



## UNDERSTANDING ETHICS IN RESEARCH

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### ABSTRACT

*When we do research it is very important to understand that there are certain ethics or discipline to be followed. These ethics are universally recognized and a great endeavour is made to follow and inculcate it to the best of the scholars and research guides' ability. APA's Ethics Code says psychologists should avoid relationships that could reasonably impair their professional performance or could exploit or harm others. But it also notes that many kinds of multiple relationships aren't unethical--as long as they're not reasonably expected to have adverse effects. The academic research enterprise is built on a foundation of trust. Researchers trust that the results reported by others are sound. Society trusts that the results of research reflect an honest attempt by scientists and other researchers to describe the world accurately and without bias. But this trust will endure only if the scientific community devotes itself to exemplifying and transmitting the values associated with ethical research conduct.*



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Another way of defining 'ethics' focuses on the **disciplines that study** standards of conduct, such as philosophy, theology, law, psychology, or sociology. There are several reasons why it is important to adhere to ethical norms in research. First, norms **promote the** aims of research, such as knowledge, truth, and avoidance of error. Second, since research often involves a great deal of cooperation and coordination among many different people in different disciplines and institutions, ethical standards promote the **values that are essential to collaborative work**, such as trust, accountability, mutual respect, and fairness. Third, many of the ethical norms help to ensure that researchers can be held **accountable to the public**. Given the importance of ethics for the conduct of research, it should come as no surprise that many different professional associations, government agencies, and universities have adopted specific codes, rules, and policies relating to research ethics

**Need of the Study:** Most people learn ethical norms at home, at school, in church, or in other social settings. Although most people acquire their sense of right and wrong during childhood, moral development occurs throughout life and human beings pass through different stages of growth as they mature. Ethical norms are so ubiquitous that one might be

tempted to regard them as simple common sense. On the other hand, if morality were nothing more than common sense, then why are there so many ethical disputes and issues in our society?

One plausible explanation of these disagreements is that all people recognize some common ethical norms but interpret, apply, and balance them in different ways in light of their own values and life experiences. For example, two people could agree that murder is wrong but disagree about the morality of abortion because they have different understandings of what it means to be a human being.

Most societies also have legal rules that govern behaviour, but ethical norms tend to be broader and more informal than laws. Although most societies use laws to enforce widely accepted moral standards and ethical and legal rules use similar concepts, ethics and law are not the same. An action may be legal but unethical or illegal but ethical. We can also use ethical concepts and principles to criticize, evaluate, propose, or interpret laws. Indeed, in the last century, many social reformers have urged citizens to disobey laws they regarded as immoral or unjust laws. Peaceful civil disobedience is an ethical way of protesting laws or expressing political viewpoints.

### **Objectives**

- To find out whether the researchers regard the importance of Ethics in research.
- To identify the basic principles of research.
- To understand the importance of ethics in research.

### **Assumptions**

- I There are several reasons why it is important to adhere to ethical norms in research. (David B. Resnik, J.D., Ph.D. December 1, 2015)
- II Academe's competitive "publish-or-perish" mindset can be a recipe for trouble when it comes to who gets credit for authorship. (DEBORAH SMITH, *Monitor* Staff, January 2003, Vol 34, No. 1, Print version: page 56)
- III Matthew McGue, PhD, of the University of Minnesota, says his psychology department has instituted a procedure to avoid murky authorship issues. "We actually have a formal process here where students make proposals for anything they do on the project," he explains. The process allows students and faculty to more easily talk about research responsibility, distribution and authorship.
- IV "If you are a grant reviewer or a journal manuscript reviewer [who] sees someone's research [that] hasn't been published yet, you owe that person a duty of confidentiality

and anonymity," says Gerald P. Koocher, PhD, editor of the journal *Ethics and Behaviour* and co-author of "Ethics in Psychology: Professional Standards and Cases" (Oxford University Press, 1998).

### **Research Question:**

Will there be a positive difference in the research when ethics are followed and established?

Could there be a healthy research atmosphere when the ethics are followed?

### **Operational definitions**

•**Understanding:** a mental grasp: comprehension; the power of comprehending; *especially:* the capacity to apprehend general relations of particulars *b:* the power to make experience intelligible by applying concepts and categories. (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/understanding>)

**Ethics:** The basic concepts and fundamental principles of decent human conduct. It includes study of universal values such as the essential equality of all men and women, human or natural rights, obedience to the law of land, concern for health and safety and, increasingly, also for the natural environment. See also morality.

