



Tangled: Exploring the Issues of Boundaries in the Practice of Filipino Psychometricians

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Abstract

This qualitative study investigates the ethical boundary challenges faced by Filipino psychometricians across various institutional settings. Through thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with twelve purposively selected participants, the research identifies key areas of concern: asserting authority, negligence in psychological test usage, limits of competence and qualification, and complexities in social interactions. The ethical frameworks provided by the American Psychological Association (APA) and the Psychological Association of the Philippines (PAP) Code of Ethics serve as foundational guides of this study. Findings underscore the necessity for proactive, organizational-level change to better support ethical practices in psychometrics. Institutions must proactively create a culture of integrity by implementing clear policies, regular audits, and ongoing support to help psychometricians navigate ethical dilemmas and make sound decisions.

Keywords: *Psychometrician, boundaries, ethics, violation*

Introduction

Ethical practice is the backbone of psychology, especially now that more people are turning to mental health professionals for support and guidance. Whether it's for school placements, job hiring, clinical diagnosis, or court decisions, psychological assessments carry real weight—and with that comes a serious responsibility. Psychologists must stay grounded in integrity, objectivity, and care for the people they serve, always being mindful of their professional boundaries. As Fisher (2021) puts it, making ethical decisions isn't just about following rules—it's about protecting trust and navigating tough situations with compassion and fairness. With the rise of online assessments, Lichtenberger et al. (2020) remind us that we need to be extra careful with privacy, consent, and communication. Ethics evolve with the times, but the core values stay the same. The APA (2021) also reinforces these values, urging psychologists to be competent, fair, and respectful, no matter the setting. And as Woods and Hinton (2020) and Niemann and Romero (2020) point out, being ethical also means being aware of cultural differences, staying objective, and constantly reflecting on how our work affects the people we serve.

When discussing ethical boundaries in psychology, we often picture the therapeutic relationship. However, psychological assessments, even in their more structured, brief nature, come with their own ethical challenges. Psychometricians, though they don't build long-term relationships with clients like therapists, still face tough questions about objectivity, confidentiality, and cultural sensitivity. Even though assessments tend to be more formal and time-limited, professionals must still strike a balance between being neutral and empathetic. Niemann and Romero (2020) emphasize that psychologists need to be aware of their own biases and understand the cultural backgrounds of their clients. Without this awareness, even subtle misunderstandings can unintentionally affect the assessment, possibly reinforcing negative power dynamics or causing the client to feel misunderstood. With virtual assessments on the rise, especially since the pandemic, there are new challenges to consider. While digital platforms offer greater convenience and accessibility, they also make it harder to maintain the same level of privacy and rapport that we would expect in a face-to-face setting. Still,

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the ethical duty to ensure trust, confidentiality, and respect remains at the forefront of these interactions (Lichtenberger et al., 2020).

The Psychology Act of 2009 (Republic Act No. 10029) marked a significant advancement for the profession in the Philippines, officially recognizing psychologists and psychometricians as licensed professionals. The introduction of the Board Licensure Examination for Psychologists and Psychometricians (BLEPP) in 2014 has since contributed to the steady growth of licensed psychometricians. For instance, in August 2024, 7,478 out of 10,717 examinees passed the licensure examination, reflecting the increasing demand for mental health services nationwide. Today, psychometricians serve in diverse settings—schools, hospitals, corporate offices, and correctional facilities—engaging in roles that extend beyond test administration. They interpret complex data and contribute to decisions that significantly impact individuals' lives. However, this expanded responsibility brings heightened ethical challenges. In the Philippines, where personal relationships and social hierarchies often intersect with professional roles, maintaining clear boundaries can be particularly challenging. While the Code of Ethics provides essential guidance, real-world situations are seldom straightforward. In smaller or underserved communities, where resources and supervision may be limited, these dilemmas become even more complex, especially when psychometricians interact with clients who are also acquaintances or family members.

All of this raises an important question: How do Filipino psychometricians understand and manage ethical boundaries in their work? While their role in psychological services continues to grow, their ethical experiences remain understudied. Much of the existing research focuses on therapists and counselors, leaving a gap when it comes to the unique challenges faced in psychological assessment.

This study aims to fill that gap. By exploring the lived experiences of psychometricians in different settings, it seeks to better understand the ethical dilemmas they face—especially around issues of professional boundaries. Through a qualitative approach and thematic analysis, this study offers a deeper insight into how they navigate these gray areas in their everyday work. Ultimately, the findings can help inform culturally relevant ethical guidelines, improve supervision and training, and support psychometricians in practicing ethically and competently grounded in both global standards and Filipino realities.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design, using semi-structured questionnaires to explore the perspectives of practicing psychometricians on boundary challenges. The methodology focuses on identifying common difficulties in establishing professional limits, as well as defining and understanding boundary violations within their practice.

A qualitative approach is especially suited to this research, as it allows for a deeper understanding of how psychometricians experience and interpret ethical boundary issues in real-world settings. Unlike quantitative methods, qualitative research captures the complexities of human behavior, relationships, and professional judgment in ways that numbers alone cannot. Recent studies emphasize that ethical dilemmas—particularly those involving professional boundaries—are often context-dependent and deeply personal (Roberts & Kim, 2020). By examining lived experiences, this study aims to uncover how practitioners make sense of ambiguous situations, navigate power dynamics, and define what counts as a boundary violation in their unique settings. As Morley et al (2021) point out, qualitative inquiry is vital for exploring ethical tensions in today's fast-evolving professional environments. These insights are especially important in psychometrics, where practitioners often work behind the scenes but are tasked with decisions that significantly impact others' lives.

The research is guided by key questions that explore how psychometricians define, experience, and navigate professional boundaries, particularly in clinical and assessment contexts. These questions aim to capture the lived realities behind ethical decision-making—what practitioners actually encounter, not just what the codes prescribe. The study draws from the *APA Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct* (APA, 2017) and Psychological Association of the Philippines (PAP) Codes of Ethics as a framework for examining dilemmas around neutrality, role clarity, and the appropriate limits of professional interaction. More importantly, by amplifying the voices of

practitioners themselves, the research seeks to offer grounded insights that inform best practices, strengthen ethical sensitivity, and promote a safer psychological environment for both clients and professionals. As Levitt and Piazza-Bonin (2022) emphasize, ethical understanding in psychology must include the real, often messy experiences of those doing the work—especially when navigating the blurry lines that emerge in human-centered fields like psychometrics.

