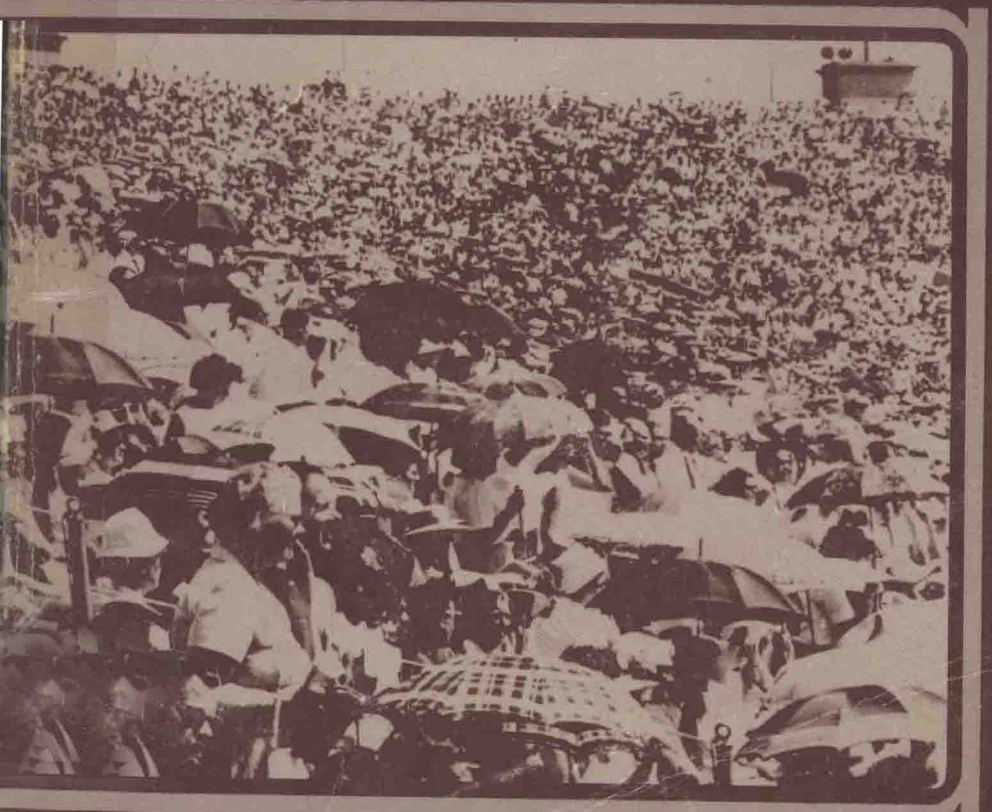
Harry Kaufmann / Linda Zener Solomon

# Readings in Social Psychology



# Readings in Social Psychology

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# Introduction

A book of readings can serve several purposes:

1. It is a useful complement to a formal text;
2. It can serve as an adjunct to the instructor's lectures without a basic text;
3. It may serve as a sample display, from which instructor and students may select, cafeteria style, only those articles which are of interest to them. These would be, one hopes, points of departure for further study.
4. Finally, a book of readings can be a showcase: It can present some typical areas of a discipline by means of "classical" articles, that is, those articles which by consensus have contributed strongly to further research in the area, and which can be considered to be substantial contributions to knowledge even if they are dated.

This book tries to fit all of these uses, even though the authors recognize that they cannot hope to succeed at any single endeavor as well as if it had been their only one.

Most articles in this book should fit in well with most of the major texts, but are also illustrative and wide-ranging enough to stand side by side with an instructor's lectures without a formal text. The articles are, of course, *samples* of a wide-ranging discipline not even a five-volume handbook (Lindzey and Aronson, 1968–1969) can hope to fully illumine; if they serve to whet the appetite and induce the reader to further research, their purpose is well served. Such a reader will unavoidably feel disappointed because certain important articles are not included here, but even such disappointment can serve as a motivator for further study.

Finally, a considerable proportion of the articles are what many psychologists would consider to be "classics." Sometimes such classic studies have been superseded by more recent work which either replicates the earlier study with more precise controls, or casts strong doubts upon the generalizability of the earlier findings. In those cases, the more recent studies

have been substituted. But the emphasis of the book is on "milestones."

There is one further desirable purpose to a book of readings: that of presenting the very latest findings in one or more areas. As a glance at the table of contents will show, we have not ignored the present in favor of the past. But we have not made it our primary purpose to compete with the latest issue of a professional journal. To have done so would, first of all, have been an effort doomed to failure from the start, for such a book would have to have several new editions each year. Besides, an excessive concern with the latest work can, for the student, lead easily to the neglect, even ignorance of the indispensable body of work that has led up to it. A discipline is not a fad or a fashion.

