

Research Methods in Social Psychology

Validity Issues

Validity

- Issues of causality
- What is causing the outcome variable to change or to be different between groups?
- Example:
 - Hypothesis: People who receive a study guide will study longer for an exam than those who don't
 - Give study guide to first 50 students, no study guide to anyone else
 - Find that the "Study Guide" group report studying longer and receive better scores on the exam

Validity

- Issues of generalization
- How do we know we will get the same finding with different people, different situations, etc.
- Example:
 - Hypothesis: Students who drink alcohol before test day perform worse on the test than those who don't
 - Ask students in social psych class if they drank the night before
 - Find that those who drank perform worse

Measurement Issues

Reliability & Validity

- **Reliability**
 - "Consistency"
 - Is it consistent across time, people and situations?
- **Validity**
 - "Accuracy"
 - Does the measure assess what it claims to?
- A measure **MUST BE** reliable for it to be valid

Things to Critique in the Paper

- _____ **Validity**
 - How do we know which variable causes the other?
 - How do we know other factors aren't causing the outcome?
- _____ **Validity**
 - How much can we generalize this finding?
 - Other people, situations, over time?
- _____ **Validity**
 - How do we know the measures are accurate?
 - Could the measures be tapping into some other variable?

Types of Measures

_____ Measures

- Naturalistic observation
- Participant observation
- Contrived observation
- Disguised vs. nondisguised
- Checklists and tally sheets used



Measures

- Neural activity
- Blood analysis
- Reflexes and reactions
- Used as indicator of a certain state (e.g., stress)



Self-Report

- Questionnaires
- Interviews
- Rate statements or answer questions about oneself



Self-Report Items

- Specific
- Simple
- Relevant to sample
- Proper and consistent response format
- Need some reverse-coded items
- Example = Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

Interviews

- Friendly atmosphere
- Conceal personal reactions
- Ask questions EXACTLY as worded
- Do NOT lead the interviewee

Problems in Self-Report

- Social desirability
- Response sets
- Length

Analysis

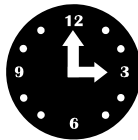
- Converting textual info to manageable data
- Narratives, projective tests (e.g., TAT)

Steps in _____ analysis

- Determine content of interest
- Rules for coders
- At least TWO coders per text
- Compute interrater reliability

_____ Measures

- Strength of associations in memory
- Latency between stimulus and response
- Reduces social desirability
- IAT and lexical decision task



Things to consider

- Don't "reinvent the wheel"
- Pretest your measure before you use it
