

Initial Post

by Hainadine Chamane - Friday, 14 June 2024, 6:03 PM

Number of replies: 3

As a statistical programmer and researcher, Abi must adhere to strict ethical guidelines to maintain the integrity of his profession and the trustworthiness of the data analysis process, as Sempa et al. (2024) emphasised.

One of Abi's most significant ethical concerns is the potential harm of selectively presenting data. Even if Abi does not falsify data, highlighting only positive outcomes can be misleading and equally unethical, as noted by Correia (2023). The fundamental principles of respect, honesty, fairness, care, and justice in research mandate that Abi presents a complete and accurate picture of his findings (Craig, 2022).

Thus, Abi must present both the positive and negative analyses, aligning with the ethical requirement of providing a comprehensive overview of the research findings. This is not just a professional obligation but a necessity to ensure stakeholders are fully informed of all potential outcomes, as highlighted by Kujala et al. (2022) and the fundamental principle of the British Computer Society (2022).

While Abi cannot control how others ultimately use the results, he does bear some responsibility for ensuring that his report is clear, comprehensive, and transparent (Bos, 2020).

As the British Educational Research Association (2019) emphasises, the best action to address a potential manufacturer's publicising only the positive ones is for Abi to include disclaimers

or recommendations for further independent testing to mitigate potential misuse. This would demonstrate due diligence and an ethical commitment to public safety.

References

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Re: Initial Post

by Alex Mutebe - Sunday, 30 June 2024, 2:31 PM

Number of replies: 0

Hainadine's initial post raises public safety concerns regarding Abi's action. Legally, while codes of conduct are not laws, they do set out expectations for professional behaviour. Violating these codes can result in professional censure or loss of membership in these organizations (ACM,2028; BCS, 2022).

If Abi's actions were to lead to harm or fraud, there could also be legal implications under consumer protection laws. For example, in Uganda, The Data Protection and Privacy Act aims to protect the privacy of individuals by regulating the collection and processing of personal information (The Republic of Uganda, 2019). According to Eeshi (2019), the act provides for the rights of persons whose data is collected and outlines the obligations of data collectors, processors, and controllers. In Abi's case, if any personal data is involved in his research on Whizzz cereal, he must adhere to this Act by ensuring that personal data is handled in a manner that respects individuals' privacy rights. Likewise, if his research involves processing personal data within the scope of EU institutions or if it has implications for EU citizens'

privacy rights. He must ensure that his research practices align with the standards set by the EDPS to avoid any legal or ethical issues (European Data Protection Supervisor, n.d.).

Both the ACM and BCS codes would advise against misrepresenting data. Abi should present his findings honestly, even if they are unfavourable to Whizzz, and he should consider the broader impact on society.

References:

ACM (2018). ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. [online] Association for Computing Machinery. Available from: <https://www.acm.org/code-of-ethics>.

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Initial Post

by Steve Fisher - Tuesday, 18 June 2024, 4:51 PM

Number of replies: 10

In this scenario, the fact that Abi is suggesting different ways to analyse the data is not only ethical but is a requirement as the duty to 'do not harm' and 'avoid bias' in his work is enshrined in many codes of ethics / conduct e.g. Royal Statistical Society (2019); British Computer Society (BCS) (2022). Furthermore, Abi should present all possible analyses of the data, ensuring full transparency of his methods, assumptions, sources of error, confidence limits and any limitations of the statistical methods used (Royal Statistical Society (2019).

Whilst Abi has no control over how his results are used by the manufacturer of the cereal, provided his report adheres to ethical requirements, this would be his defence in any possible enforcement action sought against him for misuse of his analysis.

If Abi identifies possible misuse of his analysis, he has several options in the UK depending on the manner of misuse.

- Advertisement - Inform the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA).
- Food packaging – Inform the Food Standards Agency (FSA) or Trading Standards.

As far as the manufacturer is concerned, they run the risk of being prosecuted under EU Regulation 1924/2006 which with amendments has been retained in UK law as the Nutrition and Health Claims Regulations 2007.

References

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Re: Initial Post

by Alex Mutebe - Wednesday, 26 June 2024, 1:54 PM

Hi Steve, I appreciate your thoughtful discussions especially the emphasis on contributing to society and human well-being, it aligns with Principle 1.1 of the ACM Code of Ethics (ACM, 2018). It underscores the responsibility of computing professionals to use their skills for societal benefit. Also, the suggestion to establish transparent data collection policies resonates with the ACM's focus on transparency.

Both ACM and BCS emphasize ethical decision-making. The BCS Code of Conduct emphasizes professionalism, integrity, and working in the public interest (BCS, 2022). Steve's reference to EU Regulation 1924/2006 underscores the legal implications of research findings. In my opinion, this review aligns well with established ethical frameworks. As a researcher, Abi must be aware of relevant regulations and standards and continue to uphold these principles, fostering a responsible and trustworthy profession.

References:

ACM (2018). ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. [online] Association for Computing Machinery. Available from: <https://www.acm.org/code-of-ethics>.

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Initial Post

by Sahr Solar Sumana - Wednesday, 19 June 2024, 12:34 AM

Number of replies: 2

Ethical issues arise when there is cleansing and discarding of data and when there is a failure to report pertinent findings (Berenson et al., 2019). If Abi changes the data within their findings, then it would be deemed unethical. As a researcher Abi must present both positive and negative findings as well as present relevant findings too. Considering and following through with the aforementioned actions represents a lack of research integrity as Abi would making these decisions to obtain a financial incentive, or to increase her profile at the expense of members in her area of research or even the populations that could be affected by her research in the long term (Drolet et al., 2022).

Despite Abi not being entirely responsible for how their research is used they could notify the health research authority (HRA) as they oversee ethical, governance and legal aspects of research in England (www.nihr.ac.uk, n.d.). Abi also holds responsibility for ensuring that her

research is transparent and conducted with integrity and honesty (Dawson, 2015). Abi needs to understand that the cereal manufacturer only using the positive results can have a negative effect and it would be negligent of Abi to allow the manufacturer to mislead the consumer based on the findings from their research.

Reference List:

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Re: Initial Post

by Alex Mutebe - Tuesday, 25 June 2024, 8:22 AM

Sahr rightly highlights that ethical issues arise when data is manipulated or selectively reported. Abi should maintain data integrity and avoid altering findings to suit a particular narrative. According to Korte et al. (2017), in the context of scientific progress, accurate communication of new research findings is crucial. While there are no straightforward

answers, Abi's actions will significantly influence the ethical landscape of his research and its consequences. A paper by Liu et al. (2014) explored inward rectifier channel activation by zacopride and its impact on cardiac remodeling and function. However, this paper was later retracted due to flawed data representations. This case highlights the importance of upholding ethical considerations when presenting research results. Abi confronts intricate ethical decisions, and his choices should emphasize research integrity, transparency, and public well-being.

References:

Korte, S.M. and van der Heyden, M.A., 2017. Preventing publication of falsified and fabricated data: roles of scientists, editors, reviewers, and readers. *Journal of Cardiovascular Pharmacology*, 69(2), pp.65-70.

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