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Group Project

Tools for management of moral problems

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The Ethical Dilemma


Problem owner: PhD-student

Dilemma: You have succeeded at producing some interesting results in your first project. Your supervisor is thrilled and wants you to submit a paper describing your findings before the end of the year (you have one month to do it). You think the results are promising, but are unsure of their validity. You need to repeat the experiment at least twice and statistically validate the data (this will take at least 3, but most likely 6 months). What do you do?

Possible outcomes:

1. Agree with supervisor. **Write paper now.**
2. Disagree with supervisor. **Continue with experiments.**

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- A tool for evaluation with regards to
 - Organization
 - Learning
 - Ethics
- General
- Awareness of ethical problems
- Good start when planning a new project
- Identifies potential risks
- Encourages the search for possible answers to potential problems

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- Relevant questions:
 - Whose problem is it?
 - Who is affected?
 - How are parties affected?
 - Which interests are at stake?
 - What will you do to minimize problems?

Solution to our dilemma:
Weigh all the *risks* and decide whether to publish or not.

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- Encourages Autonomous Thinking
- Critical searching for answers
- Identifies possibilities and risks
- Easy to grasp
- Good overview of the problem

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Autonomous Thinking	All principles, values, interests, duties, feelings, needs of all involved parts				
	PhD student	Supervisor	Department	Scientific community	Family/friends
Outcome 1	Possibilities: His first article is new and better Publish an article Subjecting to happy relationship with his supervisor PhD position Indicated for next semester Someone publishes his article He is proud of his work Publication in a well-known journal, doing his job well, being sure about his work, tense situation at work.	Possibilities: His first article is new and better Additional impact to the publication list Easier to get grants Easier to recruit new PhD students Risks: Someone publishes his article and gets all the credit Bad results for publication in a less renowned journal	Possibilities: Good publicity, assistance only with good results, better publications/research Easier to recruit new students, get more funding Risks: Missing an important publication Bad publicity if bad results, harder to recruit competent personnel, students do not want to study, less funding	Possibilities: Good results can be achieved faster, fairer than the general public's knowledge and can lead to new discoveries Risks: Bad results undermine the research field for the general public (and government), trust in good research practice is damaged	Possibilities: Good results, happy family Risks: Longer time to do away from family and friends Longer time for researcher, more stress, more work, unhappy family and friends

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- A comparison between using **Heteronomy** or **Autonomy** for solving the dilemma
- Examples of heteronomous reactions
 - **Outcome 1:** It's the fastest way to get the supervisor off my back
 - **Outcome 1:** This is how they do things at the department
 - **Outcome 2:** It may damage my career!
 - **Outcome 1:** My supervisor knows best.
 - **Outcome 2:** My duty to the scientific community is to validate results. Good research practice.

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- Using the autonomous method, we first identify the concerned parties and their values:

Party	Values
PhD-student (self)	Financial situation, career, science in itself, ...
Supervisor	New results, funding, career, ...
....	


- And then investigate how different decisions will affect these:

Financial situation of the PhD student: If I produce papers, I will have a job; if I have a job I can provide for my family and secure my future.

Career of the PhD student: Bad results may hold me back. Other groups will not want to work with me. It will be hard to publish new papers. However, if the results turn out to be great, I will get an immediate career boost. It will be easy to get research grants and everyone will want to work with me.

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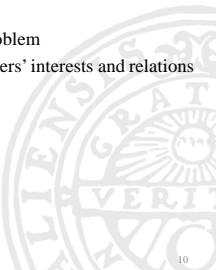
Stakeholder	Value	Impact of Decision
PhD student	Financial situation	Successful career: If the results turn out to be bad, it might harm your career and reputation. If they turn out to be great, it might give you a boost in the future.
Supervisor	Intellectual fulfillment	You will have to live with your results and knowing that you are a publication or always a publication.
Supervisor	Funding	If the results turn out to be bad, it might ruin your chances to get funding.
Supervisor	Status	Being first is always the best, Unpublished results might be bad.
Family & friends	Emotional fulfillment	You will have to do something against your will, which is not in the best interest of the family.
Scientific community	Financial security	If the results are good (and possibly very important) factor, it is dependent on the results.
Department	New discoveries	Qualitative research: It's better if the results are published and good before sharing them with the department.
Department	Exchange of ideas	Producing results: Good practice: other publications contribute to the department.



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- Interesting concept, easy to use
- A combination of the other methods
- Clear to see the complexity of an ethical problem
- No capability to rate and evaluate stakeholders' interests and relations



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