(<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/ethics.html>)

**Research:** In the broadest sense of the word, the definition of research includes any gathering of data, information and facts for the advancement of knowledge.

<https://explorable.com/definition-of-research>

### **Research Methodology**

This research was done on the basis of descriptive method.

The descriptive method has many methods.

This was done by the Survey method.

### **Population**

In this research work, the population consisted of 100 research students and 50 teachers.

### **Sample**

Using 'probability sample method' the sample was selected by lottery method.

30 Research Students and 10 teachers were selected as samples.

### **Research tool**

A questionnaire prepared by the researcher.

Oral interviews conducted by researcher.

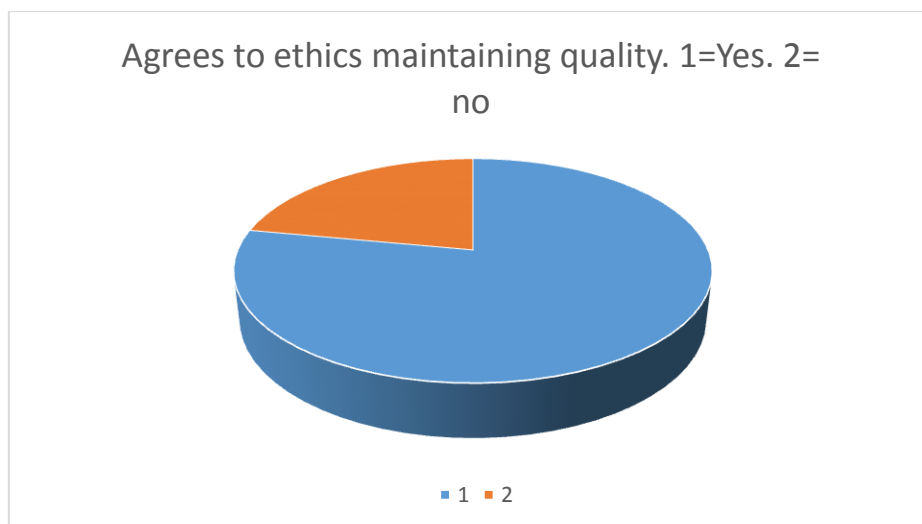
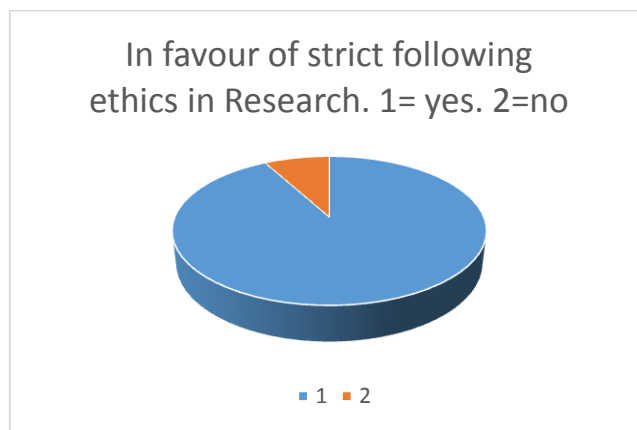
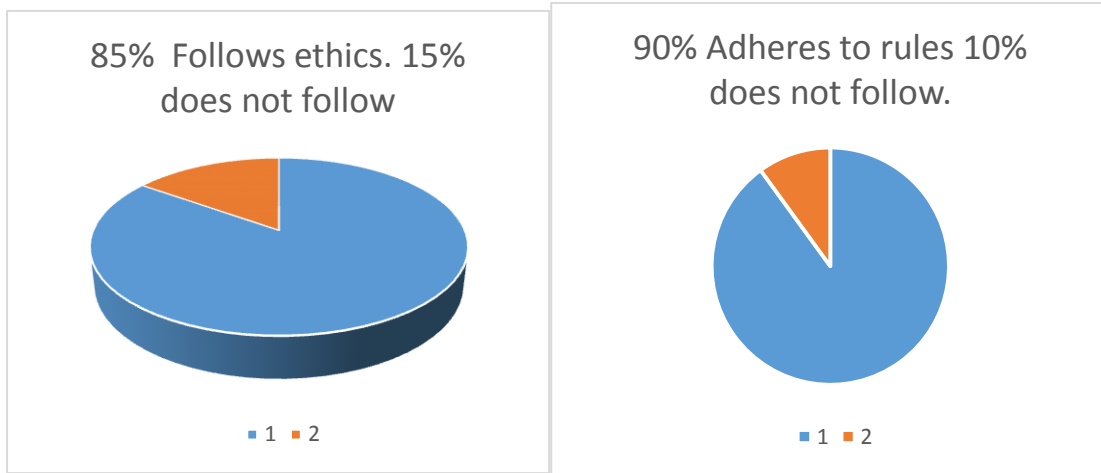
Observations (non-participant) were done by the researcher.

