

# RESEARCH METHODS

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FOR THE BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

FREDERICK J GRAVETTER  
LORI-ANN B. FORZANO

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# Research Methods for the Behavioral Sciences

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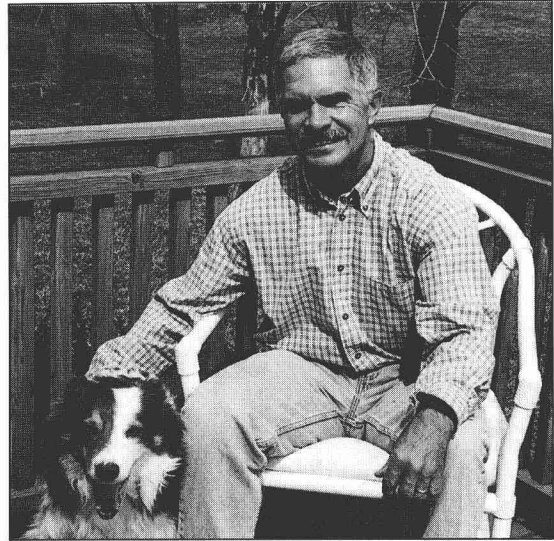
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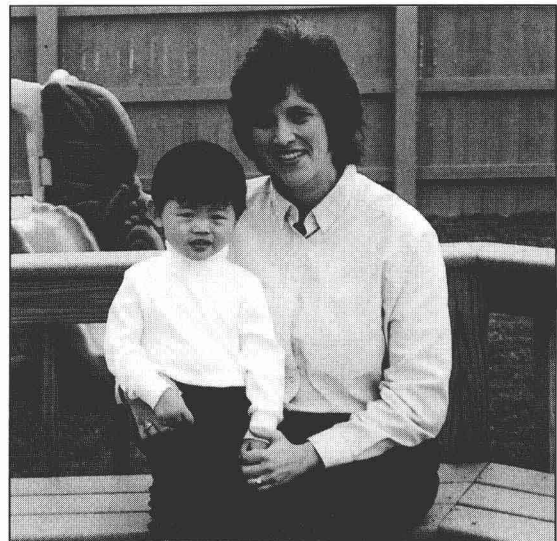
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Lori-Ann B. Forzano

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# Preface

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For years we have watched students come into psychology Research Methods courses with a fundamental fear of science. Somewhere along the way, these students seem to have developed the idea that psychology is interesting and fun but science is tedious and difficult. Many students even resent having to take a Research Methods course: “After all, I want to be a psychologist, not a scientist.”

As the semester progresses, however, most of these students begin to lose their fears, and many actually begin to enjoy the course. Much of this change in attitude is based on a realization that science is simply the technique that psychologists use to gather information and to answer questions. As long as the questions are interesting, then the task of answering them should also be interesting.

When people watch a magician do an amazing trick, they often ask, “How was that done?” In the same way, when you learn something interesting about human behavior, you ought to ask, “How do they know that?” The answer is that most of the existing knowledge in the behavioral sciences was gathered using scientific research methods. If you are really curious about human behavior, then you should also be curious about the process of studying it.

This textbook has been developed from years of teaching Research Methods. During that time, we have tried different examples and explanations in the classroom and watched the students’ responses. Over the years, the course has evolved into a less intimidating, more interesting approach that seems to be very effective in getting students involved in research. Our students have been most helpful in this evolutionary process. Their feedback has directed our progress in the development of the research methods course and the writing of this book. In many respects they have been our teachers.

---

## OVERVIEW OF THE TEXT

*Research Methods for the Behavioral Sciences* is intended for an undergraduate Research Methods course in psychology or any of the behavioral sciences. We have organized the text according to the research process, making it appropriate for use in a lecture-only class or a class with a lab component. The text discusses in detail both experimental and nonexperimental research strategies. We use an informal writing style that emphasizes discussion and explanation of topics. Pedagogical aids include preview outlines, learning checks throughout each chapter, a running glossary, chapter summaries, a list of key words for quick review at the end of each chapter, end-of-chapter exercises, and end-of-chapter InfoTrac<sup>®</sup> College Edition exercises.

