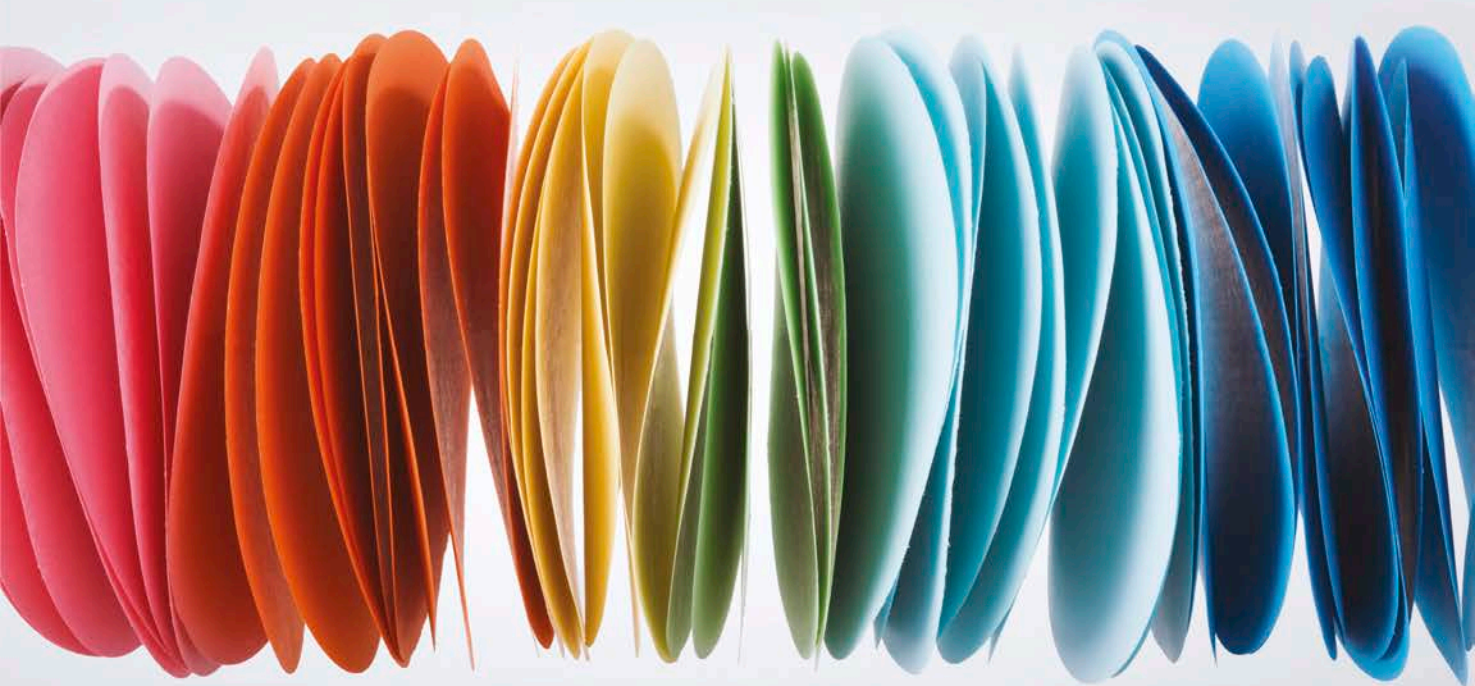


RESEARCH METHODS

for the

BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCES

EMEA Edition



Frederick J
GRAVETTER

Lori-Ann B.
FORZANO

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BRIEF CONTENTS

<i>Preface</i>	xvi
<i>About the Authors</i>	xx
1 Introduction, Acquiring Knowledge and the Scientific Method	1
2 Research Ideas and Hypotheses	27
3 Defining and Measuring Variables	50
4 Ethics in Research	81
5 Selecting Research Participants	109
6 Research Strategies and Validity	128
7 The Experimental Research Strategy	159
8 Experimental Designs: Between-Subjects Design	188
9 Experimental Designs: Within-Subjects Design	215
10 The Non-Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Strategies: Non-Equivalent Group, Pre–Post, and Developmental Designs	243
11 Factorial Designs	273
12 The Correlational Research Strategy	305
13 Modes and Methods of Measurement	324
14 Case Study and Single-Case Experimental Research Designs	352
15 Statistical Evaluation of Data	381
16 Writing an APA-Style Research Report	431
APPENDICES	
A Statistics Demonstrations and Statistical Tables	459
B Sample APA-Style Research Report Manuscript for Publication	486
<i>Glossary</i>	495
<i>References</i>	516
<i>Name Index</i>	529
<i>Subject Index</i>	532

CONTENTS

Preface xvi

About the Authors xx

CHAPTER 1

Introduction, Acquiring Knowledge and the Scientific Method 1

Chapter Learning Objectives 1

Chapter Overview 1

1.1 Methods of Knowing and Acquiring Knowledge 2

The Method of Tenacity 3

The Method of Intuition 3

The Method of Authority 4

The Rational Method 5

The Empirical Method 6

Summary 8

1.2 The Scientific Method 9

The Steps of the Scientific Method 9

Other Elements of the Scientific Method 14

Science Versus Pseudoscience 16

1.3 The Research Process 18

Quantitative and Qualitative Research 18

The Steps of the Research Process 19

Chapter Summary 25

Key Words 25

Exercises 26

Learning Check Answers 26

CHAPTER 2

Research Ideas and Hypotheses 27

Chapter Learning Objectives 27

Chapter Overview 28

2.1 Getting Started: Identifying a Topic Area 29

Common Sources of Research Topics 29

2.2 Searching the Existing Research Literature in a Topic Area 31

Tips for Starting a Review of the Literature 32

Primary and Secondary Sources 34

- The Purpose of a Literature Search 34
- Conducting a Literature Search 36
- Using Online Databases 36
- Using PsycINFO 38
- Maintaining Focus in a Literature Search 38
- Screening Articles during a Literature Search 38
- Ending a Literature Search 39
- 2.3 Finding an Idea for a Research Study from a Published Research Article 40**
 - Find Suggestions for Future Research 40
 - Contrast Existing Results 40
 - Combine Existing Results 41
 - The Components of a Research Article – Critical Reading 41
- 2.4 Using a Research Idea to Form a Hypothesis and Create a Research Study 44**
 - Characteristics of a Good Hypothesis 44
 - Using a Hypothesis to Create a Research Study 47
 - Chapter Summary 48
 - Key Words 48
 - Exercises 49
 - Learning Check Answers 49

