

TOPIC- ETHICS IN BUSINESS RESEARCH- MAJOR ETHICAL ISSUES IN CONDUCTING RESEARCH

INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH ETHICS

Research Ethics are a set of principles about how researchers and research organizations should conduct themselves when dealing with research participants, other researchers and colleagues, the users of their research and society in general. Particularly relevant to the social sciences are ethics associated with projects involving human participants, including conducting surveys, focus groups and the use of secondary data.

Typical considerations include –

- Recruiting study participants and informed consent
- Keeping data secure and confidential
- Making procedures, methods and findings transparent so that they can be assessed
- Safety and risk
- Consult guidelines and codes of conduct relevant to the research being conducted

ETHICAL STANDARDS FOR HUMAN RESEARCH/ MAJOR ETHICAL ISSUES IN CONDUCTING RESEARCH

There are several ethical issues that must be considered when designing research that will utilize participants who are human beings (American Psychological Association, 2010).

Unfair Discrimination: In their work-related activities, psychologists do not engage in unfair discrimination based on age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, or any basis proscribed by law.

Sexual Harassment: Psychologists do not engage in sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is sexual solicitation, physical advances, or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature, that occurs in connection with the psychologist's activities or roles as a psychologist, and that either (1) is unwelcome, is offensive, or creates a hostile workplace or educational environment, and the psychologist knows or is told this or (2) is sufficiently severe or intense to be abusive to a reasonable person in the context. Sexual harassment can consist of a single intense or severe act or of multiple persistent or pervasive acts.

Other Harassment: Psychologists do not knowingly engage in behavior that is harassing or demeaning to persons with whom they interact in their work based on factors such as those persons' age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, or socioeconomic status.

Avoiding Harm: Psychologists take reasonable steps to avoid harming their clients/patients, students, supervisees, research participants, organizational clients, and others with whom they work, and to minimize harm where it is foreseeable and unavoidable.

Multiple Relationships:

(a) A multiple relationship occurs when a psychologist is in a professional role with a person and

- (i) at the same time is in another role with the same person,
- (ii) at the same time is in a relationship with a person closely associated with or related to the person with whom the psychologist has the professional relationship, or
- (iii) promises to enter into another relationship in the future with the person or a person closely associated with or related to the person. A psychologist refrains from entering into a multiple relationship if the multiple relationships could reasonably be expected to impair the psychologist's objectivity, competence, or effectiveness in performing his/her functions as a psychologist, or otherwise risks exploitation or harm to the person with whom the professional relationship exists.

Multiple relationships that would not reasonably be expected to cause impairment or risk exploitation or harm are not unethical

(b) If a psychologist finds that, due to unforeseen factors, a potentially harmful multiple relationship has arisen, the psychologist takes reasonable steps to resolve it with due regard for the best interests of the affected person and maximal compliance with the Ethics Code. (c) When psychologists are required by law, institutional policy, or extraordinary circumstances to serve in more than one role in judicial or administrative proceedings, at the outset they clarify role expectations and the extent of confidentiality and thereafter as changes occur.

Conflict of Interest: Psychologists refrain from taking on a professional role when personal, scientific, professional, legal, financial, or other interests or relationships could reasonably be expected to

- (i) impair their objectivity, competence, or effectiveness in performing their functions as psychologists or
- (ii) expose the person or organization with whom the professional relationship exists to harm or exploitation

Cooperation with Other Professionals: When indicated and professionally appropriate, psychologists cooperate with other professionals in order to serve their clients/patients effectively and appropriately.

Informed Consent: (a) When psychologists conduct research or provide assessment, therapy, counselling, or consulting services in person or via electronic transmission or other forms of communication, they obtain the informed consent of the individual or individuals using language that is reasonably understandable to that person or persons except when conducting such activities without consent is mandated by law or

governmental regulation or as otherwise provided in this Ethics Code. (b) For persons who are legally incapable of giving informed consent, psychologists nevertheless (i) provide an appropriate explanation, (ii) seek the individual's assent, (iii) consider such persons' preferences and best interests, and (iv) obtain appropriate permission from a legally authorized person, if such substitute consent is permitted or required by law. When consent by a legally authorized person is not permitted or required by law, psychologists take reasonable steps to protect the individual's rights and welfare

Interruption of Psychological Services: Unless otherwise covered by contract, psychologists make reasonable efforts to plan for facilitating services in the event that psychological services are interrupted by factors such as the psychologist's illness, death, unavailability, relocation, or retirement or by the client's/patient's relocation or financial limitations.

