Abstract: The present work attempts to address the ethical stands and practices of research integrity among early career professionals in social sciences research in one of the Ethiopian Universities. The major goal of the research was unpacking the institutional research ethics stands and practices, taking a case study in one institution. The method of the research was document analysis and discussion with authorities research offices. The documents assessed were, university research proposal evaluation guidelines, national research review ethics guideline, proposals initiated by young academics and completed second-degree theses in two departments, and Research Ethics Policy (2016) of the institution. The results revealed, there is a weak institutional stand towards social science research ethics. There is no single document applied in managing the ethical realms of researches among the academic staffs and students. Among the assessed 41 documents, only 29.26% tried to practice partial ethical consideration in the proposals and theses. The rest 70.74% documents never stated a word about ethics. Even those documents did not show the complete process of the researches, the challenges encountered, and
failed to attach evidences in the documents. Therefore, stand towards research ethics is marginalized, and research ethical practices among the researchers, mentors, and supervisors are destructed. At this scenario, it positive to conclude that the issues of research ethics will be a challenge to the university in general and to the careers of young professionals in particular. Therefore, it needs absolute priority before too late to manage the gap.

Subjects: Anthropology - Soc Sci; Gender Studies - Soc Sci; Sociology & Social Policy

Keywords: Ethics; practices; principles; research integrity; stands

1. Introduction
This work has mainly emanated from the authors experiences as a head for research, community services and postgraduate office in one institute in the University. As a head to the office, the author had brief exposure and access to look at the research experiences of the university in general and the institute in particular. The author had processed, managed and reported research proposal grants; and accepted, and facilitated research output presentations in the institute and university-wide annual research review day events. Besides, the author chaired MA thesis presentations, attended proposal defense sessions, and research output presentations of second-degree students. During this experience; however, the author observed that all the personalities in general and the students, in particular, did not provide due attention to the issues of research ethical considerations. This phenomenon was similar among the early career or young academic staffs, who submitted research proposals to the call for grants from the recurrent budget of the University. Therefore, it is from such exposure that the author decided to work on this document analysis-based desk review research on the institutional ethical stands and applications, selecting a single institute as a case study to assess the research documents; and the University-wide reports to substantiate the assessments. While the young staff are from the university level, and the second-degree research outputs are limited to one institute. In this case, MA and MSc theses are institute based, the small-scale research proposals submitted for grant competition, the finished research documents have examined, university research ethics policy (2016) and research practice reports are at the institutional level. In the assessments of research ethics guidelines; however, this research addressed the university-wide social science research ethics experiences. Therefore, readers shall note two basic directions about the extrapolation of the findings of this study. In one concern, the findings are limited to the documents analyzed; and in the second concerns, extrapolating the findings related with the institutional research ethics guidelines are possible. However, generalizations shall exclude the researches among the health professionals. Though there are some debates concerning extrapolation of case studies; Flyvbjerg, in his article “Five Misunderstandings About Case-Study Research” argued, ‘case study is a necessary and sufficient method for certain important research tasks in the social sciences, and it is a method that holds up well when compared to other methods in the gamut of social science research methodology (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 26). Besides, this paper intensively assessed the data sources to make the data narrates the practical experiences in the social science research integrity. In this regard, ‘case study is an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, program or system in a real life context (Thomas, 2011, p. 512). However, research ethics is “confusing for early career researchers” and young learners need critical supports in the areas of research integrity. Finally, for confidentiality and anonymity issues of the students, the young career professionals, institution, the institute, and the departments; the author purposely concealed the details of the participants.

1.1. Background of the study
In the twenty-first century, sciences have paramount importance to the world. In this regard, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) stated, “scientific research enterprise is a cornerstone of modern society”. Therefore, the “integrity of knowledge that
emerges from research is based on individual and collective adherence to core values of objectivity, honesty, openness, fairness, accountability, and stewardship” (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine [NASEM], 2017, p. 1; University Ethics Committee, 2016). Thus, responsible stakeholders shall supervise the research integrity and/or procedures of the young researchers and students. For NASEM (2017), research process such as developing the concept notes for research, proposal development, field data collection, reporting the outputs, and training of the coming generation in the appropriate actions that shall be a priority for the academic institutions, supervisors, and stakeholders.

The historical developments of research ethics focused on the involvements of humans is related to the unethical practices against human beings during the Second World War (1939–1945). It was late compared to the code of ethics in the health-related researches that appeared in the early 20th century, and these ethical principles have been revised to make understandable in the real contexts. Because, ethics and ethical principles extend to all and wider spheres of human interaction (Commonwealth of Australia, 2007). In this case, the meaning of ethics revolves around the researchers’ integrity and the foundational concepts of research. These features of research ethics are respect for persons, beneficence, and justice to the research participants (Brody & Tracy, 2014; FDRE-MoST, 2014; Glasgow Caledonian University [GCU], 2015; The Belmont Report, 1978; University Ethics Committee, 2016; Zavisca, 2007) and in short “do no harm” (Fedorak, 2013, p. 187; Brody & Tracy, 2014, p. 17, 18). Universally, research ethics serves to identify good, desirable and/or acceptable conduct, and provide reasons for the conclusions that emerge from the researches (Commonwealth of Australia, 2007).

