

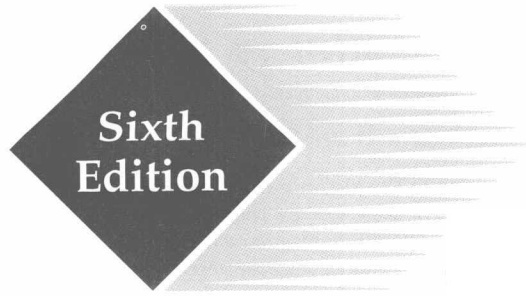
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Research Methods in Psychology

John J. Shaughnessy · Eugene B. Zechmeister · Jeanne S. Zechmeister



Research Methods in Psychology

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*To Paula
and to the Memory of
Martha,
two women to whom I am
greatly indebted
(J.J.S.)*

*To Ruth O'Keane
and to the Memory of
James O'Keane,
Kathleen O'Keane Zechmeister,
and My Mother
(E.B.Z.)*

*To My Family
(J.S.Z.)*

Preface

Detectives can know the excitement of discovering a critical piece of evidence. Prosecuting attorneys can know the satisfaction of bringing a guilty person to justice, and defense attorneys can prevent a miscarriage of justice. Judges and juries bear the responsibility of discerning the truth. Research psychologists play all these roles as they search for evidence, make the case, and render verdicts about what principles of behavior and mental processes are true. What are the effects of day care on children's intellectual and social development? To what extent do our genes determine our personalities? What are the consequences of racial stereotyping on the targets and perpetrators of these stereotypes?

For over two decades we have been writing editions of this research methods textbook with the hope that we could capture the excitement of psychological inquiry as well as the importance of understanding the methods used to conduct research. Our greatest satisfaction from writing this textbook and teaching research methods has been seeing students who enter the course feeling mild trepidations, leave not only feeling competent and confident but also excited about their understanding of the research process.

ORGANIZATION AND APPROACH

Our approach is based on our years of teaching experience. As instructors of research methods, we recognize that most students in our classes will be consumers of research and not producers of research. Students who choose to take on either role will benefit from developing critical thinking skills. We believe that we can best help our students think critically by taking a problem-solving approach to the study of research methods. Researchers begin with a good question and then select a research method that can best help them answer their question. The sometimes painstaking task of gathering evidence is only the beginning of the research process. Analyzing and interpreting the evidence are equally important in making claims about psychological processes. Researchers (and students) must analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the method they have chosen in order to be able to evaluate critically the nature of the evidence they have obtained.

Another feature that we continue from our last edition is the website designed for our book. There are interactive exercises and quizzes for students to test their knowledge of text material, as well as links to other important psychology websites. Instructors will find the instructor's manual and lecture/discussion aids helpful. Both students and instructors may easily contact the authors via this site. Please come see us at www.mhhe.com/shaughnessy6.

CHANGES IN THIS EDITION

The expression “The more things change, the more they stay the same” applies when writing a sixth edition of a textbook. We continue in this edition to illustrate the strengths and weaknesses of each research method using examples from the rich psychology literature. We do so because we think that reading actual research examples will help students appreciate the critical link between research methods and psychological knowledge. We believe that it is this appreciation for research methods and their findings that makes the study of psychology even more fulfilling and meaningful. We also continue to use bullet points within the chapters and Review Questions at the end of chapters to help students see clearly what points we think are most important for them to learn. And we continue to rely on the Challenge Questions at the end of chapters to help students learn to apply the principles they have learned. Building on the model of the Challenge Questions, we have embedded Stretching Exercises in most chapters to allow students to apply research principles while they are learning about the principles.

But things *do* change. Since we published our last edition, APA has revised the ethical principles and code of conduct for psychologists, and published a new edition of the *Publication Manual*. We have included these APA changes in Chapter 3 on ethical issues and in Chapter 14 (an appendix in previous editions) on communication in psychology. We have revised the overall structure of the book to include 14 chapters rather than the 10 in the previous edition. We have streamlined the text by emphasizing student relevant examples that clearly illustrate the major principles of the research method presented in each chapter. We hope that the shorter chapters will facilitate students’ learning of the material and instructors’ flexibility in designing their course. We have also added a new opening chapter that welcomes students to the study of research methods by using an analogy between the criminal justice process and the scientific process. Discussion questions at the end of this chapter encourage students to become active learners from the beginning.