Participants

A purposive sampling technique was used to recruit the participants. Participants were twelve (12) licensed and practicing Psychometricians in different field of expertise. Field of their expertise is only limited to school setting, industrial setting and clinical setting. Inclusion criteria required that participants: (a) Licensed psychometricians in the Philippines, (b) have at least two years of professional experience in settings such as clinical, educational, industrial, or related fields, (c) have direct involvement in psychological assessment, and (d) willing to discuss ethical concerns related to professional boundaries.

Table 1
Profile of the Respondents

PARTICIPANT	AGE	GENDER	FIELD OF EXPERTISE	NUMBER OF YEAR IN PRACTICE
1	45	M	Industrial	15
2	30	F	Clinical	4
3	26	M	School	4
4	36	F	Industrial	10
5	25	F	Clinical	4
6	38	F	Industrial	11
7	46	F	School	13
8	29	F	School	4
9	26	M	Industrial	4
10	50	F	Clinical	13
11	34	F	School	6
12	28	F	Clinical	5

Demographic Questionnaire

The researcher utilized a brief demographic questionnaire to record the participant's age, gender, field of expertise and number of years in practice. The questionnaire was completed in a 5-minute face-to-face inquiry.

Interview Protocol Development

The researcher used a semi-structured interview format due to its balance of structure and flexibility. This method allowed key questions to guide the conversation while still giving participants space to share insights that felt meaningful to them. Recent studies affirm that semi-structured interviews are especially useful in exploring sensitive topics like ethical boundaries, as they foster trust and allow participants to reflect deeply on their lived experiences (Adams, 2020). This approach also captures how personal experiences are shaped by broader cultural and institutional influences—highlighting the complex dynamics psychometricians navigate in their professional roles.

In developing the interview questions, the researcher used a Constructivist Grounded Theory approach. This began with a thorough review of recent literature on professional boundaries, role clarity, and the ethical challenges faced in psychological assessment. This foundational review ensured that the questions would be both theoretically rich and practically relevant, addressing the real issues psychometricians encounter in their work. The initial draft of the interview protocol was then reviewed by three experts in psychology, whose feedback helped refine the questions to ensure they

were clear, relevant, and ethically sensitive, including licensed psychologists and psychiatrists. Their input helped fine-tune the questions, making sure they were not only clear and relevant but also ethically sound. This collaborative process supported a deeper and more grounded exploration of the participants' experiences (Charmaz, 2020).

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher used purposive sampling to select participants, reaching out through social media and personal inquiries. Once participants gave their consent, they shared their contact details, such as e-mail addresses and phone numbers. Interviews were scheduled primarily by phone, with some arrangements made via email. By offering different contact methods, including home and cell phones or e-mail, the researcher aimed to respect the participants' privacy and make them feel comfortable.

Because the topic was sensitive, the interviews were held in a private office or room to ensure confidentiality and a distraction-free setting. The researcher and participants coordinated the date, time, and location of the interview through phone calls. Before starting, the researcher provided an orientation to clarify the scope of the research questions and introduced herself. She explained the purpose of the interview, which was to learn about the participants' experiences in their current professional roles. After obtaining written informed consent, the researcher proceeded with the interview using a prepared questionnaire. To protect confidentiality, all responses were kept private, and pseudonyms were used to ensure anonymity. Identifying information was securely stored, and the researcher reassured participants that she had no prior knowledge of their experiences and that the interview was not a test. The focus was on listening to their perspectives without judgment.

Verbal instructions were given, and participants verbally agreed before the interview was recorded. The interview began by asking about their current responsibilities and limitations. After these topics were explored, the conversation shifted to discussing boundary violations or crossings. Participants were invited to share any experiences where they had crossed or violated a boundary. The discussion followed themes related to boundary issues, with follow-up questions asking participants to reflect on the factors that influenced their boundary-related decisions. While the interview guide provided structure, it allowed enough flexibility for participants to expand on their responses or bring up new insights. Each interview lasted between 20 and 30 minutes and ended when the researcher felt enough information had been gathered to answer the research questions.

To enhance the analysis and ensure the data was relevant, the researcher reviewed the recorded interviews and reflected on the responses. Additionally, a research journal was maintained throughout the data collection and analysis process. After each interview, the researcher wrote journal entries that documented observations about participants' behaviors and communication styles, helping to contextualize the data and identify important patterns or distractions that might have influenced the findings.

Data Analysis

The interviews were tape-recorded with the participants' permission, and the recordings were transcribed verbatim by the researcher. During this transcription process, the researcher also noted initial thoughts and ideas, which were considered an essential part of the analysis. However, note-taking was kept to a minimum to ensure that the researcher remained focused on the participants and their responses. The transcribed data were carefully read and re-read multiple times, and the recordings were listened to several times to ensure the accuracy of the transcription.

The thematic analysis was conducted in six phases, with the first phase, familiarization with the data, this involved the researcher immersing in the data by reading the transcriptions and listening to the recordings repeatedly. This phase helped the researcher gain an initial understanding of the data and begin noting emerging ideas and thoughts. In the second phase, generating initial codes, the researcher identified meaningful features within the data that were relevant to the research questions. These features were marked with codes that highlighted the most significant segments. According to Nowell et al. (2022), coding

should be comprehensive and inclusive to ensure that subtle nuances are not overlooked. The researcher ensured the entire dataset was considered, not just selected sections, to identify recurring patterns. In the third phase, searching for themes, the initial codes were analyzed and grouped into broader categories, or potential themes. Thematic maps, as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2021), and reflexive journaling methods described by Castleberry and Nolen (2020), were used to explore connections among themes. Themes that were too broad or lacked sufficient supporting data were set aside to ensure analytical clarity. The fourth phase, reviewing themes, involved evaluating the coherence and internal consistency of each theme. This step included both reviewing the coded data extracts and reassessing them in relation to the entire dataset, as emphasized by Terry et al. (2021), to ensure each theme was robust and well-supported. To further enhance the credibility of the findings, member checking was also employed at this stage. Participants were invited to review the preliminary themes and confirm whether these accurately reflected their experiences and viewpoints. Feedback from this process was used to adjust or clarify themes, ensuring alignment with participant perspectives (Birt et al., 2016). During the fifth phase, defining and naming themes, the researcher refined the scope and focus of each theme to ensure distinctiveness and clarity. This involved writing detailed theme definitions that captured the core meaning, in line with the guidance of Kiger and Varpio (2020), who emphasize transparency and depth in theme articulation. Finally, in the sixth phase, writing the report, the researcher presented a coherent narrative supported by carefully selected data excerpts that exemplified each theme. These excerpts were chosen not only for their clarity but also for their ability to convey the depth and richness of participant perspectives.

