



Collaborative Discussion 2 (Research Ethics)

Course: MSc Computer Science

Module: Research Methods and Professional Practice

Assignment: Collaborative Discussion 2 (Research Ethics) – Peer Responses

Date: Saturday 28th May 2022

Student ID: 126853

Peer Response 1:

In response to:



David Bouret

Initial Post

31 days ago

2 replies



Last 20 days ago

Abi must not alter any data values as he needs to respect the authenticity and accuracy of the data as well as the output coming out of it. He also needs to keep a certain level of integrity. According to the Ethical Guidelines for Statistical Practice from the American Statistical Association (ASA), regardless of personal or institutional interests or external pressures, the statistical practitioner does not use statistical practices to mislead any stakeholder. ("Ethical Guidelines for Statistical Practice," n.d.)

I do not believe that exposing different conclusions to the customer is unethical. However, Abi needs to be transparent and demonstrate the actual output to the manufacturer. I think he should present the result as it is without considering an alternate version of the result that might better suit the stakeholder.

Also, I do not think that Abi will be held responsible for what the manufacturer decides to do with the data and the results. Nevertheless, if it goes against his beliefs, he can report the case to his manager and discuss a possible solution that will respect both his ethical opinion and his work duties.

Reference:

Ethical Guidelines for Statistical Practice, n.d. 8. Default. (n.d.). Ethical Guidelines for Statistical Practice. [online] Available at: <https://www.amstat.org/your-career/ethical-guidelines-for-statistical-practice>.

Post:

Hi David,

I completely agree with your standpoint of Abi maintaining professional integrity by demonstrating the actual research results, regardless of the positive/negative outcomes that they portray. As an independent researcher, I agree that Abi could not be held liable for the decisions and way in which the company chooses to use the published data. Although, if key information is omitted, the company could blame the lack of 'thorough research' on Abi's part as a part cause of the mis-advertising.

Although focused on news articles, a 2021 article produced by JV Consulting on behalf of the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism shows that impartiality is a key factor that can affect a user's trust and opinion of a service/provider. This is a statement that appears to be echoed in the UKRI Framework for Research Ethics, a principle of which is "research should be conducted with integrity and transparency" (UKRI, n.d.). Both of which demonstrate that Abi should disregard any professional bias for the company in question and publish the full results of the research, regardless of whether the complete outcome is favourable or not.

References:

JV Consulting. (2021) The relevance of impartial news in a polarised world. Available from: https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2021-10/Vir_the_relevance_of_impartial_news_in_a_polarised_world_FINAL_0.pdf [Accessed 1st May 2022].

UKRI. (n.d.) Framework for research ethics. Available from: <https://www.ukri.org/councils/esrc/guidance-for-applicants/research-ethics-guidance/framework-for-research-ethics/our-core-principles/> [Accessed 1st May 2022].

Screenshot:

2



Post by **Kieron Holmes**
Peer Response

26 days ago

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UKRI. (n.d.) Framework for research ethics. Available from: <https://www.ukri.org/councils/esrc/guidance-for-applicants/research-ethics-guidance/framework-for-research-ethics/our-core-principles/> [Accessed 1st May 2022].

Peer Response 2:

In response to:



Kikelomo Obayemi

Initial Post
36 days ago

6 replies



Last 22 days ago

Research misconduct is a serious problem which has the capacity to harm the public and the field in which research is being conducted on (Kornfield, 2012). It includes but not limited to intentional data misrepresentation or falsification, inappropriate statistical tests, omitting negative results and failing to report actual numbers (Marco & Larkin, 2008). Kornfield (2012) reports that flawed research, even when retracted continues to be cited long after the retractions are made thereby inflicting damage such as wasted time, effort and funds on others. In the "Whizz cereal" case study or medical research, a misconduct could put human lives in danger.

There are many different professions and institutions that have set ethical standards depending on their goals but for this case study, I would consider the ethical guidelines of the American Statistical Association (ASA). Principle A of the ASA Ethical guidelines focuses on professional integrity and accountability and requires an ethical statistical practitioner to:

"Use methodology and data that are valid, relevant, and appropriate, without favoritism or prejudice, and in a manner intended to produce valid, interpretable, and reproducible results" (ASA, 2022)

Going by these guidelines, Abi is not obligated to report both positive and negative values. If the data collected shows negative results with respect to the whizz cereal nutritional value, then it should be accurately presented. It would be unethical to manipulate data in order to arrive at positive conclusions in favour of the manufacturer.

References

American Statistical Association (2022) Ethical Guidelines for Statistical Practice. Available from: <https://www.amstat.org/your-career/ethical-guidelines-for-statistical-practice#:~:text=The%20ethical%20statistical%20practitioner%20seeks,other%20results%20of%20statistical%20practices.> [Accessed 21 April 2022]

Kornfield, D.S. (2012) Perspective: Research misconduct: The search for a remedy. *Academic Medicine*, 87(7):877-882.

Marco, C.A. and Larkin, G.L. (2000) Research ethics: ethical issues of data reporting and the quest for authenticity. *Academic Emergency Medicine*, 7(6):691-694.

Post:

Hi Kike,

I completely agree with your statement regarding it being unethical to manipulate data to arrive at a favourable conclusion. I do, however, believe that if Abi's research shows both positive and negative outcomes, these should both be included in the reports that provided to the manufacturer, Whizzz. This would then demonstrate a non-biased view on the data, leaving it down to the manufacturer to decide which aspects they wish to promote.

Within the US, cereal brand Kellogg's promoted their Rice Krispies product with the tagline "Now helps support your child's immunity". This claim was investigated by the Federal Trade Commission, which ruled against the company due to the omission of the negatives of the product in the advertising material (Manatt Phelps & Phillips LLP, 2011). Although this was a minor case of false advertising due to data manipulation, compared to those such as the VW emissions scandal (BBC, 2015), it demonstrates the need to ensure that all perspectives on the data are available for the reader to make their own judgements.

References:

BBC. (2015) Volkswagen: The scandal explained. Available from:
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-34324772> [Accessed 1st May 2022].

Manatt helps & Phillips LLP. (2011) Kellogg settles again, this time over Rice Krispies. Available from: <https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=2fa82361-e87c-4a17-816d-775564808f95> [Accessed 1st May 2022].

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Post by **Kieron Holmes**
Peer Response

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Manatt helps & Phillips LLP. (2011) Kellogg settles again, this time over Rice Krispies. Available from: <https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=2fa82361-e87c-4a17-816d-775564808f95> [Accessed 1st May 2022].