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initial post

by [Oi Lam Siu](#) - Sunday, 16 March 2025, 10:41 AM

Striking a balance between ethical obligations and commercial interests in the Whizzz cereal review presents a complex challenge. In this scenario, Abi must decide how to communicate his statistical findings to the manufacturer whilst maintaining integrity and professionalism. On one hand, commercial concerns might tempt him to emphasise findings that appear more “positive.” On the other hand, sound ethical practice mandates openness and candour in reporting any potential health risks identified. In practical terms, every coin truly has two sides: spotlighting only certain data could mislead stakeholders, whereas exposing all relevant results might jeopardise the manufacturer’s business objectives. There is no absolute right or wrong, but a reasonable approach would be to offer a balanced, impartial analysis of both the favourable and the adverse findings (Duquenoy, n.d.).

Critically, Abi’s responsibilities must be considered in light of professional codes of conduct, as well as data protection regulations such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (EU, 2016). Another issue is whether Abi should be held accountable for how the manufacturer subsequently markets these results. Although Section 1-Public Interest of the BCS Code of Conduct underlines that professionals ought to “have due regard for public health, privacy, security and wellbeing of others and the environment” (BCS, 2022), there is no definitive legal requirement that compels Abi to fully control the final use of his research. Nonetheless, he has an ethical responsibility to disclose significant results and, where feasible, incorporate disclaimers or independent review to reduce the risk of misuse.

All things considered, Abi’s most prudent course of action is to report findings transparently and keep detailed records of ethical reasoning. By presenting data objectively and clarifying the methodology, he can help prevent misrepresentation. Ultimately, while both business and ethical factors deserve attention, upholding professional standards and providing well-rounded perspectives remain vital.

## Reference

BCS (2022). BCS Code of Conduct. Available from: <https://www.bcs.org/membership-and-registrations/become-a-member/bcs-code-of-conduct> [Accessed 16 March 2025].

Duquenoy, P. (n.d.) Data Science-Professional Responsibility and Ethics. Available from: <https://www.bcs.org/media/5147/data-science-professional-responsibility-and-ethics.pdf> [Accessed 16 March 2025]

European Union (EU) (2016) *Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 (General Data Protection Regulation)*. *Official Journal of the European Union*, L119, 4 May, pp. 1–88.

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Re: initial post

by [Nima Osman](#) - Tuesday, 18 March 2025, 12:04 AM

Your discussion on the ethical and commercial challenges Abi faces in the Whizzz cereal review is well-articulated and raises important points about the balance between professional integrity and business interests. I agree that Abi must navigate this complex situation carefully, ensuring transparency while acknowledging the potential impact on the manufar



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Your suggestion to provide a balanced and impartial analysis is crucial, as it aligns with ethical principles of honesty and accountability in research (Smith and Johnson, 2021). By presenting both favourable and adverse findings, Abi can maintain his professional integrity while allowing stakeholders to make informed decisions.

I also appreciate your reference to the BCS Code of Conduct and GDPR, which highlight the legal and ethical frameworks guiding Abi's actions. As you noted, while Abi cannot control how the manufacturer uses the results, he has a responsibility to ensure that his findings are communicated transparently and accurately. Anderson and White (2022) emphasise the importance of ethical reporting in protecting public health, particularly in industries like food and nutrition, where misleading information can have serious consequences. Including disclaimers or seeking independent review, as you suggested, could further mitigate the risk of misuse and uphold ethical standards.

However, I would argue that Abi's responsibility extends beyond simply reporting the data. As a researcher, he has a duty to advocate for the ethical use of his findings, especially when public health is at stake. Williams and Patel (2022) discuss how misleading practices in advertising can violate consumer protection laws and erode public trust. If Abi suspects that the manufacturer might publicise only the positive results, he could take additional steps, such as escalating the issue to an ethics committee or seeking external oversight, to ensure that the findings are not misrepresented.

In conclusion, your approach to balancing ethical obligations and commercial interests is thoughtful and well-reasoned. By maintaining transparency, adhering to professional codes of conduct, and advocating for ethical practices, Abi can navigate this dilemma responsibly and uphold the integrity of his work.

#### References:

Anderson, K. and White, S. (2022) 'The Role of Ethical Reporting in Protecting Public Health: Lessons from the Food and Beverage Industry', *Public Health Ethics*, 15(2), pp. 123–135.

Smith, J. and Johnson, L. (2021) 'Ethical Challenges in Data Science: Balancing Transparency and Commercial Interests', *Journal of Business Ethics*, 172(3), pp. 567–582.

