Aalto-yliopisto Aalto-universitetet Aalto University





Research Methods in Engineering Psychology

B.Sc. Engineering Psychology Prof. Dr. <u>Robin</u> Welsch

Have you come across psychological research methods?







What are do you expect to learn in this course?

Learning goals

- Develop skills in conducting and evaluating psychological research
- Learn about research methods and ethical considerations in engineering psychology
- Understand study design and measurement techniques
- Evaluate empirical research
- Learn how to set up and manage a study and record your work
- see advanced methods in action

You will **NOT** learn: Qualitative methods, Test construction, Diagnostics(e.g., IQ), Complex sampling protocols.

Why is this important?

Opposites attract

Learn to be skeptic about folk psychology

- Folk psychology sais opposite attract
 - 77% of undergraduates agreed that opposites attract in relationships

Psychological Science shows that

Similarity in personality traits predicts attraction and relationship maintenance



Lewak, R. W., Wakefield Jr, J. A., & Briggs, P. F. (1985). Intelligence and personality in mate choice and marital satisfaction. Personality and Individual Differences, 6(4), 471-477.



WILEY-BLACKY

Milk consumption and Nobel prizes

Identify confounding variables!





Lie detector

Identify issues with measurment!

- Was supposed to measure
 when someone is lying
- Measures only psychophysiological correlates of arousal





Documentation

Learn to record and report your research methods and make robust inferences!

- Documentation and publication is integral to science
- Replicability and systematic work is fundamental to the scientific method
- In a study from 2015 only about 68% of effects in psychological studies could be replicated
- Misreporting and questionable research practices further undermine the scientific record → You can learn here to do better!



Open Science Collaboration. (2015). Estimating the reproducibility of psychological science. *Science*, *349*(6251), aac4716.

Research methods are imporant to

- Critically examine theories
- Use the right measurments
- Engage in good research practices
- Make research reproducible

Organisation of the course

- Format with mandatory elements and self-study elements
- Research Study
- Schedule



Format

High level introduction to psychology methods applied in engineering contexts

Lecture

Apply your knowledge to testing real participants alongside experienced researchers

Study



Re-read important details yourself Hand in 1 question (from previous or coming lecture) before the lecture to receive 10 extra points (all or

nothing)

Book



Short summary videos

Human-Al-interaction.com (now in English; soon in Finish and Swedish)



Self-assesment

Lecture X

- 1. How is data obtained in folk psychology and scientific psychology?
- 2. How is inductive reasoning applied in folk psychology?
- 3. Come up with a scientific hypothesis on one the following topics and state the type of hypothesis
 - Smartphone-use and mental here
 - Shooter games and violence
 - Old-adults and novel techn

4. What is the difference the falsification and Bayesianism in hypothesis testing?

Poster Presentation

Will be the main driver of your grade

Examples can be found in MyCourses

We will have a session about preparing and presenting a poster



Evaluation Criteria – Poster

- Correctness (1-20)
- APA Guidelines (1-20)
- Presentation (1-20)
- Replicability (1-20)
- Completeness (1-10)
- Visualization (1-10)

Illustrative cutoffs:
Grade 5: 91 and above
Grade 4: 81-90 points
Grade 3: 71-80 points
Grade 2: 61-70 points
Grade 1: 51-60 points
Note: These are subject to change and will be

calibrated depending on the overall course.



Book

- Is your first ressource if something is unclear
- Gives guidance on how to write research up
- Before each lecture send one question to me about the reading material to get 10 extra points.



Timeline

Day	Date	Time	Room	Activity	Meeting Study Coordinator	Classroom
Wed	10.01.24 (week 02)	14:15 - 16:00	R030/A133 T5	Lecture 1		x
Wed	17.01.24 (week 03)	14:15 - 16:00	R030/A133 T5	Lecture 2		x
Wed	24.01.24 (week 04)	14:15 - 16:00	R030/A133 T5	Lecture 3		х
Wed	31.01.24 (week 05)	14:15 - 16:00	R030/A133 T5	Lecture 4	X	х
Wed	07.02.24 (week 06)	14:15 - 16:00	R030/A133 T5	Tutorial 1		x
Wed	14.02.24 (week 07)	14:15 - 16:00	R030/A133 T5	Tutorial 2	Х	x
Tue	27.02.24 (week 09)	10:15 - 12:00	R030/C206 T3	Tutorial 3/Testing	Х	maybe
Tue	05.03.24 (week 10)	10:15 - 12:00	R030/C206 T3	Testing		
Tue	12.03.24 (week 11)	10:15 - 12:00	R030/C206 T3	Testing		
Tue	19.03.24 (week 12)	10:15 - 12:00	R030/C206 T3	Testing / Poster Design		
Tue	26.03.24 (week 13)	10:15 - 12:00	R030/C206 T3	Data analysis / Poster design	Х	
Tue	09.04.24 (week 15)	10:15 - 12:00	R030/C206 T3	Poster presentation		х

