Statssy

50 Psychology Research Topics

WITH STUDY DESIGNS, STATISTICAL METHODS, DATASETS AND REAL UNIVERSITY THESES

A practical dissertation topic-selection guide for BSc, MSc and PhD psychology students. Each topic is paired with an analytical approach, a free or free-to-access dataset, and a related thesis for methodological inspiration.

50	10	9	2022–2026
Research questions	Psychology sub-fields	Dataset sources	Thesis years

How to use this guide

1. Select a few questions from the psychology area that interests you.
2. Open the dataset codebook and confirm the needed outcome, predictors and scales.
3. Read the related university thesis, especially the methods section.
4. Decide whether regression, mediation, moderation or another method fits your question.
5. Narrow the population and time period before finalising your research proposal.

Discuss your topic with Statssy

Book a free consultation with Siddharth

Guide contents

01. Clinical psychology
02. Social psychology
03. Cognitive psychology and ageing
04. Developmental psychology

05. Organisational psychology
06. Health psychology
07. Educational and student psychology
08. Personality psychology
09. Cyberpsychology
10. Positive psychology and wellbeing

01 Clinical psychology

Clinical topics test whether symptoms, treatment and recovery move together. National surveys give you thousands of cases without recruiting a single patient.

TOPIC 01 Does more time in therapy link to lower psychological distress?

STUDY DESIGN	Cross-sectional
STATISTICAL TEST	Multiple linear regression
DATASET	NSDUH (Open)

Related thesis: Patient Perspectives Of Psychotherapy Duration And Treatment Outcomes
Doug Terrill · University of Kentucky · 2026

TOPIC 02 Do the DASS-42 items fit separate depression, anxiety and stress factors?

STUDY DESIGN	Psychometric
STATISTICAL TEST	Confirmatory factor analysis
DATASET	Open Psychometrics (Open)

Related thesis: Depression Symptoms are Associated with Less Positively Biased Self-Ratings of Attentional Control
Anna E. Morgan · University of Arkansas · 2026

TOPIC 03 Do daily stressors predict next-day negative mood?

STUDY DESIGN	Daily diary
STATISTICAL TEST	Multilevel model
DATASET	MIDUS (Free login)

Related thesis: Daily Rhythms In Psychosocial Stress, Sleep, And Mood: A Multimethod Approach To Transdiagnostic Psychopathology Risk And Intervention
Gabriel Gilmore · University of Kentucky · 2026

TOPIC 04 Which adults with major depression receive no treatment?

STUDY DESIGN	Cross-sectional
STATISTICAL TEST	Logistic regression
DATASET	NSDUH (Open)

Related thesis: An Experimental Test of Mental Health Help-Seeking Intentions as a Function of Demographics and Disorder Type

Alyssa Hartley · University of Arkansas · 2024

TOPIC 05 Are students with depression more likely to report panic attacks?

STUDY DESIGN	Cross-sectional
STATISTICAL TEST	Chi-square test with odds ratio
DATASET	Student Mental Health (Kaggle) (Free login)

Related thesis: A Vicious Cycle: The Interplay Between Anxiety, Perfectionism, and Indecision

Kaelyn G. Moran · University of Arkansas · 2026

Topic choice checklist

Check variable availability, validated instruments, assumptions, sample size or effective sample size, and data access requirements before committing to any topic. Statistical methods above are starting points; final model selection depends on the actual data and research design.

02 Social psychology

Social psychology topics compare attitudes across groups and countries. The European Social Survey covers more than 30 countries with the same questions.

TOPIC 06 Does trust in institutions differ by age and education across Europe?

STUDY DESIGN	Cross-sectional, multi-country
STATISTICAL TEST	Multilevel linear regression
DATASET	European Social Survey (Free login)

Related thesis: The Effect of Self-Esteem and Social Ostracism on Conspiratorial Thinking
Kayla G. Blevins · University of Arkansas · 2025

TOPIC 07 Do people who belong to a discriminated group report lower life satisfaction?

STUDY DESIGN	Cross-sectional, multi-country
STATISTICAL TEST	Multilevel linear regression
DATASET	European Social Survey (Free login)

Related thesis: Stressed, Sleepy, And Sick: The Plight Of Black Racialization Through Stress, Structural Disadvantage, And Sleep Insufficiencies
Jillian Rae Silva-Jones · University of Kentucky · 2026

TOPIC 08 Is perceived threat linked to negative attitudes toward immigrants?