In the empirical research perspectives, social science research ethics focuses on the socio-cultural dynamics of the target populations. Then, the issue of ethics during the process of the social science research has been a priority concern for the researchers (Freed-Taylor, 1994; Mollet, 2011; Morrow, 2017). This is for the reason that qualitative social science researches are exposed to many socio-cultural challenges, before, during and after the process of the research; and whilst writing the final reports of the study. According to Redmond and Franklin, however, majority of the challenges are associated with ethical dilemmas of researchers. These experiences were social constructs, derived from the dynamics of socio-cultural and historical determinants among the target communities. Therefore, the main goals of the ethical principles are designed to address the ethical dilemmas while researchers engaged in human involvement, to protect the safety and welfare of research participants (Commonwealth of Australia, 2007; Franklin, 1995; Redmond, 2003). Therefore, research involves deeply in the life of individuals and particular communities. In this regard, research ethical dilemmas are very critical and cannot be addressed by moral choices than redesigning the data collection tools to meet the vulnerability of the participants of the research (Li, 2008). Though specific applications differ from one to another discipline, ethical concerns arising in the social sciences researches generally agree with the description of the World Health Organization (WHO). The WHO stated, the systematic collection or analysis of data that humans are exposed to manipulation, intervention, observation through alteration of their environment, or individually identifiable through investigators’ collection and other records (World Health Organization [WHO], 2009). Therefore, the rationale is studying the units of analysis as “individuals, groups, organizations, countries, technologies, objects, and such” (Bhattacherjee, 2012, p. 9). Furthermore, “formal research ethics is clearly confusing for early career researchers”; and it has been shaping the social science disciplines’ (Sleeboom-Faulkner, Simpson, Burgos-Martinez, & McMurray., 2017, p. 71). Then, working on the ethical stands and administration towards early career researchers has a brief contribution to the academia and academic institutions as an early warning strategy in addressing the gap in the applications. It is from such quest that this research was conducted.

1.2. Rationale and objectives of the study

In the process of executing social science researches, there are possibilities that researchers may experience limitations at the different stages of the investigation. According to the Australian
Anthropological Society (AAS) Code of Ethics (CE), during a “field of complex involvements and obligations, it is inevitable that misunderstandings, conflicts, and the need to make choices among apparently incompatible values will arise” (AAS, 2013, p. 1). Therefore, values shall be reconciled with some of the bold binding principles of research code of ethics, since participants of a study in the various socio-cultural setting have some possibility of harm. Among those agreeing to work apt the expectations, responsibility towards research participants, maintaining the integrity of the profession, meeting the confidence and guidelines of sponsors and employers, responsibility to general laws of the nation, and finally respecting the traditions of the general public are the core values (AAS, 2013; Anthropology of Southern Africa, 2005, p. Plattner, 2004; FDRE-MoST, 2014). However, in the individual and sometimes in the entire country, there are limitations in endorsing the ethical principles of research (European Union Commission, 2002). Thus, the principles of the code of conduct are relevant in perusing social science research in general and anthropological researches in particular, to ensure the works meet the highest standards of scholarly research integrity and accountability (Anthropology Southern Africa, 2005). In social science researches that deeply involved in sensitive concepts of culture, such as anthropological trends, holism and comparativism are still in the active position. Therefore, care shall be taken whilst investigating for better understanding of complex societies (Lossiter, 2002; Tauri, 2017). In one hand, the need and application of ethical guidelines in the social science research are briefly described in the works of scholars explained above. On the other hand, directions for the investigations of possible ethical breaches in ethnographic research works in the social and cultural anthropology are mandatory. In this regard, Hahn, Hornbacher, and Schönhuth. (2008) identified themes for consideration during research engagement with the ethical dilemmas. The basic concepts are, respect to the cultural and social groups, protection of the research participants, transparency and the inclusion of voices of the target population, and accuracy and impartiality of the final documents. To apply the above-mentioned preconditions, however, “the integrity of research depends on creating and maintaining a system and environment for a research, in which, institutional arrangements, practices, policies, educational programs, and incentive structures (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017, p. 4)”. These shall be onboard in a firm status in the responsible institutions that endeavor to succeed in the scholarly world.

In the issues of Ethics and applications in the Ethiopian Universities, literature is scant. The only research associated with ethics done was about the educational leaders in the three (Jimma, Mizan Tepi and Assossa), northwestern cluster Universities in Ethiopia. The study revealed, the limitations among the leaders in addressing the interest of the university community and lack of fairness and equity. Though, leadership in Ethiopian Universities is limited in terms, it has a paramount influence on the performance of the universities (Frew, 2016). During the assessment of scholarly works, there was no any scholarly literature accessed directly linked to research integrity. Therefore, the scanty literature about the ethical stands and applications in social science research in the Ethiopian Universities confirms, lack attention among the academia. Thus, is positive to conclude that research ethics have been marginalized in the research traditions. However, global ethical code of conduct of research, such as Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) research ethical principles and procedures document insisted that researches targeted at human participants conducted by staff and students shall be subjected to the supervision of ethical procedures (Glasgow Caledonian University, 2015). Therefore, studying research ethics among young researchers’ is a timely agenda, if not too late. In this regard, Bhattacherjee (2012, p. 137) stated that ‘science has often been manipulated in unethical ways by people and organizations to advance their private agenda and engaging in activities that are contrary to the norms of scientific conduct’ (Bhattacherjee, 2012, p. 137). Then, there is no justifiable reason, to ignore the contextually designed objective study of research ethics among young researchers actively working for promotions in their careers.

