

Ethical issues in Psychological Testing

Psychologists must be concerned with the ethical treatment of their data and subjects as they are with the quality of their research methods and statistical analysis. A serious ethical violation in the treatment of data is falsification. Thus, in the melatonin experiment, you would have to record your data accurately even if it contradicted your hypothesis. During the past few decades there have been several notorious cases in which medical, biological, or psychological researchers have been accused of falsifying their data.

Psychological research is concerned with human behaviour, the researcher is expected

to follow certain ethics (or moral principles) while conducting the studies. These principles are: respect for persons' privacy and choice to participate in the study, beneficence or protecting the participants in the study from any harm, and justice or sharing the benefits of research with all participants. Some of the important aspects of these ethical principles are described as follows.

- ① Voluntary Participation: This principle states that the persons on whom you want to conduct the study should have the choice to decide whether to participate or not to participate in the study. The participants should have the freedom to decide about their participation without any coercion or excessive inducement, and the freedom to withdraw from the research without penalty.

once it has begun.

② Informed Consent:- It is essential that the participants in a study should understand what will happen to them during the study. The principle of informed consent states that potential participants must receive this information before data from them are collected, so that they make an informed decision about participation in the study. In some of the psychological experiments, electric shock is given to the participants during the experiment. Still in some cases obnoxious (e.g., harmful or unpleasant) stimuli are presented.

③ Debriefing: Once the study is over, the participants are provided with necessary information to complete their understanding of research. This is particularly important if deception has

been used in the study. Debriefing ensures that participants leave the study in the same physical and mental state as when they entered. It should offer reassurance to the participants. The researcher should make efforts to remove any anxiety or other adverse effects to remove any that participants may have felt as a result of being deceived in the course of the study.

④ Sharing the Results of the Study: In psychological research, after collecting information from the participants, we come back to our places of work, analyse the data and draw conclusions. It is obligatory for the researcher to go back to the participants and share the results of the study with them.

⑤ Confidentiality of Data Source: The participants in a study have the

right to privacy. The researcher must safeguard their privacy by keeping the information provided by them in strict confidence. The information should only be used for research purposes and, in no circumstances, it should be passed on to their interested parties. The most effective way of protecting the confidentiality of participants is not to record their identities. This is, however, not possible in certain kinds of research. In such cases, code numbers are given on the data sheet, and the names with the codes are kept separately. The identity identification list should be destroyed as soon as the research is over.