STUDY DESIGN	Cross-sectional
STATISTICAL TEST	Structural equation modelling
DATASET	European Social Survey (Free login)

Related thesis: Avoiding Pathogens or Avoiding People? Pathogen Avoidance, Pathogen-Specific Stereotypes, and Intergroup Bias toward South Asians
Aashvi Dahiya · University of Arkansas · 2026

TOPIC 09 Does loneliness predict poorer health a year later?

STUDY DESIGN	Longitudinal panel
STATISTICAL TEST	Cross-lagged panel model
DATASET	Understanding Society (Free login)

Related thesis: Social Isolation Predicts Altered Reward Circuit Connectivity and Future Behaviors in Adolescents
Mason Lucas and Josiah Leong · University of Arkansas · 2026

TOPIC 10 Do attitudes toward women's roles differ across European countries?

STUDY DESIGN	Cross-sectional, multi-country
STATISTICAL TEST	Multilevel ordinal regression
DATASET	European Social Survey (Free login)

Related thesis: The Relationship Between Media Use, Identity, and Attitudes Towards Women
Kelly A. Summers · University of Arkansas · 2026

Topic choice checklist

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03 Cognitive psychology and ageing

MIDUS includes cognitive tests for thousands of adults. That makes memory and ageing topics possible without a lab.

TOPIC 11 Do adults under high stress show faster decline in cognitive scores?

STUDY DESIGN	Longitudinal
STATISTICAL TEST	Linear mixed model
DATASET	MIDUS (Free login)

Related thesis: Baseline Subjective Cognitive Decline-Plus Features Increase Risk Of Mild Cognitive Impairment And Dementia During Longitudinal Follow-Up

Cristina N. Pinheiro · University of Kentucky · 2026

TOPIC 12 Does poor sleep quality predict weaker memory in midlife?

STUDY DESIGN	Cross-sectional
STATISTICAL TEST	Multiple linear regression
DATASET	MIDUS (Free login)

Related thesis: The Connections among Worry, Sleep Hygiene, and Sleep Quality

Anna Quesada · University of Arkansas · 2023

TOPIC 13 Do vocabulary and working memory scores move together across adulthood?

STUDY DESIGN	Cross-sectional
STATISTICAL TEST	Correlation with moderated regression
DATASET	MIDUS (Free login)

Related thesis: What Are the Roles of Vocabulary and Working Memory in Metaphor Comprehension?

Claire Simpson · University of Arkansas · 2026

TOPIC 14 Is binge drinking linked to serious difficulty concentrating or remembering?

STUDY DESIGN	Cross-sectional
STATISTICAL TEST	Logistic regression
DATASET	NSDUH (Open)

Related thesis: Next-Day Effects of Binge Drinking on Inhibitory Control in Laboratory and Naturalistic Settings
Justin Verlinden · University of Kentucky · 2026

TOPIC 15 Does working memory performance differ by age and sex in midlife?

STUDY DESIGN	Cross-sectional
STATISTICAL TEST	Two-way ANOVA
DATASET	MIDUS (Free login)

Related thesis: Relative Utility Governs Working Memory for Drug-Associated Stimuli in a Novel Translational Paradigm
Maxwell E. Boileau · University of Kentucky · 2026

Topic choice checklist

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04 Developmental psychology

Add Health follows the same people from their teens into their forties. It is the best free source for life-course questions.

TOPIC 16 Does closeness to parents in adolescence predict depression in adulthood?

STUDY DESIGN	Longitudinal
STATISTICAL TEST	Logistic regression
DATASET	Add Health (Free login)

Related thesis: Maternal Emotion Socialization on Children's Social Competence

Alivia N. DuLaney · University of Arkansas · 2025

TOPIC 17 Does conflict between parents in adolescence predict poorer adult relationships?

STUDY DESIGN	Longitudinal
STATISTICAL TEST	Multiple linear regression
DATASET	Add Health (Free login)

Related thesis: Interparental Conflict And Sibling Relationship Quality In Emerging Adulthood: An Emotional Security Perspective

Courtlyn A. Fields · University of Kentucky · 2025

TOPIC 18 Does a sense of control explain the link between childhood adversity and adult health?

STUDY DESIGN	Cross-sectional
STATISTICAL TEST	Mediation analysis
DATASET	MIDUS (Free login)

Related thesis: Self-Compassion Mediates the Relationship between Childhood Adversity in the Prediction of Later Health Outcomes among U.S. Adults

Emily Bunch · University of Arkansas · 2025

TOPIC 19 Does dating violence in adolescence predict depression in early adulthood?

