

Initial Post

Abi's circumstances bring to light one of the key ethical issues surrounding data use: Whizz cereal's marketing purportedly favourable analysis serves as a clear example of data manipulation. Although it would not be classified as outright fabrication, it still remains an unethical practice. As Babbie (2020) pointed out, ethics in research goes beyond collecting accurate data; it also involves avoiding misrepresentation of data interpretation and presentation with respect to stakeholders.

The idea that "statistics can support either side" reflects the danger of manipulative data practices like cherry-picking or p-hacking. These practices, while employing some correct data, distort the truth and mislead. This defies the ACM Code of Ethics (2018), which clearly states computing professionals have a responsibility to ensure systems and their outputs are accurate and not misleading. Abi has obligations as a professional to submit both the positive and negative data unbiased and failure to do this does great harm especially if the cereal is marketed as healthy when it is not.

Regardless of whether or not Abi offers both types of analyses, he has to prepare himself for the fact that only the positive ones will be released. In that scenario, he has ethical alternatives: he can publish the complete results on his own, publish them with caveats, or submit his grievances to some professional body or ethics board. It is critical for professionals in the health and nutrition sectors to be transparent and truthful because of the social consequences that come from falsified data.

References

ACM (2018) ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. Available at:

<https://www.acm.org/code-of-ethics>

Babbie, E. R. (2020) The Practice of Social Research. 15th edn. Boston: Cengage Learning.

UK Government (2008) Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008. Available at:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2008/1277/contents/made>