Organizational Research Methods (ORM)
INP7937.002
Fall 2010

Instructor

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Time and Place

PCD 2124, Tuesday 12:30-3:20

Overview

Conducting organizational research is an exciting challenge due to severe limitations in how we can study humans scientifically in naturalistic settings, especially the workplace where employers can be reluctant to allow participation in studies. To fully exploit the opportunities that become available, the organizational researcher must be prepared to apply a large variety of scientific methodologies, often in very creative ways. The organizational researcher must be skilled in assessment, design, and statistics. This course will be an overview of methods used in organizational research, focusing largely on research design/strategies. The course assumes basic knowledge of both psychometrics/measurement and statistics, and is designed to follow the psychology PSY6217 two semester sequence (Regression/ANOVA and Psychometrics) or the equivalent. The approach will be mainly (although not entirely) conceptual as opposed to quantitative.

Objectives

1. To acquire knowledge of organizational research methods used in I/O Psychology, Organizational Behavior, and related fields.
2. To enhance skills in evaluating methodology in existing literature.
3. To provide experience in presenting results of research.
4. To gain expanded appreciation of how research is conducted and disseminated.

Grading

Grades will be based on the project and presentations, as well as classroom participation.

Missed Classes
Students are expected to attend all classes. All missed classes must be made-up by writing a two page (double spaced) overview of the topic that was discussed that week. The overview is due the week immediately following the absence. It can be e-mailed to me.

Readings

**Weekly Readings.** Weekly readings, that form the bulk of the material for the class, are in the attached reading list. The schedule shows which readings will be discussed each week. Most are from the major journals, and can be found in the virtual library or online. Be sure to acquire all readings during the first two weeks of the semester (before things get too busy). If readings are not available, **be sure to notify me within the first two weeks of the semester**.

Research Project

There will be a research project involving the collection of data to test a hypothesis. Each student will develop a hypothesis involving 3 variables, choose measures for each variable, and collect survey data. Both a written report in journal article format and brief 5-6 minute presentation are required.

Symposium-Style Presentations of Articles

Each week students will do a 10 minute PowerPoint presentation of an article they choose that describes an organizational research study. The presentations should be like those in symposium sessions at a major conference. You should role-play as if you were the author of the particular paper. The presentation should clearly cover the purpose/rationale of the study, hypotheses, method, results and conclusions. It might be necessary to simplify the study considering the time limitations. At the conclusion of the presentation, there will be questions of the presenter by the class, again similar to a conference. Each student will do two such presentations during the semester. The time limit must be adhered to, as part of this exercise is to get used to presenting conference papers in limited time. You will be cut off at 10 minutes.

Article Analysis

Some weeks one of the assigned readings will be an example of a quantitative organizational study (indicated with superscript 1 in the schedule). The purpose is to analyze, critique, and discuss the methodology used. In particular, as you read each article pay attention to the following:

1. Purpose/rationale of the study. How do the authors setup the study? How do they position it? What is the contribution to the literature, i.e., what gaps does it address?

2. Hypotheses (if any). Are they causal or merely relational? Do they involve 2 variables or more than two variables? Are they directional? Are the relations direct or are there mediational or moderator relations expected. Is there much of a basis for the hypotheses?
3. Method. What is the design of the study? How are variables operationalized? Are measures reliable? Are measures established with strong evidence for construct validity? Is this a single-source or multi-source design? How were the data collected, i.e., what is the procedure? Are their ethical issues involved in the study? What population was sampled? What are the limitations to generalizability in both population and setting?

4. Results. How were the data analyzed? How were hypotheses tested? Did results support or fail to support hypotheses? Did analyses make sense? Were they overly complex? Did the authors give a good rationale for what they did? If complex statistics were used, were the simpler building blocks also shown/discussed such as descriptive statistics and correlations?

5. Discussion. What do the authors conclude? Do the conclusions flow logically from the method/results or are they stretched? Do you agree with the conclusions? Are there feasible alternative explanations for results? Were limitations discussed and if so, did you find this discussion to be informative/thoughtful or merely obvious?

6. General. Was the paper clearly written/presented and did it do a good job of communicating the results of the study?

Class Sessions

There will be 6 major activities that will take place in class.

1. Instructor mini-lecture about methodology
2. Student symposium-style presentation of own articles
3. Article analysis
4. Discussion of weekly readings including asking questions of the instructor.
5. Work on research project
6. Student presentation of project (last week of class)

Taping policy: Notes and tapes cannot be taken for the purpose of sale.
## Schedule

The schedule lists the topics, readings, and assignment due dates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading/Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/25</td>
<td>Course Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/1</td>
<td>Causality and correlation</td>
<td>SCC-1, Meehl, Moyle¹, Stone-Romero 2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/8</td>
<td>Validity and threats to validity</td>
<td>SCC-2, Daft, Frese¹</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/15</td>
<td>Construct and external validity</td>
<td>SCC-3, Conway, Spector, Van Dyne¹</td>
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<td>9/22</td>
<td>Quasi-experiments 1</td>
<td>SCC-4, Stone-Romero, Barling¹</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/29</td>
<td>Quasi-experiments 2</td>
<td>SCC-5, Spector 94, Ludwig¹</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/6</td>
<td>Longitudinal designs</td>
<td>Zapf, Laschinger¹</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/13</td>
<td>Field experiments</td>
<td>Judd, Wainer, Bedeian</td>
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<td>10/20</td>
<td>Survey methods</td>
<td>Edwards, Spector VanKatwyk, Schaffer</td>
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<td>10/27</td>
<td>Theory</td>
<td>Hambrick, Locke, Sutton,</td>
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<td>11/3</td>
<td>Levels</td>
<td>Hofmann, Pirola-Merlo¹</td>
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<td>11/10</td>
<td>Veteran’s Day</td>
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<td>11/17</td>
<td>Meta-analysis and reviews</td>
<td>Judge¹, Schmidt</td>
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<td>11/24</td>
<td>Ethical/practical issues</td>
<td>Aguinis, Von Glinow, Papers due</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/1</td>
<td>Wrap-up</td>
<td>Project presentations</td>
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Note: SSC is the Shadish et al. book, and the numbers refer to chapters.

¹Empirical study to analyze/discuss.
Readings


### Recommended Readings Outside of Class


*K* *Organizational Research Methods*, (July, 2010). Special Feature Topic on Method Variance.