STUDY DESIGN	Longitudinal
STATISTICAL TEST	Logistic regression with moderation
DATASET	Add Health (Free login)

Related thesis: The Association between Adolescent Dating Violence and Internalizing Symptoms: Insecure Attachment as a Moderator

Jasmine Blake · University of Arkansas · 2022

TOPIC 20 Which protective factors help adolescents from high-risk homes do well as adults?

STUDY DESIGN	Longitudinal
STATISTICAL TEST	Hierarchical regression
DATASET	Add Health (Free login)

Related thesis: Resilience After Prenatal Substance Exposure: Exploring The Role Of Cumulative And Specific Protective Factors In Predicting Toddlerhood Temperament Profiles

Anjeli Elkins · University of Kentucky · 2025

Topic choice checklist

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05 Organisational psychology

Workplace topics link job conditions to wellbeing. The OSMI survey and Understanding Society both cover this well.

TOPIC 21 Do women in tech report more mental health stigma at work than men?

STUDY DESIGN	Cross-sectional
STATISTICAL TEST	Chi-square test and logistic regression
DATASET	OSMI Mental Health in Tech (Kaggle) (Free login)

Related thesis: The Relationships Between Gendered Microaggressions, Internalizing Symptoms, Burnout, and Patient Care in Female Medical Residents

Mattie E. Berry and Ana J. Bridges · University of Arkansas · 2025

TOPIC 22 Are tech workers more likely to seek treatment when their employer offers mental health benefits?

STUDY DESIGN	Cross-sectional
STATISTICAL TEST	Logistic regression
DATASET	OSMI Mental Health in Tech (Kaggle) (Free login)

Related thesis: Evaluating Components of the Primary Care Behavioral Health Model as Predictors of Provider Satisfaction

Nicole Buhr · East Tennessee State University · 2026

TOPIC 23 Does working night or rotating shifts lower job satisfaction?

STUDY DESIGN	Cross-sectional
STATISTICAL TEST	Ordinal logistic regression
DATASET	Understanding Society (Free login)

Related thesis: Measuring the Strategies to Cope with Shift Work Among Healthcare Workers

Khushi Mehta and Lindsay Ham · University of Arkansas · 2025

TOPIC 24 Does caring for a relative harm wellbeing, and does gender change that?

STUDY DESIGN	Cross-sectional
STATISTICAL TEST	Moderation analysis
DATASET	Understanding Society (Free login)

Related thesis: Does Gender Moderate The Association Between Perceived Choice Of Being A Caregiver And Psychological Well-Being

Ran Huo · Yale School of Public Health · 2026

TOPIC 25 Does job insecurity predict lower life satisfaction across Europe?

STUDY DESIGN	Cross-sectional, multi-country
STATISTICAL TEST	Multilevel linear regression
DATASET	European Social Survey (Free login)

Related thesis: Reward Vs. Penalty: Differential Effects On Cardiovascular Reactivity And Task Performance

Zhiyuan Liu · Yale School of Public Health · 2025

Topic choice checklist

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06 Health psychology

Health psychology links mind and body. Panel data lets you test whether stress or mood comes before a health outcome.

TOPIC 26 Does perceived stress predict poorer sleep in midlife adults?

STUDY DESIGN	Cross-sectional
STATISTICAL TEST	Multiple linear regression
DATASET	MIDUS (Free login)

Related thesis: Does a Single Night of Mindfulness Meditation Improve Sleep and Stress in Female College Students?
Koushik Thudi · University of Arkansas · 2023

TOPIC 27 Do depressive symptoms explain the link between childhood adversity and adult physical health?

STUDY DESIGN	Longitudinal
STATISTICAL TEST	Mediation analysis
DATASET	Add Health (Free login)

Related thesis: Believe in Yourself and Keep the Doctor Away: Health Self-Efficacy Mediates the Relationship Between Retrospectively Reported Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and College Students' Current Self-Reported Physical Health
Amber Sale · University of Arkansas · 2024

TOPIC 28 Does optimism predict lower risk of chronic illness ten years later?

STUDY DESIGN	Longitudinal
STATISTICAL TEST	Logistic regression
DATASET	MIDUS (Free login)

Related thesis: The Long-Term Biological Toll of Adverse Childhood Experiences and the Role of Psychological Resilience
Jill Krier Desch · University of South Florida · 2026

TOPIC 29 Is regular physical activity linked to fewer depressive symptoms in UK adults?

STUDY DESIGN	Longitudinal panel
STATISTICAL TEST	Fixed effects panel regression
DATASET	Understanding Society (Free login)

Related thesis: Brief Exposure Therapy With Exercise For PTSD: A Pilot Study Using Single Case Experimental Design
Troy J.J. Hubert · University of Kentucky · 2026

TOPIC 30 Do adults with better mental wellbeing eat more fruit and vegetables?

