

TABLE 24.1 Convergent versus Divergent Research Styles as Regards Pursuit of Issues from Study to Study

RESEARCH ASPECT	STYLE	
	<i>Convergent</i>	<i>Divergent</i>
Focus	A phenomenon	A theory
Aim	To account fully for the phenomenon, using such theories as necessary	To utilize the theory fully, applying it to as many phenomena as possible
Yield	Explaining a great deal of the variance in the single phenomenon	Explaining a small amount of the variance in many phenomena
Example	Hovland's studies of delayed action effects, of primacy/re-cency	Festinger's utilization of social comparison theory, of dissonance theory
Independent-variable manipulation	Gross operational manipulation in a group setting	Precise and intricately staged manipulation in a one-on-one situation
Dependent-variable measure	Elegantly scaled, multi-item	Gross, dichotomous single measures
Test situation	Group testing	Individual testing
Number of cases	Large N	Small N
Design	Multiple independent variables	Single independent variable
Extraneous variables	Introduced as additional, orthogonal variables in the design	Eliminated or held constant by elaborate situational devices
Inferential statistics	Elaborate regression analysis (ANOVA, CANOVA, trend analysis)	Less parametric statistics (chi-square, t-test)
Interaction effects	An encouraging indication of contact with complex reality	A discouraging indication of crude independent-variable manipulation

often settling for a single dichotomous measure, such as whether the participant asks for supportive or for attacking material or does or does not sign a petition; but as regards independent-variable manipulation, divergent theorists tend to be careful and elaborate, often using intricately staged situations to establish the different levels, applying them in one-on-one testing situations and eliminating participants who internal checks suggest have not been manipulated to the intended independent-variable level.

Consequences of the two styles extend to experimental design and statistical analysis. The convergent researcher tends to use rather elaborate designs, often