

RHInno Ethics Workshop Programme

Research Ethics and Research Integrity in the COVID 19 context

Wednesday, 28th July, 2021

14:00 GMT / 16:00 SAST

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Chair and Non-Executive Director: EthiXPERT

Deputy Chair: Unisa Research Ethics Review Committee

<https://www.ethixpert.org.za/>

Member: Global Pool of Experts: Globethics.Net

<https://www.globethics.net/>



Positioning myself

- I am from African soil
- I do not speak for Africa, but my experience of the continent is localised to the colourful blend of people of South Africa & my engagements with colleagues from African countries
- Africa and African 'research' ethics cannot be simplified
- "it is a million things compressed into a vast geopolitical entity" (Orabator, 2011)
- Cultural, political, social, geographical and religious diversity inform the understanding of ethics/moral questions

Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orabator (2011). Ethics Brewed in an African Pot. *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (Spring/Summer 2011):

3-16.



Presentation Outcome

How prepared are you to deal with research ethics and integrity in the COVID-19 context?

- Reflections on ethical decision-making within a VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous) world
- Four pillars of ethical decision-making within a VUCA world



**This tiny little
virus brought
the whole
world to a halt**

...

VUCA

VUCA as a concept and theory denotes:

- chaotic, rapidly changing environments
- “technological developments, immigration, ecological disasters, geopolitical trends” disrupting our lives at high speed and magnitude
- demands for new ways of coping – resilience, social emotional competencies & 4th industrial revolution skills
- COVID-19 = severe case of VUCA – opportunities to reflect on our current ways of ‘being’ linked to humanity
- COVID-19 = “Black Swan”

World organisations such as UNESCO and OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) call for social-emotional learning and development:

self-awareness & regulation

social awareness

communication skills

empathy

mindfulness

responsible and ethical decision-making

Skills for the 4th Industrial Revolution

Critical skills needed

- Critical thinking
- Communication
- Collaboration and teamwork
- Complex problem solving
- Creativity
- Emotional intelligence
- Global awareness
- Financial, economic, business and entrepreneurial literacy
- Civic literacy
- Health literacy
- Environmental literacy
- Computational thinking
- Judgement and decision making
- Service orientation
- Negotiating
- Cognitive flexibility

VUCA and COVID-19 – Can you recognize some disruption in your life?

V=VOLITILITY

U=UNCERTAINTY

Characteristics – The disruption is unexpected causing instability and insecurity for an unknown period of time.

The nature, speed, volume and magnitude of change is not predictable, causing consistent turbulence

Change is frequent and unpredictable with high impact

Environment demands you to react quickly to on-going changes that are unpredictable and out of your control

Characteristics – Despite access to information, the basic cause and effect is unknown and change is possible but not given

Lack of predictability of issues and events make it difficult to see future outcomes or decision-making

Unknown the scale of disruption to change lives to what end

The environment requires you to take action without certainty



VUCA and COVID-19 – Unpacked for Disruption in Research

C=COMPLEXITY

Characteristics – The situation has many inter-and co-depending parts and variables. Although some information could be available or could be predicted, it is often fragmented within volume and nature which could be overwhelming

Many difficult-to-understand and interconnected variables overwhelm people and leads to social confusion

Higher levels of co- and interdependency are strained and often collapse

The environment is dynamic, with many co-and interdependencies

A = AMBIGUITY

Characteristics – Social relations become completely uncertain and strained due to conflict and confusion. No precedents exist and facing the *unknown of unknown*

Lack of clarity on the causes of the disruption or change leads to frustration and levels of panic

Lack of knowledge on rules of engagement increase anxiety and eruptions

The environment is unfamiliar, outside your comfort zone and expertise



A proposed model for ethical decision-making in a VUCA world



Nurturing personal and collective resilience

Vision (be direct and reliable in volatile situations) – the desire to do good and to be the best version of yourself

- Keep the big picture in mind
- Know what your vision is and work towards it
- Cultivate an identity underpinned by integrity and adherence to high ethical standards

Understanding (especially in uncertain and unpredictable situations) – avoiding harm in doing good (non-maleficence)