To enhance the study's credibility, member checking was conducted after the initial analysis. Participants were provided with summaries of the identified themes and representative excerpts from their interviews. They were invited to review these materials and provide feedback on the accuracy and resonance of the findings with their experiences. This process allowed participants to confirm the authenticity of the interpretations and offered an opportunity to clarify or elaborate on their responses. Incorporating participant feedback ensured that the findings accurately reflected their perspectives and experiences, thereby strengthening the study's trustworthiness.

Ethical Consideration

The participants' informed consent sheet was explained that the questions and interview would be a general discussion about the respondent's views, perception and experience on the practice of psychology. The researcher expects that this approach created a safe relationship with the respondents and encouraged them to participate in the study. Further, the participant's informed consent sheet explained the purpose of the study and the likely risks and benefits for the participants and the researcher. It also stresses the participants' right to withdraw from the study at any time and without giving any reason. Prior the start of the data gathering process each participant completed and signed the consent form. The participant's form state clearly that the names of the respondent's participated would remain confidential and that their views would always be unspecified.

Results

This section presents the key findings derived from interviews with practicing psychometricians, offering valuable insights into the boundary violations they encounter in their professional practice. Through a thorough thematic analysis of their responses, five critical themes emerged: Assertion of Authority, Negligence in the Use of Psychological Tests, Boundary of Competence and Qualification, Social Interaction and Connection, and

Issues Related to Informed Consent. These themes effectively highlight the ethical challenges psychometricians face as they navigate the complexities of their roles.

The participants shared diverse experiences in which boundary violations occurred, often shaped by institutional pressures, resource limitations, and the nature of their professional relationships with colleagues and clients. These findings underscore the tension between adherence to ethical standards and the practical constraints of the work environment. They point to the ongoing struggle between maintaining professional integrity and addressing the realities of the workplace.

These insights clearly illustrate the pressing need for clearer guidelines and more robust support systems to assist psychometricians in maintaining professional boundaries. Specifically, the following areas emerge as critical for further attention.

Defining Boundary Violation

The concept of boundary violation, as shared by participants, involves actions by psychometricians that cross the lines of professional ethics, deviating from the expected standards of conduct in their practice. Boundary violations are particularly significant in the field of psychology, where maintaining clear professional roles is critical to preserving the integrity of client relationships and ensuring ethical practice.

As revealed by the participants, boundary violations are not merely errors in judgment or occasional lapses but are transgressions that fundamentally undermine the ethical guidelines and professional responsibilities of psychometricians. These violations, by their nature, occur when practitioners act beyond their authorized role or engage in conduct that violates the rules established by the government or professional bodies such as the Psychological Association of the Philippines (PAP). The participants' views point to a broad understanding of boundaries spanning psychological, social, and professional realms, that govern the relationship between practitioners and clients.

One participant emphasized the legal and professional consequences of boundary violations by defining it as an unethical act of conducting certain tasks that a person is not authorized to do based on the established rules by the government and agreed-upon terms of the psychological association. (Interview, Participant 5). This statement highlights the legalistic and formal dimensions of boundary violations, underscoring the importance of abiding by laws and ethical agreements. The participant's focus on governmental and association rules reflects the strict legal framework within which psychometricians must operate, emphasizing that deviating from these expectations not only violates ethics but also exposes practitioners to potential legal risks.

To support this statement, another participant added that the definition of boundary violation for him is Overstepping the responsibility of a psychometrician and is law-abiding, (Interview, Participant 1). This view underscores the concern that boundary violations stem from an individual's overreach beyond their professional duties. The reference to "law-abiding" stresses the inherent responsibility to respect not just ethical guidelines but also legal constraints. The inclusion of this phrase signals that psychometricians must remain within their professional boundaries while adhering to both ethical standards and the law.

Another participant offered a thoughtful reflection on what it means to act ethically in high-stakes institutional settings. They shared that ethical compromise often happens "when you do or practice something beyond the scope of your duty as a professional, compromising ethics and not abiding policies" (Interview, Participant 3). This insight captures how ethical dilemmas do not always arise from carelessness or intentional misconduct. Sometimes, well-meaning professional steps outside their official role, believing they are helping, only to find themselves in ethically gray areas. The participant's statement underscores a key point that came up repeatedly in interviews: crossing professional boundaries, even with good

intentions, can still lead to serious consequences if it means violating established policies or ethical guidelines. What stands out here is the focus on "the scope of duty"—a phrase that speaks to the very core of a psychometrician's role. Policies are not just red tape; they exist to guide actions, ensure consistency, and, most importantly, protect clients from harm. When those boundaries are crossed, even slightly, it can shake the foundation of trust that the profession relies on. This theme, echoed by others in the study, points to a pressing need: strengthening both ethical standards and institutional accountability so that professionals are supported in staying within their roles, rather than being stretched beyond them.

Another participant shared about a subtler, but deeply impactful, ethical concern: the way personal relationships can influence professional judgment. They explained that when the client is a friend or someone familiar, there is a real risk that decisions might be clouded, not out of malice, but simply because of the emotional connection (Interview, Participant 7). In their words, the presence of personal ties can make it harder to stay fully objective, introducing bias into what should be an impartial process. This comment touches on a more interpersonal and psychological layer of boundary violations where ethics become complicated not by systems or policies, but by human relationships. It is a reminder that even with the best intentions, familiarity can blur the line between personal and professional roles. These kinds of situations can create subtle conflicts of interest, where the natural desire to support someone we care about may compromise the fairness and neutrality that psychometricians are expected to uphold. The participant's insight highlights a key challenge for practitioners: the need to recognize when personal feelings might be affecting professional decisions. It underscores why maintaining psychological boundaries and cultivating a habit of ethical self-reflection is so essential, especially in smaller communities or close-knit environments where dual relationships are harder to avoid.

Finally, one participant brought forward a particularly serious ethical concern that speaks to the heart of professional responsibility. They recounted a situation in which a Registered Psychometrician (RPM) prepared and handed over a psychological test report to a client without obtaining the required validation from a Registered Psychologist (RPsy). What made the situation more troubling was the motivation behind it: the report was issued solely for business or financial gain (Interview, Participant 9).

This account reveals more than just a procedural oversight. It highlights a profound breach of ethical and professional integrity. Skipping the validation step is not just a technical error; it bypasses a critical safeguard designed to ensure the accuracy, credibility, and safety of psychological assessments. In doing so, the psychometrician not only risked the client's well-being but also violated core principles of the profession: protecting those we serve, upholding regulatory standards, and maintaining the public's trust in psychological services.

What emerges from this participant's reflection is a deeper concern about the erosion of ethics when financial pressures, or personal profit, begin to take precedence over ethical judgment. It is a stark reminder that ethical practice is not just about knowing the rules; it's about choosing to uphold them, especially when it's inconvenient. This theme reinforces the urgent need for stronger institutional oversight, ethical mentorship, and a culture that values integrity over income.

