Introduction: Reliability and Validity

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http://psc.dss.ucdavis.edu/sommerb/sommerdemo/intro/validity.htm

For research to be of value and of use, it must be both **_reliable_** and **_valid_**.

Reliability

> **_Reliability_** refers to the repeatability of findings. If the study were to be done a second time, would it yield the same results? If so, the data are reliable. If more than one person is observing behavior or some event, all observers should agree on what is being recorded in order to claim that the data are reliable.

Reliability can also apply to individual measures. When people take a vocabulary test two times, their scores on the two occasions should be very similar. If so, the test can then be described as **_reliable_**. To be reliable, an inventory measuring self-esteem should give the same result if given twice to the same person within a short period of time. IQ tests should not give different results over time (as intelligence is assumed to be a stable characteristic).

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Validity

Validity refers to the credibility or believability of the research. Are the findings genuine? Is hand strength a valid measure of intelligence? Almost certainly the answer is "No, it is not." Is score on the SAT a valid predictor of GPA during the first year of college? The answer depends on the amount of research support for such a relationship.