CHAPTER 3

Defining and Measuring Variables 50

Chapter Learning Objectives 50

Chapter Overview 51

- 3.1 Constructs and Operational Definitions 51**
 - Theories and Constructs 52
 - Operational Definitions 53
 - Limitations of Operational Definitions 53
 - Using Operational Definitions 54
- 3.2 Validity and Reliability of Measurement 55**
 - Consistency of a Relationship 56
 - Validity of Measurement 57
 - Reliability of Measurements 60
 - The Relationship between Reliability and Validity 63
- 3.3 Scales of Measurement 64**
 - The Nominal Scale 64
 - The Ordinal Scale 65
 - Interval and Ratio Scales 65
 - Selecting a Scale of Measurement 67
- 3.4 Modalities of Measurement 68**
 - Self-Report Measures 68
 - Physiological Measures 69
 - Behavioural Measures 69
- 3.5 Other Aspects of Measurement 71**
 - Multiple Measures 71
 - Sensitivity and Range Effects 71

Artefacts: Experimenter Bias and Participant Reactivity	72
Selecting a Measurement Procedure	76
Measurement across Cultures	76
Chapter Summary	78
Key Words	79
Exercises	79
Learning Check Answers	80

CHAPTER 4

Ethics in Research 81

<i>Chapter Learning Objectives</i>	81
<i>Chapter Overview</i>	82

4.1 Introduction 82

Ethical Concerns Throughout the Research Process	82
The Basic Categories of Ethical Responsibility	83

4.2 Ethical Issues and Human Participants in Research 84

Historical Highlights of Treatment of Human Participants	84
American Psychological Association Guidelines	87
The Institutional Review Board or Research Ethics Committee	98

4.3 Ethical Issues and Non-human Subjects in Research 100

Non-human Subjects in Research	100
--------------------------------	-----

4.4 Ethical Issues and Scientific Integrity 100

Fraud in Science	101
Questionable Research Practices	102
The Open Science Movement and Safeguards against Questionable Practices	104
Plagiarism	105

Chapter Summary	107
Key Words	107
Exercises	107
Learning Check Answers	108

CHAPTER 5

Selecting Research Participants 109

<i>Chapter Learning Objectives</i>	109
<i>Chapter Overview</i>	110

5.1 Introduction to Sampling 110

Populations and Samples	111
Representative Samples	113
Sample Size	113
Sampling Basics	115

5.2 Probability Sampling Methods 116

Simple Random Sampling	116
Systematic Sampling	118
Stratified Random Sampling	118

Proportionate Stratified Random Sampling	120
Cluster Sampling	120
Combined-Strategy Sampling	121
A Summary of Probability Sampling Methods	121

5.3 Non-probability Sampling Methods 122

Convenience Sampling	122
Quota Sampling	123
Chapter Summary	125
Key Words	126
Exercises	126
Learning Check Answers	127

CHAPTER 6

Research Strategies and Validity 128

Chapter Learning Objectives 128

Chapter Overview 129

6.1 Research Strategies 130

The Descriptive Research Strategy: Examining Individual Variables	131
Strategies That Examine Relationships between Variables	131
The Correlational Research Strategy: Measuring Two Variables for Each Individual	132
Comparing Two Or More Sets of Scores: The Experimental, Quasi-Experimental, and Non-Experimental Research Strategies	133
Quasi-Experimental and Non-Experimental Research	135
Non-Experimental and Correlational Research	136
Research Strategy Summary	136
Research Strategies, Research Designs and Research Procedures	137
Data Structures and Statistical Analysis	139
Summary	139

6.2 External and Internal Validity 140

External Validity	141
Internal Validity	142
Validity and the Quality of a Research Study	143

6.3 Threats to External Validity 144

Category 1: Generalizing across Participants or Subjects	145
Category 2: Generalizing across Features of a Study	146
Category 3: Generalizing across Features of the Measures	147

6.4 Threats to Internal Validity 148

Extraneous Variables	149
Confounding Variables	149
Extraneous Variables, Confounding Variables and Internal Validity	150

6.5 More about Internal and External Validity 153

Balancing Internal and External Validity	153
Artefacts: Threats to Both Internal and External Validity	154
Exaggerated Variables	155
Validity and Individual Research Strategies	155

Chapter Summary	156
Key Words	156
Exercises	157
Learning Check Answers	158

CHAPTER 7

The Experimental Research Strategy 159

<i>Chapter Learning Objectives</i>	159
<i>Chapter Overview</i>	160

7.1 Cause-and-Effect Relationships 160

Terminology for the Experimental Research Strategy	161
Causation and the Third-Variable Problem	164
Causation and the Directionality Problem	164
Controlling Nature	165

7.2 Distinguishing Elements of an Experiment 166

Manipulation	166
Control	169
Extraneous Variables and Confounding Variables	170

7.3 Controlling Extraneous Variables 173

Control by Holding Constant or Matching	173
Control by Randomization	174
Comparing Methods of Control	175
Advantages and Disadvantages of Control Methods	176

7.4 Control Conditions and Manipulation Checks 177

Control Conditions	177
Manipulation Checks	180
Instructional Manipulation Checks, Catch Trials and other Checks of Attention	181

7.5 Increasing External Validity: Simulation and Field Studies 182

Simulation	183
Field Studies	184
Advantages and Disadvantages of Simulation and Field Studies	185

Chapter Summary	186
Key Words	186
Exercises	187
Learning Check Answers	187

CHAPTER 8

Experimental Designs: Between-Subjects Design 188

<i>Chapter Learning Objectives</i>	188
<i>Chapter Overview</i>	189

8.1 Introduction to Between-Subjects Experiments 189

Review of the Experimental Research Strategy	190
Characteristics of Between-Subjects Designs	190

	Advantages and Disadvantages of Between-Subjects Designs	192
8.2	Individual Differences as Confounding Variables	194
	Other Confounding Variables	195
	Equivalent Groups	195
8.3	Limiting Confounding by Individual Differences	196
	Random Assignment (Randomization)	197
	Matching Groups (Matched Assignment)	198
	Holding Variables Constant or Restricting Range of Variability	199
	Summary and Recommendations	199
8.4	Individual Differences and Variability	200
	Differences between Treatments and Variance within Treatments	203
	Minimizing Variance within Treatments	204
	Summary and Recommendations	205
8.5	Other Threats to Internal Validity of Between-Subjects Experimental Designs	205
	Differential Attrition	206
	Communication between Groups	207
8.6	Applications and Statistical Analyses of Between-Subjects Designs	208
	Two-Group Mean Difference	209
	Comparing Means for More Than Two Groups	210
	Comparing Proportions for Two Or More Groups	211
	Chapter Summary	213
	Key Words	213
	Exercises	213
	Learning Check Answers	214

