Syllabus for
Meta-Analysis in the Behavioral and Social Sciences
6J:269
Professor Frank Schmidt
Room W236 Pappajohn Bus. Bldg.
College of Business Administration - University of Iowa
Phone: 335-0949 E-mail: frank-schmidt@uiowa.edu
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Course Summary:

Meta-analysis is a set of methods for quantitatively integrating findings across studies in the behavioral and social sciences to determine what the overall effect size or correlation is and whether the "conflicting findings" are due to moderators (interactions) or to statistical and measurement artifacts. This course describes procedures for cumulating (1) correlations across studies, (2) effect sizes across studies, and (3) results within studies. Examples are presented for each type of application. The effects of measurement error and restriction in range in systematically attenuating mean study outcomes are explored, and the appropriate procedures and formulas for correcting for these biases are presented. The role of sampling error and differences between studies in reliability of measurement and in range restriction in producing artifactual variation in outcomes across studies are discussed and procedures and formulas for correcting for these artifacts are presented. For those cases in which artifacts do not account for all between study variance in outcome, procedures and formulas are given for properly adjusting correlations between study characteristics and study outcomes for the effect of random (sampling) error in study outcomes. The alternative method of identifying moderator variables by subgrouping of data is also described. Methods of ensuring a thorough literature review are presented, including the question of how to deal with studies having methodological weaknesses.

Importance of the Course:

The research literature on many questions in the behavioral and social sciences consists of numerous studies with apparently conflicting findings. This situation had made the development of cumulative knowledge and general principles nearly impossible. Meta-analysis showed that such conflicting findings are often illusory and artifactual. Its application allows one to determine the true meaning of previous research on a given question, permitting the establishment of cumulative knowledge. An overview of meta-analysis can be found in the American Psychologist (1992, 47, 10, 1173-1181).

The Instructor:

Professor Frank Schmidt, an industrial/organizational psychologist, is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association and the American Psychological Society. In 1982, with Drs. John Hunter and Greg Jackson, he published one of the first books on meta analysis. In 1990, he and Dr. Hunter published their second meta-analysis book, and the 2nd Edition of this book (your text) was published in 2004. In 1994, he and Dr. Hunter were given the Distinguished Scientific Award by the American Psychological Association for their work on meta-analysis methods. In 2007, the Association for Psychological Science gave Frank Schmidt the James McKeen Cattell Award for distinguished contributions to applied psychology for his work on meta-analysis methods. He and his colleagues have applied meta-analysis extensively to employment tests and other selection procedures, resulting in major revisions of earlier conclusions. Before coming to the University of Iowa in 1985, he headed a research program for the U. S.
Office of Personnel Management for 11 years. He has been on the faculties of Michigan State and George Washington University.

**Main Text:**


**Supplementary Text:**

Synthesizing Research, by Harris Cooper. Sage, 1998. (Paperback)

(Texts are available at Iowa Book and Supply.)

**Other Meta Analysis Books:**

(Asterisk indicates book on reserve in the Business Library.)


About the Course:

1. An ideal precursor to this course is 6J:273 (Measurement Methods in the Behavioral and Social Sciences). However, any measurement course would be helpful. The minimum prerequisite would be intermediate statistics.

2. The course is conducted primarily in lecture format. It is very quantitative and requires good note taking skills.

3. Students will work 5 meta-analysis exercises during the course. These exercises are given in your main textbook. The instructor supplies a Windows-based computer program package that could be used for these exercises. This program is described in detail in your main text and in the Appendix to that text. I will ask a student to load these programs on your computer. However, the exercises can also be done using calculators. Completion of these exercises is required to receive a course grade.

4. Near the end of the course, each student will critique two or more published meta-analyses and present their critiques to the class for discussion.

5. As a term project, each student completes an original meta-analysis on a subject of his/her choosing. This project demonstrates the student's mastery of meta-analysis methods. Completion of this term project is required to receive a course grade. More information on this project is provided during the class.

6. The instructor assigns reading material (beyond the two text books) from the reserve book list, as packets to be purchased by the student, and as handouts.

