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Opinion towards Research Integrity from researchers in Thailand: a cross-sectional survey

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Office of Research Integrity & Compliance (FTM-ORIC) oversees and directs research integrity activities of FTM. A main focus of Research Integrity and Compliance is to foster the responsible conduct of research to ensure that research performed within the FTM system is done safely, ethically and legally

Vision

All research at FTM meets the highest standards of good research practice and FTM has the public's trust.

Policy

FTM is committed to high quality academic research and high standards of research integrity. All staff and students are expected to conduct their research in line with current FTM policies and accepted best practice.

FTM sets out in its academic research policies in the document: Code of Practice and Guidelines.

The Code of Practice and Guidelines document provides frameworks, procedures, information and resources for all areas in the responsible conduct of research.

Mission

FTM-ORIC is established to perform the functions, as the followings;

1. To provide clear policies on how FTM research should be performed
2. To facilitate high standards of good research practice through regular training, compliance checks and promoting a culture of integrity in research.
3. To comply with all applicable regulations, laws, and Mahidol University polices.

Introduction

- As current situation in Thailand, issue of Research Integrity (RI) had been incorporated in ways of academic trainings and degrees.

- The rigorous enforcement of trainings (issues related to RI) are differently adopted within each disciplines.

- There are many stakeholders involved in practical reasons of RI.

Hypothesis

- Perception of RI among Thai Researchers is varied, depended on their research fields of interest.

- As the academic institution, its research administration office should manage the implementation of RI.

Method

- The survey was designed to observe the opinion of Thai researchers toward RI. Series of questions were divided into 3 parts;
  - Importance of fourteen responsibility as stated in Singapore Statement
  - Importance of three research processes (Upstream, Midstream, Downstream)
  - Academic's Divisions involved in management of RI

Instructions: Please rate the importance of these following statements.
[1=less importance, 2=somewhat important 3=importance, 4=very importance]

Issues	Main considerations	1	2	3	4
Integrity	Researchers should take responsibility for the trustworthiness of their research				
Adherence to Regulation	Researchers should be aware of and adhere to regulations and policies related to research				
Research Methods	Researchers should employ appropriate research methods, base conclusions on critical analysis of the evidence and report findings fully and objectively				
Research Records	Researchers should keep clear, accurate records of all research in ways that will allow verification and replication of their work by other				
Research Findings	Researchers should share data openly and promptly as soon as they have established ownership claims				

Issues	Main considerations	1	2	3	4
Authorship	Researchers should responsibly account for their contributions to all publications, funding applications, report sand other representations of their research				
Publication Acknowledgement	Researchers should acknowledge the names and roles of those who made significant contributions to the research				
Peer Review	Researchers should provide fair, prompt and rigorous evaluations and respect confidentiality when reviewing others' work				
Conflict of Interest	Researchers should disclose financial and other conflicts of interest that could compromise the trustworthiness of their work				
Public Communication	Researchers should limit comments to their recognized expertise of research findings and clearly distinguish professional comments from opinions				

Issues	Main considerations	1	2	3	4
Reporting Irresponsible Research Practices	Researchers should report to appropriate authorities any suspected research misconduct that undermine the trustworthiness of research				
Responding to Irresponsible Research Practices	Research orgs. and other research authorities should have procedures for responding to allegations of misconduct and other irresponsible research practices. Appropriate action should be taken promptly when confirmed				
Research Environments	Research institutions should create and sustain environments that encourage integrity while fostering work environments that support research integrity				
Societal Considerations	Researchers and research institutions should recognize that they have an ethical obligation to weigh societal benefits against risks inherent in their work				

In your opinion, please rate how importance of RI in each process [1=less importance, 2=somewhat important 3=importance, 4=very importance]

Process	1	2	3	4
Upstream: Planning the research proposal				
Midstream: Managing the research project				
Downstream: Outcomes of research				

At your workplace, which divisions should oversee works in the field of RI? (Please check all that apply)

- ☐ Law
- ☐ Physical and environment
- ☐ Student affairs
- ☐ Finance
- ☐ Human resource
- ☐ Information technology
- ☐ Educational administration
- ☐ General administration
- ☐ Research administration
- ☐ Planning
- ☐ Quality development
- ☐ International relations
- ☐ Other _____

Method

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- Surveys were conducted in the following events organized by FTM ;
  - Ethical principles in good clinical research protocols and practices on 16-17 July 2018
  - Statistical analysis plan and practices for clinical research studies on 18-20 July 2018
  - Advance Research Ethics Training courses on 23-24 July 2018

- Also, questionnaires were sent by e-mail (via google form) to FTM alumni and researchers who had participated in FTM workshops.

