Marita Cronqvist

University of Borås

Research ethics in Swedish dissertations in educational science – a matter of confusion

In all research, ethical considerations are crucial to reliability and quality and researchers are guided by various national and international documents and ethical committees. Despite different strategies to guide researchers and to ensure quality, there still seems to be uncertainty in educational science about how research ethics should be positioned and handled in practice (Madalinska-Michalak, 2020; Shykhnenko & Sbruieva, 2022; Vadeboncoeur et al., 2016). The aim of this study is to phenomenologically explore what position research ethics are given in Swedish doctoral dissertations in educational research and how doctoral researchers frame and present research ethics in their ethical elaborations. The empirical data consists of 60 doctoral dissertations in educational science at Swedish universities from the past year. The result indicates very different views on ethical considerations despite a quite common point of departure in the Swedish Research Council's guidelines (2017) and knowledge of the Ethics Review Act (SFS, 2003:460). The meanings of research ethics can be divided into four themes: 1) The researcher's responsibility for participants 2) The researcher's responsibility for the research process 3) About ethics 4) The researcher as a person. The different meanings are presented either in a factual or personal way and can be either related or unrelated to the current study. In addition, problematizations or dilemmas may occur within all themes. Some variations can be related to the differences in the studies' designs, but regardless of such explanations, the conclusion is that consensus regarding ethical considerations in research is largely lacking.

Engagement in discussion:

The researcher's responsibility for participants	The researcher's responsibility for the research process	About ethics ethics	The researcher as a person as a person
The main theme Informed consent Confidentiality Use of data Ethical approval The Swedish Research Council	Design and choices Consequences Power to affect society and research community Conclusions Transparency	Laws Regulations Models Codes Structures Values	Reflection Self-awareness Influence Values Well-being Criticality

Based on the results of the study, partly presented in the table, I want to highlight questions such as:

How can different meanings of research ethics be/ become significant in the supervision conversation and the doctoral student's research process?

How can different approaches of supervisors and doctoral students to research ethics affect the conversations?

How can different meanings of research ethics affect the quality of the conversations, the research process and the final product?

How might relevance and significance of the different meanings differ in relation to doctoral projects?

References:

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