A final and major structural change we have made is to revise the appendix on statistics from previous editions into two new chapters that deal with data analysis and interpretation (Chapters 12 and 13). We leaned heavily on Robert Abelson’s ideas as elucidated in his published articles and book, *Statistics as Principled Argument* (1995/Erlbaum), and on the APA Task Force on Statistical Inference (Wilkinson et al., 1999). Students will be introduced in these two chapters to a three-stage approach to analysis: an exploratory stage (getting to know the data); a summary (descriptive) stage; and a confirmation stage (confirming what the data reveal). We are optimistic that careful study of the material in these chapters will give students the necessary background both to read published research articles critically and to analyze data from their own research projects. Having more complete coverage of statistical issues in these two chapters has allowed us to focus on the conceptual issues of data analysis in the individual chapters covering specific research methods. Students can gain an appreciation of the way in which research methods and data analysis are intertwined without studying Chapters 12 and 13. By studying these

chapters, however, their understanding of both data analysis and research methods will be enriched.

WORDS OF THANKS

Many knowledgeable and discerning reviewers over the years contributed to this latest edition. Among the most recent to whom we are grateful are:

Michael J. Bayly <i>University of Charleston</i>	Stephen T. Paul <i>Mississippi State University</i>
Samuel Hill <i>The Sage Colleges</i>	Steven Robbins <i>Ph.D., Beaver College</i>
Robert W. Mitchell <i>Ph.D., Eastern Kentucky University</i>	Virgil L. Sheets <i>Indiana State University</i>

If a change that was recommended didn't appear, it wasn't because we didn't consider carefully what these reviewers were telling us. We did. Thanks for pushing us to be better.

The cumulative contributions of many others to this and earlier editions are by now beyond easy acknowledgment. Yet, some people stand out as helping to prepare this latest edition. They include our colleagues at Loyola University Chicago, Emil Posavac and Scott Tindale, who read and critiqued the new chapters dealing with data analysis and interpretation, and Joe Sherwin, Director of Research Services at Loyola, who read carefully the ethics chapter and made important suggestions for changes. Many thanks go to Paula N. Shaughnessy, who did the final formatting of the entire manuscript and prepared the Glossary and References. We also acknowledge Liz Zechmeister who helped us obtain permissions for photos and work cited.

We also would like to acknowledge the editorial and production staff at McGraw-Hill. Melissa Mashburn got us started on this edition and Cheri Dellelo provided an insightful summary of the reviews we received. We benefited from the experience and high expectations of Ken King who was our senior sponsoring editor. Georgia Gero-Chen's competence made our work more efficient and her graciousness made our experience more pleasant. Jenny El-Shamy created an inviting cover design for our book. Lou Ann Wilson identified photos that are well suited to the text material. This is the third edition that has benefited from the beautiful drawings by our good friend Fran Hughes. Our copyeditor, Linda Gomoll, demonstrated an attention to detail that even extended to catching errors in computations in the text. Finally, our project manager, Mary Lee Harms, kept us all on schedule while keeping her focus on an even higher priority—the quality of the work we were doing.

**John J. Shaughnessy
Eugene B. Zechmeister
Jeanne S. Zechmeister**

Brief Contents

Preface

xiv

PART I

General Issues

- | | | |
|---|--|----|
| 1 | <i>Introduction</i> | 1 |
| 2 | <i>The Scientific Method</i> | 14 |
| 3 | <i>Ethical Issues in the Conduct of Psychological Research</i> | 44 |

PART II

Descriptive Methods

- | | | |
|---|---|-----|
| 4 | <i>Observation</i> | 83 |
| 5 | <i>Survey Research</i> | 122 |
| 6 | <i>Unobtrusive Measures of Behavior</i> | 168 |