1.3. Objectives of the study
The general objective of the study is to unpack the ethical stands and practices of research integrity in the institute. Besides, the specific objectives of the study were to:
(1) Assess the institutional readiness towards the application of ethical principles among the early career researches
(2) Examine the practices of ethical principles in the small scale researches
(3) Compare the ethical practices among academic staffs and MA/MSc students
(4) Explore the gaps in the applications of research ethical principles
(5) Describe the status of the ethical stands and practices in the institution

2. Materials and methods
The design of the research is qualitative approach and complemented with descriptive statistics in the analysis cases. The whole works were based on the analysis of the available research guidelines in the national, research ethics documents in the university, research activity annual reports, institute, research proposal and research output in the institution. The rationale of the research is discovering new insights and contexts, and understanding the ethical stands and principles in the university in general, and ethical principles and practices among the early career researchers in the University. Therefore, the researcher used an exploratory approach towards addressing the intended goals of the research.

With regard to the data collection, the research was based on the evaluation of the second-degree theses, University funded small scale researches and research activity annual reports of the University. The theses examined covered a sample size of more than half of the research documents in both departments. The strategy of data collection was document analysis. The materials considered as a source for this research are categorized into seven groups. These are (1) the national research review ethics guideline, (2) the university, institute, and department research ethics guidelines, (3) a sample of completed second degree theses, (4) all small-scale research proposals submitted by young academic staffs in two consecutive years (second degree and few are in the rank of assistant professor), (5) the University Research Ethics Policy, and (6) faculty who secured the small-scale grants. Furthermore, the reflections of the research authorities in the University are included from the annual report documents and minutes of formal discussions.

Finally, the outcomes of the assessment are compared with the national and international research ethics principles and practices, in the research integrity endeavors. The categories mentioned above are boldly divided into three themes. These are the (1) national research ethics review guideline and institutional research guidelines, and (2) the team-based research proposals, and individual-based completed thesis projects. This assessment was an option to collect for the researcher at the absence of a grant for this research and cannot collect primary data from other institutions in the country. Such assessment is “an effective means of research where primary data collection is too costly or not feasible, and secondary data are available at a level of analysis suitable for answering the researcher’s questions (Bhattecherjee, 2012, p. 40)” In fact, the researcher believes, contacting people to ask if they consider research ethics as major component of research is not worthy than this strategy.

Therefore, the data collected were analyzed compared to the availability of the research ethics principles and/or guidelines in the national, University wise and institute basis, and the actual practical approaches of the researches. In the national level, research review ethics guidelines, the specific sections of the document applicable to the social science research orientations were addressed. In the case of the institute, reading the documents begun from the table of contents and ended at the annex section of the research documents to examine the considerations of the ethical values among the small scale researches and second-degree theses. The contents and contexts for the analysis were focused on the orientations and application of the basic principles and practices of social science research ethics. These are informed consent issues, such as consent forms, confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary participation and disclosure of the research purpose, compensation and usage of images of individuals in the final version of the research documents. Therefore, the issues are associated with the
well-being of the research participants. For the analysis of the contents, the researcher applied the procedures Bhattacherjee (2012) advised for scholars planned to conduct investigations on research integrity. It is the systematic analysis of the content of a text in a quantitative or qualitative manner. Then, the researcher selected a set of texts from the theses and research proposals of the academic staffs for the assessments.

Therefore, the researcher randomly selected a set of texts from the second-degree theses and small-scale research proposals to examine the applications of the national and University wise research guidelines. According to the guidelines for research proposal submission and template of the University (June 2017), small-scale research scheme policy is exclusively for the young researchers. In the same document, a young researcher (below assistant professor) and small-scale research fund are defined as ‘the small-scale researches shall be of two types of general small scale-where the applicant can be any academic staff and female researcher small-scale fund-which is reserved for only young female researchers (MU-VPRCS, 2017, p. 22). The context of a young researcher is treated in the academic rank in the Universities in Ethiopia, and the age of the researcher is not a criterion to decide on the career of the faculty.

