

Ethical Issues in Marketing research

Dita Kovarikova

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Course leader: Christopher M. G. Shallow



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THERE IS
NO RIGHT WAY
TO DO
A WRONG THING.



Introduction

The consideration of ethics in research, and general business for that matter, is of growing importance.

It is, therefore, critical that you understand the basics of ethical research and how this might affect your research project.



Introduction

This is especially important if your research involves interaction with businesses or members of the general community who serves as participants (i.e. respondents) in your research.

Introduction

It is easier than ever before for companies to connect directly with customers and collect individual information that goes into a computer database and can be matched to other pieces of data collected during unrelated transactions.



Introduction



- Marketing research has experienced a resurgence with the widespread use of the internet and the popularity of social networking.
- Researchers are becoming closer in-term of intimacy as well as physical proximity-to their respondents.



Introduction

Ethical problems are relationship kinds of problems. That is, ethical problems occur only when an individual interact with other people.



Historical context of ethical issues in marketing

In 1963 proposed a code of ethics by Dr. Dik Warren Twedt a Professor of Marketing and Quantitative Management Science at the University of Missouri in St. Louis. He was a marketing researcher and a member of the American Marketing Association.



Historical context of ethical issues in marketing

The code was prompted by three main issues:

- 1) *Desire to maintain public confidence in marketing research procedures*
- 2) *The need to self-regulate the discipline before outsiders decided marketing research needed regulation*
- 3) *The concern to maintain a positive public image of marketing in general.*





Questions to students

What are ethics?



Questions to students

Simply...ethics address whether a particular action is right or wrong, good or bad.



Why do we need to worry about ethics in marketing research?





Market research is the collection and analysis of information about consumers, competitors and the effectiveness of marketing programs.

A researcher has the responsibility to treat respondents fairly in a research study and has a responsibility to the client to gather accurate, reliable information.



Potential for harm

It is your responsibility to consider whether any type of harm could occur as part of your research and you need to ensure that mechanisms are instituted to remove this potential harm.



Potential for harm

- **Psychological harm:** use of nudity in advertising may show participants images that offend them.
- **Financial harm:** researching, unethical behaviour within a given firm - an individual being fired, share sensitive information with a firm's competitors - financial harm to the organization
- **Social harm:** researching how lifestyle affects consumption - disclose a person's sexual orientation when that person wanted to keep this confidential.



