Chapter 2

Ethical Data Management and Research Integrity in the Context of E-Schools and Community Engagement

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is to build on the existing literature in the field of research methodology, specifically as applicable in terms of ethical data management and research integrity, and especially in the context of e-schools and community engagement. This chapter should also enable readers to understand why ethics is important in research relating to e-schools and community engagement. Finally, the author identifies other elements critical to the responsible conduct of research in areas such as those of e-schools and community engagement. The chapter thus provides the reader with an overview of ethical issues in quantitative and qualitative data collection and guidelines for such data processing.

INTRODUCTION

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010, p. 117), ethics focus “on what is morally proper and improper when engaged” in research, concerning “beliefs about what is right or wrong from a moral perspective”. Cook and Cook (2004, p. 254) further explains that increasing “complexity and diversity in society decreases the cohesiveness of social norms and ethical decisions are increasingly negotiated within
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and between groups.” Ethics is therefore “de facto based on group norms”, closely related to a research project involving human respondents and/or participants only being ethical if the applicable scientific and methodological standards were “sound in the first place” (Malaviya, Ravinett, & Sundar, 2013, p. 132).

This chapter will discuss aspects relating to the following, presented in the context of research into e-schools and their community engagement:

- Related to Ethical Issues in Quantitative Data Collection and Guidelines for Quantitative Data Processing:
  - Full disclosure
  - Informed Consent (and Assent for under-age learners), including examples of forms that can be used in both of these cases, detailing e.g. the aspects that should be included when drafting these
    - Autonomy
  - Harm, Risk and/or Disadvantages to Human Respondents
  - Privacy, Confidentiality, Anonymity and Trust
    - Storage and disposal of research data and/or samples
  - Voluntary Participation

- In terms of Ethical Issues in Qualitative Data Collection and Guidelines for Qualitative Data Processing:
  - Roles and Importance of Research Ethics
    - Ethical Dilemmas in Fieldwork
    - Research Ethics in Fieldwork
  - Informed Consent
  - Privacy
  - Confidentiality and Anonymity
  - Fairness

- In light of the possible limitations related to the characteristics of especially Educational Research, the chapter will further also briefly discuss, where appropriate:
  - Ethical Concerns in Research Methods
  - Ethical Issues and Considerations in Data Management
  - Data Misinterpretation
  - Ethical Concerns in Data Sharing and Privacy Considerations
  - Objectivity in Research Methods

- Finally, Ethics and the Peer Review Process will be discussed as it relates to:
  - Qualifications and Expertise of the Researcher.

Therefore, the objectives of this chapter will specifically be to:
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