Taken together, the wide range of definitions shared by participants paints a compelling picture of just how vital it is to uphold clear, well-defined professional boundaries. Each account revealed a different angle: some spoke of legal or policy breaches, others pointed to the quiet, often unnoticed ways that personal bias or emotional entanglements can affect professional decisions. Still others raised red flags about actions that directly endanger client welfare. What's striking is how these diverse perspectives all point in the same direction: maintaining ethical boundaries is not optional; it is essential.

These lived experiences align closely with the ethical standards set by professional bodies like the Psychological Association of the Philippines (PAP), which emphasize the need for competence, objectivity, and integrity in every aspect of psychological work. When those boundaries are crossed, whether due to pressure, misunderstanding, or personal gain, it is not just the individual practitioner who is affected. The ripple effect can damage client trust, weaken institutional credibility, and ultimately undermine the integrity of the entire profession.

In this light, boundary violations are not just isolated mistakes or lapses in judgment. They reflect deeper, systemic challenges that call for more than just rule enforcement. They demand ongoing ethical training, meaningful supervision, and institutional cultures that support doing what is right; even when it is not the easiest path. These findings underscore the evolving role of psychometricians and point to an urgent need: to invest in structures and practices that help professionals not just understand their ethical responsibilities, but live them out in complex, real-world settings.

Table 2

Boundary Violations Experienced by Practicing Psychometricians

Derived Themes	Description
Assertion of Authority	This theme reflects how supervisors' influence can pressure professionals to follow decisions that may conflict with their ethical judgment, often leading to compromised boundaries or silent compliance.
Negligence on the Use of Psychological Test	This theme captures the shared concerns of professionals who, despite knowing what is ethically right, found themselves cutting corners with psychological tests. Whether it was photocopying materials, storing them carelessly, or using them without full authorization, these actions were often driven by workplace norms or a lack of support.
Boundary of Competence and Qualifications	This theme refers to the ethical challenges that arise when psychometricians are tasked with responsibilities outside their scope of practice
Social Interaction and Connection	This theme reflects how the deep personal and professional connections psychometricians build can blur the line between care and responsibility.

Table 2 presents the derived themes from the qualitative inquiry. The thematic analysis of the interview transcripts brought to light several key insights into the ethical challenges psychometricians face in their day-to-day work. Among the ten participants (two from industrial settings, four from clinical practice, and four from school environments) each shared firsthand experiences involving boundary crossings or outright violations. These accounts were distilled into five central themes: Assertion of Authority, Negligence on the Use of Psychological Tests, Boundary of Competence and Qualification and Personal Perception and Interest.

What stood out across the interviews was how often these themes overlapped. Many participants described situations that touched on two or even three of these areas at once; highlighting the layered, multifaceted nature of ethical dilemmas in real-world psychometric practice. This overlap points to a deeper truth: ethical challenges do not exist in a vacuum. They are shaped by a web of behaviors, motivations, institutional dynamics, and personal beliefs. Rather than viewing these themes as isolated concerns, it is more accurate to see them

as interconnected parts of a broader ethical ecosystem that psychometricians must constantly navigate as they make decisions, advocate for clients, and uphold professional standards.

Assertion of Authority

The theme of assertion of authority underscores the strong influence of participants' supervisors on their professional practices, particularly in situations where ethical boundaries were at risk of being crossed. While the level of authority exerted by superiors varies across different settings (such as industrial, clinical, or school-based environments) the findings clearly show that in all cases, participants were affected by their supervisors' decisions, leading to situations where ethical considerations were compromised.

In the context of psychometric assessments and the preparation of psychological reports, several participants described instances where supervisors directly influenced their actions, often pushing them to engage in practices that contravened established ethical guidelines. These instances reflect the tension between following professional ethical standards and complying with the directives of higher authority within an organizational setting.

One participant recounted a boundary-crossing experience in which they were asked to modify evaluation results that were originally based on standardized test data. The participant explained that they were often summoned by a higher authority and instructed to alter the psychological report to favor an individual who had a personal relationship with the supervisor, referred to as a "kumpare"; a term denoting a close friend or associate (Interview, Participant 2).

This narrative shed light on a troubling situation where professional judgment—carefully grounded in empirical test results—was overridden by pressure from someone in authority. The term *kumpare*, a culturally loaded word in the Filipino context denoting a close personal or familial bond, adds a critical layer to this account. While such bonds can foster community and support, they may also blur professional boundaries. Tablan (2021) discusses how Filipino virtue ethics, rooted in relational values, can influence perceptions of meaningful work and ethical decision-making. This cultural lens is crucial when examining scenarios where personal relationships intersect with professional responsibilities.

The participant shared how they felt compelled to alter the content of a psychological evaluation at the request of a supervisor with a personal stake in the outcome. This was not just a breach of protocol, it was a clear example of authority being misused; placing the psychometrician in a position where ethical standards were compromised in favor of maintaining interpersonal harmony or workplace compliance.

This account highlights a dual-layered ethical violation. First, it reveals how professional autonomy can be eroded when practitioners are pressured to prioritize hierarchy over evidence. Second, it underscores the ethical risk that arises when personal relationships or organizational politics begin to outweigh the objective, client-centered nature of psychological work. This example speaks directly to the broader theme of ethical tension—a tension many participants described—between upholding institutional expectations and protecting the integrity, fairness, and well-being that lie at the heart of psychological assessment.

Another participant described a situation where their professional recommendation and report, initially submitted to the supervising psychologist, were met with pressure from a direct supervisor. The participant shared that the supervisor insisted on altering the recommendation, asserting that the final decision rested with him, thereby undermining the participant's professional judgment, (Interview, Participant 8).

This quote adds yet another layer to the growing concern around supervisory influence. In this case, the participant shared a moment of ethical conflict where their

professional judgment, shaped by training, experience, and a careful assessment, was ultimately overruled by their supervisor. Despite the participant's qualifications, the supervisor insisted on changing the recommendation, asserting their role as the final decision-maker.

What this situation reveals is more than just a disagreement: it is a glimpse into a deeper organizational issue. The power imbalance between supervisor and psychometrician does not just affect workflow; it has real ethical consequences. When authority is exercised without regard for the technical expertise of the person conducting the assessment, it can lead to decisions that compromise ethical standards. This kind of top-down pressure places professionals in difficult positions where they must choose between compliance and integrity, often at the expense of their own ethical responsibilities and the welfare of the client.

The third participant shared their experience of being compelled to perform duties beyond their professional qualifications. They recounted being instructed by the administration to assume the responsibilities typically assigned to a licensed psychologist. The justification provided was a lack of available personnel, with administrators asserting that it was acceptable for the participant to take on the role due to their familiarity and background in psychological practice.