7. Grades are based on the term project meta-analysis, the class exercises, the class critique of published meta-analyses, and class participation and comments. Of these, the term project is the most important. Plus and minus grading can be used. There is no final exam.

8. If you have any disabilities that require special accommodation, please see me after the first class. See the material at the end of this syllabus.
**Course Schedule for Semester:**

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<td>2</td>
<td>Introduction to Meta-Analysis: Foundation Material</td>
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<td>3</td>
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A more detailed outline of topics to be covered can be found in the Table of Contents of the main text (Hunter and Schmidt, 2004).
**Student Report to Class**

Towards the end of the course, you will present to the class a critical analysis of one or two meta-analyses of your choice in the published literature using the principles and methods learned in this course. All questions of the following type should be addressed in your critique (these are only examples):

1. How were the studies obtained and coded? Were these processes optimal?

2. What decision rules were used? Why? Is the justification for them adequate?

3. What methods were used? Were these the best methods? If not, what methods should have been used? Why

4. What corrections were made? Not made? Why? What are the consequences? What corrections should have been made?

5. What errors were made? What are the biggest weaknesses of the meta-analysis? What effects do they have on results and conclusions? What would you have done differently?

6. What are the strengths of this meta-analysis?

7. What has changed in this field as a result of this meta-analysis? What new facts were revealed?

Completeness is important. Do not make the class ask about things you should have covered in your presentation.

Attached is a list of possible studies you may choose from. Others can also be chosen, but check with me first. [Also, see the references at the end of the Hunter and Schmidt (2004) class text.] I will also email you additional references to published meta-analyses. You will probably want to choose a topic in which you have some scientific or professional interest. If you choose a topic on which two meta-analyses have been published, you can work with a partner and the presentation will be joint. However, your team must compare and contrast the two meta-analyses and attempt to explain differences in obtained results (if any). Students typically find errors in the meta-analyses they critique. A major contributor to these errors in the lack of reviewers who are competent to review meta-analyses.

Later in the class, I will distribute a schedule showing when your presentation will be made. You may trade time slots with other students, but be sure to notify me in advance.

At least one week prior to your presentation, please give me a clear copy of the meta-analysis you have chosen so I can have it copied for the class. The class will read your meta-analysis prior to your presentation. Based on their reading, other students and the instructor will ask you questions about the meta-analysis and your presentation. [These questions count as class participation and affect final grades.]
Meta-Analyses in the Published Research Literature
(Note: I will send you additional references electronically.)


Required Boilerplate

If you have a disability that may require some modification of seating, testing, or any other class requirement, please let me know as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Similarly if you have any emergency medical information about which I should know, or if you need special arrangements in the event the building must be evacuated, please let me know. Please see me after class hours or during my scheduled office hours or schedule an appointment. I would also remind you that the Office of Student Disability Services is available to assist you.

It is my sincere hope that no student in this class submits work which is not his or her own. However, it seems prudent to clarify in advance the policy on cheating. If I determine that any assignment was not written solely by the student whose identification number appears on the project, the student will receive a zero (0) for the project and may receive an “F” for the class.

All incidents of cheating will be reported to the appropriate Deans (e.g., the Associate Dean for the Undergraduate Program in the College of Business or Liberal Arts and Sciences) and the student may be placed on disciplinary probation for the remainder of his or her undergraduate work at the University of Iowa.

In general, the decision of the Professor may be appealed to the College of Business’ Judicial Board, then to the Associate Dean for the Undergraduate Program. The Honor Code for the Tippie College of Business will determine the appropriate appeal process. The Honor Code may be found at http://www.biz.uiowa.edu/upo/honorcode.html

The Tippie College of Business and the University of Iowa are committed to providing students with an environment free from sexual harassment. If you feel that you are being or have been harassed or you are not sure what constitutes sexual harassment, we encourage you to visit the University website, http://www.sexualharassment.uiowa.edu/index.php, and to seek assistance from department chairs, the Dean’s Office, the University Ombuds Office, or the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity.