

Case study: Accuracy of information

by [Pavlos Papachristos](#) - Thursday, 18 December 2025, 5:56 PM

Abi's got himself into a genuinely awkward position here. Yes, his data is solid and running different statistical analyses is perfectly legitimate. But he's pretty certain the manufacturer will just pick out whatever makes Whizz look good and ignore the rest. The core problem isn't that he'd be faking numbers - they're accurate. It's more that cherry-picking which results to show creates a misleading picture for people who might actually eat this cereal.

Resnik (2020) talks about how you can undermine research integrity even when your findings are technically correct, simply by being selective about what you report. The BCS Code of Conduct also requires members to consider "public health, privacy, security and wellbeing of others" (BCS, 2022). So Abi's got obligations that stretch well beyond keeping his client happy.

Professionally, he really ought to lay out everything he's found. Look, examining data from different angles is normal research practice - that's not the issue. The problem comes when you start deliberately hiding results that don't fit the story you want to tell. Bodies like the ASA (2018) would see that as misconduct, plain and simple.

Then there's the legal side. If the manufacturer only advertises the positive bits, they could breach the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008, which exists precisely to stop this sort of misleading marketing. And Abi might well get dragged into that mess.

References

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Resnik, D.B. (2020) *The Ethics of Research with Human Subjects: Protecting People, Advancing Science, Promoting Trust*. Cham: Springer.