This statement sheds light on the subtle, yet powerful pressure some psychometricians face to go beyond their professional limits, often under the assumption that their background or potential makes them "qualified enough." In this case, the supervisor assigned responsibilities that clearly fell outside the participant's designated role, undermining not just the boundaries of competence, but also the integrity of the work itself.

What is of particular concern here is that these tasks were not just administrative or peripheral: they involved duties typically reserved for licensed psychologists (RPsy) with direct implications for the quality and validity of psychological services. This expectation places psychometricians in an ethical bind: do they follow orders to meet institutional demands, or do they push back to uphold professional standards, even if it risks conflict or job security? It's a clear example of how blurred boundaries and misplaced assumptions can lead to ethical dilemmas that affect not only the practitioner, but also the clients who rely on the accuracy and credibility of the services provided.

One final account illustrates the direct conflict that can arise when resisting authoritative pressure. The participant recalled a situation in which their superior demanded that the results of an entrance examination be released in a specific manner, contrary to standard procedures. When the participant refused to comply, an argument ensued, and the superior accused them of being disrespectful, highlighting the personal and professional risks involved in upholding ethical standards against institutional pressure.

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The assertion of authority in these examples speaks to a fundamental issue within organizations: the power dynamics between superiors and subordinates and the potential for these dynamics to drive ethically questionable decisions. Supervisors, often seen as authority figures, may unintentionally or deliberately pressure their subordinates to compromise ethical standards. In the context of psychometrics, this is particularly concerning, as it can result in the alteration of test results, the release of unverified reports, or the overstepping of professional roles, all of which undermine the integrity of psychological services.

The ethical standards of the Psychological Association of the Philippines (PAP) and similar organizations emphasize the need for clear boundaries in professional practice, particularly concerning the competence of practitioners and objectivity in reporting. The pressures faced by participants to conform to authority figures not only challenge their ethical decision-making but also expose gaps in the organizational structure that may lack sufficient safeguards to prevent such boundary violations.

In practice, this suggests a need for better communication and training within organizations to ensure that all members, regardless of rank, understand the importance of adhering to ethical guidelines, particularly in the handling of psychological assessments and reports. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of fostering a work environment where employees feel empowered to speak out against unethical practices without fear of reprimand or retaliation.

By acknowledging and analyzing these power dynamics, the study reveals critical areas for organizational improvement and provides insights into how psychometricians and other professionals can be better supported in maintaining ethical standards amidst external pressures.

Negligence in the Use of Psychological Tests

This theme emerged as a consistent and unanimous concern among participants, revealing how institutional constraints and workplace cultures have led to repeated ethical boundary-crossing in test administration and management. Despite their awareness of ethical guidelines established by the Psychological Association of the Philippines (PAP) which emphasize the responsible use, security, and validity of psychological instruments, all participants admitted to engaging in practices that compromise these standards. These practices included the unauthorized photocopying, downloading, and use of psychological assessments, as well as the improper storage and handling of test materials. This form of negligence, as the findings suggest, is not rooted in a lack of knowledge or disregard for ethical norms, but rather in systemic shortcomings, such as insufficient funding, lack of institutional support, and poor infrastructure. These conditions created an environment where ethical ideals conflicted with the practical demands of their work.

One participant highlighted the financial burden associated with their role, particularly in acquiring psychological test materials. They expressed awareness of their responsibility to safeguard and utilize original testing forms when administering assessments. However, they noted the difficulty of personally covering these expenses, stating that the organization did not place sufficient importance on psychological evaluations: leaving them to shoulder costs that should be institutionally supported (Interview, Participant 9).

In this account, the participant reveals a deep internal conflict between their commitment to ethical standards and the financial constraints imposed by their work environment. They expressed frustration over being expected to uphold the integrity of psychological testing, despite lacking institutional support to do so. The phrase “*alangan ako ang mag-abono*” (“I shouldn’t have to pay for this out of pocket”) captures the heart of this tension, a sense of injustice in being ethically accountable without being given the tools or resources to meet those expectations.

This is not about negligence or disregard for ethical practice. Rather, it reflects a structural problem where psychometricians are placed in untenable situations, forced to choose between following ethical guidelines and absorbing financial burdens that shouldn't fall on them in the first place. It highlights how systemic issues, like budgetary constraints and lack of institutional investment, can quietly erode ethical practice—not through intent, but through circumstance. This speaks to the urgent need for organizations to take shared responsibility in upholding ethical standards, rather than placing that weight solely on individual practitioners.

Another participant acknowledged instances where they resorted to using psychological assessments sourced from the internet to evaluate clients. This admission reflects challenges in accessing standardized materials and raises concerns about the validity, reliability, and ethical implications of using unverified tools in professional practice, (Interview, Participant 4).

This reflects a concerning but relatable workaround for professionals working in under-resourced environments. While the act of downloading and administering unverified psychological tools is ethically unacceptable and undermines the psychometric properties of the test (such as validity, reliability, and standardization), the participant's statement signals a deeper issue: a lack of access to licensed materials and possibly a lack of monitoring mechanisms within their organization. The participant's casual framing of this practice as something they "easily" did suggests both the accessibility of these unauthorized tools and the absence of institutional safeguards against such practices.

Beyond procurement issues, test security emerged as a significant ethical concern. One participant described a workplace scenario where psychological test materials were inadequately stored due to the absence of secure storage facilities. As a result, unauthorized individuals were able to access the materials. The participant recounted instances where colleagues were found reading test questionnaires, and even a case where items from the 16 Personality Factors (16PF) test were photocopied without the knowledge or consent of the psychometric staff. This highlights a serious breach in test confidentiality and raises concerns about the integrity of future assessments.

The lack of secure storage, as noted in this account, reflects institutional negligence more than individual misconduct. The mention of coworkers casually reading and even photocopying test materials without the knowledge of the psychometrician points to a failure of systemic safeguards. In such an environment, ethical breaches occur not out of malice or incompetence, but due to normalized practices within an underregulated workplace culture.

These accounts demonstrate a systemic tension between ethical ideals and real-world constraints. According to the PAP Code of Ethics, psychometricians are required to ensure the proper use, administration, and storage of psychological tests. This includes safeguarding test integrity, using only validated instruments, and ensuring that materials are not reproduced or shared without proper authorization. When these responsibilities are compromised—especially due to financial or infrastructural limitations—there is a risk of invalid results, compromised confidentiality, and ultimately, harm to clients. However, participants' reflections reveal a shared awareness that these practices were ethically problematic. Their narratives do not attempt to justify negligence; rather, they express frustration and concern over the lack of institutional support, the pressure to perform, and the normalization of unethical workarounds in underfunded environments.

