



CODE OF ETHICS IN SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

Social science research is the systematic study of the whole spectrum of human behavior as represented by its various disciplines. Research helps us to understand individuals in society, in interaction with one another and with nature, within and across communities and nations, as influenced by past events and aspirations for the future. Given its powerful theories and methods, social science can contribute to the wellbeing of individuals and the development of society.

Along with the rigor of research procedures, it is expected that social science researchers will respect the individuals, groups and communities whose behaviors they seek to understand, and will value their rights and identities at all times. This Code of Ethics serves as the framework for fulfilling these responsibilities.

1. **Integrity** or the commitment to accuracy, intellectual honesty and truthfulness must be upheld in the conduct and reporting of studies. It involves scholarly rigor in obtaining, recording and analyzing data, and in reporting and publishing results. It means taking into consideration the long and short-term effects of research projects on the people, places, natural and social environments under investigation.
2. **Confidentiality and anonymity** of research participants should be maintained and their personal **privacy** protected. Unless data have been sourced from public documents, the identity of individuals in the study should not be revealed. Moreover, identities of individuals, groups or organizations who participated in a study can be revealed only when written permission is obtained from them by the researcher.
3. **Informed consent** must be obtained by researchers from the research participants without coercion or undue influence after they have explained the purpose and objectives of the study, the methods to be used in collecting information, the nature of the research participant's involvement, and potential risks in and benefits for their participation.
4. **Beneficence** ("do good; do no harm") should be ensured in the conduct of a study. This means enhancing the well-being and improving the situation of the populations under study, rather than undermining or endangering them in any way. Participants must be protected from possible harm, including physical, medical, psychological and social damage (such as distress, embarrassment, social stigma), and financial, criminal or civil liability.

5. **Social justice** should always be considered by researchers in the allocation of burdens and benefits to the research participants and their communities. The study or its results must not introduce nor exacerbate inequalities and inequities among the research participants and the community in the study area.
6. **Cultural and gender sensitivity** to traditions, cultural norms, and values, as well as gender related perspectives and practices, must always be observed by researchers in the conduct of the study. The esteem accorded by individuals and communities to their language and other forms of cultural knowledge and practices must be respected and acknowledged.
7. The **protection of vulnerable and at-risk individuals and groups** should be foremost in the mind of researchers when undertaking a study. These sectors include those who are marginalized or disadvantaged by virtue of their age, gender, social class, disability, ethnicity, and physical or mental health. Additional measures must be placed to protect them.