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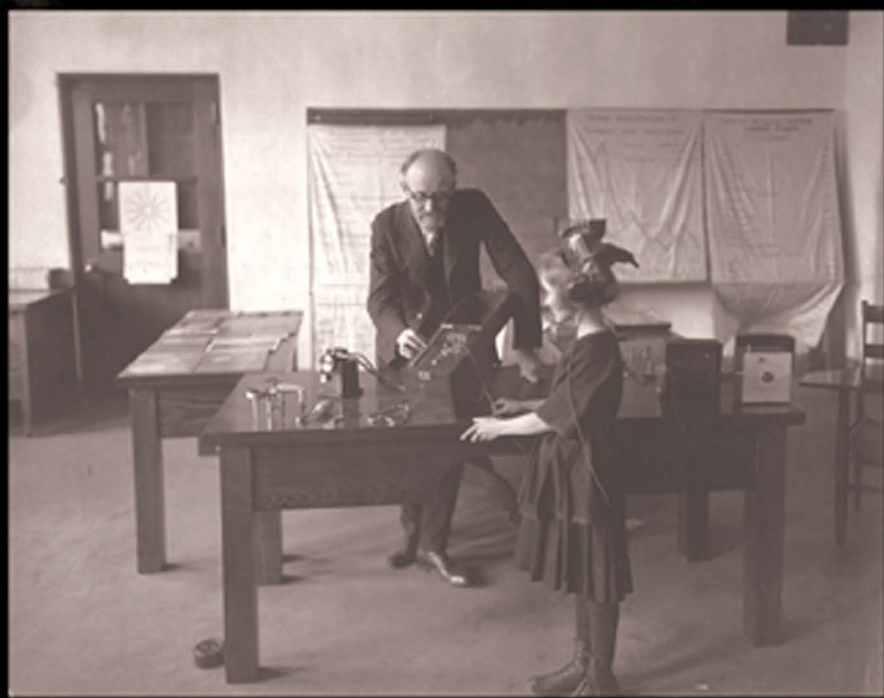


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7th
Edition

Doing Psychology Experiments

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In his leisure hours, Dr. Martin enjoys working out, scuba diving, playing the trumpet, singing, and having fun with his two sons. For 12 years he raced dirt-track stockcars and was known as "Dangerous David, the Racing Professor."

Doing Psychology Experiments

SEVENTH EDITION

David W. Martin

North Carolina State University

THOMSON

WADSWORTH

Doing Psychology Experiments
Seventh Edition
David W. Martin

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Cover Image: The photograph on the cover shows J. E. W. Wallin testing an unidentified young girl in the 1920s. He was an early pioneer of school psychology and was using instruments to test her hearing such as tuning forks, a Galton Whistle, and an audiometer constructed by Carl E. Seashore. At this time there were few tests yet available for predicting a child's success in school.

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This book is dedicated to:

*My father, the late Daniel W. Martin,
who taught me logical thinking,*

*My high school teacher, Doris Mitchell,
who showed me that teachers can care,*

*My undergraduate professor, Harve E. Rawson,
who introduced me to psychology,*

*My graduate professor, the late George E. Briggs,
who best demonstrated experimental rigor,*

*And all of my students,
from whom I am continually learning to teach.*

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PREFACE

Doing Psychology Experiments has now been available for 30 years and it still seems to be fulfilling its original function: to teach students having little or no background in experimentation how to do simple experiments in psychology. Throughout the seven editions of the book I have tried to keep the writing style informal and friendly. Although scientific results are usually reported in an objective, impersonal style, I believe that doing experimentation is a highly personal experience. The experimenter reviews the literature and forms a view of the body of knowledge. The experimenter creates the theories and hypotheses for testing. The experimenter decides which variables to manipulate and which to measure. The experimenter interprets the results and determines how the body of knowledge has been advanced. The experimenter is personally involved in the process of experimentation, and I believe that the best way to teach new experimenters about this process is through a personal book.

There has even been some research assessing students' preferences and learning when using more personally written books. For example, Paxton (1997) found that students reading a text with a "visible author" (one who writes in the first person, revealing personal opinions and self) engage in mental conversations with the author, which lead to a closer relationship with the information contained in the text. Lorin Sheppard (2001), a student at Michigan State University, has even studied the use of humor in texts by using material from this book and comparing it to material from the book that had been given, to use her term, a "humorectomy" (personal communication, April 27, 2001). She found that not only did the students report that the humorous chapters were more interesting and informative, but also that students tended to recall more items from the humorous version during a delayed recall test. I am pleased that these results support my long-held intuition that both humor and a personal writing style are pedagogically useful.

Now a few words about what this book does and does not do. It provides enough information so that a student with no experimental background will be able to design, execute, interpret, and report simple psychological experiments. Although the book has most often been used for undergraduate courses in experimental methods, it has also been used with other books for other purposes. Several colleges use it for the laboratory section of introductory psychology courses. It is sometimes used in conjunction with a statistics book or a content book for experimental courses with those orientations. It is frequently adopted for undergraduate content courses (ranging from deviant behavior to consumer psychology) when the instructor requires experiments to be done and the students have little experimental background. I have

talked with many users, both instructors and students. They report that the book can be used successfully as a stand-alone text and as a supplement. In fact, in my own experimental methods course, I assign chapters before lecturing on the material, give a little quiz from the test bank available with the book to encourage the students to read the material before class, and then spend lecture time clarifying points where necessary, but mostly discussing experimental proposals and problems. The book does a good job of bringing a diverse set of students up to the same level so that class time can be used for more creative interaction.

Although the book is often used as a supplemental text and may appear physically smaller than some others on the market, it nevertheless does discuss most of the important concepts from experimental methods. I have attempted to provide comprehensive coverage of the area, and some research indicates that the attempt has been successful.*

Authors of textbooks representing many areas of psychology were asked to rate the importance of terms and concepts from their subfields. Of the top 100 ranked terms in the methods/statistics area, 33 emphasized statistics or psychometric testing. Of the remaining 67 that emphasized methods, this book discusses all but 6. Four of those terms are discussed at a conceptual level but using alternative terminology. Only two terms, both ranking in the 90s, are not represented in this book. I believe that this evidence confirms the claim that this book provides comprehensive coverage of experimental methods.

What this book does not do is teach students much about the content and current findings in the various areas of experimental psychology. Many of the examples I use are contrived; they illustrate the methods being discussed, but they are not real and certainly will not give students a representative coverage of the content of experimental psychology. However, students should begin to get some exposure to content as they carry out literature searches as described in Chapter 6. The book also does not teach students much about the intricacies of complex experimental design and statistical analysis. I have tried to keep it simple. Although I discuss the rationale behind descriptive and inferential statistics, the actual statistical operations presented in Appendix A are admittedly cookbookish.

The seventh edition has a number of changes. Some of these are small changes such as new quotes at the beginning of chapters, correcting a few errors, and adding a few new cartoons. I changed several contrived examples that several adopters had objected to because these examples conflicted with real data. In Chapter 3, I put in a short discussion of the difference between theories that answer proximate question versus ultimate questions. In Chapter 4, when discussing the use of the term *participants* rather than *subjects*, I added some dissenting points of view. I also updated the section on animal ethics. In Chapter 5, I expanded the discussion of plagiarism by discussing

*Boneau, C. A. (1990). Psychological literacy: A first approximation. *American Psychologist*, 45, 891-900.

plagiarism from the Internet and adding some specific examples of violations. I also incorporated the latest version of the *APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* as it relates to research. In Chapter 6, I updated the section on doing electronic searches including additional information on *PsycINFO* and *PsycARTICLES*. When discussing the logic of inferential statistics in Chapter 12, I included more information about null hypothesis testing, Type I and Type II errors, and determination of the power of statistical tests. In this chapter I also added a brief discussion of three-way interactions. In Chapter 13, I updated the section on giving conference presentations because nearly all presentations are now computer based. Several reviewers suggested I include examples of the proper way to format statistical outcomes within the text of a manuscript, so I included these after each of the worked examples in Appendix A.

Additionally, the Test Bank for instructors has been expanded and updated for the seventh edition. Newly enhanced companion Web sites for students and instructors can be found at <http://www.thomsonedu.com/psychology/martin>.

In making the changes to this edition I have tried very hard to keep the book as short as possible while covering the necessary topics. In fact, the book is a few pages shorter than the previous edition. I do not want the book to seem too imposing to students and I want to keep it reasonably priced. To those who have used previous editions, I hope you like the changes. To new users, I hope you like the book.

I would like to thank North Carolina State University for providing me with the time and resources to write. I would like to thank the following people at Wadsworth: Marcus Boggs, Director; Karol Jurado, Content Project Manager; Gina Kessler, Assistant Editor; Christina Ganim, Editorial Assistant; Lauren Keyes, Technology Project Manager; Karin Sandberg, Marketing Manager; and Natasha Coats, Marketing Assistant. I also thank this edition's manuscript reviewers for their helpful comments, including: Dr. Jennifer Bonds-Raacke, Briar Cliff University; Dr. Daniel Cerutti, Duke University; Dr. Joy Drinnon, Milligan College; Dr. Julie Evey, University of Southern Indiana; and Dr. William Hardy, Sierra College. Finally, I would like to thank the students in my classes who, by their performance, have told me where I have succeeded (and failed) and the many students from around the country who recognize me at meetings and let me know they like the book.

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1

How to Make Orderly Observations

Direct, intuitive observation, accompanied by questioning, imagination, or creative intervention, is a limited and misleading prescientific technique.

C. F. MONTE (1975)

The very nature of life is such that when one dissects it, it ceases to be life. Behavior, being a by-product of life, is even more elusive.

K. Z. LORENZ (1962)

The perversity of animate subjects has, of necessity, whelped a remarkable degree of experimental sophistication in the behavioral sciences.

S. N. ROSCOE (1980)

This book is meant to teach you how to do experiments in the science of psychology. Aside from the fact that learning to do this is required of psychology majors at many colleges, why would you want to know how to do psychological experimentation? One reason could be that you plan to become a psychologist, a scientist studying human and, sometimes, animal behavior. The experimental method is one of the major research tools for collecting data to build the scientific body of knowledge in psychology. In this book I will briefly discuss some of the other tools used in psychology, but my primary focus is on how to do experiments.

Even if you do not plan to become a psychologist, learning about the use of experimentation in psychology can help you become a well-educated person and can provide you with useful skills that generalize to a number of other careers. For example, suppose you go into the banking business and work your way up to being a vice president. Obviously, some of what you learn in psychology courses can help you succeed because you now know something about human relations. What you know about experimentation can also help. Your boss calls you in and says: "As you know, we've just installed all these automatic tellers in our banks. We spent a lot of money on these newfangled machines, but for some reason the customers don't like to use them. I want you to figure out why and make whatever changes are necessary to get them to use the machines."

You will see as you read this book that carrying out such an assignment, while not a formal experiment, requires most of the skills needed for doing a psychology experiment. First, you must form several hypotheses about why customers are not using the automatic tellers. Do they feel depersonalized interacting with a machine? Are they intimidated? Do they not know how to use these machines? Do they feel less safe carrying their money to or from an ATM without the security of another person present? As a second step, you must collect some sort of data to narrow down the possible hypotheses, perhaps by doing interviews or using a questionnaire. Then you would probably want to make a manipulation to see whether you can change the customers' behavior: perhaps offering an educational program, if knowledge is a problem; perhaps giving prizes, if motivation is a problem; perhaps increasing privacy, if security is a problem. Finally, you would want to measure customers' behavior to see whether it changes after your manipulation and to determine whether any such change is meaningful. Although your boss did not ask you to do a psychology experiment, you have carried out most of the steps required to do one. Most jobs require solving people problems, and the skills you learn from this book should make you a better people-problem-solver.

If you do wish to become a psychologist, the reasons for learning about research and experimentation are probably obvious. Certainly if you want to be an experimental psychologist, then doing experiments will be your main activity and you will repeatedly use the techniques taught in this book. But even if you plan on becoming a clinician or a counselor, at the very least you should know how psychological research is done; ideally, you should be able to do it. One of the major characteristics that distinguish clinical psychologists from others who do therapy, such as social workers and psychiatrists, is how closely tied they are to behavioral data. Early in the history of clinical training, some 50 years ago, educators got together and decided that clinical psychology students should be trained first as scientists and then as therapists, that without the science they would just be guessing about which therapeutic techniques work and which do not. That is why most clinical psychologists get a Ph.D. (doctor of philosophy), a research degree. Today, it is true that about a quarter of clinical psychologists get a Psy.D. (doctor of psychology) rather than a Ph.D., but the curriculum for this degree still requires students to be somewhat versed in research methods. Clinicians must be able to understand research and experimentation otherwise they will not be able to determine the effectiveness of various treatments and to evaluate new interventions as they are introduced.

Over and above recognizing these practical reasons for learning to do psychology experiments, you will, I hope, want to learn these skills just because it's fun! We are all curious about the world around us. We want to know why things happen as they do. Humans invented science to better understand their world.¹ Science is an attempt to approach this discovery process in an orderly way. Early in life I found out that, for me, experimentation was the most

¹ And, in the case of astronomy, other worlds as well.

intriguing tool of science because it leads to the discovery of previously unknown relationships. Then when I learned about the science of psychology, I further discovered that this powerful tool could be used to understand what I considered the most interesting subject of all: human behavior.

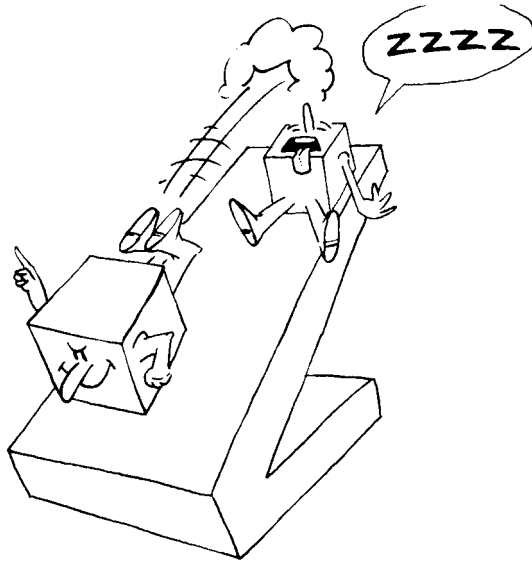
Most people are curious about their own behavior and the behavior of others. That is why we watch soap operas, gossip behind people's backs, fantasize, and read the *National Enquirer* in the grocery line: to speculate about human behavior. The use of experimentation in psychology allows us to check our speculations. What a thrill it was during my first course in experimental psychology to find scientific relationships that nobody else had ever seen. Even after years of doing experiments, my heart beats a little faster when I take that first look at the results of a new experiment. My colleagues probably get tired of my running to their offices to show them the exciting discoveries as they unfold in my lab. I hope that you feel the same exhilaration when you do your research. Although researchers have more serious reasons for doing the science of psychology, may you always continue to appreciate the fun of experimentation.

■ Psychology as a Science

Psychologists go about their business much like scientists do in other scientific fields. In their search for an understanding of human behavior, psychologists attempt to (1) establish relationships between circumstances and behaviors and (2) fit these relationships into an orderly body of knowledge. In this book we deal primarily with the first activity, although we will touch on the second activity in Chapters 3 and 13.

What kind of relationship is acceptable to us as scientists? When we can demonstrate that one event is related to a second event in some predictable way, we have made a statement that will fit into the scientific body of knowledge. At least one of these events must be a measurable behavior, but the nature of the behavior is what distinguishes one science from another. The behavior of major concern to us as psychologists is human behavior (and sometimes animal behavior). And this is where we run into one of our first problems—a problem that haunts psychologists but not physical scientists. Humans and animals are variable. We humans often cannot repeat a response precisely even if we wish to, and in some cases we may not wish to. In terms of variability, physical scientists typically have it easier than psychologists.

A physicist measuring the coefficient of friction for a wooden block might measure the time it takes the block to slide down an inclined plane. Although the times might vary from trial to trial, such variability would be relatively small. The physicist would not be making too great an error if he or she considered the variability a minor nuisance and measured the time for only one trial. However, a psychologist wanting to measure the time it takes a human to press a button in response to a light would be making a considerably greater error by ignoring human variability. While it is unlikely that our



physicist's block will be a little slow on certain trials because it has its mind on other things, isn't ready, or is blinking or asleep, a human can experience these and many other problems.

Psychologists must take into account not only variability among trials but also variability among humans. Our physicist could construct another block of the same size, weight, and surface finish as the original and repeat the experiment. The psychologist, however, cannot recreate humans. Humans seldom have exactly the same genetic background (identical twins being an exception), and they never have exactly the same environmental background. For this reason, in responding to the light, typically one individual's fastest response is considerably slower than another individual's slowest response. Thus, as psychologists we have to deal not only with one person's variability from trial to trial but also with the variability among humans.²

One way to handle variability is to use statistical techniques. Many psychology students learn to do this by taking a statistics class early in their course work. Because this is not a statistics text, I will not spend much time considering statistical solutions. I briefly mention the topic in Chapter 12, in discussing the interpretation of experimental results, and in Appendix A, where I demonstrate simple statistical operations. A second way to handle variability is to control it as much as possible in the design of your research. The goal of this book is to help you do good research, which is a simple way of saying, "Know where the variability is and be able to account for it."

² You can see why some psychologists decide to use animals in experiments. Whereas psychologists can breed animals with similar genetic characteristics and rear them in similar environments, they would be criticized if they tried to do the same thing with humans. Your friends may say, "All men are animals" or "All women are alike," but don't believe them!

Psychologists and other social scientists use a variety of research techniques to make orderly observations in an attempt to account for variability. In this chapter I give you an overview of the various techniques.

Then in the next chapter and in most of the other chapters I expand on experimentation because this is the main technique emphasized in this book. In Chapter 10 I also go into more detail about several research techniques that are not experimental: questionnaires, single-subject designs, and quasi-experimental designs.

The most widely used research techniques are sometimes called **quantitative designs**, in which events can be quantified so that the data end up being numbers. These designs include experiments and correlational observations. To give you a complete picture of the research techniques available, in this chapter I also briefly talk about **qualitative designs**, in which the events being studied are not easily converted into numbers.

■ Quantitative Designs

THE EXPERIMENTAL METHOD

As scientists, we establish relationships between events, but these events are not always behaviors. In fact, when we do an experiment, or use the **experimental method**, the relationship of interest is between a set of circumstances and a behavior. A physicist wants to know the time it takes for a block to slide down a plane, when the plane is at a particular angle, has a particular surface, and has a particular temperature. A psychologist, on the other hand, may want to study students' behavior in a classroom. Both scientists are attempting to establish relationships between a set of circumstances and a behavior, the behavior of a physical object or a human. These relationships are scientific facts, the building blocks with which we build our science.

Unfortunately, designing an experiment to establish such a relationship is not always easy. Ideally, we would like to specify exhaustively and precisely a particular set of circumstances and then measure all the behaviors occurring under these circumstances. We could then say that whenever this set of circumstances recurred, the same behaviors would result. However, if we could list *all* the circumstances, we would have a unique set. Again, if we wanted to study students in a classroom, what circumstances would interest us? Perhaps we would like to know the effect of the teacher's gender, or perhaps the type of clothes the teacher wears, or perhaps the class size, or perhaps the use of computers in the classroom, or perhaps the time of day the class meets. As you can see, there are many circumstances we might like to investigate. In fact, there is an infinite number of circumstances and these form a unique set that would never be repeated.

As is the case with the physicist, the psychologist wants to relate circumstances to behaviors, and a similar problem arises here. Which behaviors do we want to investigate? Perhaps how attentive the students are, or perhaps

how many notes the students are taking, or perhaps how many questions the students ask, or perhaps class attendance, or perhaps even what type of brain-wave activity the students are producing. As with the circumstances, again there is an infinite number of behaviors that we might choose to measure.

So, scientists potentially have an infinite set of circumstances and behaviors that they could try to relate to one another. What to do with the behaviors of less interest is less of a problem than the circumstances of less interest. Once a particular behavior is chosen, the other behaviors can generally be ignored. However, once a circumstance is chosen, the other circumstances cannot be ignored. One possibility would be to hold all the other circumstances constant to make a precise statement about the relationship between the circumstances and behaviors. However, if we did that, we would end up with an infinite number of statements, one for each unique set of circumstances paired with each of an infinite number of behaviors. Although we would have precise statements about the relationship between circumstances and behaviors, we would never be able to predict future behavior from circumstances because we would never again find those particular circumstances paired with a particular behavior. How do we get around this problem?

Scientists have had to make a compromise. After they choose one or a few circumstances to investigate, they let many of the other circumstances vary, at least within certain constraints. This means that the circumstance (or circumstances) of most interest is precisely specified, whereas most of the other circumstances form a variable set, not a unique set. In this way any relationship found between the circumstance of interest and the behavior can usually be generalized to most conditions within that set of circumstances.

In using the experimental method the scientist manipulates at least one circumstance and measures at least one behavior. For example, suppose we were interested in finding out whether words *or* pictures are easier to remember. We might make up lists of words like car, tree, house, and hand and then find simple pictures or line drawings of each word. We could then present either the word list or the picture list to people and find out how many trials it takes them to learn each type of list. So we have chosen a circumstance to manipulate and set it at two levels—*words* versus *pictures*—and measured the number of trials a person needs to learn each level. In this way, when we complete our experiment, we should be able to make a clear statement about whether presenting material as words or pictures has any effect on the ability to learn the material. We cannot just ignore all the other circumstances. As we will see in the next chapter, we have to carefully consider how to handle the circumstances we are not manipulating. However, when an experiment is done correctly, it is possible to make a clear statement that any change in the measured behavior that occurs when the circumstance of interest is manipulated is caused by the manipulation. The experimental method is so widely used in science because no other method allows us to make such a strong causal statement. As you will see when we discuss the other scientific methods in this chapter, all the other methods fall a little short of the ideal: being able to say unequivocally that the change in the circumstance *caused* the change in the behavior.

CORRELATIONAL OBSERVATION

In establishing relationships that add to our knowledge of human behavior, it is not always possible to conduct an experiment. In such cases, **correlational observation** is often appropriate. In correlational observation we try to determine whether two variables are related without attempting to manipulate either one experimentally. Suppose, for example, that we were interested in finding the relationship between the population density of the places where kids live and the rate of juvenile delinquency among these kids. Perhaps our hypothesis is that the stress of living in high-population-density areas might increase the rate of juvenile delinquency. To fit this problem into the experimental model, we would have to make population density into a circumstance we can manipulate and force the parents of a cross section of newborn infants to live in various communities with different population densities. When the children reached age 18, we might count the number of appearances before juvenile court for each child. Obviously, not only would few parents agree to such an experiment, but our society would also not smile on our sincere effort to do good research. However, rather than give up on what might be an important question, we could consider using a correlational observation.

In making such an observation, we could randomly choose a number of children from a large number of communities with differing population densities. On the basis of these population densities, we could assign a number on a scale from low to high. We could then survey court records to determine the number of offenses for each child and determine whether a relationship exists.

Data³ from correlational observations are typically pictured in a **scatterplot**, in which each variable is represented on an axis and each point represents a single measurement. For example, hypothetical data from our population-density study are plotted in Figure 1-1. In this case, each point represents a population-density score and the number of court appearances for each child. For example, the upper right point in the graph represents a child having four court appearances and living in a very high population-density community, and the lower left point, a child with no court appearances and living in a very low population-density area. This scatterplot shows that there is a moderate relationship between population density and court appearances in our fictitious example. The data points tend to cluster about an imaginary line running from the lower left to the upper right of the graph. In this hypothetical example, children who live in lower population density communities tend to have fewer court appearances.

We agreed at the beginning of this chapter that the business of scientists is establishing relationships between events. Why then is this result not as good as the result of an experiment? Remember from our discussion of the experimental method that when we have conducted a good experiment, we can say that the change in the circumstance we manipulated caused a change

³ Every good experimenter must remember that data is a plural word; a datum is, but data are. If you chant to yourself “these data are” three times every morning when you wake up, you’ll probably still forget!

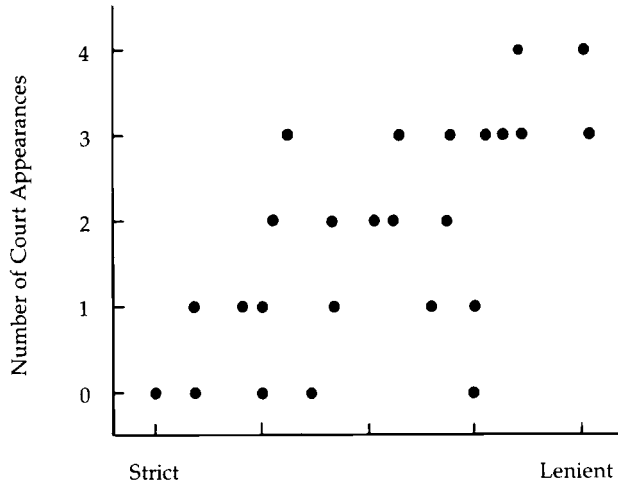


FIGURE 1-1 Fictitious data showing the relationship between population density and the number of court appearances for children

in the behavior we measured. From a correlational observation, however, the best we can do is to conclude that one variable is *related* to a second variable.

Why can't we say that population density *causes* juvenile delinquency? We can't make this statement because we have not manipulated any circumstance; all we have done is measure two behaviors. Only if we had set up an experiment in which we manipulated population density would we have been able to make a causal statement. Instead, what we did was to allow families to choose where they live. Thus, choosing to live in a community with a particular population density was a behavior rather than a manipulated circumstance, and the strong causal conclusion we could make for experimentation no longer applies. Why?

For correlational observation, one of the behaviors might be causing the other, but even if this is the case we do not know which behavior is doing the causing and which is being caused. This problem is sometimes referred to as the **directionality problem**. For instance, in our example it may be that as juveniles become more delinquent, they convince their parents to move to communities with higher population densities. In other words, although unlikely, delinquency may cause population-density choices. From a correlational study we are unable to know for sure the causal direction even if one behavior did cause the other.

Another possibility is that neither behavior could be directly causing the other even though there is a relationship. Some third variable may be causing both behaviors—cleverly known as the **third variable problem**. In the example we have been discussing, some third variable such as poverty may be causing both the choice about where to live and the tendency toward juvenile delinquency.

Perhaps the following example will illustrate why it is difficult to make causal statements on the basis of correlational observation. The U.S. Army conducted a study of motorcycle accidents, attempting to correlate the number of accidents with other variables such as socioeconomic level and age. They found the best predictor to be the number of tattoos the rider had! It would be a ridiculous error to conclude that tattoos cause motorcycle accidents or, for that matter, that motorcycle accidents cause tattoos. Obviously, a third variable is related to both—perhaps preference for risk. A person who is willing to take risks likes to be tattooed and also takes more chances on a motorcycle.



I am sure you are aware of the historical debate between the tobacco industry and the government on the health consequences of smoking. The dilemma faced by the U.S. Surgeon General several decades ago is a good illustration of the difficulty in making causal statements on the basis of correlational data. Although it had been known for some time that a positive correlation exists between the number of cigarettes smoked and the incidence of lung cancer and other health problems, the Surgeon General was reluctant to say that smoking caused lung cancer. Some of this reluctance may have been politically motivated. However, much of it was justifiable scientific caution because there could have been a third variable that caused the cancer but also influenced smoking. For example, people who are nervous might produce a chemical that keeps the body in an irritated state, producing irritated cells that are prone to malignancy. It might also be true that nervous people smoke more cigarettes. Nervousness, then, could have caused the change in both variables.

Thus, someone from the Surgeon General's office would have had to perform an experiment to say definitively from one study that smoking causes

lung cancer. Such an experiment might require 1000 people to smoke 40 cigarettes a day, another 1000 people to smoke 30 a day, and so on. In this design, experimenters could determine the probability that an individual in each group would have developed lung cancer during his or her lifetime. Assuming that the experimenters did the experiment properly, any real difference in the incidence of cancer between the groups could be said to be caused by cigarettes. However, our society requires that a person's preference be honored, so ethically such an experiment could not be and was not conducted.

How, then, did cigarette packs come to have the following warning printed on them: "SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Smoking causes lung cancer, heart disease, emphysema, and may complicate pregnancy"?⁴ In this case, experimenters determined correlations for many other variables that could have been related to health problems and smoking. As they eliminated more and more of these variables, it became increasingly likely that cigarette smoking was the cause. The Surgeon General apparently felt that the experimenters had finally eliminated all the logically possible third variables. This fact, in combination with animal experiments that did show a causal relationship, convinced him to make such a statement.

The point, then, is that sometimes we must collect correlational data to establish important psychological relationships. However, we must consider these data carefully to avoid the common error of interpreting the results of a correlational observation as a causal relationship.

One of the techniques frequently used to collect data for correlational observations is a survey, which can be in the form of a questionnaire or interview. Because students taking a research course and using this book often do a course project that uses a questionnaire, I have discussed the use of questionnaires in more detail in Chapter 10. Here let me just give a quick overview of surveys.

SURVEYS

Surveys typically ask people about their behavior or their opinions. You have probably participated in many surveys yourself, in some cases perhaps without realizing it. For example, in my school, graduating seniors are mailed a survey asking them about their experiences at the university: effectiveness of professors, access to health care, availability of career counseling, tastiness of food service meals, and so on. Or perhaps you have answered the phone and been asked questions by a political party regarding your feelings about issues and candidates. On the Internet when you subscribe to some services you have to answer questions about who you are and what your preferences are. Even this questionnaire is a type of survey.

Surveys include questionnaires that may be in paper-and-pencil form and are administered in person either individually or to groups of participants (usually called *respondents*). Questionnaires can also be mailed or even sent

⁴There are actually several statements that warn of the dire consequences of smoking, but they all imply that it is smoking that causes health problems.

out over the Internet. Surveys also include interviews that can be done face-to-face or over the telephone. Each method has its advantages and disadvantages that I discuss further in Chapter 10.

Doing survey research has several general advantages. One is that you can directly ask respondents about their opinions, attitudes, and motivations rather than having to infer these from their behaviors. For example, we might do an experiment by changing the way merchandise is displayed at a store and discover that customers buy more. However, although we know customers are buying more, we really do not know why. Perhaps they feel more positive toward the store, or perhaps they can find what they are looking for more easily. A survey would allow us to determine why they buy more, or at least why they think they buy more. A second advantage is that collecting large amounts of data quickly is relatively easy. For instance, I once watched the president's State of the Union address, and a TV network presented the results of a viewer survey just a few minutes after it was over.

Surveys also have some disadvantages. Although you may think that people are giving you factual information about their behavior or opinions, what they say may differ from the truth. For example, the Gallup Organization has been asking people about church attendance for 60 years, and about 40% of respondents typically say they attend a worship service once a week. This figure is far higher than that in other Western nations, and many churches have reported a drop in membership in recent years. What is the truth? C. Kirk Hadaway and Penny Long Marler (1998) decided to consult pastors and do head counts. They found the attendance being closer to 20% rather than to 40%. Why are all these good church-going people lying? Perhaps some decide that even if they didn't go the week before, they usually do go so it's okay to answer yes. Or perhaps they think that good people should go to church and they want to be identified as good people. Whatever the reason, we know that in surveys people tend to exaggerate how often they vote or give to charities and underestimate how often they use drugs or the office copier for personal tasks. So as a researcher you must remember that the biggest problem with surveys is that they can tell you only how people *say* they behave or what they *say* they think, not how they actually behave or what they actually think.

Another disadvantage of surveys is the same as one of the advantages—they give you so much data. One problem is that collecting these data requires a lot of respondents, and in some settings the number of respondents is limited. In my university, for instance, researchers who do large surveys using the pool of introductory psychology students as respondents must sometimes wait until other researchers have completed their research otherwise the whole pool could be exhausted by a few surveys. A more serious disadvantage is that the researcher will have difficulty interpreting the large amount of data collected. I have read many reports of survey research written by students in which they list the results of a survey they have done but then do not know what more to say. Because theory seldom drives survey research, the results do not support or refute some theory, as experiments usually do. In addition, doing a detailed analysis of survey results often requires using complex

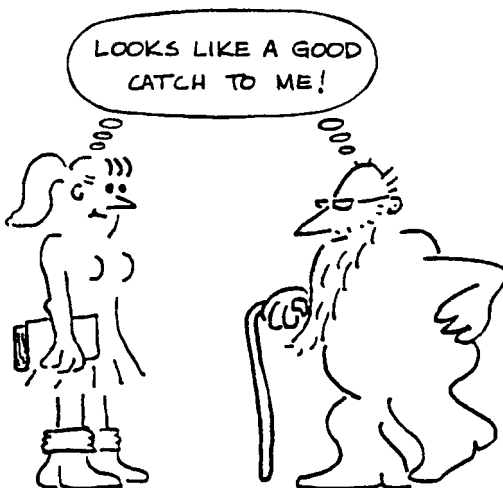
statistical techniques, such as factor analysis, that are beyond the training beginning researchers receive. I have discussed some of the other advantages and disadvantages of surveys in Chapter 10, where I go into much greater detail about questionnaires.

ARCHIVAL RESEARCH

Another form of correlational observation is archival research. In this case other people have done you a favor by recording your observations for you. That is, there may be public or private records containing information that is useful to you. When you examine these records for research purposes and attempt to organize and interpret the information to find relationships, you are doing **archival research**. I include this type under quantitative research because most of these records can be quantified and turned into numbers. However, when the records consist of interviews, case histories, and the like, this research could be characterized as qualitative research. The records of interest to psychologists include census data, court records, newspapers, hospital files, accident reports, crime reports, clinical files, government agency records, salary listings of public officials, telephone directories, and corporate sales figures.

As an example of research using archival data, Doug Kenrick and a colleague at Arizona State University examined the marriage listings of a number of newspapers (Kenrick & Keefe, 1992). They were testing an evolutionary theory of personal attraction. According to this theory, during ancestral times one of the major reasons that a woman found a man attractive is because of his potential to provide resources for his children. A man, on the other hand, found a woman attractive, at least in part, because of her potential to give birth to many children. If these statements are true, the theory predicts that even today women should in general be attracted to and marry older men

who have already accumulated resources, and men should marry younger women who have many childbearing years remaining. To investigate this hypothesis Kenrick and his researchers simply read the section of newspapers that lists people getting married and noted their ages. As the theory predicts, they did find that, up to a point, the grooms were older than their brides. Of course, there are other possible explanations for this age difference, and these reasons have been discussed at length



(Kenrick & Keefe, 1992). Nevertheless, this study clearly illustrates that archival data available to all of us, even in our daily newspaper, can form the basis for significant psychological research.

One of the most extensive examples of archival research formed the basis of *Homicide*, a book by Martin Daly and Margo Wilson (1988). These researchers were also investigating predictions made by evolutionary theory. In this case the archival data they examined were police reports of homicides. The theory predicts that in general, if people are going to kill other people, they should kill those who contribute least to their probability of reproductive success. The people they should be least likely to kill are their biological children, who carry their genetic material, and other people who contribute to the success of those children or future children, such as their faithful mates. So, for example, the theory predicts that parents are more likely to kill their stepchildren than their biological children and that men are most likely to kill their mates for suspicion of infidelity than for any other reason. The researchers carefully reviewed the homicide reports in police files for the city of Detroit and the country of Canada and discovered that nearly all their predictions were correct. Children were 40 to 100 times more likely to be killed by stepparents than biological parents! And, as predicted, sexual jealousy was the motive in most cases in which men murdered their mates.

The data supported even some predictions that seem to run counter to common sense. For example, for adult children of a given age, those having older parents were more likely to kill them than those having younger parents. Evolutionary theory would predict this finding because the older parents are less likely to have additional children, who would carry the family's genetic material, but the finding runs counter to several other theories of psychology. In Daly and Wilson's study, the archival records were so extensive that they were able to code most of the data and turn them into numbers so that they could do quantitative statistical analysis.

Archival research has several advantages. If you can find appropriate existing records, you do not have to spend time and effort collecting your own data. Also, in some cases the records provide data that are much more extensive than those you would be able to collect. Finally, some data available in the records would be impossible to collect by doing your own research. Psychologists should not provoke people into killing each other or even encourage people to marry each other for the sake of collecting data! Of course, this approach also has some disadvantages. As is the case with both correlational observations and naturalistic observations, participants are not randomly assigned, nor is any variable independently manipulated; therefore, only relationships, not causes, can be found. Additionally, in most cases those who collect the information contained in the records are not trained scientists, so its reliability is probably unknown and perhaps suspect. Sometimes the records are also difficult to find or obtain, and even if they are available, they may be difficult to organize in a systematic way. Finally, in most cases there is simply no available record that will provide the information you need.

■ Qualitative Designs

The vast majority of researchers in psychology use quantitative designs, such as experiments or correlational observations, because during the early history of psychology the scientific side of psychology fashioned itself in the image of the so-called hard sciences, such as physics and chemistry. The first fleeting attempts by the early introspectionists to use verbal reports as data rather than numerically measurable behavior were beaten down by the behaviorists, not to appear again for many decades. However, in recent years, some psychologists, particularly those in areas such as educational, clinical, and social psychology, have felt too constrained by these strict rules. They have looked around for methods that would allow them to use verbal reports as data while maintaining some scientific rigor. What they have found and adopted are some methods from anthropology and, more recently, from sociology called qualitative research. Qualitative researchers use descriptive data: written descriptions of people, including opinions and attitudes, and of events and environments.

ETHNOGRAPHY

Imagine a cultural anthropologist who has traveled to a distant land to investigate an exotic culture. How would the anthropologist proceed? He or she would know so little about this strange culture that setting up an experiment would certainly be out of the question. Even developing a questionnaire or a consistent set of interview questions would be difficult until the anthropologist knew some basic facts about the people. The initial goal would probably be to talk to the people and describe them and their setting so that the culture would stop seeming strange and seem familiar. Those who do a type of qualitative research called **ethnography** sometimes do the reverse—study familiar cultures to make them strange (Erickson, 1973). For example, suppose that we were interested in studying the dynamics of a particular type of teaching technique in an elementary school. We have all been to elementary school, so we are familiar with what goes on there. If we wanted to learn something new about the type of class we are studying, ethnographers would tell us to approach the task as if we had arrived from outer space and had seen a classroom for the first time, to train ourselves to view everything as strange.

We would probably begin by interviewing the children and the teachers, trying to approach them with a completely open mind without having formed any hypotheses that might bias us about what happens in the class. We would not conduct these interviews in a haphazard way. Rather than relying on our memory, we would probably record the interviews and transcribe them verbatim into a written text. We might also take extensive notes about the behavior of individuals in the class, the events that took place, and the setting or context within which the events occurred. Because ethnographers usually try to avoid interpreting their data, we would simply attempt to describe as accurately as possible what the children and teachers said and did and the classroom environment. Ethnographers also sometimes act as participant observers. For instance, in the classroom example, a teacher might be

doing the research as a participant observer. The participant observer typically would be as unobtrusive as possible to avoid biasing the other participants' behavior—for example, by writing notes only during breaks.

The classroom example that we have been considering is also a case of naturalistic observation—a design we will be examining next. However, not all ethnography or qualitative research has to occur in natural settings.

I have a colleague who is interested in the relationship between mothers and their daughters and in how these relationships have changed from the past to the present. Her method of collecting data is to conduct extensive interviews in her laboratory with both mothers and daughters, record these interviews on tape, and then transcribe the tapes into written text. She is also interested in interpreting the data, rather than just describing them as a pure ethnographer would. Although she has structured the interviews so that similar topics are discussed in each interview, she does not have a required set of questions that her interviewees must ask in a specific order. She has designed the interview such that it allows some flexibility rather than simply being an oral questionnaire. Qualitative researchers claim that this flexibility is one of the strengths of their method: that the interaction with participants must allow the participants to describe their experiences, feelings, and attitudes in their own ways. These researchers believe that the experimental method, in which an experimenter is testing a limited hypothesis and collecting highly structured data, is so artificial and constrained that they tap very little of the vast amount of available data. In fact, some qualitative researchers believe at a basic philosophical level that qualitative research is preferable because it has a humanistic orientation; in qualitative research participants are treated as human beings and their humanity is fully tapped, whereas experiments treat participants as objects (subjects) on which experiments are conducted.

NATURALISTIC OBSERVATION

As noted in the previous section, some psychologists believe that research is best done by studying behavior in its natural setting and that the act of filling out a questionnaire or reporting for an experiment could distort the behavior of a participant. Suppose that we were interested in whether consumption of alcohol is related to social aggressiveness. We could set up an experiment in which groups of research participants drank measured amounts of alcohol. They would then interact with each other while the experimenter sat in the room and noted the amount of aggressive activity. How aggressive do you think the drinkers would be in this situation? They would probably resemble a church congregation more than a bar crowd.

To get an effective answer to our question, we would probably have to go to a bar and observe its customers. This technique in psychological research is called **naturalistic observation** because researchers observe behaviors under the conditions in which they naturally occur.⁵ Naturalistic observations

⁵ Naturalistic observations are also sometimes called *field studies* because the investigator goes into the field to collect data. (If I bite my tongue, maybe I can avoid the old saw about the farmer who was outstanding in his. . . .)

are required when we wish to investigate any behavior that we feel might be distorted by the artificiality of an experimental situation. Children, for instance, are typically inhibited by the presence of adults, particularly strangers. We would expect the behavior of children playing at home with their own toys to be far different from that in a psychology lab with unfamiliar toys and a strange-looking psychologist present.

For a long time, comparative psychologists⁶ and ethologists wondered whether any animal other than humans used tools, and naturalistic observation provided them with the beginnings of an answer. Initially, the data they collected by observing chimpanzees in zoos supported the general belief that other animals did not use tools. After a while, however, these researchers began to wonder whether zoo chimpanzees were not using tools because no tools were available in the zoo. They gave them tools such as pliers and screwdrivers, but the chimps still didn't use them. Finally, a particularly bright investigator named Jane Goodall moved into the forest with the chimps. She lived with them and constantly observed their behavior for several years. One day she noticed that a particular chimp would take a branch, peel off the leaves to make it smooth, trim it to length, and dip it into a termite hill and lick off the termites that were clinging to the stick. Although the stick is not as sophisticated as a human's tools, some investigators consider it an appropriate chimpanzee tool, and more recent laboratory work has confirmed the use of tools. Some researchers now contend that other animals such as birds also have the capacity to use tools. Without naturalistic observation, researchers would still be sitting around watching zoo animals not using tools.

Some sciences other than psychology use naturalistic observation as their primary method because they cannot achieve control over the variables they are investigating. Astronomers, for example, must pretty well investigate the universe as it occurs naturally. The same is usually true for archaeologists, paleontologists, ethnologists, and anthropologists. This limitation has not prevented these scientists from discovering important phenomena such as evolution. Because of problems with control, researchers often use naturalistic observation in psychology to suggest hypotheses that can later be more carefully investigated through experimentation in the laboratory. Used in this way, naturalistic observation can be a valuable research tool.



The major problem with naturalistic observation as a research technique may be obvious to you. Because investigators have no control over any of the

⁶ A comparative psychologist is not someone who makes television commercials in which Brand X loses out to Brand Y. A comparative psychologist compares the behavior of animals, including humans, across species. Comparative psychologists contend that the rest of us are far too egocentric in our research; humans form only a small part of the animal kingdom.

variables they are observing, one variable may be changing systematically along with the primary one being observed. In the bar example, for instance, an investigator might observe that the more alcohol the customers drink, the more aggressive their social interactions become. However, the observer may not notice that as the evening wears on and more drinks are consumed, the number of bar patrons also increases. Maybe aggressiveness is related to crowding. Or perhaps the bartender is getting tired and brings the drinks at a slower rate. Maybe aggressiveness is related to frustration.

Thus, although naturalistic observation has an advantage in realism, it also has disadvantages in its lack of control. As with correlational observations, experimenters must be aware of potential confounding variables and must avoid making causal statements.

CASE HISTORY

A final research technique available to psychologists is another qualitative design called **case history**. A case history is a detailed account of the events in a case; the case is usually a person's life, but it can be an incident such as the shutdown of a nuclear plant. Many of the data in clinical psychology come from case studies, dating back to Freud's reports of clinical cases. As is typical of qualitative designs, data for case histories are usually verbal. Suppose that you were a therapist with a pair of conjoined twins having multiple personalities as patients. You might be interested in exploring why conjoined twins develop dual personalities. You would immediately realize that trying to conduct an experiment to answer the question would be futile. Even if you could find enough conjoined twins to do an experiment, society considers it unethical to make conjoined twins mentally ill; it is also unethical to make nonconjoined twins mentally ill! You might consider a correlational observation next. Perhaps you could correlate the number of personalities in conjoined twins with the degree of childhood stress. Again, you would need to find a number of conjoined twins with dual personalities. Because this task is virtually impossible and a correlational observation based on one data point is meaningless,⁷ you would have to abandon this approach also.

The only option left would seem to be a case history outlining the factors in the lives of the conjoined twins that have contributed to their development. First, you would spend many hours interviewing the twins to establish a history of their life from birth to present. In addition, you would talk with their relatives and friends and examine any school, medical, and psychological records that were available. Because all this information would require far too much space to report, you would select what you felt were the most important aspects. The case-history technique has built into it all the dangers mentioned for the other methods, including unknown confounding variables and inability to establish causality. This method also has additional pitfalls.

⁷ Establishing a relationship between two variables with a single point is difficult. However, establishing a relationship with two points is not difficult, because you can draw only one straight line between them. Reporting a relationship on the basis of two points is a lot like bragging. It's easy to do but no one pays any attention.

For one thing, the investigator is generally trying to reconstruct past events from the subjective reports of those who were associated with those events, and research has shown that people are terrible at recalling the past. One investigator found that mothers were inaccurate about recalling the details of their pregnancy and the birth of their children 6 months to a year after the experience. You can imagine the problems involved when the memories are 20 years old!

A second possible pitfall of the case-history method is the investigator's bias in selecting events to be reported. In a psychology course, I was once required to support a particular personality theory with the help of events from the life of the main character in the novel *Crime and Punishment*. Selecting events that offered convincing support for my theory was easy. However, I discovered that the other students in the class had used the same book to support three other personality theories, also in a convincing way. They had either chosen different events or given a different interpretation to the same events I had chosen. Even with the limited set of events described in a single book, bias was extremely important in determining the relationships we established. Is it any wonder that investigators can find support for their own pet theories from the nearly unlimited set of events in a person's life?

A number of books have been written that analyze the lives and personalities of famous historical figures, such as Richard Nixon, John Kennedy, and Sigmund Freud. Although they may make interesting speculative reading, these so-called **psychohistories** are subject to all the dangers inherent in a case history. In addition, most of the events the authors use to support their theories are based on secondhand reporting in the public media. Thus, these authors are one more step away from the objective truth. (For example, one author concluded that Nixon was psychotic; another concluded that he was neurotic.)

A case-history approach has also been used in applied experimental settings for investigating infrequently occurring events. For example, it is basically impossible for a psychologist interested in the causes of aircraft accidents to set up appropriate experiments. So, these investigators often reconstruct the events preceding an accident in as much detail as possible. By collecting enough critical incidents describing accidents and near-accidents, they hope to establish a pattern that will allow them to hypothesize the causes. These hypotheses can then be more thoroughly investigated under controlled experimental conditions.

One of the most defensible uses of the case-study approach is in neuropsychology. Neuropsychologists and neuroscientists are interested in determining the function of various structures of the brain. One of the major ways to find out what a part of the brain does is to destroy it and find out how behavior changes. In humans there are obvious ethical problems with destroying brain tissue. Because brain tissue does not grow back, any such procedure would be permanently debilitating. One solution would be to find some unfortunate soul whose brain tissue has been destroyed by accident or disease. From an introductory psychology course you may remember the case

of Phineas Gage, a fellow who had a metal rod driven through his brain in a mining accident. This case was one of the first that researchers used to understand the workings of the brain. Today researchers have extensively documented the behaviors of many patients with various neurological problems. These cases are used along with other data, such as those from animal research, to help us understand the functioning of the human brain. However, we should keep in mind that data from even these well-documented case studies do not generally come from experiments, so establishing causal relationships between these circumstances and behaviors should be done with extreme care.

The obvious advantage of the case-history approach is that it can be used when only one or a few cases can be examined. Some would also argue that another advantage is that behavior can be studied in all of its complexity in a natural context, whereas experiments are used to study artificially simple behaviors in artificial settings. However, because this approach has the disadvantages mentioned earlier, including, in some cases, relying on potentially biased subjective reports retrieved from somebody's long-term memory, we should remain skeptical of conclusions drawn solely from a single case history.

■ Quantitative versus Qualitative Designs

Unfortunately, many investigators who have been trained exclusively in either quantitative research or qualitative research consider those who use the other approach to be misguided. Quantitative researchers argue that unless data can be converted into numbers, they can never be organized into the building blocks necessary for the construction of a scientific body of knowledge and that science cannot advance unless we can build theories that help us understand behavior. Such theories require knowledge of the causes of behavior, and without experimentation—and to some extent correlational observation—no causation can be established. On top of these problems is the question of the reliability of the data collected. Without being able to repeat research, we will never know whether our data are reliable. Some experimenters would say that qualitative researchers such as ethnographers do nothing but write descriptions of behaviors, a job for historians and novelists, not scientists.

On the other side of the debate are the qualitative researchers, some of whom would argue that experimentation deals with only tiny bits of unhumanlike behavior and does so in artificial settings. They say that quantitative researchers will never be able to understand realistic human behavior in a holistic way. In addition, only qualitative research taps into the potential of the individuals being studied, using their insights and creativity to help guide the formation of our scientific body of knowledge. Some would go so far as to assert that there are ethical problems with experimentation in that it treats the people it claims to study as objects, rather than as humans. In the most extreme camp are qualitative researchers who completely reject traditional

science and maintain that the quantitative researchers unwilling to accept qualitative designs are motivated by a desire to maintain political power and silence those who have traditionally been oppressed.⁸

A reasonable and moderate position would seem to be that as scientists we should use whatever type of design is needed to answer our questions. At the very least, we can use qualitative methods to help us formulate hypotheses that we can more rigorously test using quantitative designs. There is also no reason why, in some cases, we cannot use the methods in combination. For example, many surveys have a quantitative section that collects numerical data using a rating scale such as a Likert scale and also a qualitative section that asks open-ended questions. In this case we can use the open-ended questions to help understand and interpret the quantitative responses. The following example also describes a research question that has benefited by the use of a wide combination of methods that we have discussed in this chapter.

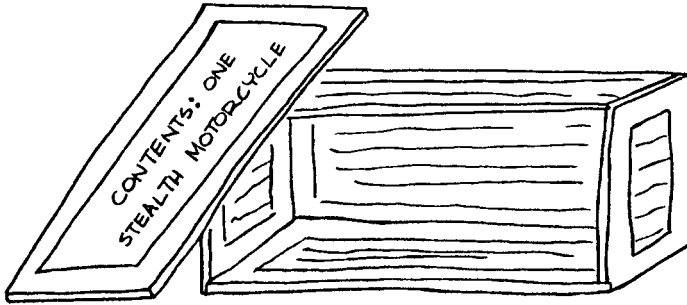
■ Using Methods in Combination

To illustrate how we might use the various research techniques discussed in this chapter to investigate a research hypothesis, consider the following situation. You are ready to pull your car onto the highway; you quickly look both ways, start to step on the gas, and then pull up and say to yourself: “Whoa! There’s a motorcycle coming. I almost didn’t see it!” Or maybe you have been the motorcycle rider and a car pulled out in front of you as if the driver had never seen you. Why do you suppose this occurs? As we will discuss in Chapter 3, everyday observations and questions like this one can lead to the formation of a hypothesis for psychological research. A first step in forming a hypothesis is to examine the situation logically. What is the major difference between motorcycles and other vehicles such as cars and trucks?⁹ Obviously, motorcycles are smaller and so may be less conspicuous than larger vehicles. But we are not the first to have thought of this idea. Once you have read Chapter 6, you will know how to find out whether anyone else has investigated this issue. You would discover that many people have. Paul Olson of the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute has reviewed some of this research and called our hypothesis the *motorcycle conspicuity hypothesis* (Olson, 1989). I will use some of the research he cites to illustrate the research techniques we might use to investigate this hypothesis.

First, although we have seen that the case-history method has many drawbacks, it can be useful in helping us form a hypothesis. To study the motorcycle conspicuity hypothesis, although it will be a bit different from the classic case-study method in which a single case is studied intensively, we can

⁸ The most extreme qualitative researchers are the poststructuralists, who question the possibility of striving for an objective science. An interesting account of the origins of qualitative research can be found in Chapter 1 of *Ethnography and Qualitative Design in Educational Research*, by Margaret D. LeCompte and Judith Preissle (1993).

⁹ I know, motorcycles are a lot more fun. Wrong answer!



perhaps find people who have almost pulled into the path of a motorcycle and ask them what happened to cause their behavior. Is there a way to collect this type of data in a more systematic manner? Fortunately, somebody has already done some of the work for us, the police. In this case an accident report is a bit like a short case study. If you collected accident reports for motorcycle–car accidents and read them, you would find that drivers who violated motorcyclists’ right of way often claim not to have seen them at all or not to have seen them in time to avoid the collision. This is the kind of statement we would expect if the conspicuity hypothesis were true. In interpreting these findings we should keep in mind the limitations of the case-study approach.

Although in this instance we have gained some confidence by having many cases, we should remember that the data rely on people’s memory, were collected by people not trained in research, and are self-reports by drivers who have just been involved in an accident and for whom the responses may have legal ramifications.

Could we use naturalistic observation to investigate our hypothesis? If we had years to waste, we could sit on a street corner and wait for a motorcycle accident to happen that we could observe. Again, here we are lucky because accident reports also contain information from people who have observed motorcycle accidents and from police officers, who have observed the consequences of the accidents. We can do archival research and look at the statistical data from various types of motorcycle–car accidents, comparing them with car–car crashes to determine the differences. If we did this we would find that, in general, cars and motorcycles are involved in the same kinds of collisions with about the same relative frequency, except in the case of the motorcycle going straight and the car turning left in front of the motorcycle. We should keep in mind that as is the case with all naturalistic observation, these data are at best correlational observations. An experimenter did not manipulate anything and then measure a change in behavior. Perhaps we could interpret the statistics as supporting the conspicuity hypothesis, but it is weak support. Why are motorcycles less conspicuous only under this set of circumstances? Perhaps the automobile drivers would not have seen the motorcycles no matter how conspicuous they were because the drivers were looking left in the direction they were turning instead of forward at the motorcycle.

Would it be possible for us to use the experimental method to investigate our hypothesis? As you will see in Chapter 10, quasi-experimental techniques can be used in some cases where a full-fledged experiment is not possible. One example of such a technique would be to look at accident statistics for each year prior to an event that had changed motorcycle conspicuity and then after. Fortunately for us, back in 1967 a number of states began requiring daytime use of headlights on motorcycles. If you measure a particular behavior, such as a motorcycle accident, a number of times before such an event and a number of times after, a quasi-experimental design called an *interrupted time-series* is created. This design is not as rigorous as an experiment but is certainly more rigorous than a correlational observation. Using such a method, some early investigators estimated the reduction in daytime collisions to range from approximately 4% to 20%. However, more recent investigators have concluded that the effect of daytime headlight operation on motorcycle crashes is minuscule or nonexistent. It is also the case that when an effect of headlight use on motorcycles has been found, headlight use on cars, for which there was never a claim of conspicuity problems, may be equally effective in reducing crashes. Thus, the headlight data are inconclusive.

We can also possibly conduct formal experiments to investigate car drivers' behavior toward motorcycles. In one such study observers estimated when an approaching vehicle would pass in front of them on the basis of a 2-second observation when the vehicle was about 100 meters away. No differences were found for motorcycles, cars, and trucks. Differences were found when observers judged the last moment that they could safely pull out in front of a vehicle; they were willing to accept shorter gaps, on average, for motorcycles. However, no experiments have been done to specifically test the conspicuity hypothesis.

The research I have reviewed here, which was cited by Olson (1989), clearly illustrates the various research techniques that can be used to investigate a single hypothesis. The research also illustrates some of the advantages and disadvantages of the various techniques. The case study and naturalistic observation tend to be more realistic but may be lacking in rigor and precision. In contrast, formal experiments may be highly rigorous but can often be criticized as being unrealistic. Table 1-1 lists some of the advantages and disadvantages of the designs that we have examined.

I do not want leave you hanging in the air. What does Olson conclude from his review? He thinks that the conspicuity hypothesis lacks support. The most likely alternative would seem to be that because motorcycles are smaller, they are more easily blocked out by objects such as other cars, windshield posts, or trees and shrubs. A possibility is that drivers often fail to see motorcycles not because they are inconspicuous, but because they are hidden.

■ TABLE 1-1

A Summary of the Advantages and Disadvantages
of Using Various Research Designs

<i>Design</i>	<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Disadvantages</i>
Experimental method	Precise control possible Causal conclusions possible Precise measurement possible Theory testing possible	Artificial setting is typical Intrusiveness typically high Complex behaviors difficult to measure Unstructured exploratory research difficult
Correlational observation	Relationships between variables can be found Precise measurement usually possible Intrusiveness usually low	Causal conclusions impossible Control of variables difficult Many participants required
Questionnaires	Data collection efficient Attitude or opinion can be measured	Causal conclusions impossible Self-reports difficult to verify Unbiased sample selection difficult Response rates low when mailed
Archival research	No additional data collection required Rare behaviors can be studied Nonmanipulable events can be studied	Appropriate records often not available Data collected by nonscientists Data usually correlational at best
Ethnography	Unfamiliar situations can be described Complex behaviors can be described Intrusiveness low Participants treated humanistically	Control of variables impossible Precise measurement difficult Investigator bias possible Causal conclusions impossible
Naturalistic observation	Realistic setting helps generalization Intrusiveness low	Control of variables impossible Data collection inefficient Investigator bias possible Causal conclusions impossible
Case history	Rare cases can be studied Complex behavior can be intensively studied	Control of variables impossible Data often based on fallible memories Investigator bias highly likely Causal conclusions impossible

■ Summary

As scientists of human behavior, psychologists have many research designs available to them, all of which aim to establish relationships between events and to fit these relationships into an orderly body of knowledge. Among the **quantitative designs** is the **experimental method**, which is the primary focus of this book. This method requires that a particular circumstance be manipulated and some aspect of behavior measured. From an experiment it is possible to say whether the manipulation of the circumstance caused any change found in the behavior.

Sometimes when an experimental approach cannot be used, it is necessary to use **correlational observations**, in which variables are observed and their relationships evaluated. The results of such a study cannot be used to establish causal relationships, because none of the variables is under the control of the investigator. Correlational observations are often carried out using a survey in the form of a questionnaire or interview. Correlational data can also be obtained by doing **archival research** with data contained in public or private records, such as census data or court records.

Some investigators are now doing research that employs **qualitative designs**. Qualitative researchers use descriptive data: written descriptions of people, including opinions and attitudes, and of events and environments. In **ethnography** the investigators use interviews and sometimes participatory observations to gather descriptive data. In one form of qualitative research they use **naturalistic observation**, in which data are gathered in realistic settings. A final qualitative design used when the potential number of observations is limited is the **case history**, in which detailed accounts of the events in a person's life or in a historical incident are described and analyzed.

2

How to Do Experiments

During its long history down to the middle of the nineteenth century, psychology was cultivated by able thinkers who did not realize their need of carefully observed facts. . . . Finally psychologists decided that they must follow the lead of physics, chemistry and physiology and transform psychology into an experimental science.

R. S. WOODWORTH (1940)

We must guard against . . . the drawing of a preconceived conclusion from experiments or observations which are so vaguely conditioned that a variety of inferences are as a matter of fact possible.

K. DUNLAP (1920)

In the first chapter we briefly discussed the experimental method. You will recall that the major advantage of doing this type of research is that it allows you to make causal statements—that a circumstance caused a change in behavior. Because this type of statement is precise, the rules required to support the statement are quite stringent. Most of these rules involve being able to account for all the circumstances that could vary.

By way of example, suppose that we were interested in the time it takes a person to press a button in response to a light of a particular intensity. At this point we have chosen a circumstance to manipulate—the intensity of a light—and a behavior to measure—the time to press a button. These two variables have formal names.

■ Variables

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

The circumstance of major interest in an experiment, light intensity in our example, is called an **independent variable**. The best way to remember this name is to recall that the variable is independent of the participant's behavior.

As experimenters, we manipulate this variable—that is, choose two or more levels to present to the participant—and nothing the participant does can

change the levels we have chosen. For example, if our independent variable is light intensity, we might select a high-intensity light and a low-intensity light as our two levels and observe behavior under both circumstances. Without at least two levels, we are not doing an experiment, but we are free to choose many more levels or to have more than one independent variable. In the later chapters I discuss ways of designing these more complex experiments.

DEPENDENT VARIABLES

Once we have chosen the independent variable, we will want to measure a participant's behavior in response to manipulations of that variable. We call the behavior we choose to measure the **dependent variable** because it is dependent on what the participant does.¹ In the reaction-time experiment, for example, our aim is to find out whether a relationship exists between light intensity and time to respond. Thus, our dependent variable is the time from when the light is turned on until the participant presses a button. Making a statement about the expected nature of the relationship is sometimes useful; such a statement is called a **hypothesis**. In the example, we might hypothesize that the more intense the light, the quicker the response will be. The outcome of the experiment will determine whether the hypothesis is supported and becomes part of the scientific body of knowledge or whether it is refuted.

I have discussed hypotheses in several different places in this book. In the next chapter we will consider how hypotheses can be deduced from theories and how they must be true if the theory is true. In Chapter 12 we will discuss the concept of a null hypothesis. As we will see, the null hypothesis is just a statistical statement saying that the independent variable has no effect on the dependent variable for a population. However, if you really believed there would be no effect in your experiment, you would probably not carry out that experiment. In actuality, you are usually predicting that the change in levels of the independent variable will cause a change in the dependent variable. This prediction is your real hypothesis. In fact, experimenters often go beyond this **nondirectional hypothesis** of simply predicting some change and state a **directional hypothesis** predicting the direction the dependent variable will change as the independent variable is manipulated.

In some cases hypotheses are not even based on theories, particularly when you simply wonder what would happen to a behavior if the independent variable were manipulated. In this case, the hypothesis is simply the answer to a question. How does crowding affect aggression? Does marking your first guess or thinking longer lead to better grades on multiple-choice tests? Are politicians who smile in their campaign posters more or less likely to win elections than those who don't? Hypothesized answers to questions such as these can also add to the scientific body of knowledge.

¹ I believe it is easier to remember the term this way, although the word *dependent* really refers to the behavior's being potentially dependent on the levels of independent variable.

CONTROL VARIABLES

So far, we have chosen one circumstance to manipulate—the independent variable. However, in some way, we will need to account for other circumstances in an experiment. One possibility is to control the other circumstances, thus making them **control variables**. We can control such circumstances by making sure that they do not vary from a single level. For example, in our reaction-time experiment, we might require constant lighting conditions in the room, only right-handed participants, a constant temperature, and so on. Ideally, all circumstances other than the independent variable would stay constant throughout an experiment. We would then know that any change in the dependent variable must be due to the changes we had brought about in the independent variable.

The concept of control is vital for experimentation and makes the experimental method distinct from the other forms of research that I discussed in the previous chapter. In your experiments, many of the variables will be set as control variables. As an experimenter, you will want to be sure that you have indeed achieved complete command of the control variables in your experiment. This is why psychologists go to considerable expense to build special environments in which sound, light, and temperature are controlled and to use special equipment to ensure that stimulus characteristics are consistent and that responses are carefully measured.

However, even though many variables in your experiments will be control variables, you should realize that, especially in psychology, not all variables will be assigned as control variables. First, the experimenter cannot control all the variables. It is impossible not only to control many genetic and environmental conditions but also to force cooperative attitudes, attentional states, metabolic rates, and many other situational factors on human participants.

Second, we really do not want to control all the variables in an experiment otherwise we would create a unique set of circumstances. If we could control all variables while manipulating the independent variable, the relationship established by the experiment would hold in only one case—when all variables were set at exactly the levels established for control. In other words, we could not *generalize* the experimental result to any other situation. As a rule of thumb, the more highly controlled the experiment, the less generally applicable the results.

Suppose, for example, that General Nosedive from the U.S. Air Force came to you and said: “Say, I understand you ran an experiment on reaction time. Tell me how intense I should make the fire-warning light in my fighter planes so that my pilots will respond within half a second.” Having conducted a well-controlled experiment, you reply, “Sir, if you can guarantee that the pilot is a 19-year-old college sophomore with an IQ of 115, sitting in an air-conditioned, 10-foot-by-15-foot room, with no distracting sounds and nothing else to do, and if you always give a warning signal 1 second before the light comes on, then I might be able to give you an answer.” You can probably imagine the general’s reply. The moral of the story: if you want to generalize the results of your experiment do not control all the variables.

The generalizability of an experimental finding is also referred to as **external validity**—how well a causal relationship can be generalized across people, settings, and times. Cook and Campbell (1979) have defined several types of validity. The way they use this term, *validity* refers to whether drawing experimental conclusions about cause is justifiable. I will introduce other terms for validity at appropriate places in the book. Threats to external validity might occur if you use a limited sample, such as college sophomores, when you want to generalize to all humans of any age or intelligence (including, as in our example, Air Force pilots). Or you might have done a highly controlled laboratory experiment when you want to generalize to real-world work settings where it is noisy, hot, and crowded, and the workers are tired and unmotivated but have lots of practice. In general, the more tightly controlled your experiment—that is, the more circumstances you choose to make into control variables—the more likely it is to suffer from threats to external validity.

RANDOM VARIABLES

Having established that we do not want to control all the circumstances, what can we do with the remaining circumstances in our experiment? One possibility is to let them vary. In what way can we allow the circumstances to vary and still be sure that they will not bias our experiment? One alternative is to permit some of the circumstances to vary randomly. These variables are termed **random variables**.

The term *random* or *randomization* is used in several different ways in science. One use of the term is in the context of **random selection** of items from a population to form a representative sample. In this case, a population of items is available and some random process is used that makes the selection of any one item from that population as likely as the selection of any other item. Random selection is used to ensure external validity, that is, to ensure that the sample of items randomly selected from the population is generalizable to that population. So, if you wanted to generalize the results from an experiment to all people in the United States, ideally you would use a means of selection that was equivalent to putting the name of everybody in the country into an enormous hat and drawing out a sample of names. You could then say that you have randomly selected your sample and you could claim good external validity of your findings.

However, in this context the word *random* in the term random variable usually refers to **random assignment** of circumstances to the levels of the independent variable. Many of the circumstances in an experiment concern individual differences in the participants. Obviously, if we use the same participants for the various levels of the independent variable, we do not have to worry about individual differences. However, if we use different participants for each level of the independent variable, then we have to make sure that the characteristics of the participants assigned to each level do not bias our conclusions. For example, suppose that you want to determine the effects of TV violence on aggression in children. After you have randomly selected

two hundred 6-year-old children as a sample from some larger population, you might then randomly assign them to two levels of the independent variable: viewing violent TV shows and viewing nonviolent TV shows. Perhaps you could flip a coin for each child and assign the child to the first group if a head occurred and to the second group if a tail occurred. Is it possible that most of the children in first group attend violent schools or eat lots of sugar or come from abusive homes, while few of those in the second group do? Yes, but if the selection was done in a truly random manner, it is statistically unlikely for such large samples to be biased.

Suppose that you let the children watch the violent or nonviolent TV shows at home. Is it possible that most of the children in one group have large-screen theater-system TVs at home, while most of those in the second group have small portable TVs? Again, it is possible but not probable; randomness makes this possibility highly unlikely.

There is no particular trick to random assignment or random selection. You can use any device that allows each item an equal chance of assignment or selection. As in the example, if you want to form two groups, you can flip a coin to form them.² If there are six groups, you can throw a die. If there are 33 groups, you can use 33 equal-sized slips of paper. Most mathematical handbooks and many statistics texts have random-number tables based on a process equivalent to drawing from 10,000 slips of paper. I have included one such table in the back of this book as Appendix C. Using any column or columns in a table of random numbers, you can assign each of your items a number and select the item when that number occurs. Just ignore the extra columns or numbers that are not on your list. If you happen to be a computer buff, you can use the computer to generate random numbers or events.³

If you have chosen to make a circumstance into a random variable, you must be sure that it varies in a truly random way, because not all events that appear random are really so. For instance, if you try to randomize conditions in an experiment by assigning events yourself, you have not randomized! Humans are notoriously bad at producing random events. If you assume that participants will show up for an experiment throughout the day or throughout the semester in a random order, you are wrong! People who are morning or afternoon volunteers or early-semester or late-semester volunteers have different characteristics. New experimenters commonly make mistakes in randomization. Don't you make them!

Perhaps most of the circumstances that become random variables in your experiment will be associated with participants and can be randomized by randomly assigning participants. However, other circumstances that are not associated with participants can sometimes be treated as random variables. Suppose in our TV violence experiment that the room in which the children

² Actually, most coins are slightly biased in favor of heads, but, unless your experiment has over 10,000 trials, don't worry about it.

³ Computers are also less than perfect at generating random events, but they're much better than coins. For assigning events in an experiment, it doesn't make much difference which method you use.

watch TV is available either in the morning or in the afternoon. If you think there is a reason why watching in the morning versus the afternoon may cause differences in how aggressive children become independent of the amount of violence in the show, then you might want to randomly assign the violent-TV and the nonviolent-TV groups to morning and afternoon times. You certainly would not want one group to watch exclusively in the morning and the other in the afternoon.

There are other circumstances that also might affect the aggressiveness of children that you may consider as random variables even though you have not been able to make truly random assignments; for example, how stormy the weather is or how much violence there is in the news on a particular day. If you have multiple sessions of your experiment, you would probably not be too far off if you assume that these circumstances are randomly distributed across the levels of your independent variable and that they will not systematically bias your results.

As mentioned earlier, the major advantage of random selection is the generalizability of the results. Every time you choose to make a circumstance into a control variable, you can generalize the results to only that level of the variable. However, if you allow many levels of the circumstance to exist in a population and then randomly choose a sample, you can generalize to the entire population. The major advantage of random assignment is the elimination of bias from the results. Thus, randomization can be a powerful experimental tool.

RANDOMIZATION WITHIN CONSTRAINTS

In some cases you may not want to make a circumstance into either a random or a control variable. Actually, randomization and control define opposite ends of a continuum. Falling between these two extremes are various degrees of **randomization within constraints**. In this case, you control one part of the event assignments and randomize the other. Suppose that in our reaction-time experiment we knew that practice could be an important variable.

If we presented all the low-intensity trials first, followed by all the high-intensity trials, we could be accused of biasing the experiment; any difference between response times to low- versus high-intensity light might, in fact, be due to short versus long practice. To avoid this problem, we could decide to control the practice variable and give only one trial to each individual. Or we could assign the low- and high-intensity trials randomly over, say, 12 trials by flipping a coin and presenting a high-intensity light whenever a head occurred and a low-intensity light whenever a tail occurred. However, this alternative might not be the most attractive one, because it could result in an inadequate representation of high and low intensities. (For example, the flipping of the coin might result in only three high-intensity trials and nine low-intensity trials.) To avoid this possibility, we could decide to have an equal number of high- and low-intensity trials.

Thus, as a solution we establish a constraint on the assignment of trials (an equal number of each type of trial) and make a random assignment within this constraint. We might write the word *high* on six slips of paper and the word *low* on six and draw them out of a hat to determine the order of presentation. This procedure would fulfill the requirement that the conditions be randomly ordered across trials within the constraint that the two intensities be equally represented.

Other constraints, of course, are possible. We might want to avoid the possibility of too many trials at a particular intensity occurring early in the sequence. We could then **randomize within blocks**, with the block serving as our constraint. Using this alternative, we could choose three blocks of four trials each, ensuring that we randomly selected two high-intensity trials and two low-intensity trials within each block. To describe this procedure, we would say that we randomly assigned conditions to three blocks of four trials each, with the constraint of representing each intensity an equal number of times within each block.

You can legitimately use many such constraints as long as you specify them. However, the more constraints you specify, the less random your selection process is, and the less generalizable your results are.

CONFOUNDING VARIABLES

If we designed our experiment perfectly so that we have chosen an independent variable to manipulate and a dependent variable to measure and made the rest of the circumstances into control variables, random variables, or variables randomized within constraints, then we would not have to worry about the variable I am about to discuss. However, not every experiment is designed perfectly, and in many real-world settings, designing a perfect experiment is impossible. In this case we need to know when a confounding variable rears its ugly head. Any circumstance that changes systematically as the experimenter manipulates the independent variable is a **confounding variable**.

Suppose, for example, that we used three different light intensities in our reaction-time experiment: a low-intensity light for the first 20 trials, a medium-intensity light for the next 20, and a high-intensity light for the last 20. If we reported, "People respond more quickly the more intense the light," someone else could say, "No, people respond more quickly after practice." In fact, we could both be correct, or either one of us could be incorrect! The problem is that we have unintentionally *confounded* the experiment with a variable that changes systematically with the independent variable.

An experimenter can record the most sophisticated measurements, do the finest statistical test, and write up the results with the style of Hemingway, yet a confounding variable can make the whole effort worthless. A feud between Coca-Cola and PepsiCo illustrates the type of confusion that this variable can cause ("Coke-Pepsi Slugfest," 1976). PepsiCo pitted its cola against Coke in a drinkers' test in which tasters who said they were Coke

drinkers drank Coke from a glass marked Q and Pepsi from a glass marked M. More than half the tasters reportedly chose the glass containing Pepsi as their favorite. Coca-Cola officials countered by conducting their own preference test—not of colas but of letters. They claimed that more people chose glass M over glass Q not because they preferred the cola in glass M but because they liked the letter M better than they liked Q. This hypothesis was supported when most people tested still claimed to prefer the drink in the M glass when *both* glasses contained Coke.

In this example, the letters were apparently a confounding variable. Because they varied systematically with the colas in the original test, the experimenters could not distinguish the tasters' preference for the colas from their preference for the letters.

I mentioned earlier in this chapter that Cook and Campbell (1979) have identified several types of validity. Another type is **internal validity**, which refers to whether the manipulated change in the independent variable caused the change in the dependent variable or whether something else caused the change. If the independent variable didn't cause the change, then a confounding variable must have. So, if we want to avoid confounding variables in our experiments, we need to understand the various possible threats to internal validity. There is no more important task for you as an experimenter than being able to recognize and, if possible, avoid the threats to internal validity that may introduce confounding variables into your experiments.

■ Threats to Internal Validity

HISTORY

In laboratory experiments, one can usually collect data at all levels of the independent variable over a relatively short time span. In this case, any change in the dependent variable is unlikely to have been due to **history**—some



event that takes place between the testing of the levels of the independent variables.

For example, suppose that you wanted to find out whether using computer-generated visuals rather than traditional hand-drawn overhead transparencies in a large introductory psychology class improves grades. Further suppose that a particular professor teaches this introductory course only once a year. For practical reasons you decide to ask this professor to use the computer-generated visuals this year and compare the grades of this class to those of the previous year's class. If you find that the overall grades are better for this year's class, you might be correct in attributing the improvement to the use of the computer-generated visuals. However, some historical event could have caused the change. For example, the school could have tightened admission standards, thereby changing the academic quality of students in the class. Or perhaps the college of engineering decided to require all senior engineering students to take the class, again changing the class composition. Or perhaps the world has undergone an increase in interest for the subject matter being taught, similar to what occurred in computer science courses after personal computers appeared. Or perhaps, at a local level, a fraternity has acquired a copy of last year's test and has made it available to certain students in the class. To have confidence in the conclusion that the change in grades between the classes was due to the use of computer-generated visuals, you must rule out these historical events, as well as any others that might threaten the internal validity of the conclusion.

MATURATION

Maturation is a threat to internal validity caused by participants' growing older or perhaps more experienced. Obviously, maturation is more of a threat with young children than with adults, such as when evaluating the effects of preschool educational programs. However, even for adults, maturation can be a problem in long-term experiments or when participants are undergoing rapid change—for example, when an employee first begins managerial duties.

SELECTION

Selection can be a threat whenever experimenters cannot assign participants randomly, particularly when, for practical reasons, participants essentially assign themselves to conditions. If, in the previous example, the classes chosen for comparison were fall and spring classes, selection could be a problem. My fall introductory psychology class contains many first-year students, many of whom are psychology majors. The spring class has many more engineering students who have put off taking this required course until their senior year. Do you think there might be differences between these classes besides the use of computer-generated visuals? Experimenters who use college students as participants are familiar with the potential differences

between early-semester volunteers⁴ and late-semester volunteers. In general the early-semester volunteers are more eager and motivated and are probably better students or at least better at planning their time. The worst kinds of selection threats are those that are directly linked to the independent variable. For instance, suppose that you want to evaluate a new industrial training program. You let workers volunteer to take the new program and then after completing the program you compare the performance of those workers to the performance of workers who did not volunteer for the program. Do you think there might be a difference in the workers who self-selected to be in the two groups? What about the difference between the recovery rates of people who choose a new type of therapy and the rates of those who refuse the therapy?

MORTALITY

Participants dropping out of an experiment, **mortality**,⁵ can also be a threat to internal validity. Fortunately, in most experiments, these participants die only with respect to their life in the experiment, not with respect to life in general. *Overall* mortality is not really a problem; *differential* mortality is a problem. This occurs when more or different kinds of participants drop out of the groups assigned to various levels of the independent variable. For example, suppose that a company decides to try a new training program to inoculate newly promoted middle managers against socially stressful situations.



The company randomly chooses half of its new managers for a 1-hour-per-day exposure to simulated personal confrontation with employees. The other managers are not exposed to this training program. The number of stress-related health complaints in the two groups is counted for a period of

⁴ A *volunteer* in this case is a little like a volunteer in the military. Although some of the students who crowd around experimental sign-up sheets would volunteer even if such service were not a course requirement, most actually volunteer to do this in place of some other requirement, such as writing a paper.

⁵ *Mortality* is the term used by Cook and Campbell (1979). Some experimenters also refer to this as *attrition*.

five years after the training. The company finds that the stress-inoculated group has reported fewer such complaints and concludes that the program was a success. Was it? Among the questions that you should ask is: How many managers dropped out of each group during the training program?⁶ Conversely, the training may have sensitized the managers to be more aware of stress-related health problems. It is likely not only that more managers would have dropped out of the stress group but also that these managers would have been the most sensitive to stress. The success of the training group might have little to do with the inoculation procedure but might be due entirely to the fact that mortality changed the characteristics of the groups.

TESTING

The act of testing can change behavior independently of any other manipulation. Testing can be a threat to internal validity when a pretest or multiple-test design is used. Suppose that you are interested in whether a new advertising campaign would increase the public's awareness of your company's brand of shaving cream. You pick a large random sample of consumers and send them a questionnaire. You ask a number of questions about various brands of shaving cream and the commercials associated with the brands. Three months later, after launching a new series of commercials touting your brand, you again send the questionnaire to the same people and discover that they are now much more familiar with your brand of shaving cream. You declare the advertising campaign a success. Are you right?

One problem with the conclusion that the campaign caused a change in awareness is that the pretest itself may have caused the change in awareness. The pretest may have sensitized this particular group of people to notice shaving cream brands in general. During the following three months, they may have watched all the shaving cream commercials more closely, and now they are able to tell you more about each of the brands regardless of the new advertising campaign.

In addition to sensitizing participants, testing can also inform the participants of the experimenter's topic of interest or even the experimental hypothesis. A pretest can also provide information, increasing the participants' knowledge of a topic so that scores on a posttest will be higher, independent of any experimental manipulation.

STATISTICAL REGRESSION

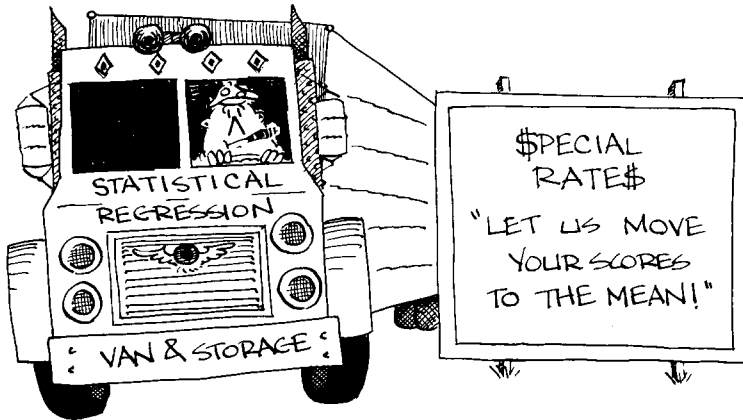
Perhaps the most subtle threat to internal validity is **statistical regression**. This term refers to the fact that when experimenters choose participants on the basis of their having scored very high or very low on a particular test,

⁶ In addition to the threat to internal validity of mortality, which I am emphasizing here, you should be able to find other potential threats. For example, the training program might harbor demand characteristics (see Chapter 4) that bias these managers against reporting stress-related health problems.

their scores tend to move toward the mean on a second test. It is not immediately obvious why regression toward the mean should occur. Perhaps an example will help.

Suppose that you have devised a program that you claim will increase the IQ scores for preschool children who have been classified as having mild retardation (IQ of 53 to 68). You give an IQ test and choose 30 children who score within the mild retardation range. After one year in your program, you give the children the test again. You discover that the mean IQ of the group has increased by seven points and that this change is statistically significant. You declare your program to be a success. Is it?⁷

How could statistical regression have caused or contributed to this result? Imagine that the IQ pretest is composed of two separate components: a “true” IQ that a perfect test would measure and “error.” The perfect test yields exactly the same score for a particular child every time you give it. If you could use such a test, statistical regression would pose no problems. But, alas, the IQ that you measure also has an error component.



This error may be due to a number of unpredictable variables. For instance, the child might have been lucky and have guessed the correct answers to several items on the pretest, or might have been unlucky and have guessed fewer correct answers than chance would predict. Or perhaps the child got up on the wrong side of the crib that morning and had a difficult time concentrating on the pretest. Or perhaps the examiner was feeling particularly grouchy that morning and failed to establish good rapport with the

⁷ At this point, you should be able to identify a number of potential threats to internal validity other than regression. The problem with maturity over a one-year period for preschool children is obvious. Testing could be a problem as well. The IQ pretest was probably the first test of any kind that these children had taken. They might have learned something in general about taking tests. They might also have remembered specific items from the pretest and learned the answers over the year.

child. Because we cannot predict the size or direction of this error component for any particular score,⁸ we must treat error as if someone were drawing a random number out of a hat and adding or subtracting it from the true score.

When you chose the group with mild retardation on the basis of a low pretest score, you probably chose many more children who had error working against them than children who had error artificially inflating their true score. That is, the true scores of this group were, on the average, not as low as the ones they received on the pretest. Because you chose only children with low scores, you biased the group toward those with error working against them. However, on the retest one year later, we would expect a less biased error. We would expect as many errors to increase the true scores as to decrease them. There is still an error component, but now it is not biasing the measured score away from the true score.

If you are not yet convinced, try a little demonstration. Pick any true score, say, 100. Write the numbers from -10 to +10 on equal-sized slips of paper and put them into a container. Draw a number from the container, add it or subtract it from 100, write down the result, and replace the number. After doing this 30 times, take the lowest five numbers and figure the mean (add the numbers and divide by 5). Now, follow the same procedure, drawing just five numbers and figuring the mean. Is the first mean lower than the second mean? You have just demonstrated statistical regression.

INTERACTIONS WITH SELECTION

Finally, validity threats such as maturation and history may have **interactions with selection**. As an example of the possible interaction of selection with history, consider the following study. Stanley Coren and his colleagues studied archival records and found that the distributions of right- and left-handers in age-groups ranging from 10-year-olds to 80-year-olds were very different (Coren & Halpern, 1991; Porac & Coren, 1981). From a high of 15% left-handers among the 10-year-olds, the percentage declined until there was 0% in the 80-year-old group. They concluded that left-handers had a “decreased survival fitness” that caused them to die at earlier ages. Obviously, many left-handers, mothers of left-handers, and husbands of left-handers were concerned about this conclusion. However, Lauren Harris (1993a) disputed the conclusions and presented evidence that the interaction of selection and history could have caused the change in percentages. Eighty years ago, people attached considerable stigma to being left-handed. So parents and teachers strongly encouraged children to be right-handed, forcing them to eat, write, and do other tasks with their right hands. In other words, selection by means of social pressure occurred for right-handedness. But this selection changed with history. Over the years, being left-handed became more acceptable, and

⁸ If you are using a standardized test, you might be able to get an idea of the general magnitude of the error component for the test—a number that characterizes the reliability of the test. The lower this number, the more we must be concerned about the effects of statistical regression.

parents and teachers pressured fewer truly left-handed children to become right-handers. So Harris argued that fewer left-handers are in the older groups not because most left-handers have died but because there never were many to begin with. The argument is not yet settled (see Halpern & Coren, 1993; Harris, 1993b), but the case of the disappearing left-handers offers an interesting example of the possible interaction of selection with history.

I hope this discussion of threats to internal validity will help you in your search for confounding variables. Whenever you are planning an experiment, going over each of these threats might be helpful to make sure that none of them is a problem for your experiment. In some cases you may have potential threats that are difficult or impossible to eliminate, in which case it might be possible for you to use a quasi-experimental design, many of which I have discussed in Chapter 10.

■ Summary of the Experimental Method

Now that you are familiar with the use of the experimental method, let's try to fit all the terms we have learned into a schematic framework. In Figure 2-1 I summarize the experimental model. On the left, I have listed all the circumstances that may affect behavior. On the right, I have listed all the potentially measurable behaviors. At the top, on the left, I have chosen one of the circumstances for manipulation, the independent variable. On the right, I have selected one of the behaviors for measurement, the dependent variable. The arrow indicates that we are interested in whether the independent variable causes a change in the dependent variable. Although we can ignore the other behaviors, we need to make sure we can account for all the circumstances. In the figure, I have partitioned these circumstances into control variables, random variables, variables randomized within constraints, and confounding variables. While partitioning the variables, we should keep in mind that a decision to control increases the precision of the results (internal validity) but decreases their generality (external validity). On the other end of the continuum, a decision to randomize decreases the precision but increases the generality.

As a final example to illustrate the types of variables that go into an experiment, I will describe an experiment that two colleagues and I conducted (Grobe, Pettibone, & Martin, 1973) and list some of the variables in a figure similar to Figure 2-1. We were interested in whether an instructor's lecture pace makes a difference in how attentive the students are. I was teaching introductory psychology to a class of 200 students at that time, so I had the dubious honor of trying to lecture to this class at different speeds. As the independent variable, then, we chose three different lecture paces. I attempted to lecture at each pace for at least five minutes during each lecture. We tape-recorded this portion of each lecture and counted the number of syllables per minute to make sure that my pace was within the allowable range of error. In Figure 2-2 you will see lecture pace listed as the independent variable. We could have

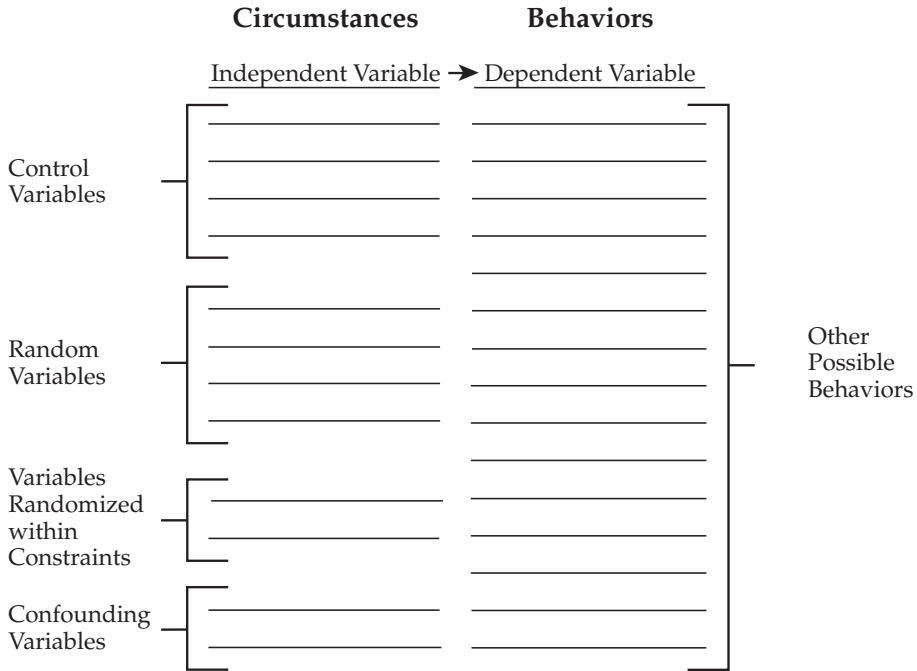


FIGURE 2-1 A diagram representing an experiment. One of the circumstances has been chosen as the independent variable. The others have been partitioned into control variables, random variables, variables randomized within constraints, and confounding variables. One of the behaviors has also been chosen as a dependent variable.

measured the students’ attentiveness many ways: we could have videotaped the students and judges could have inferred their attentiveness, students could have filled out a questionnaire indicating how attentive they had been to each lecture, and so forth. Thus, we could have chosen many behaviors as dependent variables. To get a reliable quantitative measure, we recorded the background noise level in the room and inferred that when students were quietest, they were most attentive. So in Figure 2-2 you will find noise level listed on the behavior side as the dependent variable.

