

Preface

Each research project is unique and must retain its uniqueness in order to be of scientific value. As such, researchers (including students at the master's and PhD levels) are entitled to express their interpretation of the world they are investigating. This book stresses a multimethod approach that is described in detail throughout each chapter. The researcher is encouraged to abandon the security that a favored approach may provide and accept a wider, multileveled view.

In the USA alone, psychological disorders of all sorts affect the lives of people in astonishing numbers: generalized anxiety disorder (GAD)—6.8 million adults; panic disorder—6 million; social anxiety disorder—15 million; specific phobias—19 million; obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)—2.2 million; post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)—7.7 million; major depressive disorder—14 million¹. Greenberg et al. (1999) calculated that in the 1990s, anxiety disorders amounted to over US \$ 42 billion/year in economic losses. As of 2014, The US National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) estimates the total cost associated with serious mental illness to hover over US \$ 300 billion/year². As pointed out by McLaughlin et al. (2013, p. 823) after examining data gathered from a survey of 6483 adolescents aged 13 through 17 years, “Nearly two-thirds of U.S. adolescents report experiencing 1 or more PTEs³ by age 17 years, indicating substantial exposure to PTEs during childhood and adolescence, and 4.7% of U.S. adolescents meet lifetime criteria for PTSD.”

This outlines the importance of properly modeling psychological phenomena and constructs, because better assessments and potentially better treatments can then take place, making people's lives better in the process and the economy less affected by this heavy burden.

¹ Source: Anxiety and Depression Association of America. <http://www.adaa.org/about-adaa/press-room/facts-statistics>. Accessed Nov 18, 2014.

² Source: National Institute of Mental Health (USA)

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/cost/index.shtml>. Accessed Nov 13, 2014.

³ Potentially traumatic events such as rape, domestic violence, witnessing aggression, etc.

This simple guide is designed most particularly for master’s and doctoral students in psychology as well as new researchers (all referred to as “researcher” in the body of the book).

It will assist the researcher in: (1) developing flawless psychological models that will support his thinking and research endeavors; (2) identifying shortfalls and errors commonly found in research (e.g., erroneous scales, use of additive questions to boost Cronbach’s alpha, etc.); (3) giving him⁴ effective techniques to perform qualitative and quantitative research that are rarely discussed in other research books; (4) proposing a solid approach for creating questionnaires; (5) initiating him to the power of data percolation⁵, and; (6) providing guidance for writing his thesis or paper with a step by step methodology.

This book does not replace traditional books on methodology in psychology; rather, it complements them.

A Few Questions

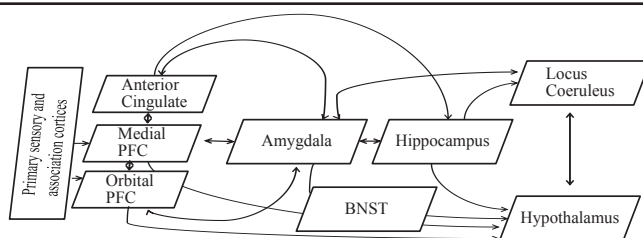
| | |
|---|---|
| A few questions | |
| The project | What is the main research theme of the researcher? (one sentence consisting of a subject, a verb, and a complement) |
| | What anxieties are experienced when thinking about the research project? |
| | What is planned to alleviate whatever concerns that may be? |
| Attitude | Define attitude towards research |
| A standard psychological construct model (bubbles and arrows) | <div><pre>graph TD; Trigger([Trigger]) -- "(C+)" --> PerceivedThreat([Perceived threat]); PerceivedThreat -- "(I+)" --> AvoidingBehaviors([Avoiding behaviors]); PerceivedThreat -- "(I+)" --> Emotions([Emotions]); Emotions -- "(I+)" --> AvoidingBehaviors;</pre></div> <p>A trigger causes the individual to perceive a threat, which generates emotions, which then influences the individual in her/his attempt to avoid the source of said perceived threat, which then leads to increased perceived threat when escape is not possible. An anxious person would be more likely to perceive a threat than a non anxious person (see Ein-Dor et al. 2011)</p> |

⁴ The masculine form is considered a neutral form in the present book.

⁵ See Mesly 2012; Mesly 2012a.

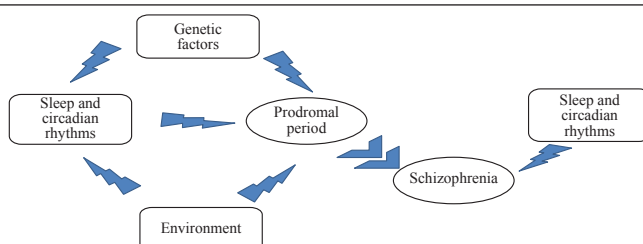
A few questions

*A process model
instead of a construct
model (parallelograms
and arrows)*



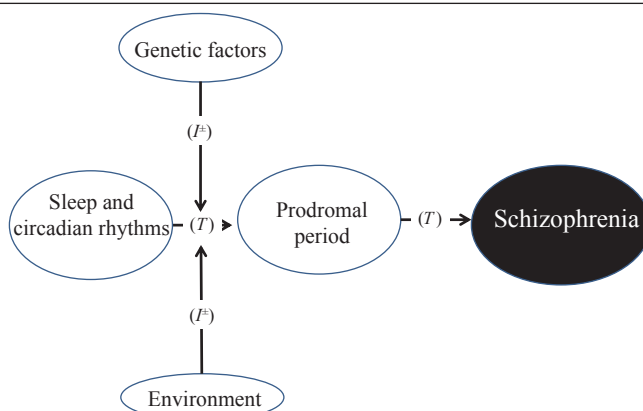
(Inspired from Hostinar et al. 2014, p. 260). When processes are discussed, parallelograms and arrows are used, not bubbles and arrows

*A model that is not
using the method
taught in this book*



(Zanini et al. 2013, p. 2635)

*The same model using
the method used in this
book*



The model was drawn based on information provided in the article of Zanini et al., 2013. With time, disruptions in sleep patterns lead to prodromal periods, which with time may lead to schizophrenia. Genetic and environmental factors may have a reinforcing effect of this particular dynamic

<http://www.springer.com/978-3-319-15752-8>

Creating Models in Psychological Research

Mesly, O.

2015, XXI, 126 p. 60 illus., 58 illus. in color., Softcover

ISBN: 978-3-319-15752-8