CHAPTER 9

Experimental Designs: Within-Subjects Design 215

Chapter Learning Objectives 215

Chapter Overview 216

9.1	Within-Subjects Experiments and Internal Validity	216
	Characteristics of Within-Subjects Designs	216
	Threats to Internal Validity of Within-Subjects Experiments	219
	Separating Time-Related Factors and Order Effects	222
	Order Effects as a Confounding Variable	222
9.2	Dealing with Time-Related Threats and Order Effects	224
	Controlling Time	225
	Switch to a Between-Subjects Design	225
	Counterbalancing: Matching Treatments with Respect to Time	225
	Limitations of Counterbalancing	228
9.3	Comparing Within-Subjects and Between-Subjects Designs	231
	Advantages of Within-Subjects Designs	231
	Disadvantages of Within-Subjects Designs	234
	Choosing Within- or Between-Subjects Design	236
	Matched-Subjects Designs	237
9.4	Applications and Statistical Analysis of Within-Subjects Designs	238

Two-Treatment Designs	239
Multiple-Treatment Designs	239
Chapter Summary	240
Key Words	241
Exercises	241
Learning Check Answers	242

CHAPTER 10

The Non-Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Strategies: Non-Equivalent Group, Pre–Post, and Developmental Designs 243

Chapter Learning Objectives 243

Chapter Overview 244

10.1 Non-Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Research Strategies 245

The Structure of Non-Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs 246

10.2 Between-Subjects Non-Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs: Non-Equivalent Group Designs 248

Threats to Internal Validity for Non-Equivalent Group Designs 249

Non-Experimental Designs with Non-Equivalent Groups 250

A Quasi-Experimental Design with Non-Equivalent Groups 254

10.3 Within-Subjects Non-Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs: Pre–Post Designs 256

Threats to Internal Validity for Pre–Post Designs 256

A Non-Experimental Pre–Post Design 257

A Quasi-Experimental Pre–Post Design 257

Single-Case Applications of Time-Series Designs 260

10.4 Developmental Research Designs 262

The Cross-Sectional Developmental Research Design 262

The Longitudinal Developmental Research Design 264

10.5 Applications, Statistical Analysis and Terminology for Non-Experimental, Quasi-Experimental and Developmental Designs 268

Application and Analysis 268

Terminology in Non-Experimental, Quasi-Experimental and Developmental Designs 268

 Chapter Summary 270

 Key Words 271

 Exercises 271

 Learning Check Answers 272

CHAPTER 11

Factorial Designs 273

Chapter Learning Objectives 273

Chapter Overview 274

11.1 Introduction to Factorial Designs 274

11.2 Main Effects and Interactions 277

Main Effects	278
The Interaction between Factors	279
Alternative Descriptions of the Interaction between Factors	280
Identifying Interactions	282
Interpreting Main Effects and Interactions	283
Independence of Main Effects and Interactions	284
11.3 Types of Factorial Designs and Analysis	286
Between-Subjects and Within-Subjects Designs	287
Experimental and Non-Experimental or Quasi-Experimental Research Strategies	288
Pre-Test–Post-Test Control Group Designs	290
Higher-Order Factorial Designs	291
Statistical Analysis of Factorial Designs	292
11.4 Applications of Factorial Designs	294
Expanding and Replicating a Previous Study	294
Reducing Variance in between-Subjects Designs	295
Evaluating Order Effects in within-Subjects Designs	296
Chapter Summary	302
Key Words	303
Exercises	303
Learning Check Answers	304

CHAPTER 12

The Correlational Research Strategy 305

Chapter Learning Objectives 305

Chapter Overview 306

12.1 An Introduction to Correlational Research	306
Comparing Correlational, Experimental and Differential Research	307
12.2 The Data and Statistical Analysis for Correlational Studies	308
Evaluating Relationships for Numerical Scores (Interval or Ratio Scales) and Ranks (Ordinal Scale)	309
Evaluating Relationships for Non-Numerical Scores from Nominal Scales	311
Interpreting and Statistically Evaluating a Correlation	313
12.3 Applications of the Correlational Strategy	315
Prediction	315
Reliability and Validity	316
Evaluating Theories	317
Exploratory Research and Hypothesis Generation	317
12.4 Strengths and Weaknesses of the Correlational Research Strategy	318
Relationships with More Than Two Variables	321
Chapter Summary	322
Key Words	322
Exercises	322
Learning Check Answers	323

CHAPTER 13**Modes and Methods of Measurement 324***Chapter Learning Objectives* 324*Chapter Overview* 325**13.1 Behavioural Tasks 325****13.2 Observational Methods 327**

Behavioural Observation 328

Content Analysis and Archival Research 330

Types of Observation and Examples 331

Strengths and Weaknesses of Observational Methods 334

13.3 Surveys and Other Self-Report Methods 335

Types of Questions 336

Constructing a Survey 340

Selecting Relevant and Representative Individuals 341

Administering a Survey 342

Strengths and Weaknesses of Survey Research 347

Diary Methods 348

The Experience Sampling Method 348

Chapter Summary 350

Key Words 350

Exercises 350

Learning Check Answers 351

CHAPTER 14**Case Study and Single-Case Experimental Research Designs 352***Chapter Learning Objectives* 352*Chapter Overview* 353**14.1 The Case Study Design 353**

Applications of the Case Study Design 354

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Case Study Design 357

14.2 Introduction to Single-Case Experimental Research Designs 359

Critical Elements of a Single-Case Experimental Design 361

Evaluating the Results from a Single-Case Study 362

14.3 Phases and Phase Changes 364

Level, Trend and Stability 364

Changing Phases 367

Visual Inspection Techniques 369

14.4 Reversal Designs: ABAB and Variations 372

Limitations of the ABAB Design 374

Complex Phase-Change Designs and Multiple-Baseline Designs 375

14.5 General Strengths and Weaknesses of Single-Case Designs 376

Advantages of Single-Case Designs 377

Disadvantages of Single-Case Designs 377

Chapter Summary 379

Key Words 379

Exercises 380

Learning Check Answers 380

CHAPTER 15

Statistical Evaluation of Data 381*Chapter Learning Objectives* 381*Chapter Overview* 382**15.1 The Role of Statistics in the Research Process 382**

Planning Ahead 383

Statistics Terminology 383

15.2 Descriptive Statistics 385

Frequency Distributions 385

Describing Interval and Ratio Data (Numerical Scores) 387

Describing Non-Numerical Data from Nominal and Ordinal Scales of Measurement 390

Using Graphs to Compare Groups of Scores 390

Correlations 393

Regression 395

Multiple Regression 396

15.3 Inferential Statistics 398

Hypothesis Tests 400

Reporting Results from a Hypothesis Test 404

Errors in Hypothesis Testing 405

Factors That Influence the Outcome of a Hypothesis Test 406

Supplementing Hypothesis Tests with Measures of Effect Size 408

The Fight against *P*-Hacking 412**15.4 Finding the Right Statistics for Your Data 414**

