**02/18/09 18:22:35**

1. The synopsis should contain some background information regarding 'Evaluation and Learning Biases with Instructors who Smoke or Drink'

Background information is now included at the end of point 6 of the synopsis.

2. It is unclear if the students who will be handed the consent form will know about this study?

Are you asking whether they will know the true purpose of this study? If so, then, no. If I tell students that their guest lecturer will either be a smoker, a drinker, or neither, then their awareness of this manipulation may alter their behavior. Personally, if I knew that smoking status was simply a manipulation, I would have no reason to focus on this or to even believe that the person actually is a smoker. Thus, the results of the entire study would be invalid. Their lack of knowledge and the reasons for it are now stated at the end of point 3 of the synopsis.

3. The consent form states that it is for "a research study that will examine the degree of learning from a guest lecturer" but in actuality they are signing the form for this project. I am unsure if this construes as misrepresentation and may be even a lie?

I have revised this sentence as follows: “…a research study, in which you will answer question over a lecture on sleep disorders.” While it is not my intention to give them false information, so that the findings of the study are valid, I do wish to withhold the true purpose of the study.

4. Participants may be allergic to smell of smoke and/or alcohol and might experience discomfort, which is a plausible risk which is not stated in the consent form due to its anonymity

Participants will have less than 5 seconds (while entering the room) of being in close proximity with the lecturer, and I sincerely believe that it will be more likely that any nasal discomfort will be the result of sitting next to another student participant who smells like smoke or perfume – a situation experienced in any classroom. To address these issues, to the second paragraph of the consent form, I added “in a room with 50 other student participants,” and to the third paragraph, I added “as well as standard risks that you encounter in any of your classes in which, for example, you may be sitting next to someone who is wearing a strong perfume that may irritate your nose or allergies.”

5. No information is given about how the data would be processed and coded. How will the undergraduate students given access to the data? soft copy, hard copy?

To point 13 of the synopsis, I added the following: “Regarding this latter access, these undergraduate research assistants will enter the data from the test/survey forms (which again do not contain the participants’ names or other identification) into SPSS, so that summary descriptive and inferential analyses may be conducted. After entering the data for a given participant, that participant’s test/survey forms will be returned to Dr. Crystal Oberle.” In case you are referring to the student participants, on the consent form is the following statement: “by May 1, a written summary of the findings will be posted online at the following address: http://www.psych.txstate.edu/research/debriefing.php”

**02/27/09 00:17:13**

1. You do have one exclusion criteria you need to include; you cannot include student participants who are under 18 years of age. You do need to make sure they are 18 BEFORE they participate, or you will be required to secure parental permission for participation as well. Many college freshman are under 18 years old.

In point 1 of the synopsis, I revised the last sentence to, “The only criterion for exclusion from participation is that students must be at least 18 years of age.” On the consent form I revised the sentence preceding the signature lines to, “Having read this form and asked any questions, please sign below if you are at least 18 years of age and if voluntarily give your consent to participate in this study.”

2. Confidentiality is compromised by passing around a sign up sheet with times for participants to come in (this makes their participation non-confidential). I question if sign up should be facilitated in a different way.

Given that the students will be signing up to attend one of the lectures with 50 other students, the fact that they are participating will be known by the other student participants, and using a different method of recruiting will not prevent that fact. Further, by including their names on a sign-up sheet, they are only acknowledging that they wish to participate in this study; they are not disclosing any personal information. Finally, and extending off of the previous statement, I believe that the method of signing up is only an ethical issue for studies with special populations (e.g., people with HIV), in which a public signature reveals such an identity.

3. I would like more support for statement 8 in the synopsis "The anticipated benefits to the participants and society far outweigh any possible risks of participation."

Trying not to repeat the information in points 5 and 6 of the synopsis, to the end of this point, I added the following: “given that the only risks are minor (slight anxiety from participating in any study and potential discomfort from being next to someone who smells), whereas the benefits are major (the impact of prejudice, not simply on instructor evaluations but also on student learning).”

4. How will you protect confidentiality of participants in a room with 20-30 other participants? You should note in the consent form that although individual data will be confidential, their participation will not be (this note would also address concern #2)

I have now specifically pointed out that participants will be participating simultaneously in a classroom with up to 50 other students. See my response to question #4 from the first reviewer.

5. I do not believe Items 5 and 10 are really part of a "Demographic Survey" in my understanding of the term demographic. Perhaps "Questionnaire" or "Additional Information" might be more appropriate labels.

I have changed the title of these instruments from “Demographic Survey” to “Questionnaire.”