



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Research Methods Workshop

Workshop / Session 6

Negotiating Access and Ethics

Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education; Transforming Lives



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This session's **Aims**

- be aware of issues associated with gaining traditional and internet-mediated access
- be able to evaluate a range of strategies that help you to gain access to organizations and to individual participants
- be aware of the importance of research ethics and the need to act ethically
- be aware of the principles of data protection and data management

Access and Ethics

Access and ethics are critical aspects for the success of any research project!

- **How access to data can be gained?**
- **How to handle possible ethical concern that could arise?**



Types of Access

- Traditional access, such as face-to-face interactions, telephone conversations, written correspondence (e.g. letter), visiting data archives
- Internet-mediated access, such as Skype / Microsoft Teams conversations, email correspondence, accessing online databases
- In most cases, you use both types of access
- But, since COVID-19 internet-mediated access became a common practice!

What type of access do you need?

- Do you need organisational access?
- Do you have to talk to experts, such as CEO's?
- Do you need to find survey/interview participants? How many?
- Do you need to find secondary data?
- Getting access to all types of data is very, very time consuming!!

Physical Access to Organisations

- **Is very hard to get, as**
 - organisations get many requests from students
 - gatekeeper (often a assistant) is unsure about your credibility and/or doubt your competence
 - decision maker does not have much time (particularly in March, August, and December)
 - decision maker might not be interested in your research (lack of perceived value)
 - the data you ask for is confidential / your topic is sensitive

Some Tips to get Organisational Access

- Familiarise yourself FULLY with the characteristics of the organisation / group you aim to get access to
- Allow yourself sufficient time, as negotiating access can take month
- Use existing contacts, but do not forget to develop new ones (networking)
- Provide a clear account to the purpose of your research (clear and to the point)
- Overcome organisational concerns (e.g. by highlighting data protection)
- Identify potential benefits for the organisation
- Use suitable language / attire

Leverage-Saliency Theory

- Different people will respond to your request differently depending on
 - Their interest in the topic
 - Your presentation (oral, written, visual)
 - Potential offer of incentives
 - Use of your research
 - Requirements of participation
- Be aware that this can lead to a response / non-response error!

RESEARCH ETHICS

Research Ethics

- **“Standards of behaviours that guide your conduct in relation to the rights of those who become subject of your work or are affected by it”**

Why should I be concerned about ethics?

- Business and management research often involves human participation and as a consequence raises ethical concerns
- As a member of a university you are required to abide by its codes of ethics
 - Understand the codes of ethics (Epigeum Research Ethics Courses);
 - Submit your research proposal for ethical review before starting your data collection
- You need to comply with the law concerning data protection

Ethical Principals

- Integrity, Fairness and Respect for others
- Avoidance of harm
- Privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity of participants
- Informed consent of participation
- Voluntary nature of participation
- Right to withdraw
- Compliance with data protection

The Principal of informed Consent

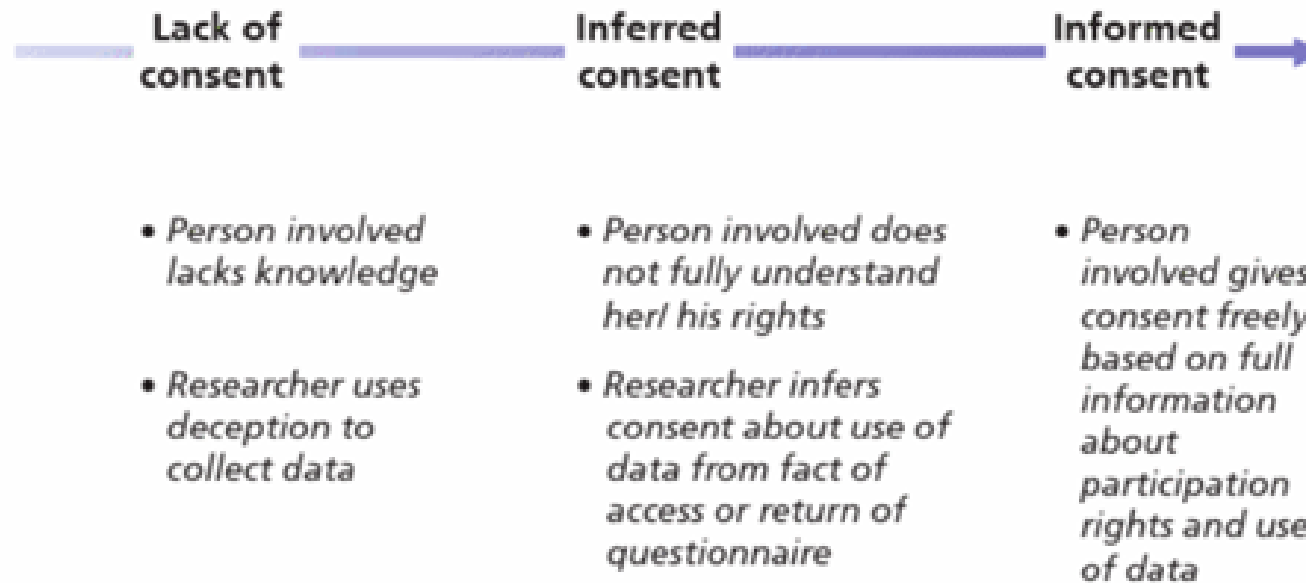


Figure 6.2 The nature of consent

- You need to give all participants a participant information sheet that describes the aim of your research project, the risks involved in the study, their rights (e.g. right to withdraw), and how you will anonymise and protect their data.

Some Words about online Communities

- **If you join an online community, such as a group on Facebook or LinkedIn**
 - Avoid 'lurking'; rather be honest about your intent from the beginning
 - Be aware that 'harvesting' data might be seen as violating the principle of the voluntary nature of participation
 - Always inform the moderator / admin about your research intent and get their consent
 - Do not use names / usernames; keep your analyses anonymous
 - Comply with data protection

Final Points to highlight

- Think very carefully about whether your research proposal is feasible and data access sufficient. If this is not the case, adjust your proposal!
- Negotiation access is NOT straightforward; it requires time, persistence, and emotional resilience.
- Remember, you rely on the goodwill of other people – behave accordingly.
- You need to demonstrate competence and integrity - ensure that your LinkedIn profile is professional
- Always introduce your research brief and to the point
- Pass the “Epigeum Research Ethics Courses” this week and submit your ethic approval form before starting to collect data

Research Activity

Have a look at page 282 of Saunders et al. (2019). Go through the different questions and answer them. Write down a summary of your answers.

Be aware you will have to follow what you wrote on your 'Ethics Form' while collecting your empirical evidence. Failing to do so will counted as an academic offence and will lead to you to dismissal or a reduction of your final dissertation mark!