

# The Journal of Values-Based Leadership

---

Volume 6  
Issue 1 *Winter/Spring 2013*

Article 6

---

January 2013

## Responsible Conduct: The Ethics of It All in Life and Research

Angela Lumpkin  
*University of Kansas*

Sharon K. Stoll  
*University of Idaho*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholar.valpo.edu/jvbl>



Part of the [Business Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Lumpkin, Angela and Stoll, Sharon K. (2013) "Responsible Conduct: The Ethics of It All in Life and Research," *The Journal of Values-Based Leadership*: Vol. 6 : Iss. 1 , Article 6.

Available at: <http://scholar.valpo.edu/jvbl/vol6/iss1/6>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the College of Business at ValpoScholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Journal of Values-Based Leadership by an authorized administrator of ValpoScholar. For more information, please contact a ValpoScholar staff member at [scholar@valpo.edu](mailto:scholar@valpo.edu).

# Responsible Conduct:

## *The Ethics of It All in Life and Research*



**ANGELA LUMPKIN**  
UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS  
LAWRENCE, KS



**SHARON K. STOLL**  
UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO  
MOSCOW, ID

### Introduction

The purpose of our paper is to discuss ethics in research. My expertise (Stoll, 2011, Stoll, in press) lies in the pedagogy of teaching ethics – thus I will limit my remarks to what I know of the teaching and learning of ethics as applied generally to the human condition including sport and then specifically to ethics in research. This first section is more informal – written in first person—whereas the next section will be more formal, focusing on the rules, regulations, and expectations of research ethics. The reason for the different formats is intentional. Professional ethics is a constant tension between the personal moral self and the rules and regulations of a profession as well as the ethical expectations within an institution. We hope that this paper will help provide a heightened understanding about this tension as well as give direction about professional and organizational expectations.

### What Do We Know about Ethics

In an earlier work, I argued that we really do not know very much about ethics (Stoll & Beller, 2006). I believe that many professionals think we fully know and comprehend ethics and can discern right versus wrong since we believe we are ethical beings. We also think that acting ethically is actually effortless since one need only employ intuition, common sense, and adherence to organizational and societal laws and rules. However, after 30 years of research in the field of moral education, I am capable of assuring the reader that practicing ethics is anything but easy, intuitive, or based in common sense; rather, the mainstream public lacks the necessary skills to interact and behave in this manner. The reason for my position lies in the theory and application of moral development, moral reasoning, and the influence of cultural relativism.

## Moral Development

Lawrence Kohlberg (1981), the preeminent moral psychologist of the last 50 years, defines ethics as a decision-making process whereby if we ask certain questions, we should be able to ferret out sound, ethical solutions. Those queries include: What is right and why is it right? What social-moral perspectives support our answers? Kohlberg presents ways to think about issues, that is, how to consider if an issue has an ethical challenge, how to find a solution, and then how to be equipped to defend that solution through what we know of personal selves — including our cultures, traditions, and history. Contrary to a favorable first impression, this is not a simple or easy process.

Kohlberg's study of moral development led to the supposition that few people possess this inherent ability to formulate ethical solutions. Instead, most of us use a type of truncated reasoning process when ethical situations are confronted. We are predominantly influenced by what researchers today call an "intuitive knowing" (Haidt, 2007). We seldom take into consideration any theoretical perspective; rather we tend to act and react haphazardly.

Let's suppose you are at the grocery store and are in the produce section. There is a very large bunch of lovely, sweet purple grapes (Lumpkin, Stoll, & Beller, 2012). They are not packaged, but rather are temptingly exposed. You want to make a purchase, but only after selecting the best. You decide to taste just one. You do and it is delicious. The taste convinces you. You decide to buy a bunch, place your selection in your cart, and proceed to finish your shopping before checking out. A neighbor witnessed you eat the grape, and as you both are standing in the checkout line, she asks you if tasting grapes is stealing. You look at her disconcertingly and perfunctorily reply in the negative: "No, tasting a grape is not stealing. It's what the marketing people of the store would say is a lead item – it's there for you to taste. It's expected; that is why the grapes are not in plastic" (Morris, 2003). Your neighbor tells you she is not convinced and she remains convinced that the tasting of the grape is an ethical issue. You disagree and begin to solicit other opinions — and even begin to question the legitimacy of your actions. Is the tasting of grapes unethical?