Many variables became control variables and did not change throughout the experiment: the classroom, the instructor, the time of day I gave the lecture, the students in the class, and so on. Some of these are listed as control variables in Figure 2-2. We allowed other variables to vary in an uncontrolled and (we hoped) random way, such as how much sleep I got the night before, the weather outside, the success of the football team each week, how many people in the class had colds (and coughed out loud), and many others. Some of these variables are listed as random variables in the figure. We randomized one variable within constraints. Because we were afraid that the day of the week might affect attentiveness, we did not want to have all the slow-paced

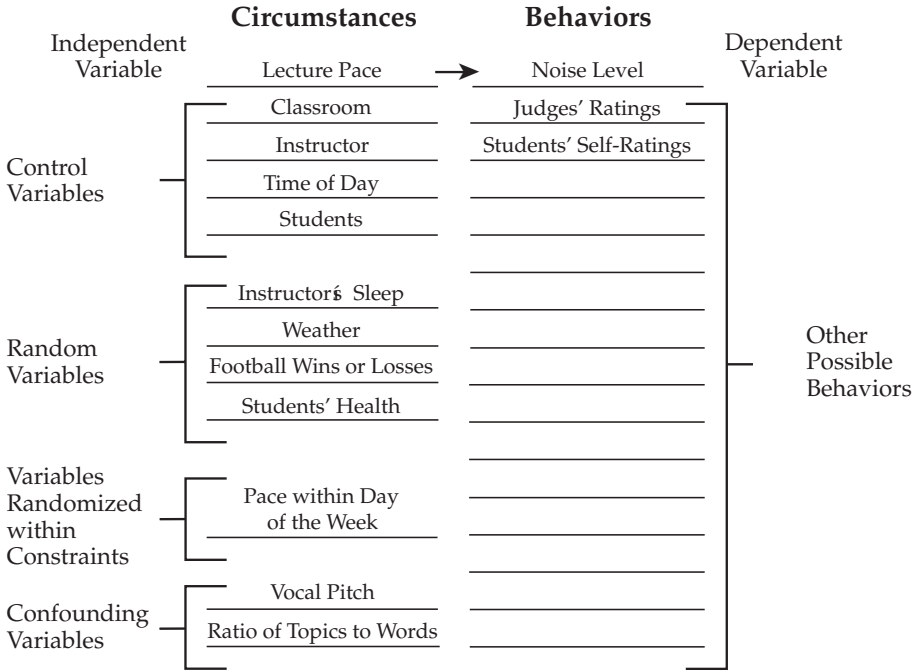


FIGURE 2-2 Variables from the lecture-pace experiment partitioned into an independent variable, control variables, random variables, a variable randomized within constraint, confounding variables, and a dependent variable

lectures on Mondays, the medium ones on Wednesdays, and the fast ones on Fridays. Therefore, we randomized the day of the week I would use each pace within the constraint that each day I gave each pace the same number of times.

Finally, although we tried to minimize confounding variables, we knew that, as in many applied experiments, some would occur. One was, undoubtedly, the average pitch of my voice. I am not a machine, so—as with most people—the faster I talk, the higher my voice becomes. I am sure that vocal pitch was confounded with lecture pace. In addition, as long as the length of a lecture remained constant, as I talked faster I could either say more words about a particular topic or say the same number of words and vary the number of topics I covered. I tried to do the former, so the ratio of topics to words was necessarily confounded with lecture pace. I have also listed these two confounding variables in Figure 2-2. I hope that this example illustrates how variables can be partitioned into the various types of circumstances and behaviors.⁹

⁹ A reader commented that she wanted to know the outcome of this experiment. Briefly, we found that lecture pace did affect attentiveness. Fortunately, ambient noise levels were lowest for my medium pace. The noise levels were highest for my fast pace. So, we inferred that a medium pace is best, and it is better to err on the side of going too slow than too fast.

■ Summary

The experimental method allows causal statements to be made—that when a circumstance is manipulated it causes a change in behavior. The circumstance that is manipulated is called the **independent variable** and is set by the experimenter to at least two levels. The behavior that is measured is called the **dependent variable** because it may be dependent on the levels of the independent variable. The predicted relationship between the independent and dependent variable is called a **hypothesis**. If the prediction is just that the independent variable will cause a change in the dependent variable, it is a **nondirectional hypothesis**, but if the prediction is about the direction of change then it is a **directional hypothesis**. Some of the other circumstances called **control variables** may be set at a particular level and not allowed to vary. Other circumstances called **random variables** may be allowed to vary in a random manner. Generally, random variables improve the **external validity** of an experiment, and allow it to be generalized to other people, settings, and times. Some circumstances called **variables randomized within constraints** may be allowed to vary randomly but within limits imposed by the experimenter. Experimenters should attempt to eliminate or minimize **confounding variables** that change systematically with the independent variable and distort the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

Confounding variables can cause low **internal validity** and make it difficult to say that only the independent variable caused a change in the dependent variable. Threats to internal validity include **history**, the occurrence of an uncontrolled event during the experiment; **maturation**, the change in age or experience of individuals during experimentation; **selection**, the biased assignment of individuals to groups; **mortality**, the nonrandom loss of individuals from groups; **testing**, the change in participants due to the testing process; **statistical regression**, the movement of scores toward the mean for groups selected on the basis of extreme scores; and **interactions with selection**, the differential effect of a threat on nonequivalent groups.

3

How to Get an Experimental Idea

You can observe a lot by just watching.

YOGI BERRA

Perfection is the greatest enemy of a good beginning.

ANONYMOUS

As he was testing hypothesis number one by experimental method a flood of other hypotheses would come to mind, and as he was testing these, some more came to mind, and as he was testing these, still more came to mind until it became painfully evident that as he continued testing hypotheses and eliminating them or confirming them their number did not decrease. It actually *increased* as he went along.

R. M. PIRSIG (1975)

The greater the island of knowledge, the longer the shoreline of the unknown.

JOHN DONNE

We do not know one millionth of one percent about anything.

THOMAS ALVA EDISON

Einstein told me how, since his boyhood, he thought about the man running after the light ray and the man closed in a falling elevator. The picture of the man running after the light ray led to special relativity theory. The picture of the man in a falling elevator led to general relativity theory.

L. INFELD (1950)

[Holmes:] I have no data yet. It is a capital mistake to theorize before one has data. Insensibly one begins to twist facts to suit theories, instead of theories to suit facts.

A. CONAN DOYLE (1891/1989)

I was once so bold and foolish as to assign introductory psychology students the task of proposing seven experiments as a course requirement. At first their reactions to this assignment puzzled me. Above the din of gnashing teeth, the moaning, and the groaning could be heard the plaintive wail of my stupefied students, "How do we get an idea?" Not only did I find it difficult

to understand why getting an idea would pose such a problem, but I also found it impossible to answer the question. I have now pondered this pervasive problem and formed an opinion about why it occurs and what can be done to solve it.

I don't believe the problem is that students have no ideas. As small children, we are curious about everything, including human behavior: "Mommy, why is that man so fat?" "How does Jenny eat with her left hand?" "Why can't I spell as good as Betty?" "Why do Tommy's parents spank him so much?" I refuse to believe that this curiosity simply fades away. In fact, the same students who "could not get an idea" seem to have plenty of thoughts about human behavior at parties or bull sessions: "What's the best way to study for my bio exam?" "Should I marry him or just move in with him?" "Am I more creative in the morning?"

For this reason I will refuse to believe you if you tell me you don't have any ideas for an experiment. It's not true that you don't have any ideas, but it may be true that you are afraid something is wrong with the ideas you do have! This fear can paralyze your natural creativity, and after a while, all your ideas seem inadequate to you.

■ Fearing Experimental Ideas

Fears about experimental ideas are usually irrational, stemming from a misunderstanding of psychology experiments. Psychologists call irrational fears *phobias*. Because I am a psychologist, I cannot resist the temptation to name the phobias behind our inability to get experimental ideas. The following phobias seem to be the most common.¹

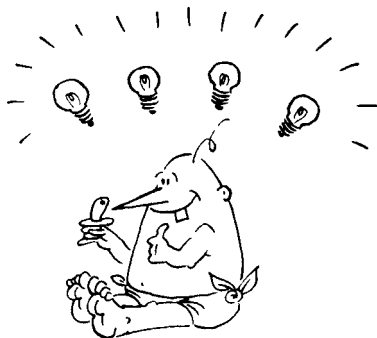
GENIEPHOBIA (FEAR OF GENIUSES)

Geniephobia stems from the common belief that anyone doing research must be a genius and that your modest brainpower couldn't possibly measure up. Researchers often do little to counteract this belief, and a few have been known to cultivate it. For years, every time I read a journal article I pictured the author as a wise-looking old man with flowing white locks. I was shocked to find that many experimenters are young, ordinary-looking men and women who make silly mistakes and say stupid things just like the rest of us.

My own geniephobia is still being cured. The more experimental psychologists I meet, the less I think only geniuses can do this kind of work.² So relax. Your ideas are probably as good as theirs were when they were getting started.

¹ Any resemblance of these names to accepted psychological terminology is purely coincidental.

² I do not mean to imply that experimental psychologists are dumber than other scientists. Biologists and physicists can be dumb, too.



A PREPHOBIC HAVING
LOTS OF IDEAS

IMITATOPHOBIA (FEAR OF IMITATING)

People with imitatophobia are afraid to propose any idea unless it is absolutely original. An imitatophobic who combines this fear with a belief that everything worthwhile has already been thought of by someone else often reaches a state of total paralysis. Truly original experiments are few indeed in psychology.

Most experiments use variations of somebody else's method to test somebody else's theory. In Chapter 6 you will learn how to find out what other experiments have been done in your area of interest, and you will find out exactly how unoriginal you are. However, don't be afraid to move science along in small steps. That's what the rest of us do.

PARAPHERNALIOPHOBIA (FEAR OF APPARATUS) AND MANUPHOBIA (FEAR OF DOING THINGS BY HAND)

If the sum total of your mechanical knowledge of the automobile is that the right pedal makes it go and the left pedal makes it stop, you are a prime candidate for paraphernaliophobia. This malady will scare you away from any experimental idea requiring an apparatus more sophisticated than a deck of cards. On the other hand, if you will not consider doing any experiment unless it requires sophisticated scientific equipment, you are a victim of the opposite affliction—manuphobia. Everyone knows that the more complex the equipment, the better the research.

Both phobias are unfounded, however. Some of the best research has used little or no equipment. Jean Piaget developed a major area of child psychology with no more apparatus than toy blocks, water glasses, and modeling clay.

Other areas of psychology, such as verbal learning, concept formation, attitude assessment, and personality, require no more than pencil and paper. An apparatus can help you do research, but it isn't research itself. Also, when

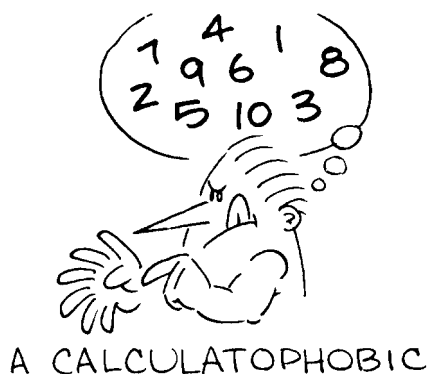
an apparatus is necessary, someone will be available who can teach you how to use it.

PARSIMONIOPHOBIA (FEAR OF SIMPLICITY)

Parsimoniophobics think they must come up with grandiose experiments that will change the course of science in one fell swoop. Their motto is: If it's simple, it can't be science. Although doing complex experiments has some advantages, you should generally aim for the simplest experiment that can answer your experimental question. People with parsimoniophobia seldom complete their majestic experiments; when they do, they usually cannot interpret the results. To start with, then, think simple. You can always pursue more complex questions later. (In Chapter 9 I discuss what I mean by simple and complex experiments.)

CALCULATOPHOBIA (FEAR OF STATISTICS)

Some people dread having to do any calculations tougher than counting on their fingers. If you can never remember how to figure out your car's gas mileage or how to keep your checkbook straight, you are a potential calculatophobic. If you will consider only those experiments that require the simplest statistical tests, remember that such tests are tools that can help you interpret your results; they should not cause you to throw out good experimental ideas. You can always find someone who enjoys playing with numbers to help you analyze your data. I am not saying that knowledge of statistics is unimportant, but it is, after all, just a tool used in science, not science itself.



IMPERFECTAPHOBIA (FEAR OF BEING IMPERFECT)

An imperfectaphobic will not tell you about an experimental idea until he or she has perfectly worked out every tiny detail, and the proposal looks like the final report. This attitude often stems from having read too many pristinely

presented journal articles. As we will see in Chapter 5, journal articles are end products; they seldom reflect the sloppy thinking and general air of confusion that precedes most experiments. Completed experiments are often quite different from the experimenters' original ideas. The original idea for an experiment simply forms the kernel; the experimental procedure will evolve as you set up and do the experiment. If you take the plunge and begin talking about your experiment in rough form, others may be able to help you mold it into a perfect experiment. Well, almost perfect.

PSEUDONONPHONOSCIENTIAPHOBIA (FEAR OF NOT SOUNDING SCIENTIFIC)

People with this hideous affliction can recognize a great idea only if it is expressed in *scientific jargonese*.³ Scientific jargonese is a pseudolanguage that some scientists make up to sound good when they talk with other scientists who do similar research. It helps obscure the research from the general public—and sometimes from other scientists as well. For example, in jargonese an experiment designed to determine whether people remember words better when the words are in groups is described as an investigation into “the effect of taxonomic and categorical clustering on the retention of verbal material.” Or a notion that people from ethnic groups live in the same neighborhood because of pressure from their friends is described as an experiment examining “the effect of demographic distribution by ethnic affiliation as a function of peer-group coercion.” Jargonese can easily be translated into everyday language. If you are interested in “the effect of affiliative preference on the salience of dimensions in person perception,” you are actually trying to find out whether people who join certain organizations differ in the way they see other people. Try translating one yourself: “the effects of maternal employment on sibling aggressive tendencies.”⁴

ERGOPHOBIA (FEAR OF WORK)

Sorry, there is no known cure for this affliction.

Now that we are aware of what fears might block our creativity, let's try to get some experimental ideas. What is the best way to start?

■ Observation

Someone once said that it's easy to write: Just sit at the computer and stare at the keyboard until drops of blood appear on your forehead. This also describes the best way to avoid coming up with experimental ideas. Because

³ I am using *jargonese* to refer to the dictionary definition of *jargon*, meaning “speech or writing characterized by pretensions, complex terminology, and involved syntax,” rather than meaning “the language peculiar to a particular trade, profession, or group.” The line between jargon and jargonese is thin indeed.

⁴ If you came close to “Do working mothers' kids fight more?” you are catching on. Be sure to buy my next book: *Scientific Jargonese for Fun and Profit*.

we are interested in human behavior rather than keyboard behavior, the best thing to do is observe humans, not keyboards!

Getting experimental ideas is simply a matter of noticing what goes on around you. Once you become a good observer, your natural curiosity will provide you with experimentally testable questions. One week of constant observation should provide you with enough experiments to last three careers.

Indeed, some of the classic research in experimental psychology started with a simple observation. If Eckhard Hess's wife had not noticed that his pupils got bigger when he was looking at bird pictures, pupillometrics might never have been created. If Ivan Pavlov had not noticed that his dogs were salivating to stimuli other than meat powder, Igor Nosnoranovitch might have been the father of classical conditioning instead. If Jean Piaget had not noticed that his daughter Jacqueline stopped making gurgling noises when she could no longer see her bottle, he might have become a famous Swiss watchmaker. Most revolutionary experimental ideas have been generated by simple observation.

PUBLIC OBSERVATION

After reading the next couple of paragraphs, take a paper and pencil, leave the room you are in, and walk outside where there are people to observe. As a training exercise in observation, make notes of possible experimental questions that occur to you as you stroll around.

First I'll go on a stroll to show you what I mean: I wander outside, and I see that the sun is shining.

1. Do people get more or less work done when the weather is nice?

I walk past two workmen laying concrete for a bike rack. One is working, while the other is standing and watching.

2. Do workers stand around more when they are unionized?

A couple of joggers run by.

3. Do people who exercise regularly sleep better at night?

A young woman is sitting over there under a tree with a young bearded fellow. They are looking rather amorous, and I feel like a peeping Tom. Better move on.

4. Do women find men with beards more attractive than men without beards?

I see a large group of students filing into a classroom.

5. Do students in large lecture classes make better grades than those in small classes?

I arrive at a crosswalk. Will that car stop? Yes, it did. Across I go.

6. Are drivers more likely to give the right of way to pedestrians of the opposite sex?

I stop to watch a sports car zooming down the street.

7. Do people drive sports cars faster than regular cars?

I head back past the library.

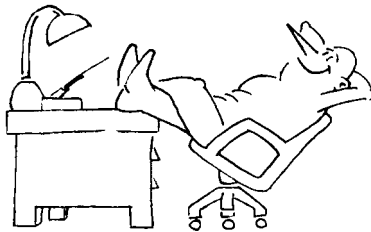
8. Do students who study in the library retain information better than those who study in the dorm?

I pass the bike rack at the front of my office building and see lots of bikes.

9. Are mountain bikes easier to ride than road bikes?

I lope upstairs to my office. I am back.

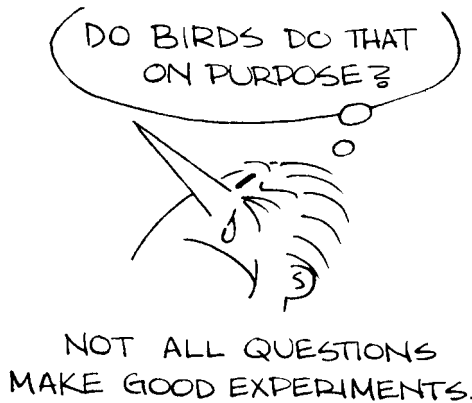
I just got nine potential ideas for experiments. That's almost one per minute! Now you try it while I wait.



ME WAITING

Welcome back. Did you get plenty of ideas? Think about the ideas you could get if you were that observant all the time. Now the problem is “Which idea should I turn into an experiment?” because not all important questions can be answered through experimentation. All experimental questions must pass the ROT test: they must be *Repeatable*, *Observable*, and *Testable*. Some questions fail because they are not repeatable. For example, some supporters of extrasensory perception (ESP) claim that it occurs only under certain conditions and that it is impossible to predict when the conditions are right. In other words, ESP works only some of the time and fails the repeatability test. As long as this basic tenet governs ESP effects, it is impossible to test for the existence of this ability. Other questions fail because they are not observable: “Do dogs think like humans?” “Is my experience of the color red the same as yours?” Finally, some questions fail because they are not testable. For example, science cannot answer moral questions, such as “Is abortion wrong?” “Is it proper for women to wear short skirts?” “Are drugs evil?” Although we can certainly use the scientific method to determine people’s opinions about these questions, we cannot devise any test that could answer the questions themselves. We must therefore eliminate all such questions from any list of experimental ideas.

Do all the questions in your list of ideas meet the ROT requirements? Take a moment to go through your list and eliminate any that fail to do so.



After reading Chapter 1, you should also recognize that some questions must be answered by correlational observation rather than by experimentation. For example, if, as in Question 7, we want to answer the question whether people who choose to drive sports cars drive faster than those who drive other types of cars, we must do a correlational observation. On the other hand, if we wish to answer the question whether people tend to drive faster when driving a sports car, we could design an experiment. Take another look at your list of ideas, and label each idea as experimental or correlational.

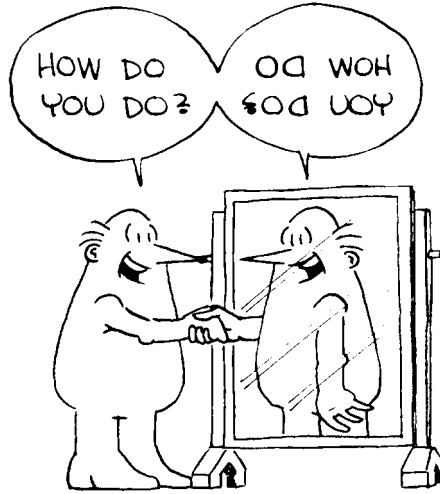
Our little walks have been interesting, but people in public provide us with a limited set of behaviors. Whom else can we observe?

OBSERVING YOURSELF

Introspection was one of the earliest techniques in experimental psychology. Introspectionists, however, concentrated on observing their own mental processes rather than their own behavior. Because a controversy developed about whether a person can know his or her own mental processes, experimental psychologists stopped watching themselves altogether. Rather than follow the dictum “Know thyself,” they resolved to “Know not thyself.”⁵ It is still generally frowned on if you, as a psychologist, do an experiment with yourself as the only participant; nevertheless, you can get some good experimental ideas this way. Not only will you be able to collect many samples of the behavior you are interested in, but you might also have some idea why you did what you did. The former can give you an idea for an experiment, the latter an idea for a theory. We will examine theories later in this chapter.

With a little effort, you can begin to notice your own behavior. It may seem ridiculous to suggest that you do not notice yourself, but it is probably

⁵ Some experimental psychologists still don't know who they are.



KNOW THYSELF.

true. When dressing, which arm do you put into your shirt or blouse first? When you brush your teeth, do you brush the left side first or the right? Do you put your house key or room key into the lock right side up or upside down? When you cross your legs, do you put your left leg or your right leg on top more often? These are all things you do every day. Do you notice them? Observing yourself can be entertaining,⁶ as well as a good source of ideas. Write down the ideas as they occur to you.

OBSERVING YOUR FRIENDS

Your friends are also good sources of experimental ideas. It is important, however, to observe their behavior as unobtrusively as possible. Staring is considered impolite at best and grounds for a fight at worst. People sometimes are not particularly fond of the way they behave and would prefer not to be observed by others. Consequently, to avoid losing friends, keep your observations to yourself. Pointing out your insights, no matter how brilliant, will not help you win friends and influence people.

OBSERVING CHILDREN

Observing children is a necessity if you are interested in doing experiments in the area of developmental psychology, but children can also give you good ideas for other areas of research. If you are not blessed with⁷ children, you probably have friends and relatives who would be more than happy to let

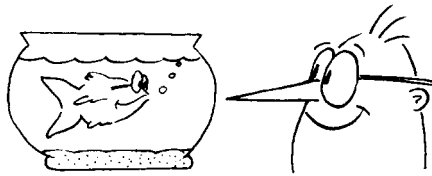
⁶ If you develop this skill, you will have to learn to control yourself in public. You may be considered strange if you break into gales of laughter over your own behavior.

⁷ Or plagued by (depending on your point of view).

you watch theirs for a while. Unlike adults, who have learned that their behavior should appear rational, logical, and consistent to an outside observer, children generally behave in ways that are uncomplicated by complex patterns or social inhibitions. Because most kids couldn't care less about adult standards, you will be able to observe relatively uncontaminated behavior patterns in children.

OBSERVING PETS

Animals are interesting to study in their own right, but much of their behavior can also be generalized to humans. Furthermore, you will find that pets are even less inhibited than children. Because they are less capable of highly complex behavior patterns, their behavior is often easier to interpret. In addition, you can manipulate your pet's environment without worrying as much about the moral implications of possible permanent damage (see Chapter 4 for a discussion of the ethics of animal treatment).



OBSERVE YOUR PETS.

■ Vicarious Observation

Although you may find it less exciting than direct observation, you can also get experimental ideas by reading other people's research. You might feel that this technique of *vicarious observation* feeds off other people's creativity, but nonetheless, this approach has certain practical advantages. For one thing, because the broad experimental question you are asking already has a stamp of approval from the author and journal reviewers, you know that the questions being posed are considered important. Second, somebody else has already fit the experimental result into the existing body of knowledge and has probably even proposed a theory, thereby structuring the area of research for you and saving you time and effort. Finally, earlier researchers have devised a method of attack that apparently works and that you may be able to modify and use in your research.

When you search for an idea, you should first identify an area of research that interests you. You will then know what types of journals you should read. Your topic should be as specific as possible: competition in small groups, play therapy in schools, perception of visual illusions, development of arithmetic abilities, and so on. For the more general topics, you can simply

scan journals having related articles. For more specific topics, this procedure is rather inefficient, and you will need to do a literature search, as described in Chapter 6.

As you read these articles, try to discover what important questions the research has left unanswered. The author will sometimes help you discover these questions by suggesting where future research should go. But after you finish reading the article, *you* should also be able to determine where it should go by the questions left unanswered. Usually you wouldn't want simply to replicate the research, but it is certainly appropriate to do something similar.

By way of example, suppose that you had read about an experiment asking whether violence on TV causes aggression in children. In the experiment six-year-old children were exposed to two hours of either violent or nonviolent television 30 minutes each day for a month. Their behavior was then measured by observing which toys they played with—aggressive toys such as guns, knives, and tanks, or nonaggressive toys such as dolls, trucks, and blocks. After reading this article you might decide that you can think of a better way to manipulate the independent variable. Maybe you do not like the way they defined violence and the TV programs they chose to show the two viewing groups and you would like to see this defined in a different way. Or you might wish to add a third group that watches a mixture of violent and nonviolent shows, or a more neutral set of shows, or perhaps no TV at all.

Instead of changing the independent variable, you might wish to change the dependent variable. Maybe you think that determining how aggressive children are by observing what toys they play with is a poor way to measure aggression. Perhaps you think it would be better to have trained judges watch the children playing together and have them rate each child on aggressiveness. Or you might want to interview the children's teachers or their parents.

You might also think that some of the control variables were set at inappropriate levels. Six-year-olds have already been exposed to a lot of TV. Perhaps you think it would be better to use younger children or to use several groups of children at various ages. Maybe you think that two hours of TV is too little given that on average children watch TV closer to four hours per day. Or maybe you think that one month is too short a time to show much effect of TV on behavior.

It may be that you think one of the control variables should have been randomized. For example, you think that the investigators were wrong to have made the children watch TV in groups of six in a laboratory rather than allowing them to watch it in a family setting in their homes.

An even more interesting reason for doing your own research would be if you thought you had discovered a confounding variable that you could eliminate. For example, it may be that the violent shows were simply louder than the nonviolent shows; maybe loud noises rather than violence make children more aggressive. You can probably think up many more ways in which the original experiment could be altered to test the hypothesis in a different way, to elaborate on the hypothesis, or to test a similar but different hypothesis.

So as you read about other people's research, you might find it helpful to go through a similar set of questions: Are there better or different ways of manipulating the independent variable, of measuring the dependent variable, of choosing levels for the control variables, of making control variables into random variables or vice versa, or of avoiding confounding variables? In other words, can you think of ways to improve the internal or external validity of the research? I believe that if you read the articles carefully and ask yourself these questions, you will think up many excellent ideas for research.

■ Expanding on Your Own Research

Once you have done several experiments, you will find that your own research provides many experimental ideas. Every experiment you do will leave a number of questions unanswered. For example, after using several levels of an independent variable in an experiment, you may want to see what happens when you choose other levels. Or you may have controlled a certain variable at a particular level in one experiment and may wonder what would happen if you set it at a different level. Or you may come up with unexpected results and want to find out why the outcome was not as predicted. Each experiment usually brings up more unsolved questions than it answers.

This picture of science as a continual growth of new questions is different from that held by those who think of science as a fixed body of knowledge that needs only to be uncovered. This latter outlook views scientific research as leaving fewer and fewer questions unanswered as it proceeds. In reality, however, each experiment actually increases the number of questions to be answered. Instead of working ourselves out of business, we are working ourselves into more business than we can possibly handle.

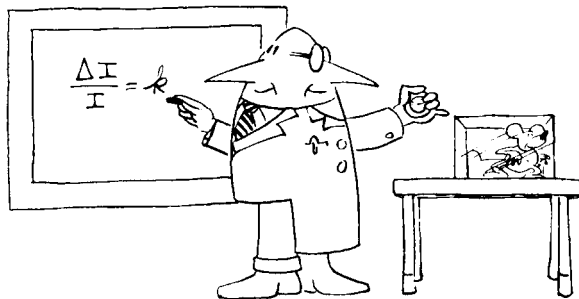
This open-ended view of science can be discouraging and exciting. It can be discouraging because it is sometimes difficult to chart our progress through an ever-expanding universe in which we sometimes seem to take five steps backward for every step forward. On the other hand, it is exciting because we end up asking better and better questions. Perhaps the goal of science is not to find answers to all possible experimental questions but to answer ever more promising and important questions. In following up on your own research, you will find that your main problem is not "How can I get an experimental idea?" but "Which idea is the most important one to work on?"

■ Using Theory to Get Ideas

Now that you have collected a number of observations, how do you put these together into a framework that suggests what kind of experiment you might do? This is usually done in science by proposing a theory. In the most typical case the purpose of an experiment is to test a theory. So one way of helping

you get an idea for an experiment is to convert some of your observations into a theory and then test that theory with an experiment. Unfortunately, those who do not understand how theory is used in science often have a negative opinion of it. One mistaken belief is that theories are extremely complex and can be understood only by geniuses: "Einstein may have understood what $e = mc^2$ means, but I never could." A second misconception is that a theory is simply somebody's wild guess: "That's only a theory." In fact, a theory can be quite simple to understand, and as evidence is collected supporting a particular theory, we can become ever more certain that it is true—but, as we will see, never entirely certain.

Why do we need theories? The outcomes from experiments and other types of research are facts. But science is more than a loose collection of facts. It is an organized body of knowledge; it has a structure much as a building has a structure. And just as a randomly arranged pile of bricks is not a building, an unstructured collection of facts is not a science. Theory provides the blueprint that tells us how these facts can be put together into an organized scientific body of knowledge. From my point of view, one of the reasons that experimental psychology is more fun than some of the other sciences is that experimental psychologists can be architects and builders as well as brick makers. Some of the other sciences have imposed a division of labor. For instance, most physicists are either theoretical physicists or experimental physicists, but not both. Experimental psychologists have traditionally done both jobs.



EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGISTS DO TWO JOBS.

I find it difficult to give a simple understandable definition of theory. If forced to do so, I would say that a **theory** is a statement about the probable relationships among a set of abstract variables. The theoretical statement is only *probable* because it is still subject to testing, and as we will see shortly, theories are easier to disprove by testing than to prove. The relationships are among *abstract* variables because if the variables consisted of directly observable events, all we would have would be a statement of fact, a direct observation rather than theory. The abstract variables in a theory are general categories of circumstances or behaviors rather than specific circumstances or behaviors. For example, the theoretical statement that viewing violence

causes aggression is different from an experimental demonstration that after seeing a war movie, children choose to play with guns.

To help you understand the use of theory a little better, I will show how theorizing fits into the planning and interpretation of experiments by using an example. Suppose we have been observing the world around us and have noticed the following things: Children seem to play rougher after watching shoot-'em-up shows on TV. In recent years younger kids seem to have been charged with violent crimes more frequently, and at the same time, violence in the media seems to have increased. Children in war-torn countries take up arms and fight at a very young age. These observations, and perhaps others, might lead us to propose a theory: "The more that children observe violent acts, the more likely they are to display aggressive behavior."

This theory is pretty easy to understand. Note that it is more abstract, and more general, than any of the observations that led to it. We may not realize it, but we came up with this theory through induction. **Induction** is a logical process in which the conclusion contains more information than the observations on which it is based. That is, we would expect from our theory of violence and aggression that it would hold not only for the three observations that led to it but also for all cases of children viewing violence. Of course, we could be wrong. Perhaps the theory is true only for the instances we have observed, in which case our induction is in error. But once the theory is stated, it can at least be further tested through experimentation.

If our theory is any good, it should allow us to make a number of predictions. The logical process by which we make these predictions is deduction. When we use **deduction**, we draw a conclusion from a set of premises, and this conclusion contains no more information than the premises taken collectively. Thus, if the information in the premises is true, the conclusion must be true. For example, if a horse is a mammal, and all mammals are animals, then by deductive reasoning a horse must be an animal. In our example, if the more that children observe violent acts, the more aggressive they become, and if watching detective shows on TV involves observing violent acts, then watching a large number of detective shows on TV must lead to increased aggressive behavior. So from our theory, through deduction,



we can predict a number of observations such as this one. Each predicted observation forms a **hypothesis** for an experiment. To test one hypothesis we might set up an experiment in which one group of children watches four hours per day of TV detective shows containing violence and a second group watches four hours per day of nonviolent TV shows. After a number of days we observe the children's play behavior to determine how aggressive they are. The hypothesis deduced from our theory is that the group observing the detective shows will display more aggressive behavior. If the theory is true, the hypothesis must be true. Figure 3-1 shows the thought process we have gone through so far. At this point we have used induction to turn our observations into a theory and used the theory to deduce a predicted observation. We are now ready to do the experiment to test this prediction.

Suppose that the experiment confirms the predicted observation. Have we proved the theory? No, confirming a hypothesis does not prove the theory that generated it. It does support the theory, but only through induction, not deduction. To conclusively prove a theory, we would need to test every hypothesis that could be deduced from the theory. In our case, we would have to test every possible way that children could observe violence and measure every type of aggressive behavior that they could display. Short of doing this, all we can say is that the outcome of our experiment supports the theory. As additional experiments are done that support the theory, particularly if they are used for testing a wide range of variables, our confidence in the theory will continue to increase, but you can see how difficult it would be to ever say that the theory has been proved.

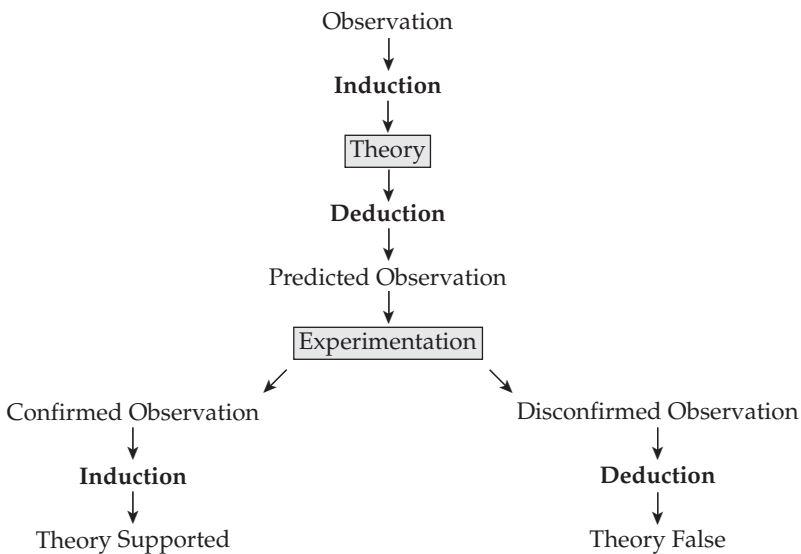


FIGURE 3-1 The role of induction and deduction in linking theory to experimentation

Suppose, on the other hand, that the experimental outcome disconfirms the predicted observation. Have we disproved the theory? From a logical point of view, we have (again, see Figure 3-1). Even a single disconfirmed prediction disproves at least one of the premises because the prediction was arrived at through deduction. Remember the example “a horse is a mammal, all mammals are animals, a horse must be an animal”? If we discovered that a horse was not an animal, it would have to be the case that either all mammals are not animals or a horse is not a mammal. No other logical possibilities exist. Using the same logic, if viewing four hours of violent TV shows rather than nonviolent ones does not cause increased aggressive behavior, then either what we were showing the children was not violent or our theory as stated is wrong. You can see why Karl Popper, a noted philosopher of science, stated that our job as scientists is not to prove theories, but to disprove them (Popper, 1968). He reduced this concept to a slogan, “No number of sightings of white swans can prove the theory that all swans are white. The sighting of just one black one may disprove it.”

The weakness in the argument that we can logically disprove a theory through experimentation is that the statistical calculations we do to reach our experimental disconfirmation are not deductive. Although I examine this issue in more detail in Chapter 12, I make the basic argument here. In our example, the way we would disconfirm our experimental hypothesis would be to find no difference in aggressiveness between the two viewing groups—that is, to find no statistically significant difference. The problem is that our statistical tests are typically designed to determine whether the levels of the independent variable cause a *difference* in behavior, not a sameness.⁸ Yet, experimentally disconfirming a hypothesis usually involves showing these levels to be equivalent rather than different, and we do not generally do statistical tests to determine equivalence. So we must be careful in concluding that a hypothesis, and therefore a theory, is false from such an outcome.

Even if we could have disconfirmed the hypothesis by testing in the proper statistical direction (that is, by determining that the hypothesis is false because an effect is statistically significant), we could still be in error. As we discuss in Chapter 12, even when used properly, these statistical tests are accurate at only a probabilistic level. On the basis of the difference on our sample, we can reach only a certain level of confidence that there is a real difference in the population. For instance, we might conclude that our result is statistically significant at the .05 level of significance. This conclusion means that we might be wrong up to 5% of the time. So, we know that 1 time out of 20 we could be in error in believing that we have disconfirmed the hypothesis, and thus we would be in error to consider the theory disproved.

There are other reasons, in addition to the statistical ones just mentioned, why the disconfirmation of a hypothesis would not provide as strong a

⁸ Technically, when we test the null hypothesis we start by assuming that there is no difference and the statistical test tells us the probability that we are wrong in that assumption. However, the test still does not tell us the probability that they are the same.

disproof of a theory as might be expected by deductive logic. For example, there could be problems with the way the theory was implemented in the experiment, with the way violence was manipulated or aggression was measured, or with the control or randomization of variables. So a single experiment is seldom considered to have disproved a theory until a number of contrary results have been found.

I have gone into some detail here about the role of theory in helping us get an idea for an experiment and in helping us interpret the results. It is important for you to understand, in a general way, how theory and experimentation interact. Fortunately, however, you do not have to go through this formal logical process every time you do an experiment. The steps are the same for all experiments. In fact, the process I have been describing is quite natural to humans. In leading our lives we continually make observations, generalize from the observations, and test the generalizations by making additional observations. Although we do not call them theories, we live our lives on the basis of these generalizations. All I have described here is a bit more formal version of the same natural process.

TYPES OF THEORIES

So far I have given only one example of a theory. But theories can take many forms. Here I will discuss three types of theories⁹ and continue to illustrate them using the question “Does violence on television cause aggression?”

Descriptive Theories

A **descriptive theory** simply attaches names to events without necessarily explaining why or how the events have occurred. For example, Freud, as part of psychoanalytic theory, said that repression occurs when we unconsciously



A DESCRIPTIVE THEORY

refuse to admit painful or disagreeable ideas to conscious thought. Although such a theory may help clinicians in their work, the mere naming does little to explain the conditions under which repression occurs or how it might be examined experimentally. In a similar way, for many years, psychologists interested in motivation were enraptured with naming instincts. At first the concept of an instinct seemed to be useful because it appeared that most animal behaviors could be classified as reflecting certain instincts (such as the feeding

⁹ The three types of theories discussed here are similar to those mentioned by Arnoult (1972) in his book *Fundamentals of Scientific Method in Psychology*, although some of the names have been changed.

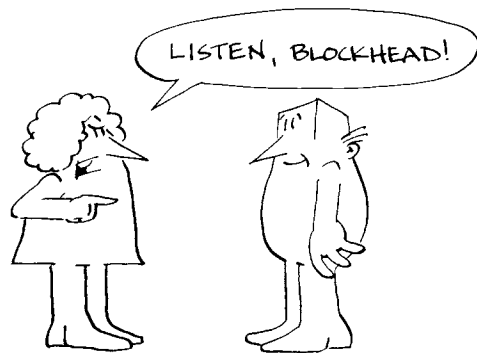
instinct or the mating instinct). However, eventually psychologists began to accumulate as many names for instincts as there were observable behaviors (such as the “running into a hole when attacked from the front” instinct), and the concept lost its usefulness.

Descriptive theories can be useful if the names are attached to abstract events rather than to directly observable events. For example, we might state that the observation of violence is related to aggressive behavior. If we could carefully define “violence” and “aggressive behavior” as general classes of events, we might have a useful descriptive theory. But even this kind of descriptive theory is of limited value because it does not explain how the relationship works.

Analogical Theories

Analogical theories explain how relationships work by drawing an analogy between a psychological relationship and a physical model so that the physical analog becomes a psychological model of behavior. For example, many of the theories that attempt to explain how humans process information use the computer as a physical analog. Of course, nobody believes that the brain works exactly like a computer, but enough similarities exist for computer modeling to provide some useful analogical theories.

As an example of an analogical theory, let’s take the physical properties of momentum as an analog for the relationship between violence and aggression. As you may know, a physical object has momentum in proportion to its speed and mass; the faster it is traveling and the more massive it is, the more momentum it has. This momentum can be overcome by friction. Thus, we might state an analogical theory relating violence and aggression as “The amount of aggression



AN ANALOGICAL THEORY

expressed by an observer is like the force exerted by a moving object, where the degree of violence observed is analogous to the mass of the object and the time of observing is analogous to the speed of the object. After exposure to violence, the aggressive tendencies will be high but will decrease over time in the same way that friction overcomes momentum.”

This analogical theory is more useful than the descriptive theory proposed in the previous section because it explains some of the complexities of the relationship. We should also be able to test the theory based on our knowledge of how the physical model works. For example, we know that the longer a force is exerted on a physical object, the faster its speed and the greater its

momentum. Thus, a longer time is needed for friction to overcome the momentum. By analogy, the longer a person observes violence, the longer it would take the aggressive tendencies to disappear.

Because of its explanatory power, an analogical theory is certainly more useful than a descriptive theory. However, analogical theories are also doomed to fail in the end because at some point the properties of the physical analog will no longer correspond to the properties of the human. For this reason, you can best use analogical theories as first approximations that help you identify the major variables and outline in a general way how the variables affect one another. But you will find that analogical theories are seldom powerful enough to help you specify the exact mathematical relationships among the variables.

Quantitative Theories

Quantitative theories do attempt to state relationships in mathematical terms. They specify not only the direction of relationships among categories of variables but also how these categories are quantitatively related. Few psychological theories have reached this level of sophistication. Only a few subareas in learning, memory, and cognition have attempted to use quantitative theories.

Quantitative theories have been limited in psychology because psychologists have more difficulty with variability than do physical scientists. For example, in physics the theory of gravity is a quantitative theory expressed in precise mathematical terms. Because gravity affects all physical objects in the same way, a physicist can assume that any variability in experimental results is simply a measurement error. In psychology, however, we cannot predict the behavior of all individuals on the basis of one individual's behavior, nor can we predict how the same individual will behave at any given time. Consequently, our quantitative theories must be able to accommodate variability. The best we can do is to predict how probable it is for a behavior to occur,¹⁰ so we must express mathematical relationships in probabilistic terms. (For example, the probability that a particular individual will learn this list of words in five trials is .8.)

Psychologists also face the problem of deciding what scale to use in measuring behaviors. In the physical sciences, the units for measuring speed or mass are not controversial. In psychology, however, we have to find scales by which such concepts as violence or aggression can be measured. For example, consider the following quantitative theory: Humans express a level of aggressiveness in direct proportion to the average level of violence they have observed in the recent past. Because our proposed theory attempts to establish a mathematical relationship between the scales of violence and

¹⁰ In some areas, physical scientists deal with similar problems. The structure of atoms, for example, is expressed probabilistically. In fact, chaos theory, a theory of dynamical systems based on nonlinear mathematics, has been developed to deal with probabilistic events in the physical sciences that do not follow the deterministic rules of classical science.

aggression, we must first determine how to measure them. As you can see, establishing scales for such concepts is no easy task.

There are several areas of psychology in which quantitative theorizing has grown rapidly in recent years. One of these, *structural equation modeling*, starts with a theory much like a descriptive theory, in which many concepts are identified and described. A best guess is then made about how these concepts might relate to one another, and links are drawn among concepts to indicate these possible relationships. Then measurements are made for each of the concepts, and statistics (that are well beyond what you want to know here) are calculated; these give weights to the links, indicating which links are the important ones. In this way the investigator learns how the concepts are quantitatively linked together.

A second area in which more quantitative theorizing is being done is *connectionism* (sometimes called *parallel distributed processing*). This type of theorizing begins with an analogical model in which the analog is the human nervous system. At least three levels of units are set up on a computer. These are similar to three levels of neurons and can send signals to one another. As the units experience the world (for example, they might analyze the curves and lines of letters) they send signals to the units at deeper levels and make some of these levels more or less likely to send their own signals, just as neurons do. After repeatedly experiencing the world, the units start to establish weightings that reflect how the learning has progressed (for example, the deeper units begin to recognize some letters). These quantitative weightings can be considered a theoretical representation of the way a human nervous system works, and the behavior of the resulting theoretical representation can be compared to human behavior in a quantitative way—for example, does the system mistake certain letters for others, as humans do? With some of these exceptions, most theories in psychology are still descriptive or analogical. However, as psychology becomes more sophisticated and we learn to handle the difficulties caused by variability and scaling, more psychological theories will become quantitative.

PROPERTIES OF A GOOD THEORY

How do you know a good theory when you see one? I have implied that quantitative theories are better than analogical theories, which in turn are better than descriptive theories. Why is this true?

First, a theory must be able to *account for most of the data* already collected. There is no use proposing a theory if the data do not support it. (You can see why a thorough literature search is so important; it will allow you to eliminate some of the competing theories before collecting any data.) One or two items of disconfirming evidence, however, will usually not destroy a theory unless an alternative theory can account for all the evidence.

A theory must also be *testable*. As we saw earlier in this chapter, science advances as research findings eliminate some theories and leave others as still possible. To be testable, then, means that the theory can potentially be

disconfirmed. A theory is disconfirmed if the outcome of an experiment is not what the theory predicted it would be. If a theory is so universal that it can account for any experimental result, then disproving it is impossible.¹¹ One reason a theory might not be testable is that the predicted results are expected to occur in an unpredictable manner only some of the time. For example, Freud's theory of repression is virtually untestable as it is usually stated. How could you disprove repression experimentally? Perhaps you could provide people with an experience they would rather forget. For instance, you might tempt people to cheat and then confront those who succumbed with their dreadful deed.¹² Sometime later you might have a close friend of each person ask that individual whether he or she had ever cheated. If no one reports having cheated, you have support for the theory because it shows that everyone repressed the incident (or, perhaps alternatively, they lied). However, if everyone reports having cheated, the result doesn't eliminate the theory, because the theory never claimed that all people repress a particular event, only that some people sometimes repress some events. Thus, your experiment would do little to dislodge the theory. A theory that is so general that no test can be proposed to discredit it is a worthless theory from a scientific point of view.

Although a theory should not be so general that it can account for any behavior, it should also *not be too restrictive*. That is, the fewer directly observable events the theory can account for, the less valuable it is. In the most extreme case, a theory simply restates the relationship between observable events.¹³ For example, the statement that "8-year-old children hit a punching bag more after watching a televised *Roadrunner* cartoon" is less useful than the statement that "watching violence on TV causes aggression in children." Even more useful is the statement that "observing violence causes people to be more aggressive." The more general our statements, the more valuable they are because they account for a larger set of observable events.

A good theory should also have *parsimony*, which means that the theory should be as simple as possible while still accounting for the data. Theories that are too detailed and complex are not very useful because we often do not know the status of all the qualifying conditions when we are trying to apply the theory to new situations.

A good theory also *predicts* the outcome of future experiments. Even descriptive theories specify the relationship between categories of events. Thus, the relationships between directly observable events that are members of these categories are predictable from the theory. Analogical and quantitative theories also allow you to predict the relationships between events, and these predictions are even more precise.

Finally, the best theories help answer ultimate questions, not just proximate questions. An **ultimate question** is a *why* question. A **proximate**

¹¹ For this reason, testability is called *falsifiability* by some. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Karl Popper (1968) is well known for suggesting that an idea is testable only if it can be falsified.

¹² For the moment, let's ignore whether this experiment would be considered ethical.

¹³ Actually, such a statement would not fit our definition of a theory, but some investigators would call it a theory.

question is a *what* or *how* question. The theory we posed earlier in this chapter, “The more that children observe violent acts, the more likely they are to display aggressive behavior,” answers a *what* question: what happens when children observe violent acts? But it doesn’t answer the ultimate *why* question: why do children act this way? A theory based on that ultimate question might say that “Evolution has imbued in humans a tendency to increase their level of aggression in response to environmental violence because that adaptation makes survival more probable.” At this date most theories in psychology are based on proximate questions. However, the recent increased emphasis on evolutionary theory in psychology will likely lead to more theories that answer ultimate questions.



A GOOD THEORY ALLOWS YOU TO PREDICT...

DOES THEORY ALWAYS PRECEDE DATA?

In this somewhat idealized discussion of the relationship between theories and experiments I have probably led you to believe that you must always have a theory in mind before you do an experiment. However, there are certain types of research in which theory is less important. Some investigators prefer to withhold theorizing until after they have collected a lot of data. They are like the sleuth Sherlock Holmes: Only after collecting all the clues (data) will they nail the culprit (theory). They feel that, particularly early in a research program, proposing a theory before collecting data is like deciding on the villain and then looking for clues related only to that person’s guilt: Both procedures are biased. In fact, B. F. Skinner, the late father of operant conditioning research, maintained that most theories do more harm than good (Skinner, 1950).

Skinner believed that our job as scientists is to account for observable events and that because theories use abstractions rather than events, they do not help us. In addition, because they are abstract, theories also lull us into believing that our research is complete when it is not. We are tempted to use the theories to fill in the holes in our research without really knowing whether the answers the theories give us are true. Finally, Skinner worried that when

we let a theory guide our research and then the theory is disproved, we lose much of the research generated by the theory. Skinner's rather extreme position must be understood within the context of behaviorism's general rejection of all mental events and intervening variables that are the basis of many current theories. Most research psychologists today disagree with the position he held and feel that theories are vital to most types of research. However, even these researchers know that there are times when theories should play a smaller role in guiding research.

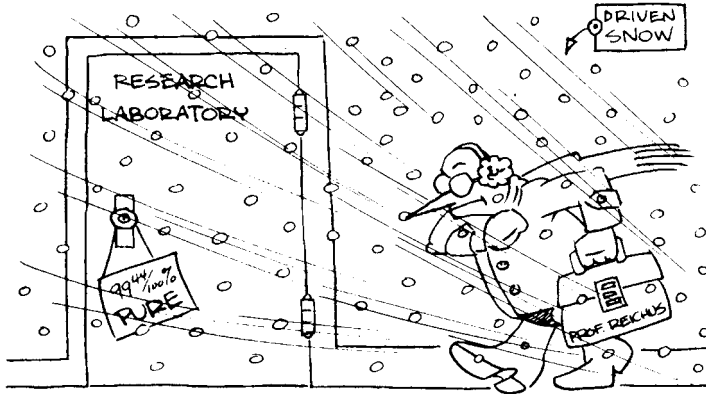
When a particular research topic is still in its infancy, premature theorizing may cause more problems than it solves. If prior to collecting much data we propose a tenuous theory, then we have to spend a lot of time and effort testing that theory when our efforts might be better devoted to collecting additional data that might lead us to a better theory. Particularly at the start of a new research program, there is certainly nothing wrong with doing many experiments whose purpose is simply to answer the question, "I wonder what would happen if . . ." rather than testing a theoretical prediction. After we have made a sufficient number of observations so that theorizing is warranted, collecting data in this unstructured exploratory way becomes increasingly less efficient.

Another danger is that playing the theory game can be great intellectual fun. In the beginning a researcher finds an important problem, makes initial observations, and proposes a theory. Others then test this theory, reject it, propose their own, have those rejected, and so on. As theory begets theory, the game takes on a life of its own, and we sometimes forget what the important problem was. We can end up investigating easily testable theories instead of looking for important problems. But because no science has the resources to investigate all problems, we must choose, and we obviously should choose important problems to work on. If, because of theories, we choose to investigate easy but rather unimportant problems instead of more difficult but more important ones, we are misusing our resources.¹⁴ To counteract this trap, I have threatened at times to teach a course titled *Psy 371, "Things Psychology Knows Nothing About."* The purpose of this course would be to find important areas of human behavior that nobody is currently investigating and to propose how one might begin research in these areas.

A final type of research in which theory is sometimes less important is **applied research**. Applied research is designed to solve a specific problem, as opposed to **basic research**,¹⁵ which is done for the sole purpose of increasing the scientific body of knowledge. Most of the research we have

¹⁴ Kuhn in his book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1970, p. 37) argues, in fact, that once the scientific community has accepted a paradigm (a set of assumptions, widely accepted model, or global theory), scientists then work only on problems that can be assumed to have solutions within that paradigm: "To a great extent these are the only problems that the community will admit as scientific. . . . A paradigm can, for that matter, even insulate the community from those socially important problems that are not reducible to the puzzle form, because they cannot be stated in terms of the conceptual and instrumental tools the paradigm supplies."

¹⁵ Basic research is sometimes also called *pure research*, perhaps because one is not supposed to have mixed motives for doing it. Unfortunately, some people who do this kind of research seem to prefer other dictionary definitions of *pure*—for example, untainted with evil or guilt. I have never heard pure scientists defend the position that they are physically chaste, even though I suspect that this is the subconscious reason behind wearing white lab coats.



been considering up to this point is basic research. Even though basic research is not designed to solve practical problems, it can help solve such problems. Current behavior modification techniques, which provide some of the most powerful procedures for correcting human behavior problems, are based on basic research done in the rat laboratories of yesteryear. Jack Adams (1972) found that many of the military systems of the 1970s had been designed using information from basic research done more than 20 years earlier.

Applied research, on the other hand, has as its primary purpose the solution of problems. Perhaps you need to know how humans read hand-written numbers so that you can design a machine to read ZIP codes. Or you may wish to know whether daily quizzes will improve students' classroom performance on major exams. Or you may want to know whether cognitive-behavioral therapy is more effective than psychoanalysis. Many such practical problems need immediate answers that basic researchers might never find. Needing an answer to a practical problem is a perfectly legitimate reason for doing research, and it can be satisfying, especially if your findings have an immediate impact on the world. In many cases it is even possible to test a theory while doing applied research. When this is possible, the research can make an immediate practical contribution and also help build the scientific body of knowledge.

Observation is again the key to getting ideas for applied research. Finding a practical problem is simply a matter of carefully observing human behavior and giving your curiosity free rein. As with the other procedures we have discussed for getting experimental ideas, you will find that more practical problems need to be solved than you can possibly do experiments to solve. As before, the question is not so much "What can I do?" but "What should I do first?"

■ Importance of Psychological Research

Before I end this chapter, I want to point out that though I have emphasized having fun with research and doing research to satisfy our curiosity about human behavior, psychological research should also be done because it

provides answers to some of life's most important problems. If I were to ask you to name the problems that cause our society the most grief and cost us the most money, which ones would you name? Here are ten I can think of:

1. Our children do not learn enough in school (for example, many can't read, write, do math, etc.).
2. Too many people abuse drugs.
3. People behave in ways that are unhealthy (smoking, sexually transmitting diseases, eating poorly, not exercising, etc.).
4. Human conflicts bring about the possibility of wars.
5. Domestic violence harms family members.
6. Violence causes high crime rates.
7. Too many people are on welfare.
8. Civility in our society is breaking down, as shown, for example, by road rage, littering, impoliteness, and frivolous litigation.
9. Too many people are killed or injured in accidents.
10. Many workers are poorly trained to do their jobs or need retraining.

How many of these problems are problems with human behavior and therefore within the scope of psychology? You are right—all of them! Think of the issues politicians talk about: crime, health, education, drugs, and the economy. Problems in these areas come about because of the way people behave. To solve these problems we need to understand human behavior better, and to do that we need research. Thus, the work we do as psychological researchers is not only interesting and fun but also frequently quite important. Society needs this research, and the answers we find will help people live better lives.

■ Summary

Although we all have a natural curiosity about human behavior, many of us develop irrational fears that block our ideas. Some of us fear that all other researchers are geniuses and that our ideas will not be original. Some people are afraid to propose an experiment requiring a complex apparatus, while others are afraid of experiments with a simple apparatus. Some others fear that their idea is too simple, that their experiment will require complicated statistics, or that their idea is not perfect when it is proposed. Finally, many people do not believe they have good ideas until they translate them into scientific jargonese.

The major key to getting experimental ideas is to learn to *observe* the world about you. You also need to know which ideas are scientifically appropriate. Ideas must be **repeatable**, **observable**, and **testable** to be experimental ideas. To get ideas, you can observe yourself, friends, children, and even pets. Although some of the best ideas come from direct observation, you can also get ideas by reading other people's research (vicarious observation) and from following up your own research.

The typical way in which observations are turned into experiments is through a **theory**, a statement about the probable relationships among a set of abstract variables. Observations lead to theory through a process called **induction**, in which a general statement is derived from specific instances. A prediction, called a **hypothesis**, can then be made from the theory through a process called **deduction**. If an experiment testing this hypothesis confirms it, the theory is supported, not proved. If the hypothesis is disconfirmed, according to the rules of logic, the theory is disproved through deduction. However, because the statistical tests used to disconfirm the hypothesis are probabilistic, disproof of the theory is not certain.

A **descriptive theory** attaches names to events and is most useful when the names are attached to abstract but definable events. **Analogical theories** explain how relationships work by drawing an analogy between psychological relationships and a physical model. **Quantitative theories** specify relationships in mathematical terms. Psychology has very few quantitative theories because we are still learning how to account for variability and how to develop precise scales of measurement. A good theory *accounts for most of the data*, is *testable*, is *not too restrictive*, has *parsimony*, and is *able to predict* the outcome of future experiments, and the best theories help answer **ultimate questions** (*why* questions) rather than just **proximate questions** (*what* questions).

Skinner held that theories are practically useless because they do not help account for observable events, they lull us into believing that unfinished research is complete, and they cause research to become useless when the theory is overturned. Although most investigators disagree with this position and believe that theories are useful, theories are not always required to do good research, particularly during the early stages of research, and for **applied research**—which is done to solve a problem—as opposed to **basic research**—which is done to contribute to the scientific body of knowledge.

4

How to Be Fair with Participants

Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

MATTHEW 7:12

Our data show that the social structure of competition and reward is one of the sources of permissive behavior in experimentation with human subjects; the relatively unsuccessful scientist, striving for recognition, was most likely to be permissive.

B. BARBER (1976)

Oh, what a tangled web we weave,
When first we practice to deceive!

SIR WALTER SCOTT

The human mind has no other means of becoming acquainted with the laws of the organic world except by experiments and observation on living animals.

IVAN P. PAVLOV

From an ethical point of view, we all stand on equal footing—
whether we stand on two feet, or four, or none at all.

P. SINGER (1985)

Now that you have an idea for an experiment, you are ready to begin planning it in more detail. First, however, we need to consider the issue of ethics. As experimenters we could be unethical in at least two ways: We could mistreat the people or animals whose behavior we are measuring. We could also mistreat the body of knowledge that we are trying to establish—in other words, treat our science unfairly. In this chapter we discuss treating participants fairly; in the next chapter we discuss treating science fairly.

Society as a whole, and the scientific community in particular, has agreed on a set of rules by which we must do our research. Some of these rules are unwritten, such as the basic rules of courtesy. The assumption is that such rules are so obvious that everybody understands them. Other rules are written, such as *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* (American Psychological Association [APA], 2002) and *Ethics in Research with Human Participants* (Sales & Folkman, 2000). These rules are continually revised as society's conception of

the role of experimentation and the rights of an individual change. In the first part of this chapter, we consider the relationship between the person doing the experiment and the one being experimented on, including some basic courtesies in the relationship. Then we examine how this relationship can affect the outcome of an experiment. We also explore alternative experimenter–participant relationships. Finally, we consider the ethics of treating animals fairly.

■ Treating Human Participants Fairly

Because the purpose of doing research in psychology is to understand behavior, we will usually be interacting with humans (and in some cases animals). Traditionally, psychologists have referred to the people who provide the behavior as *subjects*. The early forefathers and foremothers of psychology probably liked this term because it sounded scientific and the subjects of the research were humans. Unfortunately, the term also may imply that people are subject to the experimenter’s will, or even worse, subjected to it! Back in the 1930s it was suggested that the term *experimentee* should be used in place of *subject*, but the suggestion never caught on (Rosenzweig, 1970).

This discussion may seem pretty trivial to you: What’s in a word? In this case, the word *subject* reflects the nature of the relationship between this individual and the experimenter and suggests certain ethical considerations. Subjects are passive and react to conditions of an experiment much as chemicals passively react when combined in the laboratory. For these reasons, in 1994 the APA recommended that the accepted terminology be changed, and those who were formerly called *subjects* be called *participants*. The APA felt that this term properly acknowledges the help that our participants give us by participating in our research and gives them a more equivalent status to the experimenter. As you will see in Chapter 13, in writing research reports it is best to call the participants what they are: students, children, women, and so forth, but the appropriate generic term is participants.

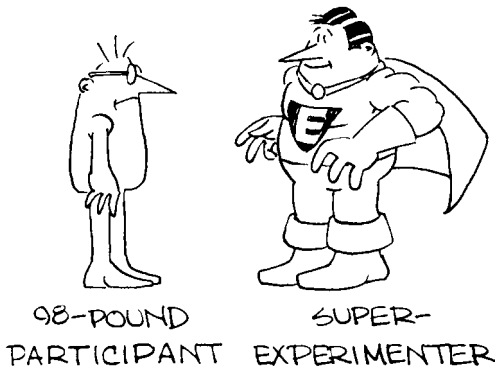
The use of the term participants rather than subjects is not universally accepted. For instance the Psychonomic Society allows its authors to ignore this rule. Roddy Roediger, the former president of the American Psychological Society (now the Association for Psychological Sciences), vehemently opposes the use of the term participants for subjects and claims to have special dispensation for his articles submitted to APA journals because of a delicate condition he describes in a letter to a copyeditor of APA, part of which I quote:

I should point out that I am a member (in fact, the founder) of a group of Sufferers of Participant Phobia (SPP). Because I have had to survive the use of the word participant in many APA journals . . . I am also a member of Participant Phobia Syndrome Survivors (PPSS). Use of the word participants in our journals has caused me mental anguish, has produced undue stress, and has caused me to write this letter and seek help from a support group (other experimental psychologists who think the language change an abomination . . .). (Roediger, 2004)

Obviously, this letter overstates the case with a bit of tongue-in-cheek humor, but it does express a legitimate concern some investigators have about the science of psychology becoming oversensitive to what they feel are certain pressure groups having political rather than scientific agendas.

In the early history of experimental psychology, nobody worried about what to call the people who were experimented on because the experimenter and the participant were the same person. In those days, most psychologists reported their own internal experiences as the dependent variable in their experiments. Believing that only time and training made it possible to become aware of these internal experiences, experimenters considered themselves their own best participants.

Later in the history of psychology, many experimenters came to believe that verbal reports of internal events were inappropriate data for the science of psychology. Arguing that being objective and subjective at the same time is not possible, these experimenters started a revolution in psychology. Some psychologists, overreacting to the revolution, decided that only animals were appropriate for psychology experiments. If you think verbal reports of a participant are not appropriate subject matter, then pick one who cannot talk!¹ During this era, the rat became a prime participant for experimentation. Other investigators felt that although experimenters were too experienced to be experimented on, rats were rather unlike most humans. What was needed was a naive human. The naive human chosen was the college student. College students are the participants in 70% to 85% of published research (Schultz, 1969; Smart, 1966) and in as much as 90% of research conducted by university psychology departments (Jung, 1969).



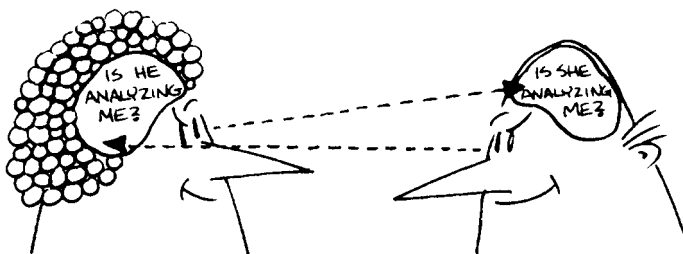
According to the latest view, a participant is supposed to be a naive, well-motivated observer who will react to experimental manipulations in an uncontaminated way. Yet, as we will see, participants are not uncontaminated observers. They usually have definite ideas about the experiment they are serving in, and they attempt to achieve specific goals that are often different from the experimenter's.

Humans (even college students) also have certain legal and moral rights. A physicist can take the block of wood from the inclined-plane experiment and drop it, hammer on it, swear at it, kiss it, or do any number of things with it. Although his colleagues may think he is pretty weird, they would not have him arrested or throw him out of the profession. Psychologists, however, must preserve their participants' rights at all times.

¹ OK, I am taking a bit of liberty with history here. I will discuss some better reasons for using animals in research later in this chapter.

The nature of the experimenter–participant relationship makes participants particularly vulnerable because the experimenter usually has most of the power. For example, many individuals serve in experiments to satisfy part of a psychology class requirement. Under these circumstances, students may feel that their course grade will be affected if they fail to do as the experimenter asks. On the other hand, if people are paid for their services, they may feel that noncooperative behavior will earn them less money. Finally, if individuals volunteer for experiments because they believe they can advance the science of psychology, they may feel that society will benefit from their cooperation. In any of these cases, participants see the experimenter as having the ultimate power to evaluate or manipulate their behavior.

In addition to these academic, monetary, or altruistic motives for cooperating with the experimenter, participants may also share the commonly held opinion that psychologists have a mysterious bag of tricks for determining whether someone is cooperating. The first three sentences between a psychologist and a stranger illustrate this belief: “What do you do for a living?” “I’m a psychologist.” “Oh, are you analyzing me?” For some reason, many people believe that every psychologist has X-ray vision and can look deep into their minds and find out what they are thinking. They believe they had better cooperate or the experimenter will get ‘em! This myth again helps stack the experimenter–participant relationship in favor of the experimenter.



RULES OF COURTESY

To unstack the relationship a little, experimental psychologists need to follow a code of behavior that treats their participants with respect and dignity.

As a new experimenter, you should hang a sign in your experimental room (an imaginary one is OK) that says “Participants are humans too!” Participants deserve the same courtesies you would give anyone who offered to help you with a project. Some simple rules of courtesy you should follow are:

1. *Be present.* Too often experimenters forget that they have a participant signed up or fail to notify the individual if the equipment has broken down or if the experiment has been delayed or called off for some other reason. Once a person signs up for an experiment, you should make every effort to fulfill your obligation to be present for the experiment.

2. *Be prompt.* A participant's time is valuable too. Don't waste it.
3. *Be prepared.* You should rehearse all phases of the experiment prior to meeting any participant. Not only is it discourteous to do otherwise, but also if you stammer over the instructions, tinker with the equipment, and generally fumble and mumble your way through the experiment, participants may become so confused or disgusted that they perform poorly.
4. *Be polite.* Unless the experiment calls for it, ask your participants to do something; don't order them. Make liberal use of the words "please," "thank you," and "you're welcome."
5. *Be private.* Treat all information that a participant gives you within an experimental context as confidential. Be discreet not only about what the individual tells you but also about how he or she performs on the experimental task. Federally funded grants are specific about what information you may obtain, how you may use that information, and how you may code and store it. If possible, eliminate participants' names from data sheets, and use a method that will prevent others from discovering the identity of individuals.
6. *Be professional.* You need not be so sober and stiff that your participants feel uncomfortable, but do not be so casual and flippant that you convince them that you don't care much about the experiment. They won't care either! Nor is an experiment the proper place to make dates, hustle golf partners, sell insurance, or use the experimenter-participant relationship for any purpose other than research.

These rules seem simple enough, but not all ethical issues concerning human participants are so straightforward. More controversial issues, such as "What constitutes informed consent?" and "Should mental stress be permitted?" are discussed at length in *Ethical Principles in the Conduct of Research with Human Participants* (APA, 2002). However, no publication can cover all possible ethical issues, and many experiments involve "close calls" where an unbiased opinion is required. For these reasons research-oriented institutions have **institutional review boards**, often abbreviated as IRBs.² These IRBs are made up of experienced researchers and sometimes physicians and other technical experts. All research using human participants should be screened by such a board.³ Typically, the researcher fills out a form that contains a

² The National Institutes of Health require IRBs for all research funded by them. They published the guideline "Protecting Human Research Subjects: Institutional Review Board Guide" (*NIH Guide*, Volume 22, Number 29, August 13, 1993) that is designed to assist review board members, researchers, and institutional administrators in fulfilling their responsibilities. Copies can be obtained from the U.S. Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250 (reference GPO Stock No. 017-040-00525-3).

³ In some cases, for courses that use a book such as the one you are holding, the instructor can convince the IRB to let the instructor evaluate classroom experiments for ethical considerations. When convincing the IRB, the instructor tends to be conservative about what will be approved. Although from time to time a course experiment is important enough to publish, the primary purpose of most of the experiments is to train students to do research. In most cases, the students' training can be accomplished as well with a low-risk experiment as with a high-risk experiment. So if you are planning a classroom experiment in which participants take a handful of drugs and then disclose their kinkiest sexual fantasies to an audience . . . forget it!

number of questions, such as “Will participants be asked to give informed consent?” and “Will confidentiality of the data be maintained?” This form also asks the researcher to describe briefly the research being proposed. The members of the board pay particular attention to the issue of potential physical or psychological harm to participants. It is unrealistic to expect that the risk of harm can be reduced to zero in any piece of research; a participant may break a leg tripping on the carpet. However, the review board’s task is to make sure that the risk of harm is minimized. And when known risks are a necessary part of the research, the board’s job is to decide whether the benefits likely to be derived from the research outweigh these risks.

Such review boards certainly help eliminate or improve many potentially unethical investigations. However, IRBs in the biomedical field have themselves been the subject of research, for it has been found that a significant minority of people who serve on such boards are poor at balancing the risks and benefits of human research (B. Barber, 1976). A large majority of board members surveyed had received no formal training in research ethics.

Some psychologists argue that there is little evidence that IRBs have been effective in reducing the risk to human participants (Mueller & Furedy, 2001). Some also feel that IRBs can become so picky that they encroach on intellectual inquiry in the social sciences. Others, such as Tom Puglisi (2001), the former director of the federal government’s office that oversees IRBs, believe that IRBs serve a necessary purpose and that a proper reading of the regulations makes much of social and behavioral sciences research exempt from the regulations. In other words, when most psychologists submit their research proposals to an IRB, they should be stating why the research is exempt from regulation rather than trying to justify doing the research. Regardless of your opinion about the usefulness of IRBs, you should realize that the ultimate responsibility for doing ethical research still lies with you, the experimenter.

INFORMED CONSENT

One of the issues of concern to IRBs and to you is **informed consent**. Before they consent to participate, participants are entitled to be informed about the factors that might influence this decision. Once they have been so informed, the researcher must document their consent, usually in writing. Although informing participants and obtaining their consent may seem to be pretty straightforward, a number of factors may cloud the issue—for example, documenting that the information given was understandable, ensuring that participants in a subordinate position are not pressured to participate, or, for some participants, determining whether they are capable of making an informed decision. *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* (APA, 2002) goes into some detail about such issues:

Text not available due to copyright restrictions

The “Ethical Principles” also say that there are conditions under which informed consent is not required; however, you still usually need to get the approval of an IRB to ensure that your interpretation is correct:⁴

8.05 Dispensing With Informed Consent for Research

Psychologists may dispense with informed consent only

- (1) where research would not reasonably be assumed to create distress or harm and involves
 - (a) the study of normal educational practices, curricula, or classroom management methods conducted in educational settings;
 - (b) only anonymous questionnaires, naturalistic observations, or archival research for which disclosure of responses would not place participants at risk of criminal or civil liability or damage their financial standing, employability, or reputation, and confidentiality is protected; or
 - (c) the study of factors related to job or organization effectiveness conducted in organizational settings for which there is no risk to participants’ employability, and confidentiality is protected or
- (2) where otherwise permitted by law or federal or institutional regulations.

Once you are comfortable that you have provided a means for your research participants to give informed consent, you need to consider the nature of the experimenter–participant relationship that will be set up in your experiment. The nature of this relationship is important because it affects not only the participant’s rights but also the experimental outcome. Although experimental psychologists like to pretend that participants in psychology experiments are neutral creatures reacting in a sterile, controlled environment, most know that such is not the case. In the next section we consider in more detail how the experimental situation can influence the outcome of an experiment.

⁴IRBs seem to have particular trouble believing that when 1b is true, no harm expected and an anonymous questionnaire, you do not need an informed consent form. I have seen more arguments about this issue at board meetings than any other.

DEMAND CHARACTERISTICS

When participants show up for an experiment, they have little idea what they will be required to do, but they are usually interested in the experiment and want to know exactly what it is about. Experimenters in turn are often secretive about their intention, which prompts the participants to try to determine what the experiment is really about from clues the experimenter gives them. The experiment then becomes a problem-solving game.

These clues that influence participants in the experimental situation have been called **demand characteristics** because they demand certain responses (Orne, 1962). While the experimenter provides many such clues, participants also bring demand characteristics with them to the experiment. If they have taken a psychology course, have read about psychology experiments, or have even been told about the experiment by a friend, they may bring the following expectations with them: The experimenter is going to shock me. The experimenter is trying to find out how intelligent I am. The experimenter is going to trick me into revealing something nasty about myself.

Sometimes these notions are so overpowering that a participant cannot be swayed from them. A participant in one of my experiments was once required to memorize a set of words presented to him through earphones. Shortly after starting the experiment, he tore off the headset and shouted, "This thing is shocking me!" Thinking he might be right, I carefully measured for any current passing through the headset. The headset was well grounded. I tried to continue the experiment, but this fellow still claimed that he was being shocked. He had made up his mind that I was going to shock him and would not believe otherwise. As a result, his data had to be discarded.

Other demand characteristics come from subtle cues that the participant picks up during the experiment. To minimize such cues, experimenters attempt to standardize all experimental procedures. An experimenter usually reads instructions, for example, from a written copy, so that all participants will at least have the same verbal demand characteristics. In some experiments, however, even the way the experimenter reads the instructions can affect the participant's performance. In one experiment, two sets of tape-recorded instructions were made by experimenters who were biased toward opposite experimental outcomes (Adair & Epstein, 1968). The experimenters found significant differences between the performances of those hearing different tapes. Although the experimenters read the same instructions, the subtle differences in their voices apparently produced results consistent with their biases.

Even animals seem to be influenced by subtle cues given by the experimenter. In one of the more famous experiments on experimenter bias, student experimenters trained rats to run a maze (Rosenthal & Fode, 1973). Some of the experimenters were told that their rats had been specially bred to be bright, fast learners; the others were told that their rats had been bred to be dull, slow learners. The supposedly bright rats learned to run the maze in fewer trials, even though they were in fact littermates of the supposedly dull rats. The usual reason given for this result is that the student experimenters must have treated the rats differently, playing with the "bright" rats more and handling

them so that they became less fearful of being manipulated. However, other investigators have claimed that the results might be due to student experimenters' cheating with their data (Barber & Silver, 1968). Whatever the reason, experimenter bias was reflected in the outcome of the experiment.

Though my presentation of the concept of demand characteristics makes it sound pretty ominous, it may be less of a problem than I have suggested. Investigators (Weber & Cook, 1972) have reported finding little evidence that experimental participants typically try to confirm what they believe is the experimenter's hypothesis, which they have deduced from cues in the experiment. Instead, these investigators claim that participants try to put their best foot forward; that is, they try to appear competent, normal, and likable. The participants' concern with how they will be judged is far more important than their concern about fulfilling the experimenter's expectancies or confirming the hypothesis.

T. X. Barber (1976), in a book dealing with the pitfalls in human research, reports that many experiments claiming to demonstrate demand characteristics are themselves seriously weakened by other design flaws. He believes that much of the research supporting the concept has been poorly done. However, just because the research may be flawed, we cannot necessarily conclude that demand characteristics can be ignored as a potential problem in our experiments. Anything that we can do to minimize their potential effects should be done to improve our experiments.

Responses of Participants to Demand Characteristics

If participants do detect the demand characteristics in an experiment, how might they respond?

Cooperative participants. After human participants determine in their own minds what the demand characteristics of the experiment are, they react according to their attitude toward the experiment (Adair, 1973). Most people tend to be *cooperative* and try to fulfill the perceived demands of the experimenter. Some cooperate to an astounding degree. In one experiment testing cooperativeness, the experimenter gave a participant a stack of 2000 sheets of paper and asked him to compute the 224 addition problems on each page. Although this task was obviously impossible, the individual continued to add for five and one-half hours, at which point the experimenter gave up! In a second experiment, the experimenter instructed participants to tear up each sheet into at least 32 pieces after completing the additions. Again, they persisted in the task for several hours without appearing hostile.

To see how this desire to cooperate might be behind a participant's response to demand characteristics, consider the following experiment on group pressure: A person is brought into a room with six other people. The group is given some problems, asking the group to judge which of two lines is longer. The first few problems are easy, and everybody agrees. Then two lines are presented, and our participant is sure that the top line is longer, but everybody else says the

bottom line is longer. After a long pause, the participant finally agrees that the bottom line is longer. What happened in this experiment? The experimenter designed the experiment to find out whether group pressure can cause someone to make an obviously incorrect response. The other participants in the room were confederates or stooges trained by the experimenter to lie on the appropriate trial. Because the real participant gave in to the group pressure, the experimenter feels that the hypothesis has been confirmed. But let's read the mind of our participant⁵ and see what really happened: "Well, here's another pair of lines. The top line is definitely longer. What a dumb experiment this is! Why waste our time having us do such an obviously easy task? And why are we doing it as a group? The experimenter must be trying to see if we can influence each other. Sure enough, everybody else is saying the bottom line is longer. They couldn't possibly really think that. Let's see, I could either give in to these shills and agree or hold my ground. I want to do a good job so I can get out of here. Besides, I'm sure that a group of people can get someone to change his or her mind, so I might as well agree. Besides, the experimenter seems like a nice person and I don't want to mess up the experiment."

If our mind reading is correct, our experimenter's conclusion was wrong. The participant, who is only trying to be cooperative, can cooperate us into drawing an incorrect conclusion! In fact, by the 1970s it became apparent that participants in conformity studies such as the one just described were often highly suspicious, ranging from 50% to 90% indicating suspiciousness (Glinski, Glinski, & Slatin, 1970). However, the effect of suspiciousness on behavior appears to be negligible. In other words, there is little difference between the behavior of suspicious and naive participants (Kimmel, 1996), and where there are effects, the participants tend toward making themselves look good rather than reacting negatively toward the experimenter.

Defensive participants. Some participants are less concerned with making the experimenter look good than with making themselves look good; let's call them *defensive* participants. These individuals search for demand characteristics in the same way that cooperative participants do, but they use them differently. Usually participants trying to perform as well as possible are an asset to an experiment. But, in some experiments, particularly attitude-assessment experiments, such persons can cause problems.

Suppose that we are investigating the difference in the way Hispanics and Anglos view gender-role behavior in children. We post one sign-up sheet requesting volunteers who have Spanish surnames and speak Spanish as a first language and a second sheet requesting Anglos who meet neither of these criteria. Now we show each volunteer pictures of children in traditional gender roles (such as girls playing with dolls) and in nontraditional gender roles (such as boys playing with dolls). We then ask the participants to rate the acceptability of each behavior. Suppose that more Hispanics than Anglos report that they find the nontraditional behaviors acceptable. We might conclude that Hispanics are

⁵ See, psychologists do have mystical powers.

more liberal than Anglos. On the other hand, another interpretation is possible. The members of each group are aware that they were selected on the basis of ethnic origin. Suppose that the Hispanics were more concerned with upholding the pride of their ethnic group than the Anglos were. In this case, they might have bent over backward to keep from looking like socially unacceptable chauvinists. In other words, they appropriately perceived the demand characteristics of the experiment and attempted to defend their ethnic group.

In an actual experiment that demonstrated the defensive participant's reaction to demand characteristics, experimenters asked participants to tap a key with their right and then their left index finger (Rosenberg, 1969). Tapping rates are usually faster for the preferred finger, but one group was told that graduate students at Yale and Michigan had been found to tap the key at similar rates with each finger. A second group was not given this information. The difference between tapping rates for the two fingers was significantly smaller for the first group. Again the participants perceived the not-so-subtle demand characteristics of the experiment and tried to make themselves look as good as possible.

Noncooperative participants. Some participants are neither cooperative nor defensive but downright *noncooperative!* The result of such behavior has been picturesquely called the "screw-you-effect" (Masling, 1966). The noncooperative individual attempts to determine the demand characteristics of an experiment and then behave in such a way as to contradict the experimenter's hypothesis. Such people act out of any number of motives. They may be participating to fulfill a course requirement and resent being coerced. Or they may be opposed to the whole idea of studying human behavior scientifically. Or perhaps they simply do not like the experimenter. Whatever the reason, such individuals can be a real nuisance in an experiment. One way to eliminate noncooperative participants is to set some minimal standard of performance so that you may exclude any participant's data that fall below this standard. You should determine this standard before the experiment and note it when the experiment is reported.

Even this procedure will not eliminate the data of all noncooperative participants, however. Sometimes the best we can do is attempt to give the participants a positive impression of our experiment and hope that they will be cooperative.

How to Minimize Demand Characteristics

Although we cannot completely eliminate demand characteristics from an experiment, every attempt should be made to minimize those demand characteristics that might become confounding variables by differentially affecting the levels of the independent variable. It is important to know whether a change in behavior is due to the experimenter's manipulation of the independent variable or to the participant's perceived demand characteristics. Confounding caused by demand characteristics can be minimized in several ways.

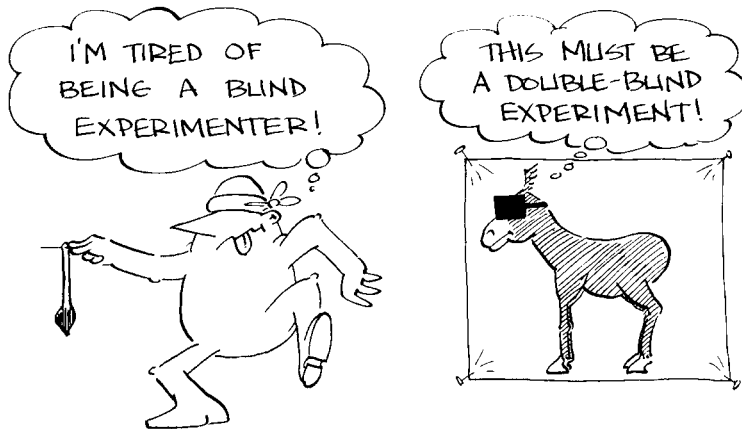
Automation. Demand characteristics can be controlled by *automating* as much of the experiment as possible. We have already discussed the use of tape-recorded instructions as one type of automation. Experimenters are often poor at reading instructions anyway, particularly after reading them aloud 20 or 120 times. You can also ask a person who is unaware of the expected outcome of the experiment to record the instructions if you want to minimize experimenter bias caused by voice inflections.

I have also used videotaped instructions in some of my own experiments or used computer presentations containing both audio and video. In this case if experimental trials involve complicated sequences of events, sample trials can be presented at a slow enough rate for participants to follow, thereby eliminating the need for the experimenter to go back and explain earlier portions of the instructions.

In some laboratories, computers are used to play all or part of the experimenter's role in an experiment. Some investigators program the computer so that the participants never see a human experimenter. The participant shows up at the appointed time. A sign instructs the individual to be seated at the computer terminal and to press a button. The computer then displays the instructions. The individual indicates his or her understanding of the instructions, and the experiment proceeds. The general idea behind this approach is that if participants are not the passive automatons we once thought they were, we can turn experimenters into automatons instead. However, some researchers object to this procedure on the grounds that the artificiality of the situation not only causes participants to feel dehumanized but also decreases the generalizability of the results. This procedure also requires that participants be able to read and understand the instructions, which makes it unsuitable for some participants, such as children and rats (and college sophomores?).

Blind and double blind. A second way of minimizing demand characteristics transmitted by the experimenter is to keep the experimenter from knowing the level of the independent variable being presented. Typically, participants are unaware of the level being presented to them. For this reason such experiments are usually called **blind experiments**. However, it is sometimes important that neither the participant nor the experimenter be aware of the manipulations in an experiment. For example, I once did an experiment to determine whether it was possible to "feel" colors with the fingers. Participants were blindfolded and given three cards, two red and one blue. On each trial they were required to put the two cards that were alike in one stack and the one that was different in another. I was concerned that I might unintentionally signal them when they were correct by changing my breathing rate, coughing, or grunting when they had the cards correctly arranged. Some of my ESP-believing friends even suggested that I might be sending ESP messages when they were correct! To avoid such signaling, I sat behind a screen so that I could not observe the participants. I was thus "blind" to the color they were feeling. In fact, this procedure is sometimes called **double blind**, because neither the participant nor the experimenter is aware of

which level of the independent variable the participant is exposed to.⁶ Psychopharmacologists, who investigate the effects of drugs on behavior, often do research using a double-blind design. Suppose that you, a researcher, want to know whether a drug called Crowzac, which has just been developed, cures people of being depressed whenever they saw crows. You realize that there may be a problem if you just give the drug to one group of patients and then try to determine whether their depression has been relieved. The depression might get better solely because of the patients' expectation that the drug will help them. It is also possible that if you are evaluating the patients' depression, you will see a phantom improvement because you expect it. To protect against the effects of patient or experimenter expectations, you could use a second, no drug level of the independent variable with another group—a control group. You would have to treat this control group in exactly the same way you treat the drug group except for actually giving them the drug. You would probably decide to give the control group placebos in place of the drug.



Giving a **placebo** involves administering a nonactive substance in the same manner that the active drug is administered. If the drug is taken in pill form, the placebo might be just a sugar pill, or if it is an injection, a saline solution might be the placebo. Even in research on marijuana, placebo cigarettes have been produced that taste like marijuana but do not contain the active ingredient. The purpose of the placebo is to produce a double-blind design; both the experimenter and the participants are blind to whether any individual is receiving the drug or the placebo.

Sometimes it is difficult or impossible to keep participants and the experimenter from knowing the level of the independent variable to which participants are being exposed. If you were an investigator interested in how lighting conditions in an assembly plant affect worker productivity, you might keep one group of workers under existing conditions and put a second group under

⁶ One of my reviewers points out that this procedure then made me double color blind!

increased illumination. Now, the workers are obviously aware of the lighting conditions as soon as they step into the room, and nothing you do would prevent that. I use this example because this was the initial experiment done in the 1920s from which the term *Hawthorne effect* came. Hawthorne was the name of the Western Electric Company plant where the experiment was done. The reported outcome was that productivity increased by the same amount for both groups regardless of the lighting conditions. The **Hawthorne effect**, then, refers to a change in behavior that is due simply to the experimenter's paying attention to the participants rather than to the effects of the independent variable. The overall finding from this research was that over a 5-year period as changes were made in working conditions such as lighting, rest pauses, and number of hours worked, productivity kept increasing regardless of which condition the workers were under (Roethlisberger, 1977).

The original interpretation of this finding was that the workers' morale kept improving as continuing attention was paid to them during each change in conditions. However, Mac Parsons (1974) reviewed the original research and discovered that over the course of the experiment the workers were given increased access to feedback about their daily productivity. This feedback, combined with changing the way they were paid, could have led to the increased productivity. His claim was that the workers had simply increased their output as a function of increasing reinforcement. So the Hawthorne effect as it is typically interpreted may not have actually caused the results observed at the Hawthorne plant. Nevertheless, it is certainly possible for an experimental manipulation to cause a change in behavior independent of what that manipulation was. So as an experimenter you must attempt to minimize these effects and the effects of participants' knowing to which level of the independent variable they are exposed. If these effects cannot be completely eliminated, at least you should be alert to the possible confounding they might cause.

Multiple experimenters. A third way to deal with experimenter-caused demand characteristics is to use *multiple experimenters*. In this case you do not control the experimenter variable but allow it to vary by using random assignment of the available experimenters to the various levels of the independent variable. Such a procedure increases the generality of your result and decreases the chances that a single, blatantly biased experimenter will influence the outcome.

Are Demand Characteristics a Problem in Your Experiment?

Even when you have attempted to minimize demand characteristics, they can creep into your experiment. Here are some procedures for detecting them.

Postexperiment questioning. For a number of years after the revolution against subjective verbal reports, experimenters seldom questioned participants about their impressions after the experiment. Fortunately, many experimenters now routinely seek this information. Such information can be valuable not only for uncovering demand characteristics but also for suggesting new hypotheses that can later be tested in a formal experiment.

Postexperiment questioning can take many forms, from the experimenter's asking an offhand question to a well-structured written questionnaire. If you want to be sure of uncovering demand characteristics, you should plan your questions ahead of time.

In planning your questions, make sure that they do not have demand characteristics built into them. For example, in the group-pressure experiment discussed earlier, a biased question would be "You weren't aware that the other participants weren't real participants, were you?" The question itself demands that the respondent say no. If respondents say yes, they are admitting that they were not the naive, cooperative people they had agreed to be. They also put themselves in the position of telling the experimenter that the experiment was a waste of time because their data cannot be used.

You should also plan your questions so that they go from general, open-ended questions to specific, probing questions. For example, in one experiment designed to determine whether humans could be conditioned without being aware of it, participants were asked to talk about any topic they wished and to continue until asked to stop (Krasner, 1958). Whenever they said a plural noun, the experimenter nodded, said "Good" or "Uh-huh," and was generally reinforcing. As participants continued to talk, they used plural nouns more frequently. As evidence that the participants were unaware of the conditioning, the experimenters asked the postexperiment question "Did you notice that the experimenter was doing anything peculiar as you talked?" Most reported that they had not. Other investigators, not convinced by this experiment, did a similar experiment but followed the original question with progressively more specific questions, such as "Did you notice that the experimenter would respond when you said certain words?" Although the participants had trouble verbalizing it, most of them were aware that "the experimenter was happier when I talked about certain things, like listing parts to cars." Those who mentioned this awareness were the same ones who had shown the effect of conditioning. Thus, to determine whether participants are influenced by demand characteristics, we should ask questions related to specific demand characteristics and more general questions.