Lecture preparation

BeforeRead chapter(s)

After

- Watch short-video
- Maybe: Re-read chapter(s)
- Maybe: Look at slides again
- Complete Self-assessment
- Derive questions and hand them in

Project preparation in Groups

Testing in March

Before

- Meet with your study coordinator
- Read literature
- Prepare materials
- Prepare call for participants
- Walk study coordinator through the study
- Get the OK signal to run your study
- Coordinate testing
- Send call for participants out

After

- Analyze the data
- Prepare the poster & presentation
- Rehearse with your coordinator
- Present your study

Questions?

Group A

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Psychological research

- Differentiate
 - Folk psychology from Psychological Science
- The problem of causality and alternative explanations
- Types of research





Psychology as a science

Scientific psychology investigates human experience, behavior and cognition.





How do we formulate a research question?

Scientific curiosity

leads to research questions

- Variables: characteristics or conditions that change or have different values for different individuals
- Research question: a statement that describes or explains a relationship between or among variables
 - often begins with: How? Why? What? Which?
 - is interesting to others
 - can be answered with research
 - are open-ended

Checklist for Developing a Research Question

- □Is it an open-ended question?
- □Is it appropriate in scope? Focused and narrow enough for your project or paper?
- Does it suggest factors that can be measured?
- □Is it relevant to my audience?
- □ Is answering the question manageable, and can I find and access enough documents, statistics, or persons to provide information to develop and support my ideas?
- □Is the topic of interest to me?

Good and Bad Research Questions

Example 1: Questions Should Have Complex Answers

- Bad: Does owning a pet improve quality of life for older people?
- **Good**: In what ways does owning a pet improve quality of life for older people?
- Example 2: Good Research Questions Need Focus
 - Bad: Does medication help alleviate attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) symptoms? And do kids need more exercise?
 - Good: How effective are the various types of medication in treating elementary students with ADHD?
- Example 3: Questions Should Be Specific
 - Bad: How do artificial sweeteners affect people?
 - Good: How does aspartame affect post-menopausal women who suffer from migraines?

How can we answer research questions?

Why does exposure to violent video games cause agressive behavior?

Psychological Science as problem solving



Psychology as problem solving



Folk Psychology

Possible ways of answering

Introspection

• E.g. Think about your motives for choosing a violent videogame

- Prior non-scientific knowledge
 - Asking someone else for their opinion on the subject, e.g. I ask my mom
- Unsystematic obervation
 - E.g. Go to a games store and observe people
- We often rely on mental shortcuts (heuristics) when forming and maintaining our beliefs about the world.
 - Confirmation bias. We tend to seek out information consistent with our beliefs, and disregard information that is *inconsistent* with our beliefs.

 \rightarrow Knowledge may be true but we can never be sure it is right.

Psychological Science as problem solving

Producing knowledge that is robust and reliable



Scientific Psychology

- 1. Is guided by theory and hypothesis
- 2. relies on empirical evidence
- 3. employs systematic research methods
- 4. strives for objectivity

What is a hypothesis?

How to formulate a hypothesis

- A hypothesis is a precise problem statement that can be directly tested through an empirical investigation
- Compared with a theory, a hypothesis is a smaller, more focused statement that can be examined by a single study
- A hypothesis considers the relevant variables and their relation in the study

Types of hypothesis

Directional	hypotheses	Non-directional hypotheses			
Causal	Non-causal	Causal	Non-causal		
More A causes more B	More A relates to more B	A causes B	A is related to B		

Map the hypotheses!



- 1. Keyoboard layout has a significant effect on task completion time
- 2. If typing experience increases then typing speed increases
- Providing typing training will increase task completion time in the 3. training group compared to users who did not receive any training.
- 4. Task completion time is related to age

Often formulated as

In practice

Causality

- Affects
- Influences
- Results in
- Has an effect on
- Brings about
- Causes
- Leads to

- Direction
- The more
- The less
- Increases
- Decreases

Checklist for a good hypothesis

Formulation, Quantifiability, Operationalizability, Justifiability

- □ Is the hypothesis understandable?
- □Can it be formulated as a conditional sentence?
- Does the hypothesis postulate a relationship between at least two variables?
- □Can the hypothesis be informed by contrary evidence?
- □Can we draft a study and collect data?
- □ Is the hypothesis backed up by theory?

How do we get data to evaluate hypotheses?

Types of empirical research in psychology

Ways of gathering empirical data



Why does exposure to violent video games (VVG) cause agressive behavior?

