



RESEARCH ETHICS

ATUL KAUSHAL

Research Scholar, School of Education, Abhilashi University, Chailchowk, Mandi, Himachal Pradesh

ABSTRACT

Ethics is a branch of philosophy that involves defending, systematizing, recommending right concepts and minimizing wrong conduct. Research involves ethical considerations in research, such as time, funding, implementation, and accessibility, that must be taken into account throughout the study. It has been concluded after analysing the data that Research ethics are essential for researchers to avoid deception and protect against harm to participants, validate research outcomes, and ensure credibility and public trust. When designing research, ethical issues should be prioritized to ensure a successful research strategy.

Key Words: Ethics, Research, Research Ethics

INTRODUCTION

Ethics a branch of philosophy with standards or codes or value systems and involves defending, systematizing, recommending right concepts and minimizing wrong conduct. Ethical issues in research are some of the genres that researchers follow to protect the rights in developing research strategies and building a trusted relationship between participants and investigator. Ethical considerations in research always been challenging, including ethical concerns vis-a-vis time, funding, implementation and accessibility. These considerations need to apply throughout the study.

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF RESEARCH ETHICS

Research ethics guide researchers conducting any research and to ensure a high ethical standard. Major ethical requirements of any study include five fundamental principles included during the research planning and designing phases: first, minimizing the risk of harm to the participants; second, securing informed consent from identified participants; third, protecting the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants; fourth, avoiding deceptive practices; and finally, offering the participants the right to withdraw from the research at will. Two major concepts are in consideration here: (a) the researcher should focus on the participants' welfare as a goal, which is known as beneficence, and (b) the researcher must avoid harming and needs to maintain confidentiality. Based on country or institution, ethical requirements in research may differ. While reviewing the approval process, the ethics committee of the concerned country or institution might find inadequacy of ethical requirements in the proposal and may reject any study that fails to meet the basic standard.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF RESEARCH ETHICS

Individuals, communities, and social values govern research work as human activities. Research ethics involve protecting subjects' dignity required in daily works and the publication of the information. Ethical concerns and dilemmas are part of the everyday practice of conducting all types of research. Moreover, ethical issues are also equally important for non-empirical research that has remarkable direct and indirect impacts and research investigating humans or documents related to people. The traditional starting point and focus for ethical issue were mainly in quantitative research. However, social scientists have started discussing ethical issues in qualitative social research since 1960s. However, ethical issues in research drawn society's interest only after the 1940s because of human exploitation in several research.

ETHICAL ISSUES IN RESEARCH DESIGNS

Each type of research design comes with unique ethical challenges. There are three types of research designs: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method designs.

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

The primary way of conducting qualitative research is to use structured and unstructured interviews. Researchers can get rich and in-depth information using interview techniques. However, extensive planning to develop the structure; decide how to interview and whom, individual or group interviews while record and analysis also mandatory. Interviewee should have multiple skill sets of conducting qualitative interviews, including rapport building, communication, social and good listening skills. All these are prone to problems of uncertainty associated with individual behaviour, thereby generating possible biases, leading to ethical challenges.

QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

Quantitative research design is more structured and well-defined, allowing researchers to plan most of the research process in clear terms. There tends to be relatively little deviation from these design specifies even during the implementation phase. Clarification about the quantitative design and associated process makes it easier to understand potential ethical challenges during the research phase. Accordingly, the researchers can plan to address possible ethical challenges, including an appropriate ethics proposal. In nonexperimental research, the researcher only needs to convince the supervisor that potential ethical challenges were covered instead of submitting an ethics proposal to a committee. In experimental research, especially involving human subjects, the researcher needs to submit an appropriate ethics proposal, although that process can slow down the research process.

ETHICAL ISSUES IN SAMPLING STRATEGIES

Sampling that the researcher may choose to investigate can also raise several ethical issues that need an appropriate attention and clear understanding to be resolved.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

During the sampling process, the researcher needs to decide on sampling units (e.g., people, organizations) –criteria to include and exclude from the selected samples – sampling techniques (probabilistic and non-probabilistic) help in selecting such units. The researcher selects units for the sample from an existing population list with confidentiality and data protection issues in the probability sampling technique. Until the researcher gets permission to access the population list and its details, it is unethical to use for research purposes. This warrants the researcher to obtain the right to have access to the list s/he intends to use. For non-probability sampling, the researcher may include or exclude units for theoretical or practical reasons. For example, in purposive sampling, the choice of units to be included and excluded is driven by theoretical elements, raising few ethical concerns. On the other hand, if units are included or excluded for practical reasons like ease of access or personal preferences there exists the risk that some units may be excluded unnecessarily, which also raises ethical issues.

SAMPLE SIZE

Sample size depends on sampling techniques, whether probabilistic or non-probabilistic aspects. Ethical issues might appear in determining sample size for two reasons: (a) an oversized sample, more people or organizations in the sample than necessary to achieve the research goals, is an ethical issue because it would expose more people than it is necessary for the study; and (b) an undersized sample limits the researcher to achieve the goals of the study, due to insufficient units of the sample. The ethical issue is that the researcher fails to correctly answer the research questions, not because of the lack of answer; instead, due to the small sample size for such an answer to be explored, derived, or interpreted.

ETHICAL ISSUES IN DATA ANALYSIS

The participants' confidentiality and data privacy issues often face challenges during the data analysis. Ethical challenges are different for quantitative and qualitative data analysis, which requires particular attention. Quantitative data analysis techniques (e.g., data aggregation and data summarization) have built-in protection mechanisms towards respondents' anonymity with some exceptions. On the other hand, both presentation style and the depth of qualitative data quality often create potential

ethical challenges, mainly due to researchers' style of reporting qualitative data in all its richness, increasing the risks of research participants identified.

CONCLUSION

Research ethics are important for researchers to avoid deception while conducting and reporting research outcomes. Research ethics also protect against any possible harm to the study participants and further help to validate the research. Following ethical standards in research also ensures credibility and public trust. Ethical issues in research should be prioritized in the study design phase. Therefore, tackling issues and challenges aligns with the research strategy to get maximum impact.

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