Nonexperiments. Another way to determine whether demand characteristics could have affected the experimental outcome is to compare a **nonexperiment control group** with an experimental group (Adair, 1973). The nonexperiment control group is not exposed to manipulation of the independent variable at all. Members are simply told about the experiment, given the instructions, shown any apparatus, and then asked to describe how they think they would perform if put into that situation. If their prediction is similar to the outcome of the experimental group, they may have been able to detect demand characteristics. These characteristics, rather than the independent variable, could have caused the outcome of the experiment. If their prediction is different from the experimental outcome, demand characteristics probably did not cause the observed behavior.

For example, Mitchell and Richman (1980) were suspicious of a finding that supported a “quasi-pictorial” memory representation of mental images. In a typical experiment, participants are asked to memorize a visual stimulus, generate a mental image of it, and then “scan” from one point on the image to another. The usual finding is that there is a direct linear relationship between scan time and physical distance on the stimulus. Mitchell and Richman thought that demand characteristics were possible with this procedure, so they conducted a nonexperiment in which participants were simply asked to predict their scan times. These individuals produced scatterplots that were indistinguishable from those found in the previous experimental work. The researchers could not rule out the possibility that the original findings could also have been caused by demand characteristics.

Simulation control groups. Although asking participants who have not been in the actual experiment how they would have behaved may give you some idea of demand characteristics, it really doesn’t tell you how they would actually behave and may mislead you. For example, for a long time people have been curious about whether folks who are hypnotized can be made to perform antisocial acts or to injure themselves. In 1939, Rowland reported an experiment in which hypnotized participants were told that a large diamondback rattlesnake was a rope and were asked to pick it up. One of the two participants immediately attempted to do this, striking his hand on the invisible glass separating him from the poisonous snake. However, 41 of 42 nonhypnotized control participants refused when asked to do the same thing. The original finding was again replicated in 1952 by Young (as cited by Kihlstrom, 1995); seven of eight hypnotized participants tried to pick up the snake, which was behind an invisible glass, and were also willing to throw a glass of nitric acid at a research assistant, who was also behind glass. Do these results indicate that hypnotized people are willing to carry out antisocial and harmful actions?

In 1965, Orne and Evans devised a new procedure, the simulation control group, to investigate this topic. A **simulation control group** is exposed to the experimental situation but without a critical manipulation of the independent variable. In this case, an experimental group of highly hypnotizable participants was hypnotized and asked to pick up a snake called an Australian two-step, because that is as far as you get after it bites you! All participants complied, and they were also willing to remove a coin from a beaker of nitric acid and even throw the acid at one of the experimenters, again protected behind glass. However, both a group of participants not susceptible to hypnosis but asked to simulate being hypnotized and a group of nonhypnotized participants also complied without exception. Were these folks really so insensitive that they were willing to hurt themselves and the experimenter? Of course not. When interviewed after the experiment they said they felt perfectly safe in the experiment. They knew that the experimenter would not allow them to be harmed; safety was one of the demand characteristics of the experiment and they knew it. The simulation control group in this case was needed to fully understand how the demand characteristics rather than hypnosis might have dictated behavior.

ALTERNATIVE EXPERIMENTER–PARTICIPANT RELATIONSHIPS

In the beginning of this chapter was the naive participant. And the naive participant was pleasing in the sight of the experimenter. But not all naive participants are good; most are not even naive. So far we have been considering ways of keeping participants as naive as possible, or at least discovering when they cannot be considered naive. We have another alternative, however. We can give in to the fact that participants are not naive and make use of their problem-solving ability.

Deception and Role Playing

One way to use this problem-solving ability, is to give participants false cues so that their interpretation of the demand characteristics is incorrect. This procedure of **deception**, defined as concealing or camouflaging the real purpose of an experiment, is a controversial topic in psychology, for both moral and practical reasons.

Deception is widely used in psychology, particularly in some areas of social psychology. Indeed, some areas of social psychology could not be investigated experimentally without deception. For example, suppose that you are interested in determining the conditions that cause bystanders to give aid to someone who is apparently in trouble. It would obviously be quite inefficient to stand around on a street corner until someone is actually in trouble. Instead you would probably contrive a situation in which a confederate⁷ fakes being in trouble and you then observe bystander behavior. Of course, then you have deceived the bystander, but how could you do the experiment otherwise? Deception runs the gamut from the famous and notorious experiment by Stanley Milgram (1963), who deceived participants into believing they were administering dangerous and perhaps fatal electrical shocks to other participants, to fairly innocuous experiments in cognitive psychology. For example, in an experiment on incidental learning, the participants may be asked to look at a list of words and rate them on some dimension such as emotionality. Then at the end of the experiment they are given a memory test and asked to recall the words from the original list. In some respects they have been deceived because they were never informed that they should memorize the words. But it would have been impossible to study incidental learning if they had been informed; the learning would have been purposeful, not incidental.

Whether the use of deception is increasing or decreasing is debatable. As shown by several surveys, it certainly did increase in the 1970s and into the 1980s (Gross & Flemming, 1982). However, more recent surveys indicate that its use has leveled off or even declined (Nicks, Korn, & Mainieri, 1997). It certainly appears to be the case that the kind of deception used has changed in that there are now few studies that blatantly mislead participants and more that simply withhold relevant information.

⁷ No, not a rebel soldier! In psychology this is what we call people who are trained to help the experimenter by acting in a prescribed way during an experiment.

The argument for using deception goes something like this: Although it is generally wrong to lie, we are justified in temporarily misleading participants because we are contributing to the advancement of science. And as we have discussed, in some areas of psychology it would be impossible to answer many of the most important questions without using deception. Besides, we debrief our participants after the experiment is over and are perfectly honest at that point, thereby wiping out most of the effects of the deception.

The argument against the use of deception goes something like this: You can use a term like “misleading” if you wish, but it is just a nice way of saying “lying.” There is enough dishonesty in the world without being dishonest in the name of science. How many of these “scientifically justifiable” experiments have caused great leaps in science? Not many! We can devise alternative ways of doing many of the experiments anyway, such as having participants role-play. It is naive to think that debriefing participants at the end of the experiment wipes out all effects of the deception. As a practical matter there are two additional problems: deception increases future participants’ suspiciousness and reduces trust in psychologists, giving the profession a bad name. Deception in psychology is not worth the costs and should be eliminated (Ortmann & Hertwig, 1997).

Research on these first two points has been done (Kimmel, 1996), and it suggests that the effects of participant suspiciousness on research performance are negligible. In addition, this research indicates that deceived participants do not become resentful about having been fooled by researchers and deception does not negatively influence their perceptions about psychology or their attitudes about science in general. For example, Christensen (1988) reviewed studies that assessed research participants’ reactions to deception experiments and found that people who participated in deception experiments report that they did not mind being deceived, enjoyed the experience more (than those participating in nondeception experiments), received more educational benefit from it, and did not perceive that their privacy was invaded. In addition, surveys have consistently shown that most individuals in the general population do not have serious objections to deception used in research.

Role playing has been suggested as an alternative procedure to deception. Is it equally effective? Some experimenters have tried to use both deception and role playing under the same conditions and then compared the results. In *role playing* the experimenter asks participants to imagine that they are in a particular situation and to respond as they think they would in a similar real-world situation. If you are interested in bargaining behavior, for example, you might ask one individual to imagine that he is a labor leader, another to pretend that she is the president of a company, and a third to act like an arbitrator. You then proceed under the assumption that their responses in some way resemble those of people in the same real-world situation.

Unfortunately, although some experiments do report equivalent results from deception and role playing (Greenberg, 1967), many others do not (Orne, 1970). It is also difficult to specify the conditions under which similar results can be expected from the two methods. In many respects role playing experiments are much like the simulation control mentioned in the previous

section. Perhaps role playing simply reflects the demand characteristics of the experiment, rather than allowing us to predict what behavior would occur in a real-world situation.

The American Psychological Association says the following about deception in its *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* (APA, 2002):

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As fledgling psychologists you should take these rules seriously, and if you are considering the use of deception in one of your experiments, you should carefully weigh its costs and benefits.

Naturalistic Observation

I already mentioned this final alternative to the standard experimenter–participant relationship in Chapter 1. *Naturalistic observation* depends on the experimenter’s being an unobtrusive observer. Rather than having participants pretend to be in a bargaining role, for example, the experimenter might go to an actual bargaining situation and observe behavior. We have already discussed the problems associated with this method. Experimenters usually have little control over the variables in the situation. They often have to wait for them to occur naturally, and even then they cannot control potential confounding variables or draw causal conclusions from the correlational data.

In this section we have examined the problems of treating participants as naive, uncontaminated observers. At the least, we should be aware of the problem-solving nature of participants and design our experiments so that the effects of their attempts to solve problems can be evaluated. Where possible, these attempts should work for us rather than against us.

I will give the APA the final word (paraphrased) on the investigator’s responsibilities for treatment of human participants. Here are the principles the investigator would do well to follow (APA, 2002):

1. Evaluate the ethical acceptability of the experiment.
2. Determine whether participants are at risk.
3. Retain responsibility for ethical procedures.
4. Disclose risks to participants and obtain informed consent.
5. Determine whether deception is justified and necessary.

6. Respect the freedom of participants to decline participation.
7. Protect participants from discomfort, harm, and danger.
8. Give postexperimental debriefings.
9. Remove any undesirable consequences of participation.
10. Keep individual research information confidential.

If you follow these basic principles and, when in doubt, seek the advice of experienced investigators, you will probably never have problems with the ethics of human participants. Perhaps the best advice concerns your attitude. The participants are doing us a favor. Without their willingness to participate, the science of human behavior comes to an abrupt halt. Treat your human participants with the proper appreciation.

■ Treating Animals Fairly

When I ask my introductory psychology students to picture an experimental psychologist, most of them come up with an eggheaded, nerdy guy in a white lab coat running rats in a maze. This picture is a bit deceptive, not only because not all experimental psychologists are eggheaded, or nerdy, or guys, but because only about 7% or 8% of psychology studies involve animals. It is true that among the experiments using animals, 90% use rats, mice, and birds; very few use dogs, cats, or nonhuman primates. A recent survey indicated that among undergraduate psychology programs 62% of experimenters use animals for teaching purposes (Cunningham, personal communication, August 24, 2001). The most common types of live animals used were rats (81%), birds (27%), mice (19%), and fish (13%).

WHY PSYCHOLOGISTS DO RESEARCH ON ANIMALS

Although the use of animals in psychological research is infrequent, why is it done at all? Why not always use humans?

Continuity of Behaviors

As scientists, we take an evolutionary perspective and assume a continuity in the animal kingdom not only of biology but also of behavior. Although primates do not behave just like humans and rats even less so, human nervous systems are built from the same building blocks, and there are commonalities. Because certain behavioral abilities occurred early in evolutionary history, many of the most basic human behavior patterns are also present in the nonhuman animals. Thus, animal research is based on the assumption that we can investigate certain universal basic behaviors using lower-order animals. We know that during evolution animals kept basic behaviors but also acquired more complex behaviors that tended to override the basic behavior patterns. Thus, if we are interested in studying basic behaviors, such as simple learning or motivation, it may be not only possible but also preferable to use animals that display the basic behaviors unconfounded by the more sophisticated patterns of behavior shown

by higher-order animals. However, we must be careful when we attempt to generalize the behavior of a lower-order animal to humans. Humans are obviously much more complex than rats, and no reputable investigator suggests that rat behavior is exactly the same as human behavior. Although some less reputable interpreters of animal research have been known to overgeneralize findings out of ignorance or simplemindedness, such occasional misuses of animal data do not invalidate the original premise behind using animals.

Control

In addition to theoretical reasons for using animals in research, there are a number of practical reasons. For one thing, animals are available nearly all the time. For some reason, college students insist on taking weekends and holidays off. Animals can also be used for experiments that take place over a long period. It is also possible and legal to *control* the conditions under which animals exist, both in and out of the experiment. Thus, animal experimenters can investigate such interesting variables as overcrowding, sensory deprivation, wake–sleep cycles, and environmental stressors.

We can control both the heredity and the environment of animals, a task made easier by the fast reproduction and multiple births common to lower animals. In human research, heredity is seldom a controlled or constrained variable, whereas in animal research, it often is. It is not true that “anything goes” with animals, however. We will consider animal ethics shortly.

Uniqueness

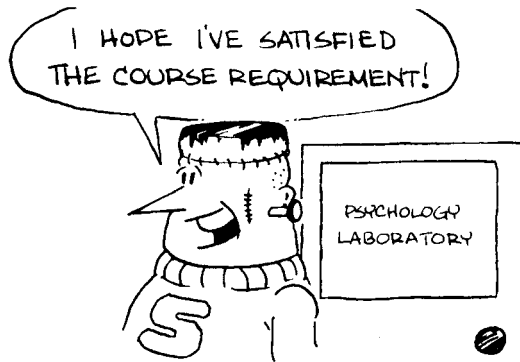
Some animals also have *unique characteristics* that make them more appropriate for certain types of research. For example, fruit flies not only reproduce quickly but also have large, simple chromosomes. Squid have much larger nerve cells than humans and so lend themselves to investigation of nervous-system structure. Similarly, many animals have a larger portion of the central nervous system devoted to the sense of smell or the sense of balance than we do. In such cases, humans are simply not the best participants for research.

Irreversible Effects

Finally, lower animals are often used when the research could have *irreversible effects* on the structure or function of the animal. Ablation research can be done only with animals because it requires that a portion of the nervous system be purposely destroyed to observe behavioral consequences. Similarly, humans cannot be used in experiments requiring that electrodes be implanted into the central nervous system. In many cases this type of research also requires that the animal be destroyed and a histology⁸ performed to locate the specific structural changes.

⁸ Histology usually involves examining the tissue of the nervous system to see what has been destroyed or where the electrodes were placed. The brain is stained and sliced into very thin pieces for microscopic examination.

Manipulations such as keeping animals socially isolated can also cause irreversible effects. One famous example of this procedure was the work in which infant monkeys were separated from their mothers shortly after birth and then presented with various artificial mothers to determine what the important mothering dimensions were (Harlow, 1958). People frown on using human babies for such research, and some people likewise frown on using animal babies.



ANIMAL ETHICS

The relationship between humans and animals has been defined in different ways by different cultures throughout history. In the Christian tradition humans have dominion over animals, and animals have been put on earth for the express use of humans. In the Western world this relationship was widely accepted until the time of Charles Darwin, the father of evolution. Darwin's proposition that there was a continuity within the animal kingdom was a double-edged sword. On one hand, animals became an important subject matter for the scientific community because of this continuity. On the other hand, this continuity removed the human from holding a unique place, superior to that of all other animals. Perhaps, then, it is not surprising that about this time, toward the end of the 1800s, the first animal rights groups, the antivivisectionists, began having a notable effect on people's opinions, particularly in England (see Dewsbury, 1990). By the turn of the century and for several decades thereafter, the antivivisectionists were quite active not only in Europe but also in the United States. They had many run-ins (verbal in nature at that time) with notable psychologists such as William James, Ivan Pavlov, Walter Cannon, and John Watson.

The animal rights movement then waned until it was spurred on by the civil rights movement and the publication of the book *Animal Liberation* by Peter Singer (1976). You are probably aware of the modern animal rights movement. There are now approximately 7000 animal protection groups in the United States alone (Justice Department, 1993). The largest of these organizations is People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), with approximately 350,000 members, a staff of 70, and a budget of \$7 million (Meyers, 1990). An aspect of the modern movement that was not present with the

antivivisectionists is terrorism. The most militant group is the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), an underground organization that has taken credit for 60% of the terrorism on research laboratories and researchers and has been deemed a terrorist organization by the FBI. Although PETA denies any official connection with ALF, it has agreed to publicize ALF's actions because it believes that breaking into a facility is the way to expose the alleged abusive treatment of animals.

There are those who believe that public interest in animal rights has peaked (Herzog, 1995). The number of articles referenced in a periodical review peaked at about 60 in 1990 but decreased to about 25 by 1994. However, terrorist acts continue. In 1997 a prize-winning researcher on drug abuse at a major university was picketed by a student organization, and later several members of that organization and an individual wearing a black mask and identifying himself as an ALF member showed up at her house, harassed the researcher and her family, and threatened to burn down her home (APA, 1997). It has been reported that there have been a total of 313 acts of terrorism by animal-rights groups, peaking in 1987–88 and declining somewhat since then (Burd, 1993). These incidents and threats of harassment have cost research institutions millions of dollars and have increasingly involved threats on researchers' lives (Mangan, 1990). What is going on here? What is the source of this controversy?

Part of the problem is that the most extreme activists believe that the rights of animals are the same as the rights of humans and that, therefore, all animal research should be banned. For example, one advocate says, "Today, animals are by far the most oppressed section of the community: their exploitation is as great an evil as were Black slavery, child labor and the degradation of women at the beginning of the last century. It is the great moral blind spot of our age" (Ryder, 1979, p. 14). These animal research abolitionists include the cofounder of PETA, who says she is "working for the day when there will be no animals in cages" (Havemann, 1989). Is this what the general public, psychologists, and students of psychology think?

Unfortunately, there has been no survey of the general public's attitude toward animal use in psychology. In the medical field there is some evidence of a decline in public support. Respondents who were asked if they agreed with the statement "Scientists should be allowed to do research that causes pain and injury to animals like dogs and chimpanzees *if* it produces new information about human health problems" fell from 63% in 1985 to 53% in 1993 (Pifer, Shimizu, & Pifer, 1994, as cited in Plous, 1996a). Negative opinion is even stronger in Great Britain. On the positive side, however, a poll found 88% approval for the use of rats in medical experiments, compared with 55% for dogs (Associated Press, 1985). And several polls have shown that more than three-quarters of the public believe "the use of animals in medical research is necessary for progress in medicine" (American Medical Association, 1989, as cited in Plous, 1996a).

To find out what psychologists and psychology students think about animals in psychology experiments, Plous (1996a, 1996b) conducted two excellent surveys, one using 3982 psychologists and another using 1188 psychology

majors. Perhaps surprisingly, about the same proportion of psychologists and students agreed on most issues. When asked their level of support for the use of animals in psychological research, about 80% of psychologists and 72% of psychology majors indicated that they either strongly supported it or supported it. And, of those giving an opinion, 84% of psychologists and 81% of the majors believed that the use of animals in psychological research is necessary for progress in psychology. However, the fact that surprised me was that 47% of the psychologists and 44% of the majors indicated they were not sure whether animals used in psychological research were treated humanely. Let's look at the rules regarding treatment.

For many years the U.S. Agriculture Department has been monitoring the federal-level regulations governing the treatment of most research animals, excluding rats, mice, and birds. Under pressure from the animal-rights groups, amendments were made in 1985 to the Animal Welfare Act—the legislation that regulates the care of dogs, cats, and nonhuman primates. After many hearings a set of rules was passed in 1991 and complying with these rules cost institutions an estimated \$537 million (Jaschik, 1991). The rules focus on issues including exercise for dogs, the establishment of institutional animal-research committees, and special care for young animals. Primates in particular are entitled to care that ensures their psychological and physical well-being.⁹

The 2002 Farm Bill passed by Congress ended a long-standing debate about whether the laboratory use of rodents and birds should be regulated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture by ruling that they should not. Congress felt that rats, mice, and birds, which are used in about 95% of nonhuman animal research, were adequately covered by the National Institutes of Health, the Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care, and local institutional animal care and use committees. All institutions supported by federal funds that do research using animals are required to have an animal research committee composed of experts including a veterinarian and a member from the public. This committee must approve all proposed research that uses animals and must ensure that the research is done by following the rules that we have already discussed.

I have gone into some detail about this topic to convince you that many people, including psychologists, are concerned about the animal-rights issue and are keeping a close watch on it. Because psychologists do use animals for research, the American Psychological Association has not been silent on the issue. *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* includes a section on animal research, which is given in the following text. There is an extensive statement on animal ethics on the APA Web site, <http://www.apa.org/science/anguide.html>

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⁹ Ironically, one of the researchers most vilified by the animal-rights radicals, Harry Harlow, did much of the research that forms the basis for these regulations.

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Why are psychologists so concerned that their right to do research on animals might be taken away? Aside from the fact that most of the psychologists who work with animals enjoy doing so and consider themselves animal lovers, they also cite the many advances they have made with this type of research that have improved human welfare (Miller, 1985), and animal welfare as well. Certainly on the medical front, animal research can be cited as having led to the virtual elimination of polio, rabies, cholera, and diphtheria, as well as the development of insulin treatment and cataract surgery and the curing of many cases of lymphatic leukemia in children. In psychology, animal research has led to significant advances in the treatment of mental disorders, pain control, drug abuse, and recovery from strokes. The highly successful behavior therapies are largely founded on animal research of 50 years ago. In some cases, particularly with basic research, it is often difficult to anticipate the exact nature of future benefits. Nevertheless, most researchers feel that the costs in terms of possible animal suffering are more than offset by the potential benefits.

Even most animal advocates occupy a middle ground between the two extreme positions and are willing to approach the issue from an informed and reasonable perspective. Most of them certainly condemn the extremists who terrorize researchers. If you wish to read more on this topic, the APA has published an expanded set of guidelines: *Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in the Care and Use of Animals* (1986). Boyce (1989) has a balanced treatment in the *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*, and Segal (1982) does a good job of weighing the needs of science against the needs of life. Carroll and Overmier (2001) have also edited a book *Animal Research and Human Health: Advancing Human Welfare Through Behavioral Science* that has a thorough discussion of these issues. Finally, Dennis Feeney (1987), a psychologist at the University of New Mexico with paraplegia, makes a strong case for animal research in an article in *American Psychologist*. He argues that the discussion of animal rights

versus human rights has involved individuals from the fields of science and agriculture, and animal-welfare organizations but has virtually ignored those who are disabled. He points to basic behavioral research in biofeedback and stroke recovery that has led to unanticipated therapeutic advances.

The following passage captures the essence of his position:

Those of us who have an incurable disease or have permanently crippling injuries can only hope for a cure through research. Much of this experimental work will require the use of animals, and accordingly, we must find some compromise that defends both human rights and animal welfare. In the determination of a compromise between the reduction of human suffering and the violation of animals' welfare, which at times includes causing pain or discomfort, I unequivocally choose to reduce human suffering. (p. 593)

In the end, you will have to decide for yourself about the ethics of using animals in research. In making your decision, you will have to go back to the very foundations of your beliefs about the relationship between humans and animals. If you are like most people, you will find it difficult to reach an entirely consistent position: Do you eat hamburgers? Would you agree to have your dog or other pet in a medical experiment? Would you condone the sacrifice of 100 dogs to find a cure that would save the life of your child? Do you buy ant and roach spray? Are you willing to adopt all the cats at the local animal shelter? From your answers to these questions, can you determine where you stand and come up with a consistent philosophy?

The issue is not clear-cut. Like most of us, you may simply have to weigh each case and try to determine whether the benefits exceed the costs. Some psychological experiments, by their very nature, will subject animals to stress and pain. In such situations, you should be convinced that the potential scientific gains are worth the costs before starting your research, and you should be able to defend your decision. Although institutions do have committees composed of experts to screen animal research, you should consider these committees as imposing only minimum standards. You must satisfy what should be a more stringent standard of ethics—your own.

■ Summary

The ethical and methodological issues of treating human and animal research **participants** fairly were considered in this chapter. Because most of the power in the experimenter–participant relationship lies with the experimenters, it is important that they follow certain basic rules of courtesy. They must be present, prompt, prepared, polite, private, and professional. **Institutional review boards** have been established to screen research proposals and help experimenters make ethical decisions with respect to their treatment of human and animal participants. Among the issues they consider is whether human participants have given **informed consent** prior to participating.

Although we have assumed in the past that human participants are naive and passive, they are in reality problem solvers who are sensitive to the

demand characteristics, or hidden clues, of the experimental situation. How they react to these demand characteristics depends on whether they are *cooperative*, *defensive*, or *noncooperative* in the experiment. We can minimize demand characteristics by **automating** much of the experiment, by using a **blind** or **double-blind** design, so that the participant or both participant and experimenter are unaware of the specific conditions being responded to, or by using **multiple experimenters**. One form of double-blind design in drug research uses a nonactive **placebo** for the control condition. When it is impossible to make participants blind to the experimental manipulation, the experimenter must be aware that the **Hawthorne effect** may occur: a change in behavior due simply to the attention given to the participants. If unwanted demand characteristics are present in an experiment, we can sometimes detect them through **postexperiment questioning** or by using **nonexperiment** or **simulation control groups**. An alternative to assuming that participants are naive is to use their problem-solving natures and give them false demand characteristics to deceive them about the actual purpose of the experiment. Alternatives to deception are to ask participants to role-play or to observe them in a naturalistic setting.

Psychologists also use animals in experiments because they exhibit continuity, engaging in some of the same basic behavior patterns that humans do in a form unconfounded by more complex behaviors. Animals also provide an opportunity for greater environmental and genetic control. Some animals possess certain unique characteristics that make them superior for certain types of research. There is a long history of the animal rights movement worldwide. In the past few decades this movement has gained some advocates who have taken extreme positions and even advocated violence. The public, as well as psychologists and psychology students, is more favorable toward animal research. In recent years the rules and regulations regarding animal experimentation at the federal, state, and institutional levels have been upgraded so that the possibility of abuse is minimized. Most researchers who do this kind of work believe that the benefits usually outweigh the costs and point to many advances in human welfare resulting from animal research in psychology, including treatment of mental disorders and drug abuse, pain control, and recovery from strokes.

5

How to Be Fair with Science

Science is willingness to accept facts even when they are opposed to wishes.

B. F. SKINNER (1953)

To obtain a certain result, one must wish to obtain such a particular result: If you want a particular result you will obtain it.

T. D. LYSENKO, QUOTED IN I. M. LERNER (1968)

Fraud in science is not just a matter of rotten apples in the barrel. It has something to do with the barrel itself.

NICHOLAS WADE, QUOTED IN K. MCDONALD (1983)

Research is a collegial activity that requires its practitioners to trust the integrity of their colleagues.

ARNOLD S. RELMAN, QUOTED IN K. MCDONALD (1983)

Dishonesty has always been perceived in our culture, and in all cultures but the most bizarre, as a central human vice. We should note that this perception is consistent with a certain hesitancy about what constitutes a lie and with the more than sneaking suspicion that there might be a number of contexts in which lying is actually justified.

TONY COADY (AUSTRALIAN PHILOSOPHER)

. . . living ethically is much more than not living unethically.

MARTIN E. P. SELIGMAN (APA PRESIDENT, 1998)

In this chapter our examination of ethics continues, but here we deal with treating science fairly. In some respects, science has fewer defenses than a research participant has. Animals squirm and yell and sometimes die when mistreated, and the animal-rights groups yell too. Human participants squirm and yell and sometimes sue when mistreated. Science can't even squirm and yell. If you mistreat it long enough, however, your fellow scientists might eventually squirm and yell.

You might wonder how you can be unfair to an inanimate thing like science. In one sense, science *can* be considered animate in that it is a moving, changing, and, we hope, expanding body of knowledge. New research constantly replaces or builds on old findings and theories. Anything you do that

retards the expansion of science or causes it to expand in the wrong direction can be considered scientifically unethical.

Science has a few safeguards built into it to ensure that the body of knowledge continues to expand in a proper direction. For example, before you are allowed to report the outcome of an experiment in the scientific literature, a group of scientists selected for their research accomplishments reviews it. Through this review, the reviewers establish whether the research follows the rules of experimentation, which I have discussed in this book. Furthermore, the reviewers attempt to determine whether your contribution is sufficient to warrant using the limited number of pages available in the journals. In this way the reviewers and editors of journals attempt to screen research so that only competent and relevant findings are added to the body of knowledge.¹ Although this reviewing process is not perfect, most psychologists believe that it accomplishes the important screening function rather well.

Although the review system is designed to exclude research that was poorly done or that fails to make a large enough contribution, it is not designed to determine whether an investigator who may be capable of doing good research has lied about his or her study. A scientist who knows the rules and claims to have followed them when in fact he or she has not is cheating science. Such behavior is usually geared toward making personal gains of some sort: “They weren’t going to promote me unless I had five publications”; “I had to make our product look good”; or “I had to have a positive result on the experiment to get a passing grade.”

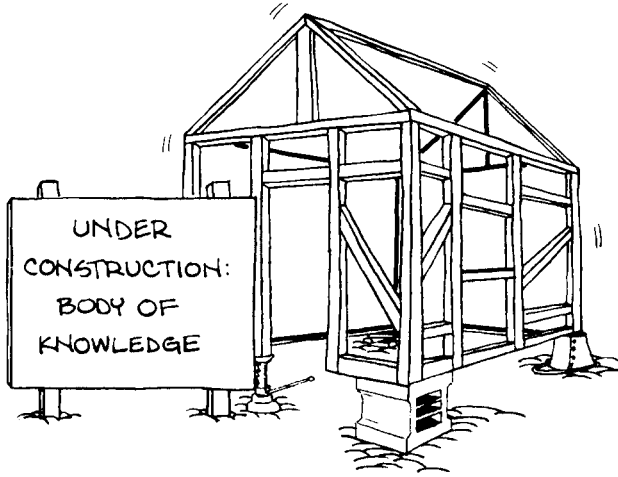
Because unethical behavior can be so harmful to our science and because we have very few built-in safeguards to detect it, unethical behavior in science is not tolerated, and a researcher quickly loses the privilege of practicing science when such behavior is detected. I call these clearly unethical and unacceptable behaviors *dirty tricks* and discuss them in the first section of this chapter. In the next section I discuss some behaviors that are frowned upon and that should be guarded against but are not so egregious that a researcher would lose scientific privileges; I call these *questionable tricks*. Finally, there are times in science when a researcher tells the truth, but not the whole truth, and our science benefits rather than loses from this behavior. This behavior can make our science more efficient and easier to understand and is considered not only acceptable but also necessary. I call these behaviors *neat tricks*.

■ Dirty Tricks

FABRICATING

One form of blatant cheating is to **fabricate results**. Some “experimenters” know that the easiest way to run an experiment is not to run it at all. They do not have to bother with such mundane matters as buying equipment, signing

¹ Note here that I am using the term *relevant* differently from the way many people use it. I use the term to mean relevant to science, not relevant to faddish topics. Sometimes topics that are relevant in the latter sense are the least relevant in the former sense.



up participants, or learning to do statistics. All they have to do is learn to write up experiments. (Fabricators better read Chapter 13. They also better learn a different profession because they will not be psychologists for long.)

As a student, you may be tempted to fabricate data because an assignment is due and you have not completed it. Don't do it! Late assignments cause lower grades, but contrived results cause class dismissals and terrible letters of recommendation. Professional scientists are totally intolerant of such behavior.

From time to time the American Psychological Association (APA) releases a document called the *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* in which it attempts to specify the ethical standards by which psychologists should conduct their business. The latest standards were published in 2002, and some of these speak to the scientific side of psychology (APA, 2002). According to Standard 8.10, "(a) Psychologists do not fabricate data." and "(b) If psychologists discover significant errors in their published data, they take reasonable steps to correct such errors in a correction, retraction, erratum, or other appropriate publication means."

Back in the early 1900s, a biologist named Kammerer attempted to demonstrate that acquired characteristics could be inherited (Ley, 1955), a concept quite different from Darwinian evolution. He claimed that he had kept generations of fire salamanders on black soil. He reported not only that the salamanders, which are normally black with yellow spots, had showed increasingly smaller spots over generations, but also that this reduction in spot size had been passed on by inheritance. A second researcher, who doubted these claims, added the time required to bring forth the number of generations that Kammerer had reported and found that the total time was considerably longer than the time for which Kammerer had been working on this research. Other scientists also began to demand explanations until, after seven years, two leading scientists examined some specimens. They found injections of India ink in the specimens. Kammerer admitted that his results "had plainly been 'improved' postmortem with India ink." He then promptly committed suicide.

The most dastardly deed in science is to add noise to the body of knowledge. If you do bad research, people can and will ignore it, but if you pretend that you have done good research when you have not, you will retard the expansion of the body of knowledge. Others will come along and attempt to build their research on yours, only to discover eventually that something is wrong. They must then waste time fixing the foundation and possibly rebuilding the whole structure. The longer such cheating goes undetected, the greater the eventual waste of science's resources.

If undetected, the cheating of science can also lead to the cheating of society. In the late 1930s, for example, a Russian named T. D. Lysenko, who also believed that acquired characteristics could be inherited (Lerner, 1968), was so adamant about this theory that he falsified a great deal of data. Lysenkoites claimed that they had brought about miraculous results such as transforming wheat into rye, barley, oats, and even cornflowers; beets into cabbage; pine into fir; and a tree of the hornbeam group into forest walnut (using doctored photographs as evidence), and even the hatching of cuckoos from eggs laid by warblers (Lerner, 1968).

Lysenko's grossly unethical behavior hurt not only science but society as well. He was personally responsible for the dismissal, exile, and execution of a number of Russian geneticists. He convinced Stalin and later Khrushchev that his theories were correct and that they should be applied on a large scale in agricultural programs (Medvedev, 1969). When the devastating agricultural failures that followed were eventually attributed in part to Lysenko's methods, he fell, Khrushchev fell (though not only for this reason), and Russian society suffered.

When I wrote this section for the first edition of this book, I had to look back into history to find examples of scientific fraud. Unfortunately, finding examples of fraud is much easier today. I recently found the following headlines in several professional and local newspapers: "Allegations of Plagiarism of Scientific Manuscript Raise Concerns About 'Intellectual Theft,'" "Nobel Honoree Faces Misconduct Charges," and "U.S. Enters Lawsuit Accusing Scientist, Institutions of Fraud."

Are dirty tricks new, or is there simply more interest today in discovering them? Apparently even the old-time scientists were not without guilt. The 19th-century geneticist Gregor Mendel has been accused of having been somewhat less than truthful (Fisher, 1936). Even Sir Isaac Newton apparently reported correlations to a degree of precision well beyond his ability to measure (Westfall, 1973).

Closer to psychology and more recently, a prominent ESP researcher discovered that his laboratory manager had fudged data. A suspicious research assistant had concealed himself and observed the manager changing the data to support ESP findings.

The most famous case in psychology relates to Sir Cyril Burt, an eminent British psychologist who had been knighted by King George VI. His research with identical twins was one of the major pillars supporting the argument that IQ is largely inherited. After his death, researchers discovered that the

correlations he had reported for identical twins had remained the same to the third decimal place over many years even as more twins were added to the study. This seemed a highly unlikely coincidence. Fraud allegations were made in the London *Sunday Times*, and the controversy continues to date. On one side are researchers who argue that Burt's data should be considered fraudulent and were probably fabricated (McAskie, 1978). Others argue that the case for fraud is weak and that a more probable explanation is simply carelessness (Jensen, 1978). It is also unfortunate that this heated debate is fueled by the politics of elitism versus egalitarianism.

How can we guard against the possibility of researchers being dishonest? No foolproof system will ever be developed because both the costs and the loss of intellectual freedom would destroy the scientific enterprise. A number of safeguards are currently in place. The Public Health Service, under which the National Institutes of Health operate, already requires universities to have guidelines for preventing misconduct (Cordes, 1990). The Association of American Universities recommends that institutions establish explicit policies about standards and have administrators to carry out the policies ("AAU Statement," 1983). When the researcher is federally funded, there is even a "whistleblower" law dating back to the 1800s that allows citizens to file lawsuits against researchers and universities and collect a sizable percentage of any money the government is awarded. Recently, a former technician in a research laboratory filed such a suit against a researcher and his university, alleging that the researcher had falsified results (Cordes, 1990).

One suggestion for minimizing fraud is to establish data archives for the raw data from research (Bryant & Wortman, 1978).² Apparently one problem encountered by investigators attempting to validate Burt's research was his incredibly sloppy data storage. The raw test sheets on the twin studies were stored among papers stuffed into half a dozen tea chests that were later destroyed! Using data archives, researchers could either store their research data individually or possibly send the data to a centralized location. In this way, research data would be available to the public, which is often not the case. For instance, a graduate student requesting raw data from 37 published authors received only 24% compliance (Wolins, 1962).



The archiving process has the following additional benefits: researchers would probably be more careful in their original data analysis; they could add to the body of knowledge by examining issues not originally addressed; and

² The individual measurements of your dependent variable prior to combining them for statistical analysis are your *raw data*. Unlike meat, raw data do not spoil—they just take up room from research.

they could also conduct longitudinal studies in which data are compared over a number of years.

The costs of a formalized central data storage system include the cost of the bureaucratic structure to administer it, the time and money required to duplicate the data or conform to a standardized format, and perhaps the cost to science of a recognized loss of trust in the integrity of scientists. Some feel that the costs of this solution are too great when the problem is relatively small. They believe that the checks and balances provided by the replication process are sufficient to detect most fraud and make the problem of dirty tricks an anomaly rather than a common practice.

Regardless of the formal requirements, you should keep data for a minimum of 5 years. Investigators often request data from one another, and with computers, storage and retrieval of raw data are easy. In fact, another of the APA's ethical standards is 8.14, "(a) After research results are published, psychologists do not withhold the data on which their conclusions are based from other competent professionals who seek to verify the substantive claims through reanalysis and who intend to use such data only for that purpose, provided that the confidentiality of the participants can be protected and unless legal rights concerning proprietary data preclude their release." If you make a habit of storing raw data, you are helping to protect science, and you are protecting yourself against false accusations as well.

Some data do indicate that scientific fraud is relatively rare. For example, from 1982 to 1988 the National Institutes of Health, which supports the research of 50,000 scientists, had handled reports of only 15 to 20 allegations of wrongdoing. On the other hand, among scientists at a major research university who responded to a survey, one third said they had suspected a colleague of plagiarism or falsifying data, but fewer than half took action to verify or report their suspicions (Hostetler, 1988). At this time it appears that unless scientists take more formal steps to find and eliminate scientific misconduct, Congress will impose such steps through legislation. This possibility disturbs the many scientists who believe that regulation by those not trained or experienced in science could lead to undesirable consequences.

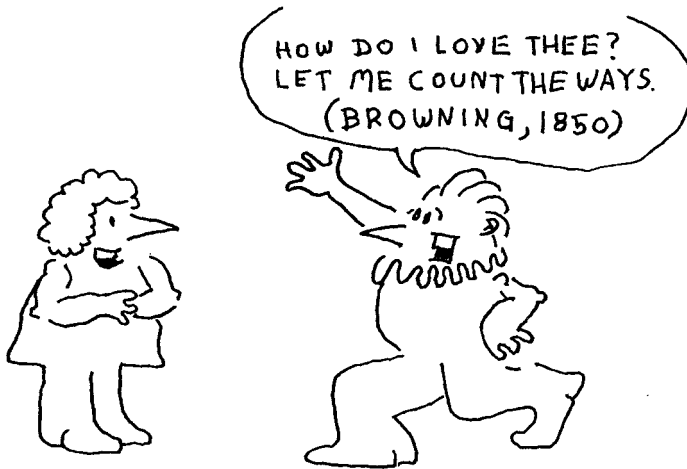
The best and most cost-effective way of preventing fraud in science is to emphasize to new researchers the importance of ethical conduct. This emphasis, of course, is the purpose of the chapter you are reading. It is only through an understanding of the way science works that the real motivation for ethical behavior can be established. Researchers must understand that science is built on trust. Unless we can trust our colleagues' research findings, we might as well discontinue the attempt to build the scientific body of knowledge.

PLAGIARISM

The APA ethical standards state under 8.11 Plagiarism, "Psychologists do not present portions of another's work or data as their own, even if the other work or data source is cited occasionally." Although this statement seems

clear, plagiarism has become such a contentious issue in recent years that some elaboration is necessary. Indeed, in just the past couple of years university presidents have lost their jobs over plagiarized speeches and authors have been accused of plagiarizing major portions of their books. Such behavior does not mean that the criteria for what we call plagiarism have changed; it is just that folks are increasingly ignorant or dismissive of the rules.

Most people realize that the act of directly quoting another person's published words is plagiarism. However, apparently some students believe that material on the Internet is fair game and that they can claim it as their own. Let me be clear: Stealing words off the Internet is as bad as stealing them from more traditional formally published sources. And be warned that your professors will use sources such as <http://www.turnitin.com> to catch students plagiarizing from internet sources.



The worst case of cheating I have personally encountered was a counseling psychologist who copied 90 pages of a 120-page doctoral dissertation from two published books. He did include citations for both books in his references section, but nowhere in the manuscript did he formally cite either book even though the material came word-for-word from them! Even in this seemingly clear-cut case, the student argued that he did not consider what he had done to be plagiarism. One of the student's former professors even argued that it wasn't plagiarism because the student did not intend to plagiarize. Again, let me be clear: Intent does not matter; the act defines itself. The psychologist in this case lost his doctoral degree and his right to practice the profession.

Plagiarism covers more than usurping somebody else's words; stealing ideas is as bad as stealing words. As discussed in Chapter 13, psychologists often do less direct quotation in their report writing than do other writers. We are more likely to paraphrase other researchers; that is, to reword a particular thought or idea using our own words. However, paraphrasing does not let

us off the hook from having to do proper citation. When writing about another researcher's thoughts, theories, or even speculations, you must cite that researcher and the source from which you learned of the ideas.

To illustrate several of the types of plagiarism we have been discussing, suppose that you have read a paragraph from the following article written by Diener, Lucas, and Scollon and published in the *American Psychologist* (2006):

The hedonic treadmill theory is built on an automatic habituation model in which psychological systems react to deviations from one's current adaptation level (Helson, 1948, 1964). Automatic habituation processes are adaptive because they allow constant stimuli to fade into the background. Thus, resources remain available to deal with novel stimuli, which are most likely to require immediate attention (Fredrick & Lowenstein, 1999).

In your report could you write?

The hedonic treadmill theory is built on an automatic habituation model in which psychological systems react to deviations from one's current adaptation level. Automatic habituation processes are adaptive because they allow constant stimuli to fade into the background.

No, you could not do this because you have used somebody else's words verbatim without citing the source and without placing them within quotation marks. Could you say?

An automatic habituation model is the basis for hedonic treadmill theory. There is a deviation from a particular habituated adaptation level so that constant stimuli just become background noise allowing resources to be used to process new information.

Although you have paraphrased the words in the paragraph, you are still talking about somebody else's ideas, so you would need to cite where those ideas came from. So, could you say?

An automatic habituation model is the basis for the hedonic treadmill theory (Helson, 1948, 1964). There is a deviation from a particular habituated adaptation level so that constant stimuli just become background noise allowing resources to be used to process new information (Fredrick & Lowenstein, 1999).

This paragraph is certainly better because it now cites sources. However, in this case you couldn't even cite these sources in this way if all you had read was the Diener, Lucas, and Scollon article. By listing the Helson, and Fredrick and Loewenstein sources, you are implying you have read these articles and are paraphrasing what you read. But, if everything you know about these sources comes from reading the Diener et al. article, the other two sources are called **secondary sources** and must be cited only in the context of the primary source that you read, for example, "Helson (1948, 1964), as noted by Diener, Lucas, and Scollon (2006), proposes that an automatic habituation model is . . ." If at all possible, rather than citing a secondary source in this way you should try to obtain a copy of the original and then cite it as a primary source.

I have used considerable space discussing plagiarism because it is considered a serious ethical violation. Even minor violations can lead to bad grades. Major violations can lead to loss of reputation, loss of employment, and, in the case of the dissertation cited in the example, loss of a doctoral degree.

FALSIFYING CREDENTIALS

If you were to walk up to a friend and say, “Would you stand on your head for me?” the response would probably be “Why?” However, if you were to walk up to another friend and say, “I’m doing an experiment; would you stand on your head for me?” your friend’s response is more likely to be “How long?” This difference arises from the fact that our society grants scientists a number of privileges not given to the average citizen. We allow scientists, particularly behavioral scientists, the freedom to experiment because, as a society, we feel that the gains from such experiments usually outweigh the costs. We also grant scientists a certain amount of prestige and generally respond to them somewhat compliantly.

Scientists not only are allowed to manipulate the lives of those around them in approved ways but also are sometimes supported in this effort by our tax money. However, we are also capable of taking away these privileges if we believe that their advantages to the society no longer outweigh their disadvantages. Requiring professional credentials of experimenters is one way we police ourselves. Consequently, to prove to other scientists that you are a qualified investigator, you must present them with your professional record, usually in the form of a vitae or résumé. A résumé is a written record that shows who you are professionally; it lists your educational degrees, your job experience, and your published papers and articles. You use it to get into graduate school, to become professionally certified, or to get a job. Perhaps it should go without saying that this document must be totally accurate. I will say it anyway: *Falsifying credentials* is a blatant dirty trick.

Not surprisingly, the APA ethical standards are clear on this issue. Standard 5.01 Avoidance of False or Deceptive Statements provides the following guidelines:

- (b) Psychologists do not make false, deceptive, or fraudulent statements concerning
 - (1) their training, experience, or competence;
 - (2) their academic degrees;
 - (3) their credentials;
 - (4) their institutional or association affiliations;
 - (5) their services;
 - (6) the scientific or clinical basis for, or results or degree of success of, their services;
 - (7) their fees;
 - (8) their publications or research findings.

Early in my career, I witnessed an incident in which a talented student used a falsified vitae in an attempt to get into graduate school. He had a fine

record and great letters of recommendation from his professors, but he listed several nonexistent papers and articles on his vitae. When his professors discovered his deception, the student no longer had either a fine record or letters of recommendation, nor is he an experimental psychologist today. Because the agreement between scientists and society is fragile, this type of dishonesty upsets the delicate balance and cannot be tolerated.

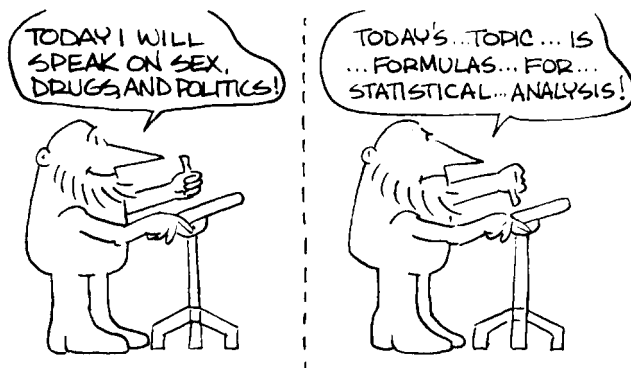
I hope that this discussion of dirty tricks was a waste of your time and that you would not have considered doing these in the first place. Yet I believe that such topics must be mentioned early in an experimenter's training. Doing psychology experiments can be fun, but the real purpose of experimentation is building science. Those who are not willing to follow the rules that make this process orderly do not belong in science.

■ Questionable Tricks

The actions that most investigators find unacceptable but lead to frowning and scolding rather than banishment can be considered questionable tricks. These actions can occur during the design of an experiment, during the experiment itself, during data analysis, or in experimental reporting.

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

In the previous chapter, we discussed experimenter bias as communicated through demand characteristics. If you design your experiment so that the demand characteristics themselves could cause a desired change in the dependent variable and do not attempt to minimize these demand characteristics or even discover them, you are, in a sense, being dishonest. You can also confound an experiment if you claim to have made a particular variable into a control variable when, in fact, this variable systematically changed with your independent variable. In some nonlaboratory experiments such confounding is difficult to control, but in many cases we can legitimately call this situation cheating.

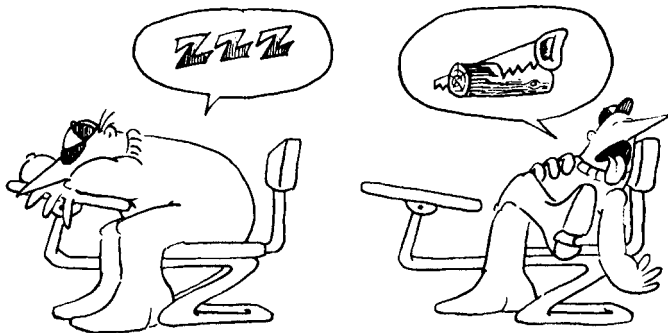


For example, remember the experiment mentioned in Chapter 2 in which I attempted to lecture an introductory psychology class at several different rates to determine whether lecture pace had an effect on the students' attentiveness? On some days I tried to speak at a slow pace, on other days at a moderate pace, and on others at a fast pace. We measured attentiveness by recording the level of background noise. Such an experiment would be easy to bias. I could have changed not only my pace but also the degree of liveliness with which I talked about the topic or perhaps the number of interesting examples I used to illustrate my points. These changes in dimensions other than lecture pace could easily confound the independent variable, whether I intended to or not.

One way to minimize the chance of cheating would be to design the experiment so that colleagues with little stake in any given outcome would rate each lecture in terms of the possible confounding variables. The experimenter could then collect data only from those lectures with equivalent ratings. Of course, moderate cheating in the form of experimenter bias will not necessarily occur in the first design, but the second design will be more convincing because such bias is less likely to occur.

COLLECTING DATA

You can also be dishonest when collecting data for your research, especially if you must use human judgment to determine what response the participant has made. In the experiment just discussed, for example, suppose that the experimenter wants to classify the students' behavior as attentive or inattentive to record the percentage of time spent in attentive versus inattentive listening. Suppose one student sits scribbling with her pencil on a piece of paper. Is she taking notes or doodling? Another student has his eyes closed. Is he concentrating or sleeping? We can classify the behaviors differently depending on our bias. If the experimenter who holds the bias is also doing the classifying, the potential problems are obvious.



WHICH STUDENT IS THE ATTENTIVE ONE?

To avoid this form of trickery, the experimenter might construct a standard checklist of attentive and inattentive behaviors and have several judges observe the tapes and independently classify the students' behaviors. It is even possible to keep judges blind to the pace the instructor used for the tape being observed. Such precautions decrease the possibility of cheating, either intentional or unintentional.

Bias can sometimes occur even in experiments in which measurement of responses seems straightforward. An experiment was carried out in which participants moved a stick to line up a marker with a moving target. After every 10-second interval, the experimenter quickly read a pointer on a voltmeter dial and reset it. (The farther the marker was from the target, the more quickly the pointer moved across the dial.) This task was difficult because the needle seldom fell directly on an index line. The experimenter could easily have made biased judgments about the location of the pointer on the dial. In this experiment, experimenters had to read the dial over 15,000 times, giving rise to the possibility that small inconsistencies in reading the instrument would eventually bias experimental results. Thus, whenever biased experimenters must use judgment to interpret a response, they should devise procedures to ensure that the judgment will be made accurately.

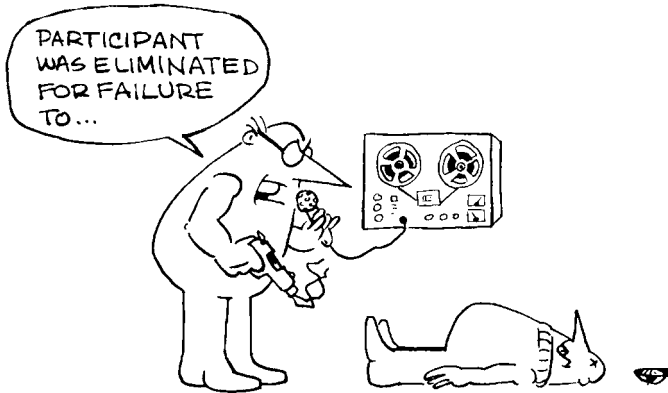
DATA ANALYSIS

You must also avoid trickery in analyzing your data in a biased way. As discussed in Chapter 12, statistical tests are usually computed to determine whether a particular result is likely to be a real effect or whether it is due to chance. These statistical tests can be used only when certain assumptions can be approximated. Using the test when its assumptions are grossly violated is questionable at best.

For example, the most frequently used statistical tests require that the underlying distribution be approximately normal, a symmetrical bell shape. Although a small violation of this assumption usually does not totally invalidate such a test, some investigators continue to use one of these tests when their distributions in no way resemble a normal distribution. As an experimenter, it is up to you to know what assumptions your statistical test requires and how likely it is for you to make an error if you fail to meet one or more of these assumptions.

When analyzing your data, you may discover that although most of the participants seem to be showing the predicted experimental effect, several do not show the effect. At this point, you can do nothing about these renegades.³ Obviously, if you could throw out data you obtained from all the participants who failed to show an expected result, you would never do an experiment that failed to support your predictions! For this reason, you must be careful about eliminating participants from an analysis on the basis of their performance on

³ Unless you are specifically interested in investigating individual differences.



the dependent variable. And you should never eliminate them on the basis of their differential responses to the levels of the independent variable.

You can eliminate participants for failing to meet some overall performance level on the dependent variable only if you determine this performance level before collecting the data, if you can logically defend it, and if you specify the performance level in your experimental report. As an illustration, suppose you were interested in the effects of noise on people's ability to perform a typing task. Before starting the experiment, you might decide to exclude data from all participants who fail to type at least 10 words per minute in the absence of noise. Your logic might be that these individuals are such poor typists to begin with that even if noise has a detrimental effect on typing, they would not show the effect. Or you might argue that you are interested in the effect of noise on experienced typists and that a speed of less than 10 words per minute indicates that the person is not an experienced typist. However, if you do not have a logical argument for eliminating participants on the basis of a predetermined dependent-variable performance level, you should not do it.

You are much safer in eliminating participants on a basis other than performance on your dependent variable. Again, however, such criteria should be set prior to the experiment and should be specified when you report the results. For example, you might be having participants search through an array of letters to report which letter is printed in red ink. In this case, you might exclude individuals who cannot pass an acuity test or a color-blindness test before the experiment.

REPORTING RESULTS

Suppose that you have analyzed your experiment and are now ready to report the results. Usually you will want to represent some of your results as a graph. We will discuss some rules to follow in plotting a graph in Chapter 12. People have written books on how to lie by distorting graphs or statistics (Best, 2001; Campbell, 1974; Huff, 1954; Wainer, 2000). For example, an experimenter

could enlarge one of the graph's axes to make a tiny effect look like a gigantic effect or possibly distort the scale on one axis so that the function being displayed changes shape. If you are a creative person, you can find all sorts of ways to make crummy results look good. Obviously, such behavior does nothing to advance science and is considered inappropriate.

One other form of questionable trickery is *piecemeal reporting* of experimental results. Although research must progress one experiment at a time, you should not report research in this way. Many decades ago the typical journal article in psychology reported the results of a single experiment. In recent times, however, the field has grown so much that there has been a literature explosion. So many people are doing so many experiments that the process of keeping current with experimental advances is nearly impossible. For this reason, few journals will accept a report of a single experiment unless it makes an unusually large contribution by itself.

Usually, you should report the results of your experimental research program as an integrated series of experiments. With this procedure, the growth of knowledge becomes much more efficient and orderly, and readers are spared the task of reorienting themselves to the research, rereading introduction and procedure sections with each experiment, and integrating fragmented research into a coherent structure. In today's "publish or perish" world, an investigator can be tempted to do piecemeal reporting to accumulate publications. However, in the end, such behavior does nothing to improve either the investigator's reputation or the body of scientific knowledge.

■ Neat Tricks

Although it seems counterintuitive, it is sometimes necessary to "lie" to the reader of a research report to communicate efficiently. Research is usually a sloppy process, yet when you read an experimental report it sounds as if the investigator proceeded in a systematic, orderly manner at all times.⁴ Don't believe it! Rarely does a researcher's mind work in the totally logical manner reflected in the report. Experimenters make many decisions based on hunches or gut-level intuitions. They make false starts based on bad guesses. They do experiments the right way for the wrong reasons or the wrong way for the right reasons.

Unfortunately, many students become turned off to experimental psychology because they think it is dry and unexciting, when in most cases it is actually an exciting, disorderly, haphazard treasure hunt. You know little about experimentation until you try your first experiment.⁵ The most obvious reason for cleaning up an experimental report is to save time and space. Though it might be fun to read about all your colleague's mistakes, you do not have the time and journals do not have the space to allow you the luxury.

⁴ A charmingly written article on the sometimes haphazard process of research is B. F. Skinner's "A Case History in Scientific Method" (1959).

⁵ It's kind of like making love: Reading about it is a poor substitute for doing it.

The experimental report is designed to convey information efficiently, not entertain the reader.⁶

LEAVING THINGS OUT

One way of cleaning up your experimental report is to leave out some experiments and analyses.⁷ Suppose that you had a bad day when you designed the third experiment in a series, you had a bad intuition, or you were temporarily confused. Nobody else is interested in the condition of your life, your viscera, or your head. So you blew the experiment. I don't want to read about it. You don't want to write about it. So don't. Science loses nothing, I lose nothing, and you save face. Be sure, however, that you are not tempted to leave out a perfectly good experiment because the results do not support your favorite hypothesis. Doing this is not a neat trick!

Not only is it acceptable to leave out whole experiments if they add nothing to the report, but at times it is also proper to ignore the details of some data analyses. Perhaps there were a number of ways to analyze your data, and you did them all. Although you should probably report that you did the analyses, you need to give details of only those that are most representative and convey the most information.⁸

REORGANIZING

Especially when doing exploratory research, you may find that the outcome of an experiment shows that it should not have been the first experiment in the series. You may find it desirable to back up and do some preliminary experiments. In such cases, you need not tell the reader that "owing to misjudgment and lack of foresight on the experimenter's part, the following experiments are out of order." You may report them in the most logical order, whether or not this order matches the order in which you did them. Data are data, and you should report them as efficiently as possible, as long as bending the truth does not bend the science.

REFORMULATING

Finally, it is generally acceptable to reformulate the theory underlying an experiment. Occasionally, you do an experiment for some reason and later discover a better reason for having done it. Or perhaps you discover that somebody else has done an experiment that casts a different light on the one you are conducting. In this case, you have to determine how your contribution to the body of knowledge best fits with the new information. Unfortunately,

⁶ A lot of textbook writers think this too. They never have any fun!

⁷ Or else put them in a footnote. Nobody reads footnotes.

⁸ Note that I am not endorsing the practice of conducting a multitude of tests and then picking and choosing only those that yield significant results. In this case, you are distorting the level of significance (see Chapter 12).

there will be times when your theory does not fit at all, and you will have to go back to the drawing board. Often, however, you will be able to fit your experiment into the revised theory by changing your emphasis or reinterpreting your results. In reporting your results, you need not burden the reader with obsolete theory. Again, your major ethical consideration should be whether you are adding to the body of knowledge in an efficient manner.

In this chapter we have by no means exhausted all the ethical questions that you will face as an experimenter. In some cases, you will find it difficult to decide whether a particular action is fair to science. When a problem comes up, you may wish to discuss it with colleagues, who may be able to raise points and suggest alternatives that you have not considered. In the end, though, the decision is yours. If you apply the principle that ethical actions are those that aid in the efficient growth of the body of knowledge, you will never do dirty tricks and seldom do questionable tricks.

■ Summary

Because science is a growing body of knowledge, any action that retards the efficient expansion of that body of knowledge is unethical. We can be less than totally truthful with science in a number of ways. We can engage in dirty tricks by *fabricating results*, *plagiarizing*, or by *falsifying our credentials*. We can also engage in questionable tricks—by *failing to control confounding variables* in the design of an experiment, for example, or by *misclassifying responses* and *misreading instruments* during collection of our data. During data analysis, *failing to meet test assumptions* and *inappropriately eliminating participants* are also unacceptable, as are distorting graphs and reporting a series of experiments as piecemeal reports. For the sake of efficiency, it is acceptable to report experimental results in a form that does not exactly parallel the experiment. For example, we can *leave out experiments and analyses* from a report if they do not add any value to the report, or we can *reorder experiments* and *reformulate theory* if these actions increase the efficiency of the experimental report.

6

How to Find Out What Has Been Done

Polonius: What do you read, my lord?
Hamlet: Words, words, words.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

But why do we have to endure the academics who insist on making verbal mountains out of intellectual molehills?

S. I. HAYAKAWA (1978)

The house of social science research is sadly dilapidated. It is strewn among the scree of a hundred journals and lies about in the unsightly rubble of a million dissertations. Even if it cannot be built into a science, the rubble ought to be sifted and culled for whatever consistency there is in it.

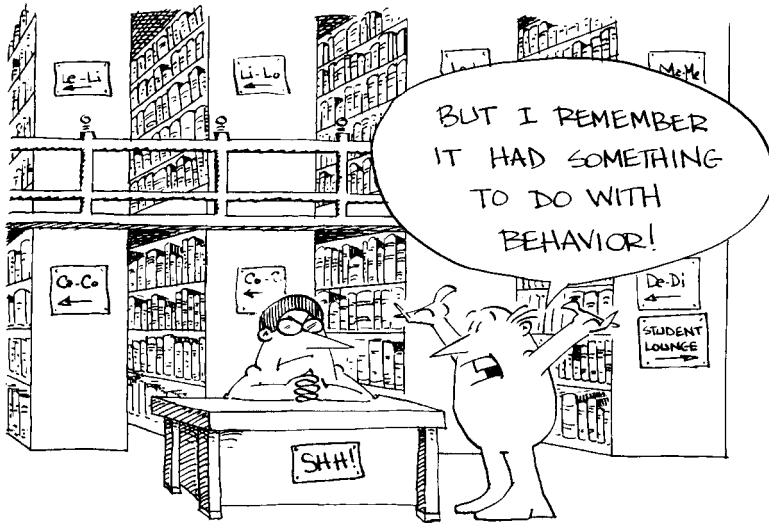
G. V. GLASS, B. MCGAW, & M. L. SMITH (1981)

Perhaps while you were reading Chapter 3, about getting an experimental idea, a terrific idea came to you in a blinding flash of inspiration. Or, an idea might have crept in on little cat feet. In any case, I hope that some interesting experimental idea has begun to form and that you are getting eager to start your experiment. However, before you begin serious planning, you should realize that your terrific idea may have already been somebody else's terrific idea.

■ Why Search the Literature?

Although psychology is a relatively young science, more than 50,000 references are published in a typical year. Although another investigator probably has not done exactly what you are planning to do, it is likely that out of all the research accumulated over the short history of psychology, somebody has done something quite similar. It would be counterproductive for you to repeat an experiment unless you thought that the published results were not reliable.

You might also find it helpful to study how other investigators have attacked similar problems. Perhaps they have used experimental techniques with which you are unfamiliar. You might also find that other investigators have already discovered a number of pitfalls you would rather not waste your time rediscovering.



Science aims to produce an organized body of knowledge, not a haphazard collection of facts built by scientists doing small, isolated experiments. Thus, the most important reason for determining what research others have done is that you will be required to fit your findings into this existing body of knowledge. When you have completed your research, you have to say not only “This is how it came out” but also “This is where it fits in.” To know where your work fits in, you obviously have to know what the body of knowledge was like before your research. This chapter discusses how to find out, through a **literature search**,¹ what is in this body of knowledge.

While you are doing a literature search in the library, be sure to keep a record of what you find. Each time you find an article or book that might be useful, make a note of the important points and write down the complete reference. Include the names of the authors,² title of the work, name of the journal or book, date, volume number, page numbers, and, for a book, the publisher. You will need all of this information later if you decide to refer to the article in your research report. Some people find using an index card for each reference helpful. Automated search is another preferred method. As I discuss later in this chapter, an automated search can be conducted and a useful feature of this type of search is that you will get a full bibliographic record for each reference you find. You can simply print this out. Regardless of how you do your search, the more orderly you are the first time through, the less time you will waste later looking for references that you put on the back of a

¹ Scientists have traditionally called this process a literature search, although you will probably not study this type of literature in your college lit courses.

² People who are new to psychology sometimes find it strange that experimental psychologists talk about experiments by author rather than by subject. If you hear your instructors say such things as “The Carothers, Finch, and Finch (1972) findings agree with Peterson, Bergman, and Brill (1971),” they are talking not about law firms but about experimenters.

long-lost gum wrapper. If you find several particularly well-written articles, you should be sure to make full copies and hang on to them. You can use them as good models when you are ready to start writing.

Although a literature search is not particularly difficult to do, it can be time consuming and not particularly inspirational, because it involves lots of paper shuffling. Knowing the literature, however, is an absolute necessity; it is your scientific body of knowledge! Nothing is more embarrassing when presenting the results of your life's work than to hear someone remark, "You are, of course, familiar with Klip and Klap (2006), who did this same experiment last year?"

■ The Timeliness of Sources

If you are completely unfamiliar with the possible research sources in psychology, such as books and articles, you may not know where to begin your literature search. First, you need to get a feel for the sources available and how up to date each source is. To do this, let's follow a typical experiment as it is reported to the scientific community. Figure 6-1 summarizes this process on a timeline in which zero represents the time the researcher starts a project.³ After collecting data, the investigator might present preliminary results to a small gathering of friends at a local institution. Assuming the researcher isn't laughed out of the room, he or she may decide to attend a professional meeting such as an annual convention and read a paper summarizing the research.⁴ Again, assuming that this somewhat more hostile audience offers a little support, the investigator might decide to write a manuscript based on the research and submit it to a journal. If the article is accepted, it will appear in the journal about nine months to a year later. Following journal publication, *Psychological Abstracts* will publish an abstract of the article. If the article is important, it may appear later in the *Annual Review*, be cited in other articles, and perhaps be mentioned in a publication such as *Psychological Bulletin*. Finally, after several years, a textbook author might mention the research as part of the accepted body of knowledge.

Figure 6-1 points out the time lag involved in the scientific communication process. If you use the library, your first access to an experimental result is its appearance as a journal article. As you can see, you have lost considerable time at this point because the research was probably started at least three years before its publication in a journal. If you begin your experiment at this point and go through the same process, the other author will have to wait three more years before your results will be reported in a journal article. (Even

³ This figure is based on research that is now a bit old. It is likely that with technological advances in publishing, the timeline has been compressed in recent years. However, I know of no other recent research that deals with this issue. I believe that the order of events is essentially unchanged today and that the figure still provides a useful way to organize our thinking about the publication process.

⁴ This is where your professors go when they miss class. And you thought they were on vacation having fun.

Text not available due to copyright restrictions

the U.S. mail has better turnaround time than this!) Because of the need to avoid such delays, fewer than one in seven research efforts originate from formal sources such as journal articles (Garvey & Griffith, 1971). Most ideas originate from more informal communication among scientists in a given field, such as presentations at meetings, discussion lists, and Web pages. However, as a new investigator without the contacts necessary for such informal communication, you might have to be content with the formal sources for the time being. If you continue to work in a particular area of research, you will find out who else works in your area and will get to know your fellow researchers personally. You will then be ahead of the journals and the “new” new investigators.

In the following section we consider the formal sources in more detail, discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each, and determine how to locate relevant sources. Let’s start with books and work our way to more recent sources.

■ Formal Sources

BOOKS

Because books include only research that was begun years earlier, you might think that they would be the worst possible source. However, this enormous time lag makes them in some ways the best source. An important process occurs between the time research is completed and the time it is reported in one of the sources: The research is screened on the basis of importance and quality so that by the time it appears in a book, it has been integrated with other research to form a coherent body of knowledge. Thus, the value of book research lies in the fact that an author includes work in a book because he or she thinks it is well done and important and that it fits into the growing body of knowledge. The author has already done much of your work for you; it’s just a bit obsolete.

A good place to start your literature search is a recently published book that deals with the general research topic you are interested in. If the author has done a good job, you can have some confidence that you have a useful summary of the most important research from the start of psychology up to about 13 years before the publication date of the text. Your job is now considerably easier: to find out what has happened during the last 13 years or so.

One problem with this approach is that the author would have had to be selective and not been able to include all the research done on a particular topic since the beginning of psychology. Every author is biased toward some theoretical or methodological approach and selects research based on this bias. In addition, most books are not subjected to the same level of peer review that journal articles are. Peer review means that several highly respected researchers have read the material and given it their stamp of

approval. Most major journals require this review for all articles selected for publication, but book publishers use this process less frequently. Thus, to be sure you can trust the author's scholarship and bias, try to develop a consensus of several resource books; at the least, try to discover the author's particular bias.

I imagine you know how to find books in the library. If you do not, then asking the reference librarian at your college library how to do a search will better serve your purpose, than having me describe it. Libraries have electronic catalogs of all the available books. You should start there by typing an author's name, book title, or subject you are interested in. The computer screen will display all the books meeting your requirements. Nowadays, it is even possible to use a computer to search the Internet for books at other libraries, although getting those books can be a problem. Interlibrary loans can help here, but be sure you don't wait until the last minute after you have collected data and you are writing up your results. It will be too late to get the books you need. Finally, you can find books using one of the computerized search databases I have discussed later in this chapter. In this case you will certainly not be guaranteed that any book you find will be in your local library.

Prior to your library visit, you might also look in an introductory psychology book under your topic. Most basic texts will list some suggested readings to get you started. You might also talk to an instructor in your psychology department who does research in the area. He or she will probably be happy to give you some book references. Finally, the American Psychological Association's (APA's) *Library Use: A Handbook for Psychology* (Reed & Baxter, 2003) should be helpful to you in learning library skills specific to psychology.

REVIEW ARTICLES AND BOOKS

Several other sources make an attempt to summarize and integrate research within particular areas of psychology. These sources are more up to date than textbooks, and consequently there has been less time for the research to be put into perspective. One such source is a journal published by the APA called *Psychological Bulletin*, which publishes "evaluative and integrative reviews and interpretations of substantive and methodological issues in scientific psychology." Here are some titles from various issues:

- "Arousal and the Inverted-U Hypothesis: A Critique of Neiss's 'Reconceptualizing Arousal'"
- "Attributions in Marriage: Review and Critique"
- "Gender Differences in Mathematics Performance: A Meta-Analysis"
- "Effects of Alcohol on Human Aggression: An Interactive Research Review"
- "Hindsight: Biased Judgments of Past Events after the Outcomes Are Known"
- "Ideas about Causation in Philosophy and Psychology"

“Psychotherapy for the Treatment of Depression: A Comprehensive Review of Controlled Outcome Research”

“Children of Depressed Parents: An Integrative Review”

“Science and Morality: The Role of Values in Science and the Scientific Study of Moral Phenomena”

As you can see, the topics covered in these articles are generally narrower than textbook topics. A *Bulletin* article may also take a previous summary article as its starting point, rather than the beginning of psychology, and fall short of a complete survey. Nevertheless, a recent review article can save you a great deal of search time. And review articles are generally more timely than books, usually within five to eight years of current research.

For those experiments that are similar to the one you are planning, a review article will not provide you with enough details. In this case, the original sources cited at the end of the article will allow you to quickly find which references are important and to determine how your experiment will fit in with past research.

Another source of research reviews is the *Annual Review of Psychology*, published by Annual Reviews, Inc. The topics in this book vary from year to year depending on the decision of an editorial board. Each chapter is written by an author who is a recognized expert in that field and whose job it is to summarize and integrate the research done since the topic was previously included in the series. The topics are generally broader than *Psychological Bulletin* topics:

“Personality”

“Developmental Psychology”

“Spatial Vision”

However, some topics are a bit narrower:⁵

“Intervention Techniques: Small Groups”

“Social and Cultural Influences on Psychopathology”

In recent years, many edited books have been published. Some of them summarize the most recent work in a particular area of psychology. Each chapter is usually written by a researcher who gives an up-to-date review of an even more narrowly defined research area. These chapters resemble review articles, and if you can find a chapter that is relevant to your research, you will save search time. For this type of book, in particular, the publication lag is much shorter than that for more standard textbooks. Many of them, in fact, are now produced by “desktop publishing,” in which the lengthy process of typesetting, editing, and producing a final copy is considerably shortened. In this case some of the research reported may be only a year or two old. However, again, these books have not been peer reviewed in the same way as journal articles.

⁵ Did you notice the interesting relationship? The broader the topic, the shorter the title.

JOURNAL ARTICLES

Psychological journals form the backbone of our science. They are called *primary sources* because they present the basic results as interpreted by the experimenter or experimenters who did the research rather than by third parties, such as those who compile reviews. To perform a thorough literature search, you must use journal articles. They are the most up to date of the formal sources, following the actual research by only a few years. Thus, although article authors try to integrate their work with the existing body of knowledge, their effort can be only partly successful because they often cannot know about other research being done at the same time. Therefore, you will have to do some integration yourself to make the research form an orderly body of knowledge. I cannot possibly list all the journals related to psychology here. Many professional organizations publish journals for their members, with a number of publishing companies sponsoring individual journals as well. However, to give you an idea of the kinds of journals available, here is a listing of some journal titles:

American Journal of Psychology
Animal Learning & Behavior
Audiology
Behavioral and Brain Sciences
Behavioral Neuroscience
Cognition
Cognitive Psychology
Current Directions in Psychological Science
Developmental Psychology
Journal of Abnormal Psychology
Journal of Applied Psychology
Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience
Journal of Comparative Psychology
Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior
Journal of Experimental Psychology: Animal Behavior Processes
Journal of Experimental Psychology: General
Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance
Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition
Journal of Memory and Language
Journal of Personality and Social Psychology
Learning and Motivation
Memory & Cognition
Motivation and Emotion
Perception & Psychophysics
Psychological Record
Psychological Review
Psychological Science
Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology. A, Human Experimental Psychology
Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology. B, Comparative and Physiological Psychology

PROCEEDINGS

In some areas of psychology proceedings, reports from scientific meetings are considered to be important. For example, the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society publishes proceedings, both electronically and in hard copy, that contain reports from most of the papers delivered at its annual meetings. While these proceedings articles are shorter than a typical journal article, they are peer reviewed by a panel of experts and are considered one of the important sources of information for this area of research. Because of the length restrictions and less rigorous peer review, proceedings articles are usually considered a little less valuable than journal articles, but they do offer a means for getting research results into the scientific literature in a timely manner.

TECHNICAL REPORTS

Technical reports are often ignored as a source of psychological literature, but they can be helpful in certain areas of research. When the federal government supports research work, particularly Defense Department research, the investigator is usually required to report it in the form of a technical report. This report is similar to a journal article but usually goes into more detail about the procedure and the apparatus, and sometimes it even lists the data. The supporting governmental agency automatically distributes technical reports to other investigators who are doing similar research supported by the same agency.

About one author in ten writes these technical reports, and only about one third of these reports are later published in a journal (Garvey & Griffith, 1971). Most libraries do not routinely order technical reports, because they would quickly fill up the shelves and are difficult for a library to organize and classify systematically. Investigators who are working on defense grants or contracts get a monthly publication listing abstracts of all technical reports. *Psychological Abstracts* also lists many of these reports. Unfortunately, technical reports are often difficult to obtain. To purchase them, you must send a request to the Defense Documentation Center in Alexandria, Virginia, and you must know the document number and the price of the report you want.

Searching through technical reports is a waste of time for some areas of research. However, if you are working in an area supported by a major government agency, the technical report is a valuable source of information. Some examples of government-supported research are automobile driver safety, personnel training and selection, operator control of complex machines, and human decision making.

ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING

I am including **electronic publishing** under formal sources even though some might believe I am giving it too much credit at this time. A wide range of electronic publishing is available, from researchers who decide to put the latest draft of an article on their Web page to electronic journals that

publish peer-reviewed articles similar in quality to printed journal articles. For this reason, it is sometimes difficult to determine the quality of what one finds. Some experts have predicted that electronic publishing will become the dominant form of scientific communication and will eventually eliminate paper publishing entirely, but this has not happened yet. The advantages are obvious. The time between completing research and publishing it can be shortened. People can immediately get the article off the Internet and have a hard copy for only the price of printing it. The researcher can post succeeding drafts of the article and revise these on the basis of comments from readers.

However, electronic publishing also has problems. Who will ensure the quality of articles? Professional associations that publish journals carefully select editors, and these editors send research manuscripts, which are submitted to highly respected peer reviewers. In some cases an average of only 10% to 20% of the submissions are chosen for publication, and only after being revised and carefully corrected by a copy editor is the paper published. On the Internet anybody with access can create a home page and post a research paper. A second problem occurs when different drafts of a posted paper are available. Which is the final version? Publications, particularly journal articles, form the building blocks of our science, and as scientists we need to have some way of knowing whether a particular article is the sole block that will be added to the scientific structure. Finally, there is the matter of money. Professional societies have generally been the keepers of the science. They have provided the infrastructure that has allowed the scientific enterprise to expand in an orderly fashion. This infrastructure costs money, which comes largely from subscription fees paid by libraries and individual scientists. If articles are published at no cost on the Internet, where will the money come from to provide the scientific infrastructure?

These are just some of the issues yet to be worked out. Therefore, the APA, the publisher of the largest number of prestigious journals, currently has a policy that it will not consider for publication any manuscript that has been publicly posted on the Internet. It takes the position that if a manuscript has been posted, it has already been published. This doesn't mean you cannot send your manuscript by e-mail to selected people for comments. However, you should keep this policy in mind if you expect to eventually publish your research in a standard scientific journal.

You should also keep some of these issues in mind when you are doing your literature search. You may find some important articles on the Internet. In particular, articles that are posted on the home pages of well-known researchers are probably worth reading and citing in your paper. However, a lot of junk is also available on the Internet. You should consider with skepticism the information you find using nonscientific search engines. There is no mandatory quality control on the Internet, so you will have to do your own quality control. Before you cite information found on the Internet, be sure to check the credentials of the author and get the opinions of others experienced in the field about the information being cited.



LITERATURE SEARCH

SEARCHING THE FORMAL LITERATURE

At this point the impossibility of searching through the mass of journals and books is probably boggling your mind. I don't blame you; you could spend the rest of your life in the library looking through publications as they are published and you would still fall farther and farther behind. Fortunately, the APA has come to your rescue. One of their services is *PsycINFO* and is dedicated to creating products to help researchers locate the literature they need. Since 1927 the APA has published *Psychological Abstracts*, containing references and abstracts of articles. Until recent years students doing a literature search would go to the many volumes of this publication in the library and manually try to find articles related to their topic by using key terms or author's names. It was a tedious but necessary task.

Today the availability of electronic communication has greatly simplified this task. In addition to the *Abstracts*, APA also produces the *PsycINFO* electronic database. Many larger libraries buy a site lease for *PsycINFO* and make it available both on terminals in the library and, in many cases, remotely. For instance, at my university, students and faculty can use their personal computers to do a literature search from their dorm rooms or offices. The database contains more than 1.5 million abstracts of psychological literature from 1887 to today, with about 5500 new references added each month. It includes articles, dissertations, reports, English-language book chapters and books, and other scholarly documents.

Figure 6-2 shows an example of an entry from the database. The three basic parts of an entry are a bibliographic citation, a summary, and standardized subject indexing. The bibliographic citation includes the title, the author

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1997-05223-007

DOCUMENT TYPE: Journal-Article

TITLE: The availability heuristic: Effects of fame and gender on the estimated frequency of male and female names.

AUTHOR: McKelvie,-Stuart-J.

SOURCE: Journal-of-Social-Psychology. 1997 Feb; Vol 137(1): 63-78

ISSN: 0022-4545

PUBLICATION YEAR: 1997

ABSTRACT: In 2 experiments, Canadian undergraduates heard a list of 13 male names and 13 female names; then they estimated how many male and female names there seemed to be. In Exp 1, the list consisted of 26 famous names or 26 nonfamous names. Both male and female participants gave similar estimates for the number of male and female names, contradicting hypotheses of a bias toward males or toward one's own gender. In Exp 2, where the list contained names of famous men and nonfamous women or names of famous women and nonfamous men, participants gave higher estimates for the gender that was famous. This result confirmed A. Tversky and D. Kahneman's (1973) fame availability effect and showed it to be moderate to large in size. ((c) 1997 APA/PsycINFO, all rights reserved)

KEY PHRASE: fame and sex of name, estimated frequency of male and female names, college students, Canada, test of fame availability heuristic

MAJOR DESCRIPTORS: *Estimation-; *Fame-; *Human-Sex-Differences; *Names-

MINOR DESCRIPTORS: Adulthood-

FIGURE 6-2 A typical entry from *PsycINFO* showing the various data fields

or authors, and the source. This is the information you would put in a references section if you were including the entry in a paper you were writing. The summary is usually an abstract, and for journal articles it is written by the author. The summary does not evaluate the research, it just describes it. The standardized subject indexing is done using key phrases and descriptors. Note that all you get from an entry is a brief description of the research. This is usually enough to tell you whether the entry is of interest to you, but it does not substitute for reading the original reference. To read the whole reference you have to obtain the article, book, or chapter from your library. Most larger libraries have a selection of standard journals. If your library does not have the book or article you are looking for, a librarian should be able to tell you how to get it from interlibrary loan. There are now full-text document delivery sources that can send articles to you over the Internet—for a fee. Some libraries also subscribe to *PsycARTICLES*. This service allows you to access the full text of articles from APA journals and has recently been updated to include archive articles back to 1894 for 24 APA journals.

How do you find entries related to your research topic? There are several ways. If you have some idea about the subject matter of the research you are interested in, you can search using key phrases or descriptors. I found the entry in Figure 6-2 in this way. I was considering doing an experiment looking at how the availability heuristic might affect people's favorability toward nuclear power generation. The availability heuristic says that our opinions can be influenced by the mental availability of instances related to that opinion. For instance, I might be of the opinion that people die more frequently from shark attacks than from wasp stings because I have more instances available in

my memory of shark attacks. In reality, however, mortality from wasp stings is higher. In our experiment we asked people to give us either advantages or disadvantages of nuclear power generation and then asked them to rate how favorable they were toward nuclear power. We expected that just having recalled either the advantages or the disadvantages would make the advantages or disadvantages more available and thus bias the favorability rating. In this case I was interested in finding references relating to the availability heuristic, so that is what I entered into the search.

I got back a message saying that the search had produced about 50 documents. I then began looking through the entries, one of which is shown in Figure 6-2. I read the title and abstract of this particular entry and determined that the entry was not close enough to my interests to look at the whole article. You can see why the search selected this article: Both the title and the key phrase contain the term *availability heuristic*. This term could have appeared anywhere in the entry and the entry would have been chosen. I could have limited the search by specifying which field to search. Each of the capitalized words indicates a separate field. So, for instance, I could have searched just the KEY PHRASE field. Only 11 search fields are shown in Figure 6-2, but there are actually 89 possible search field values.⁶ In this way you can limit your search to journal articles, or English-language references, or adult participants, and so on. With this method you would not have to search through so many entries.

The exact procedures for conducting a search are too detailed to go into here, and they change frequently. You can learn these procedures from a librarian, from one of a number of booklets, and even online from APA (<http://www.apa.org/psycinfo/>). However, I will give you a general description of the steps you will go through. First you should compose a narrative of your search question. For example, suppose that you wanted to know, "Do people develop anxieties about using computers?" You should identify the separate concepts in the question—for example, *anxiety* and *computer*. You should then use the electronic *Thesaurus* available as part of *PsycINFO* to find appropriate descriptors. The *Thesaurus* will allow you to explode or narrow the terms as needed to customize the search for your purposes. You should do this step for each of your terms. For example, maybe *anxiety* should include *fear* or *phobia*. You need to then combine your sets of descriptors using the words AND, OR, and NOT. Be careful when you do this because these words have very specific meanings. AND means that you want the search to be restrictive in that the entry will have to contain all the concepts—for example, both *anxiety* and *computer*. OR gives a much wider search and means that the entry could have either descriptor. NOT is used if you are sure that you want to exclude all entries having a particular descriptor.

⁶ You can learn more about these fields by going to the following World Wide Web address: <http://www.apa.org/psycinfo/>. This address will also go into much more detail about how to conduct an electronic search.

Once the search is complete, the screen will tell you how many entries were found. If there are only a few or none, do not automatically assume that little or no research has been done in the area. You should reevaluate the concepts in your question or view the few results to create modified descriptors. If the search has produced a few usable references, look at the descriptors listed in the entries you have found to check whether any would be appropriate for your search; add them to your search if they are. Try combining your descriptors in different ways to see whether this affects the number of entries found. On the other hand, if your search has identified hundreds of entries, scan through some of these to check whether there are research areas that are of no interest to you and try to eliminate these entries by using a NOT or by combining descriptors in some other way.

Another way to search the electronic databases is to use authors rather than descriptors. Perhaps you know of an author or several authors who regularly publish in your area of interest, or you have found several such authors while doing your descriptor search. You would probably want to enter these authors' names into a search of the author fields of the database to see what other things they have published. For example, while I was doing my search on the availability heuristic, I knew that the originators of this term, Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, had published other articles, chapters, and books on this topic, so I searched the database using their names and found a few more relevant references, as well as many more irrelevant ones. Be sure to use all the variants of the names, both with and without initials, because names are sometimes listed in a variety of ways.

When you have a reasonable list of entries from your various searches, sort through them on the screen, picking the most appropriate and "marking" them electronically. Later you can print or download all the entries you have marked or send them to yourself via e-mail. This list will provide you with the information necessary to find the original articles, books, or chapters you want to read in full, and you can later select bibliographic entries from the list to produce the references section of your research report.

I have gone into considerable detail about how to use *PsycINFO* because it is the most widely used database in psychology. However, there are other scientific literature databases that psychologists find helpful. The library at my university lists 22 different databases under psychology. For example, particularly for the clinical/medical side of psychology, *MEDLINE* might be good database to search. Using *MEDLINE* is quite similar to using *PsycINFO*.

Suppose that you were interested in bipolar disorder, which is one of the more common mental disorders studied by psychologists. You would enter *bipolar* on the line that says find. You would then fill in the various lines that specify whether the search should include finding the word in the title, in the author's name, in a journal name, or anywhere; the span of time to be searched; how you want the results sorted; and whether you want only the citation, the abstract, or the full record.

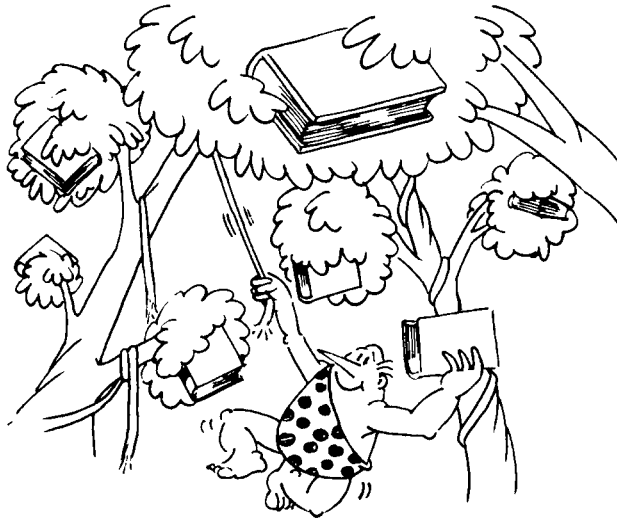
When I entered *bipolar* and specified that I wanted to do a search of titles from 1995 to 2002, the search listed 250 citations. To make the search more

efficient you would probably want to narrow the search by adding key words. Suppose that your real interest is in suicides by those diagnosed with bipolar disorders. In this case you could enter *bipolar&suicide* on the find line. When I made this change, the number of citations found decreased from 250 to 15—a much more manageable number.

I would encourage you to visit your library either in person or electronically to find out which databases are available there. You may find databases in addition to *PsycINFO* that will give you the opportunity to broaden your search, particularly if your area of interest overlaps a field in addition to psychology.

“TREEING” BACKWARD THROUGH THE REFERENCES

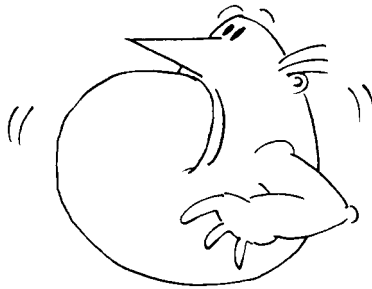
There is another way to do a literature search that is not as thorough as using *PsycINFO*. However, this method is a good way of determining whether you have missed any key research in your previous search. I refer to this technique as *treeing backward through the references*. The first step is finding the most recent article that deals with the topic of interest; this article will form the “trunk” of your research tree. Find the references at the end of the article. Many of these references should also be relevant to your topic. (With any luck most of them are already on your list.) Each of these articles will also have a reference list from which you can select in the same way. Follow each reference list backward through the literature until you have found all the important articles that form a new set of branches on your tree. This method can be helpful, but do not rely on it as your sole technique because you cannot always assume that every author has done a scholarly job of finding the important references.



TREEING THROUGH THE REFERENCES

"TREEING" FORWARD THROUGH THE REFERENCES

To be thorough in your literature search, you can tree forward through the references as well as backward. For example, if you find a key article that is several years old and want to find more recent articles that have referenced that article, you can use the *Social Sciences Citation Index* (SSCI)—a database published quarterly and cumulated annually by the Institute for Scientific Information. It covers nearly 1400 journals from virtually every social science discipline. The SSCI now comes in both electronic and paper form. In either case you will be using a key article, and you will want to find all the articles published since the date of citation of the key article. For a paper search, you would look through all the yearly volumes published since the key article came out. In each volume the key article would be listed, followed by each of the other articles that cited it. If you are doing an electronic search, you can search all the years at once and, as with other electronic databases, you can electronically mark the citations you are interested in and have them printed out. Currently, the electronic database also allows you to base your search on the subject or location of the article.



HOW TO RECYCLE YOURSELF

You can also recycle yourself by finding each article that cited the original article, then treeing backward using the references for each of these new articles. You may wish to take some of these newly acquired references, use them as key references, and go forward again. You can continue this process until you feel you have covered all the important references.

REPRINT REQUESTS

A professional courtesy among scientists allows you to get some journal articles free. When authors get articles published, they usually order 100 or so reprints of the article from the journal. As long as these reprints last, the author will send one to you if you ask nicely. The usual way is to send a postcard saying, "I would very much appreciate receiving a reprint of your article entitled _____ that appeared in _____." You might also try sending the

author an e-mail rather than a postcard. If you know where the author conducts research, you can probably find an e-mail address. For instance, if the author is a faculty member, simply go to the one of the search services that lists colleges, find the faculty member's college Web page, then go to the psychology department Web page or the university directory, and you will usually find an e-mail address to use. While you are communicating with this author, you might also ask for other articles dealing with the same subject if you have a general interest in the area of research. Be sure to include your address. The author will usually send you a copy as a courtesy. In some cases the author may have the article in electronic form and can send it to you as an e-mail attachment. Do not be embarrassed to send out these *reprint requests*. Many younger investigators who are trying to become familiar with research in a particular area but do not have the resources to buy their own journals send out reprint requests, and most authors find these requests flattering rather than a nuisance.