STUDY DESIGN	Cross-sectional
STATISTICAL TEST	Multiple linear regression
DATASET	Understanding Society (Free login)

Related thesis: A Mixed Method Investigation On The Effects Of Information And Motivation On Self-Regulation Skills And Fruit And Vegetable Consumption
Kristen Buford · University of Kentucky · 2026

Topic choice checklist

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07 Educational and student psychology

Student wellbeing topics are quick to run. The Kaggle student file is small, clean and ready in minutes.

TOPIC 31 Is depression linked to a lower CGPA among university students?

STUDY DESIGN	Cross-sectional
STATISTICAL TEST	Chi-square test and logistic regression
DATASET	Student Mental Health (Kaggle) (Free login)

Related thesis: Feasibility of Assessing Dietary Patterns and Anxiety in College Students: A Pilot Study Using Nutrition Questionnaires, GAD-7, and ASQ

Kylie Ford · East Tennessee State University · 2026

TOPIC 32 Do students with anxiety or depression seek specialist help?

STUDY DESIGN	Cross-sectional
STATISTICAL TEST	Chi-square test
DATASET	Student Mental Health (Kaggle) (Free login)

Related thesis: The Effectiveness of Peer to Peer Mentoring in Reducing Symptoms of Depression and Anxiety in College Students

Ryan Harra · University of Arkansas · 2022

TOPIC 33 Does stress explain the link between childhood adversity and young adult life satisfaction?

STUDY DESIGN	Longitudinal
STATISTICAL TEST	Mediation analysis
DATASET	Add Health (Free login)

Related thesis: Who's in control? Perceived stress and emotional regulation partially mediate the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) on mental health and life satisfaction.

Mary A. Burdan · University of Arkansas · 2025

TOPIC 34 Does feeling connected to school in adolescence predict later educational attainment?

STUDY DESIGN	Longitudinal
STATISTICAL TEST	Ordinal logistic regression
DATASET	Add Health (Free login)

Related thesis: At The Table Together: Exploring Child Perception of Lunch Buddy Mentoring
Lauren K. Primm · University of Arkansas · 2025

TOPIC 35 Does year of study change the odds of depression among students?

STUDY DESIGN	Cross-sectional
STATISTICAL TEST	Logistic regression
DATASET	Student Mental Health (Kaggle) (Free login)

Related thesis: College success 101: Resilience and mental health mediate the relationship between Adverse Childhood Experiences and college functioning
Mackenzie Crook · University of Arkansas · 2023

Topic choice checklist

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08 Personality psychology

Personality topics need large samples, and the free data is huge. The Kaggle Big Five file alone has more than a million responses.

TOPIC 36 Do Big Five trait scores differ across countries?

STUDY DESIGN	Cross-sectional, multi-country
STATISTICAL TEST	Multilevel model
DATASET	Big Five Personality Test (Kaggle) (Free login)

Related thesis: Comparing Domain- And Facet-Based Models Of Personality Disorder: Incremental Predictive Validity And Model Fit

Alexandra Hines · University of Kentucky · 2026

TOPIC 37 Does the five-factor structure hold in a million online responses?

STUDY DESIGN	Psychometric
STATISTICAL TEST	Confirmatory factor analysis
DATASET	Big Five Personality Test (Kaggle) (Free login)

Related thesis: Psychometric Properties of the Interpersonal Style Questionnaire (ISQ) and the Patterns of Thinking Survey (POTS)

Genevieve Allison · East Tennessee State University · 2026

TOPIC 38 Does neuroticism predict depression, anxiety and stress scores?

STUDY DESIGN	Cross-sectional
STATISTICAL TEST	Multiple linear regression
DATASET	Open Psychometrics (Open)

Related thesis: Putative Mechanisms Of Personality Change In Treatment

Hannah Croom · University of Kentucky · 2025

TOPIC 39 Does Machiavellianism differ by age and gender?

STUDY DESIGN	Cross-sectional
STATISTICAL TEST	Two-way ANOVA
DATASET	Open Psychometrics (Open)

Related thesis: Amusement in the Absence of Empathy: Psychopathy in Relation to the Use and Appreciation of Dark Humor

Jolie A. Brewer · University of Arkansas · 2026

TOPIC 40 Does conscientiousness rise with age?

STUDY DESIGN	Cross-sectional
STATISTICAL TEST	Polynomial regression
DATASET	Open Psychometrics (Open)

Related thesis: Examining the Effects of Different Coping Styles on Dependent Stress Generation

Whitney Skaggs · University of Arkansas · 2022

Topic choice checklist

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09 Cyberpsychology

Screen time topics are popular and easy to pitch. Panel data helps you show which comes first, the screen or the mood.