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## ORGANIZATION OF THE TEXT

The book's organizational framework is the research process—from start to finish. This step-by-step approach emphasizes the decisions researchers must make at each stage of the process. The chapters are grouped into five sections. Chapters 1 through 3 focus on the earliest considerations in the research process and include tips for finding new ideas for research and developing hypotheses, pointing out the ethics that must govern all further decisions in research. Chapters 4 through 6 focus on the preliminary decisions in the research process and include information on measuring variables, selecting participants, and choosing a valid research strategy. Chapters 7 through 9 provide details of the different research strategies. Chapters 10 through 13 provide details of specific experimental designs. Chapters 14 and 15 focus on decisions in the final stages of the research process and include information on evaluating, interpreting, and communicating research results.

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## WRITING STYLE

We have used an informal, conversational style of writing that emphasizes discussion and explanation of topics, instead of a “cookbook” presentation of facts. This style has been successful in our own classes and in Gravetter's coauthored textbook, *Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences*. Students find this style readable and un-intimidating; it is particularly useful for material that students perceive as difficult.

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## PEDAGOGICAL AIDS

We have paid particular attention to pedagogical aids. In each chapter, there are many opportunities for students to engage the material rather than passively being exposed to it. Learning checks, end-of-chapter exercises, and end-of-chapter InfoTrac College Edition exercises can be used by the instructor as prepackaged assignments.

Each chapter contains:

1. *Chapter Outline*: Each chapter begins with an outline of the material presented in the chapter, to help students see the organization of the material.
2. *Chapter Overview*: A brief summary of the chapter's contents at the beginning of the chapter prepares students for the material to come.
3. *Multiple sections*: Multiple, clearly defined sections and subsections break the material down into manageable chunks.
4. *Definitions*: Each key word is boldfaced upon its first use in the text. A clearly identified, concise definition is provided at the end of the paragraph that contains the new key word.
5. *Examples*: Numerous examples illustrate concepts presented in the text. Some examples are hypothetical, and some are selected from current or classic studies in psychology.
6. *Boxes*: Boxed material, separate from the regular text, offers additional interesting information to help demonstrate certain key points.

7. *Figures*: Where appropriate, diagrams and graphs are included to illustrate important points.
8. *Tables*: Tables are used to present information best conveyed in a list format.
9. *Margin notes*: Brief notes in the margins of the text offer reminders or cautions to students.
10. *Learning Checks*: At the end of major sections within each chapter, a set of questions helps students test how well they have learned the material.
11. *Chapter Summaries*: A general summary at the end of each chapter helps students review the main points of the chapter.
12. *Key Words*: A list of the key words used in the chapter is presented at the end of each chapter. The list is in order of the key words' appearance in the chapter so that related terms are grouped together and so that students can spot parts of the chapter they need to review.
13. *Exercises*: A list of questions and activities appears at the end of each chapter. The exercises help students test how well they have learned the material by applying what they have learned. The instructor can also use the exercises as assignments.
14. *InfoTrac College Edition Exercises*: InfoTrac College Edition Exercises appear at the end of each chapter. These exercises provide students with an additional, unique learning opportunity to apply information presented in the text.