CURRENT RESEARCH

The Smithsonian Science Information Exchange provides a way of finding out what is going on in current research. Their current file contains records for more than 14,000 projects in all areas of the behavioral sciences. All these projects are being supported by a funding agency such as the National Science Foundation. Each listing contains a 200-word description of the work being performed. You can order a package containing the listings for general topic areas such as "insomnia" or "behavior therapy with alcoholics." There is a fee for this service that depends on the number of listings. The disadvantages of this system are the cost and the fact that only funded research is listed. However, it is one of the few means of finding out about ongoing research.

■ Informal Sources

PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS

As I mentioned earlier, to be completely up to date on the research in a particular field, you must become familiar with informal sources of communication. About 15 to 18 months prior to journal publication many investigators present their research at a professional meeting by reading a paper. In fact, about one fifth of the articles published in major psychology journals are based on materials previously presented at an APA convention (Garvey & Griffith, 1971). The APA annually sponsors a national meeting and six regional conventions. In addition, many other non-APA professional groups, such as the Psychonomic Society, the Psychometric Society, and the Association for Psychological Science, sponsor meetings.

Of course, you can't attend every single meeting or convention in your field. Thus, as discussed earlier, after some of the meetings, the papers presented at the sessions are published in a bound volume called a *proceedings*,

which is available in most libraries. In addition, just before the meetings, members of these organizations receive convention programs. You might be able to find faculty members in your psychology department who belong to these organizations and get programs before the meetings. Once you know that one of these papers is of interest to you, simply send the author a reprint request. You will understand the paper better if you read it than if you listen to it anyway.

The real reason for attending conventions, aside from engaging in superfluous hedonistic activities,⁷ is to talk to other researchers doing work in your area of interest. Depending on how defensive they are, you might even find out what they are planning to do in the near future. In this way, you can fill in the information gap between “starts work” and “convention paper” in Figure 6-1.

By the way, if you learn something in one of these discussions that you might wish to quote in an article, be sure to write it down, note the date, and get the person’s permission to use it. You can then cite the source in an article as a *personal communication*.

RESEARCH GROUPS

Once you learn who does research in a particular area of interest to you, you may find that they have set up an informal means of keeping one another informed. In some cases this will be a group whose members send one another preprints of articles and papers as soon as they are ready or, in some cases, when they are in draft form. Today the Internet also offers a way for members of these groups to interact. In some cases the purpose may be to distribute papers. In other cases the members of the group may have research-related discussions via an electronic mailing list or a chat room. Sometimes such a group would be willing to have anybody who is interested join in the discussions. Other groups are more restrictive, and you would have to be invited to participate. Once you have established an interest in a particular area of research, be sure to keep an eye out for such groups. They offer a valuable way of staying informed about the latest research information.

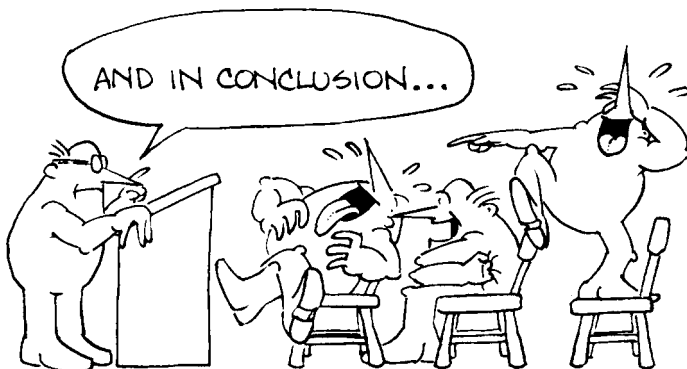
FACULTY MEMBERS

Be sure not to overlook a handy source of informal help with your literature search: the *faculty members* in your psychology department. Students are sometimes reluctant to approach professors, thinking that they will be too busy to help them or even thinking that asking the faculty for help is some form of cheating. To the contrary, most are not only willing to help but also flattered to be asked. This kind of help is as much a part of teaching as

⁷ Havin’ fun!

standing in front of a class lecturing. And real researchers use whatever sources they can find to help them conduct their research. Science is a team effort in which the goal is the creation of the body of knowledge, not a struggle of researcher against researcher or student against teacher. So give it a try. You may be pleasantly surprised not only at the willingness of your professors to help but also at how knowledgeable they are.

Although the written record of our science is maintained by the formal sources, the informal sources also perform a vital service for science. They offer a forum for saying stupid but creative things. Your informal colleagues will chuckle quietly and tell you where you are wrong. Your formal colleagues are forced to guffaw loudly and boisterously tell the world where you have gone wrong. With only the formal sources, few of us would have the courage to try to move science by leaps and bounds, and we would stick with small, conservative steps. The encouragement and friendly discouragement offered by informal contacts are important in shaping our thoughts into a form suitable for the formal literature.



I have tried to make this discussion of searching the literature as complete as possible. I hope that in doing so I haven't made the process sound more complex than it really is. Many new investigators believe that a literature search requires some sort of mystical power and many years of experience. However, if you follow the simple steps outlined in this chapter, you will find that doing a thorough literature search can be a straightforward, satisfying experience.

■ Summary

A **literature search** is necessary to find out whether your experimental idea has already been investigated, to determine whether similar experiments have been done, and to see how your experiment will fit into the current body of knowledge. To do this search efficiently, you should understand the lines of

communication within the scientific community and the *time lag* associated with various sources of information. It is usually most efficient to begin your search in *books* that are relevant to your area of interest. Books describe research from the beginning of psychology up to about 13 years prior to current research. You can then use *review articles* to bring you within five to eight years of current research. *Journal articles* will form the backbone of your literature search. Meeting *proceedings* and *technical reports* can be an important source of information, particularly in applied fields. You can track down relevant articles, books, and book chapters using either descriptor terms or author names through an electronic search with *PsycINFO*. You can double-check your search by treeing backward through the references of recent journal articles. The *Social Science Citation Index* also allows you to tree forward through the references by determining which articles have cited a particular earlier article. Informal sources such as *papers read at professional meetings*, *personal communications*, *preprints*, and even *faculty members* are a valuable way to learn about current and future research.

7

How to Decide Which Variables to Manipulate and Measure

We believe that a concept has no meaning beyond that obtained from the operations on which it is based.

W. R. GARNER, H. W. HAKE, & C. W. ERIKSEN (1956)

We learned about various types of research in Chapter 1, discussed a general model of an experiment in Chapter 2, learned how to get an experimental idea in Chapter 3, and considered ethics in Chapters 4 and 5. In Chapter 6 you probably learned more about doing a literature search than you wished to know. Now it's time we got down to work, doing what experimental psychologists are supposed to do—experiments.

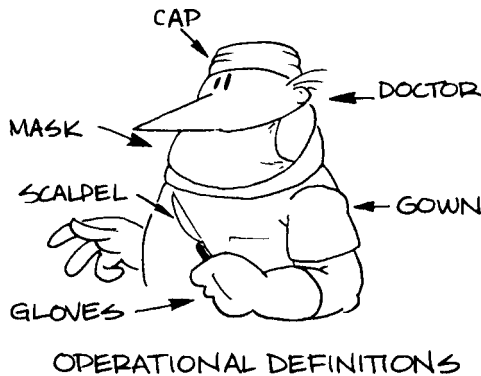
In this chapter we consider two decisions that have to be made when planning any psychology experiment, from the simplest to the most complex: We need to choose the independent and dependent variables.

■ Choosing an Independent Variable

Recall from Chapter 2 that the independent variable is the one that the experimenter manipulates. Because the purpose of any experiment is to find the effect of the independent variable on behavior, choosing this variable is about the most important decision you have to make. At first blush it may seem that the decision should be rather straightforward—and for some experiments it is. For example, if you want to know whether people press a button in response to a light more quickly when a tone is given as a warning signal, the independent variable is rather obvious: the presence or absence of the tone. If, however, you want to find out whether children are more aggressive after exposure to violent versus nonviolent television programs, the independent variable (violence) may be tougher to define. What constitutes violence on television? Is *Monday Night Football* violent? Are *Roadrunner* cartoons violent? Are rap videos violent? Not everyone would agree on a particular definition of violent television programs.

DEFINING YOUR INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

The problem here is that there is a difference in precision between what the general public will accept in defining a term and what experimental psychologists will accept. Experimental psychologists should provide **operational definitions** of the independent and dependent variables, which means that they must specify the operations anyone must go through to set up the independent variable in the same way as they did. So an operational definition is a bit like a recipe, except the procedures and ingredients create a variable rather than a cake.



In the TV-violence experiment discussed in Chapter 2, the operational definition would specify the steps required to determine whether certain shows are violent. For example, you could operationalize the concept of a violent television program by showing each program to a randomly chosen group of 100 people and requiring that 75% of them indicate a program is violent before you operationally define it as violent. An alternative is to devise a checklist with such items as “Is there physical contact that causes harm to another person?” “Has an illegal act taken place?” and “Did one person act so as to make another feel inferior?” You might specify that each program should have at least 2 out of 10 such items checked “yes” for it to be considered violent. Again, such a procedure would specify exactly what operations any other experimenter must carry out to meet your operational definition of violent television programs.

Psychology researchers have more difficulty agreeing on operational definitions than do physical scientists.¹ Galileo did not have to ponder over a definition for mass before determining whether objects that have different masses fall at the same speed in a vacuum. Yet a great many important psychological questions require complex operational definitions: Do people

¹ A physicist first used the term *operational definition*. However, in the physical sciences, operational definitions are usually so widely accepted that physical scientists spend considerably less time agonizing over the definitions than do behavioral scientists.



whose mothers are affectionate make more successful marriage partners? Do students learn more from popular professors? Does a worker's morale affect work output? Does anxiety cause depression? Before doing an experiment to answer any of these questions, you need operational definitions for the terms *affectionate*, *successful*, *learn*, *popular*, *morale*, *output*, *anxiety*, and *depression*. Try making up operational definitions for these terms: You will quickly see the psychology researcher's challenge.

For most concepts that you want to operationally define, you will find from your literature search that other investigators have already been faced with the challenge of defining most of the concepts. The good news is that if they have done a good job, much of your work has been done for you. The bad news is that if you disagree with their definitions, you may have a difficult time getting a new definition accepted. Science is rather conservative in that it does not like rapid changes. You can imagine the chaos if every investigator were to insist on a different operational definition of each important concept. The scientific body of knowledge would resemble the Tower of Babel because everyone would be speaking a different language. So once a concept is operationally defined, the definition carries some status, and it is sometimes difficult to convince others that a new one is needed. As you begin trying to operationally define the terms for your experiment, be sure to do a literature search and find out how others have defined the concepts you wish to investigate.

CHOOSING THE RANGE OF YOUR INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

Once you have defined your independent variable, you still have to choose the range of the variable. The range is the difference between the highest and lowest level of the variable you choose. For example, suppose that we

decided to define violent television programs by using our group of 100 people to classify each program as violent or nonviolent. We could choose to use two levels of violence in our experiment: those programs classified as violent by 100% of the people and those that nobody thought were violent. These two levels of the independent variable would give us the largest possible range.

On the other hand, we might have defined the programs rated violent by more than 50% of the people as violent and those rated violent by less than 50% as nonviolent. These levels would obviously create a much smaller range.

How do we determine what the range should be? Unfortunately, I can't give you any hard-and-fast rule for making this decision, for it is as much an art as a science. However, following are some guidelines that you might find useful.

Be Realistic

First, you should try to choose a range that is *realistic* in that it is similar to the levels found in the situation you will be generalizing to. You should avoid "sledgehammer" effects caused by setting the levels of the independent variable at such extremes that you are certain to find a difference in behavior. Some of the early medical research on marijuana was plagued by sledgehammer effects. In some cases, experimenters gave mice the human equivalent of a truckload of marijuana per day! The experimenters got impressive but impractical results.

Select a Range That Shows Effect

Within realistic limits, you should have a range that is large enough to show an effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable if such an effect exists. For example, if you were interested in the effect of room temperature on manual dexterity in a sorting task and you chose temperatures of 23°C and 25°C,² you might conclude falsely that room temperature had no effect on manual dexterity.

Real-world³ experimental situations require special attention be paid to choosing a large enough range because the experimenter does not always have complete control over the levels of the independent variable. You can choose an approximate level, but the actual level may vary from trial to trial. For instance, in the lecture-pace experiment discussed in Chapter 2, I attempted to vary my lecture pace by speaking at a slow, medium, or fast rate. The levels I attempted to achieve were 100, 125, and 150 syllables per minute. But because I am not a machine that can be set at a particular speaking rate, I was bound to produce some variability around the desired levels. To determine my actual rate, we recorded the lectures and counted the number of syllables per second. Fortunately, the fastest lecture at the slow

² For those who refuse to be converted to converting temperature in terms of Celsius, 73°F and 77°F, respectively.

³ I use the term *real world* to refer to nonlaboratory experiments designed to find answers to applied problems, not to imply that most people in universities are unreal. People who live in ivory towers shouldn't throw snipes.

pace was still slower than the slowest lecture at the medium pace, so there was no overlap of levels. However, if I had chosen a smaller range, I would have had less chance of producing these reliable differences among the levels of the independent variable. Thus, in some nonlaboratory experiments, you must remember to make the range large enough that differences in the levels of the independent variable are not covered up by the uncontrolled variability of that variable.

Do a Pilot Experiment

Determining the best range for an experiment is, to some extent, guesswork. In some cases, during your literature search you may find experiments that use the same independent variable you are planning to use that can give you an idea about an appropriate range. However, if your experiment is original and nobody else has used an independent variable similar to yours, you may choose to do a **pilot experiment**.⁴

A pilot experiment is a small-scale version of the experiment you are planning; by performing this experiment you can iron out any problems before you proceed. Because you need not report the results of this experiment, you may break some of the rules of experimentation here. For example, you might cajole your friends into participating, and you might even serve as a participant yourself. You can also change the levels of your independent variable halfway through a trial, stop the experiment, or

do only part of the experiment, depending on what you learn as you proceed.

When doing a pilot experiment, you will sometimes find that what looked good on paper just does not work. For example, I once discovered during a pilot experiment that a supposedly simple experiment I had designed required at least three experimenters to operate the equipment. The pilot experiment may also help you determine whether the levels of your independent variable are what you expected. Levels that seem realistic during the planning stage of an experiment may seem unrealistic in the laboratory. By having a trial run, you can change an obviously inappropriate range of the independent variable before investing a great amount of time and effort in the experiment. The pilot experiment becomes the guide for future experiments, leading the experimenter through uncharted waters.

Although searching the literature and doing pilot experiments can give you some idea of an appropriate range for your independent variable, in the end you still have to make your best guess. If you turn out to be right, you can claim good judgment. If you are wrong, you claim bad luck.



PARTICIPANT IN A
PILOT EXPERIMENT

⁴ I suppose the term *pilot*, in this case, is used in the sense of “guiding through unknown places,” as when a ship’s pilot comes on board to steer a vessel through unknown waters.

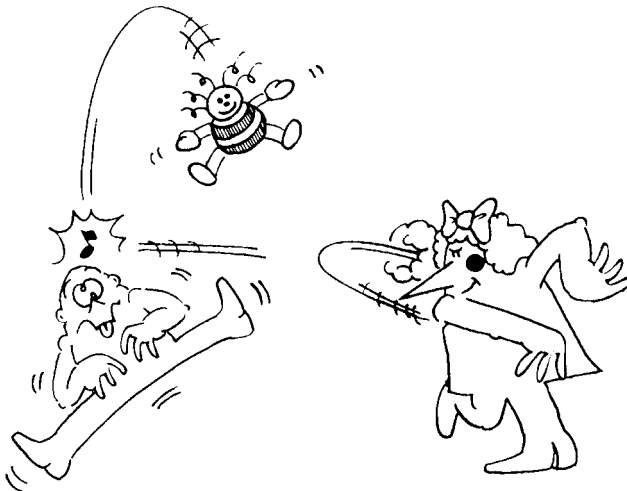
■ Choosing a Dependent Variable

As we know from Chapter 2, the dependent variable is a measure of behavior. We saw that we could choose an infinite number of behaviors to measure. Thus, in selecting our dependent variable, we must decide what we will measure.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS AGAIN

Let's return to the question "Will violent television shows cause a change in a child's aggressiveness?" In this experiment, we clearly want to measure aggressiveness, but again we need an operational definition of aggressiveness so that we can determine whether a child's behavior changes after viewing violent television shows.

One way to develop an operational definition in this example would be to have a panel of judges watch a movie of each child in a free-play situation and then rate the child's aggressiveness on a seven-point scale. Or we could tell each child several stories about other children in frustrating situations and ask the child what he or she would do in such situations. We could then use the number of "direct-attack" responses as a measure of aggressiveness. Another alternative would be to observe children as they played with a selection of toys we had previously classified as aggressive (such as guns, tanks, and knives) or nonaggressive (such as trucks, tools, and dolls). We could then measure the percentage of time each child played with each type of toy. You can undoubtedly think of many other behaviors that would be an indication of a child's aggressiveness.



A NONAGGRESSIVE TOY?

Sometimes, even when a dependent variable seems quite straightforward, there can be problems with operationally defining it. For example, two investigators wanted to determine whether some predictions from a theory of evolutionary psychology would be supported by homicide figures (Daly & Wilson, 1988). The theory predicts that people are much less likely to kill blood relatives living with them than to kill genetically unrelated people living with them. Now, it would seem to be a pretty simple matter to count homicides within a particular sample. But what exactly is a homicide? In several countries homicide figures include all “murders, attempted murders, and manslaughters.” Should attempted murders and manslaughters be counted for this study? For most manslaughters, such as a reckless auto accident, there is no intent to kill. Is intent important? If intent is important, perhaps attempted murders should be treated as murders.

Should only the cases in which a conviction was obtained be counted as murder? At first this conclusion might seem appropriate; we would not want to include a case if the accused were innocent. But counting convictions may be even more misleading. In a sample of homicides committed in Detroit in one year, 20 men were convicted for killing their wives, and nine women were convicted for killing their husbands. One might conclude that men killed their wives more often. Actually, though, women kill their spouses more often. But homicidal wives had their cases dismissed without trial 75% of the time, whereas homicidal husbands were spared a trial only 20% of the time. As the researchers point out, counting only convictions may say more about the behavior of prosecutors than about the behavior of offenders! Unfortunately, as this example illustrates, operationally defining dependent variables is no easier than doing so for independent variables.

With dependent variables, not only do we have to focus on determining an operational definition, but we also have to know whether the measurement is reliable and valid.

RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

A measuring instrument is perfectly reliable if we get exactly the same result when we repeat the measurement a number of times under comparable conditions. The more variable the results, the less reliable is the measurement instrument. A rubber ruler, for example, would not be very reliable. It might measure a tabletop at 18 inches one time and 31 inches the next time. To find out how reliable the ruler is, we would have to measure many objects at least two times and see how the results correlate (see Chapter 1). If the result of the first measurement is similar to that of the second, correlation is high, and we can assume that the measurement instrument is reliable. If correlation is low, we know that the instrument is not very reliable.

To use our example of violent television programs, we might show the same set of videotapes of each child’s behavior to a second panel of judges and compare the aggressiveness ratings given by the two panels. If the panels

gave similar ratings, we could feel more confident that ratings taken from these panels of judges were reliable.

Formally determining **reliability** is particularly important when the dependent variable is the score from a test instrument such as a test of achievement, aptitude, or personality traits. The reliability of a standardized test will already have been tested, and a statistical value indicating this reliability can be found in the test manual. However, if you use a test or questionnaire that you constructed, you may have to determine its reliability yourself. There are several methods to do this. The most obvious is **test-retest reliability**, in which the same test is simply repeated on the same group at a later time. The reliability is determined by calculating a correlation coefficient using two scores from each test taker (see Appendix A). However, the score on the second test given to the same person can be contaminated by the previous testing. The events occurring during the interval between test administrations can also influence scores. For these reasons, a second way to determine reliability is the **alternative-form** method. A second test having items similar to the first is constructed and given to the same people. Again the two scores for each person are correlated. A third way of establishing reliability is to use the **split-half** technique, in which a single test is statistically split into halves (such as using odd versus even questions) and scores for the two halves are correlated. Some of the advantages and disadvantages of using each technique for establishing reliability are listed in Table 7-1. If your dependent variable is not a test score, you may not have to formally determine its reliability. Nevertheless, you should be aware of the necessity of having a reliable measure.

■ **TABLE 7-1**
Advantages and Disadvantages of Three Methods
of Determining Test Reliability

<i>Reliability method</i>	<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Disadvantages</i>
<i>Test-retest</i>	It uses the same test items. It is simple to do.	First testing may contaminate the second. Respondents may change with time.
<i>Alternative-form</i>	It minimizes repeat-item contamination. Little time passes before retesting. It is useful for pretest-posttest designs.	Use of different items lowers reliability.
<i>Split-half</i>	It minimizes repeat-item contamination. No time passes. It is done in one sitting.	Use of different items lowers reliability. It requires a longer test.

Validity⁵ refers to confirming whether we are measuring what we want to measure. Suppose that we have a wooden ruler marked as 12 inches long, but it is really 24 inches long because each inch on the ruler actually measures 2 inches. In this case, we could measure a tabletop many times, and the ruler would indicate 11 inches every time. We have a reliable measuring instrument, but, of course, the measurement is wrong because we claim that we are measuring in inches when in fact we are not. Thus, we also need to know whether our measuring instruments are valid—that is, whether they measure in the same units as does a standard measuring device known to be valid.

In establishing our operational definition of aggressiveness, for example, suppose that we had decided to measure the percentage of time each child spent playing with aggressive versus nonaggressive toys. If our stopwatch were working correctly, this measurement would probably be reliable because we would get about the same reading when we timed the behavior again. However, people might argue that our measure of aggressiveness is not valid. They might claim that children tend to play with toys that they already know how to use. Because they have seen guns and tanks and knives used on violent television programs, they choose these toys to play with. Or they might claim that children can use trucks and tools and dolls in aggressive ways and in nonaggressive ways. To convince them that your measurement is valid, you must compare it with some standard that you both agree is a valid measure of aggressiveness. If your measuring instrument agrees with the standard, you can call it a valid instrument.

When a test score is used as a dependent variable, it is sometimes necessary to more formally establish the test's validity and its reliability. The weakest form of validity is **face validity**, which means that, on the surface, it looks as if the test measures what it is supposed to. Obviously, face validity is so subjective that it is not of much scientific use; all investigators think that their tests have high face validity. A more formal and defensible validation procedure is to establish **content validity**. The subject matter covered by the test is carefully analyzed in detail for its content. The test is then designed so that it contains a representative sample of questions from each content area identified. For example, if you were to give a test that claimed to evaluate the reader's comprehension of this chapter, you would want to have test items that cover each major concept introduced in this chapter, such as content validity. A third validation procedure is to establish **predictive validity** to determine whether the test successfully predicts some specific criterion. For example, the tests that high school students take for entrance to college are valuable in partially predicting the criterion of their college grade point average (GPA). A high correlation between the test score and the GPA would indicate high validity. **Concurrent validity** is also established by comparing the test score with a criterion, but in this case the two measures are taken at the same time. For example, if we were attempting to construct a questionnaire to be filled out by our TV-watching children's parents to measure their children's aggressiveness, we might determine its concurrent validity by correlating the questionnaire score for each child with a

⁵ For a more detailed discussion of types of validity, see Chapter 2.

teacher's numerical rating of aggressiveness. As you can see, measuring a dependent variable's validity is even more difficult than measuring its reliability. Often the best we can do is to simply argue that our measures are valid from a logically defensible position.

DIRECTLY OBSERVABLE DEPENDENT VARIABLES

The closer you can come to directly observing a behavior, the less controversy there will be over your measure. However, if your interest is in determining the workings of the human mind, you should recognize that all dependent measures are, in a sense, indirect. For example, suppose you are interested in memory and want to compare two ways of presenting material to be remembered. After a week you wish to measure how much your participants remember. What should you measure?

That's easy; just ask them what they remember. But suppose they cannot recall any of the material presented in either way. Could you then conclude that they remember nothing? You might have given them a recognition test instead and determined their accuracy at distinguishing previously presented material from new material. Or you could have had them relearn the material and measured the percentage of time saved the second time by having learned it before. Each of these methods might give you different answers to your question: How much do people remember? I hope you can see from this example that dependent variables, even those that at first appear to be directly observable, may be linked only indirectly to the behavior you are interested in.

Single Dependent Variables

Suppose we want to know whether people respond more quickly to a bright light than to a dim light when signaled to push a button. We would probably start a clock when a light goes on and stop the clock when each participant presses a button. We should recognize that only one characteristic of the response is being measured. We could have chosen any number of other characteristics—how people press the button, for example. Does an individual



move her finger from the side of the button on one trial and from directly over the button on the next? On one trial, does she miss the button on the first try? On another trial, does she hit the button lightly at first and then mash it down? From this diverse set of responses, we chose to measure only one characteristic of the response: time from light onset to button depression. In other words, we selected a **single dependent variable**.

Any single dependent variable we choose may or may not be the appropriate measure to take. For example, suppose that we ask people to use a pencil to trace the outline of a star while looking at the star in a mirror. Because the mirror reverses everything, most people find this task very tough on the first few trials. If we want to measure the improvement from Trial 1 to Trial 10 on this task, what dependent variable would best reflect this improvement? The standard dependent variable used in these experiments is the number of times the participant's tracing crosses the outline of the star. Figure 7-1 shows the tracings from two fictitious individuals whom we will sagaciously call Participant 1 and Participant 2. On Trial 1, Participant 1 crossed the boundary 20 times and on Trial 10, six times. For this individual, the dependent variable reflects the expected improvement in

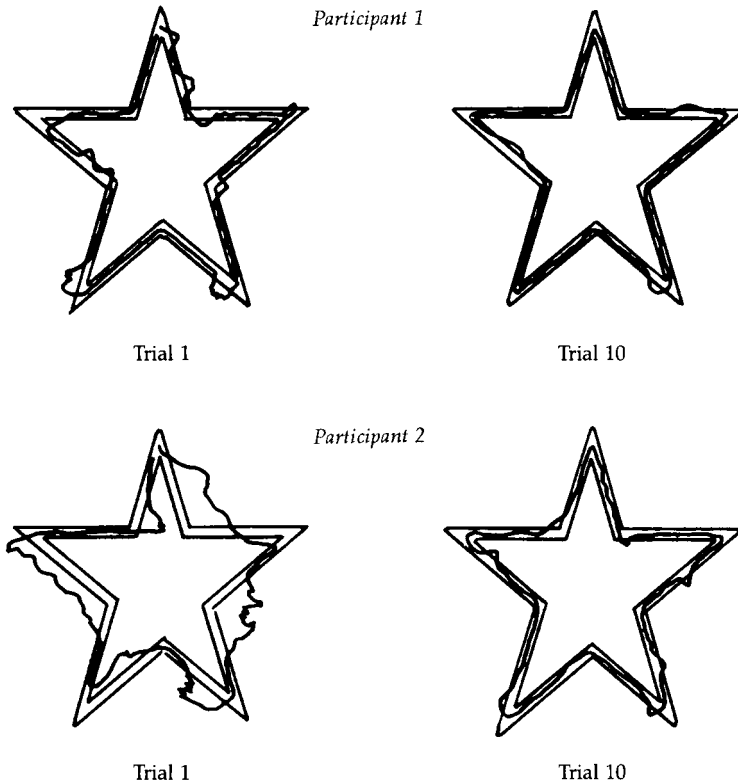


FIGURE 7-1 Star-tracing performance of two participants on Trials 1 and 10

performance. But look at Participant 2—this individual crossed the outline 14 times on each of the two trials. Our dependent variable indicates that Participant 2 did not improve in mirror-tracing performance. Do you believe this conclusion?

The basic problem is that even when using a directly observable dependent variable such as number of border crossings, we must be concerned with validity. Border-crossing behavior is only one possible measure of mirror-tracing performance. Is it a valid measure? Other dependent variables might better reflect overall mirror-tracing performance. As an alternative, we could have measured the total length of the tracing and determined what percentage fell within the borders of the star. Or we could have measured the area between the border and the tracing for each trial. Or we could have timed the participants to find out whether they were tracing the star more quickly by the 10th trial.

Multiple Dependent Variables

One way of improving the chances that we are choosing appropriate behaviors to measure in our experiment is by using **multiple dependent variables**. In fact, in some areas of experimental psychology, it is considered quite inappropriate to report only one dependent measure. For example, many types of research use **choice reaction time** as a dependent measure. Choice reaction time is the time it takes to give one of several responses when one of several stimuli⁶ occurs. Naturally, if people want to make as few errors as possible, they must respond rather slowly. If they are willing to be less accurate, they can respond more quickly. This speed–accuracy trade-off makes it necessary that both speed and accuracy be reported as dependent variables. If we are interested in the overall level of performance, one measure is useless without the other. For this reason, the better journals will not accept articles that report only speed or only accuracy of a choice-reaction-time response.

Composite Dependent Variables

Although reporting as many aspects of behavior as possible is generally a good idea, this practice can make interpreting the results much more difficult. Suppose we have four dependent variables: One measure shows great improvement across conditions, two stay the same, and one decreases slightly. To say anything about the overall change in behavior, we need a way of combining our single dependent variables into a **composite dependent variable** that will give some indication of overall performance.

A number of areas in experimental psychology, such as intelligence testing, use composite dependent variables. The Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale, a general test of IQ, is an example of a composite dependent variable. The IQ is a composite of two subscales, a verbal scale and a performance scale. The score on each of these subscales is a composite made up of subtests. For example, the

⁶ Because I haven't used the term *stimuli* before, I should point out that stimulus is singular and stimuli is plural. It is time to expand your chant: "This stimulus is, this datum is; these stimuli are, these data are." Got that?

verbal score is derived from the scores on the following tests: general information, digit span, vocabulary, arithmetic, comprehension, and similarities. The idea behind intelligence testing is that having a single measure that characterizes intelligence in general is useful. Of course, not all psychologists agree that a single number does adequately represent intelligence, but the use of composite dependent variables is traditional in the psychology of testing.⁷

A second type of composite dependent variable combines several instances of a single measure. These instances are taken at different times or under different conditions. **Percent savings** is one such dependent variable used in memory research. Suppose, for example, that one group of people learned to ride a bicycle when they were young and then did not touch a bike again until they were 40 years old. We could have them relearn bike riding, practicing for a number of trials until they could stay on for a minute without touching the ground. Suppose they required seven trials to do this. We could compare this number to the number of trials it takes a second group of 40-year-olds who had never ridden a bike to stay on for a minute. Suppose that it took this group an average of 14 trials. We could then calculate the percentage of trials saved by having learned to ride at an earlier age:

$$\% \text{ saved} = \frac{\text{Number of trials to learn} - \text{Number of trials to relearn}}{\text{Number of trials to learn}} \times 100$$

In our example:

$$\% \text{ saved} = \frac{14 - 7}{14} \times 100 = 50\%$$

Through this type of composite dependent variable, you can use a single number to show the effect of a change caused by the independent variable (past bike-riding experience).

It may not be clear to you yet how these composite dependent variables are derived or why they are appropriate measures, but you will become familiar with many others if you do research in certain areas of psychology. You may even find yourself making up your own composite variables someday.

INDIRECT DEPENDENT VARIABLES

Sometimes, directly observing the behavior you are interested in is impossible, yet we know that the ROT (repeatable, observable, testable) test of science requires that the behavior we are studying be publicly observable. How, then, can we do scientific research in such areas as emotion, learning, or intelligence? We need an indirect variable that changes along with the internal behavior we are interested in.

⁷ Stephen Jay Gould (1981) in his book *The Mismeasure of Man* took the radical position that the use of a single number such as IQ as a measure of a person's worth has been a major misuse of science in that century. He believed that this composite dependent variable has been largely used to maintain social ranks and distinctions.

Physiological Measures

Probably the most popular types of indirect variables are **physiological measures**, which are based on the idea that if the behavior is a private event, such as an emotion, perhaps the physiology of the body will change along with the private event. Because modern technology allows us to observe changes in the physiology of the body, experimenters use these changes to infer what the private event must have been.

Of course, when we use physiological measures to infer internal states, we are assuming that a unique physiological pattern accurately reflects an internal state. For example, a polygraph, or lie detector, measures four physiological processes—respiratory rate, heart rate, blood pressure, and galvanic skin response.⁸ The operator uses these measures to determine whether a person is telling the truth. Some people doubt whether the assumption behind using physiological measures is correct. For this reason, the results of a lie-detector test are admissible evidence in most courts only if both the plaintiff and the defendant agree to their use. Also, recently, federal law has severely restricted the use of polygraph tests in employment screening.

Other physiological measures become popular when researchers claim that these measures give an indication of some emotional state. The measures then lose favor as other investigators show that the same type of physiological change can occur with a different internal state. For example, an investigator named Hess at one point claimed that the diameter of a person's pupil increases when he or she is thinking pleasant thoughts and decreases when the person is thinking unpleasant things. For a while, the Madison Avenue advertising tycoons were so impressed that they used pupillary responses to choose magazine advertisements. Other investigators have since found that the diameter of the pupil is perhaps a better indication of the amount of information the person is processing than of the emotions he or she is feeling (Johnson, 1971). Pupillometricians are no longer as welcome on Madison Avenue as they once were.

More recently, some investigators have reported that the characteristics of a person's voice can be used for "psychological stress evaluation." By tape-recording a voice, slowing it down, and measuring certain aspects of vocal frequencies, these investigators thought they could tell when people are under great stress, such as they would be when lying. These claims were not supported by research, and this measure is now considered worthless by many researchers.

In the past several decades, one of the fastest-growing areas of psychology is brain imaging, in which the activity of the brain can be measured as various tasks are being carried out. The early work often involved measuring general brain wave activity in the form of the electroencephalograph (EEG). This general pattern of activity, however, is not useful other than for

⁸ In case you are not familiar with the term *galvanic skin response*, it is not a rash caused by handling too many garbage cans. It is a measure of how well the skin will carry a small electric current. Although not technically accurate, the reasoning goes something like this: Because wet skin carries electric current better than dry skin, a person who is "in a sweat" has a different galvanic skin response from one who is "cool and calm."



SOME STIMULI BRING ABOUT
A CHARACTERISTIC BRAIN WAVE.

determining a person's overall level of arousal. More recently, researchers were able to present a particular stimulus repeatedly and average the brain wave activity from either the time of stimulus presentation or the time of response. With these event-related potentials (ERPs), small changes in the characteristic peaks and valleys of the EEG can be analyzed to determine what happens as changes are made in the stimulus presented or in the cognitive processing required by the task.

Even more recently, researchers were able to use physiological techniques to map activity in various locations in the brain as tasks are being carried out. The most widely used technique is functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI). Researchers use fMRI to measure blood flow to various areas of the brain. The general idea is that as a particular area of the brain is processing information, this mental activity requires an increased firing of neurons in the area. As neurons fire they require an increasing blood supply. So if researchers give participants a task to perform and then find an increasing blood flow to a particular area of their brain, they can infer that this area of the brain must be performing this task.

For example, suppose I measure blood flow using fMRI and have you view a particular word. In one condition I might simply have you read the word. In a second condition I might ask you to make a judgment about the meaning of the word. In each condition I can get a picture showing blood flow to various areas of the brain, and by subtracting the first picture from the second, I can infer which areas must be used to process the meaning of the word. Researchers have used not only fMRIs to do this kind of work but also computerized axial tomography (CAT scans), positron emission tomography (PET scans), and multiple-site EEGs. Great progress has been made in understanding the function of the human brain by using these techniques.⁹ As we learn more about what these measures can tell us, the use of physiological measures will undoubtedly increase.

⁹ However, there are researchers who advise caution in the unquestioned acceptance of brain imaging as the royal road to understanding the brain (Van Orden & Paap, 1997).

Behavioral Measures

Some **behavioral measures** can also be used as indirect dependent variables. As with physiological measures, changes in the way a person performs a behavioral task can reflect the person's internal state.

Indirect behavioral measures are particularly important in some areas of cognitive psychology. Cognitive researchers are interested in determining what goes on in the "black box" of the human mind during cognitive tasks such as reading or problem solving. Because all they really have to work with are the inputs to (stimuli) and outputs from (responses) the box, they have had to devise clever ways of inferring what must be happening in the box. Suppose, for example, that we want to know how much information is processed in completing a particular task. If we assume that limited resources are available in the brain for processing cognitive information, one way to determine how much information is being processed is to measure how long it takes to make a response: The more information processed, the longer the response time will be. However, response time would give us only a single measure for the entire task and would tell us little about the processing required for subtasks such as encoding or response selection.

Dual-task methodology offers an indirect way of determining the processing requirements of a task while it is being performed. In this case, while the task of primary interest is being performed (the primary task), a second task (the secondary task) is also presented. The participants are instructed to do the primary task as well as possible and to use whatever resources are left over to do the secondary task. We can then measure performance on the secondary task and infer what the processing requirements of the primary task were. The better the performance on the secondary task, the fewer resources the primary task must have required. For example, the primary task might be to read a sentence. While the sentence is being read, tones are presented, and participants are instructed to press a button as quickly as possible whenever they hear a tone. We would infer that the slower the response to the tone, the more processing the sentence must be requiring at that time. With several trials, it would be possible to plot response times to the tones at various times while the sentence was being read and thus get a profile of the processing resources required by the sentence (Martin & Kelly, 1974).

As with all indirect behavioral measures, this measure is only as good as the assumptions that underlie it. In the case of dual-task methodology, the primary assumption is that a single pool of processing resources provides resources for all cognitive tasks. Some researchers have questioned this basic assumption (Navon & Gopher, 1979; Wickens, 1984). Indeed, we now have evidence for the existence of multiple pools of resources and for the fact that the type of pool used depends on whether the task is visual or aural, spatial or verbal, and so forth (Wickens, 1984). Even though some of the assumptions of dual-task methodology have been disputed, the technique still seems to provide a good measure of processing resources in many cases and is widely used.

Other indirect behavioral measures do not necessarily make the same assumptions as dual-task methodology. However, in general, the more indirect

the measure, the more elaborate the underlying assumptions have to be, and the less confident we can be of our inferences. The advantage of indirect measures is that they do offer a way of investigating experimental questions for which we have no direct measures. As long as we are aware of the assumptions we are making when using indirect measures, they can be a valuable tool for helping us get an idea of the nature of otherwise unobservable events.

■ Summary

In choosing an independent variable for your experiment, you must first specify an **operational definition** of the variable so that other experimenters will be able to go through the same operations when they conduct similar experiments. It is also important to choose the levels of your independent variable so that the **range** is large enough to show the experimental effect but small enough to be realistic. A trial run, or **pilot experiment**, will sometimes help you in this decision.

The dependent variable must also be operationally defined. In addition, we must be able to show that the dependent variable is **reliable** and **valid**. It is reliable if the same result is obtained every time a measurement is taken. When using test scores as a dependent variable, reliability of the test can be determined in several ways: **test-retest**, **alternative-form**, and **split-half**. The dependent variable is valid if it agrees with a commonly accepted standard. There are several ways of establishing the validity of a test: **face validity**, **content validity**, **predictive validity**, and **concurrent validity**. Directly observable dependent variables are relatively easy to measure, but deciding which **single dependent variable** to use is sometimes difficult. Some areas of research require that **multiple dependent variables** be reported or that dependent variables be combined to form a **composite dependent variable**. **Indirect dependent variables** are used when the behavior we are interested in is not publicly observable. **Physiological measures** may provide an indication of internal states but are often difficult to interpret. **Behavioral measures** such as **dual-task methodology** also offer the possibility of determining a participant's internal state.

8

How to Decide on a Between-Subjects versus Within-Subject Design

There may be said to be two classes of people in the world: those who constantly divide the people of the world into two classes, and those who do not.

ROBERT BENCHLEY

Now you have chosen an independent variable to manipulate and a dependent variable to measure. If everybody were exactly alike, you would need to take only a single person and do your experiment on that one individual. Fortunately for the sake of having an interesting world, but unfortunately for your task as an experimenter, we are not alike. Because we are individually different, you will have to use a sample of participants and try to minimize the variability by doing statistical tricks such as taking means. However, you have some choice about what to do with the variability caused by differences among participants, depending on how you choose to assign them to the levels of your independent variable.

There are two basic ways of assigning participants: You can expose each individual to only one level of the independent variable, or you can expose each individual to all levels. The first method is called a **between-subjects design** because the variable is manipulated between at least two subjects, or participants;¹ the second is called a **within-subject design** because the independent variable is manipulated within a single subject, or participant.² Table 8-1 illustrates the two methods of participant assignment for an experiment that has two levels of an independent variable. In the top design two

¹Up to this point in the book I have been following American Psychological Association (APA) style guidelines by referring to those who participate in experiments as participants rather than as subjects. However, in this chapter the terminology gets a little awkward because the names for commonly used designs and statistical tests have not yet changed to keep up with the APA's Publication Manual. So I will still refer to the designs and tests by their accepted names (for instance, within-subject) but I will continue to refer to those being experimented on as participants. I hope we can all agree on a common terminology in the near future.

²Others have called within-subject designs *Treatment × Subject designs* or *repeated-measures designs* on the same subjects. Between-subjects designs are sometimes called *separate groups* or *independent groups* designs.

TABLE 8-1
 The Assignment of Participants for a Between-Subjects Experiment and a Within-Subject Experiment

<i>Between-subjects</i>	<i>Independent variable</i>	
	<i>Level 1</i>	<i>Level 2</i>
	Participant 1	Participant 11
	Participant 2	Participant 12
	.	.
	.	.
	Participant 10	Participant 20
<i>Within-subject</i>	<i>Independent variable</i>	
	<i>Level 1</i>	<i>Level 2</i>
	Participant 1	Participant 1
	Participant 2	Participant 2
	.	.
	.	.
	Participant 10	Participant 10

different sets of ten participants are assigned to each level; in the bottom design each of the ten participants is assigned to both levels.

Suppose that we want to do an experiment to determine whether taking rest breaks improves studying for students. In one condition we have students study certain material continuously for two hours. In the other condition the students study for a total of two hours but take a five-minute break after every half hour. In either case they take a test at the end of the study period. Now, we could use a between-subjects design and have different groups of randomly selected students assigned to each study condition. Or we could use a



BETWEEN-SUBJECTS DESIGN: EACH PARTICIPANT IS EXPOSED TO ONLY ONE LEVEL.

within-subject design, in which case the same group of students would study different materials under each study condition. If we use different people in the two groups, we have not only individual differences within the groups but also a possible difference between groups. On the other hand, if we use the same students, we know that though there are still individual differences in studying ability between students, there should be no overall difference in the ability between the groups—they are the same people. However, because we must use different study materials for the two conditions, there may be differences in the difficulty of these materials. Let's consider some of the advantages and disadvantages of the two types of designs in more detail.

■ Between-Subjects Experiments

ADVANTAGES

The biggest advantage of between-subjects designs is that exposure to one of the levels of the independent variable cannot contaminate the participant's behavior under other levels. Because each participant is exposed to only one level, you can effectively ignore the other levels for that participant.

Earlier in the book I described an experiment my students and I did in which we were testing the availability heuristic by having participants list three advantages of nuclear power generation, or three disadvantages, or three advantages and three disadvantages. After listing these, participants indicated how favorable they were to nuclear power by marking a scale. This experiment used a between-subjects design, so each participant listed three advantages *or* three disadvantages *or* both. What if we had used a within-subject design? In this case each participant would list three advantages and give a favorability rating, *and* then list three disadvantages and give a rating, *and* finally list three advantages and three disadvantages and give a rating. Would this design accomplish what we wanted? Remember that the reason we expected the favorability rating to be affected by listing advantages or disadvantages is that by making a list, those reasons listed were expected to become more available—more easily accessed in the mind of the participant. But once an advantage has become more available, how long does it take to become less available? Indeed, in this case if we had used a within-subject design, once participants had been exposed to the first two conditions, listing three advantages and then three disadvantages, they would already have been exposed to the third condition: listing both.

For many experiments, such as the one just described, it is logically impossible to use a within-subject design because we cannot reverse the effects of former exposure to other levels of the independent variable. In other cases, it may be logically possible to reverse this exposure, but, as we will discuss later in this chapter, the design can become much more complicated. In the end, even with sophisticated designs we are sometimes not sure about having completely counteracted the effects of prior exposure. Because between-subjects designs do not have this problem, they are sometimes preferred.

Doing between-subjects experiments also has some additional practical advantages. Because each participant performs under only one level of the independent variable in a between-subjects experiment, we can collect more data at this level during a single experimental session. Because participants are likely to get tired or lose interest in what they are doing, it is easier to keep the total experimental time short for each participant. You can also avoid bringing participants back for more than one experimental session, which is an advantage because the number of individuals who actually complete an experiment tends to decrease dramatically with each additional session required.

DISADVANTAGES

The biggest disadvantage of a between-subjects design is that the groups assigned to each level of the independent variable might not be equivalent to each other on some dimension, and this dimension might bias the behavior being measured. Whenever groups are formed with different people, it is possible that the groups will be quite different. For example, in the experiment asking whether watching violent TV shows causes aggression in children, it is possible that all the children assigned to the violent TV group might come from dysfunctional families with a history of abuse, whereas all the children in the nonviolent TV group might come from wonderfully healthy families. But if children are randomly assigned to groups, it is not *probable* that this would happen.

When between-subjects designs are used, participants are usually assigned to the groups in a random fashion. This assignment can be done in a number of ways, such as using slips of paper drawn from a hat, tossing coins, or selecting from random-number tables such as the one in Appendix C. People who have little experience with psychological experimentation or statistics seem to have little confidence in random processes. They often think that randomization is the equivalent of being haphazard or sloppy, and they believe that even with large groups there are likely to be sizable differences in behavior. With experience and an increased understanding of statistical sampling, researchers come to have considerably more confidence in random assignment of participants. Additionally, although randomness may seem like the ultimate in lack of orderliness, it is at least unbiased. It allows you to assign participant variability to the groups in an unbiased way. Especially for large groups, the likelihood that the groups are quite different on any behavioral dimension is rather small. On top of that, the statistical tests you do in analyzing your data take potential differences due to random assignment into account. Random assignment of participants for between-subjects experiments is actually quite effective in removing potential bias among groups.

■ Within-Subject Experiments

Although within-subject designs are by no means the best choice for all experiments, they do offer a number of advantages.

PRACTICAL ADVANTAGES

One practical advantage of a within-subject experiment is immediately obvious from Table 8-1: Fewer participants are required. If N participants³ are required to give you an adequate number of data points at any level of a within-subject experiment, then $N \times 2$ participants are required for a two-level between-subjects experiment, $N \times 3$ for a three-level between-subjects experiment, and so on.

In many cases, increasing the number of participants also substantially increases the total time required for an experiment. For example, if your experiment requires that you pretrain individuals to do a basic task before you expose them to the experimental manipulation, you will have to pretrain twice as many in a two-level between-subjects experiment as in a within-subject experiment. Suppose that you want to know whether requiring people to remember a certain number of words will interfere with their ability to perform a complex tracking task, which in itself takes several hours to learn. If you add levels to your independent variable (number of words presented for memory), you add no more pretraining time in a within-subject experiment. But in a between-subjects experiment, you increase the number of participants and thereby the pretraining time.

It is common to conduct several practice trials at the beginning of an experiment—a practice that also increases the time to do an experiment as you include more participants. These practice trials are designed to minimize warm-up effects—that is, the fast improvement usually found during the first few trials as participants get into a state of general readiness.

In addition to the inconvenience of using a large number of participants for a between-subjects experiment, at times the number of participants available to you will be limited, especially when they must meet certain requirements. For example, you may need pilots, race-car drivers, or ballet dancers for certain experiments. Or you may want participants to be afflicted with some disorder like psychosis, color blindness, or left-handedness.⁴ In such cases, you may not be able to find enough people who meet these requirements to use a between-subjects design, and you will need to rely on a within-subject experiment.

STATISTICAL ADVANTAGES

In addition to their greater efficiency, within-subject designs can be preferable for statistical reasons. We take a brief look at statistics in Chapter 12, but I mention a few concepts here.

In an inferential statistical test, experimenters attempt to infer whether any differences they find among the data samples collected at the various levels of the independent variable are due to real differences in the behavior of some larger population or due to chance. To make this inference, experimenters, in

³ I am using N here to refer to any given number of participants, such as 10 or 20, for a particular experiment.

⁴ Just kidding, lefties. (This was just a *sinister* joke!)

TABLE 8-2

Individual Times to Run the 100-Meter Dash for Two Groups of Randomly Chosen Men

<i>Men wearing 7-mm spikes</i>	<i>Time (in seconds)</i>	<i>Men wearing 13-mm spikes</i>	<i>Time (in seconds)</i>
Mike	11.7	Don	15.7
Bob	18.2	Hector	13.4
Homer	12.2	Ron	18.0
George	15.4	Tom	12.8
Harry	15.8	Steve	13.6
Gordon	13.2	Dale	19.0
John	13.7	Pete	16.2
Bill	19.1	Juan	11.9
Randy	12.9	Dan	14.6
Tim	16.0	Paul	18.0

Mean for 7-mm men = 14.82 seconds. Mean for 13-mm men = 15.32 seconds.
 Mean difference = 0.5 seconds.

most of these tests, compare the differences between the average performances at the two levels with an estimate of how variable the performance within each of the levels is. With a statistical test, an experimenter is more likely to call a difference *real* if the difference between levels is large or if the estimated variability within levels is small. An example will show you how logical this principle is.

Suppose a track-shoe manufacturer wanted to know whether to sell shoes with 7-mm spikes or 13-mm spikes to the 100-meter dash runners on a men’s track team. To test these shoes, the manufacturer could randomly choose 10 men from a college campus to wear one type of shoe and 10 additional men from the same campus to wear the other type. The men in the two groups would probably be variable in their times to run the dash—from the 300-pound, 38-year-old ex-bartender to the 125-pound, 19-year-old halfback. Their scores might look something like those in Table 8-2. If you calculate a mean⁵ for the two groups, you find that those wearing 7-mm spikes average 0.5 seconds faster than those wearing 13-mm spikes. Examining the times for the two groups, would this difference convince you that the shorter spikes were better for running the 100-meter dash?

Now suppose that the manufacturer decided to do a second experiment, using members of the men’s track team this time, and randomly assigned them to the 7-mm and 13-mm groups. Their scores might look something like those in Table 8-3. Again there is a 0.5-second average advantage for the runners wearing the shorter spikes. Would these data convince you that the shorter spikes were better?

Undoubtedly, you would be more likely to accept the difference found in the second experiment as being a real difference. Because the scores in the

⁵ As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 12 and Appendix A, a mean is the sum of the individual scores divided by the number of scores that were added.

■ TABLE 8-3

Individual Times to Run the 100-Meter Dash for Two Groups of Randomly Chosen Track-Team Members

<i>Men wearing 7-mm spikes</i>	<i>Time (in seconds)</i>	<i>Men wearing 13-mm spikes</i>	<i>Time (in seconds)</i>
Art	10.6	Rob	10.8
Simon	10.3	Frank	11.0
Nick	10.3	Walt	10.8
Daryl	10.2	Gary	10.6
Ralph	10.4	Ken	10.8
Will	10.0	Bryan	10.7
Reuben	10.2	Dick	10.6
Ed	10.1	Stan	10.7
Fred	10.3	Rich	10.7
Wayne	10.4	Mark	11.1

Mean for 7-mm men = 10.28 seconds.

Mean for 13-mm men = 10.78 seconds.

Mean difference = 0.5 seconds.

second experiment are less variable, you probably feel that the difference found there is less likely to be due entirely to chance variation.

Most of the variability in the first experiment's scores was apparently due to large individual differences in the men's ability to run the 100-meter dash, regardless of the shoes. In the second experiment, much of the variability due to individual differences among the runners was eliminated by choosing runners who were more alike.

How could we make the participants even more alike in the two groups? By using the same participants, some first, some second! You should be able to see why a within-subject experiment having only one group gives you a statistical advantage here: It is the ultimate way to minimize the individual differences between participants. By using a within-subject design, both you and statistical tests are more likely to be convinced that any differences in performance found between the levels of the independent variable are real differences.⁶

DISADVANTAGES

Because there are so many practical and statistical advantages to using within-subject designs, why should we ever use between-subjects designs? Unfortunately, the within-subject design also carries some rather serious disadvantages. Although their position is debatable, some experimenters would go so far as to say these disadvantages make within-subject experiments next to worthless: "The day should come then when no reputable psychologist will use a within-subject design, except for a special purpose,

⁶ If you have a bent toward statistical rigor, you may have shuddered and blanched at my attempt to make the logic of inferential statistics intuitively palatable. I'll be a little more rigorous in Chapter 12. But not much.

without combining it with a separate groups [between-subjects] design” (Poulton, 1973).

As we discussed under advantages of between-subjects designs the basic problem is that once participants are exposed to one level of the independent variable, there is no way to change them back into the individuals they were before being exposed. The exposure does something irreversible, so we can no longer treat them as pure, uncontaminated, and naive. Some investigators refer to the way previous exposures have affected participants as *carry-over effects*. Because the way participants are changed also depends upon the order in which they are exposed to the levels of the independent variable, these differences are sometimes called *order effects*. An order effect in a within-subject experiment occurs when the behavior resulting from a level of the independent variable depends upon the order in which that level was presented.

One way order can affect behavior is through learning. That is, what participants have learned during exposure to an earlier level of the independent variable can affect later behavior. For example, suppose we want to know whether it takes someone longer to type on a standard QWERTY⁷ keyboard or on a newly designed keyboard where the more frequently used letter keys are under the fingers when they are in resting position. We decide that because there are likely to be large individual differences in typing ability, we will use a within-subject design. We take 10 people and find out how many hours they have to practice to type 30 words per minute on a standard keyboard. We then switch them to the newly designed keyboard and find out how many hours they have to practice to type 30 words per minute on it. We find it takes them an average of 45 hours of practice to reach the criterion on the QWERTY keyboard but only two hours on the new keyboard. Can we conclude that using the new keyboard is much easier? Obviously not.

During the first part of the experiment, in addition to learning the specific skill of using a QWERTY keyboard, the participants were also learning a general typing skill. The general skill is confounded with the specific skill. By the time they typed on the new keyboard, their general typing skill was undoubtedly at a higher level than when they started the experiment. Because the QWERTY keyboard always occurred in the first ordered position, the participants took longer to learn it because both a general skill and a specific skill were being learned. Because the new keyboard always occurred in the second ordered position, it took less time to learn because the general skill had already been learned for the most part. Learning is one of the most common order effects. However, there are others, such as fatigue and maturational development. Any time an effect changes systematically during the course of an experiment, we need to be aware that order effects are possible and be careful to keep our independent variable from being confounded by order.

⁷ The QWERTY keyboard is named after the first six letters in the upper letter row of the standard keyboard. Studies have shown that there are more optimal arrangements for the keys that would make typing a bit faster. However, the effort required to retrain all the typists who already know the QWERTY system makes it highly unlikely that any new system would be widely adopted.

Because of this disadvantage of within-subject designs, they are used far less frequently in some areas of psychology than others. For instance, investigators who study learning, memory, and some areas of social psychology, such as attitude formation, expect to make long-lasting changes in their participants by the very nature of the experiment. You cannot tell someone, “OK, now forget that list of words I just had you memorize for 10 trials” and expect them to do so, or, “Change your attitude back to where it was before you read that persuasive bit of propaganda.” In these research areas, participants are usually irretrievably contaminated by exposure to a particular level of the independent variable. However, there are other areas of research in which prior exposure has little effect. For instance, if we were studying people’s ability to distinguish between the intensity of two tones, it would be unlikely that exposure to a particular intensity difference would affect their ability to distinguish a second difference. In this case, and for many other experiments in areas such as sensation and perception, within-subject designs are appropriate and are often used.

COUNTERBALANCING

One way to minimize an order effect like learning is to counterbalance. Essentially, when you counterbalance, you admit that a potential confounding order effect is present. You also admit that you cannot control it or randomize it out of existence. So you attempt to distribute an equal amount of the confounding effect to each level of your independent variable. In this way, you hope, the order effect will counterbalance itself and not bias any effect caused by the independent variable.

To illustrate the concept of counterbalancing, I will use scales as shown in Figure 8-1. For a moment, let us pretend that we are omnipotent and know the actual size of the effects due to the independent variable and the confounding variable. If we carried out a perfect experiment presenting two levels of our independent variable, A and B, we might find the result illustrated in the graph in panel 1 of Figure 8-1. We are assuming that no variables are affecting the result other than the independent variable. The size of the effect on the dependent variable is 1 unit for level A and 3 units for level B. Because these quantities will be put on the scales, I have converted them to weights. By placing the weights on the scales in panel 2, we see that the pure unconfounded effect of the independent variable is 2.

Because we are using a within-subject design and cannot present both levels of the independent variable at the same time, we obviously must have several trials. Suppose that some confounding effect, like learning, increases with each trial, as shown in panel 1 of Figure 8-2. As you can see, on trial 1 the effect of the confounding variable is 1 unit on the dependent variable, and by trial 4, it is four units. Again the effect size is converted to weights. What we wish to do is distribute these weights so that the scales are counterbalanced. In this way, the scales will show no bias when the independent variable is added.

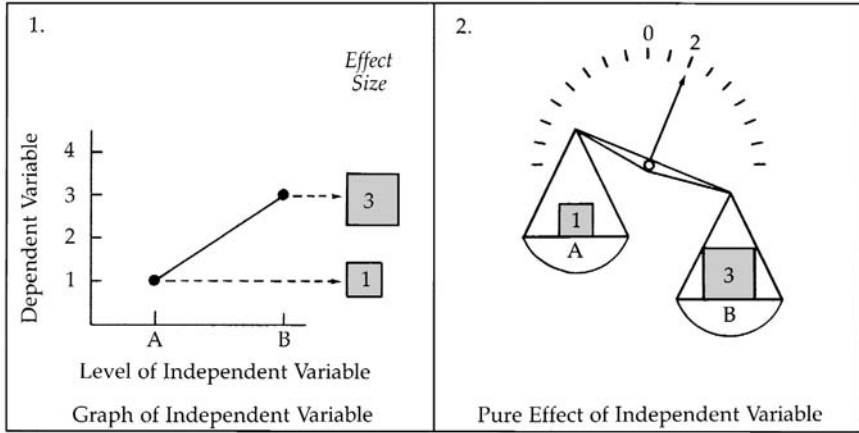
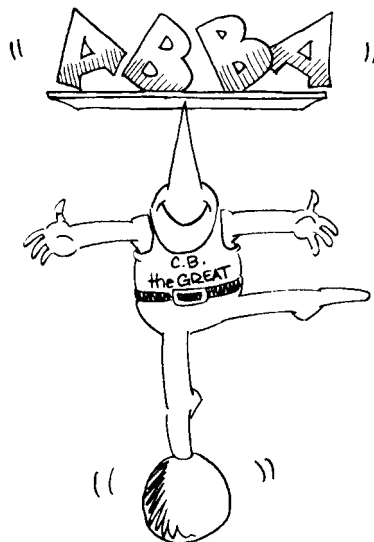


FIGURE 8-1 The graph in panel 1 shows the effect of the two levels, A and B, of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The scales in panel 2 indicate that the pure unconfounded effect of the independent variable is two units.

One of the more frequently used counterbalancing schemes is called **ABBA counterbalancing**. The A and B, as in our example, stand for the two levels of any independent variable, and the sequence represents how the levels are assigned to trials. Thus, level A would be presented on trial 1, B on trial 2, B on trial 3, and A on trial 4. Each participant receives all trials.

Panel 2 of Figure 8-2 illustrates what happens when the weights for trials 1 and 4 are placed on the A side of the scales and those for trials 2 and 3 on the B side. The scales are counterbalanced. When we also add the shaded weights representing the effects of the independent variable, the net combined effect



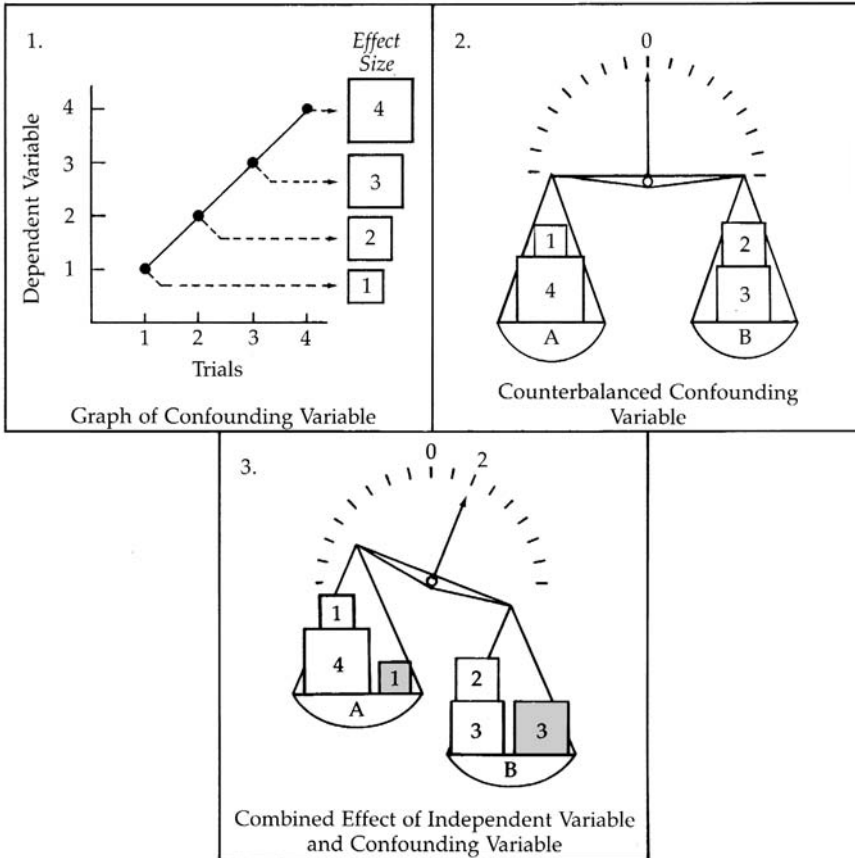


FIGURE 8-2 The graph in panel 1 shows the effect of a linear confounding variable on the dependent variable. The scales in panel 2 indicate that an ABBA ordering of the independent variable has successfully counterbalanced the confounding variable. When the shaded weights, representing the effects of the independent variable, are added in panel 3, a correct net effect of two units is found.

is two, the original pure effect of the independent variable. Basically, this unbiased outcome is what we try to achieve with all counterbalancing schemes.

Before you wax too ecstatic over the beauty of counterbalancing, permit me to tell you that counterbalancing schemes are based on certain assumptions, and when these assumptions are violated, the beauty turns into a beast.

One assumption of ABBA counterbalancing is that the confounding effect is linear—that it forms a straight line. To illustrate what can happen when it is not, let's return to our weights. Suppose the confounding effect looks like that shown in panel 1 of Figure 8-3. In fact, learning is the most likely candidate for confounding, and most learning curves look a lot like this one; an initial large increase in performance is followed by progressively smaller changes. Converting to weights and stacking the weights according to an

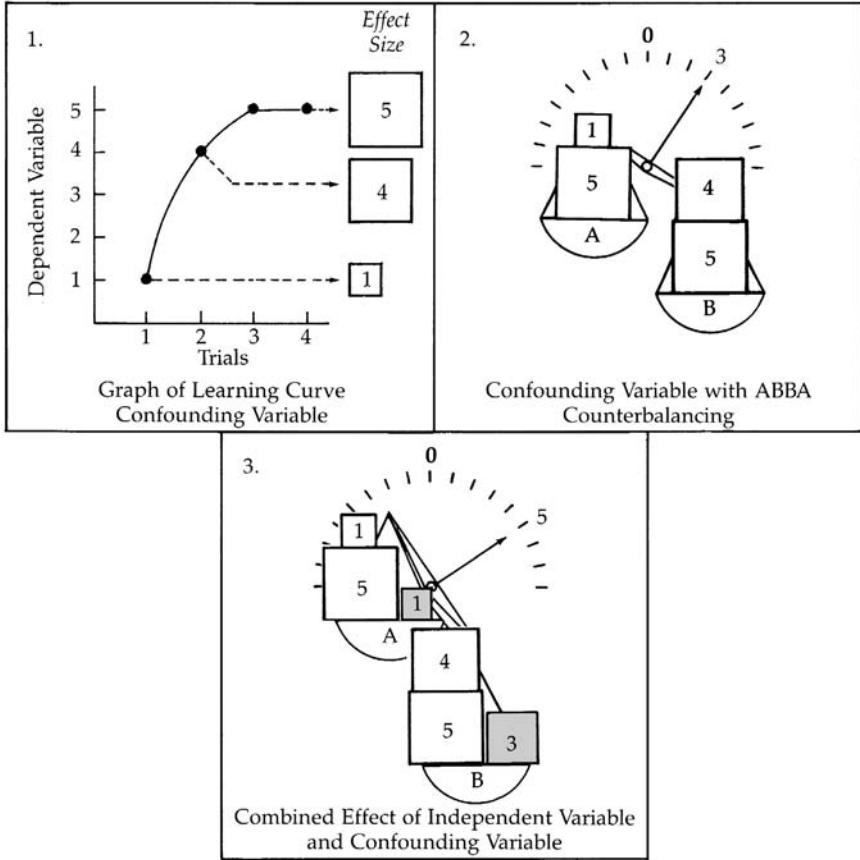


FIGURE 8-3 The graph in panel 1 shows the effects of a learning curve confounding variable on the dependent variable. The scales in panel 2 indicate that an ABBA ordering has not successfully counterbalanced the confounding variable; the scales are biased three units toward B. When the weights representing the effects of the independent variable are added in panel 3, the net effect of five units overestimates the effect of the independent variable by three units.

ABBA design, we can see in panel 2 that the scales are not counterbalanced. They are biased by three units toward the B side. When the weights representing the independent variable are added in panel 3, the net effect is five units rather than the two units we omnipotently know it should be.

Under certain conditions, ABBA counterbalancing not only fails to correct for a confounding variable but can compound the confounding problem.

An example of this is shown in Figure 8-4. The confounding effect first improves performance, then degrades it. Combining the effect of learning with the effect of fatigue could cause such a function. I will let you work out the size of the bias caused by the unbalanced confounding variable.

We have seen that ABBA counterbalancing can eliminate the effects of a confounding variable in within-subject experiments, but only if the

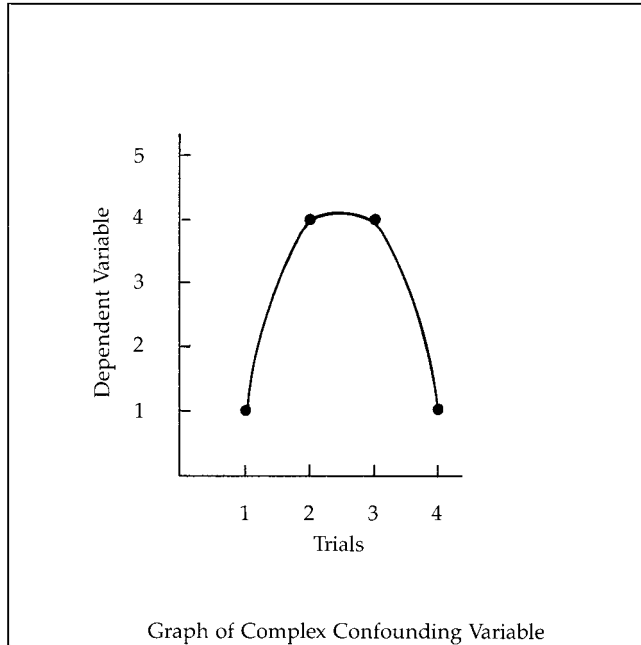


FIGURE 8-4 A graph showing the effect of a complex confounding variable on a dependent variable. Such a function could be caused by learning and fatigue.

confounding effect is linear. If the effect is nonlinear, we must choose a different counterbalancing technique or else design a between-subjects experiment.

An ABBA-counterbalancing technique attempts to counterbalance order effects in a completely within-subject manner: The same participants get both the AB order and the BA order. Other counterbalancing techniques treat order as a between-subjects variable by counterbalancing order across individuals. In the simplest two-level case, one group of participants would receive AB and a second group, BA. The “A” data from groups one and two would be averaged, as would the “B” data from both groups. If you use this method, the confounding effect does not have to be linear. However, you are still making the assumption that the effect of having B follow A is just the reverse of the effect of having A follow B (Poulton & Freeman, 1966). This assumption is sometimes called an assumption of **symmetrical transfer**.⁸ When this assumption is violated and you get asymmetrical transfer instead, this type of counterbalancing is not effective.

Consider an experiment in which asymmetrical transfer was found—the investigator was interested in the effect of noise on complex performance (Aldridge, 1978; Poulton, 1979). The participants were first given a consonant-vowel-consonant trigram (for example, DOF) to remember for 16 seconds. While doing this memory task, they also listened to a series of “Bs,” spoken

⁸ Sometimes it is called **nondifferential transfer**.

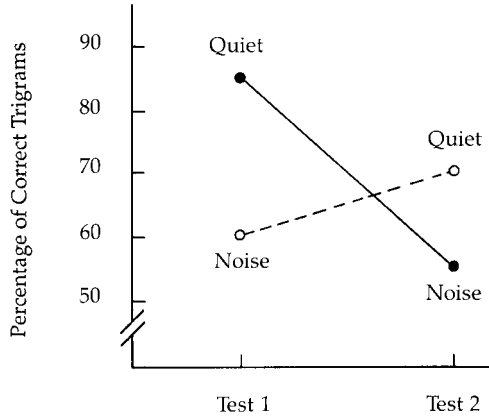


FIGURE 8-5 The effect of noise on memory for trigrams. The effect illustrates asymmetrical transfer. SOURCE: Adapted from "Levels of Processing in Speech Perception," by J. W. Aldridge, 1978, Experiment 4, *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance*, 4, 164–177.

once per second, to detect occasional "Ps." In the noise condition a loud, continuous, hissing noise was also present. To counterbalance for order effects, one group received a block of quiet trials followed by a block of noise trials (AB), while a second group received the reverse order (BA).

You can see the results of the experiment in Figure 8-5. The group members exposed first to the quiet trials did well at remembering the trigrams. However, when transferred to the noise condition, their performance dropped drastically. The other group members performed poorly in noise, as expected. Notice, however, that their performance improved only a little when transferred to the quiet condition. The magnitude of the effect was 31 percentage points for the quiet-first group and 10 percentage points for the noise-first group. We would expect the same size of effect if symmetrical transfer were present. What is the reason for the finding of asymmetrical transfer?

Apparently the two groups learned to do the task in different ways. The quiet-first group probably learned to use an echoic store to retain the words. An echoic store is sort of like an echo in the head that automatically reverberates for a short time after the auditory stimulus disappears.⁹ But like an echo, a subsequent loud auditory stimulus can cover it up. Although the echoic strategy worked well in the quiet condition, the quiet-first group probably had to change to a new strategy when noise was added, using an *articulatory store*. In this case they repeated the trigram to themselves or at least activated the program that moves the muscles required for articulation.¹⁰ Upon switching to this strategy their performance dropped. Members of the noise-first group apparently learned the task using the articulation strategy. When switched to quiet, they

⁹ Echoic store is what the husband uses to dredge up a memory when he is reading the paper and his wife says, "Did you hear what I just said?"

¹⁰ Essentially, mumbling to yourself.

probably maintained this less efficient strategy, and their performance improved a bit without the noise. Although this explanation is somewhat speculative, some additional data I am not bothering you with support the speculation.

One additional example might help you understand asymmetrical transfer. Suppose that you are interested in the effects of drinking alcohol on complex motor performance, such as driving a race car in a virtual reality video game. You have members of one group consume the equivalent of three drinks during each of the first three, one-hour sessions that they drive the race car. They then switch to racing the car sober for the next three sessions. To control for order, you have a second group do the reverse, going from sober to inebriated condition. You expect that each group will score fewer points on the video machine when under the influence of alcohol. Depending on the specific racing conditions, you may be amazed to find that members of the alcohol-first group actually drop in performance initially when switching to the sober condition and that they never show as large an effect of the alcohol as those in the other group. Such an outcome would be an example of asymmetrical transfer due to state-dependent learning. When we learn a skill in a particular state (not Idaho, but sober or inebriated) we tend to perform best when put back into that state. Maybe you know someone who shoots pool better after a couple of beers; that's state-dependent learning. In our experiment, state-dependent learning could cause asymmetrical transfer effects similar to those I have described. When you get such an asymmetrical transfer, no form of counterbalancing can save a within-subject design.

As you add more levels to your independent variable, you increase the complexity of a complete counterbalancing procedure. In a completely counterbalanced design, every level has to occur an equal number of times and also follow every other level an equal number of times. Table 8-4 shows completely counterbalanced designs for two-, three-, and four-level experiments. As you can see, **complete counterbalancing** can become a monumental task when you have a large number of levels or many independent variables. With large experimental designs, it is possible to assign levels randomly or to randomize within blocks, as described in Chapter 2. You can also sometimes use a technique called **partial counterbalancing**, in which you choose only some of the orders while making sure that each level occurs the same number of times in each position.

A partial counterbalancing scheme often used with independent variables having more than two levels is a **Latin Square**, which ensures that each level appears at every position in the order equally often. There are many possible Latin Squares for a given number of levels of the independent variable. Perhaps the most useful of these is a balanced Latin Square, in which not only does each level appear at every position in the order equally often, but each condition also precedes and follows each of the other conditions equally often. Suppose that we wanted to know how long it took people to read standardized paragraphs presented on a computer screen in four different print fonts: Chicago, Courier, Geneva, and Times, and we were concerned that the order of presentation might confound the experiment. Figure 8-6 illustrates a balanced Latin Square for this experiment. Note that each of the four print

TABLE 8-4
 Completely Counterbalanced Design for Two-, Three-,
 and Four-Level Independent Variables

<i>Two levels of independent variable</i>		<i>Three levels of independent variable</i>	
<i>Number</i>	<i>Order of levels</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Order of levels</i>
1	AB*	1	ABC
2	BA	2	ACB
		3	BCA
		4	BAC
		5	CAB
		6	CBA

<i>Four levels of independent variable</i>			
<i>Number</i>	<i>Order of levels</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Order of levels</i>
1	ABCD	13	CABD
2	ABDC	14	CADB
3	ACBD	15	CBAD
4	ACDB	16	CBDA
5	ADCB	17	CDAB
6	ADBC	18	CDBA
7	BACD	19	DABC
8	BADC	20	DACB
9	BCAD	21	DBAC
10	BCDA	22	DBCA
11	BDAC	23	DCAB
12	BDCA	24	DCBA

*The letters A, B, C, and D represent the levels.

	Order of Presentation			
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Participant 1	Chicago	Courier	Geneva	Times
Participant 2	Courier	Times	Chicago	Geneva
Participant 3	Times	Geneva	Courier	Chicago
Participant 4	Geneva	Chicago	Times	Courier

FIGURE 8-6 A balanced Latin Square for ordering the presentation of four print fonts to at least four readers

fonts appears in each position across the four participants. Taking Courier by way of example, also note, moving down the rows, that it is preceded by Chicago, nothing, Geneva, and Times, and followed by Geneva, Times, Chicago, and nothing. Thus, we have satisfied the requirements of the design. In order for a Latin Square to work, you must have at least as many participants as levels of the independent variable and, generally, some multiple of that number. This form of partial counterbalancing takes care of most of the potential confounding variables due to order or asymmetrical transfer, but it leaves a few possible subtle confounds caused by possible interactions between order and asymmetrical transfer. A fully counterbalanced design is still best, but if you have too few participants, a Latin Square does pretty well.

You have seen that a counterbalancing technique is often necessary to minimize the sequential confounding effects found in some within-subject experiments. At this point, you should also be aware of the assumptions underlying the technique you are using and should try to use a counterbalancing technique that allows you to meet the assumptions. However, in some experiments, such as those having asymmetrical transfer, it may be impossible to meet the assumptions, and you will have no choice but to use a between-subjects design. One other potential disadvantage of within-subject designs cannot be corrected by counterbalancing and may force you to use a between-subjects design—range effects.

RANGE EFFECTS

Suppose you are the purchasing agent for a widget factory and you are ordering a new set of working tables for widget assembly. You must choose the height of the tables, and you want to make sure that the tables are of the right height to maximize production. You decide to do an experiment to determine the correct height. You take one group of workers, Group A, and have them sit at tables of varying heights while you count how many blocks they can turn over during a three-minute period. The table heights you choose are -10 , -6 , -2 , $+2$, $+6$, and $+10$ inches from elbow height. Having read this book, you realize that you could have a problem with sequential-ordering effects, so you carefully counterbalance the order of table heights.

After you have completed the experiment, your boss suggests that she would like to see you test some tables of even lower height. You design another experiment just like the first, except this time you have Group B use tables of the following heights: -18 , -14 , -10 , -6 , -2 , and $+2$ inches from elbow height.

Figure 8-7 shows the actual results of this experiment. The startling thing about the results is that the best table height is different for the two groups. Group A performed best at about elbow height and Group B at six inches below elbow height. Why is this? In learning a task like turning over blocks at a table of a given height, people also learn a skill that is useful for other tasks, like turning over blocks on a table of a different height. The more alike the two table heights, the better people can transfer the skill from one height to the other. This is simply a basic principle of learning. So if we consider the

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block-turning experiment to be a learning experiment, we would expect workers to perform best at the table height that is most like all the other table heights used in the experiment. Table 8-5 shows the average difference in height, in terms of inches, between each table height and the other five heights presented for each group. For example, the difference between the +10 condition for Group A and the -10 condition is 20, between +10 and -6 is 16, and so on. Adding all difference scores between +10 and each of the other five conditions for Group A and dividing by 5 produces a mean of 12. If we expect the highest rate of work for the task that is most similar to the other conditions presented in each experiment, we could do a fairly good job of predicting Figure 8-7 from Table 8-5. You can now see why it is called a *range effect*; people tend to have the highest level of performance in the middle of the range of levels presented because transfer of learning is highest in the middle of the range. Range effects can result from a within-subject experiment whenever stimuli or

■ TABLE 8-5

Average Number of Inches of Difference between Each Table Height and the Other Five Heights Presented

	<i>Table height</i>							
	-18	-14	-10	-6	-2	+2	+6	+10
<i>Group A</i>			12	8.5	7.2	7.2	8.5	12
<i>Group B</i>	12	8.5	7.2	7.2	8.5	12		

responses can be put in a consistent order. Poulton (1973) has noted examples of range effects throughout most areas of experimental psychology.

Although Poulton and others warn against within-subject experiments because of range effects, other investigators argue that in many cases within-subject experiments are preferable. Greenwald (1976), for instance, has pointed out that a range effect is simply a **context effect**. The participant comes to the experiment with a context already established. In the table example, for instance, people are already experienced at using certain table heights. He suggests that repeatedly presenting an individual with only one level of the independent variable, as in a between-subjects experiment, will not eliminate context. As repeated trials are given at a single level of the independent variable, a new context develops—the context of the single level. For these reasons, Greenwald claims that context effects cannot be avoided by using either type of design. He suggests that a more important question to ask in choosing a design is to what situation you plan to generalize your results.

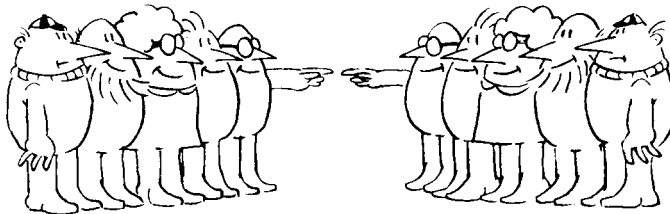
For example, in our violent-TV shows experiment, it could be more artificial to repeatedly expose a child to one level of violence (a between-subjects design) than to expose the child to several different levels. Because we would like to generalize the results to a real-life situation having many levels, perhaps we should choose a within-subject design. That is, the range used in the experiment should approximate the range found in the situation to which we are generalizing. As an experimenter, then, although you should be aware that range effects could alter the outcome of your experiment, you should choose the design that allows you to generalize your results to the appropriate situation.

So which design is preferable—between-subjects design, as claimed by Poulton, or within-subject design, as claimed by Greenwald and some other researchers who do only within-subject designs and single-subject designs? A reasonable position would be that it depends upon the particular experiment you are planning. As we have seen, in some cases, such as in the study of attitude formation and some areas of memory, it is virtually impossible to use within-subject designs. There are also areas of research in which the most sophisticated counterbalancing schemes may not be successful in correcting order effects such as asymmetrical transfer. In other cases, such as when a therapeutic technique has been found to be successful, it can even be unethical to use within-subject designs that may reverse the beneficial effects of the therapy. On the other hand, using a participant as his or her own control is a powerful experimental procedure, one that reduces variability to such an extent that we can clearly see small but important effects of experimental manipulations. And some areas of research are relatively immune to problems, such as order effects, found in within-subject designs: for example, in memory research, the study of retention interval or memory loads; in perception research, the study of illusions or sound localization; and in attention research, the study of priming. In these cases the most efficient and cleanest experiments use within-subject designs. So as a researcher the best thing you can do is to choose a design that best fits the type of research you are doing.

■ Matching

One way to take advantage of a between-subjects experiment yet avoid some of the problems of individual differences between groups of participants is to use a matched-groups design. This simply means that you have to attempt to assign the same kinds of participants to each level of your independent variable. In the typical between-subjects experiment, you hope that the individuals assigned to each level are pretty much alike, and you have randomization on your side. Random assignment makes it likely that the groups will be essentially equivalent, and this becomes more likely with larger groups. However, because this is a random process, occasionally those assigned to each group will be quite different, and you may incorrectly attribute differences in their behavior to the independent variable. That is, your experiment may be confounded by group differences. By matching groups, you can minimize this possibility.

On what basis can you match the groups? You must match your groups on a variable that is highly correlated with the dependent variable. In our track-shoe experiment, it would be a waste of time to match the two groups of runners on the basis of IQ scores. Fast minds are not related to fast feet. However, we could have each runner run the 100-meter dash in tennis shoes first and then make up pairs of subjects: the two fastest, the two next fastest, and so on. We could then flip a coin to assign one member of each pair to each of the track-shoe conditions. In this way, we know that the groups are somewhat equivalent in running speed before introducing the independent variable. In this experiment, we are assuming a large correlation between tennis-shoe running times and track-shoe running times because the lower the correlation between the matching variable and the dependent variable, the less we gain by matching.



MATCHED-GROUPS DESIGN

Through matching, we decrease the probability of being wrong when we say that the independent variable caused a change in behavior. Matching can also provide a statistical advantage, in that when matched groups are used, a statistical test is more likely to say that a given difference in the scores of the dependent variable is due to the independent variable rather than to chance. That is, the tests are more sensitive to any difference associated with the independent variable.

To illustrate this principle, the column on the left of Table 8-6 again lists the randomly chosen men who ran the dash in track shoes with 7-mm spikes (from

■ TABLE 8-6

Individual Times to Run the 100-Meter Dash for Two Matched Groups

<i>Men wearing 7-mm spikes</i>	<i>Time (in seconds)</i>		<i>Men wearing 13-mm spikes</i>	<i>Time (in seconds)</i>	
Mike	(12.2)	11.7	Vic	(12.2)	12.2
Homer	(12.8)	12.2	Jack	(12.8)	12.6
Randy	(13.5)	12.9	Barry	(13.5)	13.5
Gordon	(14.0)	13.2	Larry	(14.0)	13.8
John	(14.3)	13.7	Jess	(14.3)	14.2
George	(16.1)	15.4	Stuart	(16.1)	15.8
Harry	(16.7)	15.8	Harvey	(16.7)	16.2
Tim	(17.0)	16.0	Sid	(17.0)	16.6
Bob	(18.7)	18.2	Pat	(18.7)	18.7
Bill	(19.7)	19.1	Joe	(19.7)	19.6

Mean for 7-mm men = 14.82 seconds.

Mean for 13-mm men = 15.32 seconds.

Mean difference = 0.5 seconds.

Table 8-2). To match participants, suppose we also had these men run the race in tennis shoes. The tennis-shoe scores are in parentheses. To get a matching group, we now have many more men run the dash in tennis shoes, and we choose as participants those who have the same times as the men in our original group. These new participants are listed in the column on the right, along with their tennis-shoe times in parentheses. Note that we have been able to eliminate any differences in groups for tennis-shoe scores; the scores are exactly the same. Now we have the new group run the race in 13-mm spikes and find that, as in our previous examples, there is an average 0.5-second increase in the mean running time. Would you be more likely to believe that the difference in length of spikes caused the 0.5-second average difference in running times in the original random-groups experiment or in this matched-groups experiment? Statistical tests make decisions in much the same way you do.¹¹

One disadvantage in doing matched-groups experiments is that it takes longer to match the groups, so that experiments sometimes require two sessions, one for the pretest and one for the experiment itself. If you are planning to use many participants anyway, the chances of getting large differences between groups using random assignment are small, and the hassle of matching might not be worth the effort.

A final consideration is that the matching process itself may cause some problems. We assumed in the example that the tennis-shoe pretest did not differentially affect the spiked-shoe test. Suppose, however, that the tennis-shoe

¹¹ Note, though, that in the statistical tests used for matched-group designs you assume that you have successfully matched on a variable highly correlated with the dependent variable. For this reason, these tests are more conservative in calling a given difference statistically significant. So if you have matched on a variable that is not highly correlated with the dependent variable and use one of these tests, you are less likely to find a statistically significant effect than you would if you had not matched in the first place.

■ TABLE 8-7

A Summary of the Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Within-Subject and Between-Subjects Designs

<i>Within-subject experiments</i>	
<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Disadvantages</i>
Fewer participants are required. Experimental time is shorter. Variability between groups is smaller.	Transfer between conditions is possible. ABBA counterbalancing assumes linear confounding effect. All counterbalancing assumes symmetrical transfer. Range effects can cause problems.
<i>Between-subjects experiments</i>	
<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Disadvantages</i>
Transfer effects between conditions are not possible. Counterbalancing is not required. Matching can reduce variability between groups. Random assignment of participants eliminates bias.	Differences between groups are possible. More participants are required. More experimental time is required. Matching takes time and effort and assumes no transfer from matching operation.

test taught the runners a smooth-shoe running technique that they could transfer to a later test. We might predict that the smoother the shoes on the later test, the faster the runners will run. Because the shorter spikes are more like smooth shoes, they will cause faster times. In this case, the pretest would differentially affect the runners' performance at the two levels of the independent variable.

Thus, matched-groups designs can be valuable under certain conditions, but they can also cause more problems than they solve. You should weigh the pros and cons of using a matched-groups design for your own experiment. Table 8-7 summarizes the advantages and disadvantages of the designs discussed in this chapter. Obviously, you will want to consider these pros and cons within the context of any experiment you are considering doing. When we discuss multiple-variable experiments in Chapter 9, you will find that in many cases a single experiment will have both within-subject variables and between-subjects variables. For example, if we were interested in whether the effect of presenting a warning light on people's reaction time to a tone was dependent upon gender, we might vary "warning light/no warning light" as a within-subject variable and "gender" as a between-subjects variable (obviously!).¹²

¹² The discussion of whether to manipulate a variable within subject or between subjects is a moot point for some variables: gender, species, personality trait, IQ score, and so on.

So for multiple-variable experiments it makes more sense to use the terms *within-subject* and *between-subjects* to refer to variables rather than experiments.

■ Summary

There are two basic ways to assign participants to the levels of the independent variable: You can assign different individuals to each level or assign the same ones to all levels. The first method gives you a **between-subjects experiment** and the second, a **within-subject experiment**. A between-subjects experiment offers an advantage in that participants are exposed to only one level of the independent variable, so the other levels cannot affect the participants' behavior. In addition, experimental sessions can be shorter. The major advantage of a within-subject experiment is that variability due to individual differences is minimized. Some practical advantages of within-subject designs include using fewer participants and minimizing training and instruction time. A disadvantage of within-subjects designs is the necessity to **counterbalance** order effects. An **ABBA counterbalancing** can control for order effects within a participant, but you must be able to assume that the order effect is linear. **Complete counterbalancing** of order across participants is also possible, but you must still make an assumption of **symmetrical transfer** between conditions. In large experiments where complete counterbalancing is not possible, one can use **partial counterbalancing**, random assignment, or randomization within blocks. Even counterbalancing will not overcome **range effects** in experiments where the stimuli or responses may be consistently ordered. Individual differences among the participants assigned to each group representing a level of the independent variable can be reduced by using a **matched-groups procedure**.

9

How to Plan Single-Variable, Multiple-Variable, and Converging-Series Experiments

A carefully conceived and executed design is of no avail if the scientific hypothesis that originally led to the experiment is without merit.

R. E. KIRK (1968)

I have yet to see any problem, however complicated, which, when you looked at it the right way, did not become more complicated.

PAUL ANDERSON

In this chapter we discuss single-variable experiments, which are the types of experimental designs making up nearly all the examples used in the book to this point; in these experiments a single variable is manipulated at two or more levels. We also discuss multiple-variable or factorial experiments, in which several independent variables are included in the same experiment and each of these is manipulated at two or more levels. In the psychological literature, experiments with this design occur more frequently than any other kind. Finally, we discuss converging-series designs, in which a number of single-variable or multiple-variable experiments are done in sequence to test a hypothesis or theory.