3. Research ethics and the researcher’s positionality in case study designs

In qualitative researches, the data shared are opened for manipulations by the power relationships of the researcher and the data sources, and it is inevitable for the insider researchers. Therefore, a researcher is advised to hold the negotiated position on the qualitative data of the research (Greene, 2014). However, research ethical positionality is focused on the informed consent of the research participants and avoiding the “potential harms” (McCormick, 2012, p. 23). In this regard, the reflexive examination of our position as researchers’ highlights improves the quality of data and assumed or real practice of ethical breaches. Because, researchers “are not simply neutral observers whilst ‘in the field’ and affected by the existing situations” (Barker & Smith, 2001, p. 146), and “continuous reflexive awareness is paramount (Raheim et al., 2016, p. 10).” Thus, research ethics needs utmost attention during the process of fieldwork and knowledge production. Therefore, it has been mandatory to focus on the balance of the power relationships of the researcher and the participants of the researches. In this case, the power of the research shall be examined in terms of “positionality, reflexivity, knowledge production” and other associated research ethics components. In fact, there are problems in reconciling the institutional research ethics guidelines and the practical experiences of the researchers in the real fieldworks (Sultana, 2007, p. 382; Doiron & Asselin, 2015), and writing the results and publishing the data, which needs anonymity of the details of individuals participated in the research (Halej, 2017). In this regard, there are always competing positionalities for researchers and participants. These multiple and competing power relationships are possible to manage in the form of explicit and elucidated description of the research ethics and objects of the researches (Kulendrarajah, 2018). The negotiated approach of the researchers’ positionality in the qualitative case study has been an appropriate strategy for the balanced interpretations of the research data (Flores, 2018). In this study, the researcher had executed all the data collection studies in the maximum ethical considerations. The data were crosscheck and triangulated by multiple data collection methods and tools, discussion was made with appropriate authorities in accessing various documents, the names and any identity identifier clues are removed from the final version of the manuscript. Therefore, the position of the researcher was reflected as per the local contexts and international research experiences on research challenges and ethical dilemmas.

4. Precaution on the data analysis and trustworthiness

In this section, the author got it right to express few precautions on the data analysis procedures and the position of the author in this article. The data reported in research shows the actual research procedural excises of the institute where this research was hosted. Therefore, the author rigorously assessed the policies and real practices of the University and Institutes research ethics activities. In this respect, there is no any hidden agenda behind this research and the research is managed in the objective and impartial approaches. Therefore, no personal interest of the author
is included in this article. Furthermore, the rigorous discussions and various forms of data collections have triangulated the trustworthiness of the data.

5. Results and discussion
In this section, the rigorous data collected from multiple sources are presented, analyzed, and discussed in three themes. These are the data from (1) national and institutional guidelines; (2) the academic staff team-based research proposals, (3) completed second-degree theses documents, and data collected from annual reports and discussions. The results are discussed and compared with literatures related to research ethics and research integrity endeavors. Then, the status of the ethical principles and practices were comprehensively described in the next sub-sections.

5.1. The assessment results of young staff small-scale research proposals
In the general small-scale young researchers’ category, 21 proposals submitted in two consecutive years (2016 and 2017) call for proposals were accessed; and from 21 research proposal projects, 13 small-scale young staff proposals were assessed. These 13 proposals were initiated by 13 (3 females and 10 males) principal and 42 co-principal researchers, and the total number of researchers participated in the proposals were 55 academics. However, one precaution that must be taken into consideration is that, there was a repetition of names in the co-researchers. In the University Research proposal evaluation guideline, the document left it open with regard the number of proposals that a name co-researcher shall be appeared. From the 13 research proposals, 12 were targeted at adults and 1 of the proposals was focused on both adults and children population of people with disabilities (PWDs).

In the analysis, the details of research ethics principles and practices section are divided into two categories. These are the general (1) orientation of research ethics and (2) the details of research ethics consideration, such as informed consent in the form of oral, written or both options, compensation paid to the research participants and if the payments appeared in the research budget breakdown. Other ethical issues also include confidentiality of the participants’ privacy through anonymity, plans related with research ethics considerations, voluntary participation in the sessions and disclosing the purpose of the studies. Devastatingly the result showed, only 1 out of 13 (7.69%) young scholars’ proposals had a detailed description on the research ethical considerations. However, the rest 12 (more than 92%) proposals were never planned to accommodate research ethical considerations at all. However, Redmond (2003) argues, ethics and research methodology are interdependent and one cannot be understood independently. Therefore, the documents have a methodology chapter; but failed to considered research ethical principles and practices. Therefore, readers cannot get data on how these research processes addressed. There is a big controversy on the merit of the reviewers of these proposals and how they come across the research proposals and granted the funds. During the discussions and interviews, participants suggested, the review process was shallow and they do not have confidence on the reviewers’ knowledge on the specific contexts of the proposals. Furthermore, the review formats focused on the feasibility of the study, the thematic interests and the fairness of the budget requested by the team of researchers. Therefore, research integrity was not considered as part of the priority rules during the review process.

In the detailed research ethics approaches, 10 (76.92%) proposals never planned for the consent form and voluntary participation of the target individuals, only 2 (18.18%) planned for oral and 1 (7.69%) for oral and written consents. In the compensation realm, 11 (84.615%) proposals planned to pay compensation for the participants of the researches and included in the budget breakdown, and 2 (15.38%) never plan for compensation and not appeared in the budget plan. From the 13 proposals, only 1 proposal derived the principles in National Research Ethics Review Guideline, NRERG (FDRE-MoST, 2014). These are, respecting the interests of the discipline, the public, and sponsors of the research. In fact, the strong ethical principles of NRERG, such as beneficence for general target community and justice contexts accommodates equitable participation in the research, did not appeared in any one of the 13 research proposals (FDRE-MoST, 2014, p. 21).
Therefore, the depth and width of the application of the specific ethical principles may be determined by the interests, complexity of the research themes planned to be addressed and institutional capacities to monitor the research activities in the different levels. According to Mollet (2011), the issues of social science research ethics in the developing countries is a paramount concern and shall be supported by valid justifications by the social science researchers. Stressing the above statement, Mollet explained that developing countries’ researchers “lack of experience in dealing with bureaucratized ethics procedures, the need for cultural sensitivity, security concerns and the consequences of administrative and political practices in developing countries (Mollet, 2011, p. 8)”, have to be taken in consideration during the ethical approval procedures.