Potential for harm

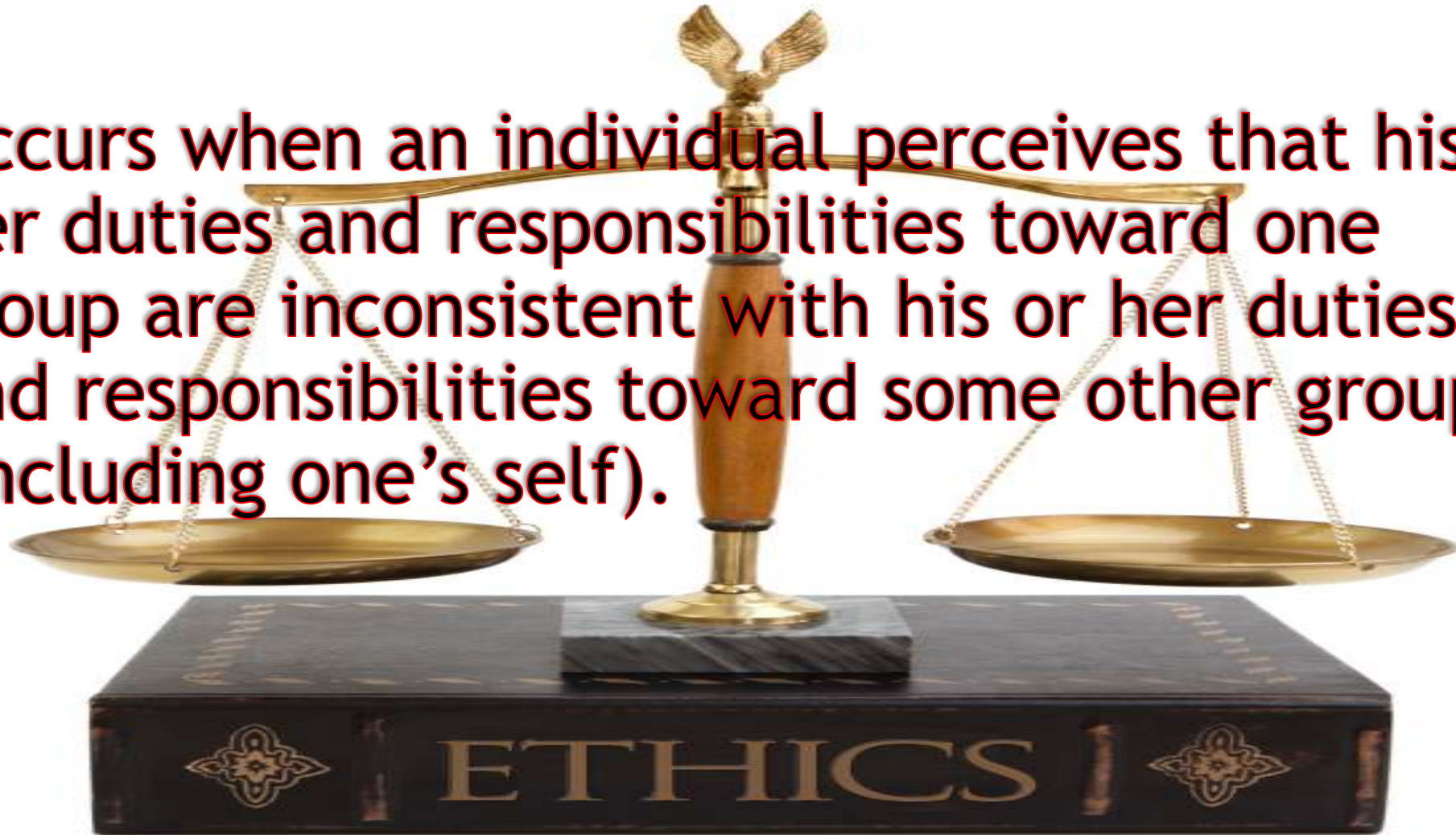
Ensure that you

- Behave according to appropriate ethical standards
- Consider how your research might negatively affect participants
- Protect yourself, your supervisor/teachers and your institution from being placed in situations in which individuals could make claims of inappropriate behaviour, resulting in public criticism or even you being sued.



