



Knowledge and Awareness of Ethics in Child Psychology

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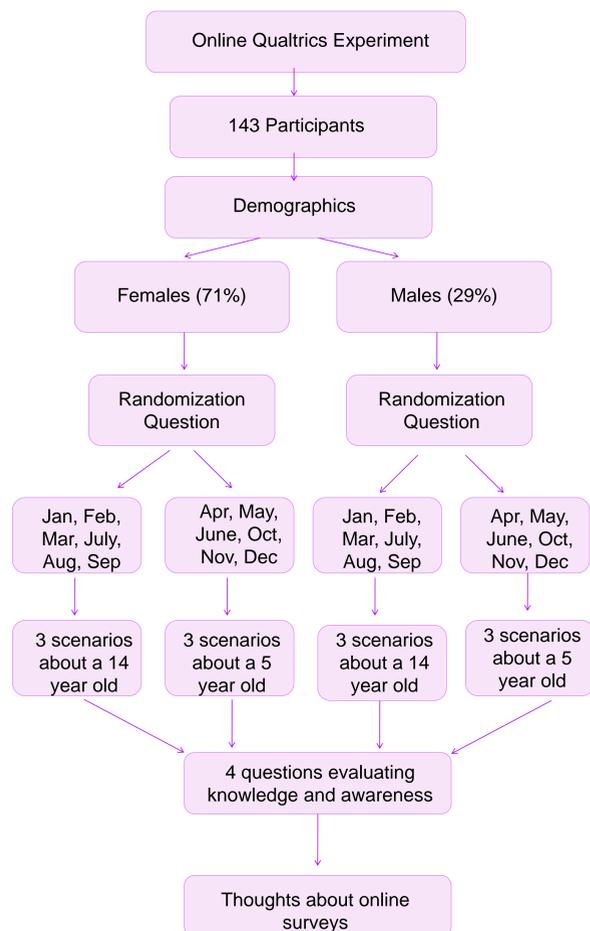
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INTRODUCTION

- ❖ Many solutions to ethical dilemmas are disagreed upon (Pope, Tabachnik, & Keith-Spiegel, 1987)
- ❖ Students training to become mental health professionals need to have experience with ethical and legal matters encountered in the practice (Callan & Bucky, 2005)
- ❖ Ethics education needs to teach correct behaviors in different ethical dilemmas (Haas, Malouf, & Mayerson, 1986)
- ❖ Main ethical issues encountered in counseling psychology (Lawrence & Robinson Kurpius, 2000)
 - ❖ **Competence:** Having the knowledge and skills to work with specific clientele
 - ❖ **Informed consent:** Permission given by the client to begin treatment
 - ❖ **Confidentiality:** Which information to share with and which to withhold from guardians
- ❖ **Hypotheses:**
 - ❖ There will be an effect between the age of the stimulus child and the appropriateness of the situation
 - ❖ In comparison to males, there will be more of an effect between females and the rating of the ethical dilemma
- ❖ **Variables:**
 - ❖ True independent variable (TIV): Age of stimulus child (fourteen years old versus five years old)
 - ❖ Quasi-independent variable (QIV):
 - ❖ Gender (male versus female)
 - ❖ Dependent variables:
 - ❖ Rating of situation to be ethical/unethical
 - ❖ Rating of psychologist's decision to be ethical/unethical
 - ❖ Rating of feeling comfortable making the same decision as the psychologist
 - ❖ Rating of probability of making the same decision

METHOD



Scenario 1: Competence

A counseling psychologist has the opportunity to work with **fourteen-year/five-year, old Joey/Jenny** who is believed to have Attention Deficit Disorder. The psychologist has had training on mental disorders of adults, but has not had specialized training on mental disorders and developmental stages of children. The psychologist believes that it is safe to assume that mental disorders are the same for all ages and feels competent enough to treat Joey/Jenny. Because of this belief, the psychologist decides to continue treatment and schedules an appointment with him/her for the following week.

Scenario 2: Informed Consent

Andrew/Allison, a fourteen-year /five-year old who is depressed, approaches a counseling psychologist with his/her grandmother/grandfather. They explain to the psychologist that it is necessary for the psychologist to treat him/her, but Andrew/Allison's parents are against the idea. His/her grandmother/grandfather says she/he will give consent for Andrew/Allison's treatment. The psychologist decides that since the grandmother /grandfather is not Andrew's/Allison's guardian, her consent is unacceptable and cannot continue with treatment.