In deciding this case, most people would not implement Kohlberg's method. They would not ask: What is the right thing to do? Why is it right? And, what social moral perspectives support this decision? Most people would have eaten that grape and savored it without any internal conflict. And, if they were confronted with the ethics of the situation, they would most likely respond with an afterthought of moral justification. The real-life grape scenario supported this finding; the majority of the people in Morris's non-scientific poll would taste the grapes without questioning this action (Morris, 2003), and if confronted with the unethical action, would work diligently to justify their choice and course of action.

## Moral Justification Versus Moral Reasoning

Albert Bandura (1986) labels this retroactive reasoning – "moral justification"—a cognitive moral restructuring invoked to rationalize questionable behavior. Moral

justification presents in different forms: **palliative comparison**, **displacement of responsibility**, **diffusion of responsibility**, and **disregard or distortion of consequences**.

**Palliative comparison** is a quick, two-step rationalization shifting the weight of the unethical behavior by declaring it no worse than another seemingly accepted social condition (Stoll & Beller, 2006). For example, one might argue that tasting the grapes is no different from or worse than trying the many different food samples that grocery marketers offer customers in the store. Since the grapes were not packaged, the store management must have intended for the customer to openly sample the wares. Palliative comparison is often used in sports to justify unethical behavior. For example, many Barry Bonds fans justify keeping his records without an asterisk by arguing that his behavior was no worse than unethical behavior of Hall of Famers with questionable personal issues (Kroichick, 2006). For example, Bonds's actions were no more deplorable than Babe Ruth's womanizing, Mickey Mantle's alcoholism, or Ty Cobb's meanness. Both of these palliative comparison examples, the grape-tasting and Barry Bonds, ignore that conditions are not exactly the same. The grapes are not being offered by a vendor, and one cannot assume that something not packaged equates to a public offering. Ruth, Mantle, and Cobb may have been immoral in their private lives, but they did not intentionally violate a promise to follow the rules of baseball and then subsequently commit perjury in federal court. Palliative comparison often muddies the water enough that argument is detoured, and the comparison makes the dilemma appear to be of equal weight – if it is permissible for one, then it should be permissible for the other.

**Displacement of responsibility** is usually an organizational response to charges of unethical behavior. Because the grocery store did not package the grapes, the store is ultimately responsible for displaying in a manner to be eaten. The store actually becomes the culprit for guilty customers. Its management should have been more responsible. In sports, we find this practice often used to explain unethical behavior of those “in charge.” For example, when Donald Fehr, the former executive director of the Major League Baseball Players Association, was challenged for his failure to implement random drug testing years earlier in professional baseball, he argued that random testing was against privacy laws and freedoms afforded to citizens. This easily places the responsibility with the federal government through constitutional provisions designed to safeguard its citizens rather than with the baseball players, team owners, managers, union leaders, or the league itself. In both cases, the grapes and the baseball representatives, responsibility is deflected to ancillary moral agents – the grocery store and the federal government.

**Diffusion of responsibility** is the argument that “everyone else is doing it,” so I also am justified in mimicking this same behavior. If I walked by the produce section and witnessed another person tasting a grape, I am justified to taste one also. Everyone else is doing it; so, therefore, I am given license to do so also. To continue with the baseball example, once one player uses a performance enhancer and there are no adverse consequences, players are then able to successfully argue the acceptance of similar actions. Kroichick (2006) argues that Bonds decided to use performance-enhancing drugs because of his jealousy of the home-run race between Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa. Bonds suspected McGwire of being a “juicer.” Bonds

couldn't beat McGwire on his own physical merit; he decided to get a little help. If McGwire could get away with it, so could Bonds. He almost did.

**Disregard or distortion of consequences** is the argument that no reasonable person could foresee or realize the adverse consequences of his or her behavior. In the grape-testing scenario, no sane individual would be able to ask, "what if we tasted all the produce or any other product in the store?" The lack of situation examination presupposes that moral people would innately understand that it was inherently wrong to walk down the mayonnaise aisle and pop the lids of each jar to sample each in deciding which to purchase (Lumpkin, Stoll, & Beller, 2012). Using the baseball example, Bud Selig, the Commissioner of Major League Baseball, argued that no one knew the effects of steroids and they were unaware that anabolic steroids could affect players' abilities to hit more balls farther. Selig dismissed the research of the last 50 years and argued that no one fully understood the consequences when most discerning individuals knew exactly what the effects were.

