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Social Science Methods in Accounting Research

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Overview

- Behavioral Accounting Research
  - Data Sources
  - Archival Research
  - Experimental Markets
- Questions and problems
- Ethical Considerations
Behavioral Accounting Research

“CFO Intentions to Report Fraudulently on Financial Statements”
Nancy Uddin & Peter R. Gillett
Behavioral Accounting Research

“Accountability, the dilution effect, and conservatism in auditors' fraud judgments”
Vicky B. Hoffman & James M. Patton
Behavioral Accounting Research

“Fraudulent financial reporting: consideration of industry traits and corporate governance mechanisms”
Mark S. Beasley, Jospeh V. Carcello, Dana R. Hermanson & Paul D. Lapides
Accounting Horizons Vol. 14 No. 4, 2000
Questions and problems
Ethical Considerations

- Two main issues
  - Treatment of subjects
  - Honesty and integrity of the research process
- Institutional Review Boards
- Tuskegee Study
  - Withheld treatment from subjects for 40 years to study effects of disease
- Cyril Burt’s studies on intelligence in twins
Ethical Considerations

- **Milgram Study**
  - Subjects were deceived as to their roles and purpose of study
  - Subjects were easily induced to impose “cruel” treatment on secret confederates of researcher believed to be other subjects
  - Did the ends justify the means?
  - In fact, subjects were extensively debriefed and evaluated in follow-up studies
Ethical Considerations

General Rules

- Do not put people at risk
- Do not violate the norms of informed consent
- Do not convert public resources to private gains
- Do not damage the environment
- Do not conduct biased research
Ethical Considerations

- APA Guidelines
  - General Considerations
  - Participant at Minimal Risk
  - Fairness, Responsibility and Informed Consent
  - Deception
  - Debriefing
  - Freedom from Coercion
  - Protection of Participants
  - Confidentiality
Ethical Considerations

Ethics of Animal Research

- General
- Personnel
- Facilities
- Acquisition
- Care and Housing
- Justification of Research
- Experimental Design
- Experimental Procedure
- Field Research
- Educational Use
- Disposition
Ethical Considerations

Hawthorne Study

- Factory workers informed of study of productivity
- Workers, eager to please, worked harder, were more punctual, took shorter breaks, etc.
- No true measure of productivity
- This has given its name to the “Hawthorne Effect”
- Deception is used to misdirect subjects
- Creates need for debriefing