■ Single-Variable Experiments

TWO-LEVEL EXPERIMENTS

In the simplest experiment, there is one independent variable having two levels. Some investigators call the groups exposed to these levels the *experimental group* and the *control group*. In some cases it is obvious what the control condition should be: no application of a treatment. For example, if you were interested in the effects of a particular drug on a behavior, the control group

would not receive the drug and the experimental group would. The control group in this case would also be valuable to show that just being in the experiment was not causing the observed effect. In other cases, especially when there are several levels of the independent variable, it is not clear which one should be called the control level.¹ For this reason, I will generally stick to the term *level* to describe the independent variable. In any case, we must use at least two levels to have a real experiment. Otherwise, it would be impossible to say that a change in the independent variable caused a change in behavior, because no comparison is possible.

In the early history of experimental psychology the typical experiment reported was a single-variable, two-level experiment. Because our science was young, investigators were more concerned with finding out whether an independent variable had any effect at all than in determining the exact nature of this effect. In addition, they had not yet developed some of the statistical tests required to analyze the more complex experimental designs. In some cases, tests existed but were generally not well known by the average investigator.

Nowadays, journal editors usually expect to see more than two levels manipulated in an experiment. They sometimes accept very well done two-level experiments, particularly when several experiments are reported, but a typical experiment usually has multiple levels. Nevertheless, as a first project a two-level experiment is appropriate. New experimenters need to get their feet wet without drowning, and in some cases two-level experiments can provide valuable results.

Advantages

Actually, two-level experiments do have several advantages over more complex designs. They offer a way of finding out whether an independent variable is worth studying. If an independent variable has no effect on a person's behavior, you obviously would be wasting your time doing a more complex experiment to determine the exact nature of the effect.

The results of a two-level experiment are also easy to interpret and analyze. The outcome is simply "Yes, the variable did have an effect; the behavior changed in this direction" or "No, the variable had no effect." To determine whether any effect is real or due to chance variation, you usually have to do a statistical test, and such tests for two-level experiments are easy to do. They may, for example, involve no more than counting pluses and minuses. Once you know which test to use, it should take you only a few minutes of hand calculation (or a few seconds of computer calculation) to statistically analyze your data.

Finally, in some cases you need no more information than a two-level experiment will give you. If the purpose of the experiment is to test two

¹ For example, if we decided to vary sex (not how much you get, but which one you are) as the independent variable in an experiment, should we call men or women the control group? Feminists and masculinists could argue for days over this issue, so why not avoid it altogether and assign the groups to Level 1 and Level 2?

competing theories and one theory predicts a difference in behavior for the two levels while the second predicts either no change or an opposite change, then a two-level experiment is adequate to distinguish between the theories. Also, in some types of applied research a two-level experiment can provide valuable information. For instance, if you want to pit two pieces of industrial equipment against each other and only two are available that can do the job, a two-level experiment gives you all the information you need. The same principle holds if you are investigating two therapeutic techniques, two educational systems, two training programs, two drugs, two sexes, or two levels of any variable when only two levels are important or available.

Disadvantages

Although a straight line is the shortest distance between two points, it is not the only line between two points. In other words, you are at a disadvantage in many two-level experiments because they will tell you nothing about the shape of the relationship between the independent and the dependent variables.

Suppose that we did an experiment to find out what type size this book should be printed in so that you would have to spend as little time as possible struggling with my periphrastic prose. We might decide to use a word processor to print several paragraphs. Some of the paragraphs would be printed in 12-point type, and the others in a smaller 10-point type. We could then measure the time it takes people to read the paragraphs printed in each type size. Of course, we would pretest the paragraphs for comprehensibility and counterbalance order and would do all the other good things we have learned in this book.

Figure 9-1 shows the fictitious results for this experiment. The arbitrary straight line drawn through the two data points indicates that the smaller the print, the longer the reading time. Thus, the experiment has answered our

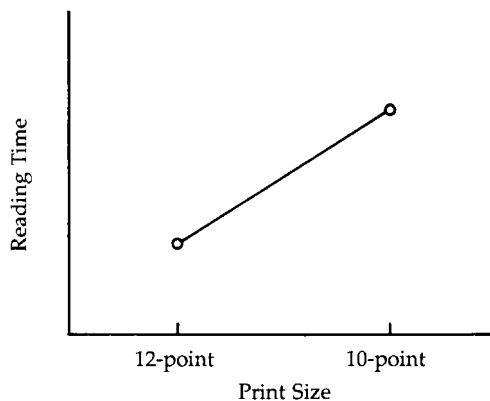


FIGURE 9-1 Possible results from an experiment measuring the time it takes to read paragraphs printed in 12-point or 10-point type

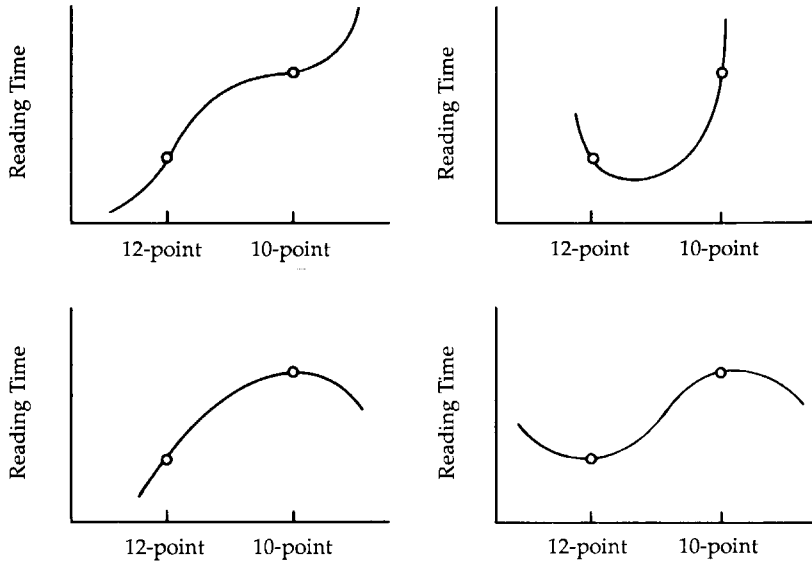


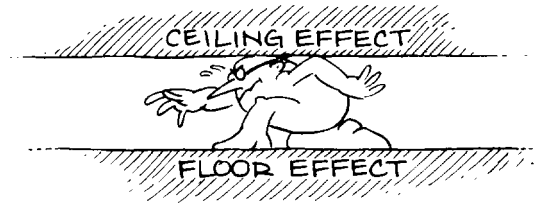
FIGURE 9-2 A number of possible relationships between type size and reading time. All the functions pass through the same two data points.

question: 12-point type makes for speedier reading. However, if we really wanted to know the best print size out of all possible sizes and we chose the two sizes used in the experiment because they were our best guess, then we don't have enough information to make a decision. Our results give no indication whether a straight-line relationship between type size and reading time is true for any size other than 12-point and 10-point.

Figure 9-2 shows a number of other relationships that could also be the actual underlying relationship. You can see that not knowing the shape of the relationship makes interpolation questionable.² We cannot correctly conclude that a print size halfway between 12-point and 10-point would give a reading time halfway between those sizes.

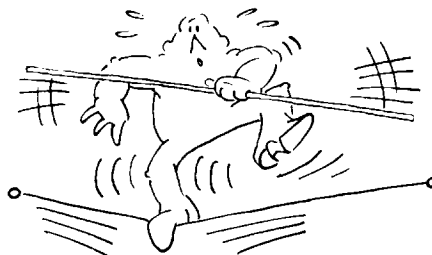
Extrapolating from two points is even more dangerous than interpolating. Most psychological functions have what are called ceiling and floor effects. A *ceiling effect* occurs when the dependent variable reaches a level that cannot be exceeded. Typical examples of ceiling levels are accuracy of response, 100%; probability of response, 1.0; and confidence in a response, 100%. In each of these cases, it is physically impossible for someone to produce a response exceeding a particular value. (In other words, you can't be more accurate than 100%.) In other cases, although an absolute ceiling does not limit responses, a softer ceiling effectively does. For example, even with practice, the number of items we can hold in short-term memory has an effective ceiling—about seven. Likewise, within a finite period humans are effectively limited in the amount

² Interpolation is an estimate of intermediate values within a known range; extrapolation is an estimate of values beyond a known range.

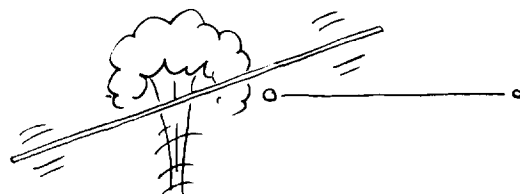


of information they can process, such as the number of figures they can add up, the number of targets they can find in a display, the number of words they can type, and so forth. The ceiling might not be so hard, but it is still impenetrable.

A *floor effect* is a value below which a response cannot be made. For example, no one can respond in fewer than zero seconds or give fewer responses than none. Again, the floor need not be absolute. There may be a softer effective floor. For instance, the shortest time to detect a stimulus, although theoretically zero, is effectively about 150 milliseconds. If we take two data points and extrapolate to values above a ceiling or below a floor, we won't be in the attic or basement; we'll be in hot water! And sometimes it is not obvious where a ceiling or floor should be. To avoid these problems, you should make it a rule in a two-level experiment not to interpolate or extrapolate beyond the levels used in the experiment.



INTERPOLATING BETWEEN TWO
POINTS IS RISKY.



EXTRAPOLATING BEYOND TWO
POINTS IS EVEN MORE DANGEROUS!

Two-level experiments are also sometimes of limited theoretical value. We agreed in Chapters 1–3 that science is built on relationships and that scientists use theories to explain the relationships found in experiments. Each

theory competes with other possible theories until an experiment is done that supports one theory, leading to the exclusion of the others. Because many theories predict that a change in an independent variable will cause the dependent variable to change in a particular direction, the outcome of a two-level experiment will often fail to distinguish among competing theories. Other than when opposing theories predict changes in opposite directions, or one predicts a change while the other does not, theory testing usually requires more complex experimental designs.

MULTILEVEL EXPERIMENTS

Multilevel experiments are single-variable experiments presenting three or more levels of the independent variable. Some investigators also call them *functional experiments* because these experiments allow you to get some idea of the shape of the function relating the independent variable to the dependent variable.

Advantages

The major advantage of a multilevel experiment is that its results allow us to infer the nature of the experimental relationship. Even if an experiment has only three levels, it still provides us with a much better idea of the shape of the underlying relationship between the independent and dependent variables than a two-level experiment does.

Suppose that we want to know how a student's anxiety level influences test scores. We decide to use two introductory psychology classes³ and a two-level, between-subjects design. In Class 1 the instructor spends five minutes before each major exam haranguing the students about the importance of grades for success in school. She makes it clear that students with the best grades get the best jobs, that students with college degrees earn a far larger salary, and that the university is a bit overcrowded at the moment.

In Class 2 she also gives a five-minute talk before each exam. In this talk, she reminds the students that making a good grade is not as important as learning the material. She tells them that 10 years from now they won't remember what grade they got on this test anyway. In this experiment, we are careful to control as many potential confounding variables as possible, such as grade level, test difficulty, and class instruction. Thus, we decide that the difference in test scores can be attributed to the anxiety produced by the talk. Assuming that the first speech causes a high level of anxiety in the students and the second, a lower level, we might get the results shown in Figure 9-3.

At this point the best guess we could make is that there is no relationship between anxiety level and average test score; a straight line drawn through

³ Because here we are using two classes that already exist rather than assigning students to the classes in a random manner, this example is not really an experiment but uses a quasi-experimental design that is discussed in Chapter 10. I hope you noticed this difference.

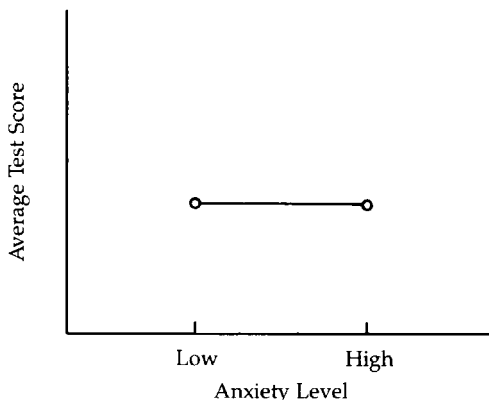


FIGURE 9-3 Imaginary results from a two-level experiment varying the anxiety level of students and measuring their average test score

the two points is flat. Suppose, however, that we had decided on a multilevel design and added a third anxiety level, a neutral level in which the instructor gives a five-minute speech simply reminding the students of some procedural details. Figure 9-4 shows imaginary results for this multilevel experiment.

When we graph the third data point, we see that there is, in fact, an important relationship between anxiety level and test scores,⁴ although some doubt exists about the exact shape of the function. Any of the three shapes shown in Figure 9-4 seem to be good possibilities; and because most psychological functions do not take sharp turns or change directions rapidly, we know that not many other relationships are possible. As you can see, the third data point allows us to get a much better idea of the shape of the experimental relationship. As we add progressively more levels to our experiment, we can make even better guesses about the true functional relationship between the independent and dependent variables. We can also interpolate and extrapolate from our data points with more confidence. In this example the neutral group that we added could be considered a control group because the teacher was not trying to influence anxiety at all. Another control group, in which the teacher said nothing, could have been added to determine whether saying anything at all affects behavior. Multilevel experiments give this kind of flexibility.

This example also illustrates a second advantage of a multilevel experiment: Generally, the more levels you add, the less critical the range of the independent variable becomes. As you recall from our discussion in Chapter 7, although the range should be realistic, it should also be large enough to show a relationship if one exists. Obviously, both of these requirements become

⁴ If you have had a course in motivation or attention, you may recognize this function as a form of the Yerkes-Dodson law, in which an inverted U describes the relationship between arousal and learning. Good for you!

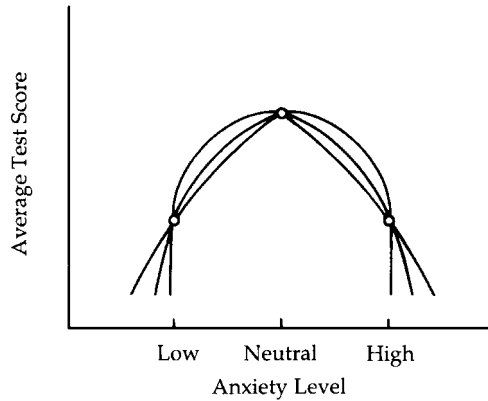


FIGURE 9-4 Imaginary results from a three-level experiment varying the anxiety level of students and measuring their average test score

easier for us to satisfy as more levels of the independent variable are represented in the experiment.

Disadvantages

From a practical point of view, the major disadvantage of a multilevel experiment is that it requires more time and effort than a two-level experiment. Recall that every time we add a level to a between-subjects experiment, we increase the number of participants needed. In within-subject experiments, additional levels do not increase the number of participants needed, but they do increase the total time of the experiment and make counterbalancing schemes more ponderous.

The statistical tests required to analyze multilevel experiments are also a bit more difficult to do. They take more time, and it is harder to interpret the data in light of the statistical test.

In weighing the advantages and disadvantages of two-level versus multilevel designs, these slight additional costs of adding levels to the independent variable are usually more than offset by the value of the information gained. This benefit is especially valuable for the first few extra levels added to the design. At some point, of course, adding more levels will do little to increase our knowledge of the experimental relationship.

So far we have been pretending that all experiments have only one independent variable. However, this restriction has been more for the purpose of discussion than it has been a reflection of the real world. Many of the experiments that you will want to do will use more than one independent variable. Here I discuss some of the general strategies used in designing progressively more complex experiments.

The most frequently used design in experimental psychology is a **factorial design**. To understand the results of most experiments published in psychology journals, you must understand the logic of factorial designs.

■ Factorial Designs

The typical way to combine several variables is in a factorial combination that pairs each level of one independent variable with each level of the second and the third, and so on. The independent variables in such a design are also called **factors**.⁵

As an example of a factorial experiment, suppose that you want to know whether a group with a leader is faster at reaching a consensus than a group without one. You need to decide which circumstances you will control and which you will let vary: Should all group members be of the same gender or not? Should communication be structured or free? Should you give the group an easy or a hard problem to solve? You may find it unsatisfactory to control or randomize all these factors. For example, you might feel that the effect of a leader on a group's efficiency could depend on the size of the group, in which case you might choose to vary both leadership and group size as factors. Suppose that you choose two levels of leadership—with and without—and four levels of size—3, 6, 10, and 20 members.

Figure 9-5 shows the usual way of representing such a factorial experiment. As shown in the figure, a *matrix* is formed with one factor on each side. The boxes within the matrix are called *cells*. As with the simpler experiments, participants are assigned to the various cells in a random manner. In the example, the upper left cell would have the participants assigned to groups with three members, one of whom is made the leader. You can see that any row or column by itself forms a simple single-variable experiment. The example we have chosen is called a 2×4 *design*⁶ because one factor has two levels, and the other has four.

Only your imagination and the population of the world limit the number of factors represented in a factorial design. Suppose that we think that

		<i>Group Size</i>			
		3	6	10	20
<i>Leadership</i>	With				
	Without				

FIGURE 9-5 A schematic representation of a 2×4 factorial design. One factor, leadership, has two levels: with and without. A second factor, group size, has four levels: 3, 6, 10, and 20 members.

⁵ Some investigators also call them **treatments**, which leads to the term *treatment combinations*. In building our science, we emulate the biblical folk building the Tower of Babel; no one can agree on the language. It's enough to make a new investigator a babbling idiot!

⁶ The "×" in this expression is read "by," not "times." Thus, an English (rather than algebraic) reading of this design would be a *two-by-four design*.

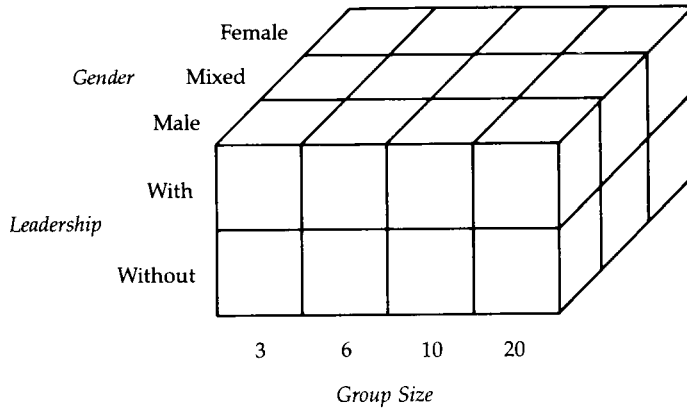


FIGURE 9-6 A schematic representation of a $2 \times 3 \times 4$ factorial design. The factors are leadership (with and without), gender (male, mixed, and female), and group size (3, 6, 10, and 20 members).

group–decision-making time differs not only with leadership and size but also with the gender of the members. We make gender a third factor having three levels. Three levels? Right—men, women, and mixed (approximately half men and half women). Figure 9-6 shows a schematic of this expanded design,⁷ which would be called a $2 \times 3 \times 4$ factorial design.

In Chapter 8 we examined within-subject and between-subjects experiments, which was appropriate because we were just considering single-variable experiments. With factorial experiments, the *factors* themselves become within-subject and between-subjects, and both kinds of factors can be included in a single factorial experiment, sometimes called a **mixed factorial design**. In our leadership experiment, for example, we could have assigned a different set of group members to each cell, making both factors into between-subjects factors. Or we could have decided to create a mixed design by having the same members of each group function both with and without a leader. In this case, group size would still be a between-subjects factor, but leadership would be a within-subject factor. In deciding whether to make a particular factor within-subject or between-subjects, the advantages and disadvantages of each, as discussed in Chapter 8, would have to be considered. If necessary, appropriate counterbalancing for within-subject factors would also have to be used.

ADVANTAGES

The major advantage of a factorial experiment is that we can study interactions. An **interaction** occurs when the relationship between one independent variable and the participant's behavior depends on the level of a second independent

⁷ Schematically representing more than three factors becomes a bit more difficult. Three-dimensional paper is hard to come by. Experimental designs, however, are not limited by three-dimensional space. They are just difficult to represent in a two-dimensional drawing.

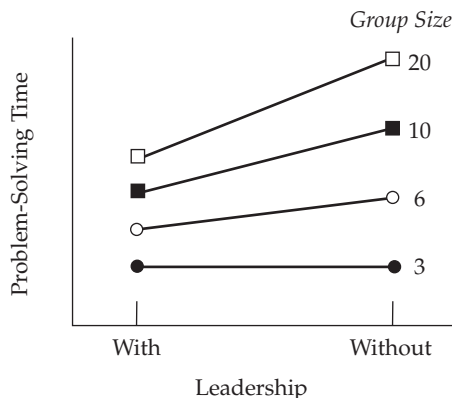


FIGURE 9-7 These hypothetical results show a possible interaction of leadership with group size. Note that for the smallest group, problem-solving time is independent of leadership, but for larger groups, leadership makes for shorter solution times.

variable. For example, a group of three may make decisions easily with or without a leader, but as the group gets larger, we may find that groups without leaders take progressively longer to reach a consensus. Thus, the relationship between leadership and decision time depends on the size of the group. Figure 9-7 shows a graph of such an interaction. As you can see, the time to solve a problem is unaffected by whether there is a leader for a group of three people. However, as the groups get larger, having a leader becomes important for minimizing the time to reach a solution. Two single-variable experiments would not provide us with information about such interactions; they would simply allow us to see the general effect of either leadership or group size. Only a factorial experiment allows us to investigate interactions.

Remember in Chapter 2 when we considered the infinite number of circumstances that could determine behavior? We decided that to do an experiment, we would have to pick one of these circumstances to be our independent variable. The other circumstances would either be controlled or be allowed to vary in a random fashion. Once we determined the effect of this circumstance on behavior, we could choose another circumstance to study. The problem with this approach is the naive assumption that once we know the effects of each independent variable, we can simply add them together and account for the behavior. This assumption totally ignores interactive effects among the circumstances. Ignoring interactions when we expect them to exist can lead us into making wrong conclusions.

In designing a single-variable experiment, when you are considering turning any circumstance into a control variable and thinking that the results could be affected by the level you choose to set the variable, you are worried about a possible interaction. The words *it might depend* should tip you off. Does having a leader speed up group problem-solving times? *It might depend* on the size of the group. Does print size affect reading speed? *It might depend*

on the age of the reader. Does watching violence on TV affect children's aggressiveness? *It might depend* on how much they watch. Whenever you think that the outcome of the experiment you are designing might depend on some other circumstance, you are in some danger of making an error if you make that circumstance into a control variable or a random variable. Taking the experimental results shown in Figure 9-7, we can suppose that rather than doing a factorial experiment, we had decided that a single-variable experiment was good enough. If we had made group size into a control variable and chosen to use only groups of three, we would have concluded that problem-solving time was unrelated to leadership. On the other hand, if we had chosen groups of 20, we would have concluded that leadership had a large effect on problem-solving time.

The situation is not much better if we turn the *it might depend* circumstance into a random variable. In a leadership experiment having the outcome shown in Figure 9-7, if we had randomly chosen group sizes between 3 and 20, we would simply have underestimated the potentially large effect of leadership. In other words, we would have found a smaller effect of leadership because it would have been averaged across the sizes of our random-sized groups. Suppose that the underlying interactions were of a different form, such as the ones shown in either panel of Figure 9-8. In this case, if group size were a random variable, we would again be averaging across group sizes and would incorrectly conclude that leadership had no effect on problem-solving time. From this discussion you should begin to appreciate why factorial experiments are so widely used in psychology. They are the only experimental designs that allow us to investigate interactions between variables. (For more information on how to interpret interactions, see Chapter 12.)

In Chapter 2 we discovered that whenever a circumstance was made into a random variable, the experimental results increased in generalizability but

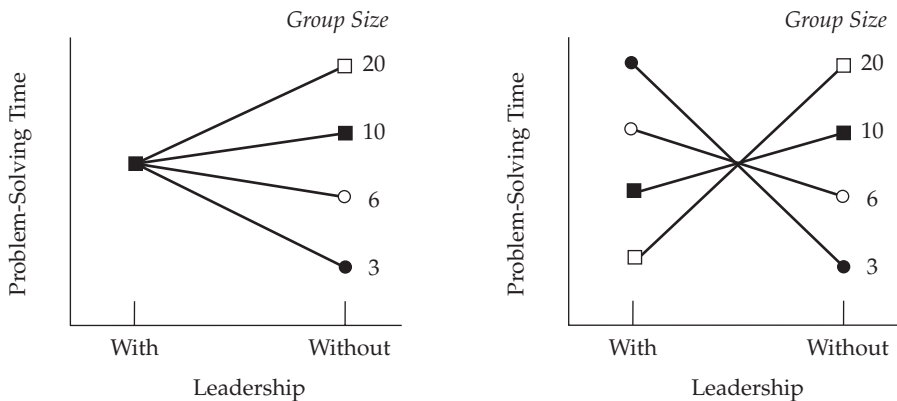


FIGURE 9-8 Two possible interactions of leadership with group size. In either case, turning group size into a random variable would probably eliminate the effect of leadership.

decreased in precision. On the other hand, choosing to make the circumstance into a control variable increased the precision of the outcome but decreased the generalizability. A factorial experiment gives us a third alternative: we can make the circumstance into another independent variable, thereby increasing the precision *and* generalizability of the result. We can generalize the outcome to a larger set of circumstances because in this case more circumstances have been made into factors, and we know precisely what the effect is at each level of these factors. Thus, we have the best of all possible worlds, although every time we choose to make another circumstance into a factor, the experiment gets progressively more complex.

A third advantage of factorial experiments is a statistical advantage. Recall from Chapter 8 that most inferential statistical tests compare the size of any difference found between the levels of the independent variable with an estimate of how variable the data are. A difference is more likely to be declared significant by the test if either that difference is large or the variability is small. In a factorial design, when a circumstance that otherwise would add variability to the data is instead made into a factor, the amount of estimated variability in the data decreases. Thus, the more circumstances we can make into factors, the smaller the estimate of variability. The smaller this estimate, the more likely it will be that any difference we find is declared statistically significant.

DISADVANTAGES

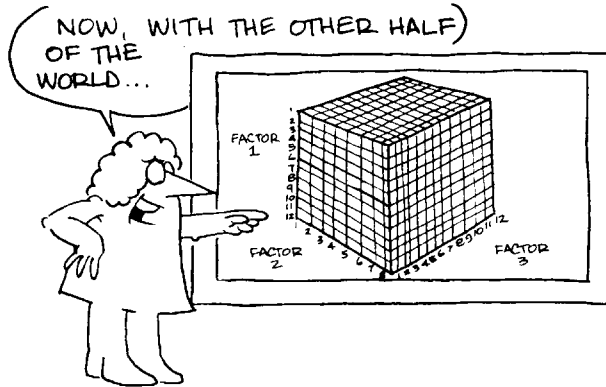
With all these good things going for factorial designs, you know that these designs must also have some drawbacks. They do. The major disadvantage of a factorial experiment is that it is time consuming and costly. Suppose that, as in Chapter 2, you are again working for General Nosedive of the Air Force. You are working with a team of engineers designing the cockpit of a new aircraft. Because you are a psychologist and know all about humans, they expect you to tell them how to design the displays and controls and where to place them.

You are aware that some variables might interact with other variables, so you choose a factorial design. For example, you know that the location of the airspeed indicator might affect the best altimeter location. The first factor you select is the length of the pointer on the altimeter. You find that four standard lengths are currently in use, so you assign four levels to this factor. You also have a choice of five possible places to put the altimeter, so you select altimeter location as a second factor and assign it five levels. Your third factor is the size of the airspeed indicator with three levels. Because there are six possible locations for this instrument, you have a fourth factor. The fifth factor is the size of the joystick grip,⁸ which has four possible diameters and five possible lengths. We have only started to consider the important variables for cockpit design, and we already have a $4 \times 5 \times 3 \times 6 \times 4 \times 5$ factorial experiment.

⁸ Nonfliers can stop snickering now. A joystick is the steering lever on an aircraft.

So far the design has 7200 cells.⁹ If we assign ten people to each cell, we will exceed the number of pilots in the Air Force!

As you can see, whenever you add another factor to a factorial experiment, you increase the number of cells in the design by a multiple of the number of levels in that factor. At this rate, the size of factorial designs can get out of hand quickly. Because each additional cell calls for more time and effort, you must be careful not to choose an unrealistic number of factors or levels within each factor.



If you do not have the resources to do a large factorial experiment, how do you find an answer for the general? One way is to do several smaller experiments. For instance, in the example you could do 4×5 , 3×6 , and 4×5 experiments. The problem with this solution is that you are assuming that the independent variables appearing in separate experiments (such as altimeter location and airspeed indicator size) do not interact. And you have no way of verifying this assumption without combining all the variables into one experiment. Nevertheless, this is how most psychologists who have to find answers to such questions go about finding them in the real world. We examine a strategy for doing a series of smaller experiments later in this chapter.

There is a second, more sophisticated way of dealing with very large factorial experiments called **response-surface methodology** (Clark & Williges, 1973; Meyers, 1971). This method allows you to determine the places within the factorial design where the dependent variable is likely to be at its maximum or minimum without having to fill each cell of the design with data points. To do this, one has to assume that some of the most complex interactions will not occur—a usually correct assumption. The details about how to use a response-surface methodology are well beyond what the beginning experimenter needs; you should simply realize that such techniques are available should you require them in the future. The references at

⁹ Although I earlier told you to interpret the \times as *by* so it is a 4 by 5 by 3 by 6 by 4 by 5 factorial experiment, for determining the number of cells, the \times can be considered a multiplication sign.

the end of this chapter are a good place to start if you need to use such designs.

A second possible difficulty with factorial experiments is interpreting the results. The statistical procedure used to analyze most factorial experiments and all factorial experiments having more than two factors is **analysis of variance**. This procedure requires you to make certain assumptions about the type of variability in your data. One assumption is that the variability is normally distributed in the familiar bell-shaped curve that approximates many real-world distributions. If the underlying variability in your data does not approximate a normal distribution, an analysis-of-variance statistical test is not appropriate.¹⁰ Unfortunately, you often do not know whether you can meet this assumption until after you have completed your experiment, which is too bad, because other statistical tests presently available for analyzing complex interactions are inadequate. In such cases, you are left with the unpleasant alternative of using a questionable statistical test or doing no statistical analysis at all. Fortunately, most factorial experiments produce distributions that are fair approximations of a normal distribution, thereby allowing you to use analysis of variance. (We examine analysis of variance in more detail in Appendix A.)

Even when you can satisfy the assumptions of the statistical analysis, interpreting the results of complex factorial experiments is sometimes difficult. The interactions mentioned so far are two-way interactions, in that the relationship between one factor and the dependent variable depends on the level of a second factor. However, as discussed in Chapter 12, you could also have three-way interactions in which the type or size of a two-way interaction depends on the level of a third factor. For example, perhaps the effectiveness of leaders interacts with group size, but only for men. By the time you get into four-way and five-way interactions, you will no longer find it obvious how to interpret your results.

We have seen that factorial experiments can offer many advantages over simple single-variable experiments. They allow you to investigate interactions, give you a statistical advantage by decreasing unwanted variability, and permit you to increase the generality of your results without decreasing the precision. However, you pay for these advantages in the time and effort expended and in the difficulty of interpreting the results. Is there a way to get some of the advantages of multiple-variable experiments without these difficulties? Yes. (Read on.)

■ Converging-Series Designs

Most journal articles report results of a series of experiments because many experimenters nowadays choose to do a **converging series** of experiments. I use this term to refer to any set of experiments that progressively home

¹⁰ Bradley (1968), in his book *Distribution-Free Statistical Tests*, has a good discussion of the errors you can make when you fail to satisfy this assumption.

in on a solution, rather than tackling a problem in one fell swoop. Most series of experiments are made up of single-variable or small factorial experiments.

In one type of series, we may simply have an applied problem that is too big for a single factorial experiment, such as the cockpit-design example. In this case, we might decide to do a series of smaller factorial experiments because higher-order interactions (three- or four-way interactions or larger) are of little interest. Once we find an optimal level for a particular factor in one experiment, we make the factor into a control variable in subsequent experiments. We can then vary other important factors until we have successively manipulated all the independent variables that might reasonably be expected to affect performance. In this way, we can progressively approach the optimal solution to our overall practical problem.

CONVERGING OPERATIONS

A form of converging-series design, which is more exciting than those used for practical problems, tests psychological theories by converging on a single experimental hypothesis that explains an observed behavior. This type of experimentation has been called a *converging-operations* approach (Garner, Hake, & Eriksen, 1956). We start the series with many possible hypotheses that could explain the behavior we are examining. Each experiment we do helps eliminate one or more of our initial hypotheses until only one remains at the end of the series that can account for the data.

To illustrate a converging-operations technique, let's look at an experiment that investigates whether it takes longer for people to perceive vulgar words than nonvulgar words. Suppose the experimenter presents words using a tachistoscope, an apparatus that exposes visual material for brief controlled periods. The experimenter presents four words, two vulgar and two nonvulgar, and instructs participants to say the words aloud as soon as they recognize them. The experimenter finds that participants require longer exposures to report the vulgar words and concludes that this finding supports the hypothesis that people unconsciously suppress the perception of vulgar material. This perceptual defense hypothesis maintains that longer exposures are required to overcome this suppression.

Being an outstanding experimenter, you think of a number of other hypotheses that could explain this same finding. First, specific characteristics of the words may have made the nonvulgar words easier to read with short exposures. Second, participants might have perceived all four words equally well but involuntarily suppressed their response on the vulgar words until they could no longer avoid it. Third, participants might have been aware of the words and known what response to make but voluntarily withheld the response until they were positive of being correct. Thus, we have at least four possible hypotheses that can account for the results of the experiment, which are listed in Figure 9-9. We now need to do a series

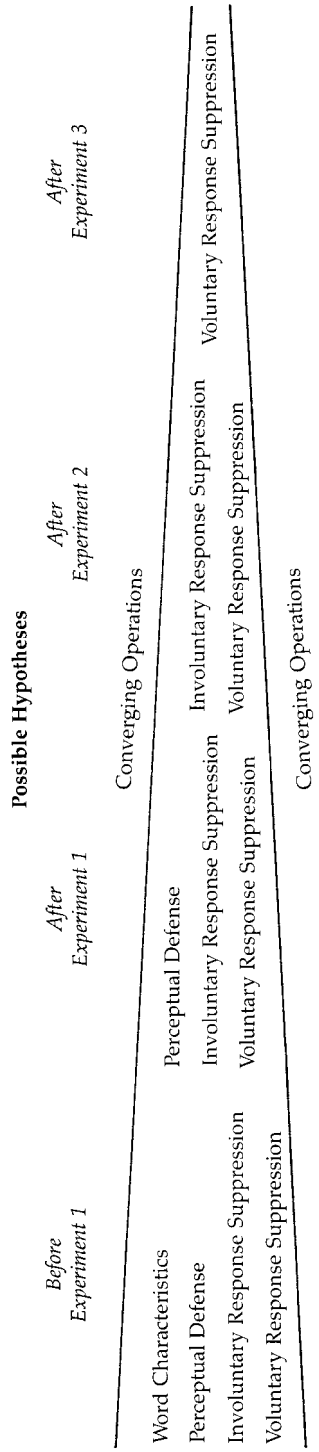


FIGURE 9-9 A schematic representation of the hypotheses in contention at each point during the three converging-operations experiments described in the text

of experiments that will converge on one of these hypotheses and exclude the rest.

The first experiment you might do distinguishes between the word-characteristics hypothesis and the other three. You can repeat the original experiment using two different vulgar and nonvulgar words. If you again find that the vulgar words require longer exposures, you are on your way to eliminating the word-characteristics hypothesis.¹¹ If longer exposure times were not required to say the vulgar words, your confidence in the word-characteristics hypothesis would increase.¹²

Assuming that the word-characteristics hypothesis has been eliminated, you still must distinguish among the remaining three. In Experiment 2 we might try to determine whether participants perceive the vulgar words at shorter exposures than they report them. We remember that a person's galvanic skin response (GSR) gives an indication of his or her emotional response to stimuli. Thus, we decide to measure participants' GSRs during presentation of the vulgar words to find out how long the words have to be exposed before they are perceived. The GSR can indicate whether participants perceive a word, even though they may voluntarily or involuntarily suppress their response.

If you find that the GSR doesn't change until the exposure duration at which the participant reports the vulgar words, the perceptual defense hypothesis receives some support. If, however, the GSR shows that they perceive the vulgar words at the same exposure durations as the nonvulgar words, one of the two remaining hypotheses must be true.

To distinguish between voluntary and involuntary response suppression, you can use an operation that causes people to voluntarily change the amount of suppression. You might anticipate that when the experimenter is of the opposite sex as the participant, more voluntary suppression occurs than when both are of the same sex. Thus, in Experiment 3, you attempt to determine if the difference in exposure time for detecting vulgar versus nonvulgar words is less when the experimenter and participant are of the same sex. If so, the voluntary response suppression hypothesis is supported. If not, involuntary response suppression seems likely.

¹¹ Actually, a single experiment seldom eliminates a hypothesis from further consideration. For example, we might have been unlucky and selected two additional vulgar words that were still harder to read than the nonvulgar words. Or we might have failed to consider a subset of this hypothesis. For example, the effect may be due to vulgar words having a lower frequency of usage than nonvulgar words. And we recognize higher-frequency words more quickly. To conclusively exclude a hypothesis, the converging operation must be completely independent of any other possible operation. By changing the specific words, we have not made word frequency completely independent of word vulgarity; therefore, we cannot eliminate this hypothesis.

¹² This sentence was carefully worded because we would not really have provided strong evidence supporting the word-characteristics hypothesis. In experimental psychology we design our experiments to show a difference in the dependent variable due to a manipulation of the independent variable. Showing that an independent variable caused no change in the dependent variable is weak evidence for the proposition that it *cannot* cause a change. There are a number of other reasons for finding no change in behavior. For example, participants may have failed to follow instructions, fallen asleep, or died.



You can see how the converging operations in this example have allowed us to eliminate all but one hypothesis. The operations we used to zero in on one hypothesis were varied: a stimulus manipulation, a physiological measurement, and an interpersonal-relationship manipulation. We could have chosen other operations, but if the assumptions underlying our operations are correct, all other operations should converge on the same hypothesis. Every time a new operation converges on the hypothesis, we can have increased confidence in that hypothesis.

Actually, this discussion has been a bit idealized. You can seldom sit down before doing a converging series of experiments and detail every possible hypothesis and every operation that will be carried out to distinguish among the hypotheses. If you are like most experimenters, you will work on one experiment at a time. Only after seeing the results of one experiment will you decide on a new operation to get you closer to the true hypothesis.

As you complete more experiments in a series, you may also find that the number of hypotheses is increasing rather than decreasing. Although you can eliminate some old hypotheses, other new ones become obvious as the experimental problem is better understood. At this point it may seem that you are doing a diverging series of experiments rather than a converging series! In fact, you are still converging, but the set of potential hypotheses is simply much larger than you at first imagined it to be.

ADVANTAGES

Most of the advantages of a converging-series approach are rather obvious from this discussion. You have a great deal more flexibility than you have in a large factorial experiment. In a large factorial experiment, you must decide on the factors and factor levels before starting the experiment, after which you are locked into this predetermined design. One bad choice can destroy a large investment of time and money. A converging series, however, gives you many choice points. You can choose new independent variables or levels at each of these points. You can also be much more efficient because you needn't

waste time investigating factors and levels that have little effect on the dependent variable. A converging-series design also has built-in replications. Every time you show an experimental result to be repeatable, it gains prestige in the scientific community. If you had done all three experiments in our vulgar-word example, you would have replicated, or repeated, the basic experimental result of vulgar words requiring longer exposures three times, providing convincing proof of the reliability of this result.

DISADVANTAGES

Converging-series designs also have some minor disadvantages. Determining how variables interact if they are manipulated between different experiments

■ **TABLE 9-1**

A Summary of the Advantages and Disadvantages of Two-Level, Multilevel, Factorial, and Converging-Series Experimental Designs

<i>Design</i>	<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Disadvantages</i>
Two-level experiment	It is efficient for determining whether a variable has any effect. Results are easy to interpret and analyze. It is adequate for some theory testing. It is useful for applied comparisons.	One cannot infer shape of functions. Interpolation and extrapolation are dangerous. Complex theories are difficult to test.
Multilevel experiment	One can infer shape of functions. Range of independent variable is less critical.	It requires more participants or time. Counterbalancing is more ponderous. Statistical calculations are more difficult.
Factorial experiment	One can investigate interactions. Adding factors decreases variability, thus increasing statistical sensitivity. It increases generalizability without decreasing precision.	Experiments become large as more factors are added. Statistical calculations are more difficult. Higher-order interactions are sometimes difficult to interpret.
Converging-series experiments	They offer more flexibility than large factorial experiments. They have built-in replications.	Interactions are difficult to assess. Between-experiment comparisons are also between-subjects, with associated difficulties. One must analyze prior experiment before doing the next.

is difficult and sometimes impossible. Under certain circumstances, you can combine two experiments from a converging series to analyze them as a single between-subjects factorial experiment. However, if you are primarily interested in interactive effects, you should do a factorial experiment.

A second disadvantage is that when comparing the results of separate experiments in the series, you are always making a between-subjects comparison with all the accompanying disadvantages of between-subjects designs (see Chapter 8).

Finally, when you use a converging-series design, you must analyze and interpret the results of one experiment before you can begin the next. It often takes several weeks and sometimes months to complete such an analysis. For this reason, many investigators work on more than one series at a time so that they can do an experiment from one series while analyzing an experiment from another series.

Considering the advantages and disadvantages of converging-series designs, it is easy to see why the approach has become so popular in recent years. The converging-series approach offers a highly efficient and flexible way to investigate both applied and basic research problems.

Table 9-1 provides a handy reference summarizing the advantages and disadvantages of all the experimental designs that we have been examining in this chapter.

■ Summary

Once you have decided on a research problem worth investigating, you must choose an experimental design. The simplest design you can choose presents only two levels of a single independent variable. This design provides a way to quickly determine whether the independent variable has any effect at all on the participant's behavior. Such experiments are also easy to interpret and analyze; for some theoretical and applied problems, they provide all the necessary information. However, these simple experiments can tell you nothing about the shape of the experimental relationship, so both interpolation and extrapolation are risky. Adding more levels to the independent variable will give you a better idea about the functional relationship between the independent and the dependent variables. It also makes choosing a range for the independent variable less critical. A disadvantage of such **multilevel experiments** is that they require more time and effort. They are also a bit harder to interpret and analyze.

The most frequently used multiple-variable experimental design is called a **factorial design**. In this design the independent variables, sometimes called **factors**, are combined so that the levels of each variable occur in combination with the levels of every other variable. If within-subject factors are combined with between-subjects factors, the experiment is said to use a **mixed factorial design**. Factorial designs allow you to investigate **interactions**. Every time you add a factor, the generalizability and precision of the results increase,

while the statistical variability decreases. However, large factorial experiments can be time consuming and costly. The design can become so large that a series of smaller experiments is required or the use of a **response-surface methodology** is necessary. Interpreting the results can also be a problem, particularly when the statistical assumptions of **analysis of variance** cannot be met.

You can use a **converging-series design** in place of a complex factorial design. This design allows you to discover **converging operations**, which progressively eliminate hypotheses until only one remaining hypothesis can account for the data. Converging-series designs offer the advantage of flexibility and provide built-in replications. However, evaluating interactions between factors varying across experiments is difficult. You must also manipulate these factors in a between-subjects manner, and you must analyze one experiment before beginning the next.

10

How to Design Research That Is Not Experimental

The task confronting persons who try to interpret the results from quasi-experiments is basically one of separating the effects of a treatment from those due to the initial noncomparability between the average units in each treatment group.

T. D. COOK & D. T. CAMPBELL (1979)

Instead of studying a thousand rats for one hour each, or a hundred rats for ten hours each, the investigator is likely to study one rat for a thousand hours.

B. F. SKINNER (1966)

Up to this point in the book we have been concentrating on experimental designs. However, it may not always be possible or desirable to design an experiment to answer a particular research question. In this chapter we discuss three ways to do research that are *not strictly* experimental. The first, **quasi-experimentation**, follows many of the rules of experimentation we have learned, but because random assignment of participants to levels of the independent variable is not possible, quasi-experimental designs must be used to minimize possible threats to internal validity that might occur. **Single-subject** and **small-N baseline** designs form the second type of nontraditional designs. In this case, because the availability of participants is limited or because showing a clear-cut result of a manipulation on each participant is desired, rules are established that allow effects to be observed without control groups or within-subject counterbalancing. The third nontraditional research discussed is **survey**, or **questionnaire**, research that uses a correlational design rather than an experimental design.

■ Quasi-Experiments (and Nonexperimental Designs)

Recall from Chapter 2 that one of the options for assignment of circumstances is to turn them into random variables. In that chapter I also emphasized how important it is for true randomization to take place. If we cannot be sure that

a truly random process has been used, a circumstance may vary in a systematic way along with the levels of the independent variable. This is a nice way of saying that we have allowed confounding to raise its ugly head. Whenever we have the possibility of confounding, we must be aware of all the possible threats to internal validity that we discussed in Chapter 2, such as history, maturation, selection, mortality, testing, and statistical regression. Remember these? The purpose of quasi-experimental designs is to minimize each of these threats even though we are not randomizing our groups. In this way we hope to avoid confounding variables.

To illustrate this problem, suppose that we wish to determine whether handing out “learning evaluations” (short noncredit quizzes) at the end of each lecture improves class performance on the major tests in a particular college course. We know from our basic experimental model that we must use at least two levels of the independent variable—probably “learning evaluations” versus “no learning evaluations.” Some circumstances will become control variables. For example, we would probably teach the same course material to participants whether they were receiving learning evaluations or not. However, we cannot clone students for a between-subjects design, and using a within-subject design is not feasible because we cannot undo what the students have learned from the material the first time through. So we will have to make the students assigned to each group into a random variable. Ideally we could put the names of all students in the university who had not taken the course into a hat and draw out 100 students to assign to each of two classes. One class would then be given learning evaluations, and the other would not.

Unfortunately, we would probably not be allowed to force these students to take a particular class; in the real world, students are allowed to choose the classes they wish to take. We might have to use two classes that already exist, perhaps a morning class and an afternoon class, and assign them to the levels of our independent variable. Do you suppose that there are any differences between the types of students who choose to take morning classes and those who take afternoon classes? Can you imagine dimensions in which these students differ that might be related to class performance?

Suppose that the classes were both morning classes, but one met on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and the other for longer classes on Tuesday and Thursday. Can you imagine dimensions related to days of the week or lecture duration that might affect performance?

An even more likely problem would develop if the instructor taught only one section of this particular course each semester or each year. How many dimensions do you suppose vary between fall and spring students or between students from one year to the next? So while we can avoid turning some circumstances into confounding variables by using control or randomization, we do not have the option of controlling for participant assignment.

In most applied field settings we do not have the option of making participant assignment a random variable. When random assignment is not

possible, we can sometimes use a quasi-experimental design. These quasi-experimental designs allow us to minimize, or in some cases at least assess, the various threats to internal validity we expose ourselves to by violating the strict laws of experimentation. Each design that we examine next has some strengths for countering some threats, but none can give us complete assurance of having eliminated all threats. In discussing quasi-experimentation, it is useful to characterize the different designs by using a notation system employed by Cook and Campbell (1979) in their classic book on the topic. In this system an “X” stands for a particular level of the independent variable (also called a *treatment*). An “O” stands for an observation during which the dependent variable is measured. The subscripts “1” through “n” refer to the order of presenting the treatments ($X_1 \dots X_n$) or measuring the observations ($O_1 \dots O_n$). A dashed line between experimental groups indicates that they were not randomly chosen.

NONEXPERIMENTAL DESIGNS

One-Group Posttest-Only Design

If you measure the behavior of a group that has been exposed to only one level of an independent variable, you are using a **one-group posttest-only design**. Using our notation system, this design looks like this:

$$\overline{\quad} \\ X \quad O$$

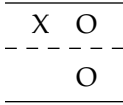
When you have no other information to supplement the outcome, this design is essentially useless for determining the impact of the treatment.

For example, suppose that a television network airs a program on the Holocaust (X), and you are interested in how the show has affected the population’s awareness of the event (O). You send out a questionnaire to a group of people and discover that 76% are now aware of what happened during the Holocaust. What do you know about the impact of the telecast? Did it cause an increase in awareness? A decrease? Without knowing what the awareness level was before the show or what the level is for an equivalent group not exposed to the show, your result is useless for answering these questions.

This design is similar to the case-study approach discussed in Chapter 1. However, some important differences generally make case studies more useful. In a case study, the researcher typically knows a great deal about the context in which the behavior is being observed. For this reason, although there may be no direct measure of preobservation behaviors, these can often be inferred. In addition, more than one behavior is usually observed in a case study. These behaviors may form a pattern that provides much more information than is provided by a single dependent variable measured in a more sterile laboratory setting.

Posttest-Only Design with Nonequivalent Groups

If we add a posttest done on a nonequivalent group to the design we have been discussing, we get a design that looks like this:



By nonequivalent, I mean that the group was chosen using a selection mechanism different from that used to choose the group exposed to the treatment.

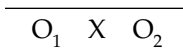
In the Holocaust example, suppose we discovered that because a local football team was playing, the telecast was not shown in Miami. We might decide to use a randomly selected sample from Miami as the nonequivalent group and send the chosen participants the questionnaire. If we now find a difference between the groups, can we attribute this difference to the television show? Miami has a large Jewish population. Do you think that being Jewish could affect your awareness of the Holocaust?

The basic problem with a **posttest-only design with nonequivalent groups** is that any observed difference could be due to either the treatment or selection differences between the groups. The more equivalent the groups, the more convincing the conclusion.

One way of strengthening the conclusion in the absence of a formal pretest is to have informal pretest information by which the two groups can be compared. This pretest information is more useful, the more highly correlated it is with the dependent variable. Thus, we might compare our two samples in terms of age, sex, social class, ethnicity, and religion. This comparison could give us an idea of how equivalent the groups are. However, the basic design is still weak, and we must take great care in interpreting the results of any posttest-only nonequivalent-groups design.

One-Group Pretest–Posttest Design

Again taking the basic one-group posttest design, we should consider what would happen if we also gave this group a pretest. This **one-group pretest–posttest design** looks like this:



This design has widespread usage in applied field settings and is an improvement over the nonequivalent-groups design in terms of selection. As is the case for within-subject designs, the same participants are selected for both observations, thus helping minimize the threat of selection. However, for within-subject designs, procedures such as counterbalancing the order of presentation and taking the two observations close together in time minimize

other threats to internal validity. Unfortunately the one-group pretest-posttest design does not minimize these other threats.

Again, using the Holocaust example, what effect do you think giving a pretest that asks about awareness of this event would have on a posttest assessing Holocaust awareness? You can see that the threat of testing is a problem in this case. If we decided to minimize the testing problems by giving the pretest well in advance of the treatment—say, one year—we could well run into other threats. History might conspire against us in that some Holocaust-related event besides the telecast, such as the capture of a war criminal, might change the group's awareness. Or, particularly if we were using schoolchildren, maturity could have an effect. If we were using the pretest to select a group, regression could also cause problems. Thus, while the pretest design may solve the selection problem, great care must be taken in interpretation because of the other threats to internal validity.

QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL DESIGNS

The three designs discussed in the previous section are called **nonexperimental designs** because there is no way to assess many of the threats to internal validity when these designs are used. The designs discussed in this section are called **quasi-experimental designs** because, although they do not meet the strict requirements of the basic experimental model, we can assess *many* of the threats. It is not within the scope of this book to exhaustively cover all quasi-experimental designs. Instead I mention several that illustrate the two major classes of designs. For more detail, refer to Cook and Campbell's (1979) or Shadish, Cook, and Campbell's (2002) excellent books.

Nonequivalent Control Group Design with Pretest and Posttest

The first design uses a nonequivalent control group, which is not exposed to the treatment, in addition to a treatment group. Each group is given both a pretest and a posttest. The notation for the design is:

$$\begin{array}{c} \hline O_1 \quad X \quad O_2 \\ \hline \hline O_1 \quad O_2 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

This design is probably the most widely used in social science field studies and allows us to assess most of the simple threats to internal validity.

How much we have to worry about certain threats depends to some extent upon the particular experimental outcome. If the pretest scores of the groups show essentially no difference, we can have some confidence that the groups are relatively equivalent, and the possibility of a selection or a regression threat is minimized. If the scores of the control group are the same at pretest and posttest, the threats of history and maturation are minimized. Because both groups receive the same tests, differential effects of testing

should also be minimal. If the number of participants who drop out of the two groups between pretest and posttest is different, mortality could be a problem. However, the design allows this threat to be assessed. The most serious potential problem when using this design is having a threat that interacts with selection. Again, if the two groups score equivalently at pretest, the threat of a selection interaction is reduced but still possible. For example, while school A is receiving a particular treatment and school B is not, school A may also employ a new principal who requires new standards of the teachers. This history–selection interaction could threaten our conclusions.

We must be even more concerned about interactions with selection when the two groups have very different scores on the pretest. For example, suppose that we want to determine whether paying assembly line workers by the piece increases productivity. We request volunteers who will have their salary lowered but will receive extra money for piecework. At the pretest we discover that the volunteers are more productive, but we figure that we can compare the size of this initial difference with the size of the posttest difference. Sure enough, at posttest the difference is even larger. Both groups improved their productivity, but the piecework group improved more. We conclude that paying by the piece improves productivity. Are we right?

Because there was a pretest difference in productivity, the volunteers in the treatment group may have been not only better at that point but also maturing (that is, learning, becoming more experienced) at a faster rate. Workers' skills are seldom stable, and we know that these workers' skills were getting better because even the control group improved. When everyone is improving, we should not be surprised that the better workers improve more rapidly. The basic design does not allow us to determine the size of this potential maturation–selection interaction. We might subdivide the treatment group by pretest to get some idea of the effect. That is, we would expect the less able workers from the treatment group to improve more slowly than the more able workers. However, we then have a different design. The point is that even when you use a nonequivalent control group design with both pretests and posttests, your findings may still be subject to threats such as selection interactions.

Variations. Rather than exhaustively detailing each variant of nonequivalent-control-group designs, I just mention a few possibilities. Sometimes when it is not possible or practical to use the same test for the pretest and posttest, a **proxy pretest** is used. That is, a pretest measure is taken of some variable or variables that should correlate with the posttest. For example, if you wished to evaluate the effects of a new method for teaching algebra, you might expose one class to the new method while teaching a second class by the traditional method. Rather than giving a pretest assessing algebra achievement to classes that had yet to learn algebra, you might give them a proxy pretest assessing general mathematical aptitude.

A proxy pretest can be used if it is not possible to give a pretest, such as when the treatment consists of some unpredictable historical event affecting

a portion of a population. Alternatively, even when it is possible to give a pretest, testing may be a threat to internal validity, so a proxy test can be used to avoid exposing the participants to the posttest. In other cases, when novel responses are called for, using the same test as the pretest and posttest could be nonsensical. For example, giving a final exam for an introductory psychology course to two classes before they take the course would not make much sense.

If testing is a threat, we can use *separate pretest and posttest samples*. Rather than drawing a single sample for each group that will receive both the pretest and the posttest, we draw two samples for each group, one to receive the pretest and the other the posttest. For instance, if an educational program is to be given to one class and not the other, the two classes can be randomly subdivided, with half of each given the pretest and the other half given the posttest later. The obvious weakness of this design is that it hinges entirely on the comparability of the pretest and posttest groups. If you believe that the groups might differ along a dimension related to the treatment, the design is considerably weakened.

Another way of strengthening the basic nonequivalent control group design with pretest and posttest is to add *pretest observations at more than one time interval*. Adding one or more pretests can help us assess the effects of two possible threats. Remember when we were discussing how “the able get more able” and how this might cause a maturation–selection interaction? If we had given an even earlier pretest, we could have determined whether the scores on that test fell on the trend line for each group. If they did, we would have a strong case for concluding that a maturation–selection interaction rather than the treatment caused the posttest difference. That is, the two pretests would have established a maturation trend, and the posttest would have been interpreted as nothing more than a continuation of this trend. An additional pretest can also help us assess the effects of statistical regression. If the groups were selected on the basis of the first pretest, regression effects should show up in the scores of the second pretest as well as in the scores of the posttest.

Other variations that are used less frequently include those in which there is a pretest, exposure to the treatment, a posttest, removal of the treatment, and another posttest. This design can also be expanded by reinstating the treatment, giving another test, ad infinitum (or possibly ad absurdum). These designs are much like the baseline designs we discuss later in this chapter. However, unlike quasi-experiments, baseline experiments typically use very few participants, and the data are examined for individuals, usually without the aid of statistical analysis.

In some cases one group can be given a treatment that is expected to change the dependent variable in one direction, and a second group can be given a treatment expected to have the opposite effect. For example, suppose two groups of workers are paid partly by the hour and partly by the piece. We might impose a treatment in which one group is paid entirely by the hour and the second group entirely by the piece. If we had predicted that paying by the piece would increase productivity, we would expect a decrease for the

■ **TABLE 10-1**

Procedures for Conducting Various Nonequivalent Control Group Designs with Pretest and Posttest

	<i>Time 1</i>	<i>Time 2</i>	<i>Time 3</i>	<i>Time 4</i>
<i>Basic nonequivalent control group with pretest and posttest</i>	Test Group 1	Apply treatment	Test Group 1	
	Test Group 2	No treatment	Test Group 2	
<i>With proxy pretest</i>	Proxy Test Group 1	Apply treatment	Test Group 1	
	Proxy Test Group 2	No treatment	Test Group 2	
<i>Separate pretest and posttest samples</i>	Test first half of Group 1	Apply treatment	Test second half of Group 1	
	Test first half of Group 2	No treatment	Test second half of Group 2	
<i>Pretest observations at more than one time interval</i>	Test Group 1	Test Group 1	Apply treatment	Test Group 1
	Test Group 2	Test Group 2	No treatment	Test Group 2

Note. Participants in Groups 1 and 2 were not randomly assigned to the treatment and no-treatment conditions and are therefore considered nonequivalent.

first group and an increase for the second. An outcome supporting our predictions is strong support for our hypothesis.

We have discussed only a few possible variations of the basic nonequivalent control group design. These are also shown in Table 10-1. Others are possible, and you will find information about these in the books listed at the end of the chapter.

Interrupted Time-Series Designs

The second major class of quasi-experimental designs is called **interrupted time-series designs**. In a basic time-series design a single group is observed multiple times prior to treatment and then multiple times after treatment. The notation for one such design looks like this:

$$\overline{O_1 \quad O_2 \quad O_3 \quad O_4 \quad O_5 \quad X \quad O_6 \quad O_7 \quad O_8 \quad O_9 \quad O_{10}}$$

The outcome easiest to interpret for such a design is an instantaneous, permanent change in the level of an otherwise flat line. For example, if we employed a new payoff scheme for workers and found an immediate 10% increase in productivity and if this change was maintained over the course of the study, we could have considerable confidence that the new payoff scheme had caused the change. However, even given this ideal outcome, we still need to be wary of possible threats such as history or mortality. Some historical event could have coincided with the introduction of the treatment. It is also possible, but probably unlikely, that at exactly the time the treatment was introduced, some unknown event caused a number of participants to drop out of the study.



INTERRUPTED TIME SERIES

Interrupted time-series designs can be used to exclude or assess other potential threats to internal validity. For instance, selection and interactions with selections are not problems, because the same group is used throughout the experiment. Any effects of testing or statistical regression should have disappeared before the treatment is introduced. Generally, we should also be able to exclude maturity as a problem because the effects of maturity are typically sluggish; hence we would expect to see a trend line rather than a discontinuous change.

When the change in the dependent variable is delayed, temporary, or reflected in the slope of an increasing or decreasing trend rather than in the overall level of a flat line, we usually state our conclusion with less

confidence. In this case more sophisticated statistical techniques can sometimes help tease out treatment effects.

Variations. As with the first type of design, variations of the simple time-series design are possible. One variation that will add considerable strength to a conclusion is the addition of a **nonequivalent no-treatment control group time series**. In this variation, a second nonequivalent group is measured at each of the observation intervals, but no treatment is given during the series. The control group allows us to assess the effects of history as a threat because both groups will probably be affected equally by a historical event. If the two groups are selected in a different manner, a history–selection interaction can occur. However, this threat is a problem only in the unlikely event of a unique historical event occurring coincidentally with presentation of the treatment and only for the treatment group.

When treatment effects are expected to be reversible, an **interrupted time series with removed treatment** can be used. After the basic design is completed, the treatment is removed and another series of observations is taken. This design is really an overlapping combination of two basic time-series designs—one series in which the presence of the treatment is the treatment and the other in which its absence is the treatment. Actually, you may choose to add and delete the treatment as many times as you wish so that *multiple replications*¹ are produced. Each replication increases your confidence in the causal effect of the treatment. Again, this design is similar to the baseline designs discussed later in this chapter.

Another way of building in replications is to use nonequivalent groups but to introduce the treatment at different points in the series of observations for the two groups. Such a design is called an **interrupted time series with switching replications**. This design offers a way to counter or assess most of the threats to internal validity, such as history and maturity. Also, by having a built-in replication on a sample from a different population, the design enhances the external validity of the experimental conclusion. Table 10–2 summarizes the interrupted time-series designs discussed in this section.

Statistical Analysis of Quasi-Experiments

Techniques for doing statistical analysis of quasi-experimental data have improved greatly over the past few years. Rather sophisticated statistical tests, which are well beyond the scope of this book, can be found in some of the books listed at the end of this chapter. I am sure you will notice that several of the designs presented here are similar to the baseline designs discussed next. However, an important difference between baseline and quasi-experimental designs is that whereas baseline experiments usually have so few participants that statistical analysis is impossible, quasi-experiments can typically be analyzed with the same statistical rigor as that used for fully

¹ For ethical reasons if the treatment is found to be beneficial, it may be necessary to end the series with the treatment in effect.

■ TABLE 10-2
Procedures for Conducting Various Interrupted Time-Series Designs

<i>Time 1</i>	<i>Time 2</i>	<i>Time 3</i>	<i>Time 4</i>	<i>Time 5</i>	<i>Time 6</i>	<i>Time 7</i>
Test Group 1	Test Group 1	Test Group 1	Apply treatment	Test Group 1	Test Group 1	Test Group 1
<i>Basic interrupted time-series design</i>						
Test Group 1	Test Group 1	Test Group 1	Apply treatment	Test Group 1	Test Group 1	Test Group 1
Test Group 2	Test Group 2	Test Group 2	No treatment	Test Group 2	Test Group 2	Test Group 2
<i>With addition of a nonequivalent no-treatment control group</i>						
Test Group 1	Test Group 1	Test Group 1	Apply treatment	Test Group 1	Test Group 1	Test Group 1
Test Group 2	Test Group 2	Test Group 2	No treatment	Test Group 2	Test Group 2	Test Group 2
<i>With removed treatment</i>						
Test Group 1	Test Group 1	Apply treatment	Test Group 1	Test Group 1	Remove treatment	Test Group 1
<i>With switching replications</i>						
Test Group 1	Apply treatment	Test Group 1	Test Group 1	Test Group 1	Test Group 1	Test Group 1
Test Group 2	Test Group 2	Test Group 2	Apply treatment	Test Group 2	Test Group 2	Test Group 2
Test Group 3	Test Group 3	Test Group 3	Test Group 3	Test Group 3	Apply treatment	Test Group 3

Note. Participants in Groups 1, 2, and 3 were not randomly assigned to the treatment conditions and are therefore considered nonequivalent.

randomized experimental designs. Certainly, quasi-experimentation should no longer be avoided because of difficulties with statistical analysis.

Advantages

The biggest advantage of quasi-experiments is that they allow us to do research that was formerly not even possible to do. Quasi-experimentation has provided a new bagful of tools to psychologists who are interested in social issues, clinical evaluation, and educational programs and wish to investigate these issues in the real world. And although care must be taken to determine whether threats to internal validity exist, at least we know what these threats might be, and the designs make it possible to evaluate most of them to see whether they are a problem.

Disadvantages

Before I wax too ecstatic about quasi-experimentation, let me point out that there are some disadvantages too. Even if we try our best we may find threats to internal validity. Although it is true that we can usually catch these when they occur, nevertheless finding such a threat pretty much invalidates our results. For example, if we use a basic nonequivalent control group with pretest and posttest design and find a difference in the pretest and posttest for the control group, interpreting any change in the treatment group is problematic at best. A second problem is that these designs are obviously more complex and often require more time and effort to carry out than a more traditional experiment. Measurements have to be taken a number of times rather than just once for each condition. And as I mentioned, statistical tests for quasi-experimental designs, though now possible, are more difficult to do and are not routinely taught in basic courses.

Even given these disadvantages, the behavioral sciences have often been criticized for either doing sound research on simple but unimportant problems or doing unsound research on complex and important problems. The advances in quasi-experimental design have made it possible to do research on complex and important problems. Although we must be careful to limit our interpretations of quasi-experimental research when compared with experimental research, with these designs it is at least possible to investigate a wider range of problems than was possible using only experimental designs.

■ Single-Subject and Small-*N* Baseline Designs

INDIVIDUAL VERSUS GROUPED DATA

Some investigators contend that the way most psychologists do experiments is at best misleading and at worst pointless. The loudest revolutionary in this group has been Sidman (1960), who claims that the kind of traditional experiments we have been learning about tell us little about an individual's

behavior. Sidman points out that experiments usually tell us about the behavior of some imaginary average participant who does not accurately reflect any real individual participant. He claims that most experimenters use groups and pretend that the behavior of individuals in the group resembles the average behavior of the group. He argues that there are times the behavior of an individual in the group may be nothing like the average behavior of the group.

To illustrate this point, consider an experiment designed to find out how quickly a person can learn a simple analogy by being exposed to examples. The first item might be, for example: *edit* is to *tide* as *recap* is to _____. The answer is *pacer* because *pacer* is *recap* spelled backward. The next item might be something like: *pets* is to *step* as *tool* is to _____. Again, the answer is *tool* spelled backward, or *loot*. We give each participant three seconds to solve an item before we present the next item. We might expect learning to occur in an all-or-nothing fashion. That is, we assume that at some point the participant will cry “Aha!” or “Eureka!” and from then on get every item correct.

Figure 10-1 shows fictitious individual results for 10 people; Figure 10-2 shows a group curve representing the average person. You can see that the group curve in Figure 10-2 does not represent any of the individual curves in Figure 10-1. The group curve might cause us to conclude that people learn the solution gradually; however, every individual actually appears to have gone from solving none of the items to solving all the items on a single trial.

Because of such discrepancies, Sidman believes, group performance seldom tells us much about how individuals perform. You may recall from Chapter 8 that Poulton (1973) took a very different position on this issue and went so far as to argue that all within-subject designs are basically flawed and only between-subjects manipulations, in which groups are used, can be easily interpreted. Psychologists decided to use groups in the first place because the behavior of individuals is so variable and because an individual participant’s variability is likely to be canceled out by others who happen to vary in the opposite direction. Sidman, however, says that variability is not inherent in the participant but is caused by a failure of the experimenter to control all the variables affecting that individual. Once experimenters gain adequate behavioral control, they should no longer find it necessary to use large groups. By doing a baseline experiment, experimenters can demonstrate that they have gained this control.

BASELINE PROCEDURES

To illustrate a Sidmanian **baseline experiment**, which is often referred to as *experimental analysis of behavior*, let’s consider an experiment designed to find out whether punishment can be used to change the behavior of a person with cerebral palsy. Suppose that a therapist is working with a client having cerebral palsy who wishes to improve his interview skills.² Individuals with

² I wish to thank David A. Sachs of Las Cruces, New Mexico, for this particular example. He devised the described technique, although the results I report are fictitious.

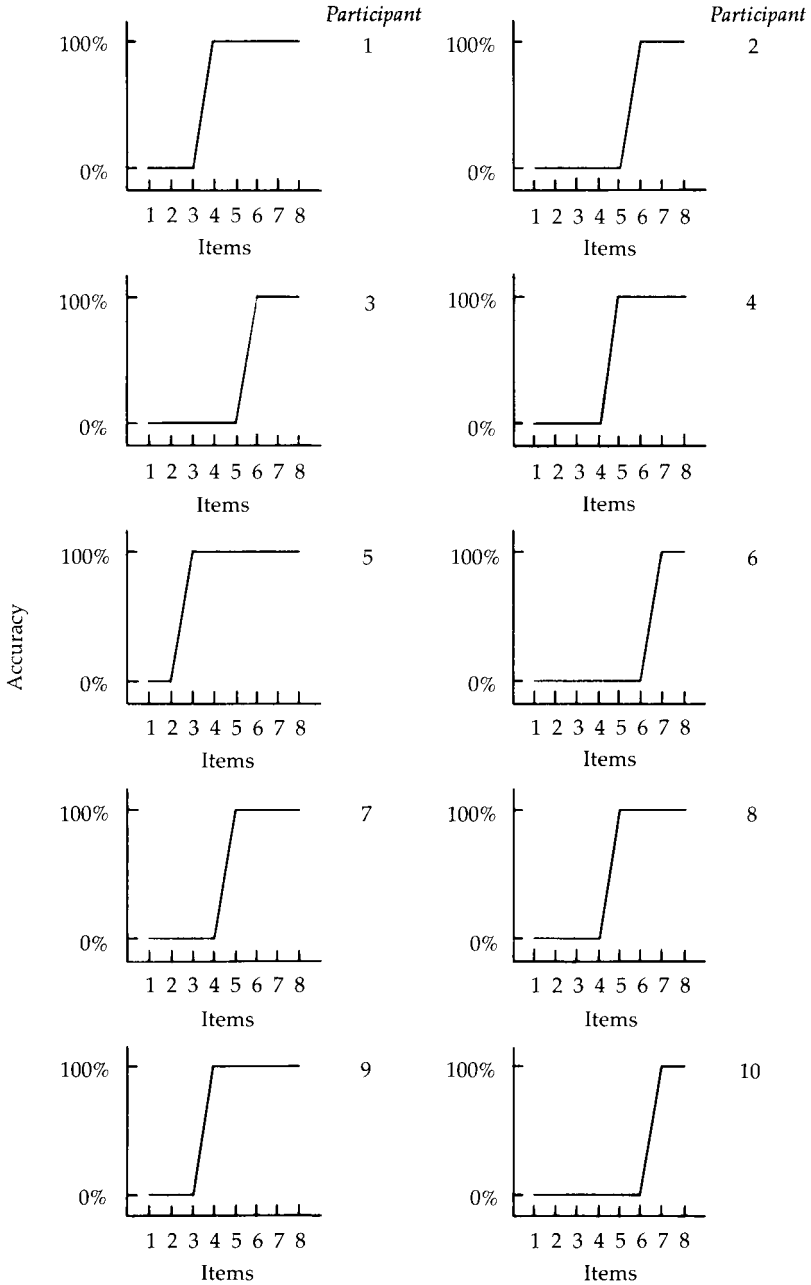


FIGURE 10-1 Possible individual results for 10 participants in an analogy experiment. Once an individual learns the rule for solving this type of problem, that person is correct on all subsequent items.

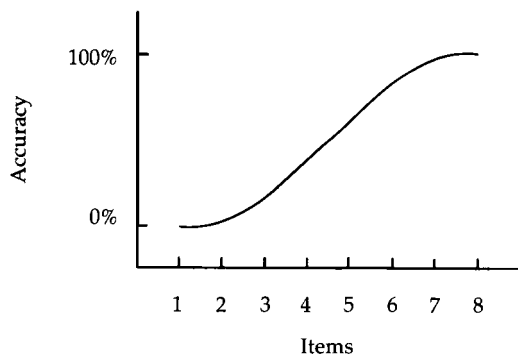


FIGURE 10-2 The group curve for the people shown in Figure 10-1. Note that the group curve is a poor representation of any individual's behavior.

cerebral palsy often have problems controlling their head movements and so tend to lose eye contact. As an attempt to increase the amount of eye contact, which is one aspect of a successful interview, the therapist decides to devise a procedure in which the client gets a mild electric shock each time his eye contact is broken. The client, wishing to improve his social skills, agrees to the shock procedure.³

The first step in this type of experiment is to establish a **baseline**—that is, a **steady state** at which the response rate changes very little. One of the nagging problems in baseline experiments is determining how much “very little” is. The methods for determining whether the baseline has reached a steady state vary from a statistical criterion such as “no more than 3% change in the response rate from one session to the next” to a simple visual inspection of the data for obvious fluctuations or trends. Once a baseline has been established, the experimenter begins the experimental manipulation.

In our example, the therapist might have the client report every day for a half-hour simulated interview. During the interview, the therapist throws a hidden switch whenever the client's eyes do not maintain contact. The switch is connected to a clock so that the total time of eye contact during each half-hour session can be determined. After a number of sessions, when the therapist is satisfied that a stable baseline performance has been reached (that is, a fairly consistent time of eye contact per session), the therapist begins the shock procedure. Whenever the client breaks eye contact and the experimenter throws the switch, the client gets a short electrical shock to the forearm. The experimenter then tries to determine whether the amount of eye contact changes from its baseline rate.

Figure 10-3 shows a possible result for this experiment: The therapist decided that a stable baseline had been achieved after Session 5 and began shocks on Session 6. Once the shocks were begun, the client's eye contact

³ The patient's agreement is a necessary although not always a sufficient ethical requirement.



THE FIRST STEP IS TO
ESTABLISH A STEADY STATE...

increased dramatically. By Session 10, eye contact had reached a stable **transition steady state**,⁴ and the experimenter discontinued the shock. By Sessions 12–14, the client had returned to the original baseline behavior.

An experimenter must carry out each of the operations described in the example to have a true baseline experiment: Establish a stable baseline, apply the experimental manipulation, and establish a stable transition steady state, and then show **reversibility** by recovering the original baseline when the experimental manipulation is removed.

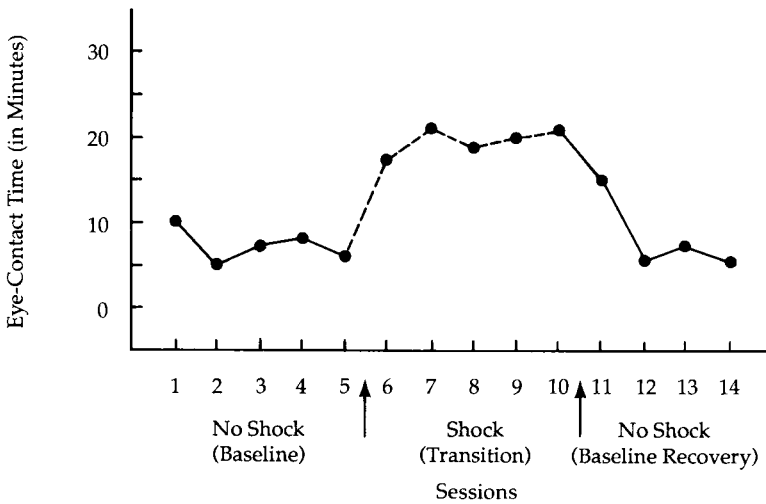


FIGURE 10-3 Possible results of an experiment in which eye-contact time for a client with cerebral palsy was measured during 30-minute simulated interviews. The first five sessions provided a baseline. Shock was administered on Sessions 6–10, and baseline recovery occurred during Sessions 11–14.

⁴ The transition steady state is sometimes called the *treatment or modification state* in clinical work.

The logic of the method is that once a baseline has been obtained, an uncontrolled confounding variable is unlikely to suddenly begin to affect behavior on the same trial in which the experimental manipulation is made. Even if this unlikely event happened, the chances that a confounding variable then ceases to have an effect on the same trial in which the experimental manipulation is discontinued would be extremely small.

To be even more convincing, an experimenter could do an *intrasubject replication*, repeating the procedure with the same individual one or more times. In the example, the experimenter might again shock the client on Session 15, continue until a stable transition steady state is achieved, discontinue the shock, and recover the original baseline. Each time the effect can be repeated, our confidence that the change in behavior was caused by the experimental manipulation rather than an uncontrolled confounding variable increases. Even though this is a single-subject design, doing an *intersubject replication*—that is, to repeat the experiment with a few additional individuals—would also increase our confidence in the result. We would still evaluate the results by looking at the data from individuals rather than at those from the group. However, being able to do such intersubject replication strengthens our conclusion.

ADVANTAGES

The major advantage of a baseline experiment is that it gives us a powerful way of looking at an individual's behavior. For instance, if the results shown in Figure 10-3 were actual data, they would go a long way toward convincing me that eye contact can be controlled by contingent shock. You would be convinced too, wouldn't you?

The results are also easy to interpret. In fact, they are so easy to interpret that baseline experimenters use no statistical tests. Researchers using baseline designs say that if you need a statistical test to convince other investigators that the effect you found is a real effect and not due to chance variation, either the effect is not strong enough to bother with or else you need to refine your techniques to get better control over behavior (that is, eliminate unwanted variability).

In a traditional group experiment, if you use a large number of participants in each group, you may find an effect that is statistically significant but of little practical importance. That is, you may have chosen an independent variable that has an effect on behavior, but the effect may be small compared with other, more important variables. However, a baseline experimental procedure is not sensitive to such unimportant effects. The variability due to the more important independent variables blankets such real but small effects. A baseline procedure thus guarantees that any effect found is large enough to be of potential importance.

Another advantage of a baseline procedure is the flexibility it allows you in deciding when to impose a level of an independent variable and which level to use. Prior to doing a standard experiment, the investigator must choose the number of trials to present and the levels of the independent variable to use.

Because most statistical tests require it, the investigator then needs to collect an equal number of data points for each level of the independent variable. However, investigators who use baseline designs can decide at any point in the experiment to collect more data at the present level or to change to a new level. For instance, in our example, if the therapist had felt the need for more data under the shock condition, the flexibility exists to continue that condition for more sessions before attempting to recover the baseline.

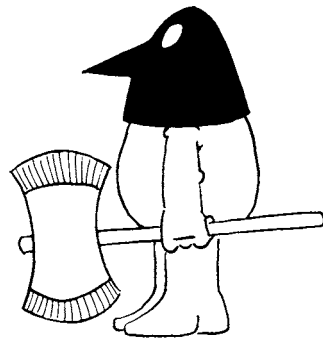
The therapist also could have decided to use an additional level of the independent variable after the experiment was under way. Suppose that the change in behavior was not particularly convincing at the chosen shock intensity. After recovering baseline and reaching stable performance, the investigator could choose to try a more intense shock on the next block of trials. Thus, the investigator is not required to use predetermined levels of the independent variable.

In addition to the advantages of easy interpretation, the elimination of statistical tests, the guarantee of finding only fairly large effects, and flexibility, baseline experiments can also be used with a single individual. Therapists with only one client with cerebral palsy or experimenters with single participants having unusual disorders, training, or talent could not use a traditional experimental design to study them. However, they could use a baseline procedure.

DISADVANTAGES

Although baseline experiments offer so many advantages, most experimenters still stick to traditional experimental group designs because they cannot meet the assumptions of baseline experiments. For example, the assumption that experimental effects can be reversed requires that the individual return to the original level of behavior at the end of the experiment. We saw in the previous chapter that many potential sequence and ordering effects require counterbalancing when a within-subject design is used. A baseline experiment is a special kind of within-subject design in which effective counterbalancing is impossible. Thus, any kind of systematically changing confounding variable prevents us from recovering the original baseline. And unless the behavior returns to its former state when the experimental manipulation is removed, we do not know whether to attribute the transition-state behavior to the manipulation or to some confounding variable.

For this reason, many traditional areas of psychology cannot be investigated using baseline procedures. Some obviously inappropriate areas are life span, memory, and some areas of learning. Most of the changes that take



**SOME PROCESSES ARE
NOT REVERSIBLE.**

place during experiments in these areas cannot be reversed. ("Now forget all the words you have learned.")

A second disadvantage is that baseline designs may not allow us to discover small but important effects. Suppose you work for a telephone company and your job is to find out whether the time it takes a directory assistance operator to find a number is improved by using a computerized search system rather than a standard telephone book. You decide to use a baseline design, and as each request comes in, you record the length of the call. You have the operator first use the standard telephone book until you achieve a baseline. Then you have the operator switch to a system in which the information is keyed into a computer and the computer provides the numbers. Finally, you have the operator return to the book.

Figure 10-4 shows some possible results. A visual inspection of the figure would probably not convince you or me that there is any difference between using the computerized system and using the standard telephone book. In other words, the transition state does not look any different from the baseline. However, the average call under the computerized system is three seconds shorter than the average call under the book system. If we had done a standard experiment, a statistical test might show such a difference to be significant. But would this be an important effect? Yes, it would be, because each second saved on an average directory-assistance call cumulatively saves telephone companies millions of dollars. That's certainly important to them!

Baseline design proponents may argue that variability is the experimenter's fault, and they may have a point with respect to rats in a sterile laboratory environment. However, I have a difficult time conceiving how the telephone company scientist could have gained better control of the behavior being measured. In this case the behavior seems to be driven largely by

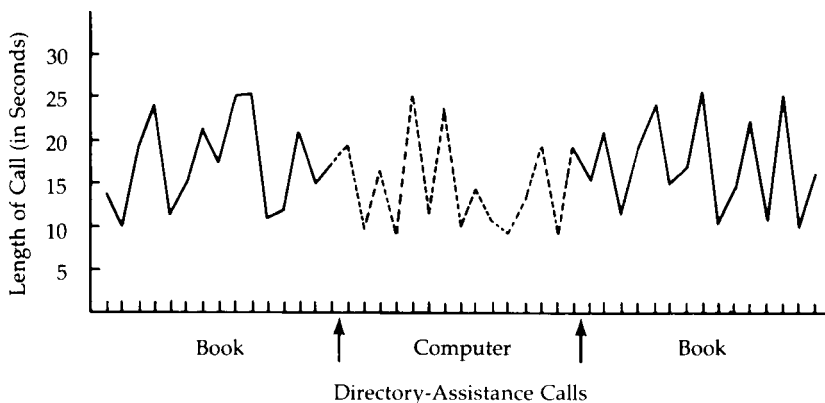


FIGURE 10-4 A fictitious baseline experiment measuring the length of each directory-assistance call when the operator was alternately using a standard telephone book and a computerized system

the customer rather than by the operator. In some situations, variability is simply intrinsic to the setting. In this case, small but important effects can be blanketed by this variability, and baseline designs may not be appropriate.

A final disadvantage of baseline experiments is that it is difficult to determine how general any effect we find may be. Because individuals may respond differently to experimental manipulations, our participant may be an oddball. This criticism could be overcome by replicating the results using additional participants or with the same or different participants under different experimental conditions. However, the tradition in baseline experiments is to use only a few individuals.

Baseline experimental designs can be a valuable tool for some areas of experimental psychology. While historically these designs were used in the laboratory for investigating issues such as simple learning, some psychologists believe that these designs can be applied to many other important problems such as managed health care (Blampied, 2000; Morgan & Morgan, 2001). When the assumptions of the design can be met, a baseline experiment offers a way to convincingly show the effects of important experimental manipulations. Unfortunately, the assumptions are usually so rigorous that baseline designs must be restricted to only a few areas of experimental psychology.

■ Survey Research

WAYS OF DOING SURVEY RESEARCH

Surveys are typically taken to gather information from a sample of people and to generalize this information to a larger population. Information about behaviors that might otherwise be directly measured could be included in a survey. But information that could not be directly measured, such as opinions, motivations, and even expected future behaviors, could also be included. In these cases there would seem to be no alternative way of collecting this type of information other than a survey. That is, surveys allow you to ask not only what people do but also why they do it. For this reason surveys are widely used in the social sciences, and when students think of doing a research project, a survey is often one of the first types of research that come to mind.

There are several ways to collect survey information. Perhaps the most widely used method of administration is a **mail survey**, which is mailed directly to the participant. (Survey researchers call the participants who respond to a survey *respondents*, for obvious reasons.) Mail surveys offer several advantages. It is possible to sample people at distant locations at relatively small cost—a task that would be far more difficult and expensive through face-to-face contact. Because anonymity and privacy are easy to maintain using this method, respondents may be more likely to give honest responses. It is also possible to send a mail survey to a representative sample of the population of interest once you have the names and addresses of that population.

However, the big problem with a mail survey is that people are free to toss it in the trash along with their other junk mail. So the response rate may be low, sometimes as low as 20% to 30%. Well, why not just send out four times as many surveys as you need and ignore the nonrespondents? The problem with this solution is that it may produce **nonresponse bias**. We have already discussed nonresponse bias in Chapter 2, but there we called it *selection* as a threat to internal validity. In the case of a survey, you may have carefully chosen a sample that is representative of a larger population and to whom you expect to generalize your findings. But then the composition of this sample changes as participants fail to become respondents. There would be no problem if they became nonrespondents in a random fashion; the sample would still be representative. However, it is difficult to determine why participants fail to respond, and the reasons might systematically bias the sample. Maybe those who fail to respond are busier and busy people happen to be richer or more educated. Or maybe some do not respond because they are uneducated and have difficulty reading surveys. Or perhaps some do not respond because they are politically conservative and believe you are invading their privacy. The problem is that you really do not know how your nonrespondents differ from your respondents and so you do not know how biased your sample has become. Thus, your ability to generalize your findings to the population has become compromised.

The way to minimize nonresponse bias, of course, is to obtain a high response rate. Dillman (1978) suggests a number of ways to improve mail survey response rates. The content of the cover letter included with the survey can make a difference. You should avoid announcing that this is a survey or questionnaire, or pleading for help. It is best to list your institutional affiliation, the date, name and address of the respondent, a statement about why participation is important, a promise of confidentiality, the usefulness of the study, a token reward for participation, where to address questions or comments, a statement of appreciation, your signature in ink, and your title. The letter should give the appearance of being personal rather than a form letter. The token reward might be as small as a quarter or perhaps a pen the respondent can keep after filling out the survey. Research has shown that rewards of this size will increase return rates (Pressley & Tullar, 1977). Another effective strategy is to precontact participants by telephone before the survey is mailed, politely asking them to fill out the survey when it arrives. Finally, follow-up letters also are effective at increasing response rates. Some investigators send out a postcard a week after the original mailing and then a follow-up letter and another copy of the survey several weeks later.

Even with all the efforts mentioned, you should not expect a 100% response rate. The very best mail surveys have response rates on the order of 80%, and a more realistic figure is probably 60%. With these levels of response it is important to assess the representativeness of the obtained sample by comparing it with the population. For instance, you probably know something about the distribution of certain demographic variables across the population such as sex, income level, and education. One reason for asking respondents

to provide such information on the survey form is to make comparisons with the population. Large deviations of the sample from the population on these demographic variables would be a tip-off that the sample obtained is not representative of the population and so generalization is dangerous.

Another way to collect survey data is by means of a **telephone survey**, in which participants are called on the telephone and asked a standard set of questions. At first this option might strike you as both cheaper and easier than a mail survey. It does have the advantage that it is more personal than a letter and for this reason might elicit more honest and complete responses. However, this method also has problems. Getting someone to respond over the phone can be difficult. During the day many families are not home, and in the evenings many homes are deluged with telemarketers trying to sell products and services. Some of these telemarketers now begin their sales pitches by claiming to be conducting a survey. Lots of folks, understandably, hang up or politely refuse to take any but personal calls, and this reaction is even more likely now that many states allow those with phones to put their names on lists that prevent telemarketers from calling. On top of this problem, not everyone has a phone, some have two or more (perhaps hooked up only to a computer or fax), and many people have unlisted numbers. Even if you get a participant to respond, some questions are more difficult for the respondent to understand over the phone, particularly with the TV set on and the baby crying in the background. Generally, questions have to be shorter and the number of response alternatives limited to avoid exceeding the respondent's attention span. Finally, particularly for some sensitive areas, respondents may not be sure that confidentiality will be maintained; they are not really sure you are who you say you are, and there may be other people near the phone who might overhear their responses.

Sometimes it is possible to save time and effort using **group administration** of a survey. In this case the investigator has access to a group of participants and can distribute and collect a written survey in a short time frame. For example, last semester I asked the students in my introductory psychology class to answer a one-page survey on attitudes toward nuclear power generation. Total time to distribute, complete, and collect the survey was about 10 minutes. My university requires that class time be used exclusively for educational purposes, so after analyzing the results, I spent part of the next class showing the students the results and using the study to illustrate psychological research methods. Many students at my university also use the student research pool from introductory psychology classes to collect survey information, in this case asking 40 or so students to come to a classroom and fill out a questionnaire. In each of these cases, of course, students can refuse to participate and can fulfill class requirements in alternative ways. Group administration has the advantage of providing large amounts of data rapidly. A disadvantage is that it is hard to ensure complete confidentiality, with other respondents sitting close by. It is also often difficult to get a representative sample using such preestablished groups. Do you think students in introductory psychology courses are representative of the general population?

Most such groups are selected or self-selected for some purpose other than the research being conducted and are seldom representative samples of populations of interest.

A time-consuming but effective survey technique is the face-to-face **interview**. The respondent meets individually with an interviewer at a location such as a research lab or at the respondent's home or workplace. The interview can be structured, with the interviewer essentially reading questions from a script, or unstructured, in which case the interviewer has the freedom to explore topics as they come up. The structured interview certainly provides more control and makes data analysis easier. On the other hand, the unstructured interview may seem more natural to the participant and may be more likely to elicit deeper and more detailed responses. A strategy used by some investigators is to conduct the first part of the survey as structured and then allow a more unstructured approach toward the end of the session.