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## TO CONTACT US

Over the years our students have given us many helpful suggestions, and we have benefitted from their feedback. If you have any suggestions or comments about this book, you can write to us at the Department of Psychology, SUNY College at Brockport, 350 New Campus Drive, Brockport, NY 14420. We can also be reached by e-mail at:

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# Brief Contents

PREFACE	ix	CHAPTER 10	Experimental Designs: Between-Subjects Design	240	
CHAPTER 1	Introduction, Inquiry, and the Scientific Method	1	CHAPTER 11	Experimental Designs: Within-Subjects Design	266
CHAPTER 2	Research Ideas	31	CHAPTER 12	Factorial Designs	291
CHAPTER 3	Ethics in Research	58	CHAPTER 13	Single-Subject Research Designs	323
CHAPTER 4	Defining and Measuring Variables	82	CHAPTER 14	Statistical Evaluation of Data	356
CHAPTER 5	Selecting Research Participants	114	CHAPTER 15	Writing a Research Report	398
CHAPTER 6	Research Strategies and Validity	130	APPENDICES		
CHAPTER 7	Descriptive and Correlational Research Strategies	161	A. Random Number Table and Instructions	425	
CHAPTER 8	Experimental Research Strategy	188	B. Statistics Demonstrations and Statistical Tables	429	
CHAPTER 9	Quasi-Experimental Strategy: Nonequivalent Group, Time-Series, and Developmental Designs	214	GLOSSARY	453	
			REFERENCES	469	
			INDEX	473	

# Contents

**AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES** vii

**PREFACE** ix

## CHAPTER 1

### **INTRODUCTION, INQUIRY, AND THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD** 1

CHAPTER OVERVIEW 1

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 2

- Why Take a Research Methods Course? 2
- How Is Understanding Research  
Methodology Useful? 2

#### 1.2 METHODS OF INQUIRY 6

- The Method of Authority 6
- The Method of Intuition 9
- The Method of Tenacity 9
- The Rational Method 10
- The Method of Empiricism 12

#### 1.3 THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD 14

- The Steps of the Scientific Method 15
- Other Elements of the Scientific Method 18

#### 1.4 THE RESEARCH PROCESS 21

- Step 1: Find a Research Idea 21
- Step 2: Convert Your Research Idea  
Into a Specific Research Hypothesis 23
- Step 3: Determine How You Will Define  
and Measure Your Variables 25
- Step 4: Identify the Participants  
or Subjects for the Study 26
- Step 5: Select a Research Strategy 26
- Step 6: Select a Research Design 27
- Step 7: Conduct the Study 27

- Step 8: Evaluate the Data 27
- Step 9: Report the Results 27
- Step 10: Refine or Reformulate  
Your Research Idea 28

CHAPTER SUMMARY 29

KEY WORDS 29

EXERCISES 29

## CHAPTER 2

### **RESEARCH IDEAS** 31

CHAPTER OVERVIEW 31

#### 2.1 GETTING STARTED 32

- Pick a Topic in Which You Are Interested 32
- Do Your Homework 32
- Keep an Open Mind 33
- Focus, Focus, Focus 33
- Take One Step at a Time 33

#### 2.2 SOURCES OF IDEAS 34

- Finding a General Topic Area 34
- Common Sources of Ideas 34
- Common Mistakes in Choosing  
a Research Topic 36

#### 2.3 FINDING AND USING BACKGROUND LITERATURE 38

- Primary and Secondary Sources 38
- The Purpose of a Literature Search 40

#### 2.4 CONDUCTING A LITERATURE SEARCH 43

- Starting Points 43
- Using Online Databases 43

Using PsycINFO 46  
The Process of Conducting a  
Literature Search 49

2.5 FINDING AN IDEA FOR A NEW  
RESEARCH STUDY 52  
Converting an Idea  
into a Research Hypothesis 54

CHAPTER SUMMARY 55

KEY WORDS 56

EXERCISES 56

InfoTrac COLLEGE EDITION EXERCISES 57

### CHAPTER 3

## ETHICS IN RESEARCH 58

CHAPTER OVERVIEW 58

3.1 INTRODUCTION 59  
Ethical Concerns Throughout  
the Research Process 59  
The Basic Categories of  
Ethical Responsibility 60