The researcher assessed the word version template and the e-research platform of the University. Both options are designed for the submission of the research proposals (small, medium, large, and mega scales). The assessment revealed that no typical section mentioned about ethical principles directly or if exists it is weak. During the assessment, there found that two points that seem associated with research ethics principles. One is about the “originality” of the research that strongly associated with plagiarism, and technical feasibility of the study. The second phrase requests the proposal initiators to state the budget planned for any payments including payments to those support the research process. In fact, it is not exactly to the participants. Therefore, it is hardly possible to consider that it is the ethical stand of the institution towards the benefits of the research participants as stated in the national and international research ethical principles and procedures. The raw data report of the assessment is depicted (Table 1) in this document. Official reports of the University for the 2016/2017 Academic Year indicated some limitations in the areas of research and community services. The report was a reflection of the problems related to the small scale researches of the University in general, and some institutes and colleges in the University. Some of these limitations were related to grant allotment and compromised data collection endeavors that can be grouped in three themes. These are (1) limited amount of grant per small-scale research proposals, (2) capacity limitations among the staffs, and (3) young academic staffs lacked research competence and publication experiences. These were the challenges appeared in the university-wide experience. However, some limitations were related to non-social science disciplines, related with access to up-to-date laboratory infrastructure. In similar ways, (1) the integration of senior and junior staffs was weak, (2) impact of recurrent projects were below the expectation, (3) weak support and monitoring system to recurrent research projects, and finally (4) emphasis on purchasing process for research inputs were weak in the management sides.

The need for ethical considerations in research has been a universal phenomenon in the world of social science researches. In fact, for Tauri (2017), researches in the indigenous people shall look at the ways to address the ethical values of the local communities. Since the social contexts in the indigenous people and indigenous researchers are different from the western-oriented research ethics approaches in the social sciences. In this regard, the top agenda for “strengthening the responsible conduct of research on individual researchers and research institutions, ... and the integrity of research depends on creating and maintaining a system and environment for research in which institutional arrangements, practices, policies, educational programs, and incentive structures support responsible conduct (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017, p. 4)”. Though broadly crafted towards the social science research applications, the rationale behind the Ethiopian National Research Ethics Review Guideline is the safety of the participants, the institutions who send the researchers to the field for data collection, and the sponsors of the researches. Therefore, social science disciplines are among the many. The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopian (FDRE), Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST), declared under proclamation no. 603/2008 and drafted the National Research Ethics Review Guideline. The focus of the guideline was health researches in general and some institutional responsibilities in managing research projects. The general ethical principles are respect for persons, beneficence, and justice, that are the main concern of research concerns in the worldwide setting (Brody &
| Researchers | Target Population | Ethics | Detailed Ethical Consideration | Remark |
|-------------|-------------------|--------|--------------------------------|--------|
| M           | 1                 | 2      | Consent: 4 | Yes | No | In the budget |
| F           | 2                 | 3      | Consent: 4 | Yes | No | In the budget |
| M           | 4                 | 1      | Consent: 4 | Yes | No | Discipline, Public and Funders |
| M           | 5                 | 1      | Consent: 4 | Yes | No | In the budget plan |
| M           | 3                 | 2      | Consent: 4 | Yes | No | In the budget plan |
| F           | 2                 | 1      | Consent: 4 | Yes | No | In the budget plan |
| M           | 2                 | 2      | Consent: 4 | Yes | No | In the budget plan |
| M           | 4                 | 2      | Consent: 4 | No  | No | No clue |
| M           | 3                 | 2      | Consent: 4 | Yes | No | In the budget plan |
| M           | 5                 | 2      | Consent: 4 | No  | No | No clue |

1The 1st column shows gender (M-Male and F-Female) of the researcher and the 2nd column is the number of co-researchers
2Under the target population, 1 represents adults, 2 children and 3 adults and children of any gender
3Used 1 for Yes and 2 for no ethical consideration issues
4Consent: 1 for oral and 2 for written, 3 for both oral and written and 4 for no clue about the consent form
5.2. MA degree theses documents assessment results in department I

In this section of the assessment, about half (13 males and 1 female) of the students’ second-degree final version these documents submitted (2013–2017) to the department were assessed. The result showed, 13 (more than 92.85%) of the 14 students had expatriate principal and 6 (42.86) co-principal expatriate supervisors. Only 1 (7.14%) student had Ethiopian nationality principal and co-supervisors. Ethiopian, co-supervisors were 7 and 1 student had no co-supervisor. The target populations for the 13 theses were adults, and 1 these included both children and adults.

