



SYMBIOSIS SCHOOL FOR LIBERAL ARTS Symbiosis International (Deemed University)

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Founder: Prof. Dr. S. B. Mujumdar, M. Sc., Ph. D. (Awarded Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri by President of India)

Workshop on Research Methodology: Research Ethics

Date: 25 July 2020, Venue: Online on Zoom, Duration: 3 hours

Objectives of the Workshop

Every year, the Research Cell at SSLA conducts a series of research workshops aimed at providing students, across all four batches, with resources and guidance for proper research and writing. The sixth workshop in this series was a workshop on research ethics, conducted by Dr. Hansika Kapoor. The workshop aimed at helping the students understand how to conduct research ethically, how the ethics of research has evolved over time, and what practical requirements need to be met in terms of obtaining necessary ethics approval for research projects.

Workshop Facilitator



Dr. Hansika Kapoor is a Research Author at the Department of Psychology, Monk Prayogshala, Mumbai since July 2011. Monk Prayogshala is an independent not-for-profit academic research institute, striving to improve the academic research environment in India, starting with the social sciences. She is also an Affiliate at the Neag School of Education at the University of Connecticut. Dr. Kapoor holds a Master's degree in Clinical Psychology and a PhD from IIT, Bombay in the area of creativity and completed her Fulbright Postdoctoral Fellowship (2019-2020) working with Prof. James C.

Kaufman at the University of Connecticut. Her work has been published in several international peer-reviewed academic journals. She also regularly contributes to popular media publications.

Number of workshop participants: 17

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Workshop Outcomes

The workshop began with a history of the various ethically questionable researches that were conducted in the past years. The students were asked to brainstorm and think of the multiple ways in which the researches were unethical, and how the researchers could have worked in an ethical fashion. This proved to be a base for the workshop - helping students understand the importance of ethical research, and how there is a need to weigh the pros and cons before starting research.

The workshop further discussed the importance of informed consent of the participants taking part in a research study. A template of a consent form was provided to the students and a discussion took place regarding the various kinds of information that need to be given to the participants of a study regarding the research being conducted. Another important topic discussed in the session was the ethics of publishing research papers. With the increase in open source journals and research papers, it has become extremely difficult to figure out whether a journal is legitimate or not. In such cases, a person falling prey to fraudulent journals and publishing scams is highly likely. Dr. Hansika provided the students with tips on how to identify authentic journals and other tips on how to avoid fraudulent publications.

The session was concluded with a question and answer session where the students cleared their doubts regarding research ethics and publications.

The screenshot shows a Zoom meeting interface. The main content is a slide titled "HISTORY" with the following text:

HISTORY

Robert Allen "Laud" Humphreys is an American sociologist and author, who is best known for his Ph.D. dissertation, *Tearoom Trade*, published in 1970. This book is an ethnographic account of anonymous male homosexual encounters in public toilets in parks – a practice known as "tea-rooming" in U.S. gay slang. Humphreys was intrigued by the fact that the majority of participants in tearoom activities were outwardly heterosexual men, who lived otherwise conventional family lives in their communities. However, it was important to them to preserve their anonymity during tearoom visits.

Typically, tearoom encounters involved three people – the two males engaging in a sexual act and a lookout person called a "watchqueen." The job of the watchqueen was to alert the two participating males for police or other people, while deriving pleasure from watching the action as a voyeur. Because it was not otherwise possible to reach these subjects, Humphreys showed up at public toilets, masquerading as a watchqueen. As a participant observer, Humphreys was able to conduct field observations for his dissertation, as he normally would in a study of political protests or any other sociological phenomenon.

Humphreys needed more information on the participants. But because participants were unwilling to be interviewed in the field or disclose personal identities, Humphreys wrote down the license plate numbers of the participants' cars, wherever possible, and tracked down their names and addresses from public databases. Then he visited these men at their homes, disguising himself to avoid recognition and announcing that he was conducting a survey, and collected personal data that was not otherwise available.

The Zoom interface includes a top bar with participant names (Isha Mahajan, Hansika Kapoor, Hridya Venkatra..., Tanvi Singh), a right-hand panel with a list of 15 participants, and a bottom toolbar with controls like Mute, Video, and Chat.

Screenshot from the workshop on "Research Ethics" conducted by Dr. Hansika Kapoor on 25 July 2020.



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