

Behavioral and Experimental Accounting Research - Reading List

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This document is a reading list for behavioral accounting research with a particular focus on the experimental method. It reflects my own perception of the seminal work that you should read, or at least know about, when conducting research in this area. The list is deliberately selective rather than exhaustive: each category contains only a handful of readings, and many excellent contributions are necessarily absent.

Foundations of Experimental Accounting Research

These readings explain what experiments in accounting are for and how to plan and evaluate them. Kinney (2019) organizes research planning around three questions that behavioral accounting researchers universally use to pitch, keep track of, and summarize their research.¹ Libby et al. (2002) introduce the predictive validity model in section 4 of their paper, which is the standard for designing and evaluating experimental studies in behavioral accounting research.² Finally, Bloomfield et al. (2016) compare the different empirical methods used in accounting research, showing that experiments have both strengths and weaknesses relative to archival, field, and survey research.

Bloomfield, R., Nelson, M. W., & Soltes, E. (2016). Gathering data for archival, field, survey, and experimental accounting research. *Journal of Accounting Research*, 54(2), 341–395. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-679X.12104>

Kinney, W. R., Jr. (2019). The Kinney three paragraphs (and more) for accounting Ph.D. students. *Accounting Horizons*, 33(4), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.2308/acch-52451>

Libby, R., Bloomfield, R., & Nelson, M. W. (2002). Experimental research in financial accounting. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 27(8), 775–810. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0361-3682\(01\)00011-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0361-3682(01)00011-3)

Theoretical Grounding

For theoretical grounding, my recommendation is to go through *The Routledge Handbook of Behavioural Accounting Research*, edited by Theresa Libby and Linda Thorne. Three chapters in particular cover the theories behind a vast range of behavioral accounting experiments: agency theory (Gordon & Trottier, 2025),

¹See also Kinney, W. R., Jr. (2025). Planning for research success by answering three (universal) questions. In T. Libby & L. Thorne (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of behavioural accounting research* (2nd ed., pp. 6–20). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003541981-3>

²See also Libby, R., Bloomfield, R., & Nelson, M. W. (2025). Experimental effectiveness and the predictive validity model. In T. Libby & L. Thorne (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of behavioural accounting research* (2nd ed., pp. 21–32). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003541981-4>

social psychology theories (Kaplan et al., 2025), and judgment and decision-making (Jollineau & Mendoza, 2025).

Gordon, I. M., & Trottier, K. (2025). Agency theory: Applications in behavioural accounting research. In T. Libby & L. Thorne (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of behavioural accounting research* (2nd ed., pp. 106–118). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003541981-10>

Jollineau, S. J., & Mendoza, K. I. (2025). Understanding and improving judgment and decision-making in accounting. In T. Libby & L. Thorne (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of behavioural accounting research* (2nd ed., pp. 35–57). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003541981-6>

Kaplan, S. E., Samuels, J. A., & Sawers, K. M. (2025). Social psychology theories as applied to behavioural accounting research. In T. Libby & L. Thorne (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of behavioural accounting research* (2nd ed., pp. 58–73). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003541981-7>

Experimental Traditions

These readings cover the main experimental traditions in accounting research. The first two draw on chapters in the handbook by Libby and Thorne, which offer an excellent and up-to-date discussion of the two laboratory traditions. Kadous & Zhou (2025) explain how to maximize the contribution of experiments in the judgment and decision-making tradition.³ Church & Ackert (2025) provide a primer on the experimental economics tradition.⁴ Finally, Floyd & List (2016) discuss the use of field experiments in accounting and finance, a third tradition that moves experiments out of the laboratory and into naturally occurring settings.