In the realm of ethical issues, 9 (64.29%) out of 14 students included issues of ethical considerations in the table of contents and in the main body of the final document version. The rest 5 (35.14%) of students never stated any issue of ethics at any section of the thesis documents. In the informed consents, 5 (35.14%) of the 14 students applied the oral and written consents. In this case, they applied written permission requests to the authority (mostly districts) and to the communities that host the study. However, 9 (64.29%) students did not mention about the exhibit in any section of the documents, including in the data gathering instruments. In the compensation cases, 14 (100%) of the documents did not mentioned about it. This indicates, the students did not apply it. From the experience of the researcher, most students did not pay for participants since they get limited funds from the academic institutions. The grant was 5,000 and now 15,000.00 Ethiopian Birr, since December 2016. In the confidentiality regards, 5 (35.14%) of the theses mentioned that they used anonymity of the reports. The other 8 (57.14%) theses did not mentioned about the case. In one thesis, data was collected from adults; however, the document depicted an image of an adult and a victim child. The worst scenario here is, the document did not apply any of the ethical considerations and incorporated the image while the interest was the image of the adult woman as an evidence of data collection procedures. There is no informed consent mentioned, no compensation-related issues, and confidentiality of data were not protected. In the case of voluntary participation and disclosing the objectives of the research, 7 (50%) documents explained the participants were taken the sessions based on their will and the research objectives were also disclosed briefly before they involved in the session. In the second category, 3 (21.42%) theses disclosed the research objectives; however, never mentioned about the willingness of the targets for participation. In the third group, 4 (28.57%) theses, there is no clue about the issues of voluntary participation and disclosure of the objectives of the researches to the participants. The raw data reports of the assessment is depicted (Table 2), attached in this document.

5.3. MA degree theses documents assessment results of department II

In this section of the assessment, about half (13 males and 1 female) of students’ second-degree theses final version documents submitted were assessed. In the principal supervisor category, 6 (42.86) expatriates and 8 (57.14%) Ethiopian nationals were participated. In the co-supervisor position, 3 (21.43%) expatriates and 9 (64.29) Ethiopians played their role in the assignments. Among the 14-second degree theses documents, the work of two students had no co-supervisor and the whole burden was on the principal supervisors. The target populations of the study were all adults in the 14 researches. In the case of ethical considerations, only 2 (14.29%), wrote they come across the process of research through connecting official documents from the institute and the department. However, the 12 (85.71%) second-degree theses documents did not explain about the research processes in general and the ethical procedures in particular. This negligence is part of the limited attitude on research ethics and integrity among the early career scholars.

Besides the above general data, the detailed ethical principles and practical considerations revealed, attention towards research ethical aspects had neglected by the students, and the principal and co-supervisors. Therefore, students had missed a golden opportunity of taking...
| Researcher | Advisors | Target Population | Ethics | Detailed Ethical Considerations | Remark: Participation is Voluntary and Aim of research disclosed |
|------------|----------|-------------------|--------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| F          | 2,2      | 1                 | 1      | 3                              | No clue, Yes Voluntary, disclosed                             |
| M          | 2,2      | 1                 | 1      | 3                              | No clue, No Voluntary, disclosed                               |
| M          | 2,2      | 1                 | 1      | 3                              | No clue, No Voluntary, disclosed                               |
| M          | 2,2      | 1                 | 1      | 3                              | No clue, Yes Voluntary, disclosed                               |
| M          | 1,1      | 1                 | 1      | 3                              | No clue, No Voluntary, disclosed                               |
| M          | 2,2      | 1                 | 1      | 4                              | No clue, No Voluntary, disclosed                               |
| M          | 2,2      | 1                 | 1      | 4                              | No clue, No Voluntary, disclosed                               |
| M          | 2,1      | 1                 | 1      | 4                              | No clue, No Voluntary, disclosed                               |
| M          | 2,1      | 1                 | 1      | 4                              | No clue, No Voluntary, disclosed                               |
| M          | 2,1      | 1                 | 1      | 4                              | No clue, No Voluntary, disclosed                               |
| M          | 2,1      | 1                 | 1      | 4                              | No clue, No Voluntary, disclosed                               |
| M          | 2,1      | 1                 | 1      | 4                              | No clue, No Voluntary, disclosed                               |

1. The 1st column shows gender (M-Male and F-Female) of the student and the 2nd column is the number of co-researchers.
2. Number 1 represents Ethiopian Nationals and 2 Expatriate Staffs for both principal and co-advisors and separated by comma (,).
3. Under the target population, 1 represents adults, 2 Children and 3 adults and children of any gender.
4. Used 1 for Yes and 2 for no ethical consideration issues.
5. Consent: 1 for oral and 2 for written, 3 for both oral and written and 4 for no clue about consent form.
lessons under the support of their professors. The details include informed consent ideas and consent forms, compensations paid to participants of the research, confidentiality of the data collected and anonymity of the names of participants in the final version documents, issues related to the voluntary participation of the target population in the different sessions, and finally the disclosure of the research purpose to the participants. Therefore, the results of the study revealed, only one (1) document depicted the application of oral and written consents, and one thesis had oral consent and the descriptions of the consents were included in the final version of the theses document. The rest 12 (85.71%) of the 14 documents have no a single statement about the informed consent case. About the compensation, not a single thesis reported and 100% of the researches ignored the agenda. In the reports, only four researches indicated, the participants were informed about the confidentiality of the data collected and the names will be kept away from the reports. This was depicted in the data collection forms attached at the end of the final version document as annexes. Finally, none (0.00%) of the 14 theses show about the voluntary participation of the informants. Only 7 (50%) of the theses stated they oriented participants about the purpose of the study. The raw data reports of the assessment is depicted (Table 3) in this document, as an attachment.

