
his work and added females, but this is not mentioned in the article. Crisham¹ suggests that although the International Council of Nurses has published descriptive data from nurses in 25 countries that identified ethical problems in nursing practice no systematic attempt has been made to either document ethical dilemmas in their practice "or to characterize the ways in which nursing practitioners perceive and respond to these dilemmas. . ."^{1(p105)} Crisham attempted to do this in her dissertation, which was completed in 1979, yet it is not mentioned in Munhall's article.

The author does not share what inferential statistics are used, but analysis of variance of some type is implied. A basic premise of analysis of variance is if the within group variance is greater than the between group variance, the *F* ratio will be less than 1, thus the between group variance is not statistically significant. If the author was more interested in the within group variance why not recast the null hypotheses and use either partial or semipartial correlation, if the data fit the model for these statistical tests?

There is now controversy in the area of nursing ethical dilemmas and how female nurses attempt to solve them. Those attempting to resolve these issues need to be cognizant of all the work being done, although an exhaustive review of the related literature is not possible. However, doctoral dissertations may prove to be a rich source of information that is often neglected in reviewing the related literature prior to planning a research study.

REFERENCE

1. Crisham P: Measuring moral judgment in nursing dilemmas. *Nurs Res* 1981;30:104-110.

Barbara J. Reid, RN, EdD

Author's response:

I wish to express my appreciation to Dr. Reid for her interest in and questions con-

cerning the cited self-appraisal of an early study I did concerning moral development. In essence she further substantiates many of the issues I proposed to address in that article.

Where we might differ is in our perception of the central emphasis of the article. My main purpose was to demonstrate problems that occur with a premature utilization of deductive, quantitative research inadequately built upon relevant qualitative inductive descriptions of phenomena. Within this context, and using my own study as a framework, I attempted to describe paradigmatic compliance, theoretic fallacies where deductions were derived from a dissimilar world, and aggregate fallacies where meaning was sacrificed for precision.

Since I was attempting to weave the theme more broadly (ie, demonstration of fallacies with an example of male bias in developmental theories) I did not cite Crisham's fine work in this area. Rest is mentioned in the article within the context of developing a widely used instrument (DIT) derived from Kohlberg's Theory.

Though the suggestion to recast the null hypothesis is perhaps a way to modify some of the lost meaning somehow obscured by the word "insignificant" it continues to place emphasis on obtaining results which are "statistically" significant versus epistemologically relevant, representing the fallacy of misplaced precision.

An interesting illustration of this point can be found in Frymier's "Within or between," where, with an substantive and illustrative rationale, he states that the differences within any group (ie, the differences among individual students) are always greater and generally more significant educationally than the differences between groups.¹

I agree with Reid; there is controversy in the area of nursing ethical dilemmas, one of which relates to the area of statistical measurement of this particular phenomenon as well as other affective behaviors. The question

here could be not so much whether we "can" measure variance or "how to" measure variance, as with whether we "should" measure variance. Pluralism of moral perspectives and context dependency perhaps are too "significant" to ignore.

Again I am grateful to Dr. Reid for her interest, additions, and suggestions for enlarging the thematic intent of the article.

REFERENCE

1. Frymier J: Within or between. *Educational Forum* 1980;44(4).

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