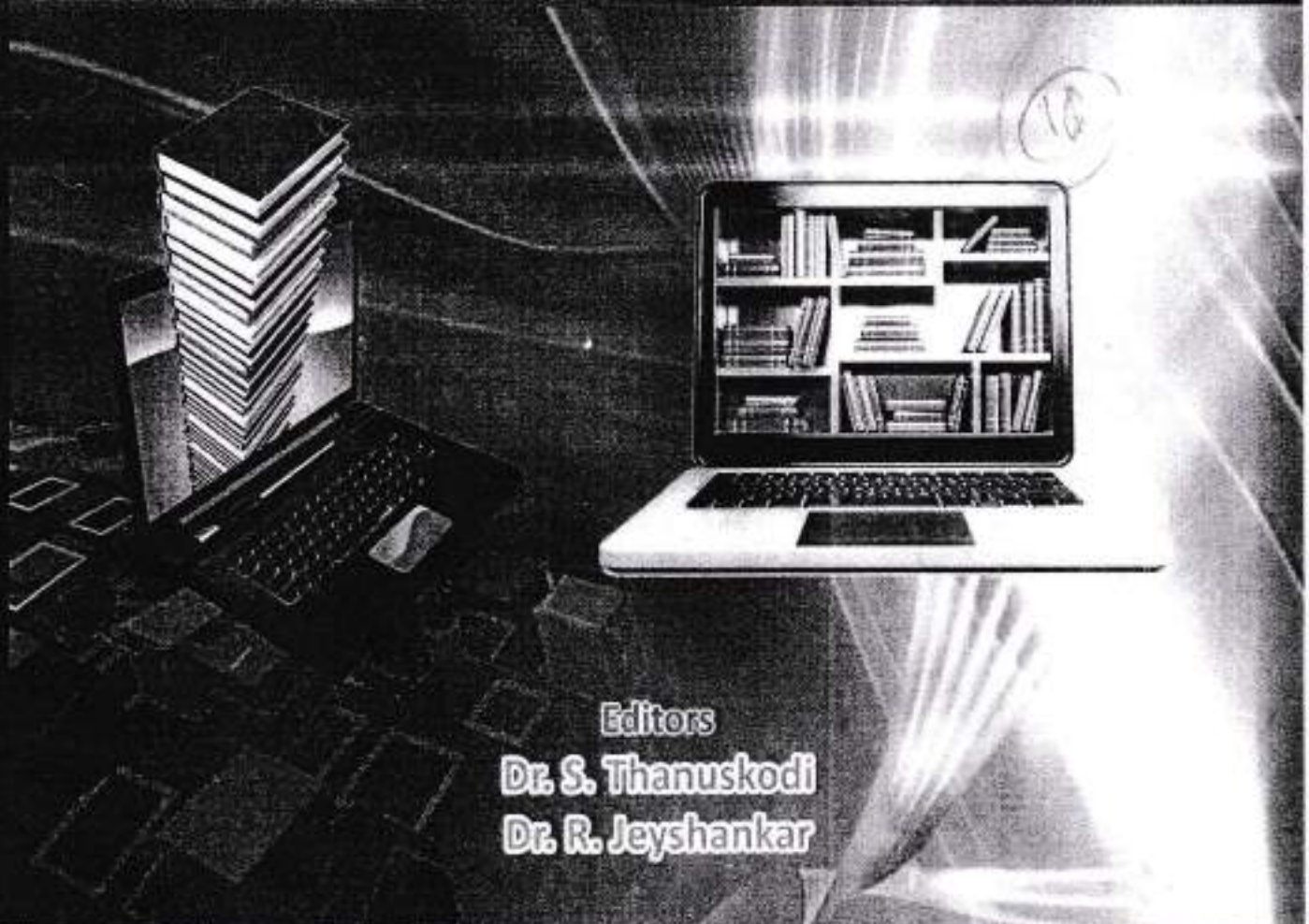


March 2016

Proceedings of the National Conference on Research Methodology in Library and Information Science

Research Methodology in Library and Information Science



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Ethics in LIS Research: A Qualitative Approach

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Abstract

In the modern world almost all information is available in the internet. So a researcher can take any information from internet. Some of the research reports, articles, dissertations duplicate (plagiarize) previous studies from the internet or books and journals. Some discipline and moral code of ethics should be followed in research. So this study focuses on the principles of ethics in the library and information science research.

Introduction

Research is the systematic process of collecting and analyzing information (data) in order to increase our understanding of the phenomenon which we are concerned with or interested in and communicating what we discover to the larger scientific community. Research has been conducted unethically in other experiments, not in regard to torture but in cases of consent, deception, privacy, and confidentiality. Such experiments include: the Milgram Experiment of 1961 (electric shock treatment), Humphrey's Tearoom Trade of 1970 (male on male sexual encounters), and the Zimbardo Guard Study of 1971 (college student simulated prison experiment) just to name a few. In these experiments the subjects did not always know what they were getting into or were not all voluntarily participating. Cultural and social studies deal with human choices, actions and relations, standards and institutions, beliefs and historical developments, works and traditions, language, thought and communication. The ultimate responsibility of research is to seek the truth. Accordingly, scientific integrity is a key aspect of research ethics. Researchers shall adhere to codified research ethics. They should fulfill requirements regarding honesty, impartiality and willingness to accept their own fallibility. Research is a systematic, socially organized quest for new and better insight.

What is Ethics?

Ethics is a set of principles that embody or exemplify what is good or right, or allow us to identify what is bad or wrong. These principles may be general in character, relate to some particular domain or come from some particular perspective. In this terms, the phrase 'social research ethics (LIS research comes under social science research)'. Ethical research becomes extremely important when dealing with human subjects.

