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Research Ethics

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.70629>

Abstract

Research ethics is closely related to the ethical principles of social responsibility. This research covers a wide context of working with people, so the researchers raised a task not only to gain confidence in the respondents' eyes, to receive reliable data, but also to ensure the transparency of the science. This chapter discusses the theoretical and practical topics of research, after evaluation of which ethical principles of organization and conducting the research are presented. There is a detailed description of how and what ethical principles were followed on the different stages of the research.

Keywords: research ethics, ethics code, research, social responsibility, respondents

1. Introduction

Relevance of the research: transparency of research, reliability of results, and the reputation of the researcher in the academic community are extremely important criteria, which determine both the prestige of science itself and the possibilities of successful use of new knowledge in practice. Therefore, the research ethics is not a mere "formality," which is required by academic journal editors, but it is a significant part of research, which is influenced by both the general trust in scientists, data protection, anonymity, and confidentiality, and the ability to build trust-based relationship with the respondents and retain it. Research ethics is not just requirements written in a digest or code of ethics, but also the researcher's philosophical and value position, as well as the discussion continuing for many decades and learning from painful mistakes, as shown by the review of the history of research. In this context, the dual question is constantly relevant: is the respondent and/or informant only a source of scientific knowledge, or also a unique personality, to which the relationship with the research or the person who conducts the research does not end with a filled questionnaire or the thoughts

expressed during the interview. Depersonalization of the relationship with subjects of research is comfortable for the researcher, but not for the subjects of research. It is quite understandable, but when publishing research results, it is quite often limited by a few sentences, which mention the ethical principles, which were followed when conducting the research. There are different opinions in the debate on the research ethics, for example, according to Guillemín et al. [1], who have interviewed Australian researchers, despite the considerable time devoted to ethics review, ethics committees and research guidelines were not seen as valuable resources for researchers undertaking research in the field. Wiles et al. [2] maintain that the increased regulation of research needs to enable researchers to attend reflexively to the social context in which consent takes place. However, the fact that the researchers and those who have expressed the consent to participate in the research are in unequal positions cannot be denied, as, for example, those subjects of research participating in the research for the first time do not have the same knowledge and skills the researchers have, and in this context, it limits the possibilities of the decision of the research subjects. Attention is also given to the differences between the theoretical considerations and practical applications and the role of the influence of the researcher's subjectivity [3, 4], which can affect the ethical approach in every individual case.

Problem of research: the problem of the research is raised by the question, how are the ethical problems of the research revealed and how to solve them in the research of the level of management culture development when aiming for implementation of corporate social responsibility.

Object of the research: research ethics.

Purpose of the research: having defined the key ethical principles of research to present management culture and corporate social responsibility research ethics.

Objectives of the research: (1) to define the fundamental principles of research ethics and (2) to present management culture and corporate social responsibility research ethics.

Methods of the research: this chapter is prepared by using the methods of analysis and synthesis of academic literature.

2. Ethical aspects of the research

In this section, ethical aspects of the research, which are important not only for this monograph, but can also be valuable in other studies in methodological terms are discussed more extensively. The problem is that, for example, Lithuania lacks a unified, rigorous scientific community agreement, and different academic communities use different agreements. The problem is more acute in commercial studies, so often there is doubt in the research organization, conduct, data reliability, and objectivity of interpretation. For example, there occurred such curious cases when, having carried out the research, it was announced that the publication for housewives is the most popular among middle-level corporate managers. Such examples do not reinforce common reliability of the researchers in the eyes of the public, regardless of whether the financed order is carried out or the research is held on the scientists' personal initiative and expense. On the other hand, there is some progress in this area, such as the creation of Ombudsman's office

caring for research ethics and the examination of unethical conduct facts and the public debate contribute to improving the transparency of research activity.

Scientific research ethics in a sense is a unique part of professional ethics as “high-quality” science requires ethical practice [5]. Many scientists [6–11] identify the following scientific ethics principles: honesty, objectivity, morality, prudence, openness and respect for intellectual property, confidentiality, responsible publication, responsible management, respect for colleagues, social responsibility, anti-discrimination, competence, legitimacy, and security of people involved in the research [12].

It was aimed to reveal the problems of corporate social responsibility analyzed in the monograph by questioning a large number of employees and managers of various levels. It was planned to carry out different, i.e. qualitative and quantitative research. Therefore, during the preparation for the research, special attention was paid to the specifics of working with people during the survey, and at the same time, especially, big attention was paid to the ethical organization and implementation of the research.