We should not overlook the Internet when thinking about survey techniques. An **Internet survey** can be conducted entirely in the electronic format, with respondents providing responses over the net. Or the Internet can be used to contact participants or advertise the availability of a survey that would then be mailed to the respondent. For example, a colleague and I just conducted an Internet survey. We belong to a particular professional society and wanted to collect some survey information from a representative sample of members. We took a random sample from the organization's membership directory and, where we could, we used e-mail addresses to send a one-page survey to be filled out electronically and sent back to us. For a few members we had no e-mail addresses or ones that did not work, and for these we used a mail survey. I do not know of any research yet that compares response rates for Internet surveys with those for mail surveys, but I suspect that for short surveys that can be answered electronically, response rates are higher for the Internet. E-mail follow-up reminders are also easy to send. In the future such surveys may be considered a violation of the general rule against unsolicited e-mail, but I believe that is not yet the case.

I also have a colleague who maintains a Web page that he uses to collect survey data. On this page he has asked people to do such things as rate the beauty of computer-generated pictures of faces. He then uses these ratings to determine which facial characteristics are related to beauty. He updates his Web site regularly so that after respondents have made their responses they can find out how their ratings compare with ratings of others. This feedback apparently provides considerable motivation to do the ratings; he has collected thousands of responses in this way. When respondents are self-selected in this way, there are obvious problems with the representativeness of the sample, but for some kinds of research this issue is not a great problem. Do computer geeks surfing the Web have different standards of facial beauty than the rest of the population? Perhaps, but probably not. However, when doing an Internet survey, we should remember that we will always have a biased sample. Not everyone has access to the Internet, and the proportions of Internet users from different demographic groups vary markedly. It is also

true that you have to know a lot about setting up a Web site or know someone who does to do this kind of research. However, tutorials are now available on the Web to help you create surveys. If you think your survey research could be conducted this way, you could use a browser or ask your professor for help in finding such a site.

SELECTING A SAMPLE

As I have emphasized, in selecting your survey sample you want a group that is representative of the population to whom you want to generalize your conclusions. How do you pick a representative sample? One possibility is to take a **random sample**, a task more difficult than you might imagine. If you wanted to generalize to the entire population of the United States, you would first need a list of all U.S. citizens and then you would randomly pick your sample from this list. Putting all these names into a hat and drawing a sample would require an enormous hat! In most cases you would have to be content to choose from a smaller population, such as the population of a city, a university, or an introductory psychology class, and hope that the chosen population was not too different from the one you were really interested in. Even then, random selection is often not possible. Most departments of psychology get their participants from students taking introductory psychology classes who volunteer to fulfill a course requirement or for extra credit. Some departments pay participants for participation. Either way these people have not been selected at random. I am sure that you can think of many ways in which such a sample might differ from a truly random sample. As an example of the impact of nonrandom sampling, in 1993 Ross Perot asked television viewers to send responses to questions printed on a postcard in *TV Guide* and found that 97% favored bigger cuts in government spending. However, the same question put to a random sample showed that only 67% favored such cuts (Tanur, 1994).

When random sampling is not possible, some investigators use a technique called **stratified sampling**. In this case, subpopulations called *strata*⁵ are identified, and participants are randomly chosen from within these strata. For example, if the population to be sampled were all U.S. citizens, even though a truly random sample might be impossible to identify, the investigator might want to ensure that economic classes were represented in the proper proportion. In this case, the strata might be incomes up to \$20,000, from \$20,001 to \$40,000, from \$40,001 to \$60,000, and from \$60,001 up. Even if the population were a university's student body, an investigator might identify strata to include the subpopulations of gender, ethnic group, and class rank to ensure that each stratum was proportionally represented in the sample.

⁵ The everyday meaning of the word *strata* is not too different from this one: layers, such as the layers of rock that you would see where the side of a hill has been cut out for construction. It is easy to picture people of various incomes stacked into such layers. The singular of strata is stratum.



CONSTRUCTING A SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Now that you have chosen a sample, how do you go about making up a survey questionnaire? First of all, you should find out whether you need to make one up at all. If the purpose of your questionnaire is to determine where people fall on a particular personality dimension such as being authoritarian, anxious, internally directed, creative, or some other personal characteristic, someone has probably already designed a questionnaire to do this. It is also likely that if this questionnaire has been published, it has already been tested for reliability and validity (see Chapter 7), so you will know whether it is any good. You may find the existence of such a questionnaire when you do your literature search (see Chapter 6), or one of your professors may be able to help you find one. If the questionnaire has been published as part of a journal article, you probably will have little difficulty with copyright restrictions. However, if it is available from a commercial publisher, you will likely have to buy copies of it, and these can be quite expensive. Resist the temptation to plagiarize questions from such a questionnaire. This practice is not only unethical but also, in the case of copyrighted material, illegal.

If your topic of interest is more specific or if you cannot find an existing questionnaire that suits your purpose, you will have to construct one yourself. This seems easy enough. All you have to do is ask questions, right? For example, if you are interested in what people think about the issue of abortion, why not just ask, "What is your opinion about abortion?" This is an example of an **open-ended question** because you have left it open for the respondents to answer any way they wish. Imagine the sentence, paragraph, or book that you will get back as a response to this one open-ended question. Even if you could convince your respondents to take the time to answer this question thoroughly, how could you possibly analyze the reams of data produced?

As a first step in constructing your questionnaire, you might wish to ask some people your potential questions in an interview setting. The types of responses people give to such open-ended questions might give you an idea for constructing more restricted **closed-ended questions** for your survey. Throughout this process, you should remember that at some point you will have to analyze the data you collect. Ideally, you should be able to convert most of the data into numbers, to make them quantitative. Statisticians tell horror stories about investigators, sometimes students, who walk into their office, plop down a stack of questionnaires, and say: “Here they are. How do I analyze them?”

I do not mean to imply that it is impossible to numerically analyze answers to all open-ended questions. Although it requires extra effort, you can convert answers to well-constructed questions into quantitative data. For example, some survey researchers train independent judges to read answers to open-ended questions and code the answers into predetermined response categories. The responses of individual judges can then be compared to determine how reliable the coding scheme was. The point is that whatever means you use, by the time you finish constructing your questionnaire, you should know exactly what types of data you will end up with and how you will analyze these data.

One way to turn the respondents’ answers into numbers is to use closed-ended, **multiple-alternative questions** that restrict the possible responses. Here is an example:

- When should a woman be allowed to have an abortion?
- Never
 - Only in the case of rape or incest
 - Only in the case of rape or incest and with parents’ permission for minors
 - Whenever she decides to do so

The instructions would indicate that the respondent place a check mark next to only one alternative. With a question item such as this one, we could count up the number of respondents who put check marks next to each alternative. That would give us numbers as data.

Note that although this question will provide quantitative data, even this simple question could be criticized. Some respondents might wonder what the word *allowed* means: Who is doing the allowing? The state? God? Some respondents might not find an alternative that perfectly describes their feelings. For example, some might believe that the fetus’s father has some rights or that the age of the fetus is of critical importance. Even the way the question is framed might make a difference. Do you think that the following questions frame the issue in such a way that respondents would be biased to answer in a particular way?

- “Should the right of a woman to terminate her pregnancy be treated like any other health issue?”

“When should the government limit a woman’s right to have an abortion?”

“When should a mother be allowed to take the life of her unborn baby?”

Certain words tend to have particular beliefs and emotions associated with them. In general, people believe that people’s *rights* should be protected, that *government limitations* should be minimized, that *women* are independent but that *mothers* have responsibilities, that *fetuses* are not human but *unborn babies* are, and that to *terminate* is not to kill but to *take the life of* is. Most questions would probably not be so blatantly biased as these examples, but smaller forms of bias can creep in even when we try to avoid it. Recently I was writing a questionnaire to find out whether a certain statistics class in my university was adequately preparing our psychology students. I must admit that I did not think that the class was being well taught. Before I caught myself and changed it, the questionnaire I was going to give graduating students contained an item that said, “If you think that this class was taught poorly, which of the following reasons would you give?” I then listed a number of possible problems with the class without listing any possible positive aspects. I was embarrassed when one of my colleagues pointed out the obvious negative bias I had built into the question.

Even small changes in language can result in large apparent changes in opinion. For example, a telephone poll found that whereas 53% of people said that the government was spending too much money “on welfare,” only 23% said the government was spending too much money “on assistance to the poor.”⁶ In a similar survey that I mentioned earlier, Ross Perot asked, “Do you believe that for every dollar of tax increase, there should be two dollars in spending cuts with the savings earmarked for deficit and debt reduction?” Sixty-seven percent of a random sample responded positively. However, when the question was rewritten to “Would you favor or oppose a proposal to cut spending by two dollars for every dollar in new taxes, with the savings earmarked for deficit reduction, even if it means cuts in domestic programs like Medicare and education?” only 33% of respondents favored it (Tanur, 1994). You can see that subtle wording changes can make large differences in respondents’ opinions.

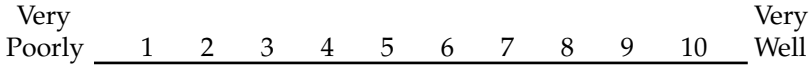
You should also examine your questions to make sure that all the language is understandable to the respondents in your sample. Because most college students and instructors typically interact with people having some college education, it is easy to forget that the general population has less well-developed reading skills and vocabulary comprehension. So keep your vocabulary appropriate for your sample. You should also make sure that the questions are not so awkwardly stated that they are confusing. For example, questions stated in the negative should typically be avoided: “Does a woman not have the right to an abortion?” The best way to find out whether your

⁶ From a telephone poll of 600 adult Americans taken for *Time* and *CNN* on May 18–19, 1994, by Yankelovich Partners, Inc. Reported in *Time*, June 27, 1994, p. 26.

questions are understandable is to give a draft of your questionnaire to a small sample of people similar to the larger sample you will use in your study and ask for comments.

Another way to force respondents to give responses that can be converted to numbers is to use a **rating scale**. Several types of rating scales provide a graded response. For example, you might ask:

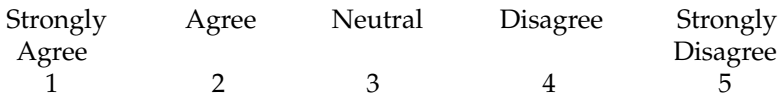
How well do you think Senator Jones has expressed her opinion on the abortion issue?



Respondents might be asked to circle a number or place a check mark or an X on the line. Alternatively, the line could be subdivided by putting hash marks on it. In this example verbal labels have been provided only at the ends of the scale: these are called *anchors* because they tie down the meaning of the ends of the continuum. Alternatively, the numbers or hash marks could be given labels as well, such as “poorly,” “fairly poorly,” “neutral,” “fairly well,” “well.” The number of gradations could also be varied, typically from five to 10. Five gradations is usually considered the minimum because some people avoid the extremes. A five-point scale then becomes a three-point scale, with little room remaining to express differences in opinion.

If you are interested in your respondents’ attitude about a number of topics, a **Likert scale** might be a good one to choose. In using a Likert scale, you give your participants a series of statements and ask them to indicate whether they agree or disagree with each statement. The following is an example of one such item:

1. It should be legal for a woman to seek an abortion if her pregnancy results from rape.



The respondents are instructed to circle the number of the alternative that best indicates their opinion. Instead of using numbers, a horizontal line can be provided, either subdivided or not, and respondents can put an X or other mark to indicate their attitude. In this case the distance from the end of the line to the mark has to be measured so that the response can be converted into a number. An advantage of a Likert scale is that respondents use the same scale to respond to a variety of items. This internal consistency in formatting minimizes confusion and makes it likely that respondents will use the scale in a consistent manner across items. From a practical point of view, an additional advantage is that the statements can usually be put into a list on the left side of the sheet, with the scale numbers on the right side. The anchors, or descriptors, then need to be printed only once at the top of the page. This formatting

Opinions on Abortion Issues

Please circle the number on the right that most closely approximates your agreement with each statement.

	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>
1. Having an abortion is a sin.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The government should subsidize abortions for poor women.	1	2	3	4	5
3. It should be illegal for a woman under 18 years of age to have an abortion without her parents' permission.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Doctors performing abortions should be required to counsel their patients about alternatives such as adoption.	1	2	3	4	5
5. The choice to have an abortion should be left entirely up to the pregnant woman.	1	2	3	4	5
6. "Day-after" abortion pills should be legal.	1	2	3	4	5
7. People picketing abortion clinics should be arrested.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Abortion should be available only in cases of pregnancy due to rape or incest.	1	2	3	4	5

FIGURE 10-5 An example of an opinion survey using a Likert scale for responses

saves space and is easy for the respondent to understand. An example is shown in Figure 10-5.

Most researchers also collect demographic information in their surveys—information about the respondent's gender, age, ethnicity, education, income, class rank, religion, grade point average, and so forth. Exactly which information you wish to ask for will depend on the purpose of the survey. For example, if you wanted to determine whether people's attitudes toward abortion were influenced by their religion, you would obviously need to include a question that would allow you to sort the questionnaires according to this factor. As you can see, here again it is important for you to determine, when designing the questionnaire, how you will analyze your data. Not all researchers agree about where in the questionnaire to include demographic items. The most obvious place would be at the beginning, but some researchers have argued that putting demographic items there might lead participants to think the questionnaire is boring, in which case they may be less likely to complete it (Dillman, 1978).

ADVANTAGES

We have already discussed many of the advantages of surveys and questionnaires. They offer a way of assessing people's opinions, attitudes, motivations, and future behaviors that would not be available to us through standard experimental techniques. In addition, they provide a way of collecting large amounts of data relatively inexpensively and quickly.

DISADVANTAGES

We have also discussed several of the disadvantages of survey research. The large data sets collected can be difficult to analyze, particularly when data analysis has not been planned during the design of the survey. Even when the data analysis has been planned, fairly sophisticated statistical techniques may be required to analyze large data sets. In addition, when low response rates are a problem, it becomes difficult to generalize to larger populations because of nonresponse bias.

A third disadvantage is that surveys are really correlational observations rather than experiments. In a survey no independent variable has been manipulated to cause a change in behavior. The data from a survey are essentially multiple dependent measures. For that reason we have to avoid making causal statements from the results. For example, we might want to relate attitudes toward abortion to religious affiliation. Perhaps we discover in a survey that respondents who indicate more fundamental religious beliefs are also more strongly opposed to abortion. We might be tempted to say that the religious beliefs cause negative attitudes toward abortion, but all we can really say is that they are related. I hope you remember the discussions in Chapters 1 and 2 in which I pointed out why we have to be careful interpreting correlational data.

A final inherent weakness of surveys and questionnaires, even good ones: They do not measure behavior directly but are self-reports. So respondents can tell us anything they want, and we have no way of independently verifying the information. Why would they lie to us? Actually, there are several reasons why their responses might not be truthful. One reason is that they want to protect themselves. Even though the researcher has told them that their responses are anonymous and they do not have to put their names on the form, they may believe that the researcher has somehow coded the forms so that they can be identified. Or if they are filling out the form in a room with other respondents, they may think that somebody else will see their answers. Even if they are convinced that their information will remain confidential, the respondents may have some specific ideas about how the researcher will use the information and may have some reason for distorting their responses. For example, an individual who smokes marijuana and thinks it ought to be legalized might state falsely that she has never had a bad experience when under the influence of drugs. She probably realizes that if a large number of users report bad experiences, this information could help prevent legalization. Individuals might even lie because they want to bring attention to their group or their cause. For example, if a student thinks that something ought to be

done about guns in his high school, he might claim that he has seen more guns in his school than he actually has.

In some cases respondents may not be purposely untruthful but may lie to themselves as well as the researcher. In the case of emotion-laden issues, individuals might not wish to admit their own feelings and attitudes, particularly when these differ from what are considered socially acceptable. For example, a respondent might strongly deny being a racist while engaging in behaviors that clearly indicate that he or she is a racist. Because being a racist is not socially acceptable to most members of our society, people have a difficult time admitting to being one even when they are.

Thus, in analyzing survey data, we should always keep in mind that in the end the data are self-reports. When we discuss the results of surveys, we should remember to qualify our statements in recognition of this fact. We should not say that 27% of high school students have used marijuana if all we know is that 27% have reported using marijuana. As my grandmother used to tell me, "Saying and doing are two different things."

Table 10-3 provides a handy reference summarizing the advantages and disadvantages of the various research techniques we have examined in this chapter.

■ **TABLE 10-3**

A Summary of the Advantages and Disadvantages of Doing Quasi-Experiments, Baseline Experiments, and Surveys

<i>Design</i>	<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Disadvantages</i>
Quasi-experiments	Allows applied research when experiments are not possible. Threats to internal validity can be assessed.	Threats to internal validity may exist. Designs are more complex than traditional experiments. Statistical analysis can be difficult.
Baseline experiments	One individual can provide results that are easy to interpret without statistics. Size and timing of independent-variable manipulation are flexible. Infrequently occurring conditions can be studied.	Assumptions are difficult to meet (for example, reversibility). Small but important effects cannot be investigated. Generalizability is limited.
Surveys	Internal events (for example, attitudes) can be investigated. Large amounts of data can be collected quickly.	Large data sets are sometimes difficult to analyze. Low response rates can cause nonresponse bias. Results are correlational, so causality cannot be inferred. Self-reports may not be truthful.

■ Summary

In applied field settings where random assignment of participants to groups is often not possible, nontraditional designs called **quasi-experimental designs** can sometimes be used. **Nonexperimental designs** are difficult to interpret because of multiple threats to internal validity. These designs include a **one-group posttest-only design**, in which the behavior of only one group is tested after exposure to a treatment; a **posttest-only design with nonequivalent groups**, in which a second group, selected in a different manner, is also tested but not exposed to the treatment; and a **one-group pretest–posttest design**, in which one group is tested before and after exposure to the treatment.

Quasi-experimental designs permit you to eliminate or assess many threats to internal validity. In a **nonequivalent control group design with pretest and posttest**, one group is tested before and after the treatment, and a second group, selected in a different manner, is tested at equivalent times but without being exposed to the treatment. Variations of this basic design include using a **proxy pretest** to measure a variable correlated with the posttest when the use of a pretest is not possible; using **separate pretest and posttest samples** by subdividing the nonequivalent groups and testing half of each group before and half after exposure to the treatment; and making **pretest observations at more than one time interval**, so that each group is tested several times before exposure to the treatment.

The second class of quasi-experimental designs is **interrupted time-series designs**, in which one group is tested multiple times before and after exposure to the treatment. Variations of this design include the **addition of a nonequivalent no-treatment control group time series**, in which a second group, selected in a different manner, is tested at equivalent times but not exposed to the treatment; using an **interrupted time series with removed treatment**, in which a third series of tests is given after the treatment is removed; and using an **interrupted time-series with switching replications**, in which several groups selected in different ways are tested at many points in time but are exposed to the treatment at different points in the series.

A second type of nontraditional design is a **baseline experiment** that can show experimental effects using data from only one individual. Baseline experiments are often used to evaluate the effects of treatments or therapeutic interventions. After establishing a **steady-state** rate of responding called a **baseline**, the investigator initiates the experimental manipulation until the rate of responding changes to a new **transition steady state**. The investigator then demonstrates **reversibility** by recovering the original baseline. An advantage of baseline designs is that they offer a convincing way to show important changes in a single individual's behavior. The experimenter can also be flexible in choosing when to manipulate the independent variable and which level to change it to. These results are also easy to interpret. However, some assumptions of baseline experiments, such as reversibility, cannot be

met in many areas of psychology. It is also sometimes difficult to show small but important effects and risky to generalize the findings to a larger population.

A third type of nontraditional design is the **survey**, or questionnaire, which can be used to assess the opinions, attitudes, motivations, or future behaviors of a sample of respondents. **Mail surveys** are relatively inexpensive and allow sampling of large geographic areas. However, low response rates can cause problems with **nonresponse bias**, the disproportionate loss of certain segments of the sample, and affect the generalizability of findings from the sample to the larger population. Response rates can be improved with appropriate cover letters, small rewards, precontacts, and follow-up letters. **Telephone surveys** can be done even more quickly and more personally. However, nonresponding is still a problem, as well as is the difficulty in getting a representative sample from those with telephones. **Group administration** of surveys can be quite efficient, but the composition of the group is often not representative of the population of interest. Face-to-face **interviews**, while less efficient than some of the other procedures, allow a more personal interaction with the respondent and the possibility of both structured and unstructured interviewing. A developing survey procedure is the **Internet survey**, in which participation can be solicited on the Internet and responding can be done either electronically or through the mail.

The sample for a survey can be a **random sample**, in which case all members of the population have an equal chance of being selected, or a **stratified sample**, in which case various categories or strata are identified and random sampling occurs within the strata. Survey questionnaires can include **open-ended questions**, which can be difficult to quantify, or **closed-ended questions**, with more restricted response options such as **multiple-alternative questions** or questions using a **rating scale** such as a **Likert scale**. Though surveys offer the opportunity to collect large amounts of data quickly about opinions, attitudes, and future behaviors, the large data sets can be difficult to analyze, low responding can cause nonresponse bias, causality cannot be inferred from correlational data, and self-reports may not be truthful.

SUGGESTED BOOKS ON QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL STATISTICS

For the Beginning Student

Cook, T. D., & Campbell, D. T. (1979). *Quasi-experimentation: Design & analysis issues for field settings*. Chicago: Rand McNally.

For the Advanced Student

Box, G. E. P., & Jenkins, G. M. (1976). *Time-series analysis: Forecasting and control*. San Francisco: Holden-Day.

Campbell, D. T., & Stanley, J. C. (1966). *Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for research*. Chicago: Rand McNally.

- Kidder, L. H., & Judd, C. M. (1986). *Research methods in social relations* (5th ed). New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Shadish, W. R., Cook, T. D., & Campbell, D. T. (2002). *Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for generalized causal inference*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

SUGGESTED BOOKS ON BASELINE DESIGNS

- Hersen, M., & Barlow, D. H. (1984). *Single-case experimental designs: strategies for studying behavior change*. New York: Pergamon Press.
- Robinson, P. W., & Foster, D. F. (1979). *Experimental psychology: A small-N approach*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Todman, J. B., & Dugard, P. (2001). *Single-case and small-N experimental designs: A practical guide to randomization tests*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

SUGGESTED BOOK ON SURVEY DESIGNS

- Dillman, D. A. (1978). *Mail and telephone surveys: The total design method*. New York: Wiley.

11

How to Tell When You Are Ready to Begin

An error is a mistake only if repeated.

ANONYMOUS

The greatest of faults, I should say, is to be conscious of none.

T. CARLYLE (1888)

The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to advice.

PROVERBS 12:15

You should now have all the tools needed for beginning your experiment. However, you may have to ask yourself some questions to determine whether you have considered all the important issues before you can begin collecting data.

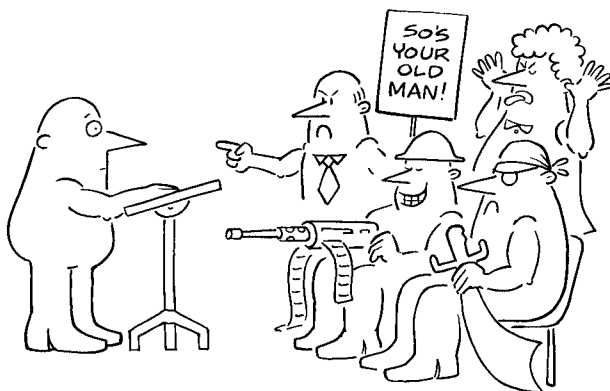


HOW TO KNOW WHEN YOU
ARE READY TO BEGIN YOUR
EXPERIMENT

When I teach experimental methods, my students have to think up, design, and do an original experiment. Before they are allowed to start collecting data, they are required to present the proposed experiment to the class. It is the job of the class, and my job, to critique the experiment, trying to find flaws and determining whether the student experimenter has considered all necessary details before doing the research. This exercise serves several purposes. It helps develop a critical sense in the students listening to the presentation—an ability that all scientists must have. Preparing for the presentation also motivates the student experimenters to try to think about the many assumptions they have made and the small decisions they may have avoided up to this point. Finally, this exercise allows all of us to help the experimenters by suggesting ways of improving the experiment.

■ The Have-a-Nice-Day Society

Before discussing some of the commonly unanswered questions that need to be considered before beginning an experiment, I would like to comment on the emotional response many of my students have toward presenting their proposed experiments. Those making the presentations often consider this the most aversive and distressing part of the course. Part of the distress is just the act of making a presentation, any presentation—a skill that is seldom tapped in other college courses. But I suspect that most of the distress is due to having to defend their experiment before a potentially critical group of peers.



A POTENTIALLY CRITICAL GROUP OF PEERS

The first reaction of the student audience is to keep quiet: “I won’t rock your boat if you don’t rock mine.” Even with my prodding, some students are reluctant to criticize their fellow students’ ideas. We live in a have-a-nice-day society where the rules include extreme tolerance of the behaviors and opinions of others. Some people seem to believe that because we all have the right to express our views, the value of one opinion is equal to the value of another. And criticizing other people’s opinions is seen as a personal attack on them or on their right of free speech.

Judging from their comments on the student evaluations filled out at the end of the class, some students certainly do perceive my comments at the student presentations as personal and uncalled for. As much as I try to smile, keep my voice down, and project a helpful attitude, these students cannot seem to understand why their nice, friendly teacher has suddenly turned on them.

I hope that the preceding chapters in this book have, at least on an intellectual level, convinced you that within science one opinion is not as good as another. Opinions must be defensible. If the rules of science are violated, the results become suspect or useless. The rules of deductive and inductive logic, discussed in Chapter 3, *are* the basis for arguing that certain results support or refute a theory. The elimination of potential confounding variables, discussed in Chapter 2, *is* required to be able to build a case for causality—that is, to claim that the independent variable caused the change in the dependent variable. The random selection of an experimental sample of participants, discussed in Chapter 2, *is* the basis on which results can be generalized to a larger population.

When the class, the instructor, or colleagues criticize a research proposal, they are attempting to help the proposer follow the rules of science so that after the research is completed, the results can be defended and added to the scientific body of knowledge. Although criticism at the proposal stage can be irritating, after the research is completed it is devastating. After-the-fact criticism indicates not only that you made a mistake because you were not thoughtful enough but also that you wasted both your time and the participants' time, as well as other resources that could have been used to advance the body of knowledge. The message here is not that science is a deadly serious enterprise in which mistakes bring great guilt but that science has certain rules to which you must adhere as a scientist. And you should use whatever resources are available, including the advice of others, to help you follow the rules and do good research.

■ Questions before You Begin

The following questions are the ones I most frequently ask my students when they make their research proposals. You may already have answered them. Good for you! If not, be sure that you can before you begin collecting data.

DOES MY EXPERIMENT SATISFY ETHICAL CONCERNS?

As we saw in Chapter 4, the need to treat research participants ethically raises a number of concerns. Have you considered all these concerns? Will your participants be subjected to any psychological or physical stress? If so, how can it be minimized? Will your participants give informed consent? If you use sign-up sheets, do these sheets give an adequate description of the experiment so that participants can give informed consent? Can you document this consent? Are you using deception in your experiment? If so, are you adequately debriefing the participants when the experiment is over? Have you

prepared a debriefing statement? Have you prepared a schedule so that you will be able to meet all your participants in a timely way? Have you considered what you will do if your equipment breaks down or if you get sick? Do you know how you are going to ensure that the data you collect remain confidential? Does your experiment have demand characteristics? Are these likely to affect the results? You should ask yourself all these questions before you begin your experiment.

In addition, you should do all the paperwork necessary to get permission from your institutional review board to conduct the study. In some cases, these review boards take several weeks to consider a research proposal, and you cannot begin before they give final approval. So be sure to fill out and submit the required paperwork as soon as you have settled on a design. Following this advice is even more important if your experiment is at all ethically controversial—that is, if it uses deception, is potentially stressful, involves drugs, and so forth. In this case, the review board will probably take longer, may come back to you to work out some details, or may not even approve the study.

HOW MANY PARTICIPANTS DO I NEED?

It is often hard to figure out how many participants you will need for your experiment. One of the most frequent mistakes students make is to use too few, so that what appears to be a good result is not statistically significant. Of course, there may be some practical considerations, such as a limited pool of participants that restrict the number you are allowed to use. If so, you may just have to compromise. Assuming that you may use as many participants as you wish, there are statistical ways of determining the power of a statistical test and the approximate number of participants needed. We briefly discuss statistical power in the next chapter, although actually calculating these tests is beyond the scope of this book.

You should also bear in mind that whereas too few participants will not allow you to show statistical significance with a reasonable-sized experimental effect, too many can show statistical significance even with an unimportant effect. In this case, not only is using too many participants inefficient, it may also be misleading.

Perhaps the best way to determine how many participants to use is by studying the literature. Certainly, if you are replicating someone else's experiment in which a statistically significant effect was reported, you will have a pretty good idea of the numbers needed. Even if you are not doing a direct replication, you will probably be able to find similar experiments that have used the dependent variable you are proposing. The variability found in data generated from particular dependent variables such as reaction times or words recalled from a list tends to be relatively predictable. In the unlikely event that you can find no similar experiments, you may have to do a pilot experiment to get some idea of the number of participants you will need.

SHOULD I RUN PARTICIPANTS INDIVIDUALLY OR IN GROUPS?

Most new experimenters think first of doing experiments on participants individually rather than in groups. Sometimes there's no choice—for example, only one piece of equipment may be available for recording responses. In other cases, some individuals might affect the performance of others in the group, so they must be run individually. However, if you can run participants in groups, you can collect data more efficiently.

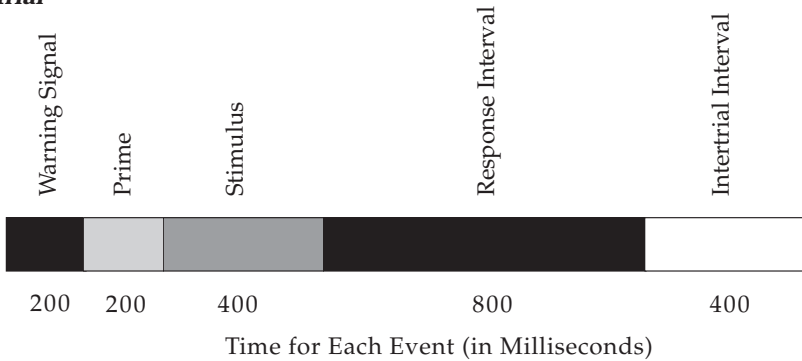
When considering your options, you should ask yourself questions like these: Can I give a questionnaire to a group of participants rather than ask questions to individuals? Can I collect the necessary data by using slides or an overhead projector to display stimuli to a group instead of using flip cards or a computer display with individuals? If you are presenting a consistent series of stimuli and recording only the accuracy of responses or the number of responses in a particular category, you can most likely use groups. If the order or timing of stimulus events depends on the responses made to earlier events or if precise timing of the responses is necessary, then you will probably need to run participants individually.

HOW LONG WILL MY EXPERIMENT TAKE?

Calculating the length of the experiment poses questions at several levels. At the grossest level, how many hours, or days, or weeks will be necessary for collecting data? At a finer level, how long will a single experimental session take? If you are going to use individual trials, you cannot answer either question without first determining the length of a trial and the number of trials necessary. To figure out trial length, you must know the sequence of events that will occur during a trial and the time required for each event, including the intertrial interval (that is, the time between trials). Then, by knowing how many trials will be presented, you can determine the total time taken to complete the trials. In some cases the number of trials may have to be estimated, as, for example, when participants must achieve a performance criterion, such as two consecutive trials on which they can correctly recall a list of words.

You should also remember to include the time to do other tasks associated with the experiment. Usually the participants will have to be given some instructions and be allowed to ask questions before starting. A set of practice trials may be included if some learning is anticipated and a relatively stable performance is desired. Rest breaks may be needed to avoid fatigue during long or tedious experiments. A debriefing session at the end of the experiment may be required, particularly if students are serving in the experiment as part of a class requirement and are supposed to be learning about experiments. Finally, some "slop time" should be built in because people sometimes arrive late. Without this time, consecutive sessions will run progressively later and later. Figure 11-1 shows some of the steps required for determining the time expected for an experimental session.

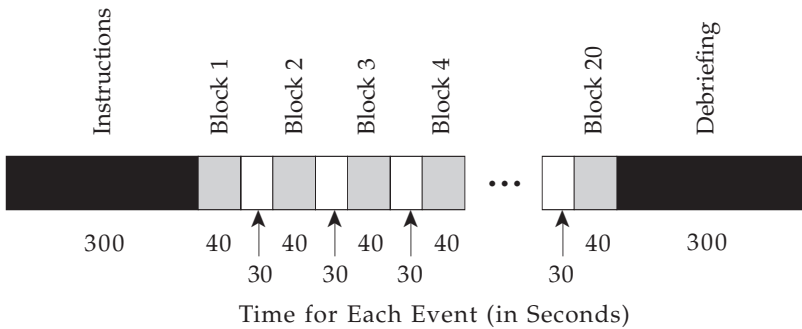
One Trial



Total time for one trial = 200 + 200 + 400 + 800 + 400 = 2000 ms, or 2 sec

One Session

With 20 blocks of 20 trials each, 30-sec rest breaks, 5 minutes for instructions, and 5 minutes for debriefing:



Total time for experiment = 300 sec + (20 blocks × 40 sec) + (19 rest × 30 sec) + 300 sec = 1970 sec, or 32 min 50 sec

Including some flexibility for late arrivals, time to be seated, and so on, this experiment should be scheduled for 40 to 45 minutes.

FIGURE 11-1 An example of the calculations necessary for determining the time required for an experimental session. In this experiment each trial consists of a 200-millisecond warning signal, a 200-millisecond prime (prestimulus information), a 400-millisecond stimulus, an 800-millisecond response interval, and a 400-millisecond intertrial interval (time between trials).

You will then need to determine how much total participant-data-collection time you will be devoting to this experiment. Again, you should anticipate some unplanned time to run extra participants, to replace those who failed to show up, those whose data were eliminated for failure to meet some criterion, or those for whom the equipment malfunctioned. As for the

total time needed to complete the experiment, remember that data collection is only part of the job. You will also need time to analyze the data, interpret them, and produce several drafts of the experimental report. And each of these tasks usually takes more time than anticipated.

DO I NEED TO SET PARTICIPANT RESTRICTIONS?

In general, determining whether to set limitations on who may participate in your experiment depends on the population to which you want to generalize your findings. The limited pool of participants from which you have to draw will probably have already reduced your ability to generalize. For example, if you use college students, you must consider that certain ages are definitely overrepresented and certain ones underrepresented. And you must take into account that compared with the average population of the country, an average group of college students has a higher IQ, is in a higher socioeconomic bracket, has greater reading ability, and is less likely to have health problems. So you cannot legitimately generalize to the entire population.

However, for practical reasons you might wish to exclude some individuals from your experiment even though this further limits the generalizability of your results. For example, if you are studying language performance such as reading ability, identification of words, memory for words, or a number of related language tasks, you might limit your participants to those whose first language is English. If you are studying visual perception, you might use people whose eyesight is corrected to 20/20 or who can pass a test for color blindness. If you are studying motor ability, such as in sports psychology, you might exclude individuals who have physical impairments that would prevent them from contributing useful data. In some cases, you might use only men or only women, whereas in other cases, you might have an equal number of men and women so that you can evaluate the effect of gender on performance. These instances are only some of the possible restrictions you might wish to consider. Depending on the particular task to be performed in your experiment, other restrictions might be appropriate and should be carefully considered.

SHOULD I SET ANY A PRIORI CRITERIA FOR ELIMINATING PARTICIPANTS?

As we discussed in Chapter 4, you may wish to set performance criteria before collecting data. For example, I often collect reaction-time data in my experiments. There are sometimes one or two participants whose overall performance level is not comparable to that of the others. So I often set a criterion that data from any individual whose mean reaction time exceeds the mean reaction time of all participants in the experiment by 300 milliseconds will be eliminated from the analysis. Such a criterion, along with the number of participants thus eliminated, should be reported in the results section of the experimental report. And as noted in Chapter 4, participants cannot be eliminated or data discarded for failure to support a predicted hypothesis.

The general purpose of setting a priori criteria is to eliminate participants who are distinctly different from the others and who therefore add a large amount of variability to the data. They may be different because of motivational factors, personality factors, or personal limitations. Such differences may certainly be of interest to psychologists studying individual differences or abnormal behavior. But such behavior is usually not of much interest to most experimental psychologists, whose concern is usually with establishing a science of the behavioral norm.

CAN I OPERATIONALLY DEFINE ALL MY VARIABLES?

In Chapter 7 I discussed the necessity of being able to operationally define your independent and dependent variables and to state the required operations that need to be carried out to enable you to repeat your experiment. Although you should determine operational definitions at an early stage of designing your experiment, experimenters sometimes fail to do this.

Because the independent variables are the variables of major interest to the experimenter, great care must be taken in specifying their definition. Suppose that you propose to do the experiment that sets the record for the one most often proposed by my students¹—you want to determine the effects of listening to music on studying. Some variations of this basic experiment are the effects of rock versus classical music, of TV, of noise, and of loud music versus soft music. Suppose the comparison is between rock and classical music. What is rock music? Heavy metal, punk rock, new wave, hip-hop, or rock and roll? What is classical music? A Strauss waltz, Dvořák's *New World Symphony*, a Beethoven sonata, or Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture*? Even when you use classical music, the outcome of the experiment may be quite different if a quiet string quartet is played rather than a noisy overture complete with rolling timpani and cannons.

Likewise, if the comparison is between loud and soft music, the question is, how *loud*? An appropriate answer is not "I'll turn it up until it sounds loud" or even "I'll set the volume control of my stereo on 8." Another experimenter would not know what operations to follow to produce the same loudness. Ideally, you would have someone measure the sound with a meter and tell you the average sound-pressure level in decibels.

For the dependent variable, again an operational definition is required. What are you going to measure to see whether the music has an effect on studying? There are a number of possibilities. You could find out how many pages participants were able to read within certain time limits. You could find out how many math problems they completed. You might give them a quiz on the material studied. Or you could ask the participants to rate how difficult it was to study under a particular condition. Each of these measures has

¹ This experiment is closely followed in popularity by experiments done to test the effects of drug X (for instance, marijuana, alcohol, or cocaine) on the performance of task Y (such as driving, studying, or memorizing). If your instructor requires that you propose an experiment and you want to be impressively original, do not propose either of these experiments!

advantages and drawbacks, but some dependent variable will have to be operationally defined because no proposal is complete until this is done.

HAVE I ARRANGED FOR ANY EQUIPMENT OR MATERIALS NEEDED?

Many experiments require equipment, and nearly all require some sort of materials to be prepared. Fortunately, computers can be used to present stimuli with precise timing and to record and store responses. If you have access to such equipment and know how to use it or can get help from someone who knows how to use it, you will be able to carry out many experiments with minimum preparation. However, if computers are not readily available, or if your experiment cannot benefit from computers, you may have to carry out your experiment the old-fashioned way, using whatever equipment is on hand or constructing the equipment and materials yourself. In some cases, you may even have to plan your experiment around the available resources.

Among the materials you may have to prepare are a set of instructions, response sheets on which to record data, and a debriefing script. You should generally write the instructions out ahead of time. Later you may well include them in an appendix in the experimental report. In any case, these instructions should certainly be available if someone wanting to replicate your experiment requests them.

It is usually not a good idea to simply hand instructions to your participants and expect them to read these instructions properly. Some people's reading ability leaves a bit to be desired, particularly when the experimenter is hovering over them waiting for them to finish. Experimenters often give written instructions and then also read them aloud—slowly. (After all, it's the first time the participants have heard the instructions, even though the experimenter may have read them many times.) The last sentence of instructions is usually "Do you have any questions?" Even in experiments in which learning should not be a problem, it is often useful to give participants a few practice trials so that they know what to expect once the experiment starts. These practice trials can also be included toward the end of the instructions.

If your experiment involves recording data about individual responses (as opposed to questionnaires, for example), you will probably have to construct data sheets for this purpose. If you are going to present various types of trials that represent different levels of the independent variable, the response sheets may also include this information. Particularly, if you have to randomly present the trial types, you should have determined the random orders ahead of time by using a random number table or some other random device. If you attempt to create a random sequence while the experiment is under way, it will not really be random (see Chapter 2).

Finally, you should write a debriefing script so that you can inform the participants at the end of the experiment about the purpose of the research. When participants serve in an experiment as part of a class requirement, such a debriefing is usually necessary. Even if it is not, the debriefing is a good idea.

People will leave the experiment feeling more comfortable and not carry away misconceptions about what they just went through. In addition, they may be able to learn something about psychology from this experience and, at the very least, will feel better about their experience because somebody has taken the time to explain the purpose of the study and to thank them for their service.



DO I KNOW HOW I WILL ANALYZE MY DATA?

Chapter 12 deals with how to interpret your experimental results using descriptive and inferential statistics, and Appendix A provides a guide to some commonly used statistical tests. If your experiment is relatively simple and small, these may be sufficient for you to determine how to analyze your data. If your experiment is more complex, you may need some help from your instructor, a statistics book, or a statistical consultant to choose an appropriate way to analyze the results. Regardless of how you determine what is the best way, before you do the experiment you must know how the data will be analyzed. Statistical consultants tell horror stories about people coming to them with reams of data after an experiment is complete only to discover that the data are useless because they are unanalyzable! Don't become a character in one of these stories. Know ahead of time in what form your data will need to be and how they can be analyzed.

HOW WILL I INTERPRET THE POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF MY EXPERIMENT?

When you decide to do a particular experiment, you probably have some idea about what the results will be. Unlike the starting assumption in statistics, called the *null hypothesis*, that there will be no effect of manipulating the independent variable, you probably actually expect that the differences in the levels of your independent variable will cause a difference in the dependent variable. Scientists are encouraged to be nonpartisan bystanders, not active participants rooting for a particular outcome. In fact, a good deal of the fun of science is predicting the outcome of experiments. Being a good predictor is

part of the art of being a good scientist.² But be careful that you do not become so enamored of your predictions that you are tempted to lose objectivity and produce a biased experiment.

So be prepared to interpret the results of your experiment regardless of the outcome. Some experiments, because of their design, are considered failures if certain outcomes occur. Scientists sometimes call such outcomes that support the null hypothesis a *negative result*. For example, suppose that you did the experiment to determine the effects of rock and classical music on a student's ability to study and found that the group listening to rock and the group listening to classical music were not statistically different in their performance. As discussed in Chapter 12, because our statistical tests are designed to test for differences, not samenesses, you cannot really say that the performances of the groups were the same, you can only say that you failed to show that they were different. Perhaps it would be interesting to know that rock music affects studying no differently than classical music does, but the failure to find a difference could have been caused by any number of factors aside from the lack of an actual difference—for example, using too few participants or not having proper control of variables, which caused the variability of the data to be high, and so on. In some cases, where a series of experiments using similar experimental conditions produces statistically significant effects, you may be a bit more confident that your negative outcome is meaningful. But generally a negative outcome is uninteresting, except perhaps as a methodological example of what not to do. Regardless of whether the outcome of your experiment is negative or is positive in an unexpected way, you must accept that result and try to explain it. There is a common tendency to want to pass off the result and simply blame it on design or methodological problems. But however strongly you believed in your hypothesis at the beginning of the experiment, once the experiment is over, you must accept whatever result you get and attempt to explain it.

One way to know whether you will be able to interpret the outcome of your experiment is to consider the various possible outcomes and determine whether you could predict each of them. As discussed in Chapter 3, a theory can help you predict. Remember that a theory is simply a statement about the probable relationships among a set of abstract variables—in the case of an experimental theory, between an independent and a dependent variable. It is more general than a statement of the specific outcome of any single experiment. So you may decide that your experiment fits within the context of a particular theory; thus, you predict the outcome of your experiment to be the same as that predicted by the theory. You are in an even better situation if two or more theories have been proposed that make differing predictions. If one of these theories supports a positive result and the second a negative result, then interpreting your outcome will still be easier if the positive result occurs, for reasons discussed in the previous paragraph. However, the best of all possible worlds is when two theories each predict positive results but in opposite directions. In this case, either outcome can be clearly interpreted.

² English professors would probably call this statement oxymoronic (but not, I hope, moronic).

A second way that a prediction can be made and supported is from prior research. Someone may have done an experiment that is similar to yours in some respects but different in other respects. In this case, you might predict that you will find a similar outcome. If you do, you have shown that the result can be repeated and that it can be generalized to your somewhat different experimental situation, and you are on your way to being able to make a more general theoretical statement. If your outcome is different from that reported in the earlier experiment, you have discovered a limitation of the prior result, and, again, something has been learned.

A third justification for a prediction, particularly when no prior research or theorizing has been done in a particular area, is simply logical argument. For example, you might argue that it is logical for loud and unpredictable music to be distracting because it draws the student's attention away from the studying task. You might also be able to logically predict some other effects from similar reasoning—for example, that the music might help if it masks a loud, even more unpredictable noise or that the more familiar the student is with the music, the less his or her performance will be degraded. Although these predictions are initially based on logic, they could gain theoretical status if supported by the outcome of your experiment.

The reason you want to be able to predict the possible outcomes of your experiment is, basically, so that you will know ahead of time that when the experiment is completed, you will have contributed something important to science. If you cannot defend the various outcomes as supporting anything important, you will have added nothing useful. For example, if the outcome you predict would be expected by all the proposed theories and would eliminate no alternative theories, your work would contribute nothing to the body of knowledge. As discussed in Chapter 3, advances in science are generally made by disconfirming theories, not by confirming theories, and you would not have disconfirmed any. The basic point is that if you believe a particular result could be important for advancing science, you should be able to defend this belief before doing the experiment. Otherwise there is no point in proceeding.

NOW, AM I READY?

If you have answered all the questions posed here, you are probably ready to begin your experiment. As a final check, you should ask yourself whether you could, at this point, write all the sections of an experimental report except the results. In fact, you could save yourself considerable time by doing this before collecting data. Graduate students in many experimental psychology programs are required to submit a formal prospectus prior to doing a thesis or dissertation. This document is essentially the final experimental report, except that the results section contains various predicted results rather than actual results and, obviously, contains no statistical analysis. One advantage of doing a prospectus is that most of the writing is completed early. In graduate schools, the procedure also helps protect the student to some extent because those on the student's faculty committee can indicate before the work is done whether they think the design contains any major flaws. For your

purposes, the major advantage of trying to write most of the report is that you would have had to answer the questions in this chapter before writing it. Obviously, you cannot describe an experimental procedure until you have worked out all its details. You cannot write a literature review until you have searched the literature. You cannot predict the outcome of the experiment without knowing the theories that have been proposed or the results previously reported. Writing a prospectus is simply a good way of making sure that you have thoroughly thought through the experiment you are proposing to do.

At this point you should be ready for the excitement of collecting your own data. It can be fun, and a good intellectual exercise, to plan an experiment. Searching the literature requires some discipline and can be interesting. Finding the appropriate statistical tests may thrill some experimenters, but, to be honest, I do statistical tests just because they are part of the experimental process. The creative act of collecting data and testing your theories and predictions is worth the hard work of doing some of the steps that you may find less intrinsically interesting. I do receive satisfaction from moving science along by making a lasting, and potentially immortal, contribution to the body of knowledge. But for me—and I hope for you too—the most fun of being a scientist is the thrill of discovery, of looking for the first time at data nobody else has seen. And that, by itself, is what makes the whole enterprise worth the effort.

■ Summary

Before you are ready to conduct an experiment, there are many practical details to consider. A useful way to determine whether you have anticipated these details is to present your ideas to others—either orally, by means of a presentation, or in writing, through a prospectus. One concern is whether you have satisfied all possible *ethical concerns* and whether the experiment has been approved by an institutional review board. In determining the *number of participants* needed you should find experiments similar to yours that have been reported in the literature and use similar numbers. In addition, you will decide whether to *run participants individually or in groups*. To determine the *experimental time required* to complete the experiment, you will have to determine the time taken for each trial, the number of trials, the time required for other activities, and the number of participants in each condition. In determining whether to set *participant selection restrictions*, you should consider to what population you will generalize your results. To avoid including experimental noise in the data, you may also wish to determine *criteria for eliminating participants* from the experiment. To make adequate *operational definitions of variables* you should be able to specify precisely what operations are required to manipulate the independent variable(s) or measure the dependent variable(s). Arranging for needed *equipment or materials* often includes preparing instructions, response sheets, and debriefing scripts. Finally, you should know how you will statistically *analyze the data* and *interpret the results*. This interpretation will be aided by existing theories, previously reported findings, or logical argument. If all these issues have been considered before you begin your experiment, completing the experiment and reporting the results should run smoothly.

12

How to Interpret Experimental Results

A well-wrapped statistic is better than Hitler's "big lie"; it misleads, yet it cannot be pinned on you.

D. HUFF (1954)

There are three kinds of lies: lies, damn lies, and statistics.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

I believe, however, that over the years an overreliance on the impoverished binary conclusions yielded by the hypothesis-testing procedure has subtly seduced our discipline into insidious conceptual cul-de-sacs that have impeded our vision and stymied our potential.

G. R. LOFTUS (1993)

In spite of frequent misuse, statistics can be an elegant and powerful tool for making decisions in the face of uncertainty.

ROGER E. KIRK (1990)

Now you are ready to collect some data. If you are recording responses by hand, it will be necessary to set up response sheets for each participant. This sheet should include information such as the participant's identification number and sex, the condition being presented, and any specific comments you might wish to note about the participant or the experimental session. Obviously, there should also be a place to systematically record the responses. These data are then made into a data set arranged according to independent variables and levels of those variables. If, as is most typical today, the experiment was done on a computer, the program will likely arrange data into a data set for you. If you collected the data by hand, you will need to arrange the data yourself, and if you are using a computer for statistical analysis, you will need to create a data set on the computer. Now that you have a set of numbers, you are still a long way from answering the experimental question: What effect does the independent variable have on the dependent variable? To answer this question, you need to know about several approaches to analyzing data and how to use them.

This chapter should give you an understanding of the logic underlying data analysis. It does not help you do the statistics required to analyze an

experiment. If you need to do such calculations, you should first read this chapter and then look for an appropriate statistical operation in Appendix A. This appendix is not meant to be a substitute for a statistics text, but with your instructor's help, it should allow you to analyze most of the simple experimental designs discussed in this book. Neither this chapter nor the appendix will substitute for taking a statistics course. We discuss only the basics here—enough so that with help in choosing a test, you might be able to analyze a simple experiment. If you wish to do further experimentation, an elementary statistics course is mandatory.

■ Plotting Frequency Distributions

Suppose that you are interested in whether students who are majoring in psychology differ in anxiety from those majoring in economics. You find a list of majors in your college, randomly pick 10 students from the two majors, and convince these students to take a test that has been found to indicate a person's overall anxiety level. The test scores for the two groups are your raw data.¹

Table 12-1 shows some fictitious scores between 0 and 100. The larger the score, the more anxious the student. Is there a difference between the two groups? Looking at individual scores in this case is like listening to individual notes from a song—it's difficult to tell what the melody is. You need some way to rearrange the raw data so that you can interpret them more easily. You can draw a **frequency distribution**, which is simply a plot of how frequently each score appears in the data. You may notice, however, that no score occurs more than one time. Thus, to make the distribution meaningful, you need to

■ **TABLE 12-1**
Fictitious Anxiety Scores for 10 Economics Majors and 10 Psychology Majors

<i>Economics majors</i>		<i>Psychology majors</i>	
<i>Student no.</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>Student no.</i>	<i>Score</i>
1	62	11	55
2	56	12	42
3	67	13	61
4	91	14	58
5	53	15	70
6	87	16	47
7	51	17	62
8	63	18	36
9	46	19	74
10	71	20	51

¹ You will note that this is not really an experiment but a correlational observation, because you are comparing two behaviors: the behavior of choosing a major and the behavior of answering questions on a test. No independent variable has been manipulated in the study.

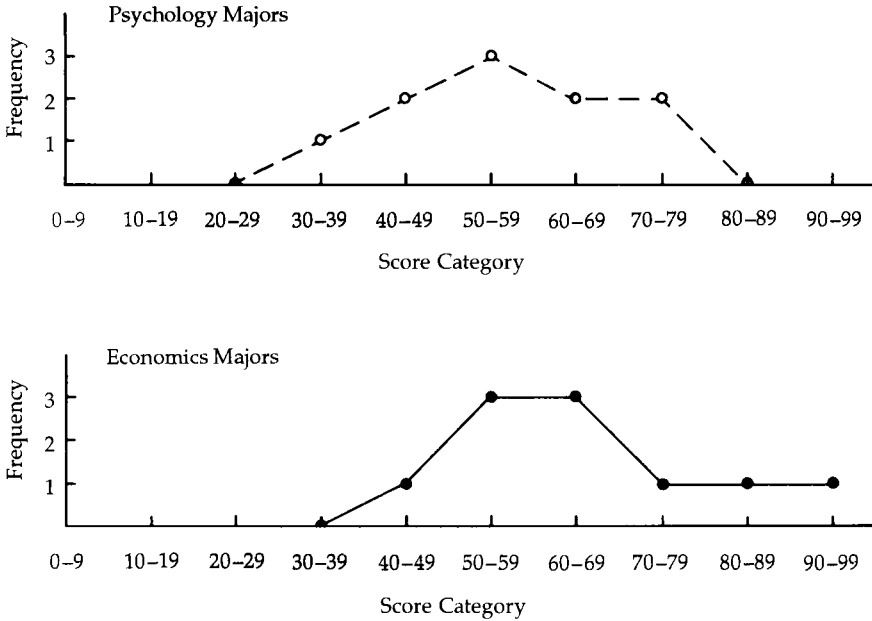


FIGURE 12-1 Frequency distributions of the fictitious anxiety scores for psychology majors and economics majors listed in Table 12-1

put the individual scores into categories. You want several data points in each of the more frequently occurring categories, so you include 10 scores in each category (for example, 10 through 19). Figure 12-1 shows such a frequency distribution for each of your two groups. The vertical axis labeled “Frequency” is simply the number of raw data points that fall into each score category.

Plotting a frequency distribution can be a useful first step in finding out whether there is a difference between conditions. Sometimes the experimental effect is strong enough that a visual inspection of the distributions will convince you that there is a difference. In this example, however, the distributions look very much alike.

Statisticians have given names to different types of distributions so that investigators can talk to each other in some common terms without having to show each other a plot of the entire distribution. We have already mentioned the properties of a **normal distribution**, shown in the upper left panel of Figure 12-2. To be normal, a distribution has to fit a complex mathematical formula. For our purposes, however, we can simply say that a distribution approximates a normal distribution if it looks something like the bell-shaped distribution shown in the figure. It is important to know whether your distributions are similar to a normal distribution because many statistical tests you will wish to use require that the data be approximately normal.

Some other types of distributions are also illustrated in Figure 12-2. A distribution that has two most-frequent categories rather than one is a **bimodal** distribution. The distribution of heights for a group composed of an equal



number of men and women would often be bimodal. A distribution is **skewed** if it is asymmetrical through having more scores in one of the tails. A distribution of IQ scores for Ph.D.s would be skewed because, generally, few have low IQs. However, if a distribution looks as though one of the tails has been completely chopped off, it is said to be **truncated**. A plot of reaction times would form a truncated distribution because there is a limit to the speed with which a person can respond.²

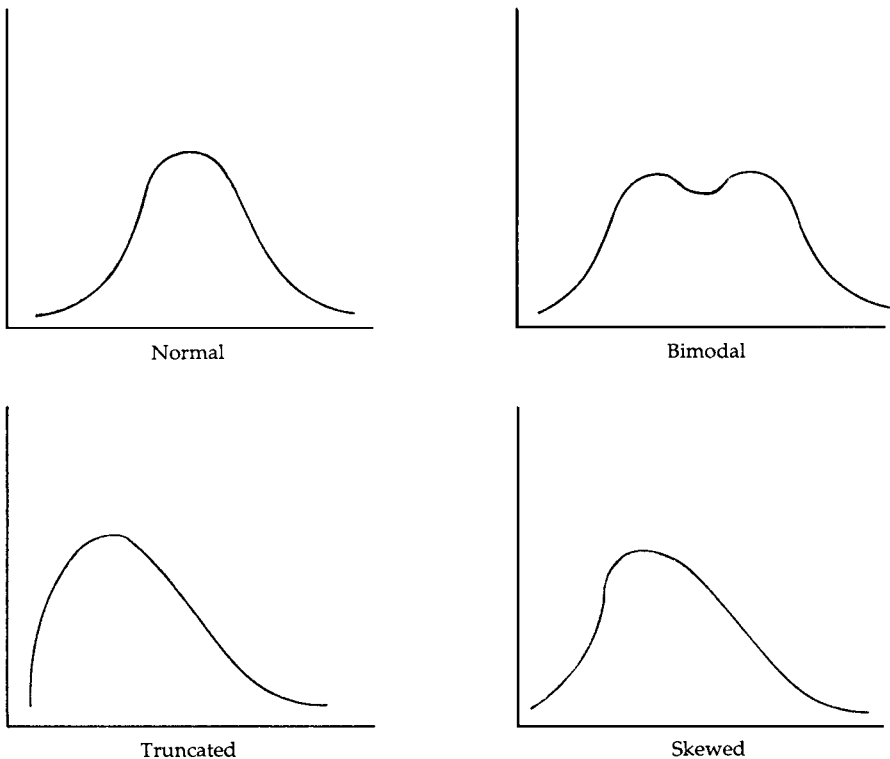
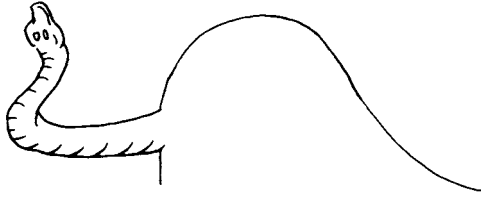


FIGURE 12-2 Four types of frequency distributions

² Remember ceiling and floor effects? They usually cause truncated distributions.



A TRUNCATED DISTRIBUTION

Plotting a frequency distribution allows you to describe your data in a more orderly way than simply listing it in raw form, but it is still a rather cumbersome way to represent the results of an experiment. It would be nice to have a single number that represents how the participants in each group performed. What we need is a way of calculating a descriptive statistic that will describe the data in this manner.

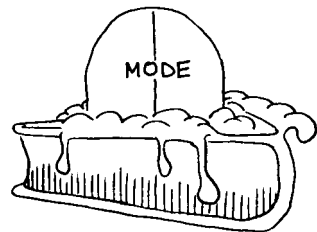
■ Statistics for Describing Distributions

Psychologists use two basic kinds of statistics: descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. A **descriptive statistic** is simply a number that allows the experimenter to describe some characteristics of the data rather than having to report every data point. Inferential statistics are discussed later in the chapter.

CENTRAL TENDENCY

One of the important things we would like to learn from a set of data is the typical behavior of participants under various conditions. Psychologists call a statistic that describes this typical behavior an indication of central tendency. One way of comparing the two groups in our example is to calculate a central tendency for the psychology majors and for the economics majors.

There are three common ways to express the central tendency. The **mode** is the easiest statistic to calculate, but it is usually the worst one to use because it ignores lots of data. The mode is simply the most frequently occurring score. In our example there is no mode because no score occurs more than once. After the data have been put into categories, a mode can be found. The mode for the psychology majors is the category 50–59, because it occurs with a frequency of three. Although this category seems to represent the central tendency of this distribution pretty well, note that if only one score were moved, the mode could change dramatically. For example, suppose that student 14 scores 71 instead of 58. The category mode would now



PIE À LA MODE

be 70–79 because there would be a frequency of three in that category. Do you think that this category would represent the central tendency of the distribution well?

The problem is that the mode uses only one property of the data—the most frequently occurring score—to describe typical behavior. It ignores all the other scores. So when you use the mode, you are throwing out lots of information, such as the ordering and size of each number. With small samples, relying on a mode to describe your data can be risky.

The **median** is literally a middle score; it has an equal number of scores above it and below it. To calculate a median, list all the scores in order, and then pick the middle score. If you have an even number of scores, the median falls halfway between the two middle scores. For example, in ordering the 10 scores for economics majors, we find that the fifth score is 62 and the sixth is 63, so the median is 62.5. The median for the psychology majors is 56.5. The median does not reflect the size of the differences between scores because it uses only order as its defining principle. Thus, we can change any score in the distribution without changing the median, as long as the position of the middle score in the list remains the same. Again, we lose some information when we describe our data in terms of a median.

The **mean** is a weighted average of the scores; that is, it is the sum of all individual scores divided by the number of scores that were added. For example, to find the mean for the economics majors, we add the 10 scores for a sum of 647 and then divide by 10, with the result of 64.7 for the mean. The mean for the psychology majors is 55.6. The mean is the center of gravity for the distribution. Thus, because the mean is affected by the size of the scores, it changes whenever any score in the distribution changes.

Which measure of central tendency best describes a distribution? As with most interesting questions, the answer is “It all depends.” First, it depends on the shape of the distribution. If you have a normal distribution or any other unimodal symmetrical distribution, all three measures give you the same number. However, as a distribution becomes more skewed, the three measures get progressively farther apart. Figure 12-3 shows that the mean is most influenced by the size of the extreme scores in the right tail of the distribution. The median is influenced only because there are more scores to the right, while the mode is unaffected by these extreme scores.³ You must use your judgment in deciding which measure to use. If you were to plot the incomes for a large group of people, you would probably get a distribution similar to the one in Figure 12-3. In this case a median would probably be the best average, because it would be influenced less than the mean would be by the few folks who make outlandish salaries. You can probably think of more extreme examples in which a few very large or very small scores can distort the mean. Whenever you must choose a measure to describe an average, you

³ Which measure to use is also influenced by the characteristics of the numbers you are using. See Appendix A for a discussion of number scales and Figure A-1 to see which measure of central tendency is appropriate for each.

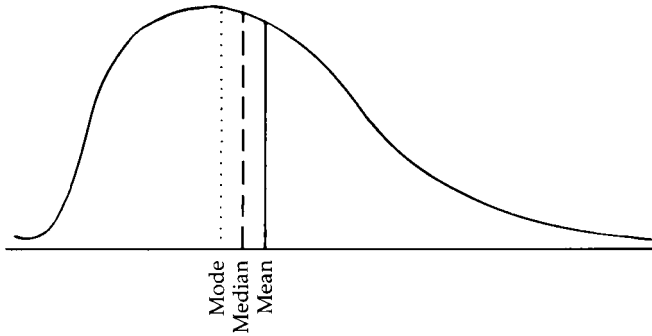


FIGURE 12-3 The location of the mode, median, and mean for a skewed distribution

will simply have to examine the shape of the distribution, determine for what purpose the average will be used, and then use your judgment.⁴

DISPERSION

A measure of central tendency tells you something useful about a distribution, but it describes only one special aspect. A second statistic that helps describe a distribution is a measure of *dispersion*, or how spread out the scores are.

One measure of dispersion is the **range**, which we can calculate by subtracting the smallest score from the largest score. In our example, for the economics majors, the range is $91 - 46 = 45$; for the psychology majors, the range is $74 - 36 = 38$. Although it gives some indication of dispersion, the range is totally insensitive to the scores in between because it is determined by only the smallest and largest scores. One extreme score completely changes the range. For this reason, a different measure of dispersion may be more useful. As an alternative, we can subtract the mean from each score so that we have a number indicating the deviation of each score from the mean. To get a mean deviation, we can then add up these deviations and divide by the number of deviations. However, because the numbers cancel each other out when added, we will get a sum of zero, which doesn't help us much. We could ignore the sign of the deviations, add up the absolute values, and thus get an average deviation. But statisticians feel that a more useful indication of dispersion is found by squaring⁵ each deviation (this also gets rid of the plus or minus sign), adding the squares, and then dividing by the number of squared deviations that were added. We then have a measure of dispersion called the **variance**. An even more useful measure is the square root⁶ of the

⁴ I am assuming that you have read Chapter 5 and are trying to be fair with science. The books *How to Lie with Statistics* by Huff (1954) and *Flaws and Fallacies in Statistical Thinking* by Campbell (1974) give many humorous examples of how to make descriptive statistics like the mean into distorting statistics.

⁵ Multiplying it times itself.

⁶ A number that when multiplied times itself gives us the variance.

variance, a number called the **standard deviation**. Formulas for calculating these measures can be found in Appendix A.

One reason the standard deviation is a useful measure of dispersion is that it tells us something about the proportion of scores that fall between it and the mean. About two thirds of the scores in a normal distribution fall in the interval between one standard deviation below the mean and one standard deviation above the mean. For example, if we gave writing tests to first year students and seniors at a particular college and found that the first year students had a standard deviation of 15, whereas the seniors had a standard deviation of five, we would know that about two thirds of the first year students scored within 30 points of each other and two thirds of the seniors scored within 10 points of each other. Such a result, along with the finding of an increase in the mean between the first year students and the seniors, could be used as support for the hypothesis that the college was successful in teaching its students to be better writers. Not only did the typical student become a better writer, but the student body as a whole also became consistently better at writing.

You may also find it helpful to view the standard deviation as a way of expressing the extent of error you are making by using the mean to represent the scores in a distribution. In reality, the mean is simply the best estimate you could make about any individual score; thus, the standard deviation indicates, on the average, how good an estimate you have made. If all the scores were the same, the standard deviation would be zero, indicating that the mean would never be in error. As the differences among scores get larger, the standard deviation increases, as does the error you would make by representing a score with the mean.⁷

■ Plotting Relationships between Variables

You do an experiment to find out whether there is a relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Although plotting frequency distributions is a good first step in analyzing your data, you will often find drawing a graph to represent the experimental relationship useful. Graphs are not new to you. They have been cropping up from time to time in earlier chapters. To be complete, however, let's start by looking at basic concepts.

DRAWING GRAPHS

A graph has two axes. The vertical axis (**y-axis**) is called the **ordinate**, and the horizontal axis (**x-axis**), the **abscissa**.⁸ When plotting experimental results, you plot the dependent variable on the ordinate and the independent variable on the abscissa. In some cases the levels of an independent variable cannot be

⁷ Which measure of dispersion to use is also influenced by the characteristics of the numbers you are using. See Appendix A for a discussion of number scales and Figure A-1 to see which measure is appropriate.

⁸ You may find it helpful to remember which term refers to which axis by noticing the shape your mouth takes when saying the first part of each word; "ab_____" is said with a horizontal mouth, and "or_____" with a vertical mouth. That's the way I remember them!

represented by numbers or if numbers are used they have no quantitative meaning. In Appendix A you can see that these levels are said to fall on a nominal scale because they are just names. In this case, it is usually appropriate to use a **bar graph** to represent the data. Figure 12-4 shows a bar graph for the mean anxiety scores of the psychology and economics majors.



In many cases the independent variable is continuous, or, to use the terms from Appendix A, the levels of the variable fall on at least an ordinal scale and thus they can be put in order.

In this case, you can draw a **histogram**, as shown in Figure 12-5. A histogram eliminates spaces between the bars of a bar graph. Figure 12-5 shows fictitious data relating the length of time patients have been in therapy to their rating of self-image. Time in therapy is a continuous variable because we could choose levels anywhere on the continuum of time.

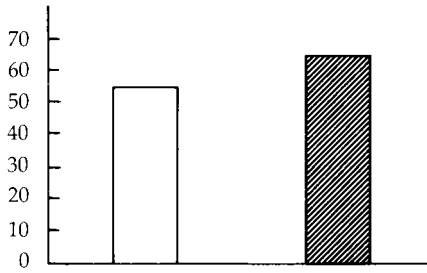


FIGURE 12-4 A bar graph showing the mean anxiety scores for psychology majors and economics majors listed in Table 12-1

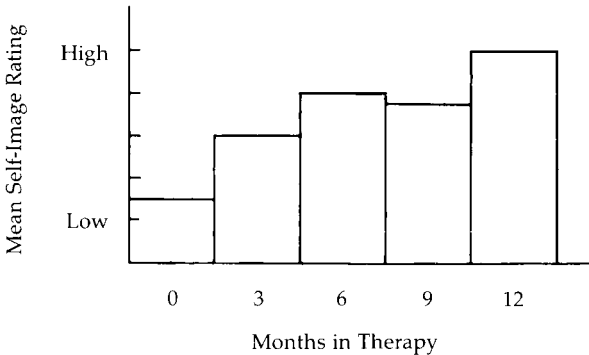


FIGURE 12-5 A histogram illustrating the results of a multilevel experiment relating perceived self-image to months spent in therapy (fictitious data)

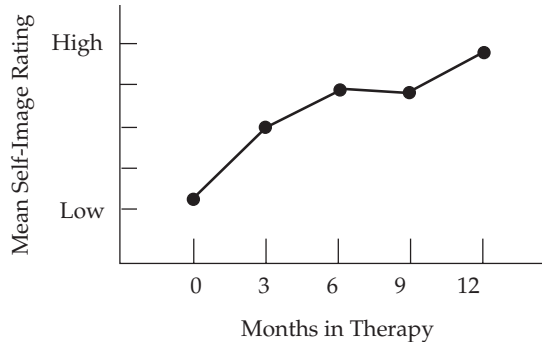


FIGURE 12-6 A line graph illustrating the same data as those plotted in the histogram in Figure 12-5

A more common way of representing data when the independent variable is continuous is to use a **line graph**, or **function**. Figure 12-6 shows the same results as those plotted in Figure 12-5 but is a line graph rather than a histogram. The individual data points are simply plotted and then connected by straight lines. Notice how this way of representing the data emphasizes the trends quite effectively. To use this type of graph, you must have data that lie on a continuum. By way of bad example, suppose that on the abscissa of the figure, we had ethnic categories such as Hispanic, African American, and so on, instead of months in therapy. These categories obviously do not lie on a continuum; so the order of listing the categories would be totally arbitrary. Trying to find a trend in such data doesn't make any sense.

Line graphs are also best used to illustrate the results of a functional (multilevel) experiment rather than those of a two-level experiment. The problem with a two-level experiment is that you really do not know whether the relationship is linear, and yet you would be using a straight line to represent it. With a functional experiment, more than two levels of the independent variable are used, and it is possible to get an idea of the shape of the function even though the points are connected with straight-line segments. However, some care must be taken when interpreting the shape of graphed functions. The shape of the function is meaningful only when the levels of the independent variable are equally spaced as they are on the graph. In Appendix A these levels are said to fall on at least an interval scale because one interval is equal to any other. If the levels represent only an ordinal scale (can be ordered but have unequal intervals) then general trends can be inferred, but the shape of the function is not interpretable. (For more on constructing figures for an experimental report, see Chapter 13.)

DESCRIBING FUNCTIONS

Several types of graphed functions are illustrated in Figure 12-7. If changing the independent variable by one unit always causes the dependent variable to

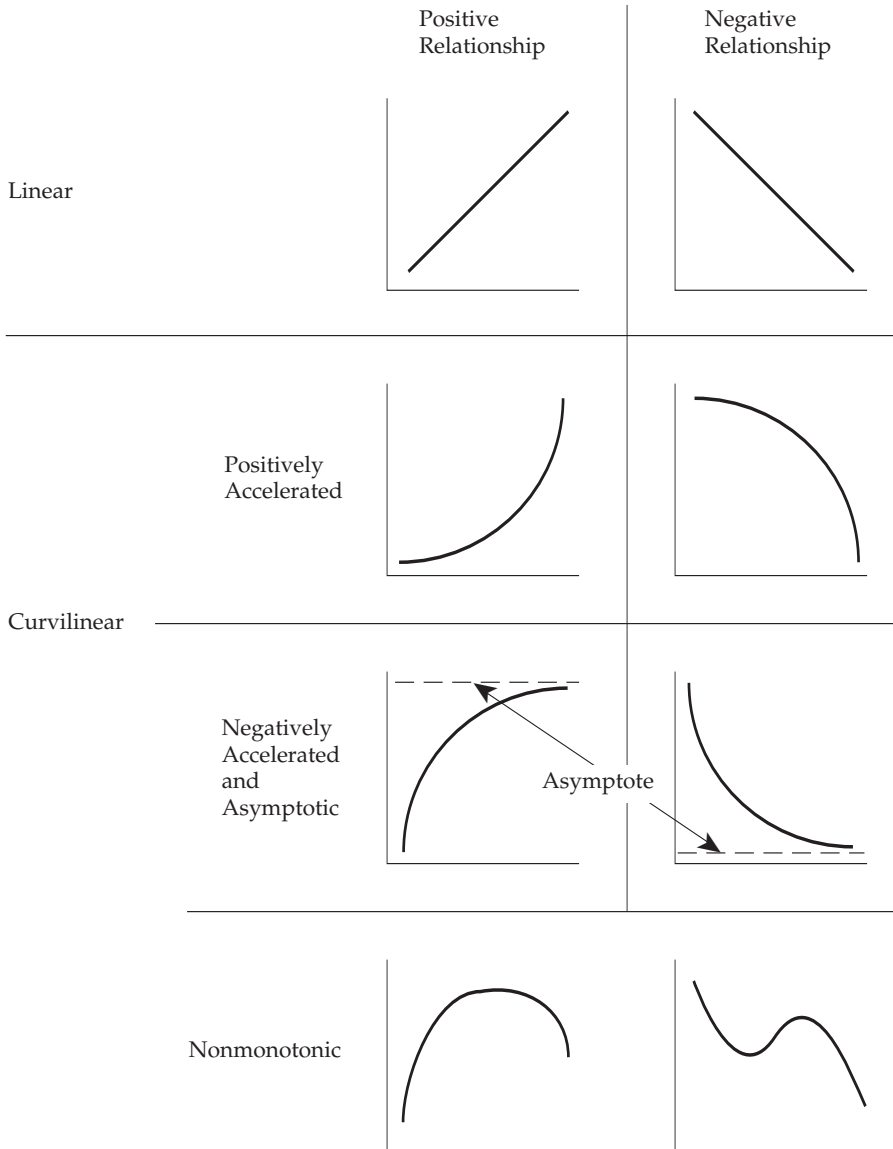


FIGURE 12-7 Graphs illustrating some terms used to describe functional relationships

change in a given direction by a constant amount, the function is **linear**; any other relationship is **curvilinear**. If increasing the independent variable causes an increase in the dependent variable, the relationship is **positive**; if it causes a decrease, the relationship is **negative**. A function that never reverses direction (that is, portions of the function are either all positive or all negative) is a **monotonic** function; otherwise, the function is termed **nonmonotonic**. If changes in the dependent variable become increasingly larger as the

independent variable increases, the function is **positively accelerated**; if the changes become smaller, it is **negatively accelerated**. A negatively accelerated function eventually approaches a particular level and appears to flatten out. The curve at this point is actually getting closer and closer to a straight line called an **asymptote**, although the curve and asymptote never touch. Such a function is said to be **asymptotic** or to approach an asymptote.

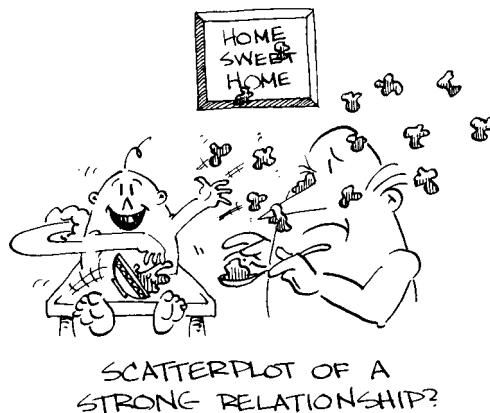
If you are seeing these terms for the first time, you may feel a bit overwhelmed. However, as you use them to describe psychological relationships, you will find that they become more familiar and allow you to discuss your results more efficiently.

■ Describing the Strength of a Relationship

The functions in the previous section either were idealized or were plots of a descriptive statistic rather than individual data points. Rarely, however, will you find every data point falling exactly on a smooth function. If you use raw data to plot an experimental relationship, you will probably find some variability, or spread, around the functions. As we saw in Chapter 1, such a plot is called a **scatterplot**.

SCATTERPLOTS

Figure 12-8 shows some examples of scatterplots. These plots could result from an experiment, in which the relationships between independent and dependent variables are plotted, or from a correlational observation (Chapter 1), in which dependent variables are plotted on both axes. If you observe the spread of the points in a scatterplot, you can get some idea of how strong the relationship is. However, visual observation is a rather crude way of estimating this strength. Fortunately, when the relationship is linear,⁹ a descriptive statistic called a *correlation coefficient* can be used for this purpose.



⁹ Actually, one form of correlation uses data that can only be ranked or ordered, in which case the term *linear* is meaningless. Such a correlation can be used for any monotonic relationship.

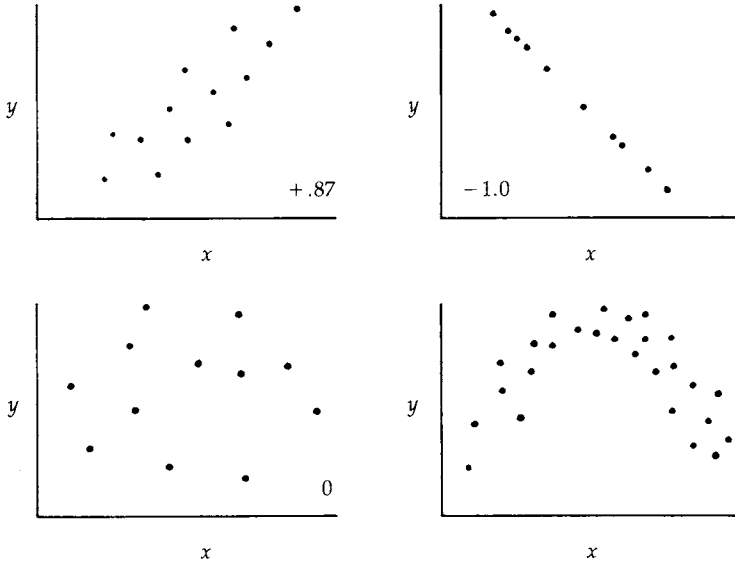


FIGURE 12-8 Four illustrations of scatterplots. Correlation coefficients are shown for three panels. No coefficient is given for the lower right panel because the relationship is curvilinear and a correlation ratio should be used.

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS

A correlation coefficient is a number between +1.0 and -1.0, with the sign indicating whether the relationship is positive or negative and the size of the number indicating the strength of the relationship. A correlation of 1.0 (+ or -) indicates a perfect relationship, and 0 indicates no relationship.

Figure 12-8 shows the correlation coefficients for three sets of data. No coefficient is shown for the lower right panel because the function is obviously curvilinear and simple linear correlation is not appropriate. (There is, however, a way of describing a curvilinear correlation, which is called a *correlation ratio* [Kirk, 1990].) You can find out how to calculate a correlation coefficient by reading Appendix A or by looking in any statistics text.¹⁰

Often when a correlation coefficient is reported, a **coefficient of determination**—or proportion of variation explained—is also reported. The coefficient of determination is simply the correlation coefficient squared and represents the proportion of the variability shared by the two variables. So if the reported correlation is +0.5, the coefficient of determination would be +0.25; 25% of the variability is shared between the two variables. Many researchers and manuals, including the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (American Psychological Association, 2001), recommend

¹⁰ Several statistics texts are listed at the end of the chapter.

reporting the coefficient of determination whenever a correlation is reported. However, other researchers claim that the correlation coefficient is a better indication of the effect size for a correlational observation and that the coefficient of determination seriously underestimates the practical importance of the results (Rosnow & Rosenthal, 1999). If you use these statistics, you should familiarize yourself with these arguments and use these numbers in an informed way.

■ Interpreting Results from Factorial Experiments

The results of factorial experiments are more difficult to interpret than those of other types of experiments because they use more than one independent variable and require you to evaluate interactions. The top graph of Figure 12-9 shows some fictitious results of our earlier experiment in which we measured the time it took students to read paragraphs typed in 12-point or 10-point print. In this case, however, assume that we used 8-year-olds in one group and 12-year-olds in another. Notice that one independent variable (print size) has been plotted on the abscissa, while the other (age) is represented by a point and line code. We can no longer just ask whether the independent variable has had an effect on the dependent variable. We must ask three more specific questions: (1) Is there an effect of print size? (2) Is there an effect of age? (3) Does the effect of one variable depend on the level of the other? The first two questions refer to **main effects** and the third to an **interaction**.

MAIN EFFECTS

Because we have two independent variables in this experiment, we have two possible main effects. To discover whether these main effects are significant, we would have to do some statistics. In order to interpret the results of the print size experiment, let's assume that any effect that we can see is statistically significant. To determine whether there is a main effect of print size, we need to ignore any effect of age. Thus, we need to find a point on the graph for each print size that is halfway between the points for each age-group. On the graph in Figure 12-9 under the question "Main effect of print size?" you will see Xs halfway down from each open circle to the corresponding black circle. These Xs represent the effect of print size averaged across the two levels of age, just as if age had never been manipulated. To find out whether there is a difference in reading speed for these two Xs, I have drawn a horizontal line across to the ordinate. The arrow shows you that a difference exists between the two Xs that represent the two print sizes. So the answer to our question is yes, there is a main effect of print size. Now follow the same procedure to determine whether there is a main effect of age.

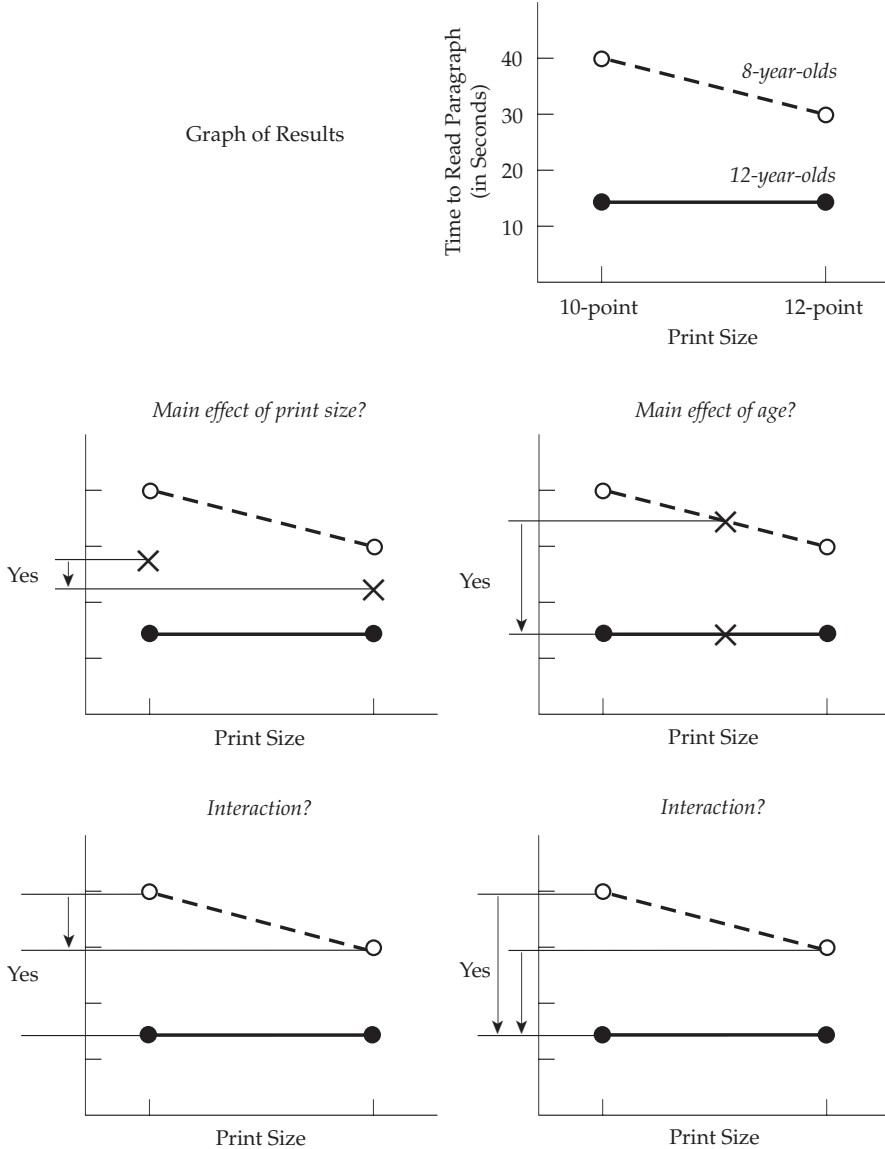


FIGURE 12-9 Main effects and interactions in a 2×2 factorial experiment

INTERACTIONS

If you do not remember what an interaction is, you may want to review the discussion on interactions in Chapter 9, where we considered factorial experiments. Remember that an interaction occurs whenever the effect of one variable depends on the level of another variable. So in the print size experiment

the question is, does the effect of print size depend on the age of the child or, alternatively, does the effect of age depend on the size of print?

In the bottom left graph of Figure 12-9, I have drawn horizontal lines over to the ordinate to discover the effect of going from 10-point to 12-point print size for each age-group. Note that for the 8-year-olds there is a decrease in reading time, but for the 12-year-olds there is no change. Thus, the effect of print size does depend on age, and the answer to our question is yes, there is an interaction. In the bottom right graph, I have asked the question the other way: "Does the effect of age on reading time depend on print size?" If you follow the lines on this graph, you will again see that there is a difference. Of course, there is really only one interaction, so the answers to the two questions will always be the same. But checking both ways will give you some additional practice at interpreting interactions.

Figure 12-10 shows some other possible results for this experiment. Using the same procedure we have been discussing, answer the three questions for each graph.

In attempting to determine whether there are main effects and interactions in the graphs you have been viewing, I hope you noticed that when there are only main effects, the interpretation is pretty straightforward. However, when there is an interaction, the interpretation of the main effects is more complex. For example, for the result graphed in Figure 12-9, the main effect of age on reading time is meaningful even though there is an interaction, because the effect exists at both print sizes. However, although there is also a main effect of print size, the interaction makes its interpretation problematic because the effect exists for only one age-group. The bottom panel of Figure 12-10 illustrates what is sometimes called a **crossover interaction** in which the lines cross each other.¹¹ When main effects with a crossover interaction are present, the main effects are difficult to interpret. In fact, they are typically meaningless.

This discussion has been limited to the simplest type of factorial experiment, when there are only two factors, each of which has only two levels. If an experiment has factors with additional levels or has additional factors, interpreting main effects and interactions is even more difficult. In order to give you just a small taste of this increased complexity, suppose that we added a third factor to our reading experiment, the difficulty of the reading material: difficult or easy. Figure 12-11 illustrates a possible outcome. In this case you would have to ask whether each of the three factors has main effects: age, print size, and difficulty. In addition, you would have to ask whether age interacted with print size, whether age interacted with difficulty, and whether print size interacted with difficulty. Each of these interactions is called a **two-way interaction** because each is concerned with just two factors. To answer these questions you would find the mean between the two points

¹¹ Rosenthal and Rosnow (1981) call a crossover interaction the only possible interaction because they argue that the main effects should be removed before graphing and interpreting, which then leaves only the crossover interaction.

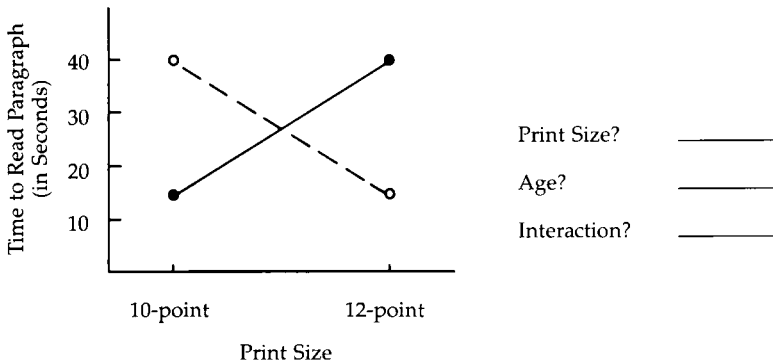
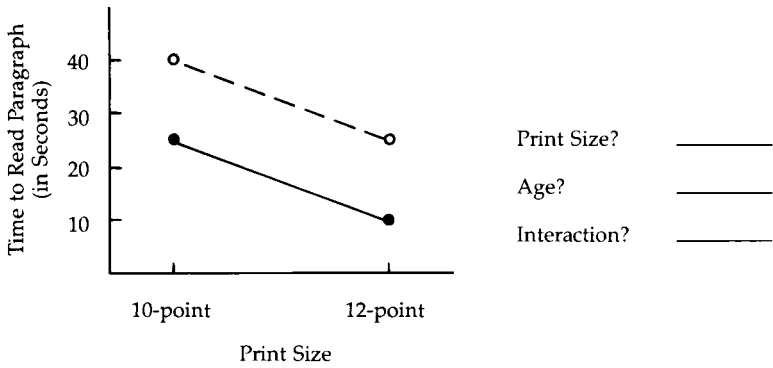
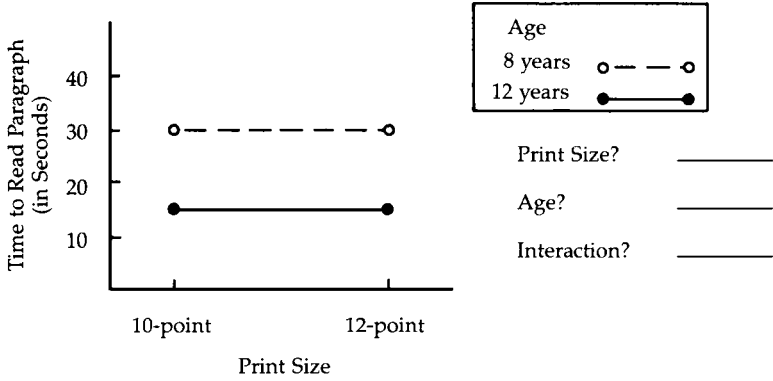


FIGURE 12-10 Graphs of three possible outcomes for a 2×2 factorial experiment. Answer the three questions for each graph. (The answers can be found at the end of the chapter.)

