



Personality & Ethics

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PSY 249

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Announcements

- Assignment 2 due 3/3. Questions?
- Details on assignment 3 coming soon Due 3/31
- Next week and onward

Ethical research is _____?

study done in a way that is moral for participants

human **Morals** equitable
fair **rights** protect dignity
reasonable **morally right** violates
values the truthful
research **consent** **rules** hurt

doing research in a way
that is moral

A Short History of Research Ethics

2002 Amendment regarding conflict with the law and upholding human rights

2016 Amendment emphasizing avoiding harm & prohibiting participation in torture

2021 APA apology for contributing to and perpetuating racism

Prior to 1900's:
Research is an unethical MESS

Eugenics Research & Intelligence Testing

Woodworth "Shellshock" Test

First Inkblot tests and Therapist heightened "problem" focus

Nuremburg Code

Isabel Myers Briggs Assessment

National Research Act Signed

1900's

1907

1919

1930

1947

1961-1962

1974



What are “Research Ethics”

The values, principles, and standards that guide the conduct of individual researchers in several areas, including the design and implementation of studies and the reporting of findings. For example, research ethics stipulate that studies involving data collection from human participants must be evaluated by institutional review boards (IRBs).

5 Ethical Principles

Beneficence & Nonmalifecence

- Researcher must do the most good and the least harm. Making sure to never harm their participants.

Fidelity & Responsibility

- Researcher is responsible both to society and to the communities that they work with. Researcher must be clear about their role and their research plans. Must adhere to a code of conduct.

Integrity

- Researcher must promote accuracy, truthfulness, and honesty in science, research, knowledge

Justice

- Researcher must be fair and ensure the accessibility of their work. Researchers attempt to address potential bias, and the limits of their competence

Respect for Rights and Dignity

- Researcher respect the dignity and worth of all people, and the rights of individuals to privacy, confidentiality, and self-determination.

An Ethical Dilemma

Scenario

A team of researchers want to study behavioral norms associated with a compassionate personality. They do an observational study looking at acts of kindness.

Researchers find midway through the study that just observing/counting isn't enough so they decide to also audio record the interactions without letting their participants know.

Violated Principle(s)?

Rights & Dignity

Fidelity & Responsibility

An Ethical Dilemma

Scenario

Researchers gave the Big 5 (FFM) to everyone at a job site to see the general personality make up of the employees. After getting the self-reports back researchers noticed they had accidentally omitted a few questions related to openness leading to negatively skewed findings. They wrote up the results and gave their findings to management anyway.

Violated Principle(s)?

Integrity

Justice

An Ethical Dilemma

Scenario

Researchers were looking at personality from middle to late adulthood. They conducted a longitudinal study giving the adults the TAT at certain age intervals. The analysis showed that as East Asian participants aged their reactions to the pictures got less emotion driven/they used less emotion based language. Researchers went on to publish the conclusion that “East Asian adults tend to get less emotional as they age.”

Violated Principle(s)?

NONE

10 Ethical Standards

Resolving
Issues

Competence

Human
Relations

Privacy &
Confidentiality

Advertising &
Public
Statements

Record
Keeping &
Fees

Education &
Training

Research &
Publication

Assessment

Therapy

Personality Psychology: A Legacy of Violence & Promise

- Personality psychology has a long history of advancing/exacerbating societal problems such as: White Supremacy, Anti-Blackness, Sexism, Eugenics, Xenophobia, Ableism, WW 1 & 2, Employment & housing Discrimination, and many others
- Researchers and Employers still often use personality psychology as a way to make money without awareness/adjustment.
- Outside of these glaring issues it has in more nuanced ways influenced the American reliance on testing in order to categorize, surveil, and control people.
- Personality psychology has also given many a sense of understanding/belonging/support.
- Findings in personality psychology has given/gives language to feelings, behaviors, and motivations that allow people to find community, communicate more effectively, and engage with one another more deeply.
- Personality psychology has fostered an international connection between countries that could be used to promote increased harmony.



Essential Ethical Questions for Personality Psych

- Is the scope of the conclusions I'm drawing truthful/accurate based on the population I'm working with?
 - Can any aspect of this research be used to advance harm to people ESPECIALLY more marginalized people?
 - Am I upholding or even creating a norm/standard that can be used to perpetuate violence and/or oppression?
 - Do I Continue to utilize these measures in a less harmful way, attempt to critically reform these measures, or break from them entirely in search of new ways to approach/understand personality?
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