The readings are organized into a number of parts. This division is partly one of logic, partly one of convenience: It reflects some of the major areas in social psychology. It should be kept in mind, however, that most of the articles could easily fit under diverse supraheadings.

Part 1 is a very brief look at the rationale of conducting an experiment and drawing conclusions therefrom. It lays claim to little more than answering the question: "Does it really make any sense at all to do 'an experiment' and if so, why?"

Part 2 deals with the topic of socialization, an area which overlaps into the discipline of developmental psychology. But the emphasis here is on the socialization of black children, not because the authors wished to be condescending, ingratiating, or "with it," but because these studies are particularly effective in illustrating how not only parents, but society in general, shape and influence the growing individual.

Part 3 concerns the formation and organization of attitudes. In our daily conversation we use the term "attitude" in many ways, and psychologists too have differed in their definitions. For the present, it suffices to assume that an attitude contains an element of liking or disliking toward its object, a belief about it, and at least a latent readiness to "do something about" translating these feelings and beliefs into some kind of action.

Part 4 deals with another major topic: How do people perceive one another and what makes them like or dislike one another? This definition illustrates what has been said above: Topics are not necessarily clearly separable. Is there a clear difference between how we *perceive* our friends and what makes us *like* or *dislike* them on the one hand, and our attitude toward them? Probably not. Yet, there is usefulness in the separation of the two topics. Perception and attitude often go together, but not always. We do have attitudes toward such concepts as "punctuality" or "general disarmament," which are obviously not amenable to perception. Conversely, it is important to find out the determinants that make us perceive another person as possessing certain attributes, even though this *perception* in turn leads to *attitudes* toward that person or what he represents. (As we shall

see, the obverse also happens: Existing attitudes influence the attributes we perceive in another person.)

Part 5 deals with man's behavior—frequently, alas, man's inhumanity —to man. Fortunately, man can also be altruistic, though not as often as we would hope.

Part 6 examines the topic often thought to be the sole one with which social psychology is concerned, that of interactions between the individual and the groups to which he belongs, and interactions among groups. How do such groups function? What are some of the determinants that make a person submit to group pressure, direct or covert? And last but not least, what are the incentives for submerging one's individuality in a crowd or mob?

Most articles are discussed and amplified at some length. It is the primary purpose of these commentaries to enable the student to read an article written by a professional for his colleagues without a bowdlerization which is self-defeating in that the student is never challenged to increase his ability to read the professional literature. The commentaries precede their respective articles, but it will usually be desirable to read the commentary before and after reading the article, in order to benefit fully from both. Usually, the formal journal article is arranged under the following headings:

*Introduction.* This is the first section of the report and is given no heading. In the introduction, the author poses the problem, sketches any relevant previous research, and describes relevant theory. He discusses why he did the study, and what problem he hoped to solve. Finally, he describes his hunches, hypotheses, and predictions.

*Method.* Here the author describes what he did in his study. The method is divided into some or all of these sections: subjects, instruments or materials, procedure. The author describes in detail the composition of his sample, his experimental setting, the instructions given to subjects, and the tasks performed by the subjects.

*Results.* Here the author gives an objective, detailed report of the results of his study. Both descriptive and inferential statistics may be reported, the first being a summary of the data (e.g. means, medians, variances), the second, a means of determining the statistical significance of results.

*Discussion.* In the discussion, the author interprets the data and draws conclusions from them. He refers his results to the introduction section, and discusses the extent to which he has fulfilled his objectives or supported the theory cited. He also compares his results to those of previous studies, and tries to account for differences and contradictions. If relevant, he may discuss his method, its adequacies or inadequacies, and any particular features of it which may have accounted for his results. The discussion is an open-ended section. The author may use it for almost any purpose, including conjectures on future research.

In reading the articles and notes, try to develop a "set" of what to look for in a journal article; you will want to be aware of the different ways in which research expands and proceeds, of the various possible procedures used in human research, both laboratory and field, and of the experiment as a social situation. You will want to have some basis for evaluation of later articles, using criteria such as: significance of the topic, relevance of the procedures to the purpose, extent of generalizability of the results, justifiability of the conclusions drawn from the results, and unintended factors affecting the results.

