

Ethics in Research

BUS 230: Business Research and Communication

Goals and Learning Objectives

1 / 10

- Goals of this chapter:
 - Learn how to ethically conduct research using human participants.
 - Learn how to ethically conduct research methods.
 - Learn how to ethically report research results.
- Learning objective: LO2.A: Recognize the ethical responsibilities of conducting human subjects research.

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Informed Consent

2 / 10

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- An informed consent form should include all of the following:
 - Statement of the purpose of the research.
 - Description of how the information will be collected from the subjects.
 - A description of the risks involved, and proper assurances against risks if appropriate.
 - Possible benefits from participating in the research.
- Informed consent is not simply a legal maneuver.
 - Allow questions and discussion any time.
 - Allow person to discontinue participation at any time.

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3 / 10

- Every project involving human subject poses risks, even if risk is minimal.
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Risks

4 / 10

- Informed consent should describe all risks, and steps that have been taken, or could be taken by the researcher to mitigate risks.
- Confidentiality: treat all information collected from individuals confidentially.
 - Do not report enough information on a single individual that might allow someone to figure out the identity of the participant.
 - Do not suggest participation is anonymous.
- Treat subgroups (age groups, race and ethnicity groups, gender) fairly in allocating risk
 - Be sure sample is representative of population.

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Benefits

5 / 10

- Describe any benefits in participating in the research.
- Does the act of participating yield any benefits?
- Might the findings from the research benefit the participants?
Inform them of the findings afterward.
- Treat subgroups fairly in allocating benefits.
- NIH: Payments for participating should not be viewed as benefits.
 - They should be small enough and intended as compensating for the inconvenience of participating in the project.

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Deliberately Fooling Subjects

- Sometimes the research design requires deliberately keeping information away from the human subjects.
- Sometimes, being too specific about the purpose of the research project will alter the answers participants give to survey questions.
- Example: Politically charged research topics
 - Economic benefits to allowing amnesty to current illegal immigrants.
- Example: When participants are an interested party.
 - Satisfaction and cost effectiveness of University Dining Services.
 - Effectiveness and/or usefulness of CBA curriculum.

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 - **Placebo effect:** it has been documented, that often times simply receiving a placebo causes a change in an outcome variable.
 - **Informed consent:** participants should be told the chances they will be receiving a placebo versus the actual treatment.
- **Lying to participants:** taste of organic fair-trade coffee.
- **Debriefing:** after project is complete, researcher contacts participants and fully informs them of the details of the procedure.

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Ethical Methodology and Reporting

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- Multiple ways to measure?
 - Are there multiple variables that measure the same item of interest?
 - Are there multiple ways of estimating cause and effect?
 - Conduct and report all of them! Not just the results that “look good.”
- Questionnaires
 - Carefully consider wording.
 - Consider multiple questions with different wording.
- Report all results.
 - Even those that suggest criticisms of your managers or your audience.
 - Even those that suggest criticisms of your research methodology or results.

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- Be careful not to generalize conclusions too broadly.
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- Be honest with data visualization.

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In-class Exercise / Homework Assignment

10 / 10

- This is an individual assignment, each person must complete it.
- You can work collaboratively with your group members.
- Go to <http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php> to complete the National Institute of Health (NIH) course on *Protecting Human Research Participants* (PHRP).
- At the end, you will be able to print out an official NIH PHRP certificate. Print to a PDF (can do this on campus), and upload to D2L dropbox.
- This is something that can go on your resume!