## Moral Reasoning

Moral reasoning is the mature process described by Kohlberg of asking three important questions – and that process demands some critical thinking. *How* do we decide if this action is right or wrong? *Why* is it right or wrong? *What* is the right thing to do? Most of us have a lifetime of experiences which have bestowed a certain level of wisdom; we learn by listening, watching, and thinking about what we witness others do. We learn what is right by watching the practices of the important role models in our lives. If we are very fortunate, these role models give us a lifetime gift that is irreplaceable. We learn news quickly and informally, and we are constantly watching and assessing. In moral education circles, a story is told about a father who was home schooling his son. His curriculum for the week was about character. The father decided to use important role models from history for his lessons. On Monday, he taught his son about character through the story of George Washington who supposedly could not tell a lie when confronted with the question, "Did you cut down the cherry tree?" His response, "I cannot tell I lie, I did" (Weems, 2012). On Tuesday, the father used the role model of "Honest Abe"; Wednesday his role model was Mahatma Gandhi; and Thursday, it was the historical Jesus the Christ. On Friday, the father took his 12-year-old to the movie theatre. The sign on the ticket booth said, "Children 10 and under get in free." The father turned to the son, and said, "Today son, you are 10 years old." All the important lessons of the week were trumped by the one action of the father. The lessons learned from our role models form the underpinnings of our intuitive discernment of what is right and wrong (Lumpkin, Stoll, & Beller, 2012).

Most of us have not studied the theory of character. Most have not read the great works about character – but some may have a very strong sense of character and if fortunate, some may believe they are able to determine what is right. Unfortunately, many people are not so blessed with these role models of strong character and struggle daily about correctness of actions.

The second part of Kohlberg's question is: How do we know *why* something is right or wrong? This morally-reasoned question is ostensibly affected by our role models, but

JOURNAL OF VALUES-BASED LEADERSHIP

is even further shaped by the many lessons we learn from society and our environment. We are bombarded with positive and negative moral lessons from television, the Internet, Facebook, videos, movies, newspapers, magazines, and many other media outlets. It is argued that the majority of us learn more of why an action is right and wrong from these sources (Lumpkin, Stoll, & Beller, 2012). I choose not to believe this general statement, for I want to believe our role models hold that position of power in teaching us basic right and wrong. However, there is no denying that the media, in its numerous forms, affect our morality and determine how we treat others, ourselves, and the interaction of the two. Do we respect others? Do we respect ourselves? Are we honest with others? (Would we lie, cheat, or steal?) Are we just or unjust in our dealings with others? (Stoll, *in press*).

In deciding why something is right or wrong (Kohlberg, 1981), we must take into consideration our moral duty to others as well as our duty to ourselves (Stoll, 2011). The “why-ness” of ethical decision-making has to do with morality, climate, and mission – both personal and professional. The nature of our behavior is directly related to how we view ourselves in relation to other sentient beings. We must view and value others as an extension of self; however, this is difficult to do (Buber, 1970), especially in competitive environments.

Universities are highly competitive places whether on the athletic playing field, in the classroom, or across the research community. Competition and morality have often been argued to be incompatible because morality is about fair play while competition is typically about gaining an advantage – whether fair or unfair. Must the win always be the most important objective? Under such conditions, can morality exist?

Up to this point, my discussion has focused on the general nature of personal morality; however, my secondary purpose of this first part is to discuss ethics as it is applied to our highly competitive research community today. For the first time in the last 100 years, research organizations have developed lengthy codes of ethics. Leading research institutions have implemented educational formats for teaching ethics, and have hired ethics consultants to do this. They have additionally established institutional review boards, ethical guideline panels, and ethical oversight committees. Many universities are so concerned about the ethical community, they have instituted anonymous hotlines where university personnel can report unethical behavior. Subsequently, a general review can take place of the suspected violators. It is a legalistic risk-managed environment, a climate fraught with rules, regulations, and codes to follow. However, in spite of all of these controls and oversights, the overall climate has not improved. Ethical violations continue and many researchers feel rather abused by risk-management administrators. Why so many rules, regulations, and oversight? Are researchers less ethical than their predecessors?

