

RESEARCH ETHICS MANAGEMENT IN EDUCATIONAL STUDIES: NAVIGATING SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND CULTURAL SENSITIVITIES

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Abstract

This study examines the ethical management of educational research, focusing on social responsibility and cultural sensitivity. It aims to address challenges in balancing academic goals with ethical principles, particularly in diverse cultural contexts. The study employs a qualitative literature review method, analyzing theoretical and empirical sources to explore the intersection of research ethics and cultural awareness. The findings highlight three main issues: low awareness of research ethics, neglect of cultural sensitivity, and minimal integration of social responsibility. Researchers in remote areas often lack knowledge of ethical guidelines, leading to practices that compromise participants' rights. Cultural insensitivity is prevalent due to a universalistic approach that overlooks local values, creating tensions between researchers and communities. Additionally, research outcomes often fail to address community needs, as they are more focused on academic achievements than tangible societal benefits. This study recommends integrated ethics training, participatory research approaches that respect local values, and the adoption of transformative paradigms emphasizing community empowerment. These strategies aim to enhance the relevance, ethical integrity, and social impact of educational research. By addressing these challenges, researchers can contribute to more inclusive and socially responsible practices, bridging the gap between theory and practice in diverse educational settings.

Keywords: Research Ethics Management, Educational Studies, Navigating Social Responsibility, Cultural Sensitivities

Introduction

Research ethics in educational studies is a crucial issue that demands academic attention, especially in the context of social responsibility and cultural sensitivity. In the research process, researchers are often faced with moral dilemmas that affect academic integrity and relationships with research subjects. These challenges include the treatment of subjects, the use of data, and the management of research results.

Navigating these ethical aspects requires a deep understanding of the social values and cultural context in which the research is conducted (Creswell, 2014).

In educational studies, research involves not only data exploration but also direct interaction with humans as the main subjects. Therefore, cultural sensitivity is an important element in ensuring an ethical research process. Researchers must consider local norms and values that can



affect the acceptance and validity of research results (Banks, 2006). Failure to understand the cultural context can lead to biased research results or even conflict with the communities involved.

The importance of ethics in educational research is increasingly relevant amid rapid social change. In the context of globalization, cross-cultural interactions are becoming more complex, creating new challenges for researchers in maintaining a balance between academic aspirations and social responsibility (Mertens, 2010). This condition demands a more inclusive and participatory approach, especially in collecting data from diverse communities.

Neglecting research ethics not only impacts the individuals involved but also academic credibility. Research conducted without considering ethical aspects can have long-term negative impacts, both for local communities and the wider community. Therefore, the application of strict ethical standards is an absolute necessity at every stage of research (Flick, 2014).

Various organizations and educational institutions have developed guidelines to ensure that research is conducted ethically. However, the implementation of these guidelines often faces obstacles, especially in the context of research in areas with high cultural diversity. This indicates the need for a more adaptive approach to local norms and values (Punch, 2013).

Researchers also have a social responsibility to ensure that their research provides real benefits to society. In the context of education, this includes developing policies that support inclusive and equitable learning. In other words, responsible research must be able to bridge the gap between theory and practice (Robson, 2011).

Cultural sensitivity in educational research involves understanding the identity,

traditions, and social dynamics of the community being studied. Without this understanding, research risks becoming an instrument of exploitation rather than a tool of empowerment. Therefore, it is important for researchers to integrate the values of justice and equality into their research design (Babbie, 2015).

Another challenge is how to manage the relationship between researchers and participants, especially in the context of power relations. Researchers must ensure that participants feel safe and respected throughout the research process. This requires good communication skills and an approach that is sensitive to the needs of both individuals and communities (Bryman, 2016).

In the Indonesian context, issues of ethics and cultural sensitivity are increasingly relevant given the ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity that exists. Research in education must be able to reflect this complexity without neglecting the aspect of inclusivity. Thus, educational research in Indonesia can be a model for ethical and socially responsible research practices (Sugiyono, 2018).

This article aims to examine the management of research ethics in educational studies, with a focus on social responsibility and cultural sensitivity. The discussion will include a literature review, identification of research gaps, and proposals for new contributions that are relevant to current conditions.

Banks (2006) explains the importance of integrating cultural sensitivity in educational research. This study highlights how understanding cultural context can increase the validity of data and the relevance of research results. The study also emphasizes the need for collaboration with local communities to avoid bias in data collection.

Mertens (2010) proposed a transformative paradigm approach in educational research. This paradigm emphasizes the principles of inclusivity and social justice, which are considered essential in ensuring that research not only provides new insights but also empowers communities. This study is an important reference for academics who want to integrate ethical aspects into their research methodology.