Observance of research ethical standards when working with people is relevant in several senses. Most scientific researches with people are meant for the welfare of mankind, promotion of knowledge and understanding, and/or social and cultural dynamics research. This task is taken up for a variety of reasons, such as to facilitate human suffering, to ground social or scientific theories, to dispel ignorance, to analyze and evaluate policies, and to understand human behavior and the evolving human situation [8]. Stern and Elliott [5] noted that research ethics in sense is a unique part of professional ethics, as “high-quality” science requires its ethical practice. Research projects designed to examine social identity difference in organizations are driven by a passion to affect positive change that ultimately leads to a more just society rather than one which enables status quo power perpetuation and continues to marginalize certain people and inhibit them from achieving personal and career goals [5], p. 25.

Resnik [13] states that first, the existence of ethical standards contributes to achieving the aims in scientific research—knowledge, honesty, and error avoidance. For example, prohibition to falsify or misinterpret research data promotes fairness and helps to avoid mistakes. Basic definitions describing misconduct in science are fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism. However, they are confused by some less clear professional misconduct categories, such as “different questionable behavior” or “other offenses” [5]. Second, according to Resnik [13], as the execution of scientific research work often requires close cooperation and coordination among many different people and institutions, ethic norms promote values that are necessary to work together—trust, accountability, mutual respect, and fairness. For example, a lot of scientific research ethical standards (such as copyright guidelines, copyright and patenting policy, data exchange policy, and rules on confidentiality applied for colleagues’ assessment) are for the intellectual property interests protection and promotion of cooperation. On the other hand, as noted by Kardelis [14], there is no single finally prepared answer on how the researcher should behave in one or other matter related to the ethical decision—it depends on the researcher's ability to find a balance among problem areas.

Continuing Resnik’s [13] insights, many scientists wish to be mentioned and evaluated for their contribution, but do not want their ideas to be stolen or made public prematurely. Most of the ethical standards help ensure scientists accountability to the public, such as policy for

negligence in carrying out scientific research, conflicts of interests, the protection of people involved in the scientific research, and care of animals used for scientific purposes; all this is needed in order to ensure the scientists', whose research is funded by public funds, accountability to the public. Implementation of scientific research in accordance with ethical standards promotes public support—people look more favorably at financing of such scientific research projects, the quality and integrity of which can be trusted. Finally, a large part of scientific research ethical standards encourage other important moral and social values: social responsibility, human rights, animal welfare, compliance with the law and health, as well as safety. Therefore, a researcher working with people requires ethical approval. Ethical approval for research is necessary for the following reasons [8]:

- to protect research participants' rights and welfare, and reduce the risk of physical and psychological discomfort, damage, and/or threats appearing because of research procedures;
- to protect the rights of the researchers to carry out a lawful research and reputation of the university implementing or supporting research;
- to reduce the probability of claims for negligence against specific researchers, universities, and all cooperating persons or organizations;
- because research funding agencies and scientific journals in their applications for getting research funding, or as a condition necessary for publication, are increasingly demanding ethical principles wording.

William [10] argues that there are some basic concepts of research ethics. CCCU [8] distinguish the following basic principles. First, autonomy (respect for individuals is expressed in recognition that their autonomy and self-determination right are based on their ability to make decisions themselves and choose). The voluntary participation principle forbids making people participate against their will. It is particularly relevant where previously the researchers searched for participants to conduct their research in such institutions as prisons, universities, etc. Basically, this means that potential research participants must be informed about the procedures and the risks associated with them and obtain their consent [10]. Second, the free and informed consent (awareness, volunteerism and understanding). Ethical standards also prohibit the creation of such conditions in which the respondents could run the risk of physical or psychological harm [10]. Third, honesty (honesty is also very important for the informed consent process, because without it the research participants cannot use their right to informed consent, fairness, and honesty). Fourth, respect for vulnerable people (elderly people, minors, the sick, or people with mental disabilities). Fifth, privacy and confidentiality. Sixth, justice and inclusion (it is necessary that honest and transparent methods were used in the ethical aspects evaluation process, that research protocols evaluation standards and procedures existed, and that this process could actually be independent). Seventh, harm and benefit (harmless damage, benefit increase) [8].

