Working With Humans: Effects and Ethics

Some effects to be aware of when doing human-subjects research.

Hawthorne Effect

The basic idea behind the Hawthorne Effect (sometimes called the observer effect) is that the act of studying people can alter their behavior.

- The name comes from the Hawthorne Works factory and a study to look at the impact lighting changes (among other things) could have on worker productivity.
- It is felt that the increased productivity was more a result of workers being motivated by the attention being paid to them.
**Pygmalion Effect**

The basic idea behind the Pygmalion Effect (or a self-fulfilling prophesy) is that if you increase the expectations imposed on a group, you can increase the average performance.

- There is a corollary effect where decreasing expectations risks a decrease in performance.

http://art.rmngp.fr/fr/library/artworks/jean-baptiste-regnault_l-origine-de-la-sculpture-pygmalion-amoureux-de-sa-statue-priant-venus-de-l-animer_huile-sur-toile_1786

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**Clever Hans Effect**

The basic idea behind the Clever Hans Effect (or observer-expectancy) is that the biases of the research can influence the participants of a study via things like body language.

- This is a major reason for double-blind studies.

https://www.britannica.com/topic/Clever-Hans
**Bandwagon Effect**
The basic idea behind the Bandwagon Effect is that when having a group of participants in a study in the same room, there is an increased probability of some of those individuals adopting the opinions of others in the room due to other factors.

- Peer pressure or conformity and the sense of being seen as an outlier.
- Friendship/loyalty between participants.

**Effect Examples: Education Research**
These effects can all impact education research. A faculty member trying a new technique might see improvements because of things like:

- The students sensing the faculty member’s enthusiasm.
- The faculty member is pushing harder for the students more to succeed.
- The faculty member improves their core teaching approach as they prepare lessons using their new technique because they want it to succeed.