Sugiyono (2018) examines the application of ethics research in Indonesia, focusing on the challenges faced by researchers in maintaining cultural sensitivity. This study found that a lack of understanding of local norms is often a major obstacle in the research process. Therefore, special training is needed for researchers to develop cultural competence.

Although various studies have discussed the importance of research ethics and cultural sensitivity, there is still little research that specifically integrates the two in the context of education in Indonesia. Most studies focus on one aspect, resulting in a fragmentary approach. This gap indicates the need for a more holistic and contextual study.

This article offers an approach that systematically unites the principles of research ethics and cultural sensitivity in the context of education in Indonesia. By combining global theory and local practice, this study is expected to provide a more relevant framework for academics and education practitioners in Indonesia..

Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a literature study method to explore the management of research ethics in educational studies, especially related to social responsibility and cultural sensitivity. The literature study method was chosen because it allows researchers to analyze and synthesize various relevant theoretical and empirical sources, resulting

in a deeper and more comprehensive understanding (Creswell, 2014).

The data in this study were obtained from various academic journals, books, and research reports that discuss research ethics and cultural sensitivity in education. The selection of literature was carried out by considering the relevance, quality of sources, and scope of the Indonesian and global contexts. The literature used includes publications from 2000 to 2023 to ensure relevance to current dynamics (Boote & Beile, 2005).

Data analysis was carried out using a thematic approach, where information from various literatures was identified, grouped, and compared to reveal patterns, themes, and relationships that are relevant to the focus of the research. This method is effective in exploring complex issues such as research ethics and cultural sensitivity, because it is able to explore deep meanings from various perspectives (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The researcher also applied a source triangulation strategy to increase the validity of the findings. By comparing the results from various literatures, the researcher can identify significant consistencies and differences. This approach helps reduce interpretation bias and ensures that the research findings reflect a more objective picture (Patton, 2015).

The Indonesian context is a primary concern in this analysis. Therefore, literature related to cultural diversity, customs, and social norms in Indonesia is a priority in the selection process. This approach ensures that the research findings are relevant to local conditions and can provide practical contributions to the development of education in Indonesia (Sugiyono, 2018).

In addition, this study adopts an interdisciplinary perspective by integrating theories from the fields of ethics, anthropology, and education. This

approach is designed to enrich the analysis and offer more comprehensive solutions to the problems discussed. This integration also allows the research to reach a wider audience, including policy makers and education practitioners (Mertens, 2010).

The research process is carried out systematically, starting from the formulation of research questions, literature selection, data analysis, to the preparation of the findings report. Each stage is designed to ensure that research meets academic ethical standards and makes a significant contribution to the development of science (Robson, 2011).

Result and Discussion

Result

1. Awareness of research ethics is still low in some areas.

Researchers found that lack of knowledge about research ethics guidelines is a major problem, especially in remote areas. Many researchers do not yet understand the importance of respecting the rights of research subjects, such as privacy and informant consent. As a result, unethical practices, such as collecting data without permission, still often occur. This situation is exacerbated by minimal access to training or resources that support an understanding of research ethics.

On the other hand, local researchers face challenges in the form of pressure to complete research in a short time, so they often ignore ethical procedures that should be followed. This pressure comes from the need to meet academic targets or demands from funding institutions. In many cases, ethics are a less important aspect compared to the speed of research completion.

Not only that, low supervision from academic institutions is also a contributing factor. Many institutions do not yet have a strict evaluation system for research proposals submitted by students or lecturers. As a result, research with

potential ethical violations can pass without receiving corrections or suggestions for improvement.

This shows the importance of systematic efforts to increase ethical awareness among researchers. Training, seminars, and discussions on research ethics need to be held more often, especially in higher education institutions. Thus, a more ethical research culture can be built sustainably.

2. Cultural sensitivity is often neglected in research design.

The study revealed that many researchers fail to understand the importance of cultural sensitivity in the research process. This can be seen from the approach that is too oriented towards the global paradigm without considering local values. This approach often produces data that is biased or less relevant to field conditions.

In some cases, ignoring cultural sensitivity creates tension between researchers and local communities. For example, the use of language or terms that are not in accordance with the cultural context can be considered offensive by participants. This kind of tension not only harms researchers but also affects the validity of the data collected.

Researchers also found that the lack of collaboration with community leaders or local stakeholders was an obstacle. Many studies were conducted without prior consultation with the communities being the subjects, so the methodology applied was often not in accordance with local needs or norms.

Therefore, it is important for researchers to adopt a more participatory approach. Involving communities in the planning to evaluation stages can help increase cultural sensitivity and ensure that research results are more beneficial to local communities.