  The e-mail responses were collected during 23 July – 24 September 2018

Result & Discussion

- Characteristics of the survey respondents

Characteristics	n	%
Sex:		
Male	71	29.6
Female	169	70.4
Main research field:		
Clinical	98	40.3
Basic Science	80	32.9
Social/Behavioral	24	10.0
Public Health/Policy	41	16.8

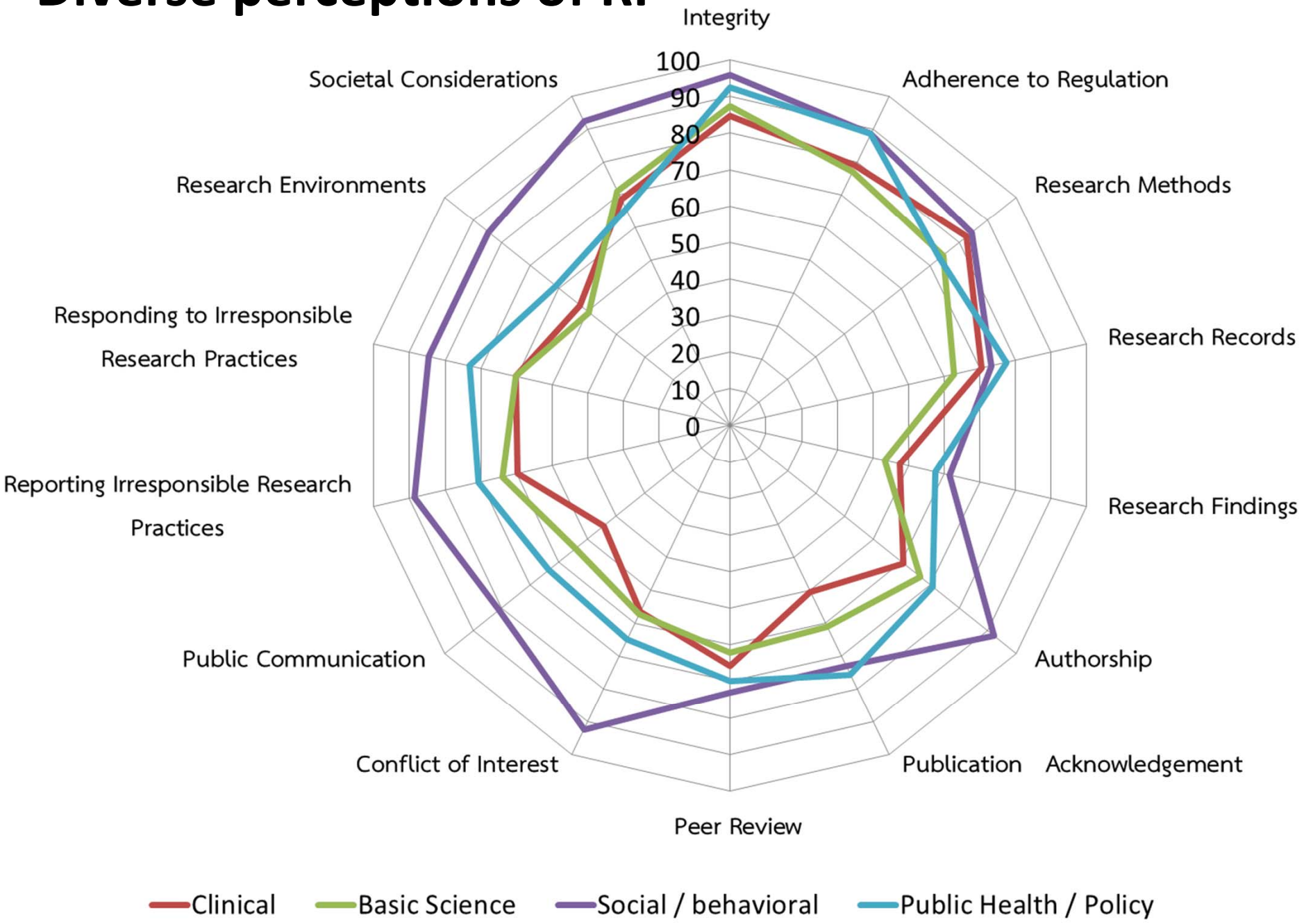
Importance of fourteen responsibilities as stated in Singapore Statement

- As anticipated, the raw data showed a skewed distribution, toward higher importance.