5.4. Unpacking the research integrity of the case study

The assessment rigorously examined the issues of research integrity investigating the major sources of data for better understanding of the ethical stands and practices in the actual researches. During the investigation, the research addressed the list of questions appeared next. These are: (1) the respect rendered to the documented cultural and social groups in the methods and form of documentation, (2) protection of informants participated in the studies, (3) the transparency of data collection and knowledge production, (4) rapport and reciprocity between the researcher and participants of the study, and finally (5) the strategies set to tackle unconscious bias, such as questions of accuracy and legitimacy of the produced knowledge.

The findings showed, research moral values, principles and practices are neglected in the institutional guidelines, among the supervisors, young academics and second-degree students. In statistical explanation, more than 92% of the young academic staffs, about 35-second degree students of the department I and more than 85 percent (85%) of the second-degree students in the department II were failed to accommodate the research integrity strategies. Among the department I students, it is moderate (about 35% failed to state) compared to the other groups. But, still those about 65% adhered to the ethical principles have limitations in articulating the processes and why they applied these principles.

In the university research proposal guidelines, no statement describes about ethics towards research participants. However, the international social sciences experiences indicated the significance of the ethical research procedures and practices. Clarifying the relevance of social science research ethics, Sleeboom-Faulkner and associates stated that “moral questions regarding discrimination, unfairness, exploitation and so on, at home and abroad: knowledge of, and sensitivity to, the complexities around the violation of socio-economic, political, and cultural norms and values are highly valued in the social sciences (Sleeboom-Faulkner et al., 2017, p. 73).” In another work, the responsibility of the institutions hosting the researchers and experts also strongly recommended to arrange a friendly environment that motivates the researchers to adhere to the specific ethical principles and the general moral obligations. In this regard, the National Academy of Science, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM) stated, in the practice of “responsible science”, the “integrity of research depends on creating and maintaining a system and environment for research in which institutional arrangements, practices, policies, educational programs, and incentive structures support responsible conduct (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017, p. 4)”.

In fact, the experts in the institutions have a crucial role in monitoring the research procedures and applications of the research code of conduct. Beyond the monitoring and
| Researchers | Advisors | Target Populatio | Ethics | Detailed Ethical Considerations | Consent | Compensation | Anonymity | Remark: Participation is Voluntary and Aim of research disclosed |
|-------------|----------|------------------|--------|--------------------------------|---------|--------------|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| M           | 2,1      | 1                | 2      |                                | 4       | No clue      | No clue  | No clue, disclosed                                             |
| M           | 2,1      | 1                | 2      |                                | 4       | No clue      | No clue  | No clue, disclosed                                             |
| M           | 2,2      | 1                | 2      |                                | 4       | No clue      | No clue  | No clue, No clue                                              |
| F           | 2,1      | 1                | 2      |                                | 4       | No clue      | No clue  | No clue, disclosed                                             |
| M           | 1,1      | 1                | 2      |                                | 4       | No clue      | No clue  | No clue, No clue                                              |
| M           | 1,1      | 1                | 2      |                                | 4       | No clue      | No clue  | No clue, No clue                                              |
| M           | 1,1      | 1                | 2      |                                | 4       | No clue      | No clue  | No clue, disclosed                                             |
| M           | 1,1      | 1                | 2      |                                | 4       | No clue      | No clue  | No clue, No clue                                              |
| M           | 2,2      | 1                | 2      |                                | 4       | No clue      | No clue  | No clue, No clue                                              |
| M           | 2,1      | 1                | 2      |                                | 4       | No clue      | Yes      | No clue, disclosed                                             |
| M           | 2,1      | 1                | 2      |                                | 4       | No clue      | Yes      | No clue, no clue                                               |
| M           | 2,1      | 1                | 2      |                                | 4       | No clue      | Yes      | No clue, no clue                                               |
| M           | 1,1      | 1                | 2      |                                | 4       | No clue      | Yes      | No clue, no clue                                               |

1The 1st column shows gender (M-Male and F-Female) of the student and the 2nd column is the number of co-researchers.
2Number 1 represents Ethiopian Nationals and 2 Expatriate Staffs for both principal and co-advisors and separated by comma (,)
3Under the target population, 1 represents adults, 2 Children and 3 adults and children of any gender
4Used 1 for Yes and 2 for no ethical consideration issues
5Consent: 1 for oral and 2 for written, 3 for both oral and written and 4 for no clue about the consent form
supervisions, the experts in the various fields have the responsibility to contextualize the research ethics guidelines into the research themes in the local contexts. Supporting this argument, NASEM advised that, the professionals have the obligation to mentor “the researcher from turning the concept of the research to the regularity procedures of the straitjackets of the institutional ethical principles (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017, p. 4). In fact, the roles of the supervisors in the second degree students and the senior mentors in the small-scale research proposal documents are not visible, except among some of the second-degree students, which is about 65% students, tried to state the central concepts of ethical considerations. The expectation, however, is the universally adopted ethical principles among the scientific communities must be addressed. As to Bhattacherjee, the major principles are ‘voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality, disclosure, and analysis and reporting ‘shall be described in the understandable procedures (Bhattacherjee, 2012, p. 137). In this regard, it is hardly possible to accept the assessed proposals and the second-degree theses applications of the major research ethical principles in the research methods, whilst failed to briefly explain the ethical cases of their research procedures. Specific case of the documents breached the confidentially of the research victims can be mentioned. One case is a little child appears, with the image of the mother in one-second degree thesis. The mother was the contact person for the interview on behalf of the child, but both appears in the image with no masks.