3.2 ETHICAL ISSUES AND HUMAN  
PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH 60  
Historical Highlights of Treatment  
of Human Participants 60  
American Psychological Association  
(APA) Guidelines 62  
The Institutional Review Board (IRB) 73

3.3 ETHICAL ISSUES AND NONHUMAN  
SUBJECTS IN RESEARCH 75  
Historical Highlights of Treatment  
of Nonhuman Subjects 75  
American Psychological Association  
(APA) Guidelines 76  
The Institutional Animal Care  
and Use Committee (IACUC) 76

3.4 ETHICAL ISSUES  
AND SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY 77  
Fraud in Science 78  
Plagiarism 79

CHAPTER SUMMARY 80

KEY WORDS 81

EXERCISES 81

InfoTrac COLLEGE EDITION EXERCISES 81

### CHAPTER 4

## DEFINING AND MEASURING VARIABLES 82

CHAPTER OVERVIEW 82

4.1 AN OVERVIEW OF MEASUREMENT 83

4.2 CONSTRUCTS AND OPERATIONAL  
DEFINITIONS 84  
Theories and Constructs 84  
Operational Definitions 85  
Using Operational Definitions 86

4.3 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF  
MEASUREMENT 86  
Validity of Measurement 87  
Reliability of Measurement 91  
The Relationship Between Reliability  
and Validity 94

4.4 SCALES OF MEASUREMENT 95  
The Nominal Scale 95  
The Ordinal Scale 95  
The Interval Scale 96  
The Ratio Scale 96  
Selecting a Scale of Measurement 96

4.5 MODALITIES OF MEASUREMENT 97  
Self-Report Measures 97

Physiological Measures	102
Behavioral Measures	103
4.6 OTHER ASPECTS OF MEASUREMENT	107
Multiple Measures	107
Sensitivity and Range Effects	107
Participant Reactivity and Experimenter Bias	108
Selecting a Measurement Procedure	110
CHAPTER SUMMARY	111
KEY WORDS	111
EXERCISES	111
InfoTrac COLLEGE EDITION EXERCISES	112

## CHAPTER 5

### SELECTING RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS 114

CHAPTER OVERVIEW	114
5.1 INTRODUCTION	115
Populations and Samples	115
Representative Samples	117
Sampling Basics	118
5.2 PROBABILITY SAMPLING METHODS	119
Simple Random Sampling	119
Systematic Sampling	121
Stratified Random Sampling	121
Proportionate Stratified Random Sampling	123
Cluster Sampling	124
Combined-Strategy Sampling	125
Probability Sampling Methods Summary	125
5.3 NONPROBABILITY SAMPLING METHODS	125
Convenience Sampling	125
Quota Sampling	127

CHAPTER SUMMARY	127
KEY WORDS	128
EXERCISES	128
InfoTrac COLLEGE EDITION EXERCISES	129

## CHAPTER 6

### RESEARCH STRATEGIES AND VALIDITY 130

CHAPTER OVERVIEW	130
6.1 INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH STRATEGIES	131
Descriptive Strategy	131
Correlational Strategy	131
Experimental Strategy	132
Quasi-Experimental Strategy	133
Summary	135
6.2 VALIDITY	136
Internal Validity	137
External Validity	138
6.3 THREATS TO VALIDITY	139
Threats to Internal Validity	140
Threats to External Validity	144
6.4 MORE ABOUT INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL VALIDITY	152
Balancing Internal and External Validity	153
Ethical Constraints	154
Exaggerated Variables	154
6.5 VALIDITY AND INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH STRATEGIES	155
Validity and the Descriptive Strategy	155
Validity and the Correlational Strategy	155
Validity and the Experimental Strategy	155
Validity and the Quasi-Experimental Strategy	156

- 6.6 RESEARCH STRATEGIES,  
RESEARCH DESIGNS, AND  
RESEARCH PROCEDURES 156
- Research Strategies 156
  - Research Designs 157
  - Research Procedures 157