This recurring theme illustrates the urgent need for systemic interventions—such as increased institutional investment in psychological services, stricter protocols for test security, and ongoing ethics training—to empower psychometricians to uphold professional standards without being burdened by impractical expectations.

In sum, the ethical lapses related to test usage are not simply personal failings, but manifestations of broader structural and resource issues. Addressing these problems requires not only ethical awareness but also systemic change. By highlighting these contextual realities, the study does not excuse the violations but provides a clearer, more compassionate understanding of the complex environment in which they occur.

Boundary of Competence and Qualification

The theme Boundary of Competence and Qualification emerged as a significant ethical concern among participants, capturing the frequent dissonance between what is expected of them in practice and what they are legally and professionally qualified to do as Registered Psychometricians (RPMs). Participants commonly reported being asked to perform duties that fall outside their defined professional scope, especially in institutions where access to licensed psychologists (RPsY) is limited or inconsistent. This misalignment between role expectations and professional competence created conditions ripe for ethical conflict, professional burnout, and potential harm to clients.

The Psychometrician's scope of practice, as outlined by the Psychology Act of 2009 (RA 10029) and the Code of Ethics for Philippine Psychologists, specifically limits RPMs from independently diagnosing, interpreting Level C tests (such as projective assessments), or providing psychological interventions. However, in actual workplace settings—particularly in understaffed schools, clinics, and private institutions—participants found themselves being assigned these restricted tasks due to necessity or organizational convenience.

One illustrative account came from a participant who was left to manage an urgent psychological assessment alone due to the temporary absence of her supervisor, who was attending a seminar. During this time, a client arrived from a remote location with a referral letter requesting a psychological assessment to determine his readiness to return to work amid symptoms of depression. Faced with the urgency of the situation, the client requested immediate assessment and results. This experience underscores the ethical and professional challenges psychometricians may face when left without proper supervision or support, particularly in cases requiring timely and clinically sensitive interventions (Interview, Participant 6).

This narrative reflects the participant's ethical dilemma: although aware that evaluating a client with depression falls under the psychologist's domain, the participant was placed in a high-pressure situation where client expectations, professional constraints, and organizational absence intersected. The participant's decision to accommodate the client was not born out of negligence but rather the tension between ethical restraint and humanitarian responsiveness—a nuance that demonstrates the ethical grey zones often navigated in the absence of proper systems support.

Another participant reported being instructed to administer the Rorschach test—a Level C projective assessment that falls strictly within the scope of practice of licensed psychologists. They explained that due to the limited number of psychologists in their workplace and the overwhelming volume of patients, they were asked to take on this responsibility despite it exceeding their professional qualifications. This account highlights a critical boundary violation and raises serious ethical and legal concerns regarding role clarity, competence, and adherence to professional guidelines in psychological assessment, (Interview, Participant 2)

In this reflection, the participant acknowledges a difficult reality: they are fully aware of the ethical risks involved yet find themselves working within a system that leaves little room for alternatives. Their account highlights a systemic flaw—where highly specialized psychological tasks are delegated to staff who lack the necessary qualifications. Importantly,

this is not portrayed as a result of carelessness or disregard for ethical practice, but as a consequence of institutional shortages and overwhelming operational demands. The tension here lies in the gap between what is ethically required and what is realistically possible.

When institutions are under-resourced, the pressure to "make do" can lead to compromises that place both practitioners and clients at risk. It's a powerful reminder that ethical breaches often arise not from bad intentions, but from broken systems, systems that need reform if we are to truly uphold the standards of psychological care.

Other participants shared similar challenges regarding the independent issuance of referrals or recommendations, particularly in environments where supervisory support was either inconsistent or unavailable. One participant noted instances where they had to make recommendations and referrals without prior consultation with their supervisor due to their supervisor's frequent absence. However, the participant emphasized their efforts to ensure that the supervisor was updated on the decisions made. This situation highlights the ethical concerns of making independent judgments without proper supervision, as well as the potential risks to client welfare and professional accountability.

While the act of issuing referrals itself may not constitute an ethical violation if done within limits, the lack of immediate supervision and ambiguous workplace protocols complicate such actions. The participant appears to be navigating this ambiguity with care, but the situation still reflects the blurred boundaries and decentralized decision-making imposed by institutional dysfunction.

Interestingly, one participant shared a strong sense of confidence in their ability to recognize psychological symptoms and make appropriate decisions in practice. They attributed this assurance to the training they received during their master's program, which they felt had prepared them well to identify signs and symptoms accurately. The participant described feeling capable of making timely referrals and even noted that, so far, they had not encountered any missteps in recognizing when a client needed to be directed to another professional, (Interview, Participant 7).

This perspective introduces another layer to the theme: the perception of competence based on educational background. While this participant seems confident in their judgment, the implication that graduate-level coursework alone qualifies an RPM to make clinical decisions highlights the slippery slope of role expansion that may begin with good intentions but gradually leads to ethical compromise, especially if institutional boundaries are lax.

What stands out across these narratives is that ethical missteps rarely stem from ignorance or willful misconduct. Instead, they often arise from a deeper, more systemic issue: a lack of structural clarity, role-specific guidance, and institutional safeguards. While the *Psychology Act of 2009* clearly outlines the distinctions between Registered Psychometricians (RPMs) and Registered Psychologists (RPsY), the realities of day-to-day practice frequently blur these boundaries. Staff shortages, administrative decisions, and unrealistic expectations often push psychometricians into roles that stretch—or even exceed—their legal and ethical scope.

The participants' stories reveal that role ambiguity is a persistent source of ethical stress, particularly in environments where RPMs are expected to "step in" for psychologists during absences or to respond quickly to client needs. In these moments, the burden of decision-making falls heavily on psychometricians, who are left to navigate the delicate balance between staying within their professional limits, addressing urgent client concerns, and working within institutional constraints.

In this context, boundary violations are not isolated acts of defiance; they are symptoms of broader systemic gaps, inconsistent supervision, and the pressure to meet demands that outpace available resources. These findings point to an urgent need for structural reform: clear administrative policies that reinforce professional roles, regular

access to supervision, and ethics-centered training that not only outlines what is expected, but also supports psychometricians in standing firm when ethical boundaries are at risk.

Social Interaction and Connection

This theme speaks to the powerful role that professional and personal interpersonal relationships play in shaping the ethical decision-making of psychometricians. As participants shared their experiences, it became clear that boundary-crossing behaviors were not simply a result of insufficient training or a lack of understanding. Rather, these behaviors were often entangled with social expectations, emotional connections, and cultural norms that are deeply embedded in their workplaces and communities. This dynamic was particularly pronounced in school and clinical settings, where psychometricians are often seen as approachable, trusted figures. In such environments, the lines between personal connection and professional responsibility can become difficult to navigate. Participants spoke candidly about the strong rapport they had built with students, colleagues, and even family members—relationships that, while rooted in care and trust, sometimes made it challenging to maintain professional distance.