William [10] notes that in order to protect the privacy of research participants, two standards are used. Usually, the confidentiality of subjects is guaranteed, ensuring that the information about their identity would be available only to the persons directly involved in the research. The anonymity principle is stricter of the two, which basically means that the identity of the subjects during the entire research period will remain unknown even for scientists themselves. There is no

doubt that the principle of anonymity provides stronger privacy guarantees, but in some cases, it is quite difficult to comply with it (especially when it is necessary to perform measurements at different times, for example, at baseline and at the end). Increasingly, scientists are faced with the human right to the service problem. Good research practice often requires the imposition of a control group—this is the group of research participants that is not involved in the research program. Scientists and scientific research ethics committees must recognize that there are situations in which research might conflict with the interests of subjects. This is especially true in the social sciences and humanities research areas seeking to examine a certain policy or organization [8].

According to William [10], even when there are clear ethical standards and principles, there are cases where the need for exact scientific research intersects with the rights of the potential participants. No set of ethical standards can anticipate all possible circumstances, which is why it is necessary to put procedures in place to ensure that researchers, formulating research plans, would consider all the relevant ethical issues for their research. It is for this reason that in most institutions and organizations there exist institutional supervision boards, composed of specialists who assess the conformance of projects submitted for receiving grants with ethical standards and decide whether it is necessary to take additional actions for ensuring the research subjects safety and rights. When assessing research proposals, the institutional supervision boards help protect researchers too and institutions conducting the research from potential legal implications because of the possible negligence solving important ethical issues of the research participants.

In fact, the scientific research ethics is based on common human moral values. Morality is a public system in the sense that at the fundamental level, it is a series of commonly understood but rarely discussed rules about how we treat each other [5]. However, it should be emphasized that it is not enough for the scientist to know the research ethics postulates. As the research by Novelskaitė and Pučėtaite [15] performed in Lithuania shows, although the scientists know the scientific ethics requirements, they do not always follow them in practice. So, there is not only risk that inaccurate data will be operated, but the colleagues will be confused citing false data, the quality of other research will suffer, the trust in the scientific community will grow weaker.

Stern and Elliott [5] argue that moral problems are not isolated from each other, and ways of solving ethical problems in science cannot contradict the ways of solving these problems beyond. It cannot be considered morally acceptable for scientists to cheat or break promises without good reason. Since morality is a public system, then how we choose to deal with a certain moral problem affects everyone.

Besides damage to the authority of the scientific community, scientific research ethics failure can result in direct negative economic consequences for companies and other subjects' health and quality of life, when one becomes the consumer of certain products. For example, according to Resnik [13], ethical breaches in scientific research can be harmful to both humans and animals that are research subjects, as well as students and society: for example, a scientist, falsifying clinical research data, can harm patients or even make fatal injuries and, by not complying with radiation and biosafety guidelines and regulations, endanger both their own and other staff and students' health and safety.

Table 1 contains the generalized summary of ethical principles identified in the codes.

Ethical principles	Definition
Honesty	It is a must to achieve honesty in all science-related communication. The scientist must honestly present information on the data, results, research methods and procedures, and publication status. It is prohibited to falsify and distort the data, to deceive colleagues, agencies aiding grants, or the public.
Objectivity	Partiality should be avoided in the formulation of the research stages plan, analyzing and interpreting data, as well as evaluating the work of colleagues, recruiting the staff, writing applications for the award of grants, giving expert testimony, and other aspects of the scientific research where objectivity is essential. It is recommended to try to avoid partiality and self-deception. The researcher must disclose any personal or financial interests that might influence the scientific research.
Morality	The researcher must comply with the promises and agreements, be honest and seek the sustainability of thoughts and actions.
Prudence	The researcher must avoid careless errors and omissions. It is important to evaluate carefully and critically both own and colleagues' work. It is proposed to collect/ systematize good, research-related activity (e.g., data collection, planning research stages and correspondence with agencies and journals), notes.
Openness	The researcher must share the data, ideas, tools, and resources, be open to criticism and new ideas.
Respect for intellectual property	The researcher must respect patents, copyright rights, and other forms of intellectual property, not to use unpublished research data, methods, or results without permission, quote where you must cite and thank properly for their help in the research. It is strictly forbidden for the researcher to plagiarize.
Confidentiality	The investigator must save confidential information, such as articles submitted for publication, records of employees, professional or military secrets and the records of patients' health stories.
Responsible publication	The researcher should publicize the results of the research for the sake of science and scientific research and not for the benefit of his career. The scientist should avoid unnecessary publication or republication.
Responsible management	The researcher should help educate students, guide and advise them in order of their well-being, and allowing themselves to make decisions.
Respect for colleagues	The researcher must respect his/her colleagues and deal with them honestly.
Social responsibility	The researcher must promote social welfare and try to avoid harm or reduce it through research, public education, and advocacy activities.
Anti-discrimination	The researcher must avoid discrimination against students or colleagues of sex, race, nationality, or other factors unrelated to scientific excellence and honesty.
Competence	The researcher must maintain and improve own professional competence through lifelong learning, and take measures to promote competence in science.
Legitimacy	The researcher must have knowledge of relevant laws for his/her work as well as institutional and government policies and comply with them.
Security of people involved in scientific research	Conducting scientific research with human beings, one must strive to minimize the damage and the risks and maximize the benefit. The researcher must respect human dignity, privacy, and autonomy. The researcher must take special precautions, working with vulnerable populations, and seek a fair distribution of the research benefits and burdens.