PART III

Experimental Methods

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|-----|
| 7 | <i>Independent Groups Designs</i> | 195 |
| 8 | <i>Repeated Measures Designs</i> | 235 |
| 9 | <i>Complex Designs</i> | 259 |

PART IV

Applied Research

- | | | |
|----|--|-----|
| 10 | <i>Single-Case Research Designs</i> | 288 |
| 11 | <i>Quasi-Experimental Designs and Program Evaluation</i> | 320 |

PART V

Analyzing and Reporting Research

- | | | |
|----|---|-----|
| 12 | <i>Data Analysis and Interpretation: Part I
Describing Data, Confidence Intervals, Correlation</i> | 360 |
| 13 | <i>Data Analysis and Interpretation: Part II
Tests of Statistical Significance and the Analysis Story</i> | 401 |
| 14 | <i>Communication in Psychology</i> | 444 |
| | <i>Appendix Statistical Tables</i> | 491 |

<i>Glossary</i>	499
<i>References</i>	507
<i>Credits</i>	523
<i>Name Index</i>	528
<i>Subject Index</i>	532

Contents

Preface xiv

PART I General Issues

1 Introduction 1

- THINKING LIKE A RESEARCHER 2
Evaluating Research Findings Reported
in the Media 4
Getting Started Doing Research 5
- SCIENCE IN CONTEXT 7
Historical Context 7
Social and Cultural Context 9
Moral Context 10

2 The Scientific Method 14

- SCIENTIFIC AND EVERYDAY APPROACHES
TO KNOWLEDGE 15
General Approach 16
Observation 17
Reporting 19
Concepts 21
Instruments 23
Measurement 24
Hypotheses 26
Attitude 27
- GOALS OF THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD 28
Description 28
Prediction 32
Understanding 33
Creating Change 35
- SCIENTIFIC THEORY CONSTRUCTION
AND TESTING 36
SUMMARY 39
KEY CONCEPTS 40
REVIEW QUESTIONS 40
CHALLENGE QUESTIONS 41
ANSWER TO STRETCHING EXERCISE 42
ANSWER TO CHALLENGE QUESTION 1 43

3 Ethical Issues in the Conduct of Psychological Research 44

- INTRODUCTION 45
- ETHICAL ISSUES TO CONSIDER BEFORE
BEGINNING RESEARCH 46
APA Ethical Standards 46
Commentary 46
- THE RISK/BENEFIT RATIO 49
Determining Risk 50
Minimal Risk 51
Dealing with Risk 52
Informed Consent 53
APA Ethical Standards 55
Commentary 57
- DECEPTION IN PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH 62
APA Ethical Standards 62
Commentary 63
- DEBRIEFING 67
APA Ethical Standards 67
Commentary 67
- RESEARCH WITH ANIMALS 70
APA Ethical Standards 70
Commentary 71
- REPORTING OF PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH 73
APA Ethical Standards 74
Commentary 75
- STEPS FOR ETHICAL DECISION MAKING 77
SUMMARY 78
KEY CONCEPTS 79
REVIEW QUESTIONS 79
CHALLENGE QUESTIONS 80

PART II Descriptive Methods

- 4 Observation 83
- OVERVIEW 84
- SAMPLING BEHAVIOR 85

Time Sampling 85
 Situation Sampling 87
CLASSIFICATION OF OBSERVATIONAL METHODS 88
OBSERVATION WITHOUT INTERVENTION 88
OBSERVATION WITH INTERVENTION 90
 Participant Observation 91
 Structured Observation 94
 Field Experiments 97
RECORDING BEHAVIOR 99
 Qualitative Records of Behavior 99
 Quantitative Measures of Behavior 101
ANALYSIS OF OBSERVATIONAL DATA 107
 Data Reduction 107
 Observer Reliability 109
THINKING CRITICALLY ABOUT OBSERVATIONAL RESEARCH 111
 Influence of the Observer 111
 Observer Bias 116
SUMMARY 118
KEY CONCEPTS 118
REVIEW QUESTIONS 119
CHALLENGE QUESTIONS 119
ANSWER TO STRETCHING EXERCISES 121
ANSWER TO CHALLENGE QUESTION 1 121

