

WEB PAGE FOR CHAPTER 3

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

- 1 If it is inappropriate due to research design conditions to explain the reasons for the research to the subjects before data collection, which of the following should the researcher do?
 - (a) inform them anyway since cooperation is vital
 - (b) not disclose any information
 - (c) tell the subject they will be informed at the end of the experiment
 - (d) give them a false explanation
- 2 If investigating the consumer choice reasons of school children with respect to buying junk food or non-junk food at the school snack bar for lunch, which should the researcher do?
 - (a) only use children who consent to answer
 - (b) get the class teacher's permission
 - (c) get parental permission
 - (d) offer money to those who will take part
- 3 If a university student drops out of a research study what should the researcher do?
 - (a) require the student to find a substitute
 - (b) amend the student's personal records to note the fact
 - (c) nothing
 - (d) insist the student continue

CLASS DEBATES

- 1 Discuss the contention that:

'The ends never justify the means as far as research with humans is concerned.'

- 2 To what extent is the advancement of knowledge and the pursuit of information sufficient justification for overriding ethical values and ignoring the interests of those studied?

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- 1 Read through the following case scenarios and answer the queries.

- (A) A disease is inflicting itself on the whole human population. Morbidity rates are roughly 10% and many who do survive infection can be affected for the rest of their lives with symptoms ranging from being severely crippled, paralysed, and nerve damage. A medical researcher wants to inject an untested vaccine into his colleague's wife and children to assess its effectiveness and potential side effects. What are the ethical implications related to this study. Should the study be undertaken?
- (B) A young boy has contracted an as-yet untreatable disease from an animal. Symptoms include encephalitis, flu-like symptoms, delirium, and eventually death. A medical scientist who, as an unlicensed physician, has no legal right to treat the boy, injects an experimental drug with which he has been working on. What ethical problem/issues are raised here?

(You may be interested to know that Examples (A) and (B) were derived from real life. In Example (A) Jonas Salk tested a polio vaccine on his laboratory technicians, his wife and children. Salk was later to receive numerous awards for his pioneering work. In Example (B), Louis Pasteur, who also developed the pasteurization process for milk, risked serious legal recourse when he administered the first rabies vaccine to 9-year-old Joseph Meister, on 6 July 1885. The treatment was successful and Pasteur escaped prosecution, instead being lauded a hero.)

- 2 Is it ethical for a researcher to precode questionnaires in invisible ink so that they know who submitted each one? Is it ethical to use different coloured paper for questionnaires for different departments of a company? Are these two situations similar or different?
- 3 A researcher plans to use a one-way mirror to video test users' reactions to a new alcoholic party drink in a simulated party environment. Are there any ethical issues involved here?
- 4 When you visit your favourite popstar's website you are requested to complete a questionnaire. Unknown to you the popstar management plan to sell your personal information to a marketing company who are selling the popstar's memorabilia via mail catalogue and email. What do you think the ethical issue is here? How could it be mitigated?
- 5 A researcher encourages subjects to take part in a survey by telling them it will only take 5 minutes when in fact it takes 20. Is this unethical?
- 6 A researcher becomes a participant observer in a project group to analyse inter-personal group relations and group decision making. None of the group know that the researcher is actually observing them and think he is a genuine member of the group. Does a researcher have the right to deceive others?
- 7 A health products company launched a new herbal product claimed to increase weight loss. A three-month long research study reported that people using the product lost 5% more weight than those on a placebo with no reported side effects. Since then it has been criticized by those who have taken it that the weight losses are not maintained after four months and long-term side effects like migraine and heartburn occur after six months. What ethical issues are salient here?
- 8 The manager of a research company tells a new client that they should have a survey on their customers' perceptions done before any survey on how their customers would react to new products which is what they originally wanted. The manager's assistant knows that the company already has some data on their customer perceptions from a previous survey just done for a competitor. Why not present these results as an appendix to the second study and save the client money? The manager feels that repeating the study is not unethical even though they know what the likely results of the repeat study will be and that it would be more unethical to disclose work done for someone else. Who do you agree with?
- 9 The new CEO feels that the changes he has introduced have improved employees' feelings about their work environment. To support his feeling he decides to carry out an organizational climate survey. He finds one used in a previous survey in the company before he took charge and decides to use it without consulting the firm that produced it and conducted the original survey. Is this unethical?
- 10 The CEO wants to survey the organizational effectiveness of his company. The questionnaire contains some quite sensitive items which the researcher is sure many employees will not answer or will lie to and suggests the items be rewritten and in some cases removed. The CEO instead requests that conversations of employees be recorded by hidden microphones in the departmental tea rooms and company dining room followed by content analysis. Should the researcher accept this change?
- 11 Suppose you are a salesperson for a new type of burger dressing. Your boss requests that you gather groups of friends together and visit all the test outlet locations and ask for that dressing in order to make it appear it is popular. The company will pay for the purchases over the next two weeks to ensure large orders are placed and rival brands no longer bought by the outlets. Do you agree to this strategy?
- 12 Mary had just started a job with a business research firm. Her first job was a survey of customer perceptions of a supermarket chain. She attends a meeting with her boss when the results are presented to the client. She notices that some of the data has been altered in a very minor way to make it look more positive. When she mentioned this to her boss afterwards he argued that while objectivity is fine in the academic world, in the real world of business it is important to keep the client happy. Do you agree?

