Reviewer’s report

Title: Researchers’ perceptions of research misbehaviours: A mixed methods study among academic researchers in Amsterdam

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Reviewer: Stefan Stuermer

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for proving me the opportunity to review this interesting manuscript. The manuscript has many positive qualities - it addresses a timely and highly relevant issue, it employs an ecologically valid and innovative methodological approach, the goals are clearly articulated, the presentation is concise and transparent. Further, the authors provide useful supplementing materials.

A main concern revolves around the multimethod design, specifically the order of the survey and the focus group study. It goes without saying that it is perfectly fine to do focus groups to better understand qualitative aspects of the data. In the present case, however, it seems that in the present study focus groups were conducted to resolve ambiguities in survey items that should have been resolved before conducting the survey. I am aware that the authors address the ambiguity issue in the general discussion, but for me their elaborations raised more questions than answers. With regard to the conclusions that can be derived from the present data discussing potential item ambiguities remains dissatisfying because this issue poses a serious threat to the study's validity (see Fielder and Schwarz (2016) for a more general analysis of theoretical and methodological challenges in the prevalence estimation of QRP from self-reports). The authors suggest tackling the ambiguity issue in future research (p. 17, l. 346). I fully agree that an improved study is an important next step. I think it is necessary, in fact, to address the limitations of the present work.

Keeping the limitations of the present items in mind, I would also comment on one of its main findings. It appears that across disciplines insufficient supervision of junior co-workers is considered a key reason for research misbehaviors. From a psychological perspective, there seems to be a "double-natured" sense of directing responsibility from self to others: First, other colleagues failing to supervise junior co-workers sufficiently; second, junior researchers who employ QRP due to a lack of supervision (which by the way depicts junior researcher as rather dependent and naïve subjects). Such other-directed attributions may have a rather self-serving quality (e.g., expressing solidarity with ill-supervised junior researchers to make oneself feel good). There may be other psychological processes involved that deserve attention (e.g., participants' responses reflect aspects of current social representation of their field that cannot simply equated with objective realities; see Stürmer et al., 2018). In sum, I would like to
encourage the authors to reflect a bit more about the "psychology" implicated in participants' judgements.

Minor point: Reference 16 indicates that parts of the data have been published elsewhere (PlosOne). For the reader some information concerning the distinctive and novel contributions of the present paper would be helpful.

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- An article of importance in its field

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