

Reaction paper

Psychology



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Critical Response The Earth is Round The article ‘ The earth is round ($p < .05$)’ written by Cohen (1994) examines misinterpretation of null hypothesis significance testing (NHST) and shows how it impacts psychology. NHST dwells on the principle that if the hypothesis is true, the theory is established. As a result, scientists treat statistical data with neglect and turn assumptions into false theories.

Cohen (1994) comes to definite conclusion that NHST has no alternative in the world of statistical psychology but scientists have to be more careful with data they have and methods they use to process it. There is a number of effective methods used in statistical psychology to interpret data and the author suggests that they can significantly improve application of NHST in research. Cohen (1994) believes that scientists should seek not only for methods to generalize their data but to improve their results by using graphic presentation methods in their research.

Generally, I agree with Cohen (1994) that generalization often gives birth to uncertain theories. NHST is convenient for psychologists (and other scientific fields as well) and it is the reason why they use it. However, every technique should advance with time. Cohen (1994) calls for conscious use of NHST and understanding that it is far from perfection. Being a statistician, he understands the pitfalls of the illusion created by NHST. At the same time, he offers the solution to improve NHST giving more credit to this technique and vindicating its use in research practices. Overall, I support the idea that scientists need to have clear evidence to support their theories even if they start with a null hypothesis significance testing.

References

Cohen, J. (1994). The earth is round (p
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