Source: Compiled by the authors according to Shamoo and Resnik [11].

Table 1. Generalized summary of ethical principles.

According to Smith [6], not so long ago, academics avoided public discussion of the ethical dilemmas that they faced with in the research and academic work, but the mentioned situation is changing. The author, citing George Mason University psychologist Dr. J. Tangney, who says that “psychologists, working in an academic environment, increasingly ask for their colleagues’ advice on various issues, from leadership to students to sensitive research data management. Over the past ten years, there has been a big change and people began to speak more often and openly about different kinds of ethical dilemmas,” states that researchers face numerous ethical requirements, such as being able to carry out research with human beings, and they must conform to professional, institutional, and federal standards. Besides, while such strict requirements are not applied to social science researchers, for example, in Lithuania, there are norms formed by a legislator guaranteeing data protection, protecting personal privacy, protecting minors against the negative effects, and so on. The law affects and regulates the progress of research with humans and standards in many ways (e.g., privacy and data protection, confidentiality, intellectual property), and human rights legislation prohibits discrimination on various grounds. All researchers should ensure their research compliance with the existing research statutory requirements [8]. In various directives, according to Kardelis [14], it is stated that all the information about the human’s mental or physical condition is not a public affair; each person or a group has the right to decide how much and under what circumstances, how widely to express the views, fears, or to say nothing at all.

According to Smith [6], the researchers often still supervise the works of students who they teach, solve authorship problems, and so on. The author proposes to protect oneself by employing five strategies of scientific research ethics according to five recommendations presented by the American Psychological Association Science Directorate [16] in order to help the scientists avoid delicate ethical situations (**Table 2**).

Strategies	Description
Open discussions about intellectual property	The aim is to guarantee the rights of authors to their research, assess in a fair way the contribution into teamwork, by mentoring student research work and so on. In addition, it helps to avoid possible disputes on intellectual property after the work is published. Discussions, when trying to find consensus, distinguish, and create conditions, allow discovering the paths and solve the problematic issues.
Perception of multiple roles	The research organizer or organizers in relations should not abuse their influence, which might give rise to abuse or other damage. There must be respected the right of choice and self-determination which commits the researcher at the same time to provide full information needed to realize this right.
Compliance with the rules of consent based on information	In line with scientific ethics, informants/research participants must be informed about their rights, the conditions of participation, and guaranteed protection. The researcher undertakes to ensure that the respondent (s) clearly understood the conditions for participation in the research.
Respect for confidentiality and privacy	The researcher commits not to disclose the data that would identify research participants.
Using ethical resources	It is necessary to be aware of their ethical obligations and use ethical resources purposefully.

Source: Compiled by the authors according to Smith [6].

Table 2. Strategies of scientific research ethics.

Although the recommendations are based on the principles formulated by the American Psychological Association Science Directorate, they are no less urgent for representatives of other scientific fields. Smith [6] elaborating strategies in her article offers an open discussion about intellectual property, because the mentality prevalent in academic environment “publish or die” can easily call the trouble for copyright. The best way to avoid disagreements over who will be mentioned in the list of authors and in which order is to discuss at the beginning of the working relationship, even if many people feel uncomfortable speaking about it. Novelskaitė and Pučėtaite [15] noted that the ethical dilemmas can arise in any phase of the research of any field of science, starting with selection of the researched problem or formulation of major research question (e.g., inappropriate solution of conflicts of interests), and ending with research results presentation to the scientific community (e.g., enforced authorship) and/or the public.