Three Data Structures 414

Scales of Measurement 414

Category 1: A Single Group of Participants with One Score Per Participant 414

Category 2: A Single Group of Participants with Two Variables Measured for Each Participant 416

Category 3: Two Or More Groups of Scores with Each Score a Measurement of the Same Variable 418

15.5 Special Statistics for Research 423

The Spearman–Brown Formula 423

The Kuder–Richardson Formula 20 424

Cronbach's Alpha 424

Cohen's Kappa 425

Chapter Summary 428

Key Words 428

Exercises 429

Learning Check Answers 430

CHAPTER 16

Writing an APA-Style Research Report 431*Chapter Learning Objectives* 431*Chapter Overview* 432**16.1 The Goal of a Research Report 432****16.2 General APA Guidelines for Writing Style and Format 433**

Some Elements of Writing Style 434

Guidelines for Word Processing 437

Manuscript Pages 437

16.3 The Elements of an APA-Style Research Report 438

Title Page 438

Abstract 440

Introduction 441

Method 444

Results 446

Discussion 447

References 449

Tables and Figures 450

Appendices 450

Submitting a Manuscript for Publication 453

Conference Presentations: Papers and Posters 454

16.4 Writing a Research Proposal 455

Why Write a Research Proposal? 455

How to Write a Research Proposal 456

Chapter Summary 457

Key Words 457

Exercises 458

Learning Check Answers 458

APPENDICES**A** Statistics Demonstrations and Statistical Tables 459**B** Sample APA-Style Research Report Manuscript for Publication 486*Glossary* 495*References* 516*Name Index* 529*Subject Index* 532

PREFACE

Welcome to the first adaptation for Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA) of Frederick Gravetter and Lori-Ann Forzano's textbook, *Research Methods for the Behavioral Sciences*. Understanding how research is done is fundamental to the study of the behavioural sciences because research is the means through which behavioural scientists create new knowledge. Therefore, this textbook aims to give students a thorough grounding in the different strategies and methods that are used to study behaviour, and thereby to equip students to understand and evaluate published research, and to conduct and draw conclusions from their own research studies. To that end, this EMEA Edition retains most of the structure and content that contributed to the success of previous editions of Gravetter and Forzano's textbook, while updating the content to reflect current practice in behavioural science research, and emphasizing that research is a global endeavour that takes place in different countries, languages and cultures.

Overview

Research Methods for the Behavioural Sciences, EMEA Edition, is intended for an undergraduate research methods course in psychology or any of the behavioural sciences. The book is organized around the framework of the research process – from developing a research question, through to analyzing data and communicating research. The chapters of the text have been organized into five sections. Chapters 1 and 2 focus on the earliest considerations in the research process, presenting an overview of the scientific method and describing how scientists develop a research hypothesis. Chapters 3–6 focus on the preliminary decisions in the research process, and include information on how to measure variables, maintaining ethical responsibility throughout the research process, selecting participants, and choosing a valid research strategy. Chapters 7–9 introduce the experimental research strategy and provide the details of between-subjects and within-subjects experimental designs. Chapters 10–14 present other (non-experimental) research strategies and their associated research designs, provide more detail on some of the most common methods that scientists use to measure behaviour, and describe research that focuses on a single individual (e.g., case studies). Chapters 15 and 16 focus on the final steps in the research process and include information on how to evaluate, interpret and communicate the results of the research process. Although the chapters are organized in a series that reflects an ordered process, the order of chapters can be varied to meet the requirements of different course instructors.

Pedagogy

This EMEA Edition retains the conversational style of writing of previous editions that emphasizes discussion and explanation of topics rather than a simple 'cookbook' presentation of facts. Each chapter includes many opportunities for students to interact with the material, rather than simply be passively exposed to the material (e.g., Learning Checks and end-of-chapter Exercises). Each chapter is organized around a list of Learning Objectives, and includes a Chapter Outline, Chapter Overview, and Chapter Summary – all of which are designed to help students impose a structure on the material that they are learning. Margin Notes, Definition Boxes, Tables, Figures, Key Word lists and the Glossary at the end of the book are all used to provide emphasis or concise summaries for key ideas. Boxes, which are separate from the regular text, provide additional information to illustrate a point – often one that is pertinent to the content of several chapters.

New to this EMEA edition

Previous edition users should know that we have tried to maintain the hallmark features of the textbook, though the content has been revised, and the structure of Chapters 13 and 14 has been re-organized.

In keeping with the brief to adapt the book for students in Europe, the Middle East and Africa, there are many new or alternative examples of research studies that extend the focus of the text beyond its original North American audience. Additionally, material has been added to several chapters that discusses cross-cultural and global perspectives on research. The prevalence of illustrative examples and idioms that are specific to the North American context has been reduced.

Other changes serve to update the content of the book: reflecting research as it is done now (e.g., increased reliance on online data collection) and current best-practice recommendations for behavioural science research. This includes new subsections of material and information boxes in several chapters that describe and explain Open Science practices, together with accounts of the questionable research practices that provided the impetus for this movement. There is increased emphasis on the importance of estimating the size of an effect, and the text in several chapters has been revised to eliminate the implication that small samples are often sufficient for a research study.

Finally, numerous small revisions have been made to improve the clarity, depth or precision of explanations. This includes revising descriptions of testing for statistical significance to improve the technical precision of the book. See below for a brief description of the other main revisions, which are described chapter by chapter.

Other revisions by chapter

Chapter 1 (Introduction, Acquiring Knowledge and the Scientific Method). To improve clarity, the subsection on *the rational method* has been revised. To simplify presentation, the material on the method of faith has been removed because this can be regarded as a special case of the method of authority. Some discussion of the ‘grey area’ between quantitative and qualitative research has been added.

Chapter 2 (Research Ideas and Hypotheses). Additional information had been added on advanced search functions in database searches. The terms *falsifiable hypothesis* and *falsifiability* (and some associated terminology) are introduced.

Chapter 3 (Defining and Measuring Variables). A subsection on *measurement across cultures* has been added, which discusses some of the features of research conducted in different languages.

Chapter 4 (Ethics in Research). In the discussion of ethical principles and guidelines, the terminology and examples have been revised to reflect practice beyond North America; for example, adding details of the *Code of Human Research Ethics* of the *British Psychological Society*. The implications for research of recent European Union legislation for data protection are identified. The section on *Ethical Issues and Non-human Subjects in Research* has been reduced substantially. This was done because the information was specific to US regulation, and because few undergraduates will have the opportunity to conduct such research, and those that do will need more specialist guidance than can be provided in a general introductory text. As a means to motivate understanding of current recommendations for research (e.g., Open Science) a subsection on *questionable research practices* has been added.

