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Honorary Professor

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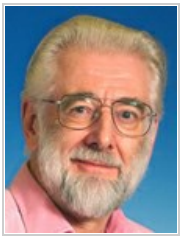

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About

David Booth investigates the ways in which an individual's life works. His research and teaching centre on the processes in the mind that situate actions and reactions by people, members of other species and, indeed, socially intelligent engineered systems.

Qualifications

MA 1963, BA 1958, Chemistry with Biochemistry, Oxford University

BSc 1960 (by thesis), Oxford University

BA 1962, Psychology & Philosophy, Birkbeck London University

PhD 1964 (by thesis), Biochemistry, Institute of Psychiatry, BPGMF London University

DSc 1977 (by publications), Psychology, University of Birmingham

Research

Fundamental Psychology

- Individual Cognition, Motivation and Emotion
- Cognitive bio-social approaches to human and animal life

Applied Psychology

- Health Psychology; Psychology in physical medicine
- Customer Psychology; Psychology of product development

An individual's mentation in a situation

Individualised cognitive analysis provides direct evidence as to what is going on in a person's mind (or in any well adapted system's performance) while tackling a task such as recognising and acting appropriately towards an object, a social situation, an emotional state or a bodily sensation. The evidence can be purely verbal, from an adequately structured conversation, or can be concrete actions or expressed dispositions in response to physically defined stimuli or culturally meaningful symbols (such as words or pictures).

My approach is to compare the person's responses to variants of the situation under test that disconfound features from each other and from their context. The data from one test occasion are analysed by normed multi-channel discrimination scaling: this is the simplest formulation of the classic ideas of dimensions of mental processing, learnt Gestalten and the just noticeable difference, and in that sense forms the logical foundation of all psychology.

For more information see the **multimodal perception group (/research/activity/psychology/multimodal/index.aspx)** pages and research into the **social psychology of empathy (/research/activity/psychology/empathy/index.aspx)** .

Nutritive and other health-related activities

Much of my research in Health Psychology concerns the consequences for long-term health of habitual patterns of eating, drinking and moving about. A "psychosocial short-cut" to identifying and advising on the healthier sorts of custom is to relate diverse individuals' choices as described in their culture to outcomes for their health, such as overweight and obesity, diabetes and high blood pressure. This new approach to psychometrics was first developed for long-term avoidance of body-weight gain. The directly evidence-based individual tailoring of advice it enables is now being extended to: the assessment and reduction of individuals' fat and salt intakes; the efficacy of management of joint mobility and pain in arthritis, rheumatic fatigue and cardiovascular health following heart surgery; and the development of interactive digital media for evidence-based health education in youngsters and adults.

Social cognitive path analyses have been developed from the psychology of dieting and (failures in) weight control. They are being extended to psychological problems in physical medicine, such as coping with the diagnosis of rheumatoid arthritis at a relatively young age. More open-ended investigations are also conducted into the personal meaning and social functions of the healthy and unhealthy practices.

Such social psychological approaches to health need underpinning by understanding of the "psychobiological system," i.e. the physiological consequences of the healthier and less healthy behaviour and their feedback onto such activities through the brain. This is vital for relating the advised behaviour both to effective support from the environment (such as food formulations and services) and to the physical effects of any medical interventions.

Thus, we continue research on the visceral and metabolic after-effects of eating and drinking that satiate hunger and thirst, modulate intellectual and social performance and mood, and induce preferences and aversions all usually via some processes of learning. This work uses intakes and ratings in the way we first developed, to measure manipulated physiological processes that have been disconfounded from the learnt expectations triggered by sensory stimulation, linguistic information and social context.

(This contrasts with the dominant practice of assuming that parameters of nutrient intake and the wordings of ratings measure particular influences on appetite.) The satiating effects of fats and carbohydrates and the cognitive effects of caffeine are under study by dose-response designs within individuals as they ingest food and drink in a familiar way.

For more information see 'Applied Biosocial Cognition' in the **health psychology pages (/research/activity/psychology/health/index.aspx)** , and the **enABLE*r/s* site (http://www.what-works-in-your-circs.org)** .

Psychological science of service and product uses

Individual cognition is uniquely capable of measuring simultaneously the actual material ("sensory") and symbolic ("marketing") influences on each customer's shopping and usage choices (and on the descriptions to which product sensory profiling and marketing concept specification are limited). Aspects of the physical product and marketed brand interact in the individual user's mind and their joint impact on behaviour is modelled by discrimination scaling of that person's disposition to acquire the various propositions generated at that stage of product development. Aggregation of these personally ideal hyper-spaces across a representative panel or sampled sub-segments gives uniquely precise and operational estimates of current market response.

This approach has been implemented in a number of academic and commercial demonstrations. It is being compared with currently established statistical treatments of grouped verbal data from sensory and market research. It is also being used to understand the neurophysiological receptor types through which manufacturing processes stimulate the cognitive integration of individuals choices and pleasures from texture, flavour and appearance of important food and drink products in everyday usages.

For more information see the **multimodal perception group (/research/activity/psychology/multimodal/index.aspx)** pages.

Groups relating to research

Research Group on Empathy in the School of Psychology's Developmental, Social and Applied Grouping (/research/activity/psychology/empathy/index.aspx)

Multimodal research in the School of Psychology's Perceptual Systems Grouping (/research/activity/psychology/multimodal/index.aspx)

Research Group on Applied Biosocial Cognition in the School of Psychology's Health Psychology Grouping (http://psychology.bham.ac.uk/research/groups/dsa/health.shtml)

http://www.whatworksinyourcircs.com/ (http://www.whatworksinyourcircs.com/)

The multidisciplinary journal Appetite - research on eating & drinking (http://www.elsevier.com/locate/issn/01956663)

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Arranged by topic: www.sussex.ac.uk David Booth (Psychology) - Research Activities

In reverse order of date of publication:-

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