ICT Student Teachers' Judgments and Justifications about Ethical Issues

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Abstract

In this study, Turkish ICT student teachers' judgments and justifications in four scenarios involving ICT-related ethical problems were investigated. Scenarios were designed based on Mason's (1986) four ethical issues: privacy, accuracy, property and accessibility. The study was carried out in the fall of 2010. We used the critical incidents technique (CIT) - a qualitative research approach- and the data were gathered via a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was conducted face-to-face with an in-person interview. Participants were 35 ICT student teachers from the Faculty of Educational Science at Ankara University. The associations between different categorical variables were analysed with Fisher's exact test. Open-ended questions were analysed through content analysis. The findings revealed that gender does not affect the ethical judgments and justifications of ICT student teachers. Furthermore the same reasons and justifications were reported by ICT student teachers who have taken course in ethic and those who have not taken the course. Moreover, out of the four issues considered in this study, accessibility was found as the most controversial issue. In addition to that it was observed that a number of ICT student teachers do not attain the right justifications due to the lack of knowledge on copyrights, intellectual property and the policies of web sites.

Keywords: *Computer ethics; ethical dilemma; gender; prior education.*