At the top of this destructed research experiences, there are responsible bodies and institutions that need to exert energy on the designing and applications of strict research ethical principles and applications. Behind the institutions, these personalities have an obligation to keep the dignity of the institutions, the research-hosting communities and research participant individuals. The major and confusing question that seems to appear in this argument is what shall be taken into consideration and where to start to act while the institutions lack strong guidelines and institutional apparatuses to manage research integrity. However, the NASEM recommends some general responsibilities for the institutions. These comprise four principal missions that include (1) creating and sustaining a research culture that fosters integrity and encourages adherence to best practices, (2) monitoring the integrity of research environments, and (3) ensuring the sustainability of capacity for investigating allegations of research misconduct. The last mission is (4) ensuring the senior institutional leaders engage on the former three strategies (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017, p. 5). Because, at the absence of strong institutional research ethical review guidelines, it is hardly comfortable to push the practitioners adhere to the national and international research ethics code of conduct and research integrity.

6. Concluding remarks
In conclusion, the scenario and availability of social science and humanities-related research ethical principles in the university is below the expectations. Similarly, the applications of the national and international research ethic review procedures are at the destructed status. It is strongly possible to conclude that the university is too late to consider research integrity as the priority agenda in moving the university one step forward as a center of research excellence. The University had already issued the ‘Research Ethics Policy (2016), and particularly article 4.3, and articles 5-8 dictates on the ethical principles and code of conducts in research. Depicting such brilliant but ambitious vision, it is less difficult to argue the question of research ethics loge on the table for discussions among multiple-interested groups. Then, it affects competition and securing grants from affiliated organizations. Therefore, this can be one of the obstacles or limiting factors in succeeding the vision and missions of the University. Therefore, the author expects the university authority shall provide utmost priority towards research integrity in the plans of University capacity development. In fact, the university already has the regulation, and the limitation is the follow up among the academia. Then, it shall be supported by short trainings in the research ethics applications to the early career researchers.

Pushing the agenda on research integrity is not a single shot task. It takes time to build the research capacity, since the university report for the 2016 indicated that there were limitations
and challenges among the researchers in general and the young academics in particular. However, it also possible for the University management to put directions in the research management and orient the senior academia, to assist the young staffs to adhere to national and the international research ethics review guidelines. To strengthen the ethical principles and practices in every research, the university needs to develop contextualized research review ethics guidelines to the social science and humanities streams. Technically speaking, the integrity of research depends on creating a conducive environment for research. Therefore, institutional arrangements, practices, policies, capacity building programs, and incentive structures have paramount importance. Incentives cases can be defined as providing maximum attention during the grant allocations and promotions are in the center. As the assessment revealed, the colleges, institutes and other academic units have concerns on the amount of budgets allocated for small-scale research recurrent of the budgets, research budget management, and integration of the junior and senior academic staffs are neglected. Therefore, such fragmented and disorganized management approaches have a negative influence on the research integrity practices.

Lastly, though this research is a case study and did not directly show the complete picture of the University coming to the major documents assessed. However, it critically located the gap of supervision among the student mentors and the University research office authorities. One common gap among all Ethiopian University experience is, they did not have the research ethics review board and approval systems, except the directly health related researches. Besides, many (67.85%) of the principal supervisors of the second-degree student were expatriates, and difficult to ensure if they appropriately understand the local contexts and merit to the position of mentorship. As Mulubrhan (2017, p. 98) quoted, there are “zombie professors” in the world, working as academics’.

Therefore, future researches on ethical principles and practices, and research integrity in general among the academics and students will have paramount importance in improving the quality of researches and publications of the university. Therefore, researchers have to conduct and manage the researches in a comprehensive manner at all the Ethiopian Higher Learning Institutions. Funding, organizations have to support such researches, since issues of ethics have high value in Ethiopia as a rapidly globalizing country that Universities have young scholars. Moreover, a research and publication officer from the same institution, suggested that ‘academics ... being assigned administrative and academic positions where they will be dealing with complex issues without having the necessary experiences and intellectual capacity, further contributing to declining excellence (Mulubirhan, 2017, p. 98). Therefore, beyond the capacity development training endeavors in research integrity, establishing research quality assurance structure, in the top management of the University may help to supervise research integrity among the researchers. This is particularly important for the early career scholars.

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Author details
Moges Gebreegziabher Woldu
E-mail: mogesdi@yahoo.com
ORCID ID: http://orcid.org/0000-0002-6573-3665
Department of Anthropology, Mekelle University, Mekelle, 231, Ethiopia.

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