

RESEARCH ETHICS, SEMINAR, CONFERENCE, WORKSHOP, ETC.

RESEARCH ETHICS

Collecting data through any of the methods may involve some ethical issues in relation to the participants and the researcher:

- Those from whom information is collected or those who are studied by a researcher become *participants* of the study.
- Anyone who collects information for a specific purpose, adhering to the accepted code of conduct, is a *researcher*.

1. Ethical issues concerning research participants: There are many ethical issues in relation to participants of a research activity.

- **Collecting information:**

Your request for information may put pressure or create anxiety on a respondent. Is it ethical?

Research is required to improve conditions. Provided any piece of research is likely to help society directly or indirectly, it is acceptable to ask *questions if you first obtain the respondents' informed consent*.

If you cannot justify the relevance of the research you are conducting, you are wasting your respondents' time, which is unethical.

- **Seeking consent:**

In every discipline, it is considered unethical to collect information without the knowledge of the participant, and their expressed willingness and informed consent. *Informed consent* implies that subjects are made adequately aware of the type of information you want from them, why the information is being sought, what purpose it will be put to, how they are expected to participate in the study, and how it will directly or indirectly affect them. It is important that the consent should be voluntary and without the pressure of any kind.

- **Providing incentives:**

Most people do not participate in a study because of incentives, but because they realize the importance of the study.

Is it ethical to provide incentives to respondents to share information with you because they are giving their time?

Giving a present before data collection is unethical.

- **Seeking sensitive information:**

Certain types of information can be regarded as sensitive or confidential by some people and thus an invasion of their privacy, asking for such information may upset or embarrass a respondent.

For most people, questions on drug use, pilferage, income, age, marital status etc are intrusive. In collecting data you need to be careful about the sensitivities of your respondents.

It is not unethical to ask such questions provided that you tell your respondents the type of information you are going to ask clearly and frankly, and give them sufficient time to decide if they want to participate, without any major inducement.

- **The possibility of causing harm to participant:**

When you collect data from respondents or involve subjects in an experiment, you need to examine carefully whether their involvement is likely to harm them in any way. *Harm includes / research that might include hazardous experiments, discomfort, anxiety, harassment, invasion of privacy, or demeaning or dehumanizing procedures.* If it is likely to, you must make sure that the risk is minimal i.e. the extent of harm or discomfort is not greater than ordinarily encountered in daily life. If the way information is sought creates anxiety or harassment, you need to take steps to prevent this.

- **Maintaining confidentiality:**

Sharing information about a respondent with others for purposes other than research is unethical. Sometimes you need to identify your study population to put your findings into context. In such a situation you need to make sure that at least the information provided by respondents is kept anonymous.

It is unethical to identify an individual's responses. Therefore you need to ensure that after the information has been collected, the source cannot be known.

2. Ethical issues relating to the researcher:

- **Avoiding bias:**

Bias on the part of the researcher is unethical. Bias is a deliberate attempt to either to hide what you have found in your study or highlight something disproportionately to its true existence.

- **Provision or deprivation of a treatment:**

Both the provision and deprivation of a treatment/ intervention may pose an ethical dilemma for you as a researcher. Is it ethical to provide a study population with an intervention/ treatment that has not yet been conclusively proven effective or beneficial? But if you do not test, how can you prove or disprove its effectiveness or benefits?

There are no simple answers to these dilemmas. Ensuring informed consent, 'minimum risk' and frank discussion as to the implications of participation in the study will help to resolve ethical issues.

- **Using inappropriate research methodology:**

It is unethical to use a method or procedure you know to be inappropriate e.g. selecting a highly biased sample, using an invalid instrument or draw wrong conclusions.

- **Incorrect reporting:**

To report the findings in a way that changes or slants them to serve your own or someone else's interest is unethical.

Sometimes it is possible to harm individuals in the process of achieving benefits for the organizations. An example would be a study to examine the feasibility of restructuring an organization. Restructuring may be beneficial to the organization as a whole but may be harmful to some individuals.

Should you ask respondents for information that is likely to be used against them?

It is ethical to ask questions provided you tell respondents of the potential use of the information, including the possibility of it being used against some of them, and you let them decide if they want to participate.

SEMINAR, WORKSHOP, CONFERENCE, SYMPOSIUM ETC.

Seminars are educational events that feature one or more subject matter experts delivering information primarily via lecture and discussion.

Workshops tend to be smaller and more intense than seminars. This format often involves students practicing their new skills during the event under the watchful eye of the instructor.

Conferences often feature keynote presentations delivered to all attendees, as well as multiple breakout sessions. Attendees often expect to receive information about industry trends and developments.

Symposium is typically a more formal or academic gathering, featuring multiple experts delivering short presentations on a particular topic.

Summit is a gathering of the highest level of leaders and experts.

Teleseminars are seminars that are delivered via a conference call over the telephone and/or over the Internet. The instructor moderates the call, while the attendees listen. To engage listeners, many instructors provide outlines, notes sheets or copies of PowerPoint slides to follow when listening to the presentation.

Webinars or Web conferences are presentations that involve an audio and video component. The audio portion of the event is delivered via phone or over the Internet so that participants can listen via their computer speakers. The video portion of the event is delivered via the Internet, giving participants a presentation to watch while listening to the instructor.