Perhaps, perhaps not. However, I do know that the present competitive environment creates an ethical dilemma. An ethical dilemma occurs when two “good” values – one moral, one social – are in conflict. The moral value, in this case, is integrity (i.e., following rules), and the social value is achieving success in a highly competitive market. One must conduct research; one must publish; and, one must get ahead.

This highly competitive environment breeds a focus on self and when that happens, ethical conduct becomes problematic. Universities may argue that their missions are about service to others, but the reality indicates a different, hidden purpose. Faculty members do not get promoted because of service to others or taking others into consideration. Faculty members get promoted because of the amount of research published or the number of grants secured. Universities say they want collegial environments and joint research agendas, but faculty members are well aware that first author status on any research product — whether book, journal, or grant — is the key to getting tenure and/or a raise in pay. One can be a second or third author on cooperative studies, but one must have a proven track record in a narrow line of research. Invariably, that is best defined through first author status. Such an environment works against the Kohlbergian question of “Why is it right” in relation to others. Why is it right becomes why is it right for me and mine? The only way to effectively change this climate is to either demonstrate inalienable allegiance to rules and procedures or hire more individuals to judiciously monitor potential incidences of unethical conduct. The very reason why we are writing this paper is to offer guidance in this very trying ethical environment so that the researcher acquires a better understanding of the rules and regulations as well as understands how to be ethically vigilant.

The final moral reasoning question by Kohlberg (1981) is: What social and moral perspectives support what is right and why is it right? This final question demands that as an educated people, we must be familiar with our history and culture. We need an understanding of our culture, philosophy, and traditions before we can truly comprehend the difference between right and wrong. Kohlberg argues that we have a duty to actively acquire this knowledge, with the learning process demanding education and enlightenment. The saddest commentary about this perspective is that even though universities have required undergraduate general education requirements in the humanities, few core courses exist in doctoral research programs — except for the requisite research ethics courses that so many institutions of higher learning are currently supporting for all research faculties. These courses are generally focused on the rules of ethical research practice; a topic which will be discussed more thoroughly in the second part of this paper. Seldom are these courses supplemented by other required courses in history, philosophy, anthropology, or the humanities. Few, if any, moral reasoning workshops exist for research faculty, although there are numerous required ethics seminars or online short courses concerning rules and regulations.

Kohlberg’s question is difficult if not impossible to answer without a strong reading and knowledge of these subject matter fields. Instead, most of us are self-professed ethical people, when we are essentially robust practicing relativists.

## **Relativism**

Relativism is the ethical doctrine that knowledge, truth, and morality exist in relation to the individual and or group of people. There are no absolute wrongs or rights — all are relative to the culture, people, and experience. Relativists believe that ethics are applicable only in a limited context. In challenging the stranglehold of relativism,

Sommers and Sommers (2003) posed a simple query: “Is there any action that no matter the context is always wrong?” Is there any action that is always morally despicable or reprehensible? Wouldn’t most people arrive at a consensus with such crimes as murder and such ethical failings such as dishonesty? Could rape ever be justified from a moral stance? Sommers and Sommers, together with a majority of the populace, obviously believe not. They argue that if there is a universal wrong, then there must be a universal right. They argue that loving children is always right. These authors thus maintain that if exceptions exist to the notion of relativism, then relativism is inherently fallible. Instead, there are universal conditions of right and wrong.

Unlike the thoughtful Sommers and Sommers (2003), so many of us are betrayed by our own lack of thinking deeply about ethical issues. We make our decisions of right and wrong based on an intuitive reaction or a notion (Haidt, 2007). If we have to explain our decisions, we morally justify our actions after the fact (Bandura, 1986).

How can we overcome the problems that I have discussed? The only way I know is to make a concerted effort to study ethics. What is it? How does it function? What is my role in relation to ethics? What duties do I have in relation to ethics? What do I believe? How do my beliefs come into play in how I act as a professor, a teacher, or a researcher? As a professor and researcher, what should I know about ethical obligations I may owe to myself, to my students, to my colleagues, and to my research? These are the questions that will be globally addressed in the next section. None of us is above and beyond the continual reading and study of ethics – it should be a lifelong endeavor (Stoll & Beller, 2006). In this next section, we offer professional and organizational food for ethical thought and action.