Before beginning the articles, you should be aware of the format that is often used for a journal article. This has been described for you above. In addition, you might need to have some understanding of statistical techniques in order to be able to understand and evaluate research results. With this in mind, the editors have included some discussion of the uses of descriptive and inferential statistics in the succeeding section. It is hoped that the brief discussion will jog your statistical memory sufficiently to enable you to cope with the results sections of the articles. Should you feel that a book on experimental design and analysis would be helpful, Winer's *Statistical Principles in Experimental Design* (1962) or Edwards' *Experimental Design in Psychological Research* (1969) are recommended. For an abbreviated treatment, you might look at Sarbin and Coe's *The Student Psychologist's Handbook* (1969).

As a final introductory note, you should be aware that, when you find a special interest in an area, it is always possible for you to trace the work done on a particular topic, or by a particular author, using the *Psychological Abstracts.* As part of your journal-reading experience, you might become familiar with this periodical source of information. The abstracts generally are found in the reference or periodicals section of the school library. The index is divided in two ways: subject, and author, and will lead you to a summary of almost any article published in a psychological journal (with the exception of doctoral theses published only in the *Dissertation Abstracts,* a publication also available in most reference or periodical rooms). Other sources of information are the *Handbook of Social Psychology* (Lindzey and Aronson, 1969), and the *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* (Berkowitz, continuing series). Also, several paperback series provide short works on a number of social psychological topics.

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# Contents

# PART 1

# A Much Abbreviated Guide to Research and Statistical Vocabulary

## RESEARCH DESIGN

### Experiments versus "Uncontrolled" Studies

There is one great advantage to the experiment which cannot be emphasized too strongly: Only a procedure in which the independent variables are fully known can generate laws of causal, as opposed to correlational, relationships. For, no matter how frequently we observe x and y occurring together, we can never know whether

(a) x causes y;
(b) y causes x;
(c) z causes x and z causes y,

i.e., both x and y are caused by a third variable.

How does a science grow in terms of the precision of its statements? Initially, the observer (who is as yet only a proto-scientist) is content to observe events in nature, as they occur. Soon, he may, on the basis of his cumulative observations, formulate partially defined theories. But because he has as yet no sufficiently precise formulations to warrant minute and carefully controlled experimentation, or because technology has not yet devised appropriate equipment, he may choose to let Nature carry out his experiment. (In some instances, Nature will always have to remain the "Experimenter," as when we wish to study the effects of galactic movements upon a light spectrum.)

At a third stage the scientist should have tested and refined his theories to the point where he is in a position to make fairly precise predictions. At that stage it is then also usually the case that the presumed independent variables have to be administered with meticulous care, in order to avoid undesirable influences by unsuspected extraneous factors.

Finally, however, a fourth stage in the scientist's inquiry is reached: He has now discovered some of the basic laws with great precision. But life involves a good deal more than basic laws: usually a great many variables

act together, producing the very complex state of affairs in which organisms normally exist. It is necessary, therefore, to observe the objects of study in a natural setting; but it is important to keep in mind that, at this stage, such natural "observation" takes place with a great deal more information than at Stage Two: Now the scientist has available some well verified laws relating some of the more important variables which he is now observing in a more complex setting, and can utilize this knowledge to formulate complex hypotheses suitable for the complex, natural situation he is observing.

A simple and plausible instance is afforded by scholastic achievement. At the first stage, we send our children to school. They learn, but we do not really know whether they could learn more efficiently, or with less resentment, and whether what they learn contributes to the goals established for them.

This lingering sense of uncertainty may induce us to observe our children's learning experiences more carefully. At this second stage we may notice that certain teachers "do better than others." But why is it so? Is the teacher friendlier, better informed, does he speak more (or less), is he older, is "he" conceivably a "she," that is does the sex of the teacher make a difference? Or is it possible that the "better" teacher is more successful because he has better equipment or a more evenly heated classroom? How can we be sure that he did not start out with better prepared students?

This is Stage Three. Whether we design classroom situations to suit our purposes precisely or utilize minimal learning situations in a "pure" laboratory setting is of only peripheral importance. What matters is that if we think that a teacher's friendliness (defined, say, by the amount of his smiling) affects learning, regardless of his other characteristics, or those which may differentiate the environment or the students themselves, we have a situation in which that aspect of the teacher's performance is systematically varied, and all other possible "confounding" factors are carefully controlled. An experiment is usually necessary to answer a question of this sort.

Finally, at the fourth stage, there is little doubt that we should wish to check out—and eventually to apply—our experimental findings on academic learning in real-life classrooms. We now look for generalizability, ecological validity, and practicality.

The following example is both more complex and more closely related to social psychological issues:

The reactions of people to situations of stress have long intrigued historians, philosophers, theologians, and, of course, social scientists. At the first stage of naive observation, we encounter writings of early historians recounting the behavior of men under tyranny, and how a people fearful of its leader would act in a number of "unusual" ways.

