Chapter 1
Marketing to Children and Ethical Research

ABSTRACT

Ethics can be defined as a set of moral principles and rules of conduct: ethics in research, as one author has put it, relates to ‘the application of a system of moral principles to prevent harming or wrongdoing others, to promote the good, to be respectful, and to be fair’ (Sieber, 1993, p.14). When most people think of ethics (or morals), they think of rules for distinguishing between the right and wrong. This is the most common way of defining “ethics”: norms for conduct that distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Ethics can be defined as a set of moral principles and rules of conduct. When most people think of ethics (or morals), they think of rules for distinguishing between the right and wrong. This is the most common way of defining “ethics”: norms for conduct that distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.
INTRODUCTION

Ethics can be defined as a set of moral principles and rules of conduct: ethics in research, as one author has put it, relates to ‘the application of a system of moral principles to prevent harming or wronging others, to promote the good, to be respectful, and to be fair’ (Sieber, 1993, p.14).

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Although most people acquire their sense of right and wrong during childhood, moral development occurs throughout life and human beings pass through different stages of growth as they mature. If morality were nothing more than common sense, then why are there so many ethical disputes and issues in our society?

One plausible explanation of these disagreements is that all people recognise some common ethical norms but different individuals interpret, apply, and balance these norms in different ways in light of their own world and life experiences.

Another way of defining ‘ethics’ focuses on the disciplines that study standards of conduct, such as, philosophy, theology, law, psychology, or sociology. One may also define ethics as a method, procedure, or perspective for deciding how to act and for analysing complex problems and issues.

Many different disciplines, institutions, and professions have norms for behaviour that suit their particular aims and goals. These norms also help members of the discipline to coordinate their actions or activities and to establish the public’s trust for the discipline. Ethical norms also serve the aims or goals of research and apply to people who conduct scientific research or other scholarly or creative activities. There is even a specialised discipline, research ethics, which studies these norms.

There are several reasons why it is important to adhere to ethical norms in research. First, norms promote the aims of the research, such as knowledge, truth, and avoidance or error. For example, prohibitions against fabricating, falsifying, or misrepresenting research data promote the truth and avoid error. Second, since research often involves a great deal of cooperation and coordination among many different people in different disciplines and institutions, ethical standards promote
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