and cost effectiveness.

Content Validity:

Anandharaja et al. (2016)

The validity of a scale refers to the degree to which it measures what it is supposed to measure (Pallant, 2005, p.6). Content validity of any test is a prerequisite of any test of research. "To demonstrate this form of content validity, the instrument must show that it fairly and comprehensively covers the domain or items that it purports to cover" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007,p.137). It refers to the fact that the items included in -the tool represent a reasonable sampling of all possible items behavior that make the domain being measured. The content area to be tested must first be studied to make certain that all major aspects or subcategories are represented in correct proportions. Experts in the content area are often called upon to analyze the items to see if they adequately represent not only the content universe (or domain) but also in correct proportions. They

also point out errors and ambiguities in items and make recommendations for changes. Content validity assessment also involves a more elaborate procedure by which items are developed, given to experts for judgment and determination of percentage of items for each category. Percentage of agreement between the judges is considered as the basis for inclusion or rejection of items. So when the items are written as per the blueprint, after revision, the tool is given to teachers who are teaching.

The breach of ethical considerations starts from here. As this course is totally structured and controlled by the investigator, therefore the possibilities of tempering with tool and its procedure are very high. Moreover, there is no regulatory body to examine this course, thus mishandling and non-seriousness has increased at this step.

Pilot Study: Required number of copies of the draft tool for conducting pilot study are printed, stating the purpose and assuring confidentiality, with proper instructions. The pilot study is conducted on the randomly chosen sample. The investigator has to meet the students in person and has to briefly explained the purpose of the data collection. He has to make it clear that the data would be used only for research purpose. Usually the pilot study is influenced selfishly. The study is conducted at the place of sheer convenience. The students are influenced by defective ways. The real cause of study is lost which further lead to denigration of virtuous standards.

Item Analysis: as discussed earlier one of the important steps in the standardization of any research tool is an items analysis. It is a statistical technique used for selecting and rejecting the items in a scale on the basis of the obtained values. It is done primarily to eliminate inconsistency of the items. It is a test that “comes after the preliminary draft of a test has been constructed, administered on a group of students” (Aggarwal, 2012, p.270). The Difficulty Index (D.I.) of an item is represented by the percentage of students who responded to it correctly. For each question the Difficulty Index is calculated by using certain formula. In the calculation the investigator sways the results as per his motives and malicious interests. The crunch of values depreciation.

Discriminative Power (D.P): “Item Discrimination or the Discriminating Power of a test item refers to the degree to which success or failure on an item indicates possession of the ability being measured” (Aggarwal, 2012, p.272). The Discriminating Power (D.P.) of an item indicates the measure of the extent to which an item discriminates or differentiates between subjects do well on the overall test and those who do not do well on the overall test. The researcher avoids to get mingled in statistical technicalities. Hence forth the self-seeking and self-centered crisis arise.

Item Selection: The items are evaluated and selected with the help of Difficulty Index and Discrimination Power of the items. The items were evaluated with the help of Difficulty Value Index and Discrimination Value Index only elective items are kept in a tool.

Reliability: Reliability refers to the extent to which you get the same answer when the same question is asked repeatedly. “Test–retest reliability measures the extent to which you get the same answer if you test the same person on two different occasions” Rugg & Petre, 2007, P.224).

The parameters of test construction should be followed with due respect and care. But the plagiarism and other considerations should be taken care of. As if these obligations are not followed properly, the crisis of values will remain in status quo. Hence forth the process of standardization should be taken seriously and all ethical concerns should be taken well care of. The budding researchers should toil to save the integrity of research. The objectives, tool construction procedure and its implementation should be treated as utmost important phenomenon. The degrading conditions of research could be saved if both students and supervisors stick to the fundamental principles of research with the alive enthusiasm.

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