Statement Accuracy Affects Ethical Decision-Making

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Choice As Context

- Choice is the distribution of operant behavior among alternative sources of reinforcement (Pierce & Cheney, 2013)
Choice As Context

- All practice-related decisions in Applied Behavior Analysis are choice
  - There are always at least two response options available at any given point in time
Ethical Analysis

• Each ethical scenario we face presents an opportunity to make a choice, such as
  • Obtain more information
  • Advise the person how to respond
  • ... yell at world out of frustration
Credibility of Reports

• The credibility, or **accuracy**, of reports may affect your ethical decision-making

• That is, you may respond differently, depending on how accurate the report is
Translational Framework to Study Applied Problems

• Probability discounting seems particularly relevant when asking how statement accuracy may affect decision-making

  Option A: 95% chance of getting $10

  Option B: 100% chance of getting $5
Translational Framework to Study Applied Problems

- Probability discounting seems particularly relevant when asking how statement accuracy may affect decision-making

  Option A: 50% chance of getting $10

  Option B: 100% chance of getting $5
Statement Accuracy and Decision-Making

• If statement accuracy influences decisions consistent with a probability discounting framework, then
• we would expect choice between two decisions to be
  • systematically and hyperbolically influenced by statement accuracy that ranges from 0% to 100%.
Study

- Twenty participants
  - 19 BCBAs
  - 1 BCaBA
  - Average time holding credential: 4.75 years
- Each participant was exposed to a survey prior to a workshop on ethics
Study

• We identified 5 ethical scenarios from two textbooks on ethics (i.e., Bailey & Burch, 2016; Sush & Najdowski, 2019)
  • Modified them to fit context of study
Study

• Next, participants were exposed to each scenario
  • Varied the order in which each scenario was presented
  • Varied the probability that each scenario was accurate
Study

• For each scenario, participants were asked to make a choice between:
  • 1) advise your colleague to report the individual to the BACB; or
  • 2) request to obtain additional information
BACB Code 8.01

Proportion Report to BACB

Statement Accuracy

n=20
Implications

- Context affects ethical decision-making! More fun studies to come, including
  - studies that control for “severity” of the ethical scenario to further isolate effects of statement accuracy.
Check out my new workbook

Visit
www.BetterABA.com
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www.MattBrodhead.com