Chapter 5 (Selecting Research Participants). The discussion of sample size now includes greater emphasis on the problems associated with small samples (e.g., low statistical power).

Chapter 6 (Research Strategies and Validity). The detailed discussion of Rosenthal and Rosnow’s (1975) study of research volunteer characteristics has been substantially reduced, and has been replaced by discussion of cross-cultural and cross-country issues around who participates in research. Some additional signposting has been added to orientate readers to the more in-depth consideration of research strategies and validity that occurs in subsequent chapters of the book.

Chapter 7 (The Experimental Research Strategy). The Box 7.1 ‘Statistical Significance’ has been revised to improve its technical precision. The term *treatment-as-usual* is introduced (as a common form of control

condition in clinical research). The discussion of manipulation checks has been lengthened, and a new subsection has been added on *instructional manipulation checks, catch trials and other checks of attention*.

Chapter 8 (Experimental Designs: Between-Subjects Design). The terms *randomized controlled trial (RCT)* and *intention-to-treat analysis* are defined and discussed. The goal of estimating the size of a treatment effect is discussed (as complementary to the goal of establishing the existence of a treatment effect).

Chapter 9 (Experimental Designs: Within-Subjects Design). The discussion of within-subjects designs that run conditions concurrently (e.g., inter-mixing multiple trials from different conditions) has been lengthened because this is a common type of study with many advantages. The discussion of counterbalancing has been expanded to emphasize that counterbalancing the order of conditions is only one of several useful applications of this technique.

Chapter 10 (The Non-Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Strategies). Additional examples of research studies have been added to illustrate key points, such as how researchers examine the effect of language (e.g., Arabic vs. Italian) on cognition. A subsection has been added on studies that combine longitudinal designs with other research designs.

Chapter 11 (Factorial Designs). The term *moderation* is introduced and explained. A box has been added on the appropriate analysis of interactions to determine whether a 'differences in differences' exists; this includes explanation and some discussion of Nieuwenhuis, Forstmann and Wagenmakers (2011).

Chapter 12 (The Correlational Research Strategy). The role of correlational research in generating and testing hypotheses is now discussed in greater depth. Additional examples to illustrate these and other points have been added.

Chapter 13 (Modes and Methods of Measurement). Previously, this chapter was titled *The Descriptive Research Strategy*. However, much of this chapter in the previous edition related to methods for measuring behaviour that are used with any kind of research strategy or research design. Chapter 13 has therefore been re-structured to make that its primary focus, as reflected in the new chapter title. Consequently, the short section titled *An Introduction to Descriptive Research* has been removed, and the section titled *The Case Study Design* has been moved to Chapter 14. A new section on *behavioural tasks* has been added, which uses examples of cognitive (e.g., reaction time) tasks to illustrate how behavioural tasks are used in research studies. Some new examples have been added to illustrate observational methods. The section titled *Surveys and Other Self-Report Methods* now emphasizes survey methods as a generic tool for measuring behaviour, rather than presenting it as a type of research design. This material has also been updated to better reflect that, in this digital era, online data collection is very common. Reflecting this, there are new subsections on *diary methods* and *the experience sampling method*. Given these revisions and its new focus, Chapter 13 can be used in various ways. For example, it can be used alongside Chapters 3 or 6 to provide greater detail on issues relating to the measurement of behaviour. Alternatively, course instructors can use Chapter 13 to discuss specific implementations of different research strategies and designs (Chapters 7-12).

Chapter 14 (Case Study and Single-Case Experimental Research Designs). With the addition of content that was previously in Chapter 13, this chapter now focuses on various kinds of single-case research – both experimental and non-experimental – as reflected in the revised chapter title. Additional examples have been added to better reflect the range of research topics and research questions that are examined via case studies, as well as the variety of goals of this type of research. This includes several examples from neuropsychology with new discussion of case-control comparisons and the logic of examining dissociations, as well as case study examples from different behavioural sciences. The coverage of single-case experimental designs has been slimmed down: the coverage of complex phase-change designs and multiple baseline designs has been greatly reduced; textbook users can now access this material from the previous edition via the new companion website.

Chapter 15 (Statistical Evaluation of Data). This chapter has had numerous small revisions to improve the technical precision of descriptions of significance testing (e.g., removing connotations of the alpha-level and *p*-value for a statistical test) and to increase the emphasis on the importance of estimating the

size of an effect (e.g., more detail on confidence intervals). New material on *p*-hacking and the steps taken to address it add to the text's emphasis on current best-practice recommendations for data collection, analysis and reporting. Appendix A and Online Appendix D, which are referenced from Chapter 15, have been updated in line with the revisions to Chapter 15.

Chapter 16 (Writing an APA-Style Research Report). The information about APA style has been updated from that for the sixth edition of the *APA Publication Manual* to that for the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Seventh Edition* (2020). The advice on writing a research report has been extended to include APA guidance on a *Student Paper* (to add to previous coverage of preparing a *Professional Paper* for submission to a journal). There is greater consideration on the principles of successful communication, which includes greater acknowledgement of appropriate variation in the style and format of research reports, and slightly less emphasis on formatting 'rules' for manuscript preparation. Appendix B (a *Sample Research Report*) has been edited so that it fits better with the revised Chapter 16 for which it provides integral examples.

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Introduction, Acquiring Knowledge and the Scientific Method

CHAPTER CONTENTS

- 1.1 Methods of Knowing and Acquiring Knowledge
- 1.2 The Scientific Method
- 1.3 The Research Process

CHAPTER LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- LO1** Compare and contrast the non-scientific methods for knowing or acquiring knowledge (tenacity, intuition, authority, the rational method and the empirical method). Identify an example and explain the limitations of each method.
- LO2** Identify and describe the steps of the scientific method.
- LO3** Define *induction* and *deduction* and explain the role of each in the scientific method.
- LO4** Distinguish between a hypothesis and a prediction.
- LO5** Explain what it means to say that the scientific method is empirical, public and objective.
- LO6** Distinguish between science and pseudoscience.
- LO7** Distinguish between qualitative and quantitative research and recognize examples of each.
- LO8** Identify and describe the steps in the research process.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

In this chapter, we introduce the topic of this textbook: research methodology. Research methods are intended to provide scientists with effective procedures for gathering information and answering questions. We begin by discussing the many ways of acquiring knowledge or finding answers to questions,

including the scientific method. Next, we provide a thorough discussion of the scientific method. The chapter ends with an outline of the research process or the way the scientific method is applied to answer a particular question. The research process provides the framework for the rest of the textbook.

1.1

Methods of Knowing and Acquiring Knowledge

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

- LO1** Compare and contrast the non-scientific methods for knowing or acquiring knowledge (tenacity, intuition, authority, the rational method and the empirical method). Identify an example and explain the limitations of each method.

Consider the following questions.

Does multitasking make you more efficient with your time?

Does having more friends make you less vulnerable to depression?

Are children of divorced parents less likely to be satisfied with their romantic relationships?

Are girls more likely to cyberbully than boys?

Does eating cake for breakfast make dieters more likely to stick to their diets later in the day?

Are adolescents who play violent video games more aggressive than adolescents who do not play violent video games?

Does playing brain games in adulthood make it less likely you will develop Alzheimer's?

Terms printed in boldface are defined in the glossary. Some terms, identified as key words, are also defined in the text.

If you find these questions interesting, then you may also be interested in learning how to find the answers. Although there are many different ways to find answers to questions like these, in this book we focus on the method used by behavioural scientists: the scientific method. The scientific method is considered basic, standard practice in the world of science. Students in the behavioural sciences (e.g., psychology, sociology, experimental economics or criminal justice) should understand how this process works and have some appreciation of its strengths and weaknesses. Before we begin, however, you should realize that the methods used in scientific research are not the only ones available

for answering questions, and they are not necessarily the most efficient. There are many different ways of knowing or finding answers to questions. In general, the different ways that people know, or the methods that people use to discover answers, are referred to as **methods of acquiring knowledge**.

DEFINITION

Methods of acquiring knowledge are ways in which a person can know things or discover answers to questions.

The rest of this chapter examines several established methods of knowing and acquiring knowledge. We begin with five non-scientific approaches: the method of tenacity, the method of intuition, the method of authority, the rational method and the method of empiricism. We conclude with a more

detailed discussion of the scientific method. As you will see, the scientific method combines elements from each of the other methods to produce a general question-answering technique that avoids some of the limitations or pitfalls of using just one of the other methods. Although the scientific method tends to be more complicated and more time consuming than the other methods, the goal is to obtain better-quality answers or at least a higher level of confidence in the answers. Finally, we warn that the scientific method outlines a general strategy for answering questions; the specific details of applying the scientific method to particular problems form the content of the remainder of the book.

The method of tenacity

The **method of tenacity** involves holding on to ideas and beliefs simply because they are accepted facts: habit leads us to continue believing something we have previously accepted as true. Often this is referred to as belief perseverance. For example, you may have heard the clichés, ‘You cannot teach an old dog new tricks’ and ‘Opposites attract’. These statements have been presented over and over again, and they have been accepted as true. In general, the more frequently we are exposed to statements, the more we tend to believe them. Advertisers successfully exploit this, repeating their slogans over and over, hoping consumers will accept them as true (and subsequently buy their products). A very catchy fast-food jingle exclaiming, ‘I’m lovin’ it’ hopes we do just that and buy more burgers from them.

DEFINITION

In the **method of tenacity**, an idea or belief is held on to because it has previously been accepted as true.

One problem with the method of tenacity is that the information acquired might not be accurate. With regard to the statement about old dogs not being able to learn new tricks, the elderly can and do learn (O’Hara, Brooks, Friedman, Schroder, Morgan & Kraemer, 2007). With regard to the statement that opposites attract, research shows that people are attracted to people who are like them (Klohnen & Luo, 2003). Another pitfall of the method of tenacity is that there is no method for correcting erroneous ideas. Even in the face of evidence to the contrary, a belief that is widely accepted can be very difficult to change.

The method of intuition

In the **method of intuition**, information is accepted as true because it ‘feels right’. With intuition, a person relies on hunches and ‘instinct’ to answer questions. Whenever we say we know something because we have a ‘gut feeling’ about it, we are using the method of intuition. For many questions, this method is the quickest way to obtain answers. When we have no information at all and cannot refer to supporting data or use rational justification, we often resort to intuition. For example, intuition provides answers when we are making personal choices such as: What should I have for dinner? Should I go out tonight or stay in? The ultimate decision is often determined by what I ‘feel like’ doing. Many ethical decisions or moral questions are resolved by the method of intuition. For example, we regard something as wrong because it does not ‘feel’ right. Some intuitions are probably based on the subtle cues that we pick up from the people around us. Although we can’t explain exactly how we know that a friend is having a bad day, something about the way she moves or speaks suggests to us that it is true. The predictions and descriptions given by psychics are thought to derive from this aspect of intuition. Intuition may also reflect an accumulation of experience that allows us to spot familiar patterns. For example, when faced with familiar problems or decisions, we can act or decide quickly based on what we did the last time we were in a similar situation. The problem with the method of intuition is that it has no mechanism for separating accurate from inaccurate knowledge.

DEFINITION

In the **method of intuition**, information is accepted on the basis of a hunch or 'gut feeling'.

The method of authority

In the **method of authority**, a person finds answers by seeking out an authority on the subject. This can mean consulting an expert directly or going to a library or a website to read the works of an expert. In either case, you are relying on the assumed expertise of another person. Whenever you 'google it' or consult books, articles, people, television or the internet to find answers, you use the method of authority. Some examples of people who are often regarded as experts are: physicians, scientists, psychologists, economists, professors, stockbrokers, religious leaders and lawyers.

DEFINITION

In the **method of authority**, a person relies on information or answers from an expert in the subject area.

For many questions, the method of authority is an excellent starting point; often, it is the quickest and easiest way to obtain answers. Much of your formal education is based on the notion that answers can be obtained from experts (teachers and textbooks). However, the method of authority has some pitfalls. It does not always provide accurate information. For example, authorities can be biased. We have all seen examples of conflicting testimony by 'expert witnesses' in criminal trials. Sources are often biased in favour of a particular point of view or orientation. For example, the supporters of different political parties often have very different answers to the same questions, as do the members of different schools of thought in academic disciplines.

An additional limitation of this method is that we often assume that expertise in one area can be generalized to other topics. For example, advertisers often use the endorsements of well-known personalities to sell their products. When a famous athlete appears on television telling you what soup is more nutritious, should you assume that being an outstanding football player makes him an expert on nutrition? The advertisers would like you to accept his recommendation on authority. Similarly, when Linus Pauling, a chemist who won the Nobel Prize for his work on the chemical bond, claimed that vitamin C could cure the common cold, many people accepted his word on authority. His claim is still widely believed, even though numerous scientific studies have failed to find such an effect.