CHAPTER SUMMARY 158

KEY WORDS 159

EXERCISES 159

InfoTrac COLLEGE EDITION EXERCISES 160

## CHAPTER 7

### DESCRIPTIVE AND CORRELATIONAL RESEARCH STRATEGIES 161

CHAPTER OVERVIEW 161

7.1 INTRODUCTION 162

7.2 OBSERVATIONAL RESEARCH  
DESIGN 163

- Types of Observation and Examples 163
- Strengths and Weaknesses  
of Observational Research Designs 166

7.3 SURVEY RESEARCH DESIGN 168

- Constructing a Survey 169
- Selecting Relevant  
and Representative Individuals 169
- Administering a Survey 170
- Strengths and Weaknesses  
of Survey Research 174

7.4 CASE STUDY DESIGN 175

- Applications of the Case Study Design 176
- Strengths and Weaknesses  
of the Case Study Design 177

7.5 CORRELATIONAL RESEARCH  
STRATEGY 179

- Applications of the Correlational Strategy 180
- Strengths and Weaknesses  
of the Correlational Research Strategy 183

CHAPTER SUMMARY 185

KEY WORDS 186

EXERCISES 186

InfoTrac COLLEGE EDITION EXERCISES 187

## CHAPTER 8

### EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH STRATEGY 188

CHAPTER OVERVIEW 188

8.1 CAUSE-AND-EFFECT  
RELATIONSHIPS 189

- Causation and the Third-Variable Problem 189
- Causation and the Directionality Problem 190
- Controlling Nature 190

8.2 ELEMENTS OF AN EXPERIMENT 191

- Manipulation and Measurement 192
- Control and Extraneous Variables 194

8.3 DEALING WITH EXTRANEOUS  
VARIABLES 196

- Control by Holding Constant or Matching 198
- Control by Randomization 199
- Comparing Methods of Control 201
- Advantages and Disadvantages of Control  
Methods 202

8.4 CONTROL GROUPS 203

- No-Treatment Control Groups 203
- Placebo Control Groups 204

8.5 MANIPULATION CHECKS 205

- 8.6 INCREASING EXTERNAL  
VALIDITY: SIMULATION  
AND FIELD STUDIES 206  
Simulation 207  
Field Studies 209  
Advantages and Disadvantages  
of Simulation and Field Studies 210

CHAPTER SUMMARY 210

KEY WORDS 211

EXERCISES 211

InfoTrac COLLEGE EDITION EXERCISES 213

## CHAPTER 9

### QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL STRATEGY: NONEQUIVALENT GROUP, TIME-SERIES, AND DEVELOPMENTAL DESIGNS 214

CHAPTER OVERVIEW 214

- 9.1 INTRODUCTION 215
- 9.2 QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL STRATEGY 215
- 9.3 NONEQUIVALENT GROUP  
DESIGNS 217  
Threats to Internal Validity for  
Nonequivalent Group Designs 218  
Differential Research Design 219  
Posttest-Only Nonequivalent  
Control Group Design 220  
Pretest-Posttest Nonequivalent  
Control Group Design 223
- 9.4 TIME-SERIES DESIGNS 225  
Threats to Internal Validity for  
Time-Series Designs 226  
One-Group Pretest-Posttest Design 226

- Time-Series and Interrupted Time-Series  
Designs 227  
Equivalent Time-Samples Design 228