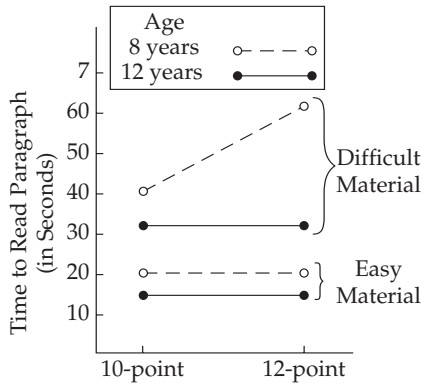


FIGURE 12-11 A graph illustrating a three-way interaction for a $2 \times 2 \times 2$ factorial experiment

across the third factor you were ignoring, much like what we did previously when trying to find main effects. Then you would interpret the two-way interaction as we did in the previous section.

In this example there is also a possible three-way interaction. A **three-way interaction** is present when the nature of each two-way interaction is dependent on the level of the third factor under which it occurs. In the figure, does the two-way interaction between age and print size depend upon whether the reading material is easy or difficult? It does, so there is a three-way interaction. As you can see, when more than two factors are used, interpreting interactions becomes more difficult, although the basic procedures for interpreting your results remain the same.

■ Inferential Statistics

To discuss the general logic of inferential statistics, let's return to the anxiety test scores for the psychology and economics majors. To find out whether the two groups differed in anxiety level, we plotted frequency distributions and calculated means for each group. We found that the mean for the economics majors was 64.7 and for the psychology majors, 55.6. Is this a real difference? Of course it is, you say: How can a difference not be a difference? And for these two samples you are absolutely correct; any difference between samples is a real difference between samples. However, what a psychologist means by the question is not "Is there a real difference between the scores for the two samples that you happened to choose for this experiment?" but rather "Is it likely that there is a difference in anxiety level between the entire population of all psychology majors and the entire population of all economics majors who could have been sampled?" The goal of the experiment is to say something about the two populations that could have been chosen, not just the particular samples that were.

Pretend that you are a bean farmer. You are not doing very well because of bean blight. Bean blight is a mysterious disease that causes many beans to wither and shrivel. To find out whether you can get rid of bean blight, you plant a field with a new type of bean that may resist the blight. After harvesting a blighted field and the new field, you have two bean bins, each containing 10 tons of beans. You want to know if both bean bins are blighted.¹² You obviously do not wish to examine every bean in the two bins, so you decide to take a sample of 100 beans from each bin. You find 12 withered beans in the sample from the bin you know contains blighted beans and seven in the other sample. Obviously, there is a difference between the samples, but you want to know whether there is a difference between the entire populations of the two bins. An **inferential statistical** test can help you answer this question. The “infer” in “inferential” denotes that the test helps you infer whether there is a difference between the populations.

You, as a psychologist, face the same problem that you would face as a bean farmer. You have chosen a randomly selected sample of data from two potentially different populations (the levels of the independent variable), and you want to know whether the behavior of the populations differs.

NULL HYPOTHESIS SIGNIFICANCE TESTING

Most inferential statistical tests are based upon null hypothesis significance testing. I briefly introduced the concept of a null hypothesis in the previous chapter, but I expand on it here. The null hypothesis states that the levels of your independent variable have no effect. For example, suppose you wondered whether there was any difference in mathematical ability between men and women. You might test this question by giving the quantitative section of the SAT test to a sample of men and a sample of women. The null hypothesis in this case would be that there is no difference in mathematical ability between the population of men and the population of women. Even though you may have done the study because you actually think there is a difference, the significance testing procedure you are using requires you to make believe that you think there is no difference. Suppose you then do your research and find that the mean for the sample of men is different from the mean for the sample of women. When you do an inferential statistical test, the question you are asking is how likely it is that this difference in means for the samples could have arisen by chance variation if indeed the null hypothesis is true—that there is no difference in population means.

Because samples are usually chosen randomly from the populations, it is always possible that you could find a sizable difference in the samples even though there is no difference in the population means. Such an outcome would be especially true if your sample sizes were small. The statistical test takes factors such as sample size into effect and tells you how likely it is that you would have found your result if the null hypothesis were true.

¹² Say that quickly three times!

■ TABLE 12-2

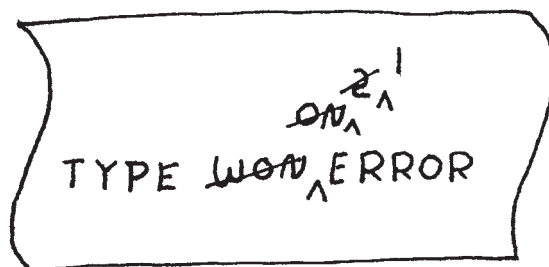
Ways of Being Correct or Making Errors in Null-Hypothesis Testing

	Truth	
	<i>Null hypothesis false</i>	<i>Null hypothesis true</i>
Reject Null	Correct (Power)	Type I Error
Fail to Reject Null	Type II Error	Correct

DECISION ERRORS IN SIGNIFICANCE TESTING

Whenever we are forced to make a yes–no decision based on evidence, we can be right in two ways and wrong in two ways. Suppose for instance that you had evidence from a lie detector test and had to decide whether the person was lying. You could be right by declaring that she told the truth, when she had, or by saying she lied, when she had. However, you could make an error by saying that she lied, when she had told the truth, or that she told the truth, when, in fact, she had lied. Table 12-2 illustrates these outcomes for null hypothesis testing.

As shown in the table, from the probabilistic results of the statistical test you can conclude either that you should reject the null hypothesis or that you should fail to reject it. (Note that as discussed later in this chapter, you cannot say that the null hypothesis should be accepted.) When you come to either of these conclusions, you can be correct, or you can be wrong. The two ways to be wrong have different names. When you reject the null hypothesis when it is true, you make a **Type I error**, and when you fail to reject the null hypothesis when it is false, you make a **Type II error**. The statistical test can tell you how likely it is to make a Type I error; it is called the level of significance.



LEVELS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Although it is probably unfortunate that we adhere to such a strict standard, most psychologists agree that for a result to be significant, the likelihood of

obtaining the observed difference in samples due to chance should be less than one in 20. Thus, if the samples really came from the same population distribution, you would expect to get a significant difference in only one out of 20 (or five out of 100) experiments. Some psychologists are even more careful to avoid saying that there is a difference between populations when there isn't. They will not accept any difference as a real one unless the test indicates that it could be due to chance only one time in 100. These strategies are called testing at the **.05 level of significance** or at the **.01 level of significance**, respectively. When these probabilities are reached or exceeded, the result is said to be **statistically significant**.

When reading a journal article, you will see that these levels of significance are referred to as $p < .05$ or $p < .01$. This term means that the test was found to be statistically significant at the .05 or the .01 level, so that you would expect this difference in the levels of the independent variable less than five times out of 100 or one time out of 100, respectively, if they actually came from the same population. Be sure to notice which way the sign is pointing; $p > .05$ means that the test was not found to be significant.

Also notice how I have phrased these statements. Some students mistakenly think that when you test at a particular level, you can make a statement about how likely it is that you could replicate the result. For instance that if you found a statistically significant result at $p < .05$, you could conclude if you repeated the experiment you would again reject the null hypothesis 95% of the time. From the level of statistical significance you *cannot* draw any conclusion about how likely it is that you could replicate your result!

STATISTICAL POWER

We have been discussing how likely it is that we might conclude something in error, but suppose we are right. Is there any way to know how likely it is that we are right? You will notice that in Table 12-2, I put the word *power* in parenthesis next to the correct decision of rejecting the null hypothesis when it is truly false. Indeed, **power** refers to the probability that a statistical test will allow you to correctly reject the null hypothesis. Although it is beyond the scope of this book, you should know that it is possible to compute the power of a statistical test to determine how likely it is to miss a real difference in the independent variable when the null hypothesis is false (that is, when there is a real difference). For instance, if the power of the test is determined to be .50, we would know that half the times you do this experiment you would fail to reject the null hypothesis. The three factors that affect the power of a test are the level of significance, the size of the underlying effect, and the sample size. Of these, the one the experimenter has most control over is the sample size. For this reason, researchers often compute the power of an experiment before conducting it to determine whether they have a large enough sample.

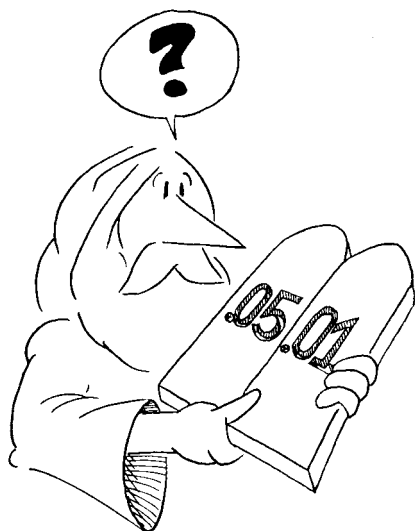
PARAMETRIC VERSUS NONPARAMETRIC TESTS

Many inferential tests are available that help you make this decision. Your choice depends on your experimental design and what test assumptions your data can meet. (See Appendix A for worked examples of some inferential tests.) The most frequently used tests are called **parametric tests**. In these tests the assumption is that if frequency distributions were plotted for the populations of interest, they would be normal distributions. When this assumption cannot be met, you must use **nonparametric tests**.

Inferential tests are obviously an important tool for evaluating the results of psychology experiments. In fact, the development of sophisticated statistical tests has been a major influence in making psychology a respectable science. However, we must realize the limitations of inferential tests.

MISINTERPRETING STATISTICAL TESTS

Some experimenters believe that when a statistical test fails to show a significant difference in the levels of the independent variable, it has shown that the levels are significantly the same. This is wrong! To avoid this error, we should keep in mind that inferential tests are designed to say something about the probability of getting a difference if the samples come from the same population; they tell us nothing about getting a sameness if the samples come from different



populations. Consequently, negative results (ones that are not statistically significant) are seldom published in psychology journals. Our statistical tests are just not designed to tell us the probability that two samples would be this equivalent if they came from different populations; rather, they tell us how probable it is that samples could come from the same population.¹³

A second mistake some investigators make when using inferential tests is to act as though the .05 and .01 levels are chiseled in stone; they wouldn't be caught dead paying any attention to a .06 level. A more realistic approach to significance levels is to treat them for what they are: a way to help you make

¹³ Although my contention that our statistical tests do not test for sameness is true of most psychological literature, technically it is not universally true anymore. Formal statistical tests of equivalence, though largely unfamiliar to psychologists, have been evolving over the past couple of decades. They are beyond the scope of this book, but I would refer those with an interest to read the article "Using Significance Tests to Evaluate Equivalence between Two Experimental Groups" by Rogers, Howard, and Vessey (1993).

a decision. Whenever you make a decision in the face of uncertainty, you have to consider not only the probability of being right or wrong but also the benefits and costs of being right or wrong. In other decisions you do not ignore these factors. For example, if you are deciding whether to fly an airplane, you probably require a higher probability of fair weather than if you are simply deciding whether to carry an umbrella. The benefits and costs are far different. The .05 and .01 levels ignore such benefits and costs. Thus, you should consider the consequences of being right or wrong when you interpret the results of your experiments and not blindly test at the .05 level.

There is some controversy in psychology about whether the term *significant* should ever be modified—for example, by saying “highly significant.” Some argue that the use of such modifiers is wrong because the tradition in psychology is to dichotomize results as *significant* or *nonsignificant* and, more important, that the use of modifiers mistakenly substitutes the size of importance of the effect for the probability of an effect (Harcum, 1989; Levenson, 1990). However, others argue that because probability is a continuum, there is nothing wrong with saying that one effect is more significant than another (Kanekar, 1990). Those on both sides of this argument would probably agree that the key is to avoid mistaking the level of statistical significance for practical significance—the issue we have just been considering. For this reason, when reporting a positive result it is best to say that it is statistically significant to emphasize that you are not necessarily claiming practical significance. And when reporting a negative result, say that it is *statistically nonsignificant* rather than insignificant. The term *insignificant* certainly does imply unimportant.

When you are trying to avoid confusing statistical significance with practical significance, remember the fine old saying that a difference is a difference only if it makes a difference. Suppose you are an employer, and the owners of the Fast-Finger Speed-Reading School are trying to convince you that you should pay them to teach all your employees how to speed-read. They say that they have experimental evidence showing that people read significantly faster after taking their course. Being a skeptic, you ask how much faster. They admit that the study shows that their students read an average of half a word per minute faster, but they insist that this difference is statistically significant. They could well be correct. By using enough participants and collecting enough data, even tiny differences between populations can be shown to be statistically significant. As an employer, though, you care more about practical significance than statistical significance. As a scientist, you should too.

In an attempt to encourage experimenters to consider whether their results are important as well as statistically significant and to get away from rigid testing at the .05 level, Geoffrey Loftus (1993, 1996), a former editor of a major psychology journal, says that statistical hypothesis testing is often not really necessary. He encourages experimenters to plot their data in a graph showing means with associated measures of dispersion, such as standard deviations. He believes that, more often than not, inspection of such a figure will immediately make apparent the significance of the effect without the

necessity of using an inferential statistical test. If this is the case, he discourages the use of such tests.

In the end, evaluating practical significance is a matter of judgment. The tools discussed in this chapter should help you determine when a result is important, but these tools do not establish the importance of the result. You, the experimenter, must do this by using logical arguments to convince other researchers that your differences make a difference.

■ Meta-Analysis

Although you will probably not use it if you are doing a simple experiment, you may run across articles that use a statistical technique called **meta-analysis**. You should know something about meta-analysis to understand these articles. In Chapter 6 we discussed how to do a literature search. When you do a search, you will be struck by how many articles there are on a particular subject. Even for relatively narrowly defined areas, hundreds or thousands of articles make up the literature. The typical way in which researchers who write review articles evaluate and integrate these studies is to do a narrative review. The researcher simply reads all the articles, considers some studies important and others minor, tries to keep in mind the results of at least the important ones, and then tries to summarize the major findings. The way researchers carry out this process has been studied and found to be pretty sloppy (Jackson, 1980). In many cases, different researchers come up with completely different conclusions from the same literature. The problem is that such researchers face an almost impossible task, much like being forced to look at the data for 100 participants in an experiment and draw a conclusion without the help of any statistical analysis. What meta-analysis does is to provide a statistical way of integrating the data from many different studies.

You do not have to understand the details of the statistics to understand the results of a meta-analytic study. If you need more detail, see the books on meta-analysis listed at the end of this chapter. Basically, meta-analysis allows you to take the results of an unlimited number of experiments that investigate the same general problem, even if they use different methodologies, and combine them statistically. For example, Lipsey and Wilson (1993) were interested in whether psychological, educational, and behavioral treatments were effective. They examined a decade and a half's research on this topic—302 studies. The basic datum for each study in a meta-analytic review is the **mean treatment effect size**. It is very easy to compute this statistic; it is the mean of the control group, subtracted from the mean of the treatment group and then divided by the standard deviation of the control group. So in Lipsey and Wilson's review, regardless of how the dependent variable was measured or how the treatment was administered for each study, the mean for the group not undergoing treatment was subtracted from the mean for the group undergoing treatment, and this number was divided by the standard deviation of

the first group. Using these mean treatment effects as data, the authors did statistics on them to determine how likely it was that these effects could have been due to chance. The data can also be reanalyzed in various ways. For example, all the studies using a particular experimental design can be analyzed separately, or those judged to be of high quality can be analyzed separately from those judged to be of low quality. These smaller-scale analyses allow the researcher to evaluate whether the initial grouping of all the studies was appropriate.

Some researchers have been critical of meta-analysis (Wilson, 1985), claiming that the technique is sometimes used to combine the results of many experiments, each of which has serious flaws. In such cases, the outcome of the meta-analysis would be as flawed as the original studies. However, meta-analysis also has its supporters (Mann, 1990) who argue that a sophisticated approach including various subanalyses minimizes the possibility of combining flawed studies into a super-flawed result. Meta-analysis certainly seems to be here to stay. When done properly, it can be a valuable tool for integrating the results of an otherwise unwieldy multitude of research.

■ Using Computers to Help Interpret Results

Computers are used in many areas of psychological experimentation, such as doing a literature search, presenting stimuli, and recording responses. However, the most widespread use of computers is for statistical data analysis. Computers are particularly valuable for this task because they can quickly store and manipulate large sets of numbers. In recent years the availability of computers has increased, and powerful statistical software now allows most statistical tests to be computed on desktop or laptop machines.

Although the net effect of computers on statistical computation has been overwhelmingly positive, there could be problems associated with the use of computers. One problem is that because computers take some of the manual effort out of doing statistics, people sometimes act as if they need not devote much mental effort either. Yet it is especially important to understand how statistical tests work when you first start using them. Computers allow you to bypass this understanding. If someone shows you the steps necessary for entering data and then the computer gives you back results, it is possible for you to go through the whole process without ever understanding what you did. I require my students to calculate each statistical test once by hand before using a computer, so that they will understand what happens inside that little magic box.

Computers are also so perfect, hardly ever making a mistake, that they lull us into thinking that whatever they tell us is *the truth*. But the adage holds: Garbage in, garbage out. You need to remember the lessons about interpreting results that you have learned in this chapter. Also, you need to know the assumptions and limitations of the various statistics that you may use (see Appendix A). Finally, you should not accept the output from a computer at face value before making some simple checks. Although it is

unlikely that the computer made a mistake, you might have made a mistake in setting up and entering the data into the computer. A computer is fast and accurate, but it is exceedingly stupid. The computer does not care in the slightest if you made an error and accidentally told it that you were going to enter the data for condition A before condition B, and then didn't enter in that order. The computer will not check to see whether you made such an error; you will have to check.

One way to make a quick check of your statistical results is to look at the descriptive statistics that your computer gives you to see whether they make sense. In our print size experiment, for instance, we expect that the 8-year-olds will read more slowly than the 12-year-olds. We would be wary of the analysis if such logical expectations were not upheld, which could be an indication that we had made a mistake in setting up the data for the computer. We could also calculate some means for a small part of the data by hand to see whether the result agreed with the computerized output. In the print size example we might decide to compute a mean for one age-group, for one paragraph, at a particular print size to see whether that mean agreed with the one listed in the output. Several small computations would require only a couple of minutes, but they would greatly increase our confidence that the output was correct.

I hope this general discussion has put the role of computers in perspective. Computers and statistical packages are simply tools that can be used to make data interpretation easier. There is no reason why computers should strike fear in your heart. They are your *friends* and are getting friendlier all the time. But as with all complex tools, care should be taken to make sure that they are being used correctly. These computer friends are not at all flexible and require you to compulsively follow their rules. They believe what you say, even when you are wrong, and they have no common sense for determining when you are wrong. To stay out of trouble, you should understand their limitations as well as their capabilities.

■ Summary

Once you complete an experiment, you must interpret the data listed on the response sheets. A useful first step is to plot a **frequency distribution** illustrating the number of data points occurring within categories of the dependent variable. Sometimes these distributions are similar to a symmetrical bell-shaped distribution called a **normal distribution**. Others are **bimodal**, with two most frequent categories; **skewed** by having more scores in one tail of the distribution; or **truncated** by having one tail of the distribution missing. Three commonly used statistics describe the central tendency of a distribution: The **mode** is the most frequently occurring category, the **median** is the middle score, and the **mean** is the center of gravity for the distribution. Two statistics are commonly used to describe the dispersion of a distribution: The **range** is the difference between the highest and lowest

scores, and the **standard deviation** and sometimes the **variance** describe the dispersion of distributions that are approximately normal.

Graphs illustrate the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The levels of the independent variable are put on the horizontal axis, the **abscissa**, and the values of the dependent variable are put on the vertical axis, the **ordinate**. A **bar graph** can be used to illustrate data points that represent qualitatively different categories. Either a **histogram** or a **functional line graph** can be used to illustrate continuous variables. In describing functions, you can indicate whether they are **linear** or **curvilinear**, **positive** or **negative**, **monotonic** or **nonmonotonic**, **positively accelerated** or **negatively accelerated**, or **asymptotic**. The strength of an experimental relationship can be illustrated in a **scatterplot**, or if the relationship is linear, you can calculate a **correlation coefficient** and a **coefficient of determination**.

To interpret the results of a factorial experiment, you must determine whether a **main effect** is present—an effect of one factor on the dependent variable at an average value of the other factors. In addition, you must also determine whether the effect of one variable is different depending on the levels of the other variables. Such differences are called **interactions** and, particularly with **crossover interactions**, can make interpretation of main effects difficult. When there are three or more factors, interpreting interactions can be even more challenging because there are several **two-way interactions**, as well as **three-way interactions**, and with more factors even higher-order interactions.

Inferential statistics are used to infer how likely it is that the difference between data samples is due to chance rather than due to a real difference in populations (levels of the independent variable). So for statistical purposes a **null hypothesis** is set up stating that levels of the independent variable have no effect. The statistical test then determines the probability that the difference found in the data samples could be due to chance if the null hypothesis is true. Once a test determines whether the null hypothesis is true, two types of errors could happen: a **Type I error**, in which the null hypothesis is rejected when it is true, and a **Type II error**, in which the null hypothesis is not rejected when it is false. The null hypothesis should be rejected when it is false, and the probability that an inferential test will do this correctly is called its statistical **power**, which is especially dependent upon the sensitivity of the experiment and the number of participants. For an effect to be declared **statistically significant**—the probability that the difference is due to chance—Type I error, usually must be less than .05 or .01. **Parametric tests** assume that population distributions are normal, whereas **nonparametric** tests do not. Researchers sometimes misuse statistical tests by equating nonsignificant results with equivalence of conditions, by overemphasizing the .05 and .01 levels of significance, or by confusing statistical significance with practical significance.

Meta-analysis is a statistical technique for combining the results of many experiments. A single statistic called the **mean treatment effect size** is computed for each experiment, and these effect sizes are analyzed to determine how likely it is that such effects could be due to chance.

Computers can often be used to carry out statistical analyses. However, care must be taken to ensure that the assumptions of the statistical tests are met and that the data have been properly entered into the program. The output must be checked for internal consistency and accuracy before it can be accepted.

Answers to the questions in Figure 12-10:

<i>Top graph:</i>	Print size?	<i>no</i>
	Age?	<i>yes</i>
	Interaction?	<i>no</i>
<i>Middle graph:</i>	Print size?	<i>yes</i>
	Age?	<i>yes</i>
	Interaction?	<i>no</i>
<i>Bottom graph:</i>	Print size?	<i>no</i>
	Age?	<i>no</i>
	Interaction?	<i>yes</i>

SUGGESTED BOOKS ON STATISTICS

For the Beginning Student

- Hinkle, D. E., Wiersma, W., & Jurs, S. G. (1988). *Applied statistics for the behavioral sciences*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Kirk, R. E. (1990). *Statistics: An introduction*. Fort Worth, TX: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

For the Advanced Student

- Keppel, G., & Zeddeck, S. (1989). *Data analysis for research designs: Analysis of variance and multiple regression/correlation approaches*. New York: W. H. Freeman.
- Maxwell, S. E., & Delaney, H. D. (1990). *Designing experiments and analyzing data: A model comparison perspective*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Myers, R. H. (1971). *Response surface methodology*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

SUGGESTED BOOKS ON META-ANALYSIS

- Cook, T. D., Cooper, H., Cordray, D. S., Hartmann, H., Hedges, L. V., Light, R. J., et al. (Eds.). (1992). *Meta-analysis for explanation: A casebook*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Glass, G. V., McGaw, B., & Smith, M. L. (1981). *Meta-analysis in social research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Rosenthal, R. (1991). *Meta-analytic procedures for social research* (Rev. ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

1.3

How to Report Experimental Results

Self-satisfaction is the enemy of good writing . . . Being able to read one's own work critically is a skill that is as important as being able to construct a beautiful sentence or put together a cogent argument.

RACHEL TOOR (2006)

We are all blind seekers after truth
Confused by the noisy rabble of words
Whether we shall ever say what we mean
Or mean what we say
We know not,
And only our doing
Will teach us in its hour.

B. DECKER (1967)

As we all know, Ten Commandments were accepted and published. What you may not know is that Moses asked that 34 others be revised and resubmitted; 16 more are still in press as a result of the lengthy publication lag.

PALLADINO & HANDELSMAN (1995)

What appears in print is a sanitized, rationalized account of the research that conforms it to the standard story schema. Although experienced investigators sometimes can guess the probable real story behind the published report by reading between the lines, the written presentation of the research contains none of this.

MADIGAN, JOHNSON, & LINTON (1995)

A classic philosophical debate goes something like this: If a tree falls in the forest and nobody is there to hear it, does it make a sound? The question is whether a person has to hear a sound for the sound to be a sound. What do you think? In reporting research, we can ask a similar question: Is research research if nobody hears about it? The metaphysical answer to either question depends on how you want to define the terms. Because we are concerned with a practical answer, we can at least say that unreported research might as well not have been done. The ultimate goal of research is not doing experiments but building a scientific body of knowledge. If other scientists do not

know about your experiments, your results cannot be used as building blocks. An experimental report is the way of making your results public so that science can benefit from your research.

Because your experimental report is the product of your research, you should try to make it a high-quality product. Although an elegantly written experimental report cannot save a bad piece of research, a poorly written report can effectively destroy a good piece of research. I know researchers who, if one judges from informal discussions of their research, seem to do well-thought-out experiments on important problems, but their ability to communicate on paper is so poor that their work is unknown. Much good research is probably lost this way.

Even instructors in writing courses have a difficult time teaching people how to write orderly thoughts. I do not have enough room in this chapter to teach you much about writing in general.¹ William Safire (1979) offers the most concise instructions I have seen for writing:

Remember to never split an infinitive. The passive voice should never be used. Do not put statements in the negative form. Verbs has to agree with their subjects. Proofread carefully to see if you any words out. If you reread your work, you will find on rereading that a great deal of repetition can be avoided by rereading and editing. A writer must not shift your point of view. And don't start a sentence with a conjunction. Don't overuse exclamation marks!!! Place pronouns as close as possible, especially in long sentences, as of 10 or more words, to their antecedents. Writing carefully, dangling participles must be avoided. If any word is improper at the end of a sentence, a linking verb is. Take the bull by the hand and avoid mixed metaphors. Avoid trendy locutions that sound flaky. Everyone should be careful to use a singular pronoun with singular nouns in their writing. Always pick on the correct idiom. The adverb always follows the verb. Last but not least, avoid cliches like the plague: seek viable alternatives.

The goal of this chapter is quite limited. I describe the parts of a research report, give you some suggestions for determining whether what you write is readable, and provide an annotated sample report.

Research reports should convey information efficiently by using a consistent format. With this principle in mind, the American Psychological Association (APA) (2001) has compiled a set of rules for writing a research report: the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*.² A well-thumbed copy of this book should sit on every experimental psychologist's desk. This publication started out in 1929 as a 7-page journal article and has now become a 439-page book. As you can imagine, it is quite a task to try mastering all the rules involved in APA-style writing. However, the

¹ If you seem to have a difficult time with your writing, you might find Strunk and White's *Elements of Style* (1979) helpful.

² Be sure to use the *fifth* edition of the *Publication Manual* to write your reports. There were some changes between the *fourth* and *fifth* editions. I have incorporated examples of most of these changes into the sample report on pages 287–299, but you will need to refer to the manual to find the many possible variations.

work you put into this effort will be worthwhile. This style manual is a standard reference and is widely used. For instance, the publisher of the book you are reading asks its authors to use the manual. Unless your instructors in other courses specify a particular style manual to use, you would probably be safe in using the rules from this manual. In your psychology classes, even for a class project, you should follow the general guidelines from the *Publication Manual*. Although I obviously cannot discuss all the topics covered in this tome, I will mention the most important rules and point out where new investigators often make mistakes.³

■ How APA Style Differs from Other Writing

Before I go into many of the rules from the *Publication Manual*, the rules collectively called *APA style*, I want to discuss some of the differences between APA style and the writing style of other disciplines. Some of these traditions in psychology may not be immediately obvious to you and, in some cases, are only implied in the *Publication Manual*. Psychology professors sometimes fail to emphasize these differences because the style becomes so ingrained after reading hundreds of journal articles. It is important for students to be aware of these subtle traditions because what you learned about writing in some of your other classes might not be acceptable in a psychology class. Much of the information I mention is based on research by Madigan, Johnson, and Linton (1995) that compared the language used in two psychology journals with that used in the *Publication of the Modern Language Association* and the *Journal of American History*.

LANGUAGE

Research psychologists try to make the language they use transparent. By this statement I mean that the language you use should not get in the way of the information you are trying to convey. In the humanities, the language and thoughts in written articles are often considered linked in such a way that the words chosen are as important as the thoughts being presented. In psychology the language is expected to be as straightforward and unobtrusive as possible. For example, even though the *Publication Manual* recommends against it, much of scientific writing has traditionally been done in a passive voice rather than an active voice—so “the data were analyzed” rather than “I analyzed the data.” Though this may seem to be a subtle distinction, the passive voice does put the emphasis on the data rather than on the investigator. If you try too hard to say things in a creative and unusual way in your

³ For students who want to become real experts on APA style, a book titled *Mastering APA Style: Student's Workbook and Training Guide* (2002) is available from the American Psychological Association. For instructors another book, *Mastering APA Style: Instructor's Resource Guide* (2002), is also available. These and other useful materials, such as *Concise Rules of APA Style* (2005), can be found at <http://www.apastyle.org>.

scientific writing, other researchers will probably not appreciate your literary efforts, and this writing style may even lead them to question the seriousness of your work.

CITATIONS

Despite citing other people's work nearly as much as historians and far more than literary critics do, psychologists make this citation in a very different way. Writers in the humanities use many direct quotes; on average, historians use a direct quote once in about every 60 words of text, whereas psychologists on average use a direct quote fewer than once in every 3000 words (Madigan et al., 1995). Rather than directly quoting authors, psychologists paraphrase them. As noted in the previous paragraph, this difference probably reflects a difference in the way language is used. Historians believe that the way something is said is as important as what is being said. Psychologists believe that the data, theories, and logical arguments stand on their own, independent of the specific words used. Students sometimes do not understand why their literature professor lowers their grade for paraphrasing cited work, whereas their psychology professor lowers their grade for using too many direct quotes. Unfortunately, the world is not always fair, and to be successful you will have to learn these subtle differences. However, let me emphasize that proper citation is as important when you are paraphrasing another person's ideas as it is when you are using a direct quote. If you fail to properly cite an author, it is **plagiarism** in either case. The commonly accepted definition of plagiarism is the appropriation (stealing) of the language, ideas, and thoughts of another author. Plagiarism can lead to very serious consequences whether it occurs in an academic setting or in a professional setting. See Chapter 5 for a more thorough discussion of plagiarism.

SUBHEADINGS

As is discussed in the next section, APA style requires a specific linear ordering of the sections of a report. Even within those sections psychologists use a lot of subheadings to announce the introduction of new topics. These subheadings minimize the transitional passages required to introduce new topics and allow research reports to be concise. Subheadings are far less common in the humanities. All this structure imposed on a research report emphasizes what is called a *story schema*, which means that by telling our research stories within a consistent structure we provide a means of communication between the author and the reader, creating specific expectations about forthcoming information. Again in keeping with a de-emphasis on language, all this standardized structure may produce a less entertaining literary piece, but one that consistently and concisely conveys information.

FOOTNOTES

Psychologists rarely use footnotes, especially what are called *discursive footnotes*.⁴ The footnotes psychologists use typically clarify a point being made or add some information that may not be of interest to many readers. Historians, on the other hand, use about four or five times as many discursive footnotes as psychologists do, and literary critics use double that number (Madigan et al., 1995). By using these footnotes historians and literary critics sometimes establish a parallel text that allows a discussion to take place on several levels at the same time. Psychologists believe that this type of footnote distracts the reader from the clear, concise, linear format he or she expects.

DISAGREEMENTS

When historians and literary critics disagree with their colleagues, they are sometimes pretty outspoken about their differences, sometimes to the point that the disagreement becomes personal. One author may accuse another of being “naive” or “failing to fully think an issue through” or even of “willful misinterpretation.” Psychologists are encouraged to keep personalities out of disagreements. They are much more likely to couch their differences in terms of the data, the methodology, or the theories rather than to directly criticize another researcher. This tradition of civility to other investigators may come from the recognition that in science we are collectively engaged in an effort to build a coherent body of knowledge. Failure to cooperate could cause the body of knowledge to be poorly constructed or cause delays in its construction. De-emphasizing the individual helps emphasize the data and theories that make up this body of knowledge.

HEDGED CONCLUSIONS

Psychologists are much more likely to use hedge words in their academic writing; psychologists on average use more than 10 times as many hedge words as historians and literary critics do (Madigan et al., 1995). Here are some typical hedge words and phrases: *is consistent with, lends support to, may be considered, may be related to*. Psychologists use most of these hedge words when stating their conclusions. In most cases the researcher is hedging not the data but the theory. As we discussed in Chapter 3, theories are essentially impossible to prove and are difficult, but not impossible, to disprove. So, even the strongest data may be only weakly linked to theory. Psychologists recognizing the weakness of these linkages properly hedge their conclusions. When scientists state their conclusions too dogmatically, their scientific colleagues may accuse them of being naive (but in a civil way!).

⁴ To emphasize this point I'll use a footnote but not a discursive one. The dictionary says *discursive* means digressive or rambling. A discursive footnote is one that is a bit off the main point of the discussion.

I hope this discussion of some less obvious traditions in APA style will help you understand why psychologists write in a way that is a bit different from what you have learned in other courses. It will still take some time for you to fully understand some of the subtle cultural differences in the way different disciplines use language. This understanding will come with experience in the field, particularly as you read the research literature and begin your own writing.

■ Parts of a Report

All experimental reports should contain certain standard sections in proper order. Otherwise we would have to be like the old preacher who said of his sermons: “First I tell ‘em what I’m gonna tell ‘em, then I tell ‘em, then I tell ‘em what I told ‘em.” All experimental reports follow a standard pattern, so we do not need to use much space “telling ‘em what we’re gonna tell ‘em.” Not only does the standardized structure improve writing efficiency, but the consistent organization also allows the reader interested in only one section, such as the method or results, to quickly find the required information. The parts of a report are listed in the following outline and described in the following sections:

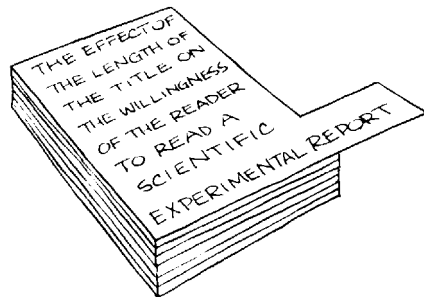
- I. Title page
 - A. Title
 - B. Author(s)
 - C. Affiliation(s)
 - D. Running head
- II. Abstract page
- III. Body of report
 - A. Introduction
 1. Background
 2. Literature review
 3. Statement of purpose
 - B. Method
 1. Participants
 2. Apparatus/materials
 3. Procedure
 - C. Results
 1. Verbal statement of results
 2. References to tables and figures
 3. Descriptive and inferential statistics
 - D. Discussion
 1. Relationship between stated purpose and results
 2. Theoretical or methodological contribution
 3. Future directions for research

- IV. References
- V. Author notes (if any)
- VI. Footnotes (if any)
- VII. Tables
- VIII. Figure captions
- IX. Figures

TITLE

During the first two months after publication, about half the research reports in major psychology journals are likely to be read by fewer than 200 psychologists (Garvey & Griffith, 1971). The people who do read a report have probably selected it because of the *title*. Most psychologists regularly scan the title pages of several journals looking for current research that might interest them. Most of the key words used in a literature search (Chapter 6) are also chosen from the title. Thus, in some respects, the title is the most important part of your report; if your title conveys little information or the wrong information, you may lose most readers even before they know what you did.

The two most helpful suggestions for creating a title are contradictory: (1) Put in as much information as possible and (2) make it as short as possible. Most titles should mention the major independent variables of interest and the dependent variable. You should also identify the general area of research if it is not obvious from the variables. The *Publication Manual* says that titles should be no longer than 10 to 12 words. Most titles should be considerably shorter than this.⁵



One way to create a title is to start with a long version and then eliminate words until you are absolutely unwilling to shorten it any further. As an example, suppose we needed a title for the print size experiment discussed in the earlier chapters. As a first step we might start with this: "An Experiment Examining the Effect of the Size of Print on the Time to Read a Standard Paragraph for Children of Various Ages." Now let's shorten it. We can immediately eliminate "An Experiment Examining the Effect of" because these words give the reader no new information. We can also eliminate most of the prepositions (*of, on, to, for*) by rearranging the words. In this case, it is also more efficient to identify the specific levels of the independent variable (*8- and 12-year-olds*) than to use a general descriptor (*children of various ages*).

⁵ Although I have no evidence to back it up, it seems to me that in general, the better known the article, the shorter the title. Perhaps this effect is due to the memory span of the reader, or maybe good writers work at creating short titles. Perhaps I should have called this book *Book*.

After a little work, the title might read: "Print Size Effects on Reading Speed of 8- and 12-Year-Olds." This title contains most of the original information but is certainly much shorter.

The use of a colon can often shorten the title and allow elimination of some words. If you examine the titles in the references at the end of this book, you will find many examples. For example, there is a title by Johnson, "Pupillary Responses during a Short-Term Memory Task: Cognitive Processing, Arousal, or Both?" Without the colon the title would be longer—for example, "Are Pupillary Responses during a Short-Term Memory Task an Indication of Cognitive Processing, Arousal, or Both?" There is also an article by Greenwald entitled "Within-Subjects Designs: To Use or Not to Use?" He could have opted for "Should Within-Subjects Designs Be Used or Not?" In this case, the use of a colon does not shorten the title, but it does allow a more interesting, Shakespeareanesque version of the question.

AUTHOR AND INSTITUTION

After the title, list the *author* or authors, followed by the *institution* where the research was done. Listing the institution where the research was done is important both because the institution should get credit for providing resources and because it takes responsibility for maintaining proper ethics and participant care. When there are multiple authors, list only those who have made substantial scientific contributions to the study. People who have simply helped collect or analyze some of the data should be acknowledged in the author note rather than listed as authors. Generally, the person who took primary responsibility for the research will also write the research report and should be listed as first author. Other authors' names should then follow, ordered by the size of their contribution. However, the relative size of a researcher's contribution is not always obvious, and disputes can arise, particularly in the case of student-faculty collaborations. It has been suggested that the best way to avoid these disputes is to discuss the issues early in the research process (Fine & Kurdek, 1993). Among the issues to consider are the nature of professional and nonprofessional contributions required by the research, the specific abilities of each person, and the duties assigned to



each. Although such agreements may need to be renegotiated as the research progresses, having a consensus up front should prevent most serious disputes later.

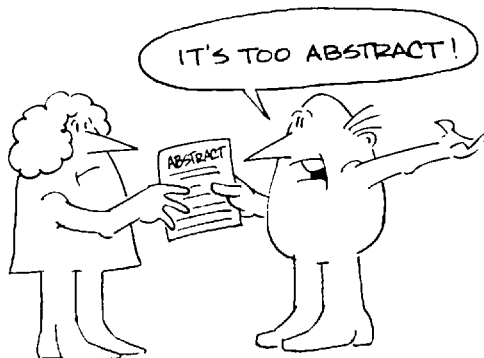
RUNNING HEADS AND PAGE HEADERS

The *running head* is just a shortened title printed at the top of the title page to identify the article. It should be no longer than 50 characters including spaces and punctuation. **Page headers** consist of the first couple of words of the title and are printed on the upper right-hand corner of each page just to the left of the page number. In case the pages of the manuscript become separated, the page header will allow it to be reassembled.

ABSTRACT

The **abstract** is the second most important part of the report. Once readers choose your paper because the title is of interest, they will next read the abstract, in the journal, in *Psychological Abstracts*, or in *PsyINFO*. Like a door-to-door salesperson, the title may get your foot in the door, but the abstract can get you an invitation into the house.

The abstract should be a condensed version of the complete report. Most investigators wait to write the abstract until the rest of the paper is finished, although it appears immediately after the title in the final report. In the abstract you should introduce the purpose of the research, name the variables, briefly present the method, mention the important results, and discuss the implications of the results. To do all this, you are allowed to use a maximum of only 120 words. As you can see, you must cover a lot of information in only a few words. Again, you may find it useful to write a long first draft and then start eliminating unnecessary information and parts of speech. Make sure that the abstract is still comprehensible and contains complete sentences (unlike a title). If the abstract is too long even after this first editing, you will have to make some choices about the relative importance of the remaining information,



eliminating the least important material until your abstract meets the length requirement.

Some investigators treat titles and abstracts as afterthoughts. They dash them off after having taken great pains with the body of the paper. In this discussion I have tried to convince you that the title and abstract are the two most important parts of your experimental report. Give them your best effort.

INTRODUCTION

The **introduction** is used to describe the current state of the body of knowledge. Because it is always the first section of the body of the report, it doesn't need a heading. You should assume that the reader has some familiarity with your area of research, so you need to mention only the few experiments most relevant to the one you have done. When you cite an experiment, give only the author's name and date of the article in the report body, and give the complete citation in the references section.⁶ Describe these key experiments in just enough detail to set the stage for your experiment. A good introduction is a miniature literature review that leaves your readers with the feeling that they know what experiment should be done next—the one you did.

After reviewing the supporting literature, you should state the purpose, or object, of your experiment. This statement should specify the relationship between the independent and dependent variables that you investigated. For example: "The purpose of this experiment was to determine whether print size would have the same effect on reading speed for 8-year-olds as it has for 12-year-olds." If you can predict the outcome of the experiment from the literature review or from a theoretical argument, state that prediction as a hypothesis. However, you must explain the logic behind your hypothesis because the purpose of predicting an outcome is to make the results easier to interpret later in the report. If your hypothesis is an unsupported hunch, don't waste the reader's time.

METHOD

At this point, your readers should know why you did what you did. Now you must tell them what you did. The **method** section should contain enough detail so that the reader could replicate your experiment. However, you must use your judgment about which details are relevant to the experimental outcome. For example, in the print size experiment, you would not need to specify the exact dimensions of the room in which the paragraphs were read, although you would certainly specify the dimensions of the paper on which each paragraph was typed. Because it is impossible to mention each circumstance from

⁶ A note about how to cite experiments: For one author, just give the author's name and the date of the article: "Jones (1967) found . . ." or "It was found (Jones, 1967). . . ." For two authors, use both last names: "Jones and Smith (1971) found . . ." or "It was found (Jones & Smith, 1971) that. . ." For more than two authors, use all the names the first time you cite the research and the first author's name followed by "et al." thereafter: "Johnson et al. (1972) also found. . . ."

the infinite set of circumstances, you should limit yourself to those that could logically have been expected to influence the results.

The method section is usually divided into several subsections. A typical report has three subsections, although you may wish to use additional subsections if your experiment calls for more.

Participants

The **participants**, or subjects,⁷ subsection should specify who the participants were. Were they students, pilots, children? What gender were they? How many did you use, and how did you select them? (Were they volunteers? Were they satisfying a class requirement? Were they paid?) Be sure to state this information in a way that a reader in Samoa could understand. (“Participants were students from PSY 204 . . .” Eh? What’s PSY 204?) For animals, be sure to report their genus, species, supplier, and housing conditions, along with their age and sex. If you eliminated data for any individuals (see Chapter 5), you should indicate the basis for this decision.

Apparatus/Materials

The **apparatus/materials** subsection should describe the equipment or materials you used in your experiment. If you used a standard psychological apparatus, you need only give the general name, the manufacturer, and the model number. (“A Scientific Prototype two-channel tachistoscope, Model 800-F, was used.”) Describe any custom-built apparatus in enough detail so that the reader could construct a similar one. (“The slides were back-projected on a Plexiglas panel 15 cm high and 20 cm wide, mounted vertically 30 cm from the participant.”)⁸ Be sure to make a note of all the measurements at the time you do the experiment. Reconstructing these details after the experiment is often difficult and sometimes impossible.

Procedure

The **procedure** subsection should specify exactly what happened to each participant during the experiment. When writing this section, imagine that your naive, innocent participant has just walked into the experimental room. What happens from that point on? What instructions did you give? You can usually paraphrase these details unless they were a major part of the experimental manipulation. What events happened during a trial, in what order, and with what timing? How many trials were presented? Were they in blocks or sessions? Were trials randomized or counterbalanced? Exactly what was measured, and how was it measured and recorded? What type of experimental design did you use? Why did you choose to use the procedure described?

⁷ When reading experimental reports published before 1974, you will see the words *subject* and *experimenter* abbreviated as *S* and *E*, respectively. These abbreviations are no longer acceptable. In fact, the term *subject* should be avoided if possible and replaced with a more specific term such as *students*, *children*, or *rats*, or if a generic term is necessary, *participants*, *respondents*, or *individuals*.

⁸ Report all measurements in metric units. If the object was manufactured in nonmetric units, report them as such but insert the metric equivalents in parentheses. (“The panel was 3 ft [0.91 m] in width.”)

The procedure section is one of the most difficult sections to write well because by the time you write the report, you have become intimately familiar with each detail, and the procedure now seems so obvious and straightforward to you. By all means have someone who has no idea what you did read the procedure section and then tell you in his or her own words what you did. Then correct any false impressions, and try it with someone else. Eventually the two accounts will correspond, and at that point the procedure section is complete.

RESULTS

You should typically begin the **results** section of the report by describing your data. Provide raw data only when illustrating a general finding or when showing the results of small- N experiments. Descriptive statistics should be reported first.⁹ When you report a measure of central tendency such as a mean or median, you should usually include a measure of dispersion as well, such as a standard deviation. If you have only a few measures to report, you can include them in the text: "The response times for the 1-, 2-, and 3-s foreperiods were 50, 362, and 391 ms, respectively." However, use a table or figure when you must report more than five or six data points.

Investigators typically use tables to show the results of main effects and to give exact values of the dependent variable when these are important. You should type tables on pages separate from the text. The short sample report toward the end of this chapter shows how a table should be organized. For specific problems, refer to the *Publication Manual* or to *Presenting your findings: A practical guide for creating tables* (Nicol & Pexman, 1999).

Use figures sparingly, for they take up journal space and are even more costly to print than are tables.¹⁰ However, as we saw in Chapter 12, figures are a great way of showing interactions and for illustrating trends in the data. In most cases, figures are preferable to tables because readers can generally extract and remember information better from figures than from tables. Here are some general rules to follow in drawing figures:

1. Label the abscissa and ordinate, and specify the units of measurement.¹¹
2. Draw the ordinate two thirds to three fourths as long as the abscissa.
3. Make 0 the smallest mark on the ordinate. If you must break the ordinate to save space (for example, if you have no response times between 0 and 0.3 seconds), indicate the break by a double slashed line at that point.

⁹ I have seen many student reports in which the first sentence in the results section was something like "The effect of variable A was significant, $t(18) = 4.7, p < .01$." Reporting the results of an inferential statistical test before describing the data is a little like reporting the results of a ball game by saying that "one of the teams won." Who won? By how much? Or in the experiment: In which direction was the effect? What was the size of the effect?

¹⁰ A figure is any visual representation of data that cannot be set in standard type. Graphs are the most common figures in experimental reports.

¹¹ New investigators commonly forget this step. To avoid this error, set a rule for yourself that you will never put in a data point until you have labeled the axes.

4. Use point and line codes to indicate the independent variables not listed on the abscissa. Make these codes consistent throughout the report. Do not rely on different colors to make your distinctions. Colors should be used only in coloring books!
5. Do not put too many curves on a single figure, usually no more than three or four.
6. Draw your figures on pages separate from the text.

These rules are designed to help you make your results clear and to minimize the possibility of distortion. However, you may find that you will need to bend them occasionally to keep from distorting your data.

Usually figures submitted to journals for formal publication can now be produced using a computer program and a printer. But be sure, if you do your own figures, that you use a good printer and that the line sizes and letter sizes are appropriate even if the figure must be reduced for publication. To avoid getting parts of the figure too small during a reduction, letter and number sizes should vary by no more than four points (for example, from 14-point type to 10-point type).

Once the data have been described, the results of inferential statistical tests can be reported. First tell the reader which test or tests you used and how you mapped your variables onto the test, if this fact is not obvious. The results of these tests are reported in a standard way. For example, if the result of a *t*-test¹² done on two groups of 10 subjects was 4.7, which you found to be significant at the .01 level, you would report it as follows: "The difference between groups was found to be significant, $t(18) = 4.7, p < .01$."¹³ Report other tests in the same way, first stating the symbol for the test statistic (italicized if not a Greek letter), followed by the degrees of freedom in parentheses, an equals sign, the result of the test calculation, a comma, a lowercase *p* italicized, a < sign (or, for nonsignificant results, a > sign), and finally the testing level.¹⁴ Many journals now require the reporting of the **effect size**, as well as standard tests of statistical significance. Reporting an effect size lets the reader determine not only whether any difference you found in your sample was likely to reflect a difference in the population but also whether the difference you found was large enough to be important. You can compute an effect size quite easily, typically using the values you obtained from your inferential test. You should consult a statistics book or your instructor to find the exact formula to use.

In the results section you should not interpret the results, other than giving the information needed for clarification. Use the results section for

¹² A *t*-test is an inferential test that indicates whether the means of two samples are significantly different from each other; its result is a number. By comparing this number with other numbers listed in a table, you can determine whether the means are statistically different at a particular probability level (for example, a probability level of .01, $p < .01$).

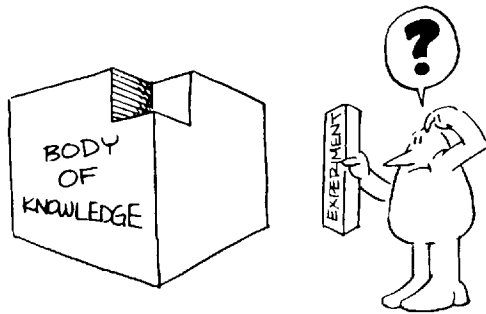
¹³ The number in parentheses is the degrees of freedom for the *t*-test. Most statistical tests have a degrees-of-freedom term, either a single number or two numbers. You will find out how to determine this number when you learn these tests.

¹⁴ In Appendix A, at the end of the worked examples for each statistical test, I have shown how to report the test result in the text of the manuscript.

stating *what* you found; the discussion section is for explaining *why* you think you found what you found, and in the standard format, never the twain should meet. In some cases, if the information can be presented more clearly or efficiently, you may combine the results and discussion sections. If you do that, be sure to clearly use this heading: Results and Discussion Section.

DISCUSSION

In your introduction you described what the body of knowledge consisted of and where it needed to be expanded. Your results section then provided a new building block.¹⁵ You now have to describe how the new block fits into the structure and how the new structure differs from the old. Thus, the **discussion** section is the place where you update the body of knowledge with your results.



In most cases, in the introduction section you would have identified competing theories or stated hypotheses predicting the outcome of the experiment. In the discussion section you should briefly review these theories and hypotheses and discuss whether your results support or refute them. If more than one theory or hypothesis can explain your results, you might suggest ways of testing these in future experiments.

This section is also the place for qualifying your results, if necessary, and for speculating on the reasons for unpredicted findings (as long as you keep your speculations short and identify them as such). However, you should not waste the reader's time by explaining effects that were not statistically significant. Only in rare cases should negative results be interpreted as being due to anything other than chance.

Particularly, if you are doing applied work, you should use the discussion section to point out the practical value of your results—how and where they can be used and how they might change current applied procedures.

Finally, you can use the discussion section to make suggestions about the direction of future research. Now that you have discussed the new state of the body of knowledge, you may be able to suggest where new expansion should take place.

¹⁵ Or, in some cases, your experiment may have blasted away part of the existing structure.

REFERENCES

Your **reference** section should list only those references cited in the report and should be ordered alphabetically by the first author's name. The references listed at the end of this book and in the sample report follow the proper style and should provide you with many useful examples. For unusual references, refer to the *Publication Manual*.

■ Reducing Language Bias

Without realizing it, most of us at times use language that reflects historical cultural biases. For example, although one of the reasons for the language convention of using *he*, *him*, and *his* as generic pronouns rather than having to say the longer *he or she*, *him or her*, and *his or hers* was probably efficiency, another reason was that, historically, the person being referred to probably was a man. Men did things worth writing about, and women stayed home and raised the kids—or at least that is what the people in control of the language (read that, men) thought. I need not point out to you that the world has changed. Those of us in psychology should certainly acknowledge this change; most psychology graduate students and about three fourths of the undergraduate psychology majors are now women. We men in psychology should probably consider ourselves lucky that the women are not demanding the use of generic feminine pronouns for a few centuries to even things up.

Bias also creeps into the language when we refer to ethnicity, age, disability, and sexual orientation. In an attempt to minimize it, the APA has included a section in the *Publication Manual* containing guidelines for language usage. Here is my version of these guidelines. I have certainly shortened them and regrouped them, but I believe that I have not distorted them:

1. *Call people what they are.* This first guideline has at least two implications. The first is that we should be specific and refer to groupings of people in as large or as small a group as is necessary to be accurate. For instance, do not refer to *man* in a phrase such as *man's search for knowledge* if you mean women as well. Use *men and women* or *human beings* or some other more inclusive term. Do not use *he*, *him*, or *his* if a woman could be included; use *he or she*, *him or her*, or *his or hers*, or change the whole sentence to plural—for example, changing “Each participant was asked whether he had . . .” to “Participants were asked whether they had. . .”¹⁶ In this way your language will be more accurate, and nobody will be excluded. On the other hand, avoid using language that refers to too large a group. Do not write *nonwhite* if you

¹⁶ Do not mix singular and plural, such as “Each participant was told that they could. . .” In conversational speech, because it is sometimes difficult to plan sentence structures far enough in advance to match nouns and pronouns and still avoid using *he* or *him* generically, the practice of using a singular noun with a plural pronoun is becoming more common; it is still not correct, but people don't gasp anymore when you do it. However, people will still gasp if you mismatch in a written report. See Foertsch and Gernsbracher (1997) for the practical consequences of such mismatches. Also see Madson and Hessling (2001) to know how people rate text that alternates *he* with *she*, uses *he or she*, or uses *they*.

mean *African American*. In other words, be as specific as necessary to achieve accuracy.

A second implication of this guideline is that terms should be used that refer to people as people, not objects. I have discussed elsewhere in this book the attempt to minimize the use of the term *subject* because it makes the experimental participants sound like objects rather than people. Again, the best terms to use are the most specific: children, students, rats, 8-year-olds, women. If more general terms are needed, *participants*, *respondents*, or *individuals* are preferable to *subjects*.

2. *Call people what they want to be called.* The way we use language changes over time. Included in these changes are terms that refer to subsets of our population. In some cases the changes occur so rapidly that this book would be out of date in only a couple of years if I tried to give you all of the most up-to-date terminology. In the past 50 years we have gone from *Negro* to *colored* to *Afro-American* to *black* to *African American*, and there is currently some talk of using *people of color*. As this edition goes to print, *Asian American* is preferred to *Oriental*, and *American Indian* or *Native American* is preferred to *Indian*. In referring to sexual orientation (note that the neutral *orientation* is preferred to *choice* because we do not know whether choice is involved), the generally preferred terms are *gay men* and *lesbians*. But in all these cases, you will have to determine what language is preferred at the time you write your report. The best way to do this is to ask your participants what they would like to be called.

3. *People are nouns; their attributes are adjectives.* This guideline acknowledges that people are people, not attributes or conditions. Thus, *people with schizophrenia* are not *schizophrenics*; schizophrenia is a condition, not a person. Likewise *people with disabilities* should not be labeled *the disabled*, *elderly people* are not *the elderly*, and *gay men* are not *gays*. The same is true for other adjectives such as *male* and *female*; refer to *female participants*, not *females*. The nouns are *men* and *women* or, for high school age and younger, *girls* and *boys*. By the way, be sure to use parallel terms, particularly when nonparallel terms put one group into a subordinate or stereotyped role, such as *men and wives*.

These are guidelines, not rigid rules; in some cases wordiness or clumsy prose might result from following them strictly. They should certainly not be used as an excuse for lessening the accuracy demanded by science. As a final test of the social implications of the language you use, Maggio (1991) suggests imagining that you are a member of the group you are discussing. If you would feel excluded or offended by what you have written, you may need to revise it.

■ Writing Style

Experimental reports are not intended to be literary masterpieces or entertaining monologues. Thus, your general writing style should not get in the way of smoothly flowing thoughts, nor should it bring more attention to you

than to your research. To meet these requirements, scientific writing has evolved a standard style.

Traditionally, scientific writers have used third-person passive voice rather than first-person active. Instead of writing “I did this experiment to . . .,” the investigator would write “This experiment was done to . . .” Although this style did keep the report from reading like a letter home, it also forced out much of its life. The prose became dull and monotonous and caused the reader more pain than pleasure. Today it is considered proper to use the pronoun *I* to a limited extent—for example, “I thought that . . .,” rather than “It was thought that . . .” You should, however, avoid excessive use of *I* to keep from drawing the reader’s attention to you rather than to the research. You should also try to use an active verb form rather than a passive form, especially when there are no pronoun problems—for example, “A previous report described a new method” rather than “In a previous report, a new method was described.”¹⁷ Again the general rule is to use words that make the writing come alive without interrupting the smooth flow of thoughts.

The context of a sentence will usually tell you which verb tense you should use. Most sentences in the introduction and method sections refer to past actions “Boles (1972) reported . . .” and “The students recalled the words . . .” On the other hand, results “are” and theory “is” even after the experiment is completed. That is, the body of knowledge exists in the present and so should be discussed using present tense verbs: “These data support an interference theory of forgetting.”

Finally, scientific writing should be concise. The limited resources of time and space simply do not allow us the luxury of excess use of verbiage. For instance, the style I have used in this book would not be appropriate for scientific writing.¹⁸ I have purposely used more words than necessary because I have tried to do more than transfer information; I have tried to convince, cajole, and convert you as well as communicate with you. In scientific writing, you should assume that the reader has already been convinced, cajoled, and converted; your only job, then, is to communicate.

The most common problem new investigators have with report writing is laziness. The investigator is not really lazy, of course, because lazy people do not do experiments, but his or her writing style may be lazy. In writing a report, the most important end of your pencil is the one without the point; the most important key is the delete key. Extremely rare is the person who can write a good, concise report the first time through. Most good scientific writers have to try a number of alternative words and sentence structures before deciding on the best one. Every word must say precisely what you

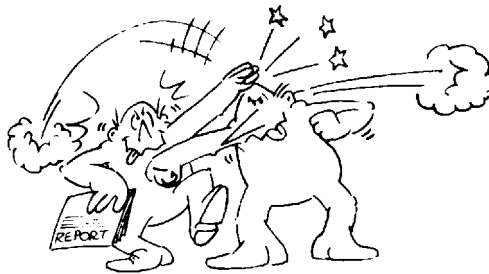
¹⁷ Some writers may object to this form on the grounds that a report cannot describe—an author describes. I suppose writing is largely a matter of personal preference. In this case, I prefer to trade a little accuracy for a lot livelier style.

¹⁸ If I had written the book in scientific style, you would have been bored, I would have been bored, and the publisher would have been bored. My mother would have bought the only copy; she loves me even when I’m boring.

want it to say, and every sentence should flow smoothly into the next. Writing this way is hard work!

When writing a report, most investigators first produce a draft of the best version they are capable of writing. Getting the report to this point may take two or three attempts because it is often easier to rewrite whole sections than to make corrections on top of corrections. Once you come up with a final draft you are satisfied with, you should give it to several people to read. At least one of these people should be unfamiliar with your experiment because you are probably so familiar with your own research that you cannot judge how well the report describes it. Because you already know what happened, your mind conveniently fills in all the gaps you leave in the report. An uninformed reader can be a good gap detector.¹⁹

It is also helpful to give the report to a reader who is familiar with what you did so that he or she can tell you whether you did what you say you did. This person can serve as your error detector. Finally, you should have a reader who is familiar with scientific writing style and is a good writer. This reader can tell you how you might improve the way you say what you did.



AN ENEMY MAKES THE BEST CRITIC.

After getting comments from these readers, you are ready to write a final version of the report. You should neatly type, print, spell-check, and proof-read this copy before you submit it.

Some of you may find that if you follow the procedure described here, your reports will be more readable; others may find that another procedure works best. Writing is an art; what works for one writer may not work for another. However, the major point we have been discussing is valid for any procedure: the report is the final product of your research and deserves at least the same effort you give to all other aspects of your research.

■ Top-Ten List

I have graded thousands of research reports written by my students. Even after I have tried to pound APA style rules into their heads, they make

¹⁹ On the death of one of his scientific colleagues, one of my friends remarked to me: "I'm really going to miss him. He was one of my best enemies. Now I don't know whom I'll send my reports to." Often, the best option is to have someone read your report who will be critical without fearing that he or she will break up a social relationship. Friends are often too nice to be good critics.

mistakes. Some of these mistakes occur much more frequently than others, so I thought it might be helpful to present a top-ten list of commonly made mistakes, à la David Letterman. You will find these listed below. (Okay, I couldn't resist sneaking in an extra one.)

STUDENTS' TOP TEN MOST FREQUENT VIOLATIONS OF APA STYLE

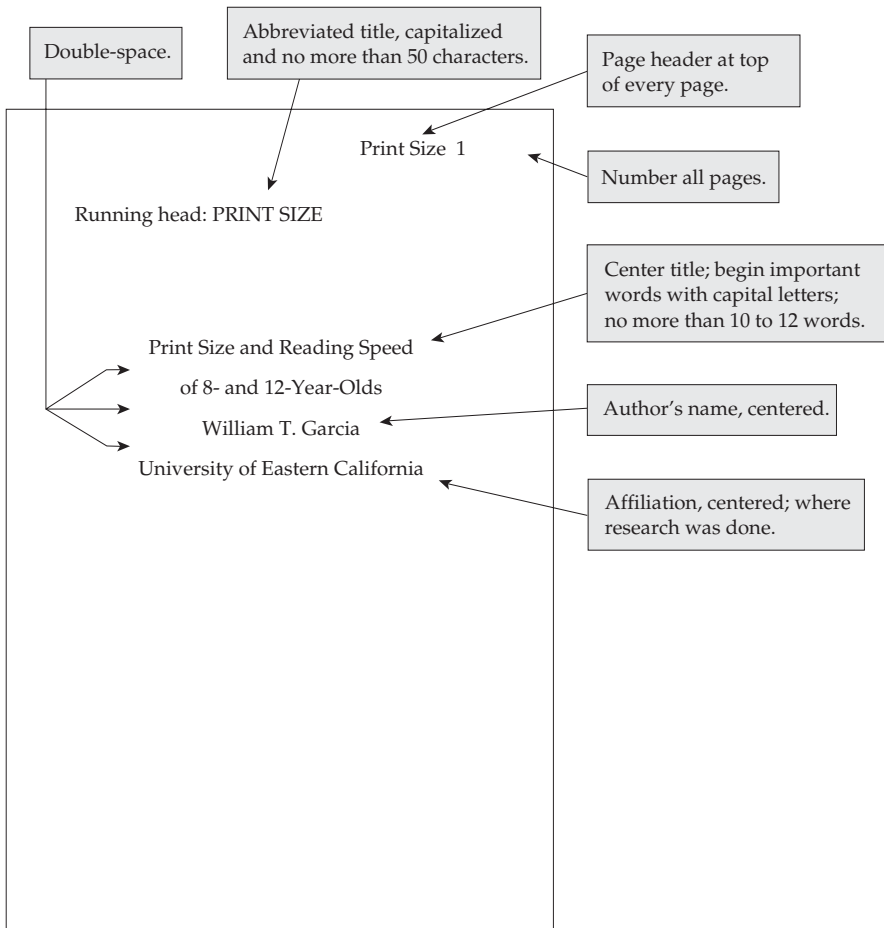
- 10b. Using "since" when not referring to time rather than "because" or "as."
- 10a. Using "and" within a parenthesis or "&" in the text.
 9. In a citation, putting a period after the et in "et al."
 8. Calling participants "subjects."
 7. Giving the issue number in a reference even when pagination is by volume.
 6. When stating statistical outcomes in the text, getting < or > signs backward.
 5. Using the wrong level of headings.
 4. Not including all cited work in the references section.
 3. Writing "data is."
 2. Using "male" and "female" as nouns.
 1. Not using past tense for what was done or present tense for theory or results that have continuing applicability.

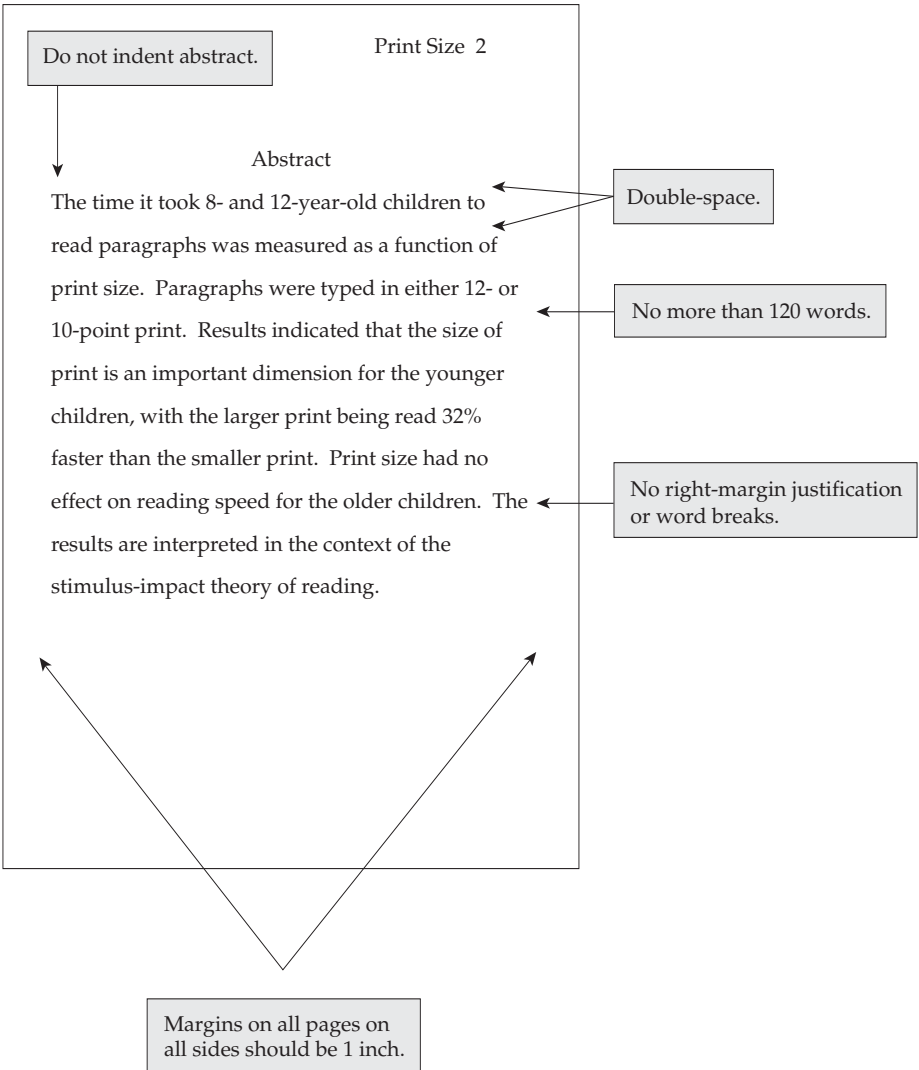
■ A Sample Report

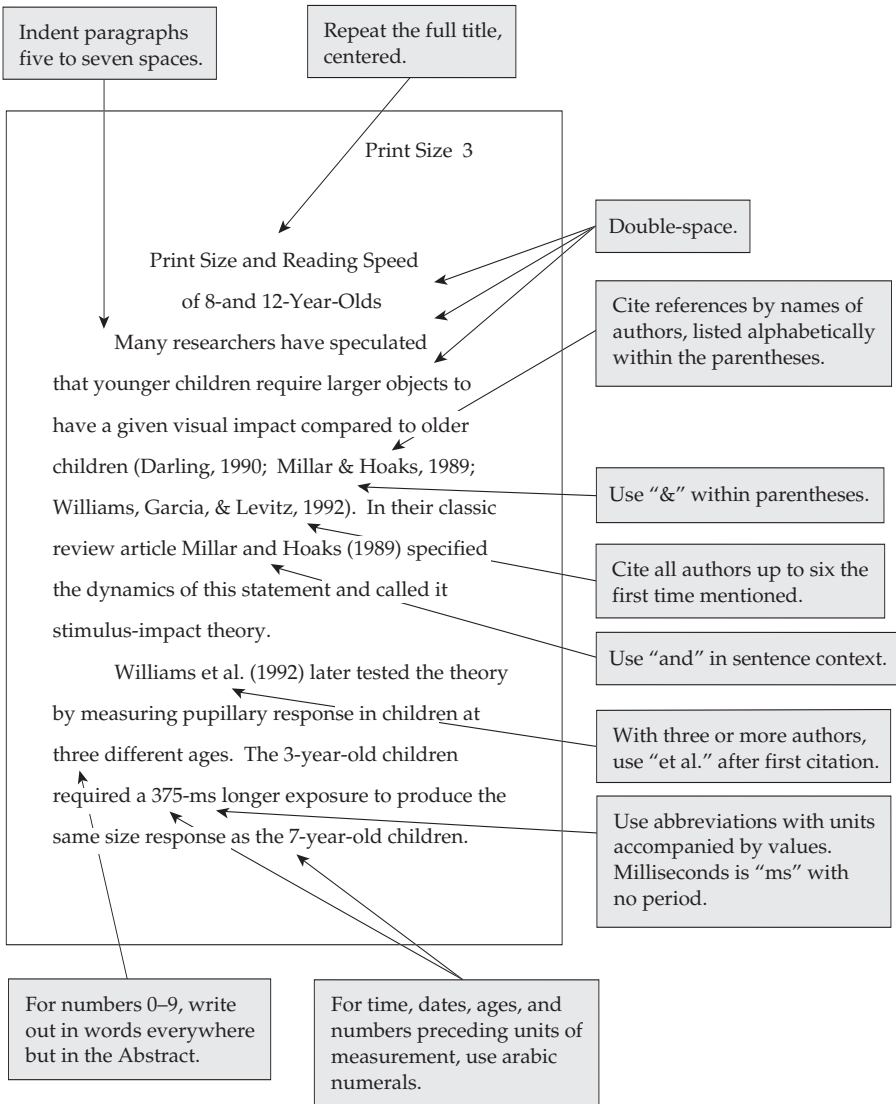
Please ignore the contents of the sample report to follow. Not only is it fictitious, but the writing style suffers because I have attempted to illustrate as many instances of APA style as possible in a short report. The marginal comments contain shortened versions of some style rules, with an arrow pointing to an example in the report. The definitive word is still the *Publication Manual*.

Your instructor may ask you to violate some of these rules. For example, when a report is not actually going to be submitted to a journal for publication, I prefer to have students incorporate figures and tables into the body of the report. That way the reader has easy access to them while reading the text. Your instructor may have similar preferences.

For a more detailed coverage of APA style you should, obviously, order a copy of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, fifth edition (2001). There are some additional resources available if you feel you need more help with writing. Fred Pycrzak and Randal R. Bruce (2000) have written a book *Writing Empirical Research Reports: A Basic Guide for Students of the Social and Behavioral Sciences* that is a good general reference. If you need more help with APA style, the American Psychological Association publishes a book *Mastering APA Style: Student's Workbook and Training Guide* (Gelfand, Walker, & APA, 2002). Software products are also available that make APA style easier to incorporate in your reports such as *APA-Style Helper 5.0* downloadable from <http://www.apastyle.org> and *Reference Point Software's Template for APA Style* downloadable from ReferencePointSoftware.com.







Use "in press" for references in process of being published.

Use metrics.

Print Size 4

Use arabic numerals for numbers of 10 or more.

Grant (in press) also used pupil size to compare the effect of 10-cm and 20-cm disks on 48 children of various ages. Disk size had little effect on children over 10 years old but had an effect for younger children.

In the research reported here I attempted to apply stimulus-impact theory to a reading task. On the basis of this theory I predicted that print size would have little effect on reading speed of 12-year-old children but would affect 8-year-olds.

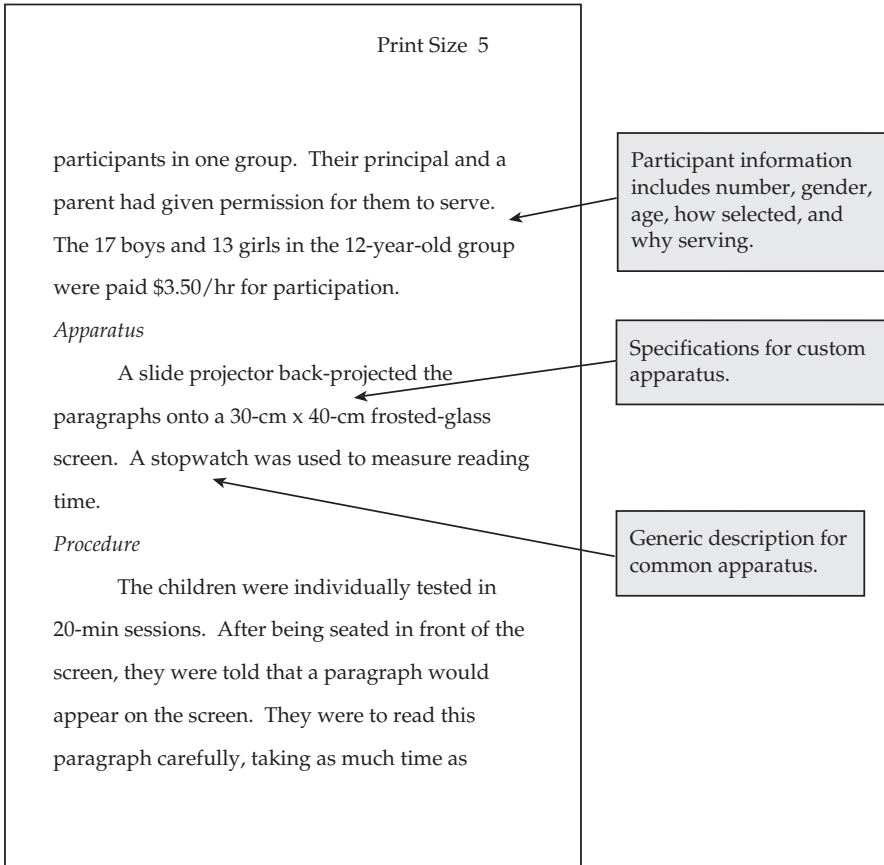
Method

Participants

Thirty 8-year-old children from an elementary school, 15 girls and 15 boys, served as

Headings go in this order:
1. CENTERED CAPS
2. Centered Mixed
3. *Centered Mixed Italicized*
4. *Flush Left Mixed Italicized*
5. *Indented, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period*
If just two levels of headings are required, as is usually the case, use No. 2 and No. 4.

Write out the number if it starts a sentence. Try not to start a sentence with a number.



Print Size 6

necessary to understand the material. After reading a paragraph, each child was asked three questions, having single-word answers, about the contents of the paragraph. After the questions were answered, another paragraph was presented until each child had read three paragraphs.

Each paragraph had been previously tested for readability and was at or below an 8-year age level. The questions had been found to be a good measure of comprehension.

The experimenter manually timed the reading latency for each trial using a stopwatch. Scores were obtained for each of the three trials in

Procedure is in past tense.

Numbers under 10 are written as words.

Numbers that represent time, ages, scores, or points on a scale are written as numerals.

Print Size 7

each session. Thus, the experimental design was a 2 x 2 x 3 factorial design having age at two levels (8- and 12-year-olds), print size at two levels (10- and 12-point), and trials at three levels.

Results

Mean reading times for each age group and print size are shown in Figure 1. An analysis of variance computed on reading times indicated that the main effect of age was statistically significant, $F(1,58) = 26.73, p < .01$. The main effect of print size was not significant, $F(1,58) = 0.87, p > .05$. However, the Age x Print Size interaction was significant, $F(2,116) = 10.31, p < .01$.

There were too few data points here to justify a figure or table in a real report.

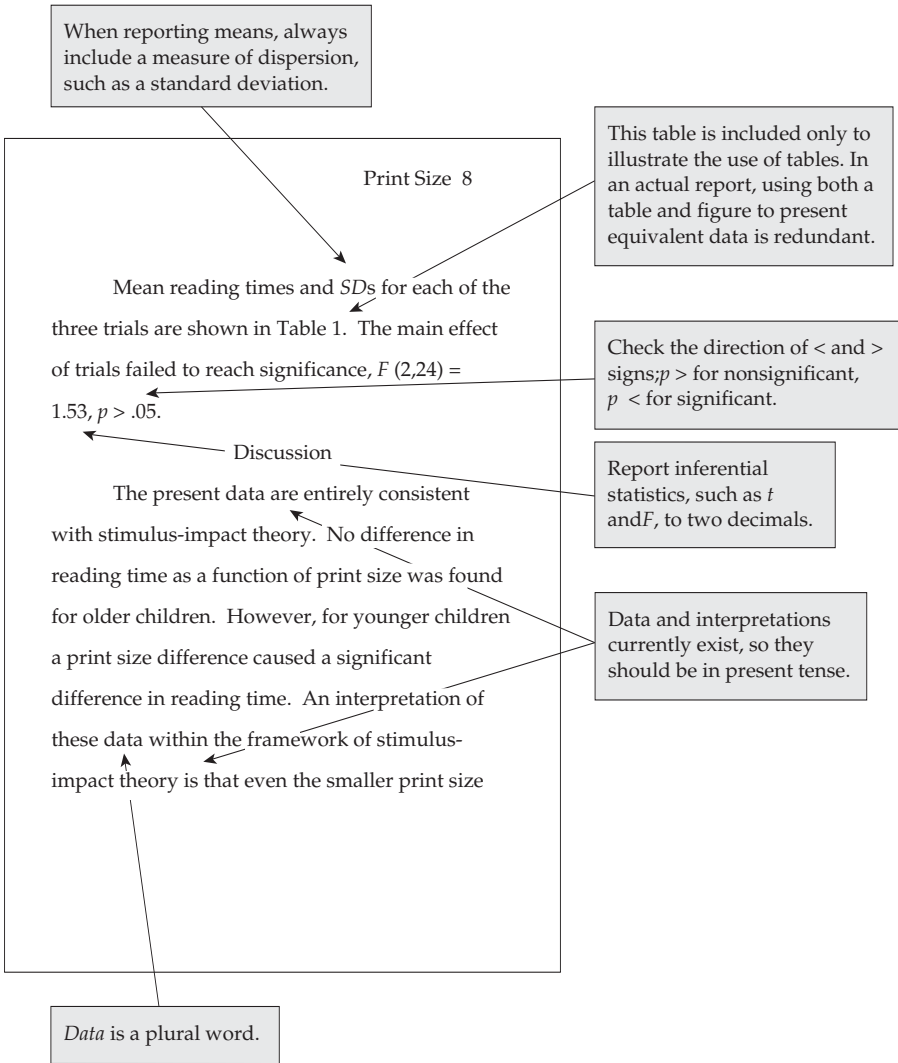
Refer to the figure in text.

Note how the statistical results are reported.

Decimals less than 1 are preceded by a 0 unless they cannot exceed 1 or are a significance level.

Capitalize first letter of interactions in this form.

Main effects are not capitalized.



Print Size 9

had maximum visual impact on the older children. The younger children required a larger-sized print in order to perform at a high level. As Millar and Hoaks stated in their 1989 article, "High-impact stimuli are necessary for maximal performance in younger children" (p. 346).

The implication of these results is obvious for publishers of children's reading material. However, before recommendations can be presented to these publishers, additional research is needed to compare reading times for many additional print sizes and for children at many age levels.

For quotations under 40 words, use quotation marks; longer quotations should be put in an indented block, without quotation marks.

The diagram illustrates the correct formatting for a list of references. It features a central list of four references, each with arrows pointing to callout boxes that describe specific formatting rules. The references are: Darling, D. T. (1990). Internal consistency in stimulus-impact theory. *Journal of Child Behavior*, 26, 58-63. Grant, U. T. (in press). Pupillary response to disks. *Sensation & Perception*. Millar, J. R., & Hoaks, A. R. (1989). Stimulus impact theory: A developmental theory of perception. *Childhood Perception and Cognition*, 7, 278-295. Williams, E. T., Garcia, W. T., & Levitz, G. W. (1992). A review of size effects. *Behavioral Review*, 21, 326-354.

Callout boxes and their corresponding rules:

- Indent entry lines except first.
- List alphabetically by first author's last name.
- Each entry should have been cited in the report. All items cited should be referenced.
- Author: Last name and initials.
- Year published.
- Title: Capitalize first word only.
- Journal name: Capitalize first letter of each major word.
- Pages.
- Volume number: Italicize journal name, commas, and volume number.
- Use "&" with multiple authors.
- Print Size 10

You will find examples of the style for books, magazines, and other references by looking at the References at the end of this book.

Print Size 11

Author Note

William T. Garcia, Department of Psychology (now at the Center for Child Development, Westbrook University).

I would like to thank Nancy Wells for her help in data collection. This experiment was reported at the Northwestern Psychological Society meeting in Madison, Washington, May 15, 2001.

Correspondence concerning this article should be sent to William T. Garcia, Center for Child Development, Box 4546, Westbrook University, Monroe, Washington 12342, or by electronic mail to garcia.ccd.wu.edu.

First paragraph has author and departmental affiliation.

Second paragraph has acknowledgments of funding agencies and helpers; also list previous presentations of data.

Third paragraph has point of contact, including current address.

Print Size 12

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations of Paragraph Reading Times in Seconds as a Function of Age, Print Size, and Trials

Print Size	<u>8-year-olds</u>		<u>12-year-olds</u>	
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
10-point				
Trial 1	84.2	12.9	31.2	8.7
Trial 2	83.4	10.2	27.7	7.8
Trial 3	81.0	10.7	24.7	8.1
12-point				
Trial 1	58.2	10.1	32.3	9.2
Trial 2	56.1	8.2	29.1	8.3
Trial 3	55.9	7.7	30.8	8.5

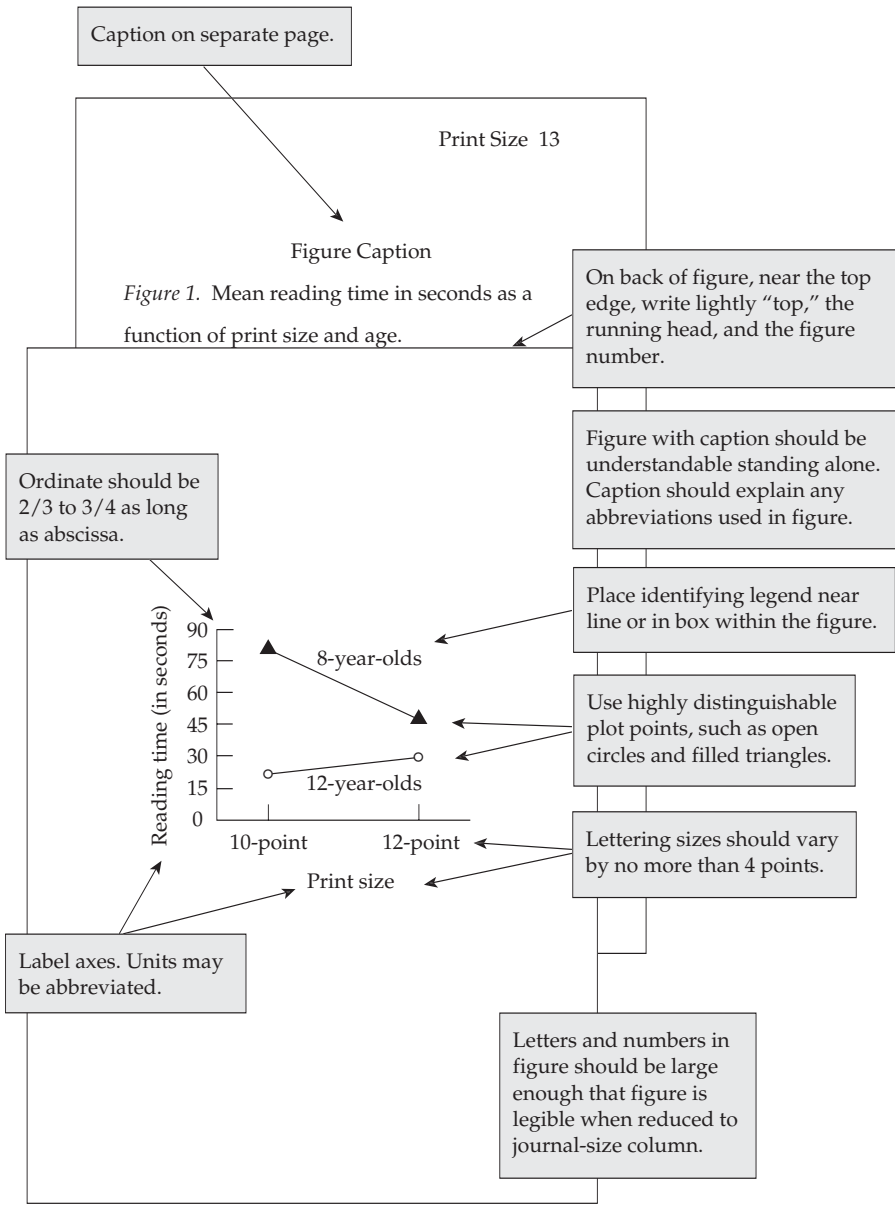
Title in mixed caps and lowercase, left justified, and italicized.

Use only horizontal rule lines.

When reporting means, always include a measure of dispersion, such as a standard deviation.

Table with title should be understandable standing alone. Title should explain abbreviations used in table.

Use indentation where possible rather than taking a full column.



Caption on separate page.

Print Size 13

Figure Caption

Figure 1. Mean reading time in seconds as a function of print size and age.

On back of figure, near the top edge, write lightly "top," the running head, and the figure number.

Figure with caption should be understandable standing alone. Caption should explain any abbreviations used in figure.

Place identifying legend near line or in box within the figure.

Use highly distinguishable plot points, such as open circles and filled triangles.

Lettering sizes should vary by no more than 4 points.

Ordinate should be 2/3 to 3/4 as long as abscissa.

Label axes. Units may be abbreviated.

Reading time (in seconds)

90
75
60
45
30
15
0

10-point

12-point

Print size

8-year-olds

12-year-olds

Letters and numbers in figure should be large enough that figure is legible when reduced to journal-size column.

■ Presentations at Conferences

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Although a written report is the primary means of reporting research, most researchers, including many students, also report their results by presenting them at professional conferences. Students have an increasing number of opportunities to present research results in this way. For example, students in my university last year could present their work in a poster session either in the psychology department or in a university-wide research conference, both sponsored by student organizations. They could also present a paper at an undergraduate research conference that drew students from several states or at a conference sponsored by the state psychological association. Some even presented papers or posters at larger regional or national meetings, either in a student session or as a coauthor in a regular session. Many students find making presentations exciting, both in telling an audience about their own work and in seeing the broader world of science at work for the first time. However, giving a paper or a poster can be a frightening experience, and other than taking a speech course, most students have little training. Here is a crash course in the art of presenting your research orally.

What does the presentation of a **conference paper** consist of? Although the answer to this question varies depending on the conference, you will generally be expected to stand up in front of a group of 20 to 100 colleagues and present your work within 10 to 20 minutes, leaving some time at the end for questions. Typically, you will have prepared some visual aids, which today is usually in the form of a computerized presentation such as PowerPoint, or in some cases a paper handout. It is important to realize that presenting your research this way is far different from writing a paper. If you try to read an APA-style research report to your listeners, you will be lucky if they do not walk out on you. The written report is too long, goes into far too much detail, and uses a nonconversational style. You might expect a person reading your written report to fully digest it and carry away many details. We know from research on the human memory that the person listening to your presentation will be able to carry away only a few major points. You want to make sure that these points are easy to grasp and remember.

Ideally, the style of your presentation should be conversational. I remember clearly the first paper I ever gave at a conference. In this case I was speaking to a national group of researchers in an area of study in which I had been working for only five months. I was terrified. But I worked hard at memorizing the presentation so I could give it without notes. I got up, knees shaking, and presented the research without stumbling over very many words. I was pretty proud of myself. But at a reception later, when my adviser asked the conference coordinator, "Didn't David do a good job with his presentation today?" the coordinator said, "No. It sounded as if he was reading the paper, and we don't do that at this conference." I was temporarily crushed, of course, but this was the best advice I could have gotten. Communication researchers know that conversational speech is quite different

from reading a text. In conversational speech we vary our pace according to our mental activity, pausing to think up the next phrase and then unloading the words rather rapidly. The listener uses these pauses and the pacing of the words to follow the thought pattern of the speaker. In reading text, words are paced more regularly without long pauses. This sing-song, monotonous style is a great way of curing a listener's insomnia but a poor way of conveying the excitement of the research. As a presenter, you should be thoroughly familiar with what you want to say, but you should not overrehearse to the point that you sound as if you are reading a written report and are bored by it.

Because you want to try to give the presentation as naturally as possible, it will take you longer to present the material than you expect. If you practice by reading a written version to yourself, even if out loud, you will zoom along because you do not have to slow down to allow something to sink in; you already understand the content. So, you can expect to take at least 20% longer to present the material to an audience, who are listening to it for the first time. Ideally, you should build in some choice points where you can add material or leave it out as you are giving the presentation to control the length of time you take. If your presentations are like mine, you will end up having to take the shorter route at most of these points.

