

Conflict of interest

I. Learning objectives

- To recognise a conflict of interest
- To explain how to avoid possible conflict of interest

II. Target group(s)

- Master's students
 Doctoral students
 Supervisors

III. Determining a story

Tina, a university student, is a member of the research team at the Department of Health and Society. Her research team is exploring the opportunities to launch a research project concerning the effects of noise on human health. Tina resides in an area suffering from high levels of noise pollution. The research team decides to choose that area, as the contribution of the residents in the area could bring good value to the project. Moreover, Tina's grandfather, who resides in the same area, officially complained to the municipality about noise issues in the area. He is usually a very proactive community member and for many years has been a leading representative* of the community in striving to solve the problems in the area. Since Tina is assigned to recruit citizen scientists, she thinks that her grandfather would be interested in joining the CS project.

What should Tina do if her grandfather decides to participate in the research project as a citizen scientist?

* Should not be linked to political activity.

Answer options

1. Surely, Tina's grandfather should be involved since he is a local from the area concerned and Tina could contribute to the CS project as planned.
2. Tina should consult her research team, informing them that her grandfather resides in the area concerned.
3. Tina should encourage her grandfather and neighbours to join the CS project. If her grandfather decides to join the CS project, Tina should inform the research team of his activities.
4. Tina should withdraw from the CS project if her grandfather is eager to join the CS project.
5. Tina should consult her research team, informing them that her grandfather resides in the area concerned and notifying them if she finds out that her grandfather has joined the CS project. Her grandfather should declare his activities to the research team.

IV. Game design elements

Instructions

Option A1 Topic-by-topic, individually	Option A2 Topic-by-topic with a facilitator (in-team)
<p>For learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> familiarise yourself with the topic in the <i>Guidelines</i> (10 min), then read the corresponding vignette (10 min), choose one answer option (4 min), and access the score and the feedback (1 min). <p>Total duration: 25 min</p>	<p>For a facilitator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> inform learners of the time allocated to read the topic in the <i>Guidelines</i> (10 min), then introduce the corresponding vignette (e.g., by reading) and the answer options (10 min), explain how the answer options should be understood and emphasise that only one answer option may be chosen (5 min), once the chosen answer options are reported, summarise the results and announce the right answer (5 min), present scores for all answer options and discuss the options using feedback (5 min), and actively moderate the discussion. <p>Total duration: 35 min</p>
Answer scores	
1. Surely, Tina's grandfather should be involved since he is a local from the area concerned and Tina could contribute to the CS project as planned.	0
2. Tina should consult her research team, informing them that her grandfather resides in the area concerned.	5
3. Tina should encourage her grandfather and neighbours to join the CS project. If her grandfather decides to join the CS project, Tina should inform the research team of his activities.	5
4. Tina should withdraw from the CS project if her grandfather is eager to join the CS project.	5
5. Tina should consult her research team, informing them that her grandfather resides in the area concerned and notifying them if she finds out that her grandfather has joined the CS project. Her grandfather should declare his activities to the research team.	10

Feedback

The research team should be informed of all possible conflicts of interest at all stages of a CS project. The research team should carefully consider each (potential) conflict of interest. The principal investigator should clearly inform each research team member of how risks of conflict of interest are to be mitigated. Researchers should discuss with citizens the issues regarding potential conflicts of interest due to their financial and non-financial activities and the importance of declaring conflicts of interest. Moreover, researchers should also carefully consider both their potential financial and non-financial conflicts of interest and disclose them whenever they occur.

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