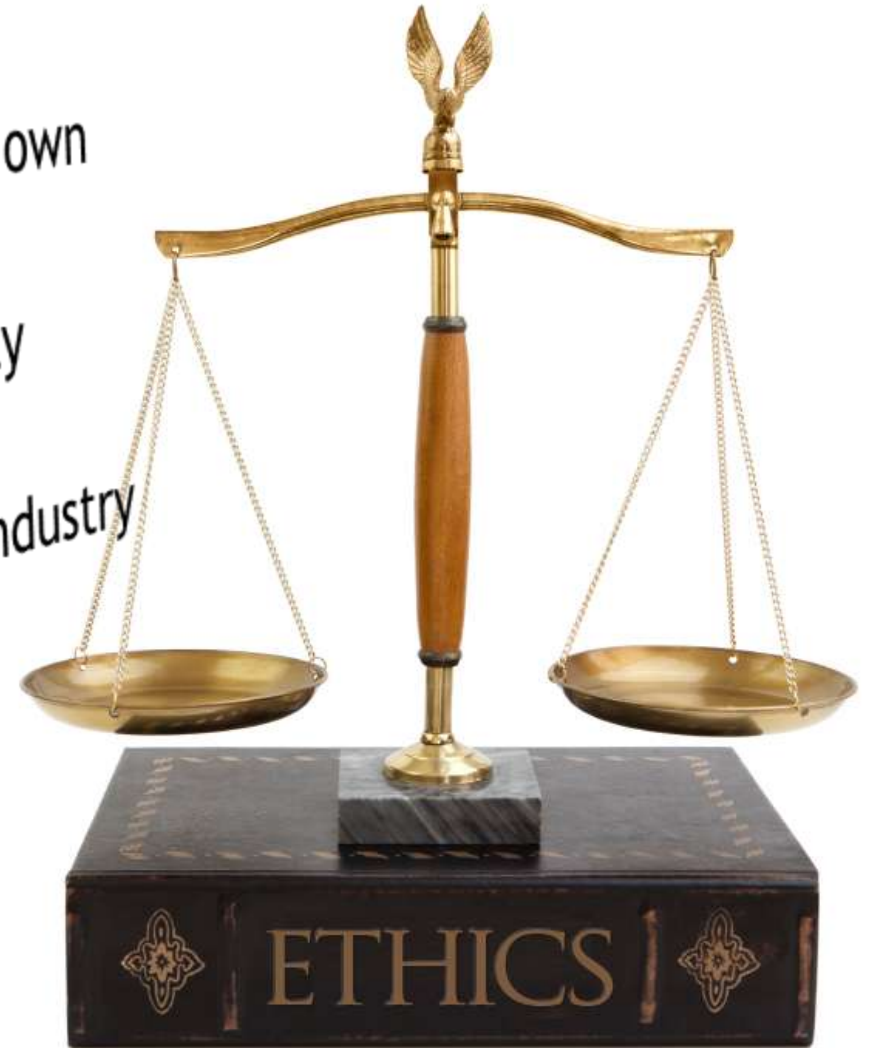
Ethical conflict

Occurs when an individual perceives that his or her duties and responsibilities toward one group are inconsistent with his or her duties and responsibilities toward some other group (including one's self).



Ethical conflict

- Serve as role models by conducting their own activities impeccably
- Encourage ethical behaviours by promptly reprimanding unethical conduct
- Draft and promote both corporate and industry codes of conduct.



Code of Ethical Conduct

There are various ethical codes of conduct that regulate researchers' behaviour. These codes discuss many issues that potentially might arise in your research, as well as other issues associated with professional practice.



Different types of codes:

- American Marketing Association's (AMA, 2009) - research-related issues and specifically states that members must 'do not harm'
- European Society for Opinion and Marketing Research's (ESOMR, 2009) - researchers' broad responsibilities.
- The American Psychological Association (APA, 2009) - a diverse range of research issues, many of which also relate to business research.



What are the major ethical problems of marketing researchers?



Ethical problems

- **Research integrity** - deliberate production of dishonest or less-than-completely-honest research
- **Treating outside clients fairly** - conflict between company interests and outside client interests
- **Confidentiality** - researcher must balance what is fair to a competitor with what is best for one's own company.



Ethical problems

- **Social issues and marketing mix** - balancing the interests of society with the interest of the company in the context of either product decisions or advertising decisions.
- **Personal decisions** - how to balance responsibilities
- **Treating respondents fairly** - protecting the personal informations and anonymity of the respondent. Balance the interests of the respondent against the interests of the company.



Ethical problems

- **Informed Consent** - ensure that potential participants fully understand what they are being asked to do and that they are informed of any potentially negative consequences of such participation.



Information sheets should include:

- Who is doing the research
- Where you are from
- Why you are doing the research
- Who the supervisor is
- How were they selected to participate
- What do participants need to do and how long it will take
- Is there any potential for them to be harmed (or will they be disadvantaged if they do not participate)
- Whether their confidentiality and anonymity will be protected
- What happens to the data and any report
- How they will be informed of the results



Ethical problems

- **Consent Forms**

Audio/videotaping, or conducting a focus group, use not only information sheet but also have the respondent sign a consent form as well. There is more emphasis on what respondents are agreeing to do and that they understand any potential negative consequences.



Ethical problems

- *Technology Issues*

Collecting data online from a blog or chat site that discusses aspects of a given company or brand. This can be viewed as a private communication.



Conclusion

Marketing research has experienced a resumption with the widespread use of the Internet and the popularity of social networking



Conclusion

Marketing researchers have an ethical obligation to conduct research objectively. The most difficult ethical problem facing marketing researchers is maintaining the integrity of their research efforts.



Conclusion

And may other ethical problems are involved in marketing research, but the issues of maintaining fundamental research integrity dominates.



E**t****H****i****C****S**

Conclusion

It is necessary for In-house research departments and agency companies having codes of ethics review and update them. Potential respondents should have full information before voluntarily participating in your research.

E**t****H****i****C****S**



Thank for listening





Question Time

Sources

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