## **Responsible Conduct of Research**

Research proliferates as faculty members seek to meet increased expectations for publications, external funding, and professional advancement. While most researchers adhere to strict ethical principles in their work, others fail to meet this standard of behavior (Fanelli, 2009; Martinson, Anderson, & deVries, 2005; Steneck, 2007; Van Noorden, 2011). The purposes of this section are to (1) describe the importance and content of responsible conduct of research with an emphasis on research ethics, research integrity, and ethical decision-making in research; and (2) define research misconduct, provide examples of questionable research practices, and briefly describe the process for dealing with research misconduct.

## **Research Integrity and Research Ethics**

Steneck (2007) suggests that responsible conduct of research is good citizenship applied to professional life as researchers report their work honestly, accurately, efficiently, and objectively. Responsible conduct of research combines research integrity and research ethics. Research integrity is “the quality of possessing and steadfastly adhering to high moral principles and professional standards, as outlined by professional organizations, research institutions and, when relevant, the government and public” (Steneck, 2006, p. 55). Research ethics is “the critical study of the moral problems associated with or that arise in the course of pursuing

research” (Steneck, 2006, p. 56). Research behavior viewed from the perspective of professional standards describes research integrity, while research behavior viewed from the perspective of moral principles exemplifies research ethics. According to Shamoo and Resnik (2003) and Steneck (2007), research integrity and research ethics are characterized by honesty, accuracy, efficiency, objectivity, integrity, carefulness, openness, confidentiality, respect for colleagues, respect for intellectual property, social responsibility, competence, equality of opportunity, and legality.

Codes of ethics can help guide professionals in behaving responsibly by displaying these ethical virtues. For example, the National Association for Sport and Physical Education’s Code of Ethics for Professionals in Higher Education articulates the responsibilities owed to students, colleagues, the discipline and profession, and society. Similarly, the Code of Ethics of the Research Consortium of the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance identifies the expectations of its members in the advancement of knowledge through research. Such codes of ethics help lead to ethical decision-making in research, which is discussed in the next section.

### **Ethical Decision-Making in Research**

Elliott and Stern (1997) offer a seven-step framework for moral reasoning that can help professionals in their quest to engage in the responsible conduct of research: (1) identify and define the ethical issues; (2) determine the key facts involved in the situation and what, if any, additional information is needed; (3) recognize the affected parties; (4) formulate alternative courses of action that could be taken based on the facts; (5) evaluate the alternatives; (6) construct possible options and select the best option; and (7) take action. Kalichman (2002) emphasizes the strong connection between ethical decision-making and the responsible conduct of research in his explanation of the responsibilities owed to the research process, research subjects, other researchers, the institution, society, the environment, and self.

Pimple (2002) provides another framework for ensuring responsible conduct of research by providing three queries to guide the actions of researchers. First, is it true? Telling the truth prevents falsification, fabrication, and unintentional bias by ensuring scientific integrity. Second, is it fair? Fairness deals with the relationships among researchers, between researchers and subjects, and toward sponsoring entities. Third, is it wise? Wisdom requires social responsibility and the proper relationship between research and the common good. Researchers who act ethically and responsibly follow the rules and demonstrate a greater sense of morality. Ethical and moral decision-making should guide the actions of researchers in nine core instructional areas (Steneck, 2007) that are central to the responsible conduct of research: (1) protection of human subjects; (2) welfare of laboratory animals; (3) conflicts of interest; (4) data management practices; (5) mentor and trainee responsibilities; (6) collaborative research; (7) authorship and publication; (8) peer review; and (9) research misconduct. The next section begins with an explanation of research conduct that fails to act responsibly in one or more of the other eight core areas.

## Research Misconduct

The U. S. Office of Research Integrity (ORI) is charged with overseeing and directing research integrity activities on behalf of the Public Health Service, which is composed of agencies such as the National Institutes of Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Research misconduct is defined by the ORI as the intentional “fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results” (Steneck, 2007, p. 21). Fabricating data or results and then recording or reporting these as research findings is fabrication. Examples of fabrication include reporting results of research not yet performed as evidence in support of proposals for grant funding and omission of data or reporting positive, but not negative, outcomes. Manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes or changing or omitting data or results so the research is not accurately represented is falsification. Examples of falsification include claiming a large data set when none exists, recording data incorrectly, changing data to support hypotheses, and suppression or non-publication of data with the intent to deceive, thus misrepresenting interventions. Appropriating another person’s ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate and deserved credit is plagiarism. Examples of plagiarism include taking credit for someone else’s work, publishing multiple versions of the same work or results, failing to acknowledge all contributors as authors, and giving attribution to authors who did not contribute. Research misconduct characterized by fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism departs significantly from acceptable practices and is committed intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly (Steneck, 2007).