5 Survey Research 122

OVERVIEW 123
CORRELATIONAL RESEARCH 123
USES OF SURVEYS 125
CHARACTERISTICS OF SURVEYS 127
SAMPLING IN SURVEY RESEARCH 127
 Basic Terms of Sampling 128
 Approaches to Sampling 131
SURVEY METHODS 135
 Mail Surveys 137
 Personal Interviews 138
 Telephone Interviews 139
SURVEY-RESEARCH DESIGNS 140
 Cross-Sectional Design 140
 Successive Independent Samples Design 141
 Longitudinal Design 144
QUESTIONNAIRES 147
 Questionnaires as Instruments 148

Reliability and Validity of Self-Report Measures 151
 Constructing a Questionnaire 153
THINKING CRITICALLY ABOUT CORRELATIONAL RESEARCH 158
 Correspondence Between Reported and Actual Behavior 158
 Correlation and Causality 160
SUMMARY 163
KEY CONCEPTS 164
REVIEW QUESTIONS 165
CHALLENGE QUESTIONS 165
ANSWER TO STRETCHING EXERCISES 167
ANSWER TO CHALLENGE QUESTION 1 167

6 Unobtrusive Measures of Behavior 168

OVERVIEW 169
PHYSICAL TRACES 170
 Rationale 170
 Types of Physical Traces 171
 Problems and Limitations 175
ARCHIVAL DATA 177
 Rationale 177
 Types of Archival Data 182
 Content Analysis 183
 Problems and Limitations 188
ETHICAL ISSUES AND UNOBTRUSIVE MEASURES 191
SUMMARY 191
KEY CONCEPTS 192
REVIEW QUESTIONS 192
CHALLENGE QUESTIONS 193
ANSWER TO STRETCHING EXERCISE 193
ANSWER TO CHALLENGE QUESTION 1 194

PART III

Experimental Methods

7 Independent Groups Designs 195
OVERVIEW 196
WHY PSYCHOLOGISTS CONDUCT EXPERIMENTS 197

LOGIC OF EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH	198
EXPERIMENTAL CONTROL	199
RANDOM GROUPS DESIGN	203
Random Assignment	203
Challenges to Internal Validity	206
ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF EXPERIMENTAL FINDINGS	212
The Role of Data Analysis in Experiments	212
Describing the Results	215
Confirming What the Results Reveal	217
What Data Analysis Can't Tell Us	220
ESTABLISHING THE EXTERNAL VALIDITY OF EXPERIMENTAL FINDINGS	221
ALTERNATIVE INDEPENDENT GROUPS DESIGNS	225
Matched Groups Design	225
Natural Groups Design	228
SUMMARY	229
KEY CONCEPTS	231
REVIEW QUESTIONS	231
CHALLENGE QUESTIONS	232
ANSWER TO STRETCHING EXERCISE	233
ANSWER TO CHALLENGE QUESTION 1	233
8 Repeated Measures Designs	235
OVERVIEW	236
WHY RESEARCHERS USE REPEATED MEASURES DESIGNS	236
THE ROLE OF PRACTICE EFFECTS IN REPEATED MEASURES DESIGNS	238
Defining Practice Effects	239
Balancing Practice Effects in the Complete Design	241
Balancing Practice Effects in the Incomplete Design	246
DATA ANALYSIS OF REPEATED MEASURES DESIGNS	251
Describing the Results	251
Confirming What the Results Reveal	253
THE PROBLEM OF DIFFERENTIAL TRANSFER	254
SUMMARY	255

KEY CONCEPTS	256
REVIEW QUESTIONS	256
CHALLENGE QUESTIONS	256
ANSWER TO STRETCHING EXERCISE	257
ANSWER TO CHALLENGE QUESTION 1	257

9 Complex Designs 259

OVERVIEW	260
GUIDELINES FOR IDENTIFYING AN EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN	261
IDENTIFYING MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTION EFFECTS	263
ANALYSIS OF COMPLEX DESIGNS	270
Analysis Plan with an Interaction	274
Analysis Plan with No Interaction	276
INTERPRETING INTERACTIONS	278
Interactions and Theory Testing	278
Interactions and External Validity	279
Interactions and Ceiling and Floor Effects	281
Interactions and the Natural Groups Design	282
SUMMARY	284
KEY CONCEPTS	285
REVIEW QUESTIONS	286
CHALLENGE QUESTIONS	286
ANSWER TO STRETCHING EXERCISE	287
ANSWER TO CHALLENGE QUESTION 1	287