At the second stage, men like Machiavelli would formulate some gen-

eral ideas as to what acts of a political leader might lead to contentment, fear, or rebellion on the part of his followers.

Stage Three belongs to social psychology. Here, we wish to know precisely what aspect of a leader's role, such as his warmth, his knowledgeability, or his "legitimacy" (that is, whether he has attained power by due process or through usurpation), etc., elicits certain responses from his subjects. This means that these separate attributes of a leader have to be assessable separately while keeping constant, or controlling for, yet other attributes in which we may not be interested at the time, such as the subjects' age or education. Thus, the social psychologist designs experiments in which he "controls for" all variables varying only, say, the leader's legitimacy and his ostensible knowledgeability, or how good he seems to be at his job.

The effect of these two variables upon, say, "liking for the leader," might be examined by means of the following experimental design:

| | | Leader's know-how | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | High | Low |
| Leader's legitimacy | High | Group 1 | Group 2 |
| | Low | Group 3 | Group 4 |

in which only the two variables are varied (over two levels), and where all other variables are controlled for, through careful "matching" of incidental conditions (such as locale, temperature, etc.) and subjects (to make sure that the subjects in one group do not differ systematically from the others in their response to the leader). In addition, there is one type of control which is particularly difficult to attain: If we use four different leaders for the four conditions, how can we be sure that it is indeed the know-how and the legitimacy of the leader of Group I which affects his subjects in a given manner? It is surely conceivable that he, but not the other leaders, possesses a characteristic which is not related to the two variables under study, but nevertheless affects the dependent variable of "liking" very strongly. Perhaps he speaks too loudly, or wears a spotty tie, or (worst of all) exudes a cadaverous smell from his mouth.

What is the answer to this seemingly unsolvable drawback? Using the *same* leader enacting all four roles (or a number of leaders, each of whom assumes all of the roles at different times) provides a better approximation to an ideal answer than could be obtained in any "natural" situation.

But suppose that we now have a fairly good idea of the effects of some of the major attributes of a leader upon "liking" by his followers. The acid test (Stage Four) is still whether our hypotheses work not only in the laboratory, but in the real world, too.

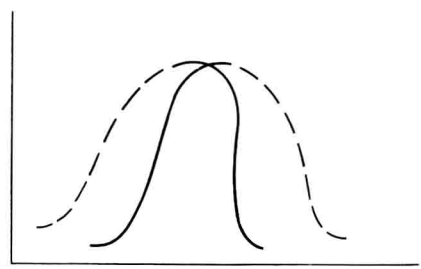
## DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

*The mean.* The mean is used to describe the central point, average, or "typical" score of a group of scores. It is obtained by summing all of the scores and dividing that sum by the number of scores.

*The variance.* The variance is used to describe the homogeneity or heterogeneity of a group of scores. Two groups with the same mean might differ in variance as for instance,

| *Group 1* | *Group 2* |
|---|---|
| 2 | 1 |
| 3 | 3 |
| 4 | 5 |

A graphic illustration of two groups with the same mean and unequal variances is as follows:



The standard deviation is the square root of the variance and has certain special properties which we will not go into here.

*t test and analysis of variance.*[1] The test most commonly used to assess the significance of a difference between two means is known as a t test. Using a statistical formula, the researcher finds the numerical value of "t" for his data; he then checks his t value in a table provided in most statistical texts to find the probability that his result was obtained by chance. (The importance of this was discussed above.)

A second technique for assessing differences between means is known as the analysis of variance. Results of the analysis of variance are circulated by means of formulae involving values of F's rather than t's. However, in

[1] The t test, analysis of variance, and product moment correlation are based upon certain statistical assumptions concerning the data which are beyond the scope of this briefest of overviews.

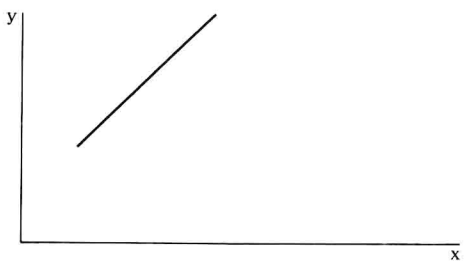
both cases, the researcher obtains the probability that the differences between the means are due to chance.

The advantage of the analysis of variance over the t test is that it can be used when either more than two means or more than one variable are involved. In cases of more than one variable, the analysis of variance allows computation, not only of a probability (p) value for each variable, but also a p value for each of the possible combinations or interactions of variables.