Fanelli’s (2009) meta-analysis of surveys of scientists who were asked if they knew of a colleague guilty of committing research misconduct or was culpable personally reports that 1.97% of the scientists admit to having fabricated, falsified, or modified data or results at least once while 33.7% admit to having committed other questionable research practices. In reporting on the actions of colleagues, scientists admit knowing that 14.12% of their colleagues’ falsified data and 72% engaged in other questionable research practices. These latter, less onerous, actions are the focus of the next section.

## Questionable Research Practices

Steneck (2006) suggests numerous examples of questionable research practices — while not as egregious as fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism — still fail to measure up to the responsible conduct of research. Changing the order of authors to indicate undeserved credit, listing unaccepted papers as “in press,” including bogus publications on one’s vitae, and receiving or giving honorary or ghost authorship are unequivocally dishonest practices. Publishing the same information more than once and publishing the results of one experiment in several publications (i.e., salami slicing) are deceitful. Making errors in citations and quotations, while maybe sloppy scholarship, can be misleading and constitute borderline plagiarism. Failing to provide sufficient information about the methods to allow for replication or evaluation and using improper statistics and data analyses demonstrate a lack of integrity in the research process. Failing to reveal a conflict of interest, presenting evidence for

purposes other than scholarly or scientific reasons, and yielding to undue influence from funding sources reveal self-serving behaviors rather than advancing knowledge based on the highest standards of research integrity.

Martinson, Anderson, and deVries (2005) discuss the top ten misbehaviors of scientists: (1) falsifying research data; (2) ignoring major aspects of human-subject requirements; (3) failing to properly disclose personal involvement in firms whose products are based on one's research; (4) engaging in questionable relationships with students, research subjects, or clients; (5) using another's ideas without obtaining permission or giving due credit; (6) using unauthorized and confidential information in connection with one's research; (7) failing to present data that contradict one's previous research; (8) circumventing minor aspects of human-subject requirements; (9) overlooking others' use of flawed data or questionable interpretation of data; and (10) changing the design, methodology, or results of a study in response to pressure from a funding source. These authors report that 33% of the respondents admit having engaged in at least one of these misbehaviors in the past three years.

In addition to these misbehaviors, LaFollette (1992) found unethical conduct or misrepresentation in scientific and technical publishing. For example, some authors falsify data or artifacts that do not exist, forge documents or objects, misrepresent or distort data or evidence, fail to make proper attribution for another's ideas or text (plagiarism), misrepresent authorship through providing undeserved credit or withholding credit although merited, and misrepresent the publication status on one's work. This author explains that some referees misrepresent facts in a review, delay a review to achieve personal gain, and steal ideas or text during the review process, while some editors and editorial staff members fabricate referees' reports, fail to honestly communicate with an author about the review process, and misappropriate ideas or text during the review process.

Van Noorden (2011) describes the dramatic increase in retractions in scientific journals. While PubMed retraction notices were almost non-existent in 1977, by 2009 this number was approximately 300. It was projected that the Web of Science index would find over 400 retractions in 2011. The causes of these retractions, according to this author, include fabrication or falsification, self-plagiarism, plagiarism, honest error, irreproducible results, and other non-specified reasons. Causal factors that influence researchers to engage in research misconduct and the subsequent repercussions they experience are explained in the next section.

### **Causes and Effects of Research Misconduct**

Publication pressures often are intense and may lead researchers to behave in ways that without these stressors they would never even contemplate doing. For example, possible causes of research misconduct encompass pressures to gain promotion and tenure and advance professionally, ease of intentionally reporting inaccurate, incomplete, or unsubstantiated positive results, failure to comply with rigorous institutional policies and federal requirements, rationalizations such as claiming that everyone else cheats in some way, belief that their research misconduct will never

find be revealed, and claim that they are guilty only of an unintentional or careless error rather than research misconduct.

