

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING DISCUSSION 2: CASE STUDY – ACCURACY OF INFORMATION

Peer Responses

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Table of Contents

PEER RESPONSE BY SULTAN ALARYANI.....	2
PEER RESPONSE BY MARTYNA ANAS.....	3

PEER RESPONSE BY SULTAN ALARYANI

Your post does a great job of explaining the ethical and professional responsibilities involved in data reporting. I really liked how you clearly connected Abi's situation to established ethical guidelines, especially the ASA Code of Ethics (2018) and the UK Data Ethics Framework (Cabinet Office, 2020). Your explanation of how selective reporting, even without changing the data, can still be misleading was very clear and important. I also agree with your point that Abi has a duty to present both positive and negative findings to avoid any misuse of the data (Resnik & Shamoo, 2017).

One area that could be further researched is how ethical dilemmas in data reporting are handled across different industries, such as pharmaceuticals or technology. Each field may have its own standards and pressures, which can affect how data is reported. Exploring this could provide a broader understanding of the issue.

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PEER RESPONSE BY MARTYNA ANAS

Thank you, Murthy. You addressed the ethical dilemmas in Abi's situation with clarity and supported your points with strong references. Your explanation of the risks associated with practices such as p-hacking and selective reporting was particularly insightful. I also appreciated your distinction between legal compliance and ethical responsibility, which is essential in professional decision-making.

I agree with Sultan's response and found the suggestion to consider how data ethics varies across industries especially thought-provoking. One way to develop that idea further would be to examine the different expectations for transparency in sectors such as pharmaceuticals, food manufacturing, or technology. For example, in the pharmaceutical industry, researchers are often required to register clinical trials and publish their results, whether positive or negative, to avoid selective reporting (De Angelis et al., 2004). In contrast, nutrition and food product research may not be subject to the same formal standards. This contrast highlights how ethical responsibilities can fall more heavily on individuals like Abi when external regulations are weaker or less clearly defined.

In addition, it may be useful to reflect on the psychological process of moral self-justification. In some cases, professionals may convince themselves that a biased or selective decision is acceptable because they believe their intentions are good. This process is sometimes described as moral licensing. According to Merritt, Effron and Monin (2010), such thinking can undermine ethical judgement over time and lead to normalisation of questionable practices. In Abi's case, the belief that the product is mostly beneficial could result in downplaying the importance of reporting harmful findings.

Another important factor is how data is communicated. Even when results are reported in full, the framing and presentation can strongly influence how the findings are interpreted. Mäntymäki et al. (2022) emphasise that ethical data communication is not only about accuracy, but also about ensuring that information is presented clearly, proportionally, and in a way that minimises the risk of misunderstanding. Ethical reporting, therefore, includes not only transparency in content, but also responsibility in how data is visualised and conveyed to decision-makers or the public.

Finally, your emphasis on the wider consequences of ethical lapses is well placed. When research influences health-related decisions, the impact of misleading or incomplete reporting can extend far beyond a single study. This is why the responsibility to communicate findings honestly and clearly is so significant in cases like Abi's.

Thank you again for your thoughtful contribution to this important discussion.

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- Merritt, A.C., Effron, D.A. and Monin, B. (2010) *Moral self-licensing: When being good frees us to be bad*, Social and Personality Psychology Compass, 4(5), pp. 344–357. Available at: <https://compass.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1751-9004.2010.00263.x> (Accessed 24 June 2025)