### 9.5 DEVELOPMENTAL RESEARCH STRATEGY 230

- Cross-Sectional Research Design 231  
Longitudinal Research Design 233

### 9.6 TERMINOLOGY IN QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DESIGNS 236

CHAPTER SUMMARY 237

KEY WORDS 237

EXERCISES 238

InfoTrac COLLEGE EDITION EXERCISES 238

## CHAPTER 10

### EXPERIMENTAL DESIGNS: BETWEEN-SUBJECTS DESIGN 240

CHAPTER OVERVIEW 240

- 10.1 INTRODUCTION 241  
Review of Experimental Research Strategy 241  
Characteristics of Between-Subjects Designs 241  
Advantages and Disadvantages of  
Between-Subjects Designs 243
- 10.2 INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES  
AS CONFOUNDING VARIABLES 245  
Equivalent Groups 247
- 10.3 LIMITING CONFOUNDING BY  
INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES 247  
Random Assignment (Randomization) 248  
Matching Groups (Matched Assignment) 249  
Holding Variables Constant or Restricting Range  
of Variability 250

Summary and Recommendations	250	Advantages of Within-Subjects Designs	268
10.4 INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES AND VARIABILITY	251	Disadvantages of Within-Subjects Designs	272
Differences Between Treatments and Variability Within Treatments	252	11.2 TIME-RELATED THREATS TO THE INTERNAL VALIDITY OF WITHIN-SUBJECTS DESIGNS	273
Minimizing Variability Within Treatments	253	History	273
Summary and Recommendations	255	Maturation	274
10.5 OTHER THREATS TO INTERNAL VALIDITY OF BETWEEN-SUBJECTS DESIGNS	256	Instrumentation	275
Assignment Bias	256	Statistical Regression	275
Differential Attrition	256	11.3 ORDER EFFECTS: CARRYOVER EFFECTS AND PROGRESSIVE ERROR	276
Diffusion or Imitation of Treatment	257	Order Effects as a Confounding Variable	278
Compensatory Equalization	257	11.4 DEALING WITH TIME-RELATED THREATS AND ORDER EFFECTS	279
Compensatory Rivalry	258	Controlling Time	279
Resentful Demoralization	258	When a Within-Subjects Design Is Not a Good Idea	280
10.6 APPLICATIONS AND STATISTICAL ANALYSES OF BETWEEN-SUBJECTS DESIGNS	259	Counterbalancing	280
Two-Group Mean Difference	259	Limitations of Counterbalancing	282
Comparing Means		11.5 APPLICATIONS AND STATISTICAL ANALYSES OF WITHIN-SUBJECTS DESIGNS	285
for More Than Two Groups	260	Two-Treatment Designs	286
Comparing Proportions		Multiple-Treatment Designs	286
for Two or More Groups	262	11.6 MATCHED-SUBJECTS DESIGNS	287
CHAPTER SUMMARY	263	CHAPTER SUMMARY	288
KEY WORDS	263	KEY WORDS	289
EXERCISES	264	EXERCISES	289
InfoTrac COLLEGE EDITION EXERCISES	264	InfoTrac COLLEGE EDITION EXERCISES	290