13 Create a checklist in question form for assessing whether a piece of proposed research is ethical. Use such questions as:

- 1 Will any person or definable minority group be able to be identified in the published research?
- 2 Will the research involve persons who themselves are unable to give informed consent?
- 3 NOW ADD TO THIS LIST

Compare your lists around the class and create a composite list that you could all use as a guide towards ethical research conduct when you next do some research. Remember that a 'yes' to any question does not mean abandon the research. It acts as a prompt for you to think about the research design and possible modifications to it, consider ways to avoid the problem and be ready to argue the case for what you want to do when facing your organization's research ethics committee

- 14 (a) State two responsibilities of researchers.
- (b) State two rights of respondents/participants.
- (c) State two responsibilities of sponsoring clients.

For each explain the reasons and issues involved.

A list of some Professional Associations and their Ethical Guidelines, with useful online sources:

Academy of Management	http://www.aomonline.org/aom.asp?ID=185
Australian Research Council	http://www.arc.gov.au/grant_programs/research_ethics.htm
British Computer Society (BCS)	http://www.bcs.org.uk/ethics/freedom.htm
British Educational Research Association (BERA)	http://www.bera.ac.uk/guidelines.html
British Market Research Association	http://www.bmra.org.uk
Centre for Business Ethics. Bentley College, Waltham, MA.	http://ecampus.bentley.edu/dept/cbe/ethicscentres/domestic.html
Centre For Research Ethics, Goteburg University, Sweden	www.cre.gu.se
Council of American Survey Research Organisations, Port Jefferson, NY.	www.carso.org
Economic and Social Research Council	http://www.esrc.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/Images/ESRC_Re_Ethics_Frame_tcm6-11291.pdf
European Business Ethics Network.	www.eben.org
HIS Inc.	http://www.ihs.com/Investor-Relations/ethics-policy.htm
Japan Marketing Research Association	http://www.jmra-net.or.jp/guideline/kouryou-e.html
MRS	http://www.mrs.org.uk/standards/codeconduct.htm
National Health and Medical Research Council	http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/ethics/human/index.htm
Qualidata.	http://www.qualidata.essex.ac.uk/creatingData/confidentiality.asp

Additional information on ethical issues

Institutional ethics committees

Even when clear ethical standards and principles exist, there will be times when the need to do accurate research runs up against potential ethical issues. No set of standards can possibly anticipate every ethical circumstance. In order to ensure that researchers consider all relevant ethical issues in formulating research plans most institutions and organizations have set up ***Institutional Ethics Committees***, a panel of persons who review grant and research proposals with respect to ethical implications and decides whether additional actions need to be taken to assure in particular the safety and rights of participants. These committees provide increased protection for both the organization and the researcher against potential legal implications of neglecting to address important ethical issues of participants. For professionals not located within institutions many professional organizations have issued ethical research principles or codes which members are expected to abide by or else suffer sanctions such as loss of professional registration.

