**Ethics Interview: Part 4**

By Harsh Sharma

1. What were the two fundamental problems identified in the article about this survey?

Ans: The author wasn’t given enough options. The survey lacked an option to abstain from selecting any provided labels. Participants were compelled to choose from the limited options even if none accurately represented their identity. The absence of an "Other" category or an opportunity to opt-out of categorization added to the frustration and restricted the representation of diverse identities.

Second problem: The survey presented options that did not align with the complexities of ethnicity. It grouped disparate aspects such as skin color, cultural identity, geographic origin, and language under limited and sometimes mismatched categories (e.g., "White," "Hispanic," "Asian," "African-American"). This created confusion and frustration for individuals whose identities did not neatly fit into these predefined categories.

1. What recommendations would you make to improve the survey question from question #1?

Ans: The author provided a couple of options:

1. **Reframe the Question:** Instead of asking a closed-ended question like "What is your ethnicity?" consider more open and inclusive phrasing:
   * "To which racial or ethnic group(s) do you most identify?"
   * "Would you describe yourself as..."
   * "How would you classify yourself?"
2. **Provide Education and Context:** Offer contextual help or external links to explain the meaning and origin of each term or category used in the survey. This educates users about the implicit meanings carried by ethnic labels and helps them make informed choices.
3. **Transparency of Purpose:** Clearly articulate the reason why the question is being asked and how the information will be used. This transparency builds user confidence in their selection and ensures they understand the relevance of their response.
4. **Expand Option Choices:** Consider increasing the number of available options to accommodate a wider range of ethnicities or provide a "Choose all that apply" checkbox system instead of radio buttons. This allows individuals to select multiple categories that represent their identity accurately.
5. **Break Down Ethnicity Aspects:** Rather than a single question, break ethnicity into multiple, more specific inquiries:
   * "What is your nationality?"
   * "To which ethnic group(s) do you most identify?"
   * "What is your native language and which languages do you use daily?"
6. **Design for Clarity and Comfort:** Ensure the visual design and language used in the survey are clear and comforting. This can involve providing clear instructions, creating a visually inviting interface, and acknowledging the sensitivity of the topic for users.

Question 3. The article mentions Facebook having 58 different gender selection options and the city of New York offering 31 different gender definitions. What are the differences between the Facebook and City of New York options? (Fully explain the differences)

Ans:

* **Number of Options:** Facebook offers a larger pool of 58 gender options compared to New York City's 31 definitions.
* **Platform vs. Legal Framework:** Facebook's options exist within a social media platform and aim to allow users to express themselves freely, while New York City's definitions have legal implications, providing protections against discrimination based on gender identity.
* **Customization:** Facebook allows users to customize their gender identity description, offering a more flexible and personalized approach, whereas New York City's definitions primarily serve as legal classifications.

Question 4: The writer links an article about Race & Ethnicity questions in research. (<https://researchdesignreview.com/2011/03/31/the-questions-of-race-ethnicity/>) How does this article define the difference between race & ethnicity?

Ans:

Race is defined as: “race refers to a population’s physical characteristics”

Ethnicity: “social groups with a shared history, sense of identity, geography, and cultural roots.”

Question 5: In your opinion, should race and ethnicity questions be asked during research?

Ans: I think it could be asked.

Question 6: Explain your answer to question #5.

Ans: A person should never have any trouble in identifying themselves. There race and ethnicity is a part of themselves and no one should have a problem in talking about their own identity.

Question 7: In the *Design for Clarity and Comfort* section, the writer states, “Ethnicity forms require extra attention in that sense: you are not only asking users to give you data about themselves, but also touching on a quite sensitive topic for some people.” Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

Ans: I can understand that for some people talking about their race could be sensitive. So, I agree with it.

Question 8: Explain your answer to question #7

Ans: It could be sensitive for people who are especially immigrant and now more associate themselves with the country they now live in. Some may altogether don’t want to share their background.