3. Implementation of social responsibility in research is still minimal.

The results of the study show that social

responsibility has not been fully integrated into research practices. Many researchers focus more on academic achievement without considering the impact of research on society. This can be seen from the lack of efforts to communicate research results directly to the communities involved.

Many studies are completed without producing recommendations that can be implemented by society or policy makers. Most research results only end up in scientific publications without providing real impact in the field. This situation creates a gap between theory and practice, which ultimately harms the community.

In addition, the lack of attention to community needs often results in research not being well received by the community. In some cases, research results are considered irrelevant or even detrimental, because they do not match local expectations or needs.

To address this problem, researchers need to integrate social responsibility into the entire research process, from planning to dissemination of results. In this way, research not only provides academic contributions but also empowers communities and creates positive, sustainable change.

Discussion

1. Awareness of research ethics is still low in some areas.

Low awareness of research ethics can be analyzed using Kohlberg's theory of moral development. This theory states that a person's level of understanding of moral values is influenced by the individual's developmental stage and their social environment. In the context of research, lack of training and coaching on the importance of ethics can cause researchers to be at a lower stage of moral development, where decisions are made only based on personal gain or external pressure (Kohlberg, 1981).

From an institutional theory perspective, Meyer and Rowan (1977) explain that norms

and practices in an organization are often influenced by institutional pressures. In this case, educational institutions that do not have strong ethical policies or guidelines tend to produce researchers who do not understand or prioritize research ethics. This indicates the need to strengthen institutional structures to form a better ethical culture among academics.

To overcome this problem, it is necessary to apply strategies based on Bandura's (1986) social learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of observation and imitation in shaping behavior. Training and mentoring programs involving senior researchers as role models can help increase ethical awareness among young researchers. With this approach, ethical values can be instilled through direct experience and learning from more experienced individuals.

2. Cultural sensitivity is often neglected in research design.

The neglect of cultural sensitivity in research can be explained through the theory of cultural relativism, which emphasizes that values and norms must be understood in a particular cultural context (Herskovits, 1948). The inability of researchers to understand the local context is often caused by a universalistic approach that does not consider cultural diversity. As a result, research results become less relevant and cannot be applied effectively in society.

From the perspective of intercultural communication theory, Gudykunst (2005) highlights the importance of communication competence in overcoming cultural differences. Insensitivity to local norms is often caused by a lack of understanding or ability to adapt to the socio-cultural dynamics of the community being studied. Researchers who are less competent in intercultural communication tend to experience obstacles in building good relationships with participants.

A more participatory approach, as proposed by Arnstein's (1969) participation theory, can be a solution to increasing cultural

sensitivity. In this model, the local community is actively involved in all stages of the research, from planning to implementation. In this way, research not only becomes more inclusive but also more relevant to local needs and values.

3. The implementation of social responsibility in research is still minimal.

The minimal implementation of social responsibility in research can be analyzed using Aristotle's Virtue Ethics theory, which emphasizes that the ultimate goal of every human action is to achieve the highest good or eudaimonia. In the context of research, social responsibility should be seen as an integral part of efforts to achieve good for society. However, excessive focus on academic achievement often distracts researchers from this goal (Aristotle, 2004).

John Rawls' (1971) theory of social justice is also relevant in explaining the importance of social responsibility. Rawls emphasizes the principle of equality and protection of the most vulnerable groups in society. In educational research, this principle requires researchers to ensure that research results provide real benefits to marginalized groups, not just for the academic or economic interests of researchers.

Mertens' (2010) transformation paradigm-based approach can be a solution to integrating social responsibility in research. This paradigm emphasizes the importance of community empowerment through participatory research that is oriented towards social change. By implementing this paradigm, research can serve as a tool to address social injustice and improve community welfare in a sustainable manner.

Conclusion

This study highlights three main findings related to research ethics management in education studies: low awareness of research ethics, neglect of cultural sensitivity, and minimal implementation of social responsibility. Low awareness of

research ethics is influenced by lack of training, weak institutional policies, and external pressures. Meanwhile, neglect of cultural sensitivity occurs due to a universalistic approach that does not consider local values, as well as low intercultural communication competence of researchers. In addition, the lack of integration of social responsibility shows a gap between research results and their impact on society.

To overcome these challenges, a more holistic and adaptive approach is needed. Integrated research ethics training, a participatory approach that respects local cultural values, and the application of a transformation paradigm that is oriented towards community empowerment are some of the proposed solutions. With these steps, research in education can be carried out more ethically, relevantly, and have a positive impact on society.

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