## Research Ethics & Reporting

Chapter 9

#### Objectives of chapter

- Explain acceptable and unacceptable research practices
- Explain research reporting standards

#### Ethics – a definition

"Research should avoid causing harm, distress, anxiety, pain or any other negative feeling to participants. Participants should be fully informed about all relevant aspects of the research, before they agree to take part" [1]

## THIS IS A HYPOTHETICAL QUESTION - DO NOT ANSWER THIS

# ARE YOU Corrupted Person?

#### Research questions – ethical or not?

- Research may ask a taboo or personal question
- What if you were asked if you are asked are corrupted person?
  - How would you feel if you were asked this?
  - Would you feel awkward?
  - Would you lie?
  - Would you answer truthfully?
- Why are we asking this question anyway?
- Could we rephrase the question better?

#### Pause for thought

Is it morally correct to carry out research by any means whatsoever providing that the end result increases the sum of human knowledge or provides some tangible benefit to mankind?

Does the end justify the means?

## Ethics before Research begins

- Inform all participants fully
  - What about children
  - Mentally deficient people
  - Those with poor language skills
- Obtain consent
- Craft your research methods carefully
  - No distortion of the data

## Ethics during Research

Field notes – what are they?

- Do we need these?
- Can we use these in our research?
  - Consent issues
  - Content issues
  - Moral issues
    - You have heard about a crime do you report it?

#### Confidentiality of respondent data

- How do we keep track of respondents?
- Should we keep track of respondents?
- How do we de-personalise gathered data?
- If data are depersonalised, is it morally correct to reuse this data for a new research project?

#### Ethics after Research

- Disposal of data paper or digital?
- Freedom of Information Act
- Reuse of data is this ethical?
  - Are there occasions where reuse of gathered data for another purpose is ok?
- Requesting permission from respondents
  - Difficulty of contacting original respondents

#### Engineering and Ethics

- Confidentiality of data
- Ownership of research results
- Consider research results
  - ☐ Is a cure for a disease as the direct result of research 'good'?
  - ☐ Is the creation of a powerful bomb as the direct result of research 'good'?
    - e.g. the atom bomb

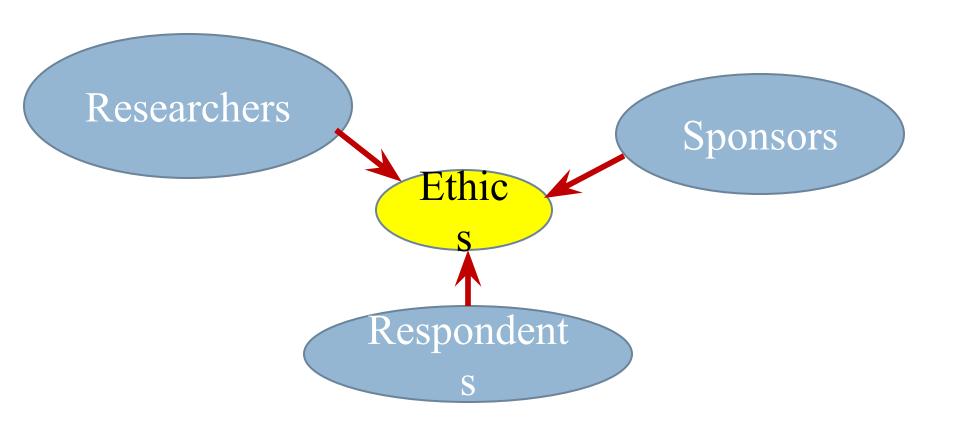
#### Research Ethics Committees

- Monitor ethical issues in research programmes
   Before during and after research
- Makes decisions and enforces these
- Gives researchers organisational support
  - Reassurance to researchers about moral issues related to a particular research project

#### Plagiarism

- What is plagiarism?
- How do we avoid plagiarism?
- What are the dangers that plagiarism causes?
- State some examples of plagiarism.

## Responsibilities of Actors



#### **Ethical Considerations: Respondents**

- Truthfulness in giving information to the researcher if a research subject or respondent gives his or her consent to participate in a research study
- Sustained cooperativeness with the researcher throughout the course of the research study
- Adhere to responsibility if informed consent is given to the researcher
- State any constraints or limitations in advance

- No deception, be forthright and do not conceal the true purpose of the research
- Maintain objectivity, courtesy and high professional standards through scientific process
- No falsification, alteration or misrepresentation of data for political or other purposes
- Protect the confidentiality of the research subjects and research sponsors
- No faulty conclusions
- No inclusion or use of information or ideas contained in competing research proposals

#### **Ethical Considerations: Research Sponsors**

- No request for submission of competitive bids by researchers if selection of the researcher has already been made
- Avoid manipulation and influencing of the researcher with a view to discrediting individuals or organizations
- The conclusions drawn from research work should be consistent with the data and not influenced by other undesirable conditions or motives
- Observe the confidentiality of the research subjects and researcher
- Avoid Advocacy Research

#### Research Report Format

- Introduction
  - Statement of the problem
  - Objectives
  - Significance
  - scope of the study
  - Organization of the paper
- Literature review
- Research method
- Results/Data analysis
- Discussion
- Conclusion
- References

#### Reference style

- Different standards for different publishers
- Common ones are
  - American psychological association (APA)
  - Harvard
  - And others
- Examples
- book
- Gerring, J. (2007). **Case Study Research** *Principles and Practices:* New York: Cambridge University Press

#### Book chapter

Daft, R. L., & Lengel, R. H. (1984). Information richness: A new approach to managerial Behavior and organization design. In B. M. Staw & L. L. Cummings (Eds.), *Research in organizational behavior* (Vol. 6, pp. 191-233). Greenwich, CT: JAI.

#### Journal

Cross, R., Parker, A., Prusak, L. and Borgatti, S.P. (2001). Knowing What We Know: Supporting Knowledge Creation and Sharing in Social Networks. *Organizational Dynamics*, 30(2):100–120

#### Dissertation

Alexopoulos, A. (2008). Social Relations, Human Resource Management, and Knowledge Transfer in Work Organizations: Toward an Integrated Approach. PhD dissertation, Business School, Dublin City University, Ireland, Unpublished.

#### Online materials

Zafirovski, M. (2005). Social Exchange Theory under Scrutiny: A Positive Critique of its Economic-Behaviorist Formulations. *Electronic Journal of Sociology*. Retrieved on June 10, 2010 from

http://www.sociology.org/content/2005/tier2/SETheory.pdf

## End!