Scenario 3: Confidentiality

Kevin/Katie, who is a fourteen-year/five-year old, has been having behavioral and academic problems in school. His/her school guidance counselor contacts Kevin/Katie's psychologist and requests access to his/her mental health records and evaluations. The psychologist is hesitant to provide the records, but Kevin/Katie's guidance counselor promises not to share them with anyone else. The guidance counselor convinces Kevin/Katie's psychologist to provide the records, and they are sent the next day.

Means Summary Table 1

	Question 1: "To What Extent Would You Rate the Situation to Ethical or Unethical?"									
	14					5				
	Correct	Male M	Female SD	Male M	Female SD	Correct	Male M	Female SD	Male M	Female SD
Scenario 1	1	2.44	.89	2.30	.76	1	2.35	.69	2.30	1.00
Scenario 2	4	3.00	.97	3.51	.78	4	2.96	1.04	3.50	.82
Scenario 3	1	1.56	.63	1.79	.98	1	1.88	.86	1.64	.78

❖ **Answers:** 1 (Unethical), 2 (Somewhat unethical), 3 (Somewhat ethical), 4 (ethical)

Means Summary Table 2

	Question 2: "To What Extent Would You Rate the Psychologist's Decision to Ethical or Unethical?"									
	14					5				
	Correct	Male M	Female SD	Male M	Female SD	Correct	Male M	Female SD	Male M	Female SD
Scenario 1	1	2.25	.93	1.98	.72	1	2.15	.83	1.89	.84
Scenario 2	4	3.19	.91	3.46	.85	4	3.31	.84	3.36	.78
Scenario 3	1	1.50	.73	1.75	.95	1	1.77	.86	1.52	.63

❖ **Answers:** 1 (Unethical), 2 (Somewhat unethical), 3 (Somewhat ethical), 4 (ethical)

RESULTS

- ❖ 2 x 2 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)
- ❖ No significant effect between TIV, QIV, and dependent variables
 - ❖ Scenario 1:
 - ❖ Q1: $F(1, 143) = .08, p < .78, \eta^2 = .00$ (no effect)
 - ❖ Q2: $F(1, 143) = .00, p < 1.00, \eta^2 = .00$ (no effect)
 - ❖ Q3: $F(1, 143) = 2.13, p < .15, \eta^2 = .00$ (no effect)
 - ❖ Q4: $F(1, 143) = 2.62, p < .11, \eta^2 = .02$ (no effect)
 - ❖ Scenario 2:
 - ❖ Q1: $F(1, 143) = .29, p < .59, \eta^2 = .00$ (no effect)
 - ❖ Q2: $F(1, 143) = .46, p < .50, \eta^2 = .00$ (no effect)
 - ❖ Q3: $F(1, 143) = .07, p < .80, \eta^2 = .00$ (no effect)
 - ❖ Q4: $F(1, 143) = .05, p < .82, \eta^2 = .00$ (no effect)
 - ❖ Scenario 3:
 - ❖ Q1: $F(1, 143) = 2.13, p < .15, \eta^2 = .02$ (no effect)
 - ❖ Q2: $F(1, 143) = 2.62, p < .12, \eta^2 = .02$ (no effect)
 - ❖ Q3: $F(1, 143) = .101, p < .01, \eta^2 = .01$ (little effect)
 - ❖ Q4: $F(1, 143) = 5.37, p < .02, \eta^2 = .04$ (no effect)

DISCUSSION

- ❖ Both hypotheses were refuted
 - ❖ Age of the stimulus child and the gender of the participant did not affect the rating of the situation and the decision
- ❖ Both males and females had some knowledge and awareness of ethics in child psychology
 - ❖ The majority of the participants either completely identified the situation and the decision as "unethical" or rated the situation and the decision to be "somewhat unethical." When the situation and the decision were ethical, the participants correctly identified the situation and decision to be "ethical."
- ❖ Both females and males indicated they would not very feel comfortable making a decision in an ethical dilemma
 - ❖ Bernard and Jara (1986) found that although students had knowledge of what to do in an ethical situation, some participants were unwilling to correctly and ethically solve the problem
- ❖ There needs to be stronger and more informative ethics training for students
- ❖ **Internal validity:** medium
 - ❖ Randomization, no effect of variables
- ❖ **External validity:** medium
 - ❖ Slightly biased population, can be somewhat generalized to society
- ❖ **Future research could include:**
 - ❖ Unbiased population
 - ❖ Comparison of stimulus child and stimulus adult
 - ❖ Survey about prior knowledge/experience of ethics
 - ❖ Tests to assess participants' morals
- ❖ **Implications:**
 - ❖ Ethics training is necessary for students
 - ❖ A lack of knowledge and skills can affect their ethical decision-making skills (Milliken & Neukrug, 2009)

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