

ETHICAL CONSIDERATION IN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

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1. Introduction

Educational research plays a critical role in shaping and improving our educational systems. By investigating teaching methods, learning processes, and educational outcomes, researchers provide valuable insights that can benefit students, educators, and policymakers. However, the pursuit of knowledge must be balanced with ethical considerations.

This paper delves into the essential principles of ethics in educational research. The Author carried out the experiment for his Ph.D. work in 2014-15. The experimental method was adopted by the researcher to test the effectiveness of the e-content package. The sample was student-teachers of one year B.Ed. course in Pune. The paper describes how the researcher followed the ethics in the experiment.

2. Meaning of Ethics in Educational Research

Ethics in educational research is a framework of moral principles that guide researchers in conducting educational studies in a responsible and respectful manner. It ensures the well-being of participants, the integrity of the research, and the advancement of educational knowledge in a just and equitable way.

3. Organizations providing Ethical guidelines in Research

Several organizations and bodies provide ethical guidelines and oversight for research in various fields, including education. Some of these bodies include:

i) British Educational Research Association (BERA): BERA provides ethical guidelines and support for educational researchers in the UK. Their Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research offer comprehensive guidance on ethical principles and practices in educational research.

ii) American Educational Research Association (AERA): AERA, based in the United States, offers ethical guidance through its Code of Ethics, which outlines principles and standards for educational research conduct. They provide resources and support for researchers to ensure ethical practices in their work.

iii) National Research Ethics Service (NRES): In the UK, the NRES provides ethical review and approval for research involving human participants through Research Ethics Committees (RECs). While NRES covers all fields of research, including education, it ensures that ethical principles are upheld in educational research projects.

iv) Institutional Review Boards (IRBs): Many academic institutions have their own IRBs or Ethics Committees tasked with reviewing and approving research involving human participants. These boards ensure that research conducted within their institution meets ethical standards and complies with regulatory requirements.

v) European Educational Research Association (EERA): EERA supports educational research across Europe and provides resources and guidance on ethical conduct through its Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research.

vi) International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE): ISTE provides ethical guidelines specifically focused on educational technology and the use of digital tools in educational research. These guidelines help researchers navigate ethical considerations related to technology use in educational settings.

vii) World Medical Association (WMA): While primarily focused on medical research, the WMA's Declaration of Helsinki provides ethical principles applicable to research involving human participants, including educational research with medical components or implications.

These organizations and bodies play a critical role in promoting ethical conduct and ensuring the protection of participants in educational research. Researchers often look to these guidelines and seek approval from relevant ethics committees to ensure their studies adhere to ethical standards and best practices.

4. Ethical consideration for the experiment:

As per the ethical guidelines for educational research (2011) published by British educational research association (BERA) UK, the researcher followed the guidelines for the experiment (2014-15) in the following way –

- **Voluntary informed consent –**

After sampling and determining the research design, the researcher took permission from the principal for the experiment. After the permission, the orientation session for the student teacher of English medium was organized, in which the details of role and expectations of the student-teachers were explained. The schedule and timings were told to them. At the end 12 students withdrew their names and the researcher got the consent of 68 students only 68 student-teachers were given pre-test for the study. 12 students not showed interest due to schedule and timing of the intervention.

- The researcher gave them clear idea about kind of activities. They will have to participate in various online activities. Most of them wanted to delete all online activities and accounts created during the experiments. They thought online activities which they will perform, would not be good enough to make publish online. The researcher agreed to delete all accounts and activities after the experiment.

- **Openness and Disclosure:** The researcher taken the permission from the principal of Tilak College of Education, Pune from where the sample was selected to carry out the research.

- **Right to Withdraw:** These student-teachers were informed about their right to withdraw from the research at any time for any reason. 12 students withdrawn their name before the beginning of the intervention. No students withdrawn thereafter.

- **Privacy:** The researcher recognized the subjects' entitlement to privacy and must accorded them their right to confidentiality and anonymity. So all accounts and email which were required to acquire e skills created for the experiment purpose only and all were deleted by subjects itself. The deletion of account gave assurance to the subjects about their privacy. The researcher protected their privacy by keeping the data stored before deleting. Keep those account online may become vulnerable in the online world.

- **Incentives:** Researcher motivated and appreciated constantly about student teachers' attendance before the college time table and giving extra timing for the research from their busy schedule. since the topics of e-content were taken from their syllabus of B.Ed. 106 ICT, they were self-motivated to learn the-content and acquire e skills.

In this way, researcher has taken optimum precaution to make sure to follow ethical guidelines for the research. Due to the observance of the ethical guidelines, the research got good involvement of all the subjects.

5. Discussion :

Ethics in educational research serve as a foundational pillar, ensuring the safety and respect of participants throughout the research process. This includes protecting participants from harm and mistreatment, a cornerstone for maintaining the trust and integrity essential in upholding the credibility of research findings and the reputation of the educational research field.

Ethical guidelines mandate obtaining informed consent, ensuring that participants are fully aware of the research's purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits, and agree to participate voluntarily. Confidentiality and privacy are paramount, requiring researchers to safeguard sensitive participant information through anonymization and secure storage, thereby respecting individual privacy rights. Additionally, ethical research emphasizes fair treatment and equity, ensuring all participants are treated equally and without bias, which is crucial for the integrity and reliability of the research outcomes.

The responsibility to society underscores the importance of research contributing positively to educational practices and policies, aiming for the greater good without causing harm. Lastly, accountability and professionalism are critical, as adherence to ethical standards reflects the researchers' commitment to professional conduct and the broader responsibilities of contributing to the field of education. Together, these principles ensure that educational research is conducted with the utmost respect for ethical standards, thereby enriching the field and its impact on society.

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