If any person thinks that research misconduct has occurred, the responsible conduct of research requires reporting this concern through appropriate institutional and federal processes. While ensuring confidentiality to protect the person making the allegation, an inquiry should assess whether the allegation has merit. If so, then a formal investigative process should determine the facts and truth regarding the allegation followed by an adjudication process that weighs the evidence and draws conclusions. The findings and any sanctions for misconduct should be reported appropriately as should the vindication of any person falsely charged (Steneck, 2007). If misconduct is confirmed, sanctions could include retraction of any fabricated, falsified, or plagiarized research, loss of job, salary reduction, stripping of rank, ineligibility for funding, repayment of funding, tarnishing of professional image, and a public statement of apology. Unfortunately, research misconduct generates negative consequences because it makes research findings unreliable, weakens trust among colleagues, undermines the public's trust in researchers, and wastes research funds.

## Conclusion

Society expects researchers to conform to the highest ethical and intellectual standards. The responsible conduct of research should be characterized by research integrity and research ethics, which are aligned with ethical decision-making through their honesty, objectivity, integrity, confidentiality, and competence as they strictly comply with federal, institutional, and professional requirements. Unfortunately, too many researchers are guilty of fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism as well as questionable research behaviors. The reasons why research misconduct exists are varied, and all of us may be tempted. The problem at hand is grappling with how to rise to the challenge and meet our responsibility to the profession and discipline. Our paper has focused on the moral reasoning application in research, ethical dilemmas that exist, and how we can appropriately address them. Responsible conduct rests with us – what will be our response?

---

## References

- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Buber, M. (1970). *The I and thou*. New York, NY: Scribner.
- Elliott, D., & Stern, J. E. (1997). *Research ethics: A reader*. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England for the Institute for the Study of Applied and Professional Ethics at Dartmouth College.
- Fanelli, D. (2009). How many scientists fabricate and falsify research? A systematic review and meta- meta-analysis of survey data. *PLoS ONE*, 4(5). Retrieved from <http://www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0005738>.
- Haidt, J. (2007). The new synthesis in moral psychology. *Science*, 316, 998-1002.

- Kalichman, M. (2002). Ethical decision-making in research: Identifying all competing interests. Commentary on "Six domains of research ethics." *Science and Engineering Ethics*, 8, 215-218.
- Kohlberg, L. (1981). *The philosophy of moral development: Moral stages and the idea of justice*. San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row.
- Kroichick, R. (2006, March 8). Why Bonds used steroids. *San Francisco Chronicle*. Retrieved from [http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2006/03/08\\_MNGAKHKF371.DTL&ao=all](http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2006/03/08_MNGAKHKF371.DTL&ao=all).
- LaFollette, M. C. (1992). *Stealing into print: Fraud, plagiarism, and misconduct in scientific publishing*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Lumpkin, A., Stoll, S. K., & Beller, J. M. (2012). *Practical ethics in sport management*. Jefferson City, NC: McFarland and Company, Inc.
- Martinson, B. C., Anderson, M. S., & deVries, R. (2005). Scientists behaving badly. *Nature*, 435, 737-738.
- Morris, T. (2003, August 05). Lying, cheating and stealing. (S. Stamberg, Interviewer).
- National Association for Sport and Physical Education. NASPE code of ethics for professionals in higher education. Retrieved from <http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/standards/upload/Code-of-Ethics-for-Professionals-in-Higher-Ed-final-10-29-09-2.pdf>.
- Pimple, K. D. (2002). Six domains of research ethics: A heuristic framework for the responsible conduct of research. *Science and Engineering Ethics*, 8, 191-205.
- Research Consortium. Code of ethics. Retrieved from <http://www.aahperd.org/rc/about/codeofethics.cfm>.
- Shamoo, A. E., & Resnik, D. B. (2003). *Responsible conduct of research*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Sommers, C. H., & Sommers, F. T. (2003). *Vice and virtue in everyday life: Introductory readings in ethics* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson.
- Steneck, N. H. (2006). Fostering integrity in research: Definitions, current knowledge, and future directions. *Science and Engineering Ethics*, 12, 53-74.
- Steneck, N. H. (2007). *ORI Introduction to the responsible conduct of research*. (Rev. Ed.). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- Stoll, S. K. (2011). Athletics: The good it should do. *Journal of College and Character*, 12(4), 1-5.
- Stoll, S. K. (in press). Loyalty: Why is it so problematic in athletics? *Journal of College and Character*.
- Stoll, S. K. & Beller, J. M. (2006). Ethical dilemmas in college sport. In R. E. Lapchick (Ed.), *New game plan for college sport* (pp. 75-90). Greenwood, CT: Praeger Publishers.
- Van Noorden, R. (2011). Science publishing: The trouble with retractions. *Nature*, 478, 26-28.
- Weems, M. L. (2012). The cherry tree. Retrieved from <http://www.apples4theteacher.com/holidays/presidents-day/george-washington/short-stories/the-cherry-tree.html>.