## CHAPTER 11

### EXPERIMENTAL DESIGNS: WITHIN-SUBJECTS DESIGN 266

#### CHAPTER OVERVIEW 266

#### 11.1 INTRODUCTION 267

Characteristics of Within-Subjects Design 267

## CHAPTER 12

### FACTORIAL DESIGNS 291

#### CHAPTER OVERVIEW 291

12.1 INTRODUCTION TO FACTORIAL DESIGNS	292	Evaluating the Results from a Single-Subject Study	324
12.2 MAIN EFFECTS AND INTERACTIONS	294	13.2 PHASES AND PHASE CHANGES	326
12.3 MORE ABOUT INTERACTIONS	297	Level, Trend, and Stability	327
Alternative Definitions of Interaction	299	Changing Phases	330
Interpreting Main Effects and Interactions	301	Visual Inspection Techniques	332
Independence of Main Effects and Interactions	303	13.3 THE ABAB REVERSAL DESIGN	333
12.4 TYPES OF FACTORIAL DESIGNS	303	Limitations of the ABAB Design	337
Between-Subjects and Within-Subjects Designs	305	13.4 MORE COMPLEX PHASE-CHANGE DESIGNS	339
Experimental and Nonexperimental Designs	307	Dismantling or Component-Analysis Design	341
Pretest-Posttest Control Group Designs	309	13.5 MULTIPLE-BASELINE DESIGNS	342
Higher-Order Factorial Designs	310	Rationale for the Multiple-Baseline Design	344
12.5 APPLICATIONS OF FACTORIAL DESIGNS	311	Strengths and Weaknesses of the Multiple-Baseline Design	346
Adding a Second Factor to a Previous Study	311	13.6 THE CHANGING-CRITERION DESIGN	346
Reducing Variability in Between-Subjects Designs	313	13.7 THE ALTERNATING-TREATMENTS DESIGN	348
Evaluating Order Effects in Within-Subjects Designs	315	Application of the Alternating-Treatments Design	349
CHAPTER SUMMARY	319	13.8 GENERAL STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF SINGLE-SUBJECT DESIGNS	351
KEY WORDS	321	Advantages of Single-Subject Designs	351
EXERCISES	321	Disadvantages of Single-Subject Designs	352
InfoTrac COLLEGE EDITION EXERCISES	322	CHAPTER SUMMARY	353
<hr/>		KEY WORDS	354
<b>CHAPTER 13</b>		EXERCISES	354
<b>SINGLE-SUBJECT RESEARCH DESIGNS</b>		InfoTrac COLLEGE EDITION EXERCISES	355
CHAPTER OVERVIEW			323
13.1 INTRODUCTION	324		



## CHAPTER 14

STATISTICAL EVALUATION  
OF DATA 356

## CHAPTER OVERVIEW 356

- 14.1 THE ROLE OF STATISTICS IN THE RESEARCH PROCESS 357
- Planning Ahead 357
  - Statistics Terminology 358
- 14.2 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS 359
- Frequency Distributions 359
  - Measures of Central Tendency 362
  - Measures of Variability 364
  - Describing Interval and Ratio Data (Numerical Scores) 366
  - Describing Nominal and Ordinal Data 368
  - Using Graphs to Summarize Data 369
  - Correlations 370
- 14.3 INFERENCE STATISTICS 375
- Hypothesis Tests 376
  - Reporting Results From a Hypothesis Test 380
  - Errors in Hypothesis Testing 381
  - Measures of Effect Size 382
- 14.4 EXAMPLES OF HYPOTHESIS TESTS 384
- Tests for Mean Differences 384
  - Tests for Correlations 387
  - Tests for Proportions 388
- 14.5 SPECIAL STATISTICS FOR RESEARCH 389
- The Spearman-Brown Formula 389
  - The Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 390
  - Cronbach's Alpha 391
  - Cohen's Kappa 391
- CHAPTER SUMMARY 394
- KEY WORDS 395
- EXERCISES 395

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## CHAPTER 15

WRITING A  
RESEARCH REPORT 398

## CHAPTER OVERVIEW 398

- 15.1 THE GOAL OF A RESEARCH REPORT 399
- 15.2 GENERAL APA GUIDELINES FOR WRITING STYLE AND FORMAT 400
- Some Elements of Writing Style 400
  - Guidelines for Typing or Word-Processing 402
  - Manuscript Pages 403
  - Page Numbers and Page Headers 403
- 15.3 THE ELEMENTS OF AN APA-STYLE RESEARCH REPORT 403
- Title Page 404
  - Abstract 405
  - Introduction 406
  - Method 409
  - Results 410
  - Discussion 412
  - References 413
  - Appendix 416
  - Author Note 417
  - Tables, Figure Captions, and Figures 417
- 15.4 SUBMITTING A MANUSCRIPT FOR PUBLICATION 417
- 15.5 WRITING A RESEARCH PROPOSAL 419
- Why Write a Research Proposal? 420
  - How to Write a Research Proposal 421
- CHAPTER SUMMARY 421
- KEY WORDS 422
- EXERCISES 422

InfoTrac COLLEGE EDITION EXERCISES 422

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