PART IV Applied Research

10 Single-Case Research Designs 288

OVERVIEW	289
THE CASE STUDY METHOD	290
Characteristics	290
Advantages of the Case Study Method	293
Disadvantages of the Case Study Method	298
Thinking Critically About Testimonials Based on a Case Study	300

SINGLE-CASE ($N = 1$) EXPERIMENTAL DESIGNS 301
 Characteristics of Single-Case ($N = 1$) Experiments 302
 Specific Experimental Designs 305
 Problems and Limitations Common to All Single-Case Designs 313
 SUMMARY 315
 KEY CONCEPTS 317
 REVIEW QUESTIONS 317
 CHALLENGE QUESTIONS 317
 ANSWER TO STRETCHING EXERCISE 318
 ANSWER TO CHALLENGE QUESTION 1 319

11 Quasi-Experimental Designs and Program Evaluation 320
OVERVIEW 321
TRUE EXPERIMENTS 322
 Characteristics of True Experiments 322
 Obstacles to Conducting True Experiments in Natural Settings 322
 Threats to Internal Validity Controlled by True Experiments 326
 Problems That Even True Experiments May Not Eliminate 330
QUASI-EXPERIMENTS 332
 The Nonequivalent Control Group Design 334
 Nonequivalent Control Group Design: The Langer and Rodin Study 336
 Sources of Invalidity in the Nonequivalent Control Group Design 338
 The Issue of External Validity 342
 Interrupted Time-Series Designs 343
 Time Series with Nonequivalent Control Group 346
AN EXTENSION OF SINGLE-CASE DESIGNS TO RESEARCH IN NATURAL SETTINGS 348
 Rationale 348
 The ABAB Design 350
PROGRAM EVALUATION 351
 SUMMARY 355
 KEY CONCEPTS 357
 REVIEW QUESTIONS 357
 CHALLENGE QUESTIONS 358

ANSWER TO STRETCHING EXERCISE 359
 ANSWER TO CHALLENGE QUESTION 1 359

PART V
Analyzing and Reporting Research

12 Data Analysis and Interpretation: Part I Describing Data, Confidence Intervals, Correlation 360
OVERVIEW 361
THE ANALYSIS STORY 362
COMPUTER-ASSISTED DATA ANALYSIS 363
ILLUSTRATION: DATA ANALYSIS FOR AN EXPERIMENT COMPARING MEANS 364
 Stage 1: Getting to Know the Data 364
 Stage 2: Summarizing the Data 369
 Stage 3: Using Confidence Intervals to Confirm What the Data Tell Us 375
ILLUSTRATION: DATA ANALYSIS FOR A CORRELATIONAL STUDY 385
 Stage 1: Getting to Know the Data 387
 Stage 2: Summarizing the Data 388
 Stage 3: Constructing a Confidence Interval for a Correlation 395
 SUMMARY 395
 KEY CONCEPTS 397
 REVIEW QUESTIONS 397
 CHALLENGE QUESTIONS 398
 ANSWER TO CHALLENGE QUESTION 1 399

13 Data Analysis and Interpretation: Part II Tests of Statistical Significance and the Analysis Story 401
OVERVIEW 402
NULL HYPOTHESIS SIGNIFICANCE TESTING (NHST) 402
EXPERIMENTAL SENSITIVITY AND STATISTICAL POWER 405
NHST: COMPARING TWO MEANS 408
 Independent Groups 408
 Repeated Measures Designs 410

STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND SCIENTIFIC OR PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE	410	CHALLENGE QUESTIONS	442
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMPARING TWO MEANS	412	ANSWER TO CHALLENGE QUESTION 1	443
REPORTING RESULTS WHEN COMPARING TWO MEANS	412		
DATA ANALYSIS INVOLVING MORE THAN TWO CONDITIONS	414		
ANOVA FOR SINGLE-FACTOR INDEPENDENT GROUPS DESIGN	415	14 Communication in Psychology	444
Calculating Effect Size for Designs with Three or More Independent Groups	420	INTRODUCTION	445
Assessing Power for Independent Groups Designs	422	THE INTERNET AND RESEARCH	447
Analytical Comparisons	423	GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE WRITING	449
Reporting Results of a Single-Factor Independent Groups Experiment	425	STRUCTURE OF A RESEARCH REPORT	452
REPEATED MEASURES ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE	427	Title Page	453
TWO-FACTOR ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR INDEPENDENT GROUPS DESIGNS	432	Abstract	454
Analysis of a Complex Design with an Interaction	432	Introduction	455
Analysis with No Interaction	436	Method	457
Effect Sizes for Two-Factor Design with Independent Groups	437	Results	459
TWO-FACTOR ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR A MIXED DESIGN	437	Discussion	464
REPORTING RESULTS OF A COMPLEX DESIGN	440	References	466
SUMMARY	440	Appendixes	467
KEY CONCEPTS	441	Author Note	467
REVIEW QUESTIONS	442	Footnotes	467
		Order of Manuscript Pages	468
		ORAL PRESENTATIONS	468
		RESEARCH PROPOSALS	469
		A SAMPLE RESEARCH REPORT	471
		<i>Appendix: Statistical Tables</i>	491
		<i>Glossary</i>	499
		<i>References</i>	507
		<i>Credits</i>	523
		<i>Name Index</i>	528
		<i>Subject Index</i>	532



Introduction

CHAPTER OUTLINE

THINKING LIKE A RESEARCHER

Evaluating Research Findings Reported in the Media

Getting Started Doing Research

SCIENCE IN CONTEXT

Historical Context

Social and Cultural Context

Moral Context

THINKING LIKE A RESEARCHER

Let's get right down to work. Consider the following headlines drawn from local newspapers and decide what kinds of evidence you think are implied by each statement.

- 1 A man from California is suspected of arson in the recent school fire.
- 2 Chicago police arrested a company vice president for embezzling \$250,000.
- 3 A couple from Dubuque were arraigned in court today on a charge of parental neglect.
- 4 A reclusive woman in upstate New York was convicted of manslaughter in the case involving the death of her neighbor.

The specific evidence in these four cases would likely vary because the alleged crimes vary from arson to manslaughter. In addition, the evidence implied in the four statements would likely vary systematically on another dimension. The quality and the extent of the evidence required to *convict* a person of a crime, as in the fourth statement, are greater than those required for each of the first three statements. For instance, a person might be suspected of a crime based on the personal opinion of an investigator and might be arrested based on circumstantial evidence. For arraignment and conviction, however, more definitive evidence such as physical evidence is often necessary. The "tightest" cases involve converging evidence from a variety of sources. Even in cases that result in conviction, we recognize that our conclusion is based on a decision that is "beyond a reasonable doubt." The legal system strives for truth, but certainty is often beyond its grasp.

Having examined a set of statements in the context of legal cases, we turn now to a second set of statements. Again, consider the statements and decide what kinds of evidence you think are implied by each statement.

- 1 In a survey of U.S. adults, 96% of married people reported they had been faithful to their spouse during the past year.
- 2 Research has shown that whether a teen begins to smoke is more related to whether the teen's friends smoke than to whether the teen's parents smoke.
- 3 Experimental research demonstrates that writing about emotional experiences associated with beginning college (compared with superficial writing) causes college students to have better health and academic outcomes.
- 4 Over many replications of the same false-memory experiment, researchers consistently found that about three-fourths of the time participants falsely reported that certain words were presented when, in fact, the words were never presented in the experiment.

You likely noticed that these four statements cover a range of research topics in psychology from marital fidelity to the formation of false memories. The measures that researchers use to gather evidence vary because of the specific area of psychology they are investigating. As you considered the four research statements, you may have noticed that they also varied systematically in terms of the extent and quality of the evidence. Just as legal professionals must have