TOPIC 41 Do young people who spend more hours on social media report lower wellbeing?

STUDY DESIGN	Longitudinal panel
STATISTICAL TEST	Fixed effects panel regression
DATASET	Understanding Society (Free login)

Related thesis: Social Media Usage and Motives in Socially Anxious Individuals
Emma Eddy · University of Arkansas · 2026

TOPIC 42 Is heavy phone or internet use linked to emotional difficulties in UK youth?

STUDY DESIGN	Cross-sectional
STATISTICAL TEST	Multiple linear regression
DATASET	Understanding Society (Free login)

Related thesis: Problematic Phone Use as an Emerging Risk to the Comorbidity of Social Anxiety and Depression
Haley O'Dwyer · University of Arkansas · 2023

TOPIC 43 Does daily internet use link to life satisfaction among older Europeans?

STUDY DESIGN	Cross-sectional, multi-country
STATISTICAL TEST	Multilevel linear regression
DATASET	European Social Survey (Free login)

Related thesis: Always Online, Never at Ease: Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) as a Partial Mediator Between Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Physical Health, Psychological Functioning, and Psychosocial Adjustment Among College Students
Evelyn Pensamiento · University of Arkansas · 2026

TOPIC 44 Is remote work linked to more mental health problems among tech workers?

STUDY DESIGN	Cross-sectional
STATISTICAL TEST	Logistic regression
DATASET	OSMI Mental Health in Tech (Kaggle) (Free login)

Related thesis: Examining the Effects of a Zoom Interview on Cortisol

Bennett Perkins · University of Arkansas · 2023

TOPIC 45 Do tech workers think talking about mental health would hurt their career?

STUDY DESIGN	Cross-sectional
STATISTICAL TEST	Chi-square test
DATASET	OSMI Mental Health in Tech (Kaggle) (Free login)

Related thesis: Does Confronting Depend on the Target?: The Influence of Target Gender on intentions to Confront Sexism

Paige A. Taylor · University of Kentucky · 2026

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10 Positive psychology and wellbeing

Wellbeing topics look at what helps people thrive, not only what goes wrong. They work well with life satisfaction scales in panel surveys.

TOPIC 46 Does a sense of purpose predict better health ten years later?

STUDY DESIGN	Longitudinal
STATISTICAL TEST	Multiple linear regression
DATASET	MIDUS (Free login)

Related thesis: The Effect of Self-Disclosure to Dogs on Stress, Coping, and Emotional Well-Being
Lilian Crawford · University of Arkansas · 2026

TOPIC 47 Does neighbourhood belonging protect older adults' wellbeing?

STUDY DESIGN	Cross-sectional
STATISTICAL TEST	Moderation analysis
DATASET	Understanding Society (Free login)

Related thesis: Protecting Older Individuals From Age Discrimination Harming Psychological Well-Being: Role Of Neighborhood Cohesion
Tongyu Qiu · Yale School of Public Health · 2026

TOPIC 48 Is religious attendance linked to happiness across Europe?

STUDY DESIGN	Cross-sectional, multi-country
STATISTICAL TEST	Multilevel linear regression
DATASET	European Social Survey (Free login)

Related thesis: Living With Flying Colors: Associations Among LGBTQ+ Identity, Religiosity, Spirituality, Community, And Overall Well-Being Among LGBTQ+ Older Adults
Madison T. Diomede · University of Kentucky · 2025

TOPIC 49 Does volunteering predict higher life satisfaction?

STUDY DESIGN	Longitudinal panel
STATISTICAL TEST	Fixed effects panel regression
DATASET	Understanding Society (Free login)

Related thesis: Prosocial Behaviors as a Protective Factor Against Suicide Risk: An Ecological Momentary Assessment Approach

Bradley A. Brown · University of South Florida · 2026

TOPIC 50 Does more income still buy more happiness after a certain point?

STUDY DESIGN	Cross-sectional, multi-country
STATISTICAL TEST	Spline regression
DATASET	European Social Survey (Free login)

Related thesis: Status, Inclusion, And Self-Esteem In Daily Life: Examining Moderation By Social Anxiety

Dylan Schnur · Yale School of Public Health · 2026

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Plan your psychology dissertation

Choose a narrowly defined question, verify the dataset and codebook, review relevant literature, and document your sampling, data analysis and ethical considerations. Use each cited thesis as a related methodological example rather than an identical study.

Need a second opinion?

Schedule a free 15-minute meeting

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