In many of these cases, the ethical tension did not come from overlooking procedures, but from empathy. The desire to help, to be present, and to meet others' needs created internal conflicts between following strict professional boundaries and responding as a compassionate human being. These moments highlight the nuanced reality that ethical decision-making is rarely black and white, and that sometimes, the most well-intentioned actions can quietly slip outside the bounds of ethical best practices.

One psychometrician described how her close relationships with co-workers and students influenced her tendency to offer direct psychological interventions, despite these responsibilities falling outside her professional role. She explained that her strong bond with these individuals made them feel comfortable approaching her with personal issues. Feeling a sense of responsibility, she believed it was her duty to respond and provide interventions. This illustrates the potential ethical risks of blurring professional boundaries, where personal relationships can lead to overstepping role limitations and compromising the integrity of psychological practice, (Interview, Participant 8).

This statement reflects a clear case of role diffusion, where personal concern and a strong sense of responsibility begin to blur the professional lines. While the participant's actions likely came from a place of genuine care and compassion, they also illustrate how interpersonal closeness, especially in tight-knit or emotionally charged environments, can make it difficult to maintain clear professional boundaries.

What may feel like a supportive or humane response in the moment can, unintentionally, lead to ethical gray areas. When these boundaries are crossed, even with the best intentions, both the practitioner and the client can be left vulnerable to ethical and legal consequences. This highlights the delicate balancing act that psychometricians often face: they must remain empathetic and connected while also protecting the integrity of their role and the safety of the therapeutic space.

Another participant recounted how familial expectations influenced her decision to conduct an assessment for a relative, despite clear ethical guidelines advising against such practices. She explained that when her relative requested her help in diagnosing a cousin from a distant province, she felt unable to refuse. The participant agreed to perform the assessment, even though she had not previously met the cousin in person. This situation highlights the ethical dilemma posed by personal relationships, where familial obligations may compromise professional boundaries and objectivity in psychological assessments, (Interview, Participant 2).

This situation really highlights how powerful cultural and familial expectations can be when it comes to making tough decisions. The participant felt torn between upholding professional boundaries and honoring a family obligation, something many people can relate to when it comes to wanting to support family or friends. The decision to go ahead with the request, despite knowing it might not align with ethical guidelines, was justified in part by the fact that there had been no prior professional relationship. This shows how emotions and cultural ties can sometimes influence decisions more strongly than strict ethical rules.

It is not so much about ignoring professional boundaries, but rather a reflection of the inner conflict professionals often face when trying to balance personal values with their professional duties. It is a reminder that ethical decision-making is not always clear-cut—sometimes, it's about navigating the complexities of relationships, emotions, and the values that shape us as individuals.

A more ethically complex case was shared by a participant who faced a dilemma involving the confidentiality of a student's self-harming behavior. The participant described a situation where a student, who had expressed suicidal tendencies, began self-harming. Despite knowing the seriousness of the situation, the participant decided not to disclose the duration of the self-harming behavior to the student's parents. This decision was based on the student's disclosure that their parents were already aware of their child's suicidal tendencies. This case highlights the tension between maintaining confidentiality and the ethical responsibility to safeguard a student's well-being, especially when considering the potential need for parental involvement in the intervention process, (Interview, Participant 3)

In this case, the psychometrician found himself in a tough spot, torn between his responsibility to protect client confidentiality and the need to involve the client's guardians because of serious mental health concerns. His decision to withhold full disclosure shows the kind of ethical struggle that often arises in real-world situations, where following the rules can sometimes clash with the trust and connection built with the client. It is a delicate balance between maintaining professional integrity while also considering the human side of care which often involves making hard choices that do not always have a clear-cut right answer.

Another participant recounted instances of emotionally driven behavior during client sessions. They described situations where, upon learning the serious nature of a client's referral, they found it difficult to control their emotional responses. In these cases, the participant expressed a tendency to offer the client words of wisdom, spiritual guidance, and personal advice, sometimes even embracing the client. This reflects the potential ethical challenge of maintaining professional boundaries when deeply moved by a client's personal struggles, underscoring the importance of balancing empathy with the need for objectivity and professional conduct in therapeutic settings, (Interview, Participant 7).

The discussions highlight how deeply empathy, personal connection, and even spiritual beliefs can influence professional boundaries, particularly in emotionally intense situations. While these actions may feel necessary or even culturally appropriate, they can blur the lines of the professional relationship and change how the client views the psychometrician's role. What stands out from these stories is that social connection is not just a background issue in ethical decision-making; it is a powerful force that shapes how psychometricians see themselves and the work they do. The emotional work involved in client relationships, especially in environments where resources are limited and strong relationships are key, can gradually make professional boundaries harder to maintain. On top of this, distinct Filipino cultural factors like *pakikisama* (togetherness), *utang na loob* (debt of gratitude), and *kapwa* (shared humanity) make it even more difficult to apply strict ethical guidelines without considering the context.

Thus, the theme of Social Interaction and Connection really shows that ethical boundaries cannot be upheld through knowledge and training alone. Institutions need to

recognize the emotional and relational side of psychological work and offer better support, such as ongoing supervision and opportunities for ethics-based reflection. This will help psychometricians handle these complex situations more effectively and with greater clarity.

Discussion

This study takes a deeper look at the ethical challenges psychometricians encounter across various institutional settings in the Philippines. While ethical guidelines are in place and professional guidance is accessible, many psychometricians still find themselves navigating ethically ambiguous situations. These challenges are often more influenced by institutional pressures, limited resources, and unclear role expectations rather than personal neglect. This reality echoes concerns raised by Baggerly and Parker (2020), who highlighted the gap between the ethical training professionals receive in theory and the real-world ethical dilemmas they face in practice.

One of the biggest ethical challenges that came up in this study is how the pressure from supervisors can shape the way psychometricians do their work. It's a bigger issue than just following orders—when supervisors who may not have psychological training make decisions about assessments, it can put psychometricians in a tough spot. It brings up questions of competence and ethics. Sommers-Flanagan et al. (2021) talk about how these power dynamics can blur the lines of what is right and wrong, making it harder for professionals to make ethical choices. Kauffman (2020) points out that even in settings where psychological expertise is critical, people without that background still often have the final say. That is important when it comes to making decisions that could have real, legal, or clinical consequences. Pope et al. (2022) add that when there's an imbalance of power, the risk of crossing professional boundaries increases. This all points to a key takeaway: organizations must not only encourage ethical behavior in theory, but also create an environment where psychometricians feel empowered to act ethically in their day-to-day work without fear of pushing back or facing negative consequences.