Smith [6] highlights that one can take credit only for the work carried out by the researchers themselves, or greatly contributed to their performance, and mentioning the name in the author's list should accurately reflect the above contribution. For minor assistance during the research or preparation of the research, text for publishing should be expressed via gratitude in the introduction or in a footnote. The same rules are applied to students. If they have contributed substantially to the development of the concept, the idea development, execution, or analysis of research data and interpretation, their names should be listed. Purely technical contributions do not give grounds for the person to be mentioned as the author. This principle has been enacted in the Republic of Lithuania Act on Copyright and Related Rights [17], the mandatory rules of which apply to any intellectual production. The legislator indicates that the person is not considered as coauthor if they rendered material, technical or organizational assistance in the development of the work. As a result, people who provided technical assistance, consulted during the research, and preparation of research results presentation cannot lay claim to joint authorship. It is, therefore, worthwhile to discuss these principles and clearly declare material and technical assistance providers before the start of the research. The researcher assumes the moral responsibility for the fact if cooperation conditions were presented in a proper and understandable way. MEK [18] highlights, inter alia, that the advice and comments and the provided aid (technical, editing or otherwise) are expressed via gratitude. The order of names in the publication is discussed and agreed by the contributors themselves.

Smith [6] proposes to understand the multiple roles, i.e., the American Psychological Association Code of Ethics [19] states that psychologists should avoid relationships which create conditions for abuse or damage and could harm the efficiency of performance of professional duties. It is also noted that the very existence of multiple relationships is not unethical as long as there is no reason to believe that it will lead to undesirable consequences. Nevertheless, psychologists should think twice before starting multiple relationships with any persons or groups (for example, hiring their students or patients to become the scientific research participants under their own direction, or while studying the shares of some company, to examine the effectiveness of its products). For example, when recruiting first-year psychology students to become participants of the experiment, it is necessary to emphasize that participation is voluntary. If it is a compulsory component of the subject taught, it is

necessary to mention it in the program and ensure that the participation should have educational value, such as providing detailed information about the research to enable students to better understand it. Probably one of the most common multiple roles for researchers is to be a mentor, a laboratory supervisor, and teacher at the same time. Experts of ethics believe that researchers must be particularly careful and prevent abuse of power preponderance among themselves and students.

In different sources special attention is paid to human dignity safety [8, 18]. Respect for human dignity is the most important ethical principle underlying the scientific research ethics, and the purpose of which is to protect the individual's interests and the physical, psychological, and cultural integrity. This, in turn, reflects a number of important ethical principles, which should underpin all research with human beings [8]. The scientific study, when the object is people, is based on a voluntary basis, is carried out without human dignity humiliation and respect for fundamental human rights. The findings of such study must remain anonymous and has to be used only for research purposes [18]. This is the standard formed in the international scientific community that Smith [6] presents by recommending to follow the rules of consent based on information, i.e., the consent process carried out discreetly, ensures that the entities are involved in the study on a voluntary basis and are aware of the potential risks and benefits. According to this principle, the researchers undertake to inform the participants about the research aim, expected duration and procedures, the participants' right to refuse to participate, and the right to withdraw from the study after it has started, as well as the expected consequences of such actions; factors likely to influence the participants' willingness to participate, such as the possible risks, side effects or inconvenience, any of the expected benefits of the research, confidentiality limits, such as data coding, destruction, storage, and sharing rules, and cases where confidentiality will be broken, incentives for participants, other people that could be contacted in case of confusion by participants who have questions. It is also proposed to consider the likelihood and size of benefits and damage, reminding the subjects that their participation is voluntary.

Thus, the researcher must consider the fact that the study participants do not have experience in this field and may be unaware of their rights; even with the agreement to participate in the study before considering those matters and not interpreting their (the participants') rights and freedom of self-determination might affect the quality of the survey results.