**Numerical technique**

Percentage, Average.

**Analysis**

The data was analysed using percentage, average.



**Conclusions:**

- Almost all the participants in this survey are in favour of maintaining ethics to the maximum to enhance quality in research.
- The samples agree that ethics are a protection to avoid plagiarism in research.
- The samples agree that the purpose of these codes of conduct is to protect research participants, the reputation of psychology and psychologists themselves.
- Research students are of the opinion that by following ethics risks and harm is minimised.
- Almost all people involved in research are aware of the importance of the ethics.
- The participants understand the important role ethics play in the scenario of research.

Other steps researchers should take include:

- **Discuss the limits of confidentiality.** Give participants information about how their data will be used, what will be done with case materials, photos and audio and video recordings, and secure their consent.
- **Know federal and state law.** Know the ins and outs of state and federal law that might apply to your research. For instance, the Goals 2000: Education Act of 1994 prohibits asking children about religion, sex or family life without parental permission.
- **Take practical security measures.** Be sure confidential records are stored in a secure area with limited access, and consider stripping them of identifying information, if feasible. Also, be aware of situations where confidentiality could inadvertently be breached, such as having confidential conversations in a room that's not soundproof or putting participants' names on bills paid by accounting departments.
- **Think about data sharing before research begins.** If researchers plan to share their data with others, they should note that in the consent process, specifying how they will be shared and whether data will be anonymous. For example, researchers could have difficulty sharing sensitive data they've collected in a study of adults with serious mental illnesses because they failed to ask participants for permission to share the data. Or developmental data collected on videotape may be a valuable resource for sharing, but unless a researcher asked permission back then to share videotapes, it would be unethical to do so. When sharing, psychologists should use established techniques when possible to protect confidentiality, such as coding data to hide identities. "But be aware that it may be almost impossible to entirely cloak identity,

especially if your data include video or audio recordings or can be linked to larger databases," says Merry Bullock, PhD, associate executive director in APA's Science Directorate.

- **Understand the limits of the Internet.** Since Web technology is constantly evolving, psychologists need to be technologically savvy to conduct research online and cautious when exchanging confidential information electronically. If you're not a Internet whiz, get the help of someone who is. Otherwise, it may be possible for others to tap into data that you thought was properly protected.

### **Recommendations and suggestions:**

#### **Keep in mind the Ethical Issues**

There are a number of key phrases that describe the system of ethical protections that the contemporary social and medical research establishment have created to try to protect better the rights of their research participants.

The principle of *voluntary participation* requires that people not be coerced into participating in research. This is especially relevant where researchers had previously relied on 'captive audiences' for their subjects -- prisons, universities, and places like that.

Closely related to the notion of voluntary participation is the requirement of *informed consent*. Essentially, this means that prospective research participants must be fully informed about the procedures and risks involved in research and must give their consent to participate. Ethical standards also require that researchers not put participants in a situation where they might be at *risk of harm* as a result of their participation. Harm can be defined as both physical and psychological. There are two standards that are applied in order to help protect the privacy of research participants.

Almost all research guarantees the participants' *confidentiality* -- they are assured that identifying information will not be made available to anyone who is not directly involved in the study.

The stricter standard is the principle of *anonymity* which essentially means that the participant will remain anonymous throughout the study -- even to the researchers themselves. Clearly, the anonymity standard is a stronger guarantee of privacy, but it is sometimes difficult to accomplish, especially in situations where participants have to be measured at multiple time points (e.g., a pre-post study).

Increasingly, researchers have had to deal with the ethical issue of a person's *right to service*. Good research practice often requires the use of a no-treatment control group -- a group of participants who do *not* get the treatment or program that is being studied. But when that

treatment or program may have beneficial effects, persons assigned to the no-treatment control may feel their rights to equal access to services are being curtailed.

### **References**

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