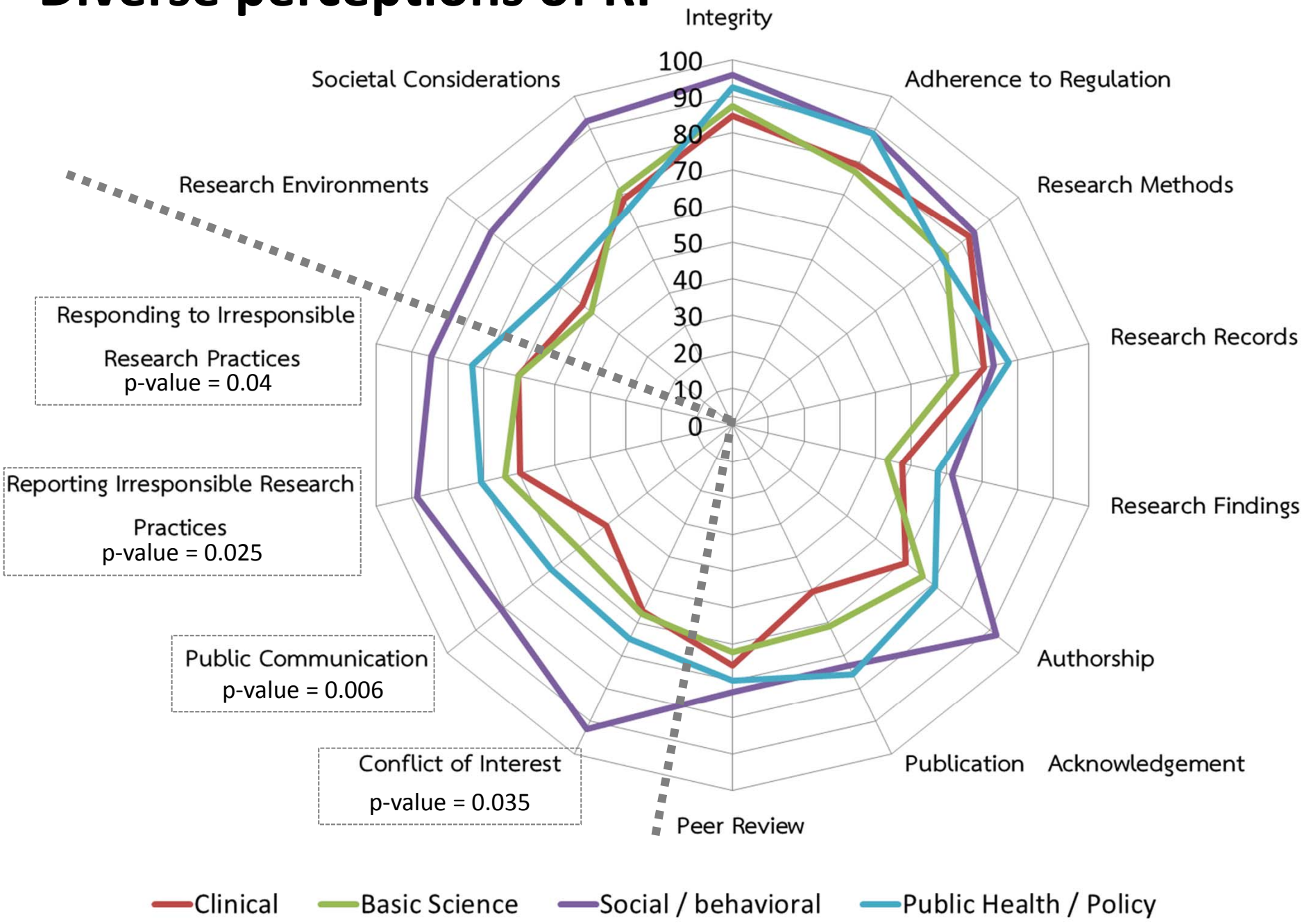
- Only data presented as “very importance” (Likert scale #4), were converted to percentages and depicted in the radar charts.