The American Association of Public Opinion Research code of ethics can be found at <http://www.aapor.org/ethics/code.html>

Code of Professional Behaviour of the Australian Market and Social research Society (AMSRS). While based on marketing this code applies across all business areas. Access this code through the following website: [http://www.mrsa.com.au/index.cfm?a=detail\\$Id=115\\$Id=](http://www.mrsa.com.au/index.cfm?a=detail$Id=115$Id=)

The Australian Psychological Society Code of Ethics can be found at: <http://www.psychology.org.au/aps/ethics/default.asp> There is a degree of similarity between the ethical codes of all organizations, and clearly research with human participants needs to consider the implications and well-being for participants, clients and society.

Impact of technology on research ethics

The masses of information on the Internet and ease of information transfer has made plagiarism far easier. New technology has also increased the likelihood that participants' privacy can be violated. Data must not be sold or even given to other persons or organizations. This is particularly applicable to employee data and company financial data. Appropriate firewalls must be in place.

Research in cyberspace should provide no special dispensation from the general ethical obligations already noted. The use of the World Wide Web is a relatively new research tool that provides a unique research environment because:

- the distinction between private and public space is unclear;
- data can be easily collected without consent;
- the participants and the researcher may never meet or speak to each other and the identities they may choose to assume may be 'virtual', bearing little resemblance to their 'real' self.

Not only does this create ethical implications for the collection of data in terms of privacy, anonymity and confidentiality, but it also points to the need to raise awareness about concerns regarding the mistaken inclusion of vulnerable or unsuitable populations (e.g. children) in a research project, who are not identifiable because of pseudonyms.

The perceptions people have of what constitutes public and private domains on the Web may not correspond with their actions when they come to log on. People often use public domains in cyberspace for private conversations. The use of the terms 'private' and 'public' refer to the accessibility of information, not the individual's own perception of the privacy of their actions. The individual's perception of privacy may well be determined by who they believe to be looking at their work and what they believe is being done with it. As with all social research, it is recommended that the participant supplying the data, whether an individual author or a site owner, is consulted personally.

Researchers must NOT assume that where access to the Web is 'public', that the information available in such domains is also 'public' and 'up for grabs'. Extracting data in such a manner from the Web contravenes some basic ethical principles:

- the author's privacy has been invaded;
- informed consent has not been obtained from the author;
- the anonymity of the author is at risk.

There are currently very few guidelines for ethical codes of conduct regarding web-based social research. Getting consent from participants in an online location can be very difficult. This is largely because of the 'faceless' nature of Web participants and the possibility that they may also be assuming a pseudo-identity.

Cross-national research

Given the global environment in which business operates, more research is being conducted across national and cultural boundaries. This raises special ethical and political issues relating to personal, cultural and national sensitivities and disparities in wealth, power, the legal status of the researcher, political interest and national political systems.

Researchers should note that important regulations governing human subjects' research, Privacy, freedom of information and copyright may be different from their own country. In some developing countries, local people may be unaware of their 'human rights'. Indeed, individuals can be subject to reprisal for raising these issues. It is important that researchers have an awareness of the local situation before embarking on their research.

A potential misuse of power is insensitivity to different cultural perspectives. However, sensitivity to the values inherent in local practices does not require uncritical acceptance of them. What is required is a willingness to explore differences without prejudice and to seek, as far as possible, to understand them, informed by knowledge of local traditions and material circumstances.

