

Research Proposal and Ethics Workshop

Lecture 12
Research Ethics

Dr Andre Samuel

andre.samuel@sam.edu.tt

<http://www.samuellearning.org>

Defining Ethics in Research

- Ethical concern will emerge as you carry out your research from planning, proposal, data collection and analysis and reporting results
- **Ethics is about actions that are valid in all circumstances**
- Your work will have an ethic attached to it that says something about you and your attitude
- Your ethical standpoint could **bias** the work in unexpected ways and **make it invalid**

Formal Definition

- “Ethics refers to the appropriateness of your behaviour in relation to the rights of those who become the subject of your work or who are affected by it”

Saunders et al (2009, pg. 183-184)

- “Ethics are norms or standards of behavior that guide moral choices about our behavior and our relationships with others”

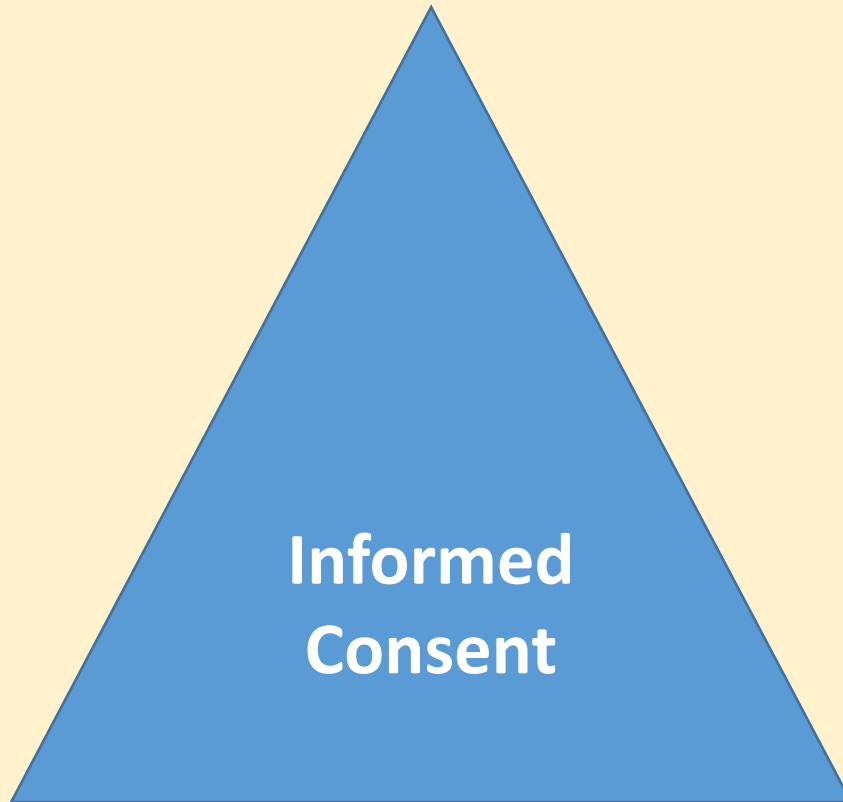
Cooper and Schindler (2006, pg. 116)

Points to Note

- Ethics has to do with our behaviour , the manner in which we conduct our research
- Is it morally acceptable?
- Are we morally responsible?
- We should be guided by social norms- notions of behaviour that ought to be adopted
- This means that there should be some **code of ethics**, set of laws or ethical codes to be followed

The Ethics Conundrum

Privacy



**Informed
Consent**

Deception

Confidentiality



De leerling was door een wand
gescheiden van de leraar.

Overall Importance

- In general ethics is concerned with how you **treat participants in your research**, how you collect data from participants and **maintain confidentiality**, and lastly how you analyse and report your findings
- The goal is to ensure that no one is harmed or **suffers adverse consequences** from research activities
- To avoid your research becoming 'null and void', unacceptable by norms, rescinded

General Ethical Issues

- Privacy of possible and actual participants
- Voluntary nature of participation and the right to withdraw
- Consent and possible deception of participants
- Maintenance of confidentiality of data
- Reactions of participants to the way in which you seek to collect data
- Effects on participants of the way data is used
- Behaviour and objectivity of you as a researcher

It's all about the Participants

- Safeguards
 - Explain study benefits
 - Explain participant rights and protections
 - Obtain informed consent
- Avoid
 - Deception
 - Infringement of Privacy
 - Confidentiality breaches

The Nature of Participant Consent

Lack of consent

- *Participant lacks knowledge*
- *Researcher uses deception to collect data*

Implied consent

- *Participant does not fully understand her/his rights*
- *Researcher implies consent about use of data from fact of access or return of questionnaire*