Think about your audience, and try to tailor your presentation to them. Are the listeners students, psychologists, experts in your research field, or scientists from many disciplines? Because we are so familiar with our topic by the time we present our research, we tend to forget that not everybody is as familiar with it, or as interested in it, as we are. Try to transport yourself back in time to where you were when you first got the idea for your research. That is probably where your audience will be when you start your presentation.

Many years ago I would have criticized presenters for not using enough graphics in their presentations. Graphics were difficult to produce and display, so presenters erred on the side of having too few. Today I believe presenters err on the side of having too many. Programs such as PowerPoint make it quite easy to put every point you want to make into a bullet on the screen. I think doing so is a mistake! While I would not go so far as Edward Tufte, who has written articles and books on the evils of PowerPoint, I do think that this tool can lead to poor presentation practices.²⁰

I think that the most successful presenters (and teachers) tell compelling stories. Imagine turning a child's bedtime story into a bulleted PowerPoint presentation. I can think of no better way to wring the mystery and emotion out of the story. In a similar way, once you convert your interesting research story into a series of bulleted phrases, many listeners will quickly scan the display and turn off their ears until the next display comes up. My preference is to put up just a few major points and not show those until after I have told the story that makes each point. I realize that there is security in PowerPoint overkill, particularly for the less experienced presenter; all your notes are up

²⁰ To get a flavor for Tufte's criticism see <http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/11.09/ppt2.html>. To see a PowerPoint presentation of the Gettysburg address go to <http://www.norvig.com/Gettysburg/>.

there on the screen so it is easy to just read them off. However, my advice would be to avoid that temptation and instead try to tell a story, using PowerPoint only sparingly to emphasize just the most important points.

Judging from many hours of sitting through presentations, I believe that the biggest error presenters make is to zip through the experimental procedure to get on to the important stuff, the results. But unless you make the procedure clear, the results are not important. I have found that the best way to help the listeners understand the procedure is, if possible, to turn them into participants. If in my experiment I showed a series of visual displays to the participants and then had them make a response, in my presentation I give the listeners a brief set of instructions, show them a series of graphics similar to the displays, and have them give the appropriate response. Several representative trials can often take as little time as explaining the procedure in words, and the audience will remember the procedure so much better. Psychologists know that people learn better by doing than by being told. We should take advantage of that principle.

When presenting your paper, go for the big picture. If people really want to know the details of your counterbalancing scheme, the levels of statistical significance at which you tested, or other such details, they can ask you later or ask for a written copy of your paper. Most listeners will never remember these details anyway. Usually, the best way to present results is graphically, using computerized displays. If possible you should have a computer monitor in front of you showing the same display that is being projected onto the screen behind you. This arrangement will allow you to continue facing the audience and the microphone as you are referring to characteristics of the display. If you do use a pointer, such as a laser, to emphasize something on the projected display, make sure you talk louder when you turn toward the screen. A better solution is to add the pointer to the display using a computer program so you do not have to turn around. Being able to point to something on the display is one reason I prefer displays to handouts. You cannot point to the thing you are talking about on the listener's handout. Other problems with handouts include the time it takes to distribute the handouts and the loss of control over the presentation when the listener reads the information from the handout before you present it (once I have a handout in hand, I tune out the speaker and sneak a look at the results)—to say nothing of the cost, the clutter, and the destruction of trees.

In using a projected display, be sure that you are positioned off to the side so you do not block the audience's view of the screen. When you show a graph, remember that this is the first time the audience has seen it. Presenters sometimes flash up a graph and immediately launch into a conclusion: "As you can clearly see, the results confirmed our hypothesis." As a member of the audience I am saying to myself: "Wait a minute. What's on each axis? Is better performance up or down on the graph? Which condition is represented by the solid line, or the dashed line? What would the figure look like if the hypothesis were not supported? What is it about this figure that supports the hypothesis?" The audience should not have to ask all these questions. You should show the figure, pause . . . , explain what is on each axis, explain what

the lines or bars represent, and indicate where in the figure the audience should look to find the important information, pointing as you go. Finally, make sure that the figures are big enough and in bold enough print that the audience can see them from the back of the room. The figures in your written report will probably have to be redrawn to meet these requirements. Before you are satisfied with your graphics, you should try projecting them on a screen under conditions similar to what you expect for the room in which you will be presenting. For each display, walk to the back of the room and be sure you can see all the details. Often the colors and contrast that look great on the computer monitor will not translate to the screen and may make the material difficult to read. Fortunately, with modern word processing, drawing good figures is an easy task technically, yet I still see illegible figures at many conferences I attend.

At the end of your presentation, you should have a display that lists your conclusions. This is one final time to give the listener a message to take away. Be conservative. Three to five conclusions are probably all your audience will remember. After giving the conclusions you should be prepared to close decisively. “Uhm . . . I guess that’s all I have to say” is not an impressive way to do this! Saying “Thank you for your attention” or “If time permits, I’d be happy to answer questions” will signal your audience that you have finished and let them know that you carefully planned for your presentation to end at this point.

You have just finished your presentation and are ready to sit down, catch your breath, and relax. What a relief! But the chair of your paper session says, “We have time for a few questions.” You, of course, have not prepared for any questions because you have answered all possible questions in your lucid presentation. Then some wag in the audience asks: “I don’t see how you can claim that your results support Landon’s theory. Doesn’t the theory of reductivity proposed by Wagner last year predict your findings?” You, of course, have never heard of Wagner. How do you respond? I have no pat answers to give you for such a question.²¹ My point is that you should prepare yourself as best you can to field questions. After you have exhausted all the potential questions you can think up, you should ask others to pose questions for you. In fact, the best way to prepare for presenting a paper is to make a trial presentation to a group of colleagues, perhaps your classmates or other students and faculty members in your department. Strongly encourage them to ask you hard questions. Try to answer the questions when they are asked, and think about the questions again later when you have time to prepare better answers. Some of these questions may reappear at the conference. Be prepared.

²¹ I believe that honesty is the best policy in these situations, but I have heard people try to bluff their way out. There are several categories of retorts: (1) I’m pressed for time—“You may be right, but the issue is much too complex to discuss here. Why don’t you see me afterward?” “I’ve thought about that, but I rejected it for a number of reasons too detailed to discuss in the time I have for questions.” “I don’t think that his theory directly applies in this case, but I would be happy to discuss it with you later.” (2) Tell me more—“In what way do you think that his theory applies to my findings?” “Could you be more specific?” “I would be interested in hearing your thoughts on that issue.” (3) It’s not my fault—“My coauthor would be happy to answer that question.”

POSTERS

Most conferences now include **poster** sessions as well as paper presentations. Picture a large room full of free-standing bulletin boards lined up in rows. People presenting posters stand in front of the bulletin boards, and behind them the posters are thumbtacked to the cork boards. Crowds are milling about, some people drifting by the posters reading titles and others talking with the presenters. Typically, at such a poster session presenters are given an hour or so to stand in front of their poster, explain their research, and discuss anything the ever-changing audience wants to discuss.

The advantage of giving a poster rather than a paper is that you can have truly interactive conversations, usually with people who have an interest in what you have done. This format works particularly well for simply designed research having straightforward results that can be easily captured in a few graphs. The disadvantage of a poster is that the first person comes up, asks you what you did, and you are two minutes into the explanation when a second person asks you the same thing. If you start over, the first person will get bored. If you continue, the second person may have trouble following you. This pattern is repeated often throughout the poster session, and when you have finished, you may feel that you never had the opportunity to explain your work fully to anyone. This disadvantage is particularly serious when your research is complex or uses an unusual complicated methodology or involves testing highly detailed and unfamiliar theories. In these cases you may simply not have the time to tell the elaborate story required to do your research justice.

As a general strategy in preparing for a poster session, you should try to put together several minipresentations. One less than a minute should quickly capsulize your work. This one you might give to the casual member of the audience who wants only a brief overview. You might prepare another “less mini” presentation lasting perhaps several minutes, which you give to someone who shows considerable interest in your work. You should also be prepared to discuss your work more fully with the few researchers who might come by who also work in your area of research. You should also devote a lot of effort to making the poster self-explanatory. The better job your poster does at explaining what you did, the easier it will be for you to spend your time interacting with your audience rather than rehashing the basics. What should be in this poster?

When your poster is accepted for presentation, you will be sent information telling you details of the setup. Typically you will be provided with a corkboard measuring four by eight feet and thumbtacks (take your own tacks anyway to be sure). You will mount your materials on this board. Above all do not simply take a manuscript copy of your paper with you and tack it to the board! The printing is too small, the detail is too great, and no one will take the time to read it. Remember that your audience will have only a few minutes at most to spend trying to understand what you did. You want to convey as much information as you can in those few minutes. In this case a picture really is worth a thousand words.

Figure 13-1 shows a sample poster arrangement. The information is put on panels about the size of standard sheets of paper. You will notice that much

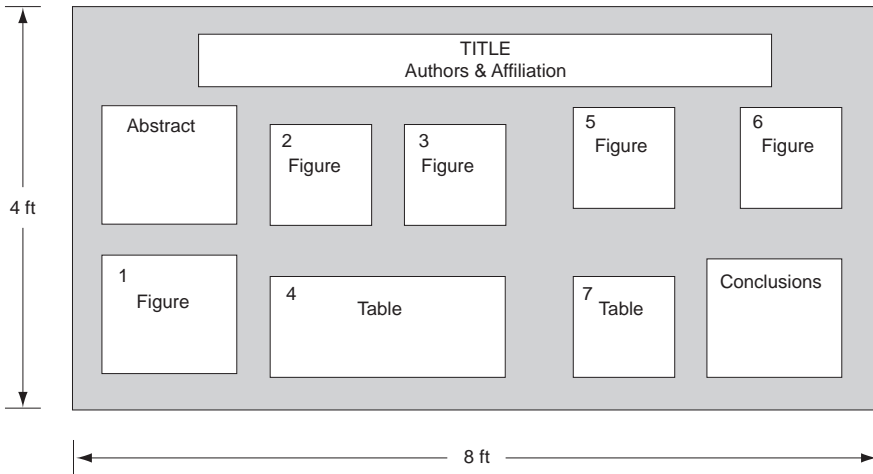


FIGURE 13-1 A sample poster arrangement. The title and author lettering should be at least 1 inch high, other lettering at least 0.33 inch. Information should flow from upper left to lower right in columns. Maximize graphics. Minimize text.

of the material is figures. As a general strategy you should present as little text as possible. Where you do have text, try putting it into figure captions. A second general principle is that information flow should start in the upper left and move to the lower right. However, unlike English text, it should not be arranged in left-to-right rows. The members of your audience will fall all over one another if you force them to walk back and forth as they follow your panels. Instead put the information into columns. Numbering the panels as shown in the figure is helpful, or in some cases it might be appropriate to use arrows to help guide the audience.

At the top of the board should be a title and a list of the authors. The lettering for these should be at least one inch (72 points) high. Remember that the poster will be viewed from a distance of a meter or more. The title should be large enough to be read over the heads of the people talking to the presenter. Many people circulating will simply read the title, not be interested, and move on. Under the names of the authors should be their affiliations, such as their universities or colleges. This print and all the rest of the lettering can be smaller, but still at least 1/3 of an inch (24 points) high. Figures, drawings, charts, or illustrations should be similar to those used in slides or overheads, with simple heavy lines. One of the organizations I belong to suggests checking the readability of your materials using the "Toe Test" (Human Factors and Ergonomics Society, 1995). Have a friend or two stand above your poster materials, which have been placed on the floor next to their feet. Can they read them? If not, have them toe the materials into a trashcan and try again!

The abstract should be simple and concise. Take out all unnecessary details. The research methods used should be explained using as few words as possible and using pictures for illustration. Depending on your study, the

pictures might show stimulus materials for your various conditions, or perhaps sample items from your survey, or perhaps a schematic of your experimental design. Results should be graphed with easily readable symbols and lettering. If possible, put your statistical results in the figure caption. Generally you should not list raw data or statistical tables. Finally, include a conclusions section in which you briefly summarize your results. List no more than five or so items. The audience will not be taking notes and will be looking at a lot of other posters, so you want to emphasize only a few points that they might remember later. Also pitch your materials to your audience. For example, if your audience includes scientists from many fields rather than just psychologists, you should be particularly careful to avoid psychological jargon and to relate the conclusions to real-world applications.

For esthetic reasons some people use colored paper to border their panels, but you should not be too fancy. Scientists are more impressed by pretty data than by pretty graphics. If possible, the panels can be dry mounted on a stiff board. More typically today, the entire poster is printed onto one or two large sheets that can be rolled up in a tube for traveling purposes. That way you do not have to worry about getting individual panels straight and evenly spaced at the start of a session when you are already a little flustered and nervous. Finally, proofread the poster! Perhaps because the lettering is so large that it is more difficult to read normally, posters seem to have a large number of typos. I have seen world-renowned researchers using professionally produced posters with errors that they have had to correct with a ballpoint pen. These researchers are embarrassed, and you would be too.

As is the case with papers, you should try giving your poster presentation to some colleagues. Have them ask questions. When you are done, ask them how they think the poster or presentation could be improved. Finally, if possible, have copies of a complete written report available to hand out. People will be likely to request these.

Regardless of how you present your research, you should take pride in presenting it and do a quality job. Remember that this is the product of all the work you have done up to this point. All that effort could go to waste if you present your work in an unclear or uninteresting way.

■ Summary

Because research is worthless unless other scientists know about it, experimenters must make their results known by writing a high-quality experimental report. This report should follow the guidelines recommended by the APA in its *Publication Manual*. Psychological writing differs from the writing found in other disciplines such as history and literary criticism. For instance, the language is more straightforward, few direct-quote citations are used, subheadings are used more liberally, discursive footnotes are infrequent, intellectual disagreements seldom turn personal, and conclusions are often hedged. A report has standardized sections. Because many readers will decide whether to read a report on the basis of its **title**, your title should be short but convey enough information to help them make this decision.

The **authors** and the **institution** where the research was done follow the title. The **abstract**, a short (120-word) version of the complete report, ends the preliminaries.

In the body of the report, the **introduction** should review enough literature to give the reader an idea of the current body of knowledge and should state the purpose of the experiment. The **method** section provides the information necessary to replicate the experiment. It is typically divided into three subsections: **participants**, which describes their type and number and how they were recruited; **apparatus/materials**, which gives others the information necessary to order or build the equipment and materials similar to those used; and **procedure**, which should give a detailed account of what happened to each participant. The **results** section summarizes the findings of the experiment. This section contains descriptive statistics, including measures of central tendency and dispersion, either in the text or in tables or figures. The results of inferential statistical tests follow, usually including the **effect size**. This section then relates results back to the body of knowledge in the **discussion** section. The report concludes with an alphabetical list of the **references** cited in the paper.

To convey information as efficiently as possible while keeping the general writing style lively, it is no longer necessary to write experimental reports exclusively in third-person passive voice. Active verbs are now considered preferable, and occasional use of first person is acceptable. The introduction and method sections are typically written in the past tense, but the present tense is appropriate for the results and discussion sections. Because the report should be as concise as possible, you should avoid lazy writing and should use the comments of other readers to make the report a high-quality product.

Because it is important to avoid language bias and be accurate in research reports, three guidelines should be followed: Call people what they are; avoid generic masculine terms when referring to both genders (*man* for *human beings*, *he* for *he or she*), and use *participant* rather than *subject*. Call people what they want to be called; ask your ethnic participants what the correct terminology is. People are nouns, and their attributes are adjectives. *People with disabilities* are not *the disabled*; *female participants* are *women*, not *females*.

Research can also be reported at professional meetings in the form of a **conference paper** or **poster**. A paper is usually presented to a group of 20 to 100 colleagues in 10 to 20 minutes. It should be given in a conversational manner, leaving out many details from the written report. Visual aids such as computerized projections should be carefully prepared so that they can be easily read. The procedure and results sections, in particular, should be prepared with the level of the listener in mind. Presenters should be ready for questions. Posters are given in a more interactive way. A poster containing a title and six to nine panels is prepared, and short presentations are given to colleagues who circulate through the room asking questions. The poster should be formatted carefully with large print, readable figures, and not too much detail. Both papers and posters should be practiced with friendly colleagues before the conference.

Epilogue

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

T. S. ELIOT

Congratulations on having wended your way through my thoughts on doing psychology experiments. May my words and pictures have helped to hold your interest rather than obstruct your progress. There is a delicate balance between informality and precision—a balance that varies from one reader to another. I hope my prose was not too unbalanced for you.

Obviously, this book has not instantly transformed you into a full-blown experimental psychologist, but I trust it has given you enough information so that you can attempt some simple experiments on your own. You will find that doing experiments is a lot more fun than reading about doing experiments. So now go have some fun!

APPENDIX A

How to Do Basic Statistics

If you are a calculatophobic (see Chapter 3), this appendix is written for you. You should be able to use this simplified “cookbook” version of statistics if you have learned only basic algebra. This book is certainly not a statistics book, and the minor concession I am making in this appendix does not contradict that statement. Some teachers and students who use this book sometimes feel the need for a brief description of basic descriptive statistics and inferential statistical tests. Here I tell you how to do a few of these tests. However, I am not telling you why you are doing what you are doing, and generally I will tell you only a little bit about the conditions for choosing what to do.

It has been my observation that writing words about numbers usually confuses things. Instead, I have attempted to show you what to do with the numbers by means of worked examples. If you arrange the numbers from your data the way the numbers are arranged in the example and follow the same steps, you should have few problems.

I first mention some characteristics of numbers. Then I give you a short glossary of statistical symbols. Finally, I provide you with worked examples of each statistical operation. At the end of each worked example I indicate how you would report this result within the text of a manuscript.

■ Characteristics of Numbers

Numbers can be used in a variety of ways. Some ways convey a lot of information (“it is 28 miles to the fair”) and some only a little (“the first baseman is number 28”). Some statements and statistical operations are possible with some numbers (“the theater, which is 14 miles away, is half as far as the fair”). These same statements are ludicrous with others (“the second baseman is number 14; for this reason he is only half the first baseman”). So, before you can do a statistical operation on numbers, you must determine whether the operation makes sense for the type of numbers you are using.

NOMINAL SCALE

Numbers that are simply used to name something are said to be on a **nominal scale**. Nominal scale data have no quantitative properties. The only legitimate

<i>Nominal scale</i>	<i>Ordinal scale</i>	<i>Interval or ratio scales</i>
Mode		
	Median	
		Mean
	Range	
		Variance
		Standard deviation
Contingency coefficient		
	Spearman rank-order correlation coefficient	
		Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient
Chi-square		
	Mann-Whitney <i>U</i> test	
		<i>t</i> -test
	Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-ranks	
		ANOVA
	Kruskal-Wallis one-way ANOVA by ranks	

FIGURE A-1 Statistical operations and the number scales they require

statistical operation you can do with nominal data is to count the number of instances that each number occurs: How many players are there with the number 28?

ORDINAL SCALE

Numbers that can be ordered, or ranked, are said to lie on an **ordinal scale**. The race car driver who was champion the previous year is allowed to put the number 1 on his or her car. The driver who was second in the point standings is number 2, and so on. We know from these ordinal scale numbers that driver 1 performed better than driver 2, but we do not know by how much.

Drivers 1 and 2 might have been 500 points apart, whereas drivers 2 and 3 might have been only 2 points apart.

INTERVAL SCALE

If the intervals between numbers are meaningful, the numbers lie on an **interval scale**. For example, temperature measured on a Fahrenheit scale is on an interval scale. It is 10 °F between 50 °F and 60 °F. It is also 10 °F between 60 °F and 70 °F.

RATIO SCALE

If you can make a ratio out of two numbers and if this ratio is meaningful, you have a **ratio scale**. Thus, although you cannot say that a temperature of 20 °F is twice as hot as 10 °F, you can say that 20 miles is twice as far as 10 miles. The big difference between an interval and a ratio scale is that the latter has an absolute zero point. On the Fahrenheit scale, “zero degrees” has no particular meaning other than the fact it is 32 arbitrary degrees below the freezing point of water. For quantities such as distance, weight, and volume, zero units is a meaningful concept.

One question you must answer before you perform a statistical operation is “What number scale am I dealing with?” Figure A-1 lists the operations we discuss in this appendix and the scales they require.

Operations that can be carried out on numbers from lower order scales such as nominal can also be used with numbers from higher order scales such as ratio. For this reason, the shaded area in the figure indicates that all the operations can legitimately be performed with interval or ratio data, but only three of them can be used with nominal data.

■ Symbols Used in Statistical Formulas

X = a datum or score

N = the total number of scores

Σ = sum, or add, the scores

X^2 = square X (multiply it by itself)

X^3 = cube X (multiply it by itself twice)

\sqrt{X} = square root of X (What number multiplied by itself equals X ?)

$|x|$ = absolute value of X (the number disregarding its sign)

■ Descriptive Statistics

MEASURES OF CENTRAL TENDENCY

Mode

The mode is the most frequently occurring score. Count the number of times each score occurs and pick the score with the most occurrences. The mode in the example in the next section is 2 because this number occurs twice.

Median

The median is the middle score. The scores should first be ordered by size. For an odd number of scores, the median is the middle one. For an even number of scores, the median lies halfway between the two middle scores. In the following example the median is 2.5, because the middle two scores are 2 and 3.

Mean

$$\text{Mean} = M = \bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

Example

$$\begin{array}{r} X \\ 1 \\ 2 \\ 2 \\ 3 \\ 4 \\ 5 \\ \hline \sum X = 17 \\ N = 6 \end{array} \quad \bar{X} = \frac{17}{6} = 2.8$$

Reporting in Text. $M = 2.8$

MEASURES OF DISPERSION

Range

The range is the largest score minus the smallest score. In the previous example:

$$\text{Range} = 5 - 1 = 4$$

Variance

$$\text{Variance} = S^2 = \frac{\sum(X - \bar{X})^2}{N}$$

Example

	X	\bar{X}^*	$X - \bar{X}$	$(X - \bar{X})^2$
	1	3	-2	4
6 scores	2	3	-1	1
so	3	3	0	0
$N = 6$	3	3	0	0
	4	3	1	1
	5	3	2	4
	$\sum X = 18$			$\sum(X - \bar{X})^2 = 10$

*Mean = $\bar{X} = \frac{18}{6} = 3$.

$$\frac{\Sigma(X - \bar{X})^2}{N} = \frac{10}{6} = 1.67$$

Standard Deviation

$$\text{Standard deviation} = SD = \sigma = \sqrt{S^2} = \sqrt{\frac{\Sigma(X - \bar{X})^2}{N}}$$

In the previous example:

$$SD = \sqrt{1.67} = 1.29$$

Reporting in Text. $SD = 1.29$

MEASURES OF ASSOCIATION

Contingency Coefficient

The **contingency coefficient** (C) is a measure of the strength of association between two sets of numbers when nominal scale data are being considered. A chi-square (χ^2) test must first be done (see p. 315). Suppose that a chi-square test has been conducted on a two-variable experiment, and you wish to know the strength of association between these two nominal-scale variables. Also suppose that χ^2 was found to be 15, with a total number of observations of $N = 100$. Then the contingency coefficient is:

$$C = \sqrt{\frac{\chi^2}{N + \chi^2}} = \sqrt{\frac{15}{100 + 15}} = \sqrt{.130} = .36$$

No further testing for the statistical significance of the association is necessary because the chi-square test has already been computed to test for significance.

Reporting in Text. $C (N = 100) = .36$

Spearman Rank-Order Correlation Coefficient

A **Spearman rank-order correlation coefficient** (ρ) is used to measure the strength of association between two ordinal scale variables. In this case, two scores, or ranks, are obtained for each participant, and the difference d is determined.

Example

Participant	Rank on first measure	Rank on second measure	d	d^2	
Bill	4	4	0	0	
Jane	1	2	-1	1	
Bob	5	5	0	0	
Pete	2	3	-1	1	$N = 5$
Mary	3	1	+2	4	
				$\Sigma d^2 = 6$	

$$\begin{aligned} rho &= 1 - \frac{6\Sigma d^2}{N^3 - N} = 1 - \frac{6(6)}{125 - 5} = 1 - \frac{36}{120} \\ &= 1 - .3 = .7 \end{aligned}$$

To determine whether the obtained *rho* is likely to have occurred because of chance variation rather than an actual association, we must consult the table of critical values for *rho* in Appendix B (Table B-1). We see that with *N* of 5, *rho* must equal 1 to be significant. It does not. We can also see from the table that the larger the number of participants, the better our chances of finding a statistically significant effect, given that there is an association present.

Reporting in Text. $\rho (N = 5) = .70, p > .05$

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient

A **Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient** (*r*) can be used to measure the strength of association between two interval or ratio scale variables. In the following example, *X* represents the score on one variable, and *Y* the score on a second variable.

Example

Participant	X	X ²	Y	Y ²	XY		
Tom	9	81	8	64	72		
Sue	4	16	4	16	16		
Jill	4	16	6	36	24		
Dave	2	4	4	16	8	N = 8	
Ken	1	1	3	9	3		
Jo	3	9	2	4	6		
Juan	7	49	8	64	56		
Al	5	25	5	25	25		
	$\Sigma X = 35$	$\Sigma X^2 = 201$	$\Sigma Y = 40$	$\Sigma Y^2 = 234$	$\Sigma XY = 210$		

$$\begin{aligned} r &= \frac{N\Sigma XY - \Sigma X\Sigma Y}{\sqrt{N\Sigma X^2 - (\Sigma X)^2} \sqrt{N\Sigma Y^2 - (\Sigma Y)^2}} = \frac{8(210) - (35)(40)}{\sqrt{8(201) - 35^2} \sqrt{8(234) - 40^2}} \\ &= \frac{1680 - 1400}{\sqrt{1608 - 1225} \sqrt{1872 - 1600}} = \frac{280}{\sqrt{383} \sqrt{272}} = \frac{280}{(19.57)(16.49)} \\ &= \frac{280}{322.7} = .868 \end{aligned}$$

To test whether an *r* of this size is statistically significant with eight pairs of scores, refer to Table B-2 in Appendix B, listing critical values of *r*. To use this table, you must determine a quantity called the *degrees of freedom* (*df*). For this test the degrees of freedom is *N* - 2. So in the example *df* = 6. Because

r of .868 exceeds the listed value of .834, it is statistically significant at the $p < .01$ level. That is, we would expect this strength of association to occur in a sample less than 1 time in 100 because of chance selection from a single population.

Reporting in Text. $r(6) = .87, p < .01$

■ Inferential Statistical Tests

CHI-SQUARE

The **chi-square (χ^2) test** is used to determine whether the observed frequency of occurrence of scores is statistically different from the expected frequency.

Example

	<i>Number of participants predicting heads after a string of tails</i>	<i>Number of participants predicting tails after a string of tails</i>
Observed	60	40
Expected	50	50
$O - E$	+10	-10
$(O - E)^2$	100	100
$\frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$	2	2

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E} = 2 + 2 = 4$$

The expected frequency can be the frequency based either on a set of previous observations or on a theoretical prediction. Usually, the theoretical prediction is that the observed frequency will be that expected by chance. For instance, in the example the expectation is that the participants' predictions will show no bias (no gambler's fallacy)—half the time they will predict heads and half the time, tails.

The final step in doing an inferential statistical test is to compare the final result of your computation with a table of critical values. You will find a table for chi-square values in Appendix B (Table B-3). To find the appropriate number in the table, you must first determine the number of degrees of freedom as follows:

df = The number of $O - E$ being considered, minus 1, which in this case equals $2 - 1 = 1$

In the table we find that with $df = 1$, χ^2 must exceed 3.84 to be significant at the $p < .05$ level of significance. Thus, the data in our example are statistically different from chance at the .05 level. If we had been testing at the $p < .01$

level, $\chi^2 = 4$ would not have exceeded 6.64, and the test would have failed to reach significance.

Reporting in Text. $\chi^2 (1, N = 100) = 4.00, p < .05$

t-TEST FOR UNCORRELATED MEASURES

There are two forms of the **t-test**, one for uncorrelated measures and the other for correlated measures. The *t*-test for uncorrelated measures is used to determine the probability that an observed difference between two independent groups of participants occurred by chance. The underlying distributions are assumed to be normal.

Example

Group 1			
X_1	\bar{X}_1	$X_1 - \bar{X}_1$	$(X_1 - \bar{X}_1)^2$
9	7	2	4
8	7	1	1
7	7	0	0
7	7	0	0
$\frac{4}{4}$	7	-3	$\frac{9}{9}$
$\Sigma X_1 = 35$			$\Sigma (X_1 - \bar{X}_1)^2 = 14$

$$N_1 = 5$$

$$M_1 = \bar{X}_1 = \frac{\Sigma X_1}{N_1} = \frac{35}{5} = 7$$

$$\sigma_1 = \sqrt{\frac{\Sigma (X_1 - \bar{X}_1)^2}{N_1}} = \sqrt{\frac{14}{5}} = \sqrt{2.8} = 1.67$$

Group 2			
X_2	\bar{X}_2	$X_2 - \bar{X}_2$	$(X_2 - \bar{X}_2)^2$
5	3	2	4
4	3	1	1
3	3	0	0
2	3	-1	1
$\frac{1}{15}$	3	-2	$\frac{4}{4}$
$\Sigma X_2 = 15$			$\Sigma (X_2 - \bar{X}_2)^2 = 10$

$$N_2 = 5$$

$$M_2 = \bar{X}_2 = \frac{\Sigma X_2}{N_2} = \frac{15}{5} = 3$$

$$\sigma_2 = \sqrt{\frac{\Sigma(X_2 - \bar{X}_2)^2}{N_2}} = \sqrt{\frac{10}{5}} = \sqrt{2} = 1.41$$

$$t = \frac{M_1 - M_2}{\sqrt{\left(\frac{\sigma_1}{\sqrt{N_1 - 1}}\right)^2 + \left(\frac{\sigma_2}{\sqrt{N_2 - 1}}\right)^2}} = \frac{7 - 3}{\sqrt{\left(\frac{1.67}{\sqrt{5 - 1}}\right)^2 + \left(\frac{1.41}{\sqrt{5 - 1}}\right)^2}}$$

$$= \frac{4}{\sqrt{\left(\frac{1.67}{2}\right)^2 + \left(\frac{1.41}{2}\right)^2}} = \frac{4}{\sqrt{.697 + .497}} = \frac{4}{\sqrt{1.194}} = \frac{4}{1.09} = 3.67$$

The degrees of freedom for an uncorrelated t -test is:

$$df = N_1 + N_2 - 2$$

$$= 5 + 5 - 2 = 8$$

Table B-4 in Appendix B indicates that, with 8 df , t must exceed 3.355 for the difference to be significant at $p < .01$. Thus, our value of 3.67 is significant at that level.

Reporting in Text. $t(8) = 3.67, p < .01$

t -TEST FOR CORRELATED MEASURES

The t -test for correlated measures is used to determine the probability that an observed difference (D) between two conditions for the same or matched participants occurred by chance.

$$t = \frac{\bar{X}_D}{\frac{\sigma_D}{\sqrt{N - 1}}}$$

Example

Participant	Condition 1	Condition 2	Difference (D)	\bar{X}_D^*	$X_D - \bar{X}_D$	$(X_D - \bar{X}_D)^2$
1	9	6	3	3	0	0
2	8	5	3	3	0	0
3	7	5	2	3	-1	1
4	8	4	4	3	1	1
5	8	5	3	3	0	0
$N = 5$	$\Sigma X_1 = 40$	$\Sigma X_2 = 25$	$\Sigma D = 15$			$\Sigma(X_D - \bar{X}_D)^2 = 2$

$$*M_D = \bar{X}_D = \frac{\Sigma D}{N} = \frac{15}{5} = 3$$

$$\sigma_D = \sqrt{\frac{\sum(X_D - \bar{X}_D)^2}{N}} = \sqrt{\frac{2}{5}} = \sqrt{.4} = .632$$

$$t = \frac{\bar{X}_D}{\frac{\sigma_D}{\sqrt{N-1}}} = \frac{3}{\frac{.632}{\sqrt{5-1}}} = \frac{3}{\frac{.632}{2}} = \frac{3}{.316} = 9.49$$

The degrees of freedom for correlated measures is:

$$df = N - 1 = 5 - 1 = 4$$

Table B-4 is used for either form of the *t*-test. In this example, *t* must exceed 4.604 to be significant at the *p* < .01 level. It does, so it is.

Reporting in Text. *t* (4) = 9.49, *p* < .01

MANN-WHITNEY U TEST

The **Mann-Whitney U test** is used under the same general conditions as an uncorrelated *t*-test but only when the assumptions of normal distributions or an interval scale cannot be met.

$$U = N_1N_2 + \frac{N_1(N_1 + 1)}{2} - R_1$$

or

$$U = N_1N_2 + \frac{N_2(N_2 + 1)}{2} - R_2$$

} whichever is smaller

where

- N*₁ = the number of participants in the smaller group
- N*₂ = the number of participants in the larger group
- R*₁ = the sum of the ranks for the smaller group
- R*₂ = the sum of the ranks for the larger group

Example

Group 1		Group 2	
<i>X</i> ₁	Rank	<i>X</i> ₂	Rank
	1	2	2
	3	4	5
	3	7	8
	5	8	9.5
<i>N</i> ₁ = 10	6	10	13.5
	8	13	16
	9	15	17
	9	16	18
	10	17	19
	12	18	20
	<i>R</i> ₁ = 82		<i>R</i> ₂ = 128

$$U = N_1N_2 + \frac{N_1(N_1 + 1)}{2} - R_1 = (10)(10) + \frac{10(10 + 1)}{2} - 82$$

$$= 100 + \frac{110}{2} - 82 = 73$$

or

$$U = (10)(10) + \frac{10(10 + 1)}{2} - 128 = 27$$

Because 27 is smaller, $U = 27$.

Two tables for determining the critical values of U can be found in Appendix B (Tables B-5 and B-6). If we wished to test for significance at the $p < .05$ level, we would use Table B-5. The value for U when $N_1 = 10$ and $N_2 = 10$ is 23. To be significant, our value must be equal to or *smaller than* this critical value. Because 27 is not, it is not statistically significant at this level.

Note that the Mann-Whitney U test is different from the other tests because in order to be significant the value must be smaller rather than larger than the value in the table. To find a table for values of N_1 smaller than 7, you will have to use a more advanced text than this one. For values of N_2 larger than 20, U must be converted to a z score using this formula:

$$z = \frac{U - \frac{N_1N_2}{2}}{\sqrt{\frac{(N_1)(N_2)(N_1 + N_2 + 1)}{12}}}$$

The z score can then be compared with the critical values listed in Table B-7 in Appendix B.

Reporting in Text. $U (N_1 = 10, N_2 = 10) = 27, p < .05$

WILCOXON MATCHED-PAIRS SIGNED-RANKS TEST

The **Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-ranks test** is used to determine the probability that an observed difference (D) between two conditions for the same or matched participants occurred by chance. It differs from the t -test for correlated measures in that it can be used with ordinal data and the underlying distributions need not be normal.

$$\left. \begin{array}{l} T = \sum R_+ \\ T = |\sum R_-| \end{array} \right\} \text{whichever is smaller}$$

where

R_+ is a rank having a positive difference

R_- is a rank having a negative difference

Example

Pair	Condition 1	Condition 2	Difference (D)	Rank of D ignoring sign	Rank having a positive D	Rank having a negative D
1	54	50	4	3	3	
2	47	32	15	9	9	
3	39	33	6	4	4	
4	42	45	-3	2.5		-2.5
5	51	38	13	7	7	
6	46	39	7	5	5	
7	42	44	-2	1		-1
8	54	46	8	6	6	
9	42	39	3	2.5	2.5	
10	47	33	14	8	8	
					$\Sigma R_+ = 45.5$	$ \Sigma R_- = 3.5$

The smaller of 45.5 and 3.5 is 3.5; thus:

$$T = |\Sigma R_-| = 3.5$$

To test for statistical significance, look at Table B-8 in Appendix B. To reach significance, *T* must be equal to or smaller than the number listed. In the example there are 10 pairs of scores, so *n* = 10, and assuming that we did not predict the direction of the difference between conditions, a two-tailed test is appropriate. We see, then, that 3.5 is smaller than 5 but not 3, so *p* < .02.

Reporting in Text. *T* (*n* = 10) = 3.50, *p* < .02

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) can be used for interval or ratio data when the underlying distributions are approximately normal. ANOVA tests are available for either within-subject (repeated measures) or between-subjects (separate groups) designs and for designs with multiple independent variables. In this appendix, however, we limit our consideration to a between-subjects design with one independent variable. In the following example the independent variable has three levels. However, the formulas given can also be used for designs having more than three groups.

Although the calculations for ANOVA appear to be complicated, the rationale behind the test is really quite simple. Suppose that you conduct an experiment in which you collect data from three groups. The experimental question is whether the three samples come from the same population and differ only by chance variation or whether the samples come from different populations and differ owing to the independent variable, as well as to chance variation. ANOVA allows you to partition the variance found in the distribution containing all the scores you sampled. Part of the variance in this distribution is due to differences between groups, including variance due to the independent variable. A second part is due to chance variation among participants within groups.

The final number calculated when doing ANOVA is called an *F value*. It is a ratio of the variance between groups to the variance within groups. If the groups sampled come from the same population and the independent variable has no effect, we would expect the ratio to be close to 1. That is, the between-group variance should be about the same size as the within-group variance. However, if the independent variable has an effect and the groups come from different populations, we would expect the between-group variance to be larger than the within-group variance. The *F* value would then be greater than 1. As the value of *F* gets larger, we would become increasingly confident that the differences among groups were due to the effects of the independent variable rather than to chance variation.

In the following example, we first calculate a quantity called the *total sum of squares* (SS_{TOT}) followed by a *sum of squares between groups* (SS_{bg}) and *within groups* (SS_{wg}). We then divide SS_{bg} and SS_{wg} by their appropriate degrees of freedom to get the mean squares between groups (MS_{bg}) and within groups (MS_{wg}). MS_{bg} is then divided by MS_{wg} to find the value of *F*.

You should be able to follow the example, but if you get into trouble, the following definitions might help:

T = the total sum of all scores for all groups

T_j = the total sum of scores in group *j*

N = the number of scores in all groups

n_j = the number of scores in group *j*

$\sum_{j=1}^k$ means to sum for all groups from 1 to *k*

k = the number of groups

Example

Group 1		Group 2		Group 3	
X_1	X_1^2	X_2	X_2^2	X_3	X_3^2
3	9	9	81	10	100
5	25	6	36	8	64
4	16	5	25	11	121
3	9	8	64	10	100
1	1	7	49	9	81
2	4	7	49	10	100
5	25	6	36	11	121
2	4	4	16	12	144
3	9	8	64	10	100
1	1	7	49	9	81
$T_1 = 29$	$\overline{103}$	$T_2 = 67$	$\overline{469}$	$T_3 = 100$	$\overline{1012}$
$n_1 = 10$		$n_2 = 10$		$n_3 = 10$	

$N = 10 + 10 + 10 = 30$
 $T = 29 + 67 + 100 = 196$
 $k = 3$

$$\begin{aligned}
 SS_{\text{TOT}} &= \sum X^2 - \frac{T^2}{N} = (103 + 469 + 1012) - \frac{(196)^2}{30} \\
 &= 1584 - \frac{38416}{30} = 1584 - 1281 = 303 \\
 SS_{\text{bg}} &= \sum_{j=1}^k \frac{T_j^2}{n_j} - \frac{T^2}{N} = \frac{29^2}{10} + \frac{67^2}{10} + \frac{100^2}{10} - \frac{(196)^2}{30} \\
 &= \frac{841}{10} + \frac{4489}{10} + \frac{10000}{10} - 1281 \\
 &= 84.1 + 448.9 + 1000 - 1281 = 1533 - 1281 = 252 \\
 SS_{\text{wg}} &= SS_{\text{TOT}} - SS_{\text{bg}} = 303 - 252 = 51 \\
 df_{\text{bg}} &= k - 1 = 3 - 1 = 2 \\
 df_{\text{wg}} &= N - k = 30 - 3 = 27 \\
 MS_{\text{bg}} &= \frac{SS_{\text{bg}}}{df_{\text{bg}}} = \frac{252}{2} = 126 \\
 MS_{\text{wg}} &= \frac{SS_{\text{wg}}}{df_{\text{wg}}} = \frac{51}{27} = 1.89 \\
 F &= \frac{MS_{\text{bg}}}{MS_{\text{wg}}} = \frac{126}{1.89} = 66.7
 \end{aligned}$$

We can now compare this number with the critical values for F listed in Table B-9 in Appendix B. With 2 df in the numerator and 27 df in the denominator, F must equal or exceed 3.38 to be significant at $p < .05$ and equal or exceed 5.57 to be significant at $p < .01$. Because 66.7 far exceeds these critical values, the difference between the groups is highly significant. Note that the test could reach statistical significance owing to a difference between any two groups. To determine which means are statistically different from one another, further tests would have to be conducted. These tests are beyond the scope of this book. They can be found in the recommended texts at the end of Chapter 12.

Reporting in Text. $F(2, 27) = 66.70, p < .05$

KRUSKAL-WALLIS ONE-WAY ANOVA BY RANKS

If the assumptions of an interval or ratio scale or normal distributions cannot be met, a **Kruskal-Wallis one-way ANOVA** can be used to test for differences between two or more independent groups. Only an ordinal scale is necessary.

In the following example:

- K = the number of groups
- n_j = the number of scores per group
- N = the total number of scores
- R_j = the sum of ranks for group j
- t = the number of ties for each score

Example

Group 1		Group 2		Group 3	
X_1	Rank	X_2	Rank	X_3	Rank
8	15	2	2.5	6	11
4	5.5	5	8.5	5	8.5
7	13	2	2.5	4	5.5
5	8.5	3	4	5	8.5
7	13	1	1	7	13
	$R_1 = 55.0$		$R_2 = 18.5$		$R_3 = 46.5$

$K = 3$
 $n_j = 5$
 $N = 15$

Rank all the scores to get the ranks for each group.

Score	Rank	Average for ties	t
1	1	1	
2	2	2.5	2
2	3		
3	4	4	
4	5	5.5	2
4	6		
5	7	8.5	4
5	8		
5	9		
5	10		
6	11	11	
7	12	13	3
7	13		
7	14		
8	15	15	

Now place the ranks from this table next to the individual scores for each group in the previous table, and sum them to get R_1 , R_2 , and R_3 .

$$\begin{aligned}
 H &= \frac{12}{N(N+1)} \sum_{j=1}^k \frac{R_j^2}{n_j} - 3(N+1) \\
 &= \frac{12}{15(15+1)} \left[\frac{(55)^2}{5} + \frac{(18.5)^2}{5} + \frac{(46.5)^2}{5} \right] - 3(15+1) \\
 &= \frac{12}{15(16)} \left[\frac{3025}{5} + \frac{342.25}{5} + \frac{2162.25}{5} \right] - 3(16) \\
 &= \frac{12}{240} \left[\frac{5529.5}{5} \right] - 48 \\
 &= .05(1105.9) - 48 = 55.295 - 48 = 7.295
 \end{aligned}$$

The correction for ties is to divide H by $1 - \frac{\sum(t^3 - t)}{N^3 - N}$.

$$1 - \frac{(2^3 - 2) + (2^3 - 2) + (4^3 - 4) + (3^3 - 3)}{15^3 - 15}$$

$$1 - \frac{(8 - 2) + (8 - 2) + (64 - 4) + (27 - 3)}{3375 - 15}$$

$$1 - \frac{96}{3360} = 1 - .029 = .971$$

$$H = \frac{7.295}{.971} = 7.51$$

According to Table B-10 in Appendix B, for group sizes of 5, 5, and 5, the probability of having an H as large as 7.51 is less than .049. Thus, the difference between groups is statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level. Because this value is smaller than the 7.98 required for the $p < .01$ level, the difference is not significant at that level.

If the groups contain more than five participants, H is distributed like the chi-square. To determine the critical value in this case, refer to Table B-3 with $k - 1$ degrees of freedom.

Reporting in Text. $H(5, 5, 5) = 7.51, p < .05$

■ Conclusion

This appendix should allow you to compute some very basic statistical operations. However, if you go much beyond a basic course in experimentation, you will need to do at least three additional things. First, you will need to learn to use more complex tests for designs having multiple independent variables and mixtures of within-subject and between-subjects variables. Second, you will need to learn to use packaged computer programs to save time and effort. Third, and probably most important, you must go beyond a cookbook approach to statistics. As a researcher you should understand why you do what you do.

An understanding of the concepts underlying statistical operations not only allows you to choose the most powerful way to analyze your data but also allows you to design research so that the data can be effectively analyzed. Statistical consultants tell horror stories about inexperienced researchers who dump volumes of data on their desks and ask, "How do I analyze this?" In some cases the data defy analysis.

The point is that design and statistical analysis are integrally linked. If you plan to design your research, you should also understand the concepts underlying the statistical operations that should be used to analyze the outcome.

APPENDIX B

Statistical Tables

TABLE B-1
Critical Values of ρ (Spearman
Rank-Order Correlation Coefficient)

N	$p = .0500$	$p = .0100$
5	1.000	—
6	.886	1.000
7	.786	.929
8	.738	.881
9	.683	.833
10	.648	.794
12	.591	.777
14	.544	.715
16	.506	.665
18	.475	.625
20	.450	.591
22	.428	.562
24	.409	.537
26	.392	.515
28	.377	.496
30	.364	.478

SOURCE: Computed from Olds, E. G., Distribution of the sum of squares of rank differences for small numbers of individuals, *Annals of Mathematical Statistics*, 1938, 9, 133–148, and the 5% significance levels for sums of squares of rank differences and a correction, *Annals of Mathematical Statistics*, 1949, 20, 117–118. Table B-1 is taken from *Elementary Statistics*, Underwood et al., Appleton-Century-Crofts.

TABLE B-2
 Critical Values of r (Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient)

<i>df</i>	<i>Levels of significance for two-tailed test</i>		
	.10	.05	.01
1	.988	.997	.9999
2	.900	.950	.990
3	.805	.878	.959
4	.729	.811	.917
5	.669	.754	.874
6	.622	.707	.834
7	.582	.666	.798
8	.549	.632	.765
9	.521	.602	.735
10	.497	.576	.708
11	.476	.553	.684
12	.458	.532	.661
13	.441	.514	.641
14	.426	.497	.623
15	.412	.482	.606
16	.400	.468	.590
17	.389	.456	.575
18	.378	.444	.561
19	.369	.433	.549
20	.360	.423	.537
25	.323	.381	.487
30	.296	.349	.449
35	.275	.325	.418
40	.257	.304	.393
45	.243	.288	.372
50	.231	.273	.354
60	.211	.250	.325
70	.195	.232	.303
80	.183	.217	.283
90	.173	.205	.267
100	.164	.195	.254

SOURCE: Adapted from Fisher, R. A., *Statistical Methods for Research Workers*, 14th Edition. Copyright 1973, Hafner Press.

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TABLE B-5
 Critical Values of the Mann-Whitney U Test at the $p < .05$ Level

N_2	N_1														
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
3	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	
4	3	4	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	11	12	13	13	
5	5	6	7	8	9	11	12	13	14	15	17	18	19	20	
6	6	8	10	11	13	14	16	17	19	21	22	24	25	27	
7	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	
8	10	13	15	17	19	22	24	26	29	31	34	36	38	41	
9	12	15	17	20	23	26	28	31	34	37	39	42	45	48	
10	14	17	20	23	26	29	33	36	39	42	45	48	52	55	
11	16	19	23	26	30	33	37	40	44	47	51	55	58	62	
12	18	22	26	29	33	37	41	45	49	53	57	61	65	69	
13	20	24	28	33	37	41	45	50	54	59	63	67	72	76	
14	22	26	31	36	40	45	50	55	59	64	67	74	78	83	
15	24	29	34	39	44	49	54	59	64	70	75	80	85	90	
16	26	31	37	42	47	53	59	64	70	75	81	86	92	98	
17	28	34	39	45	51	57	63	67	75	81	87	93	99	105	
18	30	36	42	48	55	61	67	74	80	86	93	99	106	112	
19	32	38	45	52	58	65	72	78	85	92	99	106	113	119	
20	34	41	48	55	62	69	76	83	90	98	105	112	119	127	

SOURCE: Adapted and abridged from Tables 1, 3, 5, and 7 of Auble, D., Extended tables for the Mann-Whitney statistics, *Bulletin of the Institute of Educational Research at Indiana University*, 1953, 1(2).

TABLE B-6

Critical Values of the Mann–Whitney U Test at the $p < .01$ Level

N_2	N_1														
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
3	—	—	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	3	3	
4	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	5	5	6	6	7	8	
5	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
6	3	4	5	6	7	9	10	11	12	13	15	16	17	18	
7	4	6	7	9	10	12	13	15	16	18	19	21	22	24	
8	6	7	9	11	13	15	17	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	
9	7	9	11	13	16	18	20	22	24	27	29	31	33	36	
10	9	11	13	16	18	21	24	26	29	31	34	37	39	42	
11	10	13	16	18	21	24	27	30	33	36	39	42	45	48	
12	12	15	18	21	24	27	31	34	37	41	44	47	51	54	
13	13	17	20	24	27	31	34	38	42	45	49	53	56	60	
14	15	18	22	26	30	34	38	42	46	50	54	58	63	67	
15	16	20	24	29	33	37	42	46	51	55	60	64	69	73	
16	18	22	27	31	36	41	45	50	55	60	65	70	74	79	
17	19	24	29	34	39	44	49	54	60	65	70	75	81	86	
18	21	26	31	37	42	47	53	58	64	70	75	81	87	92	
19	22	28	33	39	45	51	56	63	69	74	81	87	93	99	
20	24	30	36	42	48	54	60	67	73	79	86	92	99	105	

SOURCE: Adapted and abridged from Tables 1, 3, 5, and 7 of Auble, D., Extended tables for the Mann–Whitney statistics, *Bulletin of the Institute of Educational Research at Indiana University*, 1953, 1(2).

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TABLE B-8
Critical Values of the Wilcoxon *T*

<i>n</i>	Level of significance for a one-tailed test				<i>n</i>	Level of significance for a one-tailed test			
	.05	.025	.01	.005		.05	.025	.01	.005
	Level of significance for a two-tailed test					Level of significance for a two-tailed test			
	.10	.05	.02	.01		.10	.05	.02	.01
5	0	—	—	—	28	130	116	101	91
6	2	0	—	—	29	140	126	110	100
7	3	2	0	—	30	151	137	120	109
8	5	3	1	0	31	163	147	130	118
9	8	5	3	1	32	175	159	140	128
10	10	8	5	3	33	187	170	151	138
11	13	10	7	5	34	200	182	162	148
12	17	13	9	7	35	213	195	173	159
13	21	17	12	9	36	227	208	185	171
14	25	21	15	12	37	241	221	198	182
15	30	25	19	15	38	256	235	211	194
16	35	29	23	19	39	271	249	224	207
17	41	34	27	23	40	286	264	238	220
18	47	40	32	27	41	302	279	252	233
19	53	46	37	32	42	319	294	266	247
20	60	52	43	37	43	336	310	281	261
21	67	58	49	42	44	353	327	296	276
22	75	65	55	48	45	371	343	312	291
23	83	73	62	54	46	389	361	328	307
24	91	81	69	61	47	407	378	345	322
25	100	89	76	68	48	426	396	362	339
26	110	98	84	75	49	446	415	379	355
27	119	107	92	83	50	466	434	397	373

NOTE: The *T* is the smaller of the sum of ranks having differences that are all of the same sign. For a given number of differences *n*, the *T* is significant at a particular level if it is equal to or less than the value shown.

SOURCE: From Roger E. Kirk, *Elementary Statistics*, 2nd Edition. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole, 1984.

TABLE B-9
Critical Values of *F*

		<i>Degrees of freedom for numerator</i>									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	8	12	24	∞
<i>Degrees of freedom for denominator</i>	1	161.45	199.50	215.72	224.57	230.17	233.97	238.89	243.91	249.04	254.32
		4032.10	4999.03	5403.49	5625.14	5764.08	5859.39	5981.34	6105.83	6234.16	6366.48
	2	18.51	19.00	19.16	19.25	19.30	19.33	19.37	19.41	19.45	19.50
		98.49	99.01	99.17	99.25	99.30	99.33	99.36	99.42	99.46	99.50
	3	10.13	9.55	9.28	9.12	9.01	8.94	8.84	8.74	8.64	8.53
		34.12	30.81	29.46	28.71	28.24	27.91	27.49	27.05	26.60	26.12
	4	7.71	6.94	6.59	6.39	6.26	6.16	6.04	5.91	5.77	5.63
		21.20	18.00	16.69	15.98	15.52	15.21	14.80	14.37	13.93	13.46
	5	6.61	5.79	5.41	5.19	5.05	4.95	4.82	4.68	4.53	4.36
		16.26	13.27	12.06	11.39	10.97	10.67	10.27	9.89	9.47	9.02
	6	5.99	5.14	4.76	4.53	4.39	4.28	4.15	4.00	3.84	3.67
		13.74	10.92	9.78	9.15	8.75	8.47	8.10	7.72	7.31	6.88
	7	5.59	4.74	4.35	4.12	3.97	3.87	3.73	3.57	3.41	3.23
		12.25	9.55	8.45	7.85	7.46	7.19	6.84	6.47	6.07	5.65
	8	5.32	4.46	4.07	3.84	3.69	3.58	3.44	3.28	3.12	2.93
		11.26	8.65	7.59	7.01	6.63	6.37	6.03	5.67	5.28	4.86
	9	5.12	4.26	3.86	3.63	3.48	3.37	3.23	3.07	2.90	2.71
		10.56	8.02	6.99	6.42	6.06	5.80	5.47	5.11	4.73	4.31
	10	4.96	4.10	3.71	3.48	3.33	3.22	3.07	2.91	2.74	2.54
		10.04	7.56	6.55	5.99	5.64	5.39	5.06	4.71	4.33	3.91
	11	4.84	3.98	3.59	3.36	3.20	3.09	2.95	2.79	2.61	2.40
		9.65	7.20	6.22	5.67	5.32	5.07	4.74	4.40	4.02	3.60
	12	4.75	3.88	3.49	3.26	3.11	3.00	2.85	2.69	2.50	2.30
		9.33	6.93	5.93	5.41	5.06	4.82	4.50	4.16	3.78	3.36
	14	4.60	3.74	3.34	3.11	2.96	2.85	2.70	2.53	2.35	2.13
		8.86	6.51	5.56	5.03	4.69	4.46	4.14	3.80	3.43	3.00
	16	4.49	3.63	3.24	3.01	2.85	2.74	2.59	2.42	2.24	2.01
		8.53	6.23	5.29	4.77	4.44	4.20	3.89	3.55	3.18	2.75
	18	4.41	3.55	3.16	2.93	2.77	2.66	2.51	2.34	2.15	1.92
		8.28	6.01	5.09	4.58	4.25	4.01	3.71	3.37	3.01	2.57
20	4.35	3.49	3.10	2.87	2.71	2.60	2.45	2.28	2.08	1.84	
	8.10	5.85	4.94	4.43	4.10	3.87	3.56	3.23	2.86	2.42	
25	4.24	3.38	2.99	2.76	2.60	2.49	2.34	2.16	1.96	1.71	
	7.77	5.57	4.68	4.18	3.86	3.63	3.32	2.99	2.62	2.17	
30	4.17	3.32	2.92	2.69	2.53	2.42	2.27	2.09	1.89	1.62	
	7.56	5.39	4.51	4.02	3.70	3.47	3.17	2.84	2.47	2.01	

(continued)

TABLE B-9 (continued)

	<i>Degrees of freedom for numerator</i>									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	8	12	24	∞
40	4.08	3.23	2.84	2.61	2.45	2.34	2.18	2.00	1.79	1.52
	7.31	5.18	4.31	3.83	3.51	3.29	2.99	2.66	2.29	1.82
50	4.03	3.18	2.79	2.56	2.40	2.29	2.13	1.95	1.74	1.44
	7.17	5.06	4.20	3.72	3.41	3.19	2.89	2.56	2.18	1.68
60	4.00	3.15	2.76	2.52	2.37	2.25	2.10	1.92	1.70	1.39
	7.08	4.98	4.13	3.65	3.34	3.12	2.82	2.50	2.12	1.60
70	3.98	3.13	2.74	2.50	2.35	2.23	2.07	1.89	1.67	1.35
	7.01	4.92	4.07	3.60	3.29	3.07	2.78	2.45	2.07	1.53
80	3.96	3.11	2.72	2.49	2.33	2.21	2.06	1.88	1.65	1.31
	6.98	4.88	4.04	3.56	3.26	3.04	2.74	2.42	2.03	1.47
90	3.95	3.10	2.71	2.47	2.32	2.20	2.04	1.86	1.64	1.28
	6.92	4.85	4.01	3.53	3.23	3.01	2.72	2.39	2.00	1.43
100	3.94	3.09	2.70	2.46	2.30	2.19	2.03	1.85	1.63	1.26
	6.90	4.82	3.98	3.51	3.21	2.99	2.69	2.37	1.98	1.39
200	3.89	3.04	2.65	2.42	2.26	2.14	1.98	1.80	1.57	1.14
	6.97	4.71	3.88	3.41	3.11	2.89	2.60	2.28	1.88	1.21
∞	3.84	2.99	2.60	2.37	2.21	2.09	1.94	1.75	1.52	
	6.64	4.60	3.78	3.32	3.02	2.80	2.51	2.18	1.79	

NOTE: The top number in each cell is for testing at the .05 level; the bottom number is for testing at the .01 level.

SOURCE: Adapted from Table F of Garrett, H. E., *Statistics in Psychology and Education*, 5th Edition. Copyright 1958, David McKay Co., Inc.

TABLE B-10
Critical Values for H (Kruskal–Wallis One-Way ANOVA by Ranks)

Sample sizes			H	p	Sample sizes			H	p
n_1	n_2	n_3			n_1	n_2	n_3		
2	1	1	2.7000	.500	4	3	2	6.4444	.008
2	2	1	3.6000	.200				6.3000	.011
2	2	2	4.5714	.067				5.4444	.046
			3.7143	.200				5.4000	.051
								4.5111	.098
3	1	1	3.2000	.300				4.4444	.102
3	2	1	4.2857	.100	4	3	3	6.7455	.010
			3.8571	.133				6.7091	.013
3	2	2	5.3572	.029				5.7909	.046
			4.7143	.048				5.7273	.050
			4.5000	.067				4.7091	.092
			4.4643	.105				4.7000	.101
3	3	1	5.1429	.043	4	4	1	6.6667	.010
			4.5714	.100				6.1667	.022
			4.0000	.129				4.9667	.048
3	3	2	6.2500	.011				4.8667	.054
			5.3611	.032				4.1667	.082
			5.1389	.061				4.0667	.102
			4.5556	.100	4	4	2	7.0364	.006
			4.2500	.121				6.8727	.011
3	3	3	7.2000	.004				5.4545	.046
			6.4889	.011				5.2364	.052
			5.6889	.029				4.5545	.098
			5.6000	.050				4.4455	.103
			5.0667	.086	4	4	3	7.1439	.010
			4.6222	.100				7.1364	.011
4	1	1	3.5714	.200				5.5985	.049
4	2	1	4.8214	.057				5.5758	.051
			4.5000	.076				4.5455	.099
			4.0179	.114				4.4773	.102
4	2	2	6.0000	.014	4	4	4	7.6538	.008
			5.3333	.033				7.5385	.011
			5.1250	.052				5.6923	.049
			4.4583	.100				5.6538	.054
			4.1667	.105				4.6539	.097
4	3	1	5.8333	.021	5	1	1	4.5001	.104
			5.2083	.050	5	2	1	3.8571	.143
			5.0000	.057				5.2500	.036
			4.0556	.093				5.0000	.048
			3.8889	.129				4.4500	.071
								4.2000	.095
								4.0500	.119

(continued)

TABLE B-10 (continued)

Sample sizes			H	p	Sample sizes			H	p
n_1	n_2	n_3			n_1	n_2	n_3		
5	2	2	6.5333	.008	5	4	4	7.7604	.009
			6.1333	.013				7.7440	.011
			5.1600	.034				5.6571	.049
			5.0400	.056				5.6176	.050
			4.3733	.090				4.6187	.100
			4.2933	.122				4.5527	.102
5	3	1	6.4000	.012	5	5	1	7.3091	.009
			4.9600	.048				6.8364	.011
			4.8711	.052				5.1273	.046
			4.0178	.095				4.9091	.053
			3.8400	.123				4.1091	.086
5	3	2	6.9091	.009	5	5	2	4.0364	.105
			6.8218	.010				7.3385	.010
			5.2509	.049				7.2692	.010
			5.1055	.052				5.3385	.047
			4.6509	.091				5.2462	.051
			4.4945	.101				4.6231	.097
5	3	3	7.0788	.009	5	5	3	4.5077	.100
			6.9818	.011				7.5780	.010
			5.6485	.049				7.5429	.010
			5.5152	.051				5.7055	.046
			4.5333	.097				5.6264	.051
			4.4121	.109				4.5451	.100
5	4	1	6.9545	.008	5	5	4	4.5363	.102
			6.8400	.011				7.8229	.010
			4.9855	.044				7.7914	.010
			4.8600	.056				5.6657	.049
			3.9873	.098				5.6429	.050
			3.9600	.102				4.5229	.099
5	4	2	7.2045	.009	5	5	5	4.5200	.101
			7.1182	.010				8.0000	.009
			5.2727	.049				7.9800	.010
			5.2682	.050				5.7800	.049
			4.5409	.098				5.6600	.051
			4.5182	.101				4.5600	.100
5	4	3	7.4449	.010	5	4	3	4.5000	.102
			7.3949	.011					
			5.6564	.049					
			5.6308	.050					
			4.5487	.099					
			4.5231	.103					

SOURCE: Adapted and abridged from Kruskal, W. H., and Wallis, W. A., Use of ranks in one-criterion variance analysis, *Journal of American Statistical Association*, 1952, 47, 614-617, with the kind permission of the authors and the publisher. (The corrections to this table given by the authors in Errata, *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 1953, 48, 910, have been incorporated.)

APPENDIX C

Table of Random Numbers

Line	Col. (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
1	10480	15011	01536	02011	81647	91646	69179	14194	62590	36207	20969	99570	91291	90700
2	22368	46573	25595	85393	30995	89198	27982	53402	93965	34095	52666	19174	39615	99505
3	24130	48360	22527	97265	76393	64809	15179	24830	49340	32081	30680	19655	63348	58629
4	42167	93093	06243	61680	07856	16376	39440	53537	71341	57004	00849	74917	97758	16379
5	37570	39975	81837	16656	06121	91782	60468	81305	49684	60672	14110	06927	01263	54613
6	77921	06907	11008	42751	27756	53498	18602	70659	90655	15053	21916	81825	44394	42880
7	99562	72905	56420	69994	98872	31016	71194	18738	44013	48840	63213	21069	10634	12952
8	96301	91977	05463	07972	18876	20922	94595	56869	69014	60045	18425	84903	42508	32307
9	89579	14342	63661	10281	17453	18103	57740	84378	25331	12566	58678	44947	05585	56941
10	85475	36857	43342	53988	53060	59533	38867	62300	08158	17983	16439	11458	18593	64952
11	28918	69578	88231	33276	70997	79936	56865	05859	90106	31595	01547	85590	91610	78188
12	63553	40961	48235	03427	49626	69445	18663	72695	52180	20847	12234	90511	33703	90322
13	09429	93969	52636	92737	88974	33488	36320	17617	30015	08272	84115	27156	30613	74952
14	10365	61129	87529	85689	48237	52267	67689	93394	01511	26358	85104	20285	29975	89868
15	07119	97336	71048	08178	77233	13916	47564	81056	97735	85977	29372	74461	28551	90707
16	51085	12765	51821	51259	77452	16308	60756	92144	49442	53900	70960	63990	75601	40719
17	02368	21382	52404	60268	89368	19885	55322	44819	01188	65255	64835	44919	05944	55157
18	01011	54092	33362	94904	31273	04146	18594	29852	71585	85030	51132	01915	92747	64951
19	52162	53916	46369	58586	23216	14513	83149	98736	23495	64350	94738	17752	35156	35749
20	07056	97628	33787	09998	42698	06691	76988	13602	51851	46104	88916	19509	25625	58104
21	48663	91245	85828	14346	09172	30168	90229	04734	59193	22178	30421	61666	99904	32812
22	54164	58492	22421	74103	47070	25306	76468	26384	58151	06646	21524	15227	96909	44592
23	32639	32363	05597	24200	13363	38005	94342	28728	35806	06912	17012	64161	18296	22851
24	29334	27001	87637	87308	58731	00256	45834	15398	46557	41135	10367	07684	36188	18510
25	02488	33062	28834	07351	19731	92420	60952	61280	50001	67658	32586	86679	50720	94953
26	81525	72295	04839	96423	24878	82651	66566	14778	76797	14780	13300	87074	79666	95725
27	29676	20591	68086	26432	46901	20849	89768	81536	86645	12659	92259	57102	80428	25280
28	00742	57392	39064	66432	84673	40027	32832	61362	98947	96067	64760	64584	96096	98253
29	05366	04213	25669	26422	44407	44048	37937	63904	45766	66134	75470	66520	34693	90449
30	91921	26418	64117	94305	26766	25940	39972	22209	71500	64568	91402	42416	07844	69618
31	00582	04711	87917	77341	42206	35126	74087	99547	81817	42607	43808	76655	62028	76630
32	00725	69884	62797	56170	86324	88072	76222	36086	84637	93161	76038	65855	77919	88006
33	69011	65797	95876	55293	18988	27354	26575	08625	40801	59920	29841	80150	12777	48501
34	25976	57948	29888	88604	67917	48708	18912	82271	65424	69774	33611	54262	85963	03547
35	09763	83473	73577	12908	30883	18317	28290	35797	05998	41688	34952	37888	38917	88050

(continued)

Table of Random Numbers (*continued*)

36	91567	42595	27958	30134	04024	86385	29880	99730	55536	84855	29080	09250	79656	73211
37	17955	56349	90999	49127	20044	59931	06115	20542	18059	02008	73708	83317	36103	42791
38	46503	18584	18845	49618	02304	51038	20655	58727	28168	15475	56942	53389	20562	87338
39	92157	89634	94824	78171	84610	82834	09922	25417	44137	48413	25555	21246	35509	20468
40	14577	62765	35605	81263	39667	47358	56873	56307	61607	49518	89656	20103	77490	18062
41	98427	07523	33362	64270	01638	92477	66969	98420	04880	45585	46565	04102	46880	45709
42	34914	63976	88720	82765	34476	17032	87589	40836	32427	70002	70663	88863	77775	69348
43	70060	28277	39475	46473	23219	53416	94970	25832	69975	94884	19661	72828	00102	66794
44	53976	54914	06990	67245	68350	82948	11398	42878	80287	88267	47363	46634	06541	97809
45	76072	29515	40980	07391	58745	25774	22987	80059	39911	96189	41151	14222	60697	59583
46	90725	52210	83974	29992	65831	38857	50490	83765	55657	14361	31720	57375	56228	41546
47	64364	67412	33339	31926	14883	24413	59744	92351	97473	89286	35931	04110	23726	51900
48	08962	00358	31662	25388	61642	34072	81249	35648	56891	69352	48373	45578	78547	81788
49	95012	68379	93526	70765	10593	04542	76463	54328	02349	17247	28865	14777	62730	92277
50	15664	10493	20492	38391	91132	21999	59516	81652	27195	48223	46751	22923	32261	85653

SOURCE: *Table of 105,000 Random Decimal Digits*, Statement no. 4914, File no. 261-A-1, Interstate Commerce Commission, Washington, DC, May 1949.

GLOSSARY

- ABBA counterbalancing** A technique for minimizing the effect of a linear confounding variable in an experiment having one independent variable with two levels, A and B. Level A is presented first, followed by two presentations of level B and a final presentation of A.
- Abscissa** The horizontal axis (see *x-axis*) of a graph, upon which the levels of an independent variable are often represented.
- Abstract** A short (960 characters at most) summary of a research report.
- Alternative-form reliability** A means of determining a test's reliability by giving a second test, having items similar to the first, to the same group and calculating a correlation coefficient on the two sets of scores.
- Analogical theory** A theory that explains how psychological relationships work by drawing an analogy to a physical model.
- Analysis of variance** A parametric test of statistical inference used for analyzing data from a factorial experiment or a multilevel single-variable experiment.
- Applied research** Research having as its primary purpose the solution of a specific problem.
- Archival research** A type of study in which existing public or private records are examined, organized, and interpreted.
- Asymptote** The imaginary line that a negatively accelerated function approaches as it flattens out.
- Bar graph** A means of illustrating the frequency of qualitative data using spaced vertical bars. Qualitative class intervals are plotted on the abscissa, with frequency represented on the ordinate and the frequency of each class represented by the height of the bar over that class interval.
- Baseline experiment** A type of single-variable experiment that can show effects using data from a single participant. A steady state baseline rate of responding is established, following which an experimental manipulation is made and a transition state established. Finally, the manipulation is removed and the baseline recovered.
- Basic research** Study aimed at understanding the basic mechanisms of science. Although such research can lead to the solution of applied problems, the goal is simply to enhance the body of knowledge.
- Between-subjects design** An experimental research strategy in which each research participant provides data for only one level of the independent variable (or variables).
- Bimodal distribution** A frequency distribution having two humps, each of which has a maximum value.
- Blind experiment** An experiment in which participants are unaware of the levels of the independent variable to which they are being exposed.

- Carry-over effect** An effect in a within-subject design, in which a change in behavior is influenced by prior exposure to a different level of the independent variable.
- Case history** A nonexperimental means of collecting data that contains detailed accounts of the behaviors of a single person or event.
- Ceiling effect** The truncation of data at the top of a distribution due to a limit on the highest score possible.
- Chi-square test** A nonparametric test of statistical inference that is used to determine whether the observed frequency of occurrence of scores is statistically different from the expected frequency.
- Choice reaction time** The time taken to give one of several responses to one of several stimuli.
- Closed-ended question** A survey question that requires respondents to answer within an imposed structure.
- Coefficient of determination** A statistic computed by squaring the correlation coefficient that specifies the proportion of variation explained.
- Complete counterbalancing** An experimental design in which the order of the levels of the independent variable is such that across participants every level of the independent variable occurs an equal number of times and also follows every other level an equal number of times.
- Composite dependent variable** A measure of behavior that combines the results of several dependent variables into one measure of overall performance.
- Concurrent validity** A means of establishing a test's validity by determining whether it successfully predicts some specific criterion when the test and the criterion measurements are taken at the same time.
- Conference paper** An oral presentation of a research project to a group of researchers who have met to share research results.
- Confounding variable** A variable whose levels are correlated with the levels of the independent variable such that any change in behavior could be due either to the levels of the independent variable or those of the confounding variable.
- Content validity** A means of establishing a test's validity by carefully analyzing the subject matter purportedly covered in the test and then constructing the test so that it contains a representative set of items.
- Context effect** The influence of participants' exposure to the levels of variables—the ones that they bring with them to an experiment and those that they develop during the experiment—on their behavior.
- Contingency coefficient** A measure of the strength of association between two sets of nominal-scale numbers.
- Control group** The participants in a between-subjects design who are treated in a way comparable to those in the experimental group (or groups) except for not being exposed to the experimental manipulation.
- Control variable** A circumstance of the experiment that the experimenter sets at a particular level and prevents from varying.
- Converging-series design** A sequence of experiments conducted to progressively eliminate competing theoretical hypotheses.
- Correlation** A relationship between two variables that is of a particular direction and a particular strength.
- Correlational observation** A research design in which the researcher attempts to determine whether two or more variables are related

without attempting to manipulate the variables or draw causal conclusions.

Correlation coefficient A number between +1.0 and -1.0 that expresses the strength and direction of a relationship between two variables.

Counterbalancing A way of ordering the presentation of levels of the independent variable to minimize or eliminate the effects of sequential confounding variables.

Critical incident In applied research, a single instance that is considered to be diagnostic of a possible relationship between independent and dependent variables.

Crossover interaction An interaction from the results of a factorial experiment in which the graphed lines representing the independent variables cross each other.

Curvilinear function A function that departs from a straight line and contains components that can be fit by various mathematical formulas for curved lines.

Deception Concealing or camouflaging the real purpose of an experiment from the participants.

Deduction A means of reaching a logical conclusion from a set of premises; this conclusion contains no more information than the premises taken collectively (for example, *A is a B; B is a C; therefore, A is a C*).

Demand characteristics Attributes of an experiment that lead a participant to behave in a certain way, usually in support of the experimental hypothesis, independent of the levels of the independent variable.

Dependent variable The behavior the experimenter chooses to measure; this behavior may be dependent upon the levels of the independent variable.

Descriptive statistics Ways of reducing data sets so that only certain

properties are described (for example, central tendency or dispersion of a distribution).

Descriptive theory A theory that simply attaches names to events without necessarily explaining why or how the events have occurred.

Directional hypothesis A tentative prediction that the levels of an independent variable will cause a dependent variable to change in a particular direction.

Directionality problem Not knowing which of the variables was the cause and which the effect from a correlational observation.

Double-blind experiment An experiment in which neither the participant nor the experimenter knows the particular level of the independent variable being presented.

Dual-task methodology A way of indirectly inferring the processing requirements of a task by measuring performance on a second task performed simultaneously.

Electronic publishing The publication of information in electronic form, such as on the Internet, rather than in paper form.

Ethnography A qualitative research design that describes a culture in detail.

Experimental group Those participants in a between-subjects experiment exposed to the treatment condition.

Experimental method A research technique in which an independent variable is manipulated and a dependent variable is measured. The experimental method allows a causal inference to be made: Any change in the dependent variable was caused by the manipulation of the independent variable.

External validity The generalizability of an experimental result to a particular real-world population, situation, or setting different from that represented in the experiment.

Fabrication of results A type of scientific fraud in which false data are constructed.

Face validity The weakest form of establishing a test's validity; the test is simply examined to determine whether, on the surface, it looks as if the test is measuring what it is supposed to measure.

Factorial design An experimental design containing more than one independent variable in which every level of each independent variable is combined with every other level.

Factors The independent variables whose levels are combined in a factorial experiment.

Floor effect The truncation of data at the bottom of a distribution due to a limit on the lowest score possible.

Frequency distribution A plot of the number of scores occurring for each score value or for two or more limited ranges of score values.

Function A line or curve illustrating the relationship of one variable to another.

Functional experiment An experiment having three or more levels of an independent variable such that a functional relationship between the independent and dependent variables can be determined.

Group administration of surveys The collection of survey data through simultaneous administration of the survey to a group of respondents.

Hawthorne effect A change in behavior due simply to the experimenter's paying attention to the participants rather than to the effects of the independent variable.

Histogram A means of illustrating the frequency of quantitative data using contiguous vertical bars. Quantitative class intervals are plotted on the abscissa, with frequency represented on the ordinate and the frequency of each class

represented by the height of the bar over that class interval.

History as a threat to internal validity A change in the dependent variable due to the occurrence of an event between the testing of levels of the independent variable.

Hypothesis A statement about a predicted relationship between two or more variables.

Independent variable A circumstance having two or more levels manipulated by the experimenter so that effects on the dependent variable can be observed.

Induction A logical process in which the conclusion contains more information than the observations on which it is based.

Inferential statistic A statistical test that allows one to infer the likelihood that an observed result is due to chance alone.

Informed consent A procedure ensuring that research participants have been given all important information about the study and have formally agreed to participate.

Institutional review board A committee at a research-oriented institution constituted to ensure that all research is conducted in an ethical manner.

Interaction in a factorial design The effect of the nonadditive combination of multiple independent variables on a dependent variable.

Interactions with selection A threat to internal validity caused by a validity threat such as maturation or history interacting with the threat of selection.

Internal validity The certainty of the assertion that it was the manipulation of the independent variable that caused the change in the dependent variable.

Internet survey A survey administered electronically over the Internet.

- Interrupted time-series design** A quasi-experimental design in which a single group is observed multiple times before an experimental manipulation and then multiple times after the manipulation.
- Interval scale** Measurements in which the intervals between numbers are a constant unit; $1 = n - (n - 1)$ (for example, Fahrenheit temperature).
- Interview** The structured or unstructured collection of survey data by means of direct face-to-face contact of an interviewer with a respondent.
- Kruskal–Wallis One-way ANOVA by ranks** An inferential statistical test appropriate for ordinal data that tests for differences between two or more independent groups.
- Latin Square** A type of counterbalancing that ensures that each level of the independent variable appears in every ordered position equally often.
- Level of significance** The statistical probability required by scientists to say it is unlikely that an observed characteristic of a sample is due to chance rather than being true of the underlying population. This probability is usually $p < .05$ or $p < .01$.
- Likert scale** A rating scale that allows a researcher to investigate respondents' attitudes about topics by indicating their level of agreement with a statement.
- Linear function** A function that forms a straight line.
- Line graph** A means of illustrating the relationship of two variables using a continuous line or curve.
- Literature search** The process of examining the formal scientific body of knowledge for written material relevant to a particular area of research.
- Mail survey** A survey administered by sending it through the mail.
- Main effect** In a factorial design, the relationship between the levels of one independent variable and a dependent variable averaged across the levels of other independent variables.
- Mann–Whitney *U* test** A nonparametric test of statistical inference used for testing the difference between two groups using rank-order information.
- Matched-groups design** A method of assigning participants in between-subjects designs in which sets of participants are first formed by matching them on a variable that is highly correlated to the dependent variable; participants from each set are then randomly assigned to groups.
- Maturation as a threat to internal validity** A change in the dependent variable due to participants' aging or becoming more experienced between the administration of levels of the independent variable.
- Mean** A measure of central tendency of a distribution that is calculated by adding all the scores and then dividing the total by the number of scores.
- Mean treatment effect size** A statistic for representing the size of the effect of an experimental manipulation on behavior; it is calculated by subtracting the mean of the control group from the mean of the treatment group and dividing by the standard deviation of the control group.
- Median** A measure of central tendency of a distribution that is calculated by ordering all scores and selecting the middle score.
- Meta-analysis** A technique for estimating the cumulative size of an experimental effect across multiple experiments.

Mixed factorial design A factorial design having at least one within-subject and one between-subjects independent variable.

Mode A measure of central tendency of a distribution that is the most frequent score.

Monotonic function A function that increases throughout its range or decreases throughout its range.

Mortality as a threat to internal validity A difference in the dependent variable due to differential participant attrition from groups exposed to different levels of the independent variable.

Multiple-alternative question A question written such that the possible response alternatives are restricted.

Naturalistic observation A type of research in which behavior is studied within its natural setting.

Negative function A relationship in which increasing values of one variable are associated with decreasing values of a second variable.

Negatively accelerated function A function in which the rate of increase or decrease of one variable decreases as a second variable increases. Such functions are characterized by steep initial slopes that become progressively flatter.

Nominal scale A measurement scale without quantitative properties in which numbers are used as names (for example, a runner with the number 342 pinned to her shirt).

Nondifferential transfer (See *Symmetrical transfer*.) In an experiment in which the two levels of the independent variable are A and B, the effect of having B follow A on behavior is the same as having A follow B.

Nondirectional hypothesis A tentative prediction that the levels of an independent variable will cause a change in a dependent variable,

but not predicting the direction of that change.

Nonequivalent control group design

A quasi-experimental design that uses a control group constituted in a manner different from that of the experimental group.

Nonexperimental design A research design not having protection from the threats to internal validity provided by experimental or quasi-experimental designs. For this reason, the results of such research are impossible to defend.

Nonexperiment control group A group of participants used to assess the demand characteristics of an experiment. Each participant is not actually exposed to the levels of the independent variable but is told of the experimental conditions and asked how he or she would respond.

Nonmonotonic function A function that changes from negative to positive slope or positive to negative slope in at least one place.

Nonparametric test A test of statistical inference that does not require any assumptions about the underlying population distributions, such as that they are normally distributed.

Nonresponse bias The distortion of survey results due to the differential rate of responding by various subgroups.

Normal distribution A frequency distribution, defined by a particular mathematical function that is bell shaped, is unimodal, is symmetrical, and has the same mean, median, and mode.

Null hypothesis A statement required by null hypothesis statistical testing indicating that there is no effect in the population due to the levels of the independent variable(s) so that any differences found in the samples are due to chance.

- One-group posttest-only design** A nonexperimental design in which a single group is exposed to only one level of an independent variable.
- One-group pretest–posttest design** A nonexperimental design in which a single group is tested, exposed to only one level of an independent variable, and then retested.
- Open-ended question** A survey question that allows respondents to freely structure their answers.
- Operational definition** The definition of a concept by specifying the operations required to manipulate or measure the concept.
- Order effect** In a within-subject design, the dependence of the behavior measured on the presentation order of the levels of the independent variable.
- Ordinal scale** A measurement scale in which the order of the numbers is meaningful but intervals between or ratios of the numbers are not (for example, 9 is greater than 8).
- Ordinate** The vertical axis (see *y-axis*) of a graph, upon which the levels of a dependent variable are usually represented.
- Page header** The first several words of the manuscript title placed in the upper right of each manuscript page.
- Parametric test** A test of statistical inference in which assumptions are made about the underlying population distributions, usually that they are normally distributed.
- Partial counterbalancing** A way of ordering the presentation of levels of the independent variable to minimize some of the effects of sequential confounding variables.
- Participants** The humans whose behavior the researcher is investigating (formerly called *subjects*).
- Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient** A statistic used to measure the strength of association between two interval or ratio scale variables.
- Percent savings** A composite dependent variable in which the number of trials to relearn a task is subtracted from the number of trials required to originally learn the task, divided by the number of trials needed to originally learn, and multiplied by 100 to determine the percentage of trials saved by having learned the task previously.
- Pilot experiment** A small-scale experiment that might not satisfy all the requirements of experimentation; it is conducted for the purpose of pretesting the levels and procedures to be used in the final experiment.
- Placebo** In drug research, a nonactive substance administered in the same manner as the active drug is administered; sometimes the placebo can cause a change in behavior even though it is physiologically nonactive.
- Plagiarism** The presentation of the words or ideas of another person without proper attribution.
- Positive function** A relationship in which increasing values of one variable are associated with increasing values of a second variable.
- Positively accelerated function** A function in which the rate of increase or decrease of one variable increases as a second variable increases. Such functions are characterized by shallow initial slopes that become progressively steeper.
- Poster presentation** The presentation of a research project by posting a series of panels representing the research.
- Posttest-only design with nonequivalent groups** A nonexperimental design in which one group is

exposed to one level of an independent variable and a second group chosen using a different selection mechanism is exposed to a second level.

Power (statistical) The probability of rejecting the null hypothesis when it is false.

Predictive validity A means of establishing a test's validity by determining whether it successfully predicts some specific criterion.

Proxy pretest A test whose results are correlated with the posttest results and used in quasi-experimental designs having nonequivalent groups for the purpose of demonstrating partial equivalence of the groups.

Proximate questions Questions in science that ask how a behavior works rather than why it works.

Psychohistory Psychobiographies, usually of well-known individuals, that attempt to explain behavior patterns by examining critical events in their lives.

PsychARTICLES A subscription service from the American Psychological Association (APA) that allows full articles published in APA journals to be accessed.

PsychINFO A subscription service offered by the American Psychological Association that allows abstracts from psychological research to be searched.

Pure research (See *Basic research*.) Research aimed at understanding the basic mechanisms of science. Although such research can lead to the solution of applied problems, the goal is simply to enhance the body of knowledge.

Qualitative designs Research designs that use descriptive data such as written descriptions of people, including opinions and attitudes, and of events and environments.

Quantitative designs Research designs in which events can be quantified so that the final data

are numerical (for example, an experiment).

Quantitative theory A theory that states relationships in mathematical terms.

Quasi-experimental designs

Research designs that do not satisfy the participant randomization requirements of experimentation but that allow many of the threats to internal validity to be assessed.

Questionnaire A written survey administered individually or in groups.

Random assignment The placement of participants selected from a population into experimental groups using a random process.

Randomization A method of selection that operates by chance such that every item has an equal chance of being selected.

Randomization within blocks A method of selection in which conditions are randomly assigned to trials within the constraint that each condition occurs an equal number of times within each block of trials.

Randomization within constraints A method of selection in which items are randomly chosen within the bounds of some selection rule or rules (for example, conditions are randomly chosen within the constraint that they be represented an equal number of times).

Random sample A subgroup of a population selected by some random process.

Random selection The use of a random process to choose a sample of items or people from a population.

Random variable A circumstance in an experiment whose level is determined by chance rather than being controlled by the experimenter.

Range The difference between the smallest value of a set of numbers and the largest value.

- Range effect** In within-subject designs in which the stimuli or responses can be put into a consistent order, the tendency for the best performance to occur in the middle positions due to high transfer of learning.
- Rating scale** A response technique that allows a respondent to give a graded response indicating the individual's rating (for example, from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree").
- Ratio scale** A measurement scale in which the ratios of the numbers are meaningful (for example, 4 cm is twice as long as 2 cm).
- Reliability** The degree to which a measurement can be successfully repeated.
- Repeated measures design** (See *Within-subject design*.) An experimental design in which the same group of participants is exposed to all levels of the independent variable (or variables).
- Response-surface methodology** A technique used to estimate the effects of a combination of many independent variables without having to conduct a complete factorial experiment combining all levels of all variables.
- Reversibility** In a baseline experiment the recovery of the original steady state response rate following removal of the experimental manipulation.
- Scatterplot** A means of graphing data points in which the position of each point is determined by its value corresponding to the variables on each axis.
- Secondary source** A research publication cited in a manuscript that was not read, but the information was derived from a primary source that was read.
- Selection as a threat to internal validity** A difference in the dependent variable due to any difference in the composition of participant groups exposed to different levels of the independent variable.
- Separate groups design** (See *Between-subjects design*.) An experimental design in which each group is exposed to only one level of an independent variable.
- Simulation control group** Participants who are asked to pretend that they have been exposed to an experimental manipulation and to simulate the expected behavior so that the demand characteristics of an experiment can be assessed.
- Skewed distribution** An asymmetrical distribution whose tail extends farther in one direction than the other.
- Small-N baseline design** (See *Baseline experiment*.) A type of single-variable experiment that can show effects using data from a small number of participants. A steady state baseline rate of responding is established, following which an experimental manipulation is made and a transition state established. Finally, the manipulation is removed and the baseline recovered.
- Spearman rank-order correlation coefficient** A statistic used to measure the strength of association between two ordinal scale variables.
- Split-half reliability** A means of determining a test's reliability by statistically splitting a single test into halves and correlating their scores.
- Standard deviation** A measure of the dispersion of a frequency distribution in which each score is subtracted from the mean, squared, and summed. The sum is then divided by the number of scores, and the square root is taken.
- Statistical conclusion validity** The degree to which a statistically

- significant relationship between the independent and dependent variables indicates that there is a real relationship.
- Statistical regression as a threat to internal validity** The movement of participants' extreme scores toward the group mean during repeated testing.
- Statistical significance** A result is said to be statistically significant if the statistical probability required by scientists to say that it is unlikely that an observed characteristic of a sample is due to chance, rather than being true of the underlying population, has been reached. This probability is usually $p < .05$ or $p < .01$.
- Steady state** At the beginning of a baseline experiment a response rate that shows very little change.
- Stratified sampling** A process by which a sample of a population is selected such that appropriate representation is given to subpopulations, or strata (such as income levels or ethnic groups).
- Survey** The collection of data by asking people about their opinions or behaviors.
- Symmetrical transfer** In an experiment in which the two levels of the independent variable are A and B, the effect of having B follow A on behavior is the same as that having A follow B.
- Telephone survey** A survey administered by telephone interviews.
- Testing as a threat to internal validity** A change in the dependent variable due to participants' prior exposure to the testing instrument or situation.
- Test-retest reliability** A means of determining a test's reliability by repeating the test on the same group a second time and calculating a correlation coefficient on the two sets of scores.
- Theory** A statement about the probable relationships among a set of abstract variables.
- Third variable problem** Not knowing from a correlational observation whether a change in one variable caused a change in a second variable or whether a third variable caused a change in both.
- Three-way interaction** A higher-order interaction that occurs when the nature of each two-way interaction is dependent on the level of the third factor under which it occurs.
- Transition steady state** A response rate that shows very little variation once the experimental manipulation has been implemented in a baseline experiment.
- Treatment** The application of an experimental manipulation by the experimenter, usually as contrasted to the control condition.
- Treatment \times Subject design** See *Within-subject design*.
- Truncated distribution** A limitation on the range of a particular variable that results in a bounded frequency distribution (for example, a ceiling or floor effect).
- t-test** A parametric test of statistical inference used for determining the probability that an observed difference between data samples representing two different levels of an independent variable occurred by chance.
- Two-way interaction** In a factorial experiment the nature of the main effect of one factor is dependent upon the level of a second factor.
- Type I error** Rejecting the null hypothesis when it is true.
- Type II error** Failing to reject the null hypothesis when it is false.
- Ultimate questions** Questions in science that attempt that ask why behaviors occur.
- Validity** The degree to which something (a measuring device, a

concept) corresponds to a standard.

Variance A measure of the dispersion of a frequency distribution in which each score is subtracted from the mean, squared, and summed. The sum is then divided by the number of scores.

Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-ranks test An inferential statistical test appropriate for ordinal data used to determine the probability that an observed difference between conditions for the same or matched participants occurred by chance.

Within-subject design An experimental design in which each participant is exposed to all levels of the independent variable (or variables).

x-axis (See *Abscissa*.) The horizontal axis of a graph, upon which the levels of an independent variable are often represented.

y-axis (See *Ordinate*.) The vertical axis of a graph, upon which the levels of a dependent variable are usually represented.

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