---

## About the Authors

**Dr. Angela Lumpkin** is a professor in the Department of Health, Sport, and Exercise Sciences at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, Kansas, where she previously served as Dean of the School of Education. Previously, she served as Dean of the College of Education at State University of West Georgia, Head of the Department of Physical Education at North Carolina State University, as well as Chair of the North Carolina State Faculty Senate, and professor of Physical Education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She also served as women's basketball coach at the University of North Carolina. She holds a B.S.E. from the University of Arkansas, M.A. and Ph.D. from Ohio State University, and a M.B.A. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Angela is the author of 23 books, including *Introduction to Physical Education, Exercise Science, and Sport Studies* currently in its eighth edition, *Practical Ethics in Sport Management* with two colleagues, *Sport Ethics: Applications for Fair Play* published in three editions with two colleagues, and *Modern Sports Ethics: A Reference Handbook*, written for a public audience. She has written 8 book chapters, published nearly 60 refereed manuscripts, and delivered 22 invited lectures and over 160 professional conference presentations. She has served as President of the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) and President of the North Carolina Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance.

Among the recognitions she has received are the Honor Award from the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, selection as an American Council on Education Fellow, Distinguished Visiting Professor at the United States Military Academy at West Point, Gene A. Budig Teaching Professor in the School of Education at the University of Kansas, Gene A. Budig Writing Professor at the University of Kansas, and recipient of The Order of the Long Leaf Pine presented by Governor James B. Hunt of North Carolina for contributions to the physical fitness and health of North Carolinians.

**Dr. Sharon K. Stoll** serves as the Director of the Center for ETHICS\* at the University of Idaho. She is considered one of the leading authorities in competitive moral education intervention techniques for adults and college aged students in America. Also a professor of Physical Education, Dr. Stoll is a Phi Kappa Phi/University of Idaho Alumni Distinguished Faculty Member and winner of a prestigious University of Idaho Outreach Award in 2000, and a U of I Teaching Award in 1992. A former public school teacher, coach, and athlete, Dr. Stoll holds a Ph.D. in Sport Philosophy from Kent State University, and is the creator and director of one of the few programs in America that is directed toward moral education with competitive populations. Dr. Stoll is well known for her knowledge in teaching and methodology as applied to pedagogy in moral education and character development. Many of Dr. Stoll's 22 completed doctoral students have developed measurement evaluation tools and other curriculum designs that are impacting the knowledge of moral development in sport as well as in the US military.

Author of numerous books and articles, Dr. Stoll is an active lecturer and consultant on various character issues, including moral education, moral reasoning, and moral development. Selected as a visiting professor and in residence for an academic year at

VOLUME VI • ISSUE I • WINTER/SPRING 2013

the United States Military Academy at West Point, she served as a consultant for the Higher Education Program. She is or has been a consultant to the United States Anti-Doping Agency, United States Navy, United States Air Force, the Idaho Bar Association, the American Bar Association, United States Central Intelligence Agency, plus various sports organizations including the (already listed)the World Anti-Doping Agency, the President's Commission of the NCAA, the National Youth Sport Coaches' Association, the National Federation of High School Activities Association, and many more independent and private organizations. Dr. Stoll has been featured on such national programs as "Night Line," "ESPN Sports Center," "ESPN Chat Line," Fox Sports' "Goin' Deep," as well as in numerous regional and local news shows, documentaries, national newspapers, and magazines.

She has been featured in *Sports Illustrated* and the cover of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, as well as over 50 major newspapers in US and abroad describing the Center's project working with the Atlanta Braves. In 2007, she was named as a member of the 100 Most Influential Sport Educators in America with such individuals as Andre Agassi, William Bowen, Bob Costas, Tiger Woods, Pat Summitt, and Mike Krzyzewski.