*The correlation coefficients.* A correlation refers to an association or relationship between two or more variables or measures. We have already noted that such an association tells us nothing about whether one variable *causes* the other. Most correlation measures are defined in such a manner that +1 represents a perfect positive relationship and −1 a perfect negative one. For a perfect positive relationship it is necessary that one variable increases as the other increases, regularly and at the same rate. Numerically, this might look as follows:

| | Measure X | Measure Y |
|---|---|---|
| Person A | 2 | 3 |
| B | 5 | 6 |
| C | 6 | 7 |
| D | 9 | 10 |

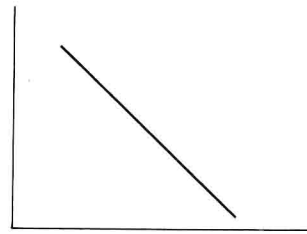
Graphically, the relationship would look like this:




For the perfect negative correlation, it is necessary that the variables be related in the opposite, rather than the same, direction. As one variable decreases, the other must increase, with no deviations or exceptions. Numerically, an example would be:

| | Measure 1 | Measure 2 |
|---|---|---|
| Person A | 2 | 5 |
| B | 3 | 4 |
| C | 4 | 3 |
| D | 5 | 2 |

Graphically, this would appear as follows:



When a correlation is perfect, knowing a person's rank on one measure enables us to predict his rank on the other (since they must be the same). However, in real and in experimental life, it is just about impossible to find a perfect correlation (unless the two variables are really the same thing). Thus, most correlations are (positive or negative) decimal numbers smaller than $\pm 1$; the closer the number is to $\pm 1$, the stronger the relationship.

### The Meaning of "Significance" in Statistical Inference

Usually, an experimental report will state that a certain finding was "significant at the .05 (or the .01) level." This means that if the conditions that are being compared "really" do not differ, that is, if they are drawn from the same population, then the obtained difference between the samples would occur no more than five times (or once) in 100 times on the average. Therefore, we conclude (at some risk of being wrong) that there exists a "true" difference, and that the two samples represent two different populations.

Also, we can easily see why it makes no sense to reduce too much the probability of making this type of error: Suppose we decide that we wish to be so certain of our findings that we will accept as indicating a "true" difference between populations only those differences between samples that are large enough to occur by chance but once in 1,000,000 times. We have now made it highly unlikely that we shall allow ourselves to be persuaded that a "true" difference indeed exists. But in doing so we have enormously increased the likelihood of overlooking a "true" difference, simply because our criterion may have become so stringent that the sample difference was not large enough to reach it.

The following simple example will illustrate this point: Suppose we want to know whether adult American males are, on the average, taller than adult American females of comparable socioeconomic and ethnic background.

We select random samples of 100 males and 100 females. (The randomness of selection, of course, must occur *within* the specifications stated above.) We obtain a mean height of 5′9″ for males and of 5′4″ for females (these are arbitrary, not census figures). Moreover, we know, by a simple statistical calculation, that such a difference between two means would occur only, say, once in 10,000 times *if* males and females in truth did not differ, and if, therefore, the present difference were a highly unlikely accident.

Now, we could declare that we have found reasons to believe that males are indeed taller than females. By doing so, we do run a small risk of being wrong. On the other hand, we can continue to believe that the height of males and females does not "truly" differ, because we have decided beforehand that the only evidence to the contrary that we will accept is a difference in sample means large enough to occur only once in 1,000,000 times by chance. Clearly, we do now run a considerable risk of ignoring some fairly persuasive evidence about differences in stature between males and females.

It is also clear that the two types of errors (called, respectively, type I error, or alpha, and type II error, or beta) are inextricably interdependent: Other things (such as sample size) being equal, a reduction of one automatically increases the other.

## THE USES OF SIMULATION

A rather novel way of studying human behavior is by means of simulation. The term does not, as many think, imply deception or trickery. It simply means "to act as if." Actually, simulation is used in many situations where we do not even think about it. A little girl playing "house" is engaged in simulating the behavior of a housewife, however imperfectly. Thor Heyerdahl, in his famous books *Kon-Tiki* (1950) and *Aku-Aku* (1958), in his attempt to recreate the putative voyages of early South American peoples by using rafts similar to those they would have used, was engaged in simulation. Psychodrama, the enacting by emotionally disturbed people of their problems, is simulation.[2]

Now, suppose we wish to study a situation in which two individuals, groups, or nations, are in conflict, or perhaps have to find an optimal strategy for attaining a mutually beneficial goal which neither could attain singly.

[2] I would not classify true stage acting as simulation, since the attempt is to go beyond life. True art, as any aesthetician will avow, must go beyond simulation, precisely in order to qualify as art.