- Listen, speak and share
- Involve people & invest in fact-finding and information sharing (how much do you know about the situation?)
- Communicate – integrity, transparency and give feedback (be direct in complex situations)
- Create a sense of security
- Break tasks down & act decisively

Care (clarity and fairness) (in complex situations) – justice

- Clarity in purpose, direction and responsibilities (be direct)
- Care for the self
- Care for others/community (put the community at the centre)
- Building up capacity
- Ethic of care: acting in a way that is attentive, responsible & competent

Agility (to promote trust in ambiguous situations) – autonomy (self-knowledge, self-respect and self-control)

- Experimenting
- Leaders must provide clear direction
- Learn new skills
- Develop self-awareness, demonstrate adaptability and openness to change

Elements needed for meaningful work

Meaningful work	Supportive management	Positive work environment that promotes productivity and creativity	Opportunities for growth and development	Trust
Autonomy – self-determination & self-management	Clear and transparent goals	Flexible work environment	Training, coaching, mentoring and support	Clear vision, mission and purpose
Select to fit/engagement	Coaching and mentoring	Humanistic workplace; Empathy and Social Awareness	Facilitated talent mobility	Continuous investment in people
Networking, small empowered teams	Investment in development	Culture of recognition & appreciation	Self-directed, dynamic learner	Transparency and honesty
Time to relax & reflect (Flow)	Agile performance management – collaborative, regular conversations and continuous feedback	Fair, inclusive diverse work environment	High-impact learning culture	Inspiration Adapted from: Factors that contribute to a positive work experience

Cross-organization collaboration and communication

Ethical decision-making

Step 1A: Identify the Problem

Step 1B: Check/Interpret the Facts

Step 2A: Evaluate Values & Principles

Step 2B: Evaluate Alternatives

Step 2C: Consistency Analysis

Step 3A: Make a Decision

Step 3B: Implement a Plan

Step 4: Reflect on Decision

Integrity	Ethics
<p>Doing research in ways that promote confidence in the results, the researchers and the research community by adhering to professional standards</p>	<p>Doing research with a firm conviction not to harm anyone (participants, researcher, employers, funders & society)</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Honesty in all aspects of research2. Accountability in the conduct of research3. Professional courtesy and fairness in working with others4. Good stewardship of research on behalf of others	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Respect for others (autonomy)2. Do good (beneficence)3. Do no harm (non-maleficence)4. Be fair and just in all your research decisions and practices
<p>(http://www.singaporestatement.org/)</p>	<p>(Belmont report, https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/belmont-report/index.html)</p>

Integrity violations (proposing, performing, reviewing or reporting)

1. Plagiarism/text recycling
2. Falsification
3. Fabrication
4. Transgressions relating to co-authorship, denial of contribution and unfair ordering of authors
5. Complicity in and facilitation of academic dishonesty
6. Criminal activity that transgress academic integrity
7. Transgressions of academic integrity in community engagement and outreach
8. Questionable practices
9. Unprofessional supervisor-supervisee relationship
10. Incomplete reporting or biased reporting
11. Technology and instrumentation used to conduct research are not in a proper working order and are not properly calibrated

Ethics violations (proposing, performing, reviewing or reporting)

1. Failure to obtain **voluntary, informed** consent from participants, or parents and/or guardians
2. Failure to obtain gatekeeper permission from employers or communities
3. Discrimination in the selection and treatment of human participants as a result of explicit or implicit bias
4. Failure to uphold confidentiality and security of records - access to records only when necessary to protect the welfare of the person or the community, is legally authorised or required by law
5. Failure to obtain ethics approval or to comply with institutional and national regulations
6. Failure to declare conflicts of interest
7. Failure to conduct a proper research ethics risk assessment

