COLLABORATIVE LEARNING DISCUSSION 2: CASE STUDY – ACCURACY OF INFORMATION

Summary Post

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SUMMARY POST

In my initial post, I discussed the moral and professional duties Abi has when selectively reporting data. While this behaviour may be legally acceptable in some contexts, presenting only favourable results can amount to *p-hacking* or *data dredging* (Head et al., 2015), which risks misleading stakeholders and undermining ethical standards. I used the ASA Code of Ethics (American Statistical Association, 2018) and the UK Data Ethics Framework (Cabinet Office, 2020) to say that Abi must be honest about good and bad results. The discussion also touched upon how consumer protection laws might affect the situation and suggested three options: complete reporting with caveats, consulting an ethics board, or blowing the whistle.

Sultan Alaryani discussed the importance of honesty in research and the need to examine differences between cultures and sectors. She said that different industries have different needs and pressures that greatly affect data reporting requirements.

Martyna Antas expanded on this by comparing regulatory frameworks in the pharmaceutical and food sectors, arguing that weaker external controls increase individual ethical responsibility. She also discussed the concept of **moral licensing**, where professionals justify biased choices based on perceived good intentions (Merritt, Effron and Monin, 2010). She emphasised the role of ethical data communication in framing and interpretation (Mäntymäki et al., 2022).

In response to Martyna, I introduced **Moor's (1985)** concept of a *policy vacuum*, arguing that the absence of organisational guidance can lead to ethical uncertainty. I also examined how organisational culture, stakeholder responsibilities (Freeman, 1984), and corporate governance structures can support or hinder ethical behaviour (Martin, Rao and Sloan, 2009).

In replying to Sultan, I reinforced the risks of reporting bias again. I raised Moor's argument again, saying that professional codes should be used as ethical safeguards when things aren't clear. I also agreed with stakeholder analysis and the moral rules of beneficence and non-maleficence (Beauchamp and Childress, 2019).

The discussion underscored the complex intersection of legal, ethical, organisational, and cultural factors in responsible data reporting.

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