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# Is My Research AResponsible?

*Teaching Material based on:*

Tourish, D. & Craig, R. (2025). Is my research *A*responsible? *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, [doi.org/10.5465/amle.2024.0473](https://doi.org/10.5465/amle.2024.0473)

The author consents and encourages other scholars to use this material for their teaching.

# Policy-making Note

The Tourish and Craig (2025) paper is highly relevant to a wide catchment of persons involved in Business School research and publication.

There are especially strong policy implications for Deans, and Directors of Research and Impact.

The paper canvasses the need to:

- understand the nature of research
- to critically evaluate what is read
- to practise responsible research

# Concerns for the State of Research in Management

- Lack of relevance and credibility
- Widespread adoption of Questionable Research Practices [QRPs]
- Failure to address “grand challenges” [and the “less grand” ones too] facing society

# Responsibility in Research

Responsibility in research is conventionally construed as comprising two categories only:

1. Responsible research
2. Irrresponsible research

but

Is there a third category? ... Aresponsible research?

Do I (or my institution) practice, or have ever condoned, aresponsible research?

# Responsible Research

Complies with Responsible Research in Business & Management's (RRBM) principles of responsible research:

1. Service to society
2. Valuing basic & applied contribution
3. Valuing plurality & multidisciplinary
4. Sound methodology
5. Stakeholder involvement
6. Impact of stakeholders
7. Broad dissemination

# Irresponsible Research

Violates one or more of the RRBM's 7 principles

- Features poor research practices that cause damage
- Uses one or more QRPs
- Some papers claim that IR is intentional, to cause harm.

# Questionable Research Practices & Misconduct

- Fabrication (invention of data)
- Falsification (inaccurate presentation of research, including omission of inconvenient results)
- Plagiarism (unattributed use of others' work)
- Self-plagiarism (authors recycling portions of their previous work without acknowledgment)
- Financial misconduct (non-disclosure of financial interests in research, misusing research funds)
- Other (guest authorship, salami slicing, fake peer review)

# A widely accepted QRP: *p*-hacking

Reporting only studies that deliver a desired *p*-value

Ceasing a study when a desired *p*-value is attained

Dropping items from survey instruments that prevent attainment of “desirable” *p*-values

Rounding off a *p*-value (e.g., stating 0.054 as 0.05)

Excising outliers until significance is attained



# Aresponsible Research

- Makes no real difference to anyone. Has no impact
- Doesn't make the world a better place
- Has low credibility & relevance (“so what” papers?)
- Often, but not always, follows accepted protocols
- Is poorly motivated. Prime purpose is to achieve publication & advance careers

# Encouraging Responsible Research

1. Distinguish between RR, IR, AR
2. Loosen the grip of journal ranking schemes
3. Dilute any undue influence journals give to developing theory
4. Encourage greater awareness by academics of their agency
5. Encourage diversity in method
6. Consider mandating “registered reports”
7. Encourage open data sharing practices

# What Promotes Aresponsible Research?

Obsession with “major theoretical advance”

Rewarding statistical significance/ hypothesis confirmation

Confusing correlation & causation

Lack of commitment to replication

Institutional pressure of university assessment schemes to rise in rankings

Condoning salami slicing & “tautological research questions”

# Policy Implications

Universities need to evaluate work by its quality rather than where it is published.

Researchers need training in responsible research early in their careers.

There should be stronger penalties for research misconduct.

Journals & institutions need to investigate allegations of research misconduct more vigorously.

Journals need to avoid publishing only positive results and publish more replication studies.