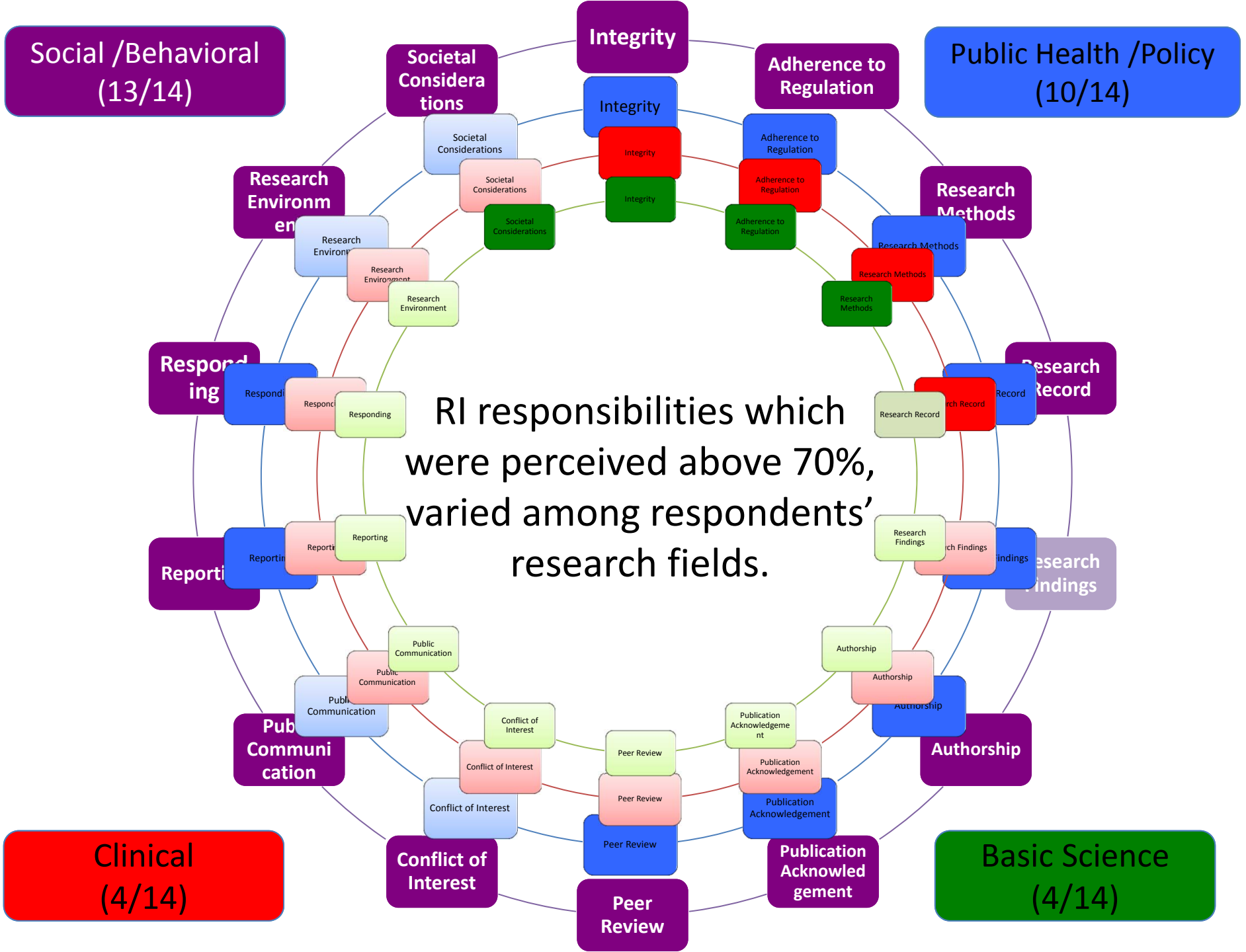
- There were different patterns among the respondents’ research fields, thus implied diverse perceptions of RI.