In the selection of data collection methods, there may arise a number of ethical issues, for example, in studies where the secret data collection methods are essential (e.g., secret observation of participants). These methods should be used only in rare cases when the data cannot be obtained otherwise. Also, during any interview, the researchers must show that they understand the potentially existing power relation among them and the study participants and to take steps to overcome it [8]. Furthermore, a wise social researcher considers the needs of others carefully to try to find the right thing to do, and is not manipulative in understanding others emotionally, intellectually, or otherwise [20]. It is compulsory for scientists to respect the confidentiality and privacy, i.e., to foster the individual's right to confidentiality and privacy [6]. According to Kardelis [14], this principle is derived from the human right to decide freely and researcher's promise to guarantee the confidence of maintaining private data in secret. For example, it is inappropriate to try to get contact data of a support group

attending people in order to offer them to participate in scientific research, but you can ask a colleague, who manages this group, to hand out a letter to its members with exposed information on scientific research and your contact details so that the interested ones could contact the researcher [6]. Other steps to be taken by the researchers are presented in **Table 3**.

The scientists are recommended to use the resources of ethics. According to Smith [6], one of the best ways in which researchers can resolve ethical dilemmas or avoid them is to know their ethical obligations and what resources are available to them.

According to Novelskaitė and Pučėtaitė [15], the focus of research ethics increased after World War II, when judging war criminals (specifically, doctors), the Nuremberg Code was formulated. William [10] argues that we live in a time when perception of applied scientific research conduct ethics in the social sciences is changing fundamentally. In the period since the end of World War II up to the early 1990s a consensus was gradually formed on the fundamental ethical principles, obliging to create the basis of any scientific research activities. Among numerous mentioned cases, two events symbolize this consensus best: the Nuremberg war crimes tribunal that took place soon after the end of World War II, during which the publicity emerged that German scientists carried out the most horrific scientific tests with prisoners of war, and in the sixth and seventh decades “Tuscegee syphilis experiment” was organized when the information about the existence of an effective treatment option was concealed from syphilis infected African-American patients. Such events led to revision of ethical standards and gradually

Stages	Description
Discuss confidentiality borders	The participants are informed about how their data will be used (file materials, photos, audio, and video recordings); participants’ consent to use the data is received.
Know the law	All the research related laws are studied in detail, especially those that impose restrictions (e.g., it is forbidden to give questions to children without parental consent) or the obligation to report possible misconduct. In such situations, there are possibilities to consult with professionals (general practitioners, psychologists and lawyers) on the best action plan.
Take practical security measures	It is ensured that confidential data will be stored in a secure location with limited access. Whenever possible, the information allowing the determination of the identity is removed from the data. The reasons are considered when confidentiality may be compromised (room without sound insulation, participants writing down their names on invoices, etc.).
Reflect on the sharing of data before starting the research	It is considered how the research data will be shared with the third parties. It has to be mentioned in the consent process, specifying how the information will be shared, and whether it will remain anonymous. The data can be a valuable resource, but if the researcher did not get the permission to share information before the start of the research, it would be unethical to do so. Methods to protect confidentiality are provided for sharing data, e.g., data coding to conceal identity. It is difficult; it may be impossible to do, when, for example, video or audio recordings are associated with larger databases.
Understand the Internet restrictions	As Internet technologies are constantly evolving, the researcher must be very well aware of them while collecting information and sharing of confidential data in an electronic form. It is ensured that the third parties would not access the data.

Source: Compiled by the authors according to Smith [6].

Table 3. Confidentiality and privacy: the researcher’s commitment.

helped to reach the general opinion that scientific research participants must be protected from becoming “guinea pigs” for scientists. According to Pont [21], the essential problem is the belief that the public interests are higher than some of the individual interests of some members of the public. While philosophers have reflected more fully on the nature and character of a good human life, they have not tested their theories of well-being in the public domain or confronted their accounts of the “good” with the values of ordinary people [22], p. 830.

According to Novelskaitė and Pučėtaitė [15], the processes led to passing many other international documents of advisory and regulatory nature. However, all of them are directed to regulation of scientific research ethics issues exclusively in one—biomedical science—area. But gradually the importance of research ethics began to be emphasized in other areas, such as social sciences, where the research involving humans often contains components of certain risks (e.g., damage and responsibility).

However, as suggested by Sieber [7], in empirical research ethics, the term ethics in the broad sense is defined as “support of such values as respect for people and their communities, and providing benefit to individuals and society.” Based on this author’s opinion, Novelskaitė and Pučėtaitė [15] argue that ethics covers both the validity of the carried out research and the full respect to research participants and their communities as well as useful social policies development and effective dissemination and installation of research findings.

