

The Development of Relationship Science

Dr. Jody Davis, Spring 2011
Ch 3

1

Introduction

- Early Philosophers
 - *If you marry wisely, marry your equal.* (Ovid)
 - *By all means marry; if you get a good wife, you'll be happy. If you get a bad one, you'll become a philosopher.* (Socrates)
 - *He that is not jealous is not in love.* (St. Augustine)
 - *Man is by nature a social animal.* (Aristotle)

2

- Darwin
- Two founding social scientists
 - Durkheim
 - Freud
- Early 1980s before the formal study of relationships took off!

3

Obstacles to the Study of Relationships

- Societal Taboos (read in Berscheid & Regan, pp. 64-65)
- Ethical Considerations
 - Not ethical to manipulate some variables
- Methodological and Analytical Challenges (read in Berscheid & Regan, pp. 70-72)

4

The Prediction of Relationship Phenomena

- Predictions tailored to unique circumstances of individual
 - Almost impossible!
- Predictions about what causes relationship outcomes on average

5

- "Anything seems commonplace, once explained."
 - - Dr. Watson to Sherlock Holmes
- Hindsight Bias

6

Experimental Studies: Theory

- Integrated set of principles that explains and predicts observations
- Generally testable
 - if not, then philosophical rather than empirical
- Very broad compared to hypothesis
- Can never be proven – why not?

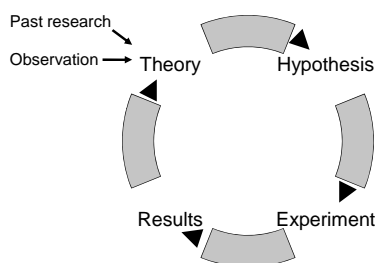
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Examples of Theories

- People's behavior is motivated by what would increase their genetic survival
- Similarity attracts

8

Science as an Endless Cycle



9

Some Themes of Science

- Collaborative
- Creative
- Focus on what's observable/testable
- Skeptical AND Open-minded
- Require evidence
- Not dependent on authority
- Simplicity first, then synthesis
- Never-ending!

Note: This information will not be on the test

10

Moving from Theory to Research

- **Operational definitions** make abstract concepts measurable and observable
- Think of operational definitions for . . .
 - Love
 - Satisfaction with dating relationship
 - Jealousy
 - Conflict in a relationship

11

Independent & Dependent Variables

- **Dependent variable (DV)**
 - dependent on influence of experiment
 - variable being measured in an experiment
- **Independent variable (IV)**
 - variable that researcher manipulates in an experiment
 - cause of change in the dependent variable

12

Example

- Experimental Question: Do couples become less satisfied because they run out of new things to do with each other?
- DV: Satisfaction with relationship (measured by scale and by persistence in relationship)
- IV: Try new things once a week for one month vs. don't try new things

13

Hypothesis

- Specific hypothesis (prediction) is derived from broad theory
 - Specific operational definitions

14

Example

- What would hypothesis be for our example?
- Couples who try new things once a week will score higher on the satisfaction scale and will be more likely to persist in the relationship compared to couples who don't try new things

15

Random Assignment

- Each P has equal chance of being in each level of IV
 - minimizes pre-existing differences between individuals assigned to different groups
 - before experimental manipulation, want groups to be equivalent

16

Example

- Should we let couples decide which group to be in?
- How can we randomly assign them?

17

IV Concepts

- **Levels:** the conditions or groups of your IV
- **Control group:** not exposed to experimental treatment
- **Within-participant:** each P experiences all levels of IV
- **Between-participants:** each P experiences only one level of IV

18

Example

- How many IVs do we have?
- What is/are the levels of the IV(s)?
- Is there a control group?
- Should the IV(s) be within or between?

19

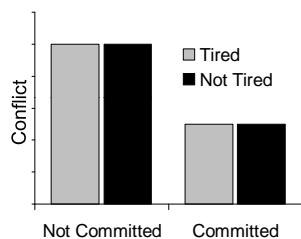
Group Activity

- What DV are you interested in? What relationship behavior/outcome would you like to predict?
- What IV(s) is/are you interested in? What could cause the outcome?
- How would you design an experimental study? Can you randomly assign Ps? What is your hypothesis?