Another pitfall of the method of authority is that people often accept an expert's statement without question. This acceptance can mean that people do not check the accuracy of their sources or even consider looking for a second opinion. As a result, false information is sometimes taken as truth. In some situations, the authority is accepted without question because the information appears to make sense, so there is no obvious reason to question it. We would all like to believe it when the doctor says, 'That mole doesn't look cancerous,' but we might be better protected by getting a second opinion.

As a final pitfall of the method of authority, realize that not all 'experts' are experts. There are a lot of supposed 'experts' out there. Turn on the television to any daytime talk show. During the first 45 minutes of the show, in front of millions of viewers, people haggle with one another: women complain about their husbands, estranged parents and teenagers reunite, or two women fight over the same boyfriend. Then, in the final 15 minutes, the 'expert' comes out to discuss the situations and everyone's feelings. These 'experts' are often people who lack the credentials, the experience or the training to make the claims they are making. Being called an expert does not make someone an expert.

In conclusion, we should point out that there are ways to increase confidence in the information you obtain by the method of authority. First, you can evaluate the source of the information. Is the authority really an expert, and is the information really within the authority's area of expertise? Also, is the information an objective fact, or is it simply a subjective opinion? For example, does the expert provide evidence in support of their opinion? Second, you can evaluate the information itself. Does it agree with other information that you already know? Were sound methods used to generate the evidence that supports the expert's opinion? If you have any reason to doubt the information obtained from an authority, the best move is to get a second opinion. If two independent authorities provide the same answer, you can be more confident that the answer is correct. For example, when you obtain information from an internet site, you should be cautious about accepting the information at face value. Do you have previous experience with the site? Is it known to be reputable? If there is any doubt, it pays to check to see that other sites are providing the same information.

The methods of tenacity, intuition and authority are satisfactory for answering some questions, especially if you need an answer quickly and there are no serious consequences for accepting a wrong answer. For example, these techniques are usually fine for answering questions about which shoes to wear or what vegetable to have with dinner. However, it should be clear that there are situations for which these uncritical techniques are not going to be sufficient. In particular, if the question concerns a major financial decision or if the answer could significantly change your life, you should not accept information as true unless it passes some critical test or meets some minimum standard of accuracy. The next two methods of acquiring knowledge (and the scientific method) are designed to place more demands on the information and answers they produce.

The rational method

The **rational method**, also known as **rationalism**, involves seeking answers by logical reasoning. This method begins with a set of premises (statements that we assume to be true) and uses logic (deduction) to reach a conclusion or get an answer to a question. A simple example of reasoning that might be used is as follows:

All information in this textbook is correct.

This textbook states that *The Belmont Report* was published in 1979.

Therefore, it is correct information that the *The Belmont Report* was published in 1979.

In this **argument**, the first two sentences are **premise statements**. The final sentence is a logical conclusion based on the premises. If the premise statements are, in fact, true and the logic is sound, then the conclusion is guaranteed to be correct. Thus, the answers obtained by the rational method must satisfy the standards established by the rules of logic before they are accepted as true.

Notice that the rational method begins after the premise statements have been presented. In the previous argument, for example, we are not trying to determine whether all information in this textbook is correct; we simply accept this statement as true. Similarly, we are not concerned with verifying that there was a report with this name or when it was published, or – indeed – whether it is even mentioned in this textbook. We take this premise 'on trust'. Specifically, the rational method does not require observations or gathering information. Instead, you should think of the rational method as mentally manipulating premise statements to determine whether they can be combined to produce a logical conclusion.

DEFINITIONS

The **rational method**, or **rationalism**, seeks answers by the use of logical reasoning.

An **argument** is a set of premise statements that are logically combined to yield a conclusion.

In logical reasoning, **premise statements** describe facts or assumptions that are presumed to be true.

The preceding example (textbook and report) can be used to demonstrate a limitation of the rational method: the conclusion is not necessarily true unless *both* of the premise statements are true, even in a valid logical argument. Regarding the first premise in our example, while we have taken great effort to avoid inaccuracies in this textbook, it is unlikely that we have always succeeded in this. Or consider a modified version of the second premise in which stated that: ‘This textbook states that the moon is made of cheese’ or that ‘... all martwheasals are chucklebons’. By rational deduction from the premises, it would necessarily follow that ‘the moon is made of cheese’ or ‘all martwheasals are chucklebons’ is correct information. In general, the truth of any logical conclusion is founded on the truth of the premise statements. If any basic assumption or premise is incorrect, then we cannot have any confidence in the truth of the logical conclusion.

A practical limitation of employing the rational method is that people are not consistently good at logical reasoning. For example, people will often accept a logically incorrect conclusion as being correct if that conclusion is consistent with their existing knowledge or beliefs (Markovits & Nantel, 1989). For example, consider this:

Premise 1: All flowers have petals.

Premise 2: Roses have petals.

Conclusion: Roses are flowers.

This conclusion does *not* follow as a logical necessity from these premises (because the premises do not exclude the possibility that there are non-flower objects that have petals). Similarly, people will often reject a logically correct conclusion if the conclusion seems implausible given what they already know about the world. For example, the following conclusion *does* follow logically from these premises below, though people often believe that it does not:

Premise 1: All things that are smoked are good for the health.

Premise 2: Cigarettes are smoked.

Conclusion: Cigarettes are good for the health.

In summary, the rational method is the practice of employing reason as a source of knowledge, whereby conclusions are tested by ensuring that they conform to the rules of logic. As you will see in Section 1.2, the rational method is a critical component of the scientific method. In the next section, we examine a different approach, in which we rely entirely on direct observation to obtain evidence to establish the truth.

The empirical method

The **empirical method**, also known as **empiricism**, attempts to answer questions by direct observation or personal experience. This method is a product of the empirical viewpoint in philosophy, which holds that all knowledge is acquired through the senses. Note that when we make observations, we use the senses of seeing, hearing, tasting and so on.

DEFINITION

The **empirical method**, or **empiricism**, uses observation or direct sensory experience to obtain knowledge.

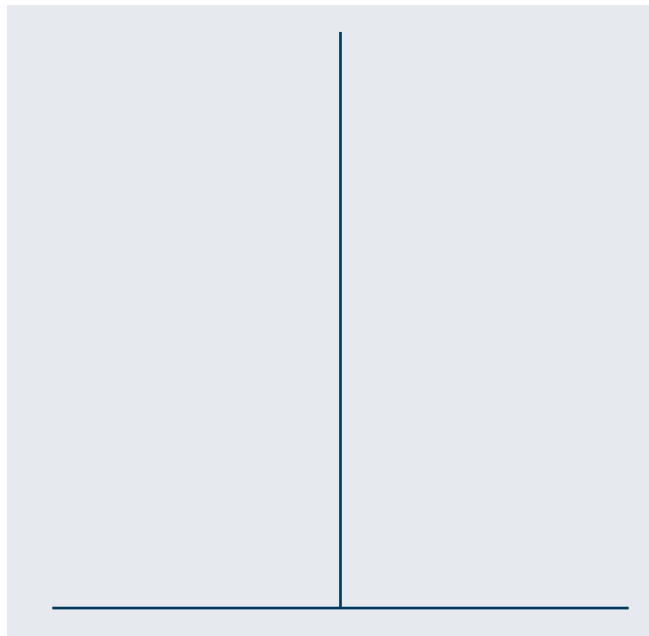
Most of you know, for example, that children tend to be shorter than adults, that it is typically warmer in the summer than in the winter, and that a kilogram of steak costs more than a kilogram of minced beef. You know these facts from personal experience and from observations you have made.