Church, B. K., & Ackert, L. F. (2025). Experimental economics: A primer for accounting researchers. In T. Libby & L. Thorne (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of behavioural accounting research* (2nd ed., pp. 275–296). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003541981-21>

Floyd, E., & List, J. A. (2016). Using field experiments in accounting and finance. *Journal of Accounting Research*, 54(2), 437–475. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-679X.12113>

Kadous, K., & Zhou, Y. (2025). Maximizing the contribution of JDM-style experiments in accounting. In T. Libby & L. Thorne (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of behavioural accounting research* (2nd ed., pp. 255–274). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003541981-20>

Participant Selection

These readings cover the participants on which accounting experiments rely. Arnold & Triki (2025) evaluate when experiments can rely on student and online participants. Elliott et al. (2007) examine the conditions under which students are a good proxy for nonprofessional investors. Finally, Bentley (2021) explains how to improve the statistical power and reliability of experiments that recruit their participants through online platforms.

Arnold, V., & Triki, A. (2025). Use of student and online participants in behavioural accounting research. In T. Libby & L. Thorne (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of behavioural accounting research* (2nd ed.,

³See also Bonner, S. E. (1999). Judgment and decision-making research in accounting. *Accounting Horizons*, 13(4), 385–398. <https://doi.org/10.2308/acch.1999.13.4.385>

⁴See also Kachelmeier, S. J., & King, R. R. (2002). Using laboratory experiments to evaluate accounting policy issues. *Accounting Horizons*, 16(3), 219–232. <https://doi.org/10.2308/acch.2002.16.3.219>

- pp. 380–395). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003541981-28>
- Bentley, J. W. (2021). Improving the statistical power and reliability of research using Amazon Mechanical Turk. *Accounting Horizons*, 35(4), 45–62. <https://doi.org/10.2308/horizons-18-052>
- Elliott, W. B., Hodge, F. D., Kennedy, J. J., & Pronk, M. (2007). Are M.B.A. students a good proxy for nonprofessional investors? *The Accounting Review*, 82(1), 139–168. <https://doi.org/10.2308/accr.2007.82.1.139>

Process Evidence

Experimental research is naturally strong in offering evidence for the causal process at play, thanks to randomization. The first stepping stone to enhancing process evidence in experimental accounting research is to feature moderation and mediation tests, which are described in Burt & Hampton (2025). The next step is to consider how various parts of the design can be used to offer more and better process evidence, which is what Asay et al. (2022) discuss. Finally, Lennox & Payne-Mann (2026) look at why mediation, which is tested using path analysis, rests on assumptions that typical experimental designs do not satisfy.

- Asay, H. S., Guggenmos, R. D., Kadous, K., Koonce, L., & Libby, R. (2022). Theory testing and process evidence in accounting experiments. *The Accounting Review*, 97(6), 23–43. <https://doi.org/10.2308/tar-2019-1001>
- Burt, I., & Hampton, C. (2025). Moderation and mediation in behavioural accounting research. In T. Libby & L. Thorne (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of behavioural accounting research* (2nd ed., pp. 495–510). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003541981-34>
- Lennox, C., & Payne-Mann, C. (2026). An explanation of path analysis and recommendations for best practice. *Contemporary Accounting Research*, 43(1), 290–313. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1911-3846.70019>

Statistical Reporting and Reproducibility

These readings cover how to plan, conduct, and report statistical tests, and how to make findings reproducible. Lindsay (2025) explains why statistical power, confidence intervals, and replication deserve more attention in behavioral accounting research.⁵ Turning to reproducibility, Hail et al. (2020) survey the views of the accounting research community, and Hartmann & de Meyst (2025) make the case for replication studies.⁶

- Hail, L., Lang, M., & Leuz, C. (2020). Reproducibility in accounting research: Views of the research community. *Journal of Accounting Research*, 58(2), 519–543. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-679X.12305>
- Hartmann, F. G. H., & de Meyst, K. J. (2025). Replication of published studies in behavioural accounting research. In T. Libby & L. Thorne (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of behavioural accounting research* (2nd ed., pp. 649–663). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003541981-46>
- Lindsay, R. M. (2025). Improving statistical practice: Why power, confidence intervals, and replication should no longer be neglected in behavioural accounting research. In T. Libby & L. Thorne (Eds.),