Diverse perceptions of RI



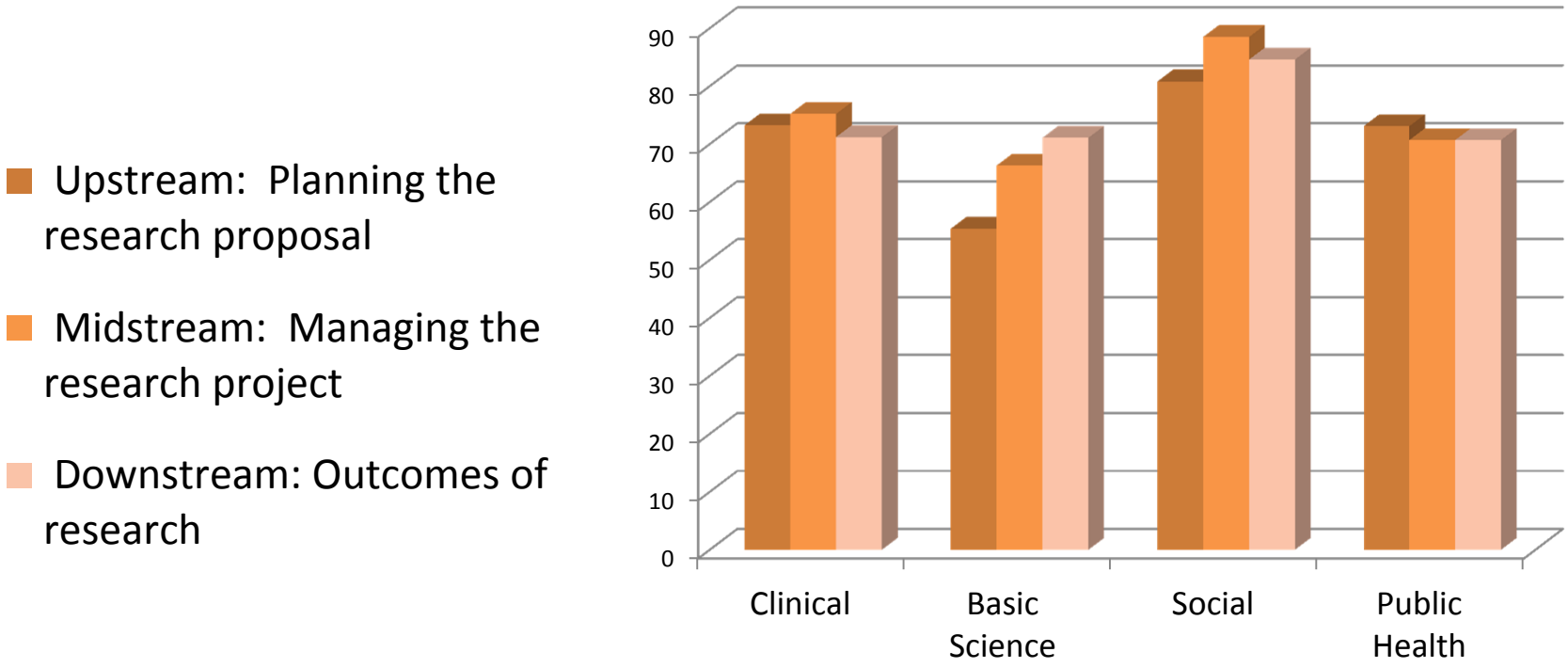
Diverse perceptions of RI



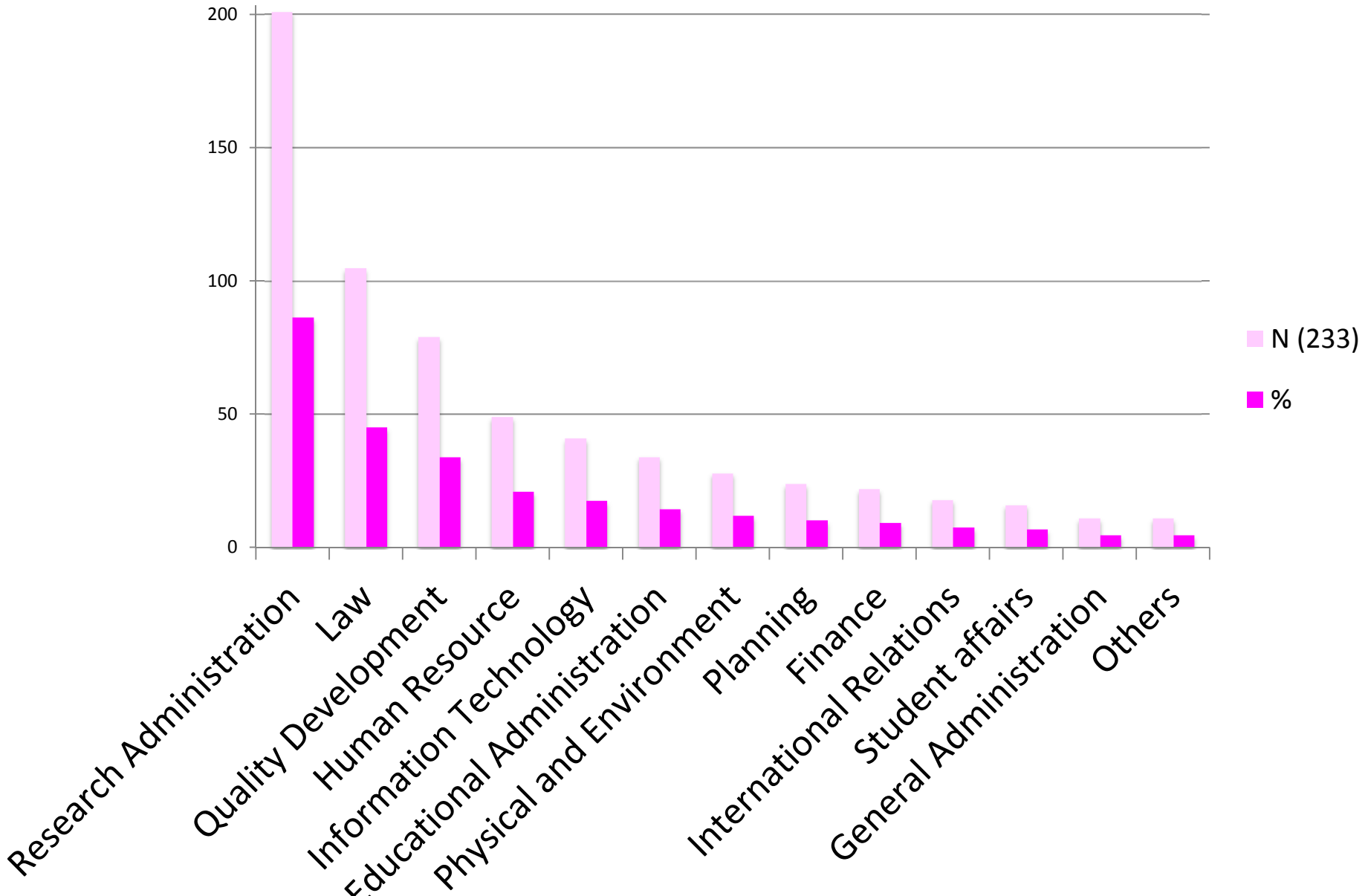

Social /Behavioral (13/14)
Integrity
Societal Considera tions
Adherence to Regulation
Public Health /Policy (10/14)
Research Environm en
Research Methods
Respon ing
Research Record
Reporti
Pub Communi cation
Authorship
Conflict of Interest
Publication Acknowled gement
Peer Review
Clinical (4/14)
Basic Science (4/14)
RI responsibilities which were perceived above 70%, varied among respondents' research fields.

Diverse perceptions of importance of three research processes

	Clinical	Basic Science	Social	Public Health	p-value
Upstream: Planning the research proposal	73.2	55.4	80.8	73.1	0.058
Midstream: Managing the research project	75.2	66.3	88.5	70.7	0.436
Downstream: Outcomes of research	71.2	71.1	84.6	70.7	0.75



Academic's Divisions involved in management of RI



Summary

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- This survey represented the primary data that;
  - Different research fields of interest had affected researchers' perceptions toward RI.
  - The management of RI should be implemented by division of research administration.
- Some considerations should be addressed;
  - First three responsibilities of Singapore Statement were invariably recognized as "very importance".
  - Raising awareness of RI throughout all research processes.
  - Works in RI could be first executed in Social/Behavioral field, as it showed best comprehension toward RI issues.

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