

## Psychology

Objective – Examine the ethical issues in the study by Loftus and Palmer.

To debate on the ethical issues in this study.

Task 1-

Pick any two ethical issues and discuss them. Give examples for each.

Task 2-

Outline any ethical issues found in the study conducted by Loftus and Palmer.

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Task 1-

### Right to Withdraw

Right to withdraw means that the participant may choose to leave or “withdraw” from the experiment at any given point of time. It is entirely their choice and they must not be forced into completing the experiment. The participants’ reason to withdraw may vary from personal family emergency to objecting to what the experiment is testing.

For example:

There is an experiment conducted which is taking place. Jane has decided to volunteer for it. This experiment is testing the effect that caffeine has on the brain. Halfway through the experiment Jane feels drowsy and asks to leave. Jane reserves the “right to withdraw” and is therefore allowed to leave.

Sophie signs up at a local university as a volunteer for a psychological experiment. However, the next day she discovers the experiment is being held in

a different city. She has no available transport and has the “right to withdraw” therefore she takes her name off the list.

### Equitable Treatment-

Equitable treatment is when all participants who take part in the experiment are treated equally. Regardless of their race, skin color, heritage, financial stability, ect..

Example:

Ron took part in a research held in the West Indies. People of all cultural backgrounds were asked to participate. However, as the experiment progressed Ron realized that the locals were being treated better than the foreigners. This is NOT equitable treatment.

Hannah is a thirteen year old student. She was selected to take part in a psychological experiment held by her school, testing memory. Students of all ages were present. Everyone, regardless of their age was given equitable treatment. This means they were all considered and spoken to just as the person before or after them was spoken to.

Task 2 -

Violation of Protection of Participants

Protection of participants is a core ethical issue which is violated in the study conducted by Loftus and Palmer. The video clip of the car accident shown to the participants may have had a traumatizing effect or negative psychological impact on the viewers. Protection of participants was not considered as the details of the video were not disclosed prior to the viewing. Therefore, the experimenters did not know whether or not a negative impact could take place on the participants. Likewise, the participants did not have the opportunity to withdraw, which they might have done had they known a clip of a traumatizing accident was going to be shown.