20

Main Effect

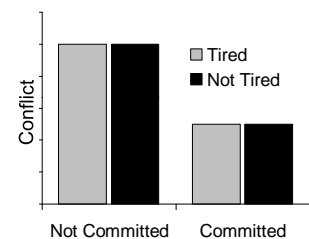
- When an independent variable (IV) has an effect on the dependent variable (DV)



21

Main Effect

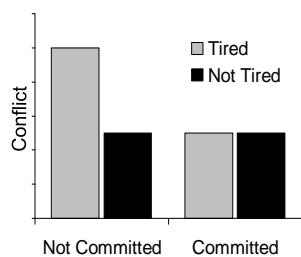
- Main effect for commitment
- Committed Ps had less conflict than not committed Ps



22

Interaction

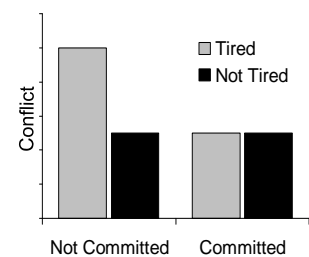
- When the effect of an IV depends on the level of another IV



23

Interaction

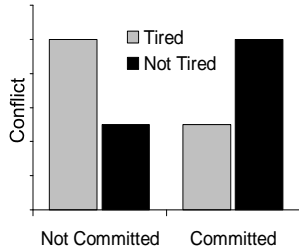
- Interaction of commitment with tired
- Tiredness didn't affect conflict when committed
- When not committed, more conflict when tired than when not tired



24

Another Interaction

- Interaction of commitment with tired
- When not committed, more conflict when tired than when not tired
- When committed, more conflict when not tired than when tired



Note: You will not be tested on this information

25

Group Exercise

- DV Sat with vacation
- 2 IVs
 - Location (beach vs. ski)
 - Temp (hot vs. cold)
- Possible main effect for each IV
- Possible interaction

26

Group Exercise

- DV: Satisfaction with bear
- IVs: Size (big vs. small) and Color (brown vs. black)
- Possible main effect for each IV
- Possible interaction

27

Natural Experiments

- Read in Berscheid & Regan, p. 76

28

Nonexperimental (Correlational) Studies

- **Longitudinal studies:** Study the same people over time
 - Ex: Recruit 30 married couples and measure satisfaction at time of marriage and then 3 yrs later.
- **Cross-sectional studies:** Study different people at one point in time
 - Ex: Recruit 30 married couples; 15 at time of marriage and 15 who've been married 3 yrs. Measure satisfaction. 4:00