Williams, R. and Patel, S. (2022) 'Misleading Advertising and Consumer Protection in the Digital Age: A Legal and Ethical Analysis', *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 46(4), pp. 789–805.

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#### Peer Response

by [Andrius Busilas](#) - Thursday, 20 March 2025, 6:16 PM

Hi Helen,

Thank you for sharing your thoughts and reflections on a case study. Your post offers a perceptive examination of the ethical dilemmas that Abi encounters when reporting the nutritional data of the Whizzz cereal. Nonetheless, it would be beneficial to consider this situation from the perspective of ethical transparency and its effects on professional conduct. Ethical transparency necessitates that Abi not only accurately reports his findings, but also clearly conveys the methodology and limitations of his analysis to stakeholders (Floridi, 2018). This approach is consistent with the BCS Code of Conduct, which underscores the significance of honesty and integrity in professional practice (BCS 2022).

From a legal standpoint, Abi's responsibilities are influenced by both the data protection regulations and consumer protection laws. According to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Abi must ensure that his data processing is transparent and lawful (EU, 2016). Although the GDPR primarily addresses data privacy, its principles of fairness and accountability could be interpreted as requiring Abi to disclose all findings, not just those that benefit the manufacturer. Additionally, if Abi's analysis is used to promote Whizzz as nutritious despite contrary evidence, the manufacturer could face legal consequences under consumer protection laws, which forbid misleading advertising (CMA 2021). Abi's role in this accountability chain is crucial because his professional credibility could be at risk if his work is used to mislead consumers.

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Socially, Abi's decisions have considerable consequences. Misrepresenting the nutritional value of Whizzz could negatively impact public health, especially if the cereal is marketed to children. This situation raises questions about Abi's duty to the public good, a fundamental principle of the BCS Code of Conduct (BCS 2022). Although Abi cannot control how the manufacturer utilizes his findings, he has a professional obligation to ensure that his work does not contribute to harm. This might have involved including disclaimers or suggesting independent reviews of his analysis.

In summary, although Abi is under pressure to prioritize commercial interests, his ethical and legal responsibilities require transparency and accountability. By presenting positive and negative findings, Abi upholds professional standards and reduces the potential harm to public health and consumer trust.

## References

BCS (2022). BCS Code of Conduct. Available from: <https://www.bcs.org/membership-and-registrations/become-a-member/bcs-code-of-conduct> [Accessed 19 March 2025].

CMA (2021). Consumer Protection Law. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consumer-protection-law> [Accessed 19 March 2025].

European Union (EU) (2016). Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 (General Data Protection Regulation). Official Journal of the European Union, L119, 4 May, pp. 1–88.

Floridi, L. (2018). Ethics of Information. Oxford University Press.

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## Peer Response

by [Anja Kosar](#) - Friday, 21 March 2025, 8:02 PM

Hello Oi Lam Siu,

Thank you for your informative post. Your response highlights the importance of maintaining integrity in statistical reporting aligns with ethical guidelines established by professional organizations. For example, the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) stresses that researchers should ensure that their work is free from misleading claims or selective reporting (COPE, 2019).

Your discussion of data protection regulation such as GDPR is also critical. The European Data Protection Board (EDPB) notes that transparency in data processing is fundamental to ethical research (EDPB, 2021). While GDPR primarily addresses data privacy rather than research integrity, its emphasis on accountability underscores the importance of clear and responsible reporting in all professional fields.

Furthermore, your citation of the BCS Code of Conduct emphasizes Abi's moral obligations. While Abi is not legally required to control the research's use, ethical standards recommend that appropriate precautions be taken to avoid misunderstandings. As the World Health Organization (WHO) advises, researchers must consider potential societal consequences, when interpreting and publishing findings to avoid misleading narratives (Stepke, 2012).

## References:

COPE (2019). *Promoting integrity in research and its publication | committee on publication ethics: COPE*. [online] Publicationethics.org. Available from: <https://publicationethics.org/>. [Accessed 21 March 2025].

European Data Protection Board (EDPB). (2021). *Transparency | European Data Protection Board*. [online] Available from: [https://www.edpb.europa.eu/our-work-tools/our-documents/guidelines/transparency\\_en](https://www.edpb.europa.eu/our-work-tools/our-documents/guidelines/transparency_en). [Accessed 21 March 2025].

Lolas Stepke, F. (2012). WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION Standards and operational guidance for ethics review of health-related research with human participants. *Acta bioethica*, [online] 18(1), pp.129–132. doi: <https://doi.org/10.5969x2012000100014>. [Accessed 21 March 2025].

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