⁵See also Lakens, D. (2022). Effect sizes. In *Improving your statistical inferences* (Chapter 6). https://lakens.github.io/statistical_inferences/06-effectsize.html and Lakens, D. (2022). Sample size justification. In *Improving your statistical inferences* (Chapter 8). https://lakens.github.io/statistical_inferences/08-samplesizejustification.html

⁶See also Lakens, D. (2022). Preregistration and transparency. In *Improving your statistical inferences* (Chapter 13). https://lakens.github.io/statistical_inferences/13-prereg.html and Lakens, D. (2022). Replication studies. In *Improving your statistical inferences* (Chapter 17). https://lakens.github.io/statistical_inferences/17-replication.html

The Routledge handbook of behavioural accounting research (2nd ed., pp. 396–421). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003541981-29>

Reviews of Behavioral Accounting Research

These readings offer reviews of experimental research in specific areas of accounting. Cade et al. (2025) review the experimental financial accounting literature on linguistic features, nonverbal cues, and media channels in financial disclosures. For similar experimental financial accounting topics, the first sections of Libby et al. (2002) are also useful but more dated. Sprinkle & Williamson (2006) offer an excellent overview of experimental management accounting research. Finally, Nelson (2025) reviews fifty years of archival and experimental auditing research. The experimental work is covered in section 4 on audit judgment studies, which discusses how the quality of auditors' judgments and decisions can be measured and what determines it.⁷

Cade, N., Rennekamp, K. M., & Winn, A. (2025). Linguistic features, nonverbal cues, and media channels in financial disclosures: Insights and implications from the experimental literature. In T. Libby & L. Thorne (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of behavioural accounting research* (2nd ed., pp. 119–141). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003541981-11>

Nelson, M. W. (2025). Experimental and archival research in auditing: Complementarities, convergence, and future directions. *The Accounting Review*, 100(6), 385–403. <https://doi.org/10.2308/tar-2025-0477>

Sprinkle, G. B., & Williamson, M. G. (2006). Experimental research in managerial accounting. In C. S. Chapman, A. G. Hopwood, & M. D. Shields (Eds.), *Handbook of management accounting research* (Vol. 1, pp. 415–444). Elsevier. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1751-3243\(06\)01017-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1751-3243(06)01017-0)

Other Readings

These readings cover other, related topics that are important for behavioral and experimental accounting researchers, but are not explicitly part of the reading list or cannot easily be allocated to one of the above categories. First, I would like to mention Brickley et al. (2020) for offering a great summary of the three-legged stool which is a framework management accountants use to describe and analyze management accounting and control systems. I would also like to mention Lipe & Salterio (2000), who report one of the most cited, if not the most cited, experimental studies in behavioral accounting research. They show that superiors who evaluate multiple business units with the balanced scorecard base their evaluations on the measures common to both units and largely ignore the measures unique to each unit. Lastly, I want to mention the chapter by Cooper & Kagel (2016) on other-regarding preferences, which offers simple conceptualizations that can explain and cover most deviations from strictly self-interested behavior in accounting settings.

Brickley, J., Smith, C., & Zimmerman, J. (2020). The economics of organizational architecture. *Journal of Applied Corporate Finance*, 32(1), 108–119. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jacf.12392>

Cooper, D. J., & Kagel, J. H. (2016). Other-regarding preferences: A selective survey of experimental results. In J. H. Kagel & A. E. Roth (Eds.), *The handbook of experimental economics* (Vol. 2, pp. 217–289).

⁷See also Trotman, K. T., Sakchuenyos, P., Trotman, A. J., & Zhang, X. (2026). Judgment and decision making in auditing. In D. Hay, W. R. Knechel, & M. Willekens (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of auditing* (2nd ed., pp. 284–301). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781032651545-24>

Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400883172-005>

Lipe, M. G., & Salterio, S. E. (2000). The balanced scorecard: Judgmental effects of common and unique performance measures. *The Accounting Review*, 75(3), 283–298. <https://doi.org/10.2308/accr.2000.75.3.283>