Another concerning issue that came up in the study was the improper handling and misuse of psychological tests. Many psychometricians openly admitted to photocopying tests, downloading assessments without permission, and storing these materials in insecure ways. These actions were not driven by malicious intent but by necessity, often due to tight budgets and a lack of institutional backing. Despite the good intentions, this behavior raises serious ethical red flags. Go (2016) points out that in the Philippines, unauthorized duplication of psychological tests is a common practice, especially within HR departments and among unlicensed individuals. Such practices violate not only ethical standards but also the Intellectual Property Code of the Philippines.

As psychological tests become more accessible online, Lichtenberger and Kaufman (2022) stress the importance of safeguarding these materials. When tests are misused or poorly protected, it does not just breach professional codes, it also jeopardizes the accuracy and fairness of the entire assessment process. As Younggren and Harris (2020) highlight, these violations can have far-reaching consequences, from invalid clinical decisions to complications in legal proceedings. The core issue here is that, without adequate institutional support and safeguards, even well-meaning practitioners may inadvertently cross ethical boundaries. This underscores the need for stronger policies within organizations and more accessible ethical resources to help psychometricians stay on track.

Adding another layer of complexity, many participants in this study shared experiences where they were asked to administer advanced psychological assessments, such as the Rorschach test, even though they did not have the proper qualifications to do so. This brings to light concerns raised by Lindsey and Bartlett (2021), who emphasize that being

competent in psychology is not just about having the right credentials; it is also about continuous learning, professional supervision, and knowing your limits. Fisher (2020) also stresses that ethical competence involves ensuring that tasks are only assigned to individuals who are truly trained to handle them, particularly when those individuals are in junior or subordinate roles.

However, in practice, the pressure to meet institutional demands often pushed psychometricians to step beyond their professional boundaries. This resulted in a real conflict between fulfilling organizational expectations and doing what they knew was ethically right (Rodolfa & Schaffer, 2020). Many participants spoke about the discomfort they felt when asked to perform duties they were not fully trained for. Pickles (2020) poignantly captures this ongoing challenge, highlighting the tension between organizational pressures and the need to uphold personal responsibility and professional competence.

What is clear from these accounts is that there needs to be more clarity surrounding the role of psychometricians in assessments and decision-making. As Rodrigues et al (2021) argue, tasks should be aligned with a practitioner's training and skill set to ensure ethical guidelines are followed, while preventing situations where practitioners are set up to fail.

Another ethical dilemma that emerged from the study is the challenge of managing multiple roles and relationships in smaller institutional settings, particularly in schools and clinical environments. In these contexts, psychometricians often find themselves juggling various roles—such as assessor, administrator, counselor, and even informal support staff. This overlap of roles creates blurred boundaries, making ethical decision-making particularly challenging. The findings echo the work of Erdur-Baker and Çetinkaya (2021), who noted that dual relationships are common in smaller psychological settings, often leading to confusion about where professional responsibilities begin and end. Knapp and Vandecreek (2021) also warned that these blurred lines can compromise the objectivity of assessments and increase the risk of ethical violations.

What is especially concerning is that many participants shared how difficult it was to apply ethical codes to the real-world situations they encountered. While they had formal training, putting that training into practice was not always straightforward. Reamer (2020) highlights how practitioners often must rely on their own judgment when ethical guidelines seem too rigid or disconnected from the situation at hand. In these moments, what is missing is a safety net: ongoing institutional support and opportunities to consult with colleagues or supervisors. Without that guidance, even well-meaning professionals can find themselves navigating ethical grey zones alone.

Barnett (2021) emphasizes that resolving these dilemmas is not just about additional training, it is about creating a culture where ethical thinking is supported and normalized through continuous dialogue, supervision, and shared responsibility. Institutions need to do more than just establish the rules; they need to foster environments where professionals can practice these principles regularly, especially in settings where individuals are expected to wear multiple hats.

The results of this study highlight the growing need to rethink how we approach ethics in psychometric testing, not as a checklist to be completed, but as a shared responsibility that is actively supported by our institutions. The findings point to several key takeaways: ethical behavior does not just stem from knowing the rules; it is shaped through real-life experience, ongoing mentorship, and a clear understanding of professional roles. As Barnett (2021) and Pope & Vasquez (2021) suggest, professional development should be more than just a one-time workshop; it should include regular feedback, open conversations about difficult decisions, and support from supervisors who have navigated these situations before. When ethical training becomes part of everyday practice, particularly with a focus on managing risk and clarifying boundaries, it becomes much easier to avoid missteps.

Conclusion, Limitations, and Recommendations

In conclusion, the results of this study make a compelling case for the need to rethink how ethical practice is supported in psychometrics, with a strong focus on systemic change at the organizational level. To truly address these ethical dilemmas and help psychometricians "untangle" themselves from issues of boundary violations, the findings reveal several critical steps. These steps go beyond just addressing individual behavior, shining a light on the importance of broader organizational shifts that create a culture of ethical support.

Institutions must provide psychometricians with the right tools, guidance, and structures to make sound, principled decisions while maintaining their professional integrity. Ethical practice cannot rest solely on the shoulders of individual practitioners; institutions must take proactive steps to foster an environment that values integrity. This means putting policies in place that not only promote ethical behavior but also provide tangible support: regular audits, accessible guidelines, and clear protocols that align with the ethical standards set by both the APA and PAP. As the field of psychological practice continues to grow and become more complex, having well-defined ethical frameworks is crucial for guiding professionals. In the end, creating an ethical culture is not about making ethics a personal burden; it is about ensuring there is a balance between individual responsibility and organizational support, so that psychometricians don't face these challenges alone.

That said, this study is not without its limitations. The participant sample was predominantly female, which may limit the generalizability of the findings across gender. Additionally, the reliance on retrospective self-reports introduces the possibility of recall and response bias, which could affect the accuracy of the ethical dilemmas shared. Future research would benefit from more diverse samples and from exploring how gender may influence ethical decision-making in psychometric work. Longitudinal studies could also be valuable in assessing the long-term effects of ethics training and supervision on reducing boundary violations and improving ethical standards.

There is also a strong case for developing proactive tools to identify ethical risks before violations occur. Trost et al. (2022) point to the potential of ethical monitoring systems: risk management tools designed to catch problems early and guide practitioners in making informed, ethical choices. Such innovations could be game-changing for institutions aiming to raise the bar for ethical competence in psychology.

AUTHOR INFORMATION

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