

# Public Policy and Ethics in Marketing Research for Organizations: Concerns, Strategies, and Initiatives

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## ABSTRACT

Companies conduct marketing research to generate customer insights. Marketing research involves public policy and ethical issues. The objective of the study is to analyze such issues. The methodology adopted is a conceptual analysis of the various public policy and ethical issues. The issues relate to intrusions on consumer privacy, consumer data security, and misuse of research findings. The discussions focus on technoethics involved in data collection in the digital age. Responsibilities of governments and companies for consumer privacy, measures to protect consumer privacy and to ensure technoethics, consumer data protection, and ensuring ethics for marketing research are discussed. The discussions will allow academicians and practicing managers to adopt initiatives and strategies which are effective. Policy makers and authorities may analyze the various aspects and implement rules and regulations which are effective in consumer privacy, consumer data security and protection, in preventing misuse of research findings, and in ensuring ethics in marketing research.

## KEYWORDS

Chief Privacy Officer, Consumer Privacy, Customer Database, Data Security, Research Findings, Technoethics

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Companies require understanding customer requirements and preferences to serve them well (Min, Yun, & Geum, 2018). Companies should analyze what is of value to customers and should try to incorporate the values in their offerings (Gaulé & Jovarauskiénė, 2022). Customer value cannot be analyzed unless companies collect information about customers and understand their requirements and preferences. Marketers should gain insights about customers and about the marketplace based on the analysis of the information (Mandal, 2020). Companies develop and manage information about marketplace elements viz. customers, competitors, products, and marketing programs (Joanna, Marek, & Władysław, 2020). Companies need to have the necessary expertise to transform marketing information from a slew of new sources into fresh customer insights that will help them engage customers and deliver greater value to them (Du, Netzer, Schweidel, & Mitra, 2021). Consumers

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require conducting marketing research to achieve the purpose. Previously, marketing research was limited to employing traditional techniques (Sahebi, Kordheydari, & Aghaei, 2022). At present, marketing research is not limited to applying traditional techniques. Marketers now-a-days employ new digital, online, mobile, and analytical techniques that enhance the abilities of the marketers to gather, analyze, communicate, and to gain insights from data about consumers and markets (Remigious Ezeugwu, Achi, & Ezeugwu, 2022).

Market research benefits the company and its customers. However, the collection of data about the business environment and the analysis of data may involve various public policy issues (Pauwels & Perry, 2022). Moreover, in the digital age, the issues related to data and information have become more critical than ever. Such public policy issues may also give rise to ethical issues. Such issues, if unattended, will result in consumer mistrust and will affect the relationships between customers and companies in the long run. In some cases, intervention by governments and regulatory bodies may be required to control the issues.

The issues are critical and require analysis. However, few researchers focus on the public policy issues and ethics involved in marketing research. Such issues should be analyzed properly so that rules and regulations may be formulated to control such issues. The study aims to address this research gap.

The objective of the study is to understand the various issues which may be related to marketing research. The study focuses mainly on analyzing the various public policy issues and ethics involved in marketing research. The study also focuses on technoethics involved in marketing research in the digital age.

The methodology adopted is a conceptual analysis of the various aspects related to data collection and analysis and the public policy issues and ethics involved in marketing research. The study also focuses on conducting a conceptual analysis of technoethics related to marketing research in the digital age. Primary data is not collected and empirical analysis is not done.

The novelty and the contributions of the study lie in the fact that an in-depth conceptual analysis of the various public policy and ethical issues related to marketing research is done. Technoethics in marketing research is becoming an important issue in the digital age and with advancements in technological developments. Issues related to technoethics are discussed. Consumer privacy, consumer data security and protection, and misuse of research findings are discussed. Both academicians and practicing managers will be benefited from the discussions. Academicians may analyze the various aspects of public policy and ethical issues related to marketing research, consumer privacy, consumer data security, and technoethics and suggest better ways to utilize marketing research and to generate consumer insights by staying within ethical domains. Practicing managers may understand and realize the importance of ethics, technoethics, consumer privacy, consumer data security, and proper usage of research findings. They may evaluate the existing initiatives and strategies in their organizations and suggest initiatives and strategies which will be effective in future. Based on the analysis, governments and policy makers may implement rules and regulations which may protect consumers and may instill trust and belief in the minds of consumers.

The study is structured as follows:

Public policy issues related to marketing research are highlighted in section 2. Section 3 discusses about the various aspects related to intrusions on consumer privacy. Intrusions on consumer privacy and technoethics are related to each other in the digital age and this is highlighted in section 4. Governments and businesses have responsibilities towards protection of consumer privacy and adopt various measures and initiatives to protect consumer privacy and to ensure technoethics. These aspects are discussed in sections 5 and 6 respectively. Various aspects related to consumer data security and protection are discussed in section 7. Research findings may be misused, misinterpreted, and misrepresented for the benefits of researchers and companies. Such issues are highlighted in section 8. It should be ensured that ethics is maintained in marketing research and this aspect is discussed in section 9. The salient points of the discussions are highlighted in section 10 with sub-sections 10.1 and 10.2 highlighting the theoretical implications and the managerial implications of the study respectively.

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