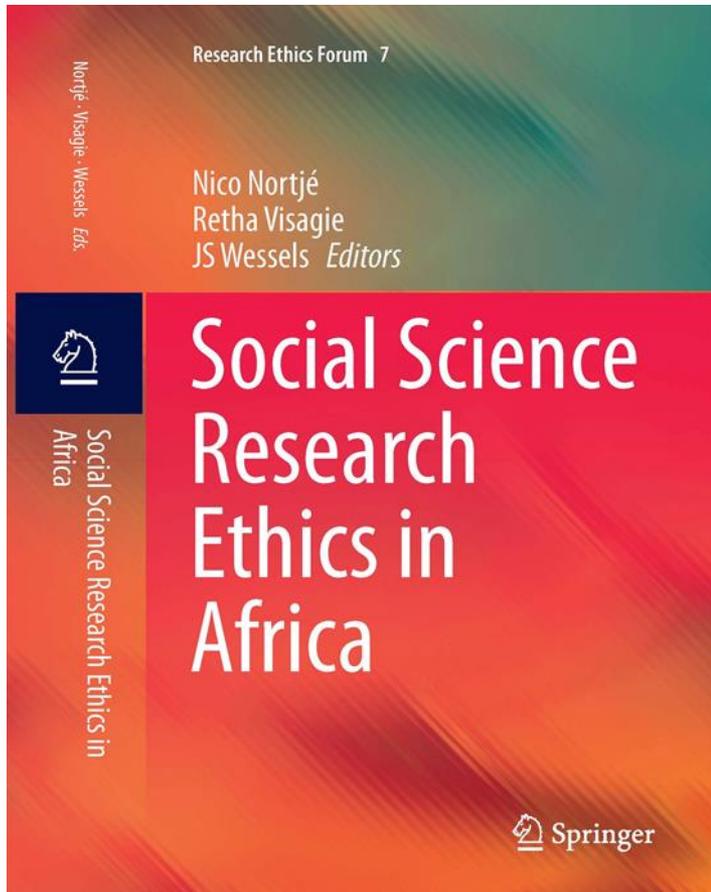
“Knowledge is always positive but
its application may not be.
Indeed, it may be perverse”

Federico Mayor Zaragosa,
Director-General of UNESCO,
1987-1999

Slide used with permission – Prof WA Hoffmann (Presentation: “Research Ethics Capacity Development” Workshop for Research Ethics Committee Members and other Academics/Researchers, Botswana Institute for Technology Research and Innovation (BITRI), Gaborone, Botswana, 13-14 Sep 2018)

Conclusion

“... If it seems to us that we *know everything*, we can easily think that we *can do everything*, and then we are going to believe that we *may do everything*. And that is how we find ourselves in front of a question: *are we permitted to do everything we can?*” (Ivo Šlaus)





POSTPONED: 7th World Conference on Research Integrity to 2022
High impact research integrity virtual event will be hosted during 30 May – 2
June 2021
<https://wcri2021.org/>

Thank you

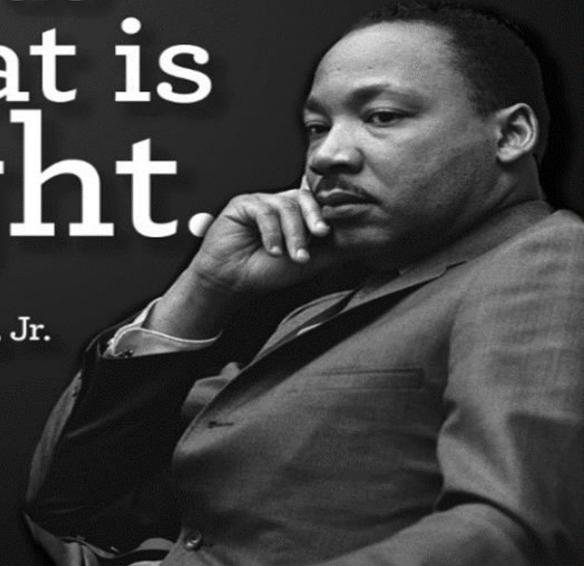
Enkosi

Re A Leboga

Dankie

The time is
always right
to do
what is
right.

- Martin Luther King, Jr.



<http://cdn.grid.fotosearch.com/CSP/CSP105/k19931743.jpg> (21 Sep 2017)