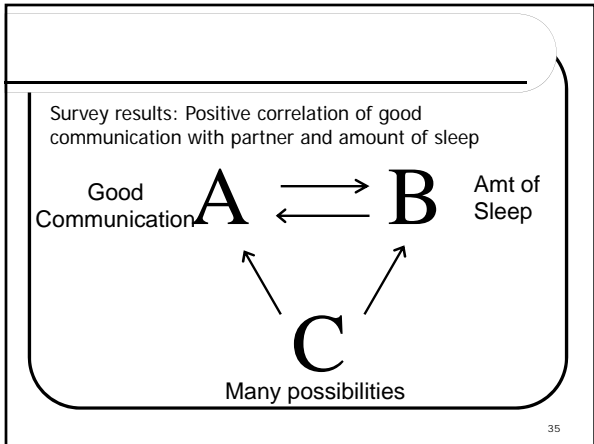
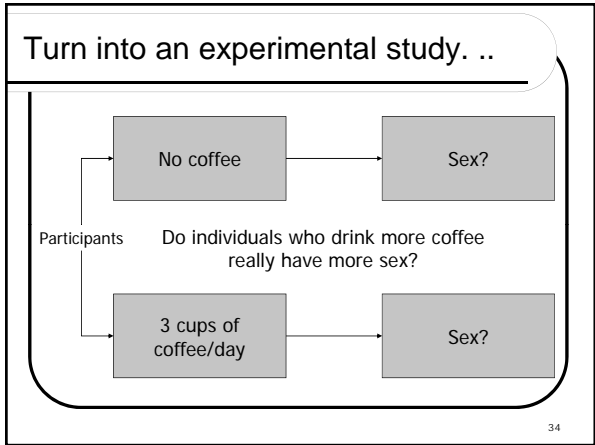
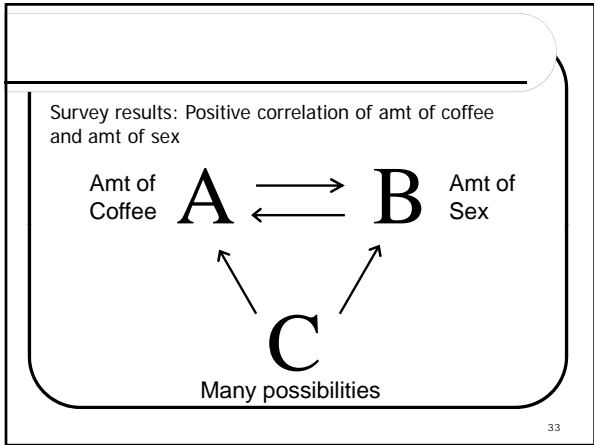
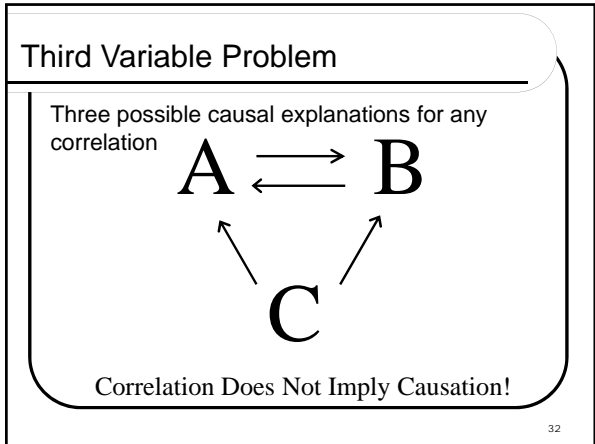
If you would like more elaboration, see Berscheid & Regan, pp. 76-77

29

- **Advantages of Correlational Research**
 - Use when manipulation impossible or unethical
 - Useful for prediction
 - Strength and direction of relationship
- **Disadvantages**
 - No random assignment 2:00
 - No information about whether causal relationship between two variables

30

- Positive correlation: as one variable increases so does the other
 - Negative correlation: as one variable increases the other one decreases
- 31

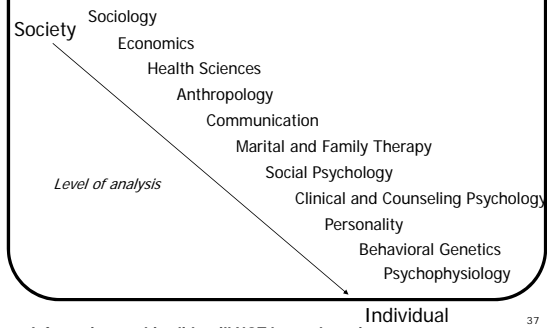


Qualitative Studies

- read in Berscheid & Regan, p. 83

36

Disciplines Contributing to Relationship Science



Note: Information on this slide will NOT be on the quiz

37

Psychology

- Developmental psychology
- Social psychology
 - Lewin: Behavior is a function of the person and the person's environment (physical *and* social)
- Clinical and Counseling psychology

Note: Information on this slide will NOT be on the quiz

38

- Many fields other than psychology as well:
 - Marital and family therapy
 - Communication studies
 - Sociology
 - Anthropology
 - Economics

Note: Information on this slide will NOT be on the quiz

39

Cultural Differences in Relationships

- read in Berscheid & Regan, pp. 92-94

40