Cross-Sectional research

Non-causal relationships; no control for confounds

- systematic measurement of variables \rightarrow dependent variables
- two or more variables are measured at the same time



"The amount of video game exposure will be positively related to aggressive behaviour"

Table 2. Analyses of variance and mean scores of the three different groups of preference for aggressive video games for aggressive and prosocial behaviour (N = 278)

	No preference ^a		Moderate preference		High preference			
	M	SD	М	SD	М	SD	d.f.	F
Aggressive behaviour Correction for IQ Prosocial behaviour Correction for IQ	1.11 1.11 1.54 1.54	1.08 1.09 0.59 0.59	1.42 1.46 1.21 1.22	1.35 1.36 0.68 0.68	1.96 1.96 1.16 1.16	1.83 1.83 0.63 0.63	(2, 243) (2, 234) (2, 243) (2, 234)	6.46* 6.16* 9.53** 8.48**

*p < .01; **p < .001.

Note. Higher values reflect more aggressive, or more prosocial, behaviour, respectively.

^a No preference: children who in their list of favourite video games mentioned no aggressive video games; moderate preference: children who in their list mentioned aggressive video games, but less than 50 per cent of their list contained aggressive video games; high preference: children whose list of favourite video games contained 50 per cent or more aggressive video games.

Anderson, C. A., & Dill, K. E. (2000). Video games and aggressive thoughts, feelings, and behavior in the laboratory and in life. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, *78*(4), 772. Wiegman, O., & van Schie, E. G. (1998). Video game playing and its relations with

aggressive and prosocial behaviour. British Journal of Social Psychology, 37(3), 367-378.

Longitudinal Research

Identification of non-causal relationships in time; no control for confounds

• systematic measurement of variables \rightarrow dependent variables

One or more variables are measured over time



Longitudinal Studies of VVG and agression

"we expected an inverse U-shape curvilinear relationship between age and effect size"(VVG-effect)

- Data is sampled across time
- Can come from same sampling points (e.g. participants) but also be independent from each other



*cohen's a means of standardizing the strength of an effect and making it comparable across studies

Experimental Research

Identification of cause and effect-relationships; control for confounds

- systematic measurement of one or more variables \rightarrow dependent variables
- systematic manipulation of one or more variables \rightarrow independent variables



Spoiler Experimental study shows that after exposure to a violent video game social interactions are interpreted as more aggressive



Bushman, B. J., & Anderson, C. A. (2002). Violent video games and hostile expectations: A test of the general aggression model. *Personality and social psychology bulletin*, *28*(12), 1679-1686.

Manipulating VVG exposure

"brief exposure to violent video games can increase aggressive expectations"

- Participants (N = 224) played either a violent or nonviolent video game.
- Then, they read ambiguous story stems about potential interpersonal conflicts.
- They were asked what the main character will do, say, think, and feel as the story continues.



Psychological Science as problem solving



Spoiler

Violent video games do have a small effect on physical aggressive behavior but pro-social games also have a positive effect on helping behavior



Anderson, C. A., Shibuya, A., Ihori, N., Swing, E. L., Bushman, B. J., Sakamoto, A., ... & Saleem, M. (2010). Violent video game effects on aggression, empathy, and prosocial behavior in eastern and western countries: a meta-analytic review. *Psychological bulletin*, *136*(2), 151.

Types of research

Ways of applying the scientific method to human empirical data



Types of research

Ways of applying the scientific method to human empirical data



Combine and triangulate insights from different sources of data

Spoiler

Violent video games do have a small effect on physical aggressive behavior this holds across these types of research approaches



Anderson, C. A., Shibuya, A., Ihori, N., Swing, E. L., Bushman, B. J., Sakamoto, A., ... & Saleem, M. (2010). Violent video game effects on aggression, empathy, and prosocial behavior in eastern and western countries: a meta-analytic review. *Psychological bulletin*, *136*(2), 151. Confounds can be vonctrolled

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Summary

- Psychological research and folk psychology use different methods to attain knowledge about the world
- Research questions are manifetstations of a researchers curiosity
- Hypotheses can differ in causality and direction
- There are different types of empirical research that can be used to answer research questions and evaluate hypothesis
- Violent video games
 - Increase agression, however, effect sizes are small and confounded e.g. by age
 - Have shown to increase aggression across experimental, cross-sectional and longitudinal studies
 - Prosocial games can also promote prosocial behavior

Questions?

Exercise (15 minutes)

Groups of 5

Come up with a research question that combines technology and psychology.

Self-assesment

Lecture 1

- 1. How is data obtained in folk psychology and scientific psychology?
- 2. What kind of study type is this? (fictional)
 - Scientists have found that body height in adults is related to weight.
 - Scientists have measured weight from one sample of Finnish university students before and after the pandemic.
 - Scientists have tested typing speed in one sample of participants and compared two keyboard layouts.
- 3. Formulate a hypothesis for one of the studies above and classify causality and directionality.