The problems of scientific research ethics are illustrated by the public debate. According to William [10], from the beginning of the 1990s, the circumstances have changed significantly. Oncological patients and people with AIDS launched a public battle with medical research bodies for the fact that the study, the aim of which was to find a cure against fatal diseases, confirmation and process lasted a very long time. In many cases, because of the reluctance to speed up this process, it was possible to blame the previous three decades of ethical assumptions. After all, it is better to delay treatment until such time when it is sufficiently clear whether it will be of benefit than risk the health of innocent people (as was the case in Nuremberg and Tuscegee cases). But unlike then, people suffering from deadly diseases now themselves have applied to become test subjects, even in quite risky, experimental conditions. There appeared several patient groups that expressed their wish to participate in such research and spoke against the ethical system of their evaluation, regardless of the fact that this system was designed to protect their rights.

So, as Kardelis states [14], there rises a number of ethical problems that can stem both from the tested problems and from the methods used. According to William [10], although the latter years of scientific research in the area of ethics have been stormy, it is already becoming clear that a new consensus will be reached with active participation of the most affected stakeholder groups by the problem in the preparation of scientific research guidelines. While, it is not entirely clear at the moment what the new consensus will be, it can almost be certain that it will not be attacked to the extreme, neither prohibiting by any cost nor allowing anyone to become a scientific research subject.

In short, it can be said that scientific research ethics in the broad sense is not just a generalized set of provisions. There are inevitable unique cases in scientific research practice where you have to act in new, previously unspecified conditions. Corporate social responsibility is based

on the fundamental moral principles of the society that is why significant attention is given to moral aspects in this research. In addition, this research covers a broad context of working with people, so researchers were given the task not only to gain confidence in the eyes of the respondents, but also to ensure academic prestige. This is a complex task, accomplishment of which requires research ethics.

This study was conducted and presented in accordance with the Scientist's Code of Ethics [18] adopted by the Lithuanian Academy of Scientists on the basis of the international scientific community ethical obligations and the principles formulated by the Republic of Lithuania Copyright and Related Rights Act [17]. Also the insights of Lithuanian and foreign representatives of the academic community relevant for research in the social sciences area and providing the basic principles are assessed.

During expert evaluations respect for individual's dignity, justice principles, comprehensive information for study participants was ensured. The experts had the right to decide independently on voluntary participation in the research, also had the right to terminate their participation at any time and/or refuse to share information and to submit questions in case of doubt. The experts were fully aware of the expert evaluation aim and objectives, familiar with the data collection methods, and future results publicity. The experts, having been informed in advance and after receiving their consent, were not assured about the confidentiality of personal information about an expert.

During the exploratory study, the ethical principles were met with respect to the respondents, and the principles of respect to the person's dignity and justice were followed. The respondents were guaranteed the protection of personal data, ensuring that the results of the study will be presented in a summary form and filled in questionnaires will be stored in researchers' personal archives without transferring them to the third parties. The respondents were provided with detailed instructions on how to collect data from the survey and the length of the survey and the duration of the whole study. Also, the aim of the study, the use of the intended results of the research were thoroughly explained. The study participants had the right at any time to terminate their participation in the study, to refuse to provide information that, they believe, may have violated their privacy. The respondents were provided with detailed instructions on the data collection methods, the duration of the study, the aim of the study, as well as the future use of the results.

Before the main quantitative study, the agreement of the managers of the groups of companies and guarantees of noninterference in the process were obtained; it was ensured that the results of the research will be publicly presented without naming the data that could be used to identify specific companies. As the questionnaire was sufficiently large, the study was conducted in such a way as to avoid disturbing the production processes, i.e. without abusing employees' free time. Therefore, with respect to time, the survey lasted longer than anticipated. The respondents were explained (in a written form in the questionnaire and orally) the aim of the study, the conditions of the voluntary participation principle. They were also guaranteed anonymity. The questionnaire sets were distributed and collected personally by the researchers, giving a possibility to leave them in the sealed boxes that were opened only at the end of the survey. The questionnaire does not specify personal data, but in order to ensure the safety of the respondent that he would not be identified according to socio-demographic criteria, questionnaire protection measures were created to prevent from getting into the hands of other individuals.

Before carrying out qualitative research, the top-level managers of the two groups of companies were addressed to obtain their consent to carry out the survey. After the consent was received, the top-level managers were informed that the interview will be recorded in the Dictaphone and having transcribed the text, the electronic media will be deleted. It was also ensured that the research results will be publicly presented without naming the data that could be used to identify specific areas, businesses, products, or their managers. All informants were explained the topic and aim of the research, with anonymity guaranteed.

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