Researchers should also be aware of ethical issues that can occur when working within a repressive political climate. They should ensure that their research activities do not jeopardize the security of local participants, guaranteeing complete confidentiality where participants have taken serious personal risks to assist them. In some societies it would be culturally inappropriate for researchers to ask individuals to participate in research without consulting the community or gaining permission from community leaders.

Copyright issues

Researchers making audio or video recordings should obtain 'copyright clearance' from interviewees if recordings are to be publicly broadcast or deposited in public archives. This is best done at the time of interview, using a signed form. Different countries have their own rules on data protection and copyright, so check up on what your country's laws require.

There are at least two different copyrights present within an interview.

- The words spoken: the copyright owner is the speaker, i.e. research participant. Included in this case are transcripts made either verbatim or later from recordings.
- The recording: the copyright owner is the person or organization who arranged for the recording to be made, i.e. the researcher or their funding body only has copyright over the physical recording.

Scope of copyright and 'fair dealing'

Recorded speech which is 'in copyright' cannot be copied, passed on to others, played in public or broadcast without the copyright owner's permission. However, the spoken words in a recording, whether in sound or transcribed form, can be copied for private study, research, criticism or review. Short extracts can be used for illustration purposes in publications provided they do not form a 'substantial' part of the recording transcript in question, although what can be considered to be 'substantial' is difficult to quantify.

Transfer of copyright

Copyright is a form of property and can be 'assigned' to another person or organization. These assignments should be made ideally in writing and signed by the copyright owner. Transfer of copyright from the participant to researcher will be needed if the researcher ever wants to publish large extracts of the participant's words, and can be carried out as part of the consent process with the participant assigning copyright of their spoken words to the researcher.

Useful material on some copyright issues

Qualidata (2002a) Consent to use information given in the interview [Internet], Qualidata. available from <http://www.qualidata.essex.ac.uk/creatingData/qualidataexampleconsentform.doc> (Example of a form which could be used to assign copyright of the interview participants' words to the researcher.)

Thomas, B. (2001) Ethical Guidelines [Internet], Available from <http://www.nmgw.ac.uk/~ohs/ohs/ethics.html> (Details of the responsibilities of researchers before, during and after an interview including the handling of copyright issues.)

Example of consent letter and information sheet

These examples only contain the information and would in the real world be printed on headed paper with address and contact numbers at the top.

Example of Information Sheet

Dear

I am conducting a study of the way in which investment advisors make investment decisions and I am inviting you to participate in a structured survey which will be administered individually. Your employer BettaInvest Group have recognised the importance of this research and support your participation in it. Participation is voluntary and there is no penalty or loss of any benefits whatsoever if you choose not to participate. The survey will take approximately 25 minutes.

If you are interested in participating you should know that:

- You can cease participation at any time and ask to have your responses removed from the study without need to provide an explanation.
- You will not be personally identified. Your name will not be included on the data file.
- The results will form the basis of a research article and report to the Association of Investment Advisors. The results will be reported in general terms.

If you decide to participate, please contact me at the phone or email address above.

Thank you for taking time to consider being involved in this project. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Yours sincerely

Consent letter

Dear

Thank you for offering to be involved in the investment decision project.

Please note the following:

- You can cease participation at any time and ask to have your responses removed from the study without need to provide an explanation.
- You will not be personally identified. Your name will not be included on the data file.
- The results will form the basis of a research article and report to the Association of Investment Advisors. The results will be reported in general terms.

Please read the following carefully:

I understand the contents of the Research Project Information Sheet and this Consent to Participate letter. I agree to participate and give my consent freely. I understand how the study will be carried out as described. I understand that whether or not I participate it will not affect my employment conditions, and that I can withdraw at any time without providing a reason. I am satisfied that I understand my role in the project and how the results will be used and presented.

Signed.....(Participant)

Date.....

ANSWERS TO MULTIPLE CHOICE

1 (c), 2 (c), 3 (c)