

PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCH METHODS

Comprehensive, engaging, and punctuated with humor, this undergraduate textbook provides an interesting introduction to research methodology. *Psychology Research Methods* allows students to become familiar with the material through examples of research relevant to their lives. The textbook covers every major research approach in psychology. Students will learn how to evaluate and conduct the different varieties of descriptive research and experimental research. They will learn all steps of the research process from developing a research idea to writing about and presenting what they did. Each chapter contains suggestions for journal article readings and activities relevant to the topics covered. The textbook also includes a chapter on how to conduct research online and an appendix with an annotated manuscript keyed to the current edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*.

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Connecting Research to Students' Lives

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Preface

Why I Wrote This Textbook

Every year one of my social psychology lectures holds my students' attention more than any other. My students are rapt, at times laughing, at times seemingly astounded at the story I am telling. What is this lecture about? The topic is Clark and Hatfield's (1989) article on receptivity to sexual offers. In this experiment, Clark and Hatfield had research assistants approach students of the opposite sex on campus and randomly ask one of three questions: "Would you go out tonight?" "Will you come over to my apartment?" or "Would you go to bed with me?" Clark and Hatfield found that a majority of men but not a single woman agreed to have a "sexual liaison" with the person who approached them (p. 39). I will admit that my students do not act in quite the same way for all my lectures. Why is this lecture different? Developing a relationship is something that virtually all have experienced or want to experience. This research is relevant to the students' lives, and it is exciting. I found myself wondering: Why not make all of this early research exposure relevant and exciting?

Thus, this textbook uses research relevant to students' lives to illustrate research methodology. Every major research approach in psychology is covered. Students will learn how to evaluate and use different varieties of descriptive research and experimental research methods. They will learn all steps of the research process from coming up with a research idea to writing about and presenting what they did.

Through it all, the one constant is that information is presented within the confines of the familiar: the students' own lives.

This textbook is likely to be of interest to instructors who teach undergraduate research methodology courses that are not discipline-specific. The students and instructor potentially will have a range of discipline interests, but all of the students likely have the "student life" interest in common. This textbook could also be of interest to instructors in research methods courses that focus on social psychology, for many of the research examples come from the social psychology discipline.

Audience

Who is the intended audience for this textbook? This textbook is intended for use in undergraduate research methods classes. The text provides an introduction to all aspects of research methodology, and thus no prerequisite knowledge is needed. Students both new to and familiar with the world of research will appreciate the clarity of presentation and the use of research examples relevant to their lives.

Features

Pedagogy

- Learning objectives are provided at the beginning of every chapter. Key terms are provided in bold in the text and are defined both in the text

Preface

and in a glossary. To help students review the material, review questions covering the main topics of each chapter are presented at the end of each chapter.

Style

- The chapters are written with a clear, conversational style with touches of humor, which will appeal to an undergraduate audience.

Content

- This text provides an introduction to a wide variety of research methods, both experimental and non-experimental.
- The first four chapters cover topics relevant to whatever research approach one decides to consider. Chapter 1 includes a description of the goals of science, a review of the steps in the research process, and an explanation of why knowledge of research methodology is important (even to those who will not ultimately be researchers). Chapter 2 describes a variety of ways to come up with a research idea. Chapter 3 describes research ethics, and Chapter 4 considers measurement issues including reliability and validity.
- The next seven chapters concern different research approaches. Chapter 5 covers descriptive approaches such as naturalistic observation and archival research. Chapter 6 focuses on correlations, and Chapter 7 covers survey research. Chapter 8 covers experimentation with one independent variable while Chapter 9 considers factorial designs. Comprehensive coverage of quasi-experimental design and small-*N* research is provided using separate chapters for each (Chapters 10 and 11 respectively). Other texts often combine these two topics in one chapter.

- The next two chapters again concern areas relevant to research in general: Chapter 12 is a consideration of external validity while Chapter 13 is on the topic of online research, an increasingly popular technique used for collecting data. Step-by-step instructions help students learn how to create surveys and experiments for online data collection. Students are taught how to launch online research studies for little to no money.
- Chapter 14 covers “Writing about and Presenting your Research.” This chapter is keyed to the current (6th) edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA).
- Appendix A provides a sample manuscript annotated with information from the APA *Publication Manual* and tips on writing.
- In virtually all cases, research examples pertinent to students’ lives are used to explain the different methods; this is a new and exciting way to teach students about research.
- This is not a statistics text, although statistics are occasionally presented within the context of a research study. In those situations statistics are discussed conceptually in easy-to-understand language. Instructors can easily choose to eliminate coverage of this information if they wish.

Articles as Illustration

- Journal article citations are provided at the end of each chapter. These articles have been chosen because they provide good examples of the concepts discussed in the chapter. Questions follow each suggested article.

Suggested Activities

- Each chapter contains suggestions for activities relevant to the topics covered.

Preface

Chapter Flexibility

- The chapters are relatively independent and thus can be taught out of order. Instructors can choose to include all chapters on their syllabi or choose to eliminate whole chapters or even portions of chapters.

Reviewers

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I dedicate this textbook to the teachers in my life. Your positive influence cannot be overstated.

Wendy P. Heath