Principles of Research Ethics:

Research Ethics Review Board (Research ERB) formulated some principles of ethics in research: with regard to 1) Privacy 2) Confidentiality 3) Informed consent 4) Appropriation of others' personal stories

Jones (1999) states the following principles in regard to electronic information gathering:

1. Openness: Existence of data banks should be publicly known
2. Individual Access and Correction: People should have access to the data collected about them.
3. Collection Limitation and Relevance: Personal data should be collected for one specific, legitimate purpose.
4. Use Limitations: Information should be used only for purposes specified at the time of collection.

5. Disclosure Limitation: Personal data is not to be communicated externally without consent of the subject who supplied the data.
6. Security: Personal data should be reasonably guarded against risks such as loss, unauthorized access, modification, or disclosure.

Purpose of Research Ethics:

Pojman (1996) proposes the following purposes of ethics:

1. To keep society from falling apart
2. To ameliorate human suffering
3. To promote human flourishing
4. To resolve conflicts of interest in just and orderly ways
5. To assign praise and blame, reward and punishment, and guilt

Research Ethics Code of Conduct by Standard Associations:

The British Psychological Society's code of conduct, ethical principles and guidelines (2005) include, among many others, section on competence, obtaining consent, confidentiality and personal conduct.

The American Psychological Association's ethical principles and code of conduct (2002) state five general principles: beneficence and non-maleficence, fidelity and responsibility, integrity, justice, and respect for people's rights and their dignity.

The American Sociological Association's codes of ethics and policies and procedures of the ASA committee on professional ethics (1999) have five general principles: professional competence; integrity; professional and scientific responsibility; respect for people's rights; dignity and diversity; and social responsibility. These are then devolved onto twenty ethical standards, including non-exploitation, confidentiality, informed consent, deception, offering inducements, and many others.

The Statement of Ethical Practice for the British Sociological Association (2002) includes sections on: professional integrity; relations with and responsibilities towards research participants; covert research; anonymity, privacy and confidentiality; relations with and responsibilities towards sponsors or funders; carrying obligations, roles and rights; pre-empting outcomes and negotiations about research; and obligations to sponsors or funders during the research process.

Ethical Standards of the American Educational Research Association (2000) include: responsibilities to the field; research populations, educational institutions, and the public (including working with children); informed consent, confidentiality, honesty, rights of withdrawal, exploitation for personal gain, sensitivity of local circumstances, avoidance of negative consequences, dissemination, anonymity; intellectual ownership; editing, reviewing and appraising research; sponsors, policy makers and other users of research; and students and student researchers.

Ethics in LIS Research:

Research in librarianship mean, the collection and analysis of original data on a problem of librarianship, done within the library schools according to scientific and scholarly standards. Research in this connection broadly includes investigations; studies; surveys; academic work at the doctoral, post-doctoral, and research staff level; and in-house or action research by practicing librarians; information personnel, and documentalists. The need of research in librarianship stems mainly from

three reasons. The first reason is the educational function of advance study in librarianship. The second reason involves the critical function, critical approach to librarianship. The profession requires students who can criticize, add to, and improve the professional knowledge and expertise. The third reason is the symbolic function. This is a result of growing professionalism. The LIS researcher takes up the studies related to quality of the libraries, quality of the library services, Case study in the biggest libraries, awareness of electronic resources in the libraries, and awareness of reading habits among students etc. All the topics are related to the quality of the libraries. So the researcher has to pursue the samples carefully and analyze them by proper statistical tools. The researcher in the field of LIS should follow the ethical factors like section on competence, secure the research data, obtaining consent, confidentiality, personal conduct, fidelity and responsibility, integrity, justice, respect for people's rights and their dignity, social responsibility, deception, offering inducements, privacy, relationship with host institution, rights of withdrawal, exploitation for personal gain, sensitivity of local circumstances, avoidance of negative consequences, dissemination, anonymity; intellectual ownership; editing, reviewing, appraising research, policy makers, students, student researchers and other users of research.

LIS Multi-Disciplinary Research:

The complexity, diversity and inter-disciplinary nature of present day knowledge demands cooperative research by scholars, and scientists from various disciplines. All human knowledge constitutes the broad canvas of librarianship. Inter-disciplinary research to overcome the diverse library problems assumes importance. Information science is actually an inter-disciplinary one. and is used here to mean as the science of information systems and information processes. This includes the academic, technical, economic, political, social, cultural and administrative fields. The inter-relationship of library and information science to other areas of knowledge and to new information and communication technologies has become more apparent. Increasingly, research activities within library and information science are interfacing with subject areas such as audio-visual technology, microfilm technology, computer science, communications, and instructional technology. Ultimately, all these developments appear to enhance the potential for research workers in library and information science to conceptualize processes more accurately to express new intellectual information. The LIS researcher should be carefully complete the research; produce results very strongly and highly impact the field or specific subjects. All the subject experts should watch the results, so that LIS researcher strongly applies all the appropriate tools and techniques under the professional ethics of research.

Responsibilities of the LIS Researcher:

Every researcher should be a member of the research community, and bear ethical responsibilities. The responsibilities of LIS researcher are:

- Sensitive approach of research
- Dangerous location should be identified for data collection
- Avoid the reputations
- Should be possible to pursuing their further research
- Ensure and follow the rules and regulations
- Protect anonymity and confidentiality

Conclusion

The LIS researcher pursuing research in the technology world, followed research ethics and compare the previous study reports. So that, the researcher identified the problems in the quality and improve the quality of the reports. The Researchers in Library and Information Science, as in every field should not follow short cut and crooked method to achieve their goal. They should not work with vested interest and selfish purposes. They should avoid plagiarization which is spreading like cancer in our academics. A standard ethical code should be made mandatory in LIS research.

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