Maintaining Confidentiality: Psychologists have a primary obligation and take reasonable precautions to protect confidential information obtained through or stored in any medium, recognizing that the extent and limits of confidentiality may be regulated by law or established by institutional rules or professional or scientific relationship

NEED OF RESEARCH ETHICS

It is important to conduct research in line with ethical standards for a number of reasons –

- In order to respect and cause no harm to the participants.
- As a sign of respect for other researchers and those who will use the research.
- It is a professional requirement particularly in some disciplines and failure to do so may result in disciplinary procedures.
- It is a requirement to obtain funding.
- Failing to conduct research ethically could be embarrassing or result in research (or the researcher) being dismissed or rejected by the research community.
- Research involving human beings, including using questionnaires and focus groups, must be passed by an Ethics Committee whose job it is to confirm that the research conforms to a set of ethical guidelines.
- If ethics are considered, this should make sure that the work is acceptable to the research community and other users of the research results.

GENERAL ETHICAL ISSUES

Given the importance of ethics for the conduct of research, it should come as no surprise that many different professional associations, government agencies, and universities have adopted specific codes, rules, and policies relating to research ethics. Many government agencies, such as the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the National Science Foundation (NSF), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) have ethics

rules for funded researchers. Other influential research ethics policies include the Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals (International Committee of Medical Journal Editors), the Chemist's Code of Conduct (American Chemical Society), Code of Ethics (American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science), Ethical Principles of Psychologists (American Psychological Association), Statements on Ethics and Professional Responsibility (American Anthropological Association), Statement on Professional Ethics (American Association of University Professors), the Nuremberg Code and the Declaration of Helsinki (World Medical Association).

The following is a rough and general summary of some ethical principles that various codes address –

Honesty: Strive for honesty in all scientific communications. Honestly report data, results, methods and procedures, and publication status. Do not fabricate, falsify, or misrepresent data. Do not deceive colleagues, granting agencies, or the public.

Objectivity: Strive to avoid bias in experimental design, data analysis, data interpretation, peer review, personnel decisions, grant writing, expert testimony, and other aspects of research where objectivity is expected or required. Avoid or minimize bias or self-deception. Disclose personal or financial interests that may affect research.

Integrity: Keep your promises and agreements; act with sincerity; strive for consistency of thought and action.

Carefulness: Avoid careless errors and negligence; carefully and critically examine your own work and the work of your peers. Keep good records of research activities, such as data collection, research design, and correspondence with agencies or journals.

Openness: Share data, results, ideas, tools, resources. Be open to criticism and new ideas.

Respect for Intellectual Property: Honor patents, copyrights, and other forms of intellectual property. Do not use unpublished data, methods, or results without permission. Give credit where credit is due. Give proper acknowledgement or credit for all contributions to research. Never plagiarize.

Confidentiality: Protect confidential communications, such as papers or grants submitted for publication, personnel records, trade or military secrets, and patient records.

Responsible Publication: Publish in order to advance research and scholarship, not to advance just your own career. Avoid wasteful and duplicative publication.

Responsible Mentoring: Help to educate, mentor, and advise students. Promote their welfare and allow them to make their own decisions. Respect for colleagues: Respect your colleagues and treat them fairly.

Social Responsibility: Strive to promote social good and prevent or mitigate social harms through research, public education, and advocacy.

Non-Discrimination: Avoid discrimination against colleagues or students on the basis of sex, race, ethnicity, or other factors that are not related to their scientific competence and integrity.

Competence: Maintain and improve your own professional competence and expertise through lifelong education and learning; take steps to promote competence in science as a whole.

Disclosure: The potential participant must be informed as fully as possible of the nature and purpose of the research, the procedures to be used, the expected benefits to the participant and/or society, the potential of reasonably foreseeable risks, stresses, and discomforts, and alternatives to participating in the research.

Legality: Know and obey relevant laws and institutional and governmental policies.

Consent: The potential human subject must authorize his/her participation in the research study, preferably in writing, although at times an oral consent or assent may be more appropriate.

Animal Care: Show proper respect and care for animals when using them in research. Do not conduct unnecessary or poorly designed animal experiments.

Human Subjects Protection: When conducting research on human subjects, minimize harms and risks and maximize benefits; respect human dignity, privacy, and autonomy; take special precautions with vulnerable populations; and strive to distribute the benefits and burdens of research fairly.