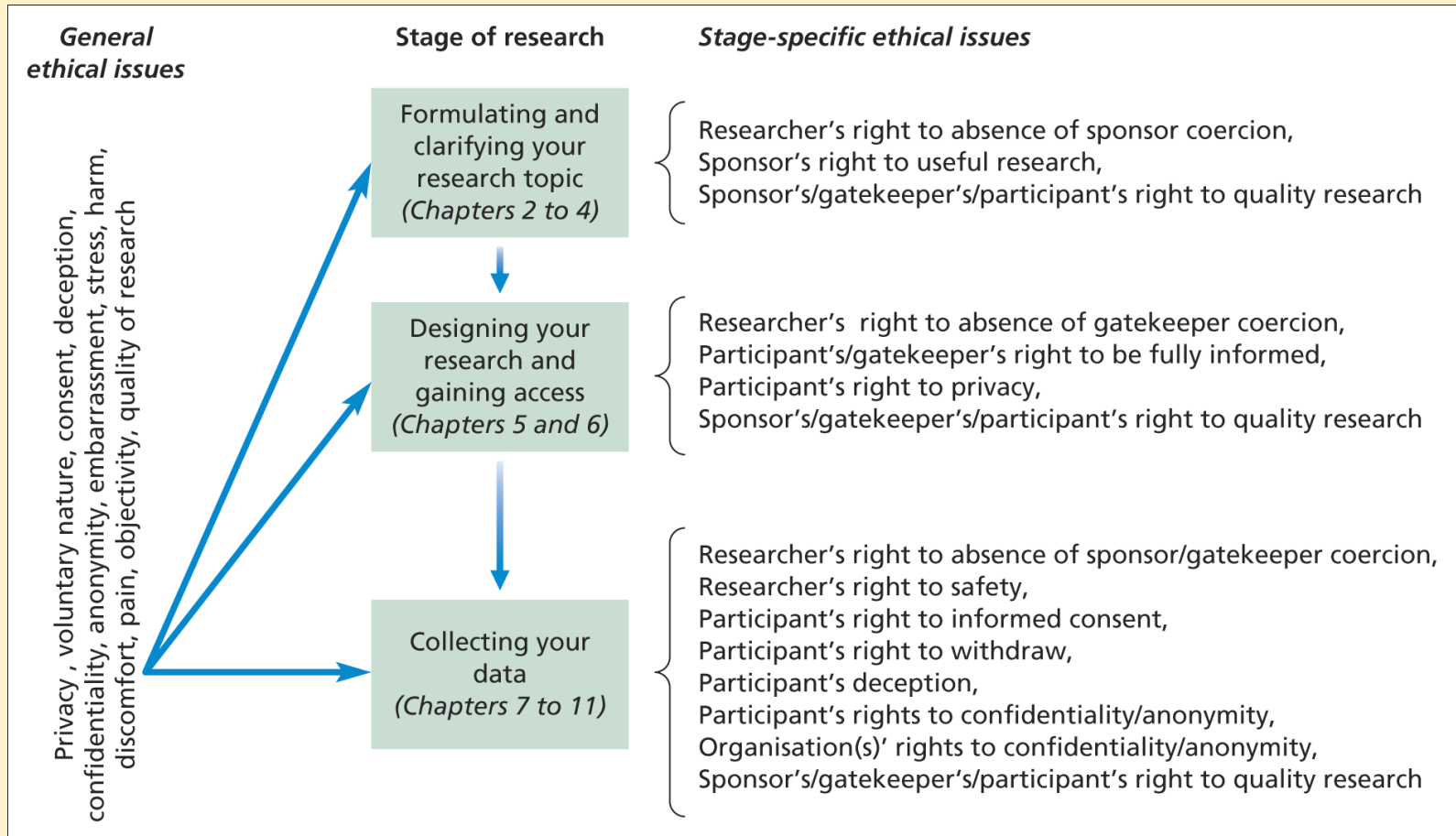
Informed consent

- *Participant's consent given freely and based on full information about participation rights and use of data*

Rights to Privacy and Confidentiality

- All individuals have a right to privacy and researchers must **Respect** that right
- Privacy guarantee is important to retain validity of the research and
- To encourage participants to answer truthfully
- Protect Confidentiality by:
 - Obtaining signed nondisclosure documents
 - Restrict access to participant information
 - Reveal participant info only with written consent
 - Not disclosing data subsets

Ethical Issues at different Stages of Research



General ethical issues

Privacy, voluntary nature, consent, deception, confidentiality, anonymity, embarrassment, stress, harm, discomfort, pain, objectivity, quality of research

Stage of research

Collecting your data
(Chapters 7 to 11)

Processing and storing your data
(Chapters 12 and 13)

Analysing your data and reporting your findings
(Chapters 12 to 14)

Stage-specific ethical issues

Researcher's right to absence of sponsor/gatekeeper coercion, Researcher's right to safety, Participant's right to informed consent, Participant's right to withdraw, Participant's deception, Participant's rights to confidentiality/anonymity, Organisation(s)' rights to confidentiality/anonymity, Sponsor's/gatekeeper's/participant's right to quality research

Participant's rights as individuals to the processing and storing of her/his personal data

Researcher's right to absence of sponsor/gatekeeper coercion, Organisation(s)' rights to confidentiality/anonymity, Participant's rights to confidentiality/anonymity, Sponsor's/gatekeeper's/participant's right to quality research

Bibliography

- Collis. J., Hussey R (2003) Business Research 2nd edition, Palgarve Macmillan
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P., Thornhill, A. (2007) Research Methods for Business Students, 4th edition, Prentice Hall
- Salkind, N. (2003) Exploring Research, 5th Edition, Prentice Hall
- Cooper, D.R., Schindler, P.S. (2006) Business Research Methods, McGraw-Hill
- Ghauri, P and Grønhaug, K. (2005) Research Methods in Business Studies, 3rd Edition, Pearson Education Limited