Many facts or answers are available simply by observing the world around you: that is, you can use the empirical method. For example, you can check the oil level in your car by simply looking at the dipstick. You could find out the weight of each student in your class just by having each person step on a scale. In many instances, the empirical method provides an easy, direct way to answer questions. However, this method of inquiry also has some limitations.

It is tempting to place great confidence in our own observations. Everyday expressions, such as ‘I will believe it when I see it with my own eyes,’ reveal the faith we place in our own experience. However, we cannot necessarily believe everything we see, or hear and feel. Actually, it is fairly common for people to misperceive or misinterpret the world around them. Figure 1.1 illustrates this point with the horizontal–vertical illusion. Most people perceive the vertical line to be longer than the horizontal line. Actually, they are exactly the same length. (You might want to measure them to convince yourself.) This illustration is a classic example of how direct sensory experience can deceive us.

Although direct experience seems to be a simple way to obtain answers, your perceptions can be drastically altered by prior knowledge, expectations, feelings or beliefs. As a result, two observers can witness exactly the same event and yet ‘see’ two completely different things. For most students, the following example provides a convincing demonstration that sensory experience can be changed by knowledge or beliefs.

Suppose you are presented with two plates of snack food, and you are asked to sample each and then state your preference. One plate contains regular potato chips and the second contains crispy, brown noodles that taste delicious. Based simply on your experience (taste), you have a strong preference for the noodles. Now suppose that you are told that the ‘noodles’ are actually fried worms. Would you still prefer them to the chips? The problem here is that your sensory experience of good taste (the method of empiricism) is in conflict with your long-held beliefs that people do not eat worms (method of tenacity).

FIGURE 1.1**The Horizontal–Vertical Illusion**

To most people, the vertical line appears to be longer, even though both lines are exactly the same length.

It also is possible to make accurate observations but then misinterpret what you see. For years, people watched the day-to-day cycle of the sun rising in the east and setting in the west. These observations led to the obvious conclusion that the sun must travel in a huge circle around the earth.

Finally, the empirical method is usually time consuming and sometimes dangerous. When faced with a problem, for example, you could use the empirical method to try several possible solutions, or you could use the rational method and simply think about each possibility and how it might work. Often, it is faster and easier to think through a problem than to jump in with a trial-and-error approach. Also, it might be safer to use the rational method or the method of authority rather than experience something for yourself. For example, if I wanted to determine whether the mushrooms in my backyard are safe or poisonous, I would rather ask an expert than try the empirical method.

In summary, the empirical method is the practice of employing direct observation as a source of knowledge. In the empirical method, evidence or observations with one's senses are required for verification of information. Note that the observations can be casual and unplanned, such as when you are simply aware of the world around you. At the other end of the continuum, observations can be systematic and purposeful. As you will see in the next section, the planned and systematic application of the empirical method is a critical component of the scientific method.

Summary

As you have seen so far, the scientific method is not the only way to know the answers or find the answers to questions. The methods of tenacity, intuition, authority, rationalism and empiricism are different ways of acquiring knowledge. Table 1.1 provides a summary of these five methods. We should point out that different people can use different methods to answer the same question and can arrive at different, or sometimes the same, answers. For example, if you wanted to know the weight of one of your classmates, you might have them step on a scale (empirical method), simply ask how much they weigh (method of authority), or compare their physical size to your own and calculate an estimated weight relative to how much you weigh (rational method).

TABLE 1.1 Summary of Non-Scientific Methods of Acquiring Knowledge

Method	Way of knowing or finding answer
Tenacity	From habit or persistence
Intuition	From a hunch or feeling
Authority	From an expert
Rationalism	From reasoning; a logical conclusion
Empiricism	From direct sensory observation

LEARNING CHECK

1. Which method of knowing is being used by a student who believes that his performance on tests is influenced by wearing a lucky hat?
 - a. The method of empiricism
 - b. The rational method
 - c. The method of tenacity
 - d. The method of authority

2. Which method of knowing is used when you find the address and phone number of a restaurant by googling the name of the restaurant?
 - a. Method of empiricism
 - b. Rational method
 - c. Method of authority
 - d. Scientific method
3. Last year Tim and his friend Jack were both too short to ride the roller coaster at a theme park. Jack went to the park this year and was tall enough to ride. Tim knows that he is taller than Jack, so he knows that he will be able to ride the roller coaster as well. Which method of knowing is Tim using?
 - a. Method of empiricism
 - b. Rational method
 - c. Method of authority
 - d. Scientific method
4. A restaurant chef tried replacing rice with pasta in one of her recipes to see what would happen. Which method of acquiring knowledge is she using?
 - a. Method of empiricism
 - b. Rational method
 - c. Method of authority
 - d. Scientific method

Answers appear at the end of the chapter.

1.2

The Scientific Method

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- LO2** Identify and describe the steps of the scientific method.
- LO3** Define *induction* and *deduction* and explain the role of each in the scientific method.
- LO4** Distinguish between a hypothesis and a prediction.
- LO5** Explain what it means to say that the scientific method is empirical, public and objective.
- LO6** Distinguish between science and pseudoscience.

The **scientific method** is an approach to acquiring knowledge that involves formulating specific questions and then systematically finding answers. The scientific method contains many elements of the methods previously discussed. By combining several different methods of acquiring knowledge, we hope to avoid the pitfalls of any individual method when used by itself. The scientific method is a carefully developed system for asking and answering questions so that the answers we discover are as trustworthy as possible. In the following section, we describe the series of steps that define the scientific method. To help illustrate the steps of the scientific method, we will use a research study investigating the common response of swearing in response to a painful stimulus (Stephens, Atkins & Kingston, 2009).

The steps of the scientific method

Step 1: Observe behaviour or other phenomena

The scientific method often begins with observation (i.e., using the empirical method). Often these are casual or informal observations. For example, the authors